

TRITHEISM and ETERNAL SONSHIP

David C F Wright DD

In the first seven centuries of Christianity, there was bitter controversy and acrimonious schism over the doctrine of the Trinity and some controversy still exists to this day.

In times past, there were several questions asked. How could God die on the Cross? How could God be three persons? How could God be in three Divine persons? God as three persons must mean three gods and this is the heresy of tritheism.

The utter confusion and aggressive debates raged and gave rise to major heresies namely the denial of Christ and His Deity. The problem of His being both God and man and therefore being both human and Divine and the scandalous belief in tritheism, that is to say the belief in three persons and therefore three gods, has generated much unnecessary controversy.

It is vital to use words and phrases correctly and Christians do not always do this and this can give rise to confusion and heresy and it is, largely, their own fault.

The Lord Jesus referred to His Father as Spirit (John 4.24) and to the Holy Spirit as spirit (John 3. 6). A spirit does not have a physical body. A spirit does not have flesh, bones, blood, arms or legs etc. A spirit has no human body. A spirit is not a person.

John 1.1 states that in the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and was God.. It goes on to say that the Word became flesh (John 1.14). Philippians 2.7 says that He was made like His brethren and found in fashion as a man therefore as a person. It follows that as He became flesh, there was a time when He was not a man.

The Eternal Word became flesh, being begotten of God (John 1.14). He became a man of flesh and blood. In other words, He became a person. One becomes a son at conception or birth. This does not mean that the Lord did not exist before He was conceived or born. He certainly did and as the Eternal Word. This is why He said in John 8.58, Before Abraham was, I am. I am is the name Jehovah and the Lord was applying that name to Himself.

In Matthew 1.21, the angel told Joseph that Mary was to have a son and had to call His name Jesus. This indicates that He was not known as Son or Jesus before His incarnation This is confirmed in Hebrews 1. 4 where we read that He was given a name more excellent than the names of angels. He was given the name of Son. God said, This is my beloved Son, today have I begotten Thee. Begotten means to give birth to.

Today is an important word here. A day is the expression of a certain time and not of eternity. There was a day when God gave the Lord Jesus the name of Son when the Father begat Him. But He existed in eternity past as the Eternal Word of God.

Of course, there are a few references to the Son in the Old Testament but they are prophetic referring to His days of His flesh and beyond.

There are probably people who have read so far and are taking issue vehemently with me and what I have written but what I have written is all what the Bible clearly says so I cannot be wrong.

In the days of Adam, Abraham, David and others there was not a man of flesh and blood in Heaven referred to by other members of the Trinity as Jesus or as the Son Of God by virtue of what has already been proved.

There were three Divine beings from all eternity and even now they are referred to as the Father, the Word and the Spirit (1 John 5. 7).

We have evidenced that the Father and the Holy Spirit are Spirit beings. But the Eternal Word became flesh, became a man and had an individual human body which is what a person is. The Lord Jesus is the only person in the trinity.

Hymnology is not always sound theology. The hymn says God in three persons blessed trinity but this is incorrect as we have proven. However, many people have taken this doctrine of three persons on board and accepted it as convenient and as the truth and refer to God as three persons and that means, in the correct use of the word, that there are three gods each with their separate individual bodies of flesh and blood.

We have already stated that words must be used correctly to avoid confusion.

There are those who advocate the Eternal Sonship doctrine which states that the Lord Jesus was always the Son of God and there was never a time when He was not. Let me repeat again that all three members of the trinity are Divine and Eternal.

Hebrews 5.5 talks of the days of the Lord in His flesh and of His Sonship and the human weaknesses He endured such as tiredness. Before His incarnation and since His return to heaven, He has not suffered these weaknesses.

In Genesis 1, we read that God created the heavens and the earth and the word for God that is used here is Elohim which is plural and in Hebrew plural is three. Of course, God is triune, a trinity eternal and Divine.

The wrong use of the word person has been explained by some as a person is anyone or anything that can use the personal pronoun I. Are angels persons since they use the word I. Balaam 's ass spoke with the word I. Is she a person? No, she is an ass.

It has also been said that a person is someone that has personality. Animals have personality. Some dogs are docile and some are aggressive but we do not say, Your dog is a lovely person!

There are those who point to when the Lord Jesus said, ' And now, O Father glorify me with the glory we had before the world began', (John 17.5) and this is taken to be a prayer to the Eternal Father from the Eternal Son but all three members of the trinity existed eternally before the world began and it is crystal clear that ' in the beginning was the Word.' We do not read in the beginning was the Son.

With all this evidence and our appeal to the faithful Scriptures some people will still not accept these truths and debate and argue which is unprofitable.

There are some companies of believers who excommunicate members who do not hold the Eternal Sonship doctrine yet these believers firmly believe in the Divine and Eternal Trinity. How cruel and insensitive can some people be?

And still there are people including established Christians who deny what is said here and yet it is true to the Bible. When I ask them why they disagree they will not answer and often become aggressive.

I will leave the last word to a child in my class who asked, "As some say God is three persons or in three persons which one of these persons is the tallest and which one has blue eyes?".

(1218)

© COPYRIGHT David C F Wright DD 2003 usual clause No part of this article, however small, may be reproduced or stored in any system whatsoever. It must not be copied, altered or downloaded. Failure to comply is illegal being theft and contrary to International Copyright law and will render any offender liable to action at law.
