

Focus on the Kingdom

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This edition of *Focus on the Kingdom*, now in its 13th year, is unashamedly dedicated to encouraging solid and easy thinking about God and Jesus. These are issues that have distressed and divided believers for much too long. These are issues, too, which provoked the most savage cruelty on the part of some confessing Christians. The murder of Michael Servetus by John Calvin in 1553, precisely over the topic in hand, is yet to be taken to heart by many. They seem unaware that this senseless brutality even took place. Such lack of information can be remedied by reading *Out of the Flames* by Lawrence and Nancy Goldstone. Also *Did Calvin Murder Servetus?* by Stanford Rives, a professional lawyer.

I was recently with my wife Barbara in Phoenix at the television studio of Jewish Voice. Their leaders had generously organized a long debate between Drs. Michael Brown and James White, both seasoned radio persons, and Joe Good and myself. The issue was on the “Trinity.” Who is God? The results will be made widely public from November and we encourage our readers to acquaint themselves with this age-old controversy about who God and Jesus are. We are urged by Jesus to worship God in spirit and in truth (John 4:24).

Why study these great issues? By being involved in the discussion you equip yourself to help other seekers to understand the Jesus of the Bible and the God of the Bible as they should.

Our object as disciples is to align our thinking with that of our Master Rabbi and Savior Jesus. Jesus was profoundly interested in keeping us straight on the issue of God and how many He is. John wrote that “Jesus came to give us an *understanding* that we might know God” (1 John 5:20). Isaiah 53:11, in a much neglected text, teaches that “the Messiah will make many righteous by his knowledge.” Popular tradition in churches is easily offended by such verses! Did not Jesus die for me to save me? Yes, of course that is true but it is not the whole truth: “By his knowledge the Messiah will cause many to be accounted righteous” (Isa. 53:11, see RSV). That is equally true. Jesus came to die and rise but he also (we repeat the point!) came to “give us an understanding that we might come to know God” (1 John 5:20). That word “understanding” in the Greek is a strongly intellectual word! The Devil trades often on the idea that “intellect” is of very secondary importance; what counts is “sincerity.” “Doctrine divides,” so goes the popular saying. But what is doctrine other than teaching? Doctrine means teaching!

Every proposition you make about faith or Jesus or the Bible is “doctrine.”

A preacher who does not preach “doctrine” would in fact remain silent at the pulpit! He would say nothing. The issue is: Are we preaching true or false doctrine? Partial or complete doctrine? The doctrine about love is not less a doctrine than the teaching which defines God properly or defines the Gospel rightly as the Gospel about the Kingdom (Luke 4:43). Paul urged preachers to deliver to their flocks the “whole counsel of God” (Acts 20:27). With this apostolic injunction he warned against falling for the easy trap of preaching just what is “acceptable” — even what keeps the paycheck secure or popularity polls high.

Did not Messiah plead with us to remember that “he who is ashamed of me and my words...I will be terribly disappointed in him when I come back in the glory of my Father” (see Mark 8:38). The whole counsel of God means the whole range of Biblical teachings. These are to be taught firmly and kindly without partiality or deferring to “lobbies” in the congregation who have decided they know better than their leader! Paul’s advice is so very compelling and relevant to today’s church scene.

The point of discussing Jesus’ teaching about who God is involves our whole relationship to God and truth. It was Jesus who said that “this is the most important commandment of all: Listen Israel, the Lord God is one Lord” (Mk. 12:29). What if the public, rather casually accepting the status quo of church tradition, aids and abets the strange idea that God is really THREE? Many have heard of the Athanasian Creed recited for centuries in churches. Amongst dogmatic pronouncements assigning you to eternal hellfire if you dare to differ with it, it says, “The Father is Almighty, the Son is Almighty and the Holy Spirit is Almighty, but this is not three Almighties, but one Almighty.”

