

**triadic** ground plan and **triadic** formulas. They do not speak in abstract terms of nature, substance, person, relation, mission, but they present in their own ways the ideas that are behind these terms. They give us no formal or formulated doctrine of the Trinity, no explicit teaching that in one God there are three co-equal divine persons. But they do give us an elemental trinitarianism, the data from which such a formal doctrine of the Triune God may be formulated.

The underlined fraction of the foregoing paragraph is **ALL** that is cited in *The Trinity* booklet! (p6) By citing *only* this sentence, they purposefully intend to mislead you to believe that Fortman believed *the opposite* of what he states! The same is true of other Trinitarian sources found in this booklet—they have all been judiciously “edited” to make it *appear* as though they support the *WT* contentions when, in fact, they do not.

### Heretical Bedfellows

The Watchtower Society doesn’t let you know that many people and publications quoted in *The Trinity* booklet are *liberal* and *deny*, to one degree or another, *the authority of the Bible*. For example, they quote Hans Kung: (p4)

Catholic theologian Hans Kung observes in his book *Christianity and the World Religions* that the Trinity is one reason why the churches have been unable to make any significant headway with non-Christian peoples. He states: “Even well-informed Muslims simply cannot follow, as the Jews have thus far failed to grasp, the idea of the Trinity...”

“Catholic theologian” Hans Kung was censored by the Vatican in 1979—10 years before the *WT* used him here—for his *extreme liberal views*. Kung was one of the bigger names behind the *Parliament of the World’s Religions* that was held in Chicago in 1993. The intent of the *Parliament* was to proclaim the unity and essential *equality of all religions* and religious expressions—from Hindus and Muslims, to Liberal New Age “Christians,” and decidedly anti-Christian Wiccans. It could better be referred to as the *Parliament of the World’s False Religions*, as biblical Christianity was not formally represented there. They were united by their absolute denial of absolute truth. It was a very “colorful” extravaganza with the Dalai Lama himself showing up with many of his orange-robed followers, along with large herds of liberal clergymen—Catholic and protestant—holding hands and preaching “*tolerance*” for all religious views. In fact, the only “religious expression” that was *rejected* (and openly ridiculed) by all those assembled worthies was *biblical Christianity* with its “intolerant” insistence that there is such a thing as truth and that Jesus Christ is the only way to the Father. So while Kung does, in fact, deny the Trinity doctrine, he also denies the Bible is exclusively the Word of God and that Christianity is the only true religion!

This background explains Kung’s remark about the Muslims and the Jews failure to “grasp the idea of the Trinity.” To Hans Kung, Islam and Judaism are merely alternate religious “paths” that are every bit as valid as Christianity—*Liberal* Christianity, that is. To Kung, biblical Christianity is a backward (and even dangerous) religious expression that’s

a threat to worldwide religious unity. Ecumenism is Kung’s god, with “tolerance” his only commandment. Kung’s “god” is *not* THE God of the Bible, nor is his “Christianity” the Christianity of the Bible. Everyone has the right to believe as they choose, but any and all religious paths *do not* lead to the true God! If Christianity is not the *only* true and *only* “path” to the true God, then Jesus Christ himself was nothing but a *liar*. He’s either the TRUTH as he claimed to be—“I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me” (*John 14:6*)—or he’s just another false prophet! Judaism rejects the Trinity because it rejects Christ. As for the Muslims, they—like the poor deceived Jehovah’s Witnesses—are following a false prophet, and it’s one of their highest religious duties to reject the Trinity.

Adolph Harnack (p11) is also a highly unreliable source in commenting on biblical issues, since he was another theological Liberal. Harnack was skeptical about John’s authorship of his Gospel as well as doubting the authorship of other New Testament books.<sup>1</sup> Of course, it’s an easy matter to deny the Trinity once you’ve denied the Word of God!

