

Focus on the Kingdom

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10 Reasons Why the Millennium Is Not Now!

Amillennialism (meaning literally “no millennium”) teaches that we are currently “reigning” with Christ “spiritually,” having had our personal, figurative “resurrection” at our conversion/baptism. Yet there are at least 10 reasons why the millennial reign of Christ and his saints in Revelation must lie in the future:

1) The reign of Christ and the saints in Revelation 20 follows the events of the return of Christ given in chapter 19. In Revelation 19:11 the words “and I saw” introduce a sequence of events, linked at verse 17 (“and I saw”) and verse 19 (“and I saw”) with the complete overthrow of the beast and the false prophet (v. 20) and the destruction of the remainder of those who oppose Jesus (v. 21). In Revelation 20:1 “and I saw” continues the sequence and deals with the complete removal from the world scene of the ultimate enemy, Satan himself. Following that event comes the next stage of the drama: “And I saw thrones and people sitting on them who had been given authority to rule” (Rev. 20:4).

2) The reign of the saints with Christ depends on a resurrection (Rev. 20:5). The noun “resurrection” (*anastasis*) occurs some 40 times in the New Testament. In every case (apart from a special use in Luke 2:34) it refers to a *real resurrection of dead people* to life, not a “resurrection” from the life of sin to life as a Christian (as amillennialism has to argue). It would be both unnatural and inconsistent to think of anything but the real resurrection of the dead in Revelation 20:4-5.

3) John described a real resurrection and not a figurative one by saying that the occupants of the thrones “came to life” after being *beheaded*. The core of the millennial passage reads: “I saw those persons who had been beheaded...and they came to life...This is the first resurrection” (20:4-5). People are not beheaded at conversion, but they may die as martyrs. The “coming to life” of those “who had been beheaded” cannot by any stretch of the imagination describe conversion! Yet amillennialism has to deal with these words in this extraordinary way in order to avoid a literal resurrection.

4) In Revelation 20:3 Satan is bound “so that he can no longer deceive the nations.” Earlier in the same book John describes Satan as “the one [now] deceiving

the whole world” (Rev. 12:9). Here in Revelation 20:3 Satan is bound and prevented from “deceiving the nations any longer.” It is beyond question that Satan cannot *at the same time* be “deceiving the whole world” and “not deceiving the nations any longer.” Yet the whole “amillennial” school is committed to that contradiction. Amillennialism teaches that the period of time in which Satan “no longer deceives the nations” (note: “the nations,” not the Church) is *the same* as the period in which he is now “deceiving the whole” world. It would be hard to think of a more unsatisfactory method of reading the Bible! Amillennialists, we fear, are driven to these extremes by their dislike of the idea of a Messianic Kingdom of God, ruled by the Messiah and the saints.

5) In Revelation 12:12-13 the Devil is thrown down from heaven to the earth. This, as all agree, is at a time prior to the Second Coming. However, in Revelation 20:1-2, Satan is banished entirely from the earth and sent to the abyss. This banishment into the abyss, which coincides with the beginning of the millennial reign, must lie in the future. Satan cannot be both confined to the earth and banished from the earth into the abyss at *the same time*.

6) Satan is represented as extremely active and powerful in the present evil age (Gal. 1:4). John describes Satan as now exercising power over the whole world: “The whole world lies in the power of the evil one” (1 John 5:19). 2 Corinthians 4:4 sees Satan as “the god of this age.” To grasp the New Testament view of the present activity of Satan the following passages should be examined: Luke 22:3; Acts 5:3; 2 Cor. 4:4; 11:14; Eph. 2:2; 1 Thess. 2:18; 2 Tim. 2:26; 1 Pet. 5:8: “Your enemy, the Devil, is prowling around like a roaring lion, searching for someone to devour.”

