

Various theologians and Church historians have written that Primitive (first century) Christianity neither affirmed nor taught that Jesus Christ is Almighty God (the second Person of the Trinity). Brunner presents a balanced discussion concerning the Trinity doctrine and its relation first century Christianity. After careful consideration of the New Testament and ante-Nicene evidence, he concludes as follows:

It was never the intention of the original witnesses to Christ in the New Testament to set before us an intellectual problem—that of the Three Divine Persons—and then to tell us silently to worship this mystery of the "Three in One." There is no trace of such an idea in the New Testament . . . The ecclesiastical doctrine of the Trinity is not only the product of genuine Biblical thought, it is also the product of philosophical speculation, which is remote from the thought of the Bible . . . Similarly, the idea of the Three Persons is more than questionable. Even Augustine felt this (cf. De Trinitate, V, 9). K. Barth seems to share this misgiving (Kirchl. Dogm., I, I, p.703).¹

While Brunner finds certain aspects of the Trinity doctrine problematic, most contemporary Bible scholars and systematic theologians contend that the Primitive Christian congregation (*ecclesia*) believed Jesus the Messiah was essentially God. Some scholars even claim that the New Testament writers held divergent views about Christ or that their respective Christological systems show signs of dialectical development (Anderson 1ff). Nevertheless, at least some Protestant and Catholic theologians have candidly conceded that the Trinity is not a strict Biblical doctrine. Certain thinkers have even noted that the first century *ecclesia* did not believe that Jesus is Almighty God nor did God's Primitive Christian people think that the Son of God is consubstantial with the Father or ontologically identical to the Holy Spirit.

Source

Footnotes:

1. Brunner 1949:226-239