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The Trinity Development

Radical, Biblical, Apostolic, Christianity



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The Trinity Development

THE HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE TRINITY DOCTRINE AND ITS EVOLUTION THROUGH THE CENTURIES

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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 there is the Orthodox belief, as stated in the ancient creeds.

What is the relationship between YHWH, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Ghost? How are we to understand the Bible's teaching about Monotheism, and yet, confess the divinity of the Father, Son, and the Holy Ghost? How are we to maintain Monotheism, and yet, keep the Scriptural distinctions spoken of, as existing between the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost?

This generation of ours is not the first in its attempt to find a way to explain the Scriptural injunctions, as stated above. The Church has been trying to understand the nature of the Godhead, since its beginning. How did the early Church comprehend this? Where did the doctrine of the Trinity really come from? This course will address and answer these very questions. In this following doctrinal course, I will try to demonstrate the progressive development of the Trinitarian doctrine up to the Council of Constantinople, in 381 A.D. This will be accomplished by studying 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. Lastly, we will look at the development of the Trinity doctrine, through the centuries, to this current time; then conclude with why I believe in Monotheism over Trinitarianism.

POST-APOSTOLIC AGE (A.D. 90-140)

There are not many extant documents from this time period. We only have an Epistle from Clement of Rome, seven Epistles of Ignatius, and one Epistle written by Polycarp of Smyrna. We also have The Shepherd by Hermas, The Didache, and some pseudonymous writings. These writings are very significant for our studies, due to the proximity in time in which they were written, in relation to the Apostles. The men who wrote 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.

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Clement of Rome is counted as the third bishop of Rome (after the Apostles). His predecessors are Linus and Cletus (or Anacletus, or Anencletus), about whom, nearly nothing is known. They are just names on a list. Clement is a little more than this, mainly because he wrote a letter to the Corinthians, which was highly valued by the early Church, and has been preserved to the present day. The letter itself does not carry his name, but is merely addressed, from the congregation at Rome, to the congregation at Corinth. However, a letter from Corinth to Rome, a few decades later, refers to “the letter we received from your bishop, Clement, which we still read faithfully.” Other early writers are unanimous in attributing the Epistle to Clement. Possibly, since this letter made his name familiar, he has had an early anonymous sermon (commonly called II Clement) credited to him, and is a character in some early religious romances.

One story about Clement of Rome, is that he died by being tied to an anchor and thrown into the sea. Therefore, he is often shown with an anchor, and many Churches in port towns intended to minister mainly to mariners, are named for him.

The Epistles of Clement to the Corinthians (also called I Clement) can be found in collections of the writings of the Apostolic Fathers, such as the Penguin Paperback Early Christian Writings, which are translated by Maxwell Staniforth. The Epistle is

commonly dated around 96 A.D., but recently, an even earlier time, has been given for the letter.

Now, 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. Clement wrote, “Have we not all One God and One Christ? Is there not One Spirit of grace poured out upon us?” This is an apparent allusion to Ephesians 4:6.

Additionally, Clement of Rome put great emphasis on the singular Name of God, as the following phrases will show: “His all-Holy and glorious Name;” “the most hallowed Name of His Majesty;” “Thine almighty and all-excellent Name;” “our hope resting on Thy Name;” “to the well-pleasing of His Name;” “every soul that calleth upon His glorious and most Holy Name.” The last phrase, perhaps alludes, to the Jesus Name baptismal formula.

There are only a couple of sentences, in I Clement, that could imply a Trinity. Chapter 46 asks, “Have we not all One God and One Christ? Is there not One Spirit of grace, poured out upon us?” We have already stated, that this language seems to be an allusion to Ephesians 4:4-6, which speaks of One body, One Spirit, One hope, One Lord, One faith, One baptism, and One God and Father. But, the main thought, in both Scriptures, is Oneness, not Threeness, or the Trinity! Ephesians 4:6, shows that the titles of Lord and Spirit relate to the One God, who is the Father: “One God and Father of all, who is above all (i.e., who is Lord), and through all, and in you all (i.e., who is the Spirit in you.”).

Now, Ignatius, according to an early, but unproved tradition, which editor A. C. Coxe of the Ante-Nicene Fathers accepted, says that Ignatius and Polycarp were both, fellow Disciples, under the Apostle John. The writings of Ignatius (c. 110-15), equate Jesus with the One God, so strongly, that some historians have called his doctrine Modalistic. The martyrdom of Ignatius dates to the fifth century. We have seven genuine letters

that were written by Ignatius, along with six spurious ones from the fourth century, and three more spurious ones from the twelfth century. Ignatius' writings are somewhat difficult or hard to decipher, simply because of the several apparent interpolations to his texts, by later copyists. It is thought that the original versions are found in a Syriac translation. Ignatius also confessed the deity of Jesus Christ in a profound manner. Jesus is none other than the eternal God, manifested 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 passable on our account; and Who, in every kind of way, also suffered for our sakes." Not only was the Lord Jesus Christ said to have been the pre-existent God, but He is also said, to have suffered for us: "The passion of my God." In several of the passages, written by Ignatius, he specifically identified Jesus, as the indwelling Holy Spirit. Assuming Ignatius comprehended God to be the Father (as stated in such verses as in John 17:3; 1 Corinthians 8:6; 2 Corinthians 1:2-3; Ephesians 4:6), he thought of Jesus, as God the Father, incarnate.

Now, Polycarp left one short letter to the Philippians (c. 112-18). He strongly endorsed the Epistles of Ignatius, apparently agreeing with the doctrine of God, expressed in them. "The Epistles of Ignatius, written by him to us, and all the rest (of his Epistles) which we have by us, we have sent to you, as you have asked. They are sub-joined to this Epistle, and by them, ye may be greatly profited." Polycarp spoke of "God and our Lord," and also identified Jesus Christ as, "our Lord and God" and "the Son of God."

The only passage that could even point to Trinitarianism, is in chapter 12, which is no longer in existence in the original Greek. The only complete text, is in Latin. According to it, Polycarp prayed that "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," and asked God's blessing on all who believe "in our Lord Jesus Christ, and in His Father, who raised Him from the dead." This language is Scriptural and makes a Biblical distinction between God the Father and the Man, Jesus, who is our Mediator and who died for us. If Polycarp were trying to make a Trinitarian

statement here, it appears that he would have recognized the Holy Ghost, as a third coequal Person, by praying for His help also, and by stating the need for faith in Him, as well. Lastly, Polycarp died about 155 A.D.

Now, “The Shepherd” of Hermas (or the Pastor) (c. 140-45), was written by an unknown man, whose name was Hermas in the city of Rome. However, this date is not possible for him to be the Hermas written about in Romans 16:14, as some believe. The Muratorian Fragment (c. 170) says, he was the brother of Pius, bishop of Rome, and that he had recently written, “The Shepherd.” This work was quite popular in the days of ancient Christendom.

“The Shepherd,” definitely states, that God is One: “First of all, believe that there is One God, who Created and finished all things” (Commandment 1). However, in one passage, it may indicate a pre-existent Son, as a separate Person: “The Son of God is older than all His creatures, so that He was a Fellow-Counselor with the Father in His work of Creation.” Hermas may have meant to say, simply, that the Son existed in the plan and mind of God. Now, Hermas believed the Holy Ghost 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 Ghost dwelt, was nobly subject to that Spirit,...and after laboring and co-operating with the Spirit, and having everything acted vigorously along with the Holy Ghost, 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.” Therefore, Hermas did not see the Holy Ghost as a separate Person of the Godhead, but said He was manifested to the world, as the Son.

Also, Hermas taught the essentiality of water baptism, the Name of God, the Holy Ghost, and Holiness of life. He alluded to the Jesus Name formula, saying that Christians take on the Lord’s Name at water baptism: “Your life has been, and will be, saved through water...founded on the Word of the Almighty and glorious Name.” “These are they who have heard the Word, and wish to be baptized in the Name of the Lord.” “The Name of the Lord, by which, they were called.” “No one shall enter into the

Kingdom of God, unless he receives His Holy Name...A man cannot otherwise enter into the Kingdom of God than by the Name of His beloved Son...Whosoever does not receive His Name, shall not enter into the Kingdom of God.” “If you bear His Name, but possess not His power, it will be in vain that you bear His Name.” “The Name of the Son of God is great, and cannot be contained, and supports the whole world.” “Before a man bears the Name of the Son of God, he is dead; but, when he receives the seal, he lays aside his deadness, and obtains life.” “The seal, then, is the water: they go down into the water dead and they arise alive.” “Ye, who suffer for His Name, ought to glorify God, because He deemed you worthy to bear His Name, that all your sins might be healed.” This last statement points to water baptism, because Hermas taught and believed, that remission of sins comes only by being baptized in water.

So, in conclusion, the writings of Clement of Rome, Ignatius, Polycarp, and Hermas adhere very close to Biblical language, usage, and thought. Each of these writers believed and taught, that God is One, that Jesus Christ is the true God, and that Christ truly was human. They distinguished between God and Jesus Christ, in the sense, that the New Testament does, distinguishing Father and Son, the eternal Spirit, and the Man, Jesus Christ, through whom, God manifested Himself. These men did not see or believe a distinction, with regard, to the Holy Ghost. To them, the Holy Ghost was the Spirit of the One God and was Jesus Christ Himself, in Spirit form. They applied great importance to the Name of God and alluded to baptism in the Name of Jesus Christ! On all these issues, these writers showed a close affinity to modern Oneness.

Lastly, Clement of Rome, Ignatius, Polycarp, and Hermas did not describe God as a Trinity or as three Persons in the Godhead, nor did they use any other distinctively Trinitarian language. Furthermore, some of these writer’s statements are incompatible with Trinitarianism, ancient and modern, and many sound like Oneness expressions of today! If the early Christians believed the Trinitarian doctrine, which differs sharply with Old Testament Monotheism, as taught by Judaism, from which they had recently emerged, and if such belief were essential to salvation as Trinitarians later claimed, then we would expect these early writers to emphasize this doctrine of the Trinity. That

they did not, is highly important!

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 New Testament. The Spirit did not receive very much attention, but when He did, He was spoken of as being God's Spirit, revealed to mankind through the Person of Jesus Christ. There is no distinctively Trinitarian language or any concepts conveyed in the writings, at this point in time. Additionally, some teachings, such as equating the Holy Ghost with the Son, are not consistent with the Trinitarian doctrine!

