

Tis morning I want to speak about one of the great chapters in Scripture. This Scripture has many many great but it is certainly a very outstanding one. I cannot possibly cover all the thoughts in this chapter. I'm not going to try to go through it verse by verse. I'm going to take out of it a few outstanding thoughts and develop other passages of Scripture which deal with similar thoughts.

This is John 17. The subject I've taken today can be entitled Unity, or perhaps Unity and Autonomy, or possibly Unity and Diversity. I'm not going to read the whole ch. to you because there are many thoughts I want to get over today, so I will read at the moment the first eleven verses and I'll be dealing with others in the course of the time.

(Reading John 17:1-11, NIV)

Unity and Diversity. We start with the Mystery of the Divine Unity. Clearly brought out in many of the vv. we read just now. For instance v. 5, v. 10, v. 21b, -- what a mystery. Jesus Christ is an individual. He is a person. He prayed to His Father. He did His Father's will. He said, My Father is greater than I. Yet He and the Father are One. Not in the sense that the two work together and become one. Not in that sense at all. In the sense they are numerically one. There is only one God.

This is brought out particularly clearly in John 14:6-11a (reading text). What a tremendous mystery! One God, only one God and yet three persons in the Godhead. We cannot understand it, yet it is clearly taught in Scripture.

Anyone who reads the NT can easily see this is clearly taught there. I'm sure the early Christians understood it. Understood it just as well as many of us can understand it today. Yet many of them began to try to understand it better. So some said, There is just one God. Only one God. So you talk about Jesus-- that's the Father, that's God walking around here. He's not a man, he's God." We call that monarchianism.

Others said, No, Jesus Christ is a real person; He prayed to His Father, he looked to His Father. He said, I do whatever the Father said. He said, My Father is greater than I. And they called that subordinationism.

altercation(?)

For the first 3 centuries you had an alteration, and you have it to some extent ever since. We put stress on one side, and that's right. But when we neglect or down-play the other we can easily get off into a wrong attitude. We put stress on the other, and downplay this. We can't understand how they fit together. It is a great mystery, but the facts are clear. Personally I do not like the term, the development of doctrine. The church through the ages has worked out doctrines