

## Unfinished Business

Herman Hoeh—April 1994

Some of you I have known for a long time, some I've known for 40 years. Mr. Billingsley hasn't changed that much other than spiritually in 40 years. Some of us perhaps have changed more. But it's good to see some we knew years ago in Modesto, Visalia, or Fresno in particular, and some have moved into other nearby areas. In a sense we have had about a generation and a half that some have been in the congregation or children who have grown up.

I would like to make just a few personal comments. I probably wouldn't be here if it were not International Night. I haven't been in our own local congregation now for last few times and I'm scheduled somewhere else next time, but I did feel that it would be appropriate since I am essentially internationally oriented. I was very happy to meet a gentleman here who spent the bulk of his youth and mature years in the People's Republic of Romania.

I think we don't realize how many different kinds of people we have in God's Church. We look at each other and we may see differences, but we have people who are the native population in Alaska and Canada, or in South America we have our literature translated from English to Spanish to (inaudible). For example, in South America we have people who are Shan and Karen

In south Asia we have one man who is Bonabon and I have never yet found a congregation who knows where Bonabons live. They don't any longer live in their homeland. A Bonabon is a Polynesian who came from Ocean Island and they sold essentially the agricultural riches of Ocean Island and all moved away.

We have people of some of the smallest groups and some of the largest groups. We have peoples from different parts of Africa whose tribal identity I can't begin to comment on. We have various minor population groups in Europe and certainly in Asia and South Asia.

We have individuals now from the Baltic countries, and that leads me to an important news item, which crossed my desk Friday, rather Thursday, excuse me. We came up here early Friday. I want to thank Mr. and Mrs. Gordon Emerson for the opportunity to become acclimatized to this area last night, and now we are in the great San Joaquin Valley.

Just before coming up, there are three new countries that at a reasonable time in the future are going to be added to the European Common Market. I do not know how many of you have been reading

that, and the negotiations, of course, have not been nearly as important as the winter Olympics.

They are Finland, Sweden and Austria; Norway presents a problem, but those three have made adequate agreements so they shall be added at an appropriate time to the present 12 of the new European Union.

The most likely, apart from the question of Norway, the most likely other country to be added before the end of this decade will be Hungary, which is quite understandable, because if Austria comes in Hungary cannot be far behind. Culturally tied to the West, the Hungarians have always prospered if Central Europe prospered.

So, that will mean, at least for the near future, 15 nations in Western Europe and Central Europe making a new union there, and opening up opportunities for the Church to communicate far more readily than we have been able to do before.

In an international night such as this, I hope we will all appreciate the breadth of the accomplishments of the work that people have done who have devoted themselves, beginning in the middle of the 1930s, to a task that they never dreamed it would get this far.

\*\*\*\*\*

I maybe the oldest surviving student in the Church from Ambassador College. I met a lady two years ago at the Feast of Tabernacles—it's not quite two, a year and a fraction, a year and a half—who was baptized in the year I was born, 1928. She's been a member for a long time. She's a very sensible person, she recognizes something we all need to recognize; that there will be different perspectives in different administrations, different perspectives of an administration, over time. But the Church is meant to be one, not to be divided in terms of competitive groups. The more we become divided, the more any group becomes divided, the less likely there will be an effective accomplishment of the goals of such institutions.

She said to me, when we were at the Eugene Festival of Tabernacles, some year and a half ago, that the most important thing to recognize is that those differences to some extent represent our spiritual maturity, but do not have to represent a relationship in which we think we have a contact with Christ, but cut ourselves off from the brethren.

I made it plain in a sermons that has, let us say, made its rounds in the underground. We have to realize—this was last autumn at the Feast of

Tabernacles—we have to realize that no human family—husband and wife or parents and children—always agree at every point on every thing.

But this does not mean that if the decision has been made, at the direction of the family, should go in that direction; that those who may not have concurred necessarily must leave simply because they don't agree. *That simply make no sense!*

There is a time, of course, when we are dealing with a question of the tragedies of family abuse. We're not dealing with that, we're dealing with the experience in a family or in a church in which we should grow and mature and learn how to cooperate and to recognize that there are differences in one another—as Paul said—first of wives to their husbands. “Wives,” he said, “submit to your husbands as to the Lord.” And then at the same time, Paul said that “we should submit one to another.”

The Government of God in the Church should be like that as also in the home.

But there have to be decisions made, and there has to be leadership. So, in this world in which we live, let's share the view this evening of the wide experiences of so many people who have been called to understand some of the marvelous Truths that were presented in, I would say, was in a song of significant insight that you have just heard sung.

Some points of which some are forgetting, but perhaps you should recall the words that you just heard.

Now, what we want to look at today, I thought we should entitle: *Unfinished Business*. It's not to be about business, it will be about the fact that:

- the work of the Church is not yet complete.
- the teachings of the Church are not yet complete
- the goals of the Church are not yet all attained

Anyone who thinks that he or she came to the Church—or came in some way—because we had found all there is to know and any variation from that will simply not be here; whether it be one month or one year from now.

In 1974 a gentleman sharing a Bible study with the then Pastor General said, ‘If I did not agree—speaking of Himself—100% with the Church, I wouldn't be here.’ I turned to my wife and said, ‘He's not going to be here a year from now.’

Any person, anywhere who says, ‘I would not be here if I didn't agree 100% might just as well leave today,’ because that's impossible.

Has any husband ever found a wife who will agree with him 100%? Let's turn it around, I'm speaking now for my life! Has any wife found a husband who would agree with her 100%? The relationship of Christ to the Church is a relationship that is a husband/wife. So, we learn from experience.

But it's very important that we don't make sudden emotional decisions and divorce ourselves from the leadership of Christ. The Church is a group of people who have been gathered together for a particular purpose and goal, one of which is to function as a wife in a marriage. So, the Church is pictured as a Bride and Christ is pictured as the Husband to be.

