

The Doctrine of the Trinity

By R. F. Cottrell

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This has been a popular doctrine and regarded as orthodox ever since the bishop of Rome was elevated to the popedom on the strength of it. It is accounted dangerous heresy to reject it; but each person is permitted to explain the doctrine in his own way. All seem to think they must hold it, but each has perfect liberty to take his own way to reconcile its contradictory propositions; and hence a multitude of views are held concerning it by its friends, all of them orthodox, I suppose, as long as they nominally assent to the doctrine.

For myself, I have never felt called upon to explain it, nor to adopt and defend it, neither have I ever preached against it. But I probably put as high an estimation on the Lord Jesus Christ as those who call themselves Trinitarians. This is the first time I have ever taken the pen to say anything concerning the doctrine.

My reasons for not adopting and defending it, are 1. Its name is unscriptural -- the Trinity, or the triune God, is unknown to the Bible; and I have entertained the idea that doctrines which require words coined in the human mind to express them, are coined doctrines. 2. I have never felt called upon to adopt and explain that which is contrary to all the sense and reason that God has given me. All my attempts at an explanation of such a subject would make it no clearer to my friends.

But if I am asked what I think of Jesus Christ, my reply is, I believe all that the Scriptures say of him. If the testimony represents him as being in glory with the Father before the world was, I believe it. If it is said that he was in the beginning with God, that he was God, that all things were made by him and for him, and that without him was not anything made that was made, I believe it. If the Scriptures say he is the Son of God, I believe it. If it is declared that the Father sent his Son into the world, I believe he had a Son to send. If the testimony says he is the beginning of the creation of God, I believe it. If he is said to be the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express imago of his person, I believe it. And when Jesus says, "I and my Father are one," I believe it; and when he says, "My Father is greater than I," I believe that too; it is the word of the Son of God, and besides this it is perfectly reasonable and seemingly self-evident.

If I be asked how I believe the Father and Son are one I reply, They are one in a sense not contrary to sense. If the "and" in the sentence means anything, the Father and the Son are two beings. They are one in the same sense in which

Jesus prayed that his disciples might be one. He asked his Father that his disciples might be one. His language is, "that they may be one, even as we are one."

It may be objected, If the Father and the Son are two distinct beings, do you not, in worshipping the Son and calling him God, break the first commandment of the Decalogue?

No; it is the Father's will "That all men should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father." We cannot break the commandment and dishonor God by obeying him. The Father says of the Son "Let all the angels of God worship him." Should angels refuse to worship the Son, they would rebel against the Father. Children inherit the name of their father. The Son of God "hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than" the angels. That name is the name of his Father. The Father says to the Son, "Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever." Heb. i. The Son is called "The mighty God." Isa. ix, 6. And when he comes again to earth his waiting people will exclaim, "This is our God." Isa. xxv, 9. It is the will of the Father that we should thus honor the Son. In doing so we render supreme honor to the Father. If we dishonor the Son we dishonor the Father; for he requires us to honor his Son.

But though the Son is called God yet there is a "God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." 1 Pet. 1, 3. Though the Father says to the Son, "Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever," yet, that throne is given him of his Father ; and because he loved righteousness and hated iniquity, he further says, "Therefore God even thy God, hath anointed thee." Heb. i, 9. "God hath made that same Jesus both Lord and Christ." Acts. ii, 36. The Son is "the everlasting Father," not of himself, nor of His Father, but of his children. His language is, "I and the children which God hath given me." Heb. ii, 13.

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