

sees the Holy Spirit as a distinct person of the Godhead. The Jews, however, whose doctrine of God Jesus espoused, considered the *Ruah ha-Kodesh* as "the Divine spirit; spirit emanating from God. . . . It is more or less synonymous with God (Isa. 63:10) or else signifies His sustaining and inspiring presence (Isa. 63:11; Psa. 51:13)."¹² The New Testament data on the Holy Spirit can certainly be understood in the same manner. It is the trinitarian historian Philip Schaff who reminds us that as late as the Council of Constantinople, in 381, the bishops who came together to decide the nature of the Holy Spirit were quite uncertain and divided about the matter, many of them not believing the Holy Spirit to be a person at all.¹³ It seems strange that as late as 381 the church could hold such diverse views on so basic a doctrine if in fact the apostolic writings had really taught the personality of the Holy Spirit! Rather, it appears that just as in the case of the gradual development of the doctrine that Christ was consubstantial with the Father, so also it came to be felt that the Holy Spirit must be viewed as a person and as the third member of the Godhead.

VI. CONCLUSION

To us, these developments were totally unnecessary and unscriptural and in fact violated Biblical monotheism. We conclude, therefore, that "Christian Monotheism" is a reality when "Christian" is understood on the basis of the explicit teachings of Jesus and His apostles, but that it is an illusion—and only an illusion—when "Christian" is understood as embodying the later creedal definitions of trinitarianism. Christian believers must decide for themselves where the *real* authority is found for the faith they hold: the Scriptures themselves, or else the later developing "tradition."

¹²R. Werblowsky and G. Wigoder, eds., *The Encyclopedia of the Jewish Religion*, art. "Holy Spirit," 190.

¹³Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, III, 664.

Michael Servetus: Fountainhead of Anti-trinitarianism

MARK M. MATTISON

In the history of Anti-trinitarianism, few people are as respected as Michael Servetus, the proto-unitarian martyr who died at the hands of Protestant Reformer John Calvin in 1553. Servetus was the ideal man of the Renaissance in that he was proficient in many disciplines, including medicine, geography, Biblical scholarship and theology. His revolutionary rediscovery of simple Biblical monotheism not only led him to the stake; it fanned the flames of unitarianism all over Europe.

I. THE LIFE OF SERVETUS

Servetus was born to a respected family in 1511 in Villanueva, Spain.¹ His father was a notary and his brother was a Catholic priest. At the age of 14, Servetus himself began to work for Juan de Quintana, a Franciscan and a doctor at the University of Paris.

Servetus was released from Quintana's service to study law at the University of Toulouse in France. While in Toulouse, he also studied theology, including the work of the late scholastic critics of the Trinity (the Moderni) who stemmed from William of Occam. Occam held that the Trinity could not be proved, demonstrated, or illustrated. It had to be accepted on faith. Among Occam's followers, Gregory of Rimini, Robert

¹The majority of this section is a brief summary of Roland H. Bainton's *Hunted Heretic: The Life and Death of Michael Servetus, 1511-1553*, Boston: The Beacon Press, 1953.

Holcot (d. 1349), Pierre D'Ailly (1350-1420?) and John Major (1469-1550) showed that the Trinity was illogical and irrational. Of these names, Roland Bainton writes:

These four names with that of Occam are a clue to the role of Servetus as the bridge between the late scholastic critics of the Trinity and the Antitrinitarians of the sixteenth century, who did not themselves delve in scholastic lore. When, then, we find them citing these five authors we may be sure that their source is Michael Servetus.²

When Quintana was appointed chaplain to His Imperial Majesty Charles V in 1529, he recalled Servetus to his service. Servetus traveled with his patron and the Emperor's court to Italy, and at Bologna in 1530 Charles V accepted coronation at Papal hands. The event left a deep impression on Servetus, who despised the pomp and pageantry of the Papacy.

Servetus apparently accompanied Quintana to Germany and went to the Diet of Augsburg, where he met Martin Bucer and Melancthon, and visited Martin Luther at Coburg.³

Unable to continue conscientiously his service with Quintana and the orthodox establishment, Servetus quietly resigned and went to Basel, perhaps hoping to meet the Christian Humanist Erasmus. Unfortunately, however, Erasmus had left the previous year.

The flames of the Reformation in Basel were being fanned at that time by Oecolampadius, an Evangelical who despised the town's attitude of religious tolerance. Oecolampadius pushed Basel's citizens to crush Catholicism, and the Mass was banned. The town council treated the Anabaptists with diminishing leniency. In the growing heat of intolerance, Erasmus left in 1529, despite Oecolampadius' requests that he stay.

