

**The Textus Receptus, The Mennonite Trinity,
and the
First London Confession**

Please see our previous study, *The Singing Controversy and Nicenism*.

I John 5:7 King James Version:

For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.

The First London Confession of Faith, article 2, edition of 1646:

In this divine and infinite Being, there is the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit, each having the whole divine essence, yet the essence undivided; all infinite, without any beginning, therefore but one God, Who is not to be divided in nature and being, but distinguished by several peculiar relative properties. I Cor. 1:3. John 1:1. Chap. 15:26. Exod. 3:14. I Cor. 8:6.

The CC Particular Baptists of the First London Confession Fellowship did not necessarily hold unto the King James Translation any more than they did the Geneva Bible or other standard Translations.

They held to the Greek Textus Receptus and in many of their writings we can detect their habit of replying on the historic Greek Texts and translating the Scriptures as they used them.

The First London Confession, FLC, is an expression of Biblical simplicity, and while it may need further explanations, yet it does not attempt to explain the Trinity by adopting borrowed expressions and concepts from either Greek Mythology or Platonic philosophy.

Expressing Menno Simons on the Trinity

The FLC doctrine of the Trinity represents the older Anabaptist anti-Nicenist concept of the Trinity in rejection of the standard Nicean concept adopted by both the Catholics and Protestants. In particular, the CC First London Confession article, following the second edition, more closely resembles the Trinity statements of Menno Simons perhaps more any of the other Anabaptists of the 1500s.

While there were certainly Arians among the Anabaptists it does not follow that all the Anabaptists were Arians, or Socinians. There were Biblical Trinitarians among the Anabaptists and they called for the simple, Biblical definition of the Trinity rather than the Nicene mixture of the apostate Hebrew concepts with the Greek Mythology and Greek Philosophy.



From the site:

<http://www.anabaptistnetwork.com/node/443>

It is important to reflect on these events, not least because the epithet 'antitrinitarian' has come to be applied to almost the entire Polish Anabaptist movement as a result of these developments. Kot offers a more helpful guide than such a provocative label provides. He explains why some questioned the traditional Trinitarian creeds: 'By not forcing belief in anything beyond the minimum contained in Holy Scripture and the Apostles' Creed, generally acknowledged for centuries, the Church removes the possibility of the propagation of heresy.'³⁵ The term 'antitrinitarian' has come, unhelpfully, to embrace both those who rejected the concept of Trinity as traditionally understood and moved in a Unitarian direction and also those other Anabaptists who simply wanted a return to more scriptural language and the simplicity of the Apostle's Creed. During the Golden Age, if not after it, Polish Anabaptism was far from 'antitrinitarian'.

For some, at least, the chief concern was to recapture a biblical understanding of the doctrine, not to reject it.

In William's *The Radical Reformation*, we find a more involved and detailed explanation that helps explain the various differing Trinity concepts under consideration and denial.

Here is Menno Simons Trinity statement:

Menno Simons on ... the trinity of God

We believe and confess with the Holy Scriptures, that there is an only, eternal and true God, who is a Spirit. One God, who created heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is therein. Such a God, whom heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot comprehend. Whose throne is heaven and earth his footstool; who measures "the waters in the hollow of his hand;" who spanneth the heavens; who comprehendeth the dust of the earth in a measure, and weigheth the mountains in scales and the hills in a balance; who is as high as heaven, deeper than hell, lower than earth and broader

than the sea; "Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see;" who is an Almighty, powerful and an over-ruling King, in the heavens above and in the earth beneath; whose strength, hand and power none can withstand. A "God of Gods, and a Lord of Lords;" there is none like unto him, but he is a mighty, holy, terrible, praiseworthy, wonderful, and consuming fire; whose kingdom, power, dominion, majesty and glory is eternal, and shall endure forever, and besides this only, eternal, living, Almighty over-ruling God and Lord we know no other; and since he is a Spirit so great, terrible, and invisible, he is also inexpressible, incomprehensible and indescribable, as may be deduced and understood from the following Scriptures, Deut. 4:35; 6:4; 7:6; 10:17; 32:39; Jn. 4:24; 1:18; Gen. 1:1; Ps. 33:6; Col. 1:16; Isa. 43:11; 44:6; 48:13; 40:12; Job 11:8; 1 Tim. 6:16; Eccl. 1:7; Matt. 11:27; Rev. 17:14; 19:16; Heb. 12:29; 1:8, 10.

This only, eternal, Omnipotent, ineffable, invisible, inexpressible and indescribable God, we believe and confess with the Scriptures, to be the eternal, incomprehensible Father, with his eternal, incomprehensible Son, and with his eternal, incomprehensible Holy Spirit. The Father, we believe and confess to be a true Father, the Son, a true Son, and the Holy Spirit, a true Holy Spirit; not carnal and comprehensible, but spiritual and incomprehensible, for Christ says "God is a Spirit." [p. 183]

John says, "There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one." Read also Matt. 28:18; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:8; John 14:16; 15:26; 1 Cor. 12:11. And although they are three, yet in Godliness, will, power and operation they are one, and can no more be separated from each other than the sun, brightness and warmth; for the one cannot exist without the other. [p. 187]

Brethren, understand all this in a divine and spiritual sense, and not in a human or carnal manner! Then you will be satisfied with the plain, clear and simple testimony of the prophets, evangelists and apostles, concerning this deep mystery. Let every one see to it with fear and trembling, lest he put his hand in the consuming fire.

