

Is God a **TRINITY?**



An Ambassador College Publication

Is God a **TRINITY?**

by George L. Johnson

Ambassador College Press
Pasadena, California



This booklet is not to be sold.
It is a free educational service in
the public interest, published by
Ambassador College.

CHAPTER ONE

Is God a Trinity or a family?
Was Jesus Christ God, or
merely a man? Was Jesus the
born son of God, or only an
adopted son? Is the Holy Spirit
a person or the creative power
of the Godhead? These ques-
tions about the nature of God
are answered in this booklet.

CHAPTER ONE

Is the Trinity Biblical?

THE belief that God is one substance, yet three persons, is one of the central doctrines of the Christian religion. The concept of the Trinity is believed by most professing Christians, whether Catholic or Protestant.

A Gallup Poll taken in 1966 found that 97% of the American public believed in God. Of that number, 83% believed that God is a Trinity.

Yet for all this belief in the Trinity, it is a doctrine that is not clearly understood by most Christian laymen. In fact, most have neither the desire nor the incentive to understand what their church teaches. Few laymen are aware of any problems with the doctrine of the Trinity. They simply take it for granted — leaving the mysterious doctrinal aspects to theologians.

And if the layman were to investigate further, he would be confronted with discouraging statements similar to the following: "The mind of man cannot fully understand the mystery of the Trinity. He who would try to understand the mystery fully will lose his mind. But he who would deny the Trinity will lose his soul" (Harold Lindsell and Charles J. Woodbridge, *A Handbook of Christian Truth*, pp. 51-52).

Such a statement means that the concept of the Trinity should be accepted or else. But, merely to accept it as doctrine without proving it would be totally contrary to

Scripture. God inspired Paul to write: "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good" (I Thes. 5:21).

Peter further admonished Christians: "... Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you..." (I Peter 3:15).

Therefore the Christian is duty bound to prove whether or not God is a Trinity.

Clear Explanation Difficult

If you were to confine yourself to reading the articles on the Trinity in popular religious literature for laymen, you would conclude that the Trinity is everywhere and clearly taught in the Bible. However, if you were to begin to read what the more technical Bible encyclopedias, dictionaries and books say on the subject, you would come to an entirely different conclusion. And the more you studied, the more you would find that the Trinity is built on a very shaky foundation indeed.

The problems inherent in clearly explaining the Trinity are expressed in nearly every technical article or book on the subject.

The *New Catholic Encyclopedia* begins: "It is difficult, in the second half of the 20th century, to offer a clear, objective, and straightforward account of the revelation, doctrinal evolution, and the theological elaboration of the mystery of the Trinity. Trinitarian discussion, Roman Catholic as well as other, *presents a somewhat unsteady silhouette*" (Vol. XIV, p. 295). (Emphasis ours throughout booklet.)

But why should the central doctrine of the Christian faith be so difficult to understand? Why should such an important doctrine present an unsteady silhouette? Isn't there a clear biblical revelation of the doctrine of the Trinity? Didn't Christ and the apostles plainly teach it?

Surely the Bible would be filled with teachings about such an important subject as the Trinity. But, unfortunately the word "Trinity" never appears in the Bible.

"*The term 'Trinity' is not a Biblical term*, and we are not using Biblical language when we define what is

expressed by it as the doctrine" (*The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, article "Trinity," p. 3012).

Not only is the word "Trinity" never found in the Bible, there is no substantive proof such a doctrine is even indicated.

In a recent book on the Trinity, Catholic theologian Karl Rahner recognizes that theologians in the past have been "...embarrassed by the simple fact that in reality the Scriptures do *not explicitly* present a doctrine of the 'imminent' Trinity (even John's prologue is no such doctrine)" (*The Trinity*, p. 22). (Author's emphasis.)

Other theologians also recognize the fact that the first chapter of John's Gospel — the prologue — clearly shows the pre-existence and divinity of Christ and does not teach the doctrine of the Trinity. After discussing John's prologue, Dr. William Newton Clarke writes: "*There is no Trinity in this*; but there is a distinction in the Godhead, a duality in God. This distinction or duality is used as basis for the idea of an only-begotten Son, and as key to the possibility of an incarnation" (*Outline of Christian Theology*, p. 167).

The first chapter of John's Gospel clearly shows the pre-existence of Christ. It also illustrates the duality of God. And as Dr. Clarke points out, the key to the possibility of the incarnation — the fact that God could become man.

The Apostle John makes plain the unmistakable fact that Jesus Christ is God (John 1:1-4). Yet we find no Trinity discussed in this chapter.

More Biblical "Proof" for the Trinity?

Probably the most notorious scripture used in times past as "proof" of a Trinity is I John 5:7. However, many theologians recognize that this scripture was added to the New Testament manuscripts probably as late as the eighth century A.D.

Notice what Jamieson, Fausset and Brown wrote in their commentary: "The only Greek MSS. [manuscripts], *in any form* which support the words, 'in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are

one. And there are three that bear witness in earth . . . ' are the *Montfortianus* of Dublin, copied evidently from the modern Latin Vulgate; the *Ravianus* copied from the *Complutensian Polyglot*; a MS. [manuscript] at Naples, with the words added in the margin by a recent hand; *Ottobonianus*, 298, of the fifteenth century, the *Greek* of which is a mere translation of the accompanying Latin. All old versions omit the words."

The conclusions arrived at in their commentary, written over 100 years ago, are still valid today. More conservatively oriented *The New Bible Commentary* (Revised) agrees, though "quietly" with Jamieson, Fausset and Brown. "... The words are clearly a gloss and are rightly excluded by RSV [Revised Standard Version] even from its margin" (p. 1269).

The editors of Peake's Commentary on the Bible wax more eloquent in their belief that the words are not part of the original text. "The famous interpolation after 'three witnesses' is not printed even in RSV, and rightly. It cites the heavenly testimony of the Father, the logos, and the Holy Spirit, but *is never used in the early trinitarian controversies*. No respectable Greek MS contains it. Appearing first in a late 4th century Latin text, it entered the Vulgate and finally the NT [New Testament] of Erasmus" (p. 1038).

Scholars clearly recognize that I John 5:7 is not part of the New Testament text. Yet it is still included by some fundamentalists as biblical proof for the Trinity doctrine.

Even the majority of the more recent New Testament translations do not contain the above words. They are not found in Moffatt, Phillips, the Revised Standard Version, Williams, or *The Living Bible* (a paraphrase).

It is clear, then, that these words are not part of the inspired canon, but rather were added by a "recent hand." The two verses in I John should read: "For there are three that bear record, the Spirit, and the water and the blood: and these three agree in one."

Three things bear record. But what do they bear record to? A Trinity? We shall see.

Bear Record to What?

The Spirit, the water and the blood bear record of the fact that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is living His life over again in us. John clarifies it in verses 11-12:

“And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.”

But how do these three elements — the Spirit, the water, and the blood — specifically bear witness to this basic biblical truth?

“The Spirit beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God” (Rom. 8:16). (We will see more about the part the Spirit plays in Chapter Three.)

Water is representative of baptism, which bears witness of the burial of the old self and the beginning of a new life (Rom. 6:1-6).

The blood represents Christ's death by crucifixion, which pays the penalty for our sins, reconciling us to God (Rom. 5:9, 10).

Now understand why Christ commanded the apostles to baptize in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit (Matt. 28:19). First of all, Jesus did not command the apostles to baptize in the name of the Father, the Son and the Spirit as an indication that God is a Trinity. No such relationship is indicated in the Bible.

