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Bible Doctrine IV

Radical, Biblical, Apostolic, Christianity



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BIBLE DOCTRINE IV

Word Biblical Commentary admits Matthew 28:19 is probably not Original.

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Some time ago, I came across a web site titled, A Closer Look at Matthew 28:19, claiming that the reading in Matthew 28:19, was probably, not original. The claims were quite interesting, but very difficult to verify, as most of the sources given are not very accessible to the average person. However, I recently purchased Word Biblical Commentary on CD-ROM and was amazed at what it had to say about this passage, especially since it was written and published by Trinitarians. It is also one of the most respected commentary series, which could still be called evangelical (that's with a very small "e") in print today. In fact, I recently examined three independent scholars' (D.A. Carson, Gordon Fee, & David R. Bauer) recommendations for commentaries on every book in the New Testament and Word Biblical Commentary received more recommendations than any other. This is what it says in its comment on Matthew 28:19:

The threefold name (at most, only an incipient Trinitarianism) in which, the baptism was to be performed, on the other hand, seems clearly to be a liturgical expansion of the evangelist consonant, with the practice of his day (thus Hubbard; cf. *Did.* 7.1). There is a good possibility that in its original form, as witnessed by the ante-Nicene Eusebian form, the text "make disciples *in my name*." (see Conybeare). This shorter reading preserves the symmetrical rhythm of the passage, whereas the triadic formula fits awkwardly into the structure, as one might expect, if it were an interpolation (see H.B. Green; cf. Howard; Hill [*IBS* 8 (1986) 54-63], on the other hand, argues for a concentric design with the triadic formula at its center). It is Kosmala, however, who has argued most effectively for the shorter reading, pointing to the central importance of the "name of Jesus," in early Christian preaching, the early practice of baptism in the name of Jesus, and the singular "in his name," with reference to the hope of the Gentiles in Isa. 42:4b, quoted by Matthew in 12:18-21. As Carson rightly

notes of our passage: “There is no evidence we have Jesus’ *ipsissima verba* here” (598). The narrative of Acts notes the use of the name only of “Jesus Christ,” in baptism (Acts 2:38, 8:16, 10:48; 19:5; cf. Romans 6:3; Gal. 3:27) or simply, “the Lord Jesus” (*tou kuriou Iesou*; Acts 8:16;19:5)....Schaberg’s theory that the triadic formula goes back to the triad in Dan. 7 (Ancient of Days, one like a son of man, and angels) remains an improbable speculation.

Footnotes

Hagner, D.A. 1998. Word Biblical Commentary: Matthew 14-28 (electronic ed.). Logos Library System; Word Biblical Commentary. Vol. 33B (Mt. 28:20). Word, Incorporated: Dallas.

A Collection of Evidence Against the Traditional Wording of Matthew 28:19

The Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics:

As to Matthew 28:19, it says: It is the central piece of evidence for the traditional (Trinitarian) view. If it were undisputed, this would, of course, be decisive, but its trustworthiness is impugned on grounds of textual criticism, literary criticism, and historical criticism. The same Encyclopedia further states that: “The obvious explanation of the silence of the New Testament on the triune name, and the use of another (JESUS NAME) formula in Acts and Paul, is that this other formula was the earlier, and **the triune formula is a later addition.**”

Edmund Schlink, The Doctrine of Baptism, page 28:

“The baptismal command in its Matthew 28:19 form cannot be the historical origin of Christian baptism. At the very least, it must be assumed, that the text has been transmitted in a form **expanded by the [Catholic] Church.**”

The Tyndale New Testament Commentaries, I, 275:

“It is often affirmed, that the words in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost are not the ipsissima verba [exact words] of Jesus, **later liturgical addition.**”

Wilhelm Bousset, Kyrios Christianity, page 295:

“The testimony for the wide distribution of the simple baptismal formula [in the Name of Jesus] down into the second century, is so overwhelming that even **in Matthew 28:19, the Trinitarian formula, was later inserted.**”

The Catholic Encyclopedia, II, page 263:

“The baptismal formula **was changed** from the name of Jesus Christ to the words

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, by the Catholic Church in the second century.”

Hastings Dictionary of the Bible 1963, page 1015:

“The Trinity.-...is not demonstrable by logic or by Scriptural proofs,...The term, Trias was first used by Theophilus of Antioch (c. AD 180),...(The term, Trinity) not found in Scripture...” “The chief Trinitarian text, in the NT, is the baptismal formula in Mt. 28:19...This late post-resurrection saying, not found in any other Gospel or anywhere else in the NT, has been viewed by some scholars, as an interpolation into Matthew. It has also been pointed out that the idea of making disciples, is continued in teaching them, so that the intervening reference to baptism with its Trinitarian formula, was perhaps, a later insertion into the saying. Finally, Eusebius’s form of the (ancient) text (“in my name,” rather than in the name of the Trinity) has had certain advocates. (Although the Trinitarian formula, is now found in the modern-day book of Matthew), this does not guarantee its source in the historical teaching of Jesus. It is doubtless better to view the (Trinitarian) formula as derived from early (Catholic) Christian, perhaps Syrian or Palestinian, baptismal usage (cf. Didache 7:1-4), and as a brief summary of the (Catholic) Church’s teaching about God, Christ, and the Spirit:...”

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The Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge:

“Jesus, however, cannot have given His disciples this Trinitarian order of baptism after His resurrection; for the New Testament knows only one baptism in the name of Jesus (Acts 2:38; 8:16; 10:43; 19:5; Gal. 3:27; Romans 6:3; 1 Cor. 1:13-15), which still occurs, even in the second and third centuries, while the Trinitarian formula occurs only in Matt. 28:19, and then only again (in the) Didache 7:1 and Justin, Apol. 1:61...Finally, the distinctly liturgical character of the formula...is strange; it was not the way of Jesus to make such formulas...**the formal authenticity of Matt. 28:19, must be disputed...**”
page 435.

The Jerusalem Bible, a scholarly Catholic work, states:

“It may be that this formula, (Triune Matthew 28:19), so far as the fullness of its expression is concerned, is a reflection of the (Man-made) liturgical usage, **established**

later, in the primitive (Catholic) community. It will be remembered, that Acts speaks of baptizing “in the name of Jesus,”...

The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, Vol. 4, page 2637,

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Under “Baptism,” says:

“Matthew 28:19, in particular only canonizes a **later ecclesiastical** situation, that its universalism is **contrary to the facts of early Christian history**, and its **Trinitarian formula (is) foreign to the mouth of Jesus.**”

New Revised Standard Version, says this about Matthew 28:19:

“Modern critics claim this formula is falsely ascribed to Jesus and that it represents **later** (Catholic) Church **tradition**, for **nowhere** in the book of Acts (or any other book of the Bible) is baptism performed with the name of the Trinity...”

James Moffett’s New Testament Translation:

In a footnote on page 64 about Matthew 28:19), he makes this statement: “It may be that this (Trinitarian) formula, so far as the fullness of its expression is concerned, is a reflection of the (Catholic) liturgical usage **established later** in the primitive (Catholic) community. **It will be remembered, that Acts speaks of baptizing, “in the name of Jesus, cf. Acts 1:5.”**

Tom Harpur:

Tom Harpur, former Religion Editor of the Toronto Star in his “For Christ’s sake,” page 103, informs us of these facts: “All, but the most conservative scholars agree, that at least the latter part of this command [Triune part of Matthew 28:19], **was inserted later**. The [Trinitarian] formula occurs nowhere else in the New Testament, and we know from the only evidence available [the rest of the New Testament] **that the earliest Church did not baptize people using these words** (“in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost”) **baptism** was “into” or “in” **the name of Jesus alone**. Thus, it is argued, that the verse originally read, “baptizing them in My Name” **and then was expanded** [changed] to work in the [later Catholic Trinitarian] dogma. In fact, the

first view put forward by German critical scholars, as well as the Unitarians in the nineteenth century, was stated as the accepted position of mainline scholarship, as long ago as 1919, when Peake's commentary was first published: "The Church of the first days (AD 33) did not observe this world-wide (Trinitarian) commandment, even if they knew it. The command to baptize into the threefold [Trinity] name, **is a late doctrinal expansion.**"

The Bible Commentary 1919, page 723:

Dr. Peake makes it clear that: "The command to baptize into the threefold name is a late doctrinal expansion. Instead of the words, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, we should probably read simply- **"into My Name."**

Theology of the New Testament:

By R. Bultmann, 1951, page 133, under Kerygma of the Hellenistic Church and the Sacraments. The historical fact that the verse Matthew 28:19, was altered is openly confessed to very plainly: "As to the rite of baptism, it was normally consummated as a bath, in which, the one receiving baptism, completely submerged, and if possible, in flowing water as the allusions of Acts 8:36, Heb. 10:22, Barn. 11:11, permit us to gather, and as Did. 7:1-3, specifically says. According to the last passage, [the Apocryphal Catholic Didache] suffices in case of the need if water is three times poured [false Catholic sprinkling doctrine] on the head. **"The one baptizing names, over the one being baptized, the name of the Lord Jesus Christ,"** later expanded, [changed] to the name of the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit."

Doctrine and Practice in the Early Church:

By Dr. Stuart G. Hall 1992, pages 20 and 21. Professor Stuart G. Hall, was the former Chair of Ecclesiastical History at King's College, London, England. Dr. Hall makes the factual statement, that Catholic Trinitarian Baptism was not the original form of Christian Baptism, rather the original was Jesus name baptism. "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit," **although those words were not used, as they**

later are, as a formula. Not all baptisms fitted this rule. Dr. Hall further states: “More common and perhaps more ancient, was the simple, “In the name of the Lord **Jesus**, or Jesus Christ.” This practice was known among Marcionites and Orthodox; it is certainly the subject of controversy in Rome and Africa, about 254, as the anonymous tract *De rebaptismate* (“On rebaptism”) shows.

The Beginnings of Christianity: The Acts of the Apostles, Volume 1, Prolegomena 1:

The Jewish Gentile, and Christian Backgrounds, by F. J. Foakes Jackson and Kirsopp Lake 1979 version, pages 335-337. “There is little doubt as to the sacramental nature of baptism by the middle of the first century in the circles represented by the Pauline Epistles, and it is indisputable in the second century. The problem, is whether it can in this (Trinitarian) form, be traced back to Jesus, and if not, what light is thrown upon its history by the analysis of the synoptic Gospels and Acts.

According to Catholic teaching, (traditional Trinitarian) baptism was instituted by Jesus. It is easy to see how necessary this was for the belief in sacramental regeneration. Mysteries, or sacraments, were always the institution of the lord of the cult; by them, and by them only, were its supernatural benefits obtained by the faithful. Nevertheless, if evidence counts for anything, few points in the problem of the Gospels are so clear as the improbability of this teaching.

The reason for this assertion, is the absence of any mention of Christian baptism in Mark, Q, or the third Gospel, and the suspicious nature of the account of its institution in Matthew 28:19: “Go ye into all the world, and make disciples of all Gentiles (nations), baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.” It is not even certain, whether this verse ought to be regarded as part of the genuine text of Matthew. No other text, indeed, is found in any extant manuscripts, in any language, but it is arguable that Justin Martyr, though he used the trine formula, did not find it in his text of the Gospels; Hermas seems to be unacquainted with it; the evidence of the *Didache* is ambiguous, and Eusebius habitually, though not invariably, quotes it in another form,

“Go ye into all the world and make disciples of all the Gentiles in My Name.”

No one acquainted with the facts of textual history and patristic evidence can doubt the tendency would have been to replace the Eusebian text (In My Name) by the ecclesiastical (Catholic Trinitarian) formula of baptism, so that transcriptional evidence is certainly on the side of the text, omitting baptism.

But, it is unnecessary to discuss this point at length, because even if the ordinary (modern Trinity) text of Matthew 28:19, be sound, it cannot represent the historical fact.

Would they have baptized, as Acts says that they did, and Paul seem to confirm the statement, in the name of the Lord Jesus, if the Lord Himself had commanded them to use the (Catholic Trinitarian) formula of the Church:? On every point, the evidence of Acts is convincing proof, that the (Catholic) tradition, embodied in Matthew 28:19, is a late (non-Scriptural Creed) and unhistorical.

Neither in the third Gospel, nor in Acts, is there any reference to the (Catholic Trinitarian) Matthaean tradition, nor any mention of the institution of (Catholic Trinitarian) Christian baptism. Nevertheless, a little later in the narrative, we find several references to baptism in water, in the name of the Lord Jesus, as part of recognized (Early) Christian practice. Thus, we are faced by the problem of a Christian rite, not directly ascribed to Jesus, but assumed to be a universal (and original) practice. That it was so, is confirmed by the Epistles, but the facts of importance are all contained in Acts.

Also, in the same book, on page 336, in the footnote number one, Professor Lake makes an astonishing discovery in the so-called Teaching or Didache. The Didache has an astonishing contradiction that is found in it. One passage refers to the necessity of baptism in the name of the Lord, which is Jesus, the other famous passage teaches a Trinitarian Baptism. Lake raises the probability, that the Apocryphal Didache or the early Catholic Church Manual, may have also been edited or changed, to promote the

later Trinitarian doctrine. It is a historical fact, that the Catholic Church, at one time, baptized its converts in the name of Jesus, but later changed to Trinity baptism.

“1. In the actual description of baptism in the Didache, the triune (Trinity) formula is used; in the instructions for the Eucharist (communion) the condition for admission is baptism in the name of the Lord. It is obvious, that in the case of an eleventh-century manuscript, the trine formula was almost certain to be inserted in the description of baptism, while the less usual formula, had a change of escaping notice when it was only used incidentally.”

**The Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C. 1923,
New Testament Studies, Number 5:**

The Lord’s Command To Baptize A Historical Critical Investigation. By Bernard Henry Cuneo, page 27. “The passages in Acts and the Letters of St. Paul. These passages seem to point to the earliest form, as baptism in the name of the Lord.” Also, we find, “Is it possible to reconcile these facts with the belief that Christ commanded His disciples to baptize in the trine form? Had Christ given such a command, it is urged, the Apostolic Church would have followed Him, and we should have some trace of this obedience in the New Testament. No such trace can be found. The only explanation of this silence, according to the anti-traditional view, is this, the short Christological (Jesus Name) formula was (the) original, and **the longer trine formula, was a later development.**”

A History of The Christian Church:

1953, by Williston Walker, former Professor of Ecclesiastical History at Yale University. On page 95, we see the historical facts again declared. “With the early disciples, generally baptism was “in the name of Jesus Christ.” There is no mention of baptism in the name of the Trinity in the New Testament, except in the command attributed to Christ, in Matthew 28:19. That text is early, (but, not the original), however. It underlies the Apostles’ Creed, and the practice recorded (or interpolated) in the Teaching, (or the Didache), and by Justin. The Christian leaders of the third century, retained the

recognition of the earlier form, and, in Rome at least, baptism in the name of Christ was deemed valid, if irregular, certainly from the time of Bishop Stephen (254-257).”

On page 61, Professor and Church historian Walker, reviles the true origin and purpose of Matthew 28:19. This Text is the first man-made Roman Catholic Creed, that was the prototype for the later Apocryphal Apostles’ Creed. Matthew 28:19, was invented along with the Apocryphal Apostles’ Creed to counter so-called heretics and Gnostics, that baptized in the name of Jesus Christ! Marcion, although somewhat mixed up in some of his doctrine, still baptized his converts the Biblical way, in the name of Jesus Christ. Matthew 28:19, is the first non-Biblical Roman Catholic Creed! The spurious Catholic text of Matthew 28:19, was invented to support the newer triune, Trinity doctrine. Therefore, Matthew 28:19, is not the “Great Commission of Jesus Christ.” Matthew 28:19, is the great Catholic hoax! Acts 2:38, Luke 24:47, and 1 Corinthians 6:11, give us the ancient original words and teaching of Jehovah/Jesus! Is it not also strange, that Matthew 28:19, is missing from the old manuscripts of Sinaiticus, Curetonianus, and Bobiensis?

“While the power of the episcopate and the significance of Churches of Apostolical (Catholic) foundation, was thus greatly enhanced, the Gnostic crisis saw a corresponding development of (man-made non-inspired spurious) creed, at least in the West. Some form of instruction before baptism, was common, by the middle of the second century. At Rome, this developed apparently between 150 and 175, and probably in opposition to Marcionite Gnosticism, into an explication of the baptismal formula of Matthew 28:19, the earliest known form of the so-called Apostles Creed.”

Catholic Cardinal, Joseph Ratzinger:

He makes this confession as to the origin of the chief Trinity text of Matthew 28:19. “The basic form of our (Matthew 28:19 Trinitarian) profession of faith, took shape during the course of the **second** and **third** centuries, in connection with the ceremony of baptism. So far, as its place of origin is concerned, the text (Matthew 28:19) came from the city of Rome.” The Trinity baptism

and text of Matthew 28:19, therefore, did not originate from the original Church, that started in Jerusalem around A.D. 33. It was rather, as the evidence proves, a later invention of Roman Catholicism, completely fabricated. Very few know about these historical facts.

“The Demonstratio Evangelica,” by Eusebius:

Eusebius was the Church historian and Bishop of Caesarea. On page 152, Eusebius quotes the early Book of Matthew, that he had in his library in Caesarea. According to this eyewitness of an unaltered Book of Matthew, that could have been the original book or the first copy of the original of Matthew. Eusebius informs us of Jesus’ actual Words to His disciples in the original text of Matthew 28:19: “With one Word and voice, He said to His disciples: “Go and make disciples of all nations **in My Name**, teaching them to observe all things, whatsoever I have commanded you.” That “Name” is Jesus.”

A Closer Look at Matthew 28:19

A Study in Textual Criticism

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Note From the Editor

This booklet is an edited reprint of a publication which was originally written in 1961 and titled, "*A Collection of the Evidence For and Against the Traditional Wording of the Baptismal Phrase in Matthew 28:19,*" written by Pastor A. Ploughman of Birmingham, England. It has been edited for readability and completeness. Pastor Ploughman's *original* work can be read in it's entirety by visiting the website of the [Jesus Messiah Fellowship](#). Copies of the original work are available there for a nominal price.

We are greatly indebted to Pastor Ploughman, who has now passed on, for his scholarly effort. He received the Holy Ghost in the 1914 Welsh revival, established 3 works in England, and invested his life's earnest into his writing about Matthew 28:19. His passion for exposing the fraud of early scribes continues to be a blessing to many.

The question of the authenticity of Matthew 28:19, is not a matter of how easily it can or cannot be explained within the context of any Churches doctrinal views. It is a matter of recovering *the very Words of our Lord*, remembering that His Word, and not our own, is eternal.

The presentation of facts in the book, I believe, is fair, to the point and extremely relevant to our faith. The lengths to which Pastor Ploughman went to support the conclusions drawn, may seem tedious to some, but for the serious student of the Word, it will only begin to whet the appetite for more personal exploration.

It has been said, "Study without reflection is useless, but reflection without study is dangerous." I hope then, that you will allow the facts contained in this booklet, to stimulate your mind, and resonate in your Spirit. You will be blessed!

Preface to the Second Edition

The importance of this subject is discussed, at length, in the last chapter of this booklet.

In more than fifty years as a student of the Bible, and an enquirer in the sphere of Biblical knowledge, I have not seen or heard of anything dealing with this question of the authenticity of Matthew 28:19, apart from articles and letters in periodicals and books, now out of print, and encyclopedias (which are inaccessible to most people).

This collection of information, is concerned with the *actual text* of Scripture, and not with any teaching, formal or otherwise, that arises as a result. However, in the chapter

dealing with internal evidence, regarding Matthew 28:19, doctrine will, of necessity, be a factor while exploring the genuineness of the text.

As a rule, teaching (or doctrine) is based on the text of Scripture. This body of evidence is not meant to discover what teaching to ascribe, to the text, but to discover *the actual text itself*.

Pastor A. Ploughman

January 1, 1962

Introduction

“Every Word of God is pure.” Proverbs 30:5

“Through thy precepts, I get understanding, therefore, I hate every false way.” Psalms 1:19:104.

Many have had difficulty, concerning the phraseology of Matthew 28:19, and have written to editors of periodicals, seeking answers. Most respondents, however, have merely glossed over the difficulty with quips, quotes, ideology, and exhortation. Of course, all of these have their place, but not at the expense of arriving at the truth.

The difficulty, left largely unanswered, surrounds the words, “*baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.*” This phrase has been questioned, not because of any certain doctrine it lends itself to, but, rather because of the early witnesses that attest to a different reading, and to the grammar and syntax of the words themselves.

Is the “name-phrase” of Matthew 28:19 genuine? Or is it, like the “three witnesses” of 1 John 5:7-8, a spurious addition, introduced into early manuscripts to bolster an

emerging doctrine? To understand the importance of this question, let us consider the words of noted nineteenth century Biblical scholar, F.C. Conybeare (1856-1924).

“Until the middle of the nineteenth century, the text of the “three witnesses” of 1 John 5:7-8, shared with Matthew 28:19, the onerous task of furnishing Scriptural evidence of the Trinity...(the spurious words added in 1 John)...are now abandoned by all authorities, except the Pope of Rome. By consequence, the entire weight of proving the Trinity, has of late, come to rest on Matthew 28:19.”

Perhaps the reason that serious scholarly efforts have not been made, to discover (or proclaim) the truth, is because to do so, would undermine the very foundation of traditional post-Nicene theology. After all, if indeed the titles, “Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,” were added, and were *not* the Words of our Lord, then what Scriptural authority do we have, for baptizing in any name, except the name of Jesus? The answer: *None whatsoever.*

However, what is important, is not what the implication of our inquiry might possibly be, but rather, that we might find *the truth*. To discover what words Matthew *actually wrote*, is the purpose and goal of this study.

We will begin, by discussing textual criticism, in general, and then apply those principles to our text, in question.

In the end, you will learn through tried and proven methods of textual criticism, what words were penned by Matthew, and what words were added, *by others*, to the sacred writ.

We would do well to begin, by remembering the strict warning, contained within the Scripture itself:

“Ye shall not add unto the Word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought

from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the Lord your God, which I command you.” Deuteronomy 4:2.

On Textual Criticism Generally

Textual Criticism, refers to the methodical and objective study of various documents, with the aim of retrieving the original form of the text, or at least, the form closest to the original.

As applied to the New Testament, this means selecting from the many variants contained in the manuscript tradition, the one which most likely represents, the primitive reading.

Most Bible Helps contain a brief description of the methods of Textual Criticism. For a brief synopsis, let us look to Swete, in the “Aids to the Student” in the Variorum Bible:

On Textual Criticism in general:

“The text of the New Testament, rests upon the combined testimony of streams of documentary evidence: extant manuscripts of the original Greek, ancient versions, and the ‘patristic’ quotations, i.e., passages by a succession of ancient Christian writers, known as “the fathers.”

Concerning Manuscript Evidence:

“The autographs (originals) of the New Testament Scriptures, were probably lost within a few years, after they were written. No early Christian writer appeals to them, as still existing...men...could not anticipate their importance to posterity.”

Concerning Early Versions:

“Next in importance to manuscripts as channels for the transmission of the text of the

Greek Testament, must be placed, the ancient Versions, which were made from Greek manuscripts, in most cases, older than any which we now possess. The Old Latin and Syriac Versions belong to the second century, and carry us back to the lifetime of some of the immediate successors of the Apostles.”

Concerning the Patristic Writings:

“So extensive, are the quotations of the New Testament in the Greek and Latin Christian writers of the first five centuries, that it would have been possible, in the event of all the manuscripts of the Canon, having perished, to recover nearly the whole of the text from this source alone...there remains a large number of instances, in which, patristic authority goes far to turn the scale in favor of a disputed reading, or against it.”

Using the above sources of textual criticism, and also with what is styled as *internal evidence*, we can, with great confidence, recover the true reading of our text. With regards to Matthew 28:19, the Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics (ERE, hereafter), has this to say:

“It is the central piece of evidence for the traditional view...if it were undisputed, this would, of course, be decisive, but it’s trustworthiness is impugned on the grounds of textual criticism, literary criticism, and historical criticism.” (Vol. 2, pg. 380, under “Baptism - Early Christian”).

Let us now employ these methods to discover the true reading of Matthew 28:19...

Evidence of the Manuscripts

If Greek Manuscripts of Matthew’s Gospel were our only source for establishing a reading of the text, then there would be no need for further study, as *all extant manuscripts* contain the name-phrase “baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.” Again, from the ERE:

“In all extant manuscripts...the text is found in the traditional form.”

However, it must be remembered, that we have no extant (currently known to exist) manuscripts that were written in the first, second, or even third centuries. There is a gap of *over three hundred years* between the actual writing of Matthew and our earliest manuscript copies.

It must also be remembered, that no single manuscript is free from textual error. Some have errors to themselves, and some *whole families* of manuscripts have the same errors. The textual critic, aims to reproduce from an examination of all the evidence, what was probably, the original words.

But, from the facts stated, it is within possibility, that all the existing manuscripts may have one or more textual errors, in common. That fact must be admitted, however, reluctantly.

Another fact that we have to face, is that during that time gap of three hundred years, false teaching thrived and developed into the Great Apostasy.

According to renowned textual critic, Dr. C. R. Gregory:

“The Greek manuscripts of the text of the New Testament, were often altered by the scribes, who put into them, the readings which were familiar to them, and which they held to be the right readings.”

How these changes were made, will be discussed further, in a later chapter. Another writer had this to say of the “weight” given to manuscript evidence:

“A great step forward is taken, when we propose to give manuscripts weight, not according to their age, but according to the age of the text which they contain. To

Tregelles, must be ascribed the honor of introducing this method of procedure, which he appropriately called, 'Comparative Criticism.' It is a truly scientific method, and leads us for the first time, to safe results. But, a little consideration will satisfy us that as an engine of criticism, this method is far from perfect. It will furnish us with a text that is demonstratively ancient, and this, as a step toward the true text, is a very important gain. It is something, to reach a text that is certainly older than the fourth century, that was current in the third or even the second century. But, this can be assumed to be autographic, *only if* we can demonstrate, that the text current in the second or third century, was an absolutely pure text. So far, from this, however, there is reason to believe, that the very grossest errors that have ever deformed the text, had entered it already *in the second century*. If our touchstone only reveals to us texts that are ancient, we cannot hope to obtain for our result, anything but an ancient text. What we wish, however, is not merely an ancient text, but the true text."

Of course, when the writer speaks of 'the grossest errors,' he is not speaking of errors of teaching, but as a textual critic, of errors in the text itself. Some of these textual corruptions occurred concurrently with corruptive teaching, in the early Church. This reality, will be dealt with later, in this study.

Where are the Earliest Manuscripts?

The fact that we have no copies of the Scriptures that date any earlier than the fourth century, naturally begs the question, "What happened to the earliest manuscripts?" The following quotes serve in no small way, to answer that question:

"Diocletian, in 303 A.D., ordered all of the sacred books to be burnt, though enough survived to transmit the text." -Swete in Variorum "Aids to the Student."

One reason why no early manuscripts have been discovered, is that they were, when found, burned by the persecutors of the early Church, before Christianity became a "state" religion, in the time of Constantine. Eusebius, who tended the great library at

Caesarea, wrote:

“I saw, with my own eyes, the houses of prayer thrown down and razed to their foundations, and the inspired and sacred Scriptures, consigned to the fire, in the open market place.”

