



– Chapter 13 –

The Logical Problems of the Trinity

A basic definition of the Trinity

Among those who uphold the doctrine of the Trinity, few know much about it beyond the “God in three persons” formula. Most churches in Canada regard trinitarianism as the foundation of their faith, yet few teach the Trinity to the lay people in any depth, probably because exposing them to formal trinitarianism will create objections to the doctrine. The first thing the people will notice is its use of non-biblical terms (including “trinity” itself), its weak biblical support, and its lack of logical cohesion. The incessant appeal to tradition and the church creeds is becoming passé in this age of open information.

So what is the Trinity? The following point-by-point definition of the Trinity is representative of how it is explained by trinitarians, and adheres to the trinitarian language used by trinitarians.

For the meanings of English words, we consult *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language* (5th edition) and *Oxford Dictionary of English* (3rd edition), abbreviated AHD and Oxford, respectively.

The following definition of the Trinity includes brief explanatory notes by me. According to trinitarianism:

- There is one and only one God.
- God subsists in three persons.
- Note: The word “subsist” is unfamiliar to most people, but it is used often in trinitarian writing to mean “to exist, be” (AHD).

- The three persons are: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Spirit.
- Each person is fully God.
- The three are coequal and coeternal.
- The three are distinct from one another, yet are not three Gods.
- God is not God except as Father, Son, and Spirit — *the three together*.
- Note: Many trinitarians use the term “Godhead” to refer to the triune God. AHD defines “Godhead” as “the Christian God, especially the Trinity”. One reason for the trinitarian use of “Godhead” rather than “God” is that in trinitarianism, God is not a person.
- God is three persons, yet only one “being” or “essence”.
- Note: Although the word “being” usually refers to a whole and complete person (e.g., “human being”), trinitarians use it in the sense of “one’s basic or essential nature” (AHD, similarly Oxford).
- Note: Trinitarians use the Greek word *hypostasis* (or the Latin *persona*) as an approximate equivalent of “person” (there is a long history behind this which we won’t go into). Hence God is three *hypostases* (three persons).
- Note: The three *hypostases* — Father, Son, and Spirit — share one *ousia* (essence or substance). Hence trinitarians speak of three *hypostases* in one *ousia* (three persons in one substance).
- Note: From *ousia* comes *homoousios* (“of one essence” or “of one substance”), which is historically the key term in trinitarianism because it is this term or its concept that supposedly makes trinitarianism “monotheistic”.
- Note: Because the three persons are of one substance, they are said to be “consubstantial”.
- By incarnation the second person of the Trinity — namely, the eternally preexistent God the Son — acquired a human nature and took on God-man existence as Jesus Christ, who now, as one person, forever possesses both a divine nature and a human nature, and is both fully God and fully man through the “hypostatic union” (of Christ’s two natures, divine and human, in one person or hypostasis).

This basic definition of the Trinity is based on dozens of definitions given by trinitarian authorities, Protestant and Catholic. It is complete in the sense that any further discussion on the Trinity will be fundamentally an elaboration on these basic points, e.g., how the three persons relate to one another; or their different roles in salvation history (the economic Trinity); or how Christ’s divine nature relates to his human nature within the one person (debate over the last question resulted in years of violence *within* trinitarianism).

Anyone who reads the formal or technical literature on the Trinity would know that it tends to use Greek and Latin terms (or their equivalent English terms), and is imbued with neo-Platonic and other philosophical concepts. These generate more confusion than illumination on how the three persons can be one God.

***Homoousios* has no biblical support, and is vehemently rejected by Martin Luther**

The word *homoousios* (“of one substance”) is historically the key term in trinitarianism because it is this term or its concept that, on account of the word “one,” gives trinitarianism some semblance of monotheism. The early trinitarian opinion that *homoousios* is “the foundation of orthodoxy” (Victorinus) is shared by modern trinitarians, yet the word *homoousios* is found nowhere in the Bible. That this word has no biblical basis is noted by a lexical authority, *New International Dictionary of NT Theology* (NIDNTT, ed. Colin Brown, article *God > The Trinity > NT*).

The following is an excerpt from this article which cites Karl Barth who, despite his lifelong advocacy of trinitarianism, admits that the doctrine of the Trinity is not found in the Bible. The excerpt has two levels of quotation. For your convenience, I put Barth’s words in boldface to separate them from the surrounding words of NIDNTT:

The NT does not contain the developed doctrine of the Trinity. [Barth says:] **“The Bible lacks the express declaration that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are of equal essence and therefore in an equal sense God himself. And the other express declaration is also lacking, that God is God thus and only thus, i.e., as the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. These two express declarations, which go beyond the witness of the Bible, are the twofold content of the Church doctrine of the Trinity”** (Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, I, 1, 437). It also lacks such terms as trinity ... and *homoousios* which featured in the Creed of Nicea (325).

