

seemed the ideal rendering of 'LORD' (*JHWH*). But not all were of this opinion. We, members of the translation committee, certainly were not. For us the preference for *TUHAN* is based chiefly on the fact that this rendering has become current use, and that we see no urgent reason or convincing arguments to oppose that tradition. Seen from the point of view of language or translation we consider the rendering of *JHWH* with *TUHAN*, *LORD*, etc., a rather disputable one. The chief objection is that in this way its name-character is lost, for 'Lord', from a linguistic point of view, is a generic name, not a proper name. I think I can say that in Dutch, for instance, the word *HERE* ('LORD'), in spite of all typographical devices, still has that character. Thus in *de HERE God* ('the LORD God') the reader sees and, especially, the listener hears not what is meant, i.e. proper name plus apposition, but what is not meant, i.e. title plus proper name (to be precise, title plus a proper name which has developed from a generic name). I am glad that the *Rules for Translators* leave open the possibility of using the transliteration of *JHWH*, just as I have been glad that the conference in Djakarta has withstood the pressure to declare this transliteration unacceptable. For the Bahasa Indonesia, therefore, we recognise the theoretical possibility of transliteration, as was shown already in the discussion of the Shellabear-Bode system, and the modifications we considered (see sub. above I/3). There is all the more reason for this theoretical reserve in the case of *JHWH* because in other languages of the Archipelago a transliteration is actually being used, among others, in Javanese (*Jehuwah*) and in Bataks (*Djahuwa*).

Nevertheless, for the present, these considerations with regard to translation in the Bahasa Indonesia have only a theoretical value. As aforesaid, the maintenance of *TUHAN* is here, in our opinion, the best solution for the time being, considering the existing tradition in the Christian churches.

"My Father"

The Significance of the Manner in Which Jesus Refers to God as Father¹

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(Adapted from the author's article of the same title in the Christian Minister, VI, 5, November-December 1954.)

Easily overlooked by the casual reader of the Scriptures are many truths which are not stated in so many words but rather conveyed or implied in more subtle ways. Among the truths thus brought out are some evidences concerning the deity of Jesus. These evidences are significant for any student of the Scriptures and at times may be of particular concern to the translator of the New Testament.

The New Testament has, of course, clear statements concerning the

¹ It may be noted that the Scriptural evidence quoted in this article is drawn exclusively from the Fourth Gospel. Support from the Synoptics is based on the argument from silence. *Ed.*

deity of Jesus. It may not be so commonly observed, however, that there is such evidence in the New Testament record of Jesus' references to God as his father.

John 5 : 18 reads, in the King James version, "therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him [Jesus], because he . . . said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God".

For Jesus to claim God as his father seems innocent enough. Modern Christians make such a claim. The Jews themselves claimed God as their father. In John 8 : 39 a group of Jews disputing with Jesus claimed, "Our father is Abraham", then changed their point of view and said (8 : 41), "We have one father, God".

If the Jews themselves held that God was their father, how could they charge Jesus with blasphemy, and even with claiming equality with God, if he referred to God as his father?

As for the charge itself, the Greek text of John 5 : 18 makes it clear that the Jews were accusing Jesus of claiming an *exclusive* relationship with the Father — a relationship far closer than that which they claimed for themselves. The text actually states that they were charging Jesus with saying that God was *πατέρα ἰδίου*, "his own father", not *πατέρα αὐτοῦ*, "his father", which the Jews would have accepted. The word *ἰδιος* implies that Jesus was allegedly claiming a unique and intimate relationship with God in which others did not share. To the Jews such a claim was a tacit assumption of equality with God.

The next question is, Was the Jews' accusation justified? Did Jesus claim an exclusive relationship to God?

There are other points of view from which this question could be investigated, but the present article will be concerned only with Jesus' references to God as father and the bearing of these references upon this question.

At first sight, it would perhaps seem that Jesus did not commonly refer to God as father except in a manner in which any Christian, or any devout Jew of Jesus' day, might refer to him. He used such phrases as "Father", "the Father", "your Father", "my Father", and other similar phrases. None of these are unusual in themselves. Considered together, on the other hand, a definite tendency is suggested.

Although Jesus commonly refers to God both as his father and as father of the faithful,² nowhere does the New Testament quote him as referring to God as "our Father" in a sense which includes himself together with other people. The only New Testament instance of Jesus' use of the phrase "our Father" is in the Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6 : 9); and in this instance he is not including himself, but only teaching the disciples what they should say when they pray.

John 20 : 17 gives Jesus a seemingly ideal opportunity to say "our Father". He could have said, "I ascend to *our* Father, and to *our* God". Yet here Jesus significantly avoids classing his relationship to the Father

² While it is not the primary purpose of this article, it may be observed at this point that Jesus does not refer to God as the father of unbelievers. Indeed, when unbelieving Jews claim God as their father (John 8 : 41), Jesus denies their claim and states, "Ye are of your father the devil" (John 8 : 44), and "Ye are not of God" (John 8 : 47).

with that even of his disciples, saying instead, "I ascend to my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God".

Looking further at Jesus' references to the father, it becomes apparent that he sometimes says "my Father" with an intentional emphasis, purposely avoiding using such a phrase as "our Father" which would have been acceptable to the Jews:

John 2 : 16 — "Do not make *my* Father's house a house of merchandise".

John 5 : 17 — "*My* Father is working until now, and I am working".

John 6 : 32 — "*My* Father gives *you* the true bread from heaven" (not '*our* Father' or '*gives us*').

John 6 : 40 — "For this is the will of *my* Father . . ."

John 8 : 19 — "You know neither me nor *my* Father: if you had known me, you would have known my Father also".

John 14 : 2 — "In *my* Father's house are many dwelling-places".

John 14 : 7 (addressed to the apostles) — "If you had known me, you would have known *my* Father also".

Jesus' insistence upon the singular pronoun "my" in reference to his own relationship to the Father is even more significant in view of the fact that he uses the plural pronoun to refer to God as the father of others — e.g., "the Father" and "your (*ὑμῶν*) Father". In only one context, "thy Father who sees in the secret place" (Matthew 6 : 4, 6, 18), does Jesus use the singular pronoun "thy" (*σου*) of the relationship of other people to God.

In other words, the New Testament seems to place Jesus' relationship to the Father in a class by itself — "my Father". For all other people the relationship is in common with all believers — "our Father".

In addition to Jesus' use of possessive pronouns with the word "father", some of his other statements concerning the Father further indicate that the Jews correctly interpreted Jesus as claiming a more-than-human relationship to God, as they charged in John 5 : 18. This charge is also brought out in John 10 : 33, where the Jews say to Jesus, "... you, being a man, are making yourself God". Some of the more significant of these statements include the following:

John 5 : 23 — "... that all men should honour the Son, *even as they honour the Father*".

John 10 : 30 — "I and the Father are one" (*ἐν ἑσμεν*).

John 14 : 6 — "... no one comes to the Father except through me".

John 14 : 9 — "he who has seen me has seen the Father".

The conclusion seems inescapable that the Jews rightly interpreted many of Jesus' statements as implying that God was his own Father in a unique sense not shared by others, and that he was like God.

Passages in the Gospels in which Jesus plainly and publicly declares his deity are not common. Nor would such declarations have served his purpose. At the same time, a careful study of the implications of what Jesus said shows that in various ways, one of which is his reference to God as Father, Jesus intended to convey the fact of his deity and of his unique sonship to God. This is verified by his contemporaries' recognition of these implications.