Dr. Wescott, in his “General Survey of the History of the Canon of the New Testament.” wrote (pg. 383):

“Among such scenes, he could not fail to learn, what books men held to be more precious than their lives.”

Indeed, even the great library, at Caesarea, suffered from this time of persecution. According to Jerome, quoted in “The Principle Uncial Manuscripts of the New Testament,” by Hatch:

“About A.D., 350, two priests, Acacius and Euzoius, undertook the task of restoring the damaged library of Pamphilus, at Caesarea, and replaced the old papyrus books with vellum copies.” -Jerome Ep. xxxiv.

From our first method of inquiry, we can thus deduce, the following facts:

1. All known manuscripts support the trine name-phrase found in Matthew 28:19.
2. Early copyists made changes to the text, some in error, some on purpose, but changes none-the-less. Textual Criticism, for the most part, exposes these changes, quite readily.
3. It is possible, that the earliest corruptions of Scripture have been preserved in all extant manuscript evidence.

4. The goal of Textual Criticism, is not merely, to find the *earliest* text, but to find the *actual* text.

5. Manuscripts dating before the fourth century, do not exist in large part, because of the widespread persecution of the early Church and the consequent destruction of sacred writings.

Because of the above facts, manuscript evidence, alone, will not suffice to reveal the true text in our study. We must now turn to the second body of evidence to be considered, *the Early Versions*.

Evidence of the Versions

As with the evidence in manuscripts, all extant Versions which contain the end of Matthew, contain the Threefold Name.

But of course, in the arena of Textual Criticism, there is more to be considered, than what is present in a document. One must also take into consideration, what is absent.

We quote again, from the ERE (Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics)

“In all extant versions, the text is found in the traditional form...though it must be remembered, that the best manuscripts, both of the African Old Latin and of the Old Syriac Versions, are defective, at this point.”

F. C. Conybeare further elaborates:

“In the only codices, which would be even likely to preserve an older reading, namely the Sinaitic Syriac and the oldest Latin Manuscript, the pages are gone, which contained the end of Matthew.”

So then, though all early Versions contain the traditional name-phrase of Matthew 28:19, the earliest of these Versions, do not contain the verse at all. And curiously, not because of omission, but because of removal!

Granted, we cannot be sure why these precious pages were destroyed, but for the sake of our study, we are now compelled to consult our next authority, the “Patristic Writings.”

Evidence of Early Writings

“In the course of my reading, I have been able to substantiate these doubts of the authenticity of the text of Matthew 28:19, by adducing patristic evidence against it, so weighty, that in the future, the most conservative of divines will shrink from resting on it, any dogmatic fabric at all, while the more enlightened, will discard it as completely as they have its fellow-text of the ‘Three Witnesses.’” - F.C. Conybeare, in the Hibbert Journal.

How true is this? What are the facts? While no manuscript from the first three centuries is in existence, we do have the writings of at least two men who did actually possess, or had access to, manuscripts much earlier than our earliest.

There are also others, who quoted Matthew 28:19, whose written works we now possess, that date much earlier than our best manuscript copies.

Who were these men? When did they write? Were they reliable and exact? How did they quote Matthew 28:19? These are all questions, that must now, be answered.

In the pages ahead, we will consider evidence from the following men, either by direct quotation from their writings, or indirectly, through the writings of their contemporaries.

1) Eusebius of Caesarea, 2) The unknown author of De Rebaptismate, 3) Origen, 4) Clement of Alexandria, 5) Justin Martyr, 6) Macedonius, 7) Eunomius, and 8)

Aphraates.

Before we turn to the witness of these early writers, let it be *emphatically* stated, that if the question under consideration were one of theology, the evidence of these “fathers” would be *of no value whatsoever*.

Our doctrine, must be obtained, from the pure Word of God alone, and not from any other source. These so-called “fathers,” lived in an age of theological darkness and rampant heresy. Their testimony is valuable, only because it provides a witness to manuscripts of the Scripture, much older than our current copies.

Therefore, our search through their writings, is not to establish any doctrine or theology, but to find an early witness, to the verse in question.

Eusebius of Caesarea

Our first witness will be Eusebius of Caesarea, also know as, Eusebius Pamphili. He was born around 270 A.D., and died around 340 A.D. He lived in times of gross Spiritual darkness, was a Trinitarian, and in later life, assisted in the preparation of the Nicene Creed.

Regarding our inquiry into Matthew 28:19, Eusebius will serve, as our key witness. Therefore, to establish his veracity as a credible witness, let us consider the following quotes:

Robert Roberts, in Good Company, vol. III, pg. 10

“Eusebius of Caesarea, to whom we are indebted, for the preservation of so many contemporary works of antiquity, many of which, would have perished, had he not collected and edited them.”

E. K., in the Christadelphian Monatshefte, Aug. 1923

“Eusebius, the greatest Greek teacher of the Church and most learned theologian of his time...worked untiringly, for the acceptance of the pure Word of the New Testament, as it came from the Apostles...Eusebius...relies throughout only, upon ancient manuscripts, and always openly confesses the truth, when he cannot find sufficient testimony.”

Mosheim, in an editorial footnote:

“Eusebius Pamphili, Bishop of Caesarea in Palestine, a man of vast reading and erudition, and one who has acquired immortal fame, by his labors in ecclesiastical history, and in other branches of theological learning. Chapter 2, 9...Till about 40 years of age, he lived in great intimacy with the martyr, Pamphilus, a learned and devout man of Caesarea, and founder of an extensive library there, from which, Eusebius derived his vast store of learning.”

Dr. Westcott, in “General Survey,” page 108.

“Eusebius, to whose zeal we owe most of what is known of the history of the New Testament.”

Peake Bible Commentary, page 596.

“The most important writer in the first quarter of the fourth century, was Eusebius of Caesarea...Eusebius was a man of little originality or independent judgment. But he was widely read in the Greek Christian literature of the second and third centuries, the bulk of which, has now irretrievably perished, and subsequent ages owe a deep debt to his honest, if some-what confused, and at times, not a little prejudiced, erudition.”

Dictionary of Christian Biography and Literature:

“Some hundred works, several of them very lengthy, are either directly cited or referred to as having been read by Eusebius. In many instances, he would read an entire treatise for the sake of one or two historical notices, and must have searched many others without finding anything to serve his purpose.

Under the head, the most vital question is the sincerity of Eusebius. Did he tamper with the materials or not? The sarcasm of Gibbon (*Decline and Fall*, c. xvi) is well known...The passages to which Gibbon refers, do not bear out his imputation...Eusebius contents himself with condemning these sins...in general terms, without entering into details...but, it leaves no imputation on his honesty.”

Mosheim, again in an editorial note

“Eusebius was an impartial historian, and had access to the best helps for composing a correct history, which his age afforded.”

F. C. Conybeare, in the *Hibbert Journal*, October, 1902

“Of the patristic witnesses to the text of the New Testament, as it stood in the Greek Manuscripts from about 300-340 A.D., none is so important as Eusebius of Caesarea, for he lived in the greatest Christian Library of that age, that namely, which Origen and Pamphilus had collected. It is no exaggeration to say from this single collection of manuscripts, at Caesarea, derives the larger part of the surviving ante-Nicene literature. In his Library, Eusebius must have habitually handled codices of the Gospels older by two hundred years, than the earliest of the great uncials, that we have now in our libraries.”

Having considered the honesty, ability, and opportunity of Eusebius as a witness to the New Testament text, let us now move on to what evidence he presents concerning Matthew.

The Evidence of Eusebius

According to the editor of the Christadelphian Monatshefte, Eusebius among his many other writings, compiled a collection of the corrupted texts of the Holy Scriptures, and “the most serious of all the falsifications denounced by him, is without doubt, the traditional reading of Matthew 28:19.”

Further inquiry has failed to pinpoint the exact compilation referred to, as Ludwig Knupfer, the Editor, has since written, “through events of war, I have lost all of my files and other materials connected with the magazine.” But, various authorities mention a work entitled, ‘Discrepancies in the Gospels,’ and another work entitled, “The Concluding Sections of the Gospels.”

According to Conybeare:

“Eusebius cites this text (Matt. 28:19) again and again, in works written between 300 and 336, namely in his long commentaries on the Psalms, on Isaiah, his *Demonstratio Evangelica*, his *Theophany* ...in his famous history of the Church, and in his panegyric of the Emperor Constantine. I have, after a moderate search in these works of Eusebius, found eighteen citations of Matthew 28:19, and always in the following form:

‘Go ye and make disciples of all the nations *in My name*, teaching them to observe all

things, whatsoever I commanded you.’

I have collected all these passages, except one, which is in a catena published by Mai in a German magazine, the *Zeitschrift fur die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft*, edited by Dr. Erwin Preuschen in Darmstadt, in 1901. And Eusebius is not content, merely to cite the verse in this form, but he more than once, comments on it in such a way, as to show how much he set store by the words, ‘in my name.’ Thus, in his *Demonstratio Evangelica*, he writes thus, (col. 240, p. 136):

‘For he did not enjoin them “to make disciples of all the nations” simply and without qualification, but with the essential addition “in His name.” For so great, was the virtue attaching to his appellation that the Apostle says, “God bestowed on Him, the name above every name, that in the name of Jesus, every knee shall bow of things in heaven and on earth and under the earth.” It was right, therefore, that He should emphasize the virtue of the power residing in His name, but hidden from the many, and therefore say to His Apostles, “Go ye, and make disciples of all the nations in My name.”’

Conybeare proceeds, in Hibbert Journal, 1902:

“It is evident, that this was the text found by Eusebius, in the very ancient codices collected fifty to a hundred and fifty years before his birth, by his great predecessors. Of any other form of text, he had never heard and knew nothing, until he had visited Constantinople and attended the Council of Nice. Then, in two controversial works, written in his extreme old age, and entitled, the one ‘Against Marcellus of Ancyra,’ and the other ‘About the Theology of the Church,’ he used the common reading. One other writing of his also contains it, namely a letter written after the Council of Nice was over, to his seer of Caesarea.”

In his ‘Textual Criticism of the New Testament,’ Conybeare writes:

“It is clear therefore, that of the manuscripts which Eusebius inherited from his predecessor, Pamphilus, at Caesarea in Palestine, some at least, preserved the original reading, in which there was no mention, either of baptism or of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. It has been conjectured by Dr. Davidson, Dr. Martineau, by the Dean of Westminster, and by Prof. Harnack (to mention, but a few names of the many), that

here the received text, could not contain the very Words of Jesus - this long before anyone except Dr. Burgon, who kept the discovery to himself, had noticed the Eusebian form of the reading.”

An objection was raised by Dr. Chase, Bishop of Ely, who argued that Eusebius indeed, found *the traditional text* in his manuscripts, but substituted the shorter formula in his works, for fear of vulgarizing and divulging the sacred Trinitarian formula.

It is interesting to find a modern Bishop, reviving the very argument used 150 years earlier, in support of the forged text of 1 John 5:7-8. According to Porson (in a preface to his Letters):

“Bengel...allowed that the words (The Three Witnesses) were in no genuine manuscripts...Surely then, the verse is spurious! No! this learned man finds a way of escape. ‘The passage was of so sublime and mysterious a nature, that the secret discipline of the Church, withdrew it from the public books, till it was gradually lost.’ Under what a lack of evidence must a critic labor, who resorts to such an argument!?”

Conybeare continues, refuting the argument of the Bishop of Ely:

“It is sufficient answer to point out, that Eusebius’ argument, when he cites the text, involves the text, ‘in My name.’ For, he asks, ‘in whose name?’ and answers, that it was the name spoken of, by Paul, in his Epistle to the Philippians 2:10.”

Finally, the Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics states:

“The facts are, in summary, that Eusebius quotes Matthew 28:19, twenty-one times, either omitting everything between ‘nations’ and ‘teaching,’ or in the form ‘make disciples of all the nations in My name,’ the latter form, being the more frequent.”

Having considered the evidence of Eusebius, let us now look at the other early writers

on our 'witness list.'

Other Early Writings

The Author of De Rabaptismate

"The anonymous author of De Rabaptismate, in the third century, so understood them, and dwells at length on 'the power of the name of Jesus, invoked upon a man by Baptism.'" From Smith's Dictionary of the Bible, Vol. 1, page 352.

Origen

"In Origen's works, as preserved in the Greek, the first part of the verse is cited three times, but his citation always stops short at the words, 'the nations;' and that in itself, suggests that his text has been censored, and the words which followed, 'in My name,' struck out." - Conybeare

Clement of Alexandria

"In the pages of Clement of Alexandria, a text somewhat similar to Matthew 28:19, is once cited, but from a *Gnostic heretic*, named Theodotus, and *not as from the canonical text*, but as follows:

'And to the Apostles He gives the command: Going around, preach ye and baptize those who believe in the name of the Father and Son and Holy Spirit.'

- Excerta cap. 76, ed., Sylb. page 287, quote from Conybeare.

Justin Martyr

"Justin...quotes a saying of Christ...as a proof of the necessity or regeneration, but falls back upon the use of Isaiah and Apostolic tradition, to justify the practice of baptism and the use of the triune formula. This certainly suggests, that Justin did not know the

traditional text of Matthew 28:19.” - Ency. of Religion and Ethics.

“In Justin Martyr, who wrote between A.D., 130 and 140, there is a passage which has been regarded, as a citation or echo of Matthew 28:19, by various scholars, e.g., Resch in his *Ausser canonische Parallelstellen*, who sees in it, an abridgement of the ordinary text. The passage is in Justin’s dialogue with Trypho 39, p. 258:

‘God hath not afflicted, nor inflicts the judgment, as knowing of some, that still even today, are being made disciples in the name of His Christ, and are abandoning the path of error, who also do receive gifts, each as they be worthy, being illuminated by the name of this Christ.’

“The objection hitherto, to these words, being recognized as a citation of our text, was that they ignored the formula, ‘baptizing them in the name of the Father and Son and Holy Spirit.’ But, the discovery of the Eusebian form of text, removes the difficulty: *and Justin is seen to have had the same text, as early as the year 140*, which Eusebius regularly found in his manuscripts, from 300 to 340.” - Conybeare (*Hibbert Journal*).

Macedonius

“We may infer, that the text was not quite fixed, when Tertullian was writing, early in the third century. In the middle of that century, Cyprian could insist on the use of the triple formula, as essential in the baptism, even of the Orthodox. The Pope, Stephen answered him, that the baptisms even of the heretics were valid, if the name of Jesus, alone, was invoked. (However, this decision did not prevent the Popes of the seventh century, from excommunicating the entire Celtic Church for its adhesion to the old use of invoking in one name). In the last half of the fourth century, the text ‘in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost’ was used as a battle cry by the Orthodox against the adherents of Macedonius, who were called, ‘pneumato-machi’ or

'fighters against the Holy Spirit,' because they declined to include the Spirit in a Trinity of persons, as co-equal, consubstantial, and co-eternal with the Father and Son. *They also stoutly, denied that any text in the New Testament, authorized such a coordination of the Spirit with the Father and Son.* Whence, we infer, that their texts agreed with that of Eusebius." - Conybeare (Hibbert Journal).

Eunomius

"Exceptions are found, which perhaps, point to an old practice dying out. Cyprian (Ep.73) and the 'Apostolic Canons' (no.50) combat the shorter formula, thereby attesting to its use in certain quarters. The ordinance of the Apostolic Canon, therefore runs:

'If any bishop or presbyter fulfill not three baptisms of one initiation, but one baptism which is given (as) into the death of the Lord, let him be deposed.'

"This was the formula of the followers of Eunomius (Socr. 5:24), 'for they baptized not into the Trinity, but into the death of Christ.' They accordingly, used single immersion only." - Encyclopedia Biblia (Article on "Baptism").

Aphraates

"There is one other witness, whose testimony we must consider. He is Aphraates...who wrote between 337 and 345. He cites our text in a formal manner, as follows:

'Make disciples of all the nations, and they shall believe in me.'

"The last words appear to be a gloss on the Eusebian reading, 'in My name.' But in any case, they preclude the textus receptus, with its injunction to baptize in the triune name. Were the writings of an isolated fact, we might regard it, as a loose citation, but in the

presence of the Eusebian and Justinian texts, this is impossible.” - Conybeare

How the Manuscripts Were Changed

The following quotations will show the ease with which scribes freely altered the manuscripts of the New Testament, so unlike the scribes and custodians of the Old Testament Scriptures, who copied the Holy writings with reverence and strict accuracy.

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These quotations will also show the early start of the practice of trine immersion, at the time when the doctrine of the Trinity, was being formulated, and how the New Testament writings were made to conform to traditional practice.

Conybeare

“In the case just examined (Matt. 28:19), it is to be noticed, that not a single manuscript or ancient version has preserved to us, the true reading. But, that is not surprising, for as Dr. C. R. Gregory, one of the greatest of our textual critics, reminds us,

‘The Greek Manuscripts of the text of the New Testament, were often altered by

scribes, who put into them, the readings which were familiar to them, and which they

held to be the right readings.’ (Canon and Text of the N.T., 1907, pg. 424).

“These facts speak for themselves. Our Greek texts, not only of the Gospels, but of the Epistles as well, have been revised and interpolated by Orthodox copyists. We can trace their perversions of the text in a few cases, with the aid of patristic citations and ancient versions. But, there must remain many passages which have been so corrected, but where we cannot today, expose the fraud. It was necessary to emphasize this point, because Dr. Wescott and Hort, used to aver, that there is no evidence of merely doctrinal changes, having been made in the text of the New Testament. This is just the opposite of the truth, and such distinguished scholars as, Alfred Loisy, J. Wellhausen, Eberhard Nestle, Adolf Harnack, to mention only four

names, do not scruple to recognize the fact.”

While this is perfectly true, nevertheless, “there are a number of reasons why we can feel confident about the *general* reliability of our translations.” - Peter Watkins, in an excellent article, “Bridging the Gap,’ in *The Christadelphian*, January, 1962, pp. 4-8.

Fraternal Visitor 1924, page 148

“Codex B. (Vaticanus) would be the best of all existing manuscripts...if it were completely preserved, less damaged, (less) corrected, more easily legible, and not altered by a later hand, in more than two- thousand places. Eusebius therefore, is not without ground for accusing the adherents of Athanasius and of the newly arisen doctrine of the Trinity of falsifying the Bible, more than once.” - Translation from *Christadelphian Monatshefte*.

Whiston - in *Second Letter to the Bishop of London*, 1719, p. 15.

“We certainly know of a greater number of interpolations and corruptions brought into the Scriptures...by the Athanasians, and relating to the Doctrine of the Trinity, than in any other case whatsoever. While we have not, that I know of, any such interpolation or corruption, made in any one of them by either, the Eusebians or Arians.”

Smith’s *Dictionary of Christian Antiquities* (Article on Baptism)

“While trine immersion, was thus, an all but universal practice, Eunomius (circa 360) appears to have been the first to introduce (again) simple immersion, ‘unto the death of Christ.’ This practice was condemned on pain of degradation, by the Canon Apostolic 46 (al 50). But, it comes before us again, about a century later, in Spain; but then, curiously enough, we find it regarded, as a badge of Orthodoxy, in opposition to the practice of the Arians. These last, kept to the use of trine immersion, but in such a way, as to set forth their own doctrine of a gradation in the three Persons.”

Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church - pp. 125-126

“In the ‘Two Ways’ of the *Didache*, the principle duties of the candidates for baptism and

the method of administering it by triple immersion or infusion on the head, are outlined. This triple immersion, is also attested to, by Tertullian (Adverses Prax 26)...The most elaborate form of the rite in modern Western usage, is in the Roman Catholic Church.”

Catholic Encyclopedia - page 262

“The threefold immersion, is unquestionably, very ancient in the Church...Its object, of course, to honor the three Persons of the Holy Trinity, in whose name it is conferred.”

Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics - Article on “Baptism”

“If it be thought, as many critics think, that no manuscript represents more than comparatively late recensions of the text, it is necessary to set against the mass of manuscript evidence, the influence of *baptismal practice*. It seems easier to believe, that the traditional text was brought about, by this influence working on the ‘Eusebian’ text, than that the latter arose out of the former, *in spite of it*.”

Conybeare - In the Hibbert Journal

“The exclusive survival (of the traditional text of Matt. 28:19) in all manuscripts, both Greek and Latin, need not cause surprise...But in any case, the conversion of Eusebius to the longer text after the council of Nice, indicates that it was, at that time, being introduced as a Shibboleth of Orthodoxy into all codices...The question of the inclusion of the Holy Spirit on equal terms in the Trinity, had been threshed out, and a text so invaluable to the dominant party could not but make its way into every codex, irrespective of its textual affinities.”

Robert Roberts, in “Good Company” (Vol. iii, page 49)

“Athanasius...met Flavian, the author of the Doxology, which has since been universal in Christendom: ‘Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, etc.’ This was composed in opposition to the Arian Doxology: ‘Glory to the Father, by the Son, in the Holy Spirit.’”

Whiston, in Second Letter Concerning the Primitive Doxologies, 1719, page 17, wrote:

“The Eusebians...sometimes named the very time when, the place where, and the person by whom they (the forms of doxology), were first introduced...Thus, Philoflogius, a writer of that very age, assures us in ‘Photius Extracts’ that in A.D. 348 or thereabouts, Flavianus, Patriarch of Antioch, got a multitude of monks together, and did there first use - this public doxology, ‘Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.’”

And regarding the possibility that additions were made into Scripture, based on liturgical use, Hammond, in “Textual Criticism Applied to the N.T.” (1890) page 23 wrote:

“There are two or three insertions in the New Testament, which have been supposed to have their origin in ecclesiastical usage. The words in question, being familiarly known in a particular connection, were perhaps noted, in the margin of some copy, and thence, became incorporated by the next transcriber; or a transcriber’s own familiarity with the words, may have led to his inserting them. This is the source to which Dr. Tregelles assigns the insertion of the doxology at the close of the Lord’s Prayer in Matthew 6, which is lacking, in most, of the best authorities. Perhaps also, Acts 8:37, containing the baptismal profession of faith, which is entirely lacking in the best authorities, found its way into the Latin text, in this manner.”

Having reviewed the evidence of the manuscripts, the versions and now the patristic writings, you will by now, have come to the conclusion that in the early centuries, some copies of Matthew did not contain the traditional triune name-phrase. Regardless of the opinions or positions taken by our commentators, we must at the very least, admit that fact.

In legal practice, where copies of the same lost document vary, recourse is had to what is called, “Internal Evidence.” That is, a comparison with the rest of the text of the document that is not in dispute, in order to ascertain which of the variant readings is the more likely original.

With both variants in mind, let us now turn to the Scriptures themselves for our *internal evidence*.

Internal Evidence

“Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.” 1 Thess. 5:21

In the above verse, the Greek word for “prove” is, *dokimazo*, and it means, “*to test, examine, prove, scrutinize (to see whether a thing is genuine or not), to recognize as genuine after examination, to approve, deem worthy.*”

In our efforts to ascertain which reading of Matthew 28:19 is original, we will submit both, to ten “tests.” In doing so, we shall be able, in the end, to recognize the genuine, and expose the spurious.

1. The Test of Context

Examining the context, we find that the traditional name-phrase lacks syntactic quality, that is, the true sense of the verse is hindered by a failure of the linguistic patterns to agree. If however, we read as follows, the whole context fits together and the tenor of the instruction is complete. (Matt. 28:18-20).

“All power is given unto *Me...go therefore...make disciples in My name*, teaching them...whatsoever *I* have commanded...*I* am with you...”

2. The Test of Frequency

Is the phrase, “in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit/Ghost,” used elsewhere in the Scripture? Not once!

Did Jesus use the phrase, “in My name,” on other occasions? Yes, 17 times actually,

examples to be found in Matt. 18:20; Mark 9:37, 39 and 41; Mark 16:17; John 14:14 and 26; John 15:16 and 16:23.

3. The Test of Argument

Is any argument, in Scripture, based on the fact of a threefold name or of baptism in the threefold name? None whatsoever!

Is any argument, in Scripture, based on the fact of baptism in the name of Jesus? Yes! This argument is made in 1 Cor. 1:13...

“Is *Christ* divided? Was Paul *crucified* for you? Or were ye *baptized in the name of Paul?*” (emphasis added)

From this argument, when carefully analyzed, it appears, that believers ought to be baptized in the name of the One who was crucified for them. The Father, in His amazing love, gave to us, His beloved Son, who by the Spirit, was raised to incorruptibility. But, it is the Lord Jesus Himself, who was crucified, and in His name, therefore, must believers be baptized in water?

According to Dr. Thomas, in “Revealed Mystery” Article XLIV:

“There is but one way for a believer of ‘the things concerning the Kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ’ to put Him on, or to be invested with His name, and that is, by immersion into His name. Baptism is for this specific purpose.”

“As for its significance, baptism is linked inseparably, with the death of Christ. It is the means of the believer’s identification with the Lord’s death.” (God’s Way, pg. 190).

Now the Father did not die, nor yet, the Spirit. As the Scripture says, “buried with *Him* (Jesus) in baptism,” not with the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. (Romans 6:3-5).

R. Roberts used this argument (The Nature of Baptism, page 13):

“According to trine immersion, it is not sufficient to be baptized into the Son. Thus, Christ is displaced from His position, as the connecting link, the door of entrance, the ‘new and living way.’ And thus, there are three names under heaven, whereby we must be saved, in opposition to the Apostolic declaration, that ‘there is none other name (than the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth), under heaven, given among men, whereby we must be saved’ (Acts 4:12).”

This, of course, is the same argument as Paul’s. Were ye baptized in the name of Paul? Or, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, or in any other name that *displaces Christ from His position, as the ‘connecting link,’* and the only name for salvation?

Based on this argument alone, we can confirm the genuine text of Matthew 28:19, to contain the phrase, “In My name.”

4. The Test of Analogy

Is there anything in Scripture analogous to baptism in the triune name? No.

Is there anything analogous to baptism in the name of Jesus? Yes! The Father baptized the disciples with the gift of the Holy Ghost, a promise that came, according to Jesus, ‘in His name.’ (John 14:26). This is because Jesus is the ‘connecting link,’ in both, water baptism and Spirit baptism, evidenced by the following Scripture quotations:

“Nevertheless, I tell you the truth; it is expedient for you, that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send Him unto you.”

“But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in My name, He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever, I have said unto you. (John 16:7 and 14:26, See also John 7:39).

“But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the Kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.” (Acts 8:12).

Notice that they were baptized in response to the preaching of the name of Jesus Christ, not the titles, “Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.”

By analogy, we should therefore, be baptized in Jesus’ name, because it precedes and prepares us for the baptism of the Spirit, which is likewise, given in His name. (Acts 2:38-39, 19:1-5, John 3:3-5).

5. The Test of Consequence

In being baptized, do we ‘put on’ the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost? No.

Do we put on the name of Jesus? Yes. When we are baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, according to all early Church baptisms, recorded in Scripture, we are quite literally, being baptized ‘into’ the name of Jesus Christ. Galatians 3:27, states:

“For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ.”

No mention is made, in Scripture, of any result in baptism being related to the titles of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Every mention makes a clear connection with the person of Christ, and His atoning sacrifice on the cross.

6. The Test of Practice

Did the disciples, after receiving the “Great Commission,” ever once, baptize in the threefold name? Never!

Did they baptize in the name of Jesus? Always! (Acts 2:38; 8:16; 10:48 (inferred); 19:5,

etc.).