Why, then, were they to baptize using these three names? The answer is clear.

They were to baptize in the name of the Father because it is the goodness of God that brings us to repentance (Rom. 2:4), and because the Father is the One “of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named” (Eph. 3:15). In the name of the Son because He is the one who died for our sins, and in the name of the Spirit because God sends His Spirit, making us His begotten Sons (Rom. 8:16).

Many theologians have misunderstood the part that the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit play in each

(Continued on page 15)

The First "Christian Trinitarian"

The central doctrine of most Protestant and Catholic churches for many centuries has been that of the Trinity. This doctrine is so important that the *Catholic Encyclopedia* states: "This [the Trinity], the Church teaches, is the revelation regarding God's nature which Jesus Christ, the Son of God, came upon earth to deliver to the world: and which she [the Catholic Church] proposes to man as the *foundation of the whole dogmatic system.*"

Both Catholic and Protestant theologians quote Theophilus of Antioch (circa 180 A.D.) as the *first person* to write about this most important doctrine. But isn't it strange that such a major doctrine was avoided in religious writings for nearly two centuries? That is almost as long as the United States has been a nation.

Furthermore, Theophilus' allusion to the traditional Trinity — "the Father, the Son and the Holy

Ghost'' — is quite nebulous at best. Notice what Theophilus wrote in commenting about the fourth day of creation in the first chapter of Genesis: "And as the sun remains ever full, never becoming less, so does God always abide perfect, being full of all power, and understanding, and wisdom, and immortality, and all good. But the moon wanes monthly, and in a manner dies, being a type of man; then it is born again, and is crescent, for a pattern of the future resurrection. In like manner also the three days which were before the luminaries, are types of the trinity, of God, and His Word, and His wisdom" (*Ante-Nicene Fathers*, "Theophilus to Autolycus").

Here is the first statement by a theologian that is supposed to teach the doctrine of the Trinity. But does his statement really teach this?

Read it — simply. He does not say that God is a Trinity of *persons*, or that the Holy Spirit is a part of that Trinity. He just refers to God, His Word and His wisdom.

Theologians have tried to imagine into this unusual statement "*their* Trinity" — and yet even the editors of the *Ante-Nicene Fathers* state in a footnote that the word translated "wisdom" in English is the Greek word *sophia* which Theophilus elsewhere used in reference to *the Son*, *not* the Holy Spirit. (Continued on next page)

...“Christian Trinitarian”

Theophilus could not possibly have gotten the idea of a Trinity from the Bible — if he really did have a Trinity of *persons* in mind, which appears unlikely from the preceding statement — as the Bible nowhere even alludes to God being a Trinity.

From the time of Theophilus, it was several hundred years before this doctrine became a part of the Catholic dogma. It was in the last twenty-five years of the FOURTH century that “what might be called the definitive trinitarian dogma ‘one God in three persons’ became thoroughly *assimilated into* Christian life and thought” (*New Catholic Encyclopedia*, “Holy Trinity”).

From this it is evident that this “central doctrine” of Catholicism and Protestantism was not a part of the “faith which was once delivered unto the saints” (Jude 3) during or prior to the time of Jude, but was *added* by *later* theologians.

The doctrine of the Trinity was *not* what Jesus Christ “came upon the earth to deliver to the world.” He came to preach the good news of His soon-coming Kingdom, to establish His true Church, to give His life as a sacrifice for all who repent, and to give God’s Holy Spirit to those who are baptized — the Spirit that empowers believers to be ONE with the Father and the Son.

(Continued from page 11)

person's salvation. The doctrine of the Trinity is the result of that misunderstanding.

The Trinity is not a biblical doctrine. It has no basis in biblical fact. Then how did this doctrine come to be believed by the Church?

History of the Trinity

The ancient idea of monotheism was shattered by the sudden appearance of Jesus Christ on the earth. Here was someone who claimed He was the Son of God. But how could He be? The Jewish people believed for centuries that there was only one God. If the claims of "this Jesus" were accepted, then in their minds their belief would be no different from that of the polytheistic pagans around them. If He were the Son of God, their whole system of monotheism would disintegrate.

When Jesus plainly told certain Jews of His day that He was the Son of God, some were ready to stone Him for blasphemy (John 10:33).

To get around the problem of a plurality in the Godhead, the Jewish community simply rejected Jesus. And to this day, Orthodox Jews will not accept Jesus' Messiahship. However, the more liberal Jews will at least admit that He was a great man — maybe even a prophet.

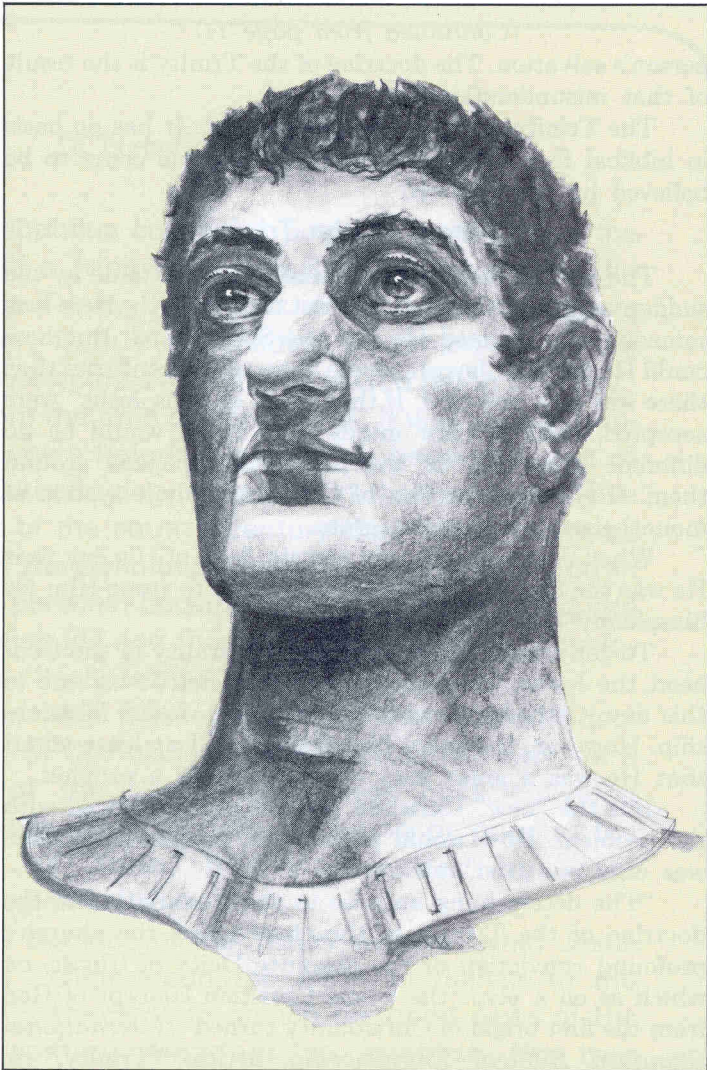
But the "new" Christian religion was still faced with the problem. How would proponents explain that there was only one God, not two?

"The determining impulse to the formulation of the doctrine of the Trinity in the church was the church's profound conviction of the absolute Deity of Christ, on which as on a pivot the whole Christian concept of God from the first origin of Christianity turned" (*International Standard Biblical Encyclopedia*, article "Trinity," p. 3021).

But the Deity of Christ does not mean that a doctrine of the Trinity is necessary, as we shall see in Chapter Two.