Yet in our passage we have a description of the total cessation of the influence of Satan over the nations. He is removed from the scene, banished and sealed in the abyss. We urge our readers to abandon a view which makes Satan’s present deceptive activity over the whole world (Rev. 12:9) compatible with a time when he is bound and unable any longer to deceive the nations (Rev. 20:3).

7) It is evident from Revelation 20:10 that Satan is finally thrown into the lake of fire after the thousand years (millennium), plus a “short time” (v. 3). Thus a thousand years separates his binding and sealing in the abyss (v. 3) from his casting into the lake of fire (v.

10). It is equally clear that the beast (Antichrist) and false prophet are already in the lake of fire when Satan joins them a thousand years later (v. 10). In John's vision a thousand years separates the throwing of the beast (Antichrist) into the lake of fire and Satan's arrival there. If, as the amillennial school holds, the thousand years began at the crucifixion, or the conversion of the individual believer (opinions vary), what is the meaning of the throwing of the beast and false prophet into the lake of fire a thousand years *earlier* than that time? What John obviously describes is the ruin of the beast and false prophet at the Second Coming, Satan's banishment to the abyss at the same time, and his being thrown into the lake of fire to join the beast and false prophet a thousand years later. The thousand-year reign thus follows the Second Coming — which is premillennialism, a recognition of the future Messianic Kingdom.

8) Amillennialists sometimes argue that the present freedom of Satan (assuming the premillennial scheme that he has not yet been bound) contradicts the effects of the crucifixion. They admit, however, that Satan must be let free for a brief period of time (Rev. 20:3). This period of freedom would equally contradict the effects of the cross. The biblical facts are that Satan has already been defeated, but his sentence is put into effect when his authority as god of this age is finally removed by banishment, first into the abyss and subsequently by being cast into the lake of fire — a two-stage punishment.

9) Satan cannot possibly already be "deceiving the nations no longer" (as amillennialism has to say). In Revelation 19:15 Christ at his coming strikes the nations precisely because they have been so disastrously deceived by Satan into opposing the Messiah at his arrival.

10) Nearly all agree that the "rest of the dead" (those not included in the first resurrection) come to life *literally* at the close of the thousand years (Rev. 20:5, 12). Yet amillennialists deny that the "coming to life" of those in the first resurrection is a literal resurrection. The same Greek word describes the resurrection of both groups, and the same words "came to life"¹ occur in two consecutive sentences. Henry Alford's celebrated protest, known as "Alford's Law," against the inconsistency of this reading of the passage deserves to be heard again:

"I cannot consent to distort the words [of Revelation 20] from their plain sense and chronological place in the prophecy... Those who lived next to the Apostles, and the whole Church for three hundred years, understood them in the plain literal sense... As regards the text itself, no legitimate

treatment of it will extort what is known as the spiritual [amillennial] interpretation now in fashion. If, in a passage where *two resurrections* are mentioned, where certain 'souls' *came to life* at the first, and the rest of the *dead came to life* only at the end of a specified period after the first — if in such a passage the first resurrection may be understood to mean *spiritual* rising with Christ, while the second means *literal* rising from the grave — then there is an end of all significance in language, and Scripture is wiped out as a definite testimony to anything. If the first resurrection is spiritual, then so is the second, which I suppose no one will be hardy enough to maintain. But if the second is literal, then so is the first, which in common with the primitive church and many of the best modern expositors, I do maintain and receive as an article of faith and hope."²

The failure to see in Revelation 20:1-6 a future reign of the Messiah with his saints involves an extraordinary feat, by which the plain meaning of words and context are thrown aside in order to sustain a theory which did not appear in the Church until 300 years after the Apostles. As K.L. Schmidt observed, "The man who refuses to find clear teaching about a future millennium in Revelation 20 approaches the text with preconceived ideas, and gains from it neither the exact sense nor the value."³ George Ladd points to a whole tradition of anti-Messianic reading of the Bible when he writes, "The first anti-millennarians disparaged the natural interpretation of Revelation 20, not for exegetical reasons, because they thought the book did not teach a millennium, but **because they did not like millennial doctrine.**"⁴

Opposition to the Jewishness of Jesus' Gospel about the Kingdom is explicit when commentators confront a straightforward (and in this case a climactic) statement about the resolution of the world's ills when the Messiah comes to reign. ✧

"Far more frequently the kingdom of heaven is spoken of as a **future** blessing, since its consummate establishment is to be looked for on Christ's solemn return from the skies, the dead being called to life again, the ills and wrongs which burden the present state of things being done away, the powers hostile to God being vanquished."

