

Chapter 6

JESUS CHRIST PREACHED AFTER A.D. 200

*Jesus is only a man and not God
Jesus is only a mighty for there is an Almighty God
Jesus is both God and man*

"For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him." 2 Corinthians 11:4

"Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me." John 5:39

All believers in the Holy Bible are generally known as Christians. They are monotheists, that is, believing in One True God. However, the puzzlement of non-Christians is why Christians cannot agree on the one God of the Bible!

This is one subject in this book, comparing the first century Christians with their modern counterparts on their recognition of the God in the Holy Bible. Divergence of belief on the real identity of Jesus Christ is the major cause of division of Christendom. Among the many doctrines on the identity of God are the following:

1. That God is the Father God, Yahweh, or Jehovah. The Son, Jesus, is only a human messenger and is not God. The Holy Spirit is only a force of God.
2. That God is divided into three distinct persons, each person is God, but one person is not the other two persons.

3. That this one God is expressed in three different manifestations, each manifestation being named Jesus Christ.
4. That the Father is also the Son, Jesus Christ; and the Holy Spirit is only a force of God.

Added to these are different doctrines of salvation, all supported by Bible verses that caused the confusion in the Christian religion. We are reminded of the anecdote, earlier told, about the Four Blind Old Women and the Elephant.

FULLFILLMENT OF A PROPHECY

2 Corinthians 11:4 "For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him."

This is what people say of Jesus Christ:

- Some people say, "Jesus is only a man and not God," and the derivative, "Jesus is only a mighty God for there is a supreme or Almighty God."
- Other people say, "The name of the Father and the Holy Spirit is Jesus Christ, and the derivative 'Jesus is also the Father, and the Holy Spirit is only a force of God.' "
- Many people say, "Jesus is both God and man, and He is the second person of the Holy Trinity."

Is this not just a rehash of how people at Caesarea Philippi who, after seeing and listening to Jesus, had different recognition of Him?

Matthew 16:13 "When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am? ¹⁴And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets."

THE JEWS DID NOT RECOGNIZE GOD

The Jews believe in one God. However, this is not enough for even the devils do.

James 2:19 "Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe..."

Jesus Christ rebuked them for not being able to identify the God that they were worshipping. There was division among them because of Him. Yet they professed to believe in the God of their father Abraham, but Jesus admonished them:

John 8:54 "Jesus answered...my Father that honoureth me; of whom ye say, that he is your God: ⁵⁵Yet ye have not known him..."

Who is the Father and who is Jesus Christ? Who is the Holy Spirit? Who is the God of the Old Testament? Who is the God of the New Testament? What is His name? Who is God that the chosen will see in heaven, and to be with in eternity?

WARNING FROM THOSE NOT KNOWING GOD

Jesus Christ warned His disciples of people who cannot identify Him and the Father.

John 16:2 "They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service. ³And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor me."

Jesus Christ is the *Truth*. As seen in Chapter 5: GOD IDENTIFYING HIMSELF, truly identifying Jesus requires the "revelation of the Father" as demonstrated to Simon Peter. How many people would react to this truth?

People believing in the Holy Bible are one in identifying Jesus that He is the child born in Bethlehem, the son of Virgin Mary. He grew in Nazareth, preached and performed many miracles in the different towns of Israel. The religious leaders that caused His arrest and torture hated him. They ridiculed Him and made to carry a cross where He was crucified. On the third day, He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and is expected to come back again.

While all people profess, "Jesus is the Christ and the Son of the living God," on His spiritual identity *Christianity today* is greatly divided. True to the warning of the Apostles, "another Jesus" is heard being preached in many

pulpits. These are the different doctrines about the identity of Jesus heard two hundred years after His birth:

A. THE ARIAN DOCTRINE OR ARIANISM

Excerpts from Encyclopedia Americana, Vol. 2, Page 281, 1967 Edition:

"Arianism is the common designation for the teachings of Arius (about AD 265-356) and his followers, which deny the divinity of Christ. It had its roots in Greek theological speculation beginning with Gnosticism and may be regarded as an elaborate attempt to define the relation of Christ to God according to natural reason. Centered in Alexandria and Antioch, it was one of the most formidable challenges to orthodoxy in the history of the Christian church. During the greater part of the 4th century, its most flourishing period, it enjoyed the strong support of the Romans and had a special appeal for the intelligencia.

Doctrine: The basic doctrine of Arius may be summarized as follows: (1) God is unique and unbegotten (agennetos), and everything outside of God was created from nothing by the will of God. (2) The Logos (Word) – Christ – is an intermediary between God and the world. He was before time but not eternal. There was a time when the Word did not exist. (3) The Word therefore was created. He was made (genetos). If it is said that He was born, begotten (gennetos), this is to be understood in terms of an adoptive sonship. (4) The incarnate Word (Christ), consequently, is inferior to God but is to be worshipped, since He is exalted above all other creatures and is both Ruler and Redeemer.

History: Arianism from the first was a fully developed doctrine. Hence, its history is the story of attenuations in the direction of orthodoxy and return to the original tenets of the church.