Roots in Greek Philosophy

Many of the early church fathers were thoroughly educated in Greek philosophy, from which they borrowed



EMPEROR CONSTANTINE convened the Council of Nicaea in 325 A.D. in an attempt to restore harmony and unity to a church divided by the Arian controversy.

Ambassador College Art

such non-biblical concepts as dualism and the immortality of the soul. However, most theologians, for obvious reasons, are generally careful to point out that they did not borrow the idea of the Trinity from the Triads of Greek philosophy or those of the ancient Egyptians and Babylonians.

But some are not so careful to make such a distinction. "Although the notion of a Triad or Trinity is characteristic of the Christian religion, it is by no means peculiar to it. In Indian religion, e.g., we meet with the trinitarian group of Brahma, Siva, and Visnu; and the Egyptian religion with the trinitarian group of Osiris, Isis, and Horus, constituting a divine family, like the Father, Mother and Son in medieval Christian pictures. Nor is it only in historical religions that we find God viewed as a Trinity. One recalls in particular the Neo-Platonic view of the Supreme or Ultimate Reality, which was suggested by Plato . . ." (*Hasting's Bible Dictionary*, Vol. 12, p. 458).

Of course, the fact that someone else had a Trinity does not in itself mean that the Christians borrowed it. McClintock and Strong make the connection a little clearer.

"Toward the end of the 1st century, and during the 2nd, many learned men came over both from Judaism and paganism to Christianity. These brought with them into the Christian schools of theology their Platonic ideas and phraseology" (article "Trinity," Vol. 10, p. 553).

In his book, *A History of Christian Thought*, Arthur Cushman McGiffert points out that the main argument against those who believed that there was only one God and that Christ was either an adopted or a created being was that their idea did not agree with Platonic philosophy. Such teachings were "offensive to theologians, particularly to those who felt the influence of the Platonic philosophy" (*ibid.*, p. 240).

In the latter half of the third century, Paul of Samosata tried to revive the adoptionist idea that Jesus was a mere man until the Spirit of God came upon Him at baptism making him the Anointed One, or Christ. In his beliefs about the person of Jesus Christ, he "rejected the

Platonic realism which underlay most of the Christological speculation of the day" (*ibid.*, p. 243).

At the end of his chapter on the Trinity, McGiffert concludes: "... It has been the boast of orthodox theologians that in the doctrine of the Trinity both religion and philosophy come to highest expression" (Vol. I, p. 247).

The influence of Platonic philosophy on the Trinity doctrine can hardly be denied.

However, trinitarian ideas go much further back than Plato. "Though it is usual to speak of the Semitic tribes as monotheistic; yet it is an undoubted fact that more or less all over the world the deities are in triads. This rule applies to eastern and western hemispheres, to north and south. Further, it is observed that, in some mystical way, the triad of three persons is one. . . . The definition of Athanasius [a fourth-century Christian] who lived in Egypt, applied to the trinities of all heathen religions" (*Egyptian Belief and Modern Thought*, by James Bonwick, F.R.G.S., p. 396).

It was Athanasius' formulation for the Trinity which was adopted by the Catholic Church at the Council of Nicaea in A.D. 325. Athanasius was an Egyptian from Alexandria and his philosophy was also deeply rooted in Platonism.

"The Alexandrian catechetical school, which revered Clement of Alexandria and Origen, the greatest theologians of the Greek Church, as its heads, applied the allegorical method to the explanation of Scripture. *Its thought was influenced by Plato*: its strong point was theological speculation. Athanasius and the three Cappadocians had been included among its members . . ." (*Ecumenical Councils of the Catholic Church*, by Hubert Jedin, p. 29).

In order to explain the relationship of Christ to God the Father, the church fathers felt that it was necessary to use the philosophy of the day. They obviously thought that their religion would be more palatable if they made it sound like the pagan philosophy that was extant at the time. These men were versed in philosophy, and that philosophy colored their understanding of the Bible.

It was the doctrine of the Trinity — colored by the

philosophy of the time — that was accepted by the Church in the early part of the fourth century — over three hundred years after Christ's death.

Even theologians recognize that the Trinity is a creation of *the fourth century*, not the first!

"There is recognition on the part of exegetist and Biblical theologians, including a constantly growing number of Roman Catholics, *that one should not speak of Trinitarianism in the New Testament without serious qualification*. There is also the closely parallel recognition — that when one does speak of unqualified Trinitarianism, *one has moved from the period of Christian origins to say, the last quadrant of the 4th century*. It was only then that what might be called the definitive Trinitarian dogma 'one God in three persons' became thoroughly assimilated into Christian life and thought" (*New Catholic Encyclopedia*, article "Trinity," Vol. 14, p. 295).

The Council of Nicaea

It was at the Council of Nicaea in A.D. 325 that two members of the Alexandrian congregation, Arius, a priest, who believed that Christ was not a God, but a created being; and Athanasius, a deacon who believed that the Father, Son and Spirit are the same being living in a threefold form (or in three relationships, as a man may be at the same time a father, a son and a brother), presented their cases.

The Council of Nicaea was not called by the church leaders, as one might suppose. It was called by the Emperor Constantine. And he had a far-from-spiritual reason for wanting to solve the dispute that had arisen.

"In 325 the Emperor Constantine called an ecclesiastical council to meet at Nicaea in Bithynia. In the hope of securing for his throne the support of the growing body of Christians he had shown them considerable favor and it was to his interest to have the church vigorous and united. The Arian controversy was threatening its unity and menacing its strength. He therefore undertook to put an end to the trouble. It was suggested to him, perhaps by the Spanish bishop Hosius who was influential at court,

that if a synod were to meet representing the whole church both east and west, it might be possible to restore harmony. Constantine himself of course neither knew or cared anything about the matter in dispute but he was eager to bring the controversy to a close, and Hosius' advice appealed to him as sound" (*A History of Christian Thought*, Vol. I, p. 258).

The decision as to which of the two men the church was to follow was a more or less arbitrary one. Constantine really didn't care which choice was made — all he wanted was a united church. (Arius was banished, but later recalled by Constantine, examined and found to be without heresy.)

The majority of those present at the council were not ready to take either side in the controversy. "A clearly defined standpoint with regard to this problem — the relationship of Christ to God — was held only by the attenuated group of Arians and a far from numerous section of delegates, who adhered with unshaken conviction to the Alexandrian [Athanasius'] view. The bulk of the members occupied a position between these two extremes. They rejected the formulae of Arius, and declined to accept those of his opponents . . . the voting was no criterion of the inward conviction of the council" (*Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 11th ed., article "Nicaea, Council of," p. 641).

The council rejected Arius' views, and rightly so, but they had nothing with which to replace it. Thus the ideas of Athanasius — also a minority view — prevailed. The rejection of Arianism was not blanket acceptance of Athanasius. Yet, the church in all the ensuing centuries has been "stuck," so to speak, with the job of upholding — right or wrong — the decision made at Nicaea.

After the council the Trinity became official dogma in the church, but the controversy did not end. In the next few years more Christians were killed by *other Christians* over that doctrine than were killed by all the pagan emperors of Rome. Yet, for all the fighting and killing, neither of the two parties had a biblical leg to stand on.

CHAPTER TWO

Who Was Jesus?

THE Bible does not teach the doctrine of the Trinity. But we are still faced with the question: Who was Jesus Christ? Was He a man that lived such a perfect life that God decided to call Him His Son at baptism? Or was He God who became a man and died for all men?