The argument, has often been made, when defending triune immersion, “I would rather obey the command of Jesus, than to imitate the Acts of the Apostles.” This kind of logic though, places the Apostles in disobedience, and makes all Apostolic baptisms, void.

If *all* of God’s Word is inspired, and it is, then we would do well, to give no greater heed to one verse over another, but rather, take all of God’s Word in context, and rightly apply it to our lives. Quite simply, the ‘red letter’ portions of our Bibles (i.e., the Words of Christ) are no more, and no less important, than the rest.

It is easier to believe, that the disciples *followed* the parting instructions of our Lord, than to suggest that they were immediately disobedient, to His command.

7. The Test of Significance

What significance is attributed, in Scripture, to baptizing believers in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost? None!

What significance is afforded to baptism in the name of Jesus? First, the Scripture teaches, that baptism in the name of Jesus, as an act of repentance, is for the remission (that is, forgiveness) of sins (Acts 2:38).

Second, baptism in His name *alone* is linked to the promise of the Holy Ghost (Acts 2:38, 19:1-5).

Third, baptism in the name of Jesus, is likened to our identification and personalization of the death and burial of Christ. (Romans 6:1-4 and Colossians 2:12).

Fourth, being baptized into Christ, is how we ‘put on’ Christ (Galatians 3:27).

Fifth, baptism in His name is called, the 'circumcision of Christ,' and reflects our 'putting off' of the man of sin, thus becoming, a 'new creature *in Christ Jesus.*' (Col. 2:11-12, 2 Cor. 5:17).

Baptism in the name of Jesus expresses faith in the Incarnation, the authentic human life of Jesus, the death of the Son of God on the cross for our sins, and the remission of sins, through His name.

Baptism in the threefold name, can be said only, to express faith in the Trinitarian doctrine itself, and the man-made creeds, that support it.

8. The Test of Parallel Accounts

As God's providence would have it, Matthew 28, is not the sole record in the Gospels of the 'Great Commission' of our Lord. Luke also records this event, with great detail. In Luke 24:46-47, he writes Jesus speaking in the third person,

"And that repentance and remission of sins, should be preached *in His name* among all nations."

This passage, alone, restores the correct text to Matthew 28:19, where Jesus speaks in the first person, "in My name."

Furthermore, the Gospel of Mark, likewise, records a version of the 'Great Commission,' using some of the same patterns of speech:

"Go ye...all the world...preach the Gospel...every creature...baptized...in My name..."
(Mark 16:15-18)

Of course, it is not baptism, that 'in My name' here refers to, but the works that the disciples would do. Compared to Matthew, though, the similarity is striking, for neither

is baptism explicitly mentioned there, but that disciples should be made, “in My name.”

9. The Test of Complimentary Citation

While there is no text that offers a complimentary citation of the triune name-phrase, there is a striking resemblance between Matthew 28:18-20, (with the correction) and Romans 1:4-5. The former contains the Commission of Christ to His Apostles, while the latter, is Paul’s understanding and acceptance of his own commission, as an Apostle. Consider the following similarities:

Matthew 28:18-20

“all power is given unto Me”

“Go ye”

“teaching them to observe”

“all nations”

“in My name”

Romans 1:4-5

“the Son of God with power”

“received...apostleship”

“for obedience to the faith”

“all nations”

“for His name”

10. The Test of Principle

It is written: “*whatsoever* ye do in Word or deed, *do all* in the name of the Lord Jesus...”

(Colossians 3:17).

In this principle, laid down by Paul, the implication is clear. The word, “whatsoever” is *all inclusive*, and certainly therefore, includes baptism, which is a rite involving both, word and deed.

The traditional reading of Matthew containing the threefold name, is clearly not in accordance, with the above principle. The shorter phrase is. This proves which of the two readings is the spurious one. God’s Word does not contradict, it compliments and completes.

Paul not only enunciated this principle, he also applied it specifically, in the context of baptism. In Acts 19:1-5, we find disciples of John, who had been baptized under his ministry. Like baptism, in Jesus’ name, John’s baptism was one of repentance for the remission of sins (Mark 1:4, Acts 2:38). John preached with his baptism, that One would come after him, who would ‘take away the sins of the world’ and “baptize with the Holy Ghost.”

Paul introduced these disciples to Jesus, and applying the above principle re-baptized them, in the name of the Lord Jesus.

And so, applying the test of principle to our two readings in Matt. 28:19, we find strong support for the phrase, “in My name.”

Other Sources

Sufficient evidence, has been produced, to enable the reader to decide whether or not the triune-name in Matt. 28:19, is genuine. The following quotations are presented by way of interest, and should not be used in the arena of textual criticism, thus far employed.

Hastings Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics

“The cumulative evidence of these three lines of criticism (Textual Criticism, Literary Criticism, and Historical Criticism), is thus, distinctly against the view, that Matt. 28:19 (in the traditional form), represents the exact Words of Christ.” - Article: Baptism; Early Christian.

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Dr. Peake - Bible Commentary, page 723

“The command to baptize into the threefold name, is a late doctrinal expansion. Instead of the words, ‘baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost,’ we should probably read simply, ‘into My name.’”

F. Whiteley in, ‘The Testimony’ (Oct. 1959, pg. 351. ‘Back to Babylon’).

“There is the ‘triune’ baptismal formula, which may prove a very broken reed, when thoroughly investigated, but...we leave it for separate treatment. The thoughtful, may well ponder, meantime, why one cannot find, one single instance, in Acts or the Epistles, of the words ever being used, at any of the main baptisms recorded, notwithstanding Christ’s (seemingly) explicit command at the end of Matthew’s Gospel.”

Williams, R. R. - Theological Workbook of the Bible, page 29

“The command to baptize in Matt. 28:19, is thought to show the influence of a developed doctrine of God, verging on Trinitarianism. Early baptism was in the name of Christ. The association of this Trinitarian conception with baptism suggests, that baptism itself, was felt to be an experience with a Trinitarian reference.”

Dean Stanley - ‘Christian Institutions’

“Doubtless, the more comprehensive form, in which baptism, is now everywhere, administered in the threefold name...soon superseded the simpler form, of that, in the name of the Lord Jesus only.”

E. K., in the Fraternal Visitor - Article: ‘The Question of the Trinity and Matt. 28:19.’ 1924, pg. 147-151, from Christadelphian Monatshefte.

“The striking contrast and the illogical internal incoherence of the passage...lead to a presumption of an intentional corruption in the interests of the Trinity. In ancient Christian times, a tendency of certain parties, to corrupt the text of the New Testament, was certainly often imputed. This increases our doubt, almost to a decisive certainty, concerning the genuineness of the passage.”

Dr. Robert Young

In his, ‘Literal Translation of the Bible,’ Young places the triune name, in Matthew 28:19, in parentheses, thus indicating the words, to be of doubtful authenticity.

James Martineau - ‘Seat of Authority’

“The very account, which tells us that, at last, after His resurrection, He commissioned His disciples to go and baptize among all nations, betrays itself, by speaking in the Trinitarian language of the next century, and compels us to see in it, the ecclesiastical editor, and not the evangelist, much less the Founder Himself.”

Black’s Bible Dictionary

“The Trinitarian formula (Matt. 28:19), was a late addition, by some reverent Christian mind.”

Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics

“The obvious explanation of the silence of the New Testament on the triune name, and the use of another formula in Acts and Paul, is that this other formula was the earlier, and that the triune formula, is a later addition.”

Professor Harnack - ‘History of Dogma’ (German Edition)

Professor Harnack, dismisses the text, almost contemptuously, as being, ‘no Word of the Lord.’

F. Whiteley, in ‘The Testimony,’ footnotes to Article: Baptism, 1958.

“Clerical conscience much troubled (see Comp. Bible App. 185), that the Apostles and Epistles, never once employ the triune name of Matt. 28:19. Even Trinitarians, knowing the idea of the Trinity, was being resisted by the Church in the fourth century, admits (e.g. Peake) ‘the command to baptize with the threefold name, is a late doctrinal expansion.’ but, still prior to our oldest, yet known, manuscripts (Fourth Century). It’s sole counterpart, 1 John 5:7, is a proven interpolation. Eusebius (A.D. 264-340), denounces the triune form, as spurious, Matthew’s actual writing, having been baptizing them, ‘in My name.’”

Is It Important?

Is it important that we amend the text of Matthew 28:19? The man whose standard of judgment is his own ideas, will answer, in the negative. But, those who acknowledge, that God’s thoughts are not our thoughts, will carefully consider the matter in light of Scripture, and remember that, in the matter of divinely appointed symbolic actions, the details are of great importance. Matthew 28:19, has to do with such, a symbolic. For example:

- (a) Cain’s offering lacked blood and was rejected.
- (b) The man who gathered sticks, on the Sabbath, forfeited his life.
- (c) Uzziah died, when he touched the Ark of the Covenant.

Certainly, these acts of disobedience were judged, according to their error, but perhaps also, God was displeased, because they marred the portrait-in-type, of the Son of His Love, as to, (a) the atonement by blood, (b) His millennial rest, and (c) His chosen ones.

Every symbolic action, required by God, has not only one or more significance, but in fact, is the actual *cause* of the very real *end-effect*. Consider the following cause-and-effect examples:

- (1) When Joshua pointed his spear, there was victory (Joshua 8:18).
- (2) Only three victories were given to Joash, when he struck the ground, but thrice
 (2 Kings 13:19-25)
- (3) The Passover Lamb (or kid) had to be without blemish (even as was Christ), if the household was to be protected from the Death Angel (Exodus 12:5).

Nothing in God's ritual, is without meaning or result. When He speaks, it is done! Christ called Lazarus, and Lazarus came forth! In matters of ritual, such as Baptism and the Breaking of Bread, we are dealing with God's ritual, not man's.

All man-made rituals, no matter how lofty their motivation, when they deviate from, and therefore, pervert the Word of God, are nothing more than empty traditions that 'make the Word of God of none effect' (Mark 7:13). Obedience to God's commands, however, will always effect the result for which they are given.

In the matter of establishing the original text of Matthew 28:19, it is indeed important, to settle what is genuine, and what is spurious, so that we may properly obey our Lord's command. After all, that is the purport of our introductory text, in Deut. 4:2, "Ye shall not add...neither...diminish ought...that ye may *keep the commandments*." When we are obedient to the true command of our Lord, we can expect the promised, and even, eternal effect.

Believers were taught, in James 5 (verse 14) to anoint the sick with oil, *in the name of the Lord*. The result would be, that the Lord would raise him up. When two or three gather together, *in His name*, the result, is that He is there in the midst of them. As our evidence reveals, Jesus commanded to go and make, *in His name*. As a result, He would be with them, to the end, even to the end of the age.

Anything we do, *in His name*, directly involves *Him*. No wonder then, that Paul so clearly charged those believers in Colosse:

“Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him!”

Addendum

1. The Light is Dawning

The British and Foreign Bible Society, published in 1960, a Greek Testament, and at Matthew 28:19, the phrase, ‘en to onomati mou’ (‘in My name’) is given as an alternate reading, Eusebius being cited, as the authority.

The Jerusalem Bible, 1966, (a Roman Catholic production) has this footnote to Matt. 28:19, “It may be that this formula...is a reflection of the liturgical usage, established later, in the primitive community. It will be remembered, that Acts speaks of baptizing, in the name of Jesus.”

2. But Matthew 28:19 and Luke 24:47, Say Nothing of Baptism!

That is true. They speak only of “making disciples of all nations” and “repentance and remission of sins.” However, in establishing the original text of Matthew 28:19, to contain simply, “in My name,” we have essentially eliminated, *all* support for *baptizing*, “in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.”

Because of this far reaching implication, we were forced to examine the internal evidence, with regards to baptism, in order to find any other support for the traditional reading, as the triune formula, *that* was added to Matt. 28:19, *is* connected with baptism.

Though baptism, is not specifically mentioned, in Matt. 28:19 or Luke 24:47, it can be

inferred, because of the following two points:

1. In Matthew, the command is to “make disciples in My name.” To “make a disciple” of necessity, includes baptism in the conversion process (Mark 16:15-16, John 3:3-5), and the entire process is under the umbrella of the injunction to do so, “in His name.”

2. In Luke, “repentance and remission of sins” would be preached “in His name.” By testimony of other Scriptures (Luke 3:3, Acts 2:38), it is clear, that *remission of sins* comes through *baptism* preceded by *repentance*. Here, Jesus enjoins both, to being preached “in His name.”

3. The Evidence of Eusebius

Jerome makes an interesting statement. (He was born A.D. 331 and died in 420, and wrote many exegetical and controversial treatises and letters, as well as the renowned Latin Vulgate translation of the Scriptures). His interesting statement, is as follows: (from the Catalogue of Ecclesiastical Writers):

“Matthew, who is also Levi...composed a Gospel...in the Hebrew language and characters...Furthermore, the Hebrew itself, is preserved to this day, in the library at Caesarea, which the martyr, Pamphilus, so diligently collected.”

Now, Eusebius of Caesarea (260-340 A.D.), inherited from that Pamphilus (who died in A.D. 310), that famous Library, a library which was commenced by Origen (185-254 A.D.).

The wording of that statement, by Jerome, seems to mean that the *original* Manuscript of Matthew was still to be seen in the Library at Caesarea. Or it could mean, an early copy of Matthew’s Hebrew writing. But, the phraseology of Jerome appears to indicate, the actual Manuscript, written by Matthew himself.

4. The Mental Reservations of Eusebius

On page 14 of this book, last paragraph, mention is made of the fact, that after the Council of Nicaea, Eusebius three times, used the triune name-phrase in writing. The following three extracts shed light on this strange affair:

1. Dictionary of Christian Biography and Literature; Eusebius

“At the Council of Nicaea (A.D. 325), Eusebius took a leading part...He occupied the first seat to the emperor’s right, and delivered the opening address to Constantine, when he took his seat in the council chamber...Eusebius, himself, has left us an account of his doings, with regard to the main object of the council, in a letter of explanation to his Church at Caesarea...This letter...is written to the Caesareans, to explain that he would resist to the last, any vital change in the traditional creed of his Church, but had subscribed to these alterations, when assured of their innocence, to avoid appearing contentious.”

2. Wallace Hadrill, in ‘Eusebius of Caesarea,’ (1960)

“Our concern here, is only with Nicaea, as it affected Eusebius...his own account of the matter is transmitted to us...in the letter he addressed to his diocese, an explanation of his actions at the Council, for with some misgiving, he had signed the document bearing the revised text of the creed he had presented...But, being satisfied that the creed did not imply the opposite Sabellian pitfall...he signed the document.”

3. William Bright, in his Preface to Burton’s, ‘*Text of Eusebius Ecclesiastical History:*’

“The Nicene Council followed, in the summer of A.D. 325. Eusebius, of course, attended, and was profoundly impressed, by the sight of that majestic gathering...He occupied a distinguished position in the Council; he was its spokesman, in welcoming the Emperor...On the next day, as if yielding to those representations, and moved by the expressed opinion of Constantine, he signed the Creed, and even accepted the anathematism appended to it; but did so, as we gather from his own statement, *by dint of evasive glosses*, which he certainly could not have announced, at that time. While

then he verbally capitulated in the doctrinal decisions of the Nicene Council...he did so reluctantly, under pressure, *and in senses of his own...He knew that he would be thought to have compromised his convictions*, and therefore wrote his account of the transaction to the people of his diocese, and, as Athanasius expresses it, '*excluded himself in his own way.*'"

5. Second Century Mutilations of the Sacred Text

In the book, mention is made of the fact, that textual critics have been able to reproduce the Sacred Text, substantially correct, as it existed in the second or third century.

As was pointed out on page 7, "there is every reason to believe, that the grossest errors that have ever deformed the text, had entered in, already in the second century...If our touchstone only reveals to us, texts that are ancient, we cannot hope to obtain for our result, anything but, an ancient text. What we wish however, is not merely an ancient, but the true text." The following three excerpts are interesting, as being in accordance, with that pronouncement:

1. *The Authentic New Testament* was translated by Dr. Hugh J. Schonfield, and published, in 1962. The introduction contains the following:

"It may be accepted with confidence, that we have at command, the New Testament,
substantially as the writings contained in it, would be read within a century
of
their composition."

It is in that century, as has been pointed out, that the 'very grossest textual errors,' deformed the Sacred Text.

2. The S.P.C.K., published in 1964, Volume One of the *Clarified New Testament*. At

Matthew 28:19, the comment reads, “One would expect this name to be that of Jesus and it is surprising to find the text continuing with ‘the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost,’ which are not names, at all. The suspicion that this is not what Matthew originally wrote, naturally arises. In ‘Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,’ we have the Trinitarian formula...which was associated with Christian Baptism, *in the second century*, as evidenced in the *Didache*, chapter seven.”

3. F.C .Kenyon, in *The Text of the Greek Bible*, pages 241-242.

“At the first, each book had its single original text, which it is now, the object of criticism to recover, but in the first two centuries, this original Greek text disappeared under a mass of variants, created by errors, by conscious alterations, and by attempts to remedy the uncertainties, thus created.”

6. The Source of the Error

The earliest reference to the triune name-phrase, is found in the *Didache*. The *Didache*, is a collection of fragments of writings, from five or more documents. They were originally written, it is thought between A.D., 80 and 160. Although we now have only 99 verses, those verses contain the seeds of many false teachings that developed into the Papal Superstitions. The seeds of Indulgences, the Mass, the Confessional, the substitution of sprinkling for immersion, and other gross errors are to be found in that disreputable pseudo-Christian document.

In the *Didache*, among all the above-mentioned apostate beliefs, is found the triune name-phrase, that later wormed its way into the sacred text of Matthew 28:19, displacing the actual Words of the Lord. Here, then, is the source of the error, a written teaching, that reflected the erroneous practice of apostate Christians in the second century.

7. Should I be Re-Baptized?

After restoring the text of Matthew 28:19, to its original form, i.e., “Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations in My name,” the following question naturally arises:

“I was baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Since this is not Biblical, should I be re-baptized?”

Rather than answer, according to our own wisdom or bias, let us find the answer to this important question in the Word of God itself, for that alone is the true standard against which, to measure our experience, with the Lord. Turning to Acts 19:1-6, we find the answer:

1. And it came to pass, that while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts, came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples,

2. He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost.

3. And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John’s baptism.

4. Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on Him, which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.

5. When they heard *this*, they were baptized, in the name of the Lord Jesus.

6. And when Paul had laid *his* hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied.

Reading the above narrative, it is easy to find the answer to our question. Paul found disciples, who like many Christians today, had heard preaching concerning Jesus, and had responded to that message, by being baptized as an act of repentance. However, they had yet to hear the full Gospel message, namely, that Jesus, in His death, burial,

and resurrection had now purchased salvation, for all mankind, by becoming the very *Lamb of God*, that John had preached about. Because of that, their baptism, under the ministry and authority of John (who preceded Christ) did not bear the association *to the death and burial of Jesus*, that makes baptism in His name efficacious.

While many Christians today, are indeed responding to a more complete Gospel message, they then affirm their belief, by a baptism that associates them, *only to a doctrinal creed*, rather than the atoning blood of Jesus, that is *only appropriated through His name*.

For Paul, the next step was obvious. Knowing that the promise of the Holy Ghost was given to those, who through the obedience of faith, had repented of their sins, and had been baptized in the name of Jesus, he instructed them, to be re-baptized, this time, in the only name under heaven, given among men, whereby we must be saved (Acts 4:12).

Was Paul mistaken? Or are we? Certainly, Paul was not, for according to the Lord's promise, He baptized the group with the Holy Ghost, only moments after being baptized in His name.

Remember, according to the 'Text of Significance' (see number seven, under *Internal Evidence*), baptism in the name of Jesus, expresses faith in the Incarnation, the authentic human life of Jesus, the death of the Son of God on the cross for our sins, and the remission of sins, through His name. In summary, using the name of Jesus, in the baptismal formula, expresses faith in:

1. The Person of Christ (*who He really is*);
2. The Work of Christ (*His death, burial, and resurrection for us*), and
3. The Power and Authority of Christ (*His ability to save us, by Himself*).

For these very reasons, baptism was then, and should continue now, to be administered in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

His Word, and not the tradition and interpolation of man, should be the supreme standard, which we preach, believe and obey, as our opening Scripture, so aptly admonishes us:

“Ye shall not add unto the Word, which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the Lord, your God, which I command you.” Deuteronomy 4:2.

The Development of the Doctrine of the Trinity

Introduction - Post Apostolic Age (AD 90-140) - Greek Apologists (AD 130-180) - Old Catholic Age (AD 170-325) - Arianism and the Road to the Council of Nicea - After Nicea: The Road to Constantinople - The Council of Constantinople - Conclusion - Relevance to the Modern Believer

Introduction

There has never been a doctrine, so widely embraced, as that of Trinitarianism. The majority of Christendom accepts this doctrine, as divine truth. Although the majority, do embrace this doctrine nominally, there are a variety of ways, in which, it is understood. There are the opposite extremes of Tritheism and the modern Oneness belief, and then there is the Orthodox belief, as stated in the ancient creeds.

What is the relationship of YHWH, Jehovah, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit? How are we to understand the Scriptural teaching of monotheism, and yet, confess the divinity of

the Father, Son, and Spirit? How are we to maintain monotheism, and still maintain the Scriptural distinctions, spoken of, as existing between the Father, Son, and Spirit?

Our generation, is not the first in its attempt, to find a way to explain the Scriptural injunctions, as stated above. The Church has been attempting to understand the nature of the Godhead, since its inception. How did the early Church understand this? Where did the doctrine of the Trinity come from? This course will address these very questions. In the following, I will attempt to demonstrate the progressive development of the Trinitarian doctrine, up to the Council of Constantinople, in A.D. 381. This will be accomplished, by examining the ways, in which, the Godhead was explained in the various generations, leading up to the 381 Council, as witnessed by the writings of the early theologians.

Post-Apostolic Age (AD 90-140)

There are not many extant documents, from this period of time. We only possess an Epistle from Clement of Rome, seven Epistles of Ignatius of one Epistle by Polycarp of Smyrna, *The Shepherd*, by Hermas, *The Didache*, and some pseudonymous writings. These writings are very important for our studies, due to the proximity in time, in which they were written, in relation to the Apostles. The men who penned these works, were alive when some of the Apostles were still ministering abroad. Their teachings, are very likely, to be closely allied to the common first-century understanding of the Godhead, as taught by the Apostles.

In the *Epistle to the Corinthians*, Clement of Rome confessed the deity of Jesus Christ, saying, "Our Lord Jesus Christ [is] the Scepter of the majesty of God." He did recognize a distinction between the Father and Son. He wrote, "Have we not (all) one God and one Christ? Is there not one Spirit of Grace poured out upon us?" An apparent allusion to Ephesians 4:6.

Ignatius' writings, are somewhat difficult to decipher, simply because, of the many

obvious interpolations to his texts, by later copyists. It is believed, that the original versions, are found in a Syriac translation. Ignatius, also confessed, the deity of Christ in a profound manner. Jesus is none other than, the eternal God, made manifest in the flesh: “Look for Him, who is above all time, eternal and invisible, yet, who became visible for our sakes; impalpable and impassible, yet, who became passible on our account; and who, in every kind of way, suffered for our sakes.” Not only was Jesus said to have been the pre-existent God, but He is also said, to have suffered for us: “The passion of my God.”

Polycarp, was in possession of Ignatius’ writings, and endorsed his theology. It is to be expected, therefore, that Polycarp’s theology would resemble that of Ignatius. The only statement Polycarp made, that would lend itself to the Trinitarianism states, “The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and Jesus Christ Himself, who is the Son of God, and our everlasting High Priest, build you up in faith and truth.” Some see, in this statement, an incipient Trinitarianism, but it does not advocate modern Trinitarianism. Polycarp, merely asserted, that which the Scriptures assert, i.e., a distinction between the Father and Son. His statement was quite Scriptural, and did not reflect later theological developments.

The author of *The Shepherd*, was a man named Hermas, who resided in Rome. He was not a bishop, and did not hold an official office in the Church, but his *Shepherd*, became very popular, among Christendom. Hermas made a statement, that seems to imply the pre-existence of the Son, as a separate person from the Father, saying, “The Son of God is older than all His creatures, so that He was a fellow-councilor with the Father, in His work of creation.” However, he may have simply meant, that the Son existed as the plan or wisdom of God, before the incarnation, and not as a separate person.

Hermas viewed the Holy Spirit to be the manifested Son of God: “The Holy, pre-existent Spirit, that created every creature, God made to dwell in flesh, which He chose. The flesh, accordingly, in which the Holy Spirit dwelt, was nobly subject to that

Spirit,...and after labouring and co-operating with the Spirit, and having in everything, acted vigorously along with the Holy Spirit, he assumed it as a partner with it. In another place, he said," I wish to explain to you, what the Holy Spirit...showed you, for that Spirit, is the Son of God."

The Post-Apostolic Fathers maintained, that there was one God, and that Jesus Christ, was God. They did distinguish between the Father and Son, using language, much like that of the NT. The Spirit did not receive much attention, but when He did, He was spoken of, as being God's Spirit, revealed to humanity through the person of Jesus Christ. There is no distinctively Trinitarian language or concepts conveyed in the writings, at this point in time. In fact, some teachings, such as equating the Holy Spirit with the Son, are not consistent with the doctrine of the Trinity.

Greek Apologists (AD 130-180)

This age is so called, because it was characterized by Greek teachers/philosophers, who wrote literary works to be read by pagans, in order to defend and explain the Christian faith to unbelievers. It was an attempt to demonstrate, that Christianity was good philosophy, so that it would be accepted by the pagan contemporaries.

The primary author, of this time period, was Justin Martyr, whose works were numerous. Other important writers from this period include, Marcianus, Aristides, the anonymous author to the *Epistle to Diognetus*, Tatian, and Melito.

It was during this period, that the doctrine of the Logos was propagated and developed. The idea of the Logos, was already popular, in the Hellenistic culture and philosophy. The Apologists adopted this philosophy,

tailoring it where necessary, in order to make the Gospel acceptable to the general population, who saw Christianity, as foolishness. To the Greeks, the Logos was reason

as the controlling principle of the universe. It was impersonal, existing in the realm of ideas. It was this realm, that was an intermediary between, The Ineffable One and physical reality. Edward Hardy explained how the Apologists, and Justin, in particular, took the Hellenistic Logos doctrine and incorporated it into Christian theology:

The idea of God's Logos could be found in a variety of sources. It was floating in the air of popular Greek philosophy and Hellenistic Judaism...Justin's use of it is partly Biblical and partly apologetic. The Logos being divine, and yet, not the Father Him-self, accounts both, for the divinity which Christians have found in Jesus, and by retrospect for the divine appearances in the Old Testament.

Justin Martyr was the first prolific writer to clearly teach a plurality within the Godhead. He even numbered them, saying, "We reasonably worship [Jesus Christ], having learned that He is the Son of the true God Himself, and holding Him in the second place, and the prophetic Spirit in the third." Again, he said, "There is...another God and Lord subject to the Maker of all things; who is also called an Angel, because He announces to men whatsoever the Maker of all things-above whom there is no other God-wishes to announce to them. ...He who is said to have appeared to Abraham, and to Jacob, and to Moses, and who is called God, is distinct from Him who made all things-numerically, I mean, not (distinct) in will."

