

Concordant Studies

“One God and One Lord”

(a two-part series)

with the additional writings:

“Yahweh is the Only Elohim”

“The Only True God”

“The Personality’ of the Holy Spirit”

and

“The Holy Spirit of God”

We are often praying for a realization of God’s purpose of the eons which He makes in Christ Jesus our Lord (Eph. 3:11), even as for discernment concerning His allotment among the saints, in which we have a part. May we complement such prayers by a request for the most fundamental realization of all, which is simply a realization of Him (Col.1:10). Truly, may the eyes of our heart be enlightened, in a realization of the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory (cf Eph.1:15-19).



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Concordant Studies

ONE GOD AND ONE LORD

THE SCRIPTURAL EXPRESSIONS FOR “GOD” signify neither supremacy nor unoriginatedness of being. And, these terms may be used either in a relative sense or in an absolute sense—even when used in a literal sense and in a faithful sense. “God” is a title which speaks of Subjectorhood or Placership.

Ultimately speaking, “there is no other God except *One*” (1 Cor.8:4). “The *Head* of Christ is *God*” (1 Cor. 11:3). The God and Father of the believer is also “*the God of our Lord Jesus Christ*” (Eph.1:17). We believe, then, that the Supreme God is the One Whom the apostle Paul terms “the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Eph.1:3), Whom Christ Himself terms “the *only* true God” (John 17:3).

While we believe “even if so be that there are many being termed ‘GODS,’ whether in heaven or on earth, even as [there is a sense in which] there are many gods, and many lords, nevertheless for us there is *one* God, *the Father*, out of Whom all is, and we for Him, *and one* Lord, Jesus Christ, through Whom all is” (1 Cor.8:5,6).

It is revealed that, in Christ, “the entire complement of the Deity is dwelling bodily” (Col.2:9). If the entire complement of the Deity, however, *dwells in* Christ, this does not make Christ God, any more than if the entire complement of a salesman’s samples are contained in a box, the box is the salesman’s samples. Even as the box remains the entity containing the samples, not the samples themselves, thus also, Christ remains the One in Whom the entire complement of the Deity is dwelling bodily, not the

Deity Himself. A complement is “that which [or the one who] fills.” Thus Christ, as the One in Whom the entire complement pertaining to the Deity is dwelling bodily, becomes the Image of the invisible God (Col.1:15), the Agency through which God’s purpose to make Himself known is realized and fulfilled.

It is revealed as well that Christ, before taking the form of a slave and coming to be in the likeness of humanity, “being inherently [lit., “inhering”] in the form of God, deems it not pillaging to be equal with God” (Phil.2:6). This fact, however, again, is no proof that He is God but is rather a disproof of any such proposition. One who is equal with another is not the other but himself. Equality between *two*, regardless of their nature and regardless of the particulars of that equality, is not a proof of identity but of its denial. Equality always denies identity, and must ever be relative, else it becomes identity. Then, it is no longer equality. If Christ our Lord, in some respect, is equal with God, this proves that Christ is not God and that God is not Christ.

“The Word” of God in John 1:1 may well have in view not only God’s personified Word, Christ, but His written word as well. In any case, “THE WORD was *toward* God.” Any sense, then, in which it is correct to say that “the Word *was* God,” must be compatible with the Word’s being, first of all “*toward* God.” This fact precludes the Word’s being literally and identificationally God, and entails Its being God only figuratively, in a representative sense. Hence it is simply incorrect to reason that if in John 1:1 Christ is the Word, it follows that He is therein affirmed to be God, in either a literal or absolute sense.

Since we wish to consider the nature of God’s being according to the claims both of Trinitarianism and Modalism, a word needs to be said concerning the English word “being” itself. One who has “being,” merely speaks of one who *exists*

or *is* (*cp* Heb.11:6). Similarly, an “entity” is that which has existence. And, the modern term “person” simply means a being characterized by conscious apprehension, rationality, and a moral sense, whether or not a corporeal being or a human being. Anything that *has* being, is anything that has existence. But when we speak of *a* being, we mean a “person,” the expression “person” being understood in accord with the definition stated above. In this sense, then, God is a “Person.” “Personal” qualities are those characteristics which pertain to a person; specifically, conscious apprehension, rationality, and moral sense.

Trinitarians, however, do not use the word “person” in the sense presented above. This has resulted in much confusion.

The teaching of Trinitarianism is that “God is one Being, existing eternally in three hypostases: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.”¹ More succinctly stated, God exists in three hypostases.

“Hypostasis” is the formal, theological equivalent for the popular term “person.” In Trinitarian theology, that which is to be understood by the latter expression, is that which is defined by the former. The Trinitarian definition of “person” is, “one of the three modes of being in the Godhead; a hypostasis.”² The word “hypostasis,” itself, simply means that without which something cannot be, the “*essential* nature of anything; a subject in which attributes are conceived to inhere, or a . . . *mode* of existence.”³ A hypostasis, then, is an “essentiality.”

It needs to be emphasized that the orthodox Trinitar-

1. Joseph W. Tkach, *Worldwide Church News*, vol.21, no.17, p.3 (Worldwide Church of God, Pasadena California).

2. WEBSTER’S NEW INTERNATIONAL DICTIONARY, second edition, unabridged; p.1828.

3. *ibid.*, p.1229.

ian does not affirm that God is both one and three in the same sense. He rather affirms that within the *one* God there are three distinct “Persons,” each one of Whom is uncreated and of the same essence or nature (any distinctions between the three being ones of service or office). By “person,” however, the knowledgeable Trinitarian does *not* mean a literal person, in the sense of an actual, living being; instead, he uses the word “person” strictly in an accommodated sense as a token for the technical “hypostasis” (i.e., essentiality).

Consequently, then, more clearly stated, God is one Being, existing eternally in three essentialities: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Briefly, according to Trinitarianism, God exists in three essentialities.

The Trinitarian, if he would maintain a viable monotheism and yet avoid adopting opposing views, has no recourse but to affirm that these three essentialities are *modes of the same Being*, three modes in which God *always and actually exists* (not to be confounded with Modalism, the opposing doctrine which affirms a plurality of divine modes merely in the sense of divine roles in which God Himself is *sometimes presented*).

To be consistent, orthodox Trinitarianism must affirm and does affirm,⁴ that by the “Trinity” they mean that God has His existence in three distinct modes, each of which being marked by a certain, “personal” quality. These modes are denominated, respectively, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

It is confusing, however, for Trinitarians to claim that these three hypostatic (i.e., essential) modes are “distinct

4. “In theological language we would define a person [i.e., a hypostasis] as a mode of subsistence which is marked by intelligence, will, and individual existence” (Loraine Boettner, *STUDIES IN THEOLOGY*, chapter 3, “The Trinity,” p.109; Presbyterian and Reformed: Philadelphia).

but not separate.” This is because “distinct” and “separate” are synonyms. It is only a question of idiom whether we use one term or the other. What the Trinitarian actually means to say, however, by the slogan “distinct but not separate,” is that while there are distinctions which separate what is to be *understood* concerning each hypostasis, one from another, nonetheless these distinctions do not constitute any of the three hypostases separate *beings*.

Even so, if the three hypostases termed the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, are in fact three modes or ways in which God subsists (i.e., continues to exist), then it follows that each itself, literally speaking, is not God Himself. Each of these three cannot literally be God, but rather a mode of God’s existence, a way in which *God* subsists. It would only be, wherever any of these are termed God, or spoken of as God, that we are to understand, by figure of association, God Himself.

Trinitarians, indeed, as a shibboleth, insist on declaring, “Jesus is God.” Yet however important this affirmation is conceived to be as a righteous slogan, such is not actually an accurate statement of Trinitarianism itself.

An outsider might reasonably suppose that by the affirmation “Jesus is God,” the Trinitarian means to say that Christ is the Deity, the one true God. The Trinitarian’s actual claim, however, is that the Son, Christ Jesus, even as the Father and the Holy Spirit, is a hypostasis or essential mode in which God subsists. That is, Christ Himself is not a Being or Person, but is instead an aspect of a Being or Person.

One who believes such a proposition cannot, apart from self-contradiction, also believe that Jesus, in a literal, identificational sense, *is* God.

Yet they do wish for Christ to have “full Godness,” including, by all means, uncreatedness, together with no immanent subordinancy to the Father, only “economic” subordinancy.

They also wish for both the “Father” and the “Holy Spirit” to have full Godness, including uncreatedness, whatever Their respective administrative offices. *And* they wish for there to be only *one* actual Being Who is God.

With such a wish list, however, the Trinitarian simply has no alternative but to conceive the Deity as a Being comprised of three hypostatic (i.e., inherently essential) modes, three *person-like aspects* that *have* being, but do not, individually in themselves, constitute *a* Being. Simply stated, God consists of three person-like aspects, one of Whom (or rather, of Which) is Christ.

But from this it follows that none of these three, including Christ, is an actual Being. Therefore, as presented in Trinitarianism, Christ is not a Person in the actual sense of the word but a Thing. Specifically, according to such a system, Christ is not, identificationally, God, but is only God, synecdochically speaking (i.e., by near association), the partial Thing being put for the whole Being, or Person. This hardly makes Christ “fully God,” but only (“fully” or otherwise) an *aspect of* God.

Indeed, the knowledgeable Trinitarian affirms that not only the word “person” but all nouns and pronouns in reference to the Father, Son, or Holy Spirit, are not literal (which would make them references to actual Beings), but are “accommodations,” mere anthropomorphisms.

MODALISM: JESUS ALONE IS GOD

In considering the claims of Modalism as to how it is that “Jesus is God,” it is helpful to note that Modalists rarely if ever explicitly distinguish the figurative, representative “is” from the literal, identificational “is.” Accordingly, in certain instances, at least to many, it may not be clear which of these two senses Modalists have in view. Indeed, one often wonders whether it is clear even in Modalists’ own

minds which sense they have in view, or even if they make this distinction at all.

No being “is” another being, literally speaking. And, there is one God, Who is a Being. It follows, then, were it to be affirmed that Christ is the Deity (is Yahweh Elohim, is God) representatively and that God alone is a Being, it could only be that by the term, “Christ,” a representative *thing* is put for the One represented. Hence, in such a case, in saying that Christ is God, one would not be speaking in a literal, identificational sense, identifying a named *person* with one of his titles, but in a representative sense, identifying *something* that somehow pertained *to* a person with the person himself.

This, however, is not the Modalist position; nor is it the Modalist’s claim. Instead, the Modalist’s notion and assertion is that the Being, Christ, is actually God Himself. Accordingly, the Modalist likewise claims that “the Father” is only a character or role in which *Jesus* is sometimes *presented*. But from this, since no being is another being, it follows that no such Being as the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ actually exists. This is because if Jesus is God the Father, “God the Father” is a character or role, not a being. To say otherwise would be to say that there are two beings each of whom are God, which is to say there are two Gods, which is impossible since there is one God.

Modalists, however, in addition to affirming that Christ is identificationally the Deity, *also* affirm that Christ is a theophany, a visible manifestation of God; God manifested in a physical form in flesh; God appearing in the form of a man. Thus, Christ is the form of God; He is the *form* in which God *appears*.

The Modalist acknowledges that God is spirit, and that He Himself does not have a body. The Modalist acknowledges as well that the form in which God appears is a

body, and that that form is not only an appearance but a real human body.⁵

CONFUSING CLAIMS

The claim that Jesus is God manifest in flesh, may be restated as God is *manifested in* the flesh of Jesus. From this, however, it only follows that God is *represented by* Jesus, which is to say that Jesus, *representatively speaking*, is God. But from this it does not at all follow that Jesus is literally, identificationally, the Deity. The Modalist's error is that He claims that Jesus is literally God, and offers as proof the proposition that Jesus is figuratively God. If the Modalist grasped his error here and were consistent, he would soon repudiate Modalism.

