



## ROOTS OF THE TRINITY

by David Clayton

The doctrine of the Trinity has been, from the moment it was first introduced into the Christian faith, a subject of heated debate and fierce controversy. Today many centuries later the situation is no different. Still there is argument and division concerning this doctrine which its advocates have declared to be a "great mystery."

Sometime, during the first four hundred years after the death of Christ, this doctrine crept into the teachings of popular Christianity. While it was officially embraced and defined at the Council of Nicea (AD 325), there seems to be evidence to suggest that even before this time it had already insinuated itself into the thinking of some Christians. However, what is absolutely certain is that this doctrine was not introduced into the Christian Church until more than a century after the death of the last of the apostles. The Encarta Encyclopedia describes its introduction into Christianity in the following way:

*Trinity (theology), in Christian theology, doctrine that God exists as three persons—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—who are united in one substance or being. The doctrine is not taught explicitly in the New Testament, where the word God almost invariably refers to the Father....*

*The term trinitas was first used in the 2nd century, by the Latin theologian Tertullian, but the concept was developed in the course of the debates on the nature of Christ. In the 4th century, the doctrine was finally formulated...*

The Encyclopedia Britannica states that "The doctrine developed gradu-



Trinitarian Buddha  
12th Century BC

ally over several centuries and through many controversies." (Article – Trinity). The doctrine, according to these articles, was "developed" during the first four centuries AD. Now think carefully. Protestants believe in the **Scripture**. Catholics believe in **Tradition** plus **Scripture**. Protestantism says, "all necessary truth is taught in the Scriptures." Catholicism says, "no, the Church continued to discover and proclaim more truth over the centuries (tradition)." It is upon this basis that the Roman Catholic Church claims that its teachings are above the Scripture. This doctrine of the Trinity falls right into the camp of Catholic tradition, rather than Scripture. Therefore the following statement by a Roman Catholic was quite justified: "Our opponents sometimes claim that no belief should be held dogmatically which is not explicitly

stated in Scripture . . . . But the Protestant Churches have themselves accepted such dogmas as **the Trinity for which there is no such precise authority in the Gospels.**" (Life Magazine, Oct. 30, 1950)

Yet, as we examine the doctrine of a three-in-one God more carefully, an even more startling fact comes to light. The doctrine of a trinitarian god existed for many centuries before it was embraced by the "Christian Church" in the first four centuries AD.

*The Papacy has in some of its churches, as, for instance, in the monastery of the so-called Trinitarians of Madrid, an image of the Triune God, with three heads on one body. The Babylonians had something of the same. Mr. Layard, in his last work, has given a specimen of such a triune divinity, worshipped in ancient Assyria. The accompanying cut of such another divinity, worshipped among the Pagans of Siberia, is taken from a medal in the Imperial Cabinet of St. Petersburg, and given in Parson's "Japhet.".... In India, the supreme divinity, in like manner, in one of the most ancient cave-temples, is represented with three heads on one body, under the name of "Eko Deva Trimurti," One God, three forms." In*

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*With Open Face* is dedicated to the promotion of the truths committed to the Advent movement, as believed and taught by the early Adventist pioneers. In particular to the restoration of those truths which have been cast down to the ground and trampled underfoot by the papacy, and adopted by her daughters.

Our purpose is to motivate our readers to commit themselves wholly to the task of personal preparation for the coming of the Lord, and to the taking of the final warning message to every nation, kindred, tongue and people.

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*Japan, the Buddhists* worship their great divinity, Buddha, with three heads, in the very same form, under the name of "San Pao Fuh." All these have existed from ancient times. While overlaid with idolatry, the recognition of a Trinity was universal in all the ancient nations of the world.... ((*The Two Babylons* - by Alexander Hislop, p.17,18)

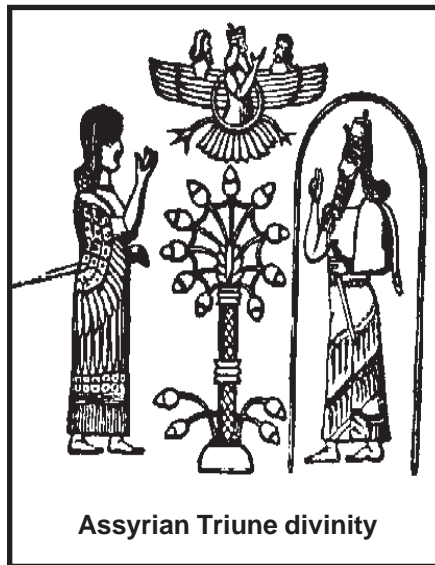
Over and over again as we examine the beliefs of ancient pagan religions which existed for hundreds of years before Christ came to this earth we find a trinity being worshipped. If the doctrine of the trinity was not understood by the people of God until several hundred years after Christ, where did the heathen religions get the idea from? Benjamin Wilkinson, who wrote the book, "Truth Triumphant," proposed an interesting answer:

"The revelations of the Old Testament had disclosed the Trinity. "In a disfigured and uncouth semblance" Zoroaster proclaimed his species of a trinity. He placed at the head of his celestial hierarchy Ormazd (or Ahura-Mazda), the great wise spirit, and Ahriman, the supreme evil spirit, who was the coeval and rival god of dark-

ness dwelling in the bottomless pit of night. With them he associated in a marked way, Mithra, the god of light, who was the sun and an embodiment of sun worship. As the sun was neither in the heavens nor on earth, but swung in an intermediate position between heaven and earth, so Mithra was the great mediator. When Mithraism had overspread the Roman Empire, Mithra was said to be the champion of sinners, the companion after death, and the guide of the soul into the heaven of heavens." (*Truth Triumphant*, p.120 - by Benjamin Wilkinson)

In the book, "The Two Babylons," the same suggestion is made by the author, Alexander Hislop:

"While overlaid with idolatry, the recognition of a trinity was universal in all the ancient nations of the world, proving how deep-rooted in the human race was the primeval doctrine on this



subject which comes out so distinctly in Genesis .... the triune emblem of the Assyrian divinity shows clearly what had been the original patriarchal faith." (*The Two Babylons* - p.18)

Just in passing, I would like to say that it had been my impression that Benjamin Wilkinson was a non-trinitarian. However, his statement above seems to indicate otherwise. Be that as it may, both he and Alexander Hislop have made the unreasonable

suggestion that the heathen nations received their concept of a trinitarian God from the early Hebrews.

One of the outstanding characteristics of the doctrine of the Trinity is that it induces in those who embrace it a lack of logic and simple common sense which is appalling. This fact has been impressed upon my mind several times as I have seen the unreasonable and illogical way that some have gone about to try to prove, justify and rationalize the doctrine of a Trinitarian God. (see article on page 8).

I have never heard anybody who attempted to defend the Trinity come up with an explanation which made sense. Most of the attempts revealed a lack of clear thinking, and the above suggestion is a clear example of this. Did the heathen nations receive their concepts of a Trinitarian god from the Hebrews? Does it make sense to suggest that they did? Is there any evidence to suggest that they were imitating the children of Israel in their ideas of a three-in-one God? What are the facts of the matter? Let us examine them.

#### DID THE ISRAELITES EVER BELIEVE IN A TRINITY?

One of the primary beliefs of Judaism is that there is only one God. This is not a new belief for the Jews, but has been one of their foundational beliefs from their very beginning as a nation. They do not, and have never believed in, or taught the doctrine of a God who was made up of three parts or persons.

It has been said that the Hebrew word, "elohim," signifies a plurality of persons within the godhead, since it is the plural form of the word, "el (god)." However, what is very significant is the fact that although this is a Hebrew word, the Hebrews themselves who best understand their own language, have never, and still do not believe in a plurality of Gods, or in a Trinitarian godhead. In fact, the schema, "hear O Israel, the Lord thy God is one Lord," contains the very word, "Elohim," yet it is the immovable basis upon which



the Jews anchor their concept of a single God who is one great Being. The Hebrews who then had the most complete revelations from, and the highest conceptions of God had absolutely no concept of a Trinitarian God but rather stridently insisted upon the very opposite. Surely it bears thinking about that the people whom God chose, and to whom He revealed Himself most fully, had absolutely no concept of a Trinity, while the heathen all around them had this concept. Did these heathen have a better understanding of the nature of God than did the Jews?

Of striking significance is the fact that in several of these heathen trinities, the third person of the trinity was an evil representation whose description could only equate him with Satan. Let us look for example at the trinity of gods which was worshipped in ancient Egypt, in Persia and even today, in the Hindu faith of India:

#### **IN EGYPT:**

*From the 1st dynasty (c. 2525-2775 BC), Horus and the god Seth were perpetual antagonists who were reconciled in the harmony of Upper and*



**Horus, Osiris, Isis  
2nd Millennium B.C.**

*Lower Egypt. In the myth of Osiris, who became prominent about 2350 BC, Horus was the son of Osiris. He was also the opponent of Seth, who murdered Osiris and contested Horus' heritage, the royal throne of Egypt.... (Encyclopædia Britannica - art. "Horus")*

*Seth was represented as a composite figure with a canine body, slanting eyes, square-tipped ears, tufted (in later representations, forked) tail, and a long, curved, pointed snout....*

*Originally Seth was a sky god, lord of the desert, master of storms, disorder, and warfare—in general, a trickster. Seth embodied the necessary and creative element of violence and disorder within the ordered world.... (Encyclopædia Britannica - art. "Seth")*

#### **IN PERSIA:**

*According to Zoroaster, Ahura Mazda created the universe and the cosmic order that he maintains. He created the twin spirits Spenta Mainyu (Mithra) and Angra Mainyu (Ahriman)—the former beneficent, choosing truth, light, and life, the latter destructive, choosing deceit, darkness, and death. The struggle of the spirits against each other makes up the history of the world.*

