

# THE TRINITY CONFUSION



**Is this who you worship?**

“O God, one in nature and three persons:  
Father, Son, and Holy Ghost;  
First cause and last end of all creatures,  
The infinite Good,  
Incomprehensible and ineffable,  
My Creator, my Redeemer, my Sanctifier.  
I believe in Thee,  
I hope in Thee,  
And I love Thee with all my heart.”

‘The Raccolta’  
‘The Priest’s Companion’  
G.A.C. Whatton p. 245

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*Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the  
commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.  
Revelation 14:12*

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## THE CONFUSION

There is no question the subject of the Trinity is a ‘hot’ issue, and in some areas it is causing confusion among God’s people.

Is it Christian? Is it pagan? Or is it papal?

Obviously, if it is Christian, it can not be pagan? But if it is a doctrine of the Bible, can it also be papal? And if it is papal, what difference does that make?

Is there more than one doctrine of the Trinity?

Is there a pagan Trinity and a papal one?

The writer of this booklet was an Anglican, who believed the Thirty Nine Articles of Religion which state, **“There is but one living and true God everlasting, without body parts, or passions; of infinite power, wisdom and goodness; the Maker and preserver of all things both visible and invisible. And in unity of this Godhead there be three Persons, of one substance, power and eternity; the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost”**. Book of Common Prayer. Thirty Nine Articles of Religion. No.1. p376. (Anglican)

There may be slight variations, but from personal research it has been discovered that all the mainline churches believe in God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit – ONE GOD.

Is it truth?

Or is it heresy?

## PAGAN BACKGROUND

There is no question that the majority of pagan religions believed in a Trinity; many still do.

In ancient Babel, Semiramus, the widow of Nimrod (grandson of Noah), spread a report that she had become pregnant by her dead husband. **“She announced the news that the spirit of Nimrod had descended from the sun, and (that) she would bear a child by her sun-god husband. Not**

**only would Nimrod be the father, he would also be the resurrected, incarnate son”.** Two Babylons by Alexander Hislop p58.59.

Tammuz was born on December 25, making this day a sacred festival of the Babylonian calendar.

Semiramus gained glory from her deified dead husband, and in the course of time, Nimrod was worshipped as the personification of the sun-god, together with his mother, who was also his wife. Thus, in Nimrod, Semiramus and Tammuz, a trinity of belief was formed. Ibid p77.157.158. 264.



Heathen Madonna and child from Egypt, India, Greece, Babylon.

**“From Babylon, this worship of the Mother and the Child spread to the ends of the earth. In Egypt, the Mother and the Child were worshipped under the names of Isis and Osiris. In India, as Ini and Iswara; in Asia, as Cybele and Deoius; in Pagan Rome, as Fortuna and Jupiter, the boy; in Greece, as Ceres, the Great Mother, with the babe at her breast., or as Irene, the goddess of Peace, with the boy Plutus in her arms; and even in Tibet, in China, and Japan, the Jesuit missionaries were astonished to find the counterpart of Madonna and her child...”** Ibid p20.21.

You will have noticed that often just the Mother and Child are pictured. This is because the ancients believed **“the Great Invisible (took) no immediate concern in human affairs”**, and was therefore worshipped in silence. In point of fact, he was not worshipped by the multitude at all. In the Hindu religion, the first person of the Hindu Triad is never worshipped, and there is scarcely a single temple in all India that was formally erected in his honour. Ibid p19.

In Egypt, the three names were Osiris (father), Isis (mother), and Horus (the son). However, Horus is often interchanged with Osiris, because **“the son is also the husband of his mother”**. Two Babylons p43. (It is the same interchange as between Nimrod and Tammuz.

In the Hindu religion, Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva constitute the heathen trinity, called the **“Trimurti; the One or Whole with Three Forms”**. Encyclopedia Britannica. Article ‘Hinduism’ In New Zealand, the Maoris call their trinity, Taranga, Maui and Tiki-Tiki.



Horus,  
Osiris,  
Isis.  
2nd  
Millenium  
B.C.



Referring to Cybele, **“the mother of the gods”**, and Venus **“the goddess of love”**, Hislop states that it may be difficult to separate these two identities, but says, **“the mystery will disappear, if the fundamental principle of the Mysteries be borne in mind – viz., that at bottom they recognised only Adad, ‘The One God’**. Adad being triune, this left room, when the Babylonian Mystery of Iniquity took shape, for three different forms of divinity – the father, the mother, and the son; but

all the multiform divinities with which the pagan world abounded, whatever diversities there were among them, were resolved substantially into so many manifestations of one or other of these divine persons, or rather of two, for the first person was generally in the background.” Two Babylons p302.

In Babylon, Semiramus was called the “Queen of Heaven”, and in Egypt, the “Habitation of God”. Upon an Egyptian temple the following was inscribed, “I am all that has been, or that is, or that shall be. No Normal has removed my veil. The fruit of which I have brought forth is the Sun.” Two Babylons p77.

It is obvious that although there were three distinct personalities involved in the heathen trinity, the single deity over-riding them was the SUN. Ibid p96.

One writer noted, “As far back as we can go into the ancient world, we find that all known cultures had a ‘three-in-one’ triune god. The very first trinity was simply the three stages of the life of the sun. 1. New-born at dawn. 2. Mature full-grown at 12 noon. 3. Old and dying at the end of the day. All three were of course One Divinity – the Sun!” Jordan Maxwell. BBC of America. Quoted in Exposure Vol 5. No.6 1999.

However, the heathen trinity was also seen as one god with three heads as seen below.



In India, the supreme divinity.... is represented with three heads on one body, under the name of “Eko Deva Trimurti -- One God, three forms”.

In Japan, the Buddhists worship their great divinity, Buddha, with three heads, in the very same form, under the name of “**San Pao Fuh**” Two Babylons p17.18.

Not all of these three-headed trinities have three heads protruding from one neck as in the previous illustration. Many of them have one head, but with three faces, one to the front, and two others either side of the head.



Trinitarian Buddha



Triune Hindu godhead

Alexander Hislop sums up the heathen trinity in the following words, “**All these have existed from ancient times. While overlaid with idolatry, the recognition of a trinity was universal in all the ancient nations of the world.**” Two Babylons p17.18.

Another aspect of the heathen trinity is that of opposing forces.

In the Hindu trinity, consisting of Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva, there are conflicting functions. Shiva, who is one of the gods of this trinity, is “**said to be the god of destruction. The other two gods are Brahma, the god of creation and Vishnu, the god of maintenance.... To indicate that these three processes are one and the same, the three gods are combined in one form.**” The Symbolism of Hindu Gods and Rituals. Published by A Parthasarathy. Bombay.

The Encyclopedia Britannica states, “**Vishnu is often regarded as a special manifestation of the preservative aspect of the Supreme, and Shiva as that of the destructive function. Another deity, Brahma, the creator, remains in the background as a demiurge. These three great figures (Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva) constitute the so-called Hindu**

## **Trinity -- Trimurti, 'The One or Whole with Three Forms' "**

Encyclopedia Britannica. Article, Hinduism.

**"Historians show that at this time (c 500BC) the Hindu priests changed their teachings and adopted the adorable conception of a loving heavenly Father. As new literature sprang up, and innumerable tractates were written to place Brahma (the creator), Vishnu (the preserver), and Siva (the destroyer), the Hindu trinity, on a par with Jehovah. These more abstract and less materialistic concepts of religion were the beliefs of the Brahmans and the educated classes, but they left the masses to their coarse idolatry."** Truth Triumphant p126. B. Wilkinson.

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

Benjamin Wilkinson comments on this aspect of good and evil within the Zoroaster species of a trinity, stating that **"In a disfigured and uncouth semblance, Zoroaster placed at the head of his celestial hierarchy Ormazd (or Ahura-Mazda), the great wise spirit, and Ahriman, the supreme evil spirit, who was the coeval and rival god of darkness dwelling in the bottomless pit of night. With them he associated in a marked way, Mithra, the god of light, who was the sun and an embodiment of sun worship. As the sun was neither in the heavens nor on earth, but swung in an intermediate position between heaven and earth, so Mithra was the great mediator. When Mithraism had overspread the Roman Empire, Mithra was said to be the champion of sinners, the companion after death, and the guide of the soul into the heaven of heavens."** Truth Triumphant. p129.

**"The Master Teachers of the Gnostic Secret Schools taught that throughout history Saviours, Avatars, Messiahs, and Christs appeared in all lands and to diverse people."** From The Gnostic Religion. By Hans Jonas..

