

THE DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY OF GOD

The word "trinity," as such, does not occur in the scriptures. Yet, the idea which it expresses is found throughout God's word. Jehovah's Witnesses, self called, deny this doctrine, and every chance they get to write on this subject they make much to do about the word "trinity" not occurring in the scriptures. In one of their books, *The Truth That Leads To Eternal Life*, copyright 1968, they say:

"Many religions of Christendom teach that God is a 'Trinity,' although the word 'Trinity' does not appear in the Bible" (end quote, page 22).

In another of their books, *Things In Which It Is Impossible For God To Lie*, Copyright 1965, they say again:

"Their word 'Trinity' does not occur in the Holy Bible" (end quote).

Thus, one of the methods of argument used by them in opposing "the doctrine of the trinity of God" is to say, "the word . . . does not appear in the Bible" (end quote). Yet, in reading their literature, they repeatedly use words which, as they would say, "does not occur in the Holy Bible" (end quote). Take as an example their book, *The Kingdom Is At Hand*, copyright 1944, they repeatedly use the words "theocratic," "theocrat," "theocracy," etc. Yet, not one of those words, as such, occurs in the Bible. I don't have a problem with the word "theocratic," and various forms of it. But if an idea is completely unscriptural solely because an exact word is not found in scripture, then it seems that their use of the word "theocratic" is unscriptural for that reason. In the content section of the book, *The Kingdom Is At Hand*, they list chapters entitled as follows:

"Theocratic Kingship . . . The Typical Theocracy . . .
Theocratic Judges . . . Palace of The Theocrat . . .
Theocracy's Ambassadors" (end quote).

To show again their repeated use of a word not found in the Bible, permit me to quote from a portion of a paragraph found on page 53 of their book, *The Kingdom Is At Hand*, as follows:

"The Almighty God is the rightful ruler. For that reason he is The Theocrat, which title means God-Ruler. His Government is a Theocracy, which means a government under the immediate

direction and administration of the Most High God. His rule and the organization that he creates are Theocratic, and the living creatures in His organization must be subject to the Theocratic rule . . . His Theocratic rule bends all the obedient universe in one" (end quote).

Apparently, Jehovah's Witnesses do not have a problem in doing the very thing that they condemn in others. Their deceptive tactics, saying one thing and doing another, will not be accepted by thinking people.

In discussing "the doctrine of the trinity of God," it would take a lifetime, if possible at all, to expound all of the great truths related to this subject. The material gathered would be cumbersome, and the effort, for the most part, would be thankless, and ineffective. This article is designed to offer a framework on which to build. I purpose to show the following ideas:

1. That "the doctrine of the trinity of God" is scriptural;
2. That scripture recognizes only three as God;
3. That those three are one in possessing the attributes of God;
4. That those three are singularly involved in those works which only God can do;
5. That those three are so described in scripture that we are compelled to think of them as distinct, not separate, persons; with special emphasis on the Father and the Son;
6. And, that this tripersonality is not tritheism for, while there are three distinct persons, there is but one essence.

The doctrine of "the Trinity of God" is scriptural. The book of Genesis is the seed bed of truth. And, this doctrine which begins there is found throughout God's word.

In Genesis 1:1 we read, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." The English word "God" here is from the Hebrew "Elohim." The word is made up of "El," meaning strength, or the strong one, and "Alah," meaning to swear, to bind oneself by an oath, and so implying faithfulness. The "im" ending in Hebrew makes the word a plural noun, as in words like "cherubim," or "seraphim," etc. Thus, "Elohim," without any other scriptural light, is a plural noun.

The word is often translated "gods," plural, as in Exodus 20:3, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me." There it has reference to false "gods." Since the word is used both of the "God" of creation and the false "gods," then the word is sometimes modified by words such as

"true" and "living" in Jeremiah 10:10, so as to distinguish the one from the other. God is "true" in the sense of real, very God. He is "true" in that He fulfills the promise of His Name. He is "true" in that He fulfills the promise of His lips, that is He is "true," not a liar. He is "living" in contrast to idols which are lifeless (Isaiah 46:5-7; I Thessalonians 1:9). The "Elohim" of creation is "the true and living God."

Whenever the word "Elohim," translated by the plural "gods" in such places as Exodus 20:3, Leviticus 19:4, Numbers 25:2, Deuteronomy 4:28, Joshua 23:16, Judges 2:3, etc., refers to "gods" in a lesser sense, "gods" other than "the true and living God," there is always something within the context that shows their inferiority. For instance, in Psalms 82:6 reference is made to those set to judge among the people as "Ye are gods," plural. Their inferiority is stated in verse 7, "But ye shall die like men," which is in contrast to the God of creation of whom it is said, "but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail" (Hebrews 1:12). Again, in Psalms 97:7 we read, "worship him, all ye gods," plural. These words are quoted in Hebrews 1:6 as, "And let all the angels of God worship him." Thus, the "gods" of Psalms 97:7 equals "the angels of God" in Hebrews 1:6. The "him" of Psalms 97:7, who is the object of "worship," is identified in the Hebrew context as the Son of God. One cannot think of the "gods" of Psalms 97:7 as being on a ground of equality with "the true and living God." It is true that the word "God" in Genesis 1:1, and the word "gods" in Psalms 97:7, are both translated from "Elohim," a plural noun. But, Psalms 97:7 shows the inferiority of the "gods" of that text because they are directed to "worship him" who is "the true and living God," the Lord Jesus Christ.

This plural noun, translated as "gods" plural in places, when used of the "true and living God" also conveys the idea of a plurality. In Genesis 1:26 we read, "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness . . ." Here, the plural pronouns "us" and "our" reveal the plurality encompassed in the word "Elohim." Again, in Genesis 3:22 we read, "And the Lord God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us . . ." Moreover, in Genesis 11:6,7 we read, "And the Lord said . . . Go to, let us go down . . ."