The Logos was the second person next to the Father, and was subordinate to the Father. In fact, He was the first Creation of God: "The Word...is the first-birth of God."

The Spirit is not mentioned much, but when He is, He seems to be equated with the Logos. There is no clear theology of the Spirit. Justin's primary focus was on Jesus' relationship to the Father. His perspective seems to be that of binitarianism or ditheism. The Logos was second to the Father, in time and sequence, and in authority, but not in will. Justin's teachings, closely resemble that of Arianism, which was to flourish, a century later.

Justin's disciple, Tatian, made it clear, that the Logos was not equal to the Father, but was His first Creation. He existed in God, but emanated forth from Him before the Creation of the world, and eventually became revealed physically, in the person of Christ: "God was, in the beginning; but the beginning...is the power of the Logos. ...With Him, by Logos-power, the Logos Himself also, who was in Him, subsists. 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. ...The Logos, begotten in the beginning, begat in turn, our world." This was in essence, the very heart of the Arian heresy, that evolved later.

Athenagoras thought of God, in some sort of a triad. He wrote, "[Christians desire] this one thing alone, that they know God and His Logos, what is the oneness of the Son with the Father, what is the communion of the Father with the Son, what is the Spirit, what is the unity of these three, the Spirit, the Son, Father, and their distinction in unity."

The Apologists' doctrine was anything but Orthodox Trinitarianism. The Biblical doctrine of the Logos was explained in terms of Greek philosophical thought, rather than that of Scripture, which lead to a false understanding of Christ and His relationship to the Father. The Son was seen to be divine reason, which existed in the mind of God without personal existence, until He emanated from God, as the first Creation of the Father, for the specific purpose of Creation. It was, at that point, that the Son had personal divine existence, which was distinct from the Father's, albeit dependent upon the Father. Tatian compared this to our thoughts, and the utterance of those thoughts. We can have a thought, but it does not have an existence, until it is spoken. Likewise, the Son was in the mind of God as His Wisdom and Reason, but was birthed from God at the beginning of God's Creation.

The Apologists' spoke of a Jesus, Who was ontologically subordinate to the Father. They did not believe that the Father and Son were coeternal, consubstantial, and coequal. As in the days of the Post-Apostolic Father, not much attention is given to the Holy Spirit. "Some passages seemingly identify the Holy Spirit with the Father, with the

Logos, or as an impersonal force. When the Spirit is clearly differentiated from the Father and the Logos, He is a divine being of even lesser rank than the Logos, perhaps similar to an angel.” For this reason, it seems best to view the Apologists’ view of God as that of a triad, rather than a Trinity.

What was the reason for such misunderstandings? “...The Scriptural distinction between God and His Son, which related to the incarnation, was wrongly imputed to the divine nature of God Himself.” The term, “Son” was seen to indicate a deity distinct from that of the Father, a lower emanation, instead of God’s revelation to man in human form.

Old Catholic Age (AD 170-325)

This period enjoyed the greatest amount of theological growth. Much of the terminology and theological concepts, of this period, were adopted at the Nicene and Constantinopolitan Councils, being used to define Orthodox Trinitarianism. This growth was spawned on by theologians such as Irenaeus, Tertullian, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, and Cyprian.

Irenaeus, in *Against Heresies* (182-188), seemed to affirm a pre-existent Son when he said the faith of the Church was belief “in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven, and earth, ... and in one Christ Jesus, the Son of God, who became incarnate for our salvation, and in the Holy Spirit...”

In contrast to the Apologists, who taught that the Logos was created in time, Irenaeus taught that the He “co-existed” with the Father and was “eternal.” Irenaeus did, however, make the same blunder, as Justin, in not distinguishing the terms, “Son of God” and “Logos” as it relates to the incarnation. The Logos was God’s visible manifestation, and self-revelation, even before the incarnation.

The Holy Spirit was equated with the Father, or God’s Wisdom, as spoken of in the OT.

This was in contrast with the Apologists who equated Wisdom with the Logos.

The Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are seen as having three separate activities, or aspects to accomplishing one goal, but each aspect is carried out by a different member of the triune God: “the Father planning everything well and giving His commands, the Son carrying these into execution and performing the work of creating, and the Spirit nourishing and increasing (what is made).”

Tertullian (150-225) was the first to speak of God as a Trinity, and as three persons in one substance. God is “the Trinity,” which consists of ‘three persons...’ God is ‘only one substance in three coherent and inseparable Persons’...The Father and the Son are ‘two separate Persons,’ ‘two different Beings,’ and ‘distinct, but not separate.’ The Son is ‘another’ from the Father ‘on the ground of Personality, not of Substance-in the way of distinction, not of division.’

Tertullian was so insistent on the distinction between the persons, that he even ranked them according to order, saying, “...how come it to pass, that God should be thought to suffer division and severance in the Son and in the Holy Ghost, who have the second and the third places assigned to them, and who are so closely joined with the Father in His substance...” When “Father” was used alongside of “Son,” Tertullian would only call the former “God,” while the latter would be called, “Lord.” Only when the Son was spoken of separately, could He be referred to as, “God.”

He spoke of the three Persons, as parts of the whole Godhead: “The Father is the entire substance, but the Son is a derivation and portion of the whole. ...The Father is ...greater than the Son.” The Son of God is “a portion of the whole Godhead.”

Although he continually denied that the three Persons are separate, he consistently spoke of them in such a manner, and even called them separate: “Now, from this one passage of the Epistle [1 Corinthians 15:27-28] of the inspired apostle, we have been already able to show that the Father and the Son, are two separate Persons, not only by

the mention of their separate names as Father and the Son, but also by the fact, that He who delivered up the kingdom, and He to whom it is delivered up--...--must necessarily be, two different Beings.” He even declared, that they are unified in substance, but not in number: “Thus, the connection of the Father in the Son, and of the Son in the Paraclete, produces three coherent Persons, who are yet distinct, One from Another. These Three are, one essence, not one Person, as it is said, ‘I and My Father are One,’ in respect of unity of substance, not singularity of number.”

His subordinationistic terminology, when speaking of the Godhead, cannot be ignored. The Son is clearly subject to the Father, and the Holy Ghost is subject to the Son:

Now the Spirit indeed, is third from God and the Son; just as the fruit of the tree is third from the root, or as the stream out of the river, is third from the fountain, or as the apex of the ray is third from the sun. Nothing, however, is alien from that original source, whence it derives, its own properties. In like manner, the Trinity, flowing down from the Father through intertwined and connected steps, does not at all disturb the Monarchy, whilst it, at the same time, guards the state of the Economy.

Now, if He too is God, according to John, (who says.) “The Word was God,” then you have two Beings--One that commands that the thing be made, and the Other that executes the order and creates. ...I have already explained, on the ground of Personality, not of Substance--in a way of distinction, not of division. But, although I must everywhere hold one only substance, in three coherent and inseparable (Persons), yet, I am bound to acknowledge, from the necessity of the case, that He who issues a command is different from Him who executes it. For, indeed, He would not be issuing a command, if He were all the while, doing the work Himself, while ordering it to be done, by the se-cond. But, still, He did issue the command, although He would not have intended to command Himself, if He were only one; or else He must have worked without any command, because He would not have waited to command Himself.

In regards to the Spirit, Tertullian seemed to connect Him with the Logos:

Now, by saying “the Spirit of God” ...and by not directly naming God, he wished that portion of the whole Godhead to be understood, which was about to retire into the designation of “the Son.” The Spirit of God, in this passage, [Luke 1:35] must be the same as the Word. For just as, when John says, “The Word was made flesh,” we understand the Spirit also in the mention of the Word: so here, too, we acknowledge the Word, likewise in the name of the Spirit. For both, the Spirit is the substance of the Word, and the Word is the operation of the Spirit, and the Two are One (and the same). He also explained the Holy Spirit as “proceeding” from no other source than from the Father, through the Son.

Origen (185-254) was the greatest contributor to the development of the Trinitarian doctrine in the Eastern Church, as Tertullian was in the Western Church. He was the first to teach “an eternal Trinity of persons.” The Son was not only eternal, but was eternally begotten by the Father. Although He spoke of equality in the Trinity saying, “Nothing in the Trinity can be called greater or less.” He also said, “that God the Word is a separate being and has an essence of His own.” Only the Father is o qeoj (the God), while the Son is only qeoj (God). This is made very clear, when Origen said, “The Father is the one true God, but...other beings besides the true God...have become gods by having a share of God... The Father is the fountain of divinity, the Son of reason... There was God with the article and God without the article, then there were gods in two orders, at the summit of the higher order, of whom, is God the Word, transcended Himself, by the God of the universe. And, again, there was the Logos without the article, “

He concluded that:

“There are three hypostases [persons], the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit; and at the same time, we believe nothing to be uncreated by the Father... The Holy Spirit is the most excellent and the first, in order of all that was made by the

Father, through Christ...The Holy Spirit seems to have need of the Son, to minister to Him, His essence, so as to enable Him, not only to exist, but to be wise, and reasonable, and just.”

This terminology presents a skewed view of that which would later become, the Orthodox view of the Trinity. Instead of complete equality between the three Persons, there is a co-dependency and order of rank. The Logos and the Spirit are Creations of God, and cannot be spoken of, as being The God, but only God. In fact, Origen called Jesus, a “second God,” and said, that He was “inferior” to the Father: “For we who say that the visible world is under the government of Him who Created all things, do thereby declare, that the Son is not mightier than the Father, but inferior to Him.”

The major contributions to the theology of the Trinity, from this time, were the ideas of one God in three persons, the coinage of the word, “Trinity” and the idea of personalities in the Godhead, coming from Tertullian; the eternal generation of the Son, coming from Origen. Both men saw the Logos and the Spirit, as being subordinate to the Father, ontologically, and not functionally, as it pertained to the incarnation. The doctrine of co-equality, although spoken of by Origen, was limited to the Son and the Father. The Spirit was the first Creation of the Father through the Son. Up to this point, we still do not have a definitive doctrine of the co-equality, or co-eternal nature of the three Persons. Instead, we have very tritheistic language, being used, to explain the relationship between the one God and the three Persons, of which, He consists. What was agreed upon, was that the Persons of the Trinity, were consubstantial.

Arianism and the Road to the Council of Nicea

In AD 318, in Alexandria, Egypt, a conflict broke out between a certain presbyter, named Arius, and the bishop of Alexandria, Alexander. Arius taught that, the Logos was created out of nothing before the beginning of the world, and therefore, was not of the same substance of the Father. In fact, He was the first Creation of God. Jesus was a demigod of the Father. Both groups agreed, that the Son pre-existed the incarnation.

The central issue, was the eternality of the Son of God. Alexander claimed, that the Son was co-eternal with the Father, but the rallying cry of the Arians was that, "there was a time when He was not."

In AD 321, Alexander held a local synod, which condemned Arius' teachings and excommunicated him and his friends. In turn, Arius petitioned support from other bishops to help him in his cause. He gained the support of Eusebius of Nicomedia and a few others. Together, they continued to spread the Arian doctrine, and continued to cause dissension among the Churches.

This dissension reached the ears of Constantine, who had just become the sole Emperor of the Roman Empire in AD 324, after having defeated Licinius, in the East. Constantine, who was the first Emperor to embrace Christianity, was interested in settling this theological dispute, probably to ensure the unity of the empire. In response, he sent his advisor, Hosius of Cordova, to Alexandria to settle the dispute. When it was apparent that the issue could not be easily solved, Constantine called for a council of all the bishops, to meet in Nicea (modern day Isnik, Turkey), twenty miles north of Nicomedia, in Bithynia.

In AD 325, approximately 300 bishops from various cities, journeyed to Nicea, at the expense of the emperor. This was only about 1/6 of the total number of bishops, in Christendom. Each bishop brought others with him, so the total number present, was probably upwards of 1,500 to 2,000 people. The majority of these bishops were from the Eastern, Greek-speaking part of the empire. The Council lasted approximately, six weeks.

There were three major groups of individuals represented at the council. There were a small minority, who were convinced of the Arian doctrine. Eusebius of Nicomedia was the spokesman for this view, rather than Arius. This was because Arius, being only a presbyter, could not sit in on the council. There were also another small minority of bishops, who believed Arianism threatened the core of the Christian message, i.e., the

full deity of Jesus Christ. The majority of those present, however, were convinced of neither view. Eusebius of Nicomedia presented his case before the council, reading a speech he had prepared. He believed this would be all that was necessary, to convince the majority of his and Arius' views, and thus, become the champion of orthodoxy, over Alexander. He was gravely mistaken. When the bishops present, heard him portray the Son as a creature of God, they angrily began shouting, "You lie! Blasphemy! Heresy!" Eusebius' voice was quickly drowned out, and his speech was rent from his hands and torn to shreds, then to be trampled underfoot. The mood of the undecided majority, had now shifted against Arius' views, and towards those of Alexander.

Convinced that they needed to definitively reject Arianism, the council sought the terms to define its faith. The Scripture alone, was not adequate, because both Arians and those who confessed that Jesus was co-eternal with the Father, used various proof-texts, to no avail. A statement of faith was deemed necessary.

Eusebius of Caesarea, the first Church historian, suggested a compromise creed, which he used for the Church in his city, which said that Jesus is "the Word of God, God of God,...the first-born of all creatures, begotten of the Father, before all time." Most of the bishops were satisfied with this. Even the Arians agreed to adopt it.

It was Alexander's party who strongly opposed it, because it did not resolve the issue. Prompted by Hosius, Constantine suggested the inclusion of *homoousios* to the statement, meaning "of the same substance." To this, the Arians strongly reacted, and those who followed Origen's teachings, it seemed too much like modalism, which taught, that Jesus' deity was actually, the Father Himself. They proposed, that *homoiousios* be used, meaning "of similar substance." Through Alexander's eloquence, his views prevailed. The Creed that was presented in its final form, reads:

We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of all things visible and invisible. And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, begotten of the Father, the only begotten; that is, of the essence of the Father, God of God, Light of Light, very

God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance [*homoousios*] with the Father; by whom, all things were made, both in heaven and on earth; who for us men, and for our salvation, came down and was incarnate, and was made man; He suffered, and the third day, He rose again, ascended into heaven; from thence, He shall come to judge the quick and the dead, and in the Holy Ghost. But those who say: "There was a time when He was not;"

And

"He was not before He was made;" and "He was made out of nothing," or "He is of another substance" or "essence," or "The Son of God is created," or "changeable," or "alterable" -they are condemned by the Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church."

"Of the essence of the Father" and "of one substance with the Father," clearly refuted any idea, that the Logos was less than full deity. "Begotten, not made," clearly refuted the Arian denial of the co-eternal existence of the Logos, with the Father. The final paragraph, also known as the condemnatory clause, condemned the various ways, in which Arius' teachings, were spoken of.

In the end, only two bishops would not sign the statement of faith, and Eusebius of Nicomedia refused to sign the condemnatory clause. As a result, they were banished by the emperor, along with Arius.

The council's contribution to the development of the Trinitarian doctrine is very important. It firmly rejected the idea, that the Logos was created and non-eternal with the Father, and established that, the Logos was of the same substance with the Father. This latter affirmation, however, caused division, once again, in the ensuing years. Even at the council, many bishops were hesitant about the inclusion of *homoousios*, because it lent itself to modalism. The council's decision cannot be referred to, as Trinitarian, however, since it did not deal with the Holy Spirit. There is only one sentence in the creed regarding Him, but it only affirmed, that they

believed in the Holy Ghost. This issue at this council, was the relationship of the Logos

to the Father, not to the Father and to the Holy Ghost. This issue would be taken up at the next ecumenical council.

After Nicaea: The Road to Constantinople

After the Council of Nicaea adjourned, the bishops went back to their respective Churches and many continued to teach the way they had before the Nicene Creed was adopted. The wording of the creed allowed the bishops to interpret it in various ways.

Arianism, although defeated by creed and imperial decree, quickly arose again and soon became the dominant view in the East. In three short years, Eusebius of Nicomedia (who was related to Constantine in some manner) managed to gain a hearing before the court of Constantine to present his views once again. Constantine was sympathetic to Eusebius this time, and allowed Arius and the deposed bishops to return in AD 328. Eusebius of Nicomedia played a crucial role in the rest of Constantine's reign. He even baptized Constantine on his death bed in AD 337. Two years after Constantine's death, Eusebius was made bishop of Constantinople upon the death of the former bishop.

Alexander died in AD 328, who was succeeded by Athanasius, a die-hard defender of the Nicene position. He became the champion of Trinitarian orthodoxy.

The political milieu that developed between the Council of Nicaea in AD 325, and the Council of Constantinople in AD 381, had much to do with the development, and acceptance of Trinitarian orthodoxy. Constantine had embraced Arianism after the Council of Nicaea. After his death, his son, Constantius II, who ruled in the East, while Constans and Constantine II, ruled all of the West, continued on with his support of Arianism. He became very pro-active for Arianism and against the Nicenes in AD 353, just three years after becoming sole emperor of the empire. Constantius II, continued as emperor, until his death, in AD 361. Arianism enjoyed a time of flourishing, in AD 328-379. Many bishops signed Arian Creeds of confession, including Hosius of

Cordova.

While Arianism dominated the theology of the empire because of the emperors' acceptance and approval, Athanasius and a few others continued to fight for the Nicene position. Athanasius was deposed from his bishopric, in Alexandria, no less than five times, but he continued the theological struggle, even in exile.

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Athanasius was aware of the hesitancy of many, to accept the *homoousios* terminology, because it lent itself toward modalism, so he came to accept the use of the term, *homoiousios*, meaning “of similar substance,” to speak of the relationship of the Son to the Father. This was a very important step, since he had previously argued, that the use of *homoiousios*, was just as heretical as Arianism.

In AD 362, at a local synod in Alexandria, Athanasius declared, that it was acceptable to refer to the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost as “one substance” as long as this was not understood to mean, an obliteration of distinction between the three persons, and it was acceptable to speak of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, as “three substances,” as long as this was not understood to separate the three, as three individual gods.

Athanasius died in AD 373, just eight years before his basic views would be adopted, as orthodoxy at Constantinople. He did not live to see his victory, but his work was carried on by the Great Cappadocians: Basil of Caesarea, Gregory of Nyssa, and Gregory of Nazianzus. They refined some of the terminology of the Nicene Creed, and that of Athanasius, to make it more acceptable. It is their work that is reflected in the synthesis of the modern Trinitarian doctrine.

Their main contribution was in their use of *ousia* and *hypostasis*. At Nicaea, these terms were used synonymously, but the Cappadocians distinguished between them, as Tertullian had over 150 years before. They said, that the Godhead existed as one *ousia*, but in three individual *hypostasis*. In Latin, it was termed one *substantia* and three *personae*. They did allow the Greek word, *prosopon* to be used in place of

hupostasis, but did not prefer it, because “it originally meant, face, countenance, or mask, and Sabellius had used it to mean, manifestation or role.”

While Athanasius was alive, he argued against distinguishing between *ousia* *hupostasis*, because Nicea did not distinguish them. He did not like to say “three *hupostasis*, because it made too great of a distinction between the persons. He did not like the term, *prosopon*, because it made too little of a distinction. At the AD 362 synod, however, he did accept “three *hupostasis*” as orthodox language, although he still advocated for the older Nicene language.

Although “three *hupostasis*” was acceptable to many, many others viewed this as Tritheism. Hebrews 1:3, was cited, which taught that Jesus was the express image of God’s *hupostasis*, and not of a second *hupostasis*. Athanasius contributed to this misunderstanding, by saying, that all men have the same substance, just as the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost have the same substance. The Cappadocians elaborated upon this, by comparing the Trinity to three men. Just as Peter, James, and John were *homoousios* with one another, yet, three persons, so the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost were *homoousios* with one another, yet, three Persons, Who had the same divine nature.

To deal with this misunderstanding, Gregory of Nyssa, admitted that the language employed, was a customary abuse of language. He said, that unlike three men, each member of the Trinity participates in the other’s work: “Every operation, which extends from God to the Creation ... has its origin from the Father, and proceeds through the Son, and is perfected in the Holy Ghost.”

The Cappadocians continued to use the subordinationistic language of the century, when speaking of the Son and Spirit. Basil taught that, we are “to perceive three, the Lord who gives the order, the Word who creates, and the Spirit who confirms,” and “the natural Goodness and the inherent Holiness and the royal Dignity, extend from the Father through the Only-begotten, to the Spirit.” Gregory of Nyssa said, “Grace flows

down in an unbroken stream from the Father, through the Son and the Spirit, upon the persons worthy of it.” Gregory of Nazianzus, even declared, “I should not like to call the Father, the greater, because from Him flows both, the Equality and the Being of the Equals (this will be granted on all hands), but I am afraid to us, the word, Origin, lest I should make Him the Origin of Inferiors... The word Greater...does not apply to the Nature, but only to Originator.”

In summary, the Three Cappadocians taught that:

The one God-head subsists in three co-equal, co-eternal, co-essential persons, and this truth is an incomprehensible mystery. There is communion of substance, but distinction of personhood. This Trinity is a perfect, inseparable, indivisible union, and the persons work together, in all things. The unique distinguishing characteristics of the persons, are as follows: the Father is unbegotten, the Son is begotten (generated), and the Holy Spirit is proceeding (spirited). The generation of the Son and the procession of the Holy Spirit are mysteries, however. While the persons are co-equal and co-eternal, the Father is, in some sense, the head and the origin.

The Council of Constantinople

In AD 379, Theodosius I, became ruler of the Roman Empire. He was a staunch supporter of the Nicene doctrine. It was under his direction, the second ecumenical council was called, in AD 381, to meet in Constantinople. There were only about 150 bishops present, and none of these were from the West. Gregory of Nyssa and Gregory of Nazianzus, were the primary spokesman, Basil of Caesarea, having died a few months before.

The creed, which the council adopted stated:

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, of all that is, seen and unseen. We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father. Through Him, all things were made. For us and for our salvation, He came down from heaven: by the power of the Holy Spirit, He became incarnate from the Virgin Mary, and was made man. For our sake, He was crucified under Pontius Pilate; He suffered death and was buried. On the third day, He rose again, in accordance with the Scriptures; He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again, in Glory, to judge the living and the dead, and His Kingdom will have no end. We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father [and the Son]. With the Father and the Son, He is worshipped and glorified. He has spoken through the Prophets. We believe in one Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

This council, rather than Nicaea, is where the first definitive, orthodox, universal creedal statement was made, which discussed the relationship of the Father, Son, and Spirit. Nicaea's primary concern was the relationship of Jesus to the Father, but Constantinople added to its creed the full, co-equal, co-eternal, consubstantial deity of the Holy Spirit. For this reason, it is regarded as the first, truly Trinitarian creed.

The council is important for two other reasons. First, it was the final theological blow to Arianism, although it would not be until the sixth century, that it would finally, be stamped out. Secondly, Apollinarianism was defeated, which taught, that Jesus had an incomplete human nature.

Conclusion

The Bible is content to speak of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit as being God, without explaining how it is so. The doctrine of the Trinity was the attempt to defend three

Biblical teachings all at the same time: monotheism; the divinity of the Father, Son, and Spirit; and the Scriptural distinctions between the Father, Son, and Spirit. The doctrine developed slowly, over a period of over 200 years, and continued to be refined in the way it was explained for hundreds of years after. Its development began, by an attempt to understand the nature of God in terms of Greek philosophical concepts, i.e., the idea that God is impassable and immutable. Since God could not suffer or change, the Son of God was declared to be an emanation from the Father, His first creation, by which, all else was created. Though He was Divine, the Logos sprang forth from the Father, became incarnate, suffered, died, was buried, and rose again. Slowly, the ideas of co-eternality and co-equality were adopted between the Father and the Son, and eventually, the Holy Spirit was added to this understanding. The final result, was the belief in One God, who exists in three distinct essences (Persons). The Father is unbegotten; the Son is begotten; and the Spirit is proceeding. Each Person in the Trinity has a certain function in the divine Economy, although Each Person participates in the work of the other two. The Father is seen in creation, the Son in redemption, and the Spirit in sanctification. These three are co-eternal, co-equal, and con-substantial. The Trinity is an indivisible unity, the Persons being distinct, yet not separate.

Relevance to the Modern Believer

The nature and being of God, is the most incomprehensible idea, known to man. How are we to think of that which has no beginning, which is omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent, and eternal? Though the concepts can be known by the mind, they cannot be fully comprehended. We have no experience in this world with which these elements can be seen or grasped. With such an idea as that of God, it must be confessed, that there is no one who can adequately explain His nature and being. Every man, though he contemplates it and seeks to discover it, will always come short and develop deficiencies in his theology. Understanding this, we need to watch ourselves, lest we elevate a certain creedal statement, a certain author's explanation, or our own understanding of God to the place of untouchable orthodoxy. Just as the doctrine of the Trinity developed over time, and the individual's theologies (who were

crucial in its development) developed over time, so too,

our understanding of God develops over time.

The creeds of Nicaea and Constantinople, though they may be beneficial to the Christian, are not the final word on the nature of the Godhead. The development of the Trinity, was in steps. Some of the ideas that were purported by earlier theologians, were later condemned as heresy, even though they were the basis for later developments, which were accepted as orthodoxy. Frank Stagg spoke of the deficiencies in the development of the Trinitarian doctrine when he said, "But what began as insistence upon tri-unity, eventually became an emphasis upon the threeness and increasing jeopardy to the belief in Oneness. ...To the term, Trinity, were soon added the terms, "persons," "three persons," "three persons of the Godhead," and even the ranking of the persons, as first, second, and third. Thus, Trinitarianism was fast on the way to tritheism, a de facto belief in three distinct gods. This, the New Testament never anticipated and does not support!"

Since the development of the Trinity was in stages, and those who advanced the doctrine had deficiencies in their theology, I must believe that even the councils and their definitive creeds did not bring an end to the pursuit of understanding God, nor an end to theological deficiencies. Although we may build from the early pioneers of the faith, we must seek to perfect it. I believe it is the duty of the modern believer to re-examine his beliefs about God, to be sure they are Biblically based. There is no creed or tradition as important as truth, and no truth as important as God. The modern Church must seek to perfect its understanding of God. This may indeed, necessitate the re-examining of the doctrine of the Trinity, as it has developed over the centuries. There are today, many Trinitarian authors who are, in fact, attempting a fresh explanation of Trinitarianism that seeks to rid the reader of subordinationistic and theistic conceptions of God, that conventional Trinitarianism has brought about in the minds of various individuals.

As did the early Church, the modern Church must continue to seek out a manner, in which, to understand and explain the Biblical teaching of monotheism, the Biblical language, that puts distinctions between the Father, Son, and Spirit, and the Biblical teaching of the divinity of the Father, Son, and Spirit. Are we to understand how three Beings are yet, one God, or are we to understand how One being, can be spoken of in three different ways? Which emphasis are we to have? The answer to this question will determine our understanding of God, and our relationship to that God, which is, the ultimate purpose for all of mankind. May God be with us in the pursuit of this grand and glorious purpose!

Footnotes

Clement of Rome, Epistle to the Corinthians.

Ignatius, Epistle to Polycarp, Epistle to the Romans.

Polycarp, Epistle to the Philippians.

Hermas, The Shepherd. Similitude.

Justin, First Apology, Second Apology.

Tatian, Address to the Greeks.

Athenagoras, Plea for the Christians.

Irenaeus, Against Heresies.