If the Modalist's claim were simply that Christ is representatively God and that He is the Image of God, he would be affirming our position, not his own. But if his claim instead is that Christ is identificationally God, he is denying that the God and Father of Christ is a Being; that is, he is denying that the God and Father of Christ, Himself exists.

Such a proposition, however, is impossible, for "there is no other God except One . . . the Father, out of Whom all is" (1 Cor.8:6). It should further be noted that since Christ is the *Image of* the invisible God (2 Cor.4:4; Col. 1:15), He cannot be God Himself. Whatever its particular nature, whether an image is an entity or a being, it is

5. "Since God is an invisible Spirit and is omnipresent, He certainly does not have a body as we know it . . . Jesus is God manifest in flesh . . . The New Testament records no theophanies of God in human form outside of Jesus Christ. Of course, He was not just God appearing in the form of a man, but He was God clothed with a real human body and nature . . . God manifested Himself in the flesh in the person of Jesus Christ" (David K. Bernard: THE ONENESS OF GOD, Word of Flame Press, Hazelwood, Missouri, 1983, pp.12,27,40,302).

always a copy, not an original. Since Modalists themselves acknowledge that Christ is a Being, and must affirm with the Scripture that He is an Image, it follows that He is not the One Whom the Image represents, God Himself, but is a Being distinct from God. Christ, then, the Image of God, is not God, but a Being Who represents and reflects God.

Modalists acknowledge that "God" is a term which speaks of a Being, and that "Christ" is a term which speaks of a Being. What they deny, however, is that these two expressions refer to two Beings. Instead, Modalists insist that these two expressions refer to the same Being. That is, Modalists deny that God is one Being and that Christ is Another. Indeed, since Modalists insist both (1) that Christ *is* God, and (2) that there is only *one* Being Who is God, they have no recourse but to claim that the expressions "God" and "Christ" refer to the same Being. Accordingly, when declaring that "Christ is God," Modalists use the word "Christ" as a term of *identification* for God, even as we use the words "Abraham Lincoln" to identify the man who was President of the United States during the Civil War. Even as it was declared, "Abraham Lincoln is President," Modalists declare, "Jesus Christ is God."

From the premises Christ is God and there is one God, it follows that the titles "Father" and "Son" are not titles, respectively, of One Who is the Father and of Another Who is the Son, but of One Who is both the Father *and* the Son. According to Modalism, this One is Christ Jesus. Hence the basic Modalist claim, "Jesus is God."

Accordingly, Modalists also claim that all the divine names and titles of Scripture are names and titles of Jesus, Who is God Himself. Whether in reference to various *roles* in which He serves or *modes* in which He is manifested, Modalists reason that since every divine name or title is a name or title of God and Jesus is God, every divine name

or title is a name or title of Jesus. It is on this basis that Modalists claim that “Jesus is the Father,” and, “Jesus is the Son.” Their thought is that, representatively speaking, “the Father” is Jesus, and “the Son” is Jesus. That is, the expression “the Father” is a term which represents Jesus in a certain role, and the expression “the Son,” likewise, represents Jesus in a certain role.⁶ As we have already shown, however, in making such claims, Modalists are quite mistaken.

GOD’S IMAGE AND EXPRESSION

God in Himself is invisible and inaudible (1 Tim.1:17; John 5:37; cf Heb.11:26,27). God is spirit (John 4:24), without intrinsic form or shape. God is omnipresent, filling heaven and earth (Jer.23:24), pervading the universe (Psa.139:7,8). In Himself, He is indiscernible and unknowable by ones such as ourselves, limited by sentient faculties. If God would make Himself known, revealing Himself to our sight and hearing, He needs an Image, an Expression, a Mediator between Himself and mankind. *That which fills this need*—“the complement of the Deity” (Col.2:9)—dwells bodily in the One Who is His Christ, His only-begotten Son, Christ our Lord.

Christ’s glory consists not in being the Deity but in revealing the Deity to us. Even as John so gloriously declares, He “tabernacles among us, and we gaze at His glory, a glory as of an only-begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth” (John 1:14).

J.R.C.

6. “The fact that Jesus is God is as firmly established in Scripture as the fact that God is one . . . [the Scripture] identifies Jesus as the same being as God—the same being as the Father . . . the three terms . . . *Father, Son and Holy Ghost* . . . indicate three different roles, modes, functions, or offices through which the one God operates and reveals Himself . . . [the] Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are manifestations of the one God with no distinctions of person being possible” (ibid., pp.55,125,211,252).

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ONE GOD AND ONE LORD

Part Two

THE SCRIPTURES REVEAL that Jesus is “the Christ, the Son of the living God” (Matt.16:16). Since our Lord is God’s *Christ* (i.e., Anointed) and *Son*, it follows that He is not God. All would acknowledge that the fact that Solomon was David’s *son*, proves that Solomon was not David. Yet due to the blinding power of tradition, few are able to see that, just as surely, the fact that Jesus is the *Son* of God, likewise proves that He is not God.

Instead of simply affirming that Christ is the Son of God, orthodoxy has instead claimed that while it is true that Christ is God’s Son, it is also true that He is God Himself. Thus it is claimed that Christ is *fully* Man *and fully* God.

Yet since such a proposition is self-contradictory, it is not only false but also incoherent. Even so, from the days of the early church councils, the teaching of the “deity of Christ” has been deemed essential truth. Accordingly, the advocates of this teaching have made countless arguments in its defense.

Since the Scriptures expressly declare that Jesus is indeed God’s Christ and Son, the orthodox themselves must acknowledge that this is so. Yet what they have *also* affirmed, *besides* His being the Christ and the Son of God, is that Jesus is *also* God Himself. Ironically, by insisting that Jesus is God, traditionalists have effectually denied the very truths which they formally affirm, our Lord’s divine Christhood and Sonship.

The primary stratagem in defense of the Trinitarian

teaching that Jesus is “God, the Son,” has long been the artful claim that Christ has “*two natures*.” According to one of these natures, He is human; according to the other, He is God. He is God-Man; that is, He is both Man *and* God.

In the fourth ecumenical council, held in Chalcedon (modern Kadiköy, Turkey) in 451 A.D., not only were the earlier creeds of Nicaea (321) and of Constantinople (381; subsequently known as the Nicene Creed) approved, but Pope Leo Is *Tome* confirming two distinct natures in Christ was also approved, over against the teachings of those who denied this papal dogma. “The overall effect [of these and other rulings] was to give the church a more stable institutional character.”¹ Yet however effective this council may have been in the service of organized religion, it was only one of the many formalized departures from scriptural truth which have obtained throughout church history.

“The unique glory of Christ Jesus as the Mediator of God and mankind has often been obscured by explanations made in defense of ‘the deity of Christ.’ In his book entitled, *THE LORD FROM HEAVEN*, Sir Robert Anderson says, ‘With us, therefore, the issue is a definite and simple one, namely, whether Christ is God or only man.’ This statement neither defines nor clarifies the theme, for the evidence is abundant on both sides. Moreover, this declaration disregards the special place of Christ as the divine Link between God and man. The Scriptures are emphatic concerning His work of mediation. ‘There is *one* God, and *one* Mediator of God and mankind, a Man, Christ Jesus . . .’ (1 Tim.2:5). Those who make Him either Deity absolute or merely human must do so by avoiding this truth and all the divine explanations of those relationships by which Christ bridges the chasm between us and God.

1. “Council of Chalcedon,” *THE NEW ENCYCLOPAEDIA BRITANNICA*, 15th edition, vol.2, p.711.

“All saints believe that, in some sense, Christ is a Mediator between God and man. Some hold Him to be absolute Deity, yet are compelled to acknowledge some limitations. Others make Him a mere man, yet more than all other men. His true place is seldom clearly defined. The solution lies in the great truth that our Lord is unique, quite unlike any other personage in the universe. We do not need to effect a compromise between the conflicting views concerning Him, for both are wrong, though each contains elements of truth. Let us not allow such explanations to rob us of the Mediator, the Christ we need.

“The key to His present constitution is very simple. He is derived from two distinct sources. His spirit is directly from God, unlike any other man. His body, however, is purely human. His soul, which is the consciousness resulting from this combination, is a thing unmatched, capable of direct communion with the Supreme Spirit, and condescending to the corrupt condition of mortal men.

“The point we wish to press is this, that the likeness of Christ to God, instead of incorporating Him into the so-called ‘Godhead,’ is itself the most satisfying evidence that He is not the Supreme. Nothing is similar to itself, except in a rhetorical figure. Likeness disappears in identity. Nor can this be limited to ‘personality,’ for Christ and God are alike apart from ‘personality.’”²

MYTHICAL CLAIMS

The claim that Christ has a “dual nature” is central not only to Trinitarianism but to Modalism as well. Hence, according to this theory too, Christ is “both fully God and fully man at the same time.”³ Indeed, Modalists suppose

2. A. E. Knoch, *Unsearchable Riches*, vol.74, pp.147,148.

3. David K. Bernard: *THE ONENESS OF GOD*, Word Aflame Press, Hazelwood, Missouri, 1983, p.88.

that nearly all that militates against their position may be shown to be false either by claims such as that the Father is a role not a Being, or by the claim that Christ has two natures.⁴

For example, in explaining the plaintive words, “My God! My God! Why didst Thou forsake Me?” (Matt. 27:46) the Modalist insists that we are to understand that this was only Jesus’ “human nature” crying out.

If it should be suggested that if Jesus is God and since He prayed to God this would entail His praying to Himself, the Modalist’s ready reply is that, rather, what transpired was that the human nature of Jesus prayed to the divine spirit of Jesus that dwelt in Him. Similarly, when Christ died on the cross, it is affirmed not that *Christ* (Who, it is claimed, is God) died, but only that the human body of Christ died, the divine spirit leaving the human body only at death.⁵

Our response to all such ingenious claims, is that no passage of Scripture either declares or entails any such thing as the “dual nature” of Christ, or the proposition that “Christ is fully God and fully man.” “The dual nature of Christ,” then, is not of faith; it is rather merely an artful

4. For the Modalist, “either the multiple attributes and roles of God or the dual nature of Jesus Christ,” are the explanation of (i.e., the means which he employs to set aside) all that would otherwise debar his position; *ibid.*, *cf* p.135.

5. *ibid.*, *cf* pp.146-234, especially pp.170-198. The author considers a wide range of texts which, to non-Modalists, plainly preclude Modalism. The essence of his justification of Modalism in the face of all such passages of Scripture is simply that “Jesus had two natures—human and divine, flesh and Spirit, Son and Father” (p.198) The New Testament . . . teach[es] the dual nature of Jesus Christ and this is the key to understanding the Godhead. Once we get the revelation of who Jesus really is—namely, the God of the Old Testament robed in flesh—all the Scriptures fall into place” (p.232).

contrivance, concocted in the first place in an attempt to support a false theory. The very idea for which it seeks to stand is irrational and absurd.

“Nature” is a singular concept; it speaks of one’s inherent character or basic constitution. Whatever the particulars of one’s nature may be, one who is fully one thing is not fully another. A mule may be the progeny of a donkey and a mare, but it is “fully” neither of these. It is the offspring of its parents; its nature incorporates elements from each; but its nature is not fully the same as either.

“Christ is the *Mediator* Who links humanity with its Creator, so that He is neither man nor God in an absolute sense, yet He is either in a relative one. The combination is not that of two ‘natures’ which can never be harmonized, but that of body and spirit, the same elements which unite perfectly to form the souls of all other men. His humanity consists in a body derived from Adam through the virgin Mary, His human mother. His deity consists in a vivifying spirit directly from God. These two fuse freely to make a Man unique (1 Tim.2:5) and a God unparalleled—the peerless Man and the only begotten God (John 1:18).”⁶

“THERE IS ONE GOD . . . AND ONE LORD”

It is revealed that “There is one God, *the Father*, out of Whom all is . . . *and* one Lord, Jesus Christ, through Whom all is” (1 Cor.8:6). The appositive, “the Father,” identifies Who the one God is. The only true God, then, is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ (*cf* John 17:1-3). Hence we are “to be slaving for the living and true God, and to be waiting for His Son out of the heavens, Whom He rouses from among the dead, Jesus, our Rescuer out of the coming indignation”(1 Thess.1:9,10).