When Servetus arrived in 1530, he was initially entertained by Oecolampadius who eventually lost his patience with Servetus' unorthodox theologizing. During his ten-month stay in Basel, Servetus probably supported himself by proofreading. He continued to research theology in his spare time. Bainton writes:

One is tempted to assign the negative development of his thought with regard to the Trinity to the residence in Toulouse and the positive

²Bainton, *op. cit.*, 28, 29.

³Cf. Bainton, *op. cit.*, 32, and George Huntston Williams, *The Radical Reformation*, Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1962, 269.

reconstruction to the Basel period. So sharp a demarcation would, of course, be untenable. Yet there is a positive point already noted with regard to the books available. The late scholastics, in addition to the Bible, were most responsible for shaking the confidence of Servetus in the traditional formula; and these all were available in Toulouse. The early Church Fathers of the second century contributed most to his own reconstruction; and those which chiefly influenced his thinking—Tertullian and Irenaeus—had only lately been issued from the presses of Basel.⁴

Servetus eventually left the increasingly hostile Basel and moved to Strassburg in May of 1531. Strassburg was at that time the most tolerant city in Reformation Europe; Bucer, the most rigorous reformer there, allowed sectaries to meet privately, and was not overtly opposed to the Anabaptists. Other Radical Reformers flocked to Strassburg: Sebastian Franck, Casper Schwenkfeld, and the Anabaptist Melchior Hoffman. In this environment, Servetus was heavily influenced by Anabaptism, developing apocalyptic views and accepting the doctrine of adult baptism, a heinous heresy at that time.

That same year, Servetus convinced Johannes Setzer of Hagenau (a village near Strassburg) to print anonymously his book *On the Errors of the Trinity*. Many in Strassburg celebrated the work. Franck wrote to a friend, "The Spaniard, Servetus, contends in his tract that there is but one person in God. The Roman Church holds that there are three persons in one essence. I agree rather with the Spaniard."⁵

Not surprisingly, the book was banned. Oecolampadius denounced it; Bucer gently refuted it; Melancthon complained about it. Condemnation of Servetus was not confined to the Protestants; Quintana, Servetus' former patron, was outraged.

Servetus wisely left Strassburg and moved back to Basel. The next year, in 1532, he attempted to placate his critics by publishing (through Setzer) the *Two Dialogues on the Trinity*. Though his theology remained essentially unchanged, Servetus in the newer work was prepared to use more orthodox language to express his views. The attempt was, of course, in vain.

Before long, the Spanish Inquisition took action. In May of 1532, the Supreme Council of the Inquisition in Spain sent instructions to the inquisitors in Saragossa to find the heretic. Servetus' own brother was

⁴Bainton, *op. cit.*, 41, 42.

⁵*Ibid.*, 60.

commissioned to go to Germany and search him out.

Servetus was harassed from all sides. Humanists, Reformers, and Catholics condemned him. His books were suppressed and he was *persona non grata* in Basel and Strassburg. The Inquisition was watching for him in Spain and Toulouse. His own brother was after him. He even considered fleeing to America.

Servetus next appeared in France as Michel de Villeneuve. In 1533, we find him studying at the college of Calvi in Paris. The next year, in 1534, he was to meet with another young man named John Calvin to discuss theology. For some unknown reason, Servetus missed the appointment in the Rue St. Antoine. The same year, the increasingly intolerant attitude of the Catholic authorities inspired both men to leave quickly. Calvin withdrew to Basel under the false name of Martinus Lucianus and Servetus withdrew to Lyons as Michel de Villeneuve.

In Lyons, Servetus became an editor for the publishing firm of Trechsel. Over the years, he edited two editions of *Ptolemy's Geography* and an edition of Santes Pagini's Bible.

In 1537, he returned to Paris to study medicine. The following year, he published his *Apology for Astrology*. That Servetus should write such a tract should come as no surprise. In the sixteenth century, medicine was part science, part superstition. Since astrology, "the stepdaughter of the church," was considered a science, it was natural that a student of medicine should believe in some form of astrology.

Servetus' study of medicine eventually led him to the discovery which made him famous in the scientific community. Dr. Servetus discovered the pulmonary circulation of blood. This he did both by examining human anatomy and reflecting on his theology. To Servetus, theology, philosophy, physiology, and psychology were all interrelated; this attitude was typical of the Renaissance. Bainton describes how Servetus balanced theology and physiology to arrive at this discovery:

The soul according to the Biblical account was breathed by God into man. The divine principle was thus injected by respiration. But respiration is directed to the purification of the blood. At once Servetus then grasped the meaning of the Hebrew doctrine that the soul is in the blood (Gen. 9:4; Lev. 17:11). And how appropriate that it should be located in something that moves! It is not, said he, in the heart, the liver, or the brain, for these are static; being in the blood, it is able to course through the body.⁶

⁶*Ibid.*, 126.