Thayer's Lexicon on "Kingdom" (*Basileia*)

² *Greek New Testament*, Vol. IV, Part 2, p. 726.

³ K.L. Schmidt, *Le Problème du Christianisme Primitif*, Paris: Leroux, 1938, pp. 84, 85.

⁴ *Crucial Questions about the Kingdom of God*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1952, p. 149, emphasis added.

¹ Used also of literal resurrection in Rev. 1:18 and 2:8.

Our Post-Truth Culture

Why It Is Imperative That Christians Stand Up by Barbara Buzzard

These days require a constant drumming into us of Truth and the love of the Truth because of the massive pressures and temptations surrounding us to exchange Truth for lies (Rom. 1:25). But the opposite is happening under the guise of inducing us to be more embracing, more inclusive, and even more loving. Can we not see that the very inclusiveness which is being promoted, required, and even demanded *excludes* Christians who choose not to or cannot compromise?

Many have come to advocate approaches which would bless all sides and condemn a hard line or a non-acceptance stance as impossibly narrow, even sinister. On the other hand, how can one have conviction without taking a stand? This thing called neutrality — is it biblical? Normally seen as a good thing, neutrality would wipe out one's testimony to Truth. Paul's many uses of "I testify to" would be re-written. Neutrality would erase conviction. It does not *allow* for conviction. Neutrality would be canceled as soon as one decides where Truth is (and where it isn't) and when one is prepared for the consequences.

Lack of conviction brings with it weakness. It yields weakness. We cannot, as Christians, run the race we are required to run without conviction. Can conviction co-exist with neutrality on spiritual/biblical issues? What are the New Testament writers trying to instill in us? Boldness, spiritual strength, courage — *and conviction*. Conviction comes from an intelligent *reaction to Scripture*. Without conviction we are dead in the water, easy prey for the enemy. Indecision with regard to biblical admonitions will bring us down. *God wants a response* from us — a reaction to the truths He lays out in Scripture. Our response will honor Him. Our response will serve as the gauge as to whether God can trust us.

Is being neutral a good thing or a lukewarm sign of weakness? Although it is possible that this could depend on the situation (and no reference is intended regarding international relations), neutrality *can be* failure and reluctance to face a tough decision. Doing the right thing is surely harder than giving in to the wrong thing. Neutrality is a *state of artificial calm* which I cannot imagine Jesus embracing. It might make for peace but only at a cost that is far too great. Isn't that why Jesus warns so strongly against being lukewarm, because that approach is worthy only of being spat out (Rev. 3:15-16).

We cannot respect weakness, either that which we see in ourselves or in others. God could not possibly respect it because it signals that we have opted/settled

for something short of Truth, rather than taking the hard and narrow road. Neutrality does not allow us to stand for the right nor does it allow us to condemn the wrong. Are you not at war with yourself if you try to bless both opposing views?

A New Dimension to the Faith — Hating Evil

The more one looks at this thing called Christianity, the more demands and requirements we have to acknowledge. I am humbled by the fact that at various stages of my walk — I could say honestly — I haven't even been doing half of it! Or "if I had known at the beginning what I know now, I wonder if I would have made the commitment." Oh, the riches of God's forgiveness!

