

A Misplaced Criticism of “The Twofoldness of Divine Truth”

In early 2010 Norman Geisler published a letter on the Internet that he claims to have sent to Ron Kangas, editor-in-chief of the journal *Affirmation & Critique (A&C)*.¹ In the letter Geisler challenged comments that Ron Kangas made concerning the twofoldness of divine truth in an article for *A&C*:

Fourth, what do you mean by “twofoldness” of truth. Can logical opposites both be true?

Ron Kangas did not say that opposites can both be true. Rather, he said that the truths in the Bible often have two sides, specifically, in the context of the article Geisler criticized, that God is both one and three at the same time.²

In the criticism to which Geisler’s letter is appended, Geisler and Ron Rhodes claim that Ron Kangas appealed to “[Witness] Lee’s mysterious doctrine of the ‘Twofoldness of Truth’” to defend logical contradictions concerning the nature of Christ. Their criticism is ill-informed. The teaching of the principle of the twofoldness of divine truth did not originate with Witness Lee. In the nineteenth century, the highly respected British Bible teacher Robert Govett wrote a booklet entitled *The Twofoldness of Divine Truth*. There Govett said that what appears to us to be a contradiction in the Word of God is often due to the truth having two sides. Of one example he wrote:

But are they not contradictory? That cannot be, for they are both parts of the Word of God, and contradictions cannot both be true. Both, then, are to be received whether we can reconcile them or no.³

Ron Kangas affirmed Govett’s understanding in an article entitled “Reflections: The Twofoldness of Divine Truth” in the spring 2010 issue of *Affirmation & Critique*:

For many years we have presented and upheld, as foundational to the theological enterprise, the twofoldness of divine truth—the essential biblical principle that the great truths in the Scriptures are respectively of two aspects. These aspects, or sides, although they might appear to be inconsistent, are by no means contradictory; rather, they are complementary.⁴

Both Govett’s original book and Ron Kangas’ article convincingly demonstrate the value of the principle of twofoldness in understanding the divine revelation in the Bible.

Geisler’s misattribution of the principle of the twofoldness of divine truth to Witness Lee is telling. Four articles on this site,⁵ three articles in *Affirmation & Critique*,⁶ as well as other publications by Living Stream Ministry⁷ all attribute this principle to Govett and his booklet. Had Geisler and Rhodes done their homework, they would have known this.

Geisler made a further insinuation that is noteworthy, particularly for its complete misrepresentation of the principle of the twofoldness of divine truth and for its possible overtones of ethnic bias. Geisler wrote:

Seventh, how would you distinguish your view from the Yin-Yang of Taoism where ultimate reality is beyond distinctions like true or false and opposites can both be one?

Would Geisler have asked the same question had he known that the principle he was rejecting was first articulated by a British theologian rather than Witness Lee?⁸ The writings of Robert Govett, Witness Lee, and Ron Kangas are based on the Bible and are replete with biblical examples. An examination of their writings quickly demonstrates that Geisler's association of the twofoldness of divine truth with the Yin-Yang of Taoism is utterly baseless. Geisler depends on the natural mind limited by the principles of Western philosophy and logic to try to apprehend what is spiritual in nature, something which the apostle Paul told us will not work (1 Cor. 2:14, cf. 1:22-23). It is Geisler, not Robert Govett or Witness Lee or Ron Kangas, who subjects the study of the Bible to an external set of philosophical principles. Robert Govett, Witness Lee, and Ron Kangas are students of the Bible, following the tradition of the loving seekers of the Lord to receive the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit (Eph. 1:17-18; cf. Acts 26:18; 2 Cor. 4:6) to apprehend the unsearchable riches of Christ unveiled in the Holy Bible (Eph. 3:8), and their expositions on the twofoldness of divine truth reflect their commitment to the Word of God.

For an extensive and enlightening commentary on the principle of the twofoldness of divine truth, please read Ron Kangas' article "Reflections: The Twofoldness of Divine Truth" in the spring 2010 issue of *Affirmation & Critique*.

¹ Ron Kangas has no record or recollection of having received such a letter.

² Ron Kangas, "The Economy of God: The Triune God in His Operation," *Affirmation & Critique XIII:1*, April 2008, p. 5:

The revealed biblical truth, being twofold according to the principle of the twofoldness of divine truth, embraces both the oneness and the threeness of the Triune God: God is uniquely one, yet He is three-one—the Father, the Son, and the Spirit.

³ Robert Govett, *The Twofoldness of Divine Truth* (Harrisburg: Christian Publishers Inc., n.d.), pp. 7-8.

⁴ Ron Kangas, "Reflections: The Twofoldness of Divine Truth," *Affirmation & Critique, XV:1*, Spring 2010, p. 91.

⁵ The four articles are:

- Ron Kangas, *Modalism, Tritheism, or the Pure Revelation of the Triune God according to the Bible* (Anaheim, CA: Living Stream Ministry, 1976);
- "Concerning the Scriptural Meaning of the Triune God," *Orange County Register*, October 22, 1977;
- Ron Kangas, *The Triune God: A Testimony of Our Belief And Experience* (Anaheim, CA: Living Stream Ministry, 1976); and
- "The Truth Concerning the Study of the Bible," *Orange County Register*, October 15, 1977.

⁶ The three articles in *A&C* are:

- Ron Kangas, "Becoming a Person Who Knows the Triune God," *A&C I:2*, April 1996, pp. 27-37;
- Ron Kangas, "The Subjective God: The Trinity in Christian Experience," *A&C II:1*, January 1997, pp. 28-43; and
- Ron Kangas, "Word, Breath, Flesh: The Processed God in the Gospel of John," *A&C X:1*, pp. 3-13.

⁷ Examples include:

- Witness Lee, *Life-study of 1 Corinthians* (Anaheim, CA: Living Stream Ministry, 1984), p. 190;
- Witness Lee, *Young People's Training* (Anaheim, CA: Living Stream Ministry, 1976), pp. 64-65; and
- Witness Lee, *Lesson Book, Level 5: The Church—The Vision and Building Up of the Church* (Anaheim, CA: Living Stream Ministry, 1990), pp. 77-78.

In *Watchman Nee: A Seer of the Divine Revelation in the Present Age* (Anaheim, CA: Living Stream Ministry, 1991), p. 262, Witness Lee wrote that Govett's booklet was translated into Chinese as part of Watchman Nee's publication work.

⁸ Geisler is not the first to use Witness Lee's Chinese lineage to imply that his teaching contains elements that are foreign to the Christian faith. Certain countercult writers seem predisposed to label anything they do not understand or disagree with as cultic or Eastern mysticism. The truth is Witness Lee was raised in a Southern Baptist home and attended Christian schools. His teaching is thoroughly biblical, and he often cited his indebtedness to the many Bible teachers from the West whose writings he carefully studied.

© 2010 DCP. All Rights Reserved