THE AGE OF THE GREEK APOLOGISTS (A.D. 130-180)

The writings of the Greek Apologists are importantly different from the writings of the Post-Apostolic Age. The writers of the Post-Apostolic Age addressed Christians, where as the Apologists addressed the non-Christians. The most influential writers of the earlier age were bishops; the most influential Apologists were philosophers, who seemingly had no important leadership position in the Church. The earlier writers adhered more closely to Biblical language and thought, while the Apologists were more philosophical and speculative. The Apologists used Greek philosophical ideas and words to define and defend Christianity. In the process, they introduced several innovations, the most significant, of which, was their doctrine of the Word (Logos).

By far, the most important Greek Apologist was a man named Flavius Justinus, or Justin, who was born in a Roman colony in Samaria. He was a Greek philosopher, who continued to wear the philosopher's cloak and title after his conversion to Christianity. Justin was not ordained and did not possess a Church position, but was an itinerant lay teacher. At two different times, he lived in Rome, where he was beheaded for his beliefs. He has traditionally been surnamed, Philosopher and Martyr.

It was during this time 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, mending it where necessary, in order to make the Gospel acceptable to the general population, who believed Christianity to be nothing more than 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. A man named Edward Hardy demonstrated 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 Himself, accounts both for the divinity which Christians have found in Jesus, and by retrospect for the divine appearances in the Old Testament.

Now, 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." Repeatedly, 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. As a matter of fact, He was the first Creation of God: "The Word...is the first-birth of God." The Spirit is not mentioned very much, yet when He is, He appears 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 appears to be that of Binitarianism or Ditheism. The Logos was second to the Father, in time and sequence, and in authority, yet not in will. Justin's teachings closely resemble that of Arianism,

which was to flourish, a century later.

In summary, Justin taught a plurality of divine Persons or gods. He taught that the Son-Word, is “another God” and “numerically distinct” from the Creator, the Father. However, it is not clear, if he believed the Holy Ghost to be a third divine Person. Some passages indicate that the Spirit is an angel, while others imply that the Spirit is the activity of the Word.

But, Justin clearly subordinated the Word to the Father as to power, authority, time, and substance. He said, the Word is not eternal, is not equal to the Father, and is like an angel. In these statements, we discover the essential features of the later Arian doctrine, (which the Council of Nicaea condemned), although in a more moderate form.

Justin used a compromise threefold baptismal formula that included the Name of Jesus. He partially kept the earlier emphasis on the Name of God, believing that there was mighty power in the Name of Jesus. He believed that water baptism was necessary for the remission of sins, and it is possible, that he believed the Name of Jesus, to be important in this regard. However, in the writings of Justin, we have the first written threefold baptismal formula, which appeared in the second generation, after the completion of the New Testament.

The other writers, whose works survive from this age of the Greek Apologists, were not nearly as prolific as Justin, and most of them were greatly influenced, by him. Now possibly, the earliest existing apology, is the Apology of Aristides, which dates to around 150 A.D., although some scholars say it was written as early as 125 or 130 A.D. Aristides was a philosopher in Athens, who became a Christian. We have only three manuscripts of his work: one in Syriac, one in Greek, and an Armenian Fragment. The Greek text exists only in a somewhat modified form, incorporated in a fanciful story called, “The Life of Barlaam and Josaphat.” Aristides emphasized God’s Oneness. “God, our Lord...is One, is all in all...God is One in His nature. A single essence is proper to Him, since He is uniform in His nature and His essence.” He explained the

Jewish belief of God, with approval, and defined the Christian doctrine of God, in a similar way. “The Jews then say, that God is One, the Creator of all, and omnipotent; and that it is not right, that any other should be worshipped, except this God alone. And herein, they seem to approach the truth more than all the nations.” “For the Christians know and trust in God, the Creator of heaven and of earth, in whom and from, whom are all things, to whom there is no other God as companion, from whom they received commandments which they engraved upon their minds and observe, in hope and expectation of the world, which is to come.”

The only possible Trinitarian allusion to Aristides, is the Greek parallel to the foregoing passage (confirmed by the Armenian Fragment). “For the Christians know God, the Creator and Fashioner of all things, through the only-begotten Son and the Holy Spirit; and beside Him, they worship no other God. They have the commands of the Lord Jesus Christ, Himself, graven upon their hearts.” So, if this passage indicates some sort of a Trinity, therefore, it advocates worship of the Father alone and alludes to the Son and Spirit, merely as His agents.

Another early document, from this time period, is the Epistle to Diognetus. Its author, date, and text are uncertain. However, historians today date it at 150 or later, although some believe it was written as early as 130 A.D. It exists only in copies of one medieval Greek manuscript, that no longer exists. That manuscript gave the authorship to Justin, but scholars today, uniformly reject that belief.

The Epistle describes the “God who gave His Son” as “our Nourisher, Father, Teacher, Counsellor, Healer, our Wisdom, Light, Honour, Glory, Power, and Life.” But, by contrast, third century Trinitarians connected some of these titles with the second and third Persons of the Trinity. Such as, they used the title of Wisdom, as a unique designation for the Son, in contrast to the Father.

In several places, this work uses a Biblical definition of the Son, as the revelation and incarnation of God Himself. “No man has either seen God, or made Him known,

but He has revealed Himself.” “He Himself, took on Him, the burden of our iniquities; He gave His own Son as a ransom for us.” “He sent the Word, that He might be manifested to the world...This is He, who was from the beginning, who appeared, as if new, and was found old, and yet, who is ever born afresh, in the hearts of the saints. This is He, who, being from everlasting, is today, called the Son.”

However, two passages, may indicate a pre-existent Son, distinct from God. “God Himself, who is Almighty, the Creator of all things, and invisible, has sent from heaven, and placed among men, the truth, and the Holy and incomprehensible Word, and has firmly established Him, in their hearts. He sent...the very Creator and Fashioner of all, things - by whom, He made the heavens...As a King, sends His Son, who is also a King, so sent He Him; as God, He sent Him.” “He formed in His mind, a great and unspeakable conception, which He communicated to His Son, alone...After He revealed and laid open, through His beloved Son, the things which had been prepared from the beginning, He conferred every blessing, all at once, upon us...He was aware then, of all things in His own mind, alone with His Son, according to the relation subsisting between them.”

Tatian, Greek (Tatianos), born A.D., 120, was a Syrian compiler of the Diatessaron (Greek: “From Four,” or “Out of Four”), a version of the four Gospels, arranged in a single continuous narrative that, in its Syriac form, served the Biblical-theological vocabulary of the Syrian Church, for centuries. Its Greek and Latin versions influenced the Gospel text. Tatian also founded, or at least was closely connected with, the heretical sect of the Encratites, which was a community, integrating a severe asceticism with elements of Stoic philosophy.

Tatian became a pupil of the 2nd-century, Roman theologian, Justin Martyr and converted to Christianity. But, after Justin’s martyrdom, Tatian broke with the Roman Church, and returned to Syria, around 172 A.D., and became connected with a school and religious community of the Encratites, so that he could incorporate his amalgam of religious philosophy.

Now, Justin's disciple, Tatian expressed beliefs quite similar to his teacher, in his "Address to the Greeks" (c. 150). Originally, God the Father, existed alone. "Our God did not begin to be in time: He alone, is without beginning and He Himself, is the beginning of all things. God is a Spirit...He is invisible, impalpable, being Himself, the Father of both, sensible and invisible things." The Logos was originally an impersonal power, inherent in the Father, but before Creation, the Logos was "begotten" or "emanated" from the Father, as a distinct Being.

Tatian made it very clear of his belief, 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 Jesus 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 on in time.

Lastly, "The heavenly Logos, was a Spirit emanating from the Father and a Logos from the Logos-power. Since Tatian believed that the Logos was from the beginning, inherent in the Father, his Diatessaron rendered the last phrase of John 1:1 as, "God is the Word." As a matter of fact, he interpreted John 1:1, much as Oneness believers do today. As far as eternity past is concerned, he seemingly had a Oneness concept. However, he differed from Oneness, in teaching, that at a certain point in time before the Creation of the world, the Word came out of God, as a distinct Person.

Melito, flourished 2nd century, Greek bishop of Sardis in Lydia (now in Turkey), whose re-discovered theological treatise on Easter, "The Lord's Passion," verifies his reputation, as a notable early Christian spokesman. The fourth century chronicles of Eusebius of Caesarea identify Melito, as a bishop, who addressed a discourse to the

Roman Emperor, Marcus Aurelius, arguing that Christianity should be made the state religion of the Roman Empire. Eusebius gives the titles of twenty of Melito's books, which were in Greek. However, only fragments of these books have survived, except for the nearly complete text of his homily on the "Passion of Christ." This work was first published in 1940, after an ancient papyrus was discovered and was then fully published in the year of 1960. In it, was eternity and time, Christ's divine and human nature, and the Jews and the Christian Church are contrasted in highly rhetorical antitheses.

But, the fragments of the books of Melito contain a number of statements that are reminiscent of the writings of the Post-Apostolic Age and that are similar to the teachings of the Modalists. Maybe, his works didn't survive because they contradicted the doctrine of God, that became dominant. It would be particularly interesting to study his lost manuscripts, entitled "One God Incarnate."

Melito's "Apology" (c. 170), emphasizes God's Oneness and identifies God, as being the Father. "He, I say, really exists...and those who love Him, speak of Him thus: "Father, and God of truth" ...God is One...There is a God, the Father of all, who never came into being, neither was ever made, and by whose will, all things subsist."

The Key says, "the Lord" is the Beginning and Creator of all things...the "Ancient of Days," and then, identifies the Lord as Jesus Christ: "The transition of the Lord, is His assumption of our flesh, through which, by His birth, His death, and His resurrection, His ascent into heaven, He made transitions." It describes the Son modalistically as, "the Mouth of the Lord, the Word of the Lord, the Arm of the Lord, the Right Hand of the Lord, the Wisdom of the Lord." The Holy Ghost is similarly called, "the Tongue of the Lord, the Finger of the Lord."

Furthermore, several fragments identify Jesus Christ, as God, in strong terms. The Discourse on the Cross says, "He was man...He is God; putting on the likeness of a servant, yet, not impairing the likeness of His Father. He sustained every character

(literally, 'He was everything'), belonging to Him in an immutable nature." Two fragments state, that Jesus was "God put to death, the King of Israel slain."

On the "Nature of Christ," says, "For, being at once, both God and perfect Man...as regards to the flesh. He concealed the signs of His Deity, although He was the true God, existing before all ages."