In a sense, Paul describes the relationship even now as having been, let's say, reached that stage that in American society we would say there has been an agreed upon date for the marriage. So that when Christ returns it will be completed for those who are in the Church. But even now we are to have a relationship that bespeaks the relationship of Mary to Joseph, not to be involved and to do other things unbecoming of someone who is devoted.

If Christ is head of the Church, then who are we to go somewhere else? It's just that simple! This is basic to the problems of divorce in this world, basic to the problems of the whole history of Christian divisions for centuries.

So, what I should like to do today is not to explain a particular subject as a doctrine—since I'm not the local pastor here, and that would be, in my judgment, the responsibility of the pastors in the churches—but to explain, if you please, how I approach some things that have been difficult for both some individuals, ministers, wives, young people, older people in the Church and some things for others have been simple or clear.

My job does include trying to explain—perhaps from a little different point of view—some things that are not explained always in the traditional way some of you grew up. So, it is important that we take a look, and the best way that I can do is to give us a perspective as to how to look at some of the more recent changes that have occurred in understanding.

If we're going to do so, there are two points we should bear in mind. We'll start out and says this:

1. you must clearly know what it is that you think you do understand and not be muddled
2. then you must carefully listen to what is being officially presented

What you know may be a bit muddled, so you will need to examine that, and what is officially presented is not always without being some times a

bit muddled. That's because human beings do not always understand that the most important criterion in explaining something to another is to be sure that you understand the other's point of view.

For example: the Church today commonly has asked you to understand what it is faith. There was a time that emphasis was that the Church wanted to understand clearly what you were thinking so that we could explain to you your perspective and then show what you didn't fully and clearly understand.

The one puts the burden on the Church, the other puts the burden on you. The former view comes from the result that the leadership of the Church was trained in advertising, trained in knowing how to write and communicate, and to do so you must understand the other person's point of view every bit as much as your own.

Theologians are those who are trained in theology do not operate on this premise because they don't write books for pedestrians. They write books for each other. They explain it to one another. I want you to understand that, because then you will better understand why some things may not seem to be clear.

The first thing you want to understand is whether you know clearly what it is that you have come to think, on the basis of reading what is in this book called Holy Scripture.

I still have my little Bible, by the way. What is important then is also to carefully listen to what is being presented, either verbally or otherwise. Then to examine the evidence. **The evidence may or may lie in the Bible.** The evidence, for me, would rest heavily in the Bible. The evidence for some would rest more heavily in reason.

There's nothing objectionable in reason, but we want to be sure that we have, whether from an earlier perspective or a contemporary one, understood that reason is not where the problem is, it is the premise from which your reason that you might be sure of.

Reason is a gift of God. The premise from which you're reasoning doesn't always come from God. That you must examine very carefully. That must be examined in the scientific events of the natural world, or examine in terms of what the Scripture clearly has said.

I brought two booklets that perhaps can be useful in this. I don't expect that you should have them with you. If you do, fine, if not it isn't based on the fact that you need to.

One is the Statement of Beliefs of the Worldwide Church of God. A booklet that now is in

a different color than the first one that you received. The first one was bluish. This one is not. So, assuming that all of you can see, expect one or so who many be able to visually, I would say that what we have here is a statement that this one was copyrighted in 1993. It is a revision of the one that appeared earlier. If you quickly want to know which it is, I would state the following as a clue:

The new one has three topics on the first page, as the old one did. But the third of the three topics goes onto the next page. That's the new edition. The old one was limited to three topics on the first page and the new one at the top of the next page; the third one goes onto the next page. Just so you know that this is the new one and supersedes the previous.

Then there is the God Is booklet, and the color here should also be very clear to you if you visually see it. And it is copyrighted in 1993, as well as 1992. the older one is 1992, and this one has completely superseded the earlier one.

Here I will cite a statement, which I think is important. Dr. Stavrinides said—who is theologically trained and who thinks Greek, loves Americans, but expects you to think Greek. He's a fun man to be around. I think he knows how to cure olives, which our dear friends the Lewis' here do too, who are Greek.

I do want to extend my public best wishes to the Lewis family, because our youngest daughter had the pleasure of going to school, first with the older and then the younger sisters and San Luis Obispo. We very much appreciate that our younger daughter and their younger daughter were baptized the same occasion in the San Luis Obispo Church.

But what is significant here is to understand that there was criticism merited of the first booklet, because it was simply done prematurely, the title God Is.

But some people who criticized it criticized truth that was in it, because it may have differed from what had been said before. Dr. Stavrinides would have said that it should have been criticized for the error that had been introduced in it that had nothing to do with some previous understanding or truth.

Anyway, I don't think you have to go back to the previous one, I think it is an illustration that over time, sometimes things are rushed, sometimes things are thought to be as clear as we could then state it, and sometimes we realize afterward that we have to restate it.

Who hasn't here sometimes re-written a personal letter? Or having mailed it, wish you had? The same thing could happen, it's human. This

booklet is one that you should read fresh without any reference to the previous one by the same title: *God Is*. You should read it fresh and read it for what it says.

How do I explain this when some members invite my wife and me over to an evening occasion after the Sabbath, and we get together, or sometime during the week when a group of ministers do. I found my job is not necessarily to explain just what the Church teaches, as one would explain a doctrine here. The way I found it necessary is to explain what it is we thought was fundamental. What it is that needs correction and then how to begin to view the matter. A remarkable thing, of course, is that after I finished reading this, there are questions that I have—I sometimes think I have the answer to those—but the questions are not addressed here, that to me would be important to this topic.

Maybe that's the same for you. So, the reason for my sermon being titled *Unfinished Business* is that this subject will be written upon again and again, and as Roosevelt said, "Again!"

This is not the only thing that will ever be said. This is a booklet that represents all that the Church, for the present, wishes to say. In the same way, this material is a statement of beliefs is all that the Church for the present wishes to state. The Church may officially believe a little more, or it may not officially believe more, but its members and ministry may believe some things that the Church prefers simply not to address.