In the past in most theological circles, a rejection of the doctrine of the Trinity included a rejection of the divinity of Christ. But before this booklet becomes classed as an Arian heresy, let me quote from Catholic theologian Karl Rahner: "... We must be willing to admit that should the doctrine of the Trinity have to be dropped as false, the major part of religious literature could well remain virtually unchanged.... *the Christian idea of the incarnation would not have to change at all if there were no Trinity.*

"It is not surprising then, that Christian piety practically remembers from the doctrine of the incarnation only that 'God' has become man, without deriving from this truth any clear message about the Trinity" (*The Trinity*, pp. 10-12).

A rejection of the doctrine of the Trinity does not constitute a rejection of the incarnation — the divinity of Christ. In fact, what he says indicates that, for all practical purposes, the doctrine is meaningless.

Jesus Was the Problem

To this day Christianity is still confused about who and what Jesus Christ really was. There is a majority who

believe in a mysterious Trinity and a vociferous minority who believe that Christ was a created being. Neither has the truth.

But why all the confusion?

Who Jesus was is clearly indicated in the pages of the Bible. It has been there for centuries. While Christians were busily excommunicating and killing each other over the question of who Jesus was, the answer has been in the pages of the Bible, and that explanation is not in harmony with what is taught by most churches today. Christ is not the second person in a Trinity, and He was not created by God — *He is the Creator God!*

In the Beginning . . .

To find out who Jesus was, let's go back to the beginning. Beginnings are mentioned in the Bible in at least two separate places — in the first chapter of Genesis and in the first chapter of John's Gospel.

The Apostle John began his Gospel by describing who and what Jesus was before He came to this earth as the saviour of mankind.

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made. . . . And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth" (verses 1-3, 14).

If we read no further in the New Testament than this, we would be able to know beyond a shadow of a doubt that Jesus Christ was God and that He is the One who created man in Genesis 2:7. Because John clearly states that the Word — the One who became Christ — created all things. Had Christians clearly understood these verses there would have never been an Arian controversy or a doctrine of the Trinity.

But the Apostle John is not the only New Testament writer who wrote about the pre-existence of Christ. Notice what Paul wrote to the Corinthians. "Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our

fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; and did all eat the same spiritual meat; and did all drink of the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and *that Rock was Christ*" (I Cor. 10:1-4).

Paul clearly tells us that Jesus Christ was the God of the Old Testament — the One who spoke to Moses and led the Israelites out of Egypt. This clearly shows us that the One who became the Son was the God of the Old Testament, not God the Father.

Yet the doctrine of the Trinity hinges on the assumption that God manifested Himself as the Father in the Old Testament and Christ in the New Testament.

Duality of God Throughout the Bible

The plurality of God is not merely a "plural of majesty" as some would have us believe.

Six hundred years before Christ, the Prophet Daniel recorded for us a vision. "I saw in the night visions, and, behold, *one* like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days . . ." (Dan. 7:13). The "Son of man" he described can be none other than the One who later became Jesus Christ. Daniel then saw Him given rulership and a Kingdom that will never be destroyed (verse 14). The "Son of man" mentioned here could hardly be a mere physical human being!

The Ancient of Days, in this instance, is the divine Being who is called the Father in the New Testament.

Jesus Christ referred to the same occurrence as mentioned in this vision in His parable of the nobleman (Himself) who went to a far country (heaven) to receive a kingdom, and to return (Luke 19:12).

The duality of the God family was also referred to in Psalm 110 by David.

"The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool" (verse 1).

Two different Lords are mentioned here. One is God the Father and the other is the One who became Jesus

How Many Creators?

Many ancient peoples have preserved among their myths an account of the creation of the world. Distorted though such stories may be, they do contain certain basic elements common to other, more reliable ancient documents. The *Popol Vuh*, the sacred book of the ancient Quiché Maya of Guatemala, for instance, contains a creation story very similar to that found in the Bible. It opens with a vista of emptiness very much like that of Genesis 1:2:

"The surface of the earth had not appeared. There was only the calm sea and the great expanse of the sky. There was nothing There was only immobility and silence in the darkness, in the night" (*Popol Vuh*, Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1950, p. 81).

In this expanse of water and chaotic gloom, then, creation began.

But unlike the conventional concept of a Creator doing all the work, the Maya account speaks of *two* beings. Tepeu and Gucumatz, the "Creator" and the "Maker," known as the "Fore-fathers," combined their efforts for the task:

"Tepeu and Gucumatz came together in the darkness . . . and talked together . . . discussing and deliberating; they agreed, they united their words and their thoughts Then they planned the creation, and the growth of the trees and the thickets, and the birth of life and the creation of man.

The story proceeds then with "Let there be light," the appearance of dry land, plants, animals and man, much as in Genesis.

Notice that the Mayas speak of *two* creating beings instead of *one*.

They have actually retained a detail not commonly understood outside the original Hebrew context of the Genesis record. For the Bible, too, shows there were *two* distinct personalities involved in creation, not one as commonly assumed.

When Genesis 1:1 opens with: "In the beginning God . . .," the Hebrew word for "God" used here is *Elohim*. It is in the *plural* form which can designate more than one. Note that Genesis 1:26 was correctly translated from the original Hebrew: "And God said, Let *us* make man in *our* image."

Most professing Christians would find it alien to conceive of more than one being as the creator. Yet *Elohim* can express plurality. The word in Genesis One means "God," but in a family relationship. The New Testament speaks of "God the Father" and "God the Son," the One who became Jesus. They are two distinct beings, but both are God. Both of them have been together since eternity. "In the beginning was the Word [the Son], and the Word was with God [the Father], and the Word was God" (John 1:1). Together they planned the creation, and God the Son carried it out (John 1:3; Col. 1:16). Notice Ephesians 3:9: "... God [the Father], who created all things by Jesus Christ."

Thus the Bible reveals that there were actually two spirit beings — two distinct personalities who united their efforts in the creation — exactly as the Maya account so surprisingly relates.

Christ. Paul quoted this passage to the Jewish Christians — applying it directly to Jesus Christ: “But to which of the angels said he at any time, Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool?” (Heb. 1:13.)

Was the Son also God? Verse 8 answers, “But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, *O God*, is for ever. . . .” There can be no doubt that God the Father and Jesus the Son are mentioned as two separate beings in the Old Testament.

Who Was Melchizedek?

Now notice Hebrews 5:6-7:

“So also Christ glorified not himself to be made high priest; but he [glorified him] that said unto him, Thou art my Son, today have I begotten thee. As he saith also in another place, Thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.”

So Christ holds the office of Melchizedek. Who was Melchizedek? He was one of the Persons composing God.

In Genesis 14:18 he is called the king of Salem and the priest of the Most High God. Notice why he could not have been merely a human being.

The Apostle Paul described Him further in Hebrews 7:2-3:

“To whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all; first being by interpretation King of righteousness, and after that also King of Salem, which is King of peace; without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God; abideth a priest continually.”

Paul could not have been describing a human being, or even an angel in these verses, for he is describing a Being that eternally existed, as only God has eternally existed.

Melchizedek was a priest of the *Most High God*. Who is the Most High God? Why of course, the Father! Jesus Christ said: “My Father is greater than I” (John 14:28). And also Melchizedek still lives (and if you will read Hebrews 7:8 carefully, you will see that Paul repeats this supremely important fact) and is still that High Priest. But Christ also is High Priest (see Heb. 7:26; 8:1). There

cannot be two High Priests both holding the same office, so Melchizedek and Jesus Christ must be one and the same.

