

THE IMPLICATIONS OF BELIEVING IN THE TRINITY

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INTRODUCTION

"John Wesley declared that any who attempt to explain the Trinity, 'have above all other persons hurt the cause which they intended to promote.'" This quotation by E.L. Holley in a class on bible doctrine further stated that John Wesley contended that there should be "no explication at all; no, not even the best I ever saw...".

It has been my experience that there is a broad spectrum of belief concerning the deity or nature of Jesus Christ. There are those who label themselves Trinitarians that actually believe, as I see it, in three distinct beings or a tri-theistic godhead, and there are Trinitarians at the other end of the scale who believe in a single eternal being existing in three eternal and essential distinctions of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Then there are Unitarians who absolutely deny the divinity of Jesus Christ while there are other Unitarians who believe in the divinity of Jesus Christ, and his humanity, yet reject the idea of a Trinity, particularly an eternal son-ship.

I do not believe that there is more than just one right answer for I do believe that there is just but one divine person, known as God. However, I believe the implications of how a man prefers to believe in this matter goes beyond mere theology (i.e. the study of God). I believe our salvation also rest on the truth of this matter. Whereas many theologians contend that the trinity or godhead is not to be understood but simply taken by faith, the Lord declared, "But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me." (Jeremiah 9:24)

I intend to lay groundwork by examining some ancient arguments of Christology. Consideration could be given to the concepts of both a Trinitarian viewpoint and a Unitarian viewpoint especially with some historic perspectives of both.

However, my chief objective in this thesis is not to present just another Christological research paper completely aimed at proving one side of an argument. My main objective is to try to answer the question -- "Does it matter what you believe?" What are the gospel implications of this truth? I will of course present as well as possible the side of the argument that I contend for, trying to be open to change in my research, but study and prayer, along with research will hopefully provide me with more assurance in my relationship with God, and give me a greater love for the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ.

CHAPTER ONE

Who is Jesus Christ? I heard an account of a missionary to Japan who entered a small store there, and upon finding the owner, he asked him, "Do you know Jesus Christ?" The Japanese proprietor replied, "No I don't, but if you can describe him to me, perhaps I can help you find him." This man knew nothing about Jesus Christ. Around the world there are millions of people who have actually not heard of Jesus, even though we are told by the Lord that this "gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nation."

Who is Jesus Christ? Rev. Finis Jennings Dake, in his Dakes Annotated Reference Bible calls attention to twelve modern statements about Christ. The Christian Scientist, according to Dake, believe that "Jesus was the offspring of Mary's self-conscious communion with God...Christ is incorporeal, spiritual...the divine idea of God...Mary's conception of him was spiritual...Jesus is not God." Dake continues with the Unity's conception of Jesus Christ as being the "I" in man, "the self...the divine idea...Reveal yourself to yourself by affirming I AM THE CHRIST." The Spiritualist state "Christ is not the son of God. Any just and perfect being is Christ...nothing more than a medium of a high order...not divine except in the sense we are all divine." The Jehovah's Witnesses believe that "Jesus Christ was a man...neither more nor less...none other than the archangel Michael...God created him." Dake quotes other modern statements, such as the Bahai who believes that Jesus Christ "is only one manifestation of God...one of many Messiahs", and the Mormons who state that Jesus is both "Father and Son"

We see then that in non-Christian circles and in cults there are many answers to the question, "Who is Jesus Christ?" Unfortunately, within Christianity itself men do not agree on the answer. Oh yes, there have been many answers given. There is an orthodox answer derived from Creeds, the result of numerous debates (Councils), inclusive of philosophy and metaphysical embellishments. Jurgen Moltmann stated that "the first schism in the history of the kingdom of God began with the separation between Christianity and Judaism." But I disagree. Speaking of the kingdom of God that Christ preached to come or the "one that is at hand", the kingdom "within", we must realize that Judaism never was a part of that kingdom but preceded it. Hence it could not be separated from out of it. The first and foremost schism in the church, I believe, had to do with the revelation of who Jesus Christ really is. We find in John 7:40-43 such a division concerning him. It is inconceivable to me that the question of circumcision ever caused as much trouble as the things concerning the person of Jesus Christ. It is at least a historical problem that we will be dealing with in this thesis; one that has been the impetus for hundreds of books being written. One that has been the stomping ground of gnostics, philosophers, metaphysicians, theologians, and just plain argumentative people throughout every century of church history. The person of Jesus Christ has become an ISSUE and remains an issue today.

My question is this: should such an issue exist? Is it indeed important to understand the "mystery of the godhead?" Moltmann quotes Philip Melancthon (d.1560) who wrote the basic Protestant Creed, the Augsburg Confession, and who stated, "We adore the mysteries of the Godhead. That is better than to investigate them" John Wesley even maintained that anyone who attempted to explain the Trinity "have above all other persons hurt the cause which they intended to promote." He further stated that there should be "no explication at all; not even the best I ever saw." Dr. W.W. Evans, in his book Great Doctrines of the Bible, professes that "...the doctrine of the Trinity is in its last analysis a deep mystery that cannot be fathomed by the finite mind...It is a doctrine to be believed even though it cannot be understood."

All of these declarations would find opposition from such men as Augustine, Herman, Athanasius, Sabellius, Tertullian, Thomas Aquinas and many others who would not only disagree that the Trinity could not be understood, but each of whom believed he understood it enough to either condemn the "heretics" or be condemned as a "heretic" while maintaining his own position. But it is not the notable theologians who have the final word on the necessity of understanding the godhead. The scriptures of God emphatically declare,

For the wrath of God is revealed from Heaven against all unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in

unrighteousness. Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. For the invisible things of Him are clearly seen being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse.

I firmly believe that it is God's will for us to understand Him and to know Him. The Bible so declares, "But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me..." I will even go so far as to say that my conviction is that if we are saved we will come to know and understand Him, and that if we do not come to know and understand Him, we will not be saved. If God is a Trinity, we will know and understand Him as a Trinity. If God is not a Trinity, we will know and understand that He is not a Trinity. However, we will not come to know Him in any means by theological definition or historical perspective. D. M. Baillie quotes A. M. Fairbairne, a leader in the "Jesus of History" movement who wrote, "We feel Him more in our theology because we know Him better in history." I fear that this is indeed the way many men feel and know him, in theology and in history; but not in the personal relationship and revelation of the person of Jesus Christ.

Chapter Two

Christological arguments are as old as Christ. To argue concerning the existence, identity, and nature of the Lord is nothing new, for before He came to this earth as a man, the world argued the same points concerning his existence, identity, and nature as God. Before the question, "Who is Christ?", there was the question "Who is God?"

Thus we find that before there was Christology, or study of Christ, we had Theology, or the study of God. It may be a rude awakening to some to state that theology did not always encompass a study of *THE GOD*. There are Buddhist theologians, and Hindu theologians, as well as Jewish theologians and Christian theologians. I say all of this in order to point out that not all Christologists are necessarily Christians.

Christology had its evolutionary process. "The Catholic faith is this, that we worship one God in Trinity and Trinity in Unity, neither confounding the persons nor dividing the substance." I wonder if the ordinary Catholic has ever had to consider that statement. It seems to be a far cry from the simple acceptance of the divinity of Jesus Christ that was a part of the earliest believers. Pliny once stated, "They sing hymns to the Christ whom they honor as God, quasi deo." Monsignor Louis Dushesne of London quoted the author of a pseudo-Clementine homily that remarked, "My brothers, we must think of Jesus Christ as God." Ignatius, the famous bishop of Antioch, called Jesus Christ God at least fourteen times in one of his writings and also says of Him that "He is the one who is beyond time the Eternal, the Invisible who became visible for our sake, the Impalpable, the Impassable, who suffered for our sake." Jurgen Moltmann also refers to Melito who preached, "the one who cannot suffer, suffers." The early church only knew Jesus in gospel simplicity. That is the way he was preached, even as Paul declared, "I determined to know nothing among you but Christ and Him crucified." They had no thought of the possibility that Jesus Christ could have been a "second God" or "another God". Patripassian Noetus, when arraigned before the priest of Smyrna for his teachings declared, "I know but one God; it is no other than He who was born, who suffered, and who died."

This relationship was more than a Father-Son relationship encompassing two persons in a Godhead. It was relationship of God-Man. It was a relationship that came into existence for the express purpose of salvation. Saved men worshipped Him even as He was declared on the day of Pentecost, as Jesus who became both "Lord and Christ". When Paul writes of Jesus, he writes of "God in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself." He speaks of "God manifested in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory." Concerning the Apostolic benediction, it is often pointed out the "implied Trinity", but when Paul preaches gospel, Jesus Christ is the Almighty God who has become our Savior.

Did the early church believe in a Trinity then? Is there reason to think that they did? Some would say that the baptismal formula of Matthew 28:19 proves emphatically that the early church believed in a trinitarian concept of God. However, the fact that the early church did not use this baptismal formula, but rather the singular name of Jesus Christ in baptism would imply that they believed in a monotheistic concept of God.

Edmund Forman in his book *The Triune God*, which is one of the series of Theological Resources edited by John Whalen and Jaroslav Pelikan, quotes the renowned theologian Karl Barth as saying, "The ecclesiastical doctrine of the Trinity is not only the product of genuine Biblical thought, it is also the product of philosophical speculation which is remote from the Bible."

