

Revisiting "Sonship" Part 5

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It is not unusual, early on in the renewal of our minds, for the Spirit To penetrate the theological frame of reference within which we have formed our concept of God, and, while effecting genuine, life-giving changes, not yet, at that stage, challenging the very skeletal structure of our view of the Divine Nature.

When the Lord revealed to me the universal breadth of salvation in Christ, for instance, I still, more or less, incorporated that truth into my personal version of classical Reformed theology, though, of course, the necessity for some modification became immediately apparent. I had no idea, back then in 1963, how drastic a process of conceptual renovation I was about to undergo.

All of us who have been significantly enlightened by kingdom-sonship truth still cling to concepts, that if carefully examined, would be found to be grossly inconsistent with what lies at the heart of our revelation. Time and time again, I've been brought face to face with the fact that my concept of God and His ways were going to require serious renovation, and not a mere re-arranging of mental furniture, a fresh coat of paint, and some new pictures on the wall.

Part of the frame of reference within which we seek to understanding God's Fatherhood, is our view of the relationship of eternity and time. We really need to ask ourselves what we mean by the word, "eternity." To the best of my knowledge, having been, I think, well informed on the subject by brethren trained in the original languages of scripture, there is no Hebrew or Greek word used by the writers of either old or new testaments, that exactly equates to, or is adequate to define eternity, in spite of conventional translations.

If eternity is to be found in the Bible, it must be by implication rather than by direct linguistic statement. I think this is true in respect to the whole gamut of what folks understand eternity to be. We are all sure, it seems, that there is something that, while being somehow related to time, transcends time. We are sure that there is a dimension where beginnings and endings fit, but that there is another dimension where

beginning and ending are no longer relevant. We call these two dimensions---however we finally define them---"time" and "eternity."

There is a strong association of eternity with death in most western minds. Most folks think of someone going out into eternity at death, and (yuck), a very popular evangelical concept joins eternity and death together as eternal death---a very painful, never ending death. I gather---and I've been around taking mental notes among Christians of all persuasions for a long time---that most Christians assume, that at death, time ends for a person, and eternity begins.

There's a common conception that we proceed from time into eternity at death, that we "cross over," but it's very uncommon to find someone with the understanding that we proceed from eternity into time at birth, and that eternity is hidden within time.

That's often referred to as belief in "pre-existence." But that's a very misleading misnomer, for eternity is not to be understood as being before time and after time, but as that dimension which encompasses time, and within which time has its meaning, and though it can be said that we proceed into time from eternity, we are not to infer that by doing so we have left eternity. We are presently within time which is within eternity, and eternity is acting upon time both from all around it and within it.

That brings up the relationship of being and becoming. "In Him, we live and move and have our being." God is not the big Being among all us lesser beings; God IS Being, in which we have our being. God's Being is eternal, and it is within the eternity that He IS, that we have our being. Our time (aeonian) experience ultimately has to do with becoming in time what we are in eternity.

That's why John informs us that those who receive Christ are given the right or authority to become children of God. That is a most interesting statement. Have you ever wondered what "right" or "authority" has to do with becoming a child of God? Ought you not to be wondering, "I always thought that becoming a child was a matter of impregnation, conception and birth, not a "right."

Brethren, if you can grasp the following truth, you will take a substantial step toward a mature understanding of "sonship," of spiritual generation and regeneration. That truth, simply stated, is that only by being God's child in and from eternity, gives you the right to become God's child in time. You cannot ultimately become what you are not. You can only become what you eternally are, and you will be subjected in that process to enduring what you are not, in order that the full glory of who you are might be revealed.

Our sonship is, as are all things, within the Son, within the eternal Son. In Him, before the foundation of the world, we were chosen that we should be holy and blameless before Him. He did not choose us as children yet to be, as He did not choose His only-begotten Son as One yet to be. His Son is the eternally chosen One, within Whom all chosenness (election) exists, and in Whom all election has its meaning and is to be understood.

We, in Christ, were not---as I once thought---merely a thought within God's mind in eternity. In, and proceeding from, eternity, we ARE in Him Who IS, and together, in the aeons, we become what we are, stripping off all that we are not by His death and resurrection. Christ is the Word of God, meaning God's complete thought expressed in the Person of His Son.

We cannot say that there was a time in eternity when the Son was only a thought in God, and later in eternity, the thought became the Word.

There is no "later" in eternity. All that God is is in His Son, and the Son's identity, as per His testimony, is in the I AM. It was not through His human birth that He became the Son of God, it was by that eternally constituted birth that what He eternally IS, entered time, and so it is with all men in Him.

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