Cordially beloved brethren and sisters in Christ Jesus! mark well the following; Since the eternal God is such a great and terrible God, as you have read; since Christ was thus born of the Father as said, and as the attributes of God so richly abound in Christ; and, also, as the prophets, evangelists and apostles so strongly declare, preach and teach him as God; and as the Scriptures so abundantly teach and testify of the Holy Spirit and confess that the eternal Father, with his eternal Son and Holy Spirit, in their

divine state, power, glory and sovereignty are ineffable, inexpressible and incomprehensible, as may be plainly understood from the cited Scriptures (for it is all Spirit and God, and therefore beyond human understanding); therefore it is that I pray, admonish and desire all my beloved brethren and fellows in Christ Jesus, with all that men can pray, not to allow and consent to flatterings, innovations nor human explanations, be it by whom it may, concerning this incomprehensible majesty. [pp. 187-188]

Brethren, I, for myself confess that I would rather die than to believe, and teach unto my brethren, a single word or letter concerning the Father, Son and Holy Ghost (behold, before God I lie not), differing from the express, testifying word of God which so clearly points out and teaches through the prophets, evangelists and apostles. [p. 188]

All excerpts are from *The complete works of Menno Simon* (Elkhart, Ind., 1871).

From the site: <http://www.mennosimons.net/trinity.html>

Menno's Trinity statement is a beautiful form of Biblical simplicity. It nowhere reflects the begotten gods or proceeding spirit in origin blasphemies of the Babylonian Nicene Creed.

Trinitarian Debates of the 1500s

Please note that from the 1500s we find many debates over the Nicenian and Biblical differences about the Doctrine of the Trinity. We also note the important place of the Textus Receptus and I John 5:7, the Three Heavenly Witnesses, in these debates and the CC FLC, edition Trinity doctrine following 1646. Like Menno did the century before, the First London Brethren chose to define their concepts from the Scriptures rather than the apostate dogmas of the Whore of Babylon established by Constantine.

Rejection of Constantine

Our CCFLC brethren rejected the Trinity concept of Constantine and his Babylon Whore, and his Bibles and Creeds.

The FLC Brethren showed their confidence in the Textus Receptus statement of the Trinity and allowed it to express the foundation of their Trinity faith. They rooted out any Nicenism and its Babylonian mixture of apostate Hebrew, Greek Mythology, and Greek Philosophy, and these Babylonian garments remained outside of any of the Creeds and Confessions of the CC Particular Baptists of England, Wales, Ireland, Scotland and New England, and any other places of outreach, until the

unfortunate events that led the Petty France Church to adopt the Presbyterian-Congregationalist version of Nicenism in 1677.

It must remain for a further Treatise to enter into the circumstances that led to the adoption of the Second London Confession in 1677, and for the present we must say that those brethren who held strongly to the Textus Receptus and Biblical Trinitology were content to link themselves with the Trinitarian faith and expression of the Mennonites and others of the 1500s.

Remember, these brethren did not merely, by default, express the Mennonite Doctrine on the Trinity, but they actively edited out of their 1644 article the moderate Nicenism from 1646 and onward, and replaced it with the Biblical statement as earlier expressed by the Mennonites of the 1500s.

They joined with the older Mennonites and other Anabaptists in holding to the concepts of :

1. Rigid Dipped Separation,
2. Rejection of Mixed Multitude Worship,
3. Anti-Nicenism and a strong reliance upon the Textus Receptus as the Inspired and preserved Written Word of God.

The Falling Aside of these Points

These points would all began to fall when a generation of CC Particular Baptists arose and adopted first the 1677/89 Nicenian based Confession, embraced Mixed Multitude Worship, and forsook Rigid Dipped Separation, and then some adopted the Keach Confession that not only contained Nicenianism but also the practice of the Papacy and the Prelates of England on Confirmation, and then introduced this into America and its adoption by the Philadelphia Association.

In Conclusion

Is it important then to remember that these various Particular Baptist bodies and fellowships have all gone into New Schoolism and Fullerism in due time and that now, most of them, if not all of them, have no clear reason to hold to the Textus Receptus or the older Biblical Doctrine of the Trinity, choosing to be involved in the structure known as *The Image of the Beast* than to walk in the faith and order of our historic and true Spiritual Forefathers of the First London Confession of Faith fellowship!

On our www site please see S. Trott's *Image of the Beast* kindly furnished to us many years ago by brother Robert Lackey and more lately by brother Leroy Rhodes.