So we see that even in the first book of the Bible the plurality of God is shown, although clear understanding of this truth could not be known until Jesus came to reveal it in the New Testament. Jesus said, "... No man knows who the Son is, but the Father; and who the Father is, but the Son, and he to whom the Son will *reveal* him" (Luke 10:22).

Jesus Came to Reveal the Father

A clear distinction is made in the New Testament between Christ and the Father. The God that Moses saw and heard was not God the Father, again proving that Christ was the God of the Old Testament. "No man has seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him" (John 1:18). Christ came to earth to, among other things, reveal the Father and to show a family relationship that exists in the Godhead. But more about that later.

Unless Jesus had revealed the Father to us, there is no way for us to know Him. "All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him" (Matt. 11:27).

The Meaning of the Word YHVH

In the Hebrew of the original inspired text, there are two different names that are commonly used to refer to God. The word first used for "God" in Genesis is *Elohim*.

The second word — which we will explain here — is YHVH (commonly, though erroneously, pronounced "Jehovah"). This word YHVH is generally translated "LORD" (in capital letters) in the King James Version of the Bible. The first place it is used is in Genesis 2:7. It was the LORD God — YHVH — who formed man out of the dust of the ground. It was the LORD God that dealt

directly with Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. And as we saw in John, chapter 1, it was the Word — Jesus Christ — who created all things.

Therefore, it was the LORD God of the Old Testament who became the Jesus Christ of the New. This fact is illustrated interestingly enough by the grammatical derivation of the word YHVH.

The word YHVH is explained by Rabbinic sources as encompassing three Hebrew words: HYH meaning *was*, HVH meaning *is* (literally “the present tense” — the word “is” is not used in Hebrew) and YHYH meaning *will continue to be*.

Putting them all together, YHVH actually means the “Was-Is-Will Continue to Be” Being. Even Hebrew linguistic scholars agree that YHVH must be derived from some form of the verb “to be” (was, is, will be).

By His very name, then, God quite literally encompasses all aspects of time — past, present and future. This is in complete accord with Malachi 3:6: “For I am YHVH, I change not”; Hebrews 13:8: “Jesus Christ the same yesterday [was], and today [is], and forever [*will* continue to be]”; and Revelation 1:8: “I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which *is*, and which *was*, and which *is to come*, the Almighty.”

Here we can see that even etymologically, Jesus Christ and YHVH can be equated. Yet this is only a small part of the picture because the clear statements of both the Old and New Testaments give overwhelming proof that the God of the Old Testament is the One who became Jesus Christ. (For further information on this vital part of our subject, write immediately for the free article “Who and What Was Jesus Before His Human Birth?”)

People Stumbled at Christ

In Isaiah chapter eight, verses 13 and 14, we find a very interesting prophecy concerning the Lord of Hosts.

“Sanctify the Lord of Hosts himself; and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread. And he shall be for a sanctuary; but for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel, for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem.”

Most editions of the King James Version of the Bible note that these verses refer to the one who later became Jesus Christ. But even more accurate proof is found in the New Testament.

In his first epistle, the Apostle Peter writes:

“Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded. Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, and a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed” (I Pet. 2:6-8).

The very same prophecy is alluded to in Luke 2:34. There can be no denying the fact that Jesus Christ was the God of the Old Testament, the Stone over which many people stumbled.

The religious leaders of the time simply could not understand how Jesus could have been God. Yet the Old Testament which they had copied for centuries is filled with prophecies about Him. Truly they were blinded, and most remain so to this day, as the Apostle Paul explained in the ninth through the eleventh chapters of his epistle to the Romans.

While Jesus Christ, the God of the Old Testament, was on earth as a human being, there was only one God-Being — the Father — left in heaven. And we find that Jesus prayed to His Father in heaven:

“And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was” (John 17:5).

The Jews and the Arians found it hard to believe that God could become man. Yet, the New Testament explains that it did indeed happen. One of the members of the Godhead became a man that we might have the opportunity to become God.

The Apostle Paul explained this concept in his epistle to the Philippians. *The Amplified Bible* makes the passage

a little clearer. In chapter 2:5-8, he encourages the Philip-
pians:

“Let this same attitude and purpose and [humble] mind be in you which was in Christ Jesus. Let him be your example in humility . . . Who, although being essentially one with God and in the form of God [possessing the fullness of the attributes which make God God], did not think this equality with God was a thing to be eagerly grasped or retained; but stripped Himself [of all privileges and rightful dignity] so as to assume the guise of a servant (slave), in that He became like men and was born a human being. And after He had appeared in human form He abased and humbled Himself [still further] and carried His obedience to the extreme of death, and even the death of [the] cross!” Jesus Christ was God. But He voluntarily gave up His position as God, became a physical human being and came to this earth to die for us that we might be saved.

The true impact and importance of the oft-repeated scripture: “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3:16), becomes abundantly clear.

CHAPTER THREE

Is the Holy Spirit a Person?

WE HAVE seen that Jesus Christ is, was and always will be God. However, you can search the Bible from Genesis to Revelation and you will find no such Bible teaching with regard to the Holy Spirit. The Bible does not teach that the Holy Spirit is a third member of the God family or of a Trinity.

This is not a prejudiced anti-trinitarian opinion. It is a fact that is recognized even by Trinitarian theologians!

Discussing the evidence for the doctrine of the Trinity in the Bible, Dr. W. N. Clarke, writes: "The New Testament begins the work, but does not finish it; for it contains *no similar teaching* [like John 1:1-18 concerning the divinity of Christ] with *regard to the Holy Spirit*. The unique nature and mission of Christ are traced to a ground in the being of God; but similar ground for the *divineness of the Spirit is nowhere shown. Thought in the New Testament is never directed to that end.* Thus the Scriptures take the first step toward a doctrine of essential Trinity, or threeness in the being of one God, but they do not take that second *step by which alone the doctrine could be completed*" (*An Outline of Christian Theology*, p. 168). (Author's emphasis.)

Theologians have to recognize that there is no biblical proof for the divinity or personality of the Spirit. And that in order to arrive at a doctrine of the Trinity, they have to go outside of the Bible.

Karl Barth, one of the most noted theologians of the 20th century, admits that the church has gone beyond the Bible to arrive at its doctrine of the Trinity.

"The Bible lacks the express declaration that the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit are of equal essence and therefore in an equal sense God Himself. And the other express declaration is also lacking that God is God thus and only thus, i.e., as the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. These two express declarations which go beyond the witness of the Bible are the twofold content of the church doctrine of the Trinity" (*Doctrine of the Word of God*, p. 437).

Since, as theologians recognize, the Bible is not the source of the Trinity doctrine, how can they square it with the Bible teaching that inspired Scripture should be the source of doctrine? (II Tim. 3:16).

The answer is, they can't. They must freely admit the painful facts.

The Spirit of God in the Bible

The personality of Jesus Christ is thoroughly provable from the Bible, but there is no such proof for a personality of the Holy Spirit.

"The OT [Old Testament] clearly does not envisage God's spirit as a person, neither in the strictly philosophical sense, nor in the Semitic sense. God's spirit is simply God's Power. If it is sometimes represented as being distinct from God, it is because the breath of Yahweh acts exteriorly (Isa. 48:16; 63:11; 32:15)." So say the authors of the *New Catholic Encyclopedia*. But let them continue:

"Very rarely do the OT writers attribute to God's spirit emotions or intellectual activity (Isa. 63:10; Wis. 1:3-7). When such expressions are used, *they are mere figures of speech* that are explained by the fact that the *rûah* was regarded also as the seat of intellectual acts and feeling (Gen. 41:8). Neither is there found in the OT or in rabbinical literature the notion that God's spirit is an intermediary being between God and the world. This activity is proper to the angels, although to them is

ascribed some of the activity that elsewhere is ascribed to the spirit of God" (*New Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. XIII, p. 574).