Dr. Servetus left Paris to practice medicine. He lived at Lyons, Avignon, and Charlieu. Sometime after 1540 he moved to Vienne, a suburb of Lyons. He enjoyed about a dozen tranquil years of practicing medicine and editing for Trechsel, which had opened a branch printing office there. Servetus enjoyed a great deal of respect; he associated with the aristocracy and pretended to be Catholic, always attending Mass to conceal his true identity.

In the meantime, a new center of the Reformation emerged. After iconoclasts had destroyed the images of the saints in Geneva, the red-bearded William Farel roused the Genevese with his thundering preaching against Catholicism. Finding himself unable to organize the movement he inspired, he sought the help of a suitable leader. John Calvin, who was passing through Geneva at that time, was recognized and installed as the Reformer of Geneva.

During the years 1546-47, Servetus corresponded extensively with Calvin. Servetus tried to instruct Calvin about Christology and adult baptism; he sent him drafts of his unfinished book, the *Restitution of Christianity*. In return, Calvin sent Servetus the *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Servetus returned the *Institutes* with notes; Calvin kept the *Restitution*. Calvin stated to a friend that if Servetus were to visit Geneva, he would be sure that Servetus did not get out alive.

In Lyons, Servetus found a publisher for his book. Balthazar Arnoullet published 1,000 copies of the work on the condition that it be done anonymously, and that the author pay the full expenses as well as a bonus. On January 3, 1553, the work was finished.

A number of copies went to the Frankfurt fair; others were sent to a bookseller at Geneva. Significantly, it was a friend of John Calvin, William de Trie in Geneva, who revealed Servetus' cover. When the Protestant de Trie secured a copy of the *Restitution*, he bragged to his Catholic cousin in Lyons that, far from being a city of orthodoxy, Lyons was a refuge for heretics. In nearby Vienne, the arch-heretic Michael Servetus was spreading his antiorthodox poison! De Trie's cousin immediately contacted the Inquisition in Lyons. The Catholic authorities treated the matter with the utmost gravity.

On March 16, the judges sent for Michel de Villeneuve. Servetus duly appeared, but only after emptying his apartment of any incriminating evidence. Servetus was informed that the judges had some information against him; his apartment was searched, but only two copies of his *Apology for Astrology* could be found.

The next two days, the judges grilled the publishers and their associates, but all charges of printing the *Restitution* were denied. The authorities at Lyons could prove nothing. De Trie, asked for proof of his allegations, convinced Calvin to give up some of Servetus' letters, as well as manuscript pieces of the *Restitution*.

Thus we see that John Calvin supplied the evidence to the Roman Catholic Inquisition! He had long preserved the secret of Servetus. At length under the importunity of a friend he succumbed. Not the least of the counts on which he must answer is that he denied his share in the affair.⁷

On the 4th of April, both Arnoullet and Servetus were arrested. Servetus was subjected to three interrogations, but did not admit to his true identity. "Taking advantage of the mild confinement he enjoyed as a gentleman, he slipped away in the early-morning hours of 7 April 1553. The tribunal continued the proceedings against him and on 17 June condemned him to be burned. The sentence was executed in effigy."⁸

On August 13, Servetus was found in Geneva, planning to travel by boat from there en route to Naples. It was a Sunday, and as absence from church would have been more conspicuous than attendance, Servetus went. In church he was recognized and arrested.

There followed thereafter a long-drawn-out series of examinations, debates, and deliberations. Servetus and Calvin debated doctrine extensively. Finally, on October 27, 1553, Michael Servetus was burned at the stake. He was condemned under the code of Justinian for Anti-trinitarianism and anti-paedobaptism. His final cry was, "O Jesus, Son of the Eternal God, have pity on me!" An eyewitness noted that if he had only moved the adjective "eternal" and called Jesus the "Eternal Son of God," his life would have been spared.

II. SERVETUS' THEOLOGY AND CHRISTOLOGY

Some writers have unintentionally misrepresented the theology of Michael Servetus. The *Wycliffe Biographical Dictionary of the Church*, for example, states that Servetus advocated Arian views.⁹ Earl Morse

⁷*Ibid.*, 157.

⁸Williams, *op. cit.*, 607.