Are you impressed? Or horrified? Why did one Archbishop even say he wished we could get rid of that creed! Are God and Jesus pleased when those gathering as congregations utter what is evident nonsense? Are we supposed to break the rules of common sense and grammar and proclaim before God our faith in what makes no sense at all?

At the recent debate in Phoenix I tried to make the point that one good reason for not believing in the Trinity is that expert Trinitarians admit candidly that to be a true and proper Trinitarian one must be willing to say “HE

[GOD] are THREE and THEY is ONE.”¹ Millard Erickson confesses that “it is simply impossible to explain the Trinity unequivocally” (p. 268). Yet “the system” requires that you believe it or else!

What if the Bible’s definition of God is actually very simple and entirely unambiguous. Try this: We read in 1 Corinthians 9:24, “Remember that in a race everyone runs, but only one person [*eis*] gets the prize. You also must run in such a way that you will win.” Did you understand “one person”? Of course. Now read about God in Galatians 3:20: “God is one Person.” The Greek word is exactly the same as in 1 Corinthians 9:24: *eis*, one, one Person. ✧

The Crunch Point in Discussions of Who God Is

At one of Ken Westby’s “One God” conferences, several days of discussion ended with an exchange between a member of the audience who believed God to be the Father only, and a guest speaker who had been invited to defend his view that God and Jesus are both eternally God.

The questioner, Mr. F, began:

Mr. F: “I listened to your entire tape series on the Deity of Jesus and I still don’t know the answer to two basic questions: Was Jesus the incarnation of Yahweh, and **how many God beings are there?**”

Dr. A: “I do not know whether Jesus was the incarnation of Yahweh, because I don’t think the New Testament says that. However, there are many, many, many New Testament passages that *transfer statements* about Yahweh to Jesus.”

Mr. F: “So what do you conclude?”

Dr. A: “I conclude this, that the New Testament writers must have thought that statements about Yahweh were good enough to *transfer* to the risen Christ.”

Dr. A: “The risen Christ is ‘different’ from the human Jesus. He is the glorified Christ, the one that appears in the book of Revelation, whose hair is white as snow and [who emits] flames of fire. I don’t know all the mysteries, no.”

Mr. F: “**How many God beings** are there?”

Dr. A: “Well, I don’t know. If you say God is the Father’s first name, then there’s only one God being. If you say God is the last name, I don’t know. I think Jesus is deity. I think Jesus is equal with God.”

Mr. F: “Was Jesus eternally uncreated?”

Dr. A: “Yeah, I believe that, because it says ‘in the beginning.’”

Mr. F: “So there are **two eternal God beings**, then?”

Dr. A: “I don’t know.”

[Editor’s comment: The conversation began to disintegrate at this point. Compare this imaginary exchange: “This is a chair; that is also a chair.” “You just said that there are two chairs.” “No, I did not say that.”]

Dr. A: “That’s your conclusion. I did not say that. You’re asking the questions that I think get people off [*or should it be on?!*] track. When John wrote that, he didn’t say two God beings. He said in the beginning the logos was God...I don’t propose to make statements like that, because they are mysteries to me...I believe in one God, the Father, and the Lord. If a Bible reader determines to ‘get real strict’ with the word *one* and therefore cannot call Jesus God, then you can’t call the Father Lord. You can’t be strict on one thing, then loose on the other.”

[Editor: Unless of course there are two lords! See Luke 2:11 (*lord Messiah*), 2:26 (*LORD’s Messiah*) and as exactly explained by Psalm 110:1, “The LORD said to my lord” — the most popular OT verse in the NT. Two lords, but only one of them is God. The other is the man Messiah.]

We invite some prolonged reflection on this interchange. It reveals the inherent non-logical contradiction involved in the proposition “Jesus is God/Yahweh.” Once that is declared, one is committed automatically, since the Father is obviously God, to *two* who are God, and thus to two Gods! This puts one in direct collision with Jesus who stated that “the Lord our God is ONE Lord” (Mark 12:29: “the one and only Lord,” NLT).