The Council of Nicaea (AD 325) condemned the teaching of Arius and declared that the Son was of the same substance (homoousios, consubstantial) with the Father. However, Eusebius of Nicomedia, although he signed the formula of Nicaea, soon repudiated it. Through influence at the imperial court, he secured the recall of Arius from exile and the deposition of Athanasius of Alexandria, the leading

champion of the Nicene definition. Eusebius represented a rigid form of Arianism. By the middle of the 4th century there were three main groups of Arians, all seeking and in part obtaining imperial support under Constantius II. The first group consisted of uncompromising Arians who maintained that the Son was unlike the Father (anomoios) and are called Anomoeans. The second group proclaimed in a Synod of Ancyra (AD 358) that the Son is like in substance with the Father (homoiousios) and are called Homoeousians or Semi-Arians. The third group rejected the terms homoousios, homoiousios, and ousia, and maintained simply that the Son was like the Father. The position of the third group was not very different from that of the second...

Despite the fanatical opposition of the Arian emperor Valens, Nicaean orthodoxy triumphed in the West and moved toward final victory in the East. The whole East subscribed to doctrines pronounced at Rome in AD 378 and 379, and the emperor Theodosius was an ardent champion of the Nicaean Faith.

The Synod of Constantinople (AD 381), later recognized as the Second Ecumenical Council, reaffirmed the Nicene Creed with slight changes, thus completing the victory of Nicaea in favor of the full divinity of the Son. Arianism was soon suppressed within the empire, but it prevailed for a long time among the barbarians. The conversion of Clovis, king of the Franks, to the orthodox faith in AD 496 was followed by a decline of Arianism among the Teutonic peoples."

The Arian Doctrine concentrates on refuting the divinity of the Son, Jesus Christ. Justifications and support for the concept are verses pointing to the "weakness" of the Son as evidenced by His dependence on the Father. Among them are the following:

1. God is not a created being. He has no beginning. The Son, Jesus, is only a "begotten" of the Father:

John 1:14 "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us... the only begotten of the Father..."

2. God is a spirit. He is not a man. A spirit cannot die.

John 4:24 "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth."

Numbers 23:19 "God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, ...or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?"

3. Jesus is a man. He is the "Son of man," and he died on the cross:

1 Timothy 2:5 "For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus."

Matthew 16:27 "For the Son of man (referring to the Son, Jesus) shall come in the glory of the Father with his angels..."

4. God is omnipotent or all-powerful, while the Son depends only on the Father for power:

John 5:30 "I can of mine own self do nothing..."

John 5:19 "Then answered Jesus and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise."

5. There is no one greater than God for He is omnipotent. The Son does not have that distinction:

John 14:28 "Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come again unto you. If ye love me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father: for my Father is greater than I."

6. God is omniscient, or all-knowing. The Son does not have that attribute:

Mark 13:32 "But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father."

7. God does not have a God, for He is the only God. The Son has a God:

John 20:17 "Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and

*say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your father;
and to my God, and your God."*

Among others, the proponents of this doctrine aver, that the foregoing truths are sufficient to prove that the Son, Jesus, can never be God.

Inexplicable "mysteries" under the Arian doctrine

1. Why did John the apostle clearly state that Jesus Christ is the true God?

1 John 5:20 "And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true; and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life."

2. Why did the same apostle of Christ write that "God" died as proof for His love? Was it not the Son, Jesus Christ, Who died on the cross?

1 John 3:16 [KJV] "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us..."

3. Why does Jesus Christ Himself say that He is the Almighty God? The following is a revelation of Jesus Christ to John the apostle as he was exiled in the island of Patmos:

Revelation 1:8 "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty."

Reference should be made to:

Genesis 17:1 "...the LORD appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect."

Isaiah 44:6 "Thus saith the Lord the King of Israel, and his Redeemer the Lord of hosts; I am the first, and I am the last; and besides me there is no God."

4. Why did the Jews, who were in general the enemies of Jesus, perceived Jesus as declaring Himself God?

John 10:33 "The Jews answered him, saying, For a good work we stone thee not; but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God."

5. Arius, the father of the Arian doctrine, believed that Jesus was telling the truth. And Jesus quoted the Scriptures saying that only God should be worshipped:

Matthew 4:10 "...it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve."

Why was Jesus Christ being worshipped and He accepted it? This was before His death and His resurrection.

1. The blind whose eyes were opened worshipped Jesus:

John 9:37 "And Jesus said unto him, Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee. ³⁸ And he said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped him."

2. Christ's apostles worshipped Him, and He accepted this:

Luke 24:51-52 "And it came to pass, while he (Jesus) blessed them (apostles), he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven. And they worshipped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy."

Matthew 28:17 "And when they (apostles) saw him (Jesus), they worshipped him..."

3. Even in His childhood, Jesus was already worshipped:

Matthew 2:11 "And when they (wise men from the East) were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him..."

4. After His ascension, Jesus Christ was being worshipped:

Revelation 5:14 "...and the four and twenty four elders fell down and worshipped him that liveth for ever and ever."

Revelation 1:18 "I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for ever more..."

Why did it take almost 300 years after Pentecost to have someone in the person of Arius preach this sort of identity for the Son? Could "Jesus" introduced by Arius be the Jesus of the Apostles or another Jesus?

B. THE TRINITY DOCTRINE OR TRINITARIANISM¹

The Trinity doctrine became known as the Athanasian Creed is a rebuttal to the Arian Doctrine. The concept, therefore, centers on proving that the Son, Jesus, is God. Athanasius, a Roman Catholic bishop was younger by around thirty years than Arius. With many Bible verses, Athanasius succeeded in proving that Jesus is, indeed, God. Among them are the following:

1. Jesus is the truth, and is the true God:

1 John 5:20 "And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true; and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life."

2. God laid down His life, and the people saw it was Jesus who died on the cross:

1 John 3:16 [KJV] "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us..."

3. Jesus revealed to John the apostle that He is the Almighty:

Revelation 1:8 "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty."

