

The Lord Jesus Christ

GOD OR ONLY MAN?

by

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*The Interpretation of Scripture
Early Centuries and The Truth
The Unfolding Purpose of God
On Reading The Bible
Letters From Prison
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PREFACE

The wise Christian will continually keep before his mind that the Scriptures give only a *partial* revelation of God. To even begin to comprehend what *has* been revealed, "that which may be known of God" (Rom.1:19), will keep the student of the Word fully occupied for the rest of his life. For this reason any approach to the subject of the Deity of Christ should be undertaken in an attitude of humility and reverence, and specious arguments avoided.

There is enough revealed in Scripture, however, to bring all before Jesus Christ confessing, with Thomas of old, "My Lord and my God" (John 20:28). This booklet by Mr. Allen, drawing as it does upon *some* of the testimony to Him, should bring forth such worship, if the facts are honestly handled by the reader.

The most important aspect of this subject, from the believers point of view, relates to his own salvation, for such is in jeopardy if there exists any doubt that Christ was God manifested in flesh (1 Tim.3:16). If we cannot believe the plain statements of John that the Word, Who was God, became flesh and dwelt amongst men as Jesus Christ, how can we be sure that as the Lamb of God He took away the sin of the world? (John 1:1,14,29). The very naming of "Jesus" as the One Who would "save His people from their sins", was in itself a fulfillment of the O. T. prophecy naming the virgin's Son, "Emmanuel, God with us" (Matt. 1:21-23).

May this booklet be a means in God's good pleasure of bringing many to confess Christ, not only as Saviour, but as Lord, with all the implications of Deity that are attached to that title.

Brian E. Sherring

THE LORD JESUS CHRIST

God or only man

The Christian faith rests upon great fundamental truths, and one of these is the Deity of Christ. The challenging question, hurled at the Pharisees by the Lord Himself, "What think ye of Christ?" (Matt.22:42) is completely relevant today, and upon our answer depends our knowledge of God and all the riches of His redeeming love and truth which He desires to make known to us. If a system errs on this vital question, it is doubtful indeed if it has the right to call itself 'Christian'. Unitarianism is only a modern form of the ancient heresy of Arianism. In the early centuries it was not until the gospel had been preached for some 300 years, that anyone began to assail the Christian belief in the Deity of Christ.

Arius began to do so, and from the nature of his attack it was clear that believers had hitherto accepted it without question. If Christians had generally denied this doctrine, his opposition would have been meaningless. His views were shown to be completely out of accord with the Word of God. From time to time they have been revived, and in the great conflict of the ages behind the scenes, between light and darkness, God and Satan, doubtless the power of the evil one has been behind these activities, for his one desire is to dethrone Christ and occupy the throne of God. Satan is not only *anti-Christ*, against Him, but *seeks His place* and desires to be accorded this by the whole universe (Isa.14: 12-14).

No philosophy of God in the Scriptures

It needs to be stated at the outset that in the Scriptures there is no philosophy of God; and as to 'God absolutely', we know nothing. Throughout the Word of God, from beginning to end, He is only seen *in His relationship with His*

creatures and what knowledge of Him that we are able to receive must be relative and conditional, not only by our extreme 'smallness', our finite limitations, but also by His limitless greatness. Unless He chooses to reveal Himself and stoop down to our limited capacity we could know nothing of Him or His ways. Even language itself is a limitation, as is also human forms of thought which must be employed to make Him known.

"God is Spirit" (John 4:24 R.V.) asserted the Saviour, and this means that in our consideration of God we must exclude all the limitations of size, shape, time and space. Unaided, we cannot discover God by our own efforts or reasoning, *because we have no knowledge of the true spirit life upon which to base our arguments*. What is truth in our human sphere, may be completely untrue in the realm of spirit. A human being cannot be in two separate places at the same time, but God is omnipresent (Psa.139:7-12) without limitations of time and space.