One may try to cover up what sounds so strange — that two are God — by quickly trying to change the meaning of God to one triune essence (one “What”). But the singular masculine pronouns for God, countless times and constantly in the whole Bible, ought to signal the fact that one’s argument has gone badly wrong. One may assemble texts, mostly from John and a few from Paul, *but none from the beginning of Matthew and Luke*. But having put together various verses, a Trinitarian believer arrives at a conclusion which forces him to say, “The Father is God (Yahweh). The Son is God (Yahweh). But there is *only one* Yahweh.”

At this point one has not made any sense, according to the rules of simple language we all agree on and use without difficulty in any other setting (except theology!). The proposition “Jesus is God and the Father is God, but that is not two Gods” sounds exactly like the Athanasian Creed above. It involves a blatant contradiction and one ends up making a non-intelligible statement about God.

If your friends invite you to discuss the Trinity, by all means ask them politely to state *how many* YAHWEHS they are proposing. If they hesitate or run away from the question, ask “Do you believe Jesus is Yahweh?” The

¹ Millard Erickson, *God in Three Persons*, p. 270.

answer will typically be “Yes.” “Do you believe the Father is Yahweh?” The answer will be “Yes.”

Your conversation partner has just revealed to him/herself and you that he/she believes in TWO Yahwehs. This violates the first commandment and Jesus’ assertion of the greatest of all truths that the Lord our God is **one Yahweh** (Mark 12:29).

It is fascinating how enthusiastically supportive of Jesus’ monotheism the Jewish scribe was. Jesus began by reciting the Jewish creed (therefore also the *Christian* creed because Jesus affirmed it). The Jewish scribe reacts to Jesus by saying, “Bravo, Master, He is one and there is no other besides Him.” Notice now the impressive accumulation of *singular* grammatical forms, describing of course a single person. He (=singular personal pronoun) is (=singular verb) one (=the numeral one, meaning one and not more than one) and there is (=singular verb) no one (=singular person) other (=singular adjective) than HE (=singular personal pronoun meaning one single person).

Is anyone still convinced that Jesus or the scribe believed that God was THREE Persons? If so, then pronouns have ceased to carry meaning for you. Yet in ordinary conversation you have not the slightest doubt about them!

Think about this. The Trinity is a sort of moving target. It often does not let you know what it proposes. Various explanations of the Trinity are offered. Some say God is “one WHAT.” Others claim He is “one Person, in three modes.” But once someone identifies Jesus, the Son of God, as Yahweh, he is committed to two Yahwehs. That cannot be right, because it interferes with the first commandment of all that the Lord God is a single Person, and we are to imagine no other Gods but HE.

When Christianity soon after Bible times began to cut ties with its parent faith, the ancient faith of Judaism and the Jew Jesus, it rebelled against its mother. The results of a rebellion against parents are always disastrous. The church needs to reconnect with Jesus the Jew and his very Jewish and unitarian belief that God is a single Divine Father. After all, in the Bible Jesus is never once called “the Lord God,” and never once called “the Almighty” (*pantokrator*). The Father is jealous of His own unique position as the ultimate and only One God. ✧

“Let Us Reason Together”

Every argument has a premise. If the premise or basis of an argument is flawed or faulty, what is built on the basis will be faulty. Trinitarians argue that God is **one Essence** existing as three Persons (check the faith statements of vast numbers of “Bible churches”). A leading Trinitarian exponent is Dr. James White, whom I debated recently at the TV studios of Jewish Voice in

Phoenix (this will be shown widely, including on TBN and Daystar).

James White defines the idea that **God is one Essence** clearly when he argues that God is “**one what and three who’s**.”² **But in the Bible God is not a WHAT!** The Bible contradicts this faith statement about a Triune God as **one Essence** when it tells us thousands of times that God is one single Person, a WHO. The Bible conveys this simple premise and fact to us by means of thousands of *singular personal pronouns* to describe God. There are in English (with equivalents in the biblical languages) 14 forms of the singular personal pronoun: I, me, myself, my, mine, thou, thee, thyself, thy, thine, he him, himself, his. We use them everyday (not today the archaic King James forms, thou, etc.). They are completely clear. They describe a single person. We could add three more “relative pronouns”: “who,” “whom,” “whose.” These also define the God of Scripture as one single divine Person, one single WHO.