Yet the teaching of Modalism affirms that Jesus Him-

6. A. E. Knoch, *Unsearchable Riches*, vol.21, p.222.

self in an ultimate sense is not the Son of the living and true God but is the living and true God Himself. In support of this teaching, it is claimed that the Greek word *kai* has two significations, in most cases, simply that of conjointness (i.e., “and”), but in some cases, that of identification (i.e., “even,” in the sense of “that is,” or “which is the same as”). Accordingly, Modalists claim that 1 Corinthians 8:6 should be translated, “There is one God . . . *even* one Lord, Jesus Christ.”

The claim is that sometimes when *kai* stands between a noun and a preceding noun it identifies the latter expression as being essentially the same as the former. Since Modalists already believe that Christ is one and the same Being as God, they suppose that this notion that *kai* sometimes means “the same as” gives support to their basic claim.

The fact that in certain passages which speak of God and Christ together, the Authorized Version sometimes renders *kai* as “even,” further confuses the issue while, at least to some, seeming to give credence to Modalism. It should be noted, however, that even in such cases the AV only renders *kai* as “even” in reference to God as “Father”; it does not translate *kai* in such a way so as to identify God as actually being Christ Jesus (e.g., 2 Corinthians 1:3, “God, *even* the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ; where the CV is “the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,” *cp* Eph.1:3; 1 Pet.1:3).⁷

It does not follow that because a *prima facie*-reasonable translation can be made by saying, as in 2 Corinthians 1:3, “God, *even* [*kai*] the Father . . .” that the purpose of *kai* in such a passage is to *identify* God as being the same Being as the Father. While it is true that God is the same Being as the Father, the fact that these two expres-

7. Additional texts in which the AV translates *kai* as “even” in reference to God as “Father” are 1 Corinthians 15:24, James 3:9, and 1 Thessalonians 3:13.

sions often appear together, joined by *kai* (“and”), is no proof that this is so. The point of the *kai* is that the Deity is both our Placer *and* our Father. Similarly, He is both our Saviour *and* our Lord, even as, under God, Christ is *both* of these to us as well.

Even so, many Modalists imagine that the various greetings in Paul’s epistles should be translated along these lines: “Grace to you and peace from God, our Father, *even the Lord Jesus Christ*” (e.g., 2 Cor.1:2), the sense being that “God, our Father” is one and the same Being as “the Lord Jesus Christ.” It should be noted that Modalists do not claim that the phrase “grace and peace” should be rendered “grace, *even* peace,” as if grace and peace were the same, yet they turn about and claim that the phrase “God, our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ” should read “God, our Father, *even* the Lord Jesus Christ,” as if these Two were the same Being.

It simply is not true that the reason why Paul conjoins “God, our Father” with “the Lord Jesus Christ” is for the purpose of identifying the former Being as one and the same as the latter. Indeed, since God is the God and Father of Christ, it is simply impossible for Him to also be Christ Himself. This consideration alone debars any claim that *kai* may be rendered “even” in the various greetings found in Paul’s epistles from God our Father *and* the Lord Jesus Christ.

The simple fact is that *kai* corresponds to our “and,” and does not mean “even.” Indeed, ordinarily, in cases where one word or phrase is to be identified with another, the Greek particle *per*—which does correspond to the English identificational “even”—is used, not the connective *kai*. For example, “Now at the festival he released to them one prisoner, *even* whom they requested” (Mark 15:6). Similarly, “Thou dost give them blood to drink, *even* what they are deserving!” (Rev.16:6).

There are countless definitive passages in which *kai* appears, in which its only meaning, “and,” is obvious and the idea of “even” is absurd. When Peter said, “Silver *and* [*kai*] gold I do not possess” (Acts 3:6), are we to understand the thought intended to be that gold, actually, is the same as silver? Similarly, when we read, “Paul *and* Silvanus *and* Timothy to the ecclesia of the Thessalonians . . .” (1 Thess.1:1), should this be, “Paul, *even* Silvanus, *even* Timothy . . .”? Was Silvanus the same as Paul? Was Timothy the same as Paul as well, though once removed, through Silvanus?

“THE GREAT GOD AND OUR SAVIOUR”

While in the Concordant Version, “even” is used in a number of passages to translate *kai* (i.e., AND), almost none of these are the “and” of parallelization, but that of ascendancy (e.g., Jude 23) or of argument (2 Cor. 4:16). Further, it is not that a certain word or phrase preceded by another word or phrase and joined by *kai* could not possibly be set in parallel, but that such a usage is exceedingly rare.⁸ In fact, we know of only one such passage, Titus 2:13: “anticipating that happy expectation, *even* [*kai*] the advent of the glory of the great God and our Saviour, Jesus Christ.”

Modalists sometimes claim that the Concordant translation itself here militates against the Concordant teaching. Such claims, however, are untrue and without merit, however persuasively they may be set forth, and however ready some may be to accept them.

8. One may not claim the presence of such a literary device whenever one wishes to do so, simply because, considered in the abstract, such a usage, however unlikely, may be possible, or because such a claim may lend support to a certain, discrete teaching. The judgment that any such literary device is actually present should only be made on the weight of compelling, objective evidence, directly related to the passage in question.

The simple answer to why the Concordant Version translates *kai* as “even” in Titus 2:13, is that the Version can by no means always maintain strict literality, and must often employ variants in the interests of idiom and good diction. Since, in the Greek, this passage involves an ellipsis, in consideration of the ordinary reader, our translators deemed it expedient to render the passage as it appears in the Version. Thus they avoided the awkwardness which the more literal rendering would have entailed, besides supplying an entire phrase, not in the Greek, yet one which would have been needed in translation: “anticipating that happy expectation, *and* the advent of the glory of the great God and our Saviour, Jesus Christ [*is that happy expectation*].”

It is not that *kai* itself ever signifies the idea of “even.” It is rather, as in Titus 2:13, that when two clauses joined by *kai* are used as parallels (as sometimes in Hebrew poetry, where one idea is expressed in two different ways), idiomatic translation requires the use of “even.”

Modalists, however, reasoning that if it is proper thus to set “that happy expectation” in parallel to the advent of the glory of Christ, it is proper as well, within this same verse, to identify the phrase “the great God” with the following phrase, “our Saviour, Jesus Christ.” Thus Modalists claim that this verse in its entirety should read, “anticipating that happy expectation, *even* the advent of the glory of the great God, *even our Saviour, Jesus Christ.*”

It is true that “the great God,” here, is indeed “our Saviour, Jesus Christ.” But it is not true that Jesus Christ is herein “identified as God,” in the ordinary sense of this expression, whether by means of the conjunction *kai* or otherwise. That Christ is the great God referred to here, does not make Him the supreme God, the Deity Himself.

Modalists reason as if it follows, since through the use of the word *kai* our happy expectation is declared to be the advent of Christ’s glory, that through the use of the

word *kai* as well, the words “the great Placer” mean “the supreme Placer,” and that the supreme Placer or God is said to be Jesus Christ! The fact, however, that the *kai* of parallelization, however rare, is itself a legitimate usage, is no indication that it is present in any certain construction. Since, for the many reasons we have presented, we may be certain that Christ is *not* God and God is *not* Christ, we may be certain as well that it is only an empty claim that any such usage of *kai* is present either in Titus 2:13 in the phrase “the great God *and* our Saviour, Jesus Christ,” or in any of the various phrases within the Pauline greetings in which “God” is conjoined with “Christ.”

GOD AND CHRIST

In Titus 1:4, the Concordant Version, as is ordinarily the case, translates *kai* as “and” (“Grace and peace from God, the Father, *and* Christ Jesus, our Saviour”). One would suppose that such a rendering is hardly to be faulted. Nonetheless, some adamantly claim that this translation is “inconsistent” and “wrong.” Such ones insist that this verse should read, “Grace and peace from God, the Father, *even* Christ Jesus, our Saviour.”

In Titus 1:4, however, there is no reason to suppose Paul wants to explain in different words what he says in the first clause. In this case, he adds a new thought by saying grace and peace also come from Christ Jesus our Saviour. This thought is not explicit but implicit, the intended idea “grace and peace from” in the second clause being so obvious that it need not even be expressed: “Grace and peace from God, the Father, *and* [*grace and peace from*] Christ Jesus, our Saviour.”

Figures of speech, including the figure termed ellipsis, ordinarily arise from fervor of expression. Ellipsis is also employed simply to avoid redundancy. Ellipsis is only truly present when the terse language of the text itself in

its literal reading is either unclear or incomplete. In passages containing ellipses such as Titus 1:4 or 1 Corinthians 1:3 (“Grace to you and peace from God, our Father, *and* the Lord Jesus Christ”), the ellipsis in the second clause, is obviously supplied from the text of the first clause. The simple and natural sense of such a verse is, “Grace to you and peace from God, our Father, *and* [*grace to you and peace from*] the Lord Jesus Christ.”

Ellipses never transform the sense of a text or add foreign considerations to it. Instead, omitted phrases necessary to the sense (i.e., ellipses), repeat what is said, or clarify or complete what is said. *Their content is not open to speculation.* To the contrary, it is in the light of what has been explicitly stated, that the substance of the implicit elliptical thought, becomes logically evident.

Therefore, in the case of passages such as 1 Corinthians 1:3, 8:6, and Titus 1:4, it is quite wrong to claim that in such constructions the connective *kai* which joins the two clauses carries the sense of “even,” used identificationaly. Any such claims are simply mistaken; and, if made in the interests of Modalism, are not harmless but injurious claims.

It is true that Paul heralded according to the injunction of God, “our Saviour” (Titus 1:3), and, that in his introduction to this epistle, he includes a word of grace and peace from Christ Jesus “our Saviour” (Titus 1:4). It is true as well that, in an ultimate sense, there is only one Saviour, God (termed Yahweh Elohim in the Hebrew Scriptures), even as that there is a sense in which Christ is the true God, Yahweh Elohim. It hardly follows from these facts, however, that Christ is identificationaly God. Nor does it follow that Titus 1:3, 4 proves such a proposition to be so, or that verse 4 should be rendered, “Grace and peace from God, the Father, *even* Christ Jesus, our Saviour.”

It would certainly accord more with the rest of Scripture, as well as with Titus 3:4-6 where our God and Sav-

our is said to pour out His blessings *through* Jesus Christ our Saviour, to see God our Saviour as the Source of our salvation and Jesus Christ our Saviour as the Channel. While Christ, then, relatively speaking, is our God (our “Placer”) and Saviour, absolutely speaking, He is *not* our God and Saviour.

COMMON MODALIST FALLACIES

Modalism, besides claiming that the Father is *not* God Himself but only a divine role, goes on to claim that, conversely, “Jesus *is* God.” Indeed, this latter claim is Modalism’s primary contention. Modalists, accordingly, even go so far as to claim that where we read of “the Father,” even “the God and Father of Christ,” this is actually Jesus presenting Himself in such a role. Similar claims are made as well concerning the Son, and, by many, concerning the Holy Spirit as well. The idea is that since it is *Jesus* Who is actually *God* Himself, and since by “Father,” “Son,” and “Holy Spirit” we are to understand merely divine roles, inasmuch as these roles are roles of God and Jesus is God, they are therefore roles of Jesus!

This claim, however, is based upon the false premises that the Father is not God Himself but only a divine role, and that Jesus is God Himself. Since the premises are mistaken, the conclusion is wrong.

In order to cover a few remaining points, I wish to present the following dialog between a hypothetical (yet quite typical) Modalist and myself:

Modalist’s Claim: God dwells within Christ, Who is God Himself. Christ is God robed in a body of flesh.