Such facts should be a warning to us when we seek to reason about God. We can only know what God has been pleased to tell us about Himself; being entirely dependent upon His revelation of His Being and His ways. What He has left unrecorded is entirely beyond us, and if we are wise, we shall accept this and take care not to depend upon the limited logic of human experience in our attempts to comprehend God. Once the bounds of Divine revelation are over-stepped, and we substitute human philosophy for the lamp of God's Word of Truth, we go into absolutely uncharted territory and are completely out of our depth.

Human understanding is of necessity limited

The Apostle Paul has made clear,

(1) The limitation not only of man, but also of the believer, concerning the things of God; contrasting the present life with the future one in glory:

"For *now* we see in a mirror dimly, but *then* face to face. *Now I know in part; then I shall understand fully*, even as I have been fully understood" (1 Cor. 13:12 R.S.V.).

Even the believer, then, has not got full knowledge during this life, and this must ever be borne in mind by all of us.

(2) The Scriptures give us only a *partial* revelation of the Person of Christ:

"... *no man knoweth* (i.e. completely comprehends) *the Son, but the Father*" (Matt.11 :27).

"that their hearts may be comforted ... unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, that they may *know the mystery (secret) of God, even Christ*" (Col. 2:2 R.V.).

"Great is the secret (mystery) of godliness; God (He Who RV.) was manifest in the flesh" (1 Tim. 3: 16).

Christ Himself is the Secret of God and this is a *great secret*, as Paul testifies, and we need to bear in mind that God has not fully revealed all His secrets, as Matthew 11: 27 clearly shows.

In view of all the foregoing ways in which we humans are circumscribed, one is often amazed at the audacity and false assurance that many modern Arians show when they discuss the Person of Christ. One would think that they fully comprehended His Person and His ways and were in a position to lay down the law in every detail. Many of the objections they bring forward to the doctrine of the Lord's Deity, (such as, if Christ is God, then He was talking to Himself on the Cross), are not only ignorant, they are grossly irreverent. If our knowledge of God in this life is limited, and God's revelation of Himself at the present time is partial, then we are bound to have problems. *If we had no problems, we should be equal to God Himself, with full knowledge.* We therefore state quite clearly that recognition of the Deity of Christ does not solve *all* our problems. Some of these, because of the afore-mentioned facts, are bound to remain, but they do not absolve Christians from believing what the holy Scriptures, which are God's truth, clearly reveal concerning the glorious Person of the Son of God. To this we now address ourselves, noting the attributes and titles of God which are positively denied to any created being as such, but are unreservedly given to the Lord Jesus Christ.

The revelation of Jehovah in the Old Testament and the
Lord Jesus Christ in the New

First of all, let us acquaint ourselves with the magnificent
statements of God Himself in the prophecy of Isaiah:

"I am Jehovah, and there is none else, *there is no God beside Me*"
(Isa.45:5,6,14,18,21,22) .. 44 ,.

"I, even I, am Jehovah; and *beside Me there is no Saviour*"
(Isa.43:11).

"I am Jehovah: that is My Name; and *My glory will I not give to
another*" (Isa. 42:8; 48: 11).

These tremendous truths must be borne in mind right through this
study, for if this is not done, we shall completely miss our way.
There is, therefore, only *one God (Jehovah)* Who has never given
the glory of His Godhead to any created being, whoever he may be.
This God is the *only Saviour* (beside Me there is no Saviour).
Nowhere in the Bible do we find that God has ever delegated the
work of salvation to a creature; He alone is able to accomplish this
great and glorious work.

Bearing these stupendous facts in mind, let us compare what the
Scriptures teach concerning the Person of God and the Lord Jesus
Christ.

GOD

THE LORD JESUS CHRIST

First and Last

"I am the first, and I am the last;
and beside Me there is no God .. _
Is there a God beside Me? Yea,
there is no God ... " (Isa.44:6-8).