The biblical injunction to "hate evil" is not often brought to the discussion table. What does it even mean? We are helped by the concise "The fear of the LORD is hatred of evil" (Prov. 8:13). Tragically, it is not common biblical knowledge that we must love the truth **so as to be saved**" (2 Thess. 2:10). That in itself is monumental. But is there even more to it than that? Must we also hate evil?

Psalms 15 gives us a good answer to the question: Who may abide in God's presence? "Those who walk blamelessly, and do what is right, and speak the truth from their heart, who do not slander with the tongue, and do no evil to their friends nor take up a reproach against their neighbors; **in whose eyes the wicked are despised.**" Practically speaking, what would that mean?

This cautionary verse answers in part; we are warned against wearying the LORD by saying, "All who do evil are good" (Mal. 2:17). A further and very somber instruction: "Since you did not hate bloodshed, bloodshed will pursue you" (Ezek. 35:6b).

In other words, we are not free to ignore evil, cover for it, appease it, accommodate to it, compromise with it, excuse it, *or be blind to it*. We are saturated with approved ways to keep our noses clean, not get involved, keep our heads down, and all that nonsense. But the fact is that God hates evil (Prov. 6:16-19). An astonishing corollary is that, according to Scripture, it is evil both to deceive and to *be deceived*. This unpleasant fact that it is a sin to be deceived is often ignored or not even recognized. But, nevertheless, it is there. We are told that "Wicked people and imposters will go from bad to worse, deceiving others and **being deceived**" (2 Tim. 3:13). How carefully we must read the Scriptures! How tenaciously we must apply these principles! How diligently we must pray for protection from evil! How aware we must be of The Evil One's desire to derail us!

As we are to imitate Jesus, we must note that one of his characteristics which brought him his Father's

approval and anointing is that he “loved righteousness and **hated wickedness**” (Heb. 1:9, Ps. 45:7).

Your Audio and Your Video Must Match!

While not a fan of Shakespeare, I find the truth in this quotation to be remarkable: “This above all: to thine own self be true, And it must follow, as the night the day, Thou canst not then be false to any man.”⁵

I must live my conscience. I am not blinded to the fact that not everyone does. Is this a problem? Well, yes. We excuse, we soften, we let slide, we might even defend those who don’t stay true to what they know is right. We even joke about middle-of-the-road Christians. Our Father requires more. The race to the finish will not be won by the one who blesses all sides, because without the “oomph” of conviction one will be weak and therefore vulnerable. Scripture warns about a double minded man, and we are commanded to let our yes be yes and our no be no.

Some say that inconsistency leads to moral corruption. Both inconsistency and failure to live up to convictions are hugely dangerous. They might be on the order of *theological malpractice* — against one’s self. The most dangerous (and the easiest!) person to deceive is actually yourself.⁶ And remember Mark Twain’s truthful insight that it is easier to fool someone than to get someone to admit that he has been fooled! We even double-down on our foolishness in order to avoid admitting that we were wrong. And yet the truth is that when two are on the wrong path, the one who turns around first is the one who will arrive first.

Stand Up!

If God has perhaps given us time to “toughen up” for yet harder times, and even more importantly to bless others with the Truth which can save them — if we do not stand up, we will be found most wanting. Any inconsistency or failure to follow one’s conscience will actually lead to moral corruption. (Think politics.) Now is not the time to hide; it is the time to stand up. *What breeds corruption? Failure to stand up.*

It is noteworthy that the end result of too much compromise is to be “compromised,” a dangerous state. We can become so deeply compromised that we lose our allegiance to what is right and take the path of complicity. There comes a time when silence is betrayal, betrayal of what we know and betrayal of what is right. Silence, like abortion, is a right that Christians don’t have.

The word “witness” not only means to see. It means to speak. To see is to speak. There is a necessity

of bearing witness. As has been said, we are only one generation away from not having freedom of speech.⁷ (From the American Dream to the American Horror Story?) The same holds true theologically: we are only one generation away from not knowing the Truth, from doctrines which matter. We must take seriously the possible corruption of our faith. *Could the faith be on the books but not in the hearts and minds?* Demise happens when Truth is not safeguarded as with a “Here I stand” mentality and fought for.

