

THE WONDERFUL TRUTH OF THE TRINITY

by Henry M. Morris*

For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one (I John 5:7).

The above text is the clearest and most succinct statement of the doctrine of the Trinity in the Bible, but also probably the most controversial verse in the Bible. Many authorities believe it was not in John's original epistle, but was added by some ancient copyist. Consequently, although it is in the King James Bible, most modern English translations omit it. There are others (including this writer) who are convinced it *was* in the original and should be retained.

In any case, the truth of the Trinity is taught in many other passages of the New Testament and does not depend on this particular verse. It is undoubtedly the most distinctive doctrine of the Christian faith. Most religions are either pantheistic (e.g., Buddhism) or polytheistic (e.g., Hinduism). Two other religions are monotheistic (Judaism, Islam), but only Christianity recognizes the one real God (the Triune God—Father, Son, Holy Spirit)—one God in three Persons.

The sacred book of the Muslims—the Koran—regards Jesus as only a prophet, repeatedly denouncing as infidels all

those who believe in the Trinity. The Jews often consider Jesus to have been a great teacher, but no more than that. To the Christian, however, the Lord Jesus Christ is a person yet God incarnate, God's only begotten Son—Creator, Savior, King of kings and Lord of lords. Christians also believe that the Holy Spirit is not just a spiritual influence, but a real person, the third Person of the Godhead.

When an individual becomes a Christian, he acknowledges it by being baptized in the "*name* [note, just a single name] *of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost*" (Matthew 28:19). He believes in one God—but not the unknowable, unapproachable "god" of Islam called "Allah."

Instead, he recognizes God as the infinite, invisible, omnipresent Father, but also as the Son, the visible, touchable, yet perfectly holy Word always revealing and manifesting the Father, and as the Holy Spirit, always present to guide, convict, and comfort. He is very real—eternal and invisible, omnipresent Father of all, yet visible and approachable through the Son and experienced and understood in the Holy Spirit.

Majestic mystery, but wonderful reality!

*Dr. Henry M. Morris is Founder and President Emeritus of ICR.

Christians believe in the Trinity—one God, not three gods, but three divine Persons, each equally and totally God. We cannot really comprehend this with our minds, but we can believe it and rejoice with our hearts. It is somewhat analogous to the “space” of God’s created universe. Space is comprised of three dimensions, each of which permeates all space. This structure is helpful to illustrate the nature of the tri-une God. That is, God is one God, not three gods. Yet He is revealed as three Persons, each of which is eternally and completely God.

This great truth appears again and again in the Bible—especially in the New Testament, of course. But one can also discern it here and there in the Old Testament.

For example, note Isaiah 48:16: *“Come ye near unto me, hear ye this; I have not spoken in secret from the beginning; from the time that it was, there am I: and now the Lord GOD and His Spirit, hath sent me.”* Note here that the Son, the divine Word who is speaking, is being “sent” into the world by the Father and the Spirit.

But turning again to the New Testament, it is rather remarkable to note how all three Persons of the Godhead are significant in so many phases of the Christian life. First, as noted, the believer is baptized in the one Name but in every Person (Matthew 18:19) of the holy Trinity.

Then, as he begins his Christian life, all three are still actively involved. *“How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?”* (Hebrews 9:14).

The actual event of salvation requires a miraculous creation, with the believer undergoing “regeneration,” and thus being “born again.” This tremendous

miracle is indeed accomplished only by the working of all three Persons of the Godhead. As Paul wrote, *“God sent forth His Son. . . . To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father”* (Galatians 4:4–6).

The apostle Peter also noted the action of every Person of the divine Godhead in the great work of saving those who trust in Christ: *“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).

An extremely important part of the Christian life from its very beginning is that of prayer. That also is accomplished daily with each person of the Trinity participating. *“For through Him [that is, through Christ the Son] we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father”* (Ephesians 2:18). When we pray, we normally pray to our heavenly Father (not to Jesus or the Holy Ghost). God, of course, can hear a sincere prayer, regardless of how addressed, but we should know that we are really coming through the Lord Jesus and in His good name by means of the indwelling Holy Spirit. (Note Matthew 6:9 and John 14:13.)

Once we have been born again by the regenerating miracle of the Holy Spirit, our bodies become His temple. But this also means that the tri-une God Himself is there through the Spirit. We can be *“strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man; That Christ may dwell in [our] hearts by faith; . . . that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God”* (Ephesians 3:16–17,19).

This was also implied in Christ’s original promise that He would send the Holy Spirit. *“I will pray the Father, and*

He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever; Even the Spirit of truth, . . . for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you. . . . At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you. . . . If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him” (John 14:16–18,20,23).