In this striking admission, Barth concedes that the two main tenets of trinitarianism (the concept of one essence and the concept of three persons in one God) are absent in the Bible.

Since *homoousios* is not a biblical term as noted by NIDNTT and Barth, it comes as no surprise that strong objections to this term have come from the ranks of trinitarians. Sure enough, Martin Luther, a trinitarian, vehemently rejects *homoousios* for its being an unbiblical term, going so far as to “hate” it. *The Cambridge Companion to the Trinity* (p.151) quotes Luther as saying, “Our adversaries ... are fanatics about words because they want us to demonstrate the truth of the trinitarian article ... by asking us to assent to the term *homoousios*”. *The Cambridge Companion* goes on to say that “trinitarian terms such as *homoousios* are for Luther a ‘stammering’ and ‘babbling’”.

Luther rejects *homoousios* even more vehemently in a statement quoted in Adolf Harnack’s seven-volume *History of Dogma*:

[Luther] declared such a term as *homoousios* to be unallowable in the strict sense, because it represents a bad state of things when such words are invented in the Christian system of faith: "... but if my soul hates the word *homoousios* and I prefer not to use it, I shall not be a heretic; for who will compel me to use it ... Although the Arians had wrong views with regard to the faith, they were nevertheless very right in this ... that they required that no profane and novel word should be allowed to be introduced into the rules of faith." (*History of Dogma*, vol.7, ch.4, p.225)

Luther's objection to *homoousios* for its unbiblical origins was so vehement that he was willing to concede that the heretical Arians — of all people! — were "very right" in rejecting this "profane" word. Luther was aware that his public criticism of *homoousios* could expose him to the charge of heresy because *homoousios* is the cornerstone of trinitarianism's dubious claim to monotheism, and that without this term, trinitarianism would immediately descend into explicit tritheism, the doctrine of three Gods.

A Catholic scholar's admissions about the Trinity

Luther comes from the ranks of Protestants but is there similar dissent from the ranks of Catholics? Hans Küng, one of the greatest Catholic theologians of the 20th century, wrote a section titled, "No doctrine of the Trinity in the New Testament," in his classic work, *Christianity: Essence, History, and Future*, in which he firmly rejects trinitarianism. Here are some statements from his book starting from page 95:

... while [in the New Testament] there is belief in God the Father, in Jesus the Son, and in God's Holy Spirit, there is no doctrine of one God in three persons (modes of being), no doctrine of a 'triune God', a 'Trinity'.

... according to the New Testament, the principle of unity is clearly not the one divine 'nature' (*physis*) that is common to several entities, as people were to think after the neo-Nicene theology of the fourth century. For the New Testament, as for the Hebrew Bible, the principle of unity is clearly the one God (*ho theos*: the God = the Father), from whom are all things and to whom are all things.

... where does this doctrine of the Trinity really come from? The answer is that it was a product of the great paradigm shift from the early Christian apocalyptic paradigm to the early church Hellenistic paradigm.

We give one more example from the ranks of Roman Catholics. An esteemed Bible dictionary — one of the most popular for two decades and in its time the most widely used one-volume Bible dictionary ever — was the scholarly *Dictionary of the Bible* written by Father John L. McKenzie, which, though written by a Catholic, was also used by Protestants for its intellectual depth and lucid writing.



In the dictionary article “Trinity,” McKenzie, himself a trinitarian, makes some observations that are unfavorable to trinitarianism, including that: (i) The doctrine of the Trinity was reached only in the 4th and 5th centuries, and does not represent biblical belief. (ii) The trinitarian terms used for describing God are Greek philosophical terms rather than biblical terms. (iii) Unbiblical terms such as “essence” and “substance” were “erroneously” applied to God by early theologians. (iv) The personal reality of the Holy Spirit is uncertain and was a later development in trinitarianism. (v) The Trinity is a mystery that defies understanding. (vi) The Trinity is not mentioned or foreshadowed in the Old Testament.