As we will see later, it was the philosophical doctrine of the Logos that became the basis for the trinitarian concept of God. While it is true that the writer John uses this term, Logos (translated Word) and the Logos who was "with God" and "was God", and "became flesh" is indeed referring to Christ, the question that was subsequently raised was what was the nature of the Logos? Was the Logos a person separate and apart from God, or rather a "mode" of God? Ignatius, according to Dushesne, "knew the doctrine of the Word" and he quotes him as saying, "...there is only one God, who has manifested himself in Jesus Christ, his son, who is His Word, uttered after silence, and who in all things was well pleasing to Him that sent Him." To what degree Ignatius believed the doctrine as

expressed by men such as Eusebius or perhaps Theophilus, also of Antioch and the first to apply the term "Trinity" to the godhead is a matter of speculation. Fortman says that for Ignatius, "there is no trinity before the birth of Christ, but that before the birth there was only God and a pre-existent Christ, who is called either Logos or Holy Spirit."

What is the doctrine of the Logos or Word? How does it fit the reasoning behind the trinitarian concept of God? As we shall see, the personification and subsequently the incarnation of the "divine Logos" is the foundation of the Trinity and is therefore essential to it. However, both the early church fathers and current leaders of the church today are divergent in the views concerning the Logos. The issue is not so much the divinity of the Logos, or shall we say whether the Logos was emanate from divinity, but the issue is whether the Logos was a pre-existent divine "person" separate and apart from the "person" of God, the father; or whether the Logos is not to be personified but rather simply being God's own reason, and the later incarnation as being the fulfillment of God's own idea of becoming a man. Eusebius stated,

...and that there is a certain being living and existent before the world, who ministered to the Father and God of the universe for the fabrication of all created things, called the Logos and Wisdom of God, can be learned from the actual proofs of Wisdom...

And then he quotes Proverbs 8:12, 15, 16. He goes on to write,

And who except the Father could ever clearly conceive the ante-mundane light and that Wisdom which was intellectual and real before the ages, the divine Logos who was in the beginning, God by the side of the Father, the first and only of spring of God before all creation and fabrication...the true and only begotten child of God.

Here, Eusebius personifies the Logos prior to manifestation in flesh. On the other hand, "Is the Word eternally a person," Fortman asks? "Is this son eternally generated?" He then answers,

The Apologists by reason of their twofold stage theory of the Logos sees to have answered both questions in the negative...Tertullian seems to agree with the apologists for he writes, 'certain people affirm that in Hebrew genesis In the beginning God made for himself a son. Against the ratification of this I am persuaded by other arguments from God's ordinances in which He was before the foundation of the world until the generation of the Son. For before all things, God was alone...because there was nothing external beside Him. Yet not even then was he alone, for He had with Him that reason which He had in Himself -- His own, of course'.

Tertullian reasoned that Christ did not exist as an Eternal Son, but He did exist as God's own "reason" which is different than a generated, created, otherwise begotten son. It is asked then was the "Word" a being at this time or was it "thought" or "reason"? Was the "Word" by the "side of the Father", as Eusebius declared, or did it proceed from God's mouth?

Many Trinitarians of today still hold to the view that the Logos was the pre-existent "God the Son", co-equal, co-eternal, and co-existent. The view is that "God the Son" became incarnate as the "Son of God", rather than the Everlasting Father (God of both the Old and New Testament) becoming incarnate in the Son of God. This is essentially the view of Eusebius, Clement, Justin, Origen, and Theophilus. Although there are some similarities between their teachings and that of other church leaders, there are differences also. Augustine did not like the term "persons" in referring to the trinity but he used it "since it had been coined." Fortman further comments that "the Augustinian approach was open to the danger of Modalism, and Harnack (a historian) maintained that 'Augustine only gets beyond modalism by the mere assertion that he does not wish to be a modalist'". In regard to modalism,

there were many early church leaders who held to the teachings of Sabellius who did not see the Father, Son and Holy Spirit as three separate distinct persons or beings, but rather as three "modes" or offices, or characters by which God revealed himself to men, "the trinity being one of revelation, not of essence." Associated with Sabellius were men such as Marcellus of Ancyra, Praxeus, Noetus, and many others.

Chapter Three

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God...He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not...and the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among men.

Of all the scriptures in the Bible, none so clearly teaches that Jesus Christ is none other than God, the creator of the world. Some call this passage a Johannine axiom. There is only one word in the whole passage that becomes a point of contention, and that is the word "with". The fact that the "Word was God" is not a problem. The fact that the "Word was made flesh" is not a real problem. The issue is over how can the "Word" be God and be "with God" at the same time?

In reflecting on the Logos philosophy, it could be understood how numerous Bible passages could be brought into the picture. What is the nature of the Word? Eusebius refers to the "Wisdom" of Proverbs as being the pre-existent Logos. It is the "Word" that actually appeared to Abraham, Moses, and other Old Testament saints as theophanies of God. Paul, the Apostle, even speaks of Christ "the wisdom of God". There are many scriptures that seem to indicate that something or someone existed with God prior to and at the creation of our present world. Such an example most popularly quoted is Genesis 1:26 which reads, "Let us make man...".

The apostle John in using the word "Logos", translated "Word", was more likely aware of various philosophical thoughts of the day. Dr. James Hastings in his outstanding work A Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels, stated that "The Evangelist assumes that the idea of the Logos is already a familiar one in Christian theology." Paramount as a philosopher of the day was Philo Judaeus (c.11) and Hastings further comments that in John's prologue,

...the main features of the Philonic doctrine are reproduced one by one; the eternal existence of the Word, its Divine character, its relation to God as towards Him, and yet distinct, its creative activity, its function in the illumination and deliverance of me.

But it is open to question as to whether John intended that Philo's doctrine be incorporated as a starting point for developing the relationship between God and Jesus Christ, the son of God, or that instead that John was beginning his great gospel with the foundation of what was to be proved throughout -- that the man Christ Jesus was the incarnation of the divine creator of Genesis 1:1. The gospel of John goes beyond the Lord's teachings of Matthew, Mark, and Luke. John's emphasis is not on the "life of Christ", but that of Christ being the source of life. He is both the "living water" and the "bread of life". It is not the miracles and healing of Mark and Luke that should be sought for, but Jesus from all blessings flow. Jesus is declared to be God by John in the beginning of the book, and by the end of the book, all doubt about his divinity should be removed as exemplified by "doubting" Thomas.

Philo's doctrine of the Logos was not really the same as that of John. If anything, John refuted the philosophy of Philo, for Philo believed that -- "Matter stands apart from the Supreme Being and does not emanate from Him, and He acts upon it by manifold powers; the chief of these is His Word." Duschesne concludes that Philo teaches --

These powers, and the Word himself are represented now as being immanent in God, now as distinct hypostases; they correspond to the "ideas" of Plato, or the "efficient causes" of the stoic...

Philo sees the Logos as an intermediate being, though immanent in God, yet distinct. The necessity for an intermediary, both in gnosticism and in Philo's doctrine was due to the separation of God and the world; the spirit from matter. However, God was actively involved in the maintenance of all creation and necessarily its first cause. To reconcile these apparent contradictions, Philo drew from Platonic and Stoic philosophy elements formulating his

doctrine of the "Potencies". It is necessary for me to use Dr. William Smith's explanation from his magnificent work A Dictionary of Christian Biography, Literature, Sects, and Doctrines.

When God would create the world, He recognized that there must be an ideal archetype of every work, and He formed the supersensuous world of ideas. But these ideas were not only models, they were also the productive causes, the Potencies which brought order into the material that existed, and to each thing its properties. The archtypal world then is also those invisible Potencies which surround the Deity as His train, and by which He works in the world, that which, owing to His separation from it, He could not otherwise have wrought. The Potencies are the vice-regents of God, His legates, and intermediaries of things finite.

In further treatment of Philo's doctrine of the Logos, Dr. Smith makes a distinction between the Logos and other Potencies. Each working of God is attributed to a Potency, but that of "goodness" and "power" stood out separately and supremely. He observes that for Philo, "...the Logos, who is the manifestation of God, must be viewed alike the combination and the source of these Potencies" This great potency, the Logos, is the "Intermediary between God and the world." Whereas other potencies have their place and are basically angels, the Logos is elevated to divine status, not as merely being immanent in God, but a separate divine personality, "although one subordinate, a kind of second God."

It was in the midst of this attempt by Philo to reconcile Judaism, Hellenistic Greek philosophy, in which he was trained, and perhaps even Gnosticism, that early church apologist too found himself perpetrating contradictory statements concerning the person of Jesus Christ. Since brevity prohibits a more thorough discussion of Philo's doctrine, let me quote Dr. Smith again who writes,

In truth the reasoning of Philo in wanting is logical precision. His definitions are only illustrations -- perhaps for that very reason attractive to some minds, but insubstantial and unsatisfactory...the Logos of Philo is full of difficulties, contradictions, and perplexities.

We shall see later in some apologetic writings much of the same illogical reasoning as that of Philo, but for different reasons. In the final analysis, even Philo did not really intend to develop an idea of separate beings within a divine Godhead. His philosophical thoughts and definitions were meant to be illustrative for the purpose of trying to reconcile Judaism to Hellenism. Although overlooked by the apologist who used Philo's Logos philosophy, Dr. Smith concludes that within Philo's doctrine,

The Logos is therefore not a personality, but the relation in which God stands to the world, or rather it is both and yet neither: though certainly not a Person in the New Testament sense, or in regard to which we could speak of either coordination or subordination to God...After all then the Logos, like the patriarchs, is only an allegory.

It was not a Jew that perpetrated a Trinitarian concept of God. Philo Judaeus, though influenced heavily by his Greek culture, still could not defer his Jewish upbringing to the hands of the philosophical predecessors of the Platonic and Stoic schools. Within his heart was a special revelation, grounded in pivotal Old Testament scripture, "Hear O Israel: the Lord our God is one Lord." But this great revelation which was the basis for the first four of the Ten Commandments and the absolute substance of the "Great Commandment" spoken by Jesus, was not always so much a part of the early church leaders. I contend that if it were, there would not have been any confusion over the nature of Jesus Christ. The Jews had no trouble in understanding what Jesus said in John 10:30, when he stated, "I and my Father are one." They just had trouble believing it. The Almighty God stood before them and was

threatening their positions as leaders of the people, and they did not want to believe it.

