

The Trinity: Will It Qualify as Monotheism When Jesus Judges?

Anthony Buzzard, Atlanta Bible College, May, 2012
restorationfellowship.org, "Jesus is Still a Jew" at YouTube
"The Human Jesus," "The Forgotten Gospel" at YouTube

Try this with your friends: "How many YHVHs are you proposing?" "One." "OK. Then you say the Father is YHVH, and Jesus is YHVH. How many YHVHs does that make?" This is a zebra, that is a zebra. How many zebras? President Obama is the only one who is currently the President of the USA. No one has the slightest difficulty with that proposition which is exactly parallel to John 17:3: "You, Father, are the only one who is true God." No one else is. (I scored a commendatory "point Buzzard" when I suggested this on a blog with Prof. Tuggy.) Augustine in his *Homilies on John* was defeated by the words of Jesus here and rearranged the words to include Jesus as the "only one who is true God."

It takes an extended time (the ten-thousand hour principle, perhaps), to probe the masterly sleight of hand achieved by classical Trinitarianism. I think we now see the marvelous degree of cleverness and cunning involved in the amazing construct that God is three and one, three in one. Did not Paul warn of trickery and deceit calculated to dupe the unwary?

Customarily its exponents are driven back to the final defense. They play the mystery card, the joker card? The Trinity cannot actually be explained. That is the problem: it cannot be explained. It attempts a mathematical proposition which for all eternity cannot work. It is a contradiction but hides that awful fact, lest it have to be admitted that the Church has been mistaken all these centuries. At the same time it has been appallingly cruel, using the rack, the sword and the stake to enforce it.

Rev. Mozeley, brother-in-law to Cardinal Newman:

"I ask with all humbleness where the idea of the threeness is expressed in the New Testament with a doctrinal sense and force? Where is the triune God held up to be worshiped, loved and obeyed? Where is he preached and proclaimed in that threefold character? We read 'God is one' and 'I and the Father are one' but never do we read that the three are one, except in one interpolated (forged) text (I John 5:7). To me the whole matter is most painful and perplexing and I should not even speak as I do now, if I were not on the threshold of the grave, soon to appear before the throne of all truth. Certainly we do not find in Scripture the expression God the Son, or God the Holy Ghost. Whenever I pronounce the word God simply, and first, I mean God the Father, and I cannot help meaning that if I am meaning anything."

Rightly Cardinal Newman, who moved from Anglicanism to Roman Catholicism, said:

"The Trinity is a contradiction, indeed, and not merely a verbal contradiction, but an incompatibility in the human ideas conveyed. We can scarcely make a nearer approach to an exact enunciation of it, than of saying that **one thing is two things.**"¹

"That's a chair and that is a chair and that makes one chair."

Or as the SDA's wrote celebrating their move to Trinitarianism: The keystone of our theology is "one plus one plus one is one."

They also wrote, "The word 'one' in Hebrew (*echad*) is inherently a plural word."²

Yahweh cannot be at the same time the triune God as a whole and also the name of *each one* of the Persons separately. This would be sheer contradiction since one X cannot be three X's. But Trinitarians are caught in a trap here. They claim that Yahweh means the triune God, but clearly Yahweh means the Father and not the triune God, as in Psalm 110:1. Thus the contradiction trap is not avoided and cannot be avoided. As expert Trinitarian proponent Millard Erickson (*God in Three Persons*) says, a good Trinitarian must say "he are three and they is one." This demonstrates the hopelessness of the Trinitarian case. It breaks the laws of language and logic. Did God require us to fracture the laws of language and communication to describe Him?

¹ Sadler's *Gloria Patri*, p. 39, A. H. Newman.

² *The Trinity*, Whidden, Moon, Reeve, p. 76.

It has been the concern of biblical unitarians throughout church history that the claim of “orthodox” churches to be monotheists may in fact put “orthodoxy” itself in jeopardy. These are serious issues. They require that every believer accept the challenge to study and analyze his current understanding of who God is. The issue demands also that those instructed in biblical monotheism harness all the energy they can muster to help others understand the monotheism of Jesus. This takes effort and reading and practice.