We must keep in mind that Father McKenzie is a trinitarian. Here are the relevant excerpts from his article:

TRINITY. The trinity of God is defined by the Church as the belief that in God are three persons who subsist in one nature. The belief as so defined was reached only in the 4th and 5th centuries AD and hence is not explicitly and formally a biblical belief. The trinity of persons within the unity of nature is defined in terms of “person” and “nature” which are Greek philosophical terms; actually the terms do not appear in the Bible. The trinitarian definitions arose as the result of long controversies in which these terms and others such as “essence” and “substance” were erroneously applied to God by some theologians.

.....

The personal reality of the Spirit emerged more slowly than the personal reality of Father and Son, which are personal terms ... What is less clear about the Spirit is His personal reality; often He is mentioned in language in which His personal reality is not explicit.

.....

... in Catholic belief the Trinity of persons within the unity of nature is a mystery which ultimately escapes understanding; and in no respect is it more mysterious than in the relations of the persons to each other.

.....

The OT does not contain suggestions or foreshadowing of the Trinity of persons. What it does contain are the words which the NT employs to express the Trinity of persons such as

Dissent from the ranks of evangelicals

I now give an example from the ranks of evangelicals. Marshall Davis is a trinitarian and an evangelical, though no longer the conservative evangelical that he used to be. He served as a Baptist pastor for 40 years, and has a doctorate from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. Among his many books is *What Your Pastor Won't Tell You: But I Can Because I'm Retired*. The title may sound lighthearted or even frivolous, but in fact the book is a somber and often painful discussion of the things that many evangelical pastors know in their hearts to be true, but won't tell others for fear of being ostracized or losing their jobs.

One of the vexing issues that Marshall Davies addresses is the Trinity, which he discusses in chapter 5 under the heading, "No One Understands the Trinity". Davis, himself a trinitarian, begins with these words:

For Christians the concept of one God in three persons is very important, yet it is also very confusing. When you think about it, the Trinity does not make sense. No one understands it, not even your pastor.

The doctrine of the Trinity came into existence as a consequence of believing that Christ was divine. Christians believed that Jesus was divine in the same way that God the Father is divine. Yet Christians were loath to worship two Gods. It smacked of polytheism, not to mention the heresy of Marcionism. Add the Holy Spirit into the mix, and Christianity seems to worship three gods — tritheism.

Davis then explains the trinitarian dilemma:

Yet there could only be one God according to the Hebrew Scriptures. "Hear O Israel, the Lord your God, the Lord is one." (**Deuteronomy 6:4**) So they were forced into the untenable position of saying that God was both three and one, even though that statement was logically self-contradictory. The Father, Christ and the Spirit were all God, and they were also one God.

Christians had painted themselves into a theological corner. After repeated attempts by theologians to resolve the problem (all declared heresy), they simply gave up and declared that the Trinity was true, even though it didn't make sense. It is a mystery! A paradox!

Actually it was just a problem they could not solve. Instead of abandoning the doctrine as untenable, they declared it to be true by fiat.

Davis says that the Trinity has no biblical basis:

Another thing your pastor will not tell you is that the Trinity is not in the Bible. The terms Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are found in the Bible. There are even a few places where the three words (or something similar) are found together. The most famous example is the Great Commission of **Matthew 28:19**, where Jesus commands his apostles to baptize all nations “in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.” But nowhere is there any attempt in the Bible to define these names as three equally divine persons of one unified Godhead.

The doctrine of the Trinity, as we know it today in all its glorious confusion, originated in the third century by Tertullian. He was the first theologian to use the term “Trinity.” He was also the first to use the words “person” and “substance” to explain the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. It has been all downhill ever since. Christianity would have been better off if [Tertullian] had just left it as a description of Christian experience instead of trying to theologize it.

The Gnostic use of *homoousios*

Gnosticism is widely regarded as the greatest threat to the life of the church in its first two centuries. We won't explain what Gnosticism is since it is a standard topic in church histories, except to say that it was a cancerous movement that grew deep roots in the church and nearly killed it. Eminent church historian Justo L. González says, “Of all these differing interpretations of Christianity, none was as dangerous, nor as close to victory, as was gnosticism.” [1]

It will come as a shock to trinitarians that the Gnostics were the first to use the word *homoousios*. The first person known to have used it was the Gnostic theologian Basilides (2nd century A.D.) who used *homoousios* to explain his concept of a “threefold sonship consubstantial with the god who is not”. [2]

When Gnosticism was at its peak, *homoousios* had a reputation in the church for being a Gnostic term. Well before the Council of Nicaea in 325, many church fathers were already aware of the Gnostic use of *homoousios*. R.P.C. Hanson's authoritative work, *The Search for the Christian Doctrine of God*, says on p.191: “Hippolytus quotes Gnostics as using the word *homoousios* ... Clement of Alexandria also uses the word in quotations of

Gnostic authors, as does Irenaeus ... Origen similarly uses the word only when he is quoting Gnostic heretics.” The academic authority of Hanson’s work is well known to every church historian and patristics scholar in the English-speaking world.