In the Old Testament, God's Spirit is pictured as His power. The power by which the One who became Jesus Christ, as Executive for the Father, created the entirety of the universe. These theologians also recognize that when the Spirit is spoken of as a person or in a personal way, the Bible writer is merely *personifying* the Spirit, as he would wisdom or any other attribute.

Now what about the New Testament? They say:

"Although the NT [New Testament] concepts of the Spirit of God are largely a continuation of those of the OT, in the NT there is a gradual revelation that the Spirit of God is a person."

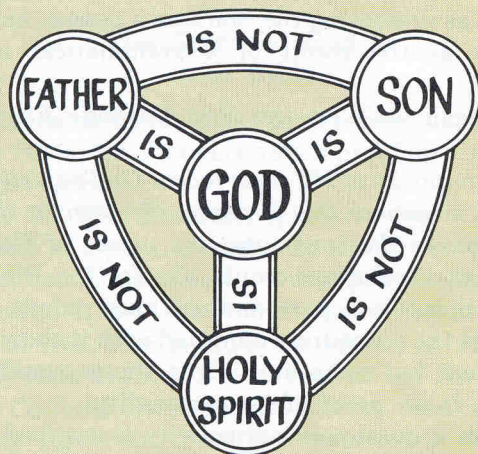
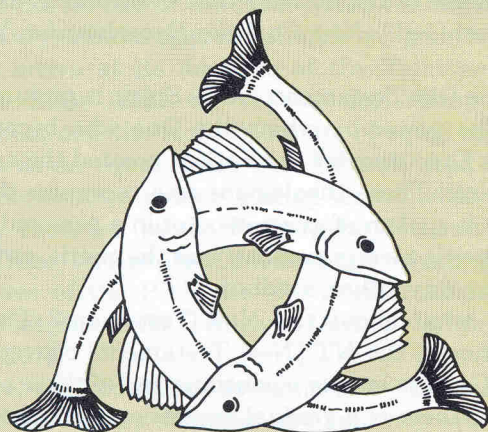
But this would seem true only if you are armed with a preconceived notion that God is a Trinity. We will see there are only a few scriptures that can even remotely be construed as presenting the Spirit as a person, and in each case only as the result of a grammatical misunderstanding.

But again let's let the *New Catholic Encyclopedia* continue.

"The majority of NT texts reveal God's spirit as something, not someone; this is especially seen in the parallelism between the spirit and the power of God."

Though theologians would like for the Bible to say that the Spirit is a person, they must admit that the majority of the scriptures connected with it show that it is *not someone*, but something. Even the personification of the Spirit is no proof of its personality.

"When a quasi-personal activity is ascribed to God's spirit, e.g., speaking, hindering, desiring, dwelling (Acts 8:29; 16:7; Rom. 8:9), *one is not justified in concluding immediately that in these passages God's spirit is regarded as a Person*; the same expressions are used in regard to rhetorically personified things or abstract ideas (see Rom. 6:6; 7:17). Thus the context of the phrase 'blasphemy against the spirit' (Mt. 12:31; cf. Mt. 12:28; Lk. 11:20) shows that reference is being made to the power of



TRINITY SYMBOLS — Most of professing Christianity today believes that God is limited to a "trinity" composed of three persons — God the Father, God the Son (Jesus Christ) and God the Holy Spirit. Shown here are two of many symbols used to represent the Trinity.

Ambassador College Art

God" (*New Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. XIII, p. 575).

After such admissions, it is almost inconceivable that any theologian could still teach that the Spirit is a person — yet some do.

A Lesson in Greek Grammar

The one place that most theologians feel describes the Spirit as a person is resolved by a lesson in the Greek language. In the Greek language, like the Romance languages (Italian, Spanish, French, and others), every noun has what is called gender; that is, it is either masculine, feminine or neuter. The gender of a word has nothing to do with whether it is really masculine or feminine — it is more of a grammatical tool.

The verses most Trinitarian theologians will fall back on for their proof that the Spirit is a person are in the 14th, 15th and 16th chapters of John's Gospel. Here Jesus is recorded as referring to the Spirit as "the Comforter." The pronoun "he" is used in connection with the word "comforter" — *parakletos* — however, the reason for the use of the personal pronoun "he" is for grammatical, not theological, or spiritual reasons. (cp. Acts 12:10)

All pronouns in Greek must agree in gender with the word they refer to, therefore the pronoun "he" is used when referring to the Greek word *parakletos*. Only John refers to the Spirit as the *parakletos* — "Comforter." The other New Testament writers use the word *pneuma* which means "breath" or "spirit." This is the Greek equivalent of *rûah*, the Hebrew word for "spirit" used in the Old Testament. *Pneuma* is a grammatically neuter word and is always represented by the pronoun "it."

However, the translators of the King James Version, being swayed by the doctrine of the Trinity, have generally mistranslated the pronouns referring to *pneuma* as masculine. One instance where they did not mistranslate is found in Romans 8:16. "The Spirit *itself* beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God."

John's use of the *parakletos* is no proof the Spirit is a person. For if the simple gender of a noun were the basis for the personality of the Spirit, then the Spirit changed gender from the Old to the New Testament, the Hebrew

What Is the Holy Spirit?

Is the Holy Spirit a *person*, just like God the Father and Jesus Christ, as the doctrine of the Trinity teaches?

Let's examine the plain, clear testimony of Scripture to see what God's Holy Spirit is.

First, it is the *power* of God. "Not by might, nor by power [of humans], but *by my spirit*, saith the Lord of hosts" (Zech. 4:6). "I am full of *power* by the Spirit of the Lord, and judgment, and of *might* . . ." declared the prophet Micah (Micah 3:8).

Second, it is the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear (deep reverence and respect — not craven fear) of the Lord (Isa. 11:2).

Third, it is a *gift*. After baptism, you are to receive "the *gift* of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:38). It is *poured* out. "And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh" (Acts 2:17). ". . . On the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 10:45).

Fourth, to be effective the Holy Spirit must be *stirred up*. "Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou *stir up* the gift of God," Paul reminded the young evangelist Timothy (II Tim. 1:7).

Five, the Spirit of God can be *quenched* (I Thes. 5:19).

Six, it is the *begetting* power of God (Matt. 1:18; Rom. 8:9).

Seven, it is God's guarantee to us that He will fulfill His promise to us (Eph. 1:14).

Eight, it sheds the love of God abroad *in* our hearts (Rom. 5:5).

Nine, it must be *renewed* (Titus 3:5-6).

Notice that in all of these scriptures there is not one characteristic even implying a "person."

Does a *person* do any of these things? Is a person "poured," "quenched," "renewed"? Does a person live *in* someone else or live *in* people's hearts?

For further evidence proving that the Holy Spirit is not a person, see Matthew 1:20. Here we read that Christ was conceived by the Holy Spirit. Yet Christ calls *God* His Father, not the Holy Spirit (John 14:16). If the Holy Spirit were a person, it would be Christ's Father — proof positive that the Holy Spirit is not a person but the power God the Father uses — much as a man uses electricity.