It is perilous to ignore the words of Jesus (John 3:36, 1 Tim. 6:3; Heb. 5:9; John 12:48 and hundreds of similar texts). Salvation is offered only to those who obey Jesus, which is the meaning of “believing in him.” Jesus makes that point over and over again. He surely foresaw, and warned against, the awful tendency to rest in the mistaken idea that believing *just* that Jesus died and rose is sufficient for salvation. Paul himself has been misrepresented in Romans 10 to support a popular view. Paul indeed spoke of the death and resurrection of Jesus constantly, but in Romans 10:17 (which is kept out of sight) he summarized his argument by telling us the true source of true faith. “Faith comes by hearing [he uses that word to denote the Gospel (of the Kingdom), cp. Gal. 3:2] and hearing by the word of Messiah.” “The word of Messiah” takes us back of course to the Gospel of the Kingdom, the Gospel as preached by Jesus in Mark 1:14-15 (not just a gospel *about* Jesus), and unpacked in the parable of the sower. Hebrews 2:3 stresses that we are to believe the saving Gospel “which was first preached by Jesus.” We neglect this at our peril. Salvation comes to “those who obey Jesus” (Heb. 5:9). Paul in 1 Corinthians 15:1-3 lists elements of the Gospel, the death and resurrection of Jesus, as “amongst matters of first importance” (*en protois*). They are not the *only* matters to be believed. The Kingdom of God and belief in that coming Kingdom is still the first and central element of the Gospel (Mark 1:14-15; Luke 4:43; Acts 8:12; 19:8, 20:24-25; 28:23, 31, etc.).

Since the words of Jesus are to be the essential heart of Christian faith, we must ask: How obedient are churches to Jesus’ first and foremost commandment? “Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord” (Mark 12:29; Deut. 6:4). Jesus here agrees entirely with a Jewish scribe on the vital issue of defining the true God. “There is no other but He” is the enthusiastic response and agreement offered by the scribe. “He” of course is a singular personal pronoun denoting a numerically single Person, not three. The quintessential heart of true faith in Jesus is compliance with his insistence that “the Lord our God *is one Lord*,” not two or three Persons in one God.

It is usual for readers of Mark 12:28ff to overlook the first of the three imperatives. Yes, we are to love God and our neighbor, but there is a primary imperative which precedes the command to love God and neighbor. It is the imperative “hear,” and it demands an intelligent understanding of who the true God is. The NT follows the LXX form of the *shema*: **God is one Lord**. He is a single Lord. He is the “Lord our God” of Hebrew faith. He is the God of Jews (Rom. 3:29), the God of the Gentiles (Rom. 3:29) and the God of Jesus, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. 1300 times in the NT “*o theos*” designates THE God of Israel, and no other God.³

Has the Church been faithful to this primary command of Jesus? I want now to examine the classic *Hastings Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels* of 1917. My interest is in seeing how that learned dictionary manages to steer its way, in the article on the Trinity, to a justification of the Trinity. My strong impression is that the learned writer is not up to the impossible task of moving seamlessly from the clear biblical witness to Jesus’ definition of God (Mark 12:29) to the *later* dogmatic declaration that God is one Being (*ousia*) in three distinct hypostases. The writer’s discussion is a fascinating attempt to convince us

³ Bishop Tom Wright points out that the NT God is “THE God” (with the definite article) and this has a polemical edge on it. In other words “the God” is the only one God recognized by Scripture, the God of Jesus and of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. We should note that Jesus is generally “the/my/our lord,” while the Father is *kurios*, translating YHVH. No one ever says “the YHVH” or “my YHVH.” It was wrong for the JW’s to corrupt the NT text by inserting the word Jehovah. The NT writers do not do this, though they could have if they had wanted to. Some LXX manuscripts have YHVH inserted into the Greek, but none of the NT manuscripts insert YHVH (but they could have). They are content to write *kurios*, Lord. In Psalm 110:1 *kurios mou*, “my lord,” reflects *adoni*, “my lord,” which is never a reference to Deity, in all of its 195 occurrences. NT writers knew that only one Person is God, and that GOD cannot die! Thus in Col. 1 Jesus is the firstborn from the dead, showing the obvious, that he is not GOD! Likewise in Heb. 1 GOD does not speak through GOD, making two GODS! He spoke through a unique Son.