Can God Trust You?⁸

We are being watched — not only by Jesus and his God, but by our fellow men. And we are hurting those who watch us and doing them a great disservice if our example is not bold and clear. Friends must know us as one who is not afraid to stand up. They should not be nervous about our next step because they should know us to be true to our beliefs. This of course is not the order of the day. Rather, the tendency is to go along to get along, to rubber stamp issues and to be “yes men” so as not to incur the disapproval of higher ups. Or perhaps you have been given orders (think politics *and* church). Being noncommittal, I fear, will not be what Jesus wants to hear. Surely you are not saying that I must be vocal? But I am! Crypto Christians are not the real thing. Invisible Christians are not the real thing.

The trick is to identify the turncoat! Is he the one urging compromise or is he the one who warns against deviating from Jesus’ words?

“Courage is the ladder on which all the other virtues mount.” “Stop letting your minds be troubled or cowardly” (John 14:27b). May God bless us with “steadfast spirit” (Ps. 51:10). The word “steadfast” occurs at least twelve times in Scripture. We must consider it and weigh our options when we are being urged to compromise.

Truth “speaks” by and through the testimony of Truth’s believers. When one stands, he is *inviting other people to see what he sees!* As one man said: if I don’t speak up now, what is the whole point of my career? May we all develop a strong compulsion to recognize and accept our duty to bear witness to the Truth, wherever it is found. Integrity demands that we do so.

Now is the day for courageous decisions to be made, for leaders to lead, for people of discernment to *participate* in the war of good and evil. Can there be a more lethal emotion or idea than indifference and the resulting silence about things that matter? ✧

⁵ Polonius, in Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*

⁶ M. Scott Peck

⁷ Former President Ronald Reagan

⁸ I hope this is not too harsh a question to ask. Answering it could be an essential exercise for us all.

⁹ Clare Booth Luce

“With” in John 1:1

Significantly, John in his Gospel always uses the preposition *para* (with) to express the proximity of one *person* to another (1:39; 4:40; 8:38, etc.). Yet in his prologue he chooses *pros* (with), suggesting that “the word with God” is not meant to designate a *person* alongside God. The first verse of John is reminiscent too of what Wisdom says in Ecclesiasticus 24:9: “God created me from the beginning before the world.” There is good evidence that the Hebrew prepositions *im* or *et*, meaning “with,” can describe the relationship between *a person and what is in his heart or mind*. Here are some interesting examples of the use of the Hebrew prepositions *im* and *et* from the Hebrew Bible:

*“Im (with), alone = in one’s consciousness, whether of knowledge, memory or purpose”*¹⁰

Numbers 14:24: “He had another spirit with him” (operating in his mind)

1 Kings 11:11: “This is with you [Solomon]” (what you want)

1 Chronicles 28:12: “The pattern of all that was in the spirit with him” (in his mind)

Job 10:13: “I know that this was with you” (parallel to “hidden in your heart”; “in your mind,” NIV; “I know that these things are your purpose,” NASV)

Job 15:9: “which is not with us” (we don’t understand it)

Job 23:10: “He knows the way which is with me” (the way that I take)

Job 23:14: “He performs the things which are appointed for me, and many such things are with Him” (many such things are His plans); LXX: “He has willed a thing and done it.”

Job 27:11: “That which is with the Almighty I will not conceal” (what is on His mind)

Psalms 50:11: “Wild beasts of the field are with Me” (are Mine, in My thought and care)

Psalms 73:23: “I am continually with you” (in your thoughts and care)

Et: “a dream or word of Yahweh is said to be *with* the prophet.”¹¹

Genesis 40:14: “Keep me in mind when it goes well with you” (lit. “Remember me with yourself”). (The “word” was what God had in mind.)

