

The Purple Pulpit

Installment #7

July 1, 2018

More Homoousian Considerations

Some of you will remember to some years ago, when, seeking to illustrate how false teachers disguise their false doctrine in moulded words (2 Pet. 2:3) so as to bring in heresies of destruction (2 Pet. 2:1) covertly (Jude 4), I gave to the assembly five ancient creeds, four of which were Arian productions, and only one was composed by a group of orthodox believers. I asked those assembled to identify which one was the composition of true believers as opposed to the other four documents of hypocrisy. To illustrate the same point on a few different occasions, I repeated the exercise, switching the numbers: four orthodox, one Arian. Those of you present on any of those occasions will recall how difficult it was, because all sounded Christian enough. That was by design from the Arians! They seek to cover their true colours until they are received as fully a part of the fellowship. Then, sentimentality will paint as cruel anyone who resists them with the vehemence that their antichrist doctrine deserves. There was a telltale indication, however, as to the true believer's creeds: the word "homoousian." The Arian creeds used plastic words, invested with alternative meanings, designed to deceive, but they

wouldn't use the word "homoousian" (of the same essence) as applied to Christ's relationship to the Father.

In this paper I want to address some of the fine points of this idea of the Lord Jesus Christ being of the same essence, substance, and being as the Father. "existing in the form of God," the Lord Jesus Christ is a natural Possessor of equality with God the Father (Phil. 2:6; Jn.5:18). One who is equal to another in all respects is of the same essence. But the fact that the Lord (as one) can be equal to His Father (as another) speaks of a distinction in Person. If Father and Son are equals as to substance, they must be, together, one God, existing in two distinguishable Persons. All the fullness of Deity dwells in both. This fullness of Deity dwells in the Son while in His bodily form (Col.2:9). But how can all the fullness of Deity reside in Christ bodily, if the Father also possesses and retains all the fullness of that same Godhead? Because the Father dwells in the Son, and the Son in the Father in co-possession of the one substance of Godhood (Jn. 10:37,38; 14:10; 12:44,45). The Person of the Father and the Person of the Son are mutually inhabiting one another in the co-possession of their Deity. Theologically, this is called "perichoresis." It speaks of the co-inhering of the Persons through the sharing of substance, a oneness of the two by virtue of this unity of Deity. The Father is not the Son, and the Son is not identical to the Father, but together they are one and the same

God. They are not the same Person, but they are the same God. This means that the Son is homoousian with the Father, of His very essence.

We have used a good deal of theological language to explain this reality this week. In next week's installment, we will explore the Scriptural term that is most definite as to the Lord being homoousian with the Father: "Son of God."