⁹Elgin Mozer, *Wycliffe Biographical Dictionary of the Church*, rev. by Earle E. Cairns, Chicago: Moody Press, 1982, 366.

Wilbur, on the other hand, states that Servetus was neither Unitarian nor Arian.¹⁰ In the light of these widely divergent statements, a careful explanation of Servetus' theology is in order.

The most common misrepresentation, that Servetus was an Arian, arises from the crude Evangelical opinion that nearly any theology that is not Trinitarian can be classified as Arian. E. Calvin Beisner writes of

Arianism, or what we know today as Unitarianism. This system has as its chief cornerstone the denial of the true deity of Jesus Christ. The name Arianism stems from its proponent in the fourth century, Arius of Alexandria (d. 336). Arianism has surfaced again and again in the history of the church, having been taught by Servetus, Socinus, and in the nineteenth century by Unitarians and others....The Jehovah's Witnesses and their dozen or more spin-off groups; the Worldwide Church of God, founded by Herbert W. Armstrong; the Concordant Publishing Concern; Christadelphianism, and the many types of Unitarianism all teach Arian theology.¹¹

This statement mistakenly lumps several theological opinions into a single category, that of Arianism.

Arians teach that Christ preexisted as an angel, a creature halfway between God and man. The most famous proponents of Arianism today are the Jehovah's Witnesses. Socinians teach that Christ did not preexist, but was a real man whose death on the cross is only a moral example, not a ransom for our sins. This teaching is held today by the Christadelphians. Binitarians teach that Jesus preexisted as God, but the Holy Spirit is not a third person in the Godhead. This teaching is held today by the Worldwide Church of God. These divergent positions should not be confused.

The charge that Servetus was an Arian is entirely untrue. Servetus did not approve of Arius' Christology and denied that he was an Arian. After explaining that Jesus can be called "God" in a functional sense, Servetus writes:

For what if I say that JESUS CHRIST is the great God, and along with this what he himself says in speaking most simply: *The Father is greater*

¹⁰Earl Morse Wilbur, *The Two Treatises of Servetus on the Trinity*, New York: Kraus Reprint Co., 1969, xviii.

¹¹E. Calvin Beisner, *God in Three Persons*, Wheaton, Illinois: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 1978, 17, 18.

than I [John xiv, 28]; am I therefore an Arian? For when Arius held the very foolish view that the Son was of different substance than the Father, having also no appreciation at all of the glory of CHRIST, he introduced a new creature, more exalted than man; although he might have excluded this and every other distinction, and have admitted, *The Father is greater than I*. But preferring to speculate upon a plurality of separate beings, he fell into most abominable error (*On the Errors of the Trinity*, Book One, Paragraph 18).

Servetus' point is that by making Christ into a separate divine being, Arius had fallen into a sort of polytheism. In truth, while the man Jesus Christ is distinct from and subordinate to the Father (John 14:28), he functions as God himself, not as another God.

Similarly, the Christology of Servetus can hardly be confused with that of the later Socinians. With this judgment Harold O.J. Brown agrees: "Although Servetus had denied the preexistence of Christ, he acknowledged his divinity as the natural Son of God and died with a prayer to Jesus on his lips. The Socini were far more rationalistic and critical."¹²

Earl Wilbur's judgment, on the other hand, has some truth to it. We do not know whether Servetus would have considered himself a unitarian since the term had not yet been coined. Servetus certainly felt free to divest the term "Trinity" of its Nicene meaning and reinterpret it along economic or modalistic (Biblical) lines.¹³ He did not care for the word, however, as it is unbiblical and misleading: "But I should prefer not to use a word foreign to the Scriptures, lest perchance in future the philosophers have occasion to go astray" (*On the Errors of the Trinity*, Book Two, Paragraph 31). Servetus clearly did not believe in the Trinity.

At this point we may seem to have encountered an impasse. If Servetus was not an Arian, a Socinian, or a Trinitarian, then how can he be classified? The answer is that Servetus stands in a category of his own. While believing that the Father alone is God, Jesus was a man who did not preexist, and the Holy Spirit is an activity of God, Servetus also believed that Jesus was the divine Son of God who died on the cross for our sins. In this belief he stands closer to the third-century unitarian, Paul of Samosata.¹⁴

¹²Harold O. J. Brown, *Heresies*, Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1984, 332.

¹³*On the Errors of the Trinity*, Book One, Paragraph 41.

¹⁴Bainton, *op. cit.*, 43ff. Servetus himself denied the connection, however.