Arthur Weigall, another Liberal quoted in the booklet (p6), wrote *The Paganism in our Christianity*. He denies the Virgin Birth of Christ, as well as the Resurrection, and states:

No biblical scholar of any standing today, whether he be a clergyman, a minister, or a layman, accepts the entire New Testament as authentic; and all admit that many errors, misunderstandings and absurdities have crept into the story of Christ’s life and other matters. (pp30-31)

Of course, Weigall means that no *Liberal* scholar accepts the entire NT as authentic, while a very large number of Conservative scholars do. But why would a religious organization such as the Watchtower—that pays lip service to the authority and authenticity of the Bible—bed itself with Liberal scholars who deny the Scriptures? The answer is that Liberal scholars are the only ones who agree with the *WT*’s position on so many doctrinal issues! And the Society knows that the average Jehovah’s Witness (and the folks they will meet at the doorstep) will have no idea that many of these quoted scholars *deny the Scriptures*. Such dishonesty *is not* unusual for the *WT*—it’s been their *modus operandi* for many years. However, the *WT*’s Governing Body in Brooklyn must be a bit envious of Liberal scholars; after all, they work very hard *twisting* the Scriptures to reflect their viewpoint, while Liberal scholars simply *declare* as “*inauthentic*” the Scriptures they don’t like!

Another Liberal quoted (p12), Levi L. Paine, states in his book, *A Critical History of the Evolution of Trinitarianism*: (p269)

Is the Bible not to be reckoned among the media of divine revelation? Certainly; but not in the way in which the old theology would reckon it. Its presuppositions of a divine miraculous origin and character, differentiating the Bible from all other religious literature, can no longer be admitted.

The very name of Paine’s book (not to be found in *The Trinity* booklet!), *A Critical History of the Evolution of Trinitarianism*, tells where he’s coming from. But here again, we have another

example of the *WT* giving credence to the viewpoint of someone who dishonors and rejects the Bible!

Next, we have their use of Unitarians Alvan Lamson (*The Church of the First Three Centuries*) (p7) and Andrews Norton (*A Statement of Reasons*) to prove their case that Trinitarianism is not true. (p11) Does anyone think a *UNITARIAN* would agree that *TRINITARIANISM* is correct! The *WT* has the right to quote Unitarians in their booklet, but it certainly would be nice if they *identified them* as being Unitarians, so we could take that fact into consideration as we read what they have to say. Why? *because Unitarians deny the authority of the Bible!* Could it be possible that the Watchtower *does not know* Unitarians reject the Word of God? No! They are well aware of what Unitarians believe! In the 1945 Watchtower book, *Theocratic Aid to Kingdom Publishers*, they state about Unitarians: (p354)

In rightly rejecting the “trinity” fable, they go to an unscriptural extreme in the other direction. They believe that not only was Jesus just a man but he was born naturally to Joseph and Mary. They do not recognize Jesus’ miraculous birth nor his death as sacrificial. They believe salvation comes through human endeavors along character-developing lines...The Bible is held in high esteem, but it is not considered as God’s inspired and infallible Word. (*See also Awake! 11-08-52*)

Again, *why* would a supposedly Bible-based religion give credence to the doctrinal views of people *whom they know reject the Word of God?* If you write a booklet on quilt making, it doesn’t matter if you quote Unitarians, Liberals, or others who reject the Bible. But if your subject is *Bible doctrine*, it then becomes rather *essential* to quote people who believe that the Bible, in its entirety, is the Word of God at the very least!

