

# *The Cambrian Peshier*

*A Voice of the Desposyni to the Dispersion*

Peshier for St. Isaac Newton Day,  
March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2026

Beloved Friends:

**Saint Isaac Newton (1643-1727),**  
*Fidei Defensor*

*[T]he Support of the Authority of those sacred Writings which Sir Isaac Newton always firmly believed to be true, for the Correction [of] modern anti-Christian Errors, both in Faith and Practice, he always detested; and for the Restoration of sincere and uncorrupt Christianity, as it was at first Settled by the Apostles from Christ, and received and practiced by the primitive Churches, which he always admired . . . , I cannot but have the highest, Honour and Veneration For this Book and its Author.*

- William Whiston, *A SHORT VIEW of Sir ISAAC NEWTON'S Observations upon the Prophecies of Daniel, and the Apocalypse of St. John*, 1733

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## **Introduction**

Yes, you read that correctly. Whilst it might be somewhat a “tongue-in-cheek” play upon the conventional “Sir” Isaac Newton, yet, considering that the name “Sir” was once a title of knighthood conferred upon a man by the king – who in England was also the Head of the Church - knighthood, in the spirit of the age of warrior monks, a *Sir* could also be a *saint*.

Concomitantly, considering also that Newton was offended at the doctrine of the *apotheosis* of saints and regarded their veneration as a form of idolatry – as all good

Puritans must - nevertheless, in the sense of how it is meant here, we think he would forgive us.

Newton, in his life and works, was truly a *fidei defensor* – defender of the faith – and has earned a commemoration as such. The year 2027 will no doubt solicit his tercentennial celebration by academicians and scientists around the world. Remembered as a scientist and leader of the Enlightenment, his role as a religious thinker will be lost in the acclaim. Evangelicals will seek to deflect some of his more heterodox opinions, while the Humanists will ignore his piety.

We offer this Peshier a year earlier, partly to open the tercentennial, but also to acknowledge the importance of his role in the Cambrian Desposynic Church. Although we seek to temper some enthusiasts who want to see him as a member of the Priory of Sion, a Rosicrucian, and a guardian of the Grail, these are only legendary approbations. We think his greater contribution is found in his published works, principally his *Observations*, but also in his protégé, William Whiston, who was far more published on religious topics than was he.

[As we have noted frequently, the Whiston Edition of the “Works of Josephus” remains a standard in the field, and he is most remembered for that contribution. His lesser known works were just as Newtonian, yet languish from neglect.]

2026 also closes the year in which the Christian religion has celebrated the Council of Nicea (325AD). Perplexingly, Newton considered the triumph of the Athanasians and their Creed to be a blight upon the Christian faith. It is for the purpose of revisiting that controversy that this Peshier is provided.

### **Newton on the Trinity**

Newton never published on the doctrine of the Trinity. What he thought about it was found in his private papers discovered by Lord John Maynard Keynes in 1936. It was then that Keynes purchased an old chest at auction and found that it contained the unpublished handwritten manuscripts of Newton’s on various topics: over a million words. Retrieving and publishing those manuscripts on the internet (much of it requiring translation because Newton wrote mostly in Latin) has been the task of the Newton Project (Professor Rob Iliffe, Director, AHRC Newton Papers Project, Scott Mandelbrote, Fellow & Perne Librarian, Peterhouse, Cambridge, *et al*: <https://www.newtonproject.ox.ac.uk>).

Newton’s polemic on the Trinitarian question recovered from those manuscripts is remarkably similar to that of William Whiston’s *Primitive Christianity Reviv’d* vol. 1 of 4 (1711) in which Whiston credited his views to the influence of “an excellent Friend of

mine whom I have not liberty to name" (p. ix) and proceeded to quote, almost verbatim, an unsigned document (x-xii) which matches in substance the one found in "the chest."

The reader is invited to read our other Peshers on the doctrine of the Trinity. While we stand solidly with the Athanasians, we do so while acknowledging that Newton's (and Whiston's) complaints were not without merit. Both Newton's unpublished manuscripts (two of which are cited below) and Whiston's polemics charge the Athanasians of their day with Sabellianism. That was an extreme heresy derived from going too far in the opposite direction from Arianism. We will try our best to help the reader sort all of that out.