This one God revelation did not exist in such men as Justin Martyr. Justinus Martyr, son of Priscus, born at Flavin Neapolis, was not a Jew. Smith says that he called himself a Samaritan in his *Dialogue with Trypho*. But Dr. Smith further remarks that he had not even heard of Moses or any of the prophets until later in life, and that Justin's grandfather's name was Greek, while his father's name and his own name were Latin. What is certain about Justin's life was that he was thoroughly trained in Greek philosophy.

Justin was one of the earlier apologists of the church (d. 165) to begin looking into Philo's theory of the Logos, in order, as Duschesne puts it, to "reconcile their own faith (that of Christian) with their philosophical education...and to present a point of contact with the educated hearers or readers to whom they were defending Christianity." Robert Grant, another historian, contends that Philo's influence on Justin is hard to prove, but that Justin did treat the Old Testament theophanies as Philo did, "as manifestations of the divine Logos." According to Grant, Justin in his apologies tried to do what Philo did, but rather than reconciling Greek philosophy to Judaism, Justin attempted to reconcile Greek philosophy to Christianity. He wrote,

What Justin had done when he moved from philosophy to Christianity was to discover a new religious sanction for his inherited and acquired culture.

Grant further remarks that Justin used philosophy heavily in his doctrinal stance, that:

Justin used whatever weapons were to be found in his old philosophical arsenal. In the Timaeus, he could still find a fairly reliable account of creation. He could use the story of Heracle's choice between vice and virtue (from Xenophon's Memorabilia of Socrates) to illustrate his own idea of free will.

It was not simply the matter of the Logos with which Justin took advantage of his philosophical education, but other doctrines as well, as noted by Grant. But in regard to the Logos, Justin went beyond Philo's use of the Logos philosophy as an allegory and,

... condemned Johannine and Stoic - Platonic understanding of the term Logos ('reason' or word') in order to maintain that the Son of God was both God's own self expression and a being distinct from Him... In his Apologies I 63, Justin refers to those 'who affirm that the Son is the Father' and condemns them. He speaks this in his Dialogue with Trypho.

To Justin, the Jesus that the apostle John spoke about was the same Logos that the philosophers that he so admired spoke of. John did not equate the Logos with a potency, angel, or other intermediary as the philosophers did, however, but rather called him "God". But for Justin, the Logos philosophy presented a "common ground" between himself and the other philosophers that he so admired. He saw them as "Christians" on the basis of their "wisdom" and remarked:

For no one trusted in Socrates so as to die for this doctrine, but in Christ, who was partially known even by Socrates (for He was and is the Logos who is in every man...), not only philosophers and scholars believed, but also artisans and people entirely uneducated, despising both glory and fear and death; since He is the power of the ineffable Father, and not the mere instrument to human reason.

Sadly, however, Justin in accepting philosophy as a working tool for doctrine was setting a precedent that was going to be followed throughout the centuries -- that of going outside of the Word of God for doctrine. This was going to be repeated in church councils and by apologists who were going to follow human wisdom in trying to explain the greatest revelation of the scriptures, the one which is called the "mystery of godliness."

Chapter Four

Certainly, the idea of the Logos was not new. As mentioned, in Dr. Hasting's opinion, such an idea was already a familiar one in Christianity as evidenced by John the Evangelist. Beside Philo, Gnostics such as Simon Magus, Cerinthus, and Marcion all used a Logos type of doctrine. Simon, who according to tradition was the Simon converted in Acts 8 in the Samaritan revival of Philip, taught that all "thought", called Ennoia, became incarnate in a woman named Helen, the wife of one Menelaus. Robert Grant writes of another Gnostic, Menander, and states,

At Antioch, Menander, said to have been Simon's disciple, replaced the figures of Simon and Helen by a first power, unknown to all and the thought of his power -- by himself, who was the Savior sent from above.

More influential than the Gnostic doctrines of Simon and Menander were those of Basilides and Valentinus, at least in the opinion of Dr. Ayer. In his book Source Book for Ancient Church History, he quotes Iranaeus, saying,

He declares that in the beginning the Nous was born of the Father, that from him in turn was born the Logos, then from the Logos, the Phronesis...

Here Iranaeus is speaking of Basilides, but concerning Valentinus, he says,

They, (the Valentinians) say that in the invisible and ineffable heights above there exist a certain perfect, pre-existent Eon, and him they call Proarche, Propator, and Bythos; and that He is invisible and that nothing is able to comprehend him... There existed along with him Ennoea, whom they call Charis and Sige. At a certain time, this Bythos determined to send forth from himself the beginning of all things, and just as seed he wished to send forth this emanation, and he deposited it in the womb of her who was with him, even of Sige. She then received this seed, and became pregnant, generated Nous, who was both similar and equal to him who had sent him forth and alone comprehended his father's greatness. This Nous they also called Monogenes and Father, and the beginning of all things.

Even in Rome, gnosticism gained a foothold that was to have a heavy influence on the development of the Christology of the church. Cerdo, a Gnostic, "held the ninth place from the Apostles in the Episcopal succession." In his position as "Pope", he influenced much of the church's thinking in his immediate area. It is stated by Duchesne that in Rome, Cerdo, Valentinus, and Marcion made every effort to get control of the church, and that Florinus, another Gnostic was known among the Clergy of the second century.

The basic tenants of Gnosticism led to the development of a "dualistic" godhead. Duchesne sums up Gnosticism relative to Christianity with some major premises. First of all, there was the premise that God, the creator and lawgiver of the Old Testament was not the true God. Above him "at an infinite distance is the father-god, the Supreme First Cause." Secondly, the God of the Old Testament did not know the true God but shared the world's ignorance of Him until Jesus proceeded from the true God. Thirdly, there was between the true God and creation a complicated system of beings known as "Aeons", who were divine in their origin and one of which was Jesus Christ. Fourth, that in humanity, there are some elements capable of redemption, having come from the celestial world. "Jesus came into the world to deliver these divine elements from the world."

The most important premise, as I see it, was the idea that the divine and matter could not develop a union since they were so opposite. Matter was the "accursed" and the divine elements which strayed into humanity has,

...no solidarity with the flesh which oppresses it. Either the flesh must be annihilated

by asceticism (rigorism) or at least the responsibility of the soul for the weaknesses of the flesh must be denied (libertinism)...For this reason, the Incarnation was an impossibility and the gospel story is explained as a moral and transitory union between a divine aeon and the concrete personality of Jesus, or again by a simple semblance of humanity.

Here we discover one of the fatal errors of Gnosticism that brought a reaction by early church leaders and caused the writings of some of the initial "apologies", or defenses of the gospel. The fallacy is "docetism," a word which means "to seem". Since spirit and matter could not really have a union, Jesus only "seemed" to become human. He furthermore only "seemed" to suffer death. Charles Thomas Crutwell comments that "in one sense all Gnostics were docetics because they thought the real work of redemption, was done by the spiritual Christ and not the man, Jesus." In the subsequent apologies, the writers then addressed the idea of the Logos as used in a Gnostic sense in which He, as an "aeon" only seemed to become flesh. In addressing this issue, the nature of Jesus Christ also came up. His relationship to God, the Father, too had to be addressed. Some of these issues arose not only among Gnostic heresies, but important church leaders such as Arius and Athanasius had their differences of opinion regarding many of these questions. The apologists, sad to say, did not rely entirely upon the Bible and the revelation that can only come from the Holy Spirit, but felt compelled to reach into their philosophical background in attempts to answer all of these questions. Like Philo, these attempts oft times offered contradictory statements, sometimes, vague explanations, and very confusing definitions to what was in a natural sense a monumental subject.

One such writer, Hermas, is an example of how difficult it was to formulate clear cut doctrine in the light of the teachers of the day. He was a contemporary of some of the Gnostics and evidently heavily opposed the schools of Basilides and Valentinus. "He insisted strongly upon the divinity of the creator...", Dusesne writes, while at the same time emphasizing the very real nature of the human flesh. But rather than Jesus being "God manifest in the flesh", his overall teaching seems to indicate the same dualism of beings that he opposes in Gnosticism. Dusesne quotes him as saying,

The pre-existent Holy Spirit created all things, and God caused it to dwell in a body of flesh chosen by Himself. This flesh in which dwelt the Holy Spirit, served the Spirit well in all purity and in all sanctity without ever inflicting the least stain upon it. After the flesh had thus conducted itself so well and chastely, after it had assisted the Spirit and worked in all things with it, always showing itself to be strong and courageous, God admitted it to share with the Holy Spirit.

These statements quoted from The Shepherd by Dusesne are a part of a parable in which the Holy Spirit is the "master's son" while the "master" is "God", the creator of all. Dusesne concludes,

Here we have, before the incarnation but two divine persons, God and the Holy Spirit whose relations are represented as those of Father and Son..

In the case of Hermas, there would not be a "trinity" but rather a dualistic godhead, and there is evidence in the writing above that he did not hold the same attitude concerning the flesh as the Gnostics. It does seem to appear that Hermas had in mind to refute the Gnostic teachings concerning the irredeemability of the flesh.

A somewhat dualistic concept of God seems to abound in the apologetic writings. It was not the "Trinity" that was to be, for in that regard, the nature of the Holy Spirit had to also enter the picture. But each attempt at an explanation seemed to start with John's Logos and move to Philo's Logos, and back again. Jesus was God, yet not "God the Father". He was "with God", so he had to be the same "thing", but not the same "one". It was in this vein of thinking that Origen first used the word "homoousion" meaning "of one and the same nature".