The God of the Bible is defined and described by these singular personal pronouns multiple thousands of times. Thus thousands of these indicators describe God as a unique Person. But the counter force of another theory about God, that He is *three* Persons, manages to block in the minds of many churchgoers the straightforward grammatical fact that the Bible never describes the One God as three Persons.

There are thousands of occurrences of the various words for God in the Bible (*theos, Adonai, YHVH, elohim*). Can you point to a single one of these as meaning “the Triune God”? Which verse?

Of Himself God repeatedly says, “**I** am God, and there is no other God besides **Me**.” Biblical people address God by saying “**You** alone are God. There is no other God except **You**. There is no God besides **You**.” Biblical writers refer to God as **He, Him, Himself**. “**He** is God and there is no other besides **Him**. **He** alone is God.” These singular personal pronouns, describing God as a single divine Person, occur constantly, repeatedly and uniformly across the pages of Holy Scripture. They ought to convince a Bible reader that God is a single Person, not two Persons, not three or more Persons — certainly not one **WHAT!**

The great truth about the sole Creator of heaven and earth and all life is summed up by this very straightforward information given in Malachi 2:10: “Do we not all have **one Father**? Did not **one God** create us?” The second sentence reinforces the first. This easy language is provided by the Bible to prevent us from breaking the first commandment, which is that we are to imagine no other God but the God of Scripture: “No other gods besides **Me**.”

² *The Forgotten Trinity*, p. 27.

We must not risk turning “Me” into “Us,” or “He” into “They.” This would be to commit a “felony” against the sacred words of Scripture. It would be to muddle language and undermine monotheism, the greatest of all truths. It would be to pulverize innocent pronouns. It would be to bludgeon the clear words of the Bible. The text of the Bible must not be so manipulated. Holy Scripture needs to be upheld at all costs. We are not to alter the revealed words of God. God knows **who He is (He is not “one WHAT”)**, and we are commanded by Jesus to believe *first* in that One God, who is the Father, a single divine Person.

Jesus was deeply impressed with this evidence. When asked by an enthusiastic Jewish scholar to say what the greatest of all commands is, he replied by defining God: “Listen, Israel, the Lord our God is **one Lord**” (Mark 12:29). Not two Lords and not three or more Lords. Just **one Lord**. Paul repeated this same monumental truth when he declared that pagans believe in more than one God, but “for us Christians there is **one God, the Father** and no other God except **Him**” (see 1 Cor. 8:4-6).

Paul went on, as we know, to *place beside that One God, the Father*, the “one Lord Jesus Messiah,” i.e. the Lord Jesus who is the Messiah, or the Jesus who is the Lord Messiah. But that one Lord **Messiah**, Jesus, is carefully distinguished from the One **God**, who is the Father. There is for us believers one single **God, the Father** and one single Lord *Messiah*, Jesus.

On no account are these two individuals to be confused. One is the Lord God and the other is “the man Messiah” (1 Tim. 2:5), the Lord Messiah.

Paul’s definition of the One God who is the Father simply repeats the thousands of references to God as He, Him, Himself, Thee, Thyself, I, Me, Myself. One Father is of course one Person and the Hebrew Bible states that very uncomplicated fact when it asks this question (we repeat it here for emphasis), “Do we not all have one Father? Has not One God created us?” (Mal. 2:10).

Jesus (in John 17:3) emphasized the importance of defining the One God when he said, “This is eternal life, that they recognize You [he was addressing the Father] as the only true God.” He placed himself (also a single person!) alongside that single Person, the Father. He defined that one Father as “the only one who is truly God.”