Thus, the word "Elohim" is:

1. A plural noun;
2. It is translated "gods" in places;
3. And, when used of the "true and living God," the plural pronouns "us" and "our" reveal that a plurality is intended.

If a plurality is intended, then two questions arise: One, How many are involved in the plurality? And, two, what is their identity? Genesis 1:1,26 reveals that the plural noun "Elohim" consists of an "us" and "our." A comparison of other scriptures tells us "how many," and also give their identity.

This seed bed of truth that begins in the book of Genesis is found throughout God's word to the extent "that three are recognized as God in scripture." The three are identified as the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Before showing that the "three are recognized as God in scripture," let us note some of the scriptures referring to them as follows:

In Matthew 3:16, 17 we have reference to:

1. "Jesus;"
2. "The Spirit of God;"
3. And, "a voice from heaven saying, This is my beloved Son."

In Matthew 28:19 we have reference to:

1. "The . . . Father;"
2. "And . . . the Son;"
3. "And . . . the Holy Ghost."

In Luke 1:32, 35, 76 we have reference to:

1. "The Son of the Highest;"
2. "The power of the Highest;"
3. And, "the Highest."

In I Corinthians 12:4, 5, 6 we have reference to:

1. "The same Spirit;"
2. "And . . . the same Lord;"
3. "And . . . the same God."

In II Corinthians 13:14 we have reference to:

1. "The Lord Jesus Christ;"
2. "God;"
3. "And . . . the Holy Ghost."

In Romans 5:5, 6 we have reference to:

1. "God;"
2. "The Holy Ghost;"
3. And, "Christ."

In Acts 10:38 we have reference to:

1. "God;"
2. "Jesus;"

3. "The Holy Ghost."

In Titus 3:4, 5, 6 we have reference to:

1. "God;"
2. "The Holy Ghost;"
3. "Jesus Christ."

In Isaiah 61:1 we have reference to:

1. "The Spirit of the Lord God;"
2. "The Lord;"
3. And, "Me," Jesus (Luke 4:16-21).

In Isaiah 48:16 we have reference to:

1. "The Lord God;"
2. "And his Spirit;"
3. And, "Me."

In Isaiah 63:7, 9, 10 we have reference to:

1. "The Lord;"
2. "The angel of his presence;"
3. And, "his holy Spirit."

This triad could be multiplied indefinitely, but these suffice to show that scripture does speak of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Once a person realizes that "Elohim" includes an "us," then many statements in God's word, casually read over without revealing any special significance, become much more meaningful. As an example, in Genesis 48:15, 16 we have the words of Jacob as follows:

". . . God, before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac did walk,
the God which fed me . . . The angel which redeemed me . . ."

The casual reader would not see much in these words. Jacob's words reveal three distinct persons. They are as follows:

1. "God, before whom my fathers . . . did walk;"
2. "The God which fed me;"
3. And, "the Angel which redeemed me."

There are thus three distinct persons, under three personal names, and performing distinct works. "The God which fed me" and "the Angel who redeemed me" are each represented as possessed of what is peculiar to a divine person, and as standing on the same footing with the true God. Divine works are ascribed to each. They are also mentioned as the object of divine worship and as the source of blessing. Jacob invokes a

blessing from the three. Yet, the true God is the only object of worship. Scripture reveals to us that it is God, the Father, who leads us, that is, He is the one "before whom" we walk. It is the Son of God, as the Goel, "the Angel" who redeems. And, it is the Holy Spirit who comforts and furnishes us with spiritual food, and feeds us therewith.

Again, in Ecclesiastes 12:1 we read:

"Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth . . ."

The casual student of God's word would not see "the trinity of God" in this text either, since reference is made to "thy Creator." With the proper research material, however, it is interesting to note that the English word "Creator" is from a Hebrew word that is plural. Hence, "Creators." Merrill F. Unger so renders the word in his *Commentary on the Old Testament*, Volume I, "Ecclesiastes," page 1102. Keil and Delitzsch, in their *Commentary on the Old Testament*, Volume 6, Ecclesiastes, page 402, make a similar comment. A lot of people would have difficulty with "Creators," plural, but that fact harmonizes with the "us" within "Elohim."

The three, heretofore presented, and described variously, "are recognized as God in scripture." Notice as follows:

1. Of the Father, "God the Father" (II Peter 1:17), "God the Father" (John 6:27), "God the Father" (Galatians 1:1,3), "God the Father" (Philippians 2:11), "God the Father" (Titus 1:4), etc.
2. Of the Son, "the Word was God" (John 1:1), "My Lord and my God" (John 20:28), "O God...thou, Lord" (Hebrews 1:8,10), "the true God, and eternal life" (I John 5:20), etc.
3. Of the Holy Spirit, "lie to the Holy Ghost...thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God" (Acts 5:3,4), etc.