Origen, born at Alexandria about 185 A.D., was the first to attempt a systematic theology in his famous

work On First Principles. Dr. Ayer refers to Origen's teachings that God could not have been eternally omnipotent without having power over an "eternal creation". It was this reasoning, though later condemned as heresy, that was used to rationalize the eternal generation of the Son, for Origen stated in De Principiis, I 2:10,

But if there never was a time when He was not omnipotent, of necessity those things by which He received that title must also exist; and He must always have had those over whom He exercised power, and which were governed by Him either as king or prince, of which we shall speak more fully when we come to discuss the subject of creation.

Abingdon's Dictionary, in an article about Tertullian's Christology refers to Origen and notes:

...and Origen, while teaching the commonality of essence linking Son and Spirit to God the Father, envisions in his Trinitarian scheme (as in his cosmology) a hierarchical arrangement which positions the son as a 'second God' (against Celsus 5:39) and limits the Spirit's sway to the church (On First Principles 1.3)

Origen used the word homoousios in reference to the nature of Christ, and this term was later adopted as an orthodox part of the Nicene Creed, but Fortman states he actually made the Son inferior to and subordinate to the Father. He writes,

The Son was only Theos, a 'secondary God' who possessed the godhead only by participation and derivation. He did not see the oneness of the Father and Son as an identity of substance but rather as a moral union like that of man and wife to form one flesh...He considered the Son the Father's minister and said 'we should not pray to any generate being, not even Christ...'. He said openly that the Son was inferior to the Father...

Fortunately the church accepted not all of Origen's ideas, and he was condemned as a heretic. Fortman remarks that Origen's idea of homoousios did not agree with the latter orthodox position for with Origen, Christ was of "generically the same substance", while with the later orthodoxy, his nature was "identically of the same substance."

Duschesne observed that Origen considers the "Word" as a "distinct person" or a "derived divinity" and further comments that Origen does not shrink from the term "second God".

In noting Forman's remarks that Origen's idea of oneness was essentially that of husband and wife, I must point out that this generally the explanation given by Trinitarians today, particularly referencing John 10:30 which reads, "I and my Father are one." It must be concluded that "homoousios" today has not changed much from Origen's thinking, at least in the minds of layman, the theological definitions being left for the theologians.

Certainly Hermas and Origen, as well as Justin were not the only teachers of the early church, and one could not do real justice to the varieties of thought among them with such a short work as this. They could not even be considered as representative of all the apologist. Different authors would even interpret their writings differently. Never the less, Fortman concludes that both Origen and Justin were trinitarian in their beliefs. He states that Origen is trinitarian and quotes him as saying, "we are persuaded that there are really three persons (trias hypostasis) the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit..."

And the for Justin he writes, "He is distinct from the Father and not only in name but numerically distinct too...and this distinctness, this otherness for Justin meant different in persons."

In any case, philosophy played a part in much of the early writings on the part of apologist and church leaders. Not only did Justin put a lot of stock in philosophy, but even Clement of Alexandria (c. 190) who along with Origen was a distinguished teacher in Alexandria maintains that,

Before the advent of the Lord, philosophy was necessary to the Greek for righteousness. And now it becomes useful to piety, being a kind of preparatory training to those who attain to faith through demonstration...perchance, too, philosophy was given to the Greeks directly till the Lord should call the Greeks also. For this was a schoolmaster to bring the Hellenic mind to Christ as was the law to bring the Hebrews.

Tertullian, on the other hand, was somewhat wary of philosophy knowing that it and gnosticism were both the sources of heresies. He states this in his De Praescriptione Haereticorum 7 (inl 2:21) as he writes,

Indeed heresies themselves are instigated by philosophy. From this source came the eons, and I know not what infinite forms, and the Trinity of man in the system of Valentinus; he was of Plato's school. From this source came Marcion's better god with all his tranquillity; he came of the stoics...When matter is made equal to God, you have the teachings of Zeno.

Suffice it to say that God Himself warned us concerning the use of philosophy or any of men's wisdom in trying to understand the spiritual things of God which Paul stated were "foolishness" to the natural mind. In the inspired Word of God, we read,

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 of the fullness of the godhead bodily.

It is certain that God's word tell us what to use in understanding the nature of Christ, for if John was familiar with philosophical explanations concerning the Logos, Paul too must have written this in response to the many questions that were asked.

Duschesne, in referring to Justin, Kranaeus, Hippolytus, and Tertullian, the apologists, states that their theology "as such, was always incomplete and fragmentary. The doctrinal synthesis was represented by Creeds." The church thus underwent much heated debate in regard to the numerous ideas of men concerning Christ, and this ultimately led to the convening of the First Nicean Council under Emperor Constantine in 325 A.D.

Chapter Five

Rather than attempting to delve into every writer of the early church and trying to explain their different and individual philosophies concerning the nature of Christ, I would like to try to summarize the major differences that caused the church to ultimately convene the First Council of Nicea.

"What is orthodox trinitarianism today?" Fortman asks. He answers his question this way,

It is substantially the doctrine of the great Greek fathers and of the first seven Ecumenical Councils with the addition of Photianism and Palmism. It maintains a consubstantial Triad of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, three distinct hypostases of one identical ousia...

It basically means that there is one nature subsisting in three distinct persons. Van Harvey in his Handbook of Theological Terms defines hypostasis as (1) something that belongs to a class, (2) that which stands under a given set of properties, and (3) a particular embodiment of certain qualities, hence "individual being". He states that the word's meaning became fixed as "individual being" and was equivalent to the Latin "persons".

The particular definition given by Fortman was slow in developing, having to make its way through the debates of the early church and the seven Councils of history. It still presents complications to various groups of believers today, for it could be argued that the "Trinity" is effectively "tri-theism", or "three-godism". If one says that there are three persons as beings, but because of there being only one nature involved there is One God; it still does not present a reasonable argument. Human beings all share the very same nature, that of flesh. Does that mean humanity itself should be classified as one person? In effect, the term God according to the trinity doctrine proposed does not refer to one Supreme Being, but a nature. The only way the trinity would not be tri-theistic is if the definitions for "person" were different than that commonly accepted as "being" or "individual". In the trinitarian sense, the term "God" refers to a family of beings, not a Supreme Being.

Because it took so many councils and debates to establish the orthodox view, it is reasonable to suppose that the earlier church fathers did not in fact have the same opinion of the nature of Christ as the latter ones. Some may have, but it is historically evident that they did not all agree. As noted before, Justin and Origen had their viewpoint, which in some ways differed from that of Tertullian, who was influenced in his later life by Montanism and Eusebius who was basically an Arian. Even more evident that the trinitarian concept of God was a later development is the fact that the early church and even the early apologists seldom considered the nature of the Holy Spirit as a separate person, and in the first analysis did not consider him at all. Clement of Alexandria gave not thought to a "threefold godhead" but he did disclaim a "twofold" one when he wrote,

In the incarnation, the Logos beget himself (Str. 5.31) without therefore becoming twofold, He is the one and the same who is begotten of the Father in Eternity and who becomes flesh.

Compared to the latter orthodox interpretation of the trinity, this would seem like a contradiction for Clement first states that the "Logos beget himself" and then "is begotten of the Father". In the earlier stages of the Logos doctrine it seems that Christ (the Logos) was not so represented as a person except for those like Justin who depended heavily on philosophy. Hippolytus, a presbyter of Rome (d. 235) did not consider the Logos an "Eternal Son" but rather having become the son just prior to creation. For him "the Word was eternally in the Father but impersonally as divine wisdom." This was essentially the viewpoint of Tertullian and also Theophilus, the sixth bishop of Antioch from 169 until after 180. He writes in his Ad Autolyicum II, 10,22:

What else is this voice but the Word of God, who is also the son? Not as poets and writers of myths talk of the sons of gods begotten from intercourse with women, but as the Truth expounds, the Word that always exists, residing within (endiatheton) the heart of God. For before anything came into existence He had him for his counselor, being His own mind and thought.

The early apologist made a distinction between the Logos "endiathetos" that is being within the Father, and the Logos "prophorikos", that is preceding from the Father as a distinct person. Origen, according to Dudley, in his apologies against the Patripassians or Sabellians, "taught that the Son is, in God, what reason is in man." Of course, this would seem somewhat a contradiction to his own idea of a "second God" or would make his teaching on the concept of God's omnipotence non-sensible. Mr. Dudley also writes concerning Constantine's Christology indicating that Constantine may not have seen the Lord as an "Eternal Son", for he remarks:

Constantine believed that the generation of the Son was not material but intellectual, being the 'Word', that is the 'Wisdom' of God, he did not diminish the substance of the Father by his descent any more than a word from our lips diminishes our wisdom.

If Constantine did indeed believe that the Son of God or Logos referred only to God's mind before Bethlehem, this was not passed down for the trinity today does not seem to make this distinction between "endiathetos" and "prophorikos".

Essentially, the Logos, which was eventually that part of God, which was manifested in the flesh, existed in its eternity as the "wisdom", "reason" or "mind" of God. At some stage, the Logos was generated, either from eternity, or for some right prior to the creation of the world. In either case, the Logos was seen as Son prior to Bethlehem, and the human birth of Jesus is seen as the incarnation of the Son of God, not God, the Father.

In contradiction to the "orthodox" view was the viewpoint of the Arians. The church of Alexandria enjoyed the benefit of numerous presbyters and famous leaders in its reign among churches, and two of its leaders came into serious conflict over the nature of Jesus Christ. Athanasius, a young cleric was very outspoken in his position of Christology favoring the more orthodox view of the divinity of Christ and pre-existent Logos. In the same church, Arius, the son of Ammonius, was a much-respected presbyter, but did not believe in the nature of Christ the same way. The orthodox believed that Christ's generation was from eternity, and that he was co-equal with the Father, whereas the Arians believed he had a beginning. The orthodox believed the son to be derived of the same identical essence and not merely of similar essence. But Arius and his followers held that he was created by the power of God out of nothing, but they did allow him to be the first created being in the universe. Arius saw only God the Father as an unbegotten, eternal being, and "if anything else is to exist, it must come into existence not by any communicating of God's being but by an act of creation that produces it out of nothing." Dean Dudley also notes that Arius not only taught that Jesus did not pre-exist but that the "Son of God was possessed of free-will so as to be capable of either of vice or virtue, and calling him a creature and a work."