If this evidence is not clear, then language at the simplest level cannot speak to you. You are blocking it with a counter theory which disables your capacity to understand what in any other situation you do understand with perfect clarity — that I, Me, Thou, Thee, He, Him define a single Person.

The disabling of our understanding is a result of years of traditional church thinking which went beyond the evidence of the Bible. While the Bible massively

defines God as a single Person, readers of the Bible become crippled and confused when that plain and simple language fact about God becomes foggy.

It is interesting to note how a very famous “church father” struggled to make the Bible’s definition of God fit with his own *later*, non-biblical definition of God. I (a single person!), the writer of this article, am referring to the celebrated Augustine. In his *Homilies on John* he **tells us to alter the words of John 17:3**. We are not to let the text say what it actually says — that the Father is “the only true God.” Rather we are to **change the order of the words as Jesus gave them** and make Jesus say what he did not say. Augustine tells us to rearrange Jesus’ words to read “You *and* Jesus Christ, the only true God.”

I encourage you to look this up online. *The Homilies on John* are readily available for you to read in English and you will be able to see for yourself the awful manipulation of John 17:3 by this so-called “church father.” The words of Jesus were neutralized when Augustine dared to rearrange the Greek Scripture at John 17:3 to force it into line with his Trinitarian idea that Jesus was equally the One God. Trinitarian commentators like Henry Alford rightly protested this “violence to the text.” Augustine was slavishly followed by other church fathers who desperately wanted to support their philosophical concept of God as three in one. They tried to make Jesus into a Trinitarian! Instead Jesus’ words are designed to correct and deliver us from man-made traditions.

In a court of law such manipulation would be spotted and condemned, but the massive weight of tradition makes churchgoers reluctant to believe Jesus’ definition of the one true God in John 17:3. The word “only,” as we all know, limits what is so described as “on its own.” Since “the Father is the only true God,” then no one else is the “only true God.” Others might be gods or even “god” in a different sense. But only the Father is the “one true God.” Exactly as Paul declared, “To us Christians there is one God and none besides him; there is to us one God, **the Father**” (see 1 Cor. 8:4-6).

With this premise in mind, one can read the Bible with new eyes, and you can rest assured that you are not being misled if you say, echoing Jesus: “The Lord our God is one Lord,” “There is none beside Him,” and “You, Father, alone, are the true God” (John 17:3). And remember that thousands of Bible verses, with their singular personal pronouns for God, state and confirm the same truth.

The reader should make up his mind about what “I,” “Me,” “He” really mean. Is this so hard?✧

Were We Deceived?

**Did Jesus and the Apostles tell us the whole story?
Why did it take over 300 years for the Church to
discover the Way of Salvation?
by Keith Relf, New Zealand**

If we are to believe, as the creeds of the Church state, that one must believe in the Trinity to be saved, on what authority rests this faith? Once, unbelievers in the Trinity were burnt at the stake. This is thankfully not acceptable today, but questioners are instead subtly threatened by the words of highly acclaimed scholars. For example, Millard J. Erickson quotes of the Trinity: “Try to explain it and you will lose your mind; but try to deny it and you’ll lose your soul.”³ What an awful prospect!

This is pretty heavy stuff and I cannot help but feel that if it is true, then Jesus and the Apostles were very remiss in not making the matter plain to us. Those of Trinitarian persuasion point to a few isolated verses, some even of doubtful provenance, in which at best one must imagine an inference to a doctrine they can’t explain. Check 1 John 5:7-8 in the KJV and then in, say, NIV, ESV, NASV and other modern translations and you will find verse 7 changed or missing. The KJV wording is known not to be the work of John but a much later Trinitarian scribe. It was an added forgery to promote the Trinity. Similar additions or translation liberties and “spin” appear in many Bibles and always favoring Trinitarianism. Sounds suspicious?