These "three are one in possessing the attributes of God." The attributes of God are those distinguishing characteristics true only of God, which no creature possesses. The attributes of God are eternal. No attribute of God is derived since that would make God dependent to that degree. No attribute of God is acquired since that would imply that God was at some time an imperfect being. His attributes coexist with His existence. Those attributes peculiar to Deity, and foreign to all creatures, are possessed by the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Notice as follows:

Eternality

1. The Father (Psalms 90:2);
2. The Son (Revelation 22:7, 12, 13, 16, 20);
3. The Holy Spirit (Hebrews 9:14).

Omniscience

1. The Father (Jeremiah 17:10);
2. The Son (Revelation 2:19,23);
3. The Holy Spirit (I Corinthians 2:11).

Omnipresence

1. The Father (Jeremiah 23:24);
2. The Son (Matthew 18:20);
3. The Holy Spirit (Psalms 139:7).

Holiness

1. The Father (Revelation 15:4);
2. The Son (Acts 3:14);
3. The Holy Spirit (Romans 9:1).

Truth

1. The Father (John 7:28);
2. The Son (Revelation 3:7);
3. The Holy Spirit (I John 5:6) .

Good

1. The Father (Luke 18:19; Psalms 119:68);
2. The Son (Matthew 20:15; John 10:11);
3. The Holy Spirit (Nehemiah 9:20).

"The three," who "are one in possessing the attributes of God," are also "one in the works ascribed to God." Notice as follows:

All three are involved in inspiration

1. The Father (II Timothy 3:16);
2. The Son (I Peter 1:10,11);
3. And, the Holy Spirit (II Peter 1:21).

All three possess power

1. The Father (I Peter 1:5);
2. The Son (II Corinthians 12:9);
3. And, the Holy Spirit (Romans 15:19).

All three are involved in the resurrection of Christ

1. The Father (Acts 2:24);

2. The Son (John 2:19);
3. And, the Holy Spirit (Romans 8:11).

All three are involved in creation

1. The Father (Nehemiah 9:6);
2. The Son (Hebrews 1:8,10);
3. And, the Holy Spirit (Job 26:13).

All three are involved in the creation of man

1. The Father (Genesis 2:7);
2. The Son (Colossians 1:16);
3. And, the Holy Ghost (Job 33:4).

All three are involved in the security of God's children

1. The Father (John 10:29);
2. The Son (John 10:28);
3. And, the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 1:13,14; 4:30).

All three indwell God's children

1. The Father (Ephesians 4:6);
2. The Son (Colossians 1:27);
3. And, the Holy Spirit (I Corinthians 6:19).

All three are involved in the authority for service

1. The Father (II Corinthians 3:5,6);
2. The Son (I Timothy 1:12);
3. And, the Holy Spirit (Acts 20:28).

All three are involved in the fellowship of God's children

1. The Father (I John 1:5-7);
2. The Son (I John 1:3);
3. And, the Holy Spirit (II Corinthians 13:14).

All three are involved in the resurrection of mankind

1. The Father (John 5:21);
2. The Son (John 5:28);
3. And, the Holy Spirit (Romans 8:11).

Thus far we have shown that the plural noun "Elohim," translated "God" and "gods," used in Genesis 1:1 of the God of creation consists of an "us" and "our." Hence a plurality. This plurality is brought out by other scriptures to be three distinct Persons, and not some plurality of excellence. The three are the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. All three, and no more and no less, are recognized as God. Therefore, all three are one in possessing the attributes of God. Moreover, all

three are said to be singularly involved in those major works which only God can do.

We come now to the point that "the three are so described in scripture that we are compelled to think of them as distinct persons." I purposely use the word distinct, and not separate. In other words, there are not three separate Gods to the extent that any one of the three is God to the exclusion of the other two. There is "one Lord." We believe in that unity as much as any one else, but believe also that the "one Lord" subsists in a plurality of persons. There are three eternal distinctions in the substance of God. Let us consider the Father and the Son:

As an example of this idea, consider John 1:1, which we expound more fully in the special study section under "the preexistence of the Son of God." John 1:1 clearly shows a distinction between two Persons, yet the two distinct Parties are one essence. "The Word" is One Person, and the God whom He "was with," or "faced" as the word "with" means, was another Person. Yet, the One whom "the Word faced" was "God", and "the Word" who faced Him was also "God." Hence, two distinct Persons, yet one essence. Some religious infidels, who deny the Deity of Christ, tell us that the definite article "the" does not occur in the original text before the word "God" which speaks of "the Word." Therefore, according to them, the omission of this article means that "the Word" was simply divine, or god-like, and not really "the God." Well, let them deal with this fact: In John 20:28 reference is made by Thomas to, "My Lord and my God." Scholars have abundantly testified that the definite article "the" does occur in the original text before both "Lord" and "God." Hence, literally the text says, "The Lord of me and the God of me."

When Christ was on earth, He said, ". . .Father. . .I come to thee. . ." (John 17:11,13). The words "I" and "thee" not only convey personality, but also demonstrate a scriptural distinction between two Parties. Other scriptures, and not a few, reveal the same distinction between two Parties. Notice a few:

1. "The Father (One) sent the Son (Another)" (I John 4:14);
2. "The Father (One) and the Son (Another)" (I John 2:22);
3. "God (One). . .his Son (Another)" (I John 5:9);
4. "This is my (One) beloved Son (Another)" (Matthew 3:17);
5. "His (One) only begotten Son (Another)" (John 3:16);
6. "The Father (One). . .hath sent me (Another)" (John 5:37), etc.

This distinction existed in eternity past, and in time during the Lord's earthly sojourn, and in time to come since the Lord's ascension into the heavens. In Galatians 4:4 we read, "But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son. . ." Thus, we have

"God...his Son." If "God sent forth his Son," He was "his Son" before being "sent forth." The same could be said of the wording of John 3:16 and I John 4:14. This distinction between the two existed before "the beginning" of time, and accords exactly with the truth of John 1:1,2. Hence, previous to "the beginning" of John 1:1, which is previous to the creation of "all things" (John 1:3), "the Word" was distinct from the "God" whom He faced, and both were "God."

When Christ was on the earth this distinction still existed. In John 16:28 Christ said, "I come forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again I leave the world, and go to the Father." On earth, we read of "the Father. . .me " (John 10:15), or "Father, I thank thee" (John 11:41), or "Father. . .me" (John 12:27), or "him. . .me" (John 12:45), or "me. . .my Father" (John 14:7), or "I. . .my Father" (John 14:12), etc.

