

88. Q. How do we become children of God under the new covenant?
89. Q. What is this process whereby the sinner is inducted into the household of faith, called, in the New Testament Scriptures?
90. Q. When do we have the privilege of calling God our heavenly Father?
91. Q. What does Jesus say about calling any man "father" in a spiritual sense?
92. Q. What are God's dealings with us in the relationship He bears to us as our heavenly Father?
93. Q. What great lesson should we learn from these truths?

Lesson Ten

FATHER, SON, AND HOLY SPIRIT

Scripture Reading: Matt. 28:16-20.

Scripture To Memorize: "Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matt. 28:19).

94. Q. Is there more than one God?
- A. No. There is one, and only one, living and true God.

Deut. 6:4—"Jehovah our God is one Jehovah" (Moses). Eph. 4:6—"one God and Father of all" (Paul). Note the perfect agreement between Old and New Testament teaching on all these matters.

95. Q. Of how many Persons does the one God consist?
- A. The Scriptures teach that He consists of three Persons—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

(1) The Scriptures teach: "1. That God is one; 2. That in this sublime and incomprehensible unity, there is also embraced a threefold personality" (Milligan, *Scheme of Redemption*, p. 19). (2) When we say that God is a Spirit, we mean that as to nature He is personal, or that He must be conceived of in terms of personality. Elsewhere in scripture we learn that His personality is triune.

96. Q. Does this mean that we worship three Gods?

A. No. It means that we worship one living and true God, who embraces within Himself a three-fold personality.

(The term "Trinity" is found only in Theology, not in the Scriptures).

97. Q. Is this threefold personality of God revealed in the Old Testament?

A. It is intimated only.

(1) Gen. 1:1—"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." Here the plural form Elohim (translated "God") is used. This plural form is most significant. (2) Gen. 1:26—"Let us make man in our image," etc. These words could not have been addressed to angels, for two reasons: (a) angels are themselves creatures, not creators; (b) man has not been created in the likeness of angels, who are ethereal, and without sex distinction (cf. Matt. 22:30, Heb. 1:14). Nor could they have been addressed to the earth, as held by certain Jewish commenators (e. g., Maimonides), for the obvious reason that such intercourse as implied in the language of this text must have been among persons, in fact could not have been in connection with inanimate things. This language, then, "serves to reveal and to express the plurality of our Creator in some sense." Are we not justified, then, in concluding that the Father, Son and Holy Spirit were holding a council among themselves with regard to the nature of this being about to be created and placed upon the earth as its lord tenant? Cf. also Gen. 11:7—"Let us go down and confound their language." Also Isa. 6:8—"And I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" (3) In the Old Testament Scriptures, we read of God, the Word of God, and the Spirit of God. Gen. 1:1—"In the beginning God." Gen. 1:2—"and the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters." Gen. 1:3—"And God said, Let there be light," etc. Cf. Ps. 33:6-9, John 1:1-3, Col. 1:16-17. In the New Testament Scriptures, they are no longer God, the Word of God, and the Spirit of God; but Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

98. Q. Why wasn't this threefold personality of God revealed in Old Testament times?

A. We cannot say definitely. Perhaps because God did not fully reveal Himself in Old Testament times. Perhaps, too, because if He had revealed His Triune personality to the Hebrew people, they would have worshiped three Gods instead of the one true God. Polytheism and idolatry were the besetting sins of the ancients.

99. Q. Why is this threefold personality of God revealed in the New Testament?

A. Because Jesus came to reveal God to us, in His essential nature, attributes and works.

(1) We usually say that Jesus came to reveal God to us fully, by which we mean that He revealed all the truths about God that we need to know, as essential to our salvation and growth in holiness. (2) The fact of the threefold personality of God is revealed in three New Testament texts, as follows: (a) Matt. 28:19, the baptismal formula, "baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." These are the words of Jesus Himself. (b) 2 Cor. 13:14, the apostolic benediction, "the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all." (c) 1 Pet. 1:2—"according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ."