### The Trinity—“Confusing & Beyond Reason”

Many sincere believers have found it [the Trinity] to be *confusing, contrary to normal reason*, unlike anything in their experience. How, they ask, could the Father be God, Jesus be God, and the holy spirit be God, yet there be not three Gods but only one God? (*The Trinity booklet p4*)

They state: “*God is not a God of confusion*” (1 Cor 14:33) and say,

In view of that statement, would God be responsible for a doctrine about himself that is *so confusing* that even Hebrew, Greek, and Latin scholars cannot really explain it? (p5)

One pleasant aspect of cult leadership is the ability to create a god who “*makes sense*” and *confuses no one*. Of course, such a god would have to be very small and uncomplicated—eternality, omniscience, omnipresence, and omnipotence would have to go, which is exactly why the cults throw out those confusing “inconveniences” along with God’s tri-personal nature. But if reason is our sole guide, is it reasonable to insist that *the Creator of the universe* must, of necessity, be like anything within man’s experience and *fully* understandable and explainable by our finite minds? Of course not! Cultic doctrines are born of Bible “difficulties”—things taught in the Bible that are beyond the capacity of human yardsticks or scales to measure and weigh. One stumbling block to understanding the full deity of Christ is the fact that the Father

generated the Son, and yet, Father and Son are co-eternal. There was never a time when the Son did not exist. Is that *impossible* or just *beyond our finite understanding?*

It’s funny that we are all perfectly willing to accept the fact that fire possesses properties unlike the properties of human nature, even though the average person has no idea of how it “works.” Here’s an experiment you can try: You’ll need two candles—one to represent the Father and one the Son. You can add a third to represent the Holy Spirit if you like. Ignore the candles—it’s the flames we are examining. Light the first candle, and then see how the original flame can generate another upon the second candle. One flame so easily becomes two, *yet the first is not diminished*. Also, the fire making up the original flame is no “older” than the fire on the generated one. *They are the same exact age*. Now put the flames together again. Impossible! How can the two be one? Yet, we all believe it. We do not say that fire *cannot exist as it does*, insisting that it *must fit* within the framework of what is possible for human beings. Fire does not possess human nature, which explains why it acts more like fire than like a man! I am not saying that God is fire; only that fire is a well-known entity that does not conform to our nature, yet it is not rejected for that reason. But imagine how difficult it would be to try to explain fire to someone who was unfamiliar with it. God is what he is. We do not have the luxury of making up a god that *must operate* within the bounds of our limited nature. We are finite. God is infinite. Just as a finite human parent begets a finite human child, an infinite Eternal Father begets an infinite Eternal Son. The true God does not possess the nature of man and so does not have to conform to our “way of being.” God is to be accepted just as he has revealed himself in the Bible—and the Bible teaches that there is *only one God*, yet, without flinching, asserts that there are *three divine persons* within that Godhead.

What about 1 Corinthians 14:33? Does it really teach the nature of God *must be easy* for us to understand? No. As is normal with their *twisting of Scripture*, the *WT*’s misuse of this passage becomes apparent when we look at the context. The chapter is addressing the problem of *chaos* in the church services—people speaking in tongues that no one there could interpret, or rudely speaking out of turn or when others were speaking. Paul is reprimanding this behavior, saying that God does not approve of confusion in the service that should be sober and worshipful. As we read in the New International Version, “God is not a God of *disorder*, but of peace.” As far as doctrine goes, however, Peter outright states that some of Paul’s teachings are “*hard to be understood*, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest [*twist, distort*]...to their own destruction” (2 Peter 3:16). So, just because some doctrines may be hard to understand, even to the point where false teachers will distort them, doesn’t make them untrue.

Finally, the *WT* says in *Reasoning from the Scriptures* of the “eternal” God, that just because our mind *cannot fully comprehend the doctrine* and finds it *unreasonable* is **no reason to**

**reject God's eternal nature** (p148). Then, they ask rhetorically, “Should we really expect to understand everything about a Person who is so great that he could bring into existence the universe, with all its intricate design and stupendous size?” (p149). You know—*when they're right, they're right!*

### The Ante-Nicene Fathers & the Watchtower

The *WT* dances the “two-story two-step” when it comes to the Ante-Nicene Fathers. Story #1 is employed when it seems convenient to infer that the early Fathers were the “early Christians” who would *drastically disagree doctrinally* with the Church of today. The *WT* needs this connection to the early days—some connection to Jesus and his apostles—so *they* do not appear as just another Johnny-come-lately, 19th-century, anti-Christian, religious cult. *The Trinity* booklet (p7) contains a fine example of Story #1 which presents a list of Ante-Nicene Fathers and makes it *appear*—through linguistic sleight-of-hand—that these men, who were closer in time to Jesus, believed pretty much as the *WT* does today.