Up until this time, the extent of conflict over Christology may have been limited because of geographical distance or because the church had been more pre-occupied over the persecutions it had faced. However, with the rise of Constantine to the Emperorship of the Roman Empire, persecutions and outside pressures begin to diminish. The free travel among churches began to open up more avenues of acquaintance with sister assemblies and differences in doctrines become more evident. Arius could find his cohorts. There were others who believed like Athanasius. Sabellius, according to Duschesne, had a large following in Rome, Carthage, Antioch and the churches of the Pentapolis. Never the less, the church at Alexandria was no ordinary church but rather one of renown and the debate that ensued there threatened to cause a major schism among sister assemblies.

An appeal was made to Emperor Constantine and to other notable persons to intervene. Thus it was in 325 A.D., the First Council of the church calling particularly for the purpose of discussing the nature of Christ convened

in Nice. In this council the issues were somewhat isolated to the two major opinions and the opponents, Arius and Athanasius. On the floor was the issue of whether Jesus Christ was a "created" being or rather a "generation" of the Almighty God from eternity. Arius and his followers were deemed as heretical in their viewpoint and Arius himself banished by order of Constantine to Illyricum. His book, Thalia, was burned and the Logos philosophy became more firmly entrenched in what was to become the Roman Catholic Church.

It is unfortunate that at the convening of the Nicene Council a third and more widespread Christology did not come into much consideration. Sabellianism, as it was called, was the belief that the personages of God described as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, were but manifestations of the one true God. These manifestations, called "modes", were characters by which God revealed himself. At the time of the Nicene Council and later, those who held to the strictly monotheistic view of God were nicknamed "Modalistic Monarchians". Marvin Arnold, in his book History of the Christian Church quotes historian A.C. McGiffert as saying, "Modalism was shared by the majority of the common people." In writing concerning the two extremes of the day, Karl Barth refers to Sabellianism and Tri-theism as the two predominant trinitarian thoughts, but the Christians who hold the viewpoint of Sabellius today and in that day do not consider themselves trinitarians but rather "oneness", or sometimes historically have been called "anti-trinitarians." The "Monarchian" Christology of the early church, though not addressed at the Nicene Council, also raised the ire of many of the early apologist and writers. As in the case of the Gnostics, whose writings are not extant, what may be learned of the monarchians is mostly available to us through the writings of their opponents rather than themselves. The writings of the early apologist and church "fathers" have come down preserved by the Roman Catholic Church whereas it seems the writings of those who opposed them have disappeared. Concerning the Sabellians Augustine wrote,

Sabellius fell into heresy. From the scriptures we learn with absolute certainty that there is a Father, Son and Holy Spirit; that the Son is not the Father, and that the Holy Spirit is not the same as the Father and the Son. (Trin. 7.9).

Do we indeed learn that there is a Father, Son, and Holy Spirit? Yes we do indeed. But do we learn from the scriptures that the Father is not the Son or that the Holy Spirit is not the Son? This can be debated in light of such scriptures as Isaiah 9:6, John 10:30, John 14:7-11, Matthew 1:20 and many more. At least we can debate the fact that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit all exist in one human person known as Jesus Christ, "the fullness of the godhead bodily." Jesus is not merely the Son of God manifested in the flesh; he is God (the father) manifested in flesh.

Fortman also quotes Tertullian as he writes Against Praxeus and says,

In divers ways has the devil shown hostility to the truth...He (Praxeus) is the champion of the one Lord, the Almighty, the creator of the world, so that he may make a heresy out of the unity. He says that the Father himself came down into the virgin. Himself was born of her, Himself suffered, in short Himself is Jesus Christ...so this wrongheadedness...thinks it is impossible to believe in one God unless it says that both Father, and Son, and Holy Spirit are one and the same.

This indeed is the belief on oneness people today; that when one has received the Holy Spirit, they have received "Christ in you the hope of glory." That same Holy Spirit that Jesus said was "the Comforter" in John 14:26 is none other than Jesus Christ himself who said, "I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you." And not only was Jesus Christ the Holy Ghost or "comforter", but here he also the Father, for that word "comfortless" is the Greek word, "orphanous", meaning orphans, or without a father. Jesus was also the everlasting father of Isaiah 9:6.

Sadly, Augustine, Tertullian, Eusebius, and Hippolytus were all early opponents of the modalist. Hippolytus (d. 235) adamantly opposed Noetus, a modalist, and accused him to Pope Callistus who had excommunicated

Sabellius. However, modalism was so widespread and its tenants so sound that even its opponents had trouble arguing against it. Among its believers were Marcellus, bishop of Ancyra, Praxeus, Noetus, Epigonus, Cleomenes, and many others. Later "oneness" believers included sects of the Ana-Baptist, Bernard Rothmann, a church historian of 1500 era, Carlstadt and Erasmus, contemporaries of Luther, who pleaded with him "to restore the pattern and even the constitution of the primitive church". The writer, Mr. Arnold, also refers to Apostolic-Pentecostal Celts in the time of Pope Zachariah (c. 210 A.D.) who refused the belief of the trinity and triune baptism and John Munzer (c. 1525 A.D.) He also speaks of Peter Abelard, Peter Bruis of St. Giles, Henry of Touleouse, and Arnold of Brescia who were all martyred between 1145 A.D. and 1163 A.D. These and millions of believers today which hold to the oneness Christology and the Apostolic formula of baptism in the name of Jesus Christ still see Jesus in his full divinity, believing him to be the one and only Eternal God, the Spirit-Father, manifested in the human Flesh-Son which was born at Bethlehem.

Never the less the controversy that reigned over the nature of Christ led up to Nice and subsequent councils, all of which determined to add something to the formulation of Christological definitions.

Chapter Six

Tri-theism was the reproach levied against Christian belief in the Trinity from the beginning." So states Jurgen Moltmann. He further states that Trinitarian tri-theism goes back to the Western Church's Athanasian Creed: "Non tres Dii, sed unus Deus." Fortman noted that there are two things about the Athanasian Creed that are evident; (1) that it is not a creed, and (2) that it is not by Athanasius. Like the Nicene Council's creed, it summarized certain viewpoints held by its writers. The Athanasian Creed reads,

We worship one God in Trinity and Trinity in unity...we distinguish among the persons but not the substance...Each the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit is uncreated, has immensity, is eternal, is omnipotent, is God, is Lord, yet there is but one eternal being...one created being...one God...The Father is not made by anyone, nor generated by anyone. The Son is not made nor created, but he is generated by the Father alone. The Holy Spirit is not made, nor created, nor generated, but proceeds from the Father.

Somewhere in this statement we have the "Christ of the Creeds" as Jesus has been called. The Son is generated from God, which is simply another way of saying that Jesus "is begotten", at least in Harvey's interpretation. However, according to this same creed, Jesus is eternal. The Holy Spirit "proceeds" from the Father in contrast to the Son's "generation". What kind of definitions are these, I ask? Are they scientific? Are they metaphysical? Are they intended to be strictly theological? In any case, the creed itself tries to make a trinity out of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit on the basis of differing relationships. The writer did not take into account, evidently, that the Holy Spirit that proceeds from the Father is the same Jesus that proceeds from the Father. The hypothesis that one was "generated" while the other "proceeded" is an erroneous consideration in defining the relationship among the three.

Let us consider this very fact – that if we believe in the inerrancy of the scriptures we do not need creeds to define or state as doctrine any fact already defined and stated as doctrine in the Bible. The Creeds only serve to define a Trinity that the Bible does not define. If we say that we can see three separate persons because of there being a Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, do we automatically discount the multitude of scriptures that tell us that there is but one God? How do we reconcile these? Either you must change the definition of what GOD is or you must change the definition of what a PERSON is. Is God hence a divine Person, or is "God" a term relating to divine Persons?

The issue at hand is not how to define what a Father, Son, or Holy Spirit is but how to apply these definitions, titles, modes, or whatever else you may call them to God without destroying the fact that He is still one Supreme Being – that is one Supreme Person, or God.

The Nicene Creed addressed the nature of Christ and determined to hang onto Philo's Logo's philosophy while all the time the Bible gave a much simpler explanation of the relationship between the Father and the Son. "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself." "God was manifest in the flesh." The Bible does not say that the Son of God became incarnate. It said that God (the Father) became incarnate in the Son. "The Father is IN me."

Did Sabellius, for example, actually teach that the Father changes, that is was metamorphosed into a Son? Or did he teach that the Father was IN the Son? What does the Bible teach? That the Father changed into a Son, or that He was IN the Son? God as our Spirit-Father never ceased to be exactly what He always was – a spirit. For that very reason He must be worshipped in spirit and in truth. Only the Eternal Spirit was eternal; the flesh was born at Bethlehem, and neither was there one spirit of the Father, and another spirit of the Son, and another spirit called the Holy Spirit. Here we speak of God's essence, not his attributes.