### **Metaphysics or Relational Theology?**

The first proposition Newton offers in the query recovered in our first manuscript under consideration, asks whether Christ ever meant for his disciples to teach metaphysics,

*Quaere 1. Whether Christ sent his Apostles to preach Metaphysick(s) to the unlearned common people & to their wives & children.*

- Source, Keynes Ms. 11, King's College, Cambridge, UK (pub.online March, 2002)

Newton would argue that Christ was a prophet, not a philosopher. Prophets are concerned with the moral condition of the people while philosophers are interested in more abstract questions of existence and are often indifferent to morals.

In Newton's second query he uses the Nicene Creed as an example of metaphysics creeping into Christian doctrine,

*Quaere 2. Whether the word Ομοουσιος [homoousios] ever was in any Creed before the Nicene; or any Creed was produced by any one Bishop at the Council of Nice for authorizing the use of that word.*

[homoousios: "of the *same* substance"]

The intermittent queries leading up to the sixth develop this question further and then he asks in "Quaere 6" whether the Nicene Fathers understood the Greek word – *homoousios* – in the same way, but instead out of an abundance of caution, added *homoiousios*, in order to preserve the distinction of persons,

*Qu 6 Whether it was not agreed by the Council that that word when applied to the Son of God should signify nothing more [than] that Christ was the express image of the father, & whether many of the Bishops in pursuance of that interpretation of the word allowed*

*by the Council, did not in their subscriptions by way of caution add τουτεστιν ὁμοιούσιος?*

[*toutestiu homoiousios*: “that is, of *similar* substance.” Notice the “i” inserted in the middle of the word. *Toutestiu* is misspelled and it is impossible to tell whether, without the handwritten text before us, this was Newton’s error or the transcriber. It does not change the sense.]

In the seventh query, Newton boldly states that the Latin Fathers botched the translation of the Greek into Latin and created a doctrinal crisis,

*Quare 7. Whether Hosius (or whoever translated that Creed into Latin) did not impose upon the western Churches by translating Ομοουσιος [homoousios] by the words unius substantiae instead of consubstantialis & whether by that translation the Latin Churches were not drawn into an opinion that the father & son had one common substance called in the Greek Hypostasis [being or person] & whether they did not thereby give occasion to the eastern Churches to cry out (presently after the Council of Serdica) that the western Churches were become Sabellian.*

Note that Newton finds a different meaning in “consubstantialis” – which he regards to be an authentic translation, while “unius substantiae” is found to be in error. **Consubstantialis does not result in Sabellianism.**

While the nature of the Sabellian heresy is discussed below, suffice it to say here that by its other name – *modalism* – it is a belief in the monad and that the persons of the Trinity in this scheme are only passing phantoms of that same being,

*Qu. 8. Whether the Greeks in opposition to this notion & language did not use the language of three hypostases, & whether in those days the word hyposta{sis} did not signify a substance.*

Newton is here arguing that God is not fundamentally a faceless blob but rather that the *hypostases* (beings or persons) are as equally fundamental to his ontological existence as is the substance,

*Qu. 9. Whether the Latins did not at that time accuse all those of Arianism who used the language of three hypostases & thereby charge Arianism upon the Council of Nice without knowing the true meaning of the Nicene Creed.*

Thus, Newton demolishes the Latin Fathers by demonstrating their lack of linguistic comprehension of the Greek language. They had imposed a meaning to the words of the Nicene Creed that was simply not there and then to further defend their error, they

absurdly accused the Nicene Fathers of Arianism, the very heresy against which they were assembled and had composed the Creed.

[These queries state the nature of the case while the remaining of the 23 queries address the historical aftermath which is not our immediate interest here. These can be found under "Newton's Notes" at the 2046AD website which provides further articles on their elucidation.]

### **Newton and the Economical Trinity**

It must be appreciated that both Whiston and Newton were adherents to what has come to be called "the doctrine of the economical trinity." While the Unitarians think that they can claim these men as somehow a part of their movement, the literary evidence does not support it. Whiston found Socinianism to be wanting, and if Socinianism was proto-Unitarian, then both Whiston and Newton were Evangelicals by comparison.

Both men were well versed in the writings of Hugo Grotius who wrote his great polemic against Socinianism in the "Governmental View of the Atonement" (published as "A Defence of the Catholic Faith concerning the Satisfaction of Christ against Faustus Socinus" (1617). They sourced Grotius freely in their writings.