Jesus said, “This is eternal life, that they might know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom You have sent” (John 17:3). John said, “Whoever believes in him [Jesus] will not perish, but have eternal life” (John 3:16). Paul pointed the way of Salvation in Romans 10:9: “If you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus, and believe in your heart that God has resurrected him from the dead, you will be saved” — and many similar statements. How many evangelistic appeals have been made based on these and similar Scriptures, not once suggesting that Jesus *is* God? Yet, on joining the church, it becomes necessary to accept the Trinitarian dogma. The doctrine is a theory fought over and declared by the winners at church councils, over a long period of time and of questionable authority. Jesus goes out of his way to make plain that our God is his God. He said to Mary after his resurrection, “I ascend to my Father and your Father; and to my God and your God” (John 20:17). Paul, speaking of the final work of reconciliation in 1 Corinthians 15:28, said: “When all things have been

³ “What God is Like,” p. 342. Millard J. Erickson (b. 1932) is a Christian theologian, professor of theology, and author. He has written the widely acclaimed systematic work *Christian Theology* as well as over 20 other books.

subjected to him, then the Son also himself will be subject to Him who put all things under him, so that God may be all in all.”

Now, Jesus did say that he had more to teach the Church in John 16:12-13: “I have yet many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. However when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth...and he will show you things to come.” And this further revelation was given after Pentecost when we read in Acts 1:2: “Until the day in which Jesus was taken up, after he had given commandments through the holy spirit to the Apostles whom he had chosen.” None of the apostolic writings say anything about the Trinity. Do we believe that it was not until another 300 years had passed, that at a council of mainly Greek bishops, presided over by a pagan sun-worshipping emperor, that God chose to reveal “the cornerstone of the Christian faith” as we are told the doctrine of the Trinity is today? Then, even later, the Athanasian Creed declares: “He therefore who wants to be saved must thus think of the Trinity...Furthermore it is necessary to everlasting salvation that he also believe rightly in the Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ [i.e. the Incarnation of a Second Person of a triune Godhead, the eternal Son of God, who had no beginning in time].”

Professor Loofs of Germany, a pupil of Harnack, one of the “princes” of church history, lectured in 1922 at Oberlin College in Ohio and remarked that none of his colleagues in Germany believed that the traditional Christology of Nicea (325) and Chalcedon (451) was biblically valid. It was this same Loofs who spoke of polytheism having entered the Church, camouflaged, in the second century. Yes, a corrupting polytheism crept in under a mask. The need to provide a second “god” in the form of a Gnostic “aeon” dealt a blow to the strict monotheism of Jesus’ own creed. **Under the guise of promoting Jesus, the creeds actually undermined his humanity and at the same time threatened the unique status of the One God, his Father. Jesus, the Son begotten in Mary (Matt. 1:20), was replaced by an alien visitor from another world.**

Every sincere Christian must seek the answers to the questions asked in this article — for there is no mystery⁴ in the nature of our Savior, “the man Christ Jesus.” It is a relief to turn to the simplicity of Scripture to learn who the Son of God is in relation to his Father. Read Luke 1:26-35. ✧

⁴ Romans 16:25-26: “Now to him who has power to establish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to **the revelation of the mystery**, which was kept secret since the world began, but **now is made manifest**, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, **made known to all nations** for the obedience of faith.”

A Biblical Unitarian Voice from the 1800s

Sacred Truths Relating to the Living God, 1826

Dr. Noah Worcester had been self-educated and then advanced to the highest levels of academic success. As a preacher he was pained at the obvious difference between what he found in Scripture and what he was required to believe as church dogma. He abandoned belief in the Trinity. He argued that the God of the Bible was a single Person. He started by referring to the very few (4) texts in which "us" is associated with God.

In view of these observations, sir, allow me to present to your notice some of the foregoing passages of Scripture in a manner conformable to the Athanasian theory. I will begin with the passage in Genesis so much quoted by Athanasian writers and connect with it the following verse. The passage, to agree with your [Trinitarian] views, should read: "And God said, Let US make man in our OUR image and after OUR likeness. So God created man in *their* own image and after *their* likeness; in the image of God *they* created him."