Servetus' theological inquiry, like that of Paul of Samosata and the other Antiochenes, began with the humanity of Christ:

I have thought that one ought to start from the man; for I see most men approaching their lofty speculation about the Word without having any fundamental understanding of CHRIST, and they attach little or no importance to the man, and give the true CHRIST quite over to oblivion (*Ibid.*, Book One, Paragraph 1).

If Jesus was genuinely a human being, his divinity or "Godship" had to be reinterpreted in such a way as to preserve his humanity. Bainton explains:

One thing to him [Servetus] was perfectly plain: Jesus was a man. The Scriptures over and over again refer to him as a man. He is also called the Son of God and even God. But if he were God, he could be God only in a sense in which man is capable of being God.¹⁵

Servetus believed that as a man, Jesus did not preexist his birth any more than John the Baptist or the prophets. It was the Word which preexisted, and this Word *became* the Son. "But ambiguity enters, in that the term *Christ* is applied both to the man Jesus, the Son, and also to the pre-existent Logos, the Word. The reason may well be that for Servetus the man Jesus became so identified with the Word that thereafter no distinction could be drawn."¹⁶

Servetus' twofold use of the word "Christ" is not the only awkward element in Servetus' writings. Another is Servetus' theological vocabulary. Servetus is perfectly willing to admit that there are three persons in one Godhead,¹⁷ and that the person of Christ preexisted as the Word.¹⁸ This is because Servetus has divested the term "person" of its orthodox meaning and defined it rather as a disposition or temperament of God. In the following passage Servetus explains that Christ preexisted as a disposition of God but "not in reality":

As for what they say of *Person*, it is a gross misuse of the term to say that one Person is an aggregate of two beings, or of two Natures united into one mass....He [Christ] was from the beginning the Son in Person, not in

¹⁵Bainton, *op. cit.*, 46.

¹⁶*Ibid.*, 49.

¹⁷*On the Errors of the Trinity*, Book Two, Paragraph 31.

¹⁸*Ibid.*, Book Seven, Paragraph 1.

reality. Indeed, Persons are spoken of because of the absence of beings, and Persons are incompatible with beings. Therefore it is not argued from this that there was any real begetting up there among the Gods, for this speculation is very beastly and harmful (*Ibid.*, Book Four, Paragraph 9).

In using the word "person" to mean a disposition of God rather than an actual being, Servetus invokes the earlier meaning of the term *prosopon*, as a "face" or "mask."¹⁹ Thus, he can write:

Moreover, John did not say, the Word was united to the flesh, but, *the Word became flesh* [John i, 14], because a change was made from the Word into flesh; a change was made from a Person into a being, as if the Person of the Word, when it became flesh, withdrew from God and came to man (*Ibid.*, Book Four, Paragraph 8).

For Servetus, this is another way of saying that God's self-expressive revelation, the Word, became manifest in a human being.

Servetus also held to the doctrine known as the "celestial flesh of Christ," teaching that Christ, as the natural²⁰ Son of God, was physically divine:

According to Servetus, when the Word became flesh, he brought his flesh down with him from heaven. Although he denied the deity and preexistence of Christ, he too was evidently trying to grapple with Christ's overwhelming majesty; he was unable to conceive of him as a mere man, even as one adopted by God, but had to postulate a direct, natural relationship with God.²¹

The concept that the Word of God, as an oracle, disposition, or "person," had divine substance which became palpable in the birth of the man Jesus Christ, is perhaps too eccentric for us today. Yet while we may wish to dispense with the "celestial flesh" doctrine as being speculative and philosophical (Servetus was, after all, a sixteenth century theologian), we cannot possibly disregard the numerous revolutionary insights found in Servetus' works.

Though Servetus left behind no followers, no "Servetians," he has correctly been identified as the fountainhead of Anti-trinitarianism and the bridge between the late scholastic critics of the Trinity and the Anti-

¹⁹*Ibid.*, Book Four, Paragraph 4.

²⁰By "natural Son of God" it is not meant that Servetus denied the virgin birth; on the contrary he affirmed it.

²¹Brown, *op. cit.*, 330.

trinitarians of the sixteenth century.²² Earl Wilbur describes Servetus' influence:

Servetus' influence had spread to such an extent in the Venetian republic as to give both Melancthon and Calvin serious concern. It is thus that he seems to have given the impulse to those who a little later stirred up the ferment of antitrinitarian thought in the Italian church at Geneva, and who, when driven thence, promoted the movement in Poland and Transylvania which eventually developed into Unitarianism. It is this fact that gives Servetus his significance in the history of religious thought in Europe: that he was the fountain-head of the antitrinitarian tendencies that in a half-century after his time had become developed into a well-defined movement. They nearly all seem historically to derive more or less directly from him.²³

III. MICHAEL SERVETUS: NOTABLE QUOTATIONS

When discussing the history of doctrine, it is customary to quote the Church Fathers, not only to invoke their authority, but also to demonstrate that their doctrinal beliefs represent historical Christianity. If a doctrine does not appear anywhere else in history, it probably is not to be found in the Bible. Thus, Lutherans quote Luther, Calvinists quote Calvin, and Catholics quote Augustine and Aquinas. We, too, can appeal to prominent theologians in history who have understood the same truths as we.