Consequently, never Unitarian, both men embraced the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, with the latter two as divine beings of lesser *status* to the Father, yet they embraced the three persons as still co-eternal and consubstantial:

*For as to the Creed and Council of Nice, which are suppos'd in the Address to Her Majesty to contradict my Assertions, especially in two Points really fundamental to our Religion, I suppose the Consubstantiality of our Saviour, and his being begotton ab aeterno, and not made or created; I must declare that I have not so far deny'd the Consubstantiality of the Son, or so far affirmed that our Saviour was made or created by the Father, in that Sense I mean wherein the Council of Nice intended chiefly to establish the one, and condemn the other, as is generally believ'd.*

- William Whiston, *Primitive Christianity Reviv'd* vol. 1, p. 45

However, it is important to add that for Newton at least only the Father is revealed in Scripture as "God" while the other persons of the Trinity were never worshipped as such, but were rather "divine" in a lesser sense as emissaries of the Father. As we find in our second manuscript under review:

*The word God put absolutely without restriction to the Son or Holy Ghost doth always signify the Father from one end of the scriptures to the other . . . Whenever it is said in the scriptures that there is but one God, it is meant the Father.*

- Keynes Collection as provided by the University of St. Andrews, Scotland, 2006

This other of Newton's untitled manuscripts provides a different line of reasoning. Newton's method was to state a proposition in multiple ways, never as setting it forth as dogma, but as an inquiry. In this manuscript (and we do not know which one of these was the earlier and the other the latter), he is more explicit in his sympathy for the Arians:

*When, after some heretics had taken Christ for a mere man and others for the supreme God, St. John in his Gospel endeavoured to state his nature so that men might have from thence a right apprehension of him and avoid those heresies and to that end calls him the word or logos: we must suppose that he intended that term in the sense that it was taken in the world before he used it when in like manner applied to an intelligent being. For if the Apostles had not used words as they found them how could they expect to have been rightly understood? Now the term logos before St. John wrote, was generally used in the sense of the Platonists, when applied to an intelligent being and the Arians understood it in the same sense, and therefore theirs is the true sense of St. John.*

We see, here, that Newton is not afraid of the language of philosophy, as might be supposed from his other inquiry reviewed above, but the reader may not at first understand what he is saying. He is telling us that the Logos is an intelligent being, not merely a cosmic force, as say the Modalists. He believes in the doctrine of the *hypostases*, except that for him – and as he interprets the Arians – the Logos is a *co-existent* but not a *co-equal* being with God the Father.

In this same manuscript, Newton argues against Christ possessing a human soul, telling us that the suffering of Christ in His humanity is efficacious for nothing. It is the Divine Logos who suffered for our sins, not a mere man. Of course, the Post-Nicene Fathers, as we find in Chalcedon, would posit Christ with a human *nature* alongside His divine *nature*, “without mingling and without confusion.” Newton, as a master of theology as any of his time, would have been careful not to deny Christ's humanity, presumably distinguishing human “nature” from that of a human “soul.”

The expression “economical Trinity” focuses on the official role of each of these persons. The “economical Trinity” has to do with the *relational* existence of these three persons in the context of a household – which is the very meaning of the word “economical” – *eco* (house) *nomia* (law).

Other than their disdain for attempts to define an ontological Trinity using words that are not found in the Scriptures, in every other respect both Whiston and Newton were Evangelical and loyal to what they believed was the true Catholic faith.

As a scientist and a logician, Newton could not tolerate sloppy metaphysics in Christian theology. Since that sloppiness devolved into the dangerous heresy of Sabellianism, it is worthwhile to examine how he understood that to be true.

### What is Sabellianism?

Drawing from internet sources, we find the following:

*Sabellianism, or Modalism, is a 3<sup>rd</sup> century Christian heresy developed by Sabellius that proposes that God is a single being which manifests itself in three different modes (Father, Son, Holy Spirit) rather than three distinct, co-equal persons. It emphasizes divine unity, reducing the Trinity to temporary, functional manifestations of one entity, and was condemned by early church councils.*

Newton and Whiston believed in the three distinct persons, but not that they were coequal, as noted above.