At that time, Christ also promised that the Holy Spirit would teach us, and that this also would involve Himself as well as the Father. *“But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, He shall teach you all things”* (v.26). The pervasive content of His teaching would, of course, concern the Lord Jesus Himself, as directed by 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”* (15:26).

Thus, in a wonderful sense, the tri-une Godhead—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—one and all live in each Christian believer, teaching, strengthening, convicting, comforting, and guiding him in answer to his prayers. This is the marvelous truth of the Trinity.

Keep in mind that there are three real Persons in the Godhead, not just three ways in which God reveals Himself. The Son prays to the Father, for example, and the Father sends the Holy Spirit when the Son returns to heaven.

Perhaps it is significant that the word “Godhead” appears just three times in the New Testament, each from a slightly different, though essentially synonymous Greek word. The first occurrence of “Godhead” is in Acts 17:29. “. . . we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone,

graven by art and man’s device.” That is, no one can make a model of our three-in-one God—neither any kind of graven image nor some kind of philosophical construct.


But it seems that God Himself has made such a model. *“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”* (Romans 1:20). This is the second mention of “Godhead.”

That is, the creation itself can be seen as a model of the three-in-one Godhead. This remarkable fact cannot be discussed in the limited space here, but will be elaborated in more detail in the *Back to Genesis* section of the December issue of *Acts & Facts*.

The physical universe is, in a very real sense, a trinity of trinities. Also, in a certain sense, human life is a trinity of body, soul, and spirit.

In fact, tri-unity in various ways is often seen in the creation (but note that a “trinity” is not an entity composed of three individual parts, like the sides of a triangle, but rather an entity of three parts, each of which is the whole).

Thus, although no man could ever model the Godhead, God has seemingly done this in His creation. But then the third mention of the Godhead is given in Colossians 2:9. *“For in [Christ] dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.”* Thus, the Lord Jesus can say to His disciples: “. . . he that hath seen me hath seen the Father” (John 14:9), for He Himself is *“the image of the invisible God”* (Colossians 1:15).

We can close with one more Biblical mention of the Trinity: *“The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all”* (II Corinthians 13:14). 

HAS EVOLUTION BECOME A STATE RELIGION?

by John D. Morris, Ph.D.


The Church of England had been established as the official state church of that country for a long time, but in the nineteenth century an effort was launched to “dis-establish” it, and remove its favored status. Yet some wanted to retain the designation, and launched the anti-disestablishment movement. Their movement became known as antidisestablishmentarianism, a beloved word of all school children who brag they can spell the longest word in the English language. There are longer words, but we can learn a lesson from this historical episode.

America’s founding fathers rejected all ideas of a national church, even though numerous voices clamored for one and several of the individual states had already selected one or the other. The very first amendment to the constitution codified this commitment, that “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof. . . .” Nowhere did they insist on “the separation of church and state” in the sense that religious concepts had no place in government, indeed quotes abound affirming their personal and national dependence on God. They insisted on freedom of religion, not the favoring of one denomination over the other. The modern day removal of all vestiges of Christianity from the public arena would greatly displease the founders. Many were devout Christians, of varying denominations, but of deep personal convictions. They wanted to keep the state out of religion, not eliminate a Christian influence on affairs of the state.

How then can we understand the government mandated rush to embrace the

concept of evolutionary naturalism? The idea that life originated, indeed the entire universe originated through strictly natural processes (as opposed to supernatural processes) is a religious concept, incapable of observation or proof, yet held by faith. In evolutionary naturalism, life not only finds its origin, but also its meaning and destiny in nature. As many have noted, it is essentially equivalent with atheism.

Our government schools teach evolution with fervor at taxpayer expense, ignoring alternatives. Textbook writers often repeat information known to be false, in the name of good evolution teaching. Teacher unions aggressively combat other views while defending teachers who abuse students of different faiths than evolution. Our courts declare other origins views off-limits, branding them religion. Scientists have even redefined the goal of science. No longer is it “the search for truth,” it has become the search for naturalistic explanations. Self-serving civil libertarians promise a bitter lawsuit against any who would return to the views of the founders. How could we have come so far? Where is the road back?

The state-supported church of atheistic evolutionism has been almost fully established in this once Christian country. I, for one, support the “disestablishment” of this false, unscientific, and harmful church. I do not favor establishing any Christian creed as the State Church, but it should be allowed to function without government “prohibiting the free exercise thereof.” I pray that it would flourish and that America’s leaders would once again welcome its wholesome influence in society. 



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