Tertullian, Against Praxeas quoted in David K. Bernard, *Oneness and Trinity A.D. 100-300* (Hazelwood, MO: Word Aflame Press, 1991).

Origen, On the Principles, Commentary on John, Against Celsus.

Basil, Letters, On the Spirit.

Gregory of Nyssa, On "Not Three Gods," "On the Holy Spirit."

Gregory of Nazianzus, Oration of Holy Baptism.

Frank Stagg, The Holy Spirit Today (Nashville: Broadman Press, n.c.).

Trinitarianism: Modified Tritheism

People often confuse the “plain” statements of Scripture with a particular theology that has been developed from those statements. While each theological system is derived from and supported by references to various Scriptures, it does not mean that the theological system developed from those Scriptures, is the teaching of the same. Even heretics appeal to Scripture, in support of their teachings. As Richard Rice said, “The Scriptures contain such vast and varied material, that it is not difficult to surround an idea with Biblical quotations. The crucial question, is whether the idea is faithful to the overall Biblical portrait of God.” To judge any theological system, then, we must question whether or not it accurately reflects the Biblical teaching, as a whole, or if it has merely found Biblical statements, to support an un-Biblical theology.

It is often the case, that the Bible makes statements that are difficult to understand, difficult to fit together into one unified picture, or statements that seem to contradict one another. What we do in such cases, is attempt to construct a theological system, which can best account for all relevant data.

Too many times, however, after having developed a particular theological construct through which to understand the data, one will go back and read that construct into the Biblical passages, believing that the passages themselves are teaching the already developed construct, rather than understanding that it is the construct which is informing their understanding of the passage. It is the mistake of seeing what we believe we are

going to see.

Therefore, it is imperative, that a distinction be made between the theological construct we have developed/been taught to assist our understanding of Scripture, and the teachings of Scripture itself. We ought to hold our theological constructs (systemic theology) as tentative, able to be altered in light of other evidence that may arise to the contrary which can better explain the Biblical data. We cannot pass off our systematic understanding of the Biblical statements, as the absolute teaching of Scripture, when indeed, such may not be the case. Our systematic understanding of Scripture, or even our exegesis of a particular text, is conditioned by our historical context, and thus, may not have permanent validity.

Implications for the Trinitarian Doctrine

The doctrine of the Trinity is no exception to the above. Trinitarianism is not the teaching of Scripture, but is a theological construct, developed from Scriptural references, to help explain the Biblical doctrine of God. While there are Scriptures that *seem* to teach Trinitarian dogma, in reality, there is not one verse that does so. At best, it could be said, that there are verses, or a combination of several verses, which seem to *support* the Trinitarian dogma, even this affirmation does not mean that Trinitarianism is the best way to understand these verses, let alone the only way. There could be other constructs that would better explain them, and indeed, I believe there is.

While many Trinitarians would object to the idea, that the Trinity is not taught in Scripture, claiming that they find the Trinity on virtually every page of the New Testament, upon further examination, any honest Trinitarian must agree, that, indeed, the Trinitarian doctrine is not taught/found in Scripture. No learned Trinitarian scholar would argue this point. Most recognize, that the doctrine developed over time, as the Church refined its understanding of God's nature, and the relationship of Jesus and the Spirit, to the Father. This development involved the coining and specialization of key terms, such as Trinity, *ousia*, and *hypostasis* (some of which, were not Biblical words),

which in turn, further defined the Church Fathers' conception of God, into a certain construct (which is true of most all language/knowledge interaction).

While Trinitarians freely admit, that the dogma is not *taught* in Scripture, they will contend, that it is *found* in Scripture, although not expressed in the same categories. Rather than being an explicit teaching of Scripture, the doctrine of the Trinity, is seen to be an implicit teaching, formulated from the inferences and exegesis of the Biblical data, although not directly stated by the same. It is viewed as the only viable explanation of all the Biblical data, concerning God's identity, all the while, the formulation itself is only a Bible-based, Biblically-in-formed construct, through which, we understand the raw Biblical data.

The Biblical Data and the Theological Constructs Developed to Account for It

The problem facing both Trinitarians and Oneness believers is how to reconcile three seemingly contradictory teachings of Scripture: 1. There is only One God; 2. The NT makes a distinction between the Father, Son, and Spirit; 3. The appellations, "Father," "Son," and "Spirit" are used in reference to God (meaning a reference to any given appellation is naturally understood to be a reference to God, and not someone other than God). The question that both, Oneness and Trinitarianism seeks to answer, then, is how to understand God as being One, and yet, account for the Scriptural distinctions. The Trinitarian dogma, as well as Oneness theology, is a theological construct, which attempts to resolve these three Biblical teachings.

Oneness and Trinitarian theology, both attempt to explain these distinctions, but do so from different starting points, and end up with two different conclusions. Oneness theology starts with the clear teaching of the OT, that God is One (understanding "One," in its normal use, to mean that God is uni-personal), and understands the NT distinctions between Father, Son, and Spirit, in light of this foundational OT teaching. Trinitarians start with the NT distinctions between Father, Son, and Spirit, and understand the OT assertions, that God is One, in light of these. The result, is that

Oneness theologians understand the distinctions as arising in the incarnation, while Trinitarians understand the distinctions as being eternal distinction of divine Persons in the Godhead, both prior to, and after the incarnation. The crux of the Trinitarian doctrine, is found in its insistence, that the distinctions between Father, Son, and Spirit are distinctions of eternal Persons, while the crux of Oneness theology, is its insistence, that God is uni-personal.

Understanding the different starting points of each theological system, is important, because one's starting point for theological understanding, often determines, how they will understand all incoming data, and the paradigm, through which, it is filtered to become a theological position. *Because Trinitarians start with diversity, when they try to fit monotheism into the equation, they necessarily end up, understanding God's Oneness to be, a mere unity, not a numerical Oneness, as is most often meant by the term, and as I believe, is indicated in the OT.*

Why Conclude that God is a Trinity?

While I do not agree with the conclusions Trinitarianism has come to, in explaining the Biblical data, the Scripture does make statements that are very difficult to understand, if God is only One Person. A casual reading of the New Testament, will demonstrate how often we find distinctions between Father and Son (and less often, between Father, Son, and Spirit). Such distinctions are perplexing, in light of the Biblical teaching, that God is One. While I do not believe Trinitarianism is the best resolution of this, 'one yet, distinct' dichotomy, Trinitarianism has, at least, made an effort to preserve God's Oneness, while also accounting for the many distinction passages.

To demonstrate the dilemma any monotheistic believer is faced with, when reading the NT, I will cite but two passages, that make a distinction between Father, Son, and Spirit. First, Jesus told His disciples that He would pray to the Father to send the Spirit to the disciples. The Spirit is said to proceed from the Father, speaking not of Himself, but speaking, that which He will hear (from who?). The Spirit, is even said, to glorify Jesus

(John 14:16-17; 15:26; 16:13-14).

On another occasion, Jesus said that if we love Him, then His Father will love us, and *they* will come to us and make *their* abode with us (John 14:23). With statements like these, it is no wonder, that Trinitarians believe that the Father, Son, and Spirit are not the same personal deity.

What I wish to point out here, is that a casual reading of Scripture would not lead one to believe, that God is three persons in one essence (Trinitarianism), but rather, that God is three essences (Tritheism). Scripture, often seems, to portray Father, Son, and Spirit, as three separate beings, without any hint of a unity of persons in one essence, as is taught by Trinitarianism. Reading the distinction passages, by themselves, would practically demand the belief of three separate Gods (Tritheism), connected somehow, by will or general essence (just like three men all share the same essence of humanity, yet are separate from one another), but not three persons, who are all somehow God in their own right, yet, at the same time, none of which are God, without all three persons.

Without the passages concerning God's Oneness, *de facto* our natural understanding of the relationship between Father, Son, and Spirit would be, that they are three separate Beings, all of whom, are Gods, but by no means, would we deduce the Trinitarian doctrine from these texts. It is only the Biblical passages, that insist on God's Oneness, that prevent Trinitarian theology from confessing Tritheism.

Because Trinitarianism starts with, and emphasizes the distinction passages, it easily floats into the waters of Tritheism. *In my estimation, Trinitarianism is little more than a Tritheistic understanding of God, that accounts for, and compensates for, its own error through its invention of 'three persons in one essence.'* I say, "invention," because such a concept and terminology, is absolutely foreign, to Scripture. But, it is only by such a concept, that this Tritheistic God of theirs, can still be spoken of, as one.

Trying to Avoid Tritheism

Trinitarians must find some way to understand the Scriptural distinctions between Father, Son, and Spirit without confessing three different Gods, because the Scripture is adamant, that God is One. To do so, they constructed the notion of God, having only one essence, but within that one essence, existing as three distinct Persons. Their emphasis on God's threeness, is prevented from becoming a confession of three separate Gods, only by qualifying it to say, God's threeness, subsists in one essence. Only by such a qualification, can they preserve some form of oneness. Insisting on seeing the distinctions between Father, Son, and Spirit as distinctions of divine Persons within one essence, in turn, necessitated the redefining of "One" to mean unity, rather than a numerical oneness. When the figures come in, we have a nonsensical, non-Biblical portrait of God's nature, that makes no sense, seems contradictory at many points, is said to be incomprehensible, and tends toward Tritheism. Trinitarianism seems to do justice to the meaning of a few passages, yet, all the while, violating the meaning of the majority.

Importance

Why is this so important to understand? It is important, because Trinitarians love to emphasize the many passages in the NT, which distinguish between the Father and Son (and less frequently, the Spirit) in order to prove to Oneness believers, that God is a Trinity. Somehow, it is believed, that by pointing out the many distinction passages, they are proving that God is Trinity, and disproving the Oneness position. Such, is a hasty and false conclusion. First, before using these distinction passages as ammunition against Oneness theology, the Trinitarian believer needs to first consider why he/she understands the distinction passages to teach a Trinity, rather than to teach three separate Gods, as such passages would naturally be understood, apart from the Trinitarian construct.

I find it amazing, that so many Trinitarians fail to realize, that the distinction passages do not demonstrate any sort of a Trinity. Even when Father, Son, and Spirit are all

mentioned in the same verse, it still does not demonstrate, that God is a Trinity. The only way these passages could teach a Trinity, is if they attempted to explain the relationship between Father, Son, and Spirit. Unfortunately, not one passage explains this. No passage spells out the Trinitarian dogma, that Father, Son, and Spirit are three persons in the one essence of God. That understanding is supplied by the Trinitarian, who reads the passages, not by the text itself. As was stated earlier, even Trinitarians will admit, that the Bible nowhere explicitly, teaches the Trinity. The doctrine is a deduced doctrine, formulated over a period of 300 years, to explain the three strands of Biblical teaching, mentioned earlier. Trinitarianism is not the teaching of Scripture, but is a particular way of reconciling the distinction passages, which seem to show that Father and Son (Spirit, sometimes) are separate beings with the Oneness passages, which demonstrate that such cannot be so.

Secondly, pointing out the distinction passages is futile, because Oneness theology fully acknowledges these passages, but understands the reason for their existence, in a different manner than do Trinitarians. To point out such passages, thinking they prove God to be a Trinity and disprove Oneness theology, demonstrates that such an individual does not understand Oneness theology, and has confused Trinitarian theology with the Scripture itself.

Solving the Problem: Oneness Theology

While the Trinitarian doctrine alludes to Biblical verses, the doctrine itself, is nowhere taught in Scripture. It is a theological construct, used to understand the Scripture, attempting to answer the three Biblical teachings. Trinitarianism, however, is not the only answer possible. There are other possible theological constructs, through which, we can better understand the Biblical teaching. I believe that Oneness theology is a much better construct, doing a much better job at answering the three Biblical teachings, without having to invent all sorts of un-Biblical concepts and terminology to do so, and without violating any of the three teachings.

Oneness theology explains the three Biblical teachings, starting with the OT emphasis on God's absolute Oneness and understands the distinction passages, in light of this fact, not vice-versa (as does Trinitarianism). Understanding the NT, in light of the OT, is necessary if we wish to pay full respect to God's progressive revelation of Himself to man, for the nature of progressive revelation will not permit newer revelation (NT) to essentially alter the foundational understanding, given to us from the old revelation (OT). The old revelation was given as a foundation, upon which, to understand the new, and was not intended to be radically altered by subsequent revelation. The new revelation was not given to redefine the meaning of the old, but rather, to add to it. Trinitarianism errs, in that, it does theology backwards, reading later revelation into prior revelation, *redefining* the latter, rather than *adding* to and *complimenting* it. To do theology properly, then, we must begin with the Old Testament's insistence on Monotheism, understanding such, as it is clearly portrayed and most naturally understood (as a numerical oneness) and interpret the distinction passages, in the NT, in light of that understanding.

A cursory examination of the Scripture will reveal, that the distinction passages are not found in Scripture, until after the incarnation (new revelation), and that most distinctions occur only between Father and Son (often, to the exclusion of the Spirit). In light of such an observation, and in consistency with the progressive nature of revelation, Oneness theology concludes it best, to understand these distinctions as arising, because of the incarnation. Only such an approach, can adequately deal with all the evidence, do justice to the progressive nature of revelation, preserve the foundational understanding of God's identity, as set forth in the OT, and fully account for the distinction passages, in the NT.

When one fails to understand the distinctions, in light of the incarnation, the results are disastrous. Origen is a perfect example. Because Origen understood the distinctions between Father and Son, as eternal distinctions between the Father and an eternal Son, he ended up with a subordinistic theology, that made the Son inferior to the Father. He could not avoid treating the Son, as eternally subordinate to the Father (rather than

co-equal, as modern Trinitarianism teaches), because the NT statements often make Jesus, not only distinct from the Father, but also subordinate to the Father. Jesus had to pray. Equals do not pray to one another. One only prays to a superior. Jesus even confessed, that the Father was greater than He. If this phenomena is not understood, in light of Christ's limited human existence, one could only conclude, that the subordination of the Son to the Father, is an eternal subordination of being.

Modern Trinitarianism, does not fall into the same error, as did Origen. Rather than understanding this phenomenon to refer to a subordination of the eternal Son to the Father, modern Trinitarianism understands the NT statements about Jesus' inferiority to the Father, as arising, because of the Son's human existence; i.e., the incarnation. What I find so amazing about this, is that Oneness theology has always understood the reason for the inferiority of the Son to the Father, in this way. *If Trinitarians can recognize, that the inferiority of the Son to the Father, is due to the incarnation, why can they not see that the distinction between the Father and the Son, is also due to the incarnation?* This is especially telling when it becomes apparent, that the Father-Son distinction is not seen, until the NT. If the Son was an eternally distinct Person of the Godhead, why was it not until the NT, that He is ever revealed? And why does the Trinitarian not question why we do not find God, as being identified, as Father (in the NT sense of the word), until after the incarnation, if He is eternally Father? God is only called, "Father," or likened to a father, when referring to Him as Creator, as suzerain over the Davidic Kings, or when referring to His Covenant relationship with Israel, but never to refer to His relationship to another Person in the Godhead! Does it not make more sense to understand the sudden emergence of the Father-Son terminology in the NT, as arising due to the incarnation, when God actually fathered a son, and to contrast God's existence apart from the incarnation and God's existence in the incarnation? I believe it does, and the failure to acknowledge such, is the weakness of the Trinitarian doctrine.

Oneness theology, naturally accounts for the distinction passages, while Trinitarianism has to go into elaborate explanations of God's nature, which are not found in the

Scripture, propagate a construct of God's nature, which tends toward Tritheism, and purport a teaching, that is said, to be so incomprehensible, that no one can ever understand it. Maybe we cannot understand it, because it does not make sense, because it does not fit the Biblical data. Maybe we cannot understand it, because Trinitarian theology has started from the wrong place, and thus, ended up at the wrong place. While Trinitarianism can account for some of the puzzling data contained in the NT, there is much it cannot account for, and much that is inconsistent or contradictory to both, the Biblical data and reason.

While I firmly believe that God's nature is a mystery, not totally comprehensible to us, we can have some comprehension, as revealed to us in Scripture. I can label any number of nonsensical affirmations as, "mystery," but, this does not make it such. Is Trinitarian dogma truly a mystery, or is it a man-made construct, that distorts the Biblical portrait of God? When it is all said and done, Trinitarianism seems more contradictory to the Biblical teaching and basic reason, than it does, to be a mystery. If, when I get to heaven, there are three Persons to greet me, I will gladly confess my error, but until then, I must continue to embrace Oneness theology, as the most adequate understanding of the Biblical data, concerning God and His nature.

Eternal Father, Eternal Son?

One of the ways, in which, Trinitarians have argued for the existence of a second, eternal Person in the God-head, known as "Son," can be illustrated by the following syllogism:

- P1 God is eternally "Father"
- P2 One cannot be a Father without having a Son
- C1 God must have an eternal Son

The conclusion of a syllogism, is true insofar, as the premises of the syllogism, are true.

If one of the premises are false, however, the conclusion will also be false. I would argue, that the conclusion Trinitarians have made concerning the Son, is false, because P1 is a false premise, based on bad hermeneutics. To argue that God is eternally, “Father,” reads NT designations for God, back into the OT, which is methodologically improper, and theologically disastrous.

God is not eternally, “Father,” any more than He is eternally, “Son.” God came to be known, as “Father,” in the incarnation. This is not to say, that God is never called, “Father,” or likened to a father in the OT, but it is to say, that “Father” was never God’s name. God’s name is clearly, “YHWH, Jehovah,” to which, He is referred over 6,800 times. God even declared, “I am YHWH...” (Isaiah 45:18). If God has always been, “Father,” and that is His name, we should expect Him to be called, “Father,” all throughout the OT, not “YHWH.”

God is referred to as, or likened to “Father” about a dozen times in the OT, but always in the sense of Creator (Deuteronomy 32:6; Malachi 2:10), Covenant-maker (Exodus 4:22; Deuteronomy 1:31 8:5; 14:1; Isaiah 64:8; Malachi 2:10), or suzerain over the Davidic Kings (Psalm 2:7; 2 Samuel 7:14). “Father” described God’s relationship to His Creation, Israel, and the Davidic Kings, *not His relationship to another divine Person*, as in Trinitarian theology, and not His name.

It is important to note the fact, that in the OT, “Father” never describes God’s relationship to another divine Person. If God’s eternal Fatherhood is derived from His relationship to an eternally divine Person, known as “Son,” why is it that we never read of the Son in the OT, that the Father is in eternal relationship with? We would expect for the Son that God is Father to, to be spoken of prior to the incarnation (in the OT). Mysteriously, we do not find any mention of the Son until *after the incarnation* when God fathered a human son (in the NT), and thus, have no reason to assume, that the Son existed prior to the incarnation, nor a basis for assuming, that God is eternally, “Father.” The incarnation, then, may explain why we only find a handful of references, in the OT, where God is referred to, as “Father,” but, a multitude of references, in the NT.

The mere fact, that God is occasionally referred to as, “Father,” in the OT, is not enough to conclude the existence of another divine Person in the Godhead (Son). For God to be ‘eternally Father’ to an eternal Son, not only requires that God be called “Father,” in the OT, but requires that God’s Fatherhood is spoken of in reference to another divine Person. If we do not find God being “Father,” in relationship to another divine Person, who is “Son” (and we do not), then there is no solid reason to conclude that God is eternally Father, or that there is an eternal Son. While the absence of the Son, in the OT, and the absence of the Father-Son language, in the OT, does not disprove Trinitarian dogma, it does throw a serious question on it, as the best explanation of the data. There is no question, that it is possible for an eternal Son to not be mentioned in the OT, and yet, still truly exist. The *possibility* of such, is not being disputed; what is being disputed, is the *likelihood*, of such.

The appellations, “Father” and “Son” are relational terms with relational significance. Furthermore, such appellations describe a specific kind of relationship: a filial relationship [parent/child]. In the incarnation, God became “Father” in a new way, unseen in the OT; i.e., in a paternal sense. It begins being used so predominantly in the NT, because God actually fathered a human child, and had a relationship with that genuine human being (Son). This is not to say that it is a relationship between Jesus’ two natures (Nestorianism), or that it is a relationship between two divine Persons (Trinitarianism), but it is to say, as a genuine human being with a genuine human consciousness, Jesus, the God-man, had need of communication with God.

It would be proper to say, then, that YHWH, Jehovah, God became both, “Father” and “Son,” at the incarnation. The way that God *became* “Father” and *became* “Son” in the incarnation, is not the same type of becoming, however. YHWH, Jehovah, became the “Son” in a *metaphysical* way, but became “Father,” only in a *relational* sense.

God became the Son by a metaphysical uniting of human nature to His One Person through the miraculous virgin conception. God became, something in time, that He was

not previously, in eternity. There was no change in God's essential being (for He remained the same), but there was a change in God's manner of existence. As the Church fathers taught, 'He became what He was not, while remaining what He was.' Such a teaching stresses God's immutability, and yet, acknowledges God's new manner of existence, as a genuine human being (in addition to His continued existence, beyond the incarnation).

God became the Father, however, only by relationship to the man that He truly became. For God to become "Father," did not require any metaphysical change. "Father," simply refers to YHWH's continued manner of existence, apart from the incarnation, as He has always existed. YHWH, Jehovah, comes to be known as, "Father" only after the incarnation, not because of a metaphysical change in His being, but because of His paternal relationship to Jesus Christ.

So, while it could be said, that YHWH, Jehovah, became "Father" and "Son" simultaneously, this does not imply that the "becoming" was of the same nature. The incarnational becoming (John 1:14) is a metaphysical becoming, while God's existence as "Father," is a relational becoming.

Love in the Godhead?

The Gospel of John, while containing some of the most powerful attestations to God's uni-personal nature, also records some statements which have been difficult for many Oneness believers to reconcile with their faith. One such example, is John's record of statements made by Jesus, concerning the Father's love for Him (John 3:35; 5:20; 10:17; 15:9-10; 16:27; 17:23-24, 26,) and His love for the Father (14:31). What did Jesus mean by these statements? If God is One, and Jesus is that One God incarnate, then how could the Father love the Son and the Son love the Father and there still be only One God? An exchange of love seems to imply, that God's being is multi-personal, not uni-personal, which is what Trinitarians have claimed for centuries (specifically, that

God is tri-personal). Do these Scriptures, which speak of love between the Father and Son, support the Trinitarian doctrine? If not, how are we to understand such Biblical statements?

The first thing to be noted in this discussion, is that the Scripture never mentions love between the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, but only love between the Father and Son. If Jesus' Words truly teach an eternal love between Persons in a Trinity, one would have to wonder why one member of that Trinity, is never spoken of, as giving or receiving love. While this is an argument from silence, the absence of "the third-Person of the Trinity," in the exchange of love, should cause us to critically evaluate the impetus for Jesus' Words. Even if the love, spoken of, is indeed between *multiple Persons* in the Godhead, while such would disprove Oneness theology, it would not prove a Trinitarian conception of God, because all three "Persons" are not said to be involved. At best, such "evidence" would give evidence, for a binitarian view of God.

How could it be, and why would it be, that the Father loves the Son, and the Son, the Father? The fact that the love is only spoken of, as being between the Father and Son, coupled with the fact, that all such statements are post-incarnational (spoken only by Christ), should alert us to consider, that such statements are due to the incarnation. Any attempt to discover the meaning and nature of the love between the Father and Son must incorporate this monumental work of God, and its ramifications for the discussion at hand.

With the advent of the incarnation, God's existence as a genuine human Being, became distinct to, but not separate from God's continued existence beyond the incarnation (God, in His transcendence). When God assumed a human existence in the incarnation, He acquired a consciousness and identity, which He did not possess before the incarnation. He had a human psyche, not overwhelmed or consumed by His deity. The exercise of Jesus' human nature (such as His consciousness, Spirit, will, mind, emotions, and flesh) in such a way, requires that, in the incarnation, Jesus be spoken of, as possessing an identity distinct from, but not separate from, the Father. Just as we

find a distinction, but not a separation of Christ's two natures, we also find a distinction, but not a separation between God and Jesus; the Father and the Son.

Let it not be thought, that we are separating Jesus and the Father, so as to say, that they are two distinct Persons in the Godhead. What is being emphasized, is the Biblical distinction between the Father and the Son -- a distinction between God's existence, as exclusive deity and His existence, as deity and humanity conjoined into the One Person of Jesus Christ. Jesus, is distinct from the Father, as it pertains to His human existence. Although the Father and Jesus are the same Person in regards to deity, the addition of humanity, in the Son, makes the Son distinct from the Father; distinct, in regards to the humanity, not in the Godhead, itself.

It is because of this distinction between God's existence in the incarnation (Son) and God's continued existence beyond the incarnation (Father), that we read of love existing between the Father and Son. God Created human beings as relational beings, with the capacity to receive and give love. Because Jesus was truly human, although fully God simultaneously, He had a need to relate to the Father, as do all men, and thus, love the Father. The Father, who loves all men, also loved Jesus, who was as human as us all. In this relationship between Father and Son (as with any relationship), the exchange of love, is to be expected.

Some have tried to explain this exchange of love, as Jesus' human nature, loving Jesus' divine nature, and vice-versa. Trinitarians, have particularly criticized this explanation, pointing out, that it reads something into Jesus' Words, that He did not say, and makes Jesus' statements meaningless when interpreted, according to the normal use of language. We must agree, that Jesus did not say His divine nature loves His human nature. Also, such an approach assumes an un-Biblical definition of "Son," attributing it strictly to Jesus' humanity, to the exclusion of His whole Person, which includes His deity. The Biblical use of the term, "Son," certainly originated with the incarnation, but it does not refer *only* to Jesus' human nature. The term, "Son" incorporates Jesus' whole Person, both deity and humanity, conjoined into one indivisible Person. To say that

“Son” only refers to Jesus’ human nature, is Nestorian, at heart, separating Jesus into two Persons, in One body. It presents Christ, as two Beings in One body, the divine nature loving the human nature. Such a conception would have Jesus saying, “I love Myself,” or “I love My other nature,” rather than, “The Father loves the Son.” The Scripture, however, presents Christ, as One whole Person. Although Christ has a divine and human nature, natures do not love, people love. Jesus loved the Father, and the Father loved Jesus.

While the above explanation does justice to Jesus’ statements, concerning love between the Father and Son after the incarnation, what about Jesus’ statement in John 17:24, where He said to the Father, “You loved Me before the Creation of the world.” This love is pre-incarnational, and thus, cannot be explained by the incarnation. Does this, then, teach an eternal love between Persons in the Godhead? To answer this question, we must consider God’s foreknowledge, and ability to “call those things which are not as though they were” (Romans 4:17). Jesus is said to be the lamb, slain from the foundation of the world (1 Peter 1:19-20; Revelation 13:8). Although Jesus’ personal existence in space/time did not occur until the fullness of time, and thus, He was not slain until the fullness of time, God considered the event, to be an accomplished event, even before the Creation of the world. Even believers are said, to have had our names written in the Book of Life, before the foundation of the world (Revelation 17:8), although our actual salvation encounter with God did not occur, until we existed in space/time. Clearly, we did not exist before the foundation of the world, and yet, God considered us to have already been saved, even then, calling those things which were not as though they were. In like manner, the Son did not have a personal existence until the incarnation, yet, the Father loved the Son before the incarnation, calling those things which were not as though they were. It would seem, that the Father loved the Son in foreknowledge, just as God loved all of us, and saved us, according to His foreknowledge.