In anticipation of His ascension into the heavens, Christ prayed, ". . .Father. . .I come to thee. . ." (John 17:11,13). The question is: Did the Son make it to the Father? Is there still someone in the heavens today, called the Son of God, who is distinct from the Father? Well, Peter wrote

". . .Jesus Christ. . .is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him." (I Peter 3:21,22).

The writer of the book of Hebrews describes exactly the same thing as follows:

"For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us" (Hebrews 9:24).

When John was inspired of God to write the book of Revelation in approximately 96 A.D., some 60 years after Christ's ascension into the heavens, "Jesus Christ" is still being distinguished from "God. . .his Father" (Revelation 1:5,6).

Christ was the Son of God before He was sent into the world, and was, previous to the incarnation, distinct from the Father (Galatians 4:4; John 1:1,2). While on earth, He is still the Son of God, and is distinct from the Father (Matthew 3:16,17). In the heavens today, He is still the Son of God (Acts 9:20), and is distinct from the Father (Acts 2:32,33).

The distinction between them, does not mean that they are separate. If they were separate, then One could be God with the exclusion of the other two. But, God is One. Yet He subsists in a plurality of Persons. Christ is said to be "the image of the invisible God" (Colossians 1:15),

that is "the express image of His person" (Hebrews 1:3). So exact was this "image" that the Son could say, "he that hath seen me hath seen the Father" (John 14:9).

The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are constantly named as separate Persons with specific operations said to be wrought by each. All three are called "God." All three possess the attributes of God, and are singularly said to be involved in those works that only God can do. A triune mode of existence cannot be doubted by an unprejudiced mind. Yet, it is equally true, God is essentially One essence. "The doctrine of the trinity" of God simply affirms that a Being may be singular in one sense, and plural in another. In the constitution of a human being there is conjunction of unity and plurality. The material and immaterial elements combine to form one individual. Each of these elements is essential to human existence in this sphere. If unity and plurality are both required in human existence, then why not unity and plurality in the case of divine existence? Thus, plurality and unity are not at variance.

If God be Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, the duties owing to God will be duties owing to that triune distinction, which must be paid accordingly; and whoever leaves any of these out of his concept of God, comes far short of honoring God perfectly, and of serving Him in proportion to the manifestation He has made of Himself.

There are three eternal distinctions in the substance of God. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are one God. Each has a peculiarity incommunal to the others. God is not without the others, yet each, with the others, is God. Later in this article, we purpose to comment on the idea of "one Lord."

Let us now consider an unusual text, Isaiah 6:3, as related to this subject matter. In a book entitled, THINGS IN WHICH IT IS IMPOSSIBLE FOR GOD TO LIE, reflecting the views of Jehovah's Witnesses, we read in an article entitled, "God a Person - or Three Persons in One God, Which?," as follows:

". . .the Trinitarians argue that the Old Testament. . . supports their teaching of. . .Trinity. . .Well, then, does their argument that the Trisagion (the mention of 'Holy' three times together) in Isaiah 6:3 proves the 'Trinity' hold good? Isaiah 6:3. . .says. . .'And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord. . .of hosts. . .Does that say that the Lord. . .is three Persons in One? Or does it say that there are three Lords or three Jehovahs? No!" (end quote, page 258).

"Elohim" is a plural noun, and consists of "us" (Genesis 1:1,26). We, however, learn from other scriptures that the "us" includes the

Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and that all three are recognized as God.

We mentioned earlier in this article that once a person realizes that "Elohim" includes an "us," that many statements in God's Word, casually read over without revealing any special significance, become much more corroborative of "the doctrine of the trinity of God." As illustrative of this, let us call attention to Isaiah 6:1-10, and in particular verse 3 which reads, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts."

I believe the thrice repeated "holy, holy, holy" refers to "the doctrine of the trinity of God." To say it is one thing. To prove it is quite another. Yet, the casual reader would probably not think of it at all as related to such doctrine.

Our proof that the thrice repeated "holy, holy, holy" refers to "the doctrine of the trinity of God" is deduced from a consideration of three things: One, the context of Isaiah 6:1-10; two, the scriptures taken from Isaiah 6:1-10 and quoted elsewhere; and, three, from the knowledge of what God's Word says elsewhere regarding this great matter.

The Jehovah's Witness, in the previous quote, completely overlook these areas of proof. Let us point out the facts that they so conveniently pass over as follows:

The context of Isaiah 6 reveals that a plurality exists within the name Jehovah. In Isaiah 6:8, the prophet wrote, "Also I heard the voice of the Lord (Jehovah), saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? . . ." Notice two facts: One, it was Jehovah's voice that the prophet heard. And, two, Jehovah referred to Himself by that plural pronoun "us," previously mentioned, in Genesis 1:26, 27; 3:22; and 11:7.

We may not, at this point, know that a trinity is intended, but other scriptures quoted from Isaiah 6, and applied, reveal that such is indeed the case.

For instance, we know that "the Lord," or Jehovah, is involved in Isaiah's prophecy, verses 3, 8. Isaiah stated that he "saw...the Lord," verse 1. John 12:40 is a quote from Isaiah 6:10. John 12:41 reads, "These things said Esaias, when he saw his glory, and spake of him." One thing is certain. The "him" of John 12:41 is none other than the Lord Jesus Christ. *The New International Version* of John 12:41 reads, "Isaiah said this because he saw Jesus' glory and spoke about him." Again, Acts 28:25-27 is a quote from Isaiah 6. In the prophecy, it was "the Lord," or Jehovah, who said, verse 8. But, in Acts 26:25, we read, ". . .Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet. . ." Thus we have as follows:

1. "The Lord," or Jehovah, consisting of an "us," verse 8;
2. The Lord Jesus Christ (John 12:41);
3. And, the Holy Spirit (Acts 28:25).

