

## **DID THE CHURCH GET THE TRINITY FROM PAGANISM AT NICEA IN A.D. 325?**

It is sometimes suggested by Antitrinitarians that the first Christian Roman Emperor Constantine (r. A.D. 313f), after his "conversion" to Christianity imported his own former tritheistic pagan views into the Church by ordering her in A.D. 325 to incorporate those views into her *Nicene Creed*. It is also further suggested that this then further syncretized an allegedly Pre-Nicene ecclesiastical unitarianism, with Pre-Nicene pagan tritheism -- thereby producing a Post-Nicene ecclesiastical trinitarianism.

But nothing could be further from the truth! Pre-Nicene Christianity, fighting for survival as a minority sub-culture within the then-still-pagan Roman Empire, was solidly Trinitarian. For the Church then agreed with Old Testament Scriptures (against Post-Malachi apostate unitarian Judaism and against even-more-apostate Pre-Christian Paganism), that God was always triune. Cf. Genesis 1:1-3 & 1:26 & 3:22 & 11:7 and Exodus 3:14f & 6:3 and Ecclesiastes 4:12 and Isaiah 6:3 & 11:2 & 63:7-19 and Malachi 3:6. Indeed, the Church also agreed with the New Testament Scriptures that God always had been and always shall be triune. Cf. Matthew 3:16f & 28:19 and John 17:1-5 and Hebrews 9:14 & 13:8 and Revelation 1:4-6 & 4:2-8 & 5:6f & 22:16-19f.

It is indeed true that, just like Pre-Malachi Israel, also the Post-Apostolic Christian Church only progressively succeeded in trying to plumb the depths of the Triune God (cf. First Corinthians 2:9-11). But for that matter, what candid Trinitarian -- or even Unitarian -- could claim that he even today knows God exhaustively, or ever shall do? Yet the Pre-Nicene Church, from Easter Sunday onward baptizing her converts into the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, was always solidly trinitarian.

Thus, in *The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*, around A.D. 95, one reads:<sup>1</sup> "You shall love the Lord Who made you!.... You shall not practise witchcraft!.... Do not be an observer of omens, since it leads the way to idolatry!.... Baptize into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit in living water!.... Pour out water thrice upon the head, into the name of Father and Son and Holy Spirit!"

To that, the expanded *Constitutions of the Holy Apostles* later also added:<sup>2</sup> "In the beginning, God made the heaven and the earth [Genesis 1:1].... The divine Scripture testifies that God [the Father] said to [the Spirit-anointed] Christ His Only-begotten, 'Let Us make man after Our image and after Our likeness!'" Genesis 1:26.

Too, Samaria's A.D. 150 Church Father Justin Martyr stated:<sup>3</sup> "God the Father...and the Son (coming forth from Him)...and the prophetic Spirit, we worship and adore.... We bless the Maker of all, through His Son Jesus Christ, and through the Holy Spirit."

Again, also the A.D. 170 Church Father Theophilus of Antioch stated:<sup>4</sup> "God made all things out of nothing.... God, then, having His Own Word internally within His Own bosom [cf. John 1:18], begat Him -- emitting Him as His Own Wisdom before all things.... He rules, and

is Lord of all things fashioned by Him -- He then being with the Spirit of God and the governing Principle and Wisdom....

"In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.... And the Spirit of God moved...and God [Triune, as the Father in the Spirit, speaking forth His Son or Word,] said: "Let there be light!" [Genesis 1:1-3].... In like manner, also the three days which were before the luminaries [Genesis 1:5-13f] are types [or 'depictions'] of the Trinity of God and His Word and His Wisdom."

Around 185 A.D., the celebrated Church Father Irenaeus of Lyons wrote<sup>5</sup> in his famous book *Against Heresies* that "there is one God...the Father.... It is evident that the Word, the Maker of all -- He Who sits upon the cherubs and contains all things, He Who was manifested to men -- has given us the Gospel...bound together by one Spirit..., the Spirit hovering with His wings over the Church....

"They who were...the Apostles of liberty termed no one else God or named Him Lord, except the only true God the Father and His Word Who has the pre-eminence in all things.... They confessed as the Lord God Him Who was the Creator of heaven and earth..., and that Jesus Christ was appointed the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness....