Trinitarians are quick to point out, that God is love (1 John 4:8, 16), and that love must have an object, for love to have any meaning. Since Creation is not eternal, while God

is, and thus, His love is eternal, it is argued, that God needed an eternal object of love. Trinitarians see this eternal object of love, as the Trinity itself. The Father has had the Son and Spirit, as eternal objects of love, and likewise, the other two Persons of the Trinity.

But, as I have demonstrated above, it is not difficult to conceive of God's love, being eternally directed toward His Creation, even before the Creation truly existed in space/time.

Even if we conclude, that God's eternal love was not based on His foreknowledge and foreordination of the Creation, why can it not be conceived, that the Father could love Himself eternally? God is love, after all, not just the source of love. We can have a godly love for ourselves (a respectful recognition of our dignity, because of who/what God Created us to be). If we can have a love for our self, who are made in God's image, then, is it not possible that God, too, could have a love for Himself? This is supported by the fact, that God gave us the command to love others, as we love ourselves (Leviticus 19:18; Matthew 19:19). Our love for others is based, in part, on our love for self (again, in a godly sense). If God's image-bearers can do such, then why can't God have love for Himself also? Such an argument is speculative and inconclusive, but is an argument, nonetheless. I find the argument no more speculative than the Trinitarian claim, that God has been eternally loved by being in community with His tri-personal self. This claim to knowledge, assumes something about the nature of God and the nature of His love, based on our imperfect, human experience of love. Human love needs an object, but it could very well be, that God's perfect love does not require an object, to have a true existence. When it comes to the nature of God and His love, then, the idea that love must have an object to be true love, may be a presupposition we are making, about love based upon our limited understanding of love. If God needs no direct object for His nature of love to have meaning, the Trinitarian argument against the Oneness position, becomes completely invalid. Again, this portion of the discussion, has been entirely speculative. While I do not personally hold to the "self-love" explanation, I postulate such speculation, simply to demonstrate that

the Oneness position cannot be rendered, *de facto* false based, on the fact that one of God's eternal attributes, is love. There are at least two ways to explain John 17:24, in light of Oneness theology.

Finally, if there is love between multiple Persons in the Godhead, how can Monotheism still be maintained? It takes a personal mind and consciousness to love, and to be the object of love. In order to have love for one another, each Person of the Trinity would have to have their own mind or consciousness. If there are three centers of consciousness, or three minds in the Godhead, we have three Gods, not three distinctions in One God, as Trinitarianism teaches. Since Trinitarianism teaches that there is only one mind in the Godhead, how can love exist between three Persons in the Godhead? This is Tritheism, or at least, incipient Tritheism.

In conclusion, Jesus' statements concerning love in the Godhead harmonize quite well with Oneness theology, being understood in light of the incarnation. Jesus is distinct from the Father, because of His human existence, and with His humanity-based distinction from the Father, there arises a need for relationship with God, just as there is a need for relationship with God in all genuine human beings. One element of the Son's relationship with the Father, is the element of love.

Why be a Trinitarian?

Why should we conclude that God is a Trinity of Persons; i.e., God's eternal essence subsists in three distinct and eternal Persons: Father, Son, Spirit? Is the Biblical evidence as overwhelmingly compelling as many Trinitarians claim it is? Oneness believers would answer in the negative. Each theological position will point to certain Scriptures to bolster their case. This is arguing from the micro-level. Our doctrine of God cannot be informed from a few isolated verses, but must be informed from the entire corpus of Biblical data. While we must grapple with the Biblical text on the micro-

level, we can only do so after having established the Biblical teaching on God on the macro-level.

No theological position, can adequately explain, every verse in the Bible that pertains to God. There will always be passages that are difficult to explain, and that seem to support another position. Because of this, we must move beyond proof-texting, when it comes to the Oneness vs. Trinity debate. It is at the level of proof-texting, however, that the debate usually lies. Both sides gather up five verses that bolster their view, and use those same verses to attack the contrary position. Each side thinks they are right and have “won” the argument, but in reality, we have ten verses that seem to teach two different things. Nobody has “won,” until we can find a way to understand all ten verses with internal consistency and without jumping through exegetical hoops.

It will not do to find a particular verse in the Bible that does not readily fit with our opponent’s doctrine, and exploit that one verse, to such an extent, that we dismiss their entire position. To do so, is to commit what I call the “weak link” fallacy. We commit the weak link fallacy, when we attack the one weak link in our opponent’s theological system, and then mistakenly believe, that we have dismantled the entire theological chain. Not so. In order to dismantle a theological system, we must not only dismantle the weak links of the chain, but the strong links of the chain, too. All theological positions have weak links. There are just as many difficult texts for Trinitarians, as there are for Oneness believers. We will not be able to solve the Godhead issue and the dilemma of these problem texts, unless we first establish a Biblical foundation upon which to interpret them through. We build that foundation through observing the Biblical data as a whole, not a difficult verse, here and there. When it comes to the Oneness vs. Trinity debate, we must ask ourselves; which view is better supported by the larger picture of Scripture? While there may be verses which seem to indicate a Trinity of eternal Persons on the micro-level, we would only be justified in concluding, that God is indeed, a Trinity, if such an interpretation is supported on the macro-level. If Trinitarianism cannot be supported on a macro-level of exegesis, then we should not interpret particular verses within a Trinitarian construct. I intend to demonstrate that on

the macro-level, Oneness theology is better supported by Scripture, than is Trinitarian theology.

Those who believe in a Trinity, often do so, based on the fact that Scripture often makes a distinction between the Father and Son, and to a lesser degree, the Holy Spirit. If God's Oneness is a numerical Oneness of Person (meaning, He is uni-personal) as Oneness believers maintain, these distinctions become very perplexing, if not meaningless. After all, how is it, that Jesus prays to the Father, and speaks of the Father as though the Father is another Person, distinct from Him, if Jesus's deity is the deity of the Father? It would be the same personal deity, in both cases. If such is the case, why would we need to make any distinction between Father and Son? In order to make sense of the distinctions between Father and Son, it would seem, that Jesus must be a distinct Person from the Father.

While I believe Monotheism and the Biblical distinctions are easily reconciled when understood in light of the humanity God assumed in the incarnation (without resorting to a Nestorian view of Christ), I can also see the weight of the dilemma that faces the readers of Scripture, when they encounter such distinctions. How can God be One, and yet at the same time, the Scripture speak of the Father, Son, and Spirit, as distinct, and as God?

It would be very easy to conclude, that Father, Son, and Spirit are three personal deities within one divine essence. Such a conclusion can account for both, the real distinctions we encounter between Father, Son, and Spirit, and maintain the existence of only One God. Of course, "One" has to be redefined away from a numerical Oneness to the notion of a "unity," to make this view work. While I sympathize with the Trinitarian solution to the perplexing data in Scripture, it is the redefining of "One," that makes the Trinitarian view untenable.

There is no doubt, that we find distinctions in reference to Father, Son, and Spirit in the Scripture, but the simple existence of distinctions does not warrant, a Trinitarian concept

of God. The doctrine of the Trinity, is a mere model, formulated by the Church Fathers, through which, the Oneness passages could be reconciled with the distinction passages. I do not believe that such a conclusion is the best conclusion to make of the data, because the Trinitarian conclusion, is not based on all the data.

We must consider the following data, when developing our theology of God:

1. While we do find distinctions between Father, Son, and Spirit, these distinctions do not appear until the NT.

2. The vast majority of distinctions, in the NT, are between the Father and Son, not the Father, Son, and Spirit.

3. The appellations, “Father” and “Son,” do not appear in the OT, as designations for God. God is only called, “Father” or likened to a “Father” about a dozen times, and in each case, it describes God’s relationship to His Creation (as Creator, or Covenant-maker), not His relationship to another divine Person (Son). Rather than being referred to, as “Father” in the OT, God is referred to as “YHWH, Jehovah.”

4. While the OT speaks of the Spirit, there is never any indication that the Spirit is a distinct Person, within God’s essence. The Spirit is most often said, to belong to YHWH, Jehovah, not to be a distinct Person from Him.

5. Not only do we find Jesus being distinguished from the Father, but we also find Him being distinguished from God, altogether.

What are the implications of this data? What is the best model of God that we can formulate, to adequately account for all of the Biblical data? Is it the Trinitarian or Oneness model?

The Nature of the Distinctions

Based particularly on the NT data, Trinitarians conclude, that God is three Persons, in One essence. Why should we conclude such? Is it because we see distinctions between Father, Son, and Spirit, in the Bible? To conclude that God is tri-personal, based simply of the fact that we find distinctions in the Bible, is not logical and is a hasty conclusion that does not account for all the data. To determine *how* Jesus is distinguished from the Father, we must examine *the nature of those distinctions*. What we find, is that Jesus is not only distinguished from the Father, but, at times, Jesus is distinguished from God, altogether (Matthew 27:46; Luke 2:52; John 8:40; 14:1; 17:3; 20:17b; Acts 2:22; 4:10; 7:55; 10:38; Romans 10:9; Ephesians 1:3; Hebrews 1:9; 1 Peter 1:3). Jesus spoke of the Father, calling Him “My God.” If Jesus has a God, then who is Jesus? If we assume that this is the second Person speaking, does God the Son, have a God? In Trinitarian theology, God the Son *is* God, He does not *have* a God. Paul said, “To us, there is but One God, the Father; and One Lord, Jesus Christ” (1 Corinthians 8:6). There is God, and then, there is Jesus. Here again, Jesus is distinguished from God Himself.

Should we conclude from the above distinction passages, that Jesus is just a man, and not God? Of course not. But, if we are going to look merely at the distinctions between Father and Son and conclude from the very existence of those distinctions, that God must be more than One Person (a triune Being), then we must, with those same distinctions, further conclude, that Jesus is not God, at all. We realize that this would be a false deduction, because there are Scriptures, that clearly declare Jesus to be God. This demonstrates, that the mere existence of distinctions between Father and Son does not give us warrant in itself, to understand those distinctions as eternal distinctions, within God’s very essence. We must seek to understand how it is, that the Son is distinct from the Father, and distinct from God, altogether.

Why is the Son Distinct from the Father?

Is the distinction between the Father and Son due to the existence of three eternal Persons in One God, or is it due to the addition of humanity to God's One eternal Person? Is the distinction between eternal Persons, or is the distinction between the One uni-personal God's incarnate existence as a man, and the same uni-personal God's existence, continued existence beyond the incarnation, as the unlimited Spirit?

If the distinction is between eternal Persons in the Godhead, why do we not read of the second Person, until the incarnation? Why would God fail to reveal Himself, as eternal Son, until the NT, if the Son is an eternally divine Person in YHWH's eternal and essential Being?

Also, why, if God is eternally Father, is He never called "God the Father," until the NT? While God was called, "Father," occasionally before the incarnation (e.g., Malachi 3:10), "Father" begins to be used for God, in an unparalleled way, after the incarnation. In the OT, "Father" was employed to describe the relationship between God and His Creation, not between God and God (as in Trinitarian thought). God's Fatherhood to Jesus Christ, however, was of a different nature, than God's Fatherhood spoken of, in the OT. God was Jesus' Father, because it was God, who fathered Jesus' human existence. This might explain why it is, that God becomes known, as "Father," in the NT, rather than "YHWH," as He was known, in the OT.

And why do we not hear of the "Son," before the NT? If God is eternally Father and eternally Son, it seems strange that we never read of "Father" and "Son," until the NT, when God actually fathered a Son. If we do not find the Father and Son, in the OT, but start seeing such terminology and distinctions, in the NT, all sane individuals ought to ask, why that is so. What changed between the Testaments? The answer to that question, just might be a clue, as to why we suddenly start reading about the "Son," and start hearing God referred to, as "Father," so frequently. Is the dramatic change, just a coincidence, or is there a logical reason for this?

The appellations, "Father" and "Son" describe a specific kind of relationship: a filial

relationship [parent/child]. Do we find such a relationship between the Father and Son, in the NT? Yes, we do. Is this relationship centered around the incarnation? Yes, it is. God overshadowed Mary and she conceived of the Holy Spirit, making that which was born of her, the Son of God, and God His father. With such an event, should we be shocked, that Jesus calls God, His Father (in a way, very distinct from the way Father was used by other Jews, as the Jews clearly recognized - John 5:18), and that God calls Jesus, His Son? No. Yes, there is a relationship, and it could be between two Persons (whether those are two divine Persons, or one divine Person and one human Person, could not be determined, simply from this evidence alone. Other information would need to be sought, to determine the nature of the two Persons), or it could be due to something else. His Sonship could be entirely filial and temporal, beginning at the incarnation. That is, the normal meaning of Son, is it not? Jesus became the Son of God, at the incarnation. If we never read about the Son, prior to the incarnation, and yet, we know that God actually fathered a human Son in the incarnation, and then we start hearing about the Son, which is more logical to conclude: 1. The Son is eternal and a distinct divine Person from the Father, or; 2. The Son refers to the human child, fathered by God, making God the Father, and the child the Son?

The time at which the appellations begin to be used, may tell us something, as to whether or not they are referring to two Persons or something else. If the appellations start being used at the incarnation to describe the relationship between God and the human child He fathered, then we would have no reason to believe that the Father and Son are two eternally distinct divine Persons. If, however, they are used prior to the incarnation to describe God's relationship with another eternally divine Person, then we would have reason to believe, that the Father and Son, are two eternally distinct divine Persons, and that such, is unrelated to the incarnation. But, when the distinctions are found, after the incarnation, as well as the Father/Son terminology, it does not favor the Trinitarian notion of an eternal distinction of Persons, but rather, a temporal distinction, grounded in the incarnation (human existence).

A Trinitarian can always fall back on the argument, that the Son was not revealed until

the NT, because it was not time for Him to be revealed until then. While this is *possible*, why should we believe it to be *likely*? The real issue is, if God is eternally three Persons, and the activities of those three Persons are both, diverse and interconnected, why would we not see the distinct Personhood of someone called, the Son and Spirit, in the OT? It surely could not have been because they were inactive. To say that it just was not time for the Son to be revealed is logical, according to the Trinitarian theory, but it simply follows on the heels of what Trinitarian theory would require. Trinitarians reason, that since God is a Trinity, the Son must have been there, even though we do not read of Him, and we do not read of Him, apparently because, it was not His time to be revealed to us.

This line of argumentation reminds me of evolutionists, who speak of all the missing links in the fossil record, that they have not found yet. I ask, "Who says they are missing? Maybe they are not there to begin with, and thus, will never be found. After all, one cannot find what does not exist." It is the evolutionary theory, that requires the existence of missing links, not the evidence itself. The evidence simply shows fully formed, distinct species. The theory causes them to both, look for missing links, and to offer explanations as to why they are missing. Maybe evolutionists are asking the wrong questions, and are working from a flawed model, which is causing them to search for something that is really not there, and come up with very logical explanations, as to why they have not found them yet. They are having difficulty finding the missing links that are required by their theory, because those missing links, simply do not exist. While evolutionists reason, "Well, we just have not found them yet," Trinitarians seem to be saying, "The Son is not found in the OT, because it was not His time to be revealed." Maybe it was not His time to be revealed, because He did not exist, because the Son is God's human manner of existence, not a distinct divine Person, in a tri-personal Godhead. That is not an unlikely possibility, especially when we have a very good reason to understand the dramatic shift we see from the OT to the NT: the incarnation. In the NT, God fathered a Son, and now we read about the Father and Son all the time. Since the Son is a human being, who came into being at a certain point, in time, it would make sense for us to not hear anything about Him, prior to the NT.

The fact that such terminology is mysteriously missing from the OT makes sense, when it is recognized that “Father” and “Son” are relational terms, used in the context of begetting a child. Did God beget a child? Yes, at the time of the incarnation. Would this account for the lack of such terms, as “Father” and “Son” in the OT, and the virtual exclusive use of such terms for God, in the NT? Yes, it would. Is it not better, then, to understand “Father” and “Son” to be incarnationally-bound appellations, rather than eternal relationships within the Godhead? After all, it is not until the NT, that we find any distinctions in reference to God, and the existence of the Father-Son terminology.

The incarnation brought a distinction between God’s existence as an incarnate man (genuine humanity and deity, united in one *theandric* existence) and the same Gods continued transcendent existence beyond the incarnation (exclusive Spirit or theistic existence). The Father is exclusive deity, while the Son, being God incarnate, is deity and humanity, metaphysically united, in one existence. The distinction between the Father and Son does not lie in the identity of Jesus’ deity (as some distinct Person in the eternal Godhead), but in the fact, that the Son is a genuine human Being. The distinctions between Father and Son, are exclusively bound up in the incarnation, not in God’s essential Being.

Because of the addition of a genuine human existence to God’s eternal Person, there arose a real relationship between Father and Son. This relationship was a temporal relationship arising, due to God’s existence as a genuine human Being with a genuine human consciousness, not an eternal relationship between two distinct divine Persons. Jesus is a real man with a genuine human existence. Because of His human nature, Jesus possesses human rationality, consciousness, Spirit, soul, body, and will, giving Him the capacity for, and need for, relationships as all men have need, even a relationship with God.

Holy Spirit

What about the Holy Spirit? While the distinction between the Father and Son can be explained by the incarnation, when it comes to the Father and the Spirit, there is no incarnational distinction. How is it that the Spirit is distinct from the Father? Is the Holy Spirit a reference to a distinct Person within God, or is it a reference for a particular aspect of God's One Person, just like our Spirit is a reference to a particular aspect of our one person (1 Corinthians 2:11)? If the former, why did the OT not make this explicit, and why is the NT data, so lacking, for such a conclusion? The NT often makes a distinction between the Father and Son, but rarely makes a distinction, between Father, Son, and Spirit.

While the OT speaks of the Spirit of God, there is never any indication that the Spirit is a distinct Person within God's essence. The Spirit is most often said, to belong to YHWH, not to be a distinct Person from Him. If YHWH is the Trinity (Father, Son, and Spirit), and the Spirit is a Person in the Trinity, then we must conclude, that the Spirit is YHWH. If the Spirit is YHWH, how can the Spirit be said, to belong to YHWH? Does the Spirit belong to Himself? It would be senseless to say, that one can belong to themselves. They either are themselves, or they belong to another. If YHWH is the Trinity, and the Spirit is said to belong to YHWH, and yet, one cannot belong to themselves, then we would have to conclude, that the Spirit is not YHWH. Such cannot be true, even in Trinitarian thought, and thus, we have no logical reason to assume, that the Spirit is a distinct Person from YHWH. The only way to curtail such a logical conclusion, would be to argue that in some references, "YHWH" is referring only to the Father, and the Spirit is being said, to belong to the Person of the Father, in YHWH. Such an explanation, however, is inconsistent and falls prey to splitting up the Trinity. Either YHWH is the Trinity of eternal Persons, or YHWH refers to only One Person in the Trinity. It cannot be both ways.

God is Holy, and God is a Spirit, so it is no surprise, that God is referred to, as "Holy Spirit," or that we read about the "Spirit of [being used as a possessive meaning, "belonging to"] God." God's Holy Spirit is the innermost essence of His Being. The references to God's Holy Spirit, also speak of God, in activity. The term serves to

signify a certain aspect of God's self-revelation to man. In the OT, the Spirit is clearly understood to be a reference to YHWH, Jehovah, referring to His nature, as Spirit.

We must still ask, how it is that the Spirit is distinguished from the YHWH, in the OT, or the Father and Son, in the NT? We can make as much distinction between God and His Spirit, as we can between a man and his Spirit. Paul seemed to make this point, when he said concerning the deep things of God: "But God has revealed them to us by His Spirit: for the Spirit searches all things, yes, even the deep things of God. For what man knows the things of a man, except the Spirit of man, which is in him? Even so, no one knows the things of God, except the Spirit of God" (1 Corinthians 2:12-13). I can distinguish my Spirit from my flesh, and speak of my Spirit, as distinct from me, but my Spirit is not a distinct person within me. I am one person, a unified whole, being both, body and Spirit. God's Spirit is no more distinct from Him, than my Spirit is from me.

When we understand the NT distinctions to be incarnationally-grounded, it explains the reason Trinitarians find so few passages that would argue for a distinct Person of the Spirit, while they find so many that seem to argue for the distinct Person-hood of the Son.

Jesus' Prayers

Trinitarians believe, that Jesus' communication with the Father, namely His prayers, compels us to conclude, that the deity of the Father and the deity of the Son, are distinct Persons in the Godhead. It is reasoned, that if the deity of the Son and the deity of the Father are the same personal deity, then Jesus' communication to the Father, was simply, God talking to Himself. The simple fact, that Jesus communicates with the Father and has a relationship with the Father, does not de facto indicate that God is a Trinity of Persons. We have to understand why Jesus communicates with the Father. While it could be due to the fact that God is tri-personal, is there compelling evidence to conclude so? There are several reasons why Jesus' communication with the Father should not be understood to indicate that God is a Trinity. We need to ask a few

questions about the Biblical data before we can conclude why Jesus communicated with the Father.

First, why do we not read of any communication between the Father and Son, until after the incarnation? If God is eternally Father and eternally Son, we would expect to find the Father and Son communicating with one another, prior to the incarnation. Interestingly, however, we only find such communication after the incarnation. If the communication between Father and Son is a major reason why Trinitarians feel compelled to conclude that the Father and Son are two distinct and eternal Persons, and yet, the communication only begins after the incarnation, when God became man, what compelling evidence is there to conclude that God is eternally Father and eternally Son? If the communication began at a certain point in time, maybe the Son is not an eternal Person in the Godhead. Maybe there is another explanation for the Father-Son distinction, and another explanation for the Son's communication with the Father.

Secondly, why is it that Jesus never communicated with any Person of the Trinity, besides the Father? Why did He not communicate with the Holy Spirit or with God the Son? It seems kind of odd, that Jesus would only communicate with one Person in the Trinity. Are we more justified in believing, that the Son simply chose not to communicate with any Person, besides the Father, or are we more justified in believing, that Jesus only communicated with the Father, because there is only one Person in the Godhead to communicate with, in the first place? The lack of communication to the other two Persons of the Triune God, may just indicate, that there are no 'two other Persons.'

Maybe Jesus only communicated with the Father, because "Father" is the one uni-personal God's existence, as the unlimited Spirit, apart from the incarnation. Maybe we do not find any communication between Father and Son, prior to the incarnation, because the Son did not exist before the incarnation, because the Son is the uni-personal God's existence, as man. Maybe the communication and relationship between the Son and Father, is due to the fact, that God assumed a real limited human

consciousness in the incarnation, and with such a consciousness, Jesus had need of a relationship with God, as does any other human being. Jesus' prayers do not support Trinitarian theology.

Foundational Problems with Trinitarianism

If we are going to confess a Trinity, we must ask why we do not find this tri-unity of God, until the NT. We have to wonder why we never read about the second Person in the OT. Why was the existence of a second Person, not revealed, until the incarnation? Why is it, that God has only spoken through the Son, in these last days (Hebrews 1:1-3), if the Son has eternally existed alongside the Father? Does it make more sense to conclude, that the Son is an eternally distinct Person in the Godhead, that God failed to mention until the NT, or is it more reasonable to conclude, that "Son" has to do with the one uni-personal God's existence, as a man, which existence did not come to be, until the incarnation?

If there was no distinct Person from the Father, in the OT, what would we expect to find in the OT, concerning the Son? What do we find? Nothing. So, why conclude that the Son of God, is an eternal Person in the Godhead, and reject the idea, that "Son" pertains to God's incarnate existence, if we read nothing about the Son, until the incarnation? Frankly, there is no good reason to do so. Trinitarians must account for the lack of evidence upon which they have concluded, that the Son is eternal. They must account for the fact, that God never disclosed His threeness, until the NT, offer a viable explanation for such disclosure, and offer compelling evidence, that would substantiate the belief, that there ever was an eternal Son to be disclosed in the first place.

While both, Trinitarian and Oneness theologies must account for the new revelation of God in the incarnation, there is a difference between saying that the same Person who revealed Himself to Moses, in the OT, became a man in the NT (Oneness theology), and saying that a second Person in the Godhead no one knew existed, became a man,

in the NT (Trinitarian theology). While Oneness believers may be shocked to see that God would become a man, Trinitarians would be shocked to see who showed up! In Oneness theology, the Person who shows up, is the same Person we have been reading about in the OT, not a different Person in the Godhead, we never read about before. Trinitarian theology has to admit that a whole other Person in the Godhead showed up on the scene, in flesh, who is personally distinct from the personal God, revealed in the OT. In Oneness theology, we do not find a part of God that we have never known before; we find the same familiar God, but manifest in flesh.

Also, why is it, that God is called, “YHWH” before the incarnation, and only “Father” and “Son” after the incarnation? The Father-Son terminology, only arises after the incarnation, when God actually became a man. It is no surprise then, that we find a distinction between Father and Son, starting in the NT (not the OT). Maybe we do not find such terminology in the OT, because God was never “Father” (in the NT sense of the word, describing the relationship between Father and Son) before He fathered a Son in the incarnation. It is much more reasonable to conclude, that the distinction between Father and Son, are temporal distinctions, arising in the incarnation, not eternal distinctions, within God’s essential Being.

Conclusion

What model of God, then, can most adequately account for all of the Biblical data? What model best explains the Biblical insistence on Monotheism, the lack of any distinction in God’s Person in the OT, the emergence of Father-Son terminology only after the incarnation, and the fact, that most of the Biblical distinctions are in reference to the Father and Son, to the exclusion of the Spirit? Is it the Trinitarian or Oneness model?

While the Trinitarian model can account for the distinctions in the NT, it cannot account for the lack of such, in the OT, nor the failure of the OT, to mention “God the Son” (other than in prophetic passages), nor the non-existence of the Father-Son terminology,

before the incarnation. While it can account for the distinction passages, it does so, only at the expense of redefining “One” to mean, “unity,” and thus, bringing the Church to the borders of Tritheism. Why should we adopt the Trinitarian model of God, when the model fails to answer so much of the Biblical data?

I argue, that a Oneness theology best accounts for such a phenomenon, insisting that God is an absolute monad, the Spirit being, His very nature and an aspect of His One Person, and the Son being none other, than His One Person incarnated as a man, but distinguished from His continued existence beyond the incarnation, due to the hypostatic union of His deity and humanity, into one unified theandric existence. Oneness theology best accounts for the rise of distinction-terminology in the NT, and the emergence of the appellations, “Father-Son,” because it was not until the NT, that God fathered a Son, and it was not until the hypostatic union, when God incorporated a human identity into His Person, that there arose such a need to make any distinctions, in reference to God. The distinction, however, is never said to be between eternal Persons in the Godhead. Such distinctions are only necessary, in light of the incarnation and God’s acquisition of a genuine human consciousness, when He assumed a genuine human existence.

Questions for Trinitarians

Jesus said, that ONLY His Father knew the day of the second coming, not the Son (Mark 13:32). What about the Spirit? Apparently, He does not know, because only the Father knows. Are there things that the Father knows that the Spirit does not? If so, in what sense can the Persons of the Trinity be co-equal, and of the same essence?

If the Son and Spirit are coequal, why is blasphemy against the Son forgivable, but not against the Spirit (Luke 12:10)?