Now in the writings of Melito, two statements appear, to indicate a pre-existent Son, distinct from the Father, but identified, as the Spirit. "The Father sent His Son from heaven without a bodily form, that, when He should put on a body by means of the Virgin's womb, and be born Man, He might save man" (Discourse on Soul and Body). "He who was begotten before the light; He who is Creator together with the Father, He who is the Fashioner of man; He who is all in all...in the voice of the preacher, the Word; among Spirits, the Spirit; in the Father, the Son; in God, God; King forever and ever...God who is from God; the Son who is from the Father; Jesus Christ the King forevermore." (On Faith).

Theophilus became bishop of Antioch in 168 A.D., and died in 181, so he wrote close to the end of this time period. To Autolycus, begins with a strong expression of God's Oneness, giving a modalistic definition of titles, that the Trinitarians later used to distinguish the Persons of the Godhead. "Now we also confess that God exists, but that He is One, the Creator, and Maker, and Fashioner of this universe; and we know that all things are arranged by His providence, but by Him alone." (3:9).

Now, Theophilus believed that the Word was in the beginning, inherent in God, in an impersonal way, but later, became expressed or begotten, apparently becoming a distinct Person. He seemed to identify the Word, as the Spirit. "God, then, having His own Word internal within His own bowels, begat Him, emitting Him along with His own wisdom, before all things. He had this Word, as a helper, in the things that were Created by Him, and by Him, He made all things. He is called, 'governing principle,' because He rules, and is Lord of all things, fashioned by Him. He, then, being Spirit of

God, and governing principle, and wisdom, and power of the highest, came down upon the Prophets, and through them, spake of the Creation of the world and of all other things. For the Prophets were not, when the world came into existence, but the wisdom of God, which was in Him, and His Holy Word, which was always present with Him.” (2:10).

Also, the Word is the activity or revelation of the Father’s Person. “The God and Father, indeed, of all cannot be contained, and is not found in a place, for there is no place of His rest; but His Word, through whom He made all things, being His power and His wisdom, assuming the Person of the Father and Lord of all, went to the garden in the Person of God, and conversed with Adam...But when God wished to make all that He determined on, He begot this Word, uttered, the first-born of all Creation, not Himself being emptied of the Word (Reason), but having begotten Reason, and always conversing with His Reason...[John 1:1 shows] us that, at first, God was alone, and the Word in Him...The Word, then, being God, and being naturally produced from God, wherever the Father of the universe wills, He sends Him to any place; and He, coming, is both, heard and seen, being sent by Him, and is found in a place” (2:22).

Now, two passages indicate an incipient Trinitarianism. “The three days [of Creation], which were before the luminaries, are types of the Triados, of God, and His Word, and His wisdom” (2:15). “But to no one less than to His own Word and wisdom did He say, “Let Us make” (2:18). The former quotation uses the genitive case of the Greek word, Trias, which means, “Triad,” and was later used for the Trinity. The translators left it in the original Greek, but capitalized it. There are those who say this is the first Christian use of the word, Trinity but most scholars reserve that dubious distinction to the man named, Tertullian, who used the Latin word, Trinitas around 210 A.D.

Tertullian clearly defined his term and used it to mean that there were three Persons or personalities - Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. By contrast, Theophilus stated his term, only once, in passing, and did not define it. Actually, his meaning is not clear. From

2:15 and 2:18, it appears that his Triad is God, His Word, and His Wisdom. If these are three Persons, then only the first Person is truly God and eternal. The third Person is not the Holy Ghost, but Wisdom. To confuse matters even further, Theophilus in other places, identified Wisdom with the Word (2:10; 2:22), and the Holy Ghost with the Word (2:10). Yet, he never stated that the Triad was three Persons, but used the term, Person in a way, incompatible with Trinitarian doctrine, saying the Word, which is God's power and wisdom, assumed the Person of the Father, the Person of God (2:22). Theophilus's Triad, then, appears to be a Triad of revelation or activity, in the beginning, consisting of God and two supreme attributes of His. The second member of the Triad, later became, distinct from God Himself, in some way, but the third member is never clearly personalized or really identified, as the Holy Ghost.

Athenagoras was a philosopher, who reportedly lived in the city of Athens. His "Plea for the Christians" (c. 177), shows further development of Trinitarianism close to the end of this age. He said that God is One, but taught a distinction between God and the Logos. "Our doctrine acknowledges One God, the Maker of this universe, who is Himself uncreated...but has made all things by the Logos, which is from Him."

Athenagoras thought of God in a threefold revelation, or as a Triad of some sort, consisting of the Father, the Logos (Son, Wisdom), and the Spirit. "[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, the Father, and their distinction in unity." "We acknowledge a God, and a Son, His Logos, and a Holy Spirit, united in essence, - the Father, the Son, the Spirit, because the Son is the Intelligence, Reason, Wisdom of the Father, and the Spirit an effluence, as light from fire."

In this vague divine Triad, the Logos and the Holy Spirit emanated from the Father, who is identified, as God. "He is God, who has framed all things by the Logos, and holds them in being, by His Spirit." "The Son of God is the Logos of the Father, in idea and in operation...the Father and the Son, being One. And, the Son being in the Father

and the Father in the Son, in Oneness and in power of Spirit, the understanding and reason of the Father is the Son of God...He is the product of the Father, not as having brought into existence (for, from the beginning, God, who is the eternal mind, had the Logos in Himself, being from eternity, instinct with Logos); but inasmuch as He came forth to be the idea and energizing power of all material things...The Holy Spirit Himself also, which operates in the Prophets, we assert to be an effluence of God, flowing from Him, and returning back again, like a beam of the sun...[We] speak of God the Father, and of God the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, and...declare both, their power in union and their distinction in order.”

So, the Apologists’ doctrine was anything, but Orthodox Trinitarianism. The Biblical doctrine of the Logos was described, in terms, by Greek philosophical thought, rather than that of what is in the Scriptures, 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 of time, 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. Therefore, 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 didn’t believe that the Father and Son were coeternal, consubstantial, and coequal. As in the time period of the Post-Apostolic Fathers, not much attention is given to the Holy Ghost. Some passages seemingly identify the Holy Ghost 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, possibly similar to an angel. Because of this, it appears best to see the Apologists’ understanding of God, as that of a Triad, instead of a Trinity.

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

OLD CATHOLIC AGE (A.D. 170-325)

This period of time enjoyed the greatest amount of theological growth. Much of the terminology and theological beliefs, 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.

At the beginning of the Old Catholic Age was a man named, Irenaeus (died c. 200). He was born in Asia Minor, but spent most of his life in the West and became bishop of Lyons in Gaul, in 178 A.D. Historians typically mention him as the first Post-Apostolic theologian, because he enunciated an understanding doctrinal system, based on the New Testament, in opposition to heresies. The theology of Irenaeus is typically characterized as Biblical, greatly reverential of tradition, and Christocentric.

According to Eusebius, who wrote a history of the Church in the fourth century, Irenaeus, prior to his becoming a bishop, had also served as a missionary to southern Gaul and as a peacemaker among the Churches of Asia Minor, that had been disturbed by heresy. Older historians, often described Irenaeus, as a disciple of Polycarp, but it seems that Polycarp’s influence on him, was minimal. Evidently, as a young boy, Irenaeus heard Polycarp preach, and possibly, had met him. Irenaeus wrote, “I also saw [Polycarp] in my early youth” (“Against Heresies” 3:3-4).

Irenaeus used phrases and ideas from Justin, the foremost Greek Apologist. So, he was possibly, “a pupil of Justin’s, as well as a reader of his books.” Yet, in contrast, to

Justin and the other Greek Apologists, however, Irenaeus greatly avoided philosophical speculation, particularly speculation, in regards to the Logos; instead he focused on the historical Christ, as God incarnate and Saviour. His major work, which was “Against Heresies,” was particularly written against Gnosticism (c. 182-88). Although being written in Greek, it exists only in a Latin translation, whose original text is often uncertain.

“Against Heresies,” teaches that God is One and speaks of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. It says, that the universal faith of the Church, as delivered by the Apostles, is belief “in One God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are in them; and in One Christ Jesus, the Son of God, who became incarnate for our salvation; and in the Holy Spirit, who proclaimed, through the Prophets, the dispensations of God” (1:10:1).

Maybe this statement shows a form of Trinitarian belief by its threefold emphasis and by its declaration that “the Son” became incarnate, which implies that the Son pre-existed the incarnation in a manner somehow distinct from the Father. Yet, on the other hand, the statement distinguishes Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in terms of manifestation or revelation, rather than essence. However, the same passage goes on to identify Jesus Christ, as the visible manifestation of the invisible God and the One to whom every knee shall bow.

In contrast to the Greek Apologists, Irenaeus didn’t define the Logos as a second, subordinate Person, created by God, at a point in time. Instead, the Logos is eternal, always in or with the Father. While some passages indicate a distinction between the Father and the Logos, a number of passages describe the Logos, as the mind of the Father or the revelation of the Father. “God over all...is all Nous [Mind], and all Logos [Word]...and has in Himself, nothing more ancient or later than another, and nothing at variance with another, but continues altogether equal, and similar, and homogeneous” (2:13-8).

However, like Justin, Irenaeus used the term, “Son of God” as the exact equivalent

of “Word,” instead of restricting it, as the Scriptures do, to the incarnation. “The Word of God...became incarnate when the fullness of time had come, at which the Son of God had to become the Son of man.” (3:16:7).

Irenaeus spoke of the Holy Spirit as, “the Spirit of the Father” (5:6:1). He also identified God’s Wisdom as the Spirit, not like the Apologists (with the possible exception of Theophilus), who followed Philo in equating wisdom with the Word. “For with [God] were always present, the Word and Wisdom, the Son and the Spirit, by whom and in whom, freely and spontaneously, He made all things, to whom also He speaks,” saying, “Let Us make man after Our image and likeness” (4:20:1). “The Word, namely the Son, [was] always with the Father...Wisdom also, which is the Spirit, was present with Him, anterior to all Creation” (4:20:3).

Now, this terminology may imply personal distinctions in the Godhead. Some passages appear to reflect such a view—such as, the explanation that in Genesis 1:26, God spoke to Word and Wisdom (as Theophilus had stated) or Son and Spirit. But if Word/Son and Wisdom/Spirit are additional divine Persons, then they are subordinate agents, “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).” (4:38:3).