Another fact often overlooked is that the scene of Isaiah 6 took place in "the temple," verse 1. Is that of itself significant ? It is, when one remembers that in "the temple" there was something called "the holy of holies." Most people have never given that designation, "the holy of holies," any serious thought as to what the expression literally means, or refers to. Yet, the name itself is a fit descriptive of what it really is. "The holy of holies" is:

1. A specific place;
2. Where God dwelt among His people.

Thus, the name itself speaks of these two features. The first part of the designation, "the holy," speaks of the place itself. And, the second part, "of holies," speaks of the true and living God who dwells there. The "of holies" is plural, however, and harmonizes perfectly with the "us" of Isaiah 6:8, seen to consist of:

1. "The Lord," or Jehovah (Isaiah 6:3, 8);
2. The Lord Jesus Christ (Isaiah 6:1, 3; John 12:40, 41);
3. And, the Holy Spirit (Isaiah 6:8; Acts 28:25).

The inner part of the Jewish sanctuary was called "the holy of holies," that is, the Holy place of the Holy ones. The thrice repeated "holy, holy, holy" is not some kind of superlative. But, the scene of that vision is the holy place of the temple, and lies therefore in the very dwelling place and residence of the Holy ones.

Isaiah goes on to inform us that in "the temple" there was an angelic order called "seraphims," a plural noun (Isaiah 6:1, 2), with the "im" ending as in Elohim, cherubim, etc. The seraphs, from the root srp, to burn, are "burning spirits," that is, angelic creatures of fire, no doubt symbolizing their purity, and godlikeness. In Hebrews 12:29 God is referred to as "a consuming fire," and in Hebrews 1:7 His angelic "ministers a flame of fire."

We are given some features of the seraphs. Each seraph "had six wings," verse 2. With "twain," or two, as the word means, each seraph "covered his face," in awe and reverence that dared not look on the glory of God. "With twain" also "he covered his feet," a token of selfless service in the presence of the Lord. And, "with twain he did fly," that is he was hovering.

Their main activity was adoration of God in a continuous antiphonal chant in which, Isaiah said, "one cried" zealously "unto another" (Isaiah 6:3). I say continuous because, according to scholars, the verbs are in the imperfect tense, describing what they were doing continually. There is no record in God's word of angels singing. Thus,

we are told, "one cried unto another, and said." The words offered were in celebration of the matchless holiness of God. Hence, "holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts" (Isaiah 6:3).

In Revelation 15:4, God the Father "only" is "holy". "Yet, the Lord Jesus Christ is called "the Holy One" in Acts 3:14. And, the Spirit is often referred to as "the holy spirit" (Acts 10:38). The three in the one Godhead are all holy. Hence, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts."

The effect of the seraphs chant caused "the posts of the door" of "the temple" to be "moved," or to shake, "and the house was filled with smoke" (Isaiah 6:4). The expression "the posts of the door" is given in the A.S.V. as "the foundation of the threshold." The "smoke" no doubt came from what was being consumed on "the alter," verses 5-7.

When Isaiah "saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up" (Isaiah 6:1), he recognized his own sinfulness, and that of his people. When one sees the Lord, in all His glory and holiness, he sees also his own sinfulness. Compare Job 42:5, 6.

The "unclean lips" of Isaiah, and that of his people (Isaiah 6:5), resulted from the deeper impurity of the heart (Matthew 15:18). One of the seraphs, not allowed to touch the sacrifice, "had taken with the tongs from off the alter...a live coal" and "laid it upon" the "mouth" of Isaiah so as to cleanse. Compare Isaiah 4:4. Once cleansed, the prophet is accepted, verse 7, and commissioned, verses 8, 9. Thus, Isaiah, in contrast to Uzziah and his people who shamed God, was prepared to deliver the message of God.

In conclusion, notice a summary of the following facts:

1. The place, in "the temple," where "the holy of holies" is, the place where the thrice holy God dwells;
2. The repetition, three times, "Holy, holy, holy;"
3. The One Jehovah of hosts to whom it was addressed, included the plural pronoun "us;"
4. In Isaiah, it was "Jehovah of hosts." In John's Gospel, it was the Lord Jesus Christ. And, in Acts, the "Jehovah of hosts" who so spake was "the Holy Spirit."

Accordingly, in the book of Revelation, "the Lamb" is represented as sitting upon the Divine throne. He is associated with the Father, and is the object of the equal homage and praise of the saints and angels. And, the scene in Isaiah 6, is transferred into chapter 4 of Revelation. The "living creatures" of John, the seraphs of the prophet, are incessantly heard in the same chant, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come" (Revelation 4:8).

Therefore, the proof of the presence of the Trinity of God in Isaiah 6:1-10 is not based solely on the "Trisagion," or "the mention of 'holy' three times together" in Isaiah 6:3, as the Russellites charge. It is based on the total information given in that chapter, and by a consideration of other verses quoted from that chapter, and applied, as we have shown. So be it.

Now let us ask: How does the trinity of God square with the words of Deuteronomy 6:4, which reads, "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord"? Moreover, how does the trinity of God square with the truth of John 1:18, which in part reads, "No man hath seen God at any time. . ."? In other words, if "No man hath seen God," and men have seen the Lord Jesus Christ, how can He be God? Does the trinity of God militate against Deuteronomy 6:4 and John 1:18 ? Let us see.

Deuteronomy 6:4 reads as follows:

"Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord."

We commented briefly on this text in the article, "the trinity of God." In a book entitled, *A Guide to the Religions of America*, copyright 1955, edited by Leo Rosten from the celebrated Look Magazine series, there are presented 19 distinguished articles explaining the beliefs of various religious denominations. One such article is entitled, "What Is a Unitarian?" That article was written by a Karl M. Chworowsky, who was born in Riga, Russia, in 1887. He was raised with a Lutheran background, but joined the Unitarian church in 1935. He was a Unitarian minister for a number of years, and was noted for many written sermons and reviews.