that the now “official,” dogmatic definition of God as triune can successfully be harmonized with the clear words of Jesus in Mark 12:29. But if one reads carefully, one sees that he fails. The foundations of biblical faith and monotheism have been drastically shifted. The later, conciliar system, Nicean, Chalcedonian, Athanasian, is clearly off biblical base.

Our author begins with the **Revelation of God in the Gospels**:⁴

“The witness of our Lord’s consciousness as revealed in the gospels... **He certainly regarded himself as the Messiah**⁵ and the names and titles by which he described himself and permitted others to describe him are messianic in their significance... He stands in a relationship of unique intimacy with the Father (Matt. 11:27). He calls God ‘my Father.’ [He enjoys] a cloudless serenity in his relationship to God... He speaks as one who sees clearly into the heart of God... He lives a life which is wittingly and willingly all that God would have it to be... He claims distinctly certain Divine attributes and privileges. He is King and Judge of all. He is to be the object of most absolute trust and devotion. No sacrifice is too great to be made for his sake... To reject him or his messengers is to reject GOD and to incur the severest judgment. ‘All things have been delivered to me by my Father’ (Matt. 11:27). [Cp. the Great Commission]

“When we turn to the Fourth Gospel we find this teaching expressed with a fullness and clearness of statement which ought not to appear extraordinary... John gives us a revelation of the inner life of that wonderful Personality. What is extraordinary is that the inner history, as we have it in John’s gospel, does not reveal any essential element which cannot be found expressed or implied in the external histories of the synoptic gospels [Matthew, Mark and Luke].”

No one, I think, can take exception to this fine statement. But there is no evidence here of a Trinitarian Jesus, one who would be acceptable to today’s “orthodoxy.”

The author then proceeds to treat the issue of Jesus’ view of God in the gospels.

“We must never forget that Christianity was built on the foundation of Jewish monotheism. A long providential discipline had secured to the Jewish people their splendid faith in the One and Only God: ‘Hear O Israel. Yahweh your God is one Yahweh, and you are to love Yahweh your God with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your might.’ This was the cornerstone of the religion of Israel. These were perhaps the most familiar of all sacred words to the ears of the pious Jew. They were recited continually. Our Lord himself had them frequently in his mind (Matt. 22:37; Mark 12:29; Luke 10:27).”

But this is precisely what churchgoers today seem to have forgotten and ignored. They assemble under a creed which is *not* that of Jewish monotheism! According to the Trinitarian Seventh Day Adventists, some 23 million of them, “the keystone of our theology is that ‘one plus one plus one equals one.’” This should be compared critically with the cornerstone of the theology of Jesus! Are Trinitarians sailing under false colors?

Continuing the article on “The Trinity” in the *Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels*. “That Jesus thought of God always as the Supreme One is unquestionable. Indeed the very idea of Fatherhood, which with our Lord is the characteristic conception, becomes in his teaching absolutely monotheistic because absolutely universal. To the Jewish mind the sovereignty of God was the natural and characteristic thought. In our Lord’s teaching the Divine Fatherhood overshadows and also transforms the Divine Sovereignty but never threatens to dissolve the pure and splendid monotheism of the original doctrine... In the teaching of our Lord there are three degrees of the Divine Fatherhood. God is the universal Father. He is, in a very intimate and special way, the Father of the disciples of Jesus. He is, in the highest and unique sense the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ... We find then that the teaching of Our Lord and of the gospels concerning God is the union of a true and unwavering monotheism with a great

⁴ “The Trinity,” *Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels*, Vol. 2, p.760.