Irenaeus identified Jesus Christ, as God incarnate. “To Christ Jesus, our Lord, and God, and Saviour, and King, according to the will of the invisible Father, every knee should bow” (1:10:1). Also, Irenaeus spoke of Jesus Christ, as Father and Spirit. Citing Deuteronomy 32:6, he said, “The Word of God” is “our Father...the Father of the human race” (4:31:2). And “He is indeed Saviour, as being the Son and Word of God; but salutary, since (He is) Spirit” (3:10:2). The Word Created Us, yet, “all things were made” by “the Spirit of God,” “the seed of the Father of all” (4:31:2). In discussing the Word/Son, Irenaeus preserved the Biblical concept of the Son, as the revelation of the Father. “Through His Word, who is His Son, through Him [the Father] is revealed” (2:30:9).

Irenaeus interpreted certain Old Testament Scriptures in a manner that implies some sort of distinction between God and the Word before the incarnation. The Word spoke to Adam in Genesis 3:8; Genesis 19:24, in which he says refers to the Father and the Son, the latter having spoken to Abraham; and Psalm 45:6, and 110:1, describe God speaking to the Word. Irenaeus adopted Justin's belief for the latter three Scriptures, yet, in contrast to Justin he said the Father spoke to Moses in Exodus 3. Also, "the Son, eternally co-existing with the Father, from of old, yea, from the beginning, always reveals the Father to angels" (2:30:9). The saints of the Old Testament didn't see the invisible Father in their visions, but His Word, which showed the Father's brightness (4:20:11). Therefore, the Word/Son was God's communication, self-revelation, or visible manifestation, even before the incarnation. However, if Irenaeus taught a distinction of Persons, he considered it temporary, for he interpreted I Corinthians 15:24-28, to mean that, in the end of God's "offspring, the First-begotten Word...should be contained by Him; and...the creature [redeemed humans] should contain the Word, and ascend to Him." (5:36:1-2).

Lastly, Irenaeus apparently used a threefold baptismal formula connected to his understanding of God. "We have received baptism for remission of sins in the Name of God the Father, and in the Name of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who became incarnate and died and was raised, and in the Holy Spirit of God." "The baptism of our rebirth comes through these three articles, granting us rebirth unto God the Father, through His Son, by the Holy Spirit."

Like Justin, but unlike Trinitarians of this day, Irenaeus kept the Name of Jesus in his baptismal formula, apparently in deference to the original practice and as part of his belief, that the Name of Jesus Christ belongs to the Father. Interestingly, in his earlier writings, he cited Acts 2:38 and 4:12, to teach that believers are to be baptized into Jesus Christ for the remission of sins ("Against Heresies" 3:12:2, 4, 7). And a fragment from his lost writings indicates, that he believed the Name of Jesus, as important in baptism: "We are made clean, by means of the sacred water and the invocation of the

Lord” (Fragments 34). Possibly, Irenaeus referred to his threefold formula, that included the Name of Jesus, maybe he, in the beginning, baptized in Jesus’ Name, but later changed formulas, or perhaps the Armenian manuscript was distorted by later Trinitarians.

In any case, it is amazing that many Protestants cite Irenaeus, as an authority for a Trinitarian baptismal formula, but reject his clear teaching, that baptism is part of the New Birth and effective for the remission of sins. (They typically say, that such a belief is nothing more but legalistic, heretical, or even cultic). Irenaeus kept much of the emphasis, terminology, and concepts of the Word-Of-God, and of the Post-Apostolic Age. Several of his statements sound like modern Oneness of today.

Now, in the beginning of the third century, we find the first clearly identifiable Trinitarian language being used. The person most responsible for the development of Trinitarianism, in its earliest beginning, was a man named, Tertullian. He was the first major theologian to write in Latin. The second most influential person was, Origen, who championed Trinitarianism in the East, as Tertullian did in the West. Following them, were a number of other writers, who were also Trinitarian of one sort or another. So, we will analyze the doctrine of God, expressed by these earliest confessed Trinitarians.

Tertullian, Latin in full (Quintus Septimus Florens Tertullianus), was born in the city of Carthage, which, at that time, was second only to Rome, as a cultural and educational centre in the West. Tertullian received an exceptional education in grammar, rhetoric, literature, philosophy, and law. Little is known of his early life. His parents were Pagan, and his father may have been a Centurion (i.e., a non-commissioned officer) in an African based legion, assigned to the Governor of the province. Then, after completing his education in Carthage, he went to Rome, possibly in his late teens or early 20’s.

Tertullian (c. 150-225), who was a lawyer and rhetorician, and converted in middle age (c. 195), became a local Church presbyter in Carthage, North Africa. He is commonly called, the founder of Western theology. He was the first person to speak of

God, as a Trinity and as three Persons in One substance.

Apparently, Tertullian began with a Binitarian (two-Person) belief, much like that of the Greek Apologists. In an early work, "On Prayer," he identified Jesus Christ, as the "Spirit of Word" and "Spirit of God." Even in "Against Praxeas," he identified the Holy Spirit in Luke 1:35, as the Word. Although that work names the Spirit, a third Person, it devotes little attention to the subject. According to Tertullian's book called, "Against Hermogenes," in the beginning, God existed alone. He was not yet, the Father, because the Son did not yet exist. The Son, also called, Word and Wisdom, was "born and Created," by the Father, who is therefore older, nobler, stronger, and more powerful than He.

However, Tertullian stated, his Trinitarian doctrine most clearly in, "Against Praxeas." God is the "Trinity," which consists of "three Persons" - Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. God is "Only One substance in three coherent and inseparable (Persons)." Thus, three "Beings" are God, but there is only One God.

In particular, 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."

Although Tertullian spoke of One substance, his analogies show that the Son is subordinate to the Father, and the Spirit is subordinate to both, for he compared the Trinity to root, tree, fruit; sun, ray, apex of ray; and fountain, river, and stream. "The Trinity, flowing down from the Father, does not at all disturb the Monarchy [One sovereign God], whilst it at the same time, guards the state of the Economy [three Persons]. The Son and Spirit, "have the second and the third places assigned to them." Also, both Father and Son can be called God, but when invoked together, the former is called God and the latter is called Lord."

Tertullian spoke of the three Persons, as being 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 stated, 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."

Now, in answering objections, Tertullian explained, that Isaiah 44:6, means God has no God beside Himself with reference to idolatry; namely, God meant, "Beside Me there is none else, except My Son." Also, Isaiah 44:24, means He stretched out the heaven "alone with His Son" or "the Son stretched out the heaven alone, because He alone, ministered in the Father's work." Following a belief in Stoicism, Tertullian believed, that every Spirit has a bodily substance, and he seemingly believed, each member of the Trinity has a distinct body - a very Tritheistic belief. "For who will deny that God is a body," although "God is a Spirit?" For Spirit has a bodily substance of its own kind, in its own form...Whatever, therefore, was the substance of the Word, that I designate a Person, I claim for it, the Name of the Son."

Lastly, Tertullian taught triple immersion in a Trinitarian baptismal formula, becoming the first theologian to use Matthew 28:19, as a precise baptismal formula and as a proof text for Trinitarianism. We are "to baptize into the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost, not into a uni-personal God. And indeed, it is not Once Only, but three times, that we are immersed into the Three Persons, at each several mention of Their Names."

Clement of Alexandria, Latin-Clemens Alexandrinus (c. 150-215) - was a theologian and Father of the early Church, probably born in the city of Athens. He first studied philosophy, then became head of the celebrated Catechetical school in Alexandria, where he related Greek philosophical thought to Christian belief. In 203 A.D., the persecution under Severus, forced him to leave and go to Palestine. His most distinguished pupil was Origen.

Clement of Alexandria and his pupil, Origen, were local Church presbyters in Alexandria and teachers, there, in a theological school for converts. Pantaenus, who was a converted Stoic philosopher, is the first known superintendent of this particular school. He was followed, in that position, by Clement, and then, Origen.

They were more than just principals of a local school, Clement of Alexandria and Origen are considered to be the leaders of the Alexandrian school of theology. It's been said, "The Alexandrian School was a continuation of the principles, which were expressed by Philo, and by the Greek Apologists. This school marked the first consistent synthesis between Biblical revelation and philosophical speculation." It was characterized by an emphasis on knowledge as greater than faith, by an extremely allegorical interpretation of the Word-Of-God, and by its view on the Logos. This theological system, is often described as, Christian Gnosticism.

Clement, a Pagan philosopher, before his conversion, was the main founder of the Alexandrian system of theology, and he incorporated many Pagan ideas into his own beliefs. His doctrine of God resembles that of the Greek Apologists. He spoke of the Word and Spirit, but did not clearly express personal distinctions.

In the beginning, the Word, "was in God;" the Word Created us, and later, manifested Himself as Christ ("Exhortations to the Heathen"). The Instructor apparently identifies the Word with the Spirit, calling Jesus the, "Spirit and Word,...the Word of God, the Spirit made flesh." Later, however, it contains a prayer that thanks "the Alone

Father and Son, Son and Father, the Son, Instructor and Teacher, with the Holy Spirit, all in One.”

Miscellanies briefly says, that Plato wrote about the “Holy Trinity,” or Triad, namely, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. It also calls the Son, “the timeless and unoriginated First Principle, and Beginning of existences...from whom, we are to learn the remoter Cause, the Father, of the universe, the most ancient, and the most beneficent of all.” It identifies the Son, as the Father’s Word and His Wisdom.

Fragments from Cassiodorus speak of the eternal generation of the Son, but Cassiodorus, the sixth-century compiler, confessed that, he corrected Clement freely.

Origen (c. 185-254), was a Christian Biblical scholar and theologian of Alexandria, Egypt, who became head of the Catechetical school in Alexandria. He was a layman, until c. 230, when he was ordained, in Palestine. He was exiled from Alexandria by bishop Demetrius, he established a new school in Caesarea. He was imprisoned and tortured during the persecution under Decius, in 250 A.D. His writings were prolific, but his beliefs on the unity of God and speculations about the salvation of the devil, were condemned by Church Councils in the 5th-6th century.

Origen 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. Also, 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 or 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, corresponding to God absolutely and a god; and the Logos in two ranks.”

Origen ended by saying, “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 belief 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. As a matter of 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.”

In his commentary on John, Origen subordinated the Son to the Father, and the Spirit to the Son, and he used Tritheistic language. “God the Word, is a separate Being and has an essence of His own.” The Father Alone, is “the God” (ho theos); the Son is simply, “God” without the article (theos), that is, God in a secondary or relative sense. “God, on the one hand, is Very God (Autotheos, God of Himself)...but...all beyond the Very God, is made God, by participation in His divinity, and is not to be called, simply God (with the article), but rather, God (without the article). Therefore, the first-born of all Creation, who is the first to be with God, and to attract to Himself divinity, is a being of more exalted rank than the other gods beside Him, of whom, God is the God.”