*In Zoroastrianism as reflected in the Avesta, Ahura Mazda is identified with the beneficent spirit and directly opposed to the destructive one. He is all-wise, bounteous, undeceiving, and the creator of everything good. The beneficent and evil spirits are conceived as mutually limiting, coeternal beings, the one above and the other beneath, with the world in between as their battleground.... (Encyclopædia Britannica - art. "Ahura Mazda")*

**Ahriman, ANGRA MAINYU** ("Destructive Spirit")

*The evil spirit in the dualistic doctrine of Zoroastrianism. His essential na-*

*ture is expressed in his principal epithet—Druj, "the Lie." The Lie expresses itself as greed, wrath, and envy. To aid him in attacking the light, the good creation of Ahura Mazda, the Wise Lord, Ahriman created a horde of demons embodying envy and similar qualities. Despite the chaos and suffering effected in the world by his onslaught, believers expect Ahriman to be defeated in the end of time by Ahura Mazda. Confined to their own realm, his demons will devour each other, and his own existence will be quenched....*

*The origin of evil is traced in Zoroaster's system to an exercise of free will at the beginning of creation, when the twin sons of Ahura Mazda entered into an eternal rivalry. One, Spenta Mainyu {Mithra} (Bounteous Spirit), chose good, thus acquiring the attributes of truth, justice, and life. The other, Angra Mainyu {Ahriman} (Destructive Spirit), chose evil and its attendant forces of destruction, injustice, and death.... (Encyclopædia Britannica - art. "Ahriman")*

#### **IN INDIA:**

##### **Hindu Trinity**

*The book "The Symbolism of Hindu Gods and Rituals" says regarding a Hindu trinity that existed centuries before Christ: "Siva is one of the gods of the Trinity. He is said to be the god of destruction. The other two gods are Brahma, the god of creation and Vishnu, the god of maintenance.... To indicate that these three processes are one and the same the three gods are combined in one form. "-Published by A. Parthasarathy, Bombay.*

*....Vishnu is often regarded as a special manifestation of the preservative aspect of the Supreme and Shiva as that of the destructive function. Another deity, Brahma, the creator, remains in the background as a demiurge. These three great figures (Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva) constitute the so-called Hindu Trinity (Trimurti, "the One or Whole with*

Three Forms”). This conception attempts to synthesize and harmonize the conviction that the Supreme Power is singular with the plurality of gods in daily religious worship .... (Encyclopædia Britannica - art. “Hinduism”)

...Historians show that at this time (c. 500 B.C.) the Hindu priests changed their teachings and adopted the adorable conception of a loving heavenly Father. A new literature sprang up, and innumerable tractates were written to place Brahma (the creator), Vishnu (the preserver), and Siva (the destroyer), the Hindu trinity, on a par with Jehovah. These more abstract and less materialistic concepts of religion were the beliefs of the Brahmans and the educated classes, but they left the masses to their coarse idolatry. (Truth Triumphant, p.126 - by Benjamin Wilkinson)

### THE THIRD PERSON

In these versions of the Trinity we find the following striking elements.

- (a) A creator-god who is good and merciful.
- (b) In two of these versions we find another god who is his son, who is also a good being.
- (c) A third god (in some cases who was also the son of the father and brother to the second god) who is evil and who makes war against the father and the son.

Can we miss the significance of this? Is this the concept of the Trinity which the heathen supposedly adopted from the Jews? The Hebrew Scriptures do reveal three beings who may be equated with the above descriptions but they most definitely do not constitute a trinity.

- (a) God the Father the supreme ruler of the universe. Absolutely and totally good.
- (b) Michael, the chief Prince (Dan. 10:13; 12:1), the Lord (Ps.110:1), the Son of the Father (Prov. 8:22-31; 30:4), also absolutely and totally

good.

(c) The enemy, Satan, the accuser and destroyer (Job 1:6; 2:7) The serpent (Gen. 3:14,15) The fallen angel (Isa. 14:12-15; Ezek. 28:12-19) who rebelled against, and makes war against God and His Son.

These heathen concepts of the Trinity, rather than pointing to a true Trinity, actually reveal very clearly the falsehood of the trinitarian doctrine and unmask its origin.

There was one who made war against the true God and His Son. One who is an enemy of all righteousness. This being greatly desired to be a part of a trinity. In fact, he was the third highest authority in heaven.

*Lucifer in heaven, before his rebellion, was a high and exalted angel, next in honor to God's dear Son.... {SR 13}*

This, however was not good enough for him. He desired to be equal with the Son of God and in an attempt to achieve this he rebelled against the Father and His Son. This person was Satan, the adversary, the destroyer.

*(Rev 12:7-8) And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, {8} And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven.*

It is this same Satan who clearly appears in the heathen trinity as the third being in the godhead. What Satan could not achieve in heaven, he achieved on earth – worship as the third person in a Trinitarian godhead.

The heathen nations did learn something from the Hebrews, but it was not the doctrine of a Trinitarian god. How could they? The Hebrews did not believe in a Trinity! What they did learn was the truth of a cosmic conflict between God, His Son and a powerful heavenly being named Lucifer who aspired to godhood. Satan, through his heathen worshippers easily distorted the facts so that he appeared as a member of the godhead, a brother of the Son of God, and therefore, worthy of worship. What a terrible tragedy that



**Palmyra. Triad of Moon God, Lord of heavens, Sun God  
1st Century A.D.**

this heathen concept should have so completely permeated Christendom that the Trinity is now the first foundational belief of nearly every Christian denomination!!

