

Pioneers Speak About the Trinity

JAMES WHITE - "The way spiritualizers this way have disposed of or denied the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ is first using the old unscriptural Trinitarian creed" *The Day Star*, Jan. 24, 1846.

J.H. WAGGONER - "The great mistake of Trinitarians, in arguing this subject, seems to be this: They make no distinction between a denial of a Trinity and a denial of the divinity of Christ. They see only the two extremes, between which the truth lies; and take every expression referring to the pre-existence of Christ as evidence of a Trinity. The Scriptures abundantly teach the pre-existence of Christ and his divinity; but they are entirely silent in regard to a Trinity." *The Atonement*, 1872 ed. chapter 4, "Doctrine of a Trinity Subversive of the Atonement" p. 165.

A.J. DENNIS - "What a contradiction of terms is found in the language of a Trinitarian creed: 'In unity of this Godhead are three persons, of one substance, power, and eternity, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.' There are many things that are mysterious, written in the word of God, but we may safely presume the Lord never calls upon us to believe impossibilities. But creeds often do." *Signs of the Times*, May 22, 1879.

R.F. COTTRELL - "My reasons for not adopting and defending it, are 1. Its name is unscriptural the Trinity, or the triune God, is unknown to the Bible; and I have entertained the idea that doctrines which require words coined in the human mind to express them, are coined doctrines. 2. I have never felt called upon to adopt and explain that which is contrary to all the sense and reason that God has given me. All my attempts at an explanation of such a subject would make it no clearer to my friends..." *Review and Herald*, June 1, 1869.

J.N. LOUGHBOROUGH - "The word Trinity nowhere occurs in the Scriptures. The principal text supposed to teach it is 1 John 5:7, which is an interpolation. Clarke says, 'Out of one hundred and thirteen manuscripts, the text is wanting in one hundred and twelve. It occurs in no MS. before the tenth century. And the first place the text occurs in Greek, is in the Greek translation of the acts of the Council of Latern, held A.D. 1215. - Commentary on John 1, and remarks at close of chap.'" *Review and Herald*, Nov. 5, 1861.

J.B. FRISBIE "We will make a few extracts, that the reader may see the broad contrast between the God of the Bible brought to light through Sabbath-keeping, and the god in the dark through Sunday-keeping. This is from *Catholic Catechism Abridged* by the Rt. Rev. John Dubois, Bishop of New York, Page 5:

Q. Where is God? Ans. God is everywhere.

Q. Does God see and know all things? Ans. Yes, he does know and see all things...

Q. Are there more Gods than one? Ans. No; there is but one God.

Q. Are there more persons than one in God? Ans. Yes; in God there are three persons.

Q. Which are they? Ans. God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Ghost.

Q. Are there not three Gods? Ans. No; the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, are all but one and the same God'...

"These ideas well accord with those heathen philosophers...We should rather mistrust that the Sunday God [the Trinity] came from the same source that Sunday-keeping did." Review and Herald, Feb. 28, 1854, The Sunday God, p.50.

J.N. LOUGHBOROUGH - "Questions for Bro. Loughborough. Bro. White: The following questions I would like to have you give, or send, to Bro. Loughborough for explanation. W. W. Giles, Toledo, Ohio

Question 1. What serious objections is there to the doctrine of the Trinity?

ANSWER. There are many objections which we might urge, but on account of our limited space we shall reduce them to the three following: 1. It is contrary to common sense. 2. It is contrary to scripture. 3. Its origin is pagan and fabulous... Instead of pointing us to scripture for proof of the Trinity, we are pointed to the trident of the Persians...This doctrine of the Trinity was brought into the church about the same time with image worship, and keeping the day of the sun, and is but Persian doctrine remodeled. It occupied about three hundred years from its introduction to bring the doctrine to what it is now. It was commenced about 325 A.D., and was not completed till 681. See Milman's-Gibbon's Rome, vol. iv, p. 422. It was adopted in Spain in 589, in England in 596, in Africa in 534.-Gib. vol. iv, pp. 114, 345; Milner, vol. i, p. 519." RH-Nov. 5, 1861.