"The Spirit of God like a dove descended upon Him.... This Spirit did David ask for the human race, saying: 'And establish me with Your all-governing Spirit!' [cf. Psalm 51:10-12] -- Who also, as Luke says, descended on the Day of Pentecost upon the disciples after the Lord's ascension, having power to admit all nations to the entrance of life....

"Our Lord alone is truly Master..., the Word of God the Father having been made the son of man.... It is impossible that the Father can be measured but as regards His love (for this it is which leads us to God by His Word) ... It was not angels...who made us.... For God did not stand in need of these, in order to accomplish what He had Himself determined with Himself beforehand should be done.... For with Him were always present the Word and Wisdom, the Son -- and the Spirit by Whom and in Whom freely and spontaneously He made all things -- to Whom also He speaks, saying, ' Let Us make man after Our image!' [Genesis 1:26 cf. 1:1-3].... We do now receive a certain portion of His Spirit, tending towards perfection."

Around A.D. 190, the Church Father Clement of Alexandria wrote:<sup>6</sup> "I understand nothing else than the Holy Trinity to be meant [at the World's creation in Genesis 1:1-3]. For the Third is the Holy Spirit, and the Son is the Second -- by Whom all things were made according to the will of the Father" as the First Person.

The Unitarian-Sabellian or modalistic 'Jesus-only' heresy -- "that one cannot believe in only one God in any other way than by saying that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are the very Selfsame Person" -- was rightly rejected by the A.D. 200 Church Father Tertullian of Carthage in North Africa. To Tertullian,<sup>7</sup> "**we**...believe this one only God also has a Son, His Word Who proceeded from Himself [and] by Whom all things were made..., Who sent also from heaven from the Father according to His Own promise the Holy Ghost...Sanctifier of the faith of those who believe in the Father and in the Son and in the Holy Ghost....

"The mystery of the dispensation is still guarded which distributes the Unity into a Trinity, placing in Their order the three Persons -- the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.... He is one God, from Whom these degrees and forms and aspects are reckoned under the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost.... I testify that the Father and the Son and the Spirit are inseparable from Each Other.... The Father is one, and the Son one, and the Spirit one....

"[Yet] They are distinct from Each Other.... This statement is taken in a wrong sense by every uneducated as well as every perversely-disposed person as if it predicated a diversity in such a sense as to imply a separation among the Father, and the Son, and the Spirit....

"He [the Son] says: 'I will pray the Father, and He shall send you another Comforter...even the Spirit' [John 14:16f].... All the Scriptures attest the clear existence of, and distinction in, (the Persons of) the Trinity.... The distinction of Persons in the Trinity, is clearly set forth....

"If the number of the Trinity also offends you as if it were not connected in the simple unity -- I ask you how it would be possible for a Being Who was merely and absolutely one and singular, to speak in a plural phrase saying: 'Let Us make man in Our Own likeness!' (Genesis 1:26)?... Was it to the angels that He spoke -- as the [unitarianized and Judaistic] Jews interpret the passage [as if the creaturely angels co-created man], because these [Judaists] too do not acknowledge the Son?" No!

"Was it because He [the Divine Father] already then had His [Divine] Son close at His side as a second Person and as His Own Word -- and a third [Divine] Person also, the Spirit in the Word [Genesis 1:2-3] -- that He purposely adopted [even] the plural phrases 'Let Us make' [in Genesis 1:26] and 'become as One of Us' [in Genesis 3:22 *cf.* 11:7 *etc.*]?" Yes! "With these [the Son and the Spirit], did He [the Father] then speak -- in the unity of the Trinity....

"In respect of the previous [pre-human] works in the World -- what says the Scripture? Its first statement indeed is" about the Spirit of God in Genesis 1:2. "When the Son had not yet appeared, [its second statement is]: 'And God said, "Let there be light!"' Genesis 1:3 . *Cf.* too the plural "Us" at 1:26.

"The Scripture....has a method of its own, both when it sets forth one only God and also when it shows that there are Two [Persons], Father and Son.... He [the Father] is named without the Son whensoever He is defined as the principle (of Deity) in the character of 'its first Person' -- which had to be mentioned before the name of the Son, because it is the Father Who is acknowledged in the first place; and, after the Father, the Son is named....