These **"Kristed-beings"** are said to be embodiments of the First Emanation of the Heavenly Father, and each came to earth to bring humanity knowledge of the True God. New Dawn Nov-Dec 1999

In summary of the heathen trinity:

1. There are three beings in this triune god.
2. One is the father, one is the mother, and one is the son.
3. The son is also the husband of the mother.
4. The son is the father incarnate.
5. All three have been deified as gods.
6. Often these three are said to be ‘one god’ – one in three forms, or three in one.
7. The father is often not mentioned; instead the mother and son are worshipped by themselves.
8. At times the heathen trinity is seen as one god playing three roles, and is pictured with three heads.
9. At other times, this one god is seen with three faces on one head.
10. In several branches of heathenism, the third person of this trinity is regarded as evil, and a destroyer
11. In this version, the 1<sup>st</sup> person is the creator, the 2<sup>nd</sup> person the maintainer, and the 3<sup>rd</sup> person the destroyer.

Certainly we want none of these heathen concepts brought into Christianity.

(Some of the ideas for this section have come from ‘With Open Face’ by David Clayton. Dec 1999 issue of his magazine)

## **PAPAL BACKGROUND**

One hundred years after the death of the apostle John, spiritual darkness was fast settling down upon the Christian community, for **“the rulers of the church from early times were prepared, should the occasion arise,**

**to adopt, or imitate, or sanction the existing rites and customs of the populace, as well as the philosophy of the educated class.”** Development of Christian Doctrine. John Henry Cardinal Newman. p371.372. 1906.

As time passed, these religious institutions, handed down to them by their ancestors, were maintained and defended with the greatest obstinacy. **“Nor do they consider of what character they are, but they feel assured of their excellence and truth on this account, because the ancients have handed them down; and so great is the authority of antiquity that it is said to be a crime to inquire into it. And thus it is everywhere believed as ascertained truth.”** The Divine Institutes. Lactantius. Bk 2. Ch 7; Ante-Nicene Father. Vol V11. p50. 1907.

During In the course of the fourth century, two developments spread over Christendom; the one ascetic, the other ritual or ceremonial. We are told in various ways by Eusebius, that Constantine, in order **“to recommend the new religion to the heathen, transferred into it the outward ornaments to which they had been accustomed in their own.”** Development of Christian Doctrine. Cardinal Newman. p373. 1906.

In this setting, it is quite probable the heathen trinity made its way into the church at Rome, although blended with Bible truth, would have taken on a somewhat different appearance.

Edward Gibbons stated, **“If paganism was conquered by Christianity, it is equally true that Christianity was corrupted by paganism. The pure Deism of the first Christians.... was changed, by the church of Rome, into the incomprehensible dogma of the trinity. Many of the pagan tenets, invented by the Egyptians and idealized by Plato, were retained as being worthy of belief.”** History of Christianity, Edward Gibbon. Preface.

The doctrine of the personality of God was becoming very corrupt, and well before the third century, many variations were being promulgated. To mention a few, Nestorianism (divided Christ’s manhood from His divinity), Monophysitism-Monothelitism (Christ was not truly man), Gnosticism (Devotees of knowledge [secret traditions] received from Christ, heathen poets and philosophers)

Another perversion that arose was called Monarchianism. It was divided into two schools of thoughts: Dynamic (Christ was only human, but with divine power), and Modalism, that there was only God who acted out three roles. He portrayed the role of the Creator as the Father, the Redeemer as

the Son, and the Guide for the Church as the Holy Spirit. This second view has adapted the heathen trinity of one god with three heads (or one head with three faces), each face portraying one of the three roles of the triune deity.

Sabellianism was also straight out of heathenism, for it taught that God was revealed in three modes, in the same sense as the sun is bright, hot and round. You will recall the heathen view of the sun in its three stages: rising, noon, and setting, and portraying the worship of a triune god.

Naturally, these varying views caused concern to the rising Papacy, not because they were heathen, but a *church divided against itself cannot stand* any more than a house, and world domination was the Papal aim.

In AD264, a synod was convened at Antioch to consider the beliefs of a bishop in that city who believed in Modalistic Monarchianism. Instead of teaching that the Father and Son were two separate and distinct Persons, he taught that they were the very same Being – one God, who became the Son at the time of the incarnation, and at Pentecost, He became the Holy Spirit.

This branch of Monarchianism claimed that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit were ‘homoousios’ – ‘one substance’; or one Being only. Another word used to denote this state was ‘consubstantiability’, meaning the ‘same substance’. In other words, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit were not of a ‘like substance’, for this would imply three separate beings, but were three actions of one God-being.

The synod at Antioch rightly condemned this teaching as heresy, however, it was not entirely eradicated. Both Modalistic Monarchianism and Sabellianism have been taught by many Roman Catholics throughout history, and in countries where heathenism abounded, the Papal Church has used pictures of exactly the same three-faced idols of the heathens to denote these beliefs. (See picture on next page)

There is no question that a heathen trinity has entered Catholicism, and although condemned in AD 264, it has still been taught by Roman Catholics.



Italian Trinity  
(Father, Son,  
Holy Spirit) –  
15<sup>th</sup> century



Norwegian Trinity  
(Father, Son, Holy  
Spirit) – 13<sup>th</sup> century



German Trinity  
(Father, Son,  
Holy Spirit) –  
20<sup>th</sup> century

*(Heathen deities are always grotesque in some way, whether ancient or modern)*

During the nineteenth century, Modalistic Monarchianism was rife among Roman Catholics, and it is this form of the trinity doctrine that confronted Christians during that era.

One writer stated, **“If you can convince me that we are one in this sense, that you are my father, and I your son; and also that I am your father, and you my son, then I can believe in the Trinity.”** The Autobiography of Elder Joseph Bates. p204.205. 1868.

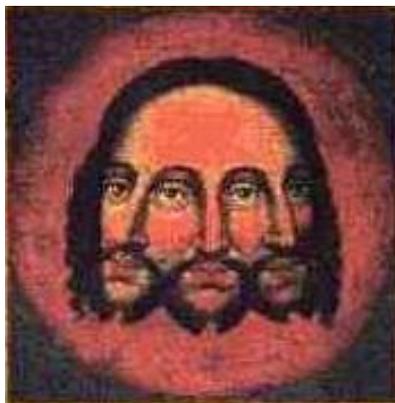
John N Loughborough, another Christian of the same century stated, **“To believe that doctrine (the Modalistic Monarchianism form of the Trinity), when reading the Scriptures, we must believe that God sent Himself into the world, died to reconcile the world to Himself, raised Himself from the dead, ascended to Himself in heaven, pleads before Himself in heaven to reconcile the world to Himself, and is the only Mediator between man and Himself...”** Review & Herald. No. 5. 1861. Vol 18 p184.

Recently a tract arrived in the mail that teaches this very form of the trinity doctrine. It asks in Question No.4. **“Do these titles (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) as used in Matthew 28:19 mean that there are three**

**separate and distinct persons in the Godhead? No, they refer to three offices, roles, or relationship to humanity.”**

Question No.58. **“Can trinitarians show that three divine persons were present when Jesus was baptized by John? Absolutely not. The one, omnipresent God used three simultaneous manifestations. Only one divine person was present – Jesus Christ the Lord.”** “60 Questions on the Godhead with Bible Answers”. Word Aflame Press (This is not a Roman Catholic tract, but a Protestant group with branches in Victoria, Australia)

The picture below is a German 9<sup>th</sup> century painting. It is a representation of the heathen belief of God – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit -- being one in total substance, as Siamese triplets. Whether it is pictured as three faces or three heads, the concept is heathen, no matter who believes it.



By the fourth century, a most powerful challenge came to the Church of Rome -- the ‘heresy’ of Arianism. **“It involved the question of the divinity of Christ and his relation to the Father, and indirectly the whole dogma of the Trinity.”** A Dictionary of Christian Biography. Smith and Wace. Vol 1. Art Arianism. p144. 1877. London John Murray.

Although Arius, a presbyter of Alexandra, was not the first to challenge the teaching of Rome on its understanding of God, his challenge led to a series of violent controversies which shook the Roman Empire, especially in the East, to its very base.

The teachings of Arius have been explained by many people, but rarely is there agreement. On one hand, he is believed to have regarded Jesus as a

*created* being, the “**beginning of the creation of God**”, as this text was explained. Revelation 3:14.

One writer stated of Arianism. “**God cannot create the world directly, but only through an agent, the Logos, who is himself created for the purpose of creating the world... Christ is himself a creature, the first creature of God, through whom the Father created other creatures....**”  
A Dictionary of Christian Biography. Smith and Wace. Vol 1 Art. Arianism. p155.156.

This nineteenth century author is dependent upon previous writers, who themselves are dependent upon others, *none of whom may have had the writings of Arius*. They do not quote Arius, but in their own words, give his *supposed* belief.