4. Many of the Jews discerned that Jesus was professing Himself God. Can Jesus profess something that He was not? Can Jesus possibly tell a lie?

John 10:33 "The Jews answered him, saying, For a good work we stone thee not; but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God."

¹ This doctrine on the identity of God is found in the writings of Tertullian, a civil lawyer who later became a priest. Tertullian gave the formula for the Holy Trinity, *tres Personae, una Substantia*. The Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are numerically distinct, and each is ; they are of one substance, one state, and one power. ("De pud." c. xxi).

5. Jesus received the greatest accolade that properly belongs to God – that of being worshipped. Only God deserves worship, according to Jesus Christ Himself:

Matthew 4:10 "Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve."

From childhood:

Matthew 2:11 "And when they (the wise men from the East) were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts: gold, and frankincense, and myrrh."

In His adulthood:

John 9:38 "And he (the blind man who received his sight) said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped him."

After His resurrection:

Matthew 28:17 "And when they (Christ's disciples) saw him, they worshipped him..."

Just before His ascension:

Luke 24:51-52 "And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven. And they worshipped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy."

After His ascension:

Revelation 1:18 "I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death."

Revelation 5:14 "...and the four and twenty elders fell down and worshipped him that liveth for ever and ever."

As stated, Athanasius succeeded in proving that Jesus Christ is God. Here is what history recorded on the father of the doctrine of the Trinity or the

Athanasian Creed. Excerpts from Encyclopedia Americana, Vol. 2, Page 603, 1967 Edition:

“Athanasius, Saint (AD 295-373), early Christian bishop, theologian, and doctor of the church. He was born, probably at Alexandria, of Christian parents. He received his classical and theological training in Alexandria and was ordained deacon in 319 by Alexander, bishop of that city...

Upon the death of Alexander, Athanasius was chosen bishop of Alexandria on June 8, 328, over the opposition of the *Arians* and the followers of Meletius. Although Arius had been condemned at Nicaea, his supporters continued to oppose Athanasius because of his adherence to the Nicæan teaching. Athanasius' refusal to admit Arius to communion, as ordered by Emperor Constantine, hardened the opposition...

After the emperor's death on May 22, 337, Athanasius returned to his see. Soon, however, the Eusebian faction succeeded in placing Gregory of Cappadocia in the see of Alexandria, whereupon Athanasius fled to Rome in 339. Pope Julius I received him and in a synod in 341 declared Athanasius innocent of the charges made against him. The Council of Sardica in 343 confirmed the findings of the synod and made it clear that Athanasius was the lawful bishop of Alexandria. After Gregory's death in 345, Athanasius returned to his diocese...

His *Trinitarian Theology* taught that the Son is of the same substance (*homoousios*) with the Father, as is also the Holy Spirit. His teaching on the Logos furnished the basic ideas for *the development of later Christological doctrine*.

As a friend of the monks of Egypt he fostered the ascetic life in the East and brought knowledge of monasticism to the West.”

(Text provided by Hermigild Dressler, The Catholic University of America)

THE ATHANASIAN CREED

Following is the summary of the doctrine of the Trinity as promulgated by St. Athanasius: Encyclopedia Americana, Vo. 27, Page, 116-117, 1967 Edition

"The central and characteristic Christian doctrine of God is that He exists in Three Persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. ("Holy Ghost" is the traditional English translation of Sanctus Spiritus and means the same as "Holy Spirit.") At the same time, the Christian church insists that God is One in "substance" (Latin *substantia*, existence or inner essence), and thus combines in a "mystery" (a formula or conception which really transcends human understanding) the truths set forth in the Holy Scriptures. It is held that although the doctrine is beyond the grasp of human reason, it is, like many of the formulations of physical science, not contrary to reason, and may be apprehended (though it may not be comprehended) by the human mind.

It is probably a mistake to assume that the doctrine resulted from the intrusion of Greek metaphysics or philosophy into Christian thought; for the data upon which the doctrine rests, and also its earliest attempts at formulation, are much older than the church's encounter with Greek philosophy. The earliest development of the doctrine may in fact be viewed as an attempt to preserve the balance between the various statements of Scripture, or the implications, without yielding to views which, though logical enough, would have destroyed or abandoned important areas of Christian belief. *The simplest affirmation is that God is "Three in One, and One in Three..." God is Father, and the Father is God; God is Son, and the Son is God; God is Spirit, and the Spirit is God...* (But the Father is not the Son and the Spirit, the Son is the Father and the Spirit, and the Spirit is not the Son and the Father, and yet there is only *One God*.)

THE HOLY TRINITY

The full development of *Trinitarianism* took place in the West, in the *Scholasticism of the Middle Ages*, when an explanation was undertaken in terms of philosophy and psychology, especially of the recovered *Aristotelianism* of the 13th century. The classical exposition is found in the works of St. Thomas Aquinas, whose views on this subject has

dominated most of later Christian theology, both Roman Catholic and Protestant.

In the 16th and 17th centuries the Socinians and Unitarians, and in the 18th century the Deists, challenged the doctrine, but without succeeding in bringing about any formal revision of doctrine in the major Christian groups."

COMMENTS ON THE TRINITARIAN DOCTRINE

1. Why did it take more than 300 years to formulate a doctrine for the recognition of God? Did the Apostles of Christ, in AD 30-96, not expound on the identity of God and Jesus Christ?
2. Why did the work of Aristotle, a noted pagan philosopher, find its place in this doctrine?
3. And why did the academe, "Scholasticism of the Middle Ages," become the center for the development of this concept? Is God's revelation confined only to a special place like the schools, and to a certain sector of society, like the intellectual elite? Is this scriptural?
4. Why did it need philosophy² to expound on the identity of God? Is the Holy Scripture,³ which is accepted as containing the Word of God, not enough to fully introduce God?