The notation below is based on Earl Wilbur's English translation of Servetus' *On the Errors of the Trinity* in which the paragraphs have been rearranged and numbered.

A. GOD IS ONE, NOT A TRINITY

• ... not one word is found in the whole Bible about the Trinity, nor about its Persons, nor about an Essence, nor about a unity of the substance, nor about one Nature of the several beings, nor about their other babblings and disputes of words, which Paul says belong to the knowledge which is falsely so called [I Tim. vi, 4, 20] (Book One, Paragraph 44).

²²Bainton, *op. cit.*, 28.

²³Wilbur, *op. cit.*, p. xviii. Cf. also Williams, *op. cit.*, 615ff.

• Again, referring to what is proclaimed in Mark; *Hear, O Israel, thy God is one . . . and there is not other but him* [Mark xii, 29, 32, Vulgate] and the second commandment is about one's neighbor, on which two commandments it says that the whole law hangeth, and the prophets [Matt. xxii, 40]. Thus among all the commandments of the Law there is no command to believe in an imaginary Trinity (Book One, Paragraph 52).

B. JESUS CHRIST IS A MAN, GOD'S SON

• Again, on the authority of Holy Scripture we are taught very plainly that Christ is called a man, since even an earthly king is called Christ [I Sam. xii, 3; II Sam. xxii, 51; Isa. xlv, 1] (Book One, Paragraph 4).

• But instead of the seed of a man, the almighty power of the Word of God overshadowed Mary, the Holy Spirit acting within her; and it continues, *Wherefore also that which is born shall be called holy, the Son of God* [Luke i, 35]. Weigh the word, *wherefore*, note the conclusion, note the reason why he is called the Son of God (Book One, Paragraph 9).

• If you would know whether these things are founded on the Scriptures, see whether the word, *man*, in the Bible has the meaning they put upon it; whether in the Greek or in the Hebrew, in place of the Latin word all this is used: *bearing a human nature*. Do they not make CHRIST a great sophist and master of sophists, when they say that the expression, CHRIST, was employed by the Prophets, Apostles, and Evangelists to signify the Second Person, by connoting *what bears a human nature* (Book One, Paragraph 15)?

• For that only the Father is called God by nature is plainly enough shown by Scripture, which says, God and CHRIST, CHRIST and God. It so joins them as though CHRIST were a being distinct from God. Likewise, when it says, God is the Father of JESUS CHRIST [II Cor. xi, 31; Rom. xv, 6], a difference is noted between God and CHRIST, just as between father and son. And also when it says, *the CHRIST of God* [Luke ix, 20], *the God of our Lord JESUS CHRIST* [Eph. i, 3], *the head of CHRIST is God* [I Cor. xi, 3]. And CHRIST cries to God, *My God, my God* [Matt. xxvii, 46]. And by common usage of Scripture the Father is called God; and CHRIST, Lord and Master. And Christ himself says, *That they should know thee, the only true God, and him whom thou didst send, even JESUS CHRIST* [John xvii, 3] (Book One, Paragraph 18).

• With regard to what you say, that he was sent by the Father, there seems to be no great difficulty. For John also is said to have been sent by God: *There was a man sent from God, whose name was John* [John i, 6]. Likewise Moses and the Prophets are said to have been sent by God [Matt. xxiii, 34; Luke xi, 49]. And CHRIST, speaking to the Father about the Apostles, says, *As thou didst send me into the world, so send I them into the world* [John xvii, 18]. And, *As the Father hath sent me, even so send I you* [John xx, 21] (Book One, Paragraph 22).

• Again, note this: that when CHRIST is called the firstborn among creatures, he is also noted as being himself the creature of God, as well as the firstborn from the dead [Col. i, 15, 18]; because he also was dead (Book Two, Paragraph 9).

