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DEPARTMENT OF NEW TESTAMENT
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"THE THINGS WHICH THOU HAST HEARD . . .
THE SAME COMEY THOU TO FATHERS, WHO
WHO SHALL BE ABLE TO TEACH OTHERS ALSO."

Dear Mr. Joffe-Cox:

In response to your letter, I am enclosing an article of mine on the "a god" mistranslation in John 1:1. And even the apostle Paul was called a god twice (Acts 28:6) and (Acts 14:11-12). Different cities had different gods. They were numerous and most of them had very limited authority. Hermes was a messenger, carrier from god to god. Bacchus was the god of wine and song, etc. One can readily realize how ~~to~~ ridiculous it was to so label Jesus, who raised the dead, fed 5000, stopp'd the wind and the waves etc. and even rose ~~th~~ from the dead.

In John 8:58, the JW translation of ego eimi as "I have been" is absolutely wrong. It means "I am" and is in the present tense in Greek. They translated it as if it was in the perfect tense. And I have never read about a "perfect indefinite tense" in any Greek grammar, and I am co-author of the most widely used one in the U.S., and it is also used worldwide.

Jesus said he was the "ego eimi", I believe, mentioned in Exodus 3:14 and 15 which meant Koh. It is so explained in verse 15. And the Jews so interpreted it when Jesus said he was the ego eimi, for they immediately pecked up stones to kill him.

JWs have not been saved because they have not accepted Jesus as Savior and Lord. (Matt. 7:21; Rom. 10:9-10; Acts 2:38; John 3:17 and 16 and 36) Emphasize the necessity of a new birth when witnessing to them.

God's best blessings on you,

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May 15, 1979

Dear Mr. Jeff Cross:

I wrote this when I learned I had been quoted out of context.

A GROSSLY MISLEADING TRANSLATION

John 1:1, which reads "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God" is shockingly mistranslated, "Originally the Word was, and the Word was with God, and the Word was a god," in a New World Translation of the Christian Greek Scriptures, published under the auspices of Jehovah's Witnesses.

Since my name is used and our Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament is quoted on page 744 to seek to justify their translation, I am making this statement.

The translation suggested in our Grammar for the disputed passage is, "The Word was deity." Moffat's rendering is "the Word was divine." Williams' translation is, "the Word was God Himself." Each translation reflects the dominant idea in the Greek. For, whenever an article does not precede a noun in Greek, that noun can either be considered as emphasizing the character, nature, essence or quality of a person or thing, as theos (God) does in John 1:1, or it can be translated in certain contexts as indefinite, as they have done. But of all the scholars in the world, as far as we know, none have translated this verse as Jehovah's Witnesses have done.

If the Greek article occurred with both Word and God in John 1:1, the implication would be that they are one and the same person, absolutely identical. But John affirmed that "the Word was with (the) God" (the definite article preceding each noun), and in so writing he indicated his belief that they are distinct and separate personalities. Then John next stated that the Word was God, i.e., of the same family or essence that characterizes the Creator. Or, in other words, that both are of the same nature, and that nature is the highest in existence, namely divine.

Examples where the noun in the predicate does not have an article, as in the above verse, are: 1 John 4:8, "God is love", John 4:28, "God is spirit". Matthew 13:39, "the reapers are angels," i.e., they are of the type of beings known as angels. In each instance the noun in the predicate was used to describe some quality or characteristic of the subject, whether as to nature or type.

The apostle John in the context of the introduction to his gospel is pulling all the stops out of language to portray not only the deity of Christ but also His equality with the Father. He states that the Word was in the

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beginning, that He was with God, that He was God and that all creation came into existence through Him and that not even one thing exists which was not created by Christ. What else could be said that John did not say? In John 1:18 he explained that Christ has been so intimate with the Father that He was in His bosom and that He came to earth to exhibit or portray God. But if we had no other statement from John except that which is found in John 14:9, "He that has seen me has seen the Father," that would be enough to satisfy the seeking soul that Christ and God are the same in essence and that both are divine and equal in nature.

Besides, the whole tenor of New Testament revelation points in this direction. Compare Paul's declaration in Colossians 1:19, for instance: "that all the divine fullness should dwell in Him," or the statement in Hebrews, "He is the reflection of God's glory and the perfect representation of His being, and continues to uphold all the universe by His mighty word" (Villan's translation). And note the sweeping cosmic claim recorded in Matthew 28:19, "All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth." Phil. 2:9, "one being in very nature God, God equalled him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name... and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord." Col. 2:9-10, "For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form... who is the head over every power and authority." Rev. 3:14, "The supervisor (arche) of God's creation." Col. 1:15, "For by him all things were created, things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible." Mark 14:61-62, "Are you the Christ, the Son of the blessed one? He said Jesus." 2 Cor. 5:19, "God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself." John 14:6, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." John 7:17, "If anyone wills to do God's will he will find out whether my teaching comes from God, or whether I speak on my own."