2 Kings 3:12: “There is with him the word of the Lord” (cp. 2 John 2: “truth is with us”; Gal. 2:5: “truth remains with you”)

Isaiah 59:12: “Transgressions are with us” (in our knowledge, present to our mind). (Cp. John 17:5, the glory which Jesus had with God — present to God’s mind, as His purpose.)

Jeremiah 12:3: “You examine my heart’s attitude with you” (lit. “You have tested my heart with you”)

Jeremiah 23:28: “The prophet with whom there is a dream” (the prophet who has a dream)

Jeremiah 27:18: “If the word of the Lord is with them...”

Job 14:5: “Man’s days are determined; the number of his months is with You” (known to You, under Your control)

Proverbs 2:1: “Treasure my commands inside yourself” (lit. “store up with yourself”)

Proverbs 11:2: “Wisdom is with the humble.”

In view of this Hebrew background we suggest a translation of John 1:1, 14 as follows: “In the beginning was God’s wisdom, and that was fixed as God’s decree, and the wisdom was fully expressive of God’s mind. That wisdom became embodied in the man Messiah Jesus.”

The historical Jesus, from John 1:14 onwards, is the wisdom of God (see 1 Cor. 1:24, 30).

Reasons why “the word” in John 1:1 is not the Son:

1. The word “word” in the Old Testament is never a person, and Jesus is never called “the word” in the Gospel of John. In John Jesus says “I am” the bread, the light, the life, the way, etc. but he never says “I am the word.”

2. There is an obvious parallel in the Dead Sea Scrolls to John 1:3: “By His knowledge everything has been brought into being, and everything that is He established by His purpose, and apart from Him nothing is done” (1 QS 11:11). The connection with John 1:1-3 is obvious. Knowledge = wisdom = logos (word).

3. Some argue that there is a parallel with Moses in John 1:1, but no text says Moses “**was** with God” (*en pros ton theon*). Yes, in the Old Testament Moses prays to God, goes up to God, etc. and the Greek *pros ton theon* is used, but it never says Moses “**WAS** with God.”

4. The word “**became**” flesh in John 1:14 – same word as the water *became* wine, stones *become* bread. Some try to argue that “the word **became** flesh” means “Jesus **was** a human being,” but “was” is clearly not the same as “became.” ✧

¹⁰ Brown, Driver and Briggs, *Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament*, p. 768.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 86.

Encouragement from a Scholar

Professor Willibald Beyschlag (1823-1900) was an evangelical theologian at the University of Halle in Germany. This is what he wrote in his *New Testament Theology*¹² on “The Only Begotten”:

“The christological thought of the New Testament unquestionably reaches its highest point in John; but it is not essentially different from the other doctrinal systems. Although some, blinded by the prologue of [John’s] Gospel, which seems to favor [later] dogmatic tradition, have sought in John a **lofty speculative picture of Christ, it is still an error.** John’s picture of Christ did not originate in theological speculation, but in the living impression of the historical personality, as that very prologue (v. 14) attests: ‘We beheld His glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth’; and it is still more emphatically established in the introduction to his Epistle: ‘That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of Life; that we declare to you’ (1 John 1:1). But this also excludes the notion that the Johannine Christology, like that of the Church Fathers and the great Councils, starts from the Divinity of Christ, and from that passes to His humanity. The converse was the only natural, and indeed the self-evident order. The Jesus who made on the evangelist the impression of being the eternal Word made flesh, was at first for him a man (John 8:40), the Master from Nazareth, whose father, mother, brothers and sisters were known to the people and to every disciple (John 1:45; 6:42; 7:27).