Our internet search offers this further description of Sabellianism:

*\* Modalism/Modalistic Monarchianism: God exists as one person who appears in different "modes" or roles, appearing as Father (creation), Son (redemption), and Spirit (sanctification) at different times.*  
*\* Denial of Distinctions: It denies that the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are distinct, co-existing, and co-equal persons, a core tenet of orthodox Trinitarianism.*  
*\*Patripassianism: An implication of this view is that the Father suffered on the cross, and the Father and Son are not distinct.*  
*\* Taught that God is a monad.*  
*Nicene Council's emphasis of "unity of substance" was labeled by the Arians as failing to maintain a distinction within the Godhead.*

Again, as divine beings, Newton and Whiston would say that the persons of the Trinity were "co-existing" but not "co-equal."

Readers of our past Peshers will recall how the biblical term for "god" is not always used of a supreme, infinite being, but is also an appellation made of men and angels. Newton and Whiston fell short in their analysis because they overlooked that distinction and thought that because Christ called the Father "my God" that He was claiming a lesser divinity. We have shown that it is a ranking of sovereignty to which Christ is alluding and while Newton strongly acknowledged Christ's divinity, nevertheless, he believed it was a derivative one. We might imagine, on the other hand, that this is what the Nicene Fathers might actually have meant by the expression: "the begotten Son."

## Whiston's Use of Tertullian as a Case Study

Another thorough treatment of the subject can be found in Whiston's treatise, published in 1720 entitled: *The True Origin of the Sabellian and Athanasian Doctrines of the Trinity*. Whiston was a "Newtonian" and can be relied upon to express publicly what Newton held privately.

In this document, Whiston uses as his case study the North African Church Father of the 2<sup>nd</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup> Century: Tertullian. He compares Tertullian's writings during his "Catholic" period with his transitory writings after he adopted Montanism. Whiston claims that Montanism, at least in its teaching on the Trinity, was proto-Sabellian with sinister origins in Simon Magus.

In Tertullian's Catholic period, he expounds a view of the Trinity which corresponds well with the writings of the other early Christian leaders: Ignatius, Clement, Justin, Irenaeus, and so on. Theological expressions during that period were free of metaphysical speculation. Instead of parsing the biblical text to derive a logical description of the being of God, early Christian writers emphasized the "relational" aspects pertaining to the persons of the Trinity.

### Relational Trinitarianism

Emphasizing this relational view, Whiston begins with Tertullian's treatment of the opening statement of the Lord's Prayer: "**Our Father**, who art in heaven . . ." (*De Oratione & De Baptismo*).

From this statement Tertullian makes several inferences about the godhead:

**First**, the existence of a "father" categorizes God within the context of familial titles. We are to entreat God, not merely as our creator, nor as just our king, but with a relational title to which all human beings can identify: that of the begetter.

**Second**, the existence of a "father" necessarily requires the existence of a "son." While Tertullian correctly assigns Christ's unique qualification of "the only begotten of the father," yet it is a *relational* criterion. Christ teaches His disciples to address God as "our father" which in this context, the question of "substance" or "essence" as in the creator/creature distinction does not matter. Obviously, per the creation story, God did not *beget* Adam as we are told He *begat* Christ. Adam is made from the soil and was animated by God "breathing" within him the "ruach" (breath, spirit) of life.

Theologically, Tertullian follows the New Testament writers to distinguish "adopted" sons from "begotten" sons. Yet, Peter tells us that God has "begotten" us by His "Word," so a valid adoption is achieved through the Holy Spirit (1 Peter 1:23).

**Third**, this concept of “begetting” implies the mother. While other Church Fathers would be more explicit to assign a maternal role to the Holy Spirit (cf. *The Mother Heart of God*, Stivers, 1994), Tertullian is content to attribute it to the “Holy Mother Church” which is endowed with the spiritual power of the new birth in Christian baptism:

*The Son is Invocated in the Father; for says he “I and the Father are one.” Nay, our Mother the Church is not omitted: since in the Son and in the Father the Mother is recognized.*

- *The Origin of the Sabellian and Athanasian Doctrine of the Trinity*, Whiston, 1720 p. 20

In Tertullian’s earliest writings, we see nothing of the metaphysical analogies which would come later. We see relational and familial titles applied to the persons of the Trinity and their roles are defined according to an “economical” or household context.