As very few of the Arian manuscripts are extant, we cannot totally refute the above statement, however, as we are seeing the very same charge made against anti-Trinitarians today, it is more than likely the accusations were *indeed false*.

One author has plainly stated, “**An erroneous charge was circulated (in the fourth century) that all who were called Arians believed that Christ was a created being. This stirred up the indignation of those who were not guilty of the charge.**” Winds of Doctrine p88. Russell Standish, quoting B.G. Wilkinson in Truth Triumphant p220. (Bracket added)

There are others who believe Arius stood for the Bible truth, and that Christ was the literal only-begotten Son of His heavenly Father. They believe he was simply taking John 3:16 as it reads – “**for God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son....**”

Note how the two understandings have been blended in the quotation below. “**Arius.... held that the Son was *begotten* of the Father, and therefore not coeternal nor consubstantial with the Father, but *created* by and subordinate to the Father, though possessing a similar nature...**” The Century Dictionary and Cyclopedia. Vol 1. Art. Arian p308.

It is no wonder there is confusion as to what Arius actually believed.

Be that as it may, the teachings of Arius caused great concern to the Papal Church. As a result, a council was called in AD325 at Nice (Nicaea), in which church leaders of both persuasions were invited, including Arius, although he was not a bishop. He was permitted to “**express his opinions**”,

but during the proceedings, one bishop angrily jumped up and punched Arius on the nose.

After much discussion, the draft of a creed was drawn up by Athanasius (a deacon who came with his bishop), and circulated among the bishops to read and sign. When it was discovered that eighteen Arian bishops had signed the document, the papal opponents broke into a wild uproar, and tore the document to pieces. At the same time they expelled Arius from the assembly. Eusebius Ecclesiastical History p15-17.

It is quite obvious that the council of Nicaea was not to unite Christendom, but to destroy Arianism.

In the commotion that followed, Eusebius of Caesarea presented an old creed before the council. When it was read, the Arian bishops signified their willingness to subscribe to it, but this was the very thing the Papal party did not want. What could they do to keep the Arians from signing the creed?

In the subsequent discussion, one of the bishops happened to mention the word ‘homoousios’, saying how absurd it was as a proposition of belief. (The Arians accepted the word ‘homoiousios’, meaning ‘like substance’, rather than ‘homoousios’ meaning ‘same substance’, although they cared not for either as neither of them are in the Bible)

This chance comment gave the Papal party the distinguishing mark they were looking for, although even Eusebius had difficulty with the similarity of the words. When he asked Constantine the difference, the Emperor said, “**Homoousios could be understood as Homoiousios**”.

This closeness proved to be an embarrassment to the council, for when Constantine asked the presiding bishop what the difference was between the two terms, Hosius replied, “**They are both alike**”. At that, laughter broke out in the assembly, and the word ‘heresy’ was flung into the air by the Papists. Truth Triumphant p92. Benjamin Wilkinson.

Once this amendment was voted upon, the Papists signed the document; and the Arians abstained. Arius and his followers were banished from their church offices, and every known book, paper, and manuscript of Arius were burnt.

(It is important to note, that in spite of the fact that the synod at Antioch sixty years earlier had condemned the word ‘homoousios’ (because it meant ‘one *identical* substance’ as

believed by Modalistic Monarchians), the Nicene Council used the very same word to condemn the Arians)

**The Nicene Creed reads: “We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of all things both visible and invisible. And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, Very God of Very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance (homoousios – the amendment) with the Father by whom all things were made; who for us men, and for our salvation, came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the Virgin Mary, and was made man, and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate. He suffered and was buried, and the third day he rose again according to the Scriptures, and ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of the Father. And He shall come again with glory to judge both the quick and the dead, whose kingdom shall have no end.**

**And we believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of Life, who proceedeth from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified, who spoke by the prophets. And we believe one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins. And we look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come.**

**Amen.”** Nicene Creed. English Version AD1549. (It has since been modified to include the word ‘eternal’ referring to the Son, as the Catholic Church believes in ‘eternal generation’)

**“What the Apostles’ Creed was content to say, that Jesus was the only Son and Lord, the Nicene Creed accumulated convergent affirmations: he is ‘eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from light, true God from true God, of one Being with the Father’ ”.** How to Understand the Creed. Jean-Noel Bezancon, Philippe Ferlay, and Jean-Marie Onfray. Roman Catholic. p53.

The Council of Nicaea began a religious controversy that continued on for at least two hundred years. Many more councils were held, and the **“boasted unity of Romanism was gloriously displayed by the diversified councils and confessions of the fourth century... Roads were crowded with bishops thronging to synods....”** Truth Triumphant p91.

It was not until the 6<sup>th</sup> century that a full agreement was reached on the teaching of the Holy Spirit, and its place in the Trinity dogma, now an integral part of Roman Catholicism.

In AD538, the Arian believers were completely wiped out by the Catholic Church, leaving the Papacy as the sole “**Corrector of heretics**”. Anyone opposing the Catholic teaching of the Trinity was exterminated, for “**the Mystery of the Trinity is the central doctrine of the Catholic Faith.**” Handbook for Today’s Catholic p11.

In summary of the papal background:

1. Paganism entered the church at Rome during the early centuries, including the heathen teachings about God. As a result, the heathen trinity was brought into the Catholic church. Over the years, it took on many forms.
2. The Catholic Church officially condemned the heathen trinity of Modalistic Monarchianism and Sabbellianism in AD264 at Antioch. Many Catholics have continued to teach this form of heathenism down through the years. (Some Protestant Christians still teach this form of the heathen trinity)
- 3 The Council of Nicaea in AD325 deliberately condemned the Arians for believing that Jesus had a beginning, without regard as to whether He was created or begotten. The decision of the council was that Christ was eternally begotten, without beginning. Arius said this belief made Christ the “**unbegotten begotten One**”, a contradiction of terms.
4. After the passing of the Nicene Creed, the Arians were proscribed. The uprooting of the three horns on the head of the fourth beast of Daniel 7, eradicated the Arians by force. In AD538, the last of the three horns was uprooted, giving the Papacy full dominion over the churches
5. The debate over the doctrine of the Trinity continued on until the 6<sup>th</sup> century, until it was firmly established as Papal dogma.

## PAPAL DOCTRINE -- PROGRESSIVE

It is interesting that the Papal Church of the West was more concerned about crushing Arianism, than Modalism and Sabbelianism. Augustine, Bishop of Hippo, gives the reason. In North Africa, we were **“more preoccupied with the risk of subordinating the Son to the Father (that was the heresy of Arius) than with the risk of making the Trinity uniform (the heresy of Sabellius, or Modalism).”** How to Understand the Creed p21. (Brackets in quotation)

In other words, they wanted to maintain the co-eternity and co-equality of Jesus with the Father, irrespective of whether the three-headed or three-faced modalistic trinity grew in ascendancy elsewhere.

However, **“some Eastern theologians made the exaggerated criticism that he (Augustine) speaks more of the God of the philosophers than of the God of Jesus Christ.”** In the East, the church was more concerned in making it clear that Modalistic Modalism was heresy, and that **“the Father is not the Son; the Son is not the Father”**. Ibid p21. (exaggerated in quote)

The writers of the above book say that the main aim of Catholic concern, even though the emphasis was different in the East and West, was to **“reconcile monotheism in the least inadequate way with the reality of the distinction of the persons in God: one God in three Persons.... It would certainly be wrong to think that there are three individuals in God, more or less united in love.”** Ibid p21.

However, in spite of the desire to maintain monotheism and not tritheism, the Papacy has had a long and heated struggle. The painting below certainly pictures three individual persons, giving the impression that the Roman Catholic doctrine has three gods.

Catholic writers state that the term ‘Trinity’ came into being in the third century, which means that when the council of three hundred bishops met at Nicaea, the doctrine had already been formulated.

Although the Nicene council came to an official decision regarding the relationship of the Father and the Son, discussions did not cease for centuries, in fact, they continue to this day.



Icon of the Trinity  
Andrei Rublev,  
Fifteenth Century

The word ‘homoousios’, (with its English meaning of consubstantial) has proved to be so difficult and confusing that many struggles and debates have arisen through subsequent decades.

In AD444, Cyril of Alexandria gave an explanation of the word ‘consubstantial’, a statement that was confirmed by the Council of Chalcedon in AD451. “.... **We (the holy Fathers) all unanimously teach that our Lord Jesus Christ is to us one and the same Son, the self-same perfect in Godhead, the self-same perfect in manhood; truly God and truly man; the selfsame of a rational soul and body; consubstantial with the Father according to the Godhead, the selfsame consubstantial with us according to the manhood, like us in all things, sin apart; before the ages begotten of the Father as to the Godhead, but in the last days, the selfsame, for us and for our salvation of Mary the Virgin Theotokos as to the manhood, one and the same Christ, Son, Lord, only-begotten....**” The Council of Chalcedon AD451

This use of the word ‘consubstantial’ by Bishop Cyril is quite understandable as it is written, however, the use of the word in the eyes of Catholic theologians is not the same Godward as it is manward.