• Again, if the Son was the *logos*, born of his Father without a mother, tell me, how did he bear him; through a womb, or through his side? Nor will I permit you here to make up various reasons to suit yourself. For you have learned such errors not from the Scriptures but from the Philosophers. For the begetting of the Son of God was made like the begetting of ourselves. . . . Again, with regard to what has been said above, the earlier writers [the Ante-Nicene Fathers] admit that the Son is God's creature, and hence created. Thus they do not speak of the metaphysical Nature (Book Two, Paragraph 9).

• Paul says that God created all things through JESUS CHRIST His Son [Eph. iii, 9; Col. i, 16; I Cor. viii, 6; Heb. i, 2; ii, 10]; and the meaning of this matter we ought to look into, for the interpretation of those who would have it understood that the worlds were made by the second being is altogether perverse, for the whole language of Paul speaks of the man JESUS CHRIST. It is to be understood, therefore, that when the Word was made flesh, so great a mystery lies hid in this matter that the same power of the oracle of God by which the worlds were made, the same and as great as it then was, is now in CHRIST, made his very own, so that CHRIST says it is his own, as when he says, *All things whatsoever the Father hath are mine* [John xvi, 15]; and the power of the Word became the power of the flesh as clearly as the Word became flesh. Thus CHRIST can say that the worlds were made by his power (Book Three, Paragraph 8).

C. THE WORD IS NOT A "SECOND BEING," BUT GOD'S ORACLE WHICH BECAME FLESH

- I say, then, that that which came down from heaven is the Word of God, as is said in Wisdom, *Thine all-powerful word, O Lord, leaped from heaven* [Wisdom xviii, 15]; because God thundered from on high, and gave his voice from heaven, and this word on earth became the Son (Book One, Paragraph 22).
- For λόγος means not a philosophical being, but an oracle, a saying, a speech, a discourse, a declaration of God; for it is derived from the verb λέγω, which means say; and that the more because the very Genesis of the world indicates the meaning, since God even from the beginning was speaking of CHRIST, and was acting by speaking this Word, so that thus all things are said to exist through CHRIST himself (Book Two, Paragraph 4).
- Nor would John ever have imagined that we should make an utterance of God the proper name of some particular being, especially since he himself refers to that speech which God spoke in the beginning, when He made the world (Book Two, Paragraph 7).

D. JESUS IS GOD IN A FUNCTIONAL SENSE, BUT NOT LITERALLY

- . . . we with a sincere heart acknowledge the real CHRIST, and Him complete in divinity. But since this divinity of His depends upon the Mystery of the Word, let us for the present say roughly that God can share with a man the fulness of his deity, and give unto him the name which is above every name [Phil. ii, 9]. For if we admit as touching Moses that he was made a God to Pharaoh [Ex. vii, 1], much more, and in a way far more exceptional, was CHRIST made the God, Lord, and Master of Thomas and of us all. And because God was in him in singular measure, and because through him we find God propitious, he is expressly called Emanuel, that is, God with us [Matt. i, 23]; nay more, he himself is called *EI* [Isa. ix, 6] (Book One, Paragraph 16).
- In opposition to what has been said, you will insist, If CHRIST is God in that way, there will then be more than one God. Here I propose that CHRIST alone shall be my teacher, in order that he alone may defend me,

for out of his words all your arguments can be refuted. To that argument of the Pharisees, the Master himself replies, *I said, Ye are Gods* [John x, 34]. CHRIST there makes it clear that he is God not in Nature but in appearance, not by nature but by grace. For when he was accused of making himself God, he spoke of God in his reply in the same way in which the prophet spoke of gods, ascribing that sort of deity to himself. Also, seeing that he adds, *If he called them gods unto whom the word of God came* [John x, 35], how much more shall the Son of man, whom the Father sanctifies [John x, 36], be called not merely Son, but even God. By way of privilege, therefore, it was given him to be God, because the Father sanctifies him; he was anointed by grace, exalted because he humbled himself [Phil. ii, 8, 9], exalted above his fellows [Heb. i, 9] (Book One, Paragraph 17).

- Again, let not the word, *God*, deceive you, for you do not and can not understand its meaning until you know what *Elohim* means, which, if you know Hebrew, I will make quite clear to you below. For you must bear in mind that all things that are written of CHRIST took place in Judaea, and in the Hebrew tongue; and in all other tongues but this there is a poverty of divine names. So we, not knowing how to distinguish between God [in one sense] and God [in another], fall into error. And that CHRIST became our God in the sense of the word, *Elohim*, is no more than to say that he became our Lord, our judge, and our king, after he was given by the Father a kingdom, all judgment, and all power (Book One, Paragraph 19).