"MYSTERIES" SPAWNED BY THE TRINITARIAN DOCTRINE

The doctrine teaches that the Three Divine Persons of God: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are co-equal in omniscience, in omnipotence, and in everything.

1. Why did the Son say that the Father is greater than He, if they are co-equal in omnipotence?

John 14:28 "Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come again unto you. If ye loved me, ye would rejoice,

² Colossians 2:8 "Beware 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."

³ Isaiah 8:20 "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them."

because I said, I go unto the Father: for my Father is greater than I."

John 5:30 "I can of mine own self do nothing..."

John 5:19 "Then answered Jesus and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do..."

Thus, the mystery!

2. Why did the Son say that the Father knows something that He does not know, if they are co-equal in omniscience?

Mark 13:32 "But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father."

Thus, the mystery!

3. The doctrine teaches that the Son is just as omnipresent as the Father and the Holy Spirit. Why was the Son not found in all places of Israel, or in every place for that matter?

Thus, the mystery!

4. The doctrine teaches that the Holy Spirit is co-equal in omniscience with the Father and the Son. Why does the Son say that the Holy Spirit cannot speak on His own?

John 16:13 "...when he, the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak..."

Thus, the mystery!

5. The doctrine teaches that the Son will be seen in heaven "sitting at the right hand of the Father," citing several verses in support. Since the doctrine also teaches that the person of the Son is not the person of the Father, and each person is God, how could there be one God sitting on the Throne?

Revelation 4:2 "And immediately I was in the spirit: and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne."

Thus, the mystery!

6. Jesus Christ revealed to John the apostle that there is only one throne in heaven,⁴ and the one in the midst of the throne is the "Lamb of God."⁵ How could the Trinity Doctrine explain the three distinct persons of God, in relation to the single throne, and the one in the midst of the throne?

Thus, the mystery!

7. God states that there is only one God and one Lord,⁶ and this truth is confirmed by Jesus Christ.⁷ Since the doctrine teaches that the person of the Father, Who is God, is not the person of the Son and the Holy Spirit, whose individual persons are also God, how could there be *One Lord and One God*?

Thus, the mystery!

8. The Bible states that it was the *Father*⁸ who made a *Testament*,⁹ and this covenant requires the death of the Testator.¹⁰ How could this Testament or Covenant be fulfilled with the death of the *Son*, when the doctrine teaches that the person of the Son is not the person of the Father?

⁴ Revelation 4:2 "And immediately I was in the Spirit: and, behold, a *throne* was set in heaven, and *one sat on the throne*."

⁵ Revelation 5:6 "And I beheld, and, lo, in the *midst of the throne...a lamb* as it had been slain..."

Matthew 25:31 "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory."

⁶ Deuteronomy 6:4 "Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God is one Lord."

⁷ Mark 12:29 "And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord."

⁸ Isaiah 63:16 "Doubtless thou art our Father, though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledge us not: thou, O Lord, art our Father, our Redeemer..."

⁹ Genesis 17:7 "And I will establish my *covenant* between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee and to thy seed after thee."

¹⁰ Hebrews 9:16 "For where a *testament* is, there must of necessity the *death of the testator*."

Thus, the mystery!

9. The doctrine teaches that the person of the Father is not the person of the Holy Spirit. The Father promised Himself to be the *inheritance* in His testament.¹¹ Why did the Son say that it is the Holy Spirit Who is to be received as inheritance by the real believers?¹²

Thus, the mystery!

10. The doctrine teaches that the person of the Son is not the person of the Holy Spirit. Why does the Bible say that "The Holy Spirit purchased us with His own blood?"

Thus, the mystery!

Acts 20:28 [KJV] "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood."

11. The *Father* revealed to prophet Isaiah that He is the only Savior. Why did Luke write that the Son is also the Savior? Since the doctrine teaches that the person of the Father is not the person of the Son, how could there be only one Savior?

Isaiah 43:11 (Father God speaking) "I, even I, am the Lord; and beside me there is no saviour."

Luke 2:11 "For unto us is born this day in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord."

Thus, the mystery!

These are some of the great mysteries about God propagated by the Athanasian Creed or the Trinity Doctrine.

¹¹ Psalms 16:5 "The Lord is the portion of mine *inheritance* and of my cup: thou maintainest my lot."

Ezekiel 44:28 "And it shall be unto them for an inheritance, *I am their inheritance...*"

¹² John 7:39 "But this spake he of the *Spirit*, which they that believe on him should receive: for the *Holy Ghost* was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified."

The eminent proponents recognize the inadequacy of the doctrine in clearly introducing God and Jesus Christ with the admission that the understanding of "The Trinity is a mystery, formula or conception which really transcends human understanding."

Statements like the following are attributable to great theologians and Bible scholars advocating the doctrine: "If you try to understand the mystery of the Holy Trinity, you will lose your mind; but to deny it will mean the loss of your soul."

The doctrine failed to consider the basic truth well established in the Holy Scripture. This refers to the knowledge and wisdom about God:

IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

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..."

Deuteronomy 29:29 "The secret things¹³ belong unto the Lord our God, but those things which are revealed belong to us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law."

IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

Colossians 1:26 "Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints."

