

The Holy Trinity
A mystery
And Reality



"Thy Word
Is
Truth"



The Apostolic Faith

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THE HOLY TRINITY A MYSTERY AND REALITY

IN the spiritual realm, where God and man interact, there are mysteries far beyond the finite mind. One of the profoundest mysteries of Scripture is the Unity of the Godhead – God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, separate yet inexplicably united in one.

When the Holy Ghost inspired the “holy men of God” to write the things of God’s Word, He evidently did not deem it necessary to move them to explain the mysterious nature of the Holy Trinity. Apparently, it is not vital to man’s salvation from sin that he be able to understand or to explain how it is possible for three Persons in the Godhead to be distinguishable and yet inseparably united. But the Scriptures warn that it is vital that a man believe what the Word of God definitely declares: “Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief” (Hebrews 3: 12).

Scriptural Evidence

In the account of creation we read of a plurality operating:

“In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.... And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.”

It is recorded that “God said, Let us make man in **our image**, after **our likeness**.” He was evidently in conference with Divine Beings. There was one image – “our image” – of the likeness and nature of those who were in that conference. The name Elohim, the Creator, is in the plural number It occurs in the first chapter of Genesis thirty-two times.

The Hebrew word here translated God is “Elohim,” and is in the plural form. It is the form almost invariably used throughout the Bible. It means “God.” The “him” gives the word the plural form. That is the way the Hebrew plurals are formed. We have in the very name itself the plurality of the Godhead expressed. But, strange to say, with the plural subject “Elohim,” the singular verb “created” is used.

According to the rules of grammar, that would not be correct; but it is perfectly theological, because although “Elohim” expresses the plurality of agents, the word “create” expresses the unity of action, that they all act as one. Here we have the plurality in one.

The Trinity is indicated when Jesus was baptized in the Jordan:

“And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him:

“And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased” (Matthew 3:16,17).

In a single sentence Paul sets the three Persons alongside one another in his benediction on the Corinthian Church:

“The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, *be with you all. Amen*” (II Corinthians 13:14).

Saint Peter, too, acknowledged the eternal Trinity in his salutation to the churches and believers when he called the people the elect:

“Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 1:2).

In His Great Commission, Christ gave the instruction:

“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost” (Matthew 28:19).

If He had meant that they should baptize in the name of “Jesus only” He could have said, “In my name,” but He specifically mentioned the three Persons of the Trinity.

Saint John writes:

“For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.

“And there are three that bear witness in earth, the spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one” (1 John 5:7, 8).

The Godhead

The word “Trinity” – the triunity of the Godhead – is not employed in the Scriptures, but is so definitely implied that only a willful unbeliever can deny it. Neither is the word “Persons” used. That word was evidently the nearest image the human mind could conceive of in the mysterious relationship of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost. It has been suggested that perhaps the word “Persons” is too concrete and fixed as the human mind conceives it today; and for that reason the term “Personalities” is preferable. However, instead of either of those terms, the Scriptures speak of the “Godhead.”

“Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device” (Acts 17:29).

And, again, we read:

“For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, *even* his

eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse” (Romans 1:20).

All Three are one God as to essence, but three Persons in individuality.

Perfect Submission

Jesus Christ did not hesitate to claim equality with the Father:

“Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God” (Philippians 2:6).

In His mission and in His obedience to His Heavenly Father, He made Himself subordinate but not in His nature. He identified Himself with the Father, saying, “If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also” (John 14: 7).

The Jews resented His claim to equality with God:

“Because he not only had broken the sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God” (John 5:18).

Paul the Apostle wrote:

“For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily” (Col. 2:9).

Jesus prayed:

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

We learn, therefore, that each Person or Personality of the Godhead is co-equal, and co-eternal. They are co-equal and to each is to be ascribed the same attributes, adoration, worship, and confidence. But they are not three Gods: one God in a threefold Personality, in an insoluble Divine Unity, operating in complete harmony.

Perfect Cooperation

Each of these Personalities has His holy OFFICE WORK – each has a part in the work of salvation but all work as a Unity. We read that the Father sent the Son; the Son sent the Holy Spirit; the Holy Spirit draws men unto God the Father, and they are made new creatures in Christ Jesus.

The Savior said He would send the Comforter from the Father:

“But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, *even* the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me” (John 15:26).

We are told, too, that God “created all things by Jesus Christ” (Ephesians 3: 9).

The Father and Son work through the Spirit. The Spirit is the Author and Interpreter of the Word of God. He is the Teacher who enlightens the soul about the truths of God, and draws him unto God.

The Son is the Redeemer, the Light of the world, and Intercessor at the Father’s throne.

So perfect is the cooperation that the Father requires all men to honor the Son as they honor Him. Christ taught that the Father is to be worshiped, and accepted worship Himself.

Jesus Christ warned that the Holy Ghost was not to be sinned against:

“Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy *against* the *Holy* Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men” (Matthew 12:31).

Names Applied

The names of the Personalities of the Trinity are interchangeably applied. God Elohim (plural in form), the Putter Forth of power; God El-Shaddai, the Almighty; God Adonai, the Lord; God Elion, the Most High, are names employed.

The Prophet Isaiah declares the Son to be:

“Wonderful, Counseller, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace” (Isaiah 9:6).

Speaking of the Son of God, the inspired John said:

“And we are in him that is true, *even* in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life” (1 John 5:20).

In her joy, the Virgin Mary exclaimed:

“And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour” (Luke 1:47).

As the names of the Trinity are interchangeably used, so the order of their mention or listing varies.

In Matthew 28: 19 the order is Father, Son, and the Holy Ghost. In Romans 15: 30 it is the Lord Jesus Christ, the Spirit, and God. In II Corinthians 13: 14 the order is the Lord Jesus Christ, God, and the Holy Ghost. And in Ephesians 4: 4-6 the order is the Spirit, the Lord, and the Father.

The reality of a Holy Trinity is so plainly revealed in the Scriptures that unbelief must be willful and stubborn. The excuse is offered that one cannot believe what one cannot understand or rationalize. How inconsistent unbelievers can be! They readily accept the mysteries all around them – time, light, wind, mind, matter, life, electricity – which even the greatest scientists are unable to explain, and are less and less positive in their statements about the “laws of nature.”

It is the promise of Jesus that “if any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrines, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself” (John 7:17). But if a man hardens his heart against the truth and refuses to have his understanding enlightened by the Holy Spirit, that man cannot know the deep things of God:

“But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know *them*, because they are spiritually discerned” (1 Corinthians 2:14).

It is a matter of revelation and of faith. The Word of God declares it. It is of faith because it transcends human understanding.