

AS IT READS

A Plea for us to accept the Plain Word of our Creator

PART 3: The Gospel versus Popular Conception

INTRODUCTORY TEXT(S):.....

Galatians 1:11-12 (KJV)>> ¹¹But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. ¹²For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught [it], but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.

1 Corinthians 1:17 (KJV)>> ¹⁷For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect.

Colossians 2:8 (KJV)>> ⁸Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.

Man's purpose here on this earth.....

1) Regardless of what we may choose to believe, what still remains the all-encompassing purpose of human existence?

Ecclesiastes 12:13-14 (KJV)>> ¹³Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this [is] the whole [duty] of man. ¹⁴For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether [it be] good, or whether [it be] evil.

Merely calling on the name of God

2) For those who simply make a nominal acknowledgement of God, will that be enough to gain them eternal bliss? Will they fare any better in the judgment than the open blasphemer?

Matthew 7:21 (KJV)>> ²¹Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.

Revelation 21:7-8 (KJV)>> ⁷He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son. ⁸But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.

We see from the just-quoted scriptures that it is *certainly not enough* to nominally acknowledge God. We must *do* the Father's will in harmony with our professing his name; we must *overcome* in this earthly life in order to **inherit eternal life**. This contradiction between professing and doing shall serve as a monumental shock to many self-proclaimed Christians as the result of their failing in the judgment shall be eternally placed before them. Many who professed the name of Christ for decades during their lifetime shall find themselves sharing the same lot of perdition as the open blasphemer. Why? They only publicly acted the part of a Christian but were never truly converted. Therefore the half-hearted "Christian", the open unbeliever, and all those in between – all those who know the right but refuse to submit to God's will in their lives – shall sadly receive of the second death. **The scriptures have never teach a nominal gospel, nor a gospel of hypocrisy, nor a gospel of contradictions. Our character, our actions are to be as authentic as the precious words of truth we profess.**

Faith without works is dead, but be careful not to embrace a *form* of godliness; your works must be founded on the true faith.....

3) What of those who are visibly active in their profession of faith in God? Will apparent acts of piety, in and of themselves, yield eternal reward for those who perform them?

Matthew 7:22-23 (KJV)>> ²²Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? ²³And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

2 Timothy 3:5 (KJV)>> ⁵Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away. ⁶For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts, ⁷**Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.** ⁸Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do

these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith.

James 1:26 (KJV)>> ²⁶If any man among you **seem to be religious**, and bridled not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, **this man's religion [is] vain**.

Let us not fool ourselves nor be fooled by others through apparent acts of piety and gestures of good. Even “the tender mercies of the wicked are cruel.” (Prov.12:10). Only the spiritual condition of the heart can determine the motive of the act. Of course, in our daily lives we are to receive the gestures of our fellow men in good faith, for we cannot judge motive where evidence is lacking. But what we are warned of is the deceitfulness of trusting in outward acts as an automatic evidence of being right with God. We must individually search ourselves to ensure we have a faith that *works by love* – the love of God and no other motive (Gal.5:6). That alone can save us.

The saving difference between the true profession and the false

4) So what is the true test which identifies those who are on the path of salvation? What central truth is there which sets the foundation upon which eternal life is built?

Romans 1:16 (KJV)>> ¹⁶For I am not ashamed of **the gospel of Christ**: for it is the power of God unto **salvation** to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.

1 Corinthians 15:1-4 (KJV)>> ¹Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you **the gospel** which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; ²**By which also ye are saved**, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, **unless ye have believed in vain**. ³For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that **Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures**; ⁴And that **he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures**:

We can then see that the decisive condition of salvation is a whole-hearted belief in the gospel, the good news about God. In fact, the gospel is the greatest news any human being could ever receive. This is the news that God our Creator has made a way by which we all can live eternally with him in the

future, in spite of the death-bound condition of our present world (John 3:16-18; Mark 16:15-16).