It has been expressed that any body of men sitting in council still can err in judgment. The ten spies that went into Canaan's land is proof that the majority is not always right. But why do theologians and scholars want to put so much stock in the councils and their creeds rather than in the scriptures? In the first place, the Nicene Council of 325 A.D. was far from the spiritual event that it should have been. Dean Dudley notes that there is not a mention of either prayer being said or of the Bible being read publicly. Abingdon's Dictionary comments that the conversion of Constantine was a "turning point for Christians", but Hans Kung in his book *Structure of the Church*, notes that Constantine was still pagan at the time that he called the council. Abingdon's Dictionary also states that Christianity "became established as the formal religion of the Roman Empire", but it was here at the First Council of Nice that the form of doctrine which was to be preached throughout the Empire was stipulated. It was Catholic doctrine, pure and simple. Hans Kung, a priest but one of the Catholic Church's foremost critics observed some things that should make one cautious of accepting the creedal ordinances that came out of Nice. He takes Constantine to task, saying,

...he laid down the regulations of this council; decided on the number and on the names of the participants, the meeting place, and the agenda to be discussed...he intervened personally in the negotiations; he exerted pressure for the acceptance of the Nicene Creed.

Of particular interest is that statement that "Constantine exerted pressure for the acceptance of the Nicene Creed". This is exactly the sentiment of the Abingdon's Dictionary concerning the Council of Chalcedon also. In giving an account of the Council of Chalcedon (451 A.D.), it is pointed out that making creeds was a difficult task. Nicea, though convened for the purpose of unifying the church toward a single viewpoint not only failed to convert Arius to Athanasius viewpoint, but ended up with schism as the outcome. Arius and his followers were later reconciled and brought "back into the fold" so to speak, but then Athanasius himself became an outcast. Because of the problems at Nicea in making a creedal statement that would solve issues, "subsequent Councils at Nicea were reluctant to produce creeds, rather desiring to 'affirm the faith'." However, the bishops were not allowed to do so and Imperial pressure was exerted to obtain a creedal statement.

It is not surprising that such a situation that creeds would actually be slanted toward the views of the imperial government or more politically oriented church leaders. God's Word became supplanted by the dictates of unsaved men who do not understand the Word of God. Roman Catholicism, considered by many fundamentals to be the "mystery Babylon" of Revelation 17:5 was basically formed by the series of councils from Nicea forward. Abingdon's again states that "Chalcedon was truly Catholic..." The Council of Constantinople in 381 A.D., though not representing Roman or Western Catholicism, developed a "sole baptismal confession of the East (Orthodox Church). The Lateran Council of 1215 expanded the Trinitarian Christology by using the words "essence", "nature", and "aluid" to signify the oneness of God, and "person" and "alium" to signify the three-ness of God. Other councils added infant baptism, the doctrine of transubstantiation, and other such doctrines or dogmas that were "Catholic".

Did the creeds serve to explain in Biblical truth concerning the deity of Jesus Christ? Did they bring forward line upon line the scriptural understanding? I contend that they did not. The councils with their creedal statements served to establish "Catholic" dogma, confusing the simple truth, ignoring Bible doctrine to produce greater ignorance in its followers. Although D.M. Baillie defends the Councils and their Creeds, he wrote the truth when he remarked, "they enshrined the mystery without explaining it." The creeds handed down by the church did not allow for "thinking" or honest hearted search, but rather insisted on telling its readers what to think.

In Abingdon's Dictionary again, we find a summarizing comment concerning creeds and their purpose:

The church needed creeds and confessions for numerous purposes: the teaching ministry of the church and catechetical instruction, a hermeneutical guide for interpreting scriptures, an antidote to heresy, and a witness to the world. The church also needs creeds preeminently for worship and in particular for baptism. Baptism in

the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit was the occasion for the development of an interrogatory creed on a trinitarian formula.

In this regard, concerning baptism, the creeds absolutely shifted away from the apostolic form of baptism "in the name of Jesus Christ" to a form consistent with the trinitarian doctrine. Certainly, if the trinitarian doctrine of the Godhead was correct, the formula for baptism would be correct, but conversely, since the Biblical formula for baptism is not trinitarian, then one might say a trinitarian godhead is also incorrect. We find substantial proof of a non-trinitarian baptismal formula throughout the scriptures and in the history of the early church. In the same token we find much scriptural evidence for a single God in the Godhead.

Church historian Harnock, of the Ritschlian School, comments that we should return to the "Jesus of History". Baillie quotes Harnock as saying,

...the history of the early Christian centuries was a story of the gradual adulteration of the original Galilean gospel through the infiltration of Greek philosophy and thus the true hope of Christian theology must be in a movement back to the Jesus of History from the metaphysical dogmas about his person.

If we were to leave behind all the theological rhetoric and go directly to the Holy Bible, what would we find? Would we find Arianism? Would we find the Logos philosophy of Philo or Justin? What we would find is Jesus Christ, the Almighty God manifested in flesh. We would not find an argument for the "person", we would find a reason for his "person", which was the express image of the "person" of the Almighty God. It is this reason for his person that is the basis for the gospel of Jesus Christ. Christ was born with a reason. He died for a reason. It is in this vein that Logos or God's REASON was fulfilled by the incarnation. We should look for this "reason" of God, not in a creed but in a scriptural explanation for the incarnation.

Chapter Seven

The scripture, without creeds, give ample proof to the divinity of Jesus Christ. We are not speaking of "a divinity" but "*the divinity*". Jesus was not simply divine because of a like nature due to sonship. It is important to understand that there is only ONE God, and only one being who has the divine nature, that is God. It is true that there is something of God that is imparted to his sons when they are born from him. Peter speaks of being "partakers of his divine nature." Here he speaks to us as sons. But when we become a son of God, we do not become God himself. There will never be for us a time when we can say, "ye shall be as gods." Not in the sense that Satan meant in Genesis 2:5, for in that Satan meant equal to God. No matter what God would impart to us, He will never impart anything that would cause us to be His equal. We have authority in God to use His Word, but we do not have authority to change it. In essence, I am saying that there is a difference in sonship and absolute deity. Our becoming "sons of God" does not allow us to play God nor does it elevate us to be co-equal with God. We are not omniscient as He is, neither are we omnipotent as God is. We have become partakers of his nature without becoming "a god".

On the other hand, what is the effect of divinity being a partaker of human nature? Jesus Christ who was God manifested in the flesh became a partaker of human nature, that is flesh and blood. God did not become MAN, that is He was not metamorphed into a human being, but through the incarnation, He became A MAN. There is much difference. When we use the article "a", as we did with "a man", we are saying one of many. We must be reminded of the scripture that reads,

For though there be that are called gods, whether in Heaven or in Earth...but to us there is but one God, the Father...

Why then was Jesus, the Son of God, called God in Hebrews 1:8? Was it because the Son of God was "a" God also? No! It was because Jesus Christ, the son of God was "God manifested in the flesh". The scripture was recognizing the divinity of Jesus Christ. He had a dual nature. He had the divine nature for he was totally God. He had the human nature because He was totally man. Jesus Christ was the only GOD-MAN that ever lived. Our birth as sons of God could rightly be called "homoiousion" (like the father in all essential respects), but such is not the case of Jesus Christ. There is a great deal of difference between our "spiritual birth" and sonship from the birth and sonship of Jesus Christ. Although the Bible speaks of us as being born of God, we are technically "born of the Word", God's instrumentality, and then "adopted" as sons of God. Jesus was not born of the Word as we are, He was the Word. He is not an adopted son as we are, He is the only begotten son. We have a human nature from both a human father and a human mother. Jesus only had a human nature from his mother's side, Mary, in order that his completeness might be fulfilled from his father, God. This does not disqualify his humanity as being all human, because he was of the "seed" of the woman. Our natural humanity is a result of our mother's seed being fertilized by the sperm of our fathers. In the case of Jesus Christ, the seed of Mary was no different than the seed of any other human woman. But God prevented fertilization by Joseph, and fertilized that very complete human seed from himself. That same seed (that of Mary) could have just as easily been fertilized by Joseph and produced another human child. Jesus Christ was indeed a complete human. God did not implant a "divine" seed in Mary and then fertilize it.

The result of all this was the one and only unique Son of God, Jesus. He was all human and yet at the same time, he was fully God. Today there are those who hold to the idea of Apollinaris (c.350) who suggested that Jesus Christ's humanity was merely a shell, and that God only inhabited a body for 33 ½ years in order to fulfill his work here. Whereas a human being is body, soul, and rational spirit, Apollinaris insisted that "the body and soul of Jesus were human but his rational spirit was replaced by the divine Logos." Jesus had a rational human spirit also, for this is what grew in wisdom. But along with his rational human spirit, he had the Holy Spirit without measure, being the

"fullness of the godhead bodily." Concerning the Lord's humanity, did God give him an unfair advantage over us against sin? Was Jesus able to overcome temptation more easily than we because of a different measure of spirit or because of a divine nature? Baillie quotes William Temple who wrote,

He overcame them (temptations) exactly as every man who does so has overcome temptation – the constancy of his will.

It was this pattern of submission of his will to that of the Father that proves his complete humanity. This pattern of submission was brought as far as the cross of Calvary to prove his complete humanity. This pattern of submission was brought as far as the cross of Calvary to prove his complete humanity. And not greater proof could be offered than the fact that he died upon the cross. Deity could not die. The everlasting Father could not die. God is spirit. He is eternal. He alone has immortality. He has no beginning and no end. But the son was begotten, having a beginning, and the son died, having an end. What then was His resurrection? It was a new beginning for the son, that of being our high priest. It was a beginning for the son, but it was not a new beginning for God for He did not cease to exist at the cross.

Jesus Christ as a man slept, ate, rested, prayed, and did all other things that humans do with the exception of sin; not because he could not, but because he would not. But Jesus also raised the dead, healed the sick, opened blinded eyes, and made the lame to walk. How? As a man? No! As God. Here we must absolutely believe what Jesus said when he remarked,

Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, He doeth the works.

The son of God could do nothing. He said so himself. Why? Because He had the same human limitations that we have. Do we raise the dead? Do we heal the sick? Do we open blinded eyes? No! God does through us. It is HUMANLY impossible. But it is not DIVINELY impossible.