That is, this is not only for church members, called *The Statement of Beliefs of the Worldwide Church of God*, we have to recognize that some statements here are fundamental, then there are others that would not be fundamental for public consumption.

For example: Here we don't discuss *divorce and re-marriage*. That's an administrative matter, actually, as well as doctrinal. We don't directly discuss under a separate heading *the laying on of hands at baptism or ordination*. We distinguish some things as not essential for this publication, but may be essential for sermons, sermonettes or the *Worldwide News*. So, you need to bear that in mind.

How do I approach the question then as a matter here that I should like to go into to enable us to try to understand what the problems were that were addressed and what they are now.

We won't start with the history of the Church in the first century except to say that by the end of the first century we did have some very interesting statements in the Bible.

In Matthew, in Paul's letters, in the Gospel of John or the book of Revelation—not to mention

the Prophets that have already been long since written—there came to be a period in the Church in which different ideas were in circulation by the second century. Then by the third and in the fourth century the great controversy took on a public role because Christianity had come to be accepted as one of the permitted religions in the Roman Empire.

Therefore, the decisions of the Church became news, and tragically from that time on there was a major split, and all who did not agree with one particular view on a set of doctrines—one of which pertained to Passover, or as it later was called Easter, and another pertaining how to explain the fundamental teachings of the Church as well as weakly the nature of God—were expelled.

Those who were expelled may have understood some things better, or some who did not understand much truth at all. Because the Church, by that time, had long since left its first love. But over the centuries certain views had become lodged in different groups' minds.

When the story opens up at the beginning of this century, the Church of God had different points of view, called *The Church of God Seventh-Day* as the corporate title. Some were essentially Arians, some were Trinitarians. When I came to the Eugene Church of God that Mr. Armstrong had raised up, I met them first in 1948, but some of these people had been with the Church since the 1930s or 1920s.

Some of them were certainly to be described as Aryans, some of them as Trinitarians. The Church did not make an issue as to the question of fellowship on this topic. There were some things that Mr. Armstrong was puzzled about. Mr. Armstrong did not come out of the Greek Orthodox Church. He didn't come out of the Roman Catholic or any mainstream Protestant group. He had come out of the Friends movement or Quakers as we call them.

So, essentially the people whom he spoke to varied from atheists to Pentecostals, Protestants primarily in the state of Oregon and gradually in the Northwest, and then across the nation.

One of the things that you will note in Protestant material, among what we would call conservatives or better stated, than evangelicals. It's not my purpose to show you books that you don't have to possess. But I could go to the leading theological work explaining the doctrines of the Bible published in the late 1940s. I could go to a bookstore in Pasadena, it was revised in the late 1970s, and in the earlier edition that reflected 1930s and 1920s teaching, I read the following; I'll just quote it:

God is three persons in one person.

That's why I always concur that the agnostic was correct, that makes no sense! Dr. Stavrinides has said that the Protestants have never understood it correctly. He has said for the Church—whether I agree with every statement he has made—he has said that 'you cannot logically'—and remember the Greeks are logical; that's one thing they're very conscious of—'it is impossible to think of God as three beings in one being, or three Gods in one God, or three persons in one person.'

When Mr. Armstrong lived in a time when this was essentially the explanation of God, he could see that was a problem; he could see it was a problem. He never accepted the concept of Aryanism—that the Logos that became Jesus the Christ to summarize it—was the first being on a Divine plain that God created, or some such idea.

There are some people in the Church of God Seventh-Day—Pastor John Keys is one—who thinks that Christ, or the Logos, did not eternal exist. That's simple wrong! The Church would never accept that. God's Church has never accepted that. So, we could never be called traditional Aryans, at least the Aryans wouldn't ever call us that.

But there was something wrong with Protestant Trinitarianism as it was taught in the 1920s, 30s and 40s. That book was in print without revision until as late as the 1970s. I have not bought that edition because there's plenty of time for me to do it, but sometime I will and probably tell you exactly what page.

But clearly we can say the Church grew up at a time in which the Trinitarian doctrine, as explained by traditional evangelical Protestants—as Dr. Stavrinides from his reasoning and logic and Greek background—would say simply is not the way to define even the Trinity doctrine. Certainly the Church could never have accepted the idea that Christ—the Logos, whatever term you chose—arose as a created being before the creation of the angelic world.

Now we have something to understand. When you have one view here and another view there, and neither of them correct, and no access, let's say, to the logic of the Greek mind or Greek tradition. And Roman Catholic tradition had strange pictures of one god, a body of three. Well, in a sense sometimes the head was three sides or three heads; there were all sorts of strange ways to picture it, even if their theologians never thought in those terms, you could go back to the material published in the 1920s and before, and the 1930s and 40s.

And you would say, and the Church would say that is simple an incomprehensible way to represent it. It would need to be edited.

In coming to Truth, therefore, one does not always take every step correctly forward. One does step away from that which is clearly by reason impossible. That is to have three persons in one person with the word *person* meaning the same thing. Three beings in one being, three gods in one God. That is not rational to which the Church would 100% agree to which the church has always 100% agreed.

Mr. Carroll Miller who handles the personal correspondence did ask me on one occasion, at lunch, said, "Why did the Church take such a strong view about the Trinity's error, when today we do explain something about God that many would see as a way of defining the term *Trinity*?"

Just be careful and don't draw premature conclusions. It puzzled him. I said, Mr. Miller—he's a personal friend and if he were here I could tell the story, and if he were here and I was there, he could tell the story, same thing.

I said that you have to 'realize that the word *trinity* means different things to different people. And what was commonly thought to be the trinity was a doctrine that was wrong at that time.'

Now, this book that I'm referring to does not have such a statement today. How remarkable that essentially, 16-1/2 centuries after the Nicene Council Protestants finally—who were in the evangelical movement—got around to editing out a fundamental error that never even appeared in the statement of the trinity, *to use that term*.

Isn't it amazing, therefore, that somehow even those who thought they were trying to keep within the tradition of the Church over the centuries mis-explained it. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, when it was already clearly explained in the (inaudible). But that's the human being.