The whole background of this wonderful news, the gospel, is that we humans were made to enjoy the earth in its original perfection alongside our divine Creator. **In harmony with our Creator, we would live in natural obedience to his commandments, for his commandments are the very expression of what true love is.** “He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.” (1stJohn 4:8). “For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.” (1stJohn 5:3). “Love is the fulfilling of the law.” (Rom.13:10).

But what if by their own free will – the freedom of choice that the selfless God grants to all his creation – humanity decided not to obey these commandments? Then the perfect order of our creation would be ruined and man would bring himself under the dominion of judgment and death (Rom.6:23). Unfortunately, Adam, the father of our race, did do this, and this is how sin came into our world (Rom.5:12). Every bad thing that we now observe in this life is as a result of sin. **All these innumerable evils were brought into our world simply by the breaking of God’s sacred, perfect order for all creation: his law, his commandments (Eccl.12:13-14; Isa.24:5; 1stJohn 3:4).**

But just right there, just when man first consented under temptation to break God’s law, the good news, the gospel, took effect. How is that so? **It is because God had arranged a merciful plan with another just like him, even before the worlds were made. You see, the scriptures tell us that God had a Son, one born from him, divine just like himself, by which the both of them cooperated to make the whole universe. Yet in the midst of this plan, it was understood that in the unfortunate event wherein humanity would somehow break the divine universal commandments, only one divine remedy could restore the universal order. The sacrifice of the divine Son in the place of humanity’s breach, was the only means to ratify the universal order. The Son’s divine life alone could meet the divine penalty of God’s law; yet this immeasurable sacrifice was selflessly given for the sake our human race. It was given that humanity would receive a second chance at immortality, rescuing us from immediate destruction by God’s judgment. (Heb.1:1-3, 9:22-26; Zech.6:12-13; Eph.3:9; 1stPet.1:18-20).**

Yes, the good news, the gospel, is the fact that you and I are living under a second chance, a second probation – that this second chance was secured at infinite cost. **That the Father and Son were willing to sacrifice of their own infinite selves just to rescue even one segment of their own finite creation. It was out of this love inherent in the gospel, that the divine Son of God adopted the debilitated human nature which we share, and gave his life on a cross at Calvary over two thousand years ago. The divine Son of God became human like us and offered himself to die in our place. Christ had to face the judgment sentence of eternal death which was incurred by Adam and us his posterity.**

Yet by leading a perfect, sinless earthly life – maintaining fidelity whilst his divinity was clothed in humanity – Christ became the perfect sacrificial remedy both for the divine law and for the human race. It was by this perfect record of obedience to God’s commandments, within this sin-cursed earth, that his divine Father could raise him from death, and restore him to original glory in heaven. It was by this, that humanity could now receive both the Son’s sacrifice and the Son’s example – to become once again the inheritors of eternal life. Beloved, this is the gospel: the love of the Father and Son in giving humanity an undeserved second chance at eternal life! (Isa.53:4-12; Rom.5:6-21; Philip.2:5-11; 2ndTim.1:9-10; Heb. 2:9-10; 1st Pet.2:21-25; 1stJohn 3:1-9, 4:14-16, 5:10-11).

If we truly believe the gospel, our thoughts and actions should genuinely reflect that reality.....

5) But is *acknowledging* the gospel the same as *believing* the gospel? What does it really mean to believe the gospel, since as the scriptures say, it is by believing the gospel that we are saved?

1 Corinthians 15:1-4 (KJV)>> ¹Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; ²By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. ³For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that **Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures;** ⁴And that **he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:**

Ephesians 1:13 (KJV)>> ¹³In whom ye also [trusted], after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise,

James 1:21-22 (KJV)>> ²¹Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and **receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls.** ²²**But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.**

Therefore, to believe in the gospel is to *actively* live by the sacrifice and example of the Son of God. It is not simply an assent or profession of

agreement with the gospel. After all, as the scripture informs, we can believe the gospel *in vain*, deceiving our own selves. **The daily deeds representing your character:** these reveal whether you have truly sought the forgiveness and sanctification which Christ has made available by the gospel. One cannot have truly believed the gospel and yet one's character is not actively developing towards Christ's perfect divine-human pattern.