Another aspect that has brought confusion was the thought “**before the ages begotten of the Father**”. To bishops at the council, this did not mean that Christ was begotten at some far distant point in eternity, but that He is “**eternally begotten**”, having no beginning.

A Catholic theologian put it in the following words, “**The Son is ‘generated’ (or begotten) of the Father, and the word points to an asymmetrical relation between them, yet the symbol of generation is such that it maintains the unity of substance as against any language of ‘making’ and ‘creating’.**” Principles of Christian Theology. Revised. John Macquarie p 193-195. Roman Catholic.

Neither party questioned that Christ was the only-begotten Son of God, but the interpretation of each separated them, for the Papacy “**maintained that the ‘generation’ of Christ is from all time, so that there never was a time when the Son was not.**” Ibid p195.

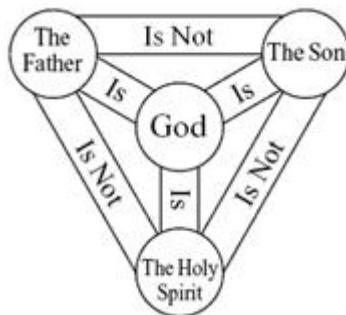
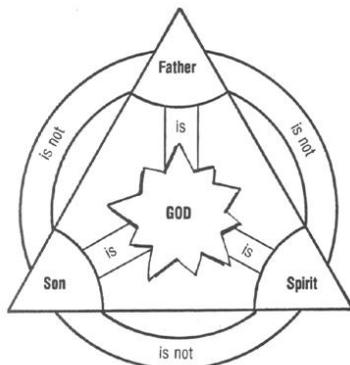
Arius on the other hand, taught that there was a point when He was *begotten* of the Father. It was this belief that the Papacy was determined to crush.

Catherine Mowry Lacugna, a modern Catholic author states, “**The Son quite literally receives Sonship from the Father, and in this reception, gives back to and constitutes the Father to be what the Father is: the begetter of the Son.**” God for Us – The Trinity in Christian Life p281. Ms Lacugna is quoting a theologian named Farley.

Unless we read comparative works of Catholic writers, we will misunderstand the meaning of individual authors such as Ms Lacugna. Another writer stated, “**No person of the Trinity is any less God than the others; in particular, the Son and the Holy Spirit are not demigods or intermediaries, subordinate to the Father. They are all one in respect of their Godhead.**” Principles of Christian Theology Ibid p192.

The Papal belief is that the Father has always been ‘the Father’, and the Son has always been ‘the Son’. Neither of them had a beginning. In this there is no denial that the Son is really a Son, but it is from all eternity, rather than a *point in eternity*. Their argument is that if the Son is not an actual Son, the term ‘Father’ and ‘Son’ would be pointless. Says John

Macquarie, “Surely it means that the Father could not be who He is apart from the Son....” Principles of Christian Theology p195.



Ancient Diagram of the Holy trinity

In his book Principles of Christian Theology, John Macquarie has called the Father “**primordial Being**”, the first Person of the Trinity. The second Person is called “**expressive Being**”, for He gives rise to intelligible structure in space and time. The third Person is designated “**unitive Being**”, for it is in the unity of the Holy Ghost that the Church in her liturgy ascribe glory to the Father and the Son. Ibid p198-201.

But not only does the Catholic Church teach that the Son had no beginning, it also teaches subordination. The Encyclopedia of Catholic Doctrine states that many Catholics fail to appreciate “**the hierarchical character of the Trinity**”. Ibid p683.

The following quotations explain the type of subordination believed by the Papacy. **“The Trinity is a hierarchy, or a sacred order... This is reflected, for example, in the fact that the Father always commands, sends, and gives to the Son, whereas the Son always obeys, is sent, and receives from the Father.... We can speak of the Father therefore, as the source of everything, including the Trinity itself, for He is as some of the Church Fathers pointed out, the ‘Unoriginated Origin’; He therefore enjoys priority within the Trinity which is why He is always designed as the first Person of the Trinity, and which also enables us to understand why Jesus tells us that “the Father is greater than I” John 19:28.”** Encyclopedia of Catholic Doctrine p684.

Ms Lacugna states, **“Although God is revealed in Jesus Christ and the Spirit, God remains the incomprehensible Origin of everything that is. The Unoriginate Origin (Father) is not ‘sent’ and does not proceed.... God as Unoriginate Origin is the Creator, the one who establishes everything that is in relation to God. It should be evident by now that ‘Father’ is not a literal term of biology. ‘Father’ as much as ‘Mother’ indicates Origin.”** God for Us p303.305. (Bracket in quotation)

By the thirteenth century, the doctrine of the Trinity **“had reached the highest point of synthesis”**. This has been credited to Thomas Aquinas, for within **“his thinking St Thomas develops the idea of ‘subsistent relationship’.... that is a way of saying in the vocabulary of his time that the mystery of the Trinity is truly that of absolute love, of the total reciprocity of love between the Father and the Son, under the influence of the Spirit. And it is in this exchange of love that we can and should live.”** How to Understand the Creed p21.

Roman Catholic Trinitarian theology can never be fully understood because it is a synthesis of paganism and Scripture, a blending of truth and error.

The words of Ms Lacugna put it well, **“Ultimately, the only appropriate response to the mystery of God revealed in the economy is adoration. For these reasons we might compare the doctrine of the Trinity to an icon.”** Ibid p305.

**“The doctrine of the Triune God gathers up in a remarkable way the findings of our philosophical theology, and forms a close bond between**

**an exposition**, and philosophical and symbolic theology” Principles of Christian Theology p188.

During the 3<sup>rd</sup> century, it was customary in Catholic churches to sing what was called the Trisagion, or Thrice-Holy, consisting of the words, **“Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Hosts”**. At the time of the Council of Chalcedon, it was changed to **“Holy God, Holy Almighty, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us”**. These three ‘Holies’ referred respectively to the three persons of the Trinity.

In AD477, Peter the Fuller led a procession of fellow monks through the streets loudly singing the Thrice-Holy, but with the addition **“Who was crucified for us”**. This unorthodox addition raised a dispute among the Catholics. On many occasions fighting ensued in the streets. **“Men, women, and children poured out from all quarters; the monks with their archimandrites at the head of the raging multitude, echoed back their religious war cry.”**

Eventually there was a show-down, and when the monks broke out with the Thrice-Holy (with the additional words), the orthodox monks, backed by the rabble of Constantinople, endeavoured to expel them from the church.

**“There was a wild, fierce fray; the divine presence of the emperor lost its awe; he could not maintain the peace... the two factions fighting in the streets, in the churches; cities, even the holiest places, ran with blood...”** Milman, Ecclesiastical History. A T Jones p201.202.

Between AD477 and 519, the dispute continued. Growing out of the addition to the Trisagion, the question was asked, **“Did one of the Trinity suffer in the flesh? Or did one *person* of the Trinity suffer in the flesh?”**

The monks of Scythia affirmed that **“one of the Trinity”** suffered in the flesh, and declared that to say that **“one *person* of the Trinity suffered in the flesh”** was absolute heresy. The question was brought before Pope Hormisdas who decided that to say that **“one person of the Trinity suffered in the flesh”** was the orthodox view; and denounced the monks as proud, arrogant, obstinate, enemies to the Church.

In AD533, the question was raised again, and Justinian became involved in the dispute; this time one set of monks argued that **“if one of the Trinity**

**did not suffer on the cross, then one of the Trinity was not born of the Virgin Mary, and therefore she ought no longer to be called the mother of God”.**

Others argued, **“If one of the Trinity did not suffer on the cross, then Christ who suffered was not one of the Trinity.”** Justinian entered the lists against both, and declared that Mary was **“truly the mother of God”**, that Christ was **“in the strictest sense one of the Trinity”**, and that whosoever denied either the one or the other, was a heretic.

This declaration frightened the monks because they knew Justinian’s opinions on the subject of heretics were exceedingly forcible. They therefore sent off two of their number to lay the question before the bishop of Rome.

As soon as Justinian learned this, he too decided to apply to the pope, sending his confession of faith by two bishops that **“one of the Trinity suffered in the flesh”**. Ecclesiastical Empire. A.T. Jones. p202.203.