But that's because most of those people who were theologians didn't really understand logic, they only had a picture in their mind and didn't realize why agnostics and atheists could see there was something fundamentally wrong.

As the Church could also see that we cannot comprehend that Jesus Christ, or to use an earlier term historically in the Bible, the Logos called *Word*—(using Spanish, Latin, German names for Jesus Christ)—something wholly created by God before angels, and had no necessary Divine origin.

That was an incomprehensible error. That doesn't mean that everything Dr. Arrios (sp.????) taught in the 4<sup>th</sup> and late 3<sup>rd</sup> century was wholly error. People are not like that.

Adam and Eve took part of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. They didn't have the

Tree of Life and the Tree of Evil. They had the Tree of Life and the Tree of Knowledge, and knowledge was made up of good and evil. And human beings, by nature, today have so little understanding as we start out that we must inevitably recognize that we have all been influenced by the around, where you will find mis-knowledge along with true knowledge.

There can be no lecture—as we recently found in the Church—on the subject (glitch in audio) or any other area.

So, I like to explain that so we understand the background and why it was possible not to have arrived at the truth in entirety, and why we have not arrived today most certainly at an area in the explanation of theology where the bulk of evangelicals once stood, because they have moved away from that and know that God cannot be explained that way today.

For years I read the Old Testament and I would say to myself when I read certain verses, I would have to say: You know, if Mr. Armstrong had to focus on that, we would have to come up with a different explanation. We haven't focused on every verse of the Old Testament in past times. Perhaps we focused on more in the New, and even now we're not focusing on every verse in the Old Testament or the New.

Until the Church focuses on all the Bible, we would have to say we have, yet, *unfinished business*. So, we recognize what I said, this is going to come out—without any doubt—in a later edition. And you will discover either something additional in the chapter, or a revised chapter, you will discover that that there will be truer perspectives.

You will discover that there were things in here you expected to find under God, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit that are not there, yet. Maybe officially we don't have to say it, but most certainly we have to know it. So, we'll look at that.

One of the things that I don't want to do is get involved with needless work. But I want to draw something to your attention; some of the fundamentals that we must have in mind.

First of all, different languages present different problems. The Biblical account was first revealed to people who spoke Hebrew, then Greek and now English, primarily. That is we communicate in English and translate into other languages in the Church.

The words that we often see in the Old Testament translated *God, Lord*—mostly those two words—come from words in Hebrew that need to be understood. One of them, especially, is unusual. It is a word that is a noun translated *God* for the form of

the noun is plural, the form is plural, not always, because there's a singular form as well.

But overwhelmingly there is a singular verb or adjective, not all together. That leads to some interesting questions. For instance, when we read that the *Eternal God* or the *Lord God*—that is use YHVH, to the very unpronounced Hebrew. The *Lord God* often comes from a term like 'Yahweh' and 'Elohim,' which has been required by the Jews to read as 'Adonai Elohim' or Lord God, because the Jews don't pronounce the name YHVH. We do in the Church here in terms in the general, at least scholarly understanding of the pronunciation.

But we have to recognize something that is a puzzlement, because the person that said, "I am the Lord, beside Me there is no other god."

That would present a problem if God the Father is a God and Yahweh is the One Who became Jesus Christ or the Word, and He's also a God.

Because you see, the Church understood that there was an error. The Church correctly understood that the Father did not give the Ten Commandments. Any minister today who says that, does not know what the Church teaches today. And it certainly doesn't know what the Church taught.

The Father did not give the Ten Commandments at Sinai. ***The Logos Who became the Son did not give the Ten Commandments at Sinai!*** It was the God Who is *one* Who did. That's what we need to face!

When you see that the Church had said over and over again that Yahweh was not the Father here or there, the Church was partly correct. Because when the Protestants said that the God of the Old Testament was the Father, they were wrong! Dr. Stavrinides, speaking from the Greek perspective, would be correct in saying—and the church today is correct in saying—that both our understanding that Yahweh was the One Who became Christ—or the Protestant traditional view or sometimes maybe the Catholics—that Yahweh was the Father—*both of Them were wrong, both points of view!*

See, it's possible for us to move from one error—not one step into truth—but from one error to another one that turns out to be an error before we arrive at what the truth is.

The Old Testament is not the revelation from the Father, and the New from a Son Who was competing with the Father. 'The Father was the angry God; the Son is the loving God. You know that kind of a view. The Father gave the Law, the Son gives us grace.'

That's the thing we knew in the first place that was wrong!

What we did not know is how we explain that Yahweh says that ‘**beside** Him there is no other God.’ And **if** He is Logos, or the Son, or the Word, **then** there can be no other God Who was the Father.

Those things we didn’t face up to! In the same way, we face up to what others are unwilling to recognize that the Logos—or put it in other terms *Yahweh*—speaks of Himself as coming as the Logos or the Son. Here is where the problem was and here is what the Trinitarians—or ‘Christians’ shall we say, used the word trinitarian much later; that’s our English word, it doesn’t matter what the Latin or the Greeks use.

What they were trying to say is how do you explain when God—Elohim—or when Yahweh is speaking, sometimes it’s so obvious that He’s referring to what we know Jesus Christ did. At other times, we know what the Father is referred to.

Is it possible for the Father and the Son to be *one* in a way we never understood before? That’s the question. Those are the things we need to ask ourselves. Because the Old Testament, as I noted—as other’s have noted—makes some very strange statements.

We should have understood it better. You will also notice, as I and Carroll Miller and I have talked it over—not just him, but other have, not just picking him out—but he’s the person responsible for writing letters at Pasadena to represent answers to people.

We were looking at these verses and trying to understand what it was that would have made it possible to resolve difficulties that some members have had, and think what the Church was teaching that it never did.

Let me explain an error that the Church never taught. I don’t know what percent; some percent in congregations that many have the wrong view, and it may be many had a correct view.