But another equally important question of believing the gospel is: what *kind* of gospel have we accepted? Do you believe the *right* gospel? How shall we know that what we actually believe is the *true* gospel which saves?

“To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.” (Isaiah 8:20). We must be careful to ensure we have the scripture-proven testimony of the gospel. **The scripture-proven gospel is the only true gospel that can save us. Anything which deviates from the harmonious gospel of the scriptures is nothing more than a counterfeit, taking the wilfully negligent down to perdition. Once again, note that there is only one true gospel. This true gospel is strictly that which the scriptures present, wherein all its essentials are clearly defined: the gospel which is a beautiful, harmonious, and unambiguous system of truth.**

The authenticity of the gospel was such a serious matter that, from the very foundation of the Christian church, the apostolic guardians of the scripture faith warned against gospel counterfeits:

Galatians 1:6-12 (KJV)>> ⁶I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto **another gospel**: ⁷Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would **pervert the gospel of Christ**. ⁸But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach **any other gospel** unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. ⁹As we said before, so say I now again, if any [man] preach **any other gospel** unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed. ¹⁰For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ. ¹¹But I certify you, brethren, that **the gospel which was preached of me is not after man**. ¹²For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught [it], but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.

2 Corinthians 11:3-4 (KJV)>> ³But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. ⁴For if he that cometh preacheth **another Jesus**, whom we have not preached, or [if] ye receive **another spirit**, which ye have

not received^[you did not receive at the first], or **another gospel**, which **ye have not accepted**^[you did not accept at the first], **ye might well bear with [him]**.

As we should now see, beloved, how we perceive the gospel is not some vague, inconsequential matter. It is not that which embraces relative interpretations or theories, to be drawn up simply for intellectual debate. If men, or even angels, preach a gospel even slightly divergent from the strict clarity of scriptures, they are declared accursed. Why such a strong prohibition from the apostle? **Because to believe in even one particular incorrectly, we can actually believe in a *different* Jesus, a *different* spirit, an *absolutely different* gospel, from that which is clearly presented in the Bible. We can actually be putting our faith in religious myths and counterfeits, whilst we blindly think we are serving the true God. We could trust that we shall be saved by a particular gospel, when indeed, we shall be lost by it. Unbelievable! This may be a shocking fact, even to much of the professing Christian world, but it is nevertheless scripturally true:**

2 Peter 2:1-3 (KJV)>> ¹But there were false prophets also among the people, even as **there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them**, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. ²And **many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of.** ³And through covetousness shall **they with feigned words make merchandise of you**: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not.

Jude 1:3-4 (KJV)>> ³Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of **the common salvation**, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort [you] that ye should **earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.** ⁴For **there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.**

But how are such deceptions allowed to take place? **It is when we remain content with a superficial glimpse of the gospel; it is when we do not investigate for ourselves the plain Word of God; it is when we unquestioningly allow the gross assumptions of professing preachers to**

influence what we believe about the gospel. It is when we refuse to listen to the Lord when he is speaking to our hearts; when he is seeking to bring us to a deeper, surer understanding of his Word.

John 5:39 (KJV)>> ³⁹Search the scriptures; for in them ye think^[you see whether or not] ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.

Acts 17:11 (KJV)>> ¹¹ These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.

2 Timothy 2:15 (KJV)>> ¹⁵Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing^[correctly interpreting] the word of truth.

2 Timothy 3:15-17 (KJV)>> ¹⁵And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. ¹⁶All scripture [is] given by inspiration of God, and [is] profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: ¹⁷That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

When the scriptural gospel is not studied and guardedly maintained, inventions of the devil make inroads; and if these unscriptural inventions go unchecked they eventually become *Popular Conception*

There are many examples of unscriptural inventions which undermine the gospel. In subsequent studies we shall have adequate time to compare them by the whole Word of God to show their disharmony – but in good faith I ask you permit the writer to mention a few teachings provable to be popular conceptions. One is *Sunday sacredness*, another *the immortality of the soul*, another *an eternally burning, soul-tormenting hell*, and another, *once saved, always saved*. These and others are popular conceptions because either they come into direct conflict with the harmonious use of scripture, or they have no concrete basis in scripture at all. They are simply accepted by assumption and popularity.