⁵ Former Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. Ramsay, says “Our Lord did not claim Deity for himself.” Why then does the Church go beyond what Jesus claimed for himself? Michael Green in *The Truth of God Incarnate*, answering *The Myth of God Incarnate*, says “Jesus did not claim to be God, just like that (*tout court*).”

doctrine of mediation according to which God and man enter into a very close relationship in the person of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.”

If the article had then added in support of its major point the wonderful monotheistic words of Paul in 1 Timothy 2:5, “There is one God and one mediator between that One God and man, the *man* Messiah Jesus,” all would have been well, and an article on the Trinity would have been totally unnecessary. But the article now goes on to waffle its way into some sort of bridge to the Church’s later denial of the excellent words said of monotheism so far!

The essay continues by referring to the “modern philosophical and theological terminology” which is used to create a doctrine of the Trinity. No attempt is made to justify the non-biblical use of philosophical language. The author continues by saying of Jesus, “His Ego had a distinctness and concreteness surpassing any other human being who ever lived. Our Lord was very man and his Ego had all the self-possession and concreteness which give to every human soul its personal distinctness. While we find, in his self-revelation, that he constantly entered into a communion with God, which is quite without parallel in human experience, and that he knew the heart of God from within, we also find him always distinguishing himself as a Person from the Father [thus proving that the United Pentecostal view that the Son *is* the Father is severely mistaken]. There is no trace anywhere of the breaking down of the boundaries of the personal life...Jesus’ utterances reveal no displacement of the centre of personal life. This personal distinction may be seen clearly in the following passages. They are among our Lord’s greatest utterances: ‘All things have been delivered to me by my Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father...The Son of Man will come in the glory of his Father with his angels. Whoever will be ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man also will be ashamed of him when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels...Not what I will but what You will. Father, into your hands I commit my spirit. My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? My Father works hitherto and I work. I and the Father are one. I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father, except through me.’ These examples are selected out of a great number. The fourth Gospel is especially rich in such passages. Jesus also said, ‘You, Father, are in me and I in You, that they also may be one in us.’ ‘I in them and You in me that they may be perfected into one.’”

This good statement indicts at once the amazing belief of “Oneness Pentecostals” that the Father and the Son are the same Person. It also makes utterly untenable the belief held by Jehovah’s Witnesses that the Son is himself really an angel (Michael) incarnated as a man! No one could possibly gather such an idea from John or the synoptics. Daniel 10:13 states that Michael is “one of” the chief angels. Jesus is certainly not “one of” a category of elevated persons. And Hebrews 1 tells us categorically that Jesus is not an angel!

The author then notes that John is emphatic about “the humanity of our Lord, yet he is our clearest teacher about the Divinity.” Note here that the ambiguous word “divinity” is slipped in. This is itself a “fog-term” allowing for various understandings. The author’s purpose is to lead us imperceptibly to the notion that the Son is fully God, Deity, and thus a member of a Triune God.

First, however, the author is frank enough to concede that the Son is subordinate to the Father. As proof he cites Mark 13:32, “No one knows the day [of the Second Coming] except the Father. Even the Son does not know.” Our author adds: “Here is a clear assertion of the subordination of the Son.” When it comes to the inferiority implied by Jesus in the saying “The Father is greater than I,” the author tries to produce this as a proof of the “divinity” of Jesus because “for a mere man to say this would be monstrous or absurd.”

But there is no absurdity if Jesus is not “a *mere* man,” if by that is meant an ordinary man. The Jesus of our New Testament is a sinless, virginally begotten man, uniquely human. He is certainly not an ordinary, “mere man”!

The stage is now set for a very “waffly” demonstration that Jesus was God. The argument fails to address, however, or rather forgets what it earlier conceded, the patent fact that Jesus in Mark 12:29ff fully commits himself to the **unitary monotheism of Israel**. If Jesus is to be our teacher, dare we disregard or depart from his plain confirmation of his unitarian heritage?