The Church never taught that God the Father—the Almighty—that the Logos or the Word, and I’m just using the Biblical terms of that without trying to define to you why God is the Father and the Logos is the Son. That’s coming later.

But there are people who said, ‘God the Father is an eternal spirit being; is a God.’ And the Logos—the One we know as the Son or Jesus Christ—is an eternal spirit being; a God.

I pointed out to Church Administration that when they said that the Church taught that the Father and the Son were Gods, that was simply not the teaching of the Church.

What they were saying was that people did say that. I wouldn’t deny that, but those people who thought so in the Church were not careful.

The teaching officially of the Church were that the Father—God Almighty—and the Logos, the Son Jesus Christ **are one God!** That has always been the teaching of the Church.

Anyone today who says it was not, wasn’t listening, may have heard it incorrectly from the pulpit, and should have examined more carefully what the Church taught.

Now, look what happens if you have one God the Father, one Lord Jesus Christ, each a cooperative eternal independent separate spirit; marvelous harmony. But then you read in Scripture that some of you have the Holy Spirit of God that comes from the Father. Then you read that you have the Spirit of Christ in you.

Now I ask, do you have two separate eternal, independent cooperative spirits in you? Or do some of you have the Spirit of Christ and some of you have the Spirit of the Father?

There’s something wrong there, isn’t there?

A minister gave a sermon in Southern California not directly at Headquarters and he said:

You know, I had that view. And my wife never knew I had that view despite all my subjects. I never knew that she had the other view, that the Father and the Son—or the Almighty God, the Logos—are one Spirit.

Isn’t that remarkable? A husband and wife living together for 10-15 years and had never realized that the other didn’t understand whether God is two different, separate, independent—albeit cooperative—Spirits, or God is one Spirit.

The understanding of the faculty of Big Sandy is important, so you know. Not that everybody is expected to agree with everything, but Dr. Ward will tell you, I will tell you, the Church has always had the view in this present administrative period, and the previous one, that God is one Spirit, not two Spirits.

Mr. Armstrong understood this. He said, “There is one Spirit.” He would have been appalled to think it was otherwise. He never gave any reason to believe it, but he left the explanation unfinished because he couldn’t figure out how to explain that there is one Spirit if there are two persons.

In other words, the traditional understanding of the Church was *unfinished business*. I think you should know that.

The Church was under the leadership of a man who was gifted in many ways. Not a trained

theologian, and the Church certainly wasn't made of trained theologians. But there's one thing that characterized Mr. Armstrong, unless you knew him you would not necessarily understand what I'm going to say.

When Mr. Armstrong didn't know something, the first thing he wouldn't tell you is that he didn't know. He simply would never mention it. Why bring it up, because he hadn't figured it out; he was not about to make it a question that everybody else would start to discuss.

He never resolved the problem of how the Logos and the Almighty—if persons, which he understood them to be—could be one Spirit. He knew they were cooperative, but he also knew that They were one; not two separate non-competing Spirits.

The Bible he knew, and he said, "The Bible says, 'By one Spirit have you all been baptized.'" Was that the Spirit of Christ or the Spirit of the Father? *That was the problem!* Some never thought it through, that's all.

So, here was a conundrum, and in fact, here was where the Christians and the Jews had no way of resolving it, and Christians came to the place they tried to resolve it in a way that would seem to satisfy all Scripture. I think we could say maybe the apostles understood more in what they said than we have been told.

What I would like you to realize is that we must recognize that the Church had not adequately explained how it was possible for God to be one Spirit, and yet, God to be the Father Almighty and the Word—or the person Jesus the Christ, Yahweh.

Of course, Yahweh sometimes clearly referred to the Father, as such, and sometimes it referred to the Son. Yet, Yahweh says, 'I AM and there is no other.' If the Father is the One Who is thought to speak, then the Son is excluded. And if the Son was speaking, the Father is excluded. So, we have to realize that there was something that needed to be reconsidered.

Long ago, before I ever heard of the Worldwide Church of God, before I ever heard of the World Tomorrow program... Let me give a little background:

My mother's side of the family came from a line that for now 375 or more years—nearly 400—in every generation have been teachers and ministers in one side of the family. And she was a minister's daughter, and her mother was a minister's daughter. That's the way it went on back. This was the (inaudible) side of the family that came from the area of (inaudible) in Germany where the oldest burials of

the family reside in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. We can trace it back.

She had training. She was a person, you know, when I was given the Bible I had and English Bible and I had a German Bible, we would start reading this one in German and then the other in English. You have with the German Methodist Church you had, what we would call, 'katakismos' *catechism*. We learned in there what God is and what an immortal soul is, and all these other things.

I asked the question of my mother, once: If Jesus Christ is a person, why would one ever call Him *a Word*? I know some of us are wordy, but that's not the point. Why would John say, 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was in the very presence of God and the Word was Divine... [that's the sense of it] ...with God.' That means that Aryanism was wrong, that He was created.

My mother explained to me the answer, which I never grasped adequately. I think I premature in asking the question. In what sense or ply should we have the sense of Word (speaking in Spanish, German and Latin) describing a person.

Now, Mr. Armstrong thought on the basis of what Protestants were saying that that meant the Word was a Spokesperson for the Father. You've heard that, that's nothing new. That is the Word was the Spokesperson like the Prime Minister, the Father, the Almighty was like the king.

The Word was therefore seen as the Speaker or the Spokesperson. Here was an error that none of us had ever adequately analyzed. We assumed that the Greek word meant what often some commentator said, which means that they didn't understand either that this word means *a person who speaks*. But it doesn't mean that at all.

### Utter and Utterance

If the speaker, the one who speaks words, who utters, it would be like in English if we were to give a translation I would speak with Dr. Stavrinides to meet it on direct translation. He said, 'Word could probably be best and simply stated in English as *utterance!*

If there was an *utterance*, we expect that there was an 'utterer.' Do you know what an 'utterer' is? *The one who gives the utter!* But *utterer* and *utterance* are two different words. One is the speaker and the other is what is spoken.