Yet there is one invention which we could call *the mother of all popular conceptions*. It has sought to insinuate itself almost from the very onset of the work of the early apostles. Within two centuries after the passing of the original apostles, it began to be foisted as a prerequisite for professing the Christian faith.

Its authority was invoked, not by the primacy of harmonious scripture, but by ecclesiastic vote, political manoeuvrings, and even by physical bloodshed. All this for a teaching which its own proponents have confessed that it is not explicitly stated in scripture. If there is one grand teaching which fits perfectly the label of popular conception, it is this teaching which still stands unquestioned by the majority of Christian today after about 1700 years. Amazing! It still stands virtually unquestioned by its own proponents, though they still cannot agree on what it really means, nor can they yet furnish incontrovertible biblical evidence to prove its validity.

Now what teaching could we be possibly speaking of? **The most popular doctrine which has become the Christian litmus test – making its accepters “churches” and its rejecters “cults”. You could be promoting the most unbiblical teachings and endorsing the most unchristian practices – but just assent to this one doctrine and there is room for your “Christianity”. What is this one *obligatory, unquestionable, indispensable* doctrine? We speak of none other than the doctrine of *the Trinity*.**

But wait! As we are trying to investigate whether the true gospel is affected by this doctrine we have singled out, let us make sure we are targeting in a precise manner what we consider to be the error of the *popular Trinity*. We have to be precise in dealing with error because we feel deeply about the preciousness of the gospel. We say we target the *popular Trinity* in particular, because from history and experience it is clear that those who give a general assent to the Trinity may very well have different views when they detail their beliefs. After all, the term trinity simply means a unity of three, and we see biblically that there is unity among the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. So the term *trinity* in and of itself does not militate against scripture. There may be instances where even those who employ the term *trinity* use it in a totally scriptural manner. Therefore we must differentiate the general term *trinity*, and the *popular Trinity* which carries with it certain assumptions.

And so, among those assumptions, there is one in particular within the *popular Trinity* which we have found – a significant point which maintains near-perfect acceptance among avowed Trinitarians at this time in history. This is where we find the very heart of the gospel attacked. What popular conception found within the *popular Trinity* do we see as the heart of the problem? In one word, we could describe the error as *Co-eternalism* – the idea that all the persons of the Trinity are coeval, of the same age, or always existed.

The Trinity is not the precise enemy of the gospel, for many have different ideas of the Trinity. The Popular Conception of Co-eternalism found within the popular Trinity doctrine – that we are bidden to oppose

Now, why is it that *Co-eternalism* destroys the gospel? Remember, *Co-eternalism* teaches that the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are co-eternal, coeval, of the same age, always existed. The three are without beginning or end. Would such ideas sound problematic to the gospel? Not to the superficial professor of Christianity, no. They would sound very much acceptable, *if* it were not for the faithful student who lives by *every word* which proceeds from the mouth of God; *if* it were not for such scriptures as the following which make very clear distinctions about the Godhead:

John 8:42 (KJV)>> ⁴²Jesus said unto them, **If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth^[Gr.issued out of] and came from^[Gr. originated from] God;** neither came I of myself, but he sent me.

John 16:27-30 (KJV)>> ²⁷For the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that **I came out from^[Gr.issued out of] God.** ²⁸**I came forth from^[Gr.issued out of] the Father,** and am come into the world: again, I leave the world, and go to the Father. ²⁹His disciples said unto him, Lo, **now speakest thou plainly, and speakest no proverb.** ³⁰Now are we sure that thou knowest all things, and needest not that any man should ask thee: **by this we believe that thou camest forth from^[Gr.issued out of] God.**

John 14:28 (KJV)>> ²⁸Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come [again] unto you. If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, **I go unto the Father: for my Father is greater than I.**

Jesus himself says very clearly above that God is his Father, even describing the kind of fatherhood and sonship which is meant. Christ says he *proceeded forth, came forth, came out from* God. He is using very literal language, for the apostles concur that he was speaking *plainly* and not proverbially nor symbolically nor metaphorically. Now what did the Bible, in quoting the words of Christ above, mean when it speaks of someone *proceeding forth* or *coming forth* from another person?