On page 141, the question was posed, "What is a Unitarian?" Mr. Chworowsky's reply, in part, was:

"In general, a Unitarian is a religious person. . .who believes in one God - not the Trinity. . ." (end quote).

On page 142, in answer to the question, "How did the name 'Unitarian' arise?", Mr. Chworowsky said in part as follows:

"The name 'Unitarian' was first used in the sixteenth century - for certain Protestant dissenters from the dogma of the Trinity" (end quote).

In June of 1952, Look Magazine began to publish a series of articles on the major religious groups in the United States. Each chapter, presenting the basic views of certain religious denominations, was presented in a question and answer format, with the questions being those of an ordinary person not affiliated with the particular group in

question. A writer was sought who was qualified to reflect the views of the group in question. The Unitarian church selected as its spokesman, Mr. Karl M. Chworowsky. His answers ought to be considered in the light of Bible truth, for they adequately reflect the views of the Unitarian Church.

On pages 141-148, 23 questions were posed to the Unitarian Church, and answered with great clarity and simplicity by Mr. Chworowsky. We already know that the name Unitarian was descriptive of a class of people who were "dissenters from the dogma of the Trinity." Six other questions posed to Unitarians, and answered by Mr. Chworowsky are as follows:

1. "Do Unitarians believe the Bible is divinely inspired and infallible?"
2. "What do Unitarians believe about Jesus?"
3. "Do Unitarians deny the divinity of Christ?"
4. "Do Unitarians deny the virgin birth?"
5. "What do Unitarians teach about sin?"
6. And, "do Unitarians believe in salvation?"

"Do Unitarians believe the Bible is divinely inspired and infallible?" This question is posed on page 143, and answered thus:

"No. The doctrine of 'revelation,' of the absolute and indisputable authority of the Bible, is alien to our faith and teaching" (end quote).

One thing that amazes me is this: If one rejects "the absolute and indisputable authority of the Bible," why quote it in an effort to support a religious view? Either the scriptures are reliable, or they are not. Why pick and choose from them, ignoring the context, and the whole of what is said elsewhere in God's word regarding the same subject matter, in order to prove a point, while rejecting "the absolute and indisputable authority of the Bible"?

Mr. Chworowsky's answers to the other five questions all reflect his answer to the first. He rejects the idea that "the Bible is divinely inspired and infallible." Therefore, all of his answers, especially to the other five we have singled out, are flatly contradictory to God's word.

"What do Unitarians believe about Jesus?" This question was posed on page 143, and answered thus:

"Unitarians love the person and message of the great Galilean. They consider him one of the rarest of personalities that have walked among men. Jesus is one of the greatest religious, and

Unitarians endorse his prophetic preaching, his moral teaching, and his spiritual insight. But Unitarians of all times have stubbornly refused to 'make a god' of one who was so utterly human in all his words and deeds, and who once even protested against being called 'good.'"(end quote).

On page 142, he also said:

". . .Unitarians refuse to acknowledge Jesus as their 'Lord and God'. . ." (end quote).

These statements remind me of those who rendered mere lip service to the claims of Christ, of whom He said, "This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me" (Matthew 15:8). Notice again, how Mr. Chworowsky uses Christ's own words to disprove His Deity, stating that He "even protested against being called 'good'," yet he denies that "the Bible is divinely inspired and infallible."

"Do Unitarians deny the divinity of Christ?" This question was posed on page 144, and answered thus:

"Unitarians do not believe that Jesus is either the Messiah of Jewish hope or Christian fantasy. They do not believe he is 'God incarnate' or the 'second person in the Trinity' or the final arbiter at the end of time who 'shall come to judge the quick and the dead'" (end quote).

"Do Unitarians deny the Virgin birth?" This question was posed on page 144, and a short answer was given thus:

"Unitarians repudiate the dogma or doctrine of the Virgin Birth."

Now listen to this master piece! "What do Unitarians teach about sin?" This question was posed on page 144, and the answer in part was as follows:

"Unitarians recognize the evil in our world and man's responsibility for much of it. They do not agree with the Christian doctrine that holds that the disobedience of Adam. . . has so completely incapacitated man for anything good that only God's 'grace'. . .can save him. Because of this total depravity of man, supposedly, God sent His only begotten son into the world, to die for sinful men in order that. . .

whosoever believeth on Him may have everlasting life. Such doctrine Unitarians find offensive, unbiblical, even immoral" (end quote).

That "such doctrine" is "offensive" to Unitarians is one thing. But, that "such doctrine" is considered by them to be "unbiblical" is quite another. Is "such doctrine" really "unbiblical"? Let us see:

1. The Unitarian view: ". . .supposedly, God sent His only begotten Son into the world. . ."
2. The Bible: ". . .God sent. . .his son into the world. . ."(John 3:17).

1. The Unitarian view: ". . .supposedly. . .to die for sinful men. . ."
2. The Bible: ". . .Christ died for the ungodly. . .While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us"(Romans 5:6, 8).

What Mr. Chworowsky called a "Christian doctrine," and "unbiblical" is just exactly what the Bible does teach! His statements, as we have demonstrated, are at direct variance with positive statements in God's word. But, again we ask: If one rejects "the absolute and indisputable authority of the Bible," why would he argue that something is "unbiblical?" Unitarians like to leave the impression that they have not rejected the Bible, by quoting isolated parts of it to support their view, when, in reality, they deny just about every basic doctrine it teaches. This method of deception is attractive to some. It gives the semblance of religiosity, yet is liberal enough to allow the individual to do what "is right in his own eyes." A lot of people want a religion of that sort.