Well, here we have the remarkable thing that Logos does not mean *speaker* in the Greek. It means that which is uttered or spoken, or *utterance*. If and 'utterer' or a spokesperson were meant, then we would have something quite different in the form of a noun.



This correction, in my judgment, is fundamental in resolving the problem. I do not find that most ministers have focused on it, but I don't think the Church has focused on how we came to understand some things. Until the Church officially tries to understand how we came to understand certain things, it is not yet fully able to explain where the error arose.

If God is one, and God most certainly thinks, and God most certainly utters, we also discover that what God utters is also Divine. Let us translate it correctly:

John 1:1: In the beginning was Utterance... [what God speaks] ...and the Utterance was with God and this Utterance... [what God speaks] ...is Divine.

Isn't that unusual? Not a God lie the Jehovah Witnesses translate it. We were looking at a Spanish translation. The Jehovah witnesses think that when the Greek says—this is the literal Greek translated into word-for-word Greek:

John 1:1: In the beginning was the Word, the Word was with the God and the Word was God.

The Jehovah Witnesses try to make that *a* God. The Greek has *the* God. That means the Creator. But when the word *God* alone is used—'Theos' in Greek—you don't put *a* in front of it, or an if it's needing that sound in English.

It should be translated *Divine*. In other words, 'Theos' means *Divinity* or *Divine*. It is at the level of the Divine.

In the beginning was Utterance, and this Utterance was with God and this Utterance was Divine.

Let us say that we haven't really thought about what it means for us to be in God's image. You are a being. God is a being on a different plain and significantly more impressive than most of us. Spirit! It hope you realize that the difference is even greater than I'm implying.

We are mortal, but we think God thinks, so God is thinker! We have thoughts. Now, *utterance* is one way to put it, *thought* is another. I have thoughts that I don't utter, or I have thoughts that I do. But the sense of what is uttered is a thought. Obviously, if is merely sound it would make no sense. So, for utterance to make sense it must be thought.

God is one, He is *thinker* and He is *thought*. He is also spirit; He is not matter. Now we're beginning to see something.

You have not been swallowed up by some modern ideas. There are some people who ask: I wonder who I am? Or people say, 'I really wish I knew who I was.' All sorts of strange ideas, and you 'find yourself.' I found myself long ago.

But let me ask you about somebody who has amnesia. You come to the person you've seen before, you found him/her on the street, and you address the person by a name that you know this individual by. This individual has suffered from a problem that we define as amnesia. That person has no knowledge of the past, doesn't know who he/she is. Let's analyze this more clearly:

Why do you know who you are? In the first place you've been told who you were when you were little because you had an origin. But more than that, you know who you are because you've been thinking and you have it as part of your memory all that you have thought.

You are what you are, not merely because you can think, but because in your mind there are all sorts of thoughts that you have. You are what you are only if in addition to being able to think, you are able also to be able to capture your thought. For us who do not have amnesia that should not be a problem.

You cannot identify yourself and know who you are without being both *thinker and thought*, or have the memory of your life. This is a very significant thing.

***God is both Thinker and Thought! As Thinker, He is Father; as Thought He is Son!***

Because we use such terms as 'Father' and 'Son'. The Bible could have used mother and daughter for that matter, it simply uses the masculine, so that it non-issue here. Since God is in the role that associate with maleness or masculinity in terms of leadership—He is called a king and not a queen, in other words—we associate father and son.

- In what sense is God *Father*? *In the sense that He is Thinker!*
- In what sense is He *Son*? *In the sense that He is Thought!*

You cannot separate in your mind, unless something is happened to you, both your thinking and your thought. You recognize that in your head—we are humans and have a body; we live in this world. God doesn't have a certain 'part of Him' where He thinks and all the rest of Him is somewhere else.

God is Divine mind! God's presence is everywhere. He doesn't have to run around the universe in order to communicate with anybody. God is not limited. Mr. Armstrong understood that the Spirit of God fills the universe. So, God as

spirit—as Holy Spirit—is not limited and cannot be put in a box. But that Spirit can link with your mind.

That’s a separate question pertaining to conversion, and what it means to be *born from above*.

But God is Thinker and God is Thought, and God is one. And you are thinker and you are thought, and you are one. That’s why in part you are an image of God inwardly.

We’re not discussing here the fact that when God externally appeared, and Adam looked at himself and looked at God and he found that he didn’t resemble a giraffe; he resembled God. We’re not talking about the external appearance when God chose to appear in space.

If some people in the Church choose to dismiss it, all I will say is simple terms *it is the nature of God if He wants to appear in matter*, so you can see Him. And He appeared to Adam and Eve; He appeared Abraham, but He wasn’t spirit when He did. But the nature of God is to be able to do that, the ability of God. That’s an aspect of His nature. But when He does so, that is not spirit. God is still spirit; He simple manifests Himself. The theologians call it a ‘theophany’ or an epiphany’; that is unimportant for the moment.

But I don’t want to argue the question of the external issue of image and likeness. That’s not the point today. The point of importance is that ***inwardly you are thinker and thought***, and your mind cannot think only and have not thought and be complete.

This is why God cannot be construed as only Father and not Son, as only Thinker and not Thought. It is impossible for God to be Father and not Son, Thinker and not Thought. That’s the issue of what Logos is.

We’re not talking of another person, another separate God; we’re talking about—and John is talking about—and that’s why he used this remarkable term. He didn’t say that ‘in the beginning was a Spokesman.’ He said that ‘in the beginning was Utterance, and that was before God, or ever-present. God could, you could not, know that you were thinking without being aware of whatever is necessary from your past thoughts.

That thought is very important because your further thinking is governed in part by your thought. So, the Father, in a sense, pays—may I say—Fatherly respect to the Son, as the Son does to the Father. The thought—in the sense of your thoughts—respond to you as thinker. You remold your thoughts and your thoughts guide your thinking.

We are on a mortal plain. God’s level of thinking and mind is supremely greater. But God is spirit and we are flesh. The Spirit is the mover.