How is Jesus divine then? This was the issue that caused the controversy of the ages, for his humanity was evident at Calvary. Was he divine because he was the son of God? If because of being the son of God he was divine, then indeed God submitted to God, deity prayed to deity, and deity died. This was the argument that the apologist levied at Sabellius, but they misunderstood his logic. Let us see what the scriptures had to say about the divinity of Christ.

The prophecies of scripture indeed do prove the divinity of Jesus Christ. Early in the book of Isaiah, chapter 6, we find the prophet having a vision of the Lord of Hosts. In this vision, the Lord of Hosts, the King, gives to Isaiah a commission which was,

Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not? Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their hearts, and convert and be healed.

Who gave this commission to Isaiah? Who was it that was upon the throne being worshipped by the seraphims? The apostle John refers back to this prophecy and speaking of Jesus Christ, "These things said Esaias, when he saw his glory, and spake of him."

We cannot overstate the relationship between the gospel message and God's own plan of becoming the one and only savior of all. Here is the crux of the matter. The Almighty God looked down upon this sinful world looking for a sinless sacrifice and found none. Jesus, the son of God, even refused the designation "good", saying that there was none good but God. If Jesus was God, it was only because of his divinity. God found none good, but more than this, he would not allow a human to be the savior of the world. Why not? Because (1) there was none good, not even the son of God; and (2) because the world would deify the flesh. This is exactly what Roman Catholicism

has done with the son. The son of God was deified, and the Catholic symbols of the crucifix, statues, and icons maintain this unholy and sinful idolatry. The Son of God has become the greatest idol in the world along with Mary, "the mother of God", as she has been called. But God alone would be the Savior of the world. He said,

For I am the Lord, thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Savior...I, even I am the Lord; and beside me there is no Savior.

We should understand that Jesus Christ was "God with us," and that he would save his people from their sins. Not only were the Jews to be saved by Him, but Jesus of the New Testament was the same Jehovah of the Old Testament who stated that He would be the Savior of the whole world. He said,

Tell, and bring them near; yea, let them take counsel together: who hath declared this from ancient times? Who hath told it from that time? Have not I the Lord? And there is not God else beside me: a just God and a Savior, 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...

We then find Jehovah making a statement that should shake the doctrine of those who would be called by that Old Testament name of God, for those who claim to be witnesses for Jehovah. Yet this same Jehovah went on to say,

I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, That unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear.

Who is this? This is that same Jesus of whom Paul speaks when he writes that "at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow...and every tongue confess..."

And there are many other prophecies that truly prove that Jehovah of the Old Testament is none other than Jesus Christ of the New Testament. As an example, we find Jehovah stating that He is "the first and the last" in Isaiah 44:6. Then we find Jesus remarking that He is the "first and the last" in Revelation 1:17. He did not say that He (Jesus) was ONE of the first and ONE of the last. He said, "I am the first and the last."

If there are so many scriptures that prove that Jesus Christ is the God of the Old Testament, then why the confusion? The confusion came with the Logos doctrine and the word "with" in John 1:1. Using that as a starting point, theologians look backward at such scriptures as Genesis 1:26, which says, "Let us make man..." and thereby conclude that there must be more than one person in the godhead, even though there is one God. But does the word "with" really imply that? Or does the word "us" as used in Genesis 1:26 really mean two persons, at least in creation? Concerning John 1:1, we may make a comparison to Deuteronomy 32:39 which reads, "See how that I, even I am he, and there is no god with me...." This would seem to be a contradiction, but it is not. Concerning another deity, there was none with the Almighty God, nor does He even know of another god. But concerning Logos, who is not another deity, but is only the mind, thought, reason of God, it always existed with God. If I were a scientist and had envisioned the building of a new interstellar rocket ship but died with those plans in my mind, I would have taken those plans "with me" to the grave. When the Word became flesh, the plan of God was fulfilled and God was able to be God in Heaven above and Earth beneath, both at the same time.

What of the scripture that reads, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness..."? Was God speaking to the Son of God? First of all, that would be speculation. He could have been speaking to the angels. It is evident, however, that God was not speaking to another deity for there was none. The Bible says,

Thus saith the Lord, thy redeemer, and He that formed thee from the womb, I am the Lord that maketh all things: that stretcheth forth the heavens alone, that spreadeth abroad the earth by myself.

God had no need to counsel with anyone else, but if He did counsel with someone, who was it? Who assists God in anything or who does he receive advice from? Ephesians 1:11 states that He works all things after the "counsel of His own will." So it is possible that God was speaking to himself. Do we ever do that? Did you ever get ready to do something, scratch your head, and say, "Well let's see now." What is that contraction – "let's". It is "let us".

A second explanation for Genesis 1:26 is that of the use of the royal "we". This common form in which a king answers in the plural while acting in the singular was even used in the scripture. Such an example can be found in Ezra 4:11, 18 in which the king, Artaxerxes, received a letter from Ezra's enemies. That letter which was sent "even unto Artaxerxes the king" was "sent to us" according to the king's reply.

A third explanation for Genesis 1:26 was that God was talking of himself and Adam when He said "let us". Was not Adam given the responsibility to reproduce after his own kind and replenish the earth? While God knelt, so to speak, to form that man Adam from the dust, could he not have said, "Let us make man (Adam) in our own image and after our likeness." We read in Genesis 5:3, "And Adam lived an hundred and thirty years, and begat a son in his own likeness, after his image..."

Which answer is correct? Perhaps one or perhaps all three, but one thing that can not be correct is that there was another God. This would exclude therefore any concept of "God, the Son" being present as any second person in the godhead.

Are there other prophecies to prove the divinity of Jesus Christ? There are! In that final coming of the Lord, we shall know with the whole world the truth of how many persons are in the godhead. I believe we shall see only one person come in the Eastern sky, one person who will sit upon the throne – we shall never see more. One will never know God in three persons or three personalities. We will know Jesus the Son of God in that day as God the Father. Paul writing to Timothy speaks of the appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ,

Which in his times he shall show, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords; who only has immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man has seen, nor can see; to whom be power and honor everlasting. Amen.

Here we find the witness of the Apostle that Jesus Christ will be the one and only God who shall return and be known in his fullness, for John the revelator also bears witness that he is the "King of Kings, and Lord of Lords." This same Jesus who will be coming and riding upon a white horse is the same spoken of in Zechariah 14:3-5. He it is that ascended into heaven from the Mount of Olivet and shall return there again, and it is stated that "the Lord my God shall come, and all the saints with thee." What will the result of his coming be? One thing that will result is the full unveiling of the mystery that seems to confound the wise, that there is only one God. When He comes, will he be the Father, the Son, or the Holy Ghost? He will not be identified that way for God is not known by titles, he is known by name. We read, "And the Lord shall be King over all the earth; in that day shall there be one Lord, and his name one."

The apostles join the prophets in declaring that Jesus Christ is the Almighty God. Thomas called him Lord and God. Other disciples, including Mary worshipped him. He had better be God in that case for none other can be worshipped lawfully. Luke writes in the Acts 20:28 that "God...purchased with his own blood" the church. Did God the Father have blood? No! Nor did he have flesh and bone for He was spirit. All of these provided, however, for his incarnation.

Paul also writes to Titus concerning the "glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior, Jesus Christ." He furthermore speaks of "God the Savior", and then "Jesus Christ, our Savior." They are one and the same person.

I heard that Nathaniel Urshan, the Superintendent of the United Pentecostal Church told an interesting story to a man concerning the divinity of Jesus Christ. He gave an example of a man that went to heaven and upon seeing Jesus on the throne, he asked, "When can I see the Father?" Jesus gave a familiar reply – "When you see me you

see the Father." This reply was given to Philip also, and shall always be the same. Jesus Christ is simply the manifestation of the "everlasting Father" of Isaiah 9:6, and is God incarnate in the flesh.

One of the most powerful apostolic witnesses to the divinity of Jesus Christ is in Colossian 2:9. In the trinitarian concept of a co-equal, co-eternal, co-existent Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, one third of the godhead became incarnate in the flesh, that is the son. Within the Augustinian doctrine of appropriations, only the Son was born of the Virgin Mary, thereby qualifying for the status of "incarnate", if I understand the doctrine correctly. Fortman comments that for Augustine,

...the Father alone, or the son alone, or the Holy Spirit alone is just as great as the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit together (therefore) He is not to be called threefold in any sense for 'He is a trinity rather than threefold'...However, Augustine says that it was not the trinity that was born of the Virgin, but only the Son; it was not the trinity that descended upon Jesus in the form of the dove, but only the Holy Spirit...

But this doctrine in itself would actually contradict the plain teaching of Colossians 2:9 which states that Jesus Christ is the "fullness of the godhead bodily." If in Christ, the fullness of the godhead dwelt bodily, and that fullness was the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, then Jesus was not ONLY the Son of God incarnate. He was the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit incarnate. How then does this affect the Logos philosophy of the eternal son becoming flesh? How then does this affect Augustine's trinity doctrine and the doctrine of appropriations? In contrast to the trinitarian doctrine that Jesus was a member of the godhead, or "in the godhead", the Bible declares that the godhead WAS IN JESUS.