"Hearken unto Me, O Jacob and
Israel, My called; I am He; I am
the first, I also am the last" (Isa.
48: 12).

"I am Alpha and Omega, the
beginning and the ending ... I am
Alpha and Omega, the first and
the last ... Fear not; I am the first
and the last ...

I am Alpha and Omega, the be-
ginning and the end, the first and
the last" (Rev.1:8,11,17; 22: 13).

Eternal

"From everlasting to everlasting,
Thou art God" (Psa.90:2).

"Whose goings forth have been
from of old, from everlasting"
(Micah 5:2).

"Thy throne is established of old:
Thou art from everlasting"
(Psa.93:2).

"Unto the Son He saith, Thy
throne, O God, is for ever and
ever" (Heb. 1 :8).

Unchangeable

"I am Jehovah, change not"
(Mal. 3:6).

"Jesus Christ the same yesterday,
and today and for ever"
(Heb. 13:8).

Almighty

"I am the Almighty God"
(Gen. 17: 1).

"I am ... the Almighty" (Rev. 1:8)
"All power is given unto Me in heaven and in
earth"
(Matt. 28: 18).

Comprehending all things

"The Lord searcheth all hearts,
and understandeth all the imagi-
nations of the thoughts"
(1 Chron.28:9).

"And (He) needeth not that any
should testify of man: for He
knew what was in man"
(John 2:25).

"Thou, *even Thou only*, knowest
the hearts of all the children of
men" (1 Kings 8:39).

"And Jesus, perceiving the
thought of their heart"
(Luke 9:47).

"I am He which searcheth the
reins and hearts" (Rev.2:23).

Judge

"Shall not the Judge of all the
earth do right?" (Gen.18:25).

"The Father judgeth no man,
but hath committed *all judgment*
unto the Son: that all men should
honour the Son, even as they honour
the Father" (John 5:22, 23).

"But God is the Judge: He put-
teth down one, and setteth up
another" (Psa.75 :7).

"We must all appear before the
judgment seat of Christ"
(2 Cor. 5: 10).

Judge (continued)

" ... for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of God. For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, to Me every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall confess to God"(Rom.14: 10,11 R.V.).

" ... Jesus Christ, Who shall judge the quick and the dead ... "
(2 Tim. 4:1).

The Holy One

"I am Jehovah ... the Holy One of Israel" (Isa. 43:3).

"Ye denied the Holy One and the Just" (Acts 3:14).

The Rewarder

"Behold, the Lord God will come with a strong hand His reward is with Him" (Isa.40:10).

"Behold, I come quickly; and My reward is with Me, to give every man according as his work shall be" (Rev. 22:12).

The Strengtheners

"God is our refuge and strength" (Psa. 46:1).

"I can do all things through Christ Who strengtheneth me" (Phil. 4:13).

"Blessed is the man whose strength is in Thee" (Psa.84:5).

"He (Christ) said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for My strength is made perfect in weakness" (2 Cor.12:9).

The Hope of His people

"Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is" (Jer.17:7).

"Jesus Christ, which is our Hope" (1 Tim.1:1).

"Christ amongst you (marg.), the hope of glory" (Col. 1:27).

The Only Saviour

"I, even I, am Jehovah; and beside Me there is no Saviour" (Isa. 43:11).

"Neither is there salvation in any other (that is, Christ): for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).

The Only Saviour (continued)

"He (Christ) became the Author of eternal salvation" (Heb.5:9).

"He is able also to save them to the uttermost ... " (Heb.7:25).

"Our great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ; Who gave Himself ... that He might redeem us from all iniquity" (Titus 2:13,14 R.V.).

The Author of eternal words

"The grass withers the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand for ever" (Isa. 40:8 R.S.V.).

"Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away" (Matt. 24:35).

Light

"Jehovah shall be thine everlasting light" (Isa. 60: 19,20).

"I am the light of the world" (John 8: 12).