You know in Gen. 1 it says that “God created the heavens and the earth.” Then we read about the Spirit of God moving something, doing something. Then we read that God said *or uttered*. So, by the time you are in the third verse of Genesis, chapter 1, you are introduced to God, the Father—functioning as Father. You were introduced to the Spirit of God, the mover—Holy Spirit, and you were introduced to saying or Utterance or Logos.

It’s all there in those first three verses! It’s one God, interestingly plural in form as a word, but singular in usage.

God is speaking to, shall we say in speaking to the angelic world, ‘Let Us make man.’ Then we read... We focus on the plural, but then we never focused on what happened. So, ***God made man in His image, not Their image***.

And every word in that which follows is in the singular verb or the singular pronoun or a possessive adjective.

- we are introduced in Matt. 28 to Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
- we are introduced in Gen. 1:1 to three: to God, Spirit of God, God’s utterance
- God is spirit
- God is thought
- God thinks

God cannot be God without all these.

If He could think and thought but couldn’t act, He wouldn’t be God. If He had thought and could act, but couldn’t think... You see it makes no sense!

This is why it is important to recognize that you cannot have merely a thinker and an actor but no thought. This is why in the end we perceive ourselves as having...

In the natural world we have air that gives us life, breath that makes it possible for me to communicate to you. Air is the same word in the Greek or Latin from which the word wind or spirit comes from.

What we also have, even in our natural world: for me to think or have thought, communicate the thought to you, I have to do by the means of the very Source of Life.

The spirit is life in the spirit world. In the natural world my breath is life. My breath conveys my thoughts. The breath is, of course, one; we all have one breath.

We are separate centers of consciousness; but even we have one breath. Solomon used it. That way there is one body of air that we all breathe; that communicates our thoughts one to another. If you were there on one side of the glass, I'm on the other side and could not lip-read, and we were both breathing, but there was either a vacuum or something that wouldn't allow vibrations to go through, then you couldn't hear or understand what I'm thinking.

So, it does take the presence of air to convey thoughts or utterance. In the same way, we cannot imagine as only thinker and thought without the sense of movement—or to move or act upon.

So, the thinker expresses thought, and the thought leads to action. That's what it is. That is God. God is that Spirit.

In this case, Father and Son, the Church has inadequately today defined and does not fully emphasize the fact that in this sense Father and Son are not terms expressing separate beings or persons. They are expressing relationships within the sense that we are using the term.

If you have an idea, you're the father of an idea. The thinker is the father of thought. If you are an inventor as thinker, invention in this sense is the product or your baby.

We were recently at the home of somebody who has a new baby. It involves shearing a sheep by a new method. Mr. Emerson's new invention, his baby. That's the sense of it; a thought. Very clever invention. I wouldn't want to be every sheep that goes through there, but it probably is more comfortable, actually, when it's all said and done than the old method would be, forced into one awkward position or another while the wool is taken off you.

Think about that, and you will see that much of what we are saying today begins to make sense. **If you really stop with the words *father and son* and don't give some further explanation, it's no wonder that the Church had difficulty in perceiving the oneness of God.**

In other words, father and son represent terms that are not referential to beings with separate centers of consciousness, as we are persons, father and son.

In this sense, in the one God there is. The name of the one God involves a name—the Eternal. But now let's take note of why it is the Son. In a sense, a son proceeds from the father. In this sense, the Logos has always proceeded from God the Father.

God as Thinker has always been thinking. There never was a time when He had not thought. You may not comprehend that, but you try to figure out what happens if there was a time when God couldn't think.

If God has always been thinking, His thought has always been in production, shall we say. So, the Son has always been coming forth from the Father eternally, because God has always been thinking.

This is how it is possible for the Son to be eternal. Eternal thought! God has never ever been unthinking, both in the, shall we say, the attitudinal sense, but I am thinking in the terms of the literal sense.

We cannot comprehend fully, but we can comprehend the logic, that if God at one time never thought. Then how do we answer why afterwards He began to think. That does not answer the question. That would be simply illogical!

***Greek logic led to this!*** *This is not a New Testament revelation!* This is, in fact, a result of the Greeks thinking about problems. Or to put it this way, to get away from the Greek so we don't blame them for too many things.

In Asia, the Buddhist religion—Hinduism, Confucianism—have often asked questions, sorry, have often proposed answers to questions that Westerners have never thought to ask, yet.

Now, the Greeks came from an awful society: Polytheistic. But there were people who began to question the folly of what they had inherited. One of the reasons why Christianity took root in the Greek world as it took root in no other literary world. The closest other group that it came to were the Armenians who were, of course, very close to the Greeks culturally and historically. But from a non-political sense.

The impact of the New Testament Church was in the Greek world where people had begun, in fact, to discuss the very questions that the Jews were thinking about, and were unable adequately to answer.

So, what we discover is indeed a people was being prepared to grasp something of the nature of God.

Now, the Church—in my judgment—has not adequately answered, yet, some things in respect to Christ. You will see that in the new booklet. I'm being, let's say, discreet, I am being diplomatic, I'm merely saying that **if you look at the booklet [the God Is booklet, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition] you will find God defined, then you will find Jesus Christ defined and the**

**Holy Spirit. But you will not find a further definition of God as Father.**

You do not find Jesus Christ and the Son fully amplified or applied. The word *son* is used with respect to Christ when Jesus Christ, in fact, turns out to be a human being Who was the Logos.

You will discover that if it says ‘God is one Divine being in three eternal, distinct ways of being—‘hupostasis’: Father, Son and Holy Spirit—I don’t find Father described; I don’t find Son, I do find Holy Spirit; but I find God and Jesus Christ.

As I have said to those who edited this, our material is yet not fully complete. So, now let me explain an area that we need to have more clearly in mind:

*If Logos is thought*, we can distinguish God’s thoughts. How did Logos—the thought in God—come to be associated with the man Jesus Christ? The answer is, listen carefully:

Jesus Christ is not the Father in the flesh. The Father did not come in the flesh, and the Holy Spirit did not come in the flesh.