Today Christendom worships a third “god.” In fact, this “god” truly receives the greatest attention these days of all the members of the so-called Trinity. He is called the “Holy Ghost,” but holy he is not. He leads Christians into the most uncouth demonstrations and the most inappropriate, and even indecent behaviour. Yet he is worshipped as the Lord and giver of life. Who is this “third member of the Trinity?” It is the same person whom the Hindus worship as Shiva, the god of death and destruction; whom the Persians worshipped as Ahriman, the evil brother of the god Mithra. He is the same god that the Egyptians worshipped as Set, or Seth, the evil half brother of the god Horus. In other words, it is Satan himself.

### ENTRY INTO CHRISTIANITY

As we have already seen, this doctrine of the Trinity was not taught in the New Testament. It was taught by neither Jesus nor His disciples. The testimony of historians is that it “developed gradually” during the first four centuries of the Christian era. When we realize that the doctrine of a triune god was prevalent among the heathen of that time and that this doctrine, rather



than being a direct teaching of the Bible was “developed” during the years of the great apostasy by the very power which was responsible for wedding paganism with Christianity, we may justifiably begin to have grave doubts concerning the Christian origins of the trinity.

The historian, Edward Gibbon in the preface to his book, “History of Christianity,” stated:

*“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.” (History of Christianity - by Edward Gibbons)*

History has been so doctored and distorted by the religious bias of mainstream religion that it is very difficult to find many historians who will give a clear, truthful picture of the influences which led to the introduction of the trinity into Christian belief. However, again we find another historian, Siegfried Morenz, in his book, “Egyptian Religion,” stating:

*“The trinity was a major preoccupation of Egyptian theologians . . . Three gods are combined and treated as a single being, addressed in the singular. In this way the spiritual force of Egyptian religion shows a direct link with Christian theology.” (Egyptian Religion, - Siegfried Morenz)*

In the fourth century AD a controversy arose concerning the teachings of Arius, a Christian priest of Alexandria, Egypt. The Encyclopedia Britannica, comments thus on the teachings of Arius:

*...It affirmed that Christ is not truly divine but a created being. Arius’ basic premise was the uniqueness of God, who is alone self-existent and immutable; the Son, who is not self-existent, cannot be God. Because the Godhead is unique, it cannot be shared or communicated, so the Son cannot be*

*God....*

*According to its opponents, especially the bishop Athanasius, Arius’ teaching reduced the Son to a demigod, re-introduced polytheism (since worship of the Son was not abandoned), and undermined the Christian concept of redemption since only he who was truly God could be deemed to have reconciled man to the Godhead.*

*The controversy seemed to have been brought to an end by the Council of Nicaea (AD 325), which condemned Arius and his teaching and issued a creed to safeguard orthodox Christian belief. This creed states that the Son is homoousion to Patri (“of one substance with the Father”), thus declaring him to be all that the Father is: he is completely divine. In fact, however, this was only the beginning of a long-protracted dispute. (Encyclopedia Britannica: Article – Arianism)*

This Arian controversy was really the focal issue which led to the formal adoption of a trinitarian creed by the Roman Catholic Church. The definitive statement was drafted at the Council of Nicaea in 325 AD where the writings and teachings of Arius were condemned and the view of God promoted by the other side was adopted as the orthodox Christian position. However, as we will see from the following quotes, the view finally accepted was not adopted solely on the basis of its faithfulness to Scripture. The men involved in making the final decision had other factors influencing their beliefs.

#### PLATO’S INFLUENCE

*In his theological interpretation of the idea of God, Arius was interested in maintaining a formal understanding of the oneness of God. In defense of the oneness of God, he was obliged to dispute the sameness of essence of the Son and the Holy Spirit with God the Father, as stressed by the theologians of the Neoplatonically influenced Alexandrian school. From the outset, the controversy between both parties took place upon the common basis of*

*the Neoplatonic concept of substance, which was foreign to the New Testament itself. It is no wonder that the continuation of the dispute on the basis of the metaphysics of substance likewise led to concepts that have no foundation in the New Testament—such as the question of the sameness of essence (homoousia) or similarity of essence (homoiousia) of the divine persons. (Encyclopedia Britannica: Article – Christianity)*

As we can see, the proponents of the view which was finally accepted as orthodox, and which is the accepted view today, were influenced by the teachings of the Greek philosopher, Plato. They belonged to the “neoplatonically influenced Alexandrian school.”