Story #2 comes into play when it becomes necessary to explain why the *WT*—calling itself a Christian organization—rejects all essential Christian doctrine as taught for 1900+ years. This is when the *WT* claims that the people who came on the scene soon after the death of the apostles (the Ante-Nicene Fathers!) *apostatized* from the true Christian faith—which the Watchtower Society thankfully “*restored*” when they arrived in the late 19th century. These Ante-Nicene *apostates* are to blame for the infusion of Pagan philosophy into the Church, at which point the Christian Church became “Christendom.” Story #1, though, is our focus for the remaining lines of this tract—that the Ante-Nicene Fathers believed similarly to the *WT* when it comes to the nature of God and Christ. First, there is **Justin Martyr**. The booklet states: (p7)

The Ante-Nicene Fathers were acknowledged to have been leading religious teachers in the early centuries after Christ's birth. What they taught is of interest. Justin Martyr, who died about 165 CE, called the pre-human Jesus *a created angel*...

The *WT* doesn't have the words “*created angel*” in quote marks (“”). That's because Justin Martyr *never said Jesus was created!* Justin did, however, identify him as “the Angel of the LORD.” Under the subtitle, **HOW GOD APPEARED TO MOSES**, he said:

Now the Word of God is his Son...and he is called Angel and Apostle...And *the Angel of God spake to Moses*, in a flame of fire out of the bush, and said, *I am that I am, THE GOD of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob*...The Jews, accordingly, being throughout of opinion that it was the Father of the universe who spake to Moses, though he who spake to him *was indeed the Son of God*...the first-begotten Word of God, *is even GOD*. And of old he appeared in the *shape of fire* and in the *likeness of an angel* to Moses and to the other prophets...<sup>2</sup> ...but now you will permit me first to recount the prophecies, which I wish to do in order to prove that *Christ is called both GOD and LORD OF HOSTS*...<sup>3</sup>

That's about as far as you can get from a “*created*” being! This “Angel of the LORD” (the Son of God!) declared himself to be the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob! and identified

himself by the name of YHWH (Yahweh)! (*Exod 3:1-15*) Often in the OT people experienced the presence of God in human or angelic form. These divine visitations have been called “Christophanies”—pre-Bethlehm “Messiah appearances” (*see Gen 16:7-13; 22:11-18; 31:11-13; 32:24-30; Josh 5:13-15; Judg 6:11-24; 13:1-24*).

Next is **Irenaeus**. They state that Irenaeus taught that Jesus was *inferior* to God, that he was *not equal* to the “One true and only God.” (p7) Again, very noticeably, the words they want to impress upon your mind—*inferior* and *not equal*—are *not within quote marks!* These are nothing but Watchtower words! They are not the words of Irenaeus! He taught that the Father is the *head* of Christ, even as the Bible says. But headship does not imply superiority of *nature*. Women are under the headship of their husbands, yet *not inferior* to them. They both share the *nature* of humanity. But as to Christ's *nature*, the following quote shows that Irenaeus believed that Jesus Christ *is God*:

Therefore, by remitting sins, he did indeed heal man, while he also manifested himself who he was. For if no one can forgive sins but God alone, while the Lord remitted them and healed men, it is plain that he was himself the Word of God made the Son of man... *since he was man, and since he was GOD*, in order that *since as man he suffered for us, so as GOD he might have compassion on us*, and forgive us.<sup>4</sup>

Next is **Clement of Alexandria** in *The Trinity* booklet: (p7)

Clement of Alexandria, who died about 215 CE, called God “the uncreated and imperishable and only true God.” He said that the Son “is next to the only omnipotent Father” but *not equal* to him.