Why, inevitably, would Logos—or thought or utterance—come in the flesh? It’s very important to note that distinction!

The Logos was made flesh, says John, chapter 1. it was made possible by the act of the Holy Spirit. It was made possible by the decision of God, that is Father. God—as Father—intended His thought to be His memory, His mind to be in this infant, and the Spirit made it possible.

Jesus was essentially composed of that which was spirit. The thought of God decided; God own thinking decided that that thought that was in His mind should now be joined on the physical level with the ovum that was in Mary’s womb.

The thoughts of God, the ideas or utterances, as however much God as Thinker should decide would be there, was there. The one thing that God did not put in the mind or in the memory bank was when Jesus Christ would return.

Jesus said that that is something that wasn’t in His memory. We don’t know how many other things were not there, but that’s one thing He said wasn’t there.

**When the little baby Jesus was born, He was born with a memory.** You were not born with a same kind of memory. You may have been born with certain impacts on your mind of noise of the last nine months—music, the words of father and mother, quarrelsome words, peaceful words—so

children tend to react after birth with the impact of these things for the last nine months.

But in Jesus, the very thoughts of God were transmitted, all that was ever essential, so that this person that was now developed had, **as a baby, had in His mind, in His memory recesses everything that was critical to His purpose that had ever been thought by God, as well as the Divine will, because He was imbued by the Spirit of God.**

When you were born, and before you were converted, you were a person with a will and with human nature.

When you were converted, you were still one person, not a person called the Holy Spirit in your head! You were still one person. You had human nature, and now through the Holy Spirit you have Divine nature, and now through the Holy Spirit you have a Divine will. A power that enables you to do things.

So, six months after you’re converted—for some it’s shorter, maybe next day; for others the minister would say is taking definitely too long. I hope not for anybody here, but it can happen. For me it was probably nearly a year before I could say this, and Mr. Armstrong would have agreed; I would have agreed with him. ***There was an intellectual problem I had to deal with!*** Some have to deal with a moral problem, which is often easier and faster to resolve.

Jesus did not have nine months of memory, He had eternal thought! He could call upon and look into the Bible when it was being read to Him in Hebrew or explained in Aramaic—whatever—as He learned the language, He could... Yes, in His mind He pictured Himself as being there when God created the heavens and the earth.

In His mind was the memory of having thought out the plan of having been there, of having been the very thought of God that said, “Let Us make man...” He was there when it says, “The Lord appeared to Abraham.”

It wasn’t that Jesus Christ as Logos alone who appeared to Abraham. God appeared to Abraham—*Thinker and Thought manifest!*

It was God as Thinker and Thought Who gave the Ten Commandments. But God as Thinker did not come into the flesh. Thought—God as Thought—Logos: Word, [speaking Spanish, etc.] whatever word you wish.

That became the memory, and through the Spirit came will and Divine nature. Jesus, therefore, was one person with two wills and two natures, and you are if converted. Each one person with two wills and two natures.

The two natures struggle within, and the one will help the other to modify, accept. You have to make the decision as the person. But you can look back on your life and say—and anybody who is converted, and anybody who hasn't yet been, for that matter, one who has been

- yielding as submitting to parents
- submitting to instruction
- reading the Word of God

Even you can look back and see that there should be influence, where you can say that 'there are things that I now can do that I could never have done before.' It's called *mature!* Otherwise known as getting older.

Yes, it goes with that. So, the famous proverb: 'too soon old, too late smart'! That's the problem. That's a kind of idiom, of course, in English.

But in reality, we have to take a look at it this way. But in the incarnation there came to be what Paul said now is unique. But the Jews could not understand. Not only did God have thought—Son—not only was God Light... You know God is Light, God is Life, God is Thinker.

Heb. 1 speaks of God as Light, He's the Light Source. The Son—or His thought—is the radiance of that Light.

You know, in bio-chemistry, let's say, in psychology and psychiatric studies use light. You wire this area, you can be a person coming to an area where a musical presentation—I'm going to quit with this—occurs. If you are non musician you are the newspaper writer, or if you're a musician next store, when the music starts they have found that the brain as a whole just lights up an emotional response.

The writer finds that generally the same area is lit up, except there may be another area that might be devoted to what we would call that part of the brain that thinks literarily. But the musicians will change immensely and what lights up will be his analytical part.

Because he's not just enjoying the music, he's analyzing it; he's a musician.

This is why we say that God is Light. The Spirit is Light, God is spirit. God is spirit—that's His nature—God is Light. But He's also Light in the Divine realm and there is no darkness. But we don't live in that Divine realm. We live in a natural world. In that Divine realm the source of Light is God.

Everywhere in God is the radiance of that Light, because God's mind is full of thought. God's mind is full of thought! That's the radiance. That's

in a sense Father and Son. That's where these terms come, because light and light radiance, light source—thought and thinker—Son and Father. That's the relationship.

But something distinct happened when a baby was born of Mary. So, Paul ultimately says, in finishing the story, 'the crucifixion, the resurrection, the ascension,' to us there is one God the Father, and one Lord Jesus Christ, for we have here a remarkable thing that is not finished. It is basically developed under the term 'Jesus Christ'; not significantly developed in the booklet *God Is*.

That is what is Jesus Christ today as our High Priest? This is not fully developed in our literature. There is unfinished business. You can read the book of Hebrews and you discover that we have one God the Father, Who still is Thinker; one God Who is Spirit—Thinker and Thought. We have one God the Father and one Lord Jesus Christ, Who are—the plural is used—and what Christ is, is our older Brother and we are His brothers and sisters, speaking in the flesh.

So, God is building a family. And the Church says that God has a family. If you would like to ask further questions, tune in next time. I appreciate Mr. Billingsley's asking us to be here.

Scriptures referenced, *not* quoted:

- John 1:1
- Genesis 1:1-3
- Matthew 28
- Hebrews 1

HH:bo  
Transcribed: 4/14/21