"The Lord is my light and my salvation" (Psa. 27: 1).

"That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world" (John 1:4,5,7-9).

" ... God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all" (1 John 1:5).

Rock

"Jehovah is my Rock" (Psa. 18:2).

"... for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ" (1 Cor. 10:4).

" ... Let us make a joyful noise to the Rock of our salvation" (Psa. 95: 1).

Shepherd

"Jehovah is my Shepherd" (Psa. 23: 1).

"I am the Good Shepherd" (John 10: 11).

"I Myself will be the Shepherd of My sheep" (Ezek. 34: 15 R.S.V.).

Christ is "the Chief Shepherd" (1 Pet. 5:4).

and "the Great Shepherd" (Heb. 13:20).

"There shall be one flock, and *one* Shepherd" (John 10: 16), (therefore Christ must be the Shepherd of the O.T.).

The Forgiver of Sins

"For I (Jehovah) will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more" (Jer. 31:34).

"But there is forgiveness with Thee that Thou mayest be feared" (Psa. 130:4).

"And when He (Christ) saw their faith, He said unto him, Man, thy sins are forgiven thee, And the Scribes and Pharisees began to reason, saying, Who is this which speaketh blasphemies? Who can forgive sins, but God alone?" (Luke 5:20,21).

Glory

"I am Jehovah: that is My Name: and My glory will I not give to another ..." (Isa. 42:8).

"... and I will not give My glory unto another" (Isa. 48: 11).

"For had they (the leaders) known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory" (1 Cor. 2:8).

" ... O Father, glorify Thou Me with Thine own self with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was" (John 17:5).

These lists could be lengthened, but they are sufficient to show to anyone except those whose minds are already made up and biased, that the God of the Old Testament is the Lord Jesus Christ of the New. *The attributes of eternity, omnipotence, immutability, which are emphatically denied to any created being, are unreservedly given to Him.* In O. T. prophecy we read, "For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given: and the government shall be upon His shoulder: and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, *The mighty God (El gibbor)*, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace" (Isa.9:6). Now the mighty God can only be Jehovah, for there is "none else". In Isaiah 10: 20 we are told" .. the house of Jacob ... shall stay upon Jehovah, the Holy One of Israel, in truth. The remnant shall return, even the remnant of Jacob, unto *The mighty God (El gibbor)*". No open mind can ignore the fact clearly stated here that the "mighty God" is the Son yet to be born.

Likewise in the O.T. we have the majestic declarations of God as Creator. "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth" (Gen. I : I). " ... Hast thou not heard, that the

everlasting God, Jehovah, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary?" (Isa.40:28). "But Jehovah is the true God, He is the living God, and an everlasting King ... He hath made the earth by His power, He hath established the world by His wisdom, and hath stretched out the heavens by His discretion" (Jer. 10:10-12). In the N. T. creation is always ascribed to Christ, "All things were made by Him; and *without Him was not anything made that was made*" (John 1 :3). "For by (or in) Him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth ... all things were created by Him, *and for Him*" (Col.1:16). "He that built all things is God" (Heb. 3:4).

The Bible does not know of two Creators any more than it reveals two Lords or two Gods; and moreover Christ not only created everything, but it is by His almighty power that the whole creation holds together, for "by Him all things consist" (Col.1:17). In the same context He is designated "the Firstborn of every creature" (verse 15), a verse completely misunderstood and misrepresented by Arians, for they fall into the trap of arguing from an English word 'firstborn', instead of getting an accurate knowledge of the original Greek word *prototokos*. They imagine that this word teaches that Christ was the first created being, the first to be born. Professor F.F.Bruce writes: "The word 'firstborn' had long since ceased to be used exclusively in its literal sense, just as prime (from the Latin *primus-first*) with us. The Prime Minister is not the first minister we have had, he is the most pre-eminent. A man in the 'prime' of life has long since left the first part of his life behind. Similarly, firstborn came to denote not priority in time, *but preeminence in rank*" (italics ours).*