Once again! The two power words they never want you to forget—*not equal*—are nothing but Watchtower words! They are *not* in quote marks, and are *not* the words of this eminent Church Father! Did Clement consider the Son to be *unequal* to the Father? It doesn't look like it from what he said here:

When he [John] says, “That which was from the beginning,” he touches upon the *generation without beginning of the Son*, who is co-existent with the Father. There was, then, a Word importing an *unbeginning eternity*; so also the Word itself, that is, *the Son of God, who being, by EQUALITY OF SUBSTANCE, one with the Father, is ETERNAL and UNCREATED*.<sup>5</sup>

Next is **Tertullian**. The booklet delivers this bombshell: (p7)

Tertullian, who died about 230 CE, taught the supremacy of God. He observed: “The Father is *different* from the Son (another), as he is greater; as he who begets is *different* from him who is begotten; he who sends, *different* from him who is sent.”

“*Different!*” Well said! Yes! There *are different persons* within the nature of the Godhead—*three of them*, in fact! That's why Trinitarians happily sing the *Holy, Holy, Holy* hymn that concludes with “God in three persons, blessed Trinity”—three persons, all having *the same nature!* It's hard to believe the Watchtower thinks this is such a big secret! Let's see what else Tertullian had to say about the nature of God:

If the number of **THE TRINITY** also offends you, as if it were not connected in the simple Unity, I ask you how it is possible for a Being who is merely and absolutely One and Singular, to speak in the *plural* phrase, saying, “Let *us* make man in *our* image, and after *our* own likeness”; whereas he ought to have said, “Let me make man in my own image”?...He is either deceiving

or amusing us in speaking plurally, if he is One only and singular. Or was it to the angels that he spoke, as the Jews interpret the passage, because these also acknowledge not the Son?...Nay, it was because he had already his Son close at his side, as a *second Person*, his own Word, and a *third Person* also, the Spirit in the Word, that he purposely adopted the plural phrase.<sup>6</sup>

We have been taught that he proceeds forth from God, and in that procession he is generated; so that he is the Son of God, and is *called GOD* from *unity of substance with God*. For God, too, is a Spirit. Even when the ray is shot from the sun, it is still part of the parent mass; the sun will still be in the ray, because it is a ray of the sun—there is no division of substance, but merely an extension. Thus Christ is Spirit of Spirit, and **GOD OF GOD**... that which has come forth out of God is at once **GOD** and the *Son of God*, and *the two are one*. In this way also, as he is Spirit of Spirit and **GOD OF GOD**, he is made a second in manner of existence—in *position, not in nature*; and he did not withdraw from the original source, but went forth. This ray of God, then... is in his birth **GOD AND MAN UNITED**.<sup>7</sup>

Then there is **Hippolytus**. According to the Watchtower: (p7)

Hippolytus, who died about 235 CE, said that God is “the one God, the first and the only One, the Maker and Lord of all,” who “had nothing co-eval [of equal age] with him... But he was One, alone by himself; who willing it, *called into being what had no being before*,” *such as the created pre-human Jesus*.

Another *WT* fable! The *six power words* at the end that they want to stamp on your brain are not within (what?) **quote marks!** *They're six empty WT words!* Here's what Hippolytus really said:

God, subsisting alone, and having nothing contemporaneous with himself, determined *to create* [not the “pre-human Jesus,” but] **THE WORLD**. And conceiving the *world* in mind, and willing and uttering the word, he made it;... Beside him *there was nothing*; but he, while existing alone, yet **EXISTED IN PLURALITY**.<sup>8</sup>

God, before the creation of anything, **EXISTED IN PLURALITY!** There can be *no doubt* that the Watchtower Society *knows* what Hippolytus actually taught and *intentionally* edited this out of their deceitful “quotation.” So when they close this section on the Ante-Nicene Fathers with the statement that “the testimony of the Bible and of history makes clear that **THE TRINITY WAS UNKNOWN** throughout biblical times and for several centuries thereafter” (p7), they show themselves to be **SHAMELESS LIARS**. The *WT's* deliberate deception and outright dishonesty in this booklet—no one can deny! And what is it again that they call themselves?—“**GOD'S ORGANIZATION!**”