Why does the Son not have any power other than that which the Father gives Him, if indeed, the Son is co-equal with the Father, and the Son continues to exist beyond the incarnation, as the second omnipotent Person in the Godhead (John 5:19, 30; 6:38)? The only logical answer that Trinitarians could offer, is that God the Son, as He continues to exist beyond the incarnation, does have all power, but only in His incarnate state is God the Son limited, and in need of receiving power from the Father, because of His humanity. But such an explanation is no different in principle, than the Oneness explanation, that the Son is limited, because of His humanity, but His deity, is the deity of the Father, which continues to exist beyond the incarnation, unlimited.

Why, if Jesus was conceived by the Person of the Holy Spirit, is God the Father considered His father, instead of the Spirit (Matthew 1:18, 20; Luke 1:35)? Is not the one who conceived you, your father? If the Spirit accomplished the conception, then He alone, should be the Father. If it is argued, that the Father and Spirit conceived, then why does the Scripture not say such? It only says, the Spirit conceived, and it only says, that God the Father is Jesus' Father. If it was the Spirit that overshadowed Mary to conceive in her womb, why wouldn't it be the Holy Spirit, who was incarnated? Finally, if Jesus is the second Person incarnate (God the Son), as Trinitarians claim, why was it not God the Son, who conceived in Mary's womb, He Himself becoming incarnate? Is not the second Person, the Logos who became flesh (John 1:1, 14)? Unless we identify who caused the conception with the Logos, the incarnation does not make sense; but, to make such a connection, is tantamount, to a Oneness conception of God.

How could only the second Person of the Trinity become a man, and not the other two Persons, in light of the Trinitarian doctrine of the perichoresis of Persons? How can the Father and Spirit only indwell Jesus (as it is commonly stated), while the eternal Son, is actually, Jesus' essential deity? How can one separate the Persons like that, without confessing three Gods, only One of which, became incarnated, and the other Two, just tag along?

If it was the eternal Son who became a man, and not the Father or Spirit, then why did

Jesus not state this? Paul said, Jesus is the image of the invisible God. Jesus said, that those who saw Him, saw the Father (obviously, not the essence of the Father, for no man can see God's essence, no matter if He is One or Three Persons). Never does He state, that they were seeing the image of the incarnated eternal Son. If Jesus is the 'Second Person,' made flesh, then why didn't He ever say, "He, who has seen Me, has seen the Son?" Why not "He, who has seen Me, has seen the Holy Spirit?" Why is it only the Father? If Jesus' deity is the eternal Son, in contradistinction to the Father and Spirit, why would Jesus say, that they have seen the Father by seeing Him, rather than seeing the Son? Jesus indicated, that to see Him, was to see the Person who sent Him [Father] (John 12:45).

It may not be exclusive proof, that since Son only appears in Scripture after the incarnation, that it means "Son" is bound up in the incarnation, but the lack of "Son," anywhere else prior to the incarnation, argues strongly against the position of an eternal Son. This argument, however, is bolstered by the fact, that God is never called, "God the Father" or "Father" (in the NT sense, at least), until after the incarnation, apparently because, He was not a Father, in the NT sense of the Word, until the incarnation (Hebrews 1:5).

The Spirit is mentioned 240 times in the OT, and never once, was it understood to refer to a distinct Person from God, but rather, to refer to a distinct aspect of God's Person, or the nature of God Himself. "Spirit of the LORD," appears twenty-six times and never once, indicates a distinct Person from the LORD. Why is this, if the Spirit is indeed, a distinct Person from YHWH, Jehovah? (Where do we get YHWH? See page 76).

Why, if there are internal relationships between Three distinct Persons in the Godhead, do we not read of love for or from the Spirit? Why is the Spirit absent from these key verses, pertaining to relationships: Matthew 11:27; John 10:30; 14:10, 32; 16:3; 17:3, 21-22; 1 Corinthians 8:6; 1 Timothy 2:5; 5:21; Acts 7:55; 1 John 1:3; Revelation 3:5; 5:13; 7:10; 21:22; all salutations?

How can it be, that we can know the Father, by knowing Jesus, but we cannot know Jesus (2nd Person), by knowing the Father, if indeed, there is a perichoresis of Persons? (John 8:19; 14:7; 2 John), and why is it that the Spirit is not known, by knowing Jesus?

Jesus, is often distinguished from God Himself (Matthew 27:46; Luke 2:52; 18:19; John 8:40, 54; 14:1; 17:3; 20:17; Acts 2:22; 4:10; 7:55; 10:38; Romans 10:9; 1 Corinthians 8:4-6; Ephesians 1:3; Hebrews 1:9; 1 Peter 1:3), but we do not conclude from such distinctions, that Jesus is not God, and neither should we conclude from such distinction terminology in the NT, that Jesus' deity is a distinct Person in the Godhead. Such distinctions, are never between equal Persons in a Trinity. Our only two options to understand such distinctions, then, is to conclude, that Jesus is not God, or to conclude, that such distinctions occur because of the incarnation (God's humanity). There is no need to postulate a "distinct Persons of One essence" view of God, because of the distinction terminology.

While there are passages which seem to indicate that the Son pre-existed the incarnation (John 17:5; Colossians. 1:15-16; Hebrews 1:1-2), there are also verses which seem to indicate that we pre-existed (Ephesians 1:3; 2 Timothy 1:9; Titus 1:2; 1 Peter 1:20). If we would not conclude that we pre-existed, why conclude that the Son pre-existed as a distinct Person in the Godhead?

If God is an eternal tri-unity of Persons, each Person, being distinct from the others, and each capable of giving and receiving love, one to another, then why, if man is made in God's image, do we not mirror our Maker? We may have distinct aspects to our person (body, soul, Spirit), but these aspects are not distinct persons, each capable of thought and interaction with one another. There is no love between my Spirit and soul, or body and Spirit. We are a unified monad, and so is God. As our love must be directed outward, so does His love.

Historical Development of the Trinitarian Mode of Baptism

In the Great Commission of Matthew 28:19, Jesus commanded that all believers be baptized. The necessity of baptism is again confirmed in Mark 16:16 and John 3:5. The apostles, to whom were given the authority and direction, by Jesus, obeyed this commandment in the establishment of the original Apostolic Church, as recorded in the Book of Acts. In all of the recorded cases (Acts 2:38, 8:16, 10:48, 19:5) where the baptism command is fulfilled, the actual name of Jesus, along with the titles of Lord or Christ, is used. Nowhere in the New Testament was anyone ever baptized using the formula in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Yet, a study will show that the major portion of Christianity today, does not baptize the way the apostles did in the Book of Acts. Where did the divergency begin? What is the correct mode of Baptism? The purpose of this course, is to show the results of a historical survey, completed by the authors that concluded that the original Apostolic baptism was done in the name of Jesus and that the tripartite formula, was a post-Apostolic development.

Most Church historians and theologians also agree, that the Baptism formula used today, is not the formula used in the New Testament Church. As German Scholar, Edmund Schlink has stated:

First of all, there is the problem of the "Trinitarian formula." Nowhere else does the New Testament speak of baptism "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: It speaks only of baptism upon (in) the name of Jesus Christ (with slight variations) In that case, the baptismal command in its Matthew 28:19 form, cannot be the historical origin of Christian baptism. At the least,

It must be assumed, that the text has been transmitted in a form, expanded by the Church.

How did Christian baptism originate? This historical question cannot be answered simply by referring to Matthew 28:19, since this text presents inescapable difficulties for historical thinking. Nor do the New Testament writings provide any support for the assumption that the primitive Church did not, at first, baptize in the name of Jesus Christ. Although the extant writings for the period, 96 A.D. - 140 A.D., which represents the first post-Apostolic period, are very limited, the glimpses do show baptism in Jesus name, continuing as Church doctrine. Clement of Rome, who was a contemporary of Paul, wrote in 96 A.D., in the Epistle to the Corinthians:

And now, may the all-seeing God and Master of Lord of all flesh, who chose the Lord, Jesus Christ and us, through Him, to be His own people, grant to every soul, over whom His magnificent and Holy name, has been invoked....

Note, the use and singularity of "His magnificent and Holy name," which undoubtedly, is the name of Jesus, that Clement refers to.

In the Shepherd of Hermas, which dates around 120 A.D., Hermas writes:

Before man bears the name of the Son of God, he is dead, but when he has received the seal (baptism), he lays aside mortality and receives life.

What was the name of the Son of God? Jesus! It's known, that Hermas' writings were accepted by many of the ancient Church leaders and read routinely, in the Church. In

studying his writings, it is also obvious, that he espoused only One God and not the Trinity. He writes:

First of all, believe that God is One, who Created all things and put them in order.

Furthermore, Hermas writes; they are such as have heard the Word and were will-

ing to be baptized in the name of the Lord; but, considering the great Holiness,

which the truth requires, have withdrawn themselves and walked again, after their

wicked lust.

At this point in history, the extant writings continue to show baptism, in Jesus name. They do not show the tri-partite formula, either as being practiced or written about. Many modern day historians agree with this conclusion.

Wilhelm Bousset writes in *Kurios Christos*, "it is still essentially a baptism in the name of Jesus."

G. R. Beesley-Murray stated: There is not one example in the whole New Testament literature of a baptism taking place in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Harry Wolfsan writes: Critical scholarship, on the whole, rejects the traditional attribution of the tripartite baptismal formula to Jesus and regards it as a later origin.

E. Lohmeyer in his book, *Das Evangelium des Atthaus*, writes that Eusebius, Bishop of the Church in Caesarea, frequently wrote Matthew 28:19, as:

Go ye, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in my name, teaching

them to observe all things, whatsoever I command you. Lohmeyer states:
The expression, in my name, referred to baptism in the name of Jesus.

Again, Bousset writes: The testimony for the wide distribution of the simple baptismal formula, down into the second century, is so overwhelming that even in Matthew 28:19, the Trinitarian formula, was only later inserted.

Ernest F. Scott affirms, it is abundantly clear, that the primitive Church knew only the simple formula and even so late, as the Didache, it is assumed, that this alone, is necessary.

At this point in Church history, the baptism formula was still in the name of Jesus. However, early in the second century, the Church was faced with the Gnostic controversy, which concerned the nature of Jesus and the relationship of the Son to the Father. The Church leaders of this time, felt that this controversy would lead to the total destruction of the Christian faith.

Aristides, Justin Martyr, Tatian, Athenagoras, and Theophilus of Antioch were some of these men, defending Christianity. These men became known as the Greek Apologists and were greatly affected by the Greek philosophies. The philosophy of Philo, who was a Jewish philosopher in Alexandria, identified the Logos with the platonic word of forms or archetypes. From Philo's teachings, the Greek Apologists set the Logos equal to Jesus Christ, in order to frame an intellectually satisfying explanation of the relationship of Christ to God the Father.

It is during this period of the Logos doctrine debate, that the first historical references to

Trinitarian water baptism appear. The primary source of a different baptismal formula, is from the writings of Justin Martyr, who wrote in 140 A.D.:

For in the name of God, the Father, and Lord of the universe, and of our Saviour,

Jesus Christ and of the Holy Ghost, they then received, the washing with water.

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Apparently, it is during this period, when the Logos-doctrine and Trinitarianism were first being debated, that the first divergency away from Jesus name baptism occurs.

Although history is not clear on who first introduced the Trinitarian formula, it does not appear to be coincidental that its introduction (as far as historical references are concerned) occurs during the Apologist's period, when the Godhead debate was sweeping the Church. As more Churches embraced the Trinitarian concepts (which weren't fully developed, at this point), we find more references to the triune baptismal formula.

It is interesting to note, that during the Apologist's period, although the doctrine of the Trinity was not fully developed, the triune formula emerges very quickly. We can only speculate that this occurred when men lost the concept of the deity and nature of Jesus Christ and contrary to Colossians 3:17, which states that, whatsoever ye do in Word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, began to misunderstand the meaning of Matthew 28:19. Once the concept of the Oneness of God and salvation through the name of Jesus began to be in question, the Churches in the Apologist's period began to place greater importance in Matthew 28:19. This was done apparently because they could not reconcile baptism here against what the apostles actually did in the Book of Acts.

The Trinity of persons in the Godhead is the reason assigned for the triune immersion by Tertullian and later by Jerome, Basil, and the Apostolic Canons. Many modern

historians have recognized the destructive influence that the philosophies of the Apologist's period introduced into the Church. As Adolf Harnack, in *Outlines of the History of Dogma*, writes:

...it (the Church) legitimized in its midst the Hellenic speculation, the superstitious views and customs of pagan mystery, worship, and the institutions of the state organization to which it attached itself and which received new strength, thereby. In theory, monotheistic, it threatened to become polytheistic, in practice, and to give way to the whole apparatus of low or malformed religion.

As the doctrine of the Trinity slowly displaced the Monotheism of the Apostles, many errors and traditions of men began to creep into the Church. The process was slow and frequently accompanied by strife, and on occasion, bloodshed. A close look at some of the errors, which spoiled the Church, will give some understanding of how error lead to more error. For instance, the Greek word used for baptism in the New Testament, means to dip, to immerse, to sink. There is no evidence that Luke, John, and Paul put any meanings upon this verb, not recognized by the Greeks. Stanley, in his *History of the Eastern Church* says:

...there can be no question that the original form of baptism, the very meaning of the Word, was complete immersion in the deep baptismal waters, and that for at least four centuries, another form was either unknown or regarded, unless in the case of dangerous illness, as an exceptional, almost a monstrous case.

It is likely, that the practice of affusion arose out of the custom of laying on of hands and anointing with oil. J.N.D. Kelly writes that,

...the general procedure was that, on coming up from the baptismal water, the newly baptized Christian was anointed with scented oil, at the same time, receiving the laying on of hands.

Because of these anointings, men began to conclude, that its purpose was for the Holy Spirit to fill that person. Consequently, because of this belief, it became customary to pour water upon the head of the one being baptized, after he had been immersed. After the fourth century, immersion had begun to be replaced, in some Churches, by a copious affusion on the head, while the person being baptized, stood in the water.

However, sprinkling was slow to be accepted, as the common mode of baptism. It is not until the thirteenth century, that sprinkling became the rule, and immersion, the exception. As Christianity spread over the Roman Empire and into conquered territories, the conversion of the adults, usually meant baptism also of all children, regardless of age. In time, very few were being baptized, as adults. When and how the practice of infant baptism began, is not certain. There is nowhere in the New Testament, an example of the practice, nor is it anywhere commanded. Tertullian knew of infant baptism, but condemned it in his writings, around 200 A.D. However, infant baptism became a generally accepted Church practice, by the fifth century with only isolated pockets of resistance, such as the Paulicians of the ninth century and the Petrobusians of the twelfth century.

It is during this period of transition of baptism modes, that the emphasis of baptism shifted from its New Testament significance, to an outward sign, and thus, baptism lost its Spiritual importance. Beasley-Murray stated:

...when infant baptism did prevail, the personal religious element fell away and the sacramental-sotereological element of baptism, which for the common people, meant the sacramental-magical element, became the essential thing in the rite.

More and more, salvation became an outward element, with no inward significance. This led Hatch to state:

...when infant baptism became general, and men grew up to be Christians, as they grew up to be citizens, maintenance of the earlier standards became impos- sible in the Church, at large. Professing Christians adopted the current morality; they were content to be no worse than their neighbors....that which had been the ideal standard of qualifications for baptism, became the ideal standard of qualifications for ordination; and there grew up a distinction between clerical morality and lay morality, which has never passed away.

It is during this transition period, apparently, that more and more Christians began to accept the Trinitarian formula as the mode of baptism. However, it should be remembered, that to the average Christian, in this period, it wasn't greatly important what formula was used, as much as the fact, that he was actually baptized. However, not everyone felt this way. One of the controversial subjects continued to be, the baptismal formula. Many congregations continued to baptize in the name of Jesus. The Church of Rome, pastored by Alexander, in 115 A.D., was a bearer of the Father's name, according to Ignatius, in his Epistles to the Romans. This was no doubt, a Oneness Church, at this time.

Even during the period when Zephyrinus and Callistus were bishops of Rome, (198 A.D. - 220 A.D.), Hippolytus writes in his, Refutation of all Heresies, that these men were modalists or Oneness believers. Based upon the connection between Oneness believers and baptism in Jesus name, it appears, that the Church in Rome, still baptized in Jesus name, at this point.

During this period, the Montanist controversy, which swept the Church around 156 A.D., apparently became a decisive factor in the number of Churches. Many of the early Churches reacted strongly to the teachings of Montanus.

If the main thrust of Montanism was revival of the gifts of the Spirit in the Church, as some have said, why should a large number of the Christians, in the early Churches, have reacted so much to Montanus, when the majority of believers, spoke in tongues and used the gifts of the Spirit?

Although it can't be proven conclusively, but because Montanus was Trinitarian, it could be that the Churches were rejecting the Trinitarian doctrine, more than they were the gifts of the Spirit. If so, more than likely, the controversy also involved baptism.

Other Oneness baptizers continued to appear. One of the most notable was Praxeas. Although the true identity of Praxeas is not known, he came from Asia Minor, which was the home of Monarchian views and arrived in Rome, during Victor's pastorate (around 190 A.D.). Praxeas was unquestionably, a Oneness believer. This is known because of the strong attack, by Tertullian in his writing, against Praxeas. Tertullian writes, that Praxeas teaches that:

God Himself, the Lord Almighty, whom in their preaching, they declare to be Jesus Christ. Furthermore, Praxeas believed, that the Father Himself came down into the virgin, was Himself, born of her, Himself suffered, indeed, was Himself, Jesus Christ.

We know conclusively, that Praxeas was a Oneness baptizer, because of Tertullian's strong defense of the Trinitarian water baptism against Praxeas. Tertullian writes, He (Jesus) commands them to baptize into the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost, not into One, and indeed, it is not once only, but three times, that we are immersed into the three persons.

While during the second century, Jesus name baptism was being challenged by the Trinitarians, by the beginning of the third century, the Trinitarians began to condemn those baptized in Jesus name, as heretics and to demand anyone who rejoined the

Church, to be rebaptized with the Trinitarian formula. Harnack, in *Outlines of the History of Dogma*, writes that,

...in all the ecclesiastical provinces, there were Monarchian contests. He continues with many Occidental teachers, who were not influenced by Plato and the Orient, used in the third and fourth centuries, modalistic formulas without hesitation.

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Tertullian and Origen testified, that the majority of Christian people, in their time, thought monarchianically. Tertullian, further admits (indirectly), that the majority of the believers, in his day, continued to baptize in Jesus name, when he writes:

...the simple, indeed (I will not call them unwise and unlearned), who always constitute the majority of believers, are startled at the dispensation (of the Three in One), on the ground that their very rule of faith withdraws them from the world's plurality of gods, to the One, and only true God....They are constantly throwing out against us, that we are preachers of two gods and three gods, while they take to themselves pre-eminently, the credit of being worshipers of the One God.

Cyprian, who became the bishop of Carthage in 248 A.D., writes in his Epistle LXX, to Agrippinus, concerning rebaptism of heretics, which he defined one group, as those who had not been baptized using the Trinity formula. Obviously, there must have been a debate continuing to go on in the Churches about Jesus name baptism versus the trine baptism for these Church leaders to continue to make denunciation of the "heretics." In 255-256 A.D., the Council of Baptism of Heretics was called by Pope Stephen of Rome to address this issue. Obviously, there were believers, at this point in Church history, who continued to use the name of Jesus, in baptism. When Pope Stephen of Rome allowed "heretics" to enter into the Church without baptism using the Trinity formula, even though they had been baptized in the name of Jesus, Cyprian felt so incensed, that he wrote a strong letter of rebuke to Stephen about his leaning toward the Oneness. But, many historians feel that Stephen did more than lean toward Jesus

name baptism, but in fact, considered baptism, as valid, only when administered in the name of Jesus Christ, or as Joseph Hefele writes in, *A History of the Christian Councils*:

It may again, be asked if Stephen expressly required, that the three divine persons should be named in the administration of baptism, and if he required it, as a condition sine qua non, or if he considered baptism, as valid, when administered, only in the name of Jesus Christ. Cyprian seems to imply, the latter was the sentiment of Pope Stephen, but he does not positively say so anywhere.

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Furthermore, Hefele writes,

Thus, Cyprian acknowledges, that Stephen, and those who think with him, attribute no value to the baptism, except it be administered in the name of Jesus Christ.

Cyprian, also writes twice, in his letter, that:

...his adversaries considered, as sufficient baptism administered out of the Church, but administered in nomine Christi.

Although it can't be said, that Stephen was a Oneness believer, he certainly recognized Jesus name baptism, as important, if not essential. Thus, the issue of Jesus name baptism was not confined to just a few "heretics," but continued to attract large numbers of followers, sufficient enough, for the Catholic Church to call a special council, to address the issue.

During this period of dual baptism formulas, the Trinitarians acquired political power, primarily through the conversion of the Roman Emperor, Constantine, in 312 A.D. When Constantine embraced Catholicism, the Trinitarians, for the first time, acquired full power to stamp out organized resistance, to their teachings. When Constantine called the Council of Nicaea together, in 325 A.D., ostensibly to debate the Arian-Athanasius

issue, Canons were also issued against the Jesus name baptizes, In Canon XIX, issued by the Council of Nicaea, the Oneness believers of the Paulinians, were required to be rebaptized, using the Trinity formula before they could be accepted into the Catholic Church.

In Canon VII of the Council of Constantinople of 381 A.D., the Catholic Church specifically stated, that those followers of Sabellius (who was a Oneness believer):

...“who teach the identity of Father and Son, and do sundry other mischievous things, for there are many such here, particularly among those who come from the country of the Galatians,” were heathens, with an invalid baptism.

From these Canon denunciations, it is obvious, that Jesus name believers were very strongly present in the Churches, at this point, in Church history. By the time of the Council of Constantinople in 381 A.D., the doctrine of the Trinity, had been fully developed and accepted. However, as Pope Pelagius said, after the Second Council of Constantinople in 560 A.D., that:

...there are many who say, that they baptized in the name of Christ alone, and by a single immersion.

Despite repeated pressure from the Catholic Church, Oneness Churches obviously continued to survive. After the Church went into the Dark Ages, clear references to Jesus name believers, become difficult to trace. When Martin Luther began the Reformation and other men became enlightened to truth, they carried with them, the triune baptismal formula into the new faiths. Consequently, most Churches today, have based their baptism on this tradition.

Although this mode of baptism has become accepted in Christianity today, without serious question, history reveals, that it was not part of the original Apostles' doctrine. Furthermore, until the concept of the Trinity evolved, due to the blending of Greek philosophy and Christianity, the early Church continued to baptize in Jesus name, after

the Apostle's deaths. Any serious follower of the Holy Bible will desire truth in its original form, not an addition, because of the traditions of men. If one is to be cursed who preaches any other message than what Paul preached, what about the followers of the Gospel message?

In conclusion, we believe that baptism by immersion in water in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, is the only method of baptism supported by Scripture, and all other forms are incorrect, and arose after the Apostles' deaths.

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Trinity, Fact or Fiction?

Scriptural Harmony Process

Section A

In the history of the Christian religious world and the twentieth century Pentecostal movement, there have been many doctrines, divisions, contentions, and different interpretations of Scripture. In this great turmoil, has erupted, at times, in different places, which has divided families, friends, Churches, organizations, and even nations. Wars of every size and description, have been fought over perceived truth, against that which is viewed, as false.

Looking at history, I have identified six different categories, as to why the history of Chris-

tianity has been filled with such bloody strife, division, and turmoil. As you review the reasons below, ask yourself the following question. What if these problems could be eliminated, where would the Christian world be now, and in the future?

- (A) Wrong interpretation of Scriptures judged to be truth.
- (B) Developing doctrine with lack of knowledge of the Scriptures.

- (C) Adding the traditions of men to the teachings of the Scriptures.
- (D) Not receiving revelation knowledge from the Spirit on a Biblical subject.
- (E) Satan and his ministers of righteousness, coming as angels of light, to deceive that which is to be lost.
- (F) God sending a delusion to a person, because they did not love truth.

With the reasons above, one would ask, has the Lord given to man, a way to overcome these problems, which would result in finding the truth of the Word of God? The answer is, yes, if one stops to think about it.

Solving the religious turmoil problem, I believe, can be done with what I call, Scriptural Harmony. By this, I mean if one takes a subject found in the Word of God, and then runs a cross check of all the Scriptures found in the Word of God, on the subject, the true meaning will shine forth. By running a cross check study with the goal of Scriptural Harmony, one is assured of perfect understanding of the Word of God, about 90% of the time, on any Biblical subject. For those subjects more difficult to understand, additional study tools must be used. These being, word meanings, time, location, and setting of the Scripture passage.

Always keep in mind, anytime one has a wrong interpretation of any of the Scriptures in the Word of God, a contradiction will pop up somewhere else in the Scriptures. When one has correct interpretation of the Scriptures, the Scriptures will be in harmony with each other. What this means, is there is a way to allow the Bible to interpret its self and take man out of the picture, in most cases. This fact about Biblical interpretation, must be kept in mind, when doing a study on any subject in the Word of God.

As an example of religious debate and strife over Scriptural interpretation, we can look at the subject of the doctrine of the Trinity. This doctrine has been debated, fought for, and against, for over seventeen hundred years. It is one that has cost millions of lives and one that has been hidden, in mystery. In an effort to take away the mystery and establish fact, I have taken this subject and run it through the Scriptural Harmony

Process. In this course, you will see an example of the Scriptural Harmony Process at work and the resulting answers given. May this information prove to be a blessing to you!

The Trinity, Fact or Fiction

Of all the doctrines listed as being major Christian teachings, none is more controversial than the subject of the Godhead. For many centuries, wars, persecutions, and debate have raged as to who and what is God? In looking at the subject of the Godhead, there are two ways to uncover what the truth is, concerning the Godhead. One is religious history and the other is the Scriptural Harmony Process. To fully comprehend the scope of the subject of the Godhead, one should look closely at both approaches. The reason being, the Scriptural Harmony Process and religious history, are in full agreement and harmony, with each other. The two systems also form a check and balance system for each other.

Between the two study systems, of greatest importance, is the Scriptural Harmony Process. This is because of the power and importance of the Word of God. As stated earlier, anytime one has a wrong interpretation of any of the Scriptures, a contradiction will pop up somewhere else in the Scriptures. When one has the correct interpretation of the Scriptures, the Scriptures will be in total harmony with each other. The basic fact about the Scriptural Harmony Process must be kept in mind, when doing a study on any subject in the Word of God. This is especially true, when doing a study on the Godhead. In our study on the Trinity, we will first review history, then move on to the Scriptural Harmony Process.

Religious History and the Trinity

Amazing as it may sound, according to the Church Fathers, it took God, one hundred years to reveal the first two Trinities. This took place, between 200 A.D. and 300 A.D.

For anyone who knows how Spiritual revelation works, one would automatically know something is fundamentally wrong with the Trinity concept, because it does not take God one hundred years, to reveal anything.

The word, "Trinity" means triune and three. In the so-called Trinity Christian religious world, the concept of a Trinity of the Godhead means, three persons who make up the Godhead. The idea of three persons in a Godhead, was not new, when the Christian Trinity concept was first developed in the Christian religious world, by the early Church Fathers. The concept of a Trinitarian Godhead system, goes back to the first city nation called, Babylon. The timing of original development of the first religious Trinity system would be between four and five thousand years ago. This took place during the time of Nimrod and Semiramis. In this first pagan Trinity, Nimrod the King, was the first person, Semiramis his Queen, was the second person, and Tammuz, their son, was the third person, of this Godhead system. In this system, Semiramis was also declared, to be the Queen Mother of Heaven and earth, and the goddess of love, sex, and fertility. This original pagan Trinity system, was based on the following characteristics.