Although Gnosticism was in relative decline by the third or fourth century, it left some of its roots in the church as seen in the adoption of *homoousios* at the Council of Nicaea in 325. A central concept in Gnosticism is the emanation of divine beings, the lesser from the greater. So it comes as no surprise that at Nicaea it was decreed on pain of *anathema* that the second person emanates from the first, much as light emanates from a source of light. Nicaean formulations of Jesus as “God of God, Light of Light” and other lofty descriptions are nothing more than direct echoes of Greek philosophy and religion.

Immense logical difficulties: Is trinitarianism tritheistic?

Trinitarianism is the doctrine of one God in three persons whereas tritheism is the doctrine of three distinct Gods. The latter is a special case of polytheism, the belief in many Gods (e.g., Hinduism).

Trinitarians vigorously deny that trinitarianism is tritheism, yet the two are inherently similar, as we will see. To put the matter plainly, trinitarianism is tritheism that claims to be monotheistic.

In trying to make sense of trinitarianism, the immediate problem that we encounter is its use of doublespeak: Trinitarianism assigns two different meanings to the word “God,” and then switches back and forth between them, usually to evade logical dilemmas.

There is the first sense of “God” in which God is not God except as Father, Son, and Spirit — *the three together*. This formulation was designed as a means of avoiding explicit tritheism, and is one of the two main tenets of trinitarianism according to Karl Barth (whom we quoted a few pages back).

In trinitarian doublespeak, there also is a second and contradictory sense of “God” in which each person of the Trinity is individually and fully God: “So the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Spirit is God” (Athanasian Creed). Trinitarians say further that each is “fully God” (White, Grudem, Bowman) or “fully and completely God” (ESV Study Bible, p.2513).

The historically important Fourth Lateran Council (1215, Rome) is even clearer: “each is God, whole and entire”. In other words, the Father is God whole and entire; the Son is God whole and entire; and the Spirit is God whole and entire. Yet the three together are God whole and entire.

In trinitarianism, each person of the triune Godhead, whether the Father or the Son or the Spirit, is fully God, coeternally God, and coequally God, such that trinitarians can and do speak of “God the Father, God the Son, and God the Spirit” in language that ascribes whole deity to each. Whole deity of each is preserved even if we reverse the word order within each of the three clauses: “the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Spirit is God” (Athanasian Creed).

Trinitarianism says that each person — whether the Father or the Son or the Spirit — is “fully” God (“each is God, whole and entire,” Fourth Lateran Council). Moreover, trinitarianism assigns sufficient distinction between the persons such that the Father is not to be confused with the Son, nor the Son with the Spirit, nor the Father with the Spirit. The Athanasian Creed says, “For there is one Person of the Father, another of the Son, and another of the Holy Spirit”. To state the obvious, the distinction of persons is already seen in the basic fact that trinitarians speak of “three persons” in one God.

Since the three are each “fully” God yet are three distinct persons, it would be semantically correct to say that they are three Gods (tritheism). The force and clarity and obviousness of this point is keenly noted, yet its validity is rejected, by the Athanasian Creed: “And yet they are not three Gods, but one God”.

This violation of semantic sense for which the Athanasian Creed offers no explanation apart from denial by fiat, must be rejected unless it is allowed by mitigating factors such as explicit biblical support. But does the Bible really teach the three-in-one trinitarian formulation? Many trinitarians (Barth, Küng, Davies) admit that it is absent in the Bible. One such trinitarian is Dr. Charles C. Ryrie, author of the *Ryrie Study Bible* and professor of systematic theology at Dallas Theological Seminary, who makes a shocking admission about trinitarianism:

But many doctrines are accepted by evangelicals as being clearly taught in the Scripture for which there are no proof texts. The doctrine of the Trinity furnishes the best example of this. It is fair to say that the Bible does not clearly teach the doctrine of the Trinity. In fact, there is not even one proof text, if by proof text we mean a verse or passage that ‘clearly’ states that there is one God who exists in three persons ... The above illustrations prove the fallacy of concluding that if something is not proof texted in the Bible we cannot clearly teach the results ... If that were so, I could never teach the doctrine of the Trinity or the deity of Christ or the deity of the Holy Spirit. (*Basic Theology*, pp. 89-90)

Dr. Ryrie, without a trace of hesitation or subtlety, elevates trinitarian doctrine above the witness and authority of Scripture.