My Reply: It is gloriously true that God “dwells” within Christ, which speaks of His special and abiding presence within His Anointed. But it does not follow from this, nor is it true on other grounds, that

Christ is God Himself, or is God Himself in a particular form (“robed in a body of flesh”). Indeed, if “Christ” is a *Being* within Whom God dwells, then Christ cannot be God, since if He were there would be two Beings Who are God. But if by “Christ” you mean simply a body of flesh, physical substance, then “Christ” is not a being but a Thing. Yet if “Christ” is a Thing (simply a body, not a Person) within Which God dwells, then He (or rather, It), is not a Being. This, however, cannot be so, for since *Christ* (not merely Christ’s body) has the characteristics of a Being, *He* therefore *is* a Being.

Modalist’s Claim: God generated Himself within Christ.

My Reply: If Christ Himself, as I affirm, in opposition to Modalism, is a Being Who is begotten of (or generated by) another Being, God, a Being Who, as a result of generating Christ did not Himself cease to exist, then Christ is not God but is, as the Scriptures plainly declare, God’s Son. Yet if, as is claimed by Modalism, you wish to affirm that in generating Christ, God also “generated *Himself*” *within* Christ, where He now dwells, this is simply to claim anew your previous claim, which I have already proved to be false.

Modalist’s Claim: Christ has two natures; He is fully man and fully God.

My Reply: To say that Christ has two “natures” or is a Being comprised of both God and man, is to say that Christ is a Being comprised of two Beings. Such an assertion cannot be true, since the “nature” of one’s “being” is a singular concept. A being’s nature may be comprised of many particulars or entities essential to itself, but together they comprise only one nature. One being cannot consist of two beings, for one being, *is* one being, not two. It cannot consist of more than it

is. It is as mistaken to say that even if other beings cannot have two natures Christ can have two natures, as it would be to say that if God should make a triangle it can have four sides.

Modalist's Claim: Jesus Christ, He alone is Yahweh Elohim, the God of Israel, the *one* God revealed in the Hebrew Scriptures, apart from Whom there is none else.

My Reply: Of course "Jesus Christ, He alone is Yahweh Elohim, the God of Israel, the one God revealed in the Hebrew Scriptures, apart from Whom there is none else." But it does not follow from this that Christ is *identificationally* Yahweh Elohim, that *thus* He is the one God of the Hebrew Scriptures.

Modalist's Claim: If Jesus Christ is not the one God of Scripture, then there is Another Who is the one God instead. But this is contradictory to what you already have claimed to believe, that Jesus Christ is the one God. You worship not one God but two, and do not really believe that there is one God but two Gods. You teach that there are two Gods; that is idolatry, and you are an idolater.

My Reply: Your argument involves the fallacy of equivocation, and is therefore invalid. Hence your bold claim as well that we are idolaters, is quite unfounded. That is, since we do not affirm that, in addition to the sense in which the Father is God, Christ as well is God in this same sense, it is pointless for you to appeal to what in itself is true, the fact that there is *some* sense in which we believe that there are "many gods" (1 Cor.8:5), and, in certain respects, believe that the title "God" applies to Christ.

When we use an expression in one sense in one place and in another sense in another place, and yet you argue as if we used it in the same sense in both places, you

are committing a fallacy of equivocation by failing to note what we actually have done, while arguing *as if* we did what we did not do. Anyone who is convinced by such a claim is guilty of this fallacy, and has been convicted not by truth but merely by a specious argument. The entire notion is simply an illogical inference, not a corollary, and is therefore completely invalid.

The fallacy of equivocation is involved as well in the false conclusion, commonly entertained both by Modalists and Trinitarians, that if there is one Being Who is unoriginated and supreme to Whom the title "God" applies, since this title applies to Christ (e.g., Heb.1:8; Titus 2:13; 1 John 5:20), He is therefore unoriginated and supreme.

GRACE FOR REALIZATION

Through artful inventions and fallacious argumentation, every false proposition may readily be "proved" and justified, indefinitely. In such cases, it is not so much conclusive proof to the contrary that is needed, but *grace* to accept conclusive proof to the contrary.

Hence, in the end, our prayer on behalf of all becomes simply a request that God would grant to each one an awareness that "the only true God," is the One Whom the Lord Jesus Christ Himself addressed as "Holy Father" (John 17:11). In praying to His Father, Christ declared, "Now it is eonian life that they may know Thee, the *only* true God, *and* Him Whom Thou dost commission, Jesus Christ" (John 17:3).

The only true God is "the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory" (Eph.1:17). Hence, "for us there is one God, *the Father*, out of Whom all is . . . *and* one Lord, Jesus Christ, through Whom all is" (1 Cor.8:6). Though indeed, "not in all is there this knowledge" (1 Cor.8:7), may this knowledge be in us so that we may rejoice in our Lord and glorify our God in truth. J.R.C.

YAHWEH IS THE ONLY ELOHIM

“GOD IS SPIRIT” (John 4:24). “God no one has ever seen” (John 1:18a). Since God is spirit, He is therefore invisible, intangible, imperceptible. He is all-sufficient; He is omnipotent, omnipresent, and omniscient. While such, indeed, are among God’s attributes, it is not inherent in this title (i.e., “the Subjector,” or “God”) that this is so. God alone is unoriginated and supreme; but it is neither entailed in nor does it follow from the fact that the Almighty is “God” that He is unoriginated and supreme.

It is true that in certain of its occurrences, the primary divine title, ELOHIM, does not refer to the supreme and only true God, but to a plurality of certain of His creatures. Clearly, in such cases, reference is made to a plural number of such beings, each one of whom, in some capacity, is a “subjector.”

In the overwhelming majority of the occurrences of ELOHIM, however, this term is *not* used in reference to certain creatures who, in a relative sense, may also bear this title together with the Supreme, but in an absolute sense in reference to Yahweh Himself alone, Who is the supreme and only true God. For example, “. . . Yahweh, *He* is the *only* Elohim. There is *no one else* aside from *Him*” (Deut.4:35). “So you know today, and you recall it to your heart that Yahweh, *He* is the *only* Elohim in the heavens above and on the earth beneath; there is *no one else*” (Deut.4:39).

There are not only those both in heaven and on earth who are *termed* “GODS” (or “ELOHIM”), but there are also those

who *are* “GODS” (“there *are* many gods and many lords”; 1 Cor.8:5). “*Nevertheless,*” declares the apostle Paul, “for us there is *one* God, *the Father*, out of Whom *all* is . . .” (1 Cor.8:6).

Just as Paul identifies to us Who the one true God is, saying that He is “the Father, out of Whom all is,” Moses identified the one true God to Israel, declaring that He is the One Whose name is Yahweh.¹

Indeed, this is Israel’s great confession: “Hear, Israel! *Yahweh* [is] our Elohim; Yahweh [the only] One” (Deut.6:4).

“The first Hebrew sentence that a Jewish child learns is [this very verse]:

SH'MA YISRAEL YAHWEH ELOHENU YAHWEH ECHAD
Hear, Israel! Yahweh our-Elohim, Yahweh One

“The observant Jew is required to recite it twice daily, in the morning and at nightfall, together with three related passages. He may add verse 5 (“So you will love Yahweh your Elohim with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your intensity”), sometimes including the following verses 6-9; also Deuteronomy 11:13-21 and Numbers 15:37-41.”²

The sense is that *not two* (or more) are Israel’s “elohim,” but only *one* is their Elohim. That *one* is *Yahweh* alone. To

1. The Divine Name, *Yahweh*, is composed of the elements of the verb “to become.” Yahweh is “I am that I am,” or literally, “I am becoming Who I am becoming” (Ex.3:14). In Revelation 1:8 John seems to give the meaning of the Name for His Greek readers: Who is and Who was and Who is coming (*cf* 1:4; 4:8 and 11:17; 16:5 where the future is omitted). Though these passages in Revelation speak directly of God Himself in contrast to Jesus Christ (*cp* 1:5), it is important to remember that while, absolutely speaking, Christ is not God Himself (“Yahweh,” in the Old Testament), representatively speaking, Christ indeed is Yahweh, Who alone is God Himself (*cp* Zech.14:3,4).

2. Herman H. Rocke, *Unsearchable Riches*, vol.78, p.280.

express the ellipsis inherent in the second clause, we would say, “Yahweh is our Elohim; Yahweh—*One*—[is our Elohim].”³

The title of this Jewish key prayer, “Shema,” is taken from the first word of Deuteronomy 6:4, *Sh`ma* (Hear!). Most Jewish translators and commentators give the sense the same as that which appears in the Concordant Version. “The belief that God [Elohim] is made up of several personalities, such as the Christian belief in the Trinity, is a departure from the pure conception of the Unity of God. Israel has throughout the ages rejected everything that marred or obscured the conception of pure monotheism it had given the world, and rather than abandon that pure monotheism, rather than admit any weakening of it, Jews were prepared to wander, to suffer, to die.”⁴

“Yahweh” is the name of the divine Being Himself, Whose chief title is “Elohim.” The literal significance of the word ELOHIM is “subjectors-ward.”

The shortest form of the divine title, *El*, which is singular, is the same in form as the connective *to* and the pronoun *these*. *To* and *these* indicate the direction, disposition, or subjection of that which is in view. For example, “The water from under the heavens shall flow together *to* one place” (Gen.1:9), *disposes* or *subjects* the waters. “*These* are the genealogical annals” (Gen.2:4), *places* the generations before the mind of the reader. This is the underlying thought, in accord with the true proverb, “Man proposes, but God disposes.”⁵ It would seem, then, that the essential thought

3. The Authorized Version rendering of Deuteronomy 6:4, “. . . the LORD our God is one LORD,” is confusing and misleading. The Revised Version (1901) is to be commended for including the correct sense in its margin (“. . . Jehovah is our God, Jehovah alone”). The Revised rendering, however, which appears in its main text, “. . . Jehovah our God is one Jehovah,” is even more perplexing than the AV translation.

4. J. H. Herz, editor: THE PENTATEUCH AND HAFTORAHS, Soncino Press, London, 1972, p.770.

5. cf A. E. Knoch, *Unsearchable Riches*, vol.24, p.173.

of the divine title (which appears in three forms, *El*, *Eloah*, and *Elohim*) is *Subjector*, *Disposer*, or *Placer*.

We may be certain that this assumption is correct, since the Greek equivalent, *Theos*, which is derived from *the-*, PLACE, signifies the *Placer*. This may be confirmed from many words which share this common stem such as *tithêmi*, *place*, *lay*, *appoint*, *assign*, or *atheteō*, which means “repudiate” or *have no place for*. The meaning of *the-* may be seen as well in such English words as *theme*, *thesis*, and *theater*, in which a certain entity (whether a topic, proposition, or drama) is placed before an audience.

The intermediate form of the divine title is *Eloah*, which is also singular. 41 of its 58 occurrences appear in the book of Job. In order to express motion or direction, the ending *-ah* is occasionally postfixed to a noun, such as *westward* (Num.2:18). This same ending, which means *-ward* (i.e., “[to]ward”), appears in *Eloah* as well. This calls to mind John 1:1 where we read that “the WORD was *toward* God.” We are mindful that Christ’s name is called the “Word” (or “Expression”) of God in Revelation 19:13. Surely all that Christ is and does directs us toward God.

It is conceivable that the title *Eloah*, in an ideal sense, was especially intended to reflect the general direction of Christ’s activity, which is *Godwards*, *toward-the-Deity*, *toward-the Subjector*, *toward-El*. Perhaps certain of its usages even entail this thought, though we cannot be certain. That the word identifies the one so termed as Christ, however, is not something that these morphological considerations themselves can prove. Indeed, in certain instances, we may be sure that ELOAH does not in any respect speak of the true God, *Eloah* of Israel, but of a foreign *eloah* or god (e.g., Dan.11:37,39). The main point to note, however, is that, whatever the original reason may have been (which may be lost to antiquity) for the employment of this special singular form which incorporates a

suffix signifying *-ward*, this form as well, when used of the Eloah of Israel, ultimately directs us to the only true God.