The baptismal formula invokes the three witnesses of heaven:

*Our Faith is sealed [by baptism] in the Father, and Son, and Holy Spirit. For if everything be established by Three Witnesses, how much more is it so here; while by this Benediction the same are Witnesses of our Faith, which are Undertakers for our Salvation: This Number of the Divine Names is sufficient for the Assurance of Faith . . . the Mention of the Church comes in of Necessity, because where these Three, the Father, and Son, and Holy Spirit are, there is the Church: which is the Body of those Three. (p. 21)*

For Whiston and Newton, this understanding of the Trinity constituted the true “Catholic” faith. While Newton would be among the first to contest the authenticity of 1 John 5:7, he would do so to diminish the co-equality of the persons of the Trinity, but not to exclude their co-deity nor their co-eternity. Both men would regard metaphysical speculations on God’s being which would come later to represent a heretical descent of Christian doctrine into cabalism, as we shall show.

Tertullian’s encounter and then finally his embrace of the Montanist movement have created great consternation among Christian thinkers in all ages. But it is important to recognize that, as is often the case with heretical movements, there were different groups within Montanism with different theological emphases.

Tertullian eventually embraced Montanism – principally the inspired utterances of its leading prophetess – yet without abandoning his core Christian doctrines. Tertullian’s interest resided in a desire for the Church to return to New Testament spiritual power. The “gifts of the Spirit” and an immediate interface with the Divine will were what interested Tertullian.

## Cabalism in Christian Doctrine

However and unfortunately, such a quest is also that of Gnosticism and Cabalism. It represents an implicit and eventually an explicit superceding of ethics and the standards of biblical law to embrace the immediate imperatives of **a spiritual oneness with God**. Obsessed with a quest to share in God's *being* – the Divine monad – Christian holiness ceases to be submission to the will of God as expressed in His covenant law, but instead becomes a mystical journey to obtain an *apotheosis* through spiritual intimacies and altered states of consciousness.

This emphasis upon a direct connection to the Divine power and essence was the deception promulgated by Simon Magus – at least, as he has become known to us – and descended through the centuries in the various heresies of multiple names: Encratites, Cappadocians, Docetists, Montanists, and so on. In more modern times, we might see these elements in the Romantic reaction to Enlightenment thinking or in the unrelated camp meeting tradition of the American frontier in which cathartic experiences were sought to bring a “new birth,” total sanctification or the baptism of the Holy Spirit. These are clearly biblical doctrines which acquired a completely different meaning for the believer's emotional states.

Whiston alleges this *Simonian* origin for modalism and charges Tertullian with the use of modalistic terms to describe the Trinity.

To support this allegation, Whiston first cites the *Apostolic Constitutions* an early Christian document which he believed to be an authentic 2<sup>nd</sup> Century expression of Christian doctrine:

- 1) It condemns Simon Magus and the early heretics (VI, 8, 10) which the Apostolic Constitutions accuse of originating novel opinions about God's nature, and then,
- 2) Contrasts that with a non-mystical affirmation of Christ's deity (VI. 11, 20),

*We profess that Christ is not a mere Man, but God the Word and Man, the Mediator between God and Men, the High Priest of the Father.*

For added clarity, Whiston cites St. Ignatius' *Epistle to the Trallians* §6:

*They [the heretics] introduce God as a Being unknown, and suppose Christ to be Unbegotten: And as to the Spirit, they do not own his Being. . .*

And from the *Epistle to the Tarsusians* §2 & §5 :

*Wherefore he is One Person that put all things under, and Who is All in All; and he another to whom all was subdued. . .*

[It must be appreciated that Ignatius' epistles were written on his way to Rome for martyrdom and was escorted – often mistreated – by his Roman captors. His letters were scrutinized before being dispatched. It is amazing that they were as lucid and cheerful as they were.]

### **Tertullian's Modalism**

Tertullian's modalism is found in his analogy, popular to this day, that **the threefold aspects of the Sun** can be used to describe the Trinity. **The orb** which we see in the sky, Tertullian likened to the Father. **The light** from the Sun, he likened to the Son of God. And **the warmth** generated from that light, he likened to the Holy Spirit. In this analogy, we see God is reduced to a spiritual power which manifests itself in three different ways.

From these types of analogies, Tertullian implied a monad, a singular being which is the very definition of Sabellianism. The fact that the Nicene Fathers and their successors would wrangle over the term "homoousious" – "of the same substance" – as well as to quarrel over questions of "consubstantiality" both Newton and Whiston felt was a presumption of the creature to comprehend its creator.