Genesis 15:3-4 (KJV)

³And Abram said, Behold, to me thou hast given no seed: and, lo, one born in my house is mine heir. ⁴And, behold, the word of the LORD [came] unto him, saying, This shall not be thine heir; but **he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels** shall be thine heir.

2 Kings 20:18 (KJV)>> ¹⁸And of **thy sons that shall issue from thee, which thou shalt beget**, shall they take away; and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon.

Comparing scripture with scripture, we see that when someone comes forth or proceeds from another person, the language means *literal birth* or, in the KJV English, *begetting*. The father begets his son; the son is begotten of his father. Is there a necessary chronology of existence between fathers and sons? Yes! The father first exists, and from the father's substance, the son is *afterward* brought into existence. The son must be a derivative; that is what makes him a son. The father must likewise precede the son in order of existence; that is how God made us as a reflection of himself. If there was anything else implied by these words, God would have told us otherwise, and inspired more appropriate words to describe himself. Taking note of these points, it should be clearer for us to understand why Christ would say the Father is greater than he – because a father must be greater than his son in chronology of existence. The scriptures never, ever give us any sanction to believe that these concrete words and descriptions are to be interpreted any other way; nor can they be interpreted otherwise when we honestly exercise our God-given reasoning. Let God be true, and every man a liar! When we accept the plain witness of the divine Father and Son, the heart of the gospel becomes exponentially more significant:

John 3:16-18 (KJV)>> ¹⁶For **God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son**, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. ¹⁷For **God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world**; but that the world through him might be saved. ¹⁸He that believeth on him is not condemned: but **he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God**.

1 John 4:9-10 (KJV)>> ⁹In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that **God sent his only begotten Son into the world**, that we might live through him. ¹⁰Herein is love,

not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son
[to be] the propitiation for our sins.

Romans 8:32 (KJV)>> ³²**He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?**

Only if we are willing to accept the plain reading and harmony of scripture above popular conception – this is the only way can appreciate and receive the blessings of the gospel. God gave his own literal, solitary divine offspring to die for a finite world. He gave the only being that originated from his own divine bosom, just as human sons originate from the loins of their human fathers. How great a sacrifice would it be for you to give up your only child to die that others might be saved? As extreme a difficulty as that would be for you, it was infinitely more difficult for God do that for us. God made a real sacrifice; he gave up his real Son. He even confirmed this to be the case when he tested Abraham on this very point with his son Isaac. While Isaac was spared, Jesus Christ could not be spared, else our world would be lost. This is the love of God! This is the real gospel! *Co-eternalism cannot give you this true gospel!*

So what does the *Co-eternalism* of the popular Trinity doctrine imply? By embracing *Co-eternalism* the following positions are taken:

- **“God did not *really* have a literal Son, for Christ did not *really* originate from the Father. They are co-eternal, so neither could possibly exist before the other.”**

[REPLY: So if God did not *really* have a Son, for Christ did not *really* originate from the Father, then why call them *Father* and *Son*? If they are co-eternals, why could not the inspired authors say so, rather than using terms which theologians now have to spiritualize away? But then again, if God is not literally a Father, and Christ is not literally a Son, then is the Holy Spirit literally a Spirit? Consistency and God-given common sense begs these questions. Maybe then, the truth that God is actually a divine Father, and Christ is actually a divine Son, and the Spirit is actually the Spirit of the Father and the Son. Prayerfully think about it.]