"The connection of the Father in the Son, and of the Son in the Paraclete, produces three coherent Persons Who are yet distinct One from Another. 'These Three are One' [First John 5:7c] -- One essence; **not**, one Person!... He [the central Person] commands them [His apostles] to baptize into the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost -- **not** into a unipersonal God!...

"The Son suffered [as man], being forsaken by the Father [Matthew 27:46].... But this ['My God why have You forsaken Me?'] was the voice of flesh and soul, that is to say, of man -- not of the Word and Spirit....

"In all other respects, the Father did not forsake the Son. For it was into His Father's hands that the Son commended His spirit [Luke 23:46]. Indeed, after so commending it, He instantly died [as man]; and, as the Spirit, remained with the flesh -- [so that] the flesh could not undergo the full extent of death, *i.e.*, in corruption and decay....

"It is the Son, too, Who ascends to the heights of heaven .... 'He sitteth at the Father's right hand' [Mark 16:19 and Revelation 2:21] -- not the Father at His Own!... Meanwhile, He has received from the Father the promised gift, and has shed this forth -- even the Holy Spirit, the Third Name in the Godhead and the Third Degree of the Divine Majesty...to everyone who hears...in the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost."

Tertullian then ends his writing against the modalistic unitarian Praxeas: "But (this doctrine of yours bears a likeness) to the Jewish Faith -- of which this is the substance: so to believe in One God, as to refuse to reckon the Son beside Him [the Father]; and, after the Son, the Spirit.... The Father, the Son, and the Spirit -- are...believed in as Three, and as making One Only God. God was pleased to renew His Covenant with man in such a way as that His Unity might be believed in...through the Son and the Spirit, in order that God might now be known openly in His proper names and Persons." See too chapter 13 in Tertullian's *On Baptism* (discussing Matthew 28:19 *etc.*).

The A.D. 230 Hippolytus of Portus in Italy states in his Anti-Patristic writing *Against the Heresy of one Noëtus*:<sup>8</sup> "Noëtus, who was a native of Smyrna, lived not very long ago.... He alleged that Christ was the Father Himself -- and that the Father Himself was born and suffered and died.... The Scriptures speak what is right; but Noëtus is of a different mind.... The Scriptures are not...to be repudiated... *I.e.*, **the number** and disposition of Persons in the **Trinity**....

"Therefore a man, even though he will it not, is compelled to acknowledge God the Father Almighty and Christ Jesus the Son of God Who, being God, became man -- to Whom also the Father made all things subject, Himself and the Holy Spirit excepted.... These, therefore, are three. But...there is one God.... As far as regards the power, therefore -- God is one. But as far as regards the economy -- there is a threefold manifestation....

"I shall not indeed speak of two Gods, but of one. Of two Persons, however -- and of a third..., *viz.* the grace of the Holy Ghost. For the Father indeed is One. But there are two Persons, because there is also the Son. And then there is the third, the Holy Spirit.... It is the Father Who commands, and the Son Who obeys, and the Holy Spirit Who gives understanding

"The Father...is above all; and the Son...is through all, and the Holy Spirit...is in all. And we cannot otherwise think of one God, but by believing in truth in Father and Son and Holy Spirit.... The Father seeks to be worshipped in none other way than this....

"[The Son in the Spirit] gave this charge to the disciples after He rose from the dead: 'Go and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost!' And by this, He shows that whosoever omitted any one of these [three], failed in glorifying God perfectly. For it is through this Trinity [*Triados*], that the Father is glorified. For the Father willed; the Son did; the Spirit manifested."

The A.D. 240 Church Father Origen of Caesarea and Alexandria states:<sup>9</sup> "The Son of God...although He seemed recently to have become incarnate, is not by any means on that account recent! For the Holy Scriptures know Him to be **the Most Ancient**.... For it was to Him [and the Holy Spirit], that God [the Father] said regarding the creation of man: 'Let **Us** make man[**kind**] in **Our** image, after **Our** likeness!' [Genesis 1:26]....