To the proponents of this doctrine, where is the fulfillment of the promise to the beneficiaries of the New Testament of, "they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD..."?

Jeremiah 31:31-34 "Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant... ³²Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day

¹³ Secret things are those that are not written in the Holy Scripture. e.g.

Revelation 10:4 "And when the 7 thunders had uttered their voices, I was about to write: and heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Seal up those things which the 7 thunders uttered, and write them not."

that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt...³³But this shall be the covenant that I will make ...After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people.³⁴And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD..."

True to the promise of God that He did not speak in secret, His chosen people are given the understanding to know Him. To know Him fully and clearly is a prerequisite to loving Him, as our Lord told a humble Scribe:

Mark 12:29 "And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord:³⁰And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength..."

But the Trinity doctrine is a much vaunted concept of recognizing God. The victory of the proponents of the doctrine in the Nicean Council of AD 325 called by Emperor Constantine I marked the beginning of the spread of the creed throughout the world. Thus, the majority of the known Christian world is dominated by religious sects preaching this gospel of the Holy Trinity.

For emphasis, how many people noticed this promise made in the Old Testament to the beneficiaries of the New Testament?

Jeremiah 31:31-34 "Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant ...³³But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people.³⁴And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD..."

This is the fulfillment of the promise in the New Testament:

Hebrews 8:11 "And they shall not teach every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest."

C. THE SABELLIAN DOCTRINE IN THE 2ND CENTURY

Recently, in the 18th century, the Sabellian or *Oneness* doctrine, also known as Modalism, or Sabellianism, renewed its appeal to many Bible readers. Today, quite a number of religious sects preach this 2nd century doctrine of identifying God and Jesus Christ. In the administration of church activities, not much difference is observed from the Arian and Trinitarian practices.

This doctrine about God and Jesus Christ was preached in the 2nd century A.D. by Sabellius, a renowned theologian at that time. Like the Arian and the Trinity doctrines, his teaching is recorded in history:

Excerpts from Encyclopedia Americana, Vol. 24, Page 80, 1967 Edition:

"Sabellius, Christian teacher: b. Pentapolis, Africa, or Italy. He taught at Ptolemais in Upper Egypt...(199-217)..."

He is known as the founder of a sect that considered the Son and the Holy Ghost only as different revelations or manifestations of the Godhead, but not as separate persons. The doctrine of Sabellius was opposed by Dionysius of Alexandria and Dionysius of Rome, by Epiphanius (who states that the Sabellians were very numerous around Rome and in Mesopotamia) and by Theodoret. St. Augustine states that by the beginning of the 5th century they had entirely disappeared. Yet their views have always found adherents, and even now some theologians attempt to reconcile theology with reason by admitting conceptions of the Trinity coinciding with that of Sabellius..."

Very close to the Sabellian doctrine is another doctrine on the identity of God and Jesus Christ, called *Monarchianism*. History records this doctrine in:

Encyclopedia Americana, Vol. 19, Page 355, 1967 Edition:

"A type of Christian doctrine which was current in the 2nd and 3rd centuries. In opposition to Gnosticism conservatives that held the Deity is not a descending series of aeons but is

one sole and sovereign Eternal Being, by whose will, all things exist. The term "monarchy" (Gr. monarchia) referred to this sole sovereignty, as taught in the Bible (Isaiah 43-45). There were two forms of the doctrine: (1) the dynamistic or adoptionist, according to which Jesus' divine nature was either a "power" (Luke 5:17) derived from the supreme God or the rank conferred upon Him at the Resurrection (Philippians 2:9-11); and (2) the modalistic, according to which the Incarnation was only a temporary "mode" of divine manifestation."

Like the Arian and the Trinity doctrines, Bible verses are given in support for the concept. Principally, the foundation upon which this doctrine is based are the verses pointing to the single name for the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. This is found in the following verses. Jesus Christ commanded His disciples to baptize the believers:

Matthew 28:19 "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

Fulfilling the command, the apostles baptized in just one name for the "three:"

Acts 2:38 "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."

Thus, oftentimes, this concept is referred to as "Jesus Christ only" doctrine. The doctrine teaches that God is manifested by three different forms or manifestations: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; and each manifestation is named Jesus Christ. Like the Arian and the Trinitarian doctrines, why did it have to take a man, in the person of Sabellius, to introduce the God of the Bible?

"MYSTERIES" INEXPLICABLE UNDER THE ONENESS DOCTRINE

1. In spite of the truth that Jesus Christ indeed is a man,¹⁴ the doctrine failed to comprehend why and how He is indeed a "real" man. Therefore

¹⁴ 1 Timothy 2:5 "For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the *man* Christ Jesus."

Philippians 2:8 "And being found in fashion as a *man*, he humbles himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."

it teaches that Jesus Christ is both God and man at the same time. This is due to His divine power, the doctrine avers, that could not possibly be endowed on a pure man. But, could Jesus Christ who is both God and man be a model, showing the way,¹⁵ to real and pure men as His "brethren?"¹⁶ Thus, the mystery!

2. How deep and profound is the belief of the three manifestations of God making up one Lord and one God of the Bible? Can this avowal stand an incisive scrutiny? The Trinitarian doctrine also professes one Lord and one God for the three persons!
3. Why do the proponents of the Oneness doctrine, while openly professing belief in the spiritual nature of the word of God, sustain its literal-physical application? The Spiritual and the Literal Language of God is discussed in Chapter 7.
4. On the surface, the doctrine vividly pictures God of the Bible as one Lord and one God. But with the doctrine's failure to comprehend the spiritual word of God, the warning of Jesus Christ revealed to John in the island of Patmos, finds relevance:

Revelation 13:11 "And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon."