The apostle Paul makes perfectly clear what he means by 'firstborn' by the statement that follows: "*Because by Him were all things created*", in other words He was the Creator as well as Firstborn, and must be so, as *He is before all things* (v. 17). Note it does not say He *was* before all things, but He

*It is interesting to note that a kindred word *monogenes* is strikingly used in John 1:18 "*the only begotten God*, He "hath declared Him". Professor A.T.Robertson writes "The best old Greek manuscripts (Aleph B C L) read *monogenes theos*, which is undoubtedly the true text" (*Word Pictures in the N. T.* Vol.5 p.17).

is so (present tense), and this is parallel to the great statement of the "I AM" of John 8:58 on which we shall comment further on. If Paul had wished to state that Christ was the first created being, he had a Greek word ready to hand, namely *protoktistos*, 'first-created'. But he does not use it for it would be grossly untrue. Moreover, had Christ been so created, Paul would have had to use the Greek word meaning 'other things', or the word meaning 'remainder', 'rest', instead of 'all things' and it would then have read "by Him were *the other things* (or *the rest*) created". The climax of this section is "that in ALL things (not some things) He might have the FIRST PLACE (pre-eminence)" (verse 18), and such a position can only be occupied by God. In 2:9 the Apostle asserts that "in Him (Christ) dwelleth *all* the fullness of the Godhead bodily", a statement that cannot be true of any created being. These facts effectively dispose of the extraordinary and completely unscriptural idea that Christ is connected with the archangel Michael.

Revelation 3: 14 in no way contradicts what we have seen, for in any case Scripture cannot contradict Scripture. There the Lord is described as "the beginning of the creation of God". 'Beginning' is *arche*, which means first in rank or chief, not merely first in time. As God the Creator, He must be First or Chief. It is pre-eminence which is again brought before us and so fits in with the other majestic titles of God which are given to Christ in the book of Revelation. The same word *arche* forms part of *God's title* in Revelation 21:6 "the *beginning* and the end", and see 22:13.

In the O. T. there can be no doubt that one of the Divine titles in the Bible is I AM. God said to Moses, "Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you" (Exod.3: 14). This was the very title that Christ claimed in His argument with the Pharisees, "Before Abraham was, I AM" (John 8:58). Had He been merely a pre-existent angelic being He would have had to have said "Before Abraham was, I was".

If the modern deniers of the Lord's Deity miss the tremendous implications of His claim, those who were listening to Him certainly did not do so, "Then took they up stones to cast at Him" (v. 59). They knew only too well that He was

claiming nothing less than the position of God revealed in the O.T. This great title, the I AM, is expanded into seven statements by the Lord Jesus Christ. Each statement is emphatic, as the pronoun 'I' is expressed (*ego eimi*). Normally this is not so, as it is inherent in the verb:

I AM the Bread of Life (6:35).
I AM the Light of the world (8:12; 9:5).
I AM the Door (10:7).
I AM the Good Shepherd (10:11).
I AM the Resurrection and the Life (11:25). I AM
the Way, the Truth and the Life (14:6). I AM the
True Vine (15:1).

To these must be added John 18:5,6 and Mark 14:61,62.

To those who came to arrest Him, the Lord Jesus said "Whom seek ye?" (John 18:4). Their answer was "Jesus of Nazareth", to which He replied "I AM" (*ego eimi*, verse 5). The effect on them was instantaneous. "They went backward and fell to the ground" (v.6). This is inexplicable if these words were ordinary word~ spoken by a mere human being.

At His trial, the Lord was questioned as to His Messianic claims by the high priest: "art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed? And Jesus said, I AM (*ego eimi*): and ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven" (Mark 14:61,62). The reaction of the high priest makes it quite clear that he realized Christ was claiming personal deity. "Then the high priest rent his clothes, and saith, what need we any further witnesses? Ye have heard the blasphemy: what think ye? And they all condemned Him to be guilty of death" (63,64).

