

The Wednesday Word, July 13, 2016: Seeing the Father!

“In Christ the invisible God has become visible. Whoever sees Him sees the Father (John 14:9). Whoever wants to know who God is and what He is must behold the Christ. As Christ is, such is the Father.”

Herman Bavinck: The Divine and Human Natures of Christ

Have you ever tried witnessing to a person who hates the doctrine of Christ's deity? They smugly say, “Well, of course, Jesus never claimed to be God, he merely claimed to be the Son of God! Oh really? The next time this happens, take them to the Scripture and show them this, “Philip said unto him, Lord, show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us. Jesus said unto him, “Have I been so long a time with you, and yet you have not known me, Philip? He that has seen me has seen the Father; and why do you say then, Show us the Father? John 14:8-9.

It doesn't get any simpler than this! Philip had had enough of these references to the Father and asked Jesus plainly to, “Show us the Father.” Christ's response is astonishing. He says, “Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? He that hath seen me has seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Show us the Father?

Was Jesus mistaken about His own identity? Was He simply a good man with a God -consciousness? Or was He merely a man possessed by God? Call it whatever way you will, if Jesus is wrong about being the God/Man, He's a fruitcake! Listen to what He boldly declares, “If you have seen me you have seen the Father.” In other words, He's saying, “Philip I'm the visible image of the invisible God. Philip, you don't have to guess anymore about what God is like, I am God in human form.”

This is stout stuff! Jesus most clearly and without ambivalence claimed to be God. John writes at the beginning of his gospel; “No man hath seen God at any time; the only-begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him” (John: 1:18).

The word translated ‘declared’ is of utmost interest. It is the Greek word ‘exegeomai’ from which we get the English words exegete and exegesis. When a preacher exegetes a passage of scripture, he brings out all that is contained in the verses. He declares what is there. He dares not read into the passage things that are not there otherwise he would be practicing eisegesis and not exegesis. Christ, according to John 1:18, is the exegesis of God. He has fully declared him. Is it any wonder then that He can say to Philip “If you have seen me you have seen the Father?” Horatius Bonar astutely remarks;

“Christ's person is a revelation of God. Christ's work is a revelation of God. He is in the Father and the Father is in Him. His words and works are the words and works of the Father. In the manger, He showed us God. In the synagogue of Nazareth, He showed us God. At Jacob's well, He showed us God. At the tomb of Lazarus, He showed us God. On Olivet, as He wept over Jerusalem, He showed us God. On the cross, He showed us God. In His resurrection He showed us God. If we say with Philip “Show us the Father and it is sufficient for us,” He answers, “Have I been so long a time with you and yet hast thou not known me? He that has seen me has seen the Father (John 14:8-9). This God, whom Christ reveals as the God of righteous grace and gracious righteousness, is the God with whom we have to do.”

Horatius Bonar: God's Way of Peace: Chapter 3

Do we understand the incarnation (God becoming man)? I for one do not. It is a mystery (1 Timothy 3:16). I can't explain it, but I can declare it. God came here Himself, became one of us and yet

remained fully God. Then as one of us, as a real and genuine human, He surrendered Himself to the ignominious death of the cross. No wonder the hymn writer declares, “Hallelujah, what a Saviour!”

And that’s the Gospel Truth!