Consider further. If the Holy Spirit were a person, Jesus Christ prayed to the wrong individual. Throughout the four Gospels, we find Christ speaking to God — *not* the Holy Spirit — as His Father.

word for "spirit" in the Old Testament being in the feminine gender in a majority of cases and in a masculine sense less often.

The fact that the word "spirit" is feminine in the Hebrew did lead some to believe that the Spirit was a feminine being of the Godhead. They believed in a Trinity of the Father, the Mother and the Son. Interestingly enough, their belief was condemned by the Trinitarians who used the same kind of ploy to prove that the Spirit was a masculine being!

The Holy Spirit — God's Begettal Power

What is the Spirit? As we saw earlier, theologians admit that the Spirit of God is the power of God. They would have no reason to believe otherwise unless they had a preconceived idea of a Trinity.

The Spirit, or Holy Spirit, as it is called in the New Testament, was the power by which Jesus Christ was begotten. "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 [Spirit]" (Matt. 1:18).

When Joseph was about to put Mary away because she was pregnant, "the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost [Spirit]" (Matt. 1:20).

Jesus was begotten in the womb of Mary by the power (Lk 1:35) of the Holy Spirit. He was literally born with God's Spirit in His mind. He became the Son of God and died for us that we might have the same opportunity to become God.

The Apostle Paul plainly taught this vital scriptural truth that we just read in Romans 8:16. "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God." Paul did not mean this in some sentimental sort of way, as he goes on to show in the next verse. "And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ...."

Paul goes on to point out that Jesus Christ is the heir

Paul Did Not Recognize the Trinity

The Apostle Paul would probably be considered a blasphemer by many Trinitarians today, because in his greetings to the churches he neglected to mention the Holy Spirit. In his introduction to the Romans, he represents himself as an apostle of God the Father and Jesus Christ, but nothing is said about any third person.

He also neglects to mention the Holy Spirit in the greetings of the rest of his letters. His standard greeting is: "Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ" (I Cor. 1:3). The same greeting is repeated in II Corinthians 1:3, Galatians 1:3, Ephesians 1:2, Philippians 1:2, Colossians 1:2, I Thessalonians 1:1, II Thessalonians 1:2, I Timothy 1:2, Titus 1:4, and Philemon 1:3.

All of these greetings are without variation — the Holy Spirit is consistently left out (a great oversight — indeed blasphemy, provided the Trinity doctrine is correct).

Only in II Corinthians 13:14 is the Holy Spirit mentioned with God and Jesus and there only in connection with communion or fellowship. The Holy Spirit is not the third member of the Godhead.

of all things in Hebrews 1:2. We then have the opportunity, if we have God's Spirit in our minds, to inherit all things with Jesus Christ.

The Spirit of God unites with our minds, and we are begotten (or conceived) again — this time spiritually — not as we originally were, physically. We become a new person.

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead” (I Pet. 1:3). And verse 23 says, “Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever.”

The Holy Spirit impregnates us with God's nature. That spiritual begetting imbues us with the nature and mind of God. Throughout our Christian lives we continue to grow and develop in the understanding and mind of God until we are finally born into the God family and made immortal at the return of Jesus Christ to this earth (I Cor. 15:49-52).

How can we obtain this Spirit? The answer was given by the Apostle Peter on the day of Pentecost mentioned in Acts chapter two. When Peter was asked at the end of his sermon what to do, he answered: “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost [Spirit]” (Acts 2:38).

Here again we can see why the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are mentioned in the “baptismal formula” in Matthew 28:19. God the Father is the One who brings us to repentance; Jesus Christ — God the Son — is the one who died that we can have our past sins forgiven; and the Holy Spirit is the power by which God the Father begets us. (For further information about the Holy Spirit, write for our free reprint article “How You Can Be Imbued With the Power of God.”)

How plain the truth of the Bible is. The Holy Spirit is the power of God. It is not a person. It is the power by which we are begotten that we might become sons of God.

CHAPTER FOUR

God Is a Family

EARLY theologians were driven by the need to explain the appearance of Jesus Christ. Some found their explanation by fabricating the Trinity doctrine. But since God is *not* a Trinity and since Jesus Christ is God, what is the relationship in the Godhead? Is God one, or are there two separate Gods and is Christianity, therefore, polytheistic?

In Chapter Two we found that the Bible teaches that Jesus Christ is the God of the Old Testament, and that He became flesh and came to this earth to die for mankind. He is called the Son of God and He calls God His Father. By now the relationship should be coming clear — God is a family.

We found in Chapter Three that we also can become begotten sons of God by the impregnation of God's Spirit — again a family relationship.

When we understand that God is a family — that God is reproducing after His kind — we are no longer confronted with the problems inherent in the Trinity doctrine, nor are we faced with the problem of worshipping many gods.

There is only one God family, yet there are presently two members, and in the future there will be *many more*. Jesus was called “the firstborn of *many brethren*” (Rom. 8:29).

Look at yourself. Whether married or single, you are part of a family. You have parents and maybe even children or grandchildren of your own. Yet, you are still one family.

It was God who created man and put him on the earth. He created marriage and the family relationship as a type of His divine family. (For further information on this vitally important subject, write for the free booklet titled *Why Marriage!*)

God's Name Is Plural

The Hebrew word for "God" used in Genesis 1:1 and 26 is *Elohim*. *Elohim* is plural in form. Though this word taken by itself does not prove that there are two beings in the Godhead, it does allow for the plurality that is clearly indicated in other parts of the Bible.

By what we can understand from the rest of the Bible, this word *Elohim* can act like our English words "family," "group," "church," or "crowd." These words are often regarded as singular and take a singular verb form, but they all contain more than one member.

The Apostle Paul exemplifies this for us in I Corinthians 12:20. Speaking about the Church he says: "But now are they many members, yet but one body."

God is a family. There presently are two members in that God family, God the Father — the Head of the family, the Lawgiver — and Jesus Christ the Son — the Spokesman, the Creator. But the word *Elohim* is not just dual. There is a dual number in Hebrew, but this would have to be *Elohim*. The God family, however, is destined to be truly plural — to have many members. And this is what the word *Elohim* describes and allows for.

Belief in a Trinity clouds the real purpose that God has in store for mankind. If we are taught that God is a closed Trinity of three persons, we lose sight of the fact that God's real purpose is to create many more members of the God family.

Look at the creation account in Genesis 1: God created fish after the fish kind, birds after the bird kind, and animals after the animal kind. But in verse 26 God made man — *not* after any of the animal kinds, but after the God kind — in God's image and God's likeness. "And God [Hebrew, *Elohim*] said, Let us make man in *our image*,

after our *likeness*: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth."

God created man in His own image. Man is greater than the rest of the creation, because God gave him mind power. He has dominion over all the creatures. Man is not an animal. He was created in the image of God — after the God kind.

Taught in the New Testament

The Apostle John understood God's plans for mankind. Notice what he wrote in I John 3:1:

"Behold, what manner of love the Father [here is the family relationship — not a closed trinity] hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we [already] the [begotten] sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: *but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.*"

Jesus Christ, the One who was the God of the Old Testament, the Creator God, became flesh, died and was resurrected as a part of God's plan to make man God. Jesus Christ is not to be the only son of God. He is the only born Son now, but as John wrote, "*when he shall appear, we shall be like him.*" We are *begotten* sons now, and will be *born* sons of God at the resurrection.

It is clearly God's plan to bring many sons into His family. "For it became him [God the Father], for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, *in bringing many sons unto glory*, to make the captain of their salvation [Jesus Christ] perfect through sufferings" (Heb. 2:10).