Another trinitarian who says that the Trinity is found nowhere in the Bible is Millard Erickson, a prominent specialist on trinitarian doctrine and the author of *Christian Theology*:

[The Trinity] is not clearly or explicitly taught anywhere in Scripture, yet it is widely regarded as a central doctrine, indispensable to the Christian faith. In this regard, it goes contrary to what is virtually an axiom of biblical doctrine, namely, that there is a direct correlation between the scriptural clarity of a doctrine and its cruciality to the faith and life of the church. (*God in Three Persons: A Contemporary Interpretation of the Trinity*, p.11)

The classic way of explaining away the tritheistic underpinnings of trinitarianism — by positing that the three persons share one essence (*homoousios*) — is unconvincing. It's not only because the word *homoousios* is absent in the Bible, but also because a shared essence or nature *characterizes tritheism as much as it does trinitarianism!* Whether we are speaking of a unity of three Gods (tritheism) or a unity of three persons in one God (trinitarianism), the three share the one substance or essence of deity. Applying the concept of “one essence” to three persons who are each “fully” God does not make them “one God”; it only makes them a unity of three full Gods. Hence the term *homoousios* (of one substance) — whose first known use was by the Gnostic theologian Basilides, and which was adopted at Nicaea over the objections of some bishops from both camps — offers no help to trinitarianism but in fact draws unwelcome attention to trinitarianism's affinity with tritheism!

The tritheistic underpinnings of trinitarianism come out in many books such as James R. White's *The Forgotten Trinity*, which is endorsed by J.I. Packer, Gleason Archer, Norman Geisler, and John MacArthur, indicating its acceptance among evangelicals.

White gives what he calls a “short, succinct, accurate” definition of the Trinity: “Within the one Being that is God, there exists eternally three coequal and coeternal persons, namely, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.” (p.26) Here White makes a distinction between “person” and “Being” such that God is three persons yet one Being. To explain what this means, White says:

When speaking of the Trinity, we need to realize that we are talking about one *what* and three *who's*. The one *what* is the Being or essence of God; the three *who's* are the Father, Son, and Spirit.

This shocking statement tells us that trinitarianism's claim to monotheism rests on the concept of “one Being” or “one essence” rather than “one person”. Here we see again the trinitarian depersonalization of God — He is no longer a person. In trying to give trinitarianism some semblance of monotheism, White is forced to make God a *what*, not a *who* — a blasphemous description of God. The God of trinitarianism is technically an “it” rather than a “He”.

If you take this to mean that God in trinitarianism is not a person, you are correct. Tertullian says: “God is the name for the substance” (see J.N.D. Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, p.114). We have already quoted C.S. Lewis, a trinitarian, as saying: “Christian theology does not believe God to be a person.” (*Christian Reflections*, p.79).

Trinitarian semantics

In the strange logic of trinitarianism, the mere use of “one” as in “one essence” is supposedly sufficient to qualify trinitarianism to be monotheism. This is what we might call “monotheism by vocabulary”: You declare that a doctrine is monotheistic simply by appropriating a word such as “one” that sounds monotheistic and has a monotheistic ring to it.

An enduring difficulty for trinitarians is that in both tritheism and trinitarianism, there are three who are “fully” God, i.e., there are three persons each of whom is “God whole and entire”. This formulation, as it stands, is tritheistic rather than monotheistic, so what do trinitarians do to make it sound monotheistic? They simply say that the three share “one” essence!

In the strange logic of trinitarianism, the tritheistic concept of “three persons who are each fully God” (note the key word “fully”) does not disqualify trinitarianism from being monotheism. This is trying to have it both ways, to have monotheism and tritheism, to have God as one and God as three, to have one God and three who are each fully God. In the final analysis, the convoluted logic of trinitarianism is the inevitable result of an attempt to prove, at times almost mathematically, that three equals one or that $1/3$ equals one.

James White says: “The Father is not $1/3$ of God, the Son $1/3$ of God, the Spirit $1/3$ of God. Each is fully God, coequal with the others, and that eternally.” This statement is problematic because if God is three persons, then anyone who is “fully God” — i.e., God whole and entire — would have to be all three persons at the same time or else he would be incomplete God (unless we change the meaning of “God” using doublespeak).