If the pronouns US and OUR are pronouns for God only, the following pronouns should be also of the plural number. Upon the same principle the first commandment would read as follows: "Thou shalt have no other Gods before US."

When God said, "I am God, and there is no one like Me," would not your theory have required the following form? "We are God, and there is none like Us." Would not the words of Christ to correspond with your views have stood thus: "God so loved the world that they gave their only-begotten Son..."

The words of the scribe: "There is one God, and there is no other but THEM, or but IT." A remarkable variation would also be required in the passage in which God speaks of Himself as the Holy One. "Thus says the LORD, the Holy One of Israel, and his Maker: Ask US of things to come, concerning OUR sons, and concerning the work of OUR hands, command US."

I would further suggest whether another variation in this text would not render it still more conformable to Mr. Jones' [Worcester's Trinitarian opponent] scheme, even to the language of Athanasius in general: "Thus says the **Holy Three** of Israel!" This, I conceive, would have been a correct expression of your doctrine of the Trinity in Unity. Under the term LORD or YAHWEH, the Unity would have been implied; and under the terms HOLY THREE, the Trinity would have been expressed.

Will you, sir, be pleased now to consider what a great and surprising change must be made throughout the Bible in respect to the pronouns and verbs agreeing with God so that the language be conformable to the Athanasian doctrine? You cannot be unaware that in every instance in

which a personal pronoun of the singular number is used as a substitute for the noun God, something is implied contrary to that Athanasian doctrine. Of course a very great proportion both of the Old Testament and New Testament is according to the natural import of language opposed to that Trinitarian theory. If the doctrine of the three Self-Existent Persons in one God were true and of such infinite importance as seems to be supposed by our good brethren, how can it be accounted for that God Himself and all the sacred writers should so uniformly adopt such forms of speech as would naturally lead to the conclusion, that the one Self-Existent God is **one Self-Existent Person**?

Mr. Jones here has suggested the idea that singular pronouns and verbs are used most commonly as agreeing with God, to guard mankind against the idea of more Gods than one. But may I not, with as much propriety, suggest that they are thus used to guard us against the idea of more than one Self-Existent Person? Or that they were thus used, that in case any should adopt the opinion of a plurality of self-Existent Persons, the error might be detected by the current and uniform language of Scripture?

If it is true that there are *three* Self-Existent Persons in One God, it is doubtless a very, very important truth. Nor is it to be admitted that God should constantly speak in a manner which tended to impress the contrary idea, to prevent our falling into the error of a plurality of Gods. Had it been a truth that there is only ONE GOD and that this term is of "plural comprehension," comprising *three* co-eternal Persons, it would certainly have been a very easy thing with God to have adopted language conformable to both parts of the proposition.

The suggestion of Mr. Jones amounts to nothing else than this, that God made use of language which was calculated to lead us into one error, lest we should fall for another.

Would it not, sir, shock the feelings of a Christian audience, if a master, in his prayers and preaching should conform his language to the Athanasian theory and established rules of grammar. But if the theory be true, ought you not to adapt your current language in prayer and preaching to your theory. You cannot be unaware that to use **pronouns and verbs of the singular number**, in relation to God, has a direct tendency to impress the minds of your hearers with the idea that God is only *one Person*. And if you believe the contrary, ought you not to avoid such forms of speech as naturally tend to mislead the minds of your hearers? You will probably try to counter the question, and ask why I did not avoid such forms of speech while I was an Athanasian? I answer, I was not aware of the *inconsistency between my common forms of speech and the theory I had adopted*. If this be

your case, you may possibly be excused in respect to what is past; but what will you do in the time to come?

