

## **Scriptural Difficulties in the way of the sole Divinity of Jesus Christ.**

(the second talk on the subject of the Divine Trinity).

Last week my talk was on the subject of the Divine Trinity. As I said then, orthodox Christian teaching, ever since the Council of Nicaea in 325 A.D., has been in terms of three Persons in one God, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost (or Holy Spirit). Each, it is said, is a separate personality and each has different functions to perform, yet they are one God. As to the paradox of "three in one", the difficulty is admitted but it tends to be met with a standard response that it is a mystery we can never hope to unravel. And even the best attempts so to unravel it never get away from the idea that there are three coequal Persons in the Godhead.

There are quite a number of passages in the Gospels which seem to say that this is so, that there are these three coequal Persons in the Godhead. Jesus talked of the Father as if He, the Father, was someone quite separate from Himself. He prayed to Him. He cried out to Him from the Cross. He spoke of Him on one occasion as being, and I quote, "greater than I" ([John 14:28](#)). Jesus on another occasion, seemed to say that the Holy Spirit is another, separate, individual or Person.

However, this is by no means where the teaching of the Gospels on the subject ends. And, though it has been done, it would be wrong to base our understanding of what is involved on these passages alone. It's the same with other subjects. You cannot take something said, or taught in isolation and apart from what else might be said on that same subject elsewhere. You must put all the things said side by side. Invariably what is said in one place, or the particular emphasis found in one place, will modify what is said elsewhere.

I quoted a number of these 'other' passages in my talk a week ago. Jesus said, "He who has seen me has seen the Father." ([John 14:9](#)). He also said, "I and the Father are one" ([John 10:30](#)). He referred to Himself, when He appeared to the apostle John on the Isle of Patmos, as "the First and the Last" ([Revelation 1:17](#)), the same words Jehovah had used of Himself hundreds of years beforehand ([Isaiah 44:6](#)). And so we could go on. It is true that there are those passages and things said which seem to suggest three separate Persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, in the Godhead.

But, and at the same time, just as clearly, just as distinctly, just as prominently, there are these passages, just referred to, which speak of the Father and the Son as one and the same and of the Holy Spirit as being no more nor no less than the influence emanating forth from this one God. (see [John 20:22](#)).

Where then lies the truth of the matter?

There is but one God who Himself came on earth by assuming human nature and a human body in order to come face to face with the power of evil from hell; a power which, at the time was threatening to overwhelm and destroy mankind. God Himself was inmosty present within Jesus Christ, for all that this was obscured in Jesus' mind at times causing Him to doubt and, also, causing Him to feel, as He undoubtedly did feel on occasions, separate from God. However, by the time of the resurrection, God, or the Divine life which at first has been very much within Jesus, and obscured, had completely infilled the human nature and body assumed so that it became an integral part of God, the one God of heaven and earth. The Father and the Son, as they are referred to, are not two, but one. They bear the same relationship as does the soul and body with every person. Just as your soul needs a body by means of which it may operate and carry out its purposes in the world, so Jehovah descended and assumed human nature in order to accomplish a vital task that needed to be done at that time. For a time they seemed to be separate. But God made the human nature He had assumed completely divine so that it merged after the resurrection with His own very essence.

Taking up this analogy of the soul and the body, if, wherever the words "the Father" appear in the Gospel we were to read and think about the Divine soul, and if, where the words "the Son" appear we were to read and think about the body or human nature assumed, all would begin to fall into place. Jesus said in one place, "No one has ever seen God; the only Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has made Him known." ([John 1:28](#)). And isn't that true of anyone? It is their body, and their bodily actions and their facial expressions which reveal them to us and make them known to us. In the same way we cannot know or hope to approach the Divine Soul or the Divine Itself, what is referred to as "the Father", except through the Divine Body, known as "the Son" which had been assumed. Jesus also said, "the Father who dwells in me does the works". ([John 14:10](#)). Once again, isn't this so of everybody?

It is the soul within which works through the body. The body is, in a very real sense, the instrument of the soul. So it was in the case of God when He came on earth. The human assumed, was the instrument through which He worked to accomplish what needed to be done.

However, one or two passages in the Gospels raise particular difficulties and are invariably referred to when it is said that God and Jesus are one and the same, one of these being the voice heard at the baptism of Jesus; another being the words Jesus spoke in answer to the person who addressed Him as "Good Master", yet another being what is said in Mark's Gospel, at the end, that after His ascension Jesus "sat on the right hand of God." (Mark 16:19).

I would like to take up this reference to Jesus as "Good Master", in particular Jesus' response which is what lies at the heart of the difficulty.

As in the Authorised Version, Matthew's Gospel, Chapter 19, from verse 16, we read: "And behold, one came and said unto Him, Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life? And Jesus said unto him, Why do you call me good? There is none good, but one, that is, God". Most people have read this as a clear statement from the mouth of Jesus of distinction and separation between Himself and God. Their emphasis has been on the word "me". " Why do you call me good?" But if we put the emphasis on the word "Why?", as it should be, an altogether different meaning comes through. "Why do you call me good?" In other words, 'Why are you saying that?' "There is none good, but one, that is, God". 'Do you realise therefore that what you are saying is tantamount to saying I am God?' "Why do you call me good?" I repeat the point that by placing the emphasis where it shouldn't be, people have taken Jesus here to be disclaiming any idea that He was God. To the contrary, and with the emphasis placed where it ought to be, we see that this is not so. He wasn't disclaiming that at all. He was intrigued to know why that person had spoken to Him in that way and whether he fully realised what he was saying. "Why do you call me good?" Are you making the acknowledgement that I am God which your words could be taken to imply?

Then there is this matter of the voice heard at Jesus' baptism. Matthew tells of this in Chapter 3, at the end. "And when Jesus was baptized, He went up immediately from the water, and, behold, the heavens were opened and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and alighting on Him; and lo, a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased."

What we need to realise here, first of all, is that this was a private experience Jesus enjoyed and which He must later have told His followers about. It doesn't say that others saw heaven opened, heard the voice, or saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove.

The second point I would make is that we tend to think of heaven as somewhere up in the sky and that therefore this was an experience outside of Jesus, for all that it was confined to Him. But, as Jesus elsewhere said, the kingdom of God, or heaven, is within us. It's not something you go out of yourself to find. It's a dimension of consciousness into which we are elevated, as it were, from within. A subjective experience. Heaven opened therefore means an awareness, within a person, of that higher dimension of consciousness, temporary though that awareness may be.

Therefore, the voice Jesus heard was a voice from within, not a voice from without, outside of Him. It was, in fact, the voice of the Divine within Him speaking to Him and reassuring Him. Sometimes we can hear the voice of conscience, for example, speaking within us, and that voice can seem like the voice of another person. But of course it's not, however much it may seem to be.

As for the reference to the risen Jesus sitting at the right hand of God we read the words altogether too literally.

We talk of someone being like our "right hand" or of that person being to us "a right hand man". It's not that they are physically, or literally, at our right hand: we mean, as people understand us to mean, that we regard that person as indispensable, someone who enables us to accomplish things we would never accomplish otherwise. The risen and glorified human; the Body which God assumed in coming on earth; and subsequently made fully Divine, completely one with Himself; is as a "right hand" to Him, enabling God to reach, influence and touch people's lives in a way that was not possible to Him previously. And it is this which is being referred to in these words.

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