

The Principles of Christian Religion

**A Study through the Baptist
Catechism using Benjamin
Beddome's *Scriptural Exposition***

Outline of the BC

- I. Introductory Questions: 1-6
- II. What We are to Believe: 7-43
- III. What Duty God Requires: 44-114
 - A. The Law and our Inability: 44-89
 - B. The Gospel and the Means of Grace: 90-114

Quotations on the Trinity

- The Athanasian Creed

1. “Whosoever will be saved: before all things it is necessary that he hold the Catholic Faith:
2. “Which Faith except every one do keep whole and undefiled: without doubt he shall perish everlastingly.
3. “And the Catholic Faith is this: That we worship one God in Trinity and Trinity in Unity”

Quotations on the Trinity

- Augustine of Hippo
 - "... [I]n no other subject is error more dangerous, or inquiry more laborious, or the discovery of truth more profitable."
- 2LCF 2.3
 - "... [W]hich doctrine of the Trinity is the foundation of all our communion with God, and comfortable dependence on Him."

Quotations on the Trinity

- John Owen

- “There was no one more glorious mystery brought to light in and by Jesus Christ than that of the Holy Trinity And this revelation is made unto us, not that our minds might be possessed with the notions of it, but that we might know aright how to place our trust in him, how to obey him and live unto him, how to obtain and exercise communion with him, until we come to the enjoyment of him.”

Quotations on the Trinity

- A.W. Pink

- The doctrines of the Oneness and Threeness of God “are equally above reason, and real Christians do not attempt to fathom them; yet their incomprehensibility so far from being an objection is a necessary condition of confidence in revelation and faith in Him who is revealed. If the Bible presented no heights beyond the powers of reason to scale, if it contained no depths unfathomable to the keenest mental acumen, this writer for one would have discarded it as being nothing more than a human production and imposture. For our part we would no more worship a ‘god’ that we could measure by our intellect than we would honor an image that our hands fashioned.
- “Whenever we attempt to discuss the revelation God has made of His three Persons we should do so with bowed heads and reverent hearts, for the ground we tread is ineffably holy.”

Question and Answer 9

Q. 9: How many persons are there in the Godhead?

A. There are three persons in the Godhead, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one God, the same in essence, equal in power and glory.¹

¹ 1 John 5:7; Matthew 28:19

I John 5:7-8

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- ⁷ For there are three that bear witness in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one.
- ⁸ And there are three that bear witness on earth: the Spirit, the water, and the blood; and these three agree as one.

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- ⁷ For there are three that testify:
- ⁸ the Spirit and the water and the blood; and these three agree.

I John 5:7-8

- Which reading is original?
 - Certainly, the shorter reading is original.
 - Of the 517 Greek Manuscripts that contain some portion of I John, only 8 contain the longer reading (and only 4 have it in the actual text), the earliest of which is from the 16th century.

I John 5:7-8

- Where did the longer reading come from?
 - “The *Comma* probably originated as a piece of allegorical exegesis of the three witnesses and may have been written as a marginal gloss in a Latin manuscript of I John, whence it was taken into the text of the Old Latin Bible during the fifth century. The passage does not appear in manuscripts of the Latin Vulgate before about A.D. 800.” – Metzger and Ehrman

I John 5:7-8

- Where did the longer reading come from?
 - When Desiderius Erasmus published his edition of the Greek NT in 1515, he was criticized for not including the *Comma*.
 - He may have promised to include it in his next edition if one Greek manuscript could be found that contained it.

I John 5:7-8

- Where did the longer reading come from?
 - “At length such a copy was found – or was made to order! As it now appears, the Greek manuscript had probably been written in Oxford about 1520 by a Fransiscan friar . . . who took the disputed words from the Latin Vulgate. Erasmus inserted the passage in his third edition (1522), but in a lengthy footnote . . . he intimated his suspicion that the manuscript had been prepared expressly in order to confute him.” – Metzger and Ehrman