To evade the argument resulting from the use of singular pronouns and verbs, some will probably say that each Person in the Trinity is *God*, and may say “I am God”; and when a singular pronoun is used for God, One Person only is intended. In reply, the following questions may be asked:

1. If each Person, as a distinct Person, may say I am *God*, will it not follow that there are as many Gods as Persons?

2. If there are three Self-Existent and coequal Persons in God, can it be proper for either of the three to say “I am *God* and there is **no God besides me**”? When any one Person adopts this language, does he not naturally exclude every other Person from the dignity which he claims for himself? Suppose three persons to be united as coequal in one government, under the title king, would it be consistent for either of those persons to say “I am King. And there is no King besides Me”? If any one of the three should speak thus, would it not be untrue in itself and a contempt of the other persons?

3. Supposing that you are among the number of divines who venture to tell us what is to be understood by the word Person as applied to God, and that by *three Persons* you mean *Three Agents*, I would here suggest some thoughts for your consideration.

Those who avow that by three Persons they understand three distinct divine Agents allow each of these Agents self-existence, independence, infinite intelligence and almighty power, as distinct Persons. Of course the three Persons are the three Infinite Agents. Of course I would now wish to be informed, what more would be necessary to conform to three Infinite Beings. And I would ask you seriously to consider whether it be possible for you to form any idea of three infinite agents which does not involve the precise idea of three infinite intelligent Beings.

I will next bring into view a text, in which the Father, the Son and holy spirit are exhibited so that you may see to what the representation in the text would amount on your (Athanasian) hypothesis: “How **God** anointed **Jesus** of Nazareth with the **Holy Spirit** and with power, who went about doing good, and healing all who were oppressed by the Devil: for God was with him.”

Here, sir, we have the Trinity fairly exhibited. But what would be the representation if by the THREE be intended three infinite Agents? Would not the representation be distinctly this: That the first Infinite Agent gave the third infinite Agent to enable the second infinite Agent to perform miracles?✧

Dr. Worcester's point is that “three who are each God” amounts to three Gods. Tritheism is not the monotheism of Jesus and the Bible.

Worldwide Scattered Brethren Network

After not quite a year from its beginning, the Worldwide Scattered Brethren Network has grown to 207 members, as reported by its creator, Robin Todd of Lacey, Washington.

We simply wanted to seek out other biblical unitarian believers like ourselves who were basically too far from a larger organized congregation for fellowship. As the list has grown we have had increasing opportunities to connect people who did not know there were others in their geographical area also looking for fellowship.

If someone contacts us we place their city/town on a list, but keep their names and contact information confidential unless otherwise given permission to share. Once a request comes in for contact with someone in that city/town, we then get permission to share contact information, and if given, connect the individuals via email. Beyond that, we send out a group email every so often just to share information about events and resources. And just this last August we had our first Scattered Brethren Conference, held in Wenatchee, Washington.

If you would like to be a member of this “connecting” ministry, just send Robin an email at robinsings4u@comcast.net; or call him at 360-701-9219.

Robin Todd

Kingdom Heart Ministries

<http://www.kingdomheart.org>

Comment

“The bishops declared in the 4th century that there is no salvation outside of the institution of Christianity, under the leadership of its bishops. This is the baggage and heritage we carry today. We cannot place the first-century church in this later institution created by its official leaders. Salvation being available only in the institution of Christianity, as generally known, has bottlenecked movements to Christ. But the walls of this institution are breaking down at this time, and now salvation through Christ *outside* of the institution is beginning to appear. In particular, Muslims are beginning to see in various parts of the world that God shows no favoritism, and that the Gospel is for the Muslims too. They acknowledged the *Injil* [Gospel] and the New Testament as a pillar of their faith from the beginning. But there was no way for them to accept it, because of the Trinity. Now all that is changing! Muslims are able to believe in a Jesus who affirms that God is not three, but strictly One Person, the Lord God.”

One God Conference – Europe

Fri. Oct. 29 – Sun. Oct. 31, 2010

Warmroth, near Frankfurt, Germany

Contact: Wolfgang Schneider, editor@bibelcenter.de