"Let no one indeed suppose that we, from having said that the Holy Spirit is conferred upon the saints alone but that the benefits or operations of the Father and of the Son extend to...just and unjust, by so doing give a preference to the Holy Spirit over the Father and the Son or assert that His dignity is greater!... Nothing in the **Trinity** can be called greater or less -- since the Fountain of Divinity Alone contains all things [precisely] by His Word..., and by the Spirit...sanctifies all things.... 'By the **Word** of **Jehovah** were the heavens strengthened, and all their power by the **Spirit**' [Psalm 33:6]....

"The Apostle Paul...demonstrates that the power of **the Trinity** is one and the same, in the words: 'There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit; there are diversities of administrations, but the same Lord; and there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God Who works all things in all people' [First Corinthians 12:4-7].... There is no difference in **the Trinity** -- but that which is called the gift of the Spirit is made known through the Son and operated by God the Father....

"Having made these declarations regarding **the Unity of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit** -- let us return to the order!... God the Father bestows existence upon all.... Participation in Christ in respect of His being the Word or reason, renders them rational beings.... The grace of the Holy Ghost is present, so that those beings which are not holy in their essence may be rendered holy by participating in it....

"Firstly, they derive their existence from God the Father; secondly, their rational nature from the Word; thirdly, their holiness from the Holy Spirit.... That this may be the case, and that those whom He has created may unceasingly and inseparably be present with Him Who **is** -- it is the business of Wisdom to instruct and train them and to bring them to perfection.... In this way, then, by the renewal of the ceaseless working of Father [and] Son and Holy Spirit in us..., we shall be able at some future time...to behold the holy and blessed life..., while we ever more eagerly and freely receive and hold fast the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit."

The A.D. Cyprian of Carthage, in his *Epistle to Jubaianus*, states<sup>10</sup> that there is one baptism which is appointed.... The Lord after His resurrection, sending His disciples, instructed and taught them in what manner they ought to be baptized -- saying, 'All power is given unto Me in heaven and on earth! Go therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost!' He suggests **the Trinity** in Whose sacrament the nations were to be baptized."

In his *Treatise on the Unity of the Church*, just like his Fellow-African Tertullian before him, Cyprian too refers to the much-disputed 'Johannine comma' First John 5:7bc. He states:<sup>11</sup> "The Lord [Jesus] says, 'I and the Father are one' [John 10:30]; and again it is written of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 'And these three are one'" -- meaning these three divine Persons, are essentially one and the same God.

Incidentally, this not only categorizes Cyprian's source here as belonging to Scripture ('it is written'). It also shows that the disputed words in First John 5:7bc were in the old pre-uncial North African Version of the Newer Testament used and quoted from by the North Africans Tertullian and Cyprian long before the now-surviving fifth-century uncials and most later miniscules went and omitted them!

The same can be seen at the A.D. 258 Council of Carthage under Cyprian's chairmanship. For that too<sup>12</sup> twice emphasized Christ's own baptismal formula, 'baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost.'

One could also cite Novatian, who around A.D. 259 or so wrote<sup>13</sup> a whole *Treatise concerning the Trinity* of some thirty-one chapters -- in favour of that doctrine. Because Novatian was ecclesiastically outside of the Church Universal, he was soon opposed in a *Treatise against the Heretic Novatian by an Anonymous Bishop*.

However, even that latter *Treatise* reminds its addressees<sup>14</sup> that "the Lord Christ charges upon Peter and...also upon the rest of His Disciples, 'Go ye and preach the Gospel to the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost! That is, that this same Trinity Who operated...in Noah's days...now operates in the Church [Matthew 28:19 *cf.* First Peter 3:20-21]."

Indeed, also the then-contemporary *Treatise on Rebaptism by an Anonymous Writer* requotes<sup>15</sup> the trinitarian Great Commission of Matthew 28:19. It also states: "John says of our Lord in his Epistle, teaching us: 'This is He Who came by water and blood, Jesus Christ. Not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit Who bears witness, because the Spirit is truth. For three bear witness -- the Spirit and the water and the blood. And these three are one' [First John 5:6 & 5:8 & 5:7c]."

"So that we may gather from these words both that water is wont to confer the Spirit, and that men's own blood is wont to confer the Spirit, and that the Spirit Himself also is wont to confer the Spirit! For since water is poured forth even as blood, the Spirit also was poured out by the Lord upon all who believed."