In John 12:37-41, the evangelist records the fact that in spite of Christ's miraculous signs, yet many of the people refused to believe on Him, thus fulfilling Isaiah's prophecy in chapters 6:9,10 and 53:1. The former verses of chapter 6 (Le.1-3) reveal Jehovah sitting upon His throne, high and lifted up, in all His Divine Majesty, with the worship of the seraphim and surrounded by the glory of heaven. The apostle John's comment on this is to tell us that Isaiah here "spake of Him" (*Christ*) and saw "*His* glory" (verse 41).

Divine worship and homage accepted by the
Lord Jesus Christ

When we come to the subject of worship in the Scriptures, one thing is perfectly clear, namely, that only God Himself has the right to accept this. *Whenever it has been offered mistakenly to a creature, however exalted or perfect, it was always refused.* For instance John, after seeing the wondrous visions given to him to record, falls down to worship before the feet of the angel who showed him these things. The angel's reaction was immediate: "... See thou do it not, for I am thy fellow-servant ... worship God" (Rev.22:8,9).

The Lord Jesus, however, accepted worship as His due. To doubting Thomas the risen Saviour shows His pierced hands and side, exclaiming "be not faithless, but believing". And Thomas answered and said unto Him "my Lord and my God" (John 20: 27,28). There is no attempt to correct him, which Christ should certainly have done if He was only a created being and not God; and in this case, to say the least, He would have acted on a much lower plane than the angel in the Revelation.

The clear-cut testimony of John 1: 1 has always been a direct challenge to the deniers of Christ's Deity, which they have done their best to minimize or alter: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and *the Word was God*". * No less clear is the wonderful passage in Philippians 2:5-11, dealing with Christ's seven voluntary steps downward to the Cross in His humiliation for our redemption, and the seven steps upward to the glory that was once His (John 17: 5), ending with nothing less than universal acclamation as LORD (Jehovah): "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him the Name which is above every name: that at the Name of Jesus *every* knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is LORD, to the glory of God the Father" (9-11).

The Apostle is quoting directly from Isaiah 45:22,23.
Here we have Jehovah, the One great God, Who asserts

*Concerning the outrageous rendering of the Jehovah Witnesses' *New World Translation* 'The Word was a god', see the Appendix.

"there is none else" (verses 5,6,14,18,21). It is to HIM that "every knee shall bow, and every tongue swear" (verse 23), and Paul, without any hesitation applies this tremendous universal homage to the Lord Jesus Christ, as he does again in Romans 14: 10,11. How could he do so with truth if Christ was not God in the fullest sense?

These contexts alone should be enough to silence every objection to the Lord's Deity by those who profess to treat the Bible as the inspired Word of God.

The Lord Jesus is the great conqueror of death (Rev. 1 : 12-18). In the O. T. God is the only One Who can give life (see the many occurrences in Psalm 119 and Hannah's declaration in 1 Samuel 2: 6). Our Saviour claims to have this power equally with the Father "For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom He will" (John 5: 21). It is Christ's voice that will raise those who are in the graves (5:25); the One Who made the majestic statement "I am the Resurrection, and the life" (11 :25) and demonstrated it by bringing back to life Lazarus who had been in the grave for four days. Imagine any creature making such a tremendous assertion! Anyone doing this seriously would be rightly regarded as an imbecile.

Note too that we are told in Philippians 2:8 that Christ "became obedient unto death". This of itself shows that He must be more than man, *for death is the sure end of man whether he likes it or not*. But Christ assured His hearers that "No man taketh it (life) from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again" (John 10:17,18), and so He could voluntarily die and give Himself up to the Cross and be raised again to life, a thing a mere man could never do. In any case, we have seen that the clear testimony of Scripture is that God alone can be man's Saviour ("beside Me there is no Saviour" Isa.43: 11).