The Beast is actually the Devil taking several forms or manifestations. As an Angel of Light,¹⁷ he could make himself attractive like the "Lamb." If Jesus Christ is the Lamb of God, it is not impossible for him to make himself look like *a lamb* also, as John saw in the revelation of Christ.

"Coming up out of the earth," indicates perception of man, where the earth symbolizes people.¹⁸ The false Christ "comes" from the teaching of people, the fruit of human wisdom.

¹⁵ John 14:6 "Jesus saith unto him, I am the *way*, the truth, and the life..."

¹⁶ Romans 8:29 "...to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren."

¹⁷ 2 Corinthians 11:13-15 "For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for *Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light*. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness..."

¹⁸ Jeremiah 22:29 "O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the Lord." (O people, people, people, listen to the word of the Lord.)

The true Christ is mistaken for the false Christ. Here is the voice of the Lamb:

John 6:63 "...the words that I (true Christ) speak unto you, they are spirit..."

Who is the Dragon?

Revelation 12:9 "And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him."

What is the language of the Dragon? How does he speak? Does he speak in order to save or to kill? How does the real Lamb speak? Does He not speak in order to save or give life?

2 Corinthians 3:6 "...made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit; for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life."

The false Christ under the Oneness doctrine, which looks like a lamb, is revealed through his "voice" – the "letter of the word" with the "letter" of the word. The voice of the real Lamb, Jesus Christ, is unrecognizable with the "spirit" of His word."

Like the Arian and the Trinitarian doctrines, the Oneness doctrine has become the "habitation" of many religious sects and denominations. Confusion in the major Christian groups, and disagreement among denominations within each group, is what characterizes Christianity Today.

"JEHOVAH DOCTRINE" A VARIATION TO THE ARIAN CONCEPT

A variation to the Arian doctrine is that Jesus, the Son, is not the Almighty God. Under this concept, the Son is acknowledged to be God, but less powerful than the Almighty God. This doctrine is based, aside from the reasons advanced by the Arian philosophy, on a verse stating that the Son is only a "mighty God."

Isaiah 9:6 "For unto us a child is born...and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called wonderful...The mighty God..."

Emphasis also is made on the name *Jehovah* as the name of the Almighty God, in contrast to Jesus Christ, the name of the mighty God. The following verses are cited in support of the doctrine:

Exodus 6:3 "And I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of God Almighty; but by my name JEHOVAH was I not known to them."

Psalms 83:18 "That men may know that thou, whose name alone is JEHOVAH, art the Most High over all the earth."

Isaiah 26:4 "Trust ye in the Lord for ever: for in the Lord JEHOVAH is everlasting strength."

"MYSTERY" THAT CANNOT BE EXPLAINED UNDER THE "JEHOVAH" DOCTRINE

Why does it openly acknowledge that there are two Gods, one Almighty and one mighty, when God Himself declares that there is no other God besides Him?

Deuteronomy 32:39 "See now that I, even I, am he, and there is no god with me."

Isaiah 44:8 "Fear ye not, neither be afraid: have not I told thee from that time, and have declared it? ye are even my witnesses. Is there a God besides me? yea, there is no God: I know not any."

Isaiah 43:10 "Ye are my witnesses, saith the LORD, and my servant whom I have chosen: that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I am he: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me."

The emphasis on the name *Jehovah* for the Almighty God is founded on human wisdom. The name is of recent origin. This is what history recorded on the much promoted name:

Excerpts from Encyclopedia Americana, Vol. 16, Page 8-9, 1967 Edition

"Jehovah, an erroneous pronunciation of the name of the God of Israel in the Bible, due to pronouncing the vowels of the term 'Ado nay,' the marginal Masoretic reading, with the consonants of the test-reading 'Yahweh,' which was not

uttered to avoid the profanation of the divine name for magical or other blasphemous purposes. Hence the substitution of 'Adonay,' the 'Lord,' or 'Adonay Elohim,' 'Lord God.' The oldest Greek versions used the term 'Kurios,' 'Lord,' the exact translation of the current Jewish substitute for the original Tetragrammaton Yahweh.

The reading '*Jehovah*' can be traced to the early Middle Ages and until lately said to have been invented by Peter Gallatin (1518), confessor of Pope Leo X..."

A Roman Catholic Cardinal by the name of Peter Gallatin invented the name Jehovah in 1518. It is not surprising for the King James Version of the Bible to incorporate the name. This is because the King James Version of 1611 is essentially a copy of the Catholic Bishops' Bible. The name *Jehovah* had been in use by the Roman Church for more than 90 years when King James of England ordered the translation of the Bible. We find this in:

Excerpts from the Encyclopedia Americana, Vol. 3, Page 717, 1967 Edition:

"*The King James Version*. In England, the most influential of all the translations was still to come. At an otherwise almost fruitless conference of clergy held at Hampton Court in 1604, John Reynolds of Corpus Cristi College, Oxford, suggested a new revision of the Bible. The suggestion was taken up by James Stuart of Scotland, who had become king of England in 1603, and the revision was ordered...

They were charged to follow the *Bishops' Bible* with as little alteration as the truth would permit but to take into account also the earlier versions. Though delayed in the beginning, the revisers finished their work by 1611, in which year appeared what has been known since then as King James or the Authorized Version, with a laudatory dedication to the king and a most illuminating preface...