Indeed, the *Treatise* ends by declaring: "I think also that we have not unsuitably set in order the teaching of the Apostle John who says that 'three bear witness, the Spirit and the water and the blood. And these three are one' [First John 5:8 & 5:7c]."

The A.D. 265 Gregory Thaumaturgus of Neo-Caesarea and Alexandria gave a magnificent defence of Trinitarianism against Unitarianism. Indeed, that was still some sixty years before -- the Unitarian Arius, the Nicene Creed, and the Trinitarian Athanasius.

Gregory opposed those who like today's so-called "Jehovah's witnesses" reject the divinity of the Son and the Spirit. He wrote:<sup>16</sup> "Most hostile and alien to the Apostolic Confession are those who speak of the Son as assumed to Himself by the Father out of nothing..., and those who hold the same sentiments with respect to the Holy Spirit.... Those who regard...the Son...like the creature, existent out of non-existence and as being first-made, and who refuse to admit that He is the only-begotten Son..., [and] who circumscribe the generation of the Son by the Father with

a measured interval...and refuse to acknowledge that the *aeon* of the Begetter and that of the Begotten are without beginning!...

"No less alienated from the true confession, are those [like today's "Jesus-only" Modalists] who hold not the doctrine of the Trinity...as a relation consisting of three Persons but impiously conceive it as...being in a unity formed in the way of synthesis, and who think that the Son is the wisdom in God in the same manner as the human wisdom subsists in man.... Moreover, the Son Himself cannot be approached apart from the Spirit. For the Spirit is both the life and the holy formation of all things. And God sending forth this Spirit through the Son, makes the creature....

"One, therefore, is God the Father; one, the Word; one, the Spirit.... Neither is there another God as Father.... Nor is there another Son as Word.... Nor is there another Spirit as quickening and sanctifying....

"If then anyone makes this affirmation that the Son is God simply as being Himself filled with divinity and not as being generated of divinity -- he has belied the Word.... He has fallen away into the worship of the creature; he has taken up the impiety of the Greeks....and he has become a follower of the unbelief of the Jews who, supposing the Word of God to be but a human son, have refused to accept Him as God....

"Again, when one speaks of the Holy Spirit as an object made holy, he will no longer be able to apprehend all things as being sanctified in the Spirit.... That man, consequently, belies the Fountain of sanctification, the Holy Spirit -- [that man] who denies Him the power of sanctifying. And he will thus be precluded from numbering Him with the Father and the Son.

"He [such a man] makes nought, too, of the holy baptism -- and will no more be able to acknowledge the holy and august **Trinity**. For either we must apprehend the perfect **Trinity** in its natural and genuine glory -- or we shall be under the necessity of speaking no more of a **Trinity** but only of a Unity....

"No object that is made, can be numbered with the **Trinity**!. But in the name of the Holy Trinity baptism and invocation and worship are administered.... What is recent [such as an allegedly-created Son or Spirit] surely is not to be worshipped along with what is eternal! For the recent, comprehends all that has had a beginning. While mighty and measureless is He Who is before the ages!

"He therefore who supposes some beginning of times in the life of the Son and of the Holy Spirit -- therewith also cuts off any possibility of numbering the Son and the Spirit with the Father. For as we acknowledge the glory to be one, so ought we also to acknowledge the substance in the Godhead to be one -- and one also, the eternity of **the Trinity**....

"**We** speak of the **Trinity** as one God.... Not as if we made the one by a synthesis of three.... In earlier times, we have this declaration from the prophet David: 'By the Word of the Lord were the heavens established, and all the power of them by the Spirit of His mouth' [Psalm 33:6]. And in the beginning of the book of the creation, it is written thus: 'And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters' [Genesis 1:2].... 'For the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the depths of God!' [First Corinthians 2:10b]....

"Do you not see that all through Scripture, the Spirit is preached -- and yet nowhere named a creature?... For thus the Father is Lord; and the Son also is God; and of God it is said that 'God is Spirit' [John 4:24]....