The one Saviour of the Scriptures is the Lord Jesus Christ A man cannot redeem men for it is entirely beyond his power. "Truly no man can ransom himself, or give to God the price of his life, for the ransom of his life is costly, and can never suffice ... " (Psa.49: 7,8 R. S. V.). The one Saviour

Who is the God of the O.T. is the Christ of the New. Note the following occurrences in Titus:

God our Saviour 1 :3.

Christ our Saviour 1 :4.

Our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ 2: 13.

God our Saviour 3:4.

Christ our Saviour 3:6.

If we deny the Deity of Christ, we are forced to concede that here there are *two* Saviours and thus deny the truth of the Old and New Testaments concerning the *one* God, and the *one* Saviour.

We repeat, because it is so important, that revelation is not always complete explanation. It is impossible for the finite to completely grasp the infinite, and because of this we shall always have problems concerning the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ; *but this does not excuse us from believing the clear testimony of the inspired Word of God as to His Deity and His manifestation in the flesh.* If we are only going to believe what we can fully understand, our creed will be small indeed.

The apostle John concludes his first epistle by saying:

"And we know that the *Son of God* is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know Him that is true, and we are in Him that is true, *even in His Son Jesus Christ, THIS IS THE TRUE GOD, and eternal life*" (1 John 5:20). In his gospel we have the words of the Son of God: "The Father ... hath committed *all* judgment to the Son, *that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father.* He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent Him" (John 5:21-23). And with this agrees John's first epistle "*Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father*" (1 John 2:23).

There is therefore a sharp division between those who give the Lord Jesus His rightful place as God, the place that Scripture accords Him; and those who do not. Such, in John's estimation, have no right to the title 'Christian', for they not only deny the Son, but inevitably the Father as well. We repeat that *in the Scriptures, every attribute of Deity, with the exception of invisibility, is accorded to the Lord Jesus*

Christ. We come back then to our first question and ask the reader in all seriousness, "What think ye of Christ?". What is your estimate of Him? God or mere man? God or created being?

The alternatives are, and have always been, either *stoning Him* or *worshipping Him*. There can be no middle position. The statements of God's Word concerning Christ and His own statements concerning Himself are either true or false. If they are true, He is God. If they are not true, then He was a liar, if He knew them to be false; or completely demented if He was not aware of this, *in which case the whole of Christianity collapses, for who can trust their all to a liar or an imbecile?*

These are days when the drift away from truth is alarming and gets more and more evident in Christendom all over the world. It is time that all who profess the name of Christ should honestly face up to the great challenge of the Person Whom the New Testament calls "our great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ" (Titus 2: 13 R.V.), and give a clear testimony that they believe this with all their heart, and count it the greatest privilege to own Him as such and devote their lives to His service.

APPENDIX

The Jehovah's Witness movement is in the forefront of modern rejectors of the Deity of Christ. Their *New World Translation* contains several erroneous translations of verses that deal with this subject, the worst possibly being their rendering of John 1: 1 "Originally the Word was, and the Word was with God, and the Word was a god". This is a shocking mistranslation, and Dr. Bruce Metzger is surely right when he says "if the Jehovah's Witnesses take this translation seriously, they are polytheists. In view of the additional light which is available during this age of grace, such a representation is even more reprehensible than were the heathenish, polytheistic errors into which ancient Israel was so prone to fall".

This rendering fails to take into account an established rule of Greek grammar dealing with the presence or absence of the definite article 'the' in the subject and predicate of a sentence. Normally the subject is made plain by the article, and the predicate without it. Thus, in 1 John 4: 16 *ho theos agape estin* can only mean 'God is love', not 'love is God', for *theos* has the article and denotes the subject. It does not then matter about the order of the words, for in this way subject and predicate are quite clear. Had the apostle John included the article in the predicate of John 1: 1, *ho theos* instead of *theos*, he would have conveyed the thought that the Word was God *to the exclusion of the Father and the Holy Spirit*, and this is not what he intended to teach.