One additional note, Origen was concerned, because many Christians prayed

directly to Jesus Christ; therefore, in “On Prayer,” he taught that they should not address the Son, directly in prayer, but “the Father through the Son in the Holy Spirit.”

The major contributions to the theology of the Trinity, from this time period, were the beliefs of One God in three Persons, the coinage of the Word, “Trinity,” and the belief of personalities in the Godhead, coming from Tertullian; the eternal generation of the Son, coming from Origen. Both men believed the Logos and the Spirit, as being subordinate to the Father ontologically, and not functionally, as it pertained to the incarnation. The doctrine of coequality, 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. However, up to this point, we still don’t have a definitive doctrine of the coequality, or coeternal nature of the three Persons. Instead, we have a 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 three Persons of the Trinity, were consubstantial.

Hippolytus (died c. 236), was a pupil of Irenaeus, but his doctrine of God resembles that of Tertullian, instead of Irenaeus. He very much was against the Modalist teacher, Noetus, and he attacked the Roman bishops, Zephyrinus and Callistus, accusing them of embracing Modalism and bitterly impugning their character. He was excommunicated by Callistus and headed a small rival Church in the Rome area; in Roman Catholic terms, Hippolytus was the first Anti-Pope.

In “Against the Heresy,” of one, Noetus, Hippolytus taught a Trinity (Triados) of One God in three Persons, the Son and Spirit, being subordinate to the Father. He used the analogies of water from the fountain and a ray from the sun, to describe the Son and Father, saying, “There is but One power, which is from the All; and the Father is the All, from which cometh this Power, the Word.” Also, “it is the Father who commands, and the Son who obeys, and the Holy Spirit who give understanding.”

Curiously, for a Trinitarian, he admitted some distinction, in terms between “Word” and “Son:” “Neither was the Word, prior to incarnation and when by Himself, yet perfect

Son, although He was perfect Word, only-begotten.” Maybe his discussions with the Modalists forced him to this position, for they maintained, that the title of Son related to the incarnation.

In “The Refutation of all Heresies,” Hippolytus taught, that the Logos was begotten at a certain time. “The First and Only (One God), both Creator and Lord of All, had nothing coeval with Himself...But He was One, Alone in Himself.” “This solitary and supreme Deity, by an exercise of reflection, brought forth the Logos first...conceived and residing in the divine mind.” The Logos, then, became the agent of Creation.

Novatian (c. 200-258), Latin-Novatianus-was born in Rome and the second Anti-Pope in Papal history, in 251 A.D. He was the first Roman theologian to write in Latin and inspired the Novatian Schism-a break from the Christian Church by rigorists who condemned Apostasy. His name was certainly Novatianus, not Novatus, which was given by the Greeks. He was ordained at Rome and around 250 A.D., became a leader of the Roman clergy, in whose name he wrote two letters to bishop Cyprian of Carthage about the Lapsi (i.e., those early Christians who renounced their faith, during the persecutions). Also, the assertion of the Church historian, Socrates (d.c. 445), that Novatian was martyred around 258, under the Roman Emperor, Valerian appears confirmed by the inscription, “novatiano martyri,” found in a cemetery near San Lorenzo, Rome, in 1932.

Now, Novatian was a vigorous Trinitarian opponent of Sabellius and an influential architect of Trinitarianism. He was later excommunicated by Cornelius, Bishop of Rome, for teaching that forgiveness was not available for certain sins committed after baptism. His Treatise, “Concerning the Trinity,” affirms the divinity of Jesus and teaches that the Word is a second subordinate Person, begotten, at a point in time. “God the Father, the Founder and Creator of all things, who only knows no beginning, invisible, infinite, immortal, eternal, is One God...of whom, when He willed it the Son, the Word, was born...He then, since He was begotten of the Father, is always in the Father. And, I thus say, always, that I may show Him not to be unborn, but born.” The Word is

“inferior to the Father.”

Cyprian (died 258) was a disciple of Tertullian, who became a Bishop of Carthage in North Africa, two years after his baptism and served in that position, for ten years until he was martyred. He taught some form of Trinitarianism, stating that, “the three are One” (“To Jubaianus.” Epistles 72:12). In opposition to Stephen, bishop of Rome, he maintained that any baptism performed by “heretics” (groups not in fellowship with the organized Church), was invalid. Some of them practiced Trinitarian baptism, yet, others baptized in the Name of Jesus Christ, but Cyprian was against their practice, as contrary to Trinitarianism. He argued, that the Jews properly received baptism, “in the Name of Jesus Christ,” as Peter instructed in Acts 2:38, only because they already acknowledged the Father, but Gentiles who did not acknowledge the Father, must be baptized, “in the full and united Trinity,” according to Matthew 28:19. Cyprian accused the “heretics” of not properly honoring, “the Name of the Father,” but he did not appear to be equally concerned, in regards to the Name of the Holy Spirit.

Preserved in Cyprian’s Epistles, is a letter from Cornelius, bishop of Rome, about people who came back to his Church and confessed, “One God...One Christ the Lord...and One Holy Spirit.”

There were other writers of the age that need to be mentioned. Dionysius, bishop of Rome, was against both, Modalism and Tritheism. In “Against the Sabellians” (259-69), he said, that some opponents of Sabellius, “by dividing and rendering the Monarchy, which is the most august announcement of the Church of God, into as it were, three powers, and distinct substances (hypostases), and three deities, destroy it...These in a certain manner announce three gods, in that they divide the Holy unity into three different substances, absolutely separated from one another.” However, he objected to the same term, later used by Orthodox Trinitarians to mean, “Persons” the Greek word, hupostasis.

Dionysius (200-65), bishop of Alexandria and a pupil of Origen, wrote against

Sabellius in Tritheistic and subordinationistic terms, saying, “The Son of God is a creature and something made, not His own by nature, but alien, in essence from the Father...Being a creature, He did not exist before He became into being.” According to Athanasius, under criticism from Dionysius of Rome, he later changed or clarified his more extreme statements. His Epistle to Dionysius of Rome, as quoted by Athanasius, affirms that the Son is eternal, eternally begotten, and of the same substance with God.

Gregory Thaumaturgus (c. 213-270), was a Greek Christian Apostle of Roman Asia and champion of Orthodoxy in the 3rd-century Trinitarian (Nature of God) controversy. His Greek surname, meaning, “wonder worker,” came from the phenomenal miracles, including the moving of a mountain, that he reputedly performed to assist in propagating Christianity.

A law student, Gregory was introduced to Christianity through studies with the leading Christian intellectual of his time, Origen, at Caesarea (close to modern Haifa, Israel). On his return to Neocaesarea, Gergory became a bishop and committed his life to Christianizing that largely Pagan area. The Roman Emperor, Decius’ persecution (250-251), forced Gregory and his followers to withdraw into the mountains, and with the return of normal conditions, he instituted liturgical celebrations, honoring the Decian, who were martyred.

Gregory, possibly taught, the coequality of Father, Son, and Spirit. Gregory of Nyssa and Basil cited him, as an ante-Nicene champion of the Nicene doctrine, but Eusebius didn’t mention either his Trinitarian doctrine or his miracles. His “Declaration of Faith” was supposedly shown to him, in a vision by the Apostle John, at the request of Mary, the mother of Jesus. It affirms a coequal, coeternal Trinity, but historians concluded that the statements, in regards to coequality and coeternity, were added or expanded by a later copyist.

Arnobius (c. 300), a North African, wrote in, “Against the Heathen,” that Jesus is to be worshiped and regarded, as God. “He is God, in reality and without any shadow of

doubt.” “He was God, on High, God in His inmost nature...and was sent by the Ruler of all, as a Saviour God.”

Lactantius (240-320)-in full Lucius Caecilius Farmianus Lactantius, Caecilius also spelled Caelius, was a Christian Apologist and one of the most reprinted of the Latin Church Fathers. He was a prolific Latin writer with an excellent writing style, spoke of two Persons in the Godhead, but made no mention of the Holy Spirit, as third Person. “When we say that we worship One God Only, we nevertheless assert that there are two, God the Father and God the Son...two Persons” (The Devine Institutes). The Son was “twice born” and is subordinate to the Father, in time and essence. “There is One God, alone, free, Most High, without any origin; for He Himself is the origin of all things, and in Him, at once, both the Son and all things are contained...Whatever is in the Father flows on to the Son, and whatever is in the Son, descends from the Father.”

The conclusion, about these early Trinitarians, Tertullian was the first person to teach explicitly, the doctrine of One God in three Persons. He invented many beliefs and terms, later, that were used to define Trinitarian Orthodoxy. Its been said, that he, “enlarged the doctrine of the Logos into a doctrine of the Trinity” and “was the first to explain clearly, the tri-personality of God, and to keep the substantial unity of the three Persons.”

Ironically, the founder of Trinitarianism was heretical by Orthodox Trinitarian standards, for rejecting the belief of coeternity and coequality, subordinating the Son and Spirit to the Father as to time, power, and rank.

Now, Origen advanced the doctrine of the Trinity considerably, by introducing the doctrine of the eternal generation of the Son. Unlike Tertullian, he affirmed the doctrine of coeternity, but similar to Tertullian, he continued to keep a definite subordination of Son and Spirit to the Father and used Tritheistic terms. In the later, Athanasian-Arian controversy that culminated at the Council of Nicaea, in 325 A.D., both sides appealed to Origen’s writings, the Athanasians citing his doctrine of eternal generation, which

implied an equality of substance in the Father and the Son, and the Arians citing his doctrine of subordination, which implied a difference of substance.

Many of the major writings that have survived from the days of Tertullian and Origen onward, express Trinitarian beliefs. Hippolytus, Novatian, Cyprian, Dionysius of Rome, Dionysius of Alexander, and Gregory Thaumaturgus were all Trinitarians. Similar to Tertullian and Origen, most of them used quite Tritheistic terms, on occasion, and held to a doctrine of subordination. Their main belief was the distinction between the Father and Son and the subordination of the latter to the former. Therefore, like the Greek Apologists, the earliest Trinitarians didn't believe in the absolute deity of Jesus Christ, not even to the extent, that later, Trinitarians would.

However, the doctrine of the Holy Ghost was still greatly unexplored. More than most, Novatian emphasized the Holy Spirit, as a third Person. On the other hand, Arnobius and Lactantius rejected the belief, that the Holy Ghost is a third Person.