The longest form of the divine title, *Elohim*, which contains the plural ending *im*, occurs much more frequently than either of the other forms. In a number of its occurrences it speaks of a plurality of beings, of various creatures, whether righteous or unrighteous, whether in heaven or on earth, of whom all are in some respect "subjectors," working *toward* the accomplishment of their own purposes, which, in the highest sense, all direct us *toward God* and the accomplishment of *His* purpose (*cp* Isa.10:5-15). All such "subjecting ones," in one way or another, are engaged in subjecting others, in the disposition of their affairs, in placing them under a certain authority. And, all such ones, in so acting, are the agents of the Supreme Subjector; thus they are included among "the men of His counsel" (*cp* Isa.46:11).

Many of the passages in which "elohim" appears merely speak of the idolatrous "elohim," the gods of the nations which Israel was prone to worship. Aaron declared to Moses: "The anger of my lord must not grow hot. You know the people that they are unbridled, for they said to me: Make *elohim* for us who shall go before us, for this Moses, the man who brought us up from the land of Egypt, we know not what has become of him" (Ex.32:22,23; *cit.* Acts 7:40; *cp* Acts 7:43; Amos 5:25-27; Ex.22:20; Deut.7:25).

It is with such "elohim" in mind that Paul wrote to the Corinthians, "that which the nations are sacrificing, they are [actually] sacrificing to *demons* . . ." (1 Cor.10:20). This was so, by whatever name these "gods" of the nations may have been known. Such deceiving spirits actually are not *worthy* of the title "subjectors," for their subjection was unto evil ends and was not in the faithful service of the true God.

In the Song of Moses, in Deuteronomy 32:21, Yahweh speaks of Israel having followed such unclean spirits, ones

which were called "elohim" yet were only so in an evil sense, unworthy of the name: "As for them, they make Me jealous with a *non-el*. They provoke Me to vexation with their idols of vanity. As for Me, I shall make them jealous with a *non-people*; with a decadent nation shall I cause them vexation." Paul speaks of the time when the Galatians once, like the Thessalonians, had turned about "to God from idols, to be slaving for the living and true God" (*cf* 1 Thess.1:9). Until that time, however, and in a similar sense to that of Israel in her idolatrous worship of a "non-el," the Galatians had been "slaves of those who, by nature, are not gods" (Gal.4:8). These demons, however, were quite real, and certainly *sub-jected* the natives of Galatia to much evil. Therefore, it is only with a *faithful sense* in view that these wicked spirits were deemed "not gods."⁶

It is certain that Galatians 4:8 should be understood in such a sense as is suggested here, for there are a considerable number of scripture passages which speak of both men and messengers as being "elohim" (i.e., "subjectors"), each one, under God, working in his own *faithful* capacity toward the achievement of his own respective service. Note the following texts: "You shall not maledict the *elohim* [i.e., the arbiters or judges; *cf* Ex.21:6], and a prince among your people you shall not curse" (Ex.22:28). "Then the sheiks of Edom are flustered; the *arbiters* [*elohim*; i.e., judges, or disposers] of Moab, quivering took hold of them. All the dwellers of Canaan are dissolved" (Ex.15:15).

6. Some, in an effort to "prove" Trinitarianism, have found support for their claim in Galatians 4:8. Their notion is, based upon their own pre-supposition that the Galatians' erstwhile idols were *in no sense whatsoever* actually "gods," therefore "ELOHIM" is a term descriptive of *nature*, one which entails both supremacy and unoriginatedness. Hence it can legitimately only be used of the "Triune God" of their creeds. This illogical claim is simply contrary to the facts, and fails to note the sense and corollaries of Deuteronomy 32:21, to which Paul alludes.

“If the thief is not found then the possessor of the house will be brought near to the *elohim* [or “judges”] to show whether or not he has put forth his hand on the work of his associate. In every matter of transgression over a bull, over a donkey, over a flockling, over raiment or over every lost thing which one says that this is it, unto the *elohim* shall come the word of the two of them. Whom the *elohim* shall condemn, he shall repay double to his associate” (Ex.22:8,9).

Of the sons of Israel, collectively, it is written, “I Myself have said: you are *elohim*, and sons of the Supreme are all of you” (Psa.82:6). How glorious to know that these words will find a fulfillment in the kingdom of the heavens. Then, Israel will be the head and not the tail; then, in the kingdom, the chosen race will indeed be a “royal priesthood,” a “holy nation” (1 Peter 2:9). Citing the very words of Psalm 82:6, Jesus declared to the Jews, “Is it not written in your law that, ‘I say you are *gods*’? If He said those were *gods*, to whom the word of God came (and the scripture can not be annulled), are you saying to Him Whom the Father hallows and dispatches into the world that ‘You are blaspheming,’ seeing that I said, ‘*Son of God am I?*’” (John 10:34-36).

The words of Psalm 97:7, in reference to Yahweh, “bow down to Him, all you *elohim*,” are interpreted in Hebrews 1:6 as “worship Him, all the *messengers* of God!” In speaking of Christ, Hebrews 1:9 (citing Psalm 45:7) declares, “Thou lovest righteousness and hatest injustice; therefore, Thou art *anointed* by God, Thy God, with the oil of exultation beyond Thy partners.” Though there are others, whether celestial or terrestrial, who are themselves “anointed ones” of God (i.e., “*christs*”), who thus are our Lord’s “partners” (*metochon*, WITH-HAVER) in divine service, Christ’s own anointing and corresponding divine service is certainly beyond that of any others.

In Hebrews 1, verses 8 and 9 (citing Psalm 45:6,7), God declares to the Son, “Thy throne, O God, is for the eon of

the eon,” and “Thou art anointed by God, Thy God.” The text of Psalm 45:6, 7 itself reads: “Your throne, O *Elohim*, is for the eon and further . . . *Elohim* Your *Elohim* has anointed You.”

In these verses of Psalm 45, not only is God termed “*Elohim*” but the Son is also termed “*Elohim*.” While it is true that the mere form of this word is plural, it is just as true that each of the two Beings Whom it herein represents are singular Beings.⁷ One is God Himself, “the Majesty in the heights” (Heb.1:3), at Whose “right hand” the other One so addressed, termed “the Son,” is seated. As is the case as well in the vast majority of the texts in which *ELOHIM* appears in which it is used in reference to God Himself (“Yahweh *Elohim*”), this form is used here not of a plurality of beings but, respectively, of Two individual beings, God and His Son.

It follows, then, the claims of Mormonism, among others, notwithstanding, that the plural form *ELOHIM* does not mean a “company” or “family” of beings. That it is used of a plurality of beings in certain passages and that certain of these are, under divine inspiration, *interpreted* accordingly in the New Testament,⁸ no one doubts. That, however, is not the issue. Indeed, it is just as true, and far more to the point, that in many places and in all cases in the Greek New Testament, God always used the Greek singular for *Elohim* whenever referring either to Himself or His Son.⁹

7. It should be noted that the plural form, “*elohim*,” is used as well of *individual* gods of the nations (cf 1 Sam.5:7; Judges 11:24; 1 Kings 18:24).

8. cf John 10:34,35; Acts 7:40,14:11,19:26; 1 Cor.8:5; Gal.4:8.

9. For example, in Exodus 3:16 when God spoke to Moses out of the flaming thornbush, He revealed Himself as the *Elohim* of Abraham, and the *Elohim* of Isaac, and the *Elohim* of Jacob. Yet when our Lord cites this passage in proving the necessity of resurrection (Matt.22:32), and Steven brings it before the Sanhedrin (Acts 7:32), neither translates *Elohim* as plural. Thus we may be certain concerning Yahweh, that *He*

Perhaps, as many scholars have suggested, when “ELOHIM” is used of Yahweh Himself, the plural form “Elohim” is an idiom termed *plural amplitudinus* or plural of majesty, which originally had in view the plenitude of God’s operations in which He acts through others who are energized by His holy spirit. Some such explanation must account for the mere plural form. This is because in the vast number of passages which speak of Yahweh Himself as “Elohim,” even as where, under God, Christ as well is denominated by this same title, a single Being alone is addressed or is in view.

It is a fallacy that either supremacy or unoriginatedness is entailed by the word “God.” It is a fallacy as well that wherever the word appears it speaks of the same being. And finally, it is a fallacy that if the word is used in a certain sense in one place, it is used in the same sense in another place. Each of these errors has been the source of much confusion. Collectively, the volume of deception which they have wrought is simply incalculable. If we are not snared by these errors ourselves, this can only be attributed to the grace of God.

We are often praying for a realization of God’s purpose of the eons which He makes in Christ Jesus our Lord (Eph.3:11), even as for discernment concerning His allotment among the saints, in which we have a part. May we complement such prayers by a request for the most fundamental realization of all, which is simply a realization of *Him* (Col.1:10). Truly, may the eyes of our heart be *enlightened*, in a realization of the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory (*cf* Eph.1:15-19). J.R.C.

(*To be continued*)

is the Subjector and Placer (not “subjectors” or “placers”) of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob.

THE ONLY TRUE GOD

WE BELIEVE that, ultimately speaking, “there is no other God except *One*” (1 Cor.8:4b). That *One*, is “*the Father*, out of Whom *all* is” (1 Cor.8:6). He alone is the Supreme (Lam.3:38; Dan.4:17); He alone is the Almighty (2 Cor. 6:18; Rev.16:14).

In Hebrew, “Yahweh” is God’s *name*; “Elohim” is (the most common form of) God’s *title*. The divine name speaks of the One Who is, was, and is coming (Rev.1:8); the divine title speaks of the One Who *places* or *subjects*, “according as He is intending” (1 Cor.12:11b; *cf* “Yet now God [lit., “*the Placer*”] *placed* the members, each one of them, in the body according as He wills,” 1 Cor.12:18; *cp* 1 Cor. 12:27b). Therefore, when we say “Yahweh,” we should think: “the One Who is, was, and is coming”; and, when we say “Elohim” or “God,” we should think: “the Placer” or “the Subjector.”

It is important to recognize that “GOD” is not a personal *name*, an expression by which one is known, but is a *title*, added to a personal name, indicative of one’s office. A name speaks of that which one is *called*; a title speaks of that which one *does*, the capacity in which one *serves*.

While the title “GOD,” when used relatively, can be used in reference to *many* beings, when it is used absolutely, it is only used in reference to *one* Being, God Himself. When this title, “GOD” (or “ELOHIM”) is used of the *One* Whose name is Yahweh, the One Who is All-Sufficient, Who is the Supreme, the Almighty, of the One Who is the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the only true God, or other-

wise of the One, so termed, Who is spoken of in contrast to or as distinct from Christ, it is evident that it is used in its absolute sense.

The title “GOD” (or “ELOHIM”), then, neither signifies nor entails either supremacy or unoriginatedness of being. Nor is it a term indicative of the essential nature of the being so designated. It is certainly true when this title is used in reference to the only true God, that it refers to One Who *is* supreme and unoriginated, and Whose essential nature *is* distinct from other beings. But the fact that these things are true of the One Who is the only true God, is no indication that any of these things are true of the *word* “GOD,” itself, or of any other beings to whom this same *word* (“GOD”) refers, when used in a *relative* sense.

It is deeply mistaken, then, to reason that since the word “GOD” is sometimes used in reference to Christ, men, or messengers, that therefore either Christ, men, or messengers, are unoriginated, supreme, or of the same essential nature as the Almighty.

The word “God” (or “god”), like all titles, concerns itself with office or service. In Greek, its stem, *the-* signifies PLACE; hence, the complete form, *theos* (GOD), means PLACER. This idea fits all the contexts in which *theos* is used. *Theos* is not only the original Greek word for the English “GOD,” but is also the inspired translation of the Hebrew “ELOHIM,” in all corresponding New Testament citations of Old Testament texts which refer to God Himself.

Any references to those lesser beings to whom the title GOD (“placer” or “subjector”) also applies notwithstanding, then, we say, Nevertheless, there is only *one* God. He alone is the Supreme, the Almighty One. He is the God, and Father, of our Lord Jesus Christ, and He is “the only true God” (John 17:3).