The French *Nouveau Dictionnaire Universel* (New Universal Dictionary) says of Plato’s influence:

*“The Platonic trinity, itself merely a rearrangement of older trinities dating back to earlier peoples, appears to be the rational philosophic trinity of attributes that gave birth to the three hypostases or divine persons taught by the Christian churches. . . . This Greek philosopher’s conception of the divine trinity... can be found in all the ancient [pagan] religions.”*

The *New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge* shows the influence of this Greek philosophy:



*“The doctrines of the Logos and the Trinity received their shape from Greek Fathers, who... were much influenced, directly or indirectly, by the Platonic philosophy... That errors and corruptions crept into the Church from this source can not be denied.”*

The Church of the First Three Centuries says:

*“The doctrine of the Trinity was of gradual and comparatively late formation; ... it had its origin in a source entirely foreign from that of the Jewish and Christian Scriptures; ... it grew up, and was ingrafted on Christianity, through the hands of the Platonizing Fathers.”*

Please read the following quote from the Encyclopedia Britannica carefully. Consider the issues as they are stated.



There is a lot of truth there, but a few misconceptions completely distorts the truth.

**The basic concern of Arius was and remained disputing the oneness of essence of the Son and the Holy Spirit with God the Father, in order to preserve the oneness of God. The Son, thus, became a “second God, under God the Father”—i.e., he is God only in a figurative sense, for he belongs on the side of the creatures, even if at their highest summit. Here Arius joined an older tradition of Christology, which had already played a role in Rome in the early 2nd century—namely, the so-called angel-Christology. The descent of the Son to Earth was understood as the de-**

**scend to Earth of the highest prince of the angels, who became man in Jesus Christ; he is to some extent identified with the angel prince Michael. In the old angel-Christology the concern is already expressed to preserve the oneness of God, the inviolable distinguishing mark of the Jewish and Christian faiths over against all paganism. The Son is not himself God, but as the highest of the created spiritual beings he is moved as close as possible to God. Arius joined this tradition with the same aim—i.e., defending the idea of the oneness of the Christian concept of God against all reproaches that Christianity introduces a new, more sublime form of polytheism ....**

*The main speaker for church orthodoxy was Athanasius of Alexandria, for whom the point of departure was not a philosophical-speculative principle but rather the reality of redemption, the certainty of salvation. The redemption of humanity from sin and death is only then guaranteed if Christ is total God and total human being,...*

*The final dogmatic formulation of the Trinitarian doctrine in the so-called Athanasian Creed (c. 500), *una substantia—tres personae* (“one substance—three persons”), reached back to the formulation of Tertullian. In practical terms it meant a compromise in that it held fast to both basic ideas of Christian revelation—the oneness of God and divine self-revelation in the figures of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit—without rationalizing the mystery itself... (Encyclopedia Britannica: Article – Christianity)*

Why, you may ask, did it have to become a question of, “was He creature, or was He God?” Why wasn’t the plain, biblical middle ground taken? He was not a creature. He was the divine SON of God! Again we find an answer in the Encyclopedia Britannica:

*From the outset, the controversy between both parties took place upon the common basis of the Neoplatonic concept of substance, which was foreign to the New Testament itself. It is no wonder that the continuation of the*

*dispute on the basis of the metaphysics of substance likewise led to concepts that have no foundation in the New Testament—such as the question of the sameness of essence (homoousia) or similarity of essence (homoiousia) of the divine persons. (Encyclopedia Britannica: Article – Christianity)*

The argument was based on philosophical concepts, not on the word of God. However, if one slight adjustment was made to Arius’ teaching, it would have been perfectly in harmony with Scripture. All that was needed was the correction that Jesus was not a created Being, but was the begotten Son of God, thus being fully divine and so fully able to effect man’s salvation from sin.

Please note that even though the council formally declared that Jesus was “begotten, not made,” the statement that He was of the “same being” as the Father made a mockery of the term begotten. Since He was of the same substance, of the same being, then He could not have been the Son of God in any understandable sense. Arius was closer in saying that Father and Son were of “similar” but not the “same” substance.

This then, is the root of the Trinitarian belief. This is how it made its way into the teachings of Christianity. From this beginning the doctrine of the Trinity has steadily and relentlessly insinuated itself into the beliefs of nearly all of Christendom so that today, there is scarcely a Christian group which is not infected with its insidious poison in one way or another. Learned theologians refer to it as one of the “eternal verities” of the Christian faith (*see Movement of Destiny - p.35,36*). So powerfully has it permeated the thinking of men that a failure to accept it will result in a religious group being instantly labeled as a cult.

Yet, the truth is overwhelmingly plain to those who are willing to honestly examine the evidence. God help us to be true to our consciences. “All truth is safe and nothing else is safe.” May we be faithful to it, regardless of tradition and popular opinion.





# Is the Gospel Trinity - based?

By Colin Gyles

Is the gospel based on a concept of God as a Trinity? A brief look at the gospel and its implications on the one hand and the Trinity and its implications on the other hand should provide a basis for a reasonable answer to this question.

First consider the gospel. If the Christian gospel were to be summarized in a single Bible verse, that verse is universally acknowledged to be 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.'

From the gospel the following realities are brought to view:

(1) A God who loves (2) A God who can and does have a Son (3) A Son who was begotten (4) A Son who could be and was given (5) A Son who could and did die. By God giving His Son is understood that God gave His Son to die wherein humanity should have died. (6) The believer who is most precious and dearly loved. Such love elicited from God the sacrifice of His only begotten Son and elicited from the Son of God the unselfish sacrifice of himself - a double sacrifice of Father and Son.