“And it would be a complete perversion to suppose that this humanity of Jesus was for John something indifferent or even only apparent. Not only does he prefer, both in the doctrinal and narrative parts of his book, to call him by his human name Jesus, but we may say that **he has made the recognition or denial of the perfect humanity of Jesus the distinguishing point of Christianity and anti-Christianity.** The false teachers of his first Epistle, like those modern teachers who find in Jesus only the historical embodiment of an idea of the Son of God, which was not truly or perfectly realized in him, represented Jesus only as a temporary embodiment of the heavenly Christ, and thus they taught that the latter had not truly come *en sarki*, in a true human nature. (The original text is not ‘come *into* the flesh,’ as Luther inaccurately translated, but ‘come in the flesh.’) To John these are antichrists (1 John 2:8), and he places over against them, as the

fundamental Christian confession, ‘the Christ who has come in the flesh’ (1 John 4:2)...

“Our study of Jesus’ testimony to Himself, according to John, has shown us that **the fourth Gospel denies nothing that is innocently human to Jesus**, neither hunger or thirst, weariness nor sadness, suffering nor death, nor struggle of soul, neither the distinction of His will from the divine, nor the exercise of prayer and worship towards God; the Johannine Christ acknowledges all human dependence upon God, and this dependence extends to his state of exaltation (John 14:16, 28)...**As the Risen One He still calls the Father His God** (John 20:17). **And it is simply not true, what is so often asserted, that John conceived his Christ as omniscient and omnipotent.** Wonderful in its extent as His knowledge and His power in John’s picture were, yet He had to ask at the grave of Lazarus, ‘Where have you laid him?’ and He could declare, ‘I can do nothing of myself’; and so we cannot say that John represents Him as omniscient or omnipotent (John 5:19).

“As in the whole New Testament, so in John, the loftiness and uniqueness of Christ rest on the basis of His human nature; but to him it is not a relative but an absolute uniqueness; Christ is among the children of men the uniquely begotten, *monogenes*. First of all, this uniqueness is to him a moral one lying in His perfect sinlessness: ‘there was no sin in him’ (1 John 3:5). As Peter does, both in his Epistles and his speeches, John in his Epistle **repeatedly accentuates the example of the holiness and righteousness of Jesus.** 2:1: ‘Jesus Christ the righteous.’ 3:7: ‘Everyone who has this hope in him sanctifies himself, just as he is holy — the one practicing righteousness is righteous, just as that one [Jesus] is righteous.’

“That by this not metaphysical and divine, but human attributes are meant, is shown (1 John 2:6) by the comparison of Jesus’ walk with ours; and in itself it cannot be doubtful from what Jesus says of Himself in the Gospel (John 5:30; 8:29; 15:10). Now this absolute faultlessness rested, in John’s view, on this moral uniqueness, as we have shown from the words of Jesus which he reports, that absolute communion with God, which He describes as being ‘in the Father,’ and as a being and dwelling of the Father in Him, from which spring the miraculous works of Jesus as well as His words of life, and all that makes Him the Savior of the world. ‘The Father does not leave me alone because I always do the things which are pleasing to Him.’ ‘The Father who dwells in me, He does the works.’ ‘The Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things.’ ‘I am in the Father and the Father is in me; the words I speak I do not speak from Myself.’ ‘The Father who sent me has given me a commandment what to say and what to speak.’ ‘As the Father has life in Himself, so He has

¹² Vol. 2, Eng. trans by Neil Buchanan, T & T Clark, 1899.. p. 414, 419, 420, 421.

granted to the Son to have life in Himself.’ That is the fundamental thought of John’s Christology, and on it rest those great utterances about Christ which we have to consider more closely...

“The Son is the Father’s bosom friend, who, resting on the heart of the eternal Father, can reveal to us His inmost thoughts and feelings. At the same time, it is one of John’s special aims to lay stress on the absolute uniqueness of this relation of the Son...in the peculiarly Johannine addition to ‘Son of God,’ the word ‘uniquely begotten,’ *monogenes* (1 John 4:9; John 1:14; 3:16). **This concept has nothing to do with the Trinitarian ‘eternal generation’ of the later Church doctrine;** it simply transfers the relation of the only child of human parents (Luke 7:12) to that of the man Jesus to His heavenly Father...

