Isaiah - Commentaries by Clifford Henry Brown

Jesus Is Jehovah, 1. Jehovah-Jesus, the Creator

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Early in the history of the professing church of God, a grave and significant controversy arose as to the Person of Christ. This came to a head early in the fourth century. Emperor Constantine called a council at Nice in Bithynia in the year 325. A powerful defender of the faith came forward in the person of the great Athanasius, later bishop of Alexandria, who was used of God to turn the tide of the conference in favor of an uncompromising defense of the absolute deity of Christ. His opponent was a certain Arius, presbyter in the church at Alexandria. As the result of the latter's insistent denial of the deity of Christ, the term "Arianism" became a synonym for the blasphemy of reducing the Christ of God to the stature of a creature — "the greatest of creatures, but not equal to the Father."1

In addition to Athanasius, some of the other eminent church fathers down through the ages held and taught the deity of Christ. Among such we might list Irenaeus, Chrysostom and Augustine.2

Down through the church's history many sects, parties and denominations have arisen who were of Arian persuasion, as opposed to what is commonly called "orthodoxy," which word means simply "right doctrine." Today the most militant and aggressive of all such Arian groups is the one which takes the name of "Jehovah's Witnesses." The present-day organization is the offshoot of a movement started some ninety years ago by a C. T. Russell, later superseded by J. T. Rutherford, and now headed by N. H. Knorr.

The whole Jehovah's Witness credo may be said to be bifocal. The Witnesses have selected one passage of Scripture in the Old Testament and one passage in the New, to which they make frequent reference in their discussions, preachments and propaganda. We would refer to Isaiah 43:10-12 in the Old Testament and John 1:1-13 in the New.

Before discussing the above references, we would call attention to a helpful device used in the familiar King James Bible. When translating the Hebrew word "Yahwe" or "Jehovah," they use all large and small capital letters and render it "LORD."3 Thus, wherever we read "LORD," we know the word in the Hebrew was "Jehovah," which means "essential existence—self-existing." The Hebrew word "Elohim" is consistently rendered "God" and means "supreme power, as in creation."

Bearing these distinctions in mind, let us read now Isaiah 43:10-12.

"Ye are My witnesses, saith the LORD [Jehovah], and My servant whom I have chosen; that ye may know and believe Me, and understand that I am He: before Me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after Me. I, even I, am the LORD [Jehovah]; and beside Me there is no saviour. I have declared, and have saved, and I have showed, when there was no strange god among you: therefore ye are My witnesses, saith the LORD [Jehovah], that I am God."

A parallel passage follows in chapter 44:

"Thus saith the LORD [Jehovah] the King of Israel, and his Redeemer the LORD [Jehovah] of hosts; I am the first, and I am the last; and besides Me there is no God" (vs. 6).

Now verse 8:

"Fear ye not, neither be afraid: have not I told thee from that time, and have declared it? ye are even My witnesses. Is there a God besides Me? yea, there is no God; I know not any."

Remember, as we read these portions of the prophet Isaiah, that there were no chapter divisions in the original document. Isaiah is here occupied with calling the attention of Israel to the folly of idolatry. If we read right on to chapter 45:11-12, we find:

"Thus saith the LORD [Jehovah], the Holy One of Israel, and his Maker, Ask Me of things to come concerning My sons, and concerning the work of My hands command ye Me. I have made the earth, and created man upon it: I, even My hands, have stretched out the heavens, and all their host have I commanded."

Now to this add Isaiah 37:16.

"O LORD [Jehovah] of hosts, God of Israel, that dwellest between the cherubim, Thou art the God, even Thou alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth: Thou hast made heaven and earth."

Now it is as clear as language can make it that the One who calls Himself "the LORD [Jehovah]," beside whom is no God, is the One who "made the earth, and created man upon it." Likewise He

"stretched out the heavens, and" commanded "all their host."

Let us then turn to the New Testament for enlightenment as to who this "LORD [Jehovah]" is who

"made the earth, and created man upon it" and "stretched out the heavens."

In John 1:13, we find ourselves at the second focal point of Jehovah's Witnesses' effort to demote the Christ of God to the status of a creature. We quote:

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made.”

Putting, then, these statements from Isaiah alongside those from John, we have the following startling parallel:

“Thus saith the LORD [Jehovah]...I have made the earth, and created man upon it: I...have stretched out the heavens, and all their host have I commanded” (Isaiah 45:11-12).

“All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made” (John 1:3).

Surely any unprejudiced reader of the above citations must feel compelled to the conclusion that

Jesus is Jehovah.

Thus we can see that the two major Scripture citations of the Jehovah’s Witnesses’ propaganda are mutually destructive of the Witnesses’ Arian attack on the Person of Christ. That the Creator of the earth and man upon it was the work of the “Logos,” the “Word,” the Christ of God, is so unequivocal that nothing less than blind infatuation with an Arian-inspired rationalization can escape seeing and owning it.

As a further attestation of Jesus’ creatorship, let us note the following parallels. We shall compare Jeremiah 10:10-16 with Colossians 1:12-17:

“The LORD [Jehovah] is the true God, He is the living God, and an everlasting King [or (margin), King of eternity]:...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. . . . The LORD [Jehovah] of hosts is His name.”

“Giving thanks unto the Father...who . . . hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son [or (margin), Son of His love]: . . . who is the image of the invisible God, . . . for by Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible....All things were created by Him, and for Him: And He is before all things, and by Him all things consist.”

The Apostle Peter speaks of those who “wrest...the...Scriptures, unto their own destruction” (2 Peter 3:16). No better example of this truth could be given than by citing the manner in which the Jehovah’s Witnesses wrest the Scriptures in their fallacious rendering of John 1:1. We quote:

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was a god.”

The unwarranted and gratuitous insertion of the indefinite article before the word “god” in the third clause of this sentence shows an utter disregard of the context and is, moreover, at variance with the best scholarship of the ages, both Catholic and Protestant. Not one of the reputable translations that have appeared during the past one hundred years has had the effrontery to insert the indefinite article and thus render it “a god.” It would seem the Witnesses got their cue for this vulgarism from Benjamin Wilson’s Emphatic Diaglott, published in 1864, a work filled with gross errors and misrepresentations. In 1926 Wilson’s translation found a rival in another of similar irresponsible character, The Concordant Version of the Sacred Scriptures by Adolph E. Knock of Los Angeles. Both became very popular with the Witnesses because they were both in agreement in denying the deity of our Lord.4

Now, having vitiated this statement as to Christ’s being God and having reduced Him to the level of “a god,” the Witnesses are willing to accept Him as the creator of all things. But we shall see, as we follow on in our study, that such a view is in stubborn contradiction to many other statements as to the Person of our Lord.

No, the Word of God is crystal clear:

Jesus-Jehovah is the Creator God.

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