The problem runs even deeper, for if Jesus is not all three persons at the same time, he would not be God at all, for God must always exist as three or else we would be breaking the “monotheism” of trinitarianism such that it descends into explicit tritheism. We must bear in mind that one of the two main tenets of trinitarianism is that God is not even God unless He is all three at the same time (Barth).

White rejects the idea that Jesus is one third of God, yet it cannot be denied that Jesus is one third of the Trinity in the sense of being one of the three persons of the Trinity which trinitarians equate with God.

White’s statement that the three are each “fully God” is but a naked assertion of pure and classic tritheism. But trinitarians deny that their doctrine is tritheistic, and they do this by insisting that God is not God through the Father alone, or the Son alone, or the Spirit alone, but by all three together. This is one of the two foundational tenets of trinitarianism (Barth) and is stated in the following words of Millard Erickson, a prominent spokesman for trinitarianism:

God could not exist simply as Father, or as Son, or as Holy Spirit. Nor could he exist as Father and Son, or as Father and Spirit, or as Son and Spirit, without the third of these persons in that given case. Further, none of these could exist without being part of the Trinity... None has the power of life within itself alone. Each can only exist as part of the Triune God. (*God in Three Persons*, p.264)

Erickson runs into vast difficulties in his attempt to defend the illogical and the incoherent. His statement that “none has the power of life within itself alone” is a most shocking way of describing someone who is supposedly God. In the case of the Father, Erickson’s statement even contradicts [John 5:26](#) in which Jesus says, “the Father has life in himself”.

Equally shocking is Erickson’s statement, “none of these could exist without being part of the Trinity”. Erickson is not just saying that God is ontologically triune, but that each Person has no power of existence outside the framework of the Trinity! Erickson’s statement was probably designed with the purpose of avoiding explicit tritheism.

Erickson’s statement — that “none of these could exist without being part of the Trinity” — effectively destroys what it means to be God. For if Jesus (or the Father or the Spirit) is fully God, his existence would not depend on anyone or anything, for God “is”. The eternal God is the “I am who I am” or “I will be what I will be”. Nothing can limit or determine or circumscribe God’s existence. Yet in trinitarianism, the ultimate ontological reality is not God the Father despite His being fully God and despite His being the One of whom the Son is begotten and from whom the Spirit proceeds. To the contrary, the ultimate ontological reality in trinitarianism is an eternal triune framework that governs the existence of three persons, none of whom can exist outside it (“each can only exist as part of the Triune God,” Erickson). In other words, this triune framework is what constitutes the real God. That is why trinitarians say that God is not a “person” but a “what”.

Erickson’s statement that “God could not exist simply as Father, or as Son, or as Holy Spirit” contradicts the trinitarian tenet that the Father is fully God, the Son is fully God, the Spirit is fully God.

In fact the unbiblical teaching of Sabellianism or modalism (which says that in salvation history, the one God is manifested in three modes, Father, Son, and Spirit) is infinitely more logical than trinitarianism. That is because modalism is free of self-contradiction, as is tritheism. If trinitarianism is to be logical and self-consistent, it can only be so as modalism or outright tritheism, both of which are as unbiblical as trinitarianism.

Tritheism, being a special case of polytheism, would be expected to borrow from the language of polytheism. We would expect this to be equally true of trinitarianism. Sure enough, the famously polytheistic religion of Hinduism would occasionally speak of the “divine essence” or “divine substance” [\[3\]](#) — a fact that further exposes trinitarianism’s affinity with polytheism.

The trinitarian term “divine substance” is also used in polytheistic Greek mythology [\[4\]](#) and Gnosticism, [\[5\]](#) yet is absent from the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures!

[\[1\]](#) *The Story of Christianity: The Early Church to the Present Day*, vol.1, p.58.

[\[2\]](#) Hippolytus in *Refutatio omnium haeresium* 7:22.

[3] Klaus Klostemaier, *A Concise Encyclopedia of Hinduism*, p.124; Klostemaier, *A Survey of Hinduism*, p.487; Steven Rosen, *Essential Hinduism*, p.193; Sri Swami Sivananda, *All About Hinduism*, p.134.

[4] Richard Caldwell, *The Origin of the Gods*, Oxford, p.137.

[5] Jean-Marc Narbonne, *Plotinus in Dialogue with the Gnostics*, p.39; and Sean Martin, *The Gnostics*, p.38.

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