It is Christ Himself Who insists that this is so. The adjective *alêthês* (TRUE) speaks of “[that which is] in accord

with the facts.”¹ In accord with the actual, literal facts, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ alone is God. He is the only Placer Who is not Himself placed by another. He alone is self-existent and self-sufficient. All others to whom this title is ascribed, *including Christ*, possess it in a derived sense, *not* in accord with the facts absolute, but relatively speaking, or, in some figurative way.

Supremely speaking, there is only *one* true God, even though, speaking relatively, and even in a righteous sense, “there *are* many gods” (1 Cor.8:5). For, indeed, “there are those being *termed* gods, whether in heaven or on earth” (1 Cor.8:5; *cp* Ex.22:8,9; Psa.82:6). Consequently, we should hardly be surprised that, in certain passages, Christ also is so termed (*cf* Titus 2:13; Heb.1:8; 1 John 5:20b). Except for God Himself, Christ certainly has a right to this title in a way unspeakably above that of all others, to whom it is also properly applied. Yet conversely, we must also realize that the ascription of the title “God” to Christ—in certain senses and in various connections—is no more indication that He is the Deity than that any others to whom this title is also ascribed are the Deity.

SEEING THE INVISIBLE

The word “Godhead,” as in the Authorized Version and others, is a mistranslation of the nouns *theiotês* and *theotês*. *Theiotês* should be “divinity,” for it speaks of the *attributes* or *qualities* which *pertain to* God (Rom.1:20). The adjectival form, *theion*, should be rendered “divine” (e.g., 2 Pet. 1:3,4). The idea which is conveyed in English under the figure “head,” forms no part of these Greek expressions. Yet it is this very term, “Godhead,” taken either in a pluralistic sense, or in a corporate sense, which is a pillar of “the sacred mystery of the Trinity.”

1. KEYWORD CONCORDANCE, entry “true,” p.310.

We believe that “there is no other God except One . . .” and that this One is “God, the Father, out of Whom all is” (1 Cor.8:4-6). Yet we realize that the Father, the “*Most High*” (Luke 1:32) or “*Supreme*” God (Psa.87:5), speaking relatively, rightly says to the Son, “Thy throne, O God [O Placer], is for the eon of the eon” (Heb.1:8). Thus, Christ Himself is “the great God [Placer] and . . . Saviour” Whose advent we await (Titus 2:13).

However, we also believe, and insist, that Christ’s Head is *God* (1 Cor.11:3), “the *God* of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory” (Eph.1:17). The Father, ultimately speaking, is “the *only God*” (Jude 24,25; *cp* Rom.16:27; 1 Tim.1:17).

We believe that Christ is the “Effulgence” (the Radiant Splendor) of God’s glory (Heb.1:3). Likewise, we believe that Christ is the Emblem of God’s *assumption* (Heb. 1:3), of the role God assumes whenever, in the Person of His Son, He manifests Himself before His creatures. It is the ministry of Christ, Who is a tangible, visible Being, to *represent* His God and Father, Who is an intangible, invisible Being, whenever, and in whatever way, the Deity wishes to manifest Himself. Therefore, where we read that the One Who is spirit, Who is therefore essentially invisible, Whom, accordingly, no one has ever (literally) seen (John 1:18), is nevertheless “perceived” by certain of His creatures, we are to understand that such perception is either by the agency of Christ, Who is God’s Image, is visionary (Rev.5:1), or is through the eyes of *faith* (Matt.5:8).

It is only through the figure of *anthropomorphism* (human form) that the Supreme Himself is spoken of as having bodily members. Literally speaking, God is spirit (John 4:24), invisible (Col.1:15) and intangible, and so, in Himself, has no form or shape. How, then, does the Scripture speak of His arms and hands, His mouth, eyes, and face, as

if He were a member of the human race? In all such cases, God condescends to our low estate and speaks to us in human language. Otherwise we could never understand Him or enter into His thoughts and feelings.

When God impresses us through His Word, it is as if a man speaks to us with his *mouth*, so this feature is ascribed to Him. Since God sees us as a fellow man does with his *eyes*, organs of sight are ascribed to the Deity. The human body is the basis of many figures which contradict flatly the great facts concerning the Deity, if they are taken literally.

Spirit is intangible, imperceptible, and so is not an object of literal, or sentient, perception. Therefore God is not a Being of form or shape, these terms only being applicable to beings of corporeal, tangible existence.

GOD’S CREATIVE ORIGINAL

It is Christ alone, the Word or Expression of God (John 1:14), Who unfolds the Deity (John 1:18), for He is “the Image of the invisible God” (2 Cor.4:4). Christ enjoys the highest *delegated* authority in the entire universe. Even as Christ, “the Firstborn from among the dead” (Col.1:18), was once actually among the dead, thus also, Christ, the “Firstborn of every creature” (Col.1:15), was once actually created. These passages are parallel, the proper understanding of verse 15 (Christ’s being the Firstborn of every creature), not depending upon verse 18 (Christ’s being the Firstborn from among the dead) for its own interpretation. But actually, the former verse sets the precedent for the latter passage’s proper sense, a sense which, ostensibly at least, no one doubts (the sense which reveals that Christ was once actually dead, that is, numbered among the dead).

Therefore the Son of God must have had a beginning. Consequently, our Lord must be One Who is among God’s creatures, though One Who is unspeakably higher than any other. His beginning, however, must have been before

that of all others, since all² was created in and through Him (Col.1:16,17).

Truly, *all* is out of God (Rom.11:36), and all glory, even that which is Christ's, is to be ascribed to God: "to [God] be the glory in the ecclesia *and in Christ Jesus* for all the generations of the eon of the eons! Amen" (Eph.3:21). Christ is "God's creative Original" (Rev.3:14); literally, He is "THE ORIGINAL OF-THE CREATION OF-THE God" (CONCORDANT GREEK TEXT sublinear), Who, as Christ Himself declared concerning His Father, is "the *only* true God" (John 17:3).

"Christ is God's creative Original. According to the Greek, He is the Original, the Beginning, or the Chief, of every creation of God (Rev.3:14). The basic meaning of *archê* is ORIGIN, and all its forms are to be found under this word in the Concordance of the Concordant Version. In earliest times, all government was in the family, and the father, who *originated* it, was chief. So the stem came to be applied to the highest of a class, as the *archangel*, as well as the *archetype*, the pattern, or original. But the pattern comes *before* the product, the original *before* the copies. This accords perfectly with the fact that all creation was *in* Him. Adam was the original of all mankind;

2. It is illogical to reason from the mere presence of the words "all is created through Him" (Col.1:16), that since "*all*" is created through Him, that Christ Himself, therefore, is not a created being. In the "all" that was created in and through Christ, as with the "all" which, in beginning, came into being through the "word" (or "Word"; John 1:3), in both cases, the One through Whom all these creative works were achieved, obviously, already existed Himself. The scope of the "all" of the context, then, in both of these passages, is all that came into being from the time when, through Christ, all these creative works began. From that point onward, all, without exception, was created in and through Him. Whether Christ, at some antecedent point in time, was Himself created, is a question which neither Colossians 1:16 nor John 1:3 can answer. Since neither of these verses are concerned with that issue, it is wrong to offer them as proof in denial of His creaturehood.

his descendants, and all *originated* in him. So Christ is the *Original* of creation."³

Metaphorically (in the sense that "this One *is* [i.e., represents] that One"), Christ Himself, as God's Image, "is" the true God, even as He "is" life eonian (1 John 5:20b). And, even *literally*, in Himself, Christ is the great God (i.e., Placer) and Saviour of Whom Paul speaks in Titus 2:13. Nevertheless, it is *Christ's own God*, His God and Father, Who is the Supreme and *only true* God.

THE FORM OF GOD

The entire *complement* of the "Deity" [or, "*deity*," *theotês*, PLACERSHIP, the "GODNESS" or PLACERSHIP of God] is dwelling *bodily* in Christ (Col.2:9). In a *bodily* way, the entire array of *that which pertains to* God is *dwelling in* Christ. Since the entirety of that which pertains to God yet cannot be communicated *by* God in Himself, Who is spirit, is dwelling *bodily in* Christ, it follows that Christ Himself is *not* the Deity.

Similarly, since Christ alone was "inherently [lit., "inhering," i.e., existing by right] in the form of God," He, accordingly, "deem[ed] it not pillaging to be *equal with* God" (Phil.2:6,7).

Since Christ is the Son of God, He is a Being distinct from God. Christ therefore was not equal to God in an identification-of-person sense; instead, the *appearance* of Christ was in a form which is to be identified as that which is proper to Deity. To all appearances, Christ was the same as, or "equal to," God.

We are not told that Christ is a Form of God (and, therefore, that Christ is a mere Form, instead of a tangible, actual Being). Instead, we are told that God's Anointed, *Christ*, before He emptied Himself, was "inherently *in* the form of God" (Phil.2:6). Form refers not to inward essence

3. A. E. Knoch, "The Pre-existence of Christ," p.4.

but merely to external appearance (e.g., 2 Tim.3:5). The form of God was not a manifestation of what Christ was in Himself, but a representation of His God. His glory consisted not in actually being the Deity, but in possessing the visible appearance through which God had chosen to manifest Himself.

“The form of God,” does not refer us to that of which God Himself is composed, nor is it an expression corollary to the notion that God Himself is a corporeal being. Instead, it refers to the personal *appearance* of *Christ*, in which He inhaled and thus deemed it not pillaging to be *equal* with *God* (lit., “ANOINTED JESUS WHO IN FORM OF-GOD BELONGING . . .”). Christ was inherently in the “of-God” *form*; thus He *appeared* to be the Deity. He Who is the Image of the invisible God, existed in the form which is proper to Deity, the form in which God would have Himself made manifest.

THE CHRIST OF GOD

The English “anoint” is derived from the Latin *inungere* (to smear or rub on). The Greek verb *criō* (“anoint”), is the basis of the noun *christos*, which in English is “christ.” It is to be regretted that we use “christ” for the noun of the verb *anoint*, thus obscuring its meaning from the ordinary reader. It corresponds to the Hebrew “messiah,” a title applied to priests, kings, and prophets after their consecration by means of anointing with oil. Our Lord Jesus *Christ*, is the Christ of christos, even as He is King of kings, for He is “anointed” by the spirit of God with the oil of exultation *beyond* His partners (Heb.1:9), beyond that of all others who also enjoy an anointing of God.

Christ Jesus is not the only one Who is anointed. We ourselves are “christos,” for all who have God’s spirit are christos (anointed ones). Paul told the Corinthians, “He Who . . . anoints [“christos”] us is God” (2 Cor.1:21). Similarly, those to whom John wrote were anointed as well, for he said, “You have an anointing [Greek: *chrisma*]” (1 John 2:20).

Anointing is always connected with *service*. It is the vital badge of *office* under God. Christ’s anointing, preeminently, equipped Him to be the Saviour, the Saviour of the world. As well as King and Prophet, His anointing made Him a *Priest*, a Mediator, “the one Mediator of God and mankind” (1 Tim.2:5). Thus He is “giving Himself a correspondent Ransom for all” (1 Tim.2:6). He offered Himself to *God*. God did not offer Himself to *Himself*. The Offering was for us, to bring us to *God*. He did not offer Himself to bring us to *Himself*. We cannot approach God apart from Christ and His sacrifice. Yet this does not make Him God, but God’s Anointed, His Mediator.

The Lord Jesus did not assume the office of Messiah, until he was about thirty years of age. But at His first public utterance, in the synagogue at Nazareth, He declared that, “The *spirit* of the Lord is *on* Me, on account of which He *anoints* Me to bring the evangel . . .” (Luke 4:18). Similarly, Peter said to Cornelius that, “after the baptism which John heralds, [came] Jesus from Nazareth, as God *anoints* Him with *holy spirit and power*” (Acts 10:37,38). No ceremonial oil was even used when *God* anointed His *Anointed One*.