Next consider the Trinity. The Trinity teaches that there is one God; and that one God is Trinity - Father, Son, Holy Spirit. A primary supporting tenet is that Father, Son and Holy Spirit are absolutely (in every sense) co-equal persons.

From the Trinity the following implications are evident:

(I) The Father-Son relationship is not literal. To make the Son absolutely co-equal with His Father eliminates all possibility of the one being begotten of the other. That which is presented to humanity as the measure of God's love for us - namely the sacrifice of His only begotten Son for our sakes is all but nullified if Jesus is not truly and literally the begotten Son of God.

(2) Jesus did not truly die. If Jesus is absolutely co-equal with "the blessed and only Potentate Who only hath immortality" (1 Tim. 6:15,16), who absolutely cannot die, then Jesus did not truly die, but continued to live on some different plane while appearing to be dead. This would make all our professions about death and resurrection of Christ mere vanity and illusion.

The Trinity denies the most fundamental tenets of the gospel and therefore cannot be reasonably held as a foundation on which the gospel is based. The biblical basis of the gospel is that Jesus is the Son of God (Matt. 16:16-18).

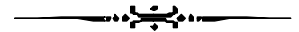
Finally, the identity of the Holy Spirit will be established. Unlike the Trinity concept which holds the Holy Spirit as a co-equal person who is distinct from Christ, the Bible identifies the Holy Spirit as the glorified manifestation in which Jesus would return to be with His followers.

The Greek word (Parakletos) which is translated Comforter (John 14:16) is the same Greek word (Parakletos) which is translated Advocate (1 John 2:1). Thus, the one who is the Comforter is the same one who is our Advocate who promised "I am with you always, even unto the end of the world" (Matt. 28:20) and is the same one who offers to live in human hearts, saying "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock" (Rev. 3:20). Accordingly, Jesus said "I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you." (John 14:18).

Cumbered by the form of humanity, Jesus could not be at more than one place at the same time. He first had to be glorified and thus enabled to divest himself of the form of humanity. This is why He said that the Holy Spirit could not come if He did not go away (John 16:7) and it was declared that "the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified" (John 7:39). Jesus prayed "O, Father glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was." John 17:5. The Holy Spirit is really the glory of the Father which is given to the Son and through the Son communicated to believers. Jesus promised another Comforter because it was in another manifestation that He

would return to offer further comfort.

Thus, in yet another instance the trinity concept is contrary to the gospel since it denies that Jesus is Himself the Comforter. But most fundamentally, it denies that Jesus is truly the Son of God and that Jesus truly died. The gospel is therefore not based on a concept of God as a Trinity, but rather on the concept of one Supreme Being who has a divine Son. May each professed Christian worship God in accordance with the revelation that He has given of Himself because "this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." John 17:3.



*This article was contributed by Colin Gyles. You may contact Colin by writing to him at: **God's Love, P.O. Box 542, Kingston 10, Jamaica W.I.***

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## Once To Every Man And Nation

Once To Every Man And Nation comes the moment to decide,  
In the strife of truth with falsehood,  
for the good or evil side;  
Some great cause, God's new Messiah,  
offering each the bloom or blight,  
And the choice goes by forever  
'Twixt that darkness and that light.

Then to side with truth is noble  
when we share her wretched crust,  
Ere her cause bring fame and profit,  
and 'tis prosperous to be just;  
Then it is the brave man chooses,  
while the coward stands aside,  
Till the multitude make virtue  
of the faith they had denied.

By the light of burning martyrs,  
Christ, Thy bleeding feet we track,  
Toiling up new Calvaries ever  
with the cross that turns not back;  
New occasions teach new duties,  
time makes ancient good uncouth;  
They must upward still and onward,  
who would keep abreast of truth.

Though the cause of evil prosper,  
yet 'tis truth alone is strong;  
Though her portion be the scaffold,  
and upon the throne be wrong;  
Yet that scaffold sways the future,  
and behind the dim unknown,  
Standeth God within the shadow,  
keeping watch above His own.

*James Russell Lowell*

*December 1999*

# TRINITARIAN CONFUSION

Sometime ago someone emailed me a copy of the following article. This article was actually taken from a book written on the subject of the Trinity, and in this article the author attempts to explain the Trinity. We have reprinted the article here, because it brings out some of the inconsistencies of the doctrine and illustrates the illogical arguments which must be used when one attempts to justify the doctrine of a Trinitarian God. Ironically this article was written by a man named (of all things) James White!! We have taken the liberty of numbering the paragraphs for easy reference.