However, in defense of the Creeds, it must be remembered that the Fathers argued their position from Scripture and refused to embrace the pagan metaphysics which the heretics tried to impose. They condescended to use the language of metaphysics but to limit that language – indeed to provide content to that language – and by so doing, they restricted its usage to the explicit language of the Scriptures.

That is the position of this writer, even if it was not that of Whiston and Newton, who - as scientific men - were impatient with their contemporaries. Whiston was expelled from Cambridge for Arianism and Newton kept his mouth shut.

### **Whiston's Extensive Excerpts from Ignatius**

The following is a collation of Ignatius's teachings on this subject compiled in William Whiston's, *The Sacred History Of The Old And New Testament*, vol. 6, (p. 415-417) 1745, Whiston's words are in bold:

**As for Ignatius's Accounts of those ancient Heresies that are set down already out of the Apostolic Constitutions; they are these:** "The Hereticks, **says Ignatius**, alienate Christ from the Father and the Law from Christ. They calumniate his Nativity of a Virgin; They are ashamed of the Cross, and deny the Passion, and do not believe the Resurrection: they introduce God as a Being unknown, and suppose Christ to be unbegotten. And as to the Spirit, they do not own his Being. Some of them say that the Son is a mere Man; **and that the**

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are all one; and that the Creation is the Work of God, not by Christ, but by some other foreign Power." *Ad Trall* §6. Such Heresies as these he confutes, §10, 11. and in §11. he names the principal Authors of them, in the Words following, "Do you avoid those wicked Branches of the Devil, *Simon* his first born Son; and *Menander*, and *Basilides*, and all his wicked Rout. [The *Ebionites* also] those Worshippers of a Man; whom the Prophet Jeremiah pronounces accursed [Jer. xvii. 5.] Avoid also the impure *Nicolaitans*, falsely so called; those Lovers of Pleasure, those Calumniators: Avoid also that Brood of the wicked one, *Theodotus*, and *Cleobulus*, which produce deadly Fruit."

The same *Ignatius*, in his Epistle to the Philadelphians, §6. gives a larger Account of these old Heresies, in the Words following: "If any one preaches the one God of the Law and of the Prophets; but denies Christ to be the Son of God, he is a Liar, as is also his Father the Devil. Such an one is a *Jew*, falsely so called, of the Circumcision which is from beneath. If any one confesses Christ Jesus to be the Lord; but denies the God of the Law, and of the Prophets, saying that the Father of Christ is not the Maker of Heaven and Earth; such an one has not abode in the Truth, nor more than his Father the Devil. And he is the Disciple of *Simon the Magician*, and not of the Holy Spirit. If any one says there is one God, and also confesses Christ Jesus; but supposes the Lord to be a mere Man, and not the only begotten God, and Wisdom, and Word of God, but supposes him to be compounded only of a Soul and Body; such an one is a Serpent, that preaches Deceit and Error; to the Destruction of Men. Such an one is *poor in his Understanding*, as he is called by Name, *Ebion*. If any one confesses these Things, but calls the Use of lawful Marriage, and the begetting of Children Corruption and Pollution; or calls some Kind of Food abominable, such an one has the Apostate Dragon [Job xxxvi. 13. ap. 72] inhabiting within him. If anyone confesses the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and praises the Creation; but affirms the Incarnation to be only in Appearance, and is ashamed of the Passion, such an one has denied the Faith, no less than the Jews, who slew Christ. If any one confesses these Things, and that God the Word did inhabit in a human Body; being therein the Word, as the Soul is in the Body, because it was God that was the Inhabitant, and not a human Soul; but yet affirms that unlawful Mixtures are a good Thing; and places complete Happiness in Pleasure; as do the *Nicolaitans*, falsely so called, such an one can neither be a Lover of God, nor a Love of Christ; but is a Corrupter of his own Flesh, and is therefore void of the Holy Spirit, and estranged from Christ." See also the Epistle to the Smyrneans, §2. 4. 6. 7.

In his Epistle to *Tarsus*, §2. he thus describes these old Heresies, but more briefly: "I have, says *Ignatius*, been informed that some of the Ministers of *Satan* have been desirous to disturb you. Some asserting, that *Jesus* was born in Appearance, [and died in Appearance, and was crucified in Appearance.] Others, That he is not the Son of the Creator: Others, That he is the *God over all*: Others, that he is a mere Man: Others, that this Flesh is not to rise again; and that it is our Business to live and enjoy a pleasurable Life: For that this is the chief Good of Men; who within a little while are utterly to perish." These Heresies he particularly confutes, §3. 4. 5. 6. 7. See also the Epistle to the *Antiochians*, §1. 2. 3. 4. 5. as also that to *Hero*, §2.

