

Defining Christ, Part Two The Father/Son Relationship

John R Gavazzoni

Rushing to conclusions is a sign of both natural and spiritual immaturity. It is often true, as the saying goes, that "A little knowledge is a dangerous thing." Concerning the relationship of God, our Father, and His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, some folks, fixating on little more than one word in one verse of scripture, make that verse say something that it really does not. So it is with the statement of Jesus: "I and the Father are one." Be careful about fixating on the word, "one" in that verse. I do not mean to sound caustic, dear ones, but in order to make my point emphatically, I will borrow from contemporary rhetoric, and ask this simple question of those who are forming maddeningly illogical conclusions regarding relationship within Deity, "Just what part of 'and' don't you understand?" May I be so bold as to encourage you, at least in regard to the following, that you follow my example when it comes to forming opinions on the basis of a direction of thought that might be initiated when one is contemplating how to interpret a passage of scripture.

Of course, it is elementary, that we with all humility, submit our brain to the mind of Christ which we have by the indwelling of the Spirit of Truth. But, also, there is the practical dimension of an approach to the Bible. We ought to take it slow and easy from the very outset when our mind is drawn in a certain direction of conclusion based upon what seems to us at the moment to be what a certain passage is saying.

This has been my practice for years. I almost immediately pause and read the passage several times in its immediate and larger context (not forgetting to consider its cultural context), checking several translations, chewing the Word, digesting it, letting the thought of the writer, and most importantly the thought of the Spirit sink in, and in so doing I often discover that though I thought I knew what the passage said, I really, after all, did not, or that I missed something which upon more careful examination became quite clear.

The next step involves a process of comparing that verse with others, also in their context, that at least first appear to be addressing the same subject, also setting, in my mind, the verse I'm considering against the great backdrop of the essential thrust of the whole of scripture. One does, after many years, get a "feel" for the essential message of scripture which threads its way from Genesis to Revelation, so we ought to be instantly suspicious if we're being led in a direction which, at that point at least, seems contradictory to that divine thread.

Of course, there are those who do not need to take such care in their handling of the written words of God, for they have such an absolutely undisturbed, direct, mystical and immediate access to the mind of God, that they have no need for such pedestrian labors. They are beyond trying the spirits. They are so spiritual that they need not consider the apostolic warning that there are many spirits that have gone forth into the world. (If you did not pick up on the sarcasm in the last sentence, please do so now).

Then there is the matter of recalling the input of others in our lives through their personal fellowship and teaching, and through their writings. The Spirit of Truth is God's deposit to the whole church and needs to be experienced in relationship with one another. Be willing to be adjusted in your thinking by the thinking of others. This is not necessarily contradictory to being taught of God.

The anointing that we have that teaches us all things is first a corporate anointing from which we individually draw. I want to acknowledge that there are genuine, spiritually-healthy believers who are not given to great scrutiny of scripture, but those brethren are careful not to set themselves up as teachers to the church. I love the simplicity of the faith of such ones, and have been enriched by their spirit.

Well, I could go on and on in this vein, but I think what I've shared thus far is enough to make the point. So back to the relationship within Deity. Central to this subject, of course, is the relationship of the Father to the Son. Clearly Jesus affirmed a relationship with the Father that was a matter of both distinction and similarity. "I AND the Father are ONE." Minds undisciplined by the Lord often want to

consider either only the "one" factor, or the "and" factor. But we are faced with two dimensions of relationship; "and" and "one."

The Son's relationship with the Father--- which includes our relationship with the Father in Him--- is not a matter of either/ or, but of both. On one hand, the Father is the Father, and Christ Jesus is the Son, and on the other hand, they are one. This is elementary theologically. The oneness is a oneness of union, not of simplistic sameness. We find this all through the Bible. God brings forth out of Adam a hitherto hidden dimension of his being, Eve; then the two are joined together and become one flesh. This is based upon God realizing within the oneness of Deity an "Us," as in, "Let Us make man in Our image.....Male AND female created He them." So man is a "them" and God is an "Us," and the correlative element is the male/female dynamic.

The Christ expresses Himself as His Body and His Bride, the Father bringing forth out of the Body of Christ, the Bride of Christ. Few things are more pregnant in meaning as that last scene in the Book of Revelation where the Holy City, the New Jerusalem, descends out of heaven from God, as a bride adorned for her husband.

That romantic scene is the consummation in a garden/city setting of what began in the garden setting in Genesis. The garden has grown into a garden-city. We see God as the great Husbandman and the great Builder. In both settings there is God's man and woman, a river, the tree of life and no curse. The thing missing in the end is the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, so that the potential for and eventuality of the curse has been removed.

Dear student of scripture, let not the obvious escape us. The Son of God has been eternally birthed by God, a birthing translated into the aion by the Holy Spirit, making the Christ both eternal and aionian. He is Emmanuel, God with us. He is with us in the aions from eternity. He is begotten from eternity and from there into space-time. The Holy Spirit is the Person(al) transmission of, and reception of the Seed of Deity.

The Son is not the Father, and the Father is not the Son. The Son is the Son, and the Father is the Father, but the Son is one with the

Father in that He is the reproduction of God, as a Son. God became both a Father and a Son in the birth of the Son. Deity knows both the experience of Fatherhood and Sonship within Its own Being. They are absolutely of one substance and nature, for in the Seed of God is the essence of Deity, no less than in the Father.

The Father has One who is just like Him in every way, except that He remains Father to the Son, and the Son remains Son to the Father. The Father is, in that sense, greater than the Son, for the Son received His life from the Father and eternally lives by the life of the Father. See, my dear brethren, there is an OTHERNESS within the ONENESS. If you cannot entertain that duality in unity, then you give evidence of spiritual and intellectual adolescence.

For some reason, some minds in opposition to the above, flit to Paul's teaching about Christ reigning until He has put every enemy under His feet, upon which He will deliver up the kingdom to the Father, that God may be all in all. HELLO! Is anyone there or am I just talking to empty cranial air? The goal of the administration of God is that God should be all in all. There it is again, duality in unity. It's not just God as all, it's God, as all IN all. Two alls.

Once there was only one All--- God; then God brought forth another all, admittedly out of Himself, but nevertheless another all, so that He might not longer only be All, but All in all. Let's see, let's try it this way: 1 plus 1 equals 2. Well maybe that's just too simple for the truly profound among us. Does God become all in all, but the Father ceases to be all in the Son, and that relationship, which began in eternity, ends up dissolved?

Please note how scripture uses "one" and "with" in regard to the indwelling of Christ. To be sure, "He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit," but have you forgotten the various versions of Paul's benediction, "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be WITH your spirit." Aww, come on now; it's a matter of ONENESS of spirit, but also of WITNESS of spirit.

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