“If you love me, you will keep my commandments” (John 14:15). “You call me rabbi and lord and you do well” (John 13:13). This can hardly mean, “but you are free to disregard my primary command to believe that God is a single Lord.” “You are free to assemble under a Trinitarian umbrella about which I said not a word.” It appears that Jesus, attempting today to join an evangelical or other church, would be barred from entrance, since he could not possibly sign the Trinitarian faith statement! The Lord Jesus can well complain, “Why do you call me lord and refuse to do what I say?” (Luke 6:46): “Listen, Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord.”

The issue is critically important. Is our faith to be based on the recorded witness of Jesus or are we at liberty to set aside his teaching, his theology? The answer ought to be obvious, and it should also lead to some profound soul-searching. If we believe in the creed of Jesus, are we at liberty to join in the worship of churchgoers who do not espouse that unitary monotheistic creed? Can we appear in church with confidence, knowing that the Trinitarian view of Jesus is held as the central creed? Knowing of Jesus’ clear confession of God as the One God of Israel, how can we commit ourselves to anything but Jesus’ own confessed definition of the Father as “the only one who is true God” (John 17:3)?

Commentary presents the “orthodox” version of Christianity as untroubled by what Jesus taught about God. The prestigious *Word Biblical Commentary* makes this amazing statement. It questions why Mark would bother recording Jesus’ affirmation of the Shema (Deut. 6:4 in Mark 12:29). First the author of the commentary on Mark observes that Bultmann said “the special interests of the Church are not in evidence” in Mark 12:28ff. He then agrees with Bultmann. “It is difficult to understand how and why Jesus’ affirmation of the Shema, which is *neither remarkable nor specifically Christian*, would have been created by an early Christian prophet.”⁶ His point is that the recorded saying of Jesus, defining God, must surely be genuinely the words of Jesus. But he gives himself away with his astonishing remark that Jesus’ affirmation of the Shema is “neither remarkable *nor specifically Christian*.” The point should not be missed. Apparently the teaching of Christ at the most essential point of defining the true God is not remarkable or important for us today! Christ, then, can be happily divorced from his teaching, and the Church can go confidently on its way, disregarding the theology of Jesus. This points surely to a huge need for a reformation of the Reformation, to achieve a real return to Jesus, allowing for the savior’s words to be the controlling factor of all Christian teaching.

Dr. James Dunn in his recent “*Did the First Christians Worship Jesus?*” gives us reason for hope that the Trinitarian system may reconsider and return to Jesus — may in fact thus be revived. (Revival is not achieved by anything less than a revolutionary return to the Gospel and words of Jesus!) Dr. Dunn must be read carefully — and he not infrequently blunts clear statements with various qualifications and retractions, but he does say this: “The New Testament writers are really quite careful at this point. **Jesus is not the God of Israel, he is not the Father, he is not Yahweh**” (p. 142). The New Testament writers “recalled that this was Jesus of Nazareth, who affirmed the same monotheistic creed as they did, who forbade worship to any other than God and who prayed to God as an expression of his own need and reliance upon God” (p. 145). “In an important sense, Christian monotheism, if it is to be truly monotheism, has still to assert, that only God, only the one God, is to be worshiped” (p. 146).

Dr. Dunn could have added that Jesus is worshiped in the NT, but that the word “worship” is often applied to prominent figures other than God. They are not worshiped as the One God, but they are highly honored as representing the One God. Jesus of course is uniquely and supremely elevated to the position designated by Psalm 110:1. But he is still not Deity. He is the “milord” (*adoni*) of that most frequently cited text.

But how can the unrivaled position of the Father, as a single divine Self, possibly be preserved as long as the Church clings to a creedal statement which Jesus could not have recognized? Doesn’t the Trinity multiply God? Does it not turn Jesus into an antichrist, rivaling and challenging his own creed? He never claimed to be GOD and recoiled from that awful suggestion.

