

Scriptures and Doctrine :: George MacDonald

George MacDonald - posted by Skagway, on: 2006/6/24 23:56

Hi everyone,

I've always been a big fan of C.S. Lewis and his writings on God, and so while I was at the bookstore today I decided to look into the writings of George MacDonald, who Lewis very frequently lauds as his greater and the originator of many of his ideas. I have read also words of Oswald Chambers in support of MacDonald, and I have found Chambers' own writings to be a great blessing in my life. I did find one book on MacDonald's writings (Your Life in Christ, ed. Michael Phillips), and I read very little of it, so I will refrain from passing any judgement on its content. However, part of the book's very beginning, which dealt with the Trinity, was rather alarming.

I quote:

"I believe, then, that Jesus Christ is the eternal Son of the eternal Father. I believe that from the first beginnings of all things Jesus is the Son, because God is the Father... I believe therefore that the Father is the greater, and that if the Father had not been, the Son could not have been."

~George MacDonald

Perhaps some of you are better-versed in MacDonald's writings and theology, and could explain what he is saying here? I was under the impression that the assertion that the Father is greater than the Son was Arianism and was long ago dismissed as apostasy. Is MacDonald actually saying this, or have I just misconstrued his words? I hope that God will show the true meaning of these words through the insight of one greater than I. Thank you for any thought you give to this.

Yours in Christ,
Michael

Re: George MacDonald, on: 2006/6/25 4:54

Hi Skagway,

I haven't read anything by George Macdonald, but CS Lewis I know, and I've looked into Arianism.

Quote:

-----I was under the impression that the assertion that the Father is greater than the Son was Arianism

John addresses the issues arising from Arianism prophetically in his gospel and first epistle. Remember, John was exiled to a Greek island. His writings, Paul's and some of Jesus' words, speak to Greek thinking directly (without stating this is what they are doing). I think if Church members today, were more aware of the significance of some of the nuances of meaning which divide pure truth from carnal thinking, they would be in awe of the intelligence of Jesus the Man, not just for His unique doctrine or healings and miracle-working power.

I'm sure there will be others here who can fill in the detail of Arianism, which I've not picked up. All I want to show is how scripture addresses the points I do understand.

One of the ideas in Arianism is not that the Jesus was not the Son, but that He was of a lesser *substance* than the Father.

The Greeks had an idea that a woman was of a lesser substance than a man. This is consistent with the homosexual mindset of that culture, which idolized the male. I believe the basis of the suggestion the Son was of a lesser substance than the Father, is a variation of this confusion.

But we should be clear that the Son, Jesus, the Word made Flesh, did not **appear** as Jesus - the Son - the Word made Flesh - until He had been born of Mary. His pre-incarnate existence as the Word, John defines as the Logos. This ties in with Paul's revelation in Colossians 1:15 -19, (2 Corinthians 4:4), and also (author unknown) Hebrews 1:1 - 4. In Acts 17:28, 29, Paul addresses the other temptation - to make a physical representation of a god with one's own hands.

EDIT: this paragraph added to and relocated.

John addresses the relationship between the Father and the Son, first, with his use of the word 'begotten', (John 1:14, 18 and 3:16, 18,) and picks up on many permutations of the same theme through Jesus' own words in other parts of his gospel and epistles.

Jesus *did* say His Father is greater than Himself

John 14:28

Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come unto you. If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father: for **my Father is greater than I**.

John 10:30

"I and My Father are one."

Isaiah 9:6

For unto us **a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder:** and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, **The everlasting Father**, The Prince of Peace.

John 2:23

Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father either; he who acknowledges the Son has the Father also.

Acts 13:33

God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second psalm, **Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee**.

The scriptural basis for believing the offspring is of the same substance as its parent, starts in Genesis 1 and 2.

For any who are tempted towards the idea there is a hierarchy in the Godhead, the Colossian exposition shows how important it is to take the revelation of Jesus Christ through His own words, and that which the Spirit brought to us through the other New Testament writers, in its historical context. Clearly Col 1:16 For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones, or dominions, or principalities or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: 17 and he is before all things, and by him all things consist. 18 And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all he might have the preeminence. 19 For it pleased that in him should all fulness dwell; is talking of not only eternity, (and past and present) but also of that which has not yet come, in which the **Son** shall have the **pre-eminence**.

So, it is less incorrect to have noted that the Father has been greater than the Son, than it is to ignore that this has not always been so, (John 17:5 And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.) nor will it always be so.