“From all this it could not surprise us if the Apostle designated the Only-begotten as *theos* (God), and he does so by the mouth of Thomas (John 20:28); **but it must not be forgotten that the usage of the Old Testament did not refuse this name even to the king** (Ps. 45). On the other hand, the reading *monogenes theos* [only-begotten God] in John 1:18, though well attested, is on internal grounds very improbable immediately after ‘No one has ever seen God at any time.’ **And I hold it to be quite impossible to refer the ‘this is the true God and eternal life’ in 1 John 5:20 to Him who is immediately before named Son,** instead of to the Father, who has twice before been designated ‘true.’ The same Apostle who makes Jesus describe the Father (John 17:3) as the ‘only true God’ could not so directly contradict himself as to assert alongside of ‘only true God’ a second ‘the true God.’”✧

Comments

• “My story starts when I was a young boy raised as a Jehovah’s Witness. Through my teenage and early adult years I drew away from faith. In my early 30s I found the word of God again. Not knowing too much, I just wanted to get baptized, and I was baptised at the Church of England at the age of 35. I didn’t really get on with the Church of England, thinking it was too much rituals involved, and I found out that they believe in the Trinity and Jesus was God. I started to look elsewhere. First I went to a local Baptist church, but they also believed in the Trinity and that became a stomping point. So I ended up going to a local Christian assembly. I’ve been going there for a bit but their teachings are even worse than the Church of England and the Baptist Church. They are very hostile and call me a heretic. The Baptist Church also called me a heretic, but to be fair to the Church of England,

there I was never called a heretic for not believing in the Trinity. The only reason I continue to pop into the Christian assembly is to have discussions with them about the Bible. Now I consider myself a Bible believing Christian or a biblical unitarian, who believes in the Lord Jesus Christ as the Messiah, the holy Son of God who has died for forgiveness of my sins.” — *England*

• “You are truly a blessing to me and my assembly, I’ve been using your material in my teaching for about three to four years.” — *Trinidad*

• “I’m a zealous truth seeker because my faith is the only treasure I have in my life. I am an indigent believer who only depends upon the benevolence of fellow workers.” — *Philippines*

• “I would like to start by thanking you so very much for your teaching ministry. Your books and lectures have helped me, and certainly thousands of others, break free from the bonds of traditional Christianity. I write ‘traditional’ since it is indeed based on tradition. I have long thought, particularly as I am a physician, that Christians are too ‘otherworldly’ when it comes to their physical health. Indeed, we are almost certainly Platonists! We treat bodies as a necessary evil in which our real self, the soul, is trapped. You have helped me ‘concretize’ this feeling by renewing my mind, to quote the apostle Paul, to see that the true Christian religion is not dualistic. This Platonic mindset also sets the stage for an aggressive over-exploitation of nature. Forgetting the words of the apostle Paul as to nature’s role in pointing to its creator, we have exploited it without remorse. Well, we have remorse now, but we have gone to the extremes of deifying nature and making it an end in itself. Thank God that our earth will be renewed one day. However, it is in the realm of theology proper and particularly Christology, that your influence has been the greatest. Having studied philosophy and theology in my early twenties at a Roman Catholic institution and later as a Baptist elder-in-training, it has been the most difficult to free myself from the classical doctrine of Christ’s Deity. I have been going back and forth for over a decade on the issue. Releasing myself from this most destructive of heresies has been difficult, though finally achieved. And now, as the veil is lifted, I understand what damage this doctrine has caused. Jews were accused of deicide, supplying a powerful argument for antisemitism; in the Levant the ostracization of unitarian Christians by the ‘orthodox’ Trinitarian church set the stage for an easier conversion to Islam; and overall, Christians were given a god-man as an example to follow, an unrealizable objective for those who are just ‘men.’” — *Canada*