"Do Unitarians believe in salvation?" This question was posed on page 144, and answered thus on pages 144-145:

"Unitarians believe in 'salvation by character.' They hold that as man develops a society where moral values and spiritual insights are treasured, man will find the road that leads to peace, justice, and brotherhood. Man at his best is the surest proof that he needs no God-man Savior to die for him and for the sins of the world. He needs all the help that good education, noble example, and friendly cooperation can give him. God's help is not likely to come to those who cast all their burdens on the Lord" (end quote).

I am not offended by the Unitarians denying "the trinity of God." The truth of the matter is: They deny just about every Bible doctrine. Their statements, in answering the various questions posed, are in direct contrast to the word of God. In this last answer, Mr. Chworowsky lauds the idea that "man at his best is the surest proof that he needs no God-man Savior to die for sin," yet inspired testimony reads, "every man at his best is altogether vanity," (Psalms 39:5).

They have a mock reverence for the Bible, and for Jesus, yet deny His deity, His virgin birth, His death for sinners, His bodily resurrection, His triumphant second coming, etc. They deify reason, reject God's word, and manifest great incipience, and arrogant pride, in claiming that man, by his own effort and merit, is able to save himself. I could spend a great deal of time showing what Unitarians believe on a variety of subjects. But, when one denies the Deity of Christ, and openly rejects God's redemptive plan of saving sinners through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, without human merit, offered to all men in Christ's substitutionary death, all else is unimportant in the light of eternity.

"Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord." The words "one Lord" do not deny "the trinity of God," nor the deity of Christ. The word "one" of that passage is from the Hebrew "echad." A number of scholarly men have testified that this word does not mean absolute unity, and, if that was the intended point, an entirely different Hebrew word conveying absolute unity was available and would have been used by the inspired writer. Merrill F. Unger, a Hebrew scholar, writes as follows:

". . .The Lord [Jehovah] our God [Elohim] is one Lord, the one ehad, expressing compound unity, not yahid, meaning a single one. . .He is the one and only God, of one eternal, uncreated essence, yet manifested tripersonally as scripture shows" (end quote, *Unger's Commentary on the Old Testament*, Volume I, "Deuteronomy," page 242).

Thus, according to Mr. Unger, the "one" of Deuteronomy 6:4 conveys "compound unity" rather than "a single word," which idea would necessitate an altogether different word.

Keil and Delitzsch, in their 10 volume *Commentary on the Old Testament*, Volume I, "The Fifth Book of Moses," pages 322,323, make exactly the same distinction as Mr. Unger. Walter R. Martin, in his book *The Kingdom of the Cults*, "Jehovah's Witnesses and the Watchtower," page 61, testifies as do Mr. Unger, Mr. Keil and Mr. Delitzsch, as follows:

"The term Echod, 'One' in Hebrew, does not denote absolute unity in many places throughout the Old Testament, and often it definitely denotes Composite Unity, which argues for the Trinity of Deity (Jehovah)" (end quote).

In another book, *Jehovah of the Watchtower*, written by Walter Martin and Norman Klann, pages 125-128, they testify to exactly the same thing. Not one of the five Hebrew scholars was of the opinion that the word "one" in Deuteronomy 6:4 militated against "the trinity of God." In Genesis 2:24 we read:

"Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh."

Here, the word "one" is the same Hebrew word used in Deuteronomy 6:4. This word speaks of composite unity, not absolute unity. Two persons cannot be "one," as "a single one." In John 17:22 the Lord prayed:

"And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one."

The pronouns "them" and "they" speak of a plurality of persons. The Lord desired "that," a plurality of persons, "they may be one," which is impossible if the word "one" conveys absolute unity, a single one.

Those who deny "the trinity of God" are certainly going to interpret the word "one" in Deuteronomy 6:4 so as to make God's word conform to their unbelief. But, neither scholarship, in defining the word "echod," nor God's word where it is used, gives them any relief. In Numbers 13:23 we read:

"And they came unto the brook of Eschol, and cut down from thence a branch with one cluster of grapes, and they bare it between two upon a staff; and they brought of the pomegranates, and of the figs."

Here, reference is made to "one cluster." This is the word "one" of Deuteronomy 6:4. There were many grapes on this cut branch, yet it is called "one cluster of grapes." This certainly cannot be absolute unity. Arno C. Gaebelin, in his work *The Annotated Bible*, Volume I, "The Pentateuch," writes of the word "one" in Deuteronomy 6:4 as follows:

"It is often used by Jews and Unitarians to deny the three persons of the Godhead. The Hebrew word 'echod'...however, excludes forever such a denial, for it means a compound unity. The Hebrew has another word which expresses exactly what Jews and Unitarians, who reject the three persons in the Godhead, believe. It is the word 'yochid'; this has the meaning of a single one" (end quote, page 397).

God is "one," but subsists in three distinct persons, yet there is "one" essence. As an example, in John 1:1 there is a distinction between two parties. One party is "the word." The other party is the "God" whom He "was with," or "faced," as the word "with" means. Yet, both parties are the same essence for both are identified as "God."

I believe in the unity of God as much as anyone, but that God subsists in a plurality of Persons, three to be exact, no less and no more, is that which accords with the guideline of scripture. God is "one." Yet, He subsists in a personality which is threefold, indicated by relationship as Father and Son, by a mode of being as Spirit, and by the distinct parts taken by the Godhead in the work of redemption. There is union, but there is distinction. There are three eternal distinctions in the substance of God. The distinctions are marked out by certain properties peculiar to each Person, and not communicable. These properties are either external or internal, the internal relating to the modes of subsistence in the divine essence, and the external relating to the mode of revelation in the world.