I John 5:7-8

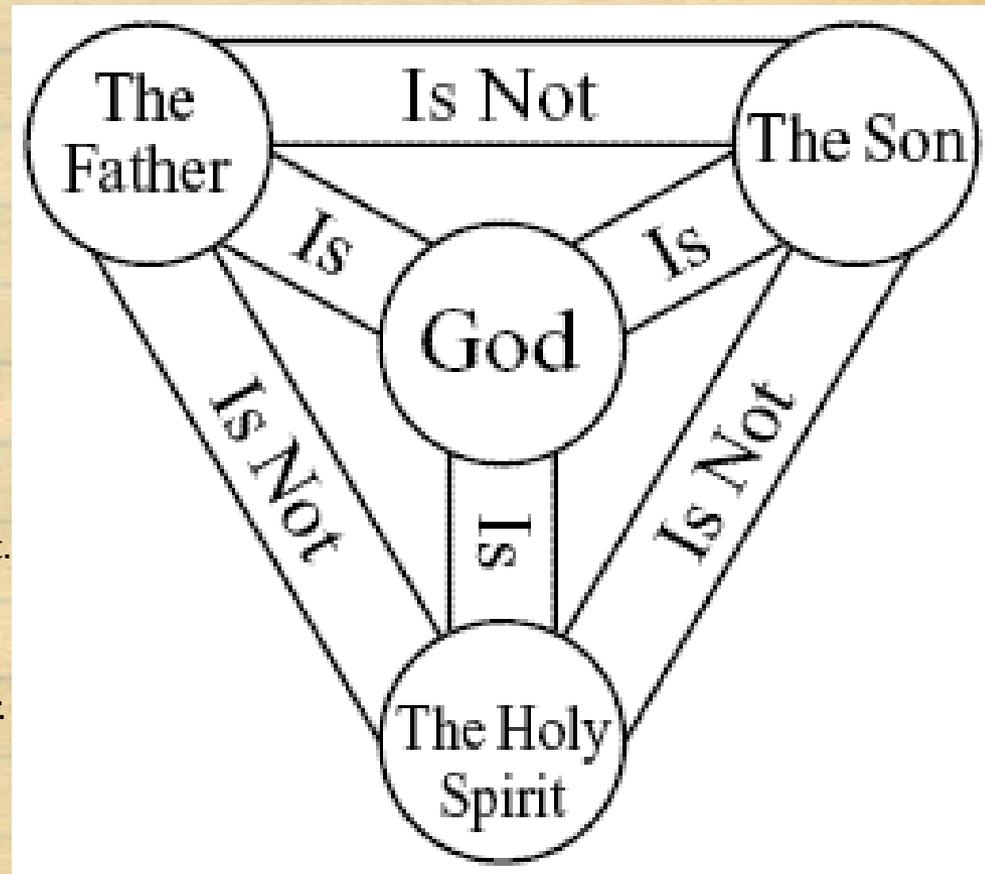
- Where did the longer reading come from?
 - Erasmus' text of the Greek NT, because it was the first on the market and cheaper and more convenient than its rivals, became the standard Greek text for 400 years (the "Textus Receptus").

I John 5:7-8

- What does this all mean?
 - It means that we cannot use I John 5:7-8 to prove the Trinity.
 - But that's OK: the doctrine of the Trinity does not depend on that one statement.
 - And it does not invalidate the teaching of the Trinity in the Confession or in the Catechism or in the Reformers or in the Puritans.

The Shield of the Trinity

1. The Father is God.
2. The Son is God.
3. The Holy Spirit is God.
4. God is the Father.
5. God is the Son.
6. God is the Holy Spirit.
7. The Father is not the Son.
8. The Father is not the Holy Spirit.
9. The Son is not the Father.
10. The Son is not the Holy Spirit.
11. The Holy Spirit is not the Father.
12. The Holy Spirit is not the Son.



Question and Answer 9

- This is the core of the doctrine of the Trinity.
 - There is only one God, one divine essence; but there are three divine Persons.
 - Each Person is fully and equally God.
 - But each Person is distinct from the other Persons.
 - Both God's oneness and His threeness must always be kept in balance.
 - 2LCF 2.3; Athanasian Creed: "We worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity, neither confounding the persons nor dividing the substance [essence]."

Question and Answer 9

- Terminology:
 - **Godhead** = Middle English equivalent of “Godhood”; divine nature or essence
 - **Person** = from Latin *persona* (Greek *prosopon*); an analogy of sorts; indicates an objective, distinct identity
 - **Subsistence** = from Latin *subsistentia* (Greek *hypostasis*); “indicating a particular being or existent, and individual instance of a given essence” (Muller)
 - **Essence** = from Latin *essentia* (Greek *ousia*); “the whatness or *quidditas* of a being, which makes the being precisely what it is” (Muller)

Question and Answer 9

- Trinitarian Heresies (and Bad Trinitarian Analogies):

- **Modalism**

- The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are three different “modes” of God’s revelation of Himself.
 - Denies true distinction of the Persons
 - Analogies of water/coats/roles

- **Partialism**

- The three Persons are three parts of the one God, each having a third of the divine nature.
 - Denies the indivisibility of the divine essence

Question and Answer 9

- Trinitarian Heresies (and Bad Trinitarian Analogies):

- **Tritheism**

- The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are actually three gods.
 - Denies the oneness of God
 - Analogy of Peter, Paul, and Mary

- **Arianism**

- The Son and Spirit are the Father's first and best creations
 - Denies the equality and true divinity of each Person
 - Analogy of the sun