How many in an attempt to validate the absolute divinity of Jesus Christ have overlooked that Jesus in his divinity was also the Holy Spirit? The trinitarian approach actually separates the three as person while maintaining that there is one God, who in essence is not Jesus, although Jesus is one of the three. The oneness approach disagrees with the ideal that there is one essence but three persons, but rather teaches that there is one essence and one person, who is Jesus Christ. Jesus existed from eternity as the everlasting Father, then Jesus died upon the cross as the Son of God, and now Jesus Christ, as the Holy Spirit lives within the heart of the believer. If there are three persons in the godhead, then we indeed do confuse the appropriate works, as the doctrine of the appropriations teaches. If for example the Father and the Holy Spirit are two persons, the Father would not be the Father of Jesus for Matthew 1:20 states, "for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost." Who is the Father? God (the father) or the Holy Spirit? The Holy Spirit as another person would make this scripture contradictory. In the same token, Jesus Christ is also called the Holy Spirit and there is proof that he is the Holy Spirit. John 14:26 speaks of the Comforter, "which is the Holy Ghost", but in verse 17-18, Jesus states, "for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you comfortless, I will come to you." Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit are one and the same. We also read in I Peter 1:11 that the prophets spoke by the "Spirit of Christ" which was in them, and in II Peter 1:21, the scripture declares that the holy men of God "spoke as they were moved on by the Holy Ghost."

To simply state the trinitarian position, trinitarians believe that Jesus Christ is God. However, they do not believe that God (the father) is Jesus Christ. Nor do they believe that the Holy Spirit is Jesus Christ. Is it a matter of semantics? No! It is not! It is a matter of concept and revelation. Karl Barth sees the trinity as "the necessary and relevant analysis of revelation, of the one central fact to which the Bible bears witness – the act of God in revelation." So writes Fortman who further states,

God reveals himself as Lord...actually this sonship is God's Lordship in his revelation.

The Lordship of God here means His freedom to be the Son, to be God for us...Revelation in the Bible means the self-unveiling, imparted to men, of the God who according to His nature cannot be unveiled to men.

According to Fortman, Barth concludes that God in both Old and New Testament is Jesus who in the final analysis is (1) the Revealer, i.e. Father, (2) the act of Revelation, i.e. the Son, and (3) the state of Revelation, i.e. the Holy Ghost. For Barth, it is the "Trinity", but for those who have had a soteriological revelation, it is not the "trinity", but the revelation of One God of the Old and New Testament who is not known by *titles* but by *name* – Jesus, the Christ. The greatest fallacy of the trinity is that it assigns and identifies God by titles, that of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, rather than by the name that every man must know in order to be saved. In the process, the value of the name of Jesus Christ in salvation has been diminished. Even in the most common form of salvation today one speaks of "receiving Christ as their personal Savior" instead of speaking the name, Jesus.

In concluding the testimonies concerning the divinity of Jesus Christ, let it be said that Jesus himself gave the greatest weight of testimony for it. He first did it by accepting without hesitation the worship of men. He spoke also to the Pharisees and told them that he was before Abraham, not as the Logos, but as the "I Am". He spoke concerning his resurrection and declared, "Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up." Who raised Jesus from the dead? Jesus, as God raised himself from the dead.

How confusing it sometimes seems as Jesus speaks of himself as being God, the father, incarnate, and yet speaks of himself as the Son of God and the Son of Man. Indeed he was both, but yet he was more. It seemed that he himself continually refers back to the Father, refusing credit and glory, but at the same time accepting worship. Did he have a reason to make his identity vague? Did he somehow hide his divinity knowing that it would become a reason for contention? Indeed, he did speak in parables concerning this fact:

What think ye of Christ? Whose son is He? They say unto him, The son of David. He saith unto them, How then doth David in spirit call him Lord, saying The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool. If David then call him Lord, how is he his son?

What is the meaning of this riddle? Jesus Christ knew the Jews would know that the Lord of David was none other than Jehovah, God of the Old Testament – the father. But how is He the Son of David? Jesus stated in Revelation 22:16 that He was both the "root" (ancestor – father) and "of spring" (descendent – son) of David. Jesus was God, the father in spirit and from creation, but Jesus was the Son of God, that is God incarnate in human flesh.

If the godhead (or trinity) seems confusing, it is. Especially when one says that there is one God in three persons. Does this mean that God is still one, but is incarnate in the Father, and incarnate in the Son, and incarnate in the Holy Spirit? Or does this mean that God actually refers to a family of beings? Or does this mean there are three gods? In truth there is only ONE GOD, dwelling in ONE PERSON, the Son. This is only possible because God is spirit. This is our Christological starting point.

Chapter Eight

Our understanding of the godhead is not intended to be a theological revelation but rather a soteriological revelation. Soteriology is the study of things pertaining to salvation, and there is not greater truth concerning salvation than Jesus Christ is the Almighty God who saves us. It was God himself that delivered the children of Israel out of Egypt and Moses was but an instrument. How many times are we reminded by example of the salvation of God, using human beings as instruments but refusing to allow the glory to be given to the human instrumentality? This pattern of "God, the Savior" was finally brought down to the ultimate salvation. Sinful flesh was useless for this final war against sin and so the human instrumentality could not have been a David, or Sampson, or even another Moses.

The reason for the incarnation goes back to the fall of man. Here the greatest of all tragedies occurred when men lost fellowship with their creator. From that time till now, men have striven to restore fellowship, just as the lonely heart of a lost child cries out for its parents. How have they tried to restore this missing feeling of communion with God? Religion has seen one occurrence after another of the raising up of a human prophet and then that prophet being elevated to divine status. The Buddhist may try to say that Buddha was only a prophet that brought enlightenment. They say that it is the enlightenment they actually reach for, or the state of being that is taught, but never the less they have made statues of Buddha and built temples, and worshipped him as a god. Moslems may not officially "deify" Mohammed, but they journey to his grave each year and speak of him in great devotion. "Human Gods" abound both in the more civilized religions and in the heathen religions where ancestor worship abound. In short, men have filled up their longing heart for God by substituting the worship of the creature rather than the creator.

To the Jews, the Messiah was supposed to be a deliverer and king who would be on the order of David. He was to be a man that would restore Israel's greatness as an independent nation. He would deliver the Jews from Roman oppression, their "Egypt". For the Jews, the Messiah was to be a man, not God. They knew better than to deify the flesh and therefore they called it blasphemy when Jesus spoke of himself as the Son of God. They were blinded to a great truth, however, that Messiah was going to be none other than God, himself:

For we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory; which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

If they had known who Jesus was, would they have crucified him? Jesus came to restore a kingdom, but it was not the kingdom that the Jews sought for; it was to restore a kingdom that the Buddhist, and the Moslems, and the heathens sought for...one in which God was again in fellowship with man.

To this kingdom, men need to be saved. Saved, not from the Romans, but from their sins. This was the eternal purpose of God; fellowship with His creation. One thing that God did not want is the relationship that some would have in which God is afar of, not involved with his creation, but only a "maintainer" of creation.

In keeping with the design of God, He would not allow a man or human to be the Savior. Men would trust in the arm of flesh, or they would deify the flesh, and the man would become their "god". I must note that this has happened anyway, because for the majority of Christians, Jesus, the Son of God, has been deified along with Mary, and Peter, and Paul, and many others who become "sainted". The "Son of God" now shares the "glory" with the Father due to a lack of revelation, and this in spite of God's own declaration,

I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction. (Why?) For mine own sake, even for mine own sake, will I do it: for how will my name be polluted? And I will not give my glory to another.

We have already read where God himself said He would come and save us. And we must acknowledge

that John the Baptist prepared a highway in the wilderness for his God to come. It was God who said that He alone would be the Savior.

So it is that we find salvation's message being revealed right in the very beginning of the gospels. But this salvation is from sin. And what is the very first element of the gospel that is linked with salvation from sin? It is the name of Jesus Christ. The Bible says, "And thou shalt call his name JESUS, for he shall save his people from their sins." Here we find the name of that human incarnation of God, but linked with his name is the REASON for this name...salvation from sin. Any name could have been given, but it was not; for it was a specific name and the reason was given as to why his name HAD TO BE JESUS. Did his name have to be Jesus because it was poetical? No! Did his name have to be Jesus because it was unique? No, for the name Jesus is not unique. His name had to be Jesus, because it identified who the Savior is. This is the simple reason. In the Hebrew, the name was Joshua (Yeshua), meaning "Jehovah Savior". It is the meaning of the name that is all important. Later we find another name given for Him, Emmanuel, meaning "God with us". The name Jesus was the name that was above every name. It clearly identified Jesus Christ, as "God the Savior".

Salvation is everywhere linked to the name of the Christ. When we say name of Christ, we are saying, the name of the anointed one. Christ was but one title for the Messiah, but his name is Jesus. The scripture declares that power to become sons of God was for those who believe "in his name". We are told that we receive "life through his name". The Bible says that we receive remission of sins only through faith in his name in both Acts 2:38 and Acts 10:43. We cast out devils in the "name of Jesus Christ." Again, it is declared that "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord, shall be saved." I do not believe this means any name of the Lord, but only the name of Jesus. God's Old Testament name of "Jehovah-Jireh" will not save us, neither will his name "Jehovah-Ropheka." Calling him Allah or even Jehovah is not sufficient, for only the name of Jesus is sufficient. That name is all important for salvation for we are told,

Neither is there salvation in any other, for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.

The name of scriptures pertaining to the power and salvation of the name of Jesus is many, but it should make us aware of one thing. God has a name! Our Savior has a name! Like any son, I may call my father by the title "father", but to the world he must be declared by name. And until a person becomes a son of God by being born into the family, the title father must give way to his name, Jesus. The name of Jesus must be preached to all the world.

This very important fact, that of the name of Jesus being linked with salvation, is a part of the controversy that rages over whether there is a trinity or not. Many may not think it is a worthy issue, but we must be reminded that we are not going to be hated for being called "Christians". But we will be persecuted for declaring to the world what the world does not want to hear; that there is one Lord and his name one. Surely the Romans and Greeks were not of ended because another deity came on the scene. They had a whole Parthenon of deities so one more did not matter. But when a Christian declares, "your gods are no gods, for there is but One God," then there is persecution. It is only when Jesus Christ is declared *as God* does persecution come.

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