The King James Version by no means won immediate favor. It was resented and opposed on various counts by many who preferred what had grown familiar. But as the clamor of comment died down, it was seen that this translation had brought together into an extraordinary unity and beauty of effect the direct and vital speech of Tidal and Coverdale, insights from the Geneva Bible, and translators' own instinctive gift of rich and rhythmic prose. Nor had the

Rheims-Douay version been without influence upon them. Its Latinisms, excessive in that version, yet suggested words that gave at certain points a deeper music to what the translator wrote."

The King James Version, considered the most reliable of all Bible versions, is not exempt from the influence of the dominant church. It is therefore understandable why the name *Jehovah* is found in this sacred book.

THE HERACLIAN DOCTRINE OR MONOTHELITISM

Not only theologians but also lay people, like Emperor Heraclius in 638, joined the fray in identifying God and Jesus Christ. Here is the account of history on the matter:

Excerpts from Encyclopedia Americana, Vo. 19, Page 369b-370, 1967 Edition:

"Monothelites (from Greek *monos*, single, and *thelein*, to will), a Christian sect of the 600's. They are also called Monothelites. While adhering to the basic Christian belief that Christ has two natures, human and divine, coexisting in one person, the Monothelites believed that these two natures have only a single will, the divine. The divine will, in effect, deprives the human will of all action or efficiency. The sect was commonly regarded as an offshoot of the Monophysites (q.v.), though the Monothelites denied all connection with Monophysitism.

Monothelitism was originated by Emperor *Heraclius* in 638 in an attempt to reconcile the Monophysites with the dominant church. The attempt was successful for a time. Heraclius consulted Sergius I, patriarch of Constantinople, on the new dogma, and Sergius not only approved it but became its most active propagandist. At Sergius' urging, Pope Honorius I addressed two letters to Sergius, which according to some interpreters favored Monothelitism. The successors of Honorius, however, condemned the Monothelites, and Pope Martin I, in 649, issued a bull anathematizing them...

The Sixth Ecumenical Council, held in Constantinople in 680, condemned monothelitism as heresy. The early controversies on the incarnation then

grew fainter, until they were forgotten amid the disputes between the Iconoclasts and their opponents in the 700's and 800's."

"Mysteries" that cannot be explained under Monothelitism:

1. Why did Paul write the Christians of Corinth that Jesus, the Son, is also the Spirit?

2 Corinthians 3:17 "Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is..."

2. Why does the Bible state that "the Holy Ghost purchased us with his own blood?" This doctrine failed to show the relation of the Son with the Holy Spirit.

Acts 20:28 "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood."

3. And why did the Son talk to the Father,¹⁹ and the Father referred to the Son?²⁰

Like the other man-made doctrines about God and Jesus Christ, Monothelitism cannot stand the power of the truth; thus, relegating it to the condemned "human precepts and fruits of philosophy."²¹

Isaiah 8:20 "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them."

¹⁹ Luke 23:34 "Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do..."

²⁰ Matthew 3:16-17 "And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: and lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

²¹ Colossians 2:8 "Beware 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."

"1001 DOCTRINES OF GOD AND JESUS CHRIST"

Man does not seem to run out of concepts about God and Jesus Christ. History and current events bear this out. What is amazing is every belief and concept attracts not a few people. Among these creeds are the following:²²

"Unitarianism, for which Christ is purely human, though possessing 'divine' qualities of character, leadership, and heroism;

Ritschlianism, in which Christ has the 'value' of God, or the view of William Sanday, Sandayism, that Christ in relation to the Father existed in his 'subconscious,' and many more, ranging from an Avatar in a long series of divine manifestations to the projection of a 'Christ idea,' the 'Christ myth' theory of the 1900's.

Is the omniscience of God capable of waning? Are God's prophecies subject to imperfection? Will the Word of God pass away?

Luke 16:17 "And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail."

Matthew 5:18 "For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled."

People of the world are witnesses to the fulfillment of one great prophecy about the preaching of many "other Christs."²³

2 Corinthians 11:4 "For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him."

What were presented are but some of the "1001 Jesus Christs" being preached in *Christianity Today*. God is the Judge. He judges through His Word.²⁴ Truly "only few" worthy people discern the right judgment.

²² Encyclopedia Americana, Vol. 6, Page 630, 1967 Edition

²³ Matthew 24:23-24 "Then if any man shall say unto you, *Lo, here is Christ, or there*, believe it not. For there shall arise *false Christs* and false prophets..."

THE REJECTED CORNER STONE

Since God entrusted His words to the Jews, Jesus told them:

Matthew 21:42 "...Did ye never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes?"

Matthew 21:44 "And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder."

Mathew 21:43 "Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof."

1. This "stone which the builders rejected" written in the book of Isaiah points to Jesus Christ:

Isaiah 28:16 "...thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste."

"Corner stone" is the foundation of the posts upon which an edifice is built. Christ of course is referring to the "foundation" of belief for salvation. The Jews as physical descendants of Abraham relied on the promise of God to be His chosen people. But our Lord rebuked them:

John 8:54 "...it is my Father that honoureth me; of whom ye say, that he is your God: ⁵⁵Yet ye have not known him..."

2. The "foundation and corner stone"

Definitely, this refers to Jesus Christ, and many people ignore what He says regarding the "first of all the commandments" as a prerequisite to loving God.

²⁴ John 12:48 "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day."

Mark 12:29 "And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord."

Are not many people with the different doctrines on the identity of Jesus setting aside the "first of all the commandments?" This is supposed to lead to the clear recognition of Christ and finally to the identity of the Father also.