At the same time, the anathemas of the church were fortified by a civil excommunication which separated the heretics from their fellow citizens by disqualifying them from holding any public office, trust or employment. **“That these laws might not be vain, the office of ‘inquisitor of the faith’ was instituted, and it was not long before capital punishment was inflicted upon ‘heresy’.”** Ibid p556.

It is also interesting that in approximately AD348, Flavianus, the patriarch of Antioch, gathered together a multitude of monks, and had them use a new public doxology for the first time, **“Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit”**. It was composed in opposition to the Arian doxology, **“Glory to the Father, by the Son, in the Holy Spirit.”** Sir William Whiston. Second letter concerning the Primitive Doxologies 1719 p17; Robert Roberts, Good Company Vol 111. p49. Flavian was the author of the Catholic doxology, which has become orthodox in Catholicism.

When the sign of the cross is made, the Trinitarian doxology is said, **“Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost”**.

**“Nothing in the Church is begun, carried out, or completed, without the sign of the cross. It is used in innumerable blessings and ceremonials of the Church. At Mass alone it is used fifty-one times.”** My Catholic Faith. Louis LaRavoie Morrow p392. (Emphasis in quotation)

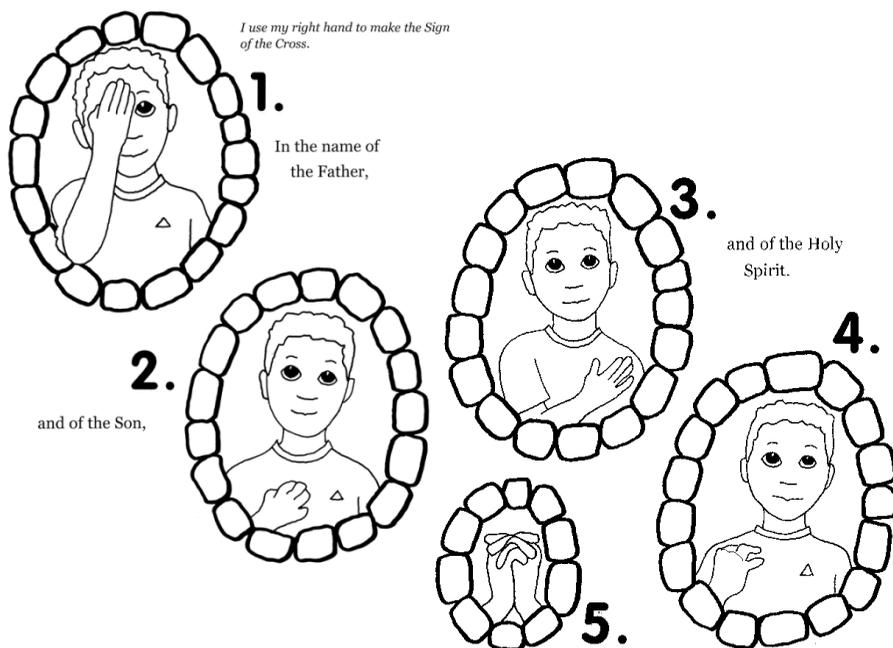
**Question. Why do we make the sign of the cross?**

“We make the sign of the cross to express two important mysteries of the Christian religion, the Blessed Trinity and the Redemption.

1. When we say. “In the name”, we express the truth that there is *only one God*; when we say, “of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost”, we express the truth that there are *three distinct Persons* in God. And when we make the form of the cross on ourselves, we express the truth that the Son of God, made man, redeemed us by His death on the cross.

By this sign we confess that we belong to the religion of the crucified Saviour. By it a Catholic makes a clear confession of faith; by it he is known.

2. By means of the sign of the cross we obtain *God’s blessing and protection from dangers both spiritual and physical....”* Ibid p393. (Italics in quotation)



In summary of the progressive papal background:

1. All who made a distinction in the nature of the Son from that of the Father, were declared to be heretics. They were declared incapable of

making wills or legacies. They were relieved of their offices, had their goods confiscated, and were exiled.

2. The Western part of the Empire was more concerned about crushing Arianism than Modalism and Sabbellianism, to make it absolutely clear there was no literal subordination between the Father and the Son.
3. The Eastern part of the Empire was more concerned with crushing Modalism and Sabbellianism, to make it absolutely clear the Father was not the Son, and the Son was not the Father.
4. Artists depicted both views of the Trinity, one as three separate Beings (opposing Modalism, but becoming three Gods); another as one Being with three faces (opposing Tritheism, but heathen in its concept).
5. Catholic writers have tried to explain the Trinity, but it remains a mystery. They teach that Jesus is begotten of the Father eternally, and is yet being begotten today. No subordination.
6. At the same time, the Father is believed to be the Unoriginated Original, the source of everything. Thus He is designated the first Person of the Trinity, the One who sent Jesus and the Spirit to the earth. This is subordination.
7. The doctrine of the Trinity is philosophical theology, and can be explained in many different ways.

## PAPAL DOCTRINE – TODAY

Although certain aspects of the doctrine of the Trinity were debated in the 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, and 6<sup>th</sup> centuries, the doctrine was ‘law’ from the very first creed at the Council of Nicaea.

**“In the space of fifteen years (Theodosius 4<sup>th</sup> century) promulgated at least fifteen severe edicts against the heretics, more especially against those who rejected the doctrine of the Trinity”.** Gibbon, quoted in ‘The Great Prophecies from Babylon to the Fall of Rome’, Chapter entitled The Catholic Faith Re-established’ by A T Jones p555.

The doctrine of the Trinity was included in the catechism that arose out of the Council of Trent (1545-1563), and from that time it has stood unchanged. In 1985, twenty years after the close of the Second Vatican Council, an extraordinary synod of Bishops met believing it was necessary to formulate a new catechism to preserve the teaching of the Second Vatican Council, and give new direction to the universal Church.

The New Catechism of 800 pages was first printed in 1992, and again in 1994, its teachings on the Trinity being identical to that of the Council of Trent, and the Councils of Nicaea and Chalcedon, sixteen hundred years earlier.

Pope John Paul 11 wrote in his book ‘Crossing the Threshold of Hope’, **“As for her (the Catholic Church), teaching it is necessary to go back to the entire first millennium, from the First Council of Nicaea to those of Ephesus and Chalcedon, and then finally to the Second Council of Nicaea, which evolved out of the Councils that preceded it.**

**All the Councils from the first millennium revolve around the Holy Trinity, including the procession of the Holy Spirit...”** Crossing the Threshold of Hope. Pope John Paul 11. p44.

The Catechism states, **“From the beginning, the revealed truth of the Holy Trinity has been at the very root of the Church’s living faith... (250) During the first centuries the Church sought to clarify its Trinitarian faith, both to deepen its own understanding of the faith, and to defend it against the errors that were deforming it. This clarification was the work of the early councils, aided by the theological work of the Church Fathers and sustained by the Christian people’s sense of the faith.”** New Catholic Catechism. p66.

What does the Catholic Church officially teach about the Triune God?

**“The Trinity is One. We do not confess three Gods, but one God in three persons, the ‘consubstantial Trinity’. The divine persons do not share the one divinity among themselves, but each of them is God whole and entire... each of the persons is that supreme reality, viz., the divine substance, essence or nature.”** Ibid p66.67. You will notice that controversial word ‘consubstantial’, (homouosios) again.

What is the meaning of that debated word today?

Does it mean absolutely one as taught by the Modalistic Monarchians and the Sabellians of the third century?

Is the God of the Catholic Church a sole Being who manifests Himself in three ways? Is it that old heathen concept of one Being with three heads?

Listen to the words of the Catechism. (254) **“The divine persons are really distinct from one another, ‘God is one but not solitary’** (Encyclical Fides Damasi DS71) **‘Father’, ‘Son’, ‘Holy Spirit’ are not simply names designating modalities of the divine being, for they are really distinct from one another. ‘He is not the Father who is the Son, nor is the Son he who is the Father, nor is the Holy Spirit he who is the Father or the Son.’** (Council of Toledo X1 AD675) New Catechism p67.

Note the key word *‘modalities’*. This specifically refers to the teaching of Modalistic Monarchianism, for as it says, **“they are really distinct from one another.”** The wording could not be plainer. **“God is one, but not in solitary.”**

We can be absolutely clear that the Catholic teaching of the Trinity consists of **“three divine persons”** who are **“one and the same God”**. My Catholic Faith Louis L Morrow p32. Never should we say that the Catholic Church believes in a Trinity that has ‘one body with three heads’. It is simply not true, despite paintings from the past.

Of course the word *‘consubstantial’* still causes confusion, for it certainly presents a sole Being with three modes of operation.

