

And the first of the Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion of the Church of England in the form of its American Revision of 1801, states:

There is but one living and true God, everlasting, without body, parts, or passions; of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness; the Maker, and Preserver of all things both visible and invisible. And in unity of this Godhead there be three Persons, of one substance, power, and eternity: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.^4

Of course these brief statements leave much unsaid and use some technical terms which need definition and expansion. For the moment, however, we will let these assertions stand as brief responses to our first question.

2. Why is this Doctrine Important?

Although it is not apparent upon initial reflection, the doctrine of the Trinity is important in its implications for the nature and meaning of biblical revelation, particularly that body of revelation concerning the true deity and mediatorial work of Christ. If God is one in the sense of one individual Person, then when we read in Scripture of the Father saying at Jesus' baptism, "Thou art My beloved Son; in Thee I am well-pleased" (Mark 1:11), or the Father saying at Jesus' transfiguration, "This is My beloved Son, with whom I am well-pleased; listen to Him!" (Matthew 17:5), or Jesus in His high priestly prayer saying, "Father, the hour has come; glorify Thy Son, that the Son may glorify Thee." (John 17:1), we must understand these statements to mean either that Jesus was only a man who experienced very special personal interrelationships with God, or that God accommodated Himself to our limited understanding by employing the *appearance* of interaction and interrelationship, although the *reality* of such was simply nonexistent.

But if Jesus was only a man and not the God-man, he could not be the "one Mediator between God and man" spoken of by the apostle Paul in 1 Timothy 2:5, and could not accomplish redemption for sinners. And if God created the mere appearance of interaction, so that the one Person God both spoke from heaven and appeared in human form at the same time, then perhaps the other things recorded in Scripture about the nature and word of God are mere appearances, and should not be understood as representations of reality! Such an interpretation raises severe questions