## A Brief Definition of the Trinity

by James White

1. I know that one of the most oft-repeated questions I have dealt with is, "How does one explain, or even understand, the doctrine of the Trinity?" Indeed, few topics are made such a football by various groups that, normally, claim to be the "only" real religion, and who prey upon Christians as "convert fodder." Be that as it may, when the Christian is faced with a question regarding the Trinity, how might it best be explained?
2. For me, I know that simplifying the doctrine to its most basic elements has been very important and very useful. When we reduce the discussion to the three clear Biblical teachings that underlie the Trinity, we can move our discussion from the abstract to the concrete Biblical data, and can help those involved in false religions to recognize which of the Biblical teachings it is denying.
3. We must first remember that very few have a good idea of what the Trinity is in the first place - hence, accuracy in definition will be very important. The doctrine of the Trinity is simply that there is one eternal being of God - indivisible, infinite. This one being of God is shared by three co-equal, co-eternal persons, the Father, the Son, and the Spirit.
4. It is necessary here to distinguish between the terms "being" and "person." It would be a contradiction, obviously, to say that there are three beings within one being, or three persons within one person. So what is the difference? We clearly recognize the difference between being and person every day. We recognize what something is, yet we also recognize individuals within a classification. For example, we speak of the "being" of man—human being. A rock has "being"—the being of a rock, as does a cat, a dog, etc. Yet, we also know that there are personal attributes as well. That is, we recognize both "what" and "who" when we talk about a person.
5. The Bible tells us there are three classifications of personal beings—God, man, and angels. What is personality? The ability to have emotion, will, to express oneself. Rocks cannot speak. Cats cannot think of themselves over against others, and, say, work for the common good of "catkind." Hence, we are saying that there is one eternal, infinite being of God, shared

fully and completely by three persons, Father, Son and Spirit. One what, three whos.

6. NOTE: We are not saying that the Father is the Son, or the Son the Spirit, or the Spirit the Father. It is very common for people to misunderstand the doctrine as to mean that we are saying Jesus is the Father. The doctrine of the Trinity does not in any way say this.

7. The three Biblical doctrines that flow directly into the river that is the Trinity are as follows:

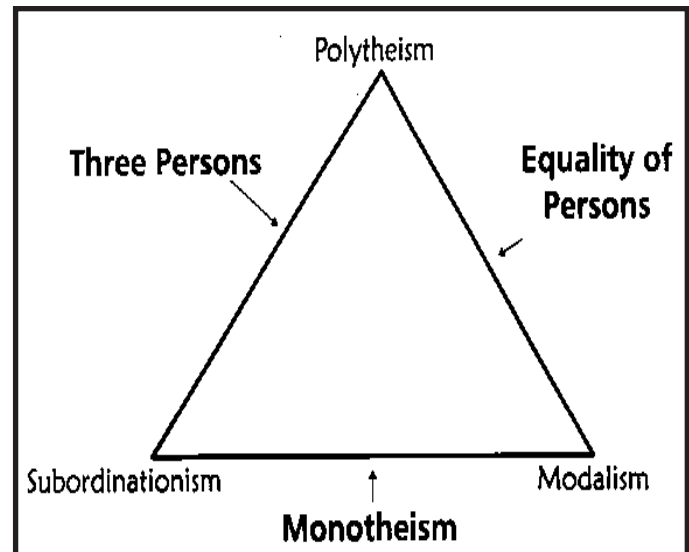
1) There is one and only one God, eternal, immutable.

2) There are three eternal Persons described in Scripture - the Father, the Son, and the Spirit.

These Persons are never identified with one another - that is, they are carefully differentiated as Persons.

3) The Father, the Son, and the Spirit, are identified as being fully deity—that is, the Bible teaches the Deity of Christ and the Deity of the Holy Spirit.

One could possibly represent this as follows:



8. The three sides of the triangle represent the three Biblical doctrines, as labeled. When one denies any of these three teachings, the other two sides point to the result. Hence, if one denies that there are Three Persons, one is left with the two sides of Full Equality and One God, resulting in the "Oneness" teaching of the United Pentecostal Church and others. If one denies Fully Equality, one is left with Three Persons and One God, resulting in "subordinationism" as seen in Jehovah's Witnesses, the Way International, etc. (though to be perfectly accurate the Witnesses deny all three of the sides in some way—they deny Full Equality (i.e., Jesus is Michael the Arch-



angel), Three Persons (the Holy Spirit is an impersonal, active “force” like electricity) and One God (they say Jesus is “a god”—a lesser divinity than Yahweh; hence they are in reality not monotheists but henotheists). And, if one denies One God, one is left with polytheism, the belief in many gods, as seen clearly in the Mormon Church, the most polytheistic religion I have encountered.

Hopefully these brief thoughts will be of help to you as you “grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

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### *Our Comments on The Article*

The first illogical, false and deceptive thing this writer tries to do is to distort the meaning of the word, “being”. He says in paragraph 3 that there is one “being of God” shared by three persons. Here He means a classification of being, or a **kind** of being. However, He tries to make the word “being”, which clearly refers to an individual, refer to more than one. To every individual of a certain kind. In paragraph 4 he continues to build on this false definition. He says, “we speak of the ‘being’ of man—human being. A rock has ‘being’—the being of a rock, as does a cat, a dog, etc.” When we refer to human being, are we referring to all humanity? The “being” of all mankind? Or are we referring to an individual? Is the word “being” a collective noun, meaning a group of persons, or does it mean a single entity? Of course it means one! If we referred to more than one, we would say, “human **beings!** Because a being is an **individual**. More than one individual are **beings**. Now this man tries to give the word, being, a different meaning, but it does not fit. If we accept this man’s definition then when we say human being, we would be referring to all humans! However, if “human being” means one individual, then, “divine being” must also refer to one individual.