100. Q. Does this mean that God consists of Three Persons?

A. It means that as to nature, God is one; as to personality, He is Three.

(1) God is inherently a Spirit (John 4:24); that is, as to nature, He is a personal God. This oneness of nature, however, seems to embrace a threefold personality, scripturally revealed as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. (2) These Three Persons are so described in the Scriptures that we are compelled to think of them as three distinct Persons, at least on occasions and in their operations. (3) For example, the Son (one Person) told His apostles that He would pray

the Father (another Person) to send the Holy Spirit (a third Person, for Spirit is essentially personal) upon them, to guide them into all the truth. See John 14:16, 17; 16:7-10, etc. (4) Again, when Jesus was baptized, He, the Son (one Person) was standing on the bank of the Jordan River; and at the same time, the Father (another Person) was speaking from heaven; and at the same time also, the Holy Spirit (a third Person) was descending through the air in a dovelike form. See Matt. 3:16-17, Luke 3:21-22. (5) Again, the Father is distinguished from the Son as the Sender from the One Sent; also as the Begetter from the One Begotten. See John 3:16-17; 1:14, 18; 1 John 4:9, etc. The Son is pictured as praying to the Father. See John 11:41-42; also the entire seventeenth chapter of John. Finally, the Spirit is distinguished from both the Father and the Son, and is said to have been sent by both. See John 14:16-17; 14:26; 15:26; 16:7; Gal. 4:6, etc. In view of all this evidence, together with other numerous scriptures which represent the Holy Spirit as having the attributes of a person, as doing the works of a person, and as suffering the slights and experiencing the emotions of a person; it is obvious that Father, Son and Holy Spirit are presented to us in the Scriptures as three distinct Persons.

101. Q. What is the formula according to which believers are to be baptized?

A. They are to be baptized "into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matt. 28:19).

(1) This is the command of Jesus, a part of the Great Commission. (2) Note: not names, but name, i. e., Three in One.

102. Q. What is the signification of this formula?

A. It means that in the one act (baptism or immersion) we yield our hearts and lives unto the authority of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

103. Q. Does this mean that we should be dipped three times?

A. No. We are immersed only once, because there is only one God.

To be dipped three times would indicate that we worship

three Gods. So-called "trine immersion" is unscriptural for the obvious reason that our God, though embracing within Himself a threefold personality, is still one God.

104. Q. Can we fully understand this triune personality of God?

A. Of course not. Nor is it necessary that we understand it fully.

(1) It is impossible for our finite minds, which cannot even fathom the mysteries of created things, to be capable of comprehending a mystery which is infinitely above all created things. (2) It is equally impossible for the finite mind to understand all the existences, manifestations and operations of Spirit. (3) We must accept this doctrine by faith. Nor does it pay to speculate too extensively regarding such matters. It is beyond the power of the human intellect to peer into the secrets of the Divine Being. Martin Luther warned of the unprofitableness of discussing what God does and thinks "by Himself." Calvin says: "God treats sparingly of His essence. His essence is indeed incomprehensible to us. Let us therefore willingly leave to God the knowledge of Himself." Zwingli says: "A Christian man's task is not to talk grandly of doctrines, but always to be doing hard and great things with God."

105. Q. What is the importance of this doctrine of the triune personality of God?

A. It is evidently essential to both creation and redemption.

How could there be a Scheme of Redemption without the Father to originate, the Son to execute, and the Spirit to realize, apply and consummate it? (Explain that after the Son had made atonement for sin, the Spirit came, on the first Pentecost after the resurrection of our Lord, to apply the redemptive work of Christ to the hearts of men and women. This present dispensation is the age of the Holy Spirit. His dwelling-place is the Church, the body of Christ. Eph. 2:22—"the habitation of God in the Spirit"). Thus it will be seen that in the fullness of God's being we find satisfaction for every human need.

REVIEW EXAMINATION OVER LESSON TEN

94. Q. Is there more than one God?
95. Q. Of how many Persons does the one God consist?
96. Q. Does this mean that we worship three Gods?
97. Q. Is this threefold personality of God revealed in the Old Testament?
98. Q. Why wasn't this threefold personality of God revealed in Old Testament times?
99. Q. Why is this threefold personality of God revealed in the New Testament?
100. Q. Does this mean that God consists of Three Persons?
101. Q. What is the formula according to which believers are to be baptized?
102. Q. What is the signification of this formula?
103. Q. Does this mean that we shall be dipped three times?
104. Q. Can we fully understand this triune personality of God?
105. Q. What is the importance of this doctrine of the triune personality of God?

Lesson Eleven

HOW GOD HAS SPOKEN TO US

Scripture Reading: Heb. 1:1-4, Rom. 1:18-23, 1 Cor. 2:6-16.

Scripture To Memorize: "God, having of old time spoken unto the fathers in the prophets by divers portions and in divers manners, hath at the end of these days spoken unto us in his Son" (Heb. 1:1-2).

106. Q. Is it possible for the world to know God through its own wisdom?

A. It is not.

1. Cor. 1:21—"For seeing that in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom knew not God, it was God's good pleasure through the foolishness of the preaching to save them that believe."

107. Q. In view of this fact what did God do for us?