The pages of the Bible are filled with this — God's great purpose for man. And yet the majority of this world's Christians are blinded to this central biblical truth. Why? Because Satan has deceived the whole world (Rev. 12:9). God is not a closed Trinity, He is a family — a family in which you can become a member.

Why the Deception?

Why has Satan palmed off the doctrine of the Trinity on the world? Because he doesn't want *you* to rule in his place! Satan was originally created to carry out God's rule on earth. But, he refused to serve the Creator and even fomented a rebellion to dislodge God from His position as Ruler over the whole universe (Ezek. 28:11-19; Isa. 14:12-14). A third of the angels united with Lucifer in that rebellion and were cast back down to this earth with him (Rev. 12:3-4) — having forever disqualified themselves and Satan from ruling in the government of God. However, Satan and his demonic cohorts remain in office until Christ actually returns.

Yet being disqualified, they do not want anyone else ever to take their place. For that reason, during nearly 6000 years of man, they have tried to hide from all the world the breathtaking truth of God. If they can make you believe in the Trinity, you will be deceived into thinking that the Godhead consists of *only* three persons. You would then never in your wildest dreams ever imagine that you were created to be born into the God family — to actually have a part in ruling this earth!

Satan wants you to think that God is a limited Trinity — not a *growing* family or Kingdom into which we may, through the grace of God, enter.

There you have it. That is the truth about the Trinity. God's family isn't closed to mankind as Satan would have you believe.

It's wide open to you, your family and all mankind. You can be made in the exact likeness of God at Christ's return! □

ADDITIONAL READING

Ambassador College publishes many colorful, informative booklets on a wide range of biblical topics. Four are listed below:

Why Were You Born?

Was humanity created and put here on earth by an intelligent and Almighty Creator for a definite purpose? And if so, what is that purpose — and why is humanity so totally unaware of it?

Just What Do You Mean — Born Again?

Don't be too sure you know. Many professing Christians sincerely believe they have been "born again" — but do not understand what Jesus meant by those words.

What Is a Real Christian?

Is everyone who professes Christ a true Christian? Or is Christianity a definite way of life that produces a startling change in the new convert?

Where Is God's True Church Today?

Does Jesus Christ have many different church denominations doing His Work? Is Christ divided? How, when, and where did this religious babylon of multiple denominations get started? And how does one recognize the true Church?

Write for your free copies of these booklets. World-wide mailing addresses are at the end of this booklet.

The Bible is a *NOW* Book

BELIEVE it or not, the Bible was written for our day, this age — this generation! The Bible is the most up-to-date book you can read today.

In the pages of this "Book that nobody knows" are revealed the causes of all of today's ills — the social problems, the economic problems, and even the threat of nuclear annihilation hanging over mankind today.

The Bible shows where world events are leading, and what the final outcome will be.

But ironically, this "Book of all books" is the LEAST UNDERSTOOD of all books!

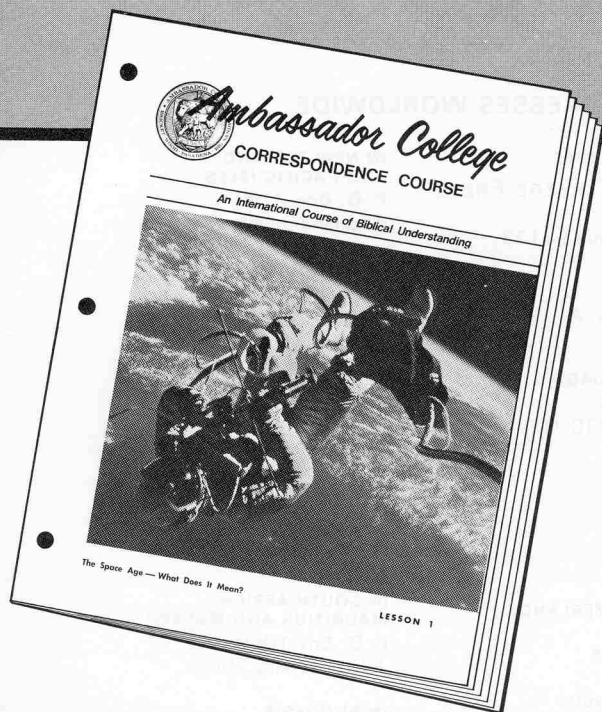
Why?

Simply because when most people try to read the Bible, they can't understand it. Consequently, they assume it's out of date and irrelevant in our modern age.

But you can understand it.

Here's how!

For more than a decade and a half, Ambassador College has been helping thousands to become "Biblical literates" through the Ambassador College Correspondence Course. This unique course of *Biblical*



understanding has led over 200,000 students in nearly every country on earth to a greater knowledge and understanding of the Bible.

This course has been designed to guide you through a systematic study of your own Bible — the Bible is the only textbook.

A different major subject of vital interest in this fantastic push-button age is thoroughly gone into and made clear with each 16-page, monthly lesson.

There are no assignments or tests to send in. You review and evaluate your own progress at home. And there is no tuition cost to you whatsoever.

This course is absolutely free! Just write to the following address and ask to be enrolled. You'll be glad you did.

AMBASSADOR COLLEGE
CORRESPONDENCE COURSE
Pasadena, California 91123

If you live outside the United States, please see the mailing addresses on the next page.

MAILING ADDRESSES WORLDWIDE:

IN THE UNITED STATES

AMBASSADOR COLLEGE PRESS
P. O. Box 111
Pasadena, California 91123

IN CANADA

P. O. Box 44, Sta. A
Vancouver 1, B.C.

OR

IN FRENCH LANGUAGE

Boîte Postale 121
Montréal, P. Q. H3C 1C5

IN BRITAIN

P. O. Box 111
St. Albans, Herts.
England

IN FRANCE, SWITZERLAND AND BELGIUM

Le MONDE A VENIR
Case Postale 10
91, rue de la Servette
1211 Geneva 7
Switzerland

IN GERMANY

Postfach 1324
(4) Düsseldorf 1
West Germany

IN HOLLAND & BELGIUM

Postbus 496
Arnhem, Nederland

IN AUSTRALIA

G. P. O. Box 345
Sydney, NSW 2001
Australia

IN NEW ZEALAND AND PACIFIC ISLES

P. O. Box 2709
Auckland 1, New Zealand

IN THE PHILIPPINES

P. O. Box 1111
Makati, Rizal D-708

IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

P. O. Box 111
Farrer, Singapore, 11

IN AFRICA

All African nations *except*
those in Southern Africa
should write to the
British address.

IN SOUTH AFRICA, MAURITIUS AND MALAWI

P. O. Box 1060
Johannesburg 2000

IN RHODESIA

Box UA30
Union Avenue
Salisbury

IN JERUSALEM

P. O. Box 19111
Jerusalem

IN CENTRAL AMERICA

P. O. Box 5-595
México 5, D. F.

IN THE CARIBBEAN & SOUTH AMERICA

c/o Spanish Dept.
Box 111
Pasadena, California 91123

THIS BOOKLET IS NOT TO BE SOLD. It is provided as a public service in the public interest by Ambassador College — made possible by the contributions of those who, voluntarily, have become co-workers in support of this worldwide work. Ambassador College, as a separate corporation, is associated with the Worldwide Church of God, and a portion of the financial needs of the work is supplied by that Church. The publishers have nothing to sell, and although contributions are gratefully welcomed, no solicitation is ever made to the public for financial support.