We join Dr. Dunn in his plea for conformity with Jesus’ definition of God, though we suggest that Dunn might have expressed himself even more forcefully. He does say that “there are some problems,

⁶ Craig Evans, *Commentary on Mark 8-16*, Thomas Nelson, 2001, p. 261.

even dangers, in Christian worship if it is defined too simply as worship of Jesus. If what has emerged in this enquiry is taken seriously, it soon becomes evident that Christian worship may deteriorate into what may be called Jesus-olatry. That is not simply into worship of Jesus, but into a worship that falls short of the worship due to the one God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. I use the term Jesus-olatry as in an important sense parallel or even close to idolatry. As Israel's prophets pointed out on several occasions, the calamity of idolatry is that the idol is in effect taken to be the god to be worshipped. So the idol substitutes for the God, takes the place of God. The worship due to God is absorbed by the idol. The danger of Jesus-olatry is similar: that Jesus has been substituted for God, has taken the place of the one creator God. Jesus is absorbing the worship due to God alone" (p. 147)

Admittedly Dunn remains confident that Trinitarian Christianity is somehow still monotheism. But the crucial question should not be obscured. What is the theology and teaching of Jesus as declared by his uncompromising adherence to the Shema of Israel, defining God as a single divine Lord? If we are to take Jesus' seriously (and we must!), what right have we to modify in any way the creed of Jesus, agreed to and affirmed also by a Jewish scribe?

A powerful confirmation of the fact that Jesus has not approved any revision of Deuteronomy 6:4 is found in the repeated use of Psalm 110:1 across the pages of the New Testament. It is that crucial verse which has received scant attention from many commentators. Its testimony when revealed is an embarrassment to the notion that "Jesus is God." Psalm 110:1 defines the identity of Jesus precisely *not* as Deity, but as the supremely exalted human being (cp. exactly 1 Tim. 2:5). Jesus is the *adoni* (my lord) at the right hand of Yahweh. Yahweh and *adoni* ought never for a second to be confused — but they have been, when a capital L appears on the second lord in many translations, signaling to the unwary reader that the underlying Hebrew is the title of Deity, *Adonai*. But the Hebrew (translated exactly by *kuriō mou*, "to my lord," in both LXX and NT Scripture) is positively not *Adonai*, creating an impossible "God to God," polytheistic conversation. However exalted Jesus is, he remains the "man Messiah," the non-Deity lord (*adoni*) of Psalm 110:1. So careless with this distinction have been much commentary and translation, that the second lord has been reported as *Adonai*¹, Lord God, and not as it is, *adoni*, a non-deity lord in all 195 occurrences in the Hebrew Bible. The capital L on the second lord is highly misleading.

Richard Longenecker, in his commentary on Galatians in the celebrated *Word Biblical Commentary* notes that "the second part of Galatians 3:20 is a citation of the quintessential confession of all Jews, the great deuteronomic utterance known as the *shema*, that God is one" (p. 142). He then cites Betz: "The process of divine redemption requires conformity to the oneness of God" (*Commentary on Galatians*, pp. 172, 173). Romans 3:30 repeats this fundamental teaching about who God is. God is said to be "*eis*" (one, masculine). And the meaning of course is "one person" not one "essence." Paul is writing not just as a Jew, but as a Christian. Ought not the creed of Paul to be ours too? Only then are we subject to apostolic scriptural teaching, which is also the teaching of Jesus. We suspect a hidden antipathy to the Jewish creed of Jesus and Paul. This needs to be corrected.

Inadvertently "orthodoxy" gives itself away. William Lane in his *Word Biblical Commentary on Hebrews* observes of Hebrews 11:12 that the Greek "*aph' enos*" means "from one person." The reference is to Abraham. But the very same use of "one" (*eis*, genitive *enos*) regularly describes the One God of the Bible. The Emphasized New Testament renders Galatians 3:20 correctly: "God is [only] one [*eis*] person." As long ago as 1849, the Rev. Richard Treffry, in a massive defense of the Trinity in his *Inquiry into the Eternal Sonship of our Lord Jesus Christ*, noted that "*eis* [one] in the masculine means one person," i.e., one individual self (p. 129). This is an elementary fact of the Greek language and is echoed in the article we cited from *The Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels*: Observing that in John 10:30 ("I and the Father are one") the Greek has the neuter *en*, the writer explains that the masculine *eis* (one) means "one person."