And, if we contrast with that the belittling implication that Christ was only a god, do we not at once detect the discord? Does not such a conception conflict with the New Testament message both in whole and in part? Why, if John, in the midst of the idolatry of his day, had made such a statement would not the first century hearers and readers have gotten a totally inadequate picture of Christ, who we believe, is the Creator of the universe and the only Redeemer of humanity?

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or Logos "was divine" is not examples. Neither was the saying that he was the God place the only market, nor with whom he was. It merely was the word ill of God, as tells of a certain quality about it would mean if the article the Word or Logos, but it does were also used with θεός. The reason for their render- ing, this *Grammar* could have the Greek word "divine", translated it, and the word and not "God", is that it is the same as god, to run more parallel-Greek noun θεός or without the let with Xenophon's statement, definite article here on an and the place uses a market, through θεός. The God with in the sentence "and the whom the Word or Logos was word was a god" the copula- originally is designated here five verb "was" and the by the Greek expression θεός, predication "a god" form the the case preceded by the definite article in the sentence. In article θεός, hence an articular definite article no that before omize that the articular com- θεός (god), and it is pre- scriptions of the noun points to an identification, a personality, definite article is to be under- whereas an anarthrous com- stood so that the sentence struction points to a quality should therefore be translated about someone. That is what "and the Word was God." That *A Manual Grammar of the Greek Language by Dana* was the God with whom the and *Manual Grammar on Dana*, Word was said to be. This is 140 paragraph viii *Accusative*, unreasonable; for how can it, on page 146 paragraph 13), Word be with the God and at the same time publication says the same time be that same about the subject of a sentence, God?

The article sometimes dis- True, on page 178, *Green's Handbook to the Grammar of the Greek Testament* has this the predicate in a copulative to say on the significance of sentence. In Xenophon's *Anabasis* the article: "26. Hence arises said, 1:4:6; *Handbook I* is of the general rule. That in the *review*, and the place uses a simple sentence the Subject marked, he have parallel takes the article, the Predicate case to what we have in John omits it. The subject is def- 1:1, and θεός to θεός, and the subject before the mind, the word was deity. The article predicate generally denotes points out the subject in these the class to which the subject

John 1:1 — "a god"

θεός (theos), Greek

The Complete Bible — An Issue of The Bible by Dr. Jan. American Translation renders Moffat reads likewise: "The this expression 'divine', make. Logos existed in the very be- ing the entire verse read: "In coming, the Logos was with the beginning the Word exist. God, the Logos was divine." ed. The Word was with God, 1935 edition) Every honest and the Word was divine." person will have to admit that (1943 reprint) A. New France. John's saying that the Word

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is referred, or from which it is excluded." Then this *Handbook* adds some sentences to illustrate this general rule regarding an anarthrous predicate, such as, "thy word is truth"; "the Word was God." "God is love"; and next the *Handbook* says: "Had the article been employed with the Predicate in the above case, the sentences would have read thus: . . . Thy Word is the Truth, and nothing else can be so described; the Word was the entire Godhead, and God and Love are identical, so that in fact Love is God." Such an explanation is, in itself, an unintended admission that "the Word" of John 1:1 is not the same god as the God with whom the Word is said to be. Hence the omitting of the article in the predicate of a simple sentence is shown to be not a general rule, and not one that holds good in every case. One such case where that general rule does not hold true is John 1:1. The definite article "the" was there omitted, but not according to that general rule; it was not omitted with the idea that it should be understood by the reader.

Here we agree with Dr. A. T. Robertson when he says: "God" and "love" are not convertible terms any more than "God" and "Logos" or "Logos" and "Besh." . . . The absence of the article here is on pur-

pose and essential to the true idea." (Page 768, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament*) John's inspired writings and those of his fellow disciples show what the true idea is, namely, the Word or Logos is not God or the God, but is the Son of God, and hence is a god. That is why, at John 1:1, 2, the apostle refers to God as the God and to the Word or Logos as a god, to show the difference between the two. Hence he deliberately left out the definite article in the predicate which describes who or what the Word (Logos) was.

With a reference to the *Grammar* by Dr. Robertson, the *Manual Grammar* by Dana and Manley, page 140, says: "Surely when Robertson says that θεός (theos), as to the article, 'is treated like a proper name and may have it or not have it' (R. 761), he does not mean to intimate that the presence or absence of the article with θεός has no special significance. We construe him to mean that there is no definite rule governing the use of the article with θεός, so that sometimes the writer's viewpoint is difficult to detect, which is entirely true. But in the great majority of instances the reason for the distinction is clear. The use of θεός in John 1:1 is a good example."

The above disposes of the trinitarian argument that the

* Or, "you are demonized." * You have seen Abraham? BAVG; has Abraham seen you? KSYA. * I have been = ἐγὼ εἰμι (e-go' ei-mi') after the a'orist infinitive clause σὺν Ἀβραάμ γενέσθαι and hence properly rendered in the perfect indefinite tense. It is not the same as ὁ ὢν (ho oñn), meaning "The Being" or "The I Am"?) at Exodus 3: 14, LXX.