- . . . because of the poverty of the Greek in divine names, the Apostles could not express this matter to the Greeks otherwise than by the word *θεός*, although they rarely use it. All which things should be carefully weighed; nor would they have caused us so much trouble had the Greeks learned Hebrew (Book One, Paragraph 20).

- Yet some reason out an equality of Nature, because it says, using the same word, *The Lord said unto my Lord* [Ps. cx, 1]. But they should be pardoned, for not knowing the original language of Holy Scripture they do not know their own selves. Yet you, if you know Hebrew, will find the prophet saying, *יְהוָה לֵאדֹנָי* [*Neum Yahweh ladoni*, or Jehovah said unto my Lord]. It obviously also says of Christ *Adon*. And this prophecy about sitting on the right hand is fulfilled in CHRIST, as is shown in the tenth of Hebrews [Heb. x, 12; cf. Mark xvi, 19]. Nevertheless the philosophers invent other sittings in the eternities of the ages. Again, this

is known of itself from the words of CHRIST, nor does he make it a point of applying the name יהוה [Jehovah] to himself; for in that case it would have been easy for the Jews to reply to him (Book One, Paragraph 28).

- And note this one teaching of the Master: that all words soever that are from CHRIST are spirit and life. Hence it is spiritually to be understood that CHRIST is God; for as he is not called man without having flesh, so he is not called God without having the Spirit of God (Book Two, Paragraph 18).

E. THE HOLY SPIRIT IS NOT A "THIRD BEING"

- The philosophers have invented besides a third separate being, truly and really distinct from the other two, which they call the third Person, or the Holy Spirit; and thus they have contrived an imaginary Trinity, three beings in one Nature. But in reality three beings, three Gods, or one threefold God, are foisted upon us under the pretense and with the names of a unity (Book One, Paragraph 30).
- And in the Scriptures there is frequent mention of the existence of God the Father, and of the Son, and of seeing and praying to them; but of the Holy Spirit no mention is made, except where it speaks about doing something, as by a sort of casual statement; which is noteworthy, as though the Holy Spirit denoted not a separate being, but an activity of God, a kind of in-working or in-breathing of the power of God (Book One, Paragraph 40).
- . . . the Holy Spirit is a divine impulse in the spirit of man (Book Six, Paragraph 10).

F. THE INFLUENCE OF GNOSTICISM AND GREEK PHILOSOPHY ON THE TRINITY

- Into the error which he [John] had once condemned we have slipped in the same way; for it makes no difference whether one says that what appeared to be flesh is a phantom fallen from heaven, or whether we say that a like phantom fallen from heaven is in the flesh, and is united to the flesh in the common and carnal way; since John does not say that the Word was united with, but became, flesh. For in quite the same way [i.e., in a

similar way to orthodox theologians] Valentinus said that the Savior put on an animal body (Book Two, Paragraph 5).

- Others confess that JESUS CHRIST is the name of his human nature, yet they refuse the man the relation of a son. But what else is this than to deny that CHRIST is the Son of God; for they say that there is one Nature of the Son, there is another Nature of JESUS CHRIST, and the Son of God united himself with CHRIST, as Valentinus said (Book Three, Paragraph 22).
- . . . their dreams carry with them little conviction unless they prove by Scripture that the Word was a real Son; and these emanations are remains left over from the emissions of the Valentinians; these emissions or emanations from within are mathematical, and unknown to the Scriptures. Even the word emanation smacks somewhat of the philosophical, which can not be included in the nature of God. For that which has emanated from God is CHRIST himself, who came forth from the Father. But in God, within, there are no goings forth, nor emanations; but CHRIST was formed beforehand in the divine mind (Book Seven, Paragraph 1).
- And he [Paul] speaks expressly against Aristotle concerning the wisdom of the Greeks; and the wonder is that we seek wisdom from Aristotle rather than from God, and pay the more diligent attention that we may excuse his words. If he was in darkness, how can he give us light? Our Master gives a teaching which cannot escape notice: namely, that the blind can not lead the blind [Matt. xv, 14; Luke vi, 39]. If the book came down from heaven, think you that anything superfluous or not pertaining to learning can be contained in it? In the Bible I find all philosophy and wisdom. Do you not clearly see how Paul here says that the wisdom of the Greeks is false and worldly (Book Three, Paragraph 14)?

G. THE ATONEMENT

- And even as seeing him, just so in hearing him is the Father heard; and on account of his blood it is said that we are redeemed by the blood of God [Acts xx, 28]. God is in him entirely, and to such a degree that all things that are in him are God's; and the things that are done through CHRIST are not man's works but God's. . . . We are justified through CHRIST (Book Four, Paragraph 5).