### Our Commentary (cf. highlighted statements above):

While some statements are hard to follow, the gist is that Ignatius is affirming that doctrinal purity or accuracy is not enough, but rather proper moral commitments are required, as well. Ignatius is cautioning his readers to beware of people who can state

proper doctrinal confessions on some points, yet who might misstate other doctrines or dispense with moral law. They might embrace the “Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,” for example, yet deny the Incarnation was real. They might embrace all of the apostolic doctrines, yet deny the institution of marriage, and so on.

Ignatius anticipates the heresy of Sabellius many years in advance, by denouncing those who claim “that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are all one” as in “one being,” presumably the modalism described above.

His reference to Simon Magus is highlighted.

Ignatius appears to vindicate Isaac Newton’s belief that the Divine Logos constituted the “soul” which was incarnated in the flesh of Jesus “because it was God that was the Inhabitant, and not a human Soul,” yet confuses us with an undefined reference to “unlawful mixtures.” It might be inferred that some people believed that a mixture of a human soul with a divine soul – as in the case of Greek mythology of the gods mating with Earth women – might be what is meant here; in which case, Ignatius would be anticipating the controversy settled by Chalcedon, in which the divine nature and the human nature (not souls) cohabitated side-by-side within Christ, “without mingling, and without confusion.”

Readers of our past Peshers will appreciate the value of the writings of St. Ignatius as not only apostolic, but also Desposynic. No greater authority can be imagined than someone who not only personally knew the leading figures of the New Testament Church, but one, even as a small child, who would have been present with the assembled believers on the Day of Pentecost.

### **The Tetragrammaton & the Ya Ha Wa Ha**

*Sing unto God . . . by his name JAH.*

Psalm 68:4 (KJV)

Through the centuries, there has been much discussion over the correct pronunciation of God’s Name. Of course, this uncertainty arose because of the Jewish reticence from ancient times to pronounce the Great Tetragrammaton: YHWH. These four letters are all consonants with no vowels supplied in the ancient Hebrew language. The vowels were supposedly passed down orally through an esoteric tradition among the Aaronic priesthood and perhaps the Hebrew prophets. We are led to believe that no one really knows today how it is properly pronounced.

Having a new covenant name for God in the person of Jesus Christ, Christian theologians have been indifferent to the Tetragrammaton and have contented themselves with translating it as “Jehovah” when they encountered it in the Hebrew text, or just following the Septuagint with LORD as do Jewish Rabbis.

In more modern times, Messianic enthusiasts – Christians who want to be all things Jewish but to still embrace Jesus as their Savior and Messiah – have insisted that we drop the “Jehovah” and “LORD” nomenclature and instead use the the name, “Yahweh.”

I, too, am indifferent on the correct pronunciation because I happen to believe that if God was worried about it, He would have made it a prominent part of biblical revelation. Mankind constitutes a world with hundreds of languages; I would surmise that dialects and enunciation would make it impossible for it to be pronounced the same worldwide.

I happen to believe that a correct pronunciation would require the sounding of all four consonants, which neither Jehovah nor Yahweh satisfy. Perhaps, Adolph Ernst Knoch came the closest in suggesting as much when he rendered the Tetragrammaton with the four vowel sounds: *ee-ah-oo-ah*.

Regardless, what is more important is to ask what kind of being are we addressing when we use such words of appellation?

The world of magic is one which believes that the proper invocation of names is critical for it to work. Knowing the name of a deity or demon constitutes power over that being. If the magician fails to pronounce the magic word correctly, he will not successfully summon the entity nor compel it to do the desired work or miracle. People who worry about the correct pronunciation of God’s Name – as are the Jews (whose leaders from the time of the Pharisees onward indulged in these superstitions) – fall into the same Cabalistic trap. They view prayer as if they were practicing magic.

Jesus told His followers to pray in His Name, but never did teach them how to say it. “Yeshua” in the Hebrew and “Yay-soos” in the Greek, we either have a human’s name in the former (Joshua) or we have an appeal to the Greek god “Zeus” in the latter (“Yah is our Zeus”). “Zeus” meaning “savior” – it’s given etymologists fits.