- **“The terms *Father* (as applied to God) and *Son* (as applied to Christ) cannot be taken literally.”**

[REPLY: In fact, there is no other instance in the entirety of human language where *father* and *son* ever meant anything like what *Co-eternalism* teaches. That a father can have a son without preceding him in existence is not only a distortion of unbiblical proportions, but also a distortion human language and God-given reason.]

- **“Christ is only the Son of God by virtue of Bethlehem or the resurrection. Conversely, God must only be the Father of Christ by the same conditions.”**

[REPLY: The implications of this is that the sonship of Christ is restricted to his human nature, hence he is a created Son and not an only-begotten Son. *Co-eternalism* denies that Christ’s divine nature had any origin whatsoever: his divine nature cannot be subject to sonship. Also conversely, God the Father was not really a Father till either Bethlehem or the resurrection; and he was the Father of only the human part of Christ. But even that problem is exacerbated by the fact that *Co-eternalism* acknowledges the Holy Spirit also an individual divine being. This would infer, according to Luke 1:35, that it is not God the Father who is the father of Christ but God the Holy Spirit. Could *Co-eternalists* please answer, who is the father of Christ?]

- **“The terms *Father* and *Son* are only roles which are being played two of the three divine personages. The three persons of the Godhead, having always existed, decided to take various roles of Father, Son and Holy Spirit to enact a plan of salvation for man.”**

[REPLY: Therefore the plan of salvation is not an account of real relations and identities given at infinite risk and sacrifice, but rather an ingenious role-playing drama wherein three divine persons mysteriously took one role each. And this drama was carried out to show man how he was to be saved? Does this not sound more like a convenient, abstract, mythical arrangement, rather than an active, heart-rending divine deliberation, fraught with eternal consequences? Think about it and judge righteous judgment.]

- **“God (who is co-eternally three and one at the same time) so loved the world that one God-person role-played as a dying Son in order that the world could be saved. The God-person role-playing the Father gave another God-person role-playing the Son to the world to save it – albeit we recognize that the role-playing Father did not really sacrifice a role-playing Son because God (who is coeternal and has always existed) cannot die. In reality any one of the co-eternal persons could have offered up themselves.”**

At the end of all this we must ask ourselves: How can *Co-eternalism* represent what the Bible testifies about the gospel? When there is no real Father? When there is no real Son? When there is no real sacrifice? When there no real death? When there is no real sense to it all? Everything becomes an unintelligible mystery! Is that the gospel you believe in, friend?

The Co-eternalism of the popular Trinity doctrine is fraught with so many problems because the theory is not founded on harmonious scripture. Co-eternalism is a popular conception founded by the father of lies. It makes a nonentity of the literal, divine Father and Son. It is embedded within the popular Trinity doctrine, therefore we cannot accept popular Trinitarianism if we shall take the Bible as it reads.....

One inspired author from the 19th century saw keenly how theories outside the Bible (such as *Co-eternalism*) would destroy a saving knowledge of the gospel. Here is some of what Sis. E. G. White (1827-1915) penned which, one century later, proves astonishingly true to the letter:

Heavenly angels are waiting to co-operate with those who work on the side of truth and righteousness. The enemy of souls is working diligently to bring in **his so-called science that will make of God and of Christ a nonentity. His delusions are flooding the world, but we cannot conceive of what will be in the future.** {Ms27-1906.36} – *Manuscript 27, 1906, par. 36.*

Satan is not ignorant of the result of trying to define God and Jesus Christ in a spiritualistic way that sets God and Christ as a nonentity. The moments occupied in this kind of science are, in the place of preparing the way of the Lord, making a way for Satan to come in and confuse the minds with mysticisms of his own devising. **Although they are dressed up in angel robes they have made our God and our Christ a nonentity.** Why?--because Satan sees the minds are all fitted for his working. **Men have lost track of Christ and the Lord God, and have been obtaining an experience that is Omega to one of the most subtle delusions that will ever**

captivate the minds of men. {11MR 211.2} – *Manuscript Releases, Vol.11, p. 211.*