Lastly, of all the writers of this age, only Dionysius of Rome, and maybe, Gregory Thaumaturgus appeared to define Trinitarianism, in a way, compatible with later Nicene Orthodoxy.

THE ROAD TO NICAEA

Now, in the Old Catholic Age (c. A.D., 170-325), Christendom shifted from the Biblical belief in One God toward a form of Trinitarianism. The Trinitarians, of that time period, divided the personality of God, in Tritheistic terms, and they rejected the full deity of Jesus Christ, by subordinating the second Person of their Trinity to the first Person.

By the year 300 A.D., some form of Trinitarianism and Trinitarian baptism had become dominant in Christendom, but Orthodox Trinitarianism, as is known today, had yet to be formulated clearly or established solidly.

In the second and third centuries, most Christians affirmed the absolute Oneness of God and the full deity of Jesus Christ and did not believe in the Trinity. But, by the end of the third century, it appears that Church leaders had mostly rejected Oneness, in favor of making a personal distinction between God the Father and Jesus Christ. The nature of this distinction was unclear. The Greek Apologists, prominent Christian philosophical writers in the second century, had spoken of Jesus Christ, mainly as the Logos (Word). By and large, they believed that the Logos was a second divine Person, subordinate to the Father. They called both Persons, God, but they didn't see the Logos, as coequal or coeternal, with the Father.

Tertullian and Origen were leading opinion makers, in the third century, whom the institutional Church, nevertheless ultimately condemned, as heretics. They debated in favor of a Trinity of Persons in the Godhead, but they too, subordinated Jesus to the Father. They moved closer to the later Trinitarian formulation, however, - Tertullian, by emphasizing that the three Persons were of One substance, and Origen, by introducing the doctrine that the Father and Son were coeternal.

In 318 A.D., in Alexandria, Egypt, a conflict erupted between a certain presbyter named, Arius, and the bishop of Alexandria, Alexander. Now, 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. As a matter of 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 believed that the Son was coeternal with the Father, but the rallying cry of the Arians was that "there was a time when He was not."

Similar to the Christians of earlier times, Arius emphasized the absolute Oneness of God, using Biblical Scriptures, such as, Deuteronomy 6:4, and he therefore, rejected the Trinitarian belief, that was becoming predominate. However, like the Trinitarians, he used a threefold baptismal formula and believed that Jesus was a second Person,

called the Logos or Son. His way of reconciling these different beliefs, was to reject that Jesus was God. He believed that the Son was “Created out of nothing before the world was called into being, and for that very reason, was not eternal, nor of the divine essence.” To Arius, Jesus was the first and most exalted Created being; the Supreme agent of God; in effect, a demigod.

Arius’s belief was similar to that of the Greek Apologists of the second century and to that of the Dynamic Monarchians, a dissident group in the third century. It was a logical extension of the view of subordination that was inherent in Trinitarianism, thus far, for it acknowledged that Jesus was divine, but not deity.

While Arius was committed to Monotheism, he vehemently rejected Modalism (Sabellianism), and “he protested against what he believed to be the Sabellianism of his bishop, Alexander.” He objected to Alexander’s stress on the deity of Jesus Christ, although Alexander was actually a Trinitarian, instead of a Modalist.

The immediate reason for the contention between them, was Arius’s interpretation of Proverbs 8:22-31, a Scripture that personifies wisdom, as an attribute of God. Beginning with the second century, Apologists, theologians commonly identified wisdom in Proverbs, as a second divine Person, the Son-Logos. Verse 22 says, “The Lord possessed me in the beginning of His way, before His works of old.” Because the Hebrew word, translated as “possessed” can mean, “Created” or “brought forth,” Arius interpreted the Scripture to mean, that God Created the Son, at a certain point in time, before the Creation of the world.

In 321 A.D., Alexander held a local synod, which condemned Arius’ teachings and excommunicated him, along with his friends. In turn, Arius petitioned support from other bishops to aide him, in his cause. He obtained 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 A.D., 324, after having defeated Licinius, in the East. Constantine, who was the first emperor to embrace Christianity, was interested in settling this theological debate, probably to ensure the unity of the Empire. So, in response, he sent his advisor, Hosius of Cordova, to Alexandria, to settle the situation. When it appeared that the issue could not be easily settled, Constantine called for a Council of all the bishops to meet in Nicea (modern day Isnik, Turkey), twenty miles north of Nicomedia, in Bithynia.

THE COUNCIL OF NICAEEA

In 325 A.D., approximately 300 bishops from different cities traveled to Nicaea 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 around six weeks.

There were three major groups of people 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, instead of 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 belief. Now, Eusebius of Nicomedia presented his case before the Council, reading a speech he had written. He believed this would be all that was necessary, to convince the majority of he and Arius' views, and therefore, 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 very 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' beliefs, and towards those of

Alexander.

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

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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 greatly rejected it, because it didn’t resolve the issue. Prompted by Hosius, Constantine suggested the inclusion of homoousios to the statement, meaning, “of the same substance.” To this, the Arians greatly reacted, and those who followed Origen’s teachings, it appeared too much like Modalism, which taught that Jesus’ deity was really the Father Himself. They suggested that homoiousios be used, meaning “of similar substance.” Through Alexander’s eloquence, his beliefs 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 coeternal existence of the Logos with the Father. The final paragraph, also known as the condemnatory clause, condemned the different 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. Because of this, they were banished by the emperor, along with Arius.

The Council’s contribution to the development of the Trinitarian doctrine is very significant. It firmly rejected the belief, 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 coming years. Even at the Council, many bishops were hesitant about the inclusion of homoousios, because of it, lent itself to Modalism. The Council’s decision cannot be referred to as Trinitarian, however, since it did not deal with the Holy Ghost. There is only one sentence in the Creed about Him, but it only affirmed, that they believed in the Holy Ghost. The 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 NICEA: THE ROAD TO CONSTANTINOPLE

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

Arianism, although defeated by Creed and imperial decree, quickly arose, once again, and soon became the main belief in the East. In three short years, Eusebius of Nicomedia (who was related to Constantine, in some manner), managed to obtain 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 328 A.D. Eusebius of Nicomedia played an important role in the remainder of Constantine's reign. He even baptized Constantine on his deathbed, in A.D., 337. Two years after the death of Constantine, Eusebius was made Bishop of Constantinople, upon the death of the former bishop.

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

Now, the political milieu that developed between the Council of Nicea in 325 A.D., and the Council of Constantinople, in 381 A.D., had a lot to do with the development, and acceptance of Trinitarian Orthodoxy. Constantine had embraced Arianism after the Council of Nicea. After his death, his son Constantius II, who reigned in the East, while Constans and Constantine II reigned all of the West, continued on with his support of Arianism. He became very supportive for Arianism and against the Nicenes, in 353 A.D., just three years after becoming the only emperor of the empire. Constantius II continued as emperor, until his death in 361 A.D. Arianism enjoyed a time of flourishing, 328-379 A.D. 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 while in exile.

Athanasius knew 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, which means, "of similar substance," to speak of the relationship of the Son to the Father. This was a very significant step, since he had previously debated, that the use of homoiousios, was just as heretical as Arianism.

In 362 A.D., 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 373 A.D., just eight years before his beliefs would be adopted as Orthodoxy, at Constantinople. He didn’t 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 seen in the synthesis of the modern Trinitarian doctrine.

Their main contribution, was in their use of ousia and hupostasis. At Nicea, 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 hupostasis. Now, in Latin, it was termed one subsantia and three personae. They did allow the Greek word, prosopon, to be used in place of hupostasis, but didn’t prefer it, because “it in the beginning, meant face, countenance, or mask, and Sabellius had used it to mean, manifestation or role.”

While Athanasius was alive, he debated against distinguishing between ousia and hupostasis, because Nicea didn’t distinguish them. He did not like to say, “three hupostasis, because it made too great of a distinction between the Persons. He didn’t like the term, prosopon, because it made very little of a distinction. At the 362 A.D., 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 saw this as Trithe-ism. Hebrews 1:3, was cited which taught, that Jesus was the expressed image

of God's hypostasis, and not of a second hypostasis. Now, 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. Also, the Cappadocians elaborated upon this, by comparing the Trinity to three different men. As for an example, 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 confessed, that the language used, was a customary abuse of language. He said, that unlike three men, each Person 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, extends 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 stated, "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 use 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."

So, in summary, the Three Cappadocians taught, that the One Godhead subsists in three coequal, coeternal, coessential 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 (spirated). The generation of the Son and the procession of the Holy Spirit are mysteries, however. While the Persons are coequal and coeternal, the Father is, in some sense, the head and the origin.

THE COUNCIL OF CONSTANTINOPLE

In 379 A.D., 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 381 A.D., to meet in Constantinople. There were only around 150 bishops that were there, and none of these were from the West. Gregory of Nyssa and Gregory of Nazianzus were the main speakers, Basil of Caesarea, having died a few months, earlier.

Now, the Creed which the Council adopted, stated the following: “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 worshiped 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 Nicea, is where the first definitive, Orthodox, Universal

Creedal statement was made, which debated the relationship of the Father, Son, and Spirit. Nicea's main concern, was the relationship of Jesus to the Father, but Constantinople added to its Creed, the complete, coequal, coeternal, consubstantial deity of the Holy Spirit. For this reason, it is thought of, as the first truly Trinitarian Creed.

Lastly, the Council is significant for two other reasons. First, it was the final theological defeat 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.

AFTER CONSTANTINOPLE

By 381 A.D., then, the doctrine of the Trinity was almost complete. In the East, John of Damascus made some refinements in the eighth century: he rejected most of the remaining elements of subordinationism, and stated, that the Persons were not related to one another, as three men are, and described their inter-relation as, "mutual inter-penetration" (circumincession) without commingling.

In the West, Augustine (354-430) brought greater emphasis on the unity of essence and the equality of Persons, saying that each Person has the complete essence, but under a different point of view. He was uncomfortable with the word, Person, for he did not believe that the Trinity was like three Persons, who possess in common, only a generic nature.

Some of his analogies suggest Modalism: he compared the Trinity to memory, intelligence, and will, in the human Spirit, to something seen, vision, and the intention of the will uniting the two; and to something in memory, the inner vision, and the will uniting the two. His last analogy, was the human mind in threefold action: remembering, understanding, and loving God.