This simple language about God as one Person, reflected in 1300 NT occurrences of "God" meaning a single Person, the Father, has had to give way to the fearfully complex concept of a "one and three" God. Is this not a rather obvious assault on the Lord Messiah's unitary monotheism which in Mark 12:29 he describes as the most important of all theological issues?

Is not the Lord Messiah who was born in Bethlehem (Luke 2:11) precisely distinguished from the Lord's (Yahweh's) Messiah in Luke 2:26? Is not this Triune God concept also an affront to billions of Muslims and millions of Jews?

The alarming departure of Trinitarian "orthodoxy" from the plain words of Jesus requires urgent attention. Christianity, we may fairly say, is the only world religion which begins by discarding its own founder's creed. This should be considered a world disaster. What are we going to do to correct this situation? We might start by pointing out that it is dangerous to propose a view of God which is at odds with our Savior Jesus' view and which appears, on the admission of those who have written on the subject, to be a nonsensical contradiction, a proposal which cannot be believed because there is no recognizable proposition to believe!

"It might tend to moderation and in the end agreement if we were industrious on all occasions to represent our own doctrine, the Trinity, as wholly unintelligible" (Dr. Hey, *Lectures in Divinity* at Cambridge, Vol. 2, p. 253).

"What is there in the whole book of God that nature at first sight more recoils at than the doctrine of the Trinity? How many still stumble and fall at it" (Dr. John Owen, *Divine Origin of the Scriptures*, p. 132).

Dr. A Newman: "It is a contradiction, indeed and not merely a verbal contradiction, but an incompatibility in the human ideas conveyed. We can scarcely make a nearer approach to an exact enunciation of it, than that of saying that **one** thing is **two** things" (*Sadler's Gloria Patri*, p. 39).

Bishop Hurd: "Reason stands aghast and faith herself is half confounded [at the idea of the sacrifice of a person of the Godhead as maintained by the Trinitarians]" (*Sermons at Lincoln's Inn*, Vol. 2, No. 17).

"'Tis mystery all, the immortal dies" (Wesley hymn).

"Every Christian who says that Jesus died, says that Jesus is not God" (John Biddle, British schoolmaster killed for his unitarian faith).

Echad, one single:

One place (Gen. 1:9), one man (Gen. 42:13), one law (Ex. 12:49), one side (Ex 25:12), one ewe lamb (Lev. 14:10), one of his brethren (Lev. 25:48), one rod (Num. 17:3), one soul (Num. 31:28), one of those cities (Deut. 4:42), one way (Deut. 28:7), one ephah (I Sam 1:24), one went out into the field (I Kings 4:39). One shepherd (Ezek 37:24), one basket (Jer. 24:2). One thing (Ps. 27:4), two are better than one (Ecc. 4:9), for one day or for two (Ezra 10:13). Abraham was only one person (Ezek 33:24), a unique day (Zech 14:7).

970 occurrences of the word "one" in the OT, 1300 references of *o theos* to God as the Father and 11,000 references to GOD, *Adonai, Elohim, theos*, not one of which can be shown to mean a Triune God!

I am grateful for my cousin Dr. J.A.T. Robinson's clear statement about Jesus as described by John: "In the first place it should be noted that John is as undeviating a witness as any in the NT to the fundamental tenet of Judaism, of **unitary monotheism** (Rom. 3:30; James 2:19). There is one true and only God (John 5:44; 17:3). Everything else is idols (I John 5:21). In fact nowhere is the Jewishness of John [and Jesus], which has emerged in all recent study, more clear. The only possible exception is in I John 5:20, where 'this is the true God' could grammatically relate not to the Father, but to the immediately preceding words 'His Son Jesus Christ,' though the 'his' in 'His Son' must refer to 'the one who is true,' that is God the Father, as everywhere else [including Mal. 2:10, 'Do we not all have one Father? Has not one God created us?']"⁷