The Second Person in the Godhead, the Lord Jesus Christ, is the revealer of God, as in the manifestation of God to men. One of the biggest mistakes in presenting the Second Person in the Godhead is to fail to present the right estimate of His Person. It is in the work of redemption that the distinctions between the Persons in the Godhead clearly are set forth: "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself" (II Corinthians 5:19). And, "God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (II Corinthians 4:6).

In John 1:18, we read, "No man hath seen God at any time. . ." Some use this statement to deny the Deity of Christ arguing that since "No man hath seen God at any time," but men have seen Jesus Christ, that Jesus Christ cannot be God. John 1:18, in its entirety, makes it perfectly clear that the God which "no man hath seen" is God the Father. Notice the text:

"No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him."

The One "no man hath seen," and who was "declared," or "led forth" by the son, is God the Father. Therefore, I positively know that when God assumed various forms in the Old Testament, and appeared to man under certain circumstances, He did not do such as God the Father. I believe that every time God appeared to man in human form He did so in the second person in the Godhead, the Lord Jesus Christ. In John 5:37 Christ said again:

"And the Father himself, which hath sent me, hath borne witness of me. Ye have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape."

The One whose "voice" has not been "heard," and whose "shape" has not been "seen," is God the Father, just as in John 1:18. Yet, Christ, who revealed God, said, ". . . he that hath seen me hath seen the Father. . ." (John 14:9).

Jesus Christ was, and is God in the highest sense in which the word can be understood. In the New Testament, when He took on Him human flesh, and walked among men, He enabled men to see God in His attributes. He only was made manifest through the son. In The Old Testament, God appeared to men, in various forms, as human form, or as the angel of Jehovah, etc., and spoke to them. But, these preincarnate manifestations of God were in the second person in the Godhead, the Lord Jesus Christ, according to the truth of John 1:18; 5:37; 14:9; Matthew 11:27.

In Genesis 18, 19 there is an interesting story that reveals this truth. In Genesis 18:1, we read in the *American Standard Version*, as follows:

"And Jehovah appeared unto him by the oaks of Mamre, as he sat in the tent door in the heat of the day."

Now notice: "Jehovah appeared unto him," that is Abraham, yet "no man hath seen God" the Father "at any time."

In Genesis 18:2 we read:

"and he lifted up his eyes and looked, and, lo, three men stood over against him: and when he saw them, he ran to meet them from the tent door, and bowed himself to the earth."

Now notice: The "Jehovah" who "appeared" was in human form, and was seen to be one of "three men."

As the story unfolds, two of the three, who appeared in human form, departed "and went toward Sodom," verses 16, 22. These two are

identified in Genesis 19:1, A.S.V., in the words, "And the two angels came to Sodom at even. . ." In Genesis 19, these two are still in human form, and are perceived to be "men" by "the men of Sodom," verses 4, 5. Back in Genesis 18, one of the three remains with Abraham, and converses with him, and this one is identified as Jehovah Himself, verses 1, 10, 13, 17, 33.

In Genesis 18:9, "And they said. . .," but in Genesis 18:10, "And he said. . ." The "he" of this verse said, "I will certainly return unto thee according to the time of life, and lo, Sarah thy wife shall have a son. . .," verse 10. Although out of sight, Sarah overheard the conversation between this "he," one of the three who appeared in human form, and Abraham. Verses 11, 12 give us a reason as to why Sarah laughed in overhearing the conversation. This "he," who conversed with Abraham, knew that Sarah had laughed, and identified Himself as "Jehovah," verses 13, 14. In verse 15, "Sarah denied" it, but Jehovah, in human form, manifested His omniscience, and said, "nay; but thou didst laugh," verse 15. In verse 16, the other two in human form, identified in Genesis 19:1 as "the two angels" (A.S.V.), left. Abraham accompanied them a space, as was customary to do, verse 16. They were headed "toward Sodom," verses 16, 22, and upon arriving at "Sodom" (Genesis 19:1) testified that "the Lord hath sent us to destroy it" (Genesis 19:13). While they were gone, and Abraham with them (Genesis 18:16), the Lord desires to disclose to Abraham what His intention was concerning Sodom, verses 17-22. In revealing His purpose to Abraham, Abraham asked, "wilt thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked?", verse 23. The conversation between Jehovah and Abraham regarding that question is taken up in verses 24-32, after which we read:

"And the Lord (Jehovah) went his way, as soon as he had left communing with Abraham: and Abraham returned unto his place," verse 33.

It was Jehovah who appeared in human form to Abraham, along with two angels. They were seen by Abraham, and conversed with Abraham. "No man hath seen God" the Father "at any time" (John 1:18), nor "heard his voice at any time" (John 5:37). But, since the trinity of God is a scriptural idea, and Abraham saw and conversed with Deity, we believe that it was the second person in the Godhead, the Lord Jesus Christ, who appeared for He is ever the Revealer of Deity (Matthew 11:27; John 1:1, 2, 14, 18; 5:37; 14:9).

Did Abraham see and converse with Deity? We believe that he did, and that fact does not militate against John 1:18, or John 5:37, since there is another in the Godhead, of the same essence, who reveals the Father.

Thus, in the destruction of Sodom, we read:

"Then the Lord (Jehovah) rained. . .brimstone and fire from the Lord (Jehovah) out of heaven" (Genesis 19:24).

Notice: "The Lord. . .from the Lord." No wonder Deuteronomy 6:4 reads, "The Lord (Jehovah) our God (Elohim) is one Lord (Jehovah)."

We have Jehovah appearing in human form in Genesis 18, and being seen of man. Later in this writing we discuss "the angel of Jehovah," which involves other preincarnate manifestations of Jehovah to man. Also, in discussing Philippians 2:6-8, under the special studies section, we show that the second Person in the Godhead assumed a "form," and was perceived, before the creation of man, to be "God" by purely spiritual intelligences.