What the word *‘consubstantial’* really means to the theologians, no one really knows. It is still a debated issue. No theological dialogue has yet come up with a clear explanation of how three separate God-beings can be of the *same substance*, except it means *like substance*. But of course, the Nicæan opposition to Arianism would never allow this, even today.

The Catechism continues, (255) **“The divine persons are relative to one another. Because it does not divide the divine unity, the real distinction of the persons from one another resides solely in the relationships which relate them to one another.”** Ibid p67.

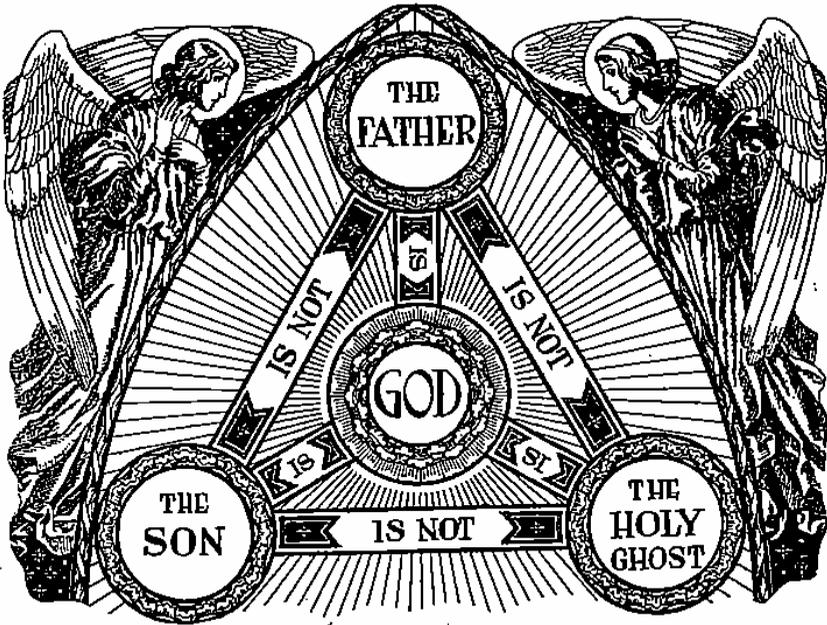
One explanation of this statement has been given already in this booklet, that ‘the Father’ cannot be a *Father*, except He has a Son, and likewise the Son cannot be a *Son*, except there be a Father. This is why their unity **“resides solely in the relationships which relate them to one another”**.

(266) **“Now this is the Catholic faith; We worship one God in the Trinity and the Trinity in unity, without either confusing the persons or dividing the substance; for the person of the Father is one, the Son’s is another, the Holy Spirit’s is another; but the Godhead of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit is one, their glory equal, their majesty coeternal.”** Athanasian Creed. New Catechism p. 67, 68. (The Athanasian Creed was not written by Athanasius who was at the Council of Nicaea, but an “unknown person of the 5<sup>th</sup> century”).

Cardinal Gibbons wrote, **“The Catholic Church teaches that there is but one God, who is infinite in knowledge, in power, in goodness, and in every other perfection; who created all things by His omnipotence, and governs them by His Providence. In this one God there are three distinct Persons – the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, who are perfectly equal to each other.”** Faith of our Fathers. Cardinal Gibbons. Chapter 1 p1.

The symbols below are from an occult website. Compare with the picture on the next page.





(This picture is from a Catholic book depicting the Trinity, a well-accepted symbol called the Triquetra -- equality, unity and eternity.)

As has already been shown, the New Catechism quotes the Athanasian Creed, which makes it absolutely clear that the Catholic belief is in three separate co-eternal Persons, but one God. It states further, “**Such as the Father is, such is the Son, and such is the Holy Spirit; the Father uncreated, the Son uncreated and the Holy Spirit uncreated; the father infinite, the Son infinite, and the Holy Spirit infinite; the Father eternal, the Son eternal, and the Holy Spirit eternal. And yet there are not three eternals, but one eternal, as also not three infinites, nor three uncreated, but one uncreated, and one infinite. So likewise, the Father is almighty, the Son almighty, and the Holy Spirit almighty; and yet not three almighties, but one almighty.**

**So the Father is God, the Son God, and the Holy Spirit God; and yet not three Gods, but one God. So the Father is Lord, the Son Lord, and the Holy Spirit Lord; and yet not three Lords but one Lord. For like as we are compelled by Christian truth to acknowledge every Person**

by Himself to be both God and Lord; so are we forbidden by the Catholic religion to say, there be three Gods or three Lords.

The Father is made of none, neither created nor begotten. The Son is of the Father alone, not made nor created, but begotten. The Holy Spirit is of the Father and the Son, not made nor created nor begotten but proceeding. So there is one Father not three Fathers, one Son not three Sons, and one Holy Spirit not three Holy Spirits. And in this Trinity there is nothing before or after, nothing greater or less, but the whole three Persons are coeternal together and coequal.

So that in all things, as is aforesaid, the Trinity in Unity and the Unity in Trinity is to be worshipped. He therefore who wills to be in a state of salvation, let him think thus of the Trinity....” Athanasian Creed. Early Fifth Century.

The Trinity is constantly brought to mind by the Catholic devotee. As has already been stated, “**in making the sign of the Cross, we invoke the Three Divine Persons, saying: In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.**” Small Catechism p24.

When saying the “Our Father”, or the Lord’s Prayer, the words are “**Our Father’ is Almighty God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, Who is the Father of all.**” Ibid p44.

What else is in honour of the Trinity?

Dr Tuberville in the Douay Catechism stated, “**It (Sunday) is a day dedicated by the apostles to the honor of the Most Holy Trinity, and in memory that Christ our Lord arose from the dead upon Sunday, sent down the Holy Ghost on a Sunday etc, and therefore is called the Lord’s day. It is also called Sunday from the old Roman denomination of Dies Solis, the day of the sun, to which it was sacred.**” Douay Catechism.

During the millennium celebrations of the Catholic Great Jubilee Year 2000, “*the aim will be to give glory to the Trinity, from whom everything in the world and in history comes and to whom everything returns.* This mystery is the focus of the three years of immediate preparation: from Christ and through Christ, in the Holy Spirit, to the Father. In this sense the Jubilee celebration makes present in an anticipatory way the goal and fulfilment of the life of each Christian

**and of the whole Church in the Triune God”.** The Third Millennium. Pope John Paul II. p78,79.

When the Image to the Beast institutes Sunday as the national and international day of worship, the Pope will make the Sign of the Cross over the legislation, and every person who honours this Papal day of rest will be bowing before the triune god of the Antichrist.

In summary of the Papal beliefs of today:

1. The teaching of the Trinity has not changed since the days of Nicaea, Chalcedon, Trent, Vatican Two, and it is now clearly placed in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, 800-page Catechism.
2. The Catholic Church officially teaches that there are three divine Persons in the one Godhead, all of the ‘same substance’ and co-eternal, rather than of ‘like substance’.
3. The Papacy definitely rejects Modalism, one God with three roles or modes of operation.
4. The Trinity is invoked in the Sign of the Cross.
5. The Trinity is invoked in the saying of the ‘Our Father’ or the Lord’s Prayer.
6. The keeping of Sunday is dedicated to the Trinity.
7. The main aim of the millennium celebration was to give glory and honour to the Trinity, the central pillar of the Roman Catholic Church.

## PROTESTANT BELIEF -- TODAY

According to the prophet John, the Roman Catholic Church is represented as “**Mystery Babylon the great, the *mother* of harlots and abominations of the earth**”. John 17:5.

Being a mother, we would expect the daughters to have similar teachings, and they do, for both ‘mother and daughters’ all worship the same triune God.

Without exception, the main-stream churches stand on the creed of Nicaea and Chalcedon.

Every Sunday, the Lutheran Church affirms its stand on the doctrine of the Trinity as “**the Nicæan creed is repeated by the congregation.**” Lutheran Pastor in Melbourne.

The Baptist Church “**teaches the same as the Catholic Church**”. The only difference from mainstream is that “**we are self-governing and the people are the guide.**” Baptist Union Office representative. When asked about one God with three modes, the answer was, “**Oh Modalism is an old heresy.**” Ibid. The Independent Baptist Church believes in “**three co-equal, distinct, individual, separate Beings, who are all one God**”. Baptist Independent Pastor in Melbourne.

A spokesman from the Churches of Christ in Australia said, “**We have no credal position due to the divisive nature of creeds. We believe in exploring the Scripture in the ecumenical Christian tradition**”. As a result, he said, there is “**a range of perspectives**”, and a number of different positions. “**Most members believe in the Trinity by default more than research. Many would say, ‘I believe in God and Jesus, don’t confuse me with the Trinity’.**”

When asked if there was a possibility some may find Arianism in the church’s freedom to search the Scriptures, the faculty member interviewed laughed and said, “**Well Arianism is already here with a new name – the ‘Jesus Seminar’ -- a modern form of Arianism very popular in the United States.**” Faculty member of the Churches of Christ (Australia) Theological College.