God is not the Anointed, but the Anointer. He never needs to be anointed, nor can He be, for He is already the Almighty, the All-Sufficient One. In Him the spirit is immanent, not imparted.

Anyone who is perfect and all-powerful in himself hardly needs to be anointed. The mere fact of our Lord’s being anointed shows that He was intrinsically lacking in the ability to fulfill His office. Christ’s ability is not His own. It is derived from God, through His spirit. Of Himself, Christ could do nothing (John 5:30; *cp* John 8:28). “Now the Father, remaining in Me, *He* is doing His works” (John 14:10b).

The expression “the deity of *Christ*,” is simply preposterous, for it is a contradiction of terms. God cannot be anointed by another. God needs no preparation, no impartation or empowering, for He is the singular Source of all. Who

is able to anoint Him? If Christ were the Supreme God, He would need no anointing. The possession of anointing by no means signifies Deity, but rather the opposite. No one who had any accurate idea of the scriptural function of anointing would ever accept the absurd thought that it was the equivalent of Deity. A christ, or anointed one, cannot literally be God, although, as God’s Image, the term may be figuratively applied to His Son.⁴

ONE IS GOD HIMSELF

“God” is not a term in reference to the Almighty’s essential nature, but is an expression which speaks of His universal governance. It has special reference to the eonian times, and to the purpose of the eons which He makes in Christ Jesus our Lord (Eph.3:11). That purpose, when all has finally been *subjected* (1 Cor.15:27), is for Him to become All in all (1 Cor.15:28).

It is indeed so that we are “sons” of God (Gal.3:26) and are members of His “family” (Eph.2:19). Nevertheless, and no matter how fully it may be that believers will “partake of”⁵ the divine nature (2 Pet.1:4), this will not make them a part of God. There is only *One* Who is God; for any other, then, there is neither part nor lot therein.

Some who wish to point out that believers have a certain equality with Christ (e.g., Rom.8:29b) and are partakers of the divine nature, however, suppose that such considerations prove that we will someday “be God.” Some even claim that “Christians” are “little gods” even today. Those who argue thus, however, take the title “GOD” as a term of essential nature or constitution. This is a fundamental error.

4. Portions of this section were adapted or excerpted from “Can the Deity be Anointed?” by A. E. Knoch, *Unsearchable Riches*, vol.39, pp.103-112.

5. If one “partakes of” that which pertains to an apple pie, it hardly follows that one *becomes* an apple pie, or a component thereof.

It is claimed that those who are saved will, one day, as a term of genus, belong to “the God family.” Such claims are made as if the Scriptures plainly declared them to be so. It is simply incorrect, however, to affirm that “god,” when used in the plural, signifies a family of beings in which each member is of the same constitution or essence as God, the Father.

Historically, the teaching of “becoming God” is termed *Apotheosis*. Some who have affirmed a teaching of “Christian deification,” whether among the church fathers or in certain of the writings of the Eastern Orthodox church, by this have only intended “that men are ‘deified’ in the sense that the Holy Spirit dwells within Christian believers and transforms them into the image of God in Christ, eventually endowing them in the resurrection with immortality and God’s perfect moral character.”⁶

If by the doctrine of *Apotheosis* (or “becoming God”), however, one intends to affirm that men are, or one day will become, *constitutionally*, of the same genus or speciation as God, the Father, this is unscriptural and is a form of polytheism. This is because such a teaching affirms a plurality of beings of which each is of the same constitution or essential nature as the supreme God. Thus, according to such a teaching, there is no supreme Being Who alone is God Himself. Such a proposition is contrary not only to Scripture, but to monotheism.

Actual Trinitarianism, together with Modalism and Arianism (the latter is the historic name closest to the Concordant teaching), are all monotheistic. This is because each of these teachings affirms that there is one Being Who alone is God Himself. This most fundamental prop-

6. Robert Bowman, *Christian Research Journal*, Winter/Spring, 1987, p.19; cited in THE AGONY OF DECEIT, “Ye Shall Be As Gods,” Walter Martin (Moody Press: Chicago, 1990), p.93.

osition is denied, however, by *Apotheosis*, such as is taught by Mormonism and others. Since monotheism is the teaching of Scripture, polytheism, in whatever form, is contrary to Scripture and is therefore false.

Since the issues are tightly drawn, either Trinitarianism, Modalism, or Arianism must be correct, insofar as the dispute between them is concerned. Is Christ an aspect of the Deity yet not Himself the Deity (Trinitarianism)? Is Jesus Himself the Deity (Modalism)? Or is it that the Father is the Deity (Arianism)? We must go on to decide which of these claims is correct. But before we do so, we can be certain that we are correct in rejecting *Apotheosis*.

In the ordinary sense of the word “God,” the Scripture no more teaches that men one day will “become God” than that I will be you or you will be me, or that either one of us will become either a tree or a fish. This is so, whether by “God” we have in mind God Himself, or, by association, ones who are of His constitutional essence.

It follows, then, that the sense in which it is true that God’s creatures will become His “children” and “sons,” is confined to the place (*cf* Eph. 1:5) and privileges which they will enjoy; it does not extend to their essential nature. Therefore, the reasoning that says that since humans beget little humans, God begets little gods, is simply undiscerning and fallacious.

The fact that this title, “GOD,” applies to many others besides God, the Father, in various connections and senses, is beside the point. It is not that there is no sense at all in which the title “GOD” will ever be applied to us; therefore it is not incorrect to say that there is a sense in which it may be said that this or that person will one day be termed “a god” (i.e., a subjector). These things, however, are not disputed by ourselves, for the word “god” says nothing about one’s constitution, but only concerns one’s having some role in the subjection of all unto God Himself, that is, unto the supreme Subjector Himself, the only true God. J.R.C.

Spirit and Spiritual Blessings

THE “PERSONALITY”
OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

THE “PERSONALITY” of the holy spirit of God is usually based upon the *gender* of the original Greek, whether it is *he*, *she*, or *it*. But this is done in a very queer way by theologians, so that ordinary folk will find it very difficult to follow them, or to straighten out the tangles that they produce. Some points may seem strange to one who knows only English, but we will try to show by examples how little reliance can be placed on the usual arguments to prove the holy spirit of God to be a distinct and different “personality” from God Himself.

From the standpoint of English the matter should be very simple. All the *she’s* and *he’s* are “personalities” and the *it’s* should not be. According to this, God and Christ, being masculine, are “personalities,” but the holy spirit, being “*neuter*” in Greek, is not. The Authorized Version, having been made by men who were pledged to support the teaching of the church, usually managed to evade this fact in their renderings, but even they translate Romans 8:26: “the Spirit *itself* maketh intercession,” notwithstanding that, in this passage, the spirit is actually personified as an intercessor, pleading for us with inarticulate groanings, which can be true only of a person. The word *spirit* (*pneuma*) is *not masculine* in Greek, but indefinite. *If gender proves personality, then the spirit of God cannot be a person*, for, in Greek, it is always called *it*, never *he* or *she*.

But, we are told, the holy spirit is called a “comforter,” and this is *masculine* in Greek, hence we must refer to the spirit as *He*. Various figures are used of the spirit, yet

nowhere else do we transfer the gender like this. The spirit descended on our Lord as a *dove* (Mark 1:10). It actually assumed the bodily appearance of a dove (Luke 3:22). But the word *dove* is *feminine*! So, according to this reasoning the spirit must be called *she* in this place! Other figures support this. In Romans 8:10 we read that the spirit is *life*, which is feminine, and in 1 John 5:6 we are told that the spirit is *truth*, which is also feminine in gender. So that we have three times as much evidence that the spirit should be *She* rather than *He*, if we ignore the fact that the Greek word spirit is neither one. Besides, if “*comforter*” and *dove* are sufficient to prove “personality,” we can also take *life* and *truth* to prove the opposite.

If gender proves “personality,” then all sorts of things, in Greek, are endowed with it. We will list a few *female* persons first, taken at random from the early pages of our concordance: *Achaia, operation, air, allegation, aloe, Antioch, pageantry, manifestation, pretense*, etc., are feminine personalities! Here are some male personalities: *Christian* (no women!), *back, stone, dyke, beach, beam*, etc. Here are some *things* without personality: *acquisition, beast, vocation, alabaster, anemone, ankle, phantom*, etc. From these few examples it should be clear that *Greek gender proves nothing as to personality*. Many *things* are feminine or masculine. Even if the word *spirit* were masculine that would not prove that it refers only to persons. A *beam* of wood is not a person even if it is masculine gender.

Yet it is a fact that *very few “personalities” are found in the so-called “neuter” gender. The general trend of Greek gender is against the word spirit being used of a personality*. Having given the name “neuter” to these forms, most scholars and translators insist on adding the word *thing* to show this, if necessary, notwithstanding the absurdities to which it leads, such as the *reconciliation* of all *things*, not persons! If our translators had been consistent in this mat-

ter, they would have insisted that every occurrence of the word *spirit* should be treated as neuter, and referred to as *it*, never as *he* or *she*. Their theological bias, however, has warped their scholarship in this instance, so that the same ones who wish to bring out the neuter elsewhere, denounce it when applied to the word *spirit*.

But does the fact that *spirit* is “neuter,” or, rather, *indefinite*, prove that it cannot be a “personality?” By no means! The word *beast* is hardly a *thing*, yet it is “neuter.” And the Scriptures certainly introduce us to many spirits which have “personality,” or, rather, *individuality*, which is a more correct expression for what is meant in modern English, for we can say that a certain individual has no “personality,” that is, has nothing to distinguish him from others of his class. “Personality” is a non-scriptural, unsound, misleading expression, and should never be used or countenanced by anyone who desires God’s truth. Indeed, it always indicates that there is a departure from God’s revelation and a dependence on man’s misrepresentation of Him. When men denounce others for not “believing in” the “personality” of the holy spirit, when God has not used the term at all in His Book, we may be sure that those who insist on the term are in error and need this expression in order to impose their apostasy on others. We should always demand that truth be clothed in the words of inspiration.

As is shown in the lexicon of the CV concordance, the word *spirit* has quite a variety of usages. It is applied to metaphysical beings, generally unclean or evil (1 Tim.4:1), including demons (Luke 4:33) and messengers (Rev.4:5). On the other hand it is used of what might be termed a principle of action, especially when followed by the genitive of a thing, as the spirit of *love*, of *grace*, of *truth* (1 John 4:6—in contrast to the spirit of deception—John 14:17, 15:26, 16:13), of *meekness*, of *sonship* (Rom.8:15), of *sanity* (2 Tim.1:7), etc. The spirit of a *thing* cannot have

“personality” or individuality. Everyone who is a son of God has the spirit of sonship, yet they harbor no person who is related to sonship. Sonship is not merely a theory or a doctrine with us. It is a *vital power* in our lives. This the Scriptures call the *spirit* of sonship, for it enables us to speak and act like sons of God.

Besides these two usages of the word *spirit* there are others which are usually confused with them. All *living* things, especially animals and mankind, have a spirit, which is merged with the individual. It may be said to have “personality” in humanity, as it is the spirit of a person, but it has no individuality distinct from the person. The reader of these lines has a spirit, but this has no separate life or experience which he does not share. So it is with the spirit of Christ and of God. A man can give some of his spirit to others. So, also, do Christ and the Deity. But this does not mean that we part with a person, or that we impart a person or a part of a person to others. There is no “personality” involved at all. Let us consider this matter in other relationships, where there is no theological bias to warp our thinking.

“The mouth of Yahweh speaks!” (Isa.1:20). Were we to reason from this statement as is usually done in regard to the *spirit* of God, we would insist that there is another person in the Godhead, for Yahweh’s *mouth* must be a *person*! Only a person can speak! So also with His *arm* and His *ear*. Only a person can save and hear. Isaiah tells us (59:1):

Behold, the *hand* of Yahweh is not too short to save!

And His *ear* is not too heavy to hear!