J.H. WAGGONER - "The 'Athanasian creed'...was formulated and the faith defined by Athanasius. Previous to that time there was no settled method of expression, if, indeed, there was anywhere any uniformity of belief. Most of the early writers had been pagan philosophers, who to reach the minds of that class, often made strong efforts to prove that there was a blending of the two systems, Christianity and philosophy. There is abundance of material in their writings to sustain this view. Bingham speaks of the vague views held by some in the following significant terms: "There were some very early that turned the doctrine of the Trinity into Tritheism, and, instead of three divine persons under the economy of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, brought in three collateral, coordinate, and self-originated beings, making them three absolute and independent principles, without any relation of Father or Son, which is the most proper notion of three gods. And having made this change in the doctrine of the Trinity, they made another change answerable to it in the form of baptism.'-Antiquities, book 11, chap. 3, & 4. "Who can distinguish between this form of expression and that put forth by the council of Constantinople in A.D. 381, wherein the true faith is declared to be that of 'an uncreated and consubstantial and co-eternal Trinity?' The truth is that we find the same idea which

is here described by Bingham running through much of the orthodox literature of the second and third centuries. There is no proper 'relation of Father and Son' to be found in the words of the council, above quoted...Bingham says this error in regard to a Trinity of three coordinate and self-originated and independent beings arose in the church very early; and so we find it in the earliest authors after the days of the apostles." Thoughts on Baptism, 1878.

R.F.COTTRELL - "That one person is three persons, and that three persons are only one person, is the doctrine which we claim is contrary to reason and common sense. The being and attributes of God are above, beyond, out of reach of my sense and reason, yet I believe them": But the doctrine I object to is contrary, yes, that is the word, to the very sense and reason that God has himself implanted in us. Such a doctrine he does not ask us to believe. A miracle is beyond our comprehension, but we all believe in miracles who believe our own senses. What we see and hear convinces us that there is a power that effected the most wonderful miracle of creation. But our Creator has made it an absurdity to us that one person should be three persons, and three persons but one person; and in his revealed word he has never asked us to believe it. This our friend thinks objectionable... "But to hold the doctrine of the Trinity is not so much an evidence of evil intention as of intoxication from that wine of which all the nations have drunk. The fact that this was one of the leading doctrines, if not the very chief, upon which the bishop of Rome was exalted to the popedom, does not say much in its favor. This should cause men to investigate it for themselves; as when the spirits of devils working miracles undertake the advocacy of the immortality of the soul. Had I never doubted it before, I would now probe it to the bottom, by that word which modern Spiritualism sets at nought. "Revelation goes beyond us; but in no instance does it go contrary to right reason and common sense. God has not claimed, as the popes have, that he could 'make justice of injustice,' nor has he, after teaching us to count, told us that there is no difference between the singular and plural numbers. Let us believe all he has revealed, and add nothing to it." Review and Herald, July 6, 1869.

A.T. JONES - "Another, and most notable opponent, was Servetus who had opposed the Catholic doctrine of the Trinity, and also infant baptism." Review and Herald, June 17, 1884.

D.W. HULL - "The inconsistent positions held by many in regard to the Trinity, as it is termed, has, no doubt, been the prime cause of many other errors. Erroneous views of the divinity of Christ are apt to lead us into error in regard to the nature of the atonement... "The doctrine which we propose to examine, was established by the council of Nice, A.D., 325, and ever since that period, persons not believing this peculiar tenet, have been denounced by popes and priests, as dangerous heretics. It was for a disbelief in this doctrine. that the Arians were anathematized in A.D., 513... "As we can trace this doctrine no further back than the origin of the 'Man of

Sin,' and as we find this dogma at that time established rather by force than otherwise, we claim the right to investigate the matter, and ascertain the bearing of Scripture on this subject." Review and Herald, Nov.10, 1859.