John 8:19 "Then said they unto him, Where is thy Father? Jesus answered, Ye neither know me, nor my Father: if ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also."

No wonder whenever the topic as to who the God of Abraham and Peter is being discussed, more so of His name, never does this receive favorable reception from the listeners. Thus,

Matthew 21:44 "And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder."

3. "Whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken"

Did not Jesus show this when the Jews heard Him speak about Himself, "I am he," were they not "broken, fell backward, snared, and taken?"

John 18:6 "As soon then as he had said unto them, I am he, they went backward, and fell to the ground."

Luke 23:20 "Pilate therefore, willing to release Jesus, spake again to them. ²¹But they cried, saying, Crucify him, crucify him."

Is not their actuation clear in the eyes of God and to His chosen?

4. "But on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder."

The Jews in general simply rejected Jesus. However, the religious leaders, the doctors of the law, priests, Scribes, and Pharisees were virtually idolized by them. God has this to say regarding idols that were ground to powder:

2 Chronicles 34:7 "...he had broken down the altars and the groves, and had beaten the graven images into powder, and cut down all the idols throughout all the land..."

Before men, graven images either inanimate or living are extolled, but God destroys them like *powder* because they are abhorrent to Him.

Matthew 21:45 "And when the chief priests and Pharisees had heard his parables, they perceived that he spake of them. ⁴⁶But when they sought to lay hands on him, they feared the multitude, because they took him for a prophet."

Since the word of God is "alive," it is not surprising to see the characters in the story with different names only.

WHERE DID THE SCRIBES AND PHARISEES GO WRONG?

First, they did not recognize Jesus, the Messiah whom they have been waiting for as prophesied, thereby rejecting the "stone, the *head of the corner*." For not recognizing the Christ, they did not recognize the God of their father Abraham. Thus, the warning of Jesus that remain unheeded:

John 8:24 [KJV] "I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins."

Today, perhaps no one among the religious leaders would say they would fall as the Scribes and Pharisees did. Nevertheless, Jesus said, "Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away."

Who would not claim having known Jesus from birth to death, to His resurrection, and finally expecting His second coming? Thus, many would say, "Where is the *ditch*?"²⁵

However, tracing the identity of Jesus *backwards* would reveal the *ditch*.²⁶ Nobody denies the death of Jesus fulfilled the testament of salvation, and this would usher in the coming of the Holy Ghost who would guide the chosen to salvation.

²⁵ Matthew 15:14 "Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch."

²⁶ John 8:19 "...Jesus answered, Ye neither know me, nor my Father: if ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also."

Is there anybody who would not question the maker of the covenant or testament, called the testator, is the God of Abraham? How many now would accept the following?

Hebrew 9:16 "For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator."

1 John 3:16 [KJV] "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us..."

Therefore, is John 8:24 (KJV) directed only to the Scribes and Pharisees?

Second, the Scribes and Pharisees were waiting for the coming of the promised Messiah, when He came already and in fact, He was in the midst of them.

Today, who is not waiting for the second coming of Christ as it is written? Who have not heard (read) this promise of Jesus to His Disciples after His resurrection?

Matthew 28:20 [KJV] "Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen."

Matthew 28:20 [NIV] "and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

How many people believe this promise of Jesus Christ? Perhaps nobody would say, "He will never tell a lie, and will always be true to His promise." Then why are "many" people still waiting for His second coming if He is indeed "with His Disciples unto the end of the world?"

Therefore, where now is the *ditch* that remains unseen today? The Disciples witnessed the ascension of Jesus Christ:

Acts 1:9 "And when he had said these things, as they were looking, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight."

And, is not the Holy Ghost that is with the Disciples after Jesus ascension into heaven? Where now is the promise? How many people read (have seen) the following?

2 Corinthians 3:17 "Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty."

Let alone God by divine revelation identify the only Lord:

1 Corinthians 8:6 "But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things... and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things..."

Let Jesus Christ identify the Spirit:

John 7:39 "(But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given....)"

How many believe that the Jesus Christ is the Holy Ghost, since the Lord is the Spirit, and the Spirit is the Holy Ghost? Perhaps the reason why this cannot be accepted is because the senses and the intellect are resisting this truth, thereby lacking in "spiritual discernment." This is identifying mark of the Natural Man.

1 Corinthians 2:14 "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." (Not intellectually, not sensually {of the senses} discerned)

True, the Disciples saw Jesus Christ ascending physically to heaven, and the two angels spoke of His second coming:

Acts 1:10 "And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; ¹¹Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven."

Nevertheless, did not Jesus demonstrate that He could show Himself visibly and invisibly the way He wanted to after His resurrection? Regarding the statement of the two angels, is not God speaking in parables (Ezekiel 20:49), that those on the outside would not "see the secret of the kingdom of heaven?"

Mark 4:11 "And he said unto them, Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God: but unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables:¹² That seeing they may see, and not perceive; and hearing they may hear, and not understand; lest at any time they should be converted, and their sins should be forgiven them."

Therefore, at Pentecost when the Holy Ghost descended upon the Disciples who, in reality and by divine revelation, did they receive?

1 Corinthians 3:16 "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?"

1 Corinthians 6:19 "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?²⁰ For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body..."

Can we now fully grasp the great message of "Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." To the chosen few, "liberty is freedom from human wisdom, which is the dictate of the intellect, feeling, and senses. And this is what Paul found himself "dying daily" that he would be totally released from clasp of this human nature. Real Christians therefore are only waiting for the second appearance of Christ:

Hebrew 9:28 "So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation."