Some years ago Dr. E. C. Colwell of the University of Chicago, pointed out that "A definite predicate nominative has the article when it follows the verb; it does not have the article when it precedes the verb". In the lengthy appendix of the *New World Translation* which attempts to justify their rendering "a god", the Jehovah's Witnesses quote 35 other passages in John where the predicate noun has the definite article in the Greek. These are attempts to prove that the absence of the article in John 1: 1 requires the translation "a god". But none of the 35 instances are parallel,

for in every case (bearing in mind the rule noted by Dr. Colwell) the predicate noun *standing after the verb*, properly has the article. Furthermore, the additional references quoted in the above translation from the Septuagint, are exactly in conformity with the rule and show its accuracy. Other passages which they quote are not properly relevant to the question.

Thus their evidence turns against themselves. Moreover, they are completely inconsistent. In John 1: 14 we have " And the Word became flesh". Why not "the Word became a flesh"? or 1 John 1:5 "God is light"; why not "God is a light"?

For further information concerning Dr. Colwell's study, see:

A definite rule for the use of the article in the Greek New Testament by E. C. Colwell (Journal of Biblical Literature LII [1933] 12-21).

An idiom Book of NT.Greek by C. F. D. Moule pp. 115, 116.

A Grammar of NT. Greek pp. 183,184 by J. H. Moulton & N. Turner,

and generally on the subject see:

Professor A. T. Robertson's monumental work *A Grammar of the Greek of the NT. in the light of Historical Research* pp. 767f.

The above Jehovah's Witness rendering of John 1: 1 shows to what lengths some of the deniers of the Lord's Deity are prepared to go. But this is not the only context where the plain teaching concerning the Deity of Christ has been obscured. In the passage already referred to, namely Colossians 1: 15-17, the *New World Translation* falsifies what the Apostle wrote by inserting the word 'other', (absent in the Greek) *no less than four times*, "... by means of Him all *other* things were created in the heavens and upon the earth ... all *other* things have been created through Him, and for Him. Also He is before all *other* things and by means of Him all *other* things were made to exist". The purpose in doing this is quite obvious, namely, to treat Christ as a created being and on a par with the rest of creation. Paul did not write this, so what reliance can be put on a version that handles the inspired

Word in this shocking way?

Something must be said too for the unwarranted separation of "the great God" from our "Saviour Christ Jesus" in Titus 2: 13. Either the translators did not know or deliberately ignored a principle of Greek grammar which states that when *kai*, the copulative 'and', connects two nouns of the same case, and if the article precedes the first noun and is not repeated before the second noun, the latter always refers to the *same person that is expressed by the first noun*. Thus, the RV. correctly renders Titus 2: 13 "Our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ" where *one* person is meant, not two.

The Jehovah's Witnesses have repeated the same error in the similar context of 2 Peter 1: I "our God and the Saviour Jesus Christ" where it should read, as the RV., "Our God and Saviour Jesus Christ". The grammatical principle stated above is supported by such eminent grammarians as J. H. Moulton (*A Grammar of N. T. Greek* vol. I, 3rd ed. p.84), and A. T. Robertson (*A Grammar of N. T. Greek in the light of Historical Research* 5th ed. pp. 785, 786).

Regarding the doctrine of the Trinity, Unitarians love to point out that the word 'trinity' does not occur in Scripture. This is true, but the *fact* can be there, even though the word is not. One could just as easily show that the word 'theocracy: so often used by them, does not occur in the Bible!

As to the word 'person', these people create their own difficulty by treating this as synonymous with 'individual'. For a Biblical discussion of this, the reader is referred to *Is God a Person?* by Charles H. Welch obtainable from:

The Berean Publishing Trust, 52a
Wilson Street, London EC2A
2ER