Few can discern the result of entertaining the sophistries advocated by some at this time. But the Lord has lifted the curtain, and has shown me the result that would follow. **The spiritualistic theories regarding the personality of God, followed to their logical conclusion, sweep away the whole Christian economy.** They estimate as nothing the light that Christ came from heaven to give John to give to His people. They teach that the scenes just before us are not of sufficient importance to be given special attention. They make of no effect the truth of heavenly origin, and rob the people of God of their past experience, giving them instead a false science. {SpTBo2 54.1} – *Testimonies for the Church Containing Letters to Physicians and Ministers; Instruction to Seventh-day Adventists, p. 54.*

The truths most plainly revealed in the Bible have been involved in doubt and darkness by learned men, who, with a pretense of great wisdom, teach that the Scriptures have a mystical, a secret, spiritual meaning not apparent in the language employed. These men are false teachers. It was to such a class that Jesus declared, “Ye know not the Scriptures, neither the power of God.” [Mark 12:24.] **The language of the Bible should be explained according to its obvious meaning, unless a symbol or figure is employed.** Christ has given the promise, “If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine.” [John 7:17.] **If men would but take the Bible as it reads,** if there were no false teachers to mislead and confuse their minds, a work would be accomplished that would make angels glad, and that would bring into the fold of Christ thousands upon thousands who are now wandering in error. {GC88 598.3} – *The Great Controversy (1888 Edition), p. 598.*

Conclusion.....

By God’s grace, we have sought to furnish the overwhelming truth that the saving gospel is one that is wholly founded on scripture, and sincerely manifested in the daily life. Also, we have endeavoured to show that there is only one true gospel, which has always been targeted by subtle and specious counterfeits. We have

testified that Satan instigates these counterfeits, and as true fidelity to scripture faith and practice wanes, he gains a foothold over such as are nominal Christians. As the majority of Christians become lukewarm, many of Satan's counterfeits gain vantage ground to become *popular conception* in the place of true Bible teaching. **We have solemnly declared that the belief of *Co-eternalism* embedded within the popular Trinity doctrine is one of, if not, the most diabolical of any popular conception which abounds. We have used scripture to show that the assumptions of *Co-eternalism* actually destroy the true meaning of the gospel, albeit these false theories "are dressed up in angel robes," as one insightful author put it. We have sought to carry ourselves step by step through what is meant by the true gospel. We can with spiritual confidence say that the scripture gospel harmonizes upon a literal divine Father-Son relation between God and Christ. We can say, upon the word of God, without the slightest discomfort, that Christ did have an origin from the Father upon the days of eternity, before anything was made. This is how he is the only-begotten Son that was then sent to the world 2000 years ago. Though an unpopular view today, though not the popular conception, we see where these facts make perfect sense according to the harmonious study of scripture, and they place great worth upon the heartfelt reality of God giving up his own Son to die for us. This understanding alone reveals the wondrous love of God and his Son!**

We implore you to consider and weigh the evidences presented here in a manner which should confirm you upon a decided position. In asking of you this courtesy, we indulge upon you the following brief narrative as a creative reminder:

A PRACTICAL ILLUSTRATION UPON DIVINITY. What if I, a middle-aged father, am sitting down with my only son, Joshua, who is 16 years old. We're looking in an old album of mine and there is a picture of me from high school shaking hands with one who was my closest friend in high school. Pointing to the best friend in the picture, I say to Joshua, "Did you ever meet the son I had back in high school?"

Joshua is now absolutely shocked and confused. But being more of an insightful youth than an erratic one, he contemplates and responds, "But father, as far as I know reality to be, I thought I was your only son. Besides, this young man looks just about the same age as you. How could he have been your son?"

Realizing the dilemma I unwittingly created, I apologetically reply, "Oh, dear son: what I was trying to convey is that the bond I had with this best friend was so close, it was to me, *like* that of a father and a son. I was like a father figure to him, a counsellor, a close mentor and confidant. But we were not *literally* father and son. Don't worry: there's no question that you're my only true son. I just thought using those titles was the best way to help you understand how close we were. I guess it didn't work that way now, did it?"