A minister of the Presbyterian Church said plainly, “**We are orthodox; Chalcedon of the 5<sup>th</sup> century, and always have been. We are one of the churches of the Reformation and stand on Nicaea.**” Telephone interview.

The Uniting Church does not have a paragraph relating to the Trinity in its Basis of Union statement, however, it is Trinitarian in principle. According to the Moderator of Victoria, **“We follow the doctrine of the Trinity in the tradition of the churches”**. She said, **“God reveals Himself in three ways: God the Creator and Father, God the Son, Jesus Christ; and God, the Holy Spirit.”**

In answer to the question if this was Modalism, or one God in three modes, she said, **“No, there are three co-equal, co-eternal, co-existent, consubstantial Persons. They are separate, but somehow all present within each other.”**

A theologian from Ormond College stated that **“the early pronouncement of the Nicene Creed tried to avoid heresies. It is a basic statement, but it must be interpreted. Most church members do not explore it deeply. There are not three *Beings* in the Trinity, that is Tritheism, which is three Gods. But it is correct to say there are three *Persons* in the Trinity. Modalism is certainly rejected.”** Theologian, Ormond College. Uniting Church.

When union took place (between the Methodist, Congregational, and Presbyterian Churches), there was **“no debate on the subject of the Trinity as they were so similar”**. Victorian Moderator of the Uniting Church. This was confirmed by the Ormond College theologian.

The Wesleyan Church stands with John Wesley in the Methodist tradition, believing in one God: the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Wesleyan College, Victoria.

An Assemblies of God representative stated that they are Trinitarian, **“the same as main-stream – Catholics, Baptist, Luther. We have always believed in the Trinity since we first started in 1906.”** Assemblies of God Office

The Anglican Church believes in the Trinity, and at particular services, **“the Creed of Saint Athanasius is appointed to be read.”** Book of Common Prayer p48 under Morning Prayer.

The Thirty Nine Articles of Religion states,

**I. “Of Faith in the Holy Trinity. There is but one living and true God, everlasting, without body, parts, or passions; of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness; the Maker, and Preserver of all things both visible and invisible. And in unity of this Godhead there be three**

Persons, of one substance, power, and eternity; the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

**II. Of the Word or Son of God, which was made very Man.** The Son, which is the Word of the Father, begotten from everlasting of the Father, the very and eternal God, and of one substance with the Father, took Man's nature in the womb of the blessed Virgin, of her substance; so that two whole and perfect Natures, that is to say, the Godhead and Manhood, were joined together in one Person, never to be divided, whereof is one Christ, very God, and very Man; who truly suffered, was crucified, dead and buried, to reconcile his Father to us, and to be a sacrifice, not only for original guilt, but also for all actual sins of men.....

**V. Of the holy Ghost.** The Holy Ghost, proceeding from the Father and the Son, is of one substance, majesty, and glory, with the Father and the Son, very and eternal God.” Ibid. Articles of Religion p376.

In the Anglican Church, Trinity Sunday is eight weeks after Easter. On this day the collect is, “Almighty and everlasting God, who hast given unto us thy servants grace by the confession of a true faith to acknowledge the glory of the eternal Trinity, and in the power of the Divine Majesty to worship the Unity; We beseech thee, that thou wouldest keep us steadfast in this faith, and evermore defend us from all adversaries, who livest and reignest, one God, world without end. Amen.” Common Prayer p. 124.

It was interesting to note that those interviewed were well-versed in church history, and in their stand for the Trinity, referred back to Nicaea and Chalcedon as the authoritative basis for their belief.

One theologian objected to my calling the Council of Nicaea a Catholic council, and that it was ecumenical, consisting of the *world church* from the East and the West of the Roman Empire. It is true it was ecumenical, but history makes it very clear that it was initiated by the Catholic segment of the church for the purpose of crushing Arianism.

The Protestant churches who broke away from the Roman Catholic Church during the reformation of the 16th Century still believed many of the forms and credal errors of the papacy. The doctrine of the Trinity as well as Sunday sacredness mark mainstream Protestantism as still under Rome's authority.

Catholicism recognises that these doctrines are not explicitly taught in the Scriptures. The Church states, **“Our opponents sometimes claim that no belief should be held dogmatically which is not explicitly stated in Scripture (ignoring that it is only on the authority of the Church we recognize certain Gospels and not others as true). But the Protestant churches have themselves accepted such dogmas as the Trinity for which there is no such precise authority in the Gospels.”** Catholic Encyclopedia p49. (Bracket in quotation)

The Encyclopedia Britannica states, **“Biblical Basis – neither the word ‘Trinity’ nor the explicit doctrine as such appears at any one place in the Bible, the ecclesiastical dogma in an effort to unite in one confession all the several strains of Biblical description of God. Fundamental to that description in both the Old and the New is the monotheistic credo summarized in the Shema of Deut 6:4 ‘Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord’”. Neither Jesus nor his early followers intended anything they said about their new revelation to contradict that credo.”** Encyclopedia Britannica (1976) p241.

A lecturer at Andrews University, Michigan stated that **“some will tend to resist this doctrine (of the Trinity) because it is not found expressly stated in the Scriptures”**. Adventist Review. Aug 20. 1993. p8.

According to Sir William Whiston, there was **“a greater number of interpolations and corruptions brought into the Scriptures by the Athanasians, and relating to the Doctrine of the Trinity, than in any other case whatsoever.”** Second letter to the Bishop of London from Sir William Whiston. 1719 p15.

In summary of the Protestant beliefs of today:

1. According to Rome, she is the ‘mother’ of the Protestant churches and is at present calling them ‘back home’.

2. All the mainline churches of Protestantism stand on the Nicæan and Athanasian creeds.
3. Protestants still accept some of the dogmas of Rome, such as the Trinity and Sunday sacredness. Rome challenges Protestantism that if they stand with her in two beliefs, they should stand in everything. Little by little, through ecumenism, the churches are complying. This can be seen in church union activities, such as combined services, prayers for unity, calling ministers priests, and Holy Communion the Eucharist, the elevation of Mary, genuflection and many other subtle ways.
4. Rome's challenge is: 'There is no Bible basis for the Trinity doctrine'. Many Protestants agree with her, but still cling to the creeds.
5. Unfortunately, the Protestant churches have ceased to be '*protestant*', a name derived from the protest of the princes during the Reformation.

## SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS

The Seventh-day Adventist Church professes to be Trinitarian today, however, this was not always so. Their pioneers rejected the Trinity in the strongest terms, calling it “**unscriptural**” and “**the old trinitarian absurdity**”. James White 1846 and 1852.

The Trinity they were denouncing was Modalism (God is one in solitary), Creator of the world, in due time becoming Jesus, and later the Holy Spirit. Said Joseph Bates, “**Respecting the trinity, I concluded that it was an impossibility for me to believe that the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, was also the Almighty God, the Father, one and the same Being...**” Autobiography of Joseph Bates 1868. (Obviously Modalism was the teaching of the Catholic Church in the eastern part of the United States during those years)

However, the Adventists also rejected other forms of Trinitarian teaching, believing instead the “**there is one God the Father**” (1 Cor 8:6), the supreme God of the universe, the One Daniel refers to as the Ancient of Days. Daniel 7:9. They also believed the Father bore a Son in His own likeness, “**the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His person**”. Hebrews 1:3.

Thus, the Son was the *eternal* Christ, not co-eternal with the Father, but as opposed to becoming a Son at His birth in Bethlehem, which is believed today. In their early days, Adventists believed God had a Son to send; now He is one of three co-equal and co-eternal Persons, one of whom made a decision to become the Son.

It is in this area of Sonship that Seventh-day Adventists differed from Jehovah’s Witnesses. Both rejected the Trinity, but, while Adventists believed Christ was begotten of the Father, Jehovah’s Witnesses believed He was the first created Being of the Father. (The latter group remains firm in this belief today)

According to William Johnsson, editor of the Adventist Review, Seventh-day Adventists do not believe as they used to regarding Christ’s Sonship. “**Adventist beliefs have changed over the years under the impact of ‘present truth’.** Most startling is the teaching regarding Jesus Christ, our Saviour and Lord. Many of the pioneers, including James White, J.N. Andrews, Uriah Smith and J.H. Waggoner, held to an Arian or semi-Arian view – that is, the Son at some point in time before the

**creation of our world was generated by the Father. Likewise, the Trinitarian understanding of God, now part of our Fundamental Beliefs, was not generally held by the early Adventists.”** Adventist Review. Jan 6. 1994 p10.11.