A three-person Godhead. A woman, known as the Queen Mother, as a part of the Godhead system. Astrology-Mystery, as key parts of the religious system. Human-animal sacrifice. Mystical practices, which evolved into witchcraft. Temple prostitution. Hidden knowledge, only revealed to the priesthood or those with the proper education.

After the flood, and then the scattering from the Tower of Babel, the earth was in a re-population process, by pagan Trinity believers, initially from Babylon. As the original Babylonians scattered across the face of the earth from the tower occurrence, they took their religious system with them, even though they expressed their religious system in their new languages. Even in their new languages, the general characteristics of the Trinity system, remained the same.

Over the many following centuries, after the scattering from the tower, this Babylonian pagan religious system, mutated through evolution, was modified many different ways,

sectioned off into splinter groups, which developed into new movements, and systems of religion. This process of never-ending change and modification in the original Babylonian Trinity system, has been going on, even down to today. This system, eventually infected, the Christian religious world and is spoken of in hidden detail, in Revelation, chapters seventeen and eighteen.

It should also be noted, with several thousand years of the indoctrination for mankind to the concept of a three-person Godhead religious system, the RELIGIOUS Gentiles of the world, have been fully convinced, there are three persons and there is a Trinity. This was also the situation, when God first called Abraham, at Ur, and revealed to him, there was only One God and not three or more.

Once the pagan Trinity system was firmly established in the minds of most religious Gentiles in the world, God then did something rather amazing, to illustrate His nature of being One. He called Abraham and his seed, to follow Him and only Him. From Abraham to Moses, God raised up a ONE GOD people, known as the Nation of Israel. They were different from all religious systems around them, because they did not worship three or more, they worshiped only ONE. This is stated clearly, in the Shamah of Deuteronomy 6:4-5:

Deuteronomy. 6:4-5

4 Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD: 5 And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.

From Abraham forward in time, the Jews practiced their monotheistic ONE GOD religion in the middle of a three-person Godhead pagan religious world. During these years, until the coming of Jesus Christ, the Nation of Israel was constantly tempted by their Trinity neighbors to convert to several pagan religious systems. As history shows, the Nation of Israel and later Judah, when faithful to their ONE GOD religion, were blessed of God. Anytime they adopted any of the pagan Trinity systems around them, they were cursed of God and fell to destruction. The Jews of the promised land were not cured of

their backsliding from their ONE GOD religion, until the first destruction of the Temple, and the seventy years of captivity, which followed.

Once the remnant of Judah returned to Jerusalem from Babylon and rebuilt the Temple and the city, the seed of Abraham dwelling in the promised land, remained fairly successful in remaining faithful to their monotheistic ONE GOD religion, up until the last twenty-five years of the twentieth century. Even during the occupations of the Greek and Roman Empires, the promised land Jews were very; successful in not backsliding, either to the Greek or Roman mythology Trinity religious systems, which ruled over them.

Amazing as it may sound, we now find at the end of the twentieth century, a very small portion of the Jewish population of the world has now returned to the three God Trinity religious world in worship and belief. They call themselves, the Messianic Jewish Christian Movement. These people are believers in God, the Holy Spirit, and Jesus Christ, as the three separate persons in the Christian Godhead. They follow and believe the theory of the Western Trinity, as do most Protestants and which means they are Roman Catholic, at the core. Needless to say, their salvation plan, is not as the Apostles taught, but they follow the plan of salvation developed by the Reformers under Martin Luther. How the development of the Trinity Christian religious world took place follows a little later in this course.

After Jerusalem was rebuilt along with its second Temple being dedicated to the One True God, the nation of Israel was concurred by the Greek Empire of Alexander the Great, then the Romans of the Roman Empire. It was during the occupation of the Roman Empire, the first appearance of God, being MANIFESTED IN THE FLESH of Jesus Christ took place. Why this event took place, at this time in history, we do not know. We do know with the manifestation and birth of Jesus Christ as the Son of God and God being made visible in human form, the introduction of a New Covenant to replace the Old Covenant and the Law of Moses, was ushered in. In the Old Covenant, only Jews of the seed of Abraham could be saved by believing and obeying the Old Covenant Commandments. In the New Covenant, beginning in Acts 2, anyone could be

saved, by believing and obeying ALL the New Covenant Commandments. These New Covenant Commandments were given to the original Apostles, by Jesus, during His time of ministry on this earth and later, they were revealed to the Apostle Paul, after his conversion in Damascus.

In this New Covenant and for the first 170 years of the Christian religious world, the concept of a Christian Trinity, based on three separate persons, did not exist. This was mainly due to the fact, the early Christian Church was a Jewish Church, who believed totally, in the ONE GOD teachings in the Law of Moses. In this Apostolic Church world, initially headed up by the original Apostles, everyone in general, believed Jesus Christ was God Himself MANIFEST-ED in the flesh, as well as being the Son of God, born of the virgin Mary. To the early Jewish Christians, God was the INVISIBLE Holy Ghost-Holy Spirit, who was the One Divine Spirit who was also the FATHER in Creation. The early Apostolic Church believed Jesus Christ was the express image of the invisible God, and He was both, fully man and fully God. To the early Apostolic Christians, Jesus Christ was never the second person of the Godhead. HE WAS THE ONLY PERSON OF THE GODHEAD. This is also the main reason the religious leaders, in Jerusalem and the Temple, wanted to kill Jesus. Not only did He claim to be the Son of God, He also claimed to be the ONE True God, at the same time. The Jews could accept Jesus as the Son, but not as God Himself. Sad, but true, even to this day, the Jews down through history and the Trinity Christian world, have never fully understood Isaiah 9:6.

Isaiah 9:6

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 (Jesus Christ) shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The Mighty The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.

The Birth of the Trinity Christian World.

After the Death, Resurrection, and Ascension of Jesus Christ and through the ministry

of the Apostle Paul, Gentiles were introduced into the Christian world in large numbers. As thousands of Gentiles slowly came into the Jewish Christian Apostolic world between 50 A.D., and 200 A.D., they brought their pagan concept of three persons in the Godhead with them. From these thousands of Gentile converts, came intellectual leaders known as, the early Church Fathers. These men, who were mostly lawyers, scholars, and philosophers, claimed to have new revelation of the Scriptures. Their feeling was, the Apostles were not educated men, and thus, could not understand the deep mysteries of God. They felt God had left to them, the true revelation of the mysteries of God, because of their secular education and high levels of intelligence.

With this claim of new revelation, based on higher education, the first Church Father, named Justin Martyr, changed the teaching of the Apostles on the doctrine of water baptism. Even though Justin agreed with the Apostles that water baptism was central to salvation, his change in water baptism application was introduced into the Christian world around 150 A.D. Justin's change in water baptism application was to add the Words of Jesus Christ in Matthew 28:19 to the name of Jesus Christ, as found in Acts 2:38, 8, 10, 19:1-7, and 22:16. By adding the titles of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, to the Name of Jesus Christ in water baptism, the functions and purposes of water baptism were destroyed for those who followed His teaching. The reason being, this change represented a change in the Gospel of the Apostles. According to Apostolic teaching, water baptism was to be done only in the name of Jesus Christ and all those following Justin's doctrine became false Christians and were lost, because they were no longer believing and obeying the Gospel of the Apostles. Of course, for those following Justin's revelation, they believed they were correct and still do today. The truth is, Justin changed the Gospel of salvation, which means no salvation with any kind of change, away from the doctrine of the Apostles.

Following Justin Martyr, came Tertullian of Carthage, North Africa, and Origen of Alexandria, Egypt. These two men entering into the Christian religious world from the pagan religious world, also brought with them, the concept of the three Godhead system, known as the Trinity. Between 175 A.D., and 225 A.D., these two men became

followers of Justin Martyr's theology on water baptism. As so-called early Church Fathers, both men during these years, also developed the first TWO Christian Trinity theories to support their change in water baptism. One Trinity was known as the Western Trinity by Tertullian, which laid the doctrinal foundation of the Roman Catholic Church system. The other was the Eastern Trinity of Origen, which laid the doctrinal foundation of the Orthodox Churches in the world. Once the developmental process of the first two Trinities began, these two men and their followers removed the name of Jesus Christ in water baptism, and just repeated the Words of Jesus in Matthew 28:19. This was another major departure from the Doctrine of the Apostles on water baptism. According to the Apostles, the end result will be the same. Change the Gospel and lose salvation. Between 200 A.D., and 325 A.D., religious debate and warfare ensued between the followers of the Apostles and their One God belief, and the Western and Eastern Trinity believers. All three groups fought each other for control of the Christian Religious World for over one hundred years. In this, many thousands died, fighting for what they believed to be the truth.

In 325 A.D., the Western Trinity believers and their theology gained political approval and power, by becoming the official state approved religious system of the Roman Empire. This took place at the Council of Nicaea, via the Creed of Nicaea. In this development, the Roman Catholic Church was born with the Roman Emperor being its High Priest and Pope. (As a side note, the title of Pope was not adopted by the bishop of Rome until the fall of the Roman Empire in the sixth century). This means, it is impossible for Peter to be the first Pope, because the Roman Emperor held that title until the fall).

With the development of the different Trinities (in which there are at least six in the world today), the early Church world which had been dominated by ONE GOD Christian Apostolic Jews, now found the new Trinity theology to be a violation of their ONE GOD beliefs and the teachings of the Apostles. In this situation, even Jews, looking at possible conversion to the Christian world, rejected these three God systems, as they called them, as nothing more than a new twist of the old pagan religious systems, which

were based on the Trinity.

Once the Western Trinity was in official position as the only true religion of the Roman Empire, the Gentile takeover of the public Christian world, was complete. As for the Jewish Apostolic Christian world, they just faded away in a short time.

As for the teachings of the early Apostolic Church world and the Apostles, history shows contrary to Trinity teaching. There has always been somewhere in the world, an Apostolic movement of truth. Never very public, never large in numbers, even to this day, and always being attacked by the Trinity religious world, as being false and of the Devil. In this situation of the Trinity religious world always attacking the Apostolic Christian world, the following prophecy by the Apostle Peter had and has come true.

2 Peter 2:1-2

1 But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. 2 And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom THE WAY OF TRUTH SHALL BE EVIL SPOKEN OF.

Of special attention, the following should be a matter of deep consideration. The Apostle Peter has told us in the Word of God (2 Peter 2:1-2), the day would come when the way of truth would be evil spoken of by all false prophets. The Apostle Paul tells us in Galatians 1:8-9, anyone preaching a different Gospel than preached by the Apostles, would be cursed of God. In Jude, we find the term, COMMON SALVATION, being spoken of and a warning for any who would change this COMMON SALVATION. Jude tells us the very same thing would happen to anyone changing the COMMON PLAN OF SALVATION, as happened to the children of Israel, who made the golden calf. Searching what happened to the Golden Calf makers in the Word of God, we find those who made the Golden Calf, had their names taken out of the Lambs Book of Life.

It is very evident when Justin Martyr changed Apostolic teaching on water baptism and when Origen and Tertullian developed the first two Trinities, exactly what Peter, Paul, and Jude, said would happen, did happen. This means, all who follow the teachings of the Church Fathers, as well as the Church Fathers themselves, will not be saved. This also means, anyone or any type of professing Christian or non Christian, will not be saved until they BELIEVE and OBEY the COMMON SALVATION - GOSPEL as taught and believed by the original Apostles of the Lord.

The Reformation and the Trinity

Between 325 A.D., with the birth of the official Roman Catholic Church and the Reformation of the 1500's A.D., great battles took place between Western Trinity believers, Eastern Trinity believers, and any religious groups who were not Trinity based. Of prime focus of attack was the Trinity believers both, East and West, against any who followed the teachings of the Apostles and water baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. At the same time, and for over one thousand years, the Roman Catholic Church lost its control of the Eastern Trinity world and the developing Orthodox religious world. During these years, millions of non-Trinity Christians were murdered by the Roman Church and the Orthodox religious world. In the Western religious world, this was known as the Inquisition.

Towards the end of the Inquisition period came the Protestant Reformation. The result of the Reformation, was to split the Roman Catholic Church and Western Europe between Catholics and Protestants. In this Reformation period, millions died in contending for what they believed to be the truth.

In Reformation theology, salvation became just a matter of believing in Jesus Christ, and obeying the New Covenant commandments of the Gospel of the Apostles was declared to be legalism and bondage, not to be given any value whatsoever.

As the early Reformation leaders developed the doctrine of the movement, the question

of the Godhead had to be established. In looking at this, Apostolic teaching on the Godhead was declared to be a heresy, and a decision had to be reached as to which Trinity was correct. After years of study, the Reformation leaders picked the Western Trinity, as the true revelation of the Godhead. This means, even though the Protestant Church world split from the Roman Catholic Church, they remained Roman Catholic at the core, because of the Trinity they followed.

Whether Eastern Trinity, Western Trinity, or non-Trinity, any change of modification in the Gospel of the Apostles, can result in only one end, according to the Bible. NO SALVATION, NO NAME IN THE LAMBS BOOK OF LIFE.

The Apostolic Church World

Matthew 5:8

8 Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall SEE God. (Without a pure heart, no man will see God).

Hebrews 12:14

14 Follow peace with all men, and Holiness, without which no man shall SEE the Lord. (The word see, is the same in both verses and it does not mean just a visual observation).

Mark 16:15-16

15 And He said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature.

16 He that BELIEVETH (The Gospel as the Apostles believed it) and is BAPTIZED shall be saved; but he that BELIEVETH NOT (The Gospel as the Apostles believed it) shall be damned.

2 Thessalonians 1:7-9

7 And to you who are troubled, rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, 8 In flaming fire, taking vengeance on

them that know not God, and that OBEY NOT the GOSPEL of our Lord Jesus Christ: 9 Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the Glory of His power;

2 Corinthians 4:3-7

3 But if our Gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: 4 In whom the God of this world Hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the LIGHT of the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them. 5 For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus, the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake. 6 For God, who commanded the LIGHT to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the Glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. 7 But, we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.

One must also keep in mind, millions of so-called Apostolics in the world today and down through history, have never been saved and have died, lost, even though they were water baptized correctly. The reason they remained lost, is because they have never been taught how to BELIEVE and OBEY the true Gospel as the Apostles believed it. The Word of God tells us in Hosea 4:6, the people of God are destroyed, for lack of knowledge. This means, one can believe and obey the truth, in part, and still be lost because one does not have the full truth. This is why anyone who does not BELIEVE and OBEY the full truth, will not be saved whether one is Oneness, Trinity, or whatever.

The reason the Apostolic movement world-wide has never been UNITED in how they believe Acts 2:38, and the full Gospel along with the Trinity believers, having never seen the true Gospel, is because all those who have not believed it, have not had pure hearts and this is why they have never been shown the full truth. In not revealing the true Gospel to the lost, God has just let them be destroyed, for lack of knowledge. This means, believing and obeying the true Gospel is connected to the condition of the heart of man and not his intelligence, education, and preaching ability. Always keep in mind, visual signs, wonders, and miracles, are not signs of doctrinal truth and do not indicate

the presence of the full Apostolic truth. In this, we can quickly see why and where the Church Fathers and the Reformers were so far off base in their doctrine and why so many millions of Apostolics have missed salvation, also. We have too many sign followers and not enough truth followers.

This indicates, salvation is based strictly on a one to one relationship between the believer and the Lord Jesus Christ, with those who have knowledge of the full truth.

We can now see the following, truly the road of salvation is narrow, much narrower than we ever dreamed.

Just a little food for thought from your author.

Section B

With a general overview of religious history in Section A complete, we are now ready to study the doctrine of the Christian Trinity, with the Scriptural Harmony Process. Before we can do this, we must first determine exactly what is the doctrine of the Christian Trinity and how did it come about?

To understand how the Christian Trinity was developed and what it is, we must go back in history to the time of Justin Martyr, Tertullian, and Origen. This time frame is between 150 A.D., and 250 A.D. During this one hundred year period, following the passing of the Apostles, a system of Scripture study was developed. How and why it came about, we do not know for sure. It does appear from the evident results of this system, it was used by Gentile Christian converts, to discredit and if possible, destroy the teachings of the Jewish Christian Apostles. The term used to describe this system in modern day English, is Scholastic Theology.

In Scholastic Theology, the interpretation of the Scriptures is determined by ones ability

to speak and write in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin. Because of the development of Scholastic

Theology, the understanding of the Word of God was taken out of the hands of the common uneducated Church member and given to the highly educated ministry and developing priest-hoods. As the system evolved and grew in complexity, schools of doctrinal study began to appear. These schools, which began as pre-baptismal schools of study, quickly evolved into what is called today, seminaries.

With nineteen hundred years of history to observe, the results of Scholastic Theology and seminaries, one amazing point stands out. Scholastic Theology turns out to be a very fluid and liberal study system, which is responsible for the formation of over three thousand different Christian movements, sects, groups, and denominations, over the past two thousand years. This number alone, is clear indication this system is not designed to find and proclaim the truth of the Word of God. In application, the system has turned out to be a control system, which allows the ruling class of ministry and educated elite, to develop personal truth and new revelation as Biblical truth, to be used in attracting and controlling followers. In this, we can quickly understand why the world has so many different Christian religious movements and groups, all speaking from the same Scriptures, but coming up with different interpretations. It all comes down to numbers, money, and building organizations, for control and power. Where the Bible tells us to study in order to find truth, Scholastic Theology has been used to study, in order to generate truth. Needless to say, this is mass confusion on a grand scale, especially since the Word of God repeatedly says, there is only ONE truth.

From Scholastic Theology, came the different Christian Trinity systems. Knowing there is over six different Christian Trinity systems in the world today, gives clear indication, the Christian Trinities are not of God and do not represent the truth on the nature of the Godhead. As stated in section A, the early first generation Church Fathers, on the most part, were believers in the pagan concept of the Trinity, before they became believers in Jesus Christ. Once becoming believers, they developed Scholastic Theology as a tool,

to be used to develop a new Christian doctrine, totally foreign, to the teachings of the Apostles. In this system was conceived and born, the concept of the Christian Trinity. What really takes place in Scholastic Theology, is adaptation and merging. In this partial truth, is merged and adapted with that which is false, to form new truth which is how the Church Fathers developed the different Trinities. As the Scriptural Harmony Process reveals, the Apostles had the truth and the Church Fathers over a period of five hundred years, changed every point of doctrinal salvation truth, proclaimed by the Apostles.

In looking at the Trinity theory, one quickly sees the presence of a central doctrinal core. This core states, there is ONE God who exists as three different persons. These three per-

sons, who look like humans, have no beginning and no ending. Their names are Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. These three persons, dwell in the New Jerusalem, have three thrones they sit on, and are co-equal in authority and power. Anytime God has to make a decision, these three persons come together to develop a joint-unified decision. This concept of the Godhead is a result of Scholastic Theology and the merging together of selected Scriptures, with the teachings of Greek and Roman Pagan Mythology, plus Greek philosophy.

What we will do in this section, is to examine a general statement of the Trinity, and then, break down the different parts and concepts of the Trinity to be compared with the Scriptural Harmony Process.

Trinity Statement

God is One Divine essence subsisting in three Divine persons. 1st Person - Father, 2nd Person - Son, and 3rd Person - Holy Ghost; Co-Equal, Co-Eternal, Co-Omnipresent, Co-Omniscient, Co-Powerful; Three in one and one in three.

In looking at this statement and concept one must keep in mind, even Trinity scholars themselves down through the centuries of time, admit the Trinity is not clearly found in the sacred text. This means, the Trinity is not expressed clearly, as a fact in the Word of God. These scholars also admit, the Trinity theory is a result of human induction from the statements of the Scriptures. This means, humans with their educated minds, have identified certain Scriptures which indicate, "to them," the existence of three different persons, who are deity in nature, but operate in different functions. These scholars also state, one has to believe in this theory to be a Christian and be saved, even though there are Scriptures in the Word of God, which totally refute this theory.

The following are common teachings by Trinity believers, which have Scriptures in direct opposition, to the teaching. Here, the Scriptural Harmony Process, clearly shows, the many false teachings of the Trinity believers and why the Trinity is not a true Christian doctrine.

God is one Divine essence, subsisting as three Divine Persons.

John 4:24

24 God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him, must worship Him in Spirit and in Truth.

Ephesians 4:4-6

4 There is ONE body, and ONE SPIRIT, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; 5 One Lord, One faith, One baptism, 6 One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.

(Nowhere in the Bible, is God described, as an essence or a substance. Nor is the Father and the Holy Ghost ever described, as Persons in the Word of God. Keep in mind, in the Spirit world, there is neither male or female. Also, God the Great Spirit, is neither male or female. This means, the Father and Holy Ghost are titles given to the ONE Divine invisible omnipresent Spirit, who is God. This Great Spirit is our heavenly

Father and His name is Jesus Christ. This is why Jesus told the Apostles, “When you see Me, you have seen the Father”).

There are three separate Persons (Father, Son, and Holy Ghost), living in heaven. Each has His own throne and They are seated next to each other with Jesus Christ, at the right hand of the Father.

Isaiah 43:10-11

10 Ye are My witnesses, saith the LORD, and My servant whom I have chosen: that ye may know and believe Me, and understand that I am He: before Me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after Me. 11 I, even I, am the LORD; and beside Me there is no Saviour.

Isaiah 44:6

6 Thus saith the LORD, the King of Israel, and his redeemer the LORD of hosts; I am the first, and I am the last; and beside Me there is no God.

Isaiah 44:8

8 Fear ye not, neither be afraid: have not I told thee from that time, and have declared it? Ye are even My witnesses. Is there a God beside Me? Yea, there is no God, I know not any.

Isaiah 45:3

3 And I will give thee the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places, that thou mayest know that I, the LORD, which call thee by thy name, am the God of Israel.

Isaiah 45:5-6

5 I am the LORD, and there is none else, there is no God beside Me: I girded thee, though thou hast not known me: 6 That they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that there is none beside Me. I am the LORD, and

there is none else.

Isaiah 45:18

18 For thus saith the LORD that created the heavens; God Himself that formed the earth and made it; He hath established it, He created it not in vain, He formed it to be inhabited: I am the LORD, and there is none else.

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Isaiah 45:21-22

21 Tell ye, and bring them near; yea, let them take counsel together: who hath declared this from ancient time? who hath told it from that time? have not I the LORD? and there is no God else beside Me; a just God and a Saviour; there is none beside Me. 22 Look unto Me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else.

Isaiah 46:9

9 Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like Me.

(In the monotheistic religion of Abraham and Moses, the seed of Abraham learned the Old Covenant Scriptures well. They also knew these verses in Isaiah perfectly well. With these Scriptures coming from one of the most powerful prophets of God ever in history, is it any wonder the early Apostolic Jewish Christians and traditional Jews rejected the theory of a Trinity Godhead system? To the Christian Jews, and traditional Jews alike, in early Church history, this Trinity thing was nothing more than a new twist of old pagan idolatry. This was especially true, when the early Trinitarians started making statues and paintings illustrating the so-called three separate Persons in heaven. It is also very evident from these Scripture verses, in Isaiah, there never has been, nor is there, a co-eternal Godhead of three Persons, dwelling in heaven. Here again, the "Bible" confirms the non-existence of the Christian Trinity).

The Trinity teaches the first Person in the Godhead, "Father," is the father of Jesus

Christ.

Matthew 1:18

18 Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as His mother Mary, was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost.

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(Here, we can clearly see the deception of the Trinity. If the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost were three separate Persons, then Jesus did not know who His Father was when He prayed to His Father. The reason being, Trinity believers are taught, anytime Jesus prayed to His Father, He was praying to the 1st Person of the Trinity Godhead. Nothing could be farther from the truth. The reason being, the "Bible" teaches the Holy Ghost is the Father of Jesus Christ).

The Trinity teaches, that Jesus Christ is the second Person in the Godhead.

Colossians 1:19

19 For it pleased the Father (Holy Spirit), that in Him (Jesus Christ) should all fullness dwell;

Colossians 2:8-13

8 Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. 9 For in Him DWELLETH ALL THE FULLNESS OF THE GODHEAD BODILY. 10 And ye are complete in Him, WHICH IS THE HEAD OF ALL PRINCIPALITY AND POWER: 11 In whom, also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: 12 Buried with Him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with Him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised Him from the dead. 13 And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath He quickened together with Him, having forgiven all your trespasses;

1 Timothy 3:16

16 And without controversy, great is the mystery of Godliness: GOD (Jesus Christ) 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.

Isaiah 9:6

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 (Jesus Christ) shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The Mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.

(There is no other teaching that is more repugnant to the Lord, than the Trinity teaching, that Jesus Christ is in second position in the Godhead. Being the King of Kings and Lord of Lord's, He is the fullness of the Godhead, manifested in the flesh. While the Great Spirit has always been and will always be, Jesus Christ, is the visible human manifestation of the invisible Holy Spirit).

The Trinity teaches, the three Persons of the Godhead are co-powerful in authority.

Matthew 28:18

18 And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, ALL POWER is given unto Me, in heaven and in earth.

(Here we see another contradiction between the Trinity and the Word of God. The Word tells us, Jesus has ALL POWER. If He has ALL POWER, this then leaves NO POWER for the so-called 1st and 3rd Persons, if there were three Persons).

As we look at the theory of the Trinity, in light of the Scriptures, it is very evident, the Church Fathers using Scholastic Theology to develop the theory of a Christian Trinity, made some very bad interpretational errors of the Scriptures they use, to prove the Trinity. In addition, most of the Scriptures in the Word of God, which clearly shows

there cannot be a Christian Trinity, they clearly ignored.

In this process of picking and choosing, one key word has been clearly ignored throughout the history of the Trinity movement. This word is MANIFESTATION. In the Bible, we know the following about God. He is an invisible Holy Spirit, who is omnipresent in existence. Since He is invisible, with no confinement in form, the only way we can see and feel Him, is by MANIFESTATIONS. The word, manifestation means, to make visible and to make someone aware of.

Examples of Biblical manifestations of God are: the voice of God, speaking in the garden and in the burning bush, the pillars of fire and smoke, the great I AM revelation, the voice and fire on Mt. Sinai, the Glory of God on the Mercy Seat in the Holy of Holies, the Angel of the Lord, the Death Angel, the Father in Creation, the Son in redemption, the Holy Ghost in regeneration, the Ancient Of Days on the throne, the Lord Jesus Christ on the throne, the Son, dove, and voice at the baptism of Jesus Christ, by John.

These many manifestations of God are all important to students of religious history and reveal the diverse nature and power of the One true God. What the authors of the Christian Trinity did, was select three of these manifestations and turn them into human-like Persons and the theory of the Trinity, while at the same time, ignoring the complete nature and power of our God. In modern day terms, the Church Fathers put God in a human shoe box, called the Trinity and then said, to be Christian, and to be saved, one had to believe the Trinity and bow to it. This is not salvation, because the Word of God does not support Trinity doctrine.

As stated before, the change in water baptism by Justin Martyr and the development of the different Trinities, represents change in the Gospel of salvation of the Apostles. These changes can only result in one thing, the curse of God and the loss of salvation to all who follow these changes.

Footnote: Where does YHWH come from? The ancient name of God given to Moses

was: Ehyeh Asher Ehyeh

“I AM THAT I AM” Take away the vowels in Ehyeh and you have YHWH, the most ancient name of God.

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