Nevertheless, Augustine continued to speak of three Persons and defended the doctrine of the Trinity. One of his most famous analogies, even sounds Tritheistic: the Trinity is like a lover, the beloved, and the love that binds the two together. The following are the contrasting aspects in Augustine's teaching on the Godhead: The Persons of the Trinity are not different from one another; with respect to the entire divine substance, they are identical with each other...Each of the three Persons is equal to the entire Trinity, and the entire Trinity, is not more than one of the Persons. Augustine spoke, as though the essence of Being, is a Person, after all. However, Augustine, in agreement with the Church's tradition, insisted on the three Persons in the Trinity. How, then, was he able to do this after his previous statements on the unity? Simply, by introducing the logical category of relationship. In the One God, there are three forms of existence, and the One cannot be without the other...There is the relation of mutual dependency among the Persons. The Father, Son, and Spirit behold in themselves, the entire undivided unity, which belongs to each of them, under a different point of view, as generating, generated, or existing, through aspiration.

SUMMARY

The New Testament Church was founded upon the Old Testament message of the absolute Oneness of God, coupled with the New Testament revelation of Jesus Christ, as the fullness of the One God incarnate. The New Testament was completed and the last of the Apostles died, not long before the close of the first century. However, two centuries later, by the beginning of the fourth century, the pre-dominant doctrine of God, in Christendom, had evolved from Biblical Oneness, to an incipient form of Trinitarianism.

The writers of the Post-Apostolic Age (c. A.D., 90-140), adhered closely to Biblical language, usage, and thought. They affirmed the characteristic Oneness themes of strict Monotheism, the absolute deity of Jesus Christ, and the true humanity of Christ. They connected great importance to the Name of God and alluded to baptism in the Name of Jesus. They didn't describe God, as a Trinity or as three Persons, nor did they

use any other distinctively Trinitarian language. Some of their statements are not compatible with Trinitarianism, and many sound like distinctive Oneness expressions of today.

In short, as Trinitarian scholars acknowledge, these writings express no clear thought of a Trinity. Evangelical author, Calvin Beisner confessed, “In the earliest times of the Church, there is little explicit or precise statement, and even less definition of the doctrine of the Trinity...[In the first two centuries], the primary thought was of Monotheism.”

In the Age of the Greek Apologists (c. A.D., 130-180), we discover a progressive shift away from the Biblical doctrine of Oneness and the substantially identical beliefs of the Post-Apostolic Age. The main innovation was the doctrine of the Word (Logos), as a second divine Person, subordinate to the Father.

Around 130 to 150, Aristides and the Epistle to Diognetus still kept a predominantly Biblical Oneness belief, although the latter began to distinguish God from the Word. By 150, Justin and Tatian taught, that the Father and the Word were two distinct Persons. By 170 to 180, Theophilus and Athenagoras had begun to connect a vague, undefined form of threeness, with God. Yet, even at this date, Bishop Melito continued to keep a pre-dominantly, modalist view of God. Also, in this age, we find the first definite modification of the baptismal formula and the first roots of the Trinity.

In sum, the Greek Apologists, especially Justin, introduced several key thoughts that led to Trinitarianism: the Logos, as a second divine Person or god, the begotten of the Logos, at a point in time before Creation, the Logos, as identical to the Son, a threefold baptismal formula, and a vague connection of the Spirit with the Father and the Son. One century after the completion of the New Testament, the stage was ready for Trinitarianism to arise.

The New Catholic Encyclopedia gives an accurate summarization of the doctrine of

the second century about Trinitarianism: Among the Apostolic Fathers, there had been nothing even remotely approaching such a mentality or perspective; among the second century Apologists, little more than a focusing of the problem, as that of plurality, within the God-head...In the last analysis, the second century, theological achievement was limited...a Trinitarian solution, was still in the future.

In the Old Catholic Age (c. A.D., 170-325), Christendom shifted from the Biblical belief in One God, toward a form of Trinitarianism. This process had already taken place with the vague binitarian and triadic formulations of the Greek Apologists in the mid to latter part of the second century, and it resulted in the promulgation of Orthodox Trinitarianism, in the latter part of the fourth century.

The evidence indicates, that Modalism was the dominant belief of Christianity in the first part of this age. Since history is written by the victors, the existing evidence probably shows, only a fraction of the total scope. Nevertheless, it shows that Modalism was widespread throughout this time period. However, despite the sparseness of existing, historical evidence, it is clear, that in the Old Catholic Age, many people affirmed the two central tenets of Oneness, and many people baptized in the Name of Jesus.

When Trinitarianism did come, in the first part of the third century, it began with the premise, that Jesus was a subordinate deity. Its two main founders, Tertullian and Origen, never forsook that belief. Only much later, in the fourth century, did Trinitarians attempt to rectify this flaw, with only partial success, by affirming the co-equality, co-eternity, and con-substantiality of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Not only the Greek Apologists, but also, the early Trinitarians rejected the unqualified statement of the Bible and the writers of the Post-Apostolic Age, that Jesus is God.

More than any other theologian, Tertullian developed the terms and beliefs of the Trinity, yet ironically, he did so, as a member of a schismatic group, all the while, vigorously rejecting the mainstream Church. He introduced the terms, "Trinity, three

Persons, One substance” to the debate of God. Excluding a reference in the Didache, that is probably a corruption, he was the first to cite Matthew 28:19, as the proper baptismal formula and the first, to mention triple baptism. Nevertheless, Tertullian taught, that the Trinity was only temporary; it had a beginning and will have an ending. Furthermore, he clearly subordinated the Son and Spirit to the Father. So, with respect to the Orthodox Trinitarian doctrines of con-substantiality, co-eternity, and co-equality, he taught only the first, and even on that point, he was aberrant since he taught that the angels participated in the One divine substance.

Origen, who was excommunicated and condemned as a heretic, made an extremely important contribution to Trinitarianism, by his doctrines of the eternal Son and the eternal generation of the Son. He and Tertullian were the two most significant initial advocates of Trinitarianism. As Tertullian, Origen definitely subordinated the Son and the Spirit. In terms of Trinitarian Orthodoxy, he taught co-eternity, but not co-equality. While some statements appear to teach con-substantiality, others reject it.

Except for Commodian, the later writers of the Old Catholic Age spoke more and more in Trinitarian terms. They typically subordinated the Son and Spirit to the Father and didn't have a clear doctrine of the Holy Spirit. Novatian, another schismatic, contributed greatly to the development of Trinitarianism, by emphasizing the distinction of Persons and by emphasizing the Holy Spirit, as a third Person, yet, he still kept subordinationism.

Of all the writers of this time period, it was only Dionysius of Rome, and maybe, Gregory Thaumaturgus who appeared to define Trinitarianism, in a way, compatible with later Orthodoxy. Especially, the controversy between Dionysius of Rome and Dionysius of Alexandria, prepared the way for the decision at the Council of Nicea.

In short, the Old Catholic Age made the first definite Trinitarians, who clashed first with the Monarchians, particularly the Modalists, and then with the Arians. By the close of the age, some form of Trinitarianism and Trinitarian baptism had become dominate in

Christendom, but it took most of the fourth century to formulate and establish Orthodox Trinitarianism.

Now, toward the end of the Old Catholic Age, a fierce controversy about the doctrine of God broke out between two men of Alexandria: Athanasius, an Archdeacon, who was supported by Bishop Alexander, and Arius, a Presbyter. Arius taught that Christ is an intermediate divine Being, created by the Father, who is subordinate to the Father and who is of a similar, but not the same, essence. Like the Dynamic Monarchians, he attempted to uphold God's Oneness, by denying the true deity of Jesus Christ, and like the Trinitarians, he believed that Christ is a second Person. In opposition to Arius, Athanasius affirmed that the Father and the Son are two distinct Persons who are coequal, coeternal, and of the same substance.

The view of Athanasius prevailed at the first Ecumenical Council, held in Nicea in 325 A.D., making him the Father of Trinitarian Orthodoxy. The issue was not finally resolved, however, until the Council of Constantinople in 381 A.D., which affirmed the decision of Nicea and clarified the identity of the Holy Ghost, as the third coequal Person of the Trinity. The result was the revised Nicene Creed, which is used today.

The most definitive Trinitarian Creed, which is used by both Roman Catholics and Protestants, including Evangelicals, is the so-called Athanasian Creed. It can be no earlier than the fifth century, and it was seen in final form in the late eighth or early ninth century. These two Creeds define Orthodox Trinitarianism of today.

Why did this doctrine develop as it did? The impetus for the first of the foregoing steps was the Greek philosophical belief of the Logos. Under its influence, the Scriptural distinction between God and His Son, which related to the Incarnation, was falsely imputed to the divine nature of God Himself. In searching to study the New Testament by Pagan categories of thought, instead of by context of Scripture itself, including the prior revelation of the Old Testament, and by the illumination of the Holy Ghost, the forerunners of Trinitarianism failed to comprehend the Incarnation.

Furthermore, why did Christian believers accept this elitist doctrine? The answer is that for around a century, they did not! However, when they finally did, it appears that the compromise had much to do with a general Spiritual downfall. As time went on, it seems that people relied less and less upon the power of the Holy Ghost, and the great outpouring of the Spirit subsided. By the time Trinitarianism finally became dominant, in the fourth century, it appears that the baptism of the Holy Ghost with the initial sign of speaking in tongues, was an experience of the past, as far as most people were concerned. Masses of Pagans joined the institutional Church with little or no repentance or regeneration by the Spirit, and the Church, as a whole, became susceptible to Pagan influences and modes of thought. The prevailing Polytheism of the culture, made Trinitarianism appear quite plausible, particularly when new converts had little or no personal relationship with the One God.

Once the belief of plurality was introduced to the debate of the Godhead, it was easy for the initial binitarian emphasis eventually to become Trinitarian. Scriptural statements relative to the Word/Son were interpreted in a new way, and when this new way of believing was put to Scriptural statements about the Holy Ghost, similar results followed. According to the new doctrine, the Father was the Supreme God, as distinguished from Jesus. One way adherents expressed their belief was to modify the practice of baptizing in the Name of Jesus Only, for this formula indicated that Jesus alone was the Saviour and the sole object of faith for remission of sins. The only alternative they could find with a Scriptural basis was the words of Matthew 28:19, which led them to adopt a threefold baptismal formula (rather than just a twofold formula). Therefore, a threefold formula preceded a conscious confession of Trinitarianism. Again, once the threefold formula was used to teach a personal distinction between the Father and the Son, it followed that the Holy Ghost was personally distinct, also.

The very basis upon which the belief of a plurality in God was introduced, the Apologist's Logos doctrine, logically required that the second Person be seen as subordinate,

Created, inferior, and a derivation from the first Person. So, it was only natural for subordinationism to remain an integral part of Trinitarianism for around a century.