"We acknowledge that the Son and the Spirit are consubstantial with the Father -- and that the substance of the Trinity is one..., and the Spirit being sent forth eternally [Hebrews 9:14] from the substance of the Father through the Son with power to sanctify the whole creation.... **The Trinity** is to be adored, to be glorified, to be honoured, and to be revered -- the Father being apprehended in the Son, even as the Son is of Him; and the Son being glorified in the Father, inasmuch as He is of the Father and...manifested in the Holy Spirit to the sanctified....

"And that the **Holy Trinity** is to be worshipped without either separation or alienation, is taught us by Paul who says in his Second Epistle to the Corinthians [13:14]: 'The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God [the Father], and the communion of the Holy Ghost -- be with you all!' .... Behold here again, the saint has defined **the Holy Trinity** -- naming God [the Father], and the Word [or Son], and the Holy Ghost!... **The Holy Trinity** is believed to be one God -- in accordance with these testimonies of Holy Scripture!.

Also in his *Fragment from the Discourse*, Gregory declares:<sup>17</sup> "We speak...of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.... The Divine Persons are names indeed..., and are called **the Holy Trinity**.... One nature in three Persons....

"But **the Trinity remains as it was**. Nor does anything new befall the Persons even, or the names. But these are eternal, and without time.... It was declared to us that there is an **Eternal Trinity** -- in equal honour....

"Neither were there two natures, but only one nature of **the Holy Trinity**.... The nature of **the Trinity** remained one, also after the incarnation of the Son....

"Moreover, if anyone believes that any **increment** has been given to **the Trinity** by reason of the assumption of humanity by the Word, he is an alien from us and from the ministry of the...Apostolic Church. This is the perfect, holy, Apostolic Faith of the holy God. Praise to the Holy Trinity for ever, through the ages of the ages! Amen."

Finally, we draw attention to just two of many extant early liturgies. First, *The Liturgy of the Blessed Apostles composed by Addaeus and St. Maris Teachers of the Easterns*. And second, *The Divine Liturgy of James the Holy Apostle and Brother of the Lord*.

Renaudot considers that of Addaeus or Thaddeus "one of the earliest and perhaps the very earliest of the many formularies"; and Rev. Professor Dr. A. Cleveland Coxe elucidates that "the Apostle Thaddeus [Matthew 10:3 and Mark 3:18] is called Addai in Syriac"; and that "Maris is said to have been one of the seventy disciples" [Luke 9:1-6 and 10:1 & 10:17].<sup>18</sup> Indeed, Neale in his *General Introduction to the History of the Holy Eastern Church* considers "the *Liturgy of St. James*...of earlier date, as to its main fabric, than A.D. 200."<sup>19</sup>

The *Liturgy of the Blessed Apostles composed by Thaddeus* commences: "Adored, glorified, lauded, celebrated, exalted and blessed in heaven and on earth be the adorable and glorious name

of Your ever-glorious Trinity, O Lord of all!... Your name, great and holy, illustrious and blessed; the blessed and incomprehensible name of Your glorious Trinity and Your kindness to our race -- we ought at all times to bless, adore and glorify, O Lord of all!"

Indeed, the Presbyter later prays: "O Lord, mighty God, help my weakness through Your clemency and the aid of Your grace...to the praise of Your Trinity --- O Father, Son, and Holy Ghost!" And later, he says (*cf.* Second Corinthians 13:14): "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God the Father and the communion of the Holy Ghost be with us all!"

*The Divine Liturgy of James the Holy Apostle and Brother of the Lord* is even more elaborate, either directly or indirectly referring to the Trinity at least seventeen times! Briefly, here are some excerpts:

"O Sovereign Lord our God!... Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, the triune light of the Godhead which is unity subsisting in **trinity!**.... For **the Trinity** is the one God Almighty....

"Sovereign Lord Jesus Christ, O Word of God..., glory behooves You -- with Your eternal Father and Your all-holy and good and quickening Spirit, now and ever, and to all eternity.... O benevolent King eternal and Creator of the universe, receive Your Church...which You have purchased by the precious blood of Your only-begotten Son...our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ with Whom You are blessed and glorified together with Your all-holy and good and quickening Spirit, now and ever, and to all eternity!... For You are blessed, and glory behooves You -- the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit now and ever....