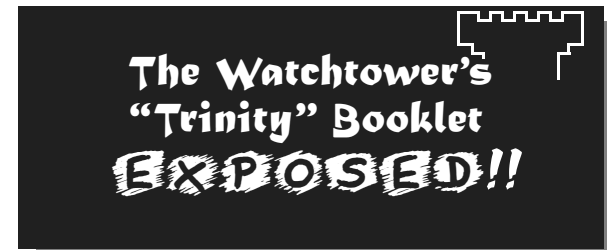
### “BY THEIR FRUITS YE SHALL KNOW THEM”

Matthew 7:20

#### References:

[1] Colin Brown, *New International Dictionary of the Christian Church*, Zondervan Publishing, p452 [2] Justin Martyr, “*The First Apology of Justin*,” in Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson eds., **THE ANTE-NICENE FATHERS**, vol 1 (1884 reprint, Eerdsman's Publishing, 1989) p184 [3] Ibid., “*Dialogue with Trypho*,” p212 [4] Ibid., Irenaeus, “*Irenaeus Against Hereses*,” p545 [5] Ibid., Clement of Alexandria, “*Fragments from Cassiodorus*,” p574 [6] Ibid., Tertullian, “*Against Praxeas*,” p606 [7] Ibid., “*Apology*,” pp34-35 [8] Ibid., Hippolytus, “*Against the Heresy of One Noetus*,” p227

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The Watchtower Bible and Tract Society's 1989 booklet **SHOULD YOU BELIEVE IN THE TRINITY?** allegedly proves the Trinity/Deity-of-Christ doctrines are unreasonable, confusing, God-dishonoring, unbiblical, and heretical. They quote (or rather, *misquote*) numerous genuine Christian publications and scholars, as well as numerous theological liberals, heretics, Unitarians, and other non-Christians whose anti-Trinitarian, and often, anti-biblical biases are never revealed in the publication.

*The Trinity* booklet *does not* include a bibliography, utilize footnotes, give volume and page numbers, or otherwise make it easy or convenient for the reader to check their sources for accuracy or context. After one does check out their sources and learns how these sources are either misquoted, taken out of context, heretical, or all of the above, one can see why they *do not make it easy* for the reader to track down and check out the source documents for themselves. It's stunning, even to those who are well aware of the Watchtower's (*WT*) history when it comes to misrepresentation and prevarication, to see how very dishonest this little booklet is.

**Can I misquote you on that?** And so the booklet begins:

Do you believe in the Trinity? Most people in Christendom do. After all, it has been the central doctrine of the churches for centuries. In view of this, you would think that there could be no question about it. But there is, and lately even some of its supporters have added fuel to the controversy. (p3)

This seems to imply that many of the people and publications quoted in this booklet will be Trinity supporters who are questioning its truthfulness or, at least, its roots in the Bible. But in reality, the Trinity supporters who are quoted are not “questioning” or denying that the doctrine is rooted in Scripture, but they are being *misquoted* or *taken out of context* to make it **appear** they believe that. One example of a staunch Trinitarian whose words are ripped from their context to make a dubious point is Edman J. Fortman. In the introduction to his book, *The Triune God*, he describes himself as “a firm believer in the Triune God.” Fortman states (pp15-16):

The New Testament writers together tell us there is only one God, the creator and lord of the universe... They call Jesus the Son of God... They assign him the divine functions of creation, salvation, judgment. Sometimes they call him **God** explicitly. They do not speak as fully and clearly of *the Holy Spirit* as they do of the Son, but at times they coordinate him with the Father and the Son and *put him on a level with them* as far as *divinity* and *personality* are concerned. They give us in their writings a