Throughout the Scriptures we find this figurative language. Usually it is understood, when there is no false tradition or theology to hinder the student. The mouth of Yahweh, or His hand or ear, cannot be distinct personalities, so we understand them to be picturesque and powerful figures. Moreover these are compound figures, since

God has no literal mouth or arm or ear. God is spirit, so it is a much simpler figure to ascribe His acts to His spirit, if we were not hindered by the creeds, which ignore this figure in order to split the one God of the Scriptures into the trinity of Christendom.

Just as in the case of His mouth and His arm and His ear, *everything done by the spirit of God in figure is done by God in fact*. In some cases it is absolutely impossible to make two individuals of them. God *works* by His spirit, just as He *speaks* by His mouth. Christ was generated by the holy *spirit*, yet He claimed that *God* was His Father. Did He have *two* Fathers, or one? So all *operations* of the Deity may be ascribed to His holy spirit.

THE “COMFORTER”

A “comforter,” in English, may be *he*, *she*, or *it*. In Greek they use only *he* or *she*. Either a person or a thing may comfort us. A kind of quilt covering has been given the name “comforter” in some parts of the English speaking world. So, in English, we want to know who *or what* comforts, before we are able to say that *he* or *she* comforts, or that *it* comforts. In Greek we could not do this. We would be compelled to say that the comforter, *he* or *she* is warm, because all comforters, even when composed of *things*, are either masculine or feminine. In translating, then, if we come across a passage saying, “The woolen comforter, *he* is warm,” we would be compelled to change it to “*it* is warm.” No one would object to this because it does not touch a sore spot in theology. If it did, we would be compelled to say “he is warm” (though woolen), or suffer the anathemas of the church.

There is a case like this in John 14:16, which reads as follows in the CV: “And I shall be asking the Father, and He will be giving you another consoler, that it, indeed, may be with you for the eon; the spirit of truth, which the world

cannot get, for it is not beholding it, neither is knowing it. Yet *you* know it, for it is remaining with you and will be in you." Now, ordinarily, we think of a consoler as a person, but here we are told *what* (not Who) this consoler is. It is the *spirit of truth*. This is the ("neuter") spirit of a *thing* (truth). To be sure, *truth* is *feminine* in Greek, but that does not make it a person. And even if it did, *even the spirit of a person is a thing*. Consider the following list of things, all of which have a spirit. Is it not clear beyond all question that *the spirit of a thing* (no matter what its gender in Greek may be) *must be a thing?* The spirit of truth is the vital power resident in truth, the energy it imparts; truth living and acting in us. This is closely associated with the spirit of God, but it is by no means identical with it.

The following is a list of the phrases found in the Scriptures, in which spirit is followed by the genitive of a thing. Besides spirit of truth (John 14:17; 15:26; 16:13; 1 John 5:6), we have spirit of infirmity (Luke 13:11), spirit of holiness (Rom.1:4), spirit of sonship (Rom.8:15), spirit of stupor (Rom.11:8), spirit of humanity (1 Cor.2:11), spirit of meekness (1 Cor.4:21; Gal.6:1), spirit of wisdom (Eph. 1:17), spirit of timidity (2 Tim.1:7), spirit of grace (Heb. 10:29), spirit of glory (1 Peter 4:14), spirit of deception (1 John 4:6), spirit of life (Rev.11:11), spirit of prophecy (Rev.19:10).

Notwithstanding the plain statement that the consoler, or "Comforter" is distinctly said to be *a thing of a thing*, the spirit of truth, scholars and translators object when we turn this into English, and refer to the thing as *it*, or even *that*, a pronoun which may be used of persons as well as of things. Moreover, once we grasp the fact that Christ has sent the holy spirit of truth to take His place in the world, especially for Circumcision saints, all that is spoken of this spirit will be much clearer. It is the truth that consoles the saints. It is a spirit which the world cannot receive so long

as it is under the influence of the deceiver. It is the truth that exposes the world (John 16:7-11). And it is the power of this spirit that guides the saints into all truth. It informs them as to what is coming, and glorifies Christ.

THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST

In the ancient prophets, the Spirit of Christ acted as a "person." It testified beforehand of the sufferings pertaining to Christ and the glories after these (1 Peter 1:11). I suppose no one separates the Spirit of Christ from Himself, as is often done with the Spirit of God. Indeed, immediately after the apostle says, "if anyone has not Christ's Spirit, he is none of His," he adds, "if Christ is in you," and thus identifies Christ with His Spirit (Rom.8:9,10). It is *Christ's spiritual presence*. We all recognize the fact that Christ Himself is not present in flesh. That is reserved for the future. That will vivify our flesh. Since the Spirit of Christ is not a distinct "personality" from Christ, and as it operates in closest accord with the Spirit of God, there is no valid ground for dividing God and His Spirit into two distinct entities each of which is "fully God."

We realize the power and presence of God's Spirit (making its home in us) in all that we do. Having Christ's Spirit means that Christ is in us (Rom.8:9,10). God's Spirit gives us power over our "dead" bodies, and Christ's Spirit gives us communion with Him.

A.E.K.



THE HOLY SPIRIT OF GOD

QUESTION: "The Concordant Version's rendering 'holy spirit' (instead of 'Holy Spirit') seems strange to me. When I try to show my friends how accurate and helpful the Concordant Version is, they are stumbled by the rendering 'holy spirit,' instead of 'the Holy Spirit,' by which phrase they under-

stand 'the third Person of the Holy Trinity.' In any case, why do you use a small 'h' and 's' instead of a capital 'H' and 'S,' especially since you use a capital 'H' on 'He,' 'His,' and 'Him' where these pronouns are used in reference to God or to Christ? Also, what is the difference between 'holy spirit' and 'the holy spirit,' in those instances in which the Greek definite article (as indicated by 'the') is included in the Original? And finally, in texts in which the definite article does *not* appear, is it correct to say 'a holy spirit' instead of simply 'holy spirit'?"

ANSWER: I sympathize with you on the problem of the lower case "holy spirit" in the CV, which is an attempt to be neutral in translation. In the Explanatory Information section of the CONCORDANT LITERAL NEW TESTAMENT WITH KEYWORD CONCORDANCE (p.620), it is stated that, "[in nearly all cases,] it is left to the reader to decide for himself which aspect of SPIRIT is in view in a given occurrence It was decided to keep personal concepts out of the controversy by not capitalizing the word *spirit* in its various occurrences. This should not be taken as a symptom of irreverence toward GOD'S HOLY SPIRIT but rather as a sign of human incompetence to deal with the problem in a satisfactory manner, without injecting personal opinion, and thus detracting from the laud of His glory." Perhaps a "better" solution (though probably impractical in a version) would be to set this phrase in small caps, as "HOLY SPIRIT," as I sometimes have done in expositions, at least in the midst of exegesis.

Through fallacious thinking (e.g., certain false assumptions as to idiom), it is sometimes possible to misuse the fact of the presence of the definite article ("the"). As a rule, however, noting its presence can be quite helpful. One important point is that "the" can always be converted either to "this" (near demonstrative pronoun) or "that" (far demonstrative) without changing the sense, though often with the result of the *clarification* of the sense. This help-

ful practice of noting that "'the' [actually] equals 'this,'" cannot change the sense of any text; but, besides affording clarification, it will often manifest the invalid nature of popular reasoning such as that founded on the common expression "*the* gospel," from which it is concluded that "there is only one gospel," when sane logic on this very point will preclude such a conclusion.

Where the *definite* article is not present, however, it does not follow that the (English) *indefinite* article ("a") is necessarily to be understood. That depends upon the nature of the case. For example, take the case of "HOLY SPIRIT." Unless, in some instance, the particular *usage* entails a reference to a specific, *discrete* "HOLY SPIRIT," we should simply say, "HOLY SPIRIT" (instead of *either* "*the* HOLY SPIRIT," or "*a* HOLY SPIRIT"). But where, again, in the nature of the case, it is evident that a *discrete* entity *is* in view, then we not only *may* but *should* employ the indefinite article (e.g., "*a* day of salvation; 2 Cor.6:2). If, in such instances, we were to use no article at all, (1) we would fail to indicate the fact that a discrete entity is in view; and (2) we would violate the dictates of good English. Conversely, if, in such cases, we should employ the definite article, those who falsely imagine that its import is "*the one and only* [such entity]," instead of, its true sense, "[this or that] [such entity]," would be given grist for their mill.

Hence, in answer to your question concerning instances in which the definite article is not included in the Original, while in such cases it would not necessarily be mistaken to say "*a* HOLY SPIRIT," it would only be *correct* to do so in instances in which it was evident that a discrete HOLY SPIRIT was in view. In most usages of Greek nouns in cases where they appear without the definite article, however, a discrete entity *is* in view, and, therefore, in English, the indefinite article "a" should be employed (as in 2 Cor.6:2). This is because, while, in Greek, the idea con-

veyed by the English “a” is understood (not expressed), in English, according to custom, it must be expressed.

In trying to help your friends who are hindered by tradition, point out to them that *holy* means “consecrated” (or “devoted”), and *spirit* means “imperceptible power.” Hence, “HOLY SPIRIT” means “consecrated imperceptible power.” Now, “[imperceptible] power” is a *thing*, not a person. Hence, if, in any certain passages (such as Acts 13:2), personal qualities should be ascribed to HOLY SPIRIT, it follows that such usages are not literal, but figurative. They are the figure termed Personification, by which personal qualities are ascribed to non-personal entities, even as in the case of Law, Sin, Death, Righteousness, Grace, and so forth.

In some usages of HOLY SPIRIT, a compound figure is involved, by which (as in Acts 13:2) not only is the usage a matter of Personification, but of Metonymy; that is, of the *association* of the personified entity with an actual being, namely, God Himself. It is also helpful to note that wherever we read of “HOLY SPIRIT,” or of “the HOLY SPIRIT,” this is a contraction (hence, the figure of Omission, or Ellipsis) of “HOLY SPIRIT [e.g., which is of God],” or “the HOLY SPIRIT [*of God*]” (*cp* Eph.4:30).

These are all objective facts that must be intelligently grasped. They should be wholeheartedly embraced and applied by all, prior to any judgments as to interpretation. Indeed, apart from such knowledge, legitimate hermeneutics is impossible.

One should also become acquainted with what orthodox Trinitarianism actually affirms,¹ noting especially that—be its exponents ever so zealous in their claim that “Jesus is the second Person of the Trinity”—*Trinitarianism’s own*

1. *cf Unsearchable Riches*, “The Doctrine of the Triune God,” vol.22, pp.167-192.

interpretation of the sense in which this proposition is to be understood, entails it also being so that Jesus is only God in a sense that is incompatible with the proposition that He is *literally* and *absolutely* (hence, identificationally) God.

Many of our friends seem unable to concentrate sufficiently to grasp such particulars, or else are disinclined to do so. Yet those outside are usually far too prejudiced against our teaching to give it a fair hearing; and unless given special grace, will not thank us for proving their beliefs to be false. This makes it impossible for them to grasp what we are actually saying.

Most would have us simplify things more than we can or should. They want our explanations to be sufficiently simple that they themselves need not gain any new proficiencies, nor otherwise put themselves to much inconvenience.

It is all too human simply to “get on a bandwagon,” thus avoiding the labor of adequate study. One bandwagon, in acceptance of Trinitarianism, is promoted by appeals to human authority and tradition, and especially by the bias-inducing claim that one’s acceptance of the tenets of Trinitarianism is essential to salvation (however unthoughtfully those tenets may be embraced). The other bandwagon, in rejection of Trinitarianism, having insufficient interest in accuracy and fairness, is often promoted through misrepresentation, mockery, and the destruction of straw men (in its “disproofs” of Trinitarianism). Of course if we would be faithful, we must avoid the latter wagon as surely as the former.

In light of such needs, then, for progress toward maturity, may we “not cease praying,” for one another and for all, “requesting that [we] may be filled full with the realization of [God’s] will, in all wisdom and spiritual understanding, you to walk worthily of the Lord for all pleasing, bearing fruit in every good work, and *growing in the realization of God*” (Col.1:9).
J.R.C.