Said George Knight, professor of church history at Andrews University, **“Most of the founders of Seventh-day Adventism would not be able to join the church today if they had to subscribe to the denomination’s Fundamental Beliefs. Most specifically, most would not be able to agree to belief number 2, which deals with the doctrine of the Trinity.”** Ministry magazine. Oct 1993 p10.

The suggestion that Seventh-day Adventist beliefs should change was certainly not the opinion of Ellen White, prophet to the Church, who, in the early days, was regarded as having an authoritative voice. She said, **“As a people, we are to stand firm on the platform of eternal truth that has withstood test and trial. We are to hold to the sure pillars of our faith. The principles of truth that God has revealed to us are our only true foundation. They have made us what we are. The lapse of time has not lessened their value...”** 1 Selected Messages p201.

In 1904, when Dr J.H. Kellogg was tearing down the pillars of Adventism, Ellen White wrote, **“What influence is it that would lead men at this stage of our history to work in an underhand, powerful way to tear down the foundations of our faith -- the foundation that was laid at the beginning of our work by prayerful study of the Word and by revelation? Upon this foundation we have been building for the past fifty years. Do you wonder that when I see the beginning of a work that would remove some of the pillars of our faith, I have something to say?”** Ibid p207.208. The main issue at that time was over the personality of God, Christ and the Spirit. Ibid p201-3.

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, not even Ellen White would have been able to join the Seventh-day Adventist Church, an interesting proposition! At this present time, there is a movement going through Adventism to return to the pioneer belief on the subject of the Godhead. Many are returning because they believe that position was according to the Scriptures.

Unfortunately, there is a charge being thrown at those who hold to the pioneer position today – that a begotten Son could not be divine. But this is a false accusation. The pioneer belief acknowledged strongly the divinity of Christ, the inheritor of the divine attributes of His Father,

including His love, mercy, justice, omnipotence, omniscience, omnipresence, immortality. These divine capabilities made Him equal to His Father in nature. **“In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”** John 1:1.10. Hebrews 1:8.

Those who agree with the pioneers believe Christ was given an exalted position by His Father. God **“invested (His Son) with authority to command the heavenly host... (the) Son would carry out His (Father’s) will and His purposes.... Christ was acknowledged sovereign of heaven, His power and authority to be the same as that of God Himself.”** Signs of the Times. Jan 9 1879. Patriarchs and Prophets, Chapter 1.

Adventist understanding of the Holy Spirit in the past was of an omnipresent Spirit, an integral part of both the Father and the Son. **“The greatness of God is to us incomprehensible. ‘The Lord’s throne is in heaven’; yet by His Spirit He is everywhere present. He has an intimate knowledge of, and a personal interest in, all the works of His hand.”** Education p132. Psalm 139:7-10.

The Son inherited His Father’s Spirit, and therefore has His Father’s omnipresent ability. When the Spirit convicts of sin, guides, and comforts, it is Christ’s own personal presence working in the life.

**“The work of the holy Spirit is immeasurably great. It is from this source that power and efficiency come to the worker for God; and the holy Spirit is the Comforter, as the personal presence of Christ to the soul.”** The 1888 Materials. p1075.

**“He (Christ) would represent Himself as present in all places by His Holy Spirit, as the Omnipresent.”** Manuscript Release 1084 p23.24.

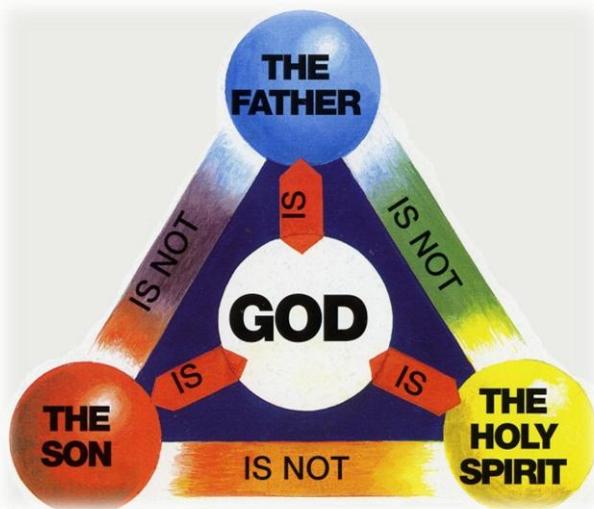
Today Adventists believe the Holy Spirit is the third Person of a Trinitarian co-eternal and co-equal Deity as stated in their 27 Fundamental Beliefs. **“From eternity God the Holy Spirit lived within the Godhead as the third member. The Father, Son, and Spirit are equally self-existent. Though each is equal, an economy of function operates within the Trinity.”** Ibid p61.

A challenge was given over the radio in 1928 by an old-time Seventh-day Adventist regarding the pioneer view of the Holy Spirit in the following words.

“The world rejected Jesus of Nazareth in the flesh, even though they could see Him with the natural eye. Much more will the world reject Him coming in the Spirit, invisible to the natural eye and only recognized by the eye of faith.

And here I pause to emphasize this fact: professed Christians who have not learned to behold Christ in the Spirit, and to deal with the invisible Christ with the same sense of reality with which the world deals with visible persons, are still living on the worldly plane. They are still of the world. Here is the test for the reality of our Christianity.” W.W. Prescott.

The illustration below is taken from a Seventh-day Adventist book entitled, “The New Pictorial Aid” by Frank Breaden. It is an exact copy of that used by the Catholic and Protestant churches. (See pages 19 and 28 of this booklet)



*The New Pictorial Aid for Bible Study, p. 75.*

At the 1980 General Conference Session, the Seventh-day Adventist Church voted a belief in an eternal Father, an eternal Son, and an eternal Spirit. “While the Godhead is not one in person, God is one in purpose, mind, and character. This oneness does not obliterate the

**distinct personalities of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Nor does the separateness of personalities within the Deity destroy the monotheistic thrust of Scripture, that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are one God.”** 27 Fundamental Beliefs p23.

When reading fundamental beliefs No.2 (The Godhead), No.3 (God the Father), No.4 (God the Son), No.5 (God the Holy Spirit), one can not equate the Seventh-day Adventist form of the Trinity with the Catholic or Protestant teaching of ‘one substance’, nor is it Modalism, a sole God. Instead, it borders on Tri-theism, although this is denied in their writings. Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology. Vol 12. p150.

A more recent statement says, **“Systematically distrustful and critical of traditional theological positions, Adventists were determined to build doctrines on the basis of Scripture alone. The difficulties implicit in this fresh approach may account for the scant number of Adventist statements on the doctrine of God.”** Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology. Vol 12. p148

A summary of Seventh-day Adventist beliefs:

1. The pioneers believed in one supreme God, the Father, and Christ, the Son of God, begotten at some point in eternity, the “express image” of God, a totally divine Being. They believed the Holy Spirit to be the personal omnipresence of both the Father and the Son.
2. In approximately 1920, Trinitarian teachings began to appear in their writings.
3. In 1957, Adventist leaders affirmed their Trinitarian belief when challenged by evangelical leaders on many anti-trinitarian references in their books. (This confirmation gave them acceptance and status as a mainline church. Many books have been changed to show a Trinitarian belief)
4. At the 1980 General Conference session, it was voted that **“the being of God (is) an essential co-primordiality of three co-equal, co-eternal, non-originated persons.”** Handbook. Vol 12. p150.
5. They acknowledge Scriptural evidence is minimal.

## THE CHALLENGE OF THIS BOOKLET

Obviously ‘Who’ we worship is absolutely vital to our salvation. We may be a Christian in every way, even worshipping on the right day of the week, but bowing before a false god.

The question has been asked, **“Are we worshipping the true God as He is revealed in His Word, in Christ, in nature, or are we adoring some philosophical idol enshrined in His place?”** Gospel Workers p92.

It is a serious question.

Sadly, with so many different understandings of God, His Son, and the Holy Spirit, some Christians *must* be worshipping a false god! Paul has warned that there is **“another Jesus.... another Spirit.... another gospel...”** 2 Corinthians 11:4

Believe them not.

**“There are many who are crying out for the living God, longing for the divine presence. Philosophical theories or literary essays, however brilliant, cannot satisfy the heart. The assertions and inventions of men are of no value. Let the word of God speak to the people. Let those who have heard only traditions and human theories and maxims hear the voice of Him whose word can renew the soul unto everlasting life.”** Christ’s Object Lessons. p40.

What about you dear Reader?

God tells us in loving terms, **“And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart.”** Jeremiah 29:13.