This is clearly the way the word “God” is used in Scripture. Not as a collective noun, referring to a classification of being, but rather as the personal name of an individual Being who, over and over is referred to as “He.” A single person. Not a group, a committee or an agency.

In paragraph 5 he again tries to pull the wool over our eyes when he says, “ the Bible tells us there are three classifications of personal beings .... God, man and angels. This is deliberate deception. If we are speaking of classifications, we must, to be consistent say, “*godkind (or divinity), mankind (or humanity) and angelkind*. If we are speaking of several, then we must say, “*gods, men and angels*.” If we say “*God, man and angel (not angels)*” then we are clearly referring to individuals. Sometimes we do use the word *man* in a generic way, to refer to mankind. However, it is clearly understood that this is not the common usage of the word, and that when it is used in this way, it actually means mankind. The same thing applies to the words *God* and *angel*. They can also be used in the generic sense, but this is not the common usage of the words and it certainly is not the way the word *God* is used in the Scriptures except in one or two instances (John 1:1). In the vast majority of cases the word *God* clearly and unarguably refers to a single individual who is referred to as *He*, rather than *them*.

By this definition, when we say there is only one God, what we mean is that there is only one kind of being who may be

called God. Not that there is one individual. The problem is that every false, polytheistic religion could agree with that, because even the heathen believe in gods who are of a different nature than men. They believe that their gods are beings who are of a different kind than men. This does not mean that they believe in only one god, even though they may believe in one kind of god. The fact that they believe in several individuals within their concept of godkind, makes them polytheists and sets them in opposition to the clear biblical truth, “the Lord thy God is one Lord.” The same applies to this teaching. One kind of being called God, but several persons with the title is polytheism, even if we give it the title of Christian.

The logical conclusion of this warped reasoning is found in the last sentence of paragraph 5 where he refers to God as a “what,” while the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are “whos.” It hardly needs to be said that this kind of garbage is far removed from the simple Biblical truth that God is an individual person, our Father. A *He*, not a *what*.

In paragraph 7 under subsection 2, again we have a glaring untruth to catch and deceive the unwary. It says, “These Persons are never identified with one another - that is, they are carefully differentiated as Persons.” Is this true? It is true where the Father and His Son are concerned. They are never identified with each other. They are very clearly two distinct and separate persons with one being God, and the other His Son. But what about the Holy spirit? What do the following quotes mean?

*(Eph 4:4) There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling;*

*(2 Cor 3:17) Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.*

*(John 14:16-18) And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever .... I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you.*

*(John 17:23) I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one...*

Finally, the diagram: By using one untruth and one half-truth, the author has come up with a convenient, but very false picture which is only a clever device for illustrating a falsehood. The three sides are supposed to represent three “biblical truths. However, the Bible does not teach “three persons,” as one side indicates. Furthermore, the other side which reads, “equality of persons,” needs a modification. The Father and Son are equal in nature and character as the Scriptures clearly teach. However, they are not equal in authority as the Scriptures also clearly teach. Hence, subordinationism (if this means the Son is subject to the Father) is true. Also, since the Father comes to us in the form, or the “mode” of the Holy Spirit, then this is also true as far as the identity of the Holy Spirit is concerned.

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*All who love not the light must hate him who is continually labouring to pour it upon them.*

*Wesley*

## **Things Don't Change Much**

Two extracts from the Journal of John Wesley

### ***Encounter With a "Churchman"***

Between Doncaster and Epworth I overtook one who immediately accosted me with so many and so impertinent questions that I was quite amazed. In the midst of some of them concerning my travels and my journey, I interrupted him and asked, "are you aware that we are on a longer journey; that we are travelling towards eternity?" He replied instantly, "oh I find you! I find you! I know where you are! Is not your name Wesley? Tis pity! Tis a great pity! why could not your father's reli-

gion serve you? Why must you have a new religion?" I was going to reply, but he cut me short by crying out in triumph, "I am a Christian! I am a Christian! I am a churchman! I am a churchman! I am none of your culamites;" as plainly as he could speak; for he was so drunk he could but just keep his seat. Having then clearly won the day, or as his phrase was, "put them all down," he began kicking his horse on both sides and rode off as fast as he could.

### ***The Doctrine of Perfection***

The more I converse with the believers in Cornwall, the more I am convinced that they have sustained great loss for want of hearing the doctrine of Christian Perfection clearly and strongly enforced. I see, wherever this is not done, the believers grow dead and cold. Nor can this be prevented, but by keeping up in them an hourly expectation of being perfected in love. I say an hourly expectation; for to expect it at death, or some time hence, is much the same as not expecting it at all.

### ***With Open Face***

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