It is not out of a desire to “dumb down” the world into its lowest common denominator that I take issue with followers of “the Name.” It is rather to affirm faith in the baptismal formula: “In the Name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost” (Matthew 28:19). We presume that the Divine Name comprehends these three persons.

We keep coming back to the importance of the doctrine of the Trinity in our discussions because it is the foundation of social order. The formula contains a familial nomenclature and I have spent my entire writing career trying to explain why it is essential to relational theology.

Whatever is comprehended within the “Name of Jesus” as an historical person revealed to us in the Gospels, we are taught that in Him is revealed the Godhead. As within the name of “Jehovah” or our “Yahovaha,” “Jesus” is the revelatory name which embraces the Three Persons of the Trinity. You cannot have the Son without the Father, nor the Father without the Son. And while the place of the Third Person is not always obvious – it is a necessary inference.

While as noted above, William Whiston was accused of Arianism in his day and Isaac Newton was posthumously, yet they insisted that the language of the Nicene Creed was itself deficient and resulted in the Sabellian heresy which has plagued the Latin Churches. Relying upon a deficient translation of the Greek language which is not the language of Divine revelation as is the Hebrew, the Creeds could not express the Hebrew concept of the *min* – “the same substance in kind” – but degraded into the insufficient nomenclature of Greek metaphysics – “of the same substance” (*homoousios*). The semi-Arians could not do any better – “of like substance” (*homoiousios*) – as a compromise with the Arians, “of different substance” (*heteroousios*). Each term could be twisted heretically.

With the former Hebrew expression, we can have a genuine three persons in our “godkind,” just as we can have three fishes in “fishkind”, or three cows in “cowkind”, or three people in “humankind” – different persons but the same substance. With the Greek *homoousios*, we have a monad, a singular substantial blob, the same divinity as the Gnostics.

While the Nicene Creed brilliantly guards us from such a conclusion, yet in failing to appeal to the language of revelation – either because as Greeks they were unaware of the Hebrew nomenclature or perhaps they felt it “primitive,” preferring their philosophical expressions – they left the gates of doctrine wide open.

Historic Christianity has failed to produce a true, relational theology. It is mired down in metaphysics. Somehow, it has failed to fulfill the final charge of Old Testament revelation found in Malachi:

*He shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse. – Malachi 4:6*

Are we still cursed?

## The Doctrine of the Min

In logic, all things are defined by their attributes. From the discovery and classification of attributes, all things can be differentiated from everything else. This is science.

We see this logical process of classification in the creation account in Genesis, which introduces us to the Hebrew word for “kind”: מין *Min* (pronounced “mean”, Strong’s #4327).

[This is an interesting word and is strikingly similar to our words for *minimum*, *minimal*, *miniature*, and so on. ]

When Genesis speaks of flora and fauna, it uses the expression “After its kind . . .” implying that propagation and replication is necessary to be a Min.

This is how science decides whether a living thing represents a species: Can it be propagated?

While we learn later in biblical revelation that an infinite being cannot be classified (“I AM THAT I AM”), nevertheless, as that Being is revealed to us – by the attributes which we can know Him, man being made in that divine image – we then can infer that God is a “kind,” a “min” because God makes this declaration:

*Behold, the man has become as one of us . . .*

Somehow, in man’s disobedience, he has acquired an “attribute” which God had reserved to Himself, but which man had the potential to obtain: moral discretion. By achieving that attribute, man acquired a moral power which changed the nature of the relationship he had with his Creator.

Regardless, God is known by His revealed attributes and the possession of those attributes constitutes “**Godkind.**”

It may not be clear whether using “min” would have rescued the Nicene Council from the wrangling over its Creed, but it could have helped. It is a word in the language of revelation, after all, and should be trusted. If God dared to use it, we can, as well.

A Servant of Jesus,

James

**Collect for the Day:**

*The kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever*

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*The Cambrian Peshier* is the pastoral epistle of the Cambrian Episcopal Desposynic Church, a fellowship and abbey adhering to a spiritual tradition from ancient Wales. We use the Authorized Version of the Bible (King James Version) as our default translation and the Book of Common Prayer of the Episcopalian Church for liturgical guidance. We are not an affiliate of any denomination.

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