

The Purple Pulpit

Installment #17

September 9, 2018

Expanding on the Communion of Attributes

In today's teaching we want to expand upon a concept that we have previously touched upon in dealing with both the unipersonality and hypostatic union of our Lord Jesus Christ, namely that of the communion of attributes. You will remember that the communion of attributes is a Christological term for that literary phenomenon in the Scriptures wherein they refer to our Saviour by titles of Deity, humanity, and unipersonality coupled with actions, states, or conditions of Deity, humanity, and unipersonality in homogeneous or heterogeneous combinations. This is to say that in heterogeneous combinations references to Christ's Deity are combined with situations true only to His humanity, and vice versa. The homogeneous combinations connect names or offices of Christ's Deity, humanity, or unipersonality with situations of the same focus. That the writers of Scripture so naturally refer to the Messiah such is a perfectly powerful proof of their belief in the two essences combined in one Person. Deity, humanity, and unipersonality are all evidenced in the faith-acquired second-nature of "Christian-eze" references to two essences in the one Person of our Lord Jesus Christ. This particular installment may be edifyingly intellectually-challenging.

We can identify 12 categories of combinations. For ease of reference, we will refer to “predications” and “denominations.” “Predications” are things being stated about the Christ, while “denominations” are the names, titles, offices, and pronouns used to identify the Lord. With each category a representative Scripture reference will be supplied to illustrate an example of that type of statement. Here are our 12 categories:

- 1.) The acts are predicated of the whole Person. (ex. Jn. 5:34)
- 2.) The predication is true only of the Deity. (ex. Jn. 8:58)
- 3.) The predication is true only of the humanity. (ex. Jn. 19:28)
- 4.) The predication is true of the whole Person, but the denomination is of the Deity.
(ex. Jn. 3:35)
- 5.) The predication is true of the whole Person, but the denomination is true only of the humanity. (ex. Lk. 9:12)
- 6.) The predication is true of the whole Person, and the denomination likewise. (ex. Jn. 17:6a)
- 7.) The predication is true of the Deity of Christ, but the denomination is of the whole Person. (ex. Col. 1:16)
- 8.) The predication is true of the Deity of Christ, but the denomination is of the humanity. (ex. Lk. 19:10)
- 9.) The predication is true of the Deity of Christ, and the denomination is likewise.
(ex. Jn. 5:21)

- 10.) The predication is true of the humanity of Christ, but the denomination is of the Deity. (ex. 1 Cor. 2:8)
- 11.) The predication is true of the humanity of Christ, but the denomination is of the whole Person. (ex. 1 Tim. 2:5)
- 12.) The predication is true of the humanity of Christ, and the denomination likewise. (ex. Mt. 17:22,23)

Again, when we see Scripture speak so naturally in language that presupposes doctrines of unipersonality, hypostatic union, distinction of essences, consubstantiality of the Son with the Father, consubstantiality of Christ with us, and of His self-consciousness of both His Deity and humanity our faith is bolstered by some of the strongest evidence for these things, namely the matter-of-fact way that they are assumed as common knowledge among believers.

Have incarnational fun categorizing other affirmations about our Lord Jesus into the 12 rubrics of the communion of attributes!