⁷ "The ambiguities of phrasing in the Johannine epistles are notorious, but I find it very difficult to be persuaded by such as Schnackenburg, Bultmann and Brown that it is Christ who is being designated as 'the true God' [contradicting Jn. 17:3!]. I am convinced with Westcott, Brooke and Dodd that the remaining Johannine usage (particularly 'This is the true God, this is eternal life,' I John 5:20 and 'This is eternal life, to know thee who alone art true God' John 17:3) which I believe the former deliberately echoes, requires the reference to be to the Father. There is also the parallel in II John 7 where 'this is the deceiver and the Antichrist' must refer to the secessionists and not to the immediately preceding words 'Jesus Christ coming in the flesh.'" He then says, that "despite the clear evidence of the Gospel that Jesus refuses the claim to *be* God (10:33) or in any way to usurp the position of the

Note on prayer to Jesus: Carl Judson Davis, *The Name and Way of the Lord: Old Testament Themes and New Testament Christology* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996). The jump-off point for Davis' study is the multiple NT references to "calling upon the name of the Lord Jesus (Christ)". E.g., in 1 Corinthians 1:2, Paul uses such a phrase as a simple and universally-applicable description of fellow believers. Most serious students and scholars readily recognize the expression as deriving from OT phrasing, where "to call upon the name of the LORD" = to engage in worship, invoking YHWH specifically. One OT passage explicitly cited in the NT is Joel 2:32 (Heb. 3:5), promising that "everyone who calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved" (e.g., Acts 2:21; Romans 10:13). As Davis observes, OT uses (e.g., Jer. 10:25; Ps. 79:6; 116:1-4, 13-19) connote "religious activities and in particular such ones that occur during worship" (105). (As he also notes, in the Greek translation, it appears that the "middle" voice form of the verb *epikaleo* is used to distinguish this sort of cultic invocation from more ordinary summoning or calling to/for someone.) So, he judges, "'Calling upon the name of', unlike invocation in general, occurs, as far as I can find, only with the divine as the object in pre-Christian Judaism" (116).

Yes, but once Jesus is born and exalted, activity formerly addressed to GOD is extended to Jesus, but this does not make Jesus God, but the exalted, immortalized Man Messiah (1 Tim 2:5). Interestingly, he suggests: "'Calling upon the name of the Lord Jesus' may have been part of the reason for Paul's persecution since, according to Acts 9:14, 21...Paul came to arrest those 'calling upon the name of the Lord Jesus'." He further notes, "It may have been that this practice was so different from the common practice of Jews that Paul and his Jerusalem kinsmen felt justified to deprive Jewish Christians of all their rights and even their lives because of it" (128-29). Given the clear connotation of the expression, "The burden of proof lies upon those who interpret 'calling upon the name of the Lord Jesus' as something other than prayer" (133).

Note on water Baptism. There is an equally simple and clear order from Jesus and the Apostles that we be baptized in water. So much so that the command to baptize (i.e. given to human agents of God) is always a command to baptize in water. To be baptized in spirit in no way dispenses with the command to baptize and be baptized, get oneself baptized, in water. In Acts 10:47 Peter is astonished that even Gentiles (for the first time) have received baptism in spirit and then, in view of this, "orders them in the name of Jesus to be baptized" in water. It was baptism as the necessary accompaniment to repentance, which was required, for all those becoming believers, since the spirit had already come upon them. "Who was **able to forbid water** for them to be baptized?" The point is so critically important that the whole event is repeated, step by step, for emphasis in Acts 11:17: "How was I **able to forbid God?**" **One needs to read the Greek for the full effect, the repetition of the word "forbid," "resist." It would be a tragic thing to resist God by resisting water for baptism.**

Father, this is clearly for John not the whole picture." He goes on to point out that the logos is God. But he has said above that John's Jesus is a unitarian. The logos is therefore the wisdom of God and not a second Person until Jesus is born. Jesus is thus what the word (not Word) *became*. God is still "the only one who is true God," which excludes the Son. Jesus and John were unitarians.