Joshua replies, "No, father. Actually you were confusing me, and I was caught between thinking either this is the shock of my life, or some strange, ill-humoured jest, or even worse, like you were going a bit senile. If your friendship was that close with this friend, all you needed to do was describe it as it was, in the most

straightforward words possible. Not employ terms which assume relations and prerogatives you have no intention to convey.”

Standing truly corrected, with such sound reasoning coming from my teenage son, I had no choice but to yield with these words: “Yes, you’re right Joshua. Truly, a son must necessarily be the offspring of his father. If such derivation is not intended, what an utterly careless choice of words it is! What a contortion of the mind it creates! What a betrayal of our normal sense of truth and reality! You’re totally correct Joshua, and truly you are the one who is my only-begotten son.”

After all that, a stunning revelation slapped me in the face! I was impelled to ask one serious question: “But, Joshua, you know where I got this kind of thinking from?”

“Where, father?”

“From believing in the popular Trinity! The popular conception that the Father and the Son are coeternal or coeval, that is, of the exact age, without beginning or ending. I never consciously thought of it until now, but how a father can be the true father of one the same age as he is beyond my sensible, God-given reasoning. And how a son can be a true son without ever actually originating from his father, but rather being the same age as his father is – that is likewise beyond me. Yet further, how an entity can be literally counted as one, and in the same state literally counted as three – that baffles my mind. How can we have three God-beings that are *not* three Gods but really one God? These ideas do not just seem *beyond* my sense, but they appear rather *against* my sense – the very sense that God gave me. And I suspect all the variations of a three-in-one, co-eternal God do the same thing with common sense. As God is true, I know such contradictions and contortions of common sense could not come from Him or His Word.”

Then Joshua concurs with me, in a most solemn, striking conclusion: “Dear father, my true father, this shows us we should just take the Bible as it reads, as it appeals to our common sense. Let’s ask for God’s guidance, and let the clear conclusions of the Word alone guide our belief and practice. While the traditions of men are usually shrouded in mystery, God’s Word has always proven clear as crystal.”

And all I could say was, “Amen!”

APPEAL:

Isaiah 66:1-2,5>> ¹Thus saith the LORD, The heaven [is] my throne, and the earth [is] my footstool: where [is] the house that ye build unto me? and where [is] the place of my rest? ²For all those [things] hath mine hand made, and all those [things] have been, saith the LORD: **but to this [man] will I look, [even] to [him that is] poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word...** ⁵Hear the word of the LORD, **ye that tremble at his word; Your brethren that hated you, that cast**

you out for my name's sake, said, Let the LORD be glorified:
but **he shall appear to your joy, and they shall be ashamed.**

The wonderful God of heaven, represented by his dear Son, tells us that he dwells with those who tremble at his Word. Who are those approved, trembling ones? Those who take the Word as it reads. Those who accept every word in its proper place. Those who don't seek to add to, or subtract from it. Those who will not betray the common sense of the Word to uphold tradition. Such are the only ones today who will truly understand the gospel, and ultimately receive of its eternal blessing. Are you one of those people? Whatever condition you may find yourself, I pray that you will take a stand for God's undiluted Word, His true gospel. A gospel in which the divine Father's love is shown in that He gave His divine Son to be a sacrifice and example for our human race. I pray your future actions will bear fruit in harmony with this realization.

As the Bible says, others will seek to cast you off for the true gospel's sake, all the while blindly thinking they are doing God's service. But the wonderful promise is that Christ will ultimately appear to your joy and, sadly, to their shame. So take courage. As the Lord so moves you, there are many others worldwide who, like you, are responding to this the original gospel. We are here to help one another to hold firm in the original faith, onward through the narrow path that leads to Christ. May this one true gospel of the Son of God, and not popular conception, be our guide as we strive – individually and in like-minded fellowship – for the glorious kingdom of God and Christ.

1 John 1:3>> ³That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and **truly our fellowship [is] with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.**

AMEN.

Shared with you out of love, in the service of the gospel,



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