"Because You are holy, Lord our God, and dwell and abide in holy places -- we send up the praise and the hymn *Trisagion* [Revelation 4:5-8] to You, the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, now and ever and to all eternity.... Guarded by Your power at all times and led into the light of truth, may we send up the praise and the thanksgiving to You -- the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit now and ever!...

"Hallowed and glorified is Your all-honoured and great name, Father and Son and Holy Spirit, now and ever and to all eternity!... For worthy of praise and worship and most glorious, is Your all-holy name, Father and Son and Holy Spirit, now and always and to all eternity....

"You are an all-merciful and gracious God, and we send up the praise and the thanksgiving to You -- Father, Son and Holy Spirit, now and always and for ever.... O Lord our God, incomprehensible Word of God, one in substance with the Father and the Holy Spirit, co-eternal and indivisible -- accept the pure hymn!... May we glorify You, our only living and true God -- the holy and consubstantial **Trinity** -- Father, Son, and Holy Ghost now and ever and to all eternity!....

"O Lord..., make us worthy of perfect lovingkindness!... Make us worthy of the heavenly Kingdom in Christ Jesus our Lord with Whom You are blessed together with Your all-holy and good and quickening Spirit now and always and for ever!.... You are our sanctification and light, O God -- and Your only-begotten Son and Your all-holy Spirit now and ever and to all eternity!...

"O Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the living God..., You are He Who has commanded us, saying 'Whatsoever things you bind upon earth shall be bound in heaven!' [John 20:21-23].... Glory is due to You, with the eternal Father and the quickening Spirit, now and ever and to all eternity! Amen."

But enough! At our outset, our challenge was solely to prove that the Pre-Nicene Church was thoroughly Trinitarian. Q.E.D. *Quod erat demonstrandum* -- and "Quite easily done!"

### Endnotes

- 1) *The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles* chs. 1-3 & 7, in *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1970, VII:377-79.
- 2) *Constitutions of the Holy Apostles* V:1:7, in *The Ante-Nic. Fath.* VII:4
- 3) Justin Martyr: *First Apology*, chs. 6 & 67, in *The Ante-Nic. Fath.* I:164 & 185f.
- 4) Theophilus: *To Autolycus*, chs. 10-11 & 15, in *The Ante-Nic. Fath.* II:98 & 100f.
- 5) Irenaeus: *Against Heresies*, III:11:7-8 & III:15:3 to 17:2 & III:18:6 & III:20:1-6 and V:8:1.
- 6) Clement of Alexandria: *Stromata*, V:14, in *The Ante-Nic. Fath.* II:468.
- 7) Tertullian: *Against Praxeas*, chs. 2 & 9 & 11 & 12 & 18 & 25f & 30f, in *Ante-Nic. Fath.* III:598f & 603f & 606f.
- 8) Hippolytus: *Against the Heresy of one Noëtus*, 1 & 3 & 8 & 14; in *Anti-Nic. Fath.* V:223-28.
- 9) Origen: *Against Celsus* V:37 and *De Principis*, I:3:7-8.
- 10) Cyprian's *Epistle LXXII:1-5* (Oxford's LXXIII).
- 11) Cyprian's *Treatise* I:7.
- 12) *The Seventh Council of Carthage under Cyprian*, in *Ante-Nic. Fath.*, V:565-69.
- 13) Novatian: *Treatise concerning the Trinity*, in *Ante-Nic. Fath.*, V:611-44.
- 14) *Treatise against the Heretic Novatian by an Anonymous Bishop*, 7 -- in *Ante-Nic. Fath.*, V:658.
- 15) *Treatise on Rebaptism by an Anonymous Writer*, 3 & 15 & 19 -- in *Ante-Nic. Fath.*, V:657-77.
- 16) Gregory Thaumaturgus: *A Sectional Confession of Faith*, 1 & 4-5 & 9-14 & 18-23; and also in his *On the Trinity* -- in *Ante-Nic. Fath.*, VI:40-46.
- 17) Gregory Thaumaturgus: *Fragment from the Discourse*, in *Ante-Nic. Fath.*, VI:48-49.
- 18) *Early Liturgies*, in *Ante-Nic. Fath.* VII pp. 534 & 561-63 & 570
- 19) *Ib.*, pp. 533 & 537-50.

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