In sum, the Trinitarian doctrine developed logically from a flawed premise of plural Persons in the Godhead. It has reached an equilibrium state, in that, once a person accepts the belief that One God can and does exist as three Persons, then the other definitions and conclusions follow. Yet, when an individual stands outside the system and sees it as a whole, it is apparent that Trinitarianism is contrary to Scripture, that its axioms are inherently self-contradictory and incomprehensible, and that its definitions and propositions have no objective meaning.

Therefore, the main problem of the Trinitarian error, both historically and theologically, is a failure to heed and understand Colossians 2:8-10: "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. For in Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in Him, which is the head of all principality and power."

FINAL REMARKS: THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE TRINITY DOCTRINE

The Bible is content to speak of the Father, Son, and the Holy Ghost as being God, without explaining how it is so. The doctrine of the Trinity was the endeavor 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 started by an attempt to comprehend the nature of God, in terms of Greek philosophical beliefs, 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 came forth from the

Father, became incarnate, suffered, died, was buried, and rose again. Slowly, the beliefs of co-eternality and co-equality were adopted between the Father and the Son, and eventually the Holy Ghost was added to this belief. 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 Holy Ghost 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 Holy Ghost in Sanctification. These three are co-eternal, coequal, and consubstantial. The Trinity is an indivisible unity, the Persons being distinct, but not separate.

RELEVANCE TO THE MODERN BELIEVER

Now, the nature and being of God is the most incomprehensible idea, known to mankind. How are we to think of that which has no beginning, which is omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent, and eternal? Though the beliefs can be known by the mind, they can't be fully understood. We have no experience, in this world, with which these elements can be viewed or grasped. With such an idea as that of God, it must be admitted that there is no one who can adequately explain His nature and being. Every man, though he contemplates it and searches to find it, will always come short and develop deficiencies in his theology. Comprehending this, we need to watch ourselves, lest we elevate a certain Creedal statement, a certain author's explanation, or our own comprehension 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 Nicea 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 beliefs that were purported by earlier theologians, were later on, condemned as being heresy, even though they were the basis for later developments, which were accepted as Orthodoxy. Frank Stagg spoke of these

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.”

Because 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 didn't bring an end to the pursuit of comprehending God, nor an end to theological deficiencies. Although we may build from the early pioneers of the faith, we must search to perfect it. I believe it's the duty of the modern believer to re-examine his concepts about God to be sure they are Biblically founded. There is no Creed or tradition as significant as truth, and no truth as important as God. The modern Church must search to perfect its comprehension of God. This may indeed necessitate the re-examining of the doctrine of the Trinity, as it has developed over the centuries. As a matter of fact, there are this very day, many Trinitarian writers who are attempting a new explanation of Trinitarianism, that seeks to rid the reader of subordinationistic and Tritheistic beliefs God that conventional Trinitarianism has brought about in the minds of different individuals.

WHY I BELIEVE MONOTHEISM OVER TRINITARIANISM

Now, after the city of Jerusalem was rebuilt, along with its second Temple, being dedicated to the One true God, the nation of Israel was conquered by the Greek Empire of Alexander the Great, then the Romans of the Roman Empire. It was during the occupation of the Roman Empire, that the first appearance of God, being Manifested in the Flesh of Jesus Christ, took place. Why this event occurred, at this time period of 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 Christ, during His time of ministry on this earth, and later, they were shown to the Apostle Paul, after this conversion in Damascus.

In this New Covenant and for the first 170 years of the Christian religious world, the belief of a Christian Trinity, based on three separate Persons in the Godhead, did not exist! This was primarily due to the fact, that the early Christian Church was a Jewish Church, who believed completely 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 that Jesus Christ was God Himself, Manifested 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-who was the One Divine Spirit, who was also the Father in Creation. The early Apostolic Church believed Jesus Christ was the expressed 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 primary reason the religious leaders in Jerusalem and the Temple wanted to kill Jesus. Because, not only did He claim to be the Son of God, but, 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! So sad, but true today, that the Jews down through history and the Trinity Christian world, have never fully comprehended Isaiah 9:6, "For unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given: and the government shall be upon His shoulder: and His Name (Jesus Christ) shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace."

Another reason why I believe in Monotheism over Trinitarianism, can be seen in the Word-Of-God, also. The following Scriptures should be a matter of deep consideration, in regards to Monotheism versus Trinitarianism. The Apostle Peter has told us in the

Bible (2 Peter 2:1-2), that the day would come when the way of Truth would be evil spoken of by all false Prophets: those who promote the doctrine of the Trinity!

The Apostle Paul tells us in Galatians 1:8-9, that anyone preaching a different Gospel, than preached by the Apostles, would be cursed of God. The Apostles of the Lord, all preached the message of being baptized in the Name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and not in the Trinity formula!

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 Bible, we discover those who had 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, that exactly what Peter, Paul, and Jude, said would occur, did come to pass. This means, that all who follow the teachings of the Church Fathers, as well as the Church Fathers themselves, will not be saved someday. This also means, that anyone or any type of professing Christian or non-Christian, will not be saved until they believe and obey the Common Salvation-the Gospel as taught and believed by the original Apostles of the Lord Jesus Christ!

When looking at the Trinity doctrine, one quickly sees the presence of a main doctrinal core. This core states, that there is One God who exists as three different Persons. These three Persons, who appear like humans, have no beginning and no ending. Their names are Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. These three Persons live in the New Jerusalem, have three thrones, that they sit on, and are co-equal in authority and power. Any time God has to make a decision of any kind, these three Persons come together to develop a joint unified decision. This belief of the Godhead is a direct result of Scholastic Theology and the merging together of selected Scriptures with the

teachings of Greek and Roman Pagan Mythology, in addition of Greek philosophy.

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

Let's look at the 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 belief, one must remember that even Trinity scholars themselves, down through the centuries of time, confess, that the Trinity is not clearly found in the Bible. This means, the Trinity is not expressed clearly as a fact, in the Word-Of-God. These scholars also confess, that the Trinity doctrine 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 Bible, which completely reject this theory or belief!

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, which further backs my reason for believing Monotheism over Trinitarianian.

Trinitarianism asserts that God is One Divine Essence, subsisting as three Divine Persons.

John 4:24, "God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in Spirit and in Truth."

Ephesians 4:4-6, "There is One body, and One Spirit, even as ye are called in One Hope of your calling; One Lord, One faith, One baptism, 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. Neither is the Father and the Holy Ghost ever described, as being Persons in the Bible. Remember, that 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 said to His Apostles, "When you see Me you have seen the Father."

Here is another common teaching by Trinity believers: 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, "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. I, even I, am the Lord; beside Me, there is no Saviour."

Isaiah 44:6, "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, "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, "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, "I am the Lord, and there is none else, there is no God beside Me: I girded thee, though thou hast not known Me: 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, "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."

Isaiah 45:21-22, "Tell ye, and bring them near; yea, let them take council 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. 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, "Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like Me."

Now, in the Monotheistic religion of Abraham and Moses, the seed of Abraham learned the Old Covenant Scriptures, very well. They also knew these Verses, that we have mentioned 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 Trinity doctrine Godhead system? To the Christian Jews and traditional Jews alike, in early Church history, this Trinity doctrine was nothing more than, a new twist of old Pagan idolatry. This was particularly true, when the early Trinitarians began to make statues and paintings, showing the so-called three separate Persons in heaven. It is also very evident from these Scripture

Verses in Isaiah, there never has been, neither is there, a co-eternal Godhead of three Persons, living in heaven. Once again, Bible confirms the non-existence of the Trinity doctrine.

The Trinity teaches, the first Person in the Godhead, "Father" is the Father of Jesus Christ. Matthew 1:18, "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."

Here, we can clearly see, the deception of the Trinity doctrine. If the Father, Son, and the Holy Ghost were three separate Persons in the Godhead, then Jesus did not know who His Father was, when He prayed to His Father. The reason being, the Trinity believers are taught, that 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, that the Holy Ghost, is the Father of Jesus Christ.

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

Colossians 1:19, "For it pleased the Father, that in Him should all fullness dwell;"

Colossians 2:8-13, "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. For, in Him, dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in Him, which is the Head of all principality and power: 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: 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. And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath He quickened together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses;"

1 Timothy 3:16, “And without controversy, great is the mystery of Godliness: God 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, “For unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given: and the government shall be upon His shoulder: and His Name shall be called Wonderful, 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 doctrine that teaches that Jesus Christ is in second position in the Godhead! Being the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, He is the fullness of the Godhead, manifested in the flesh. While the Great Spirit has always been and will forever be, Jesus Christ is the visible human manifestation of the invisible Holy Spirit.

Furthermore, the Trinity teaches the three Persons of the Godhead are co-powerful in authority. But, what does the Word-Of-God say in Matthew 28:18? “And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth.”

Once again, we see another contradiction between the Trinity doctrine and the Bible. The Word tells us, that Jesus has All Power! If He has All Power, this then leaves no power for the so-called 1st and 3rd Persons in the Godhead, if there were three Persons.

As we look at the doctrine of the Trinity, in light of the Bible, it is very clear that the Church Fathers, using Scholastic Theology to develop the concept of a Christian Trinity, made some very bad interpretational mistakes of the Scriptures that they used to try and prove the Trinity. Also, most of the Scriptures in the Bible, which clearly show there cannot be a Christian Trinity doctrine, 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

Word-Of -God, we know the following about God: He is an invisible Holy Spirit, who is omnipresent in existence. Because 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.

Here are some examples of Biblical manifestations of God: 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 the voice at the baptism of Jesus Christ by John.

These many manifestations of God are all significant to students of religious history and show the diverse nature and power of the One True God. What the writers of the Christian Trinity doctrine did, was choose three of these manifestations and made them into human-like Persons and the concept of the Trinity, while at the same time, rejected the complete nature and power of our God. In modern day terminology, the Church Fathers put God in a human shoe box, called the Trinity, and then said, to be a Christian, and to be saved someday, an individual had to believe in the Trinity and bow down to it. This is not salvation, because the Bible does not support a Trinity doctrine!

As it has already been said, 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!

This ends my course on the development of the Trinity doctrine, and I feel with confidence, that I have closed with enough evidence, to prove, that this Trinitarian doctrine, has never existed in the Word-Of-God, and have clearly presented why I believe in Monotheism over Trinitarianism! The Bible does not and never has taught, a Trinity

doctrine, of any kind! Thank God for Truth!

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