

The Son

Letter by W.H. Westcott concerning the Interpretation of John 1:18 by J. Taylor

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"Windrush "

12. Stonehouse Rd.,

Sutton Coldfield,

Warwickshire.

March 28th, 1932

My dear -----,

Herewith I return the typed copy of J. T.'s letter to a brother in Croydon . . .

... I have read over Mr. Taylor's exposition, and without entering into controversy over his exploration of Greek prepositions, entirely disagree with his conclusion as to John 1: 18.

Mr. T. on line 21 of his first page adroitly expunges from his reference to that Scripture the words "the only begotten Son" and substitutes the title "Christ"; then adding what he brings from his own mind,— "the preposition conveys that He is viewed as Man."

But the passage surely teaches to every simple soul that, in the ' clause in the middle of the verse, the qualification and competency of our Lord to declare God is given. It was not that after He became Man He moved into (or towards) the competency to declare Him. The " who is " is not the present tense in the Greek, but the present participle, and this signifies the (One) being (existing) in the Father's bosom. . . What Mr. T. presses is the force of '*eis*,' and he states in effect that '*eis*' the bosom of the Father means that He was not in the bosom of the Father formerly, but moved into, or towards, that position as Man. But in so doing he nullifies, and flics in the face of, the whole force of the verse. For the whole point is that the knowledge of the God unseen by any man at any time has become available by the declaration of what God is in the Word become flesh. The only begotten Son "*being* in the bosom of the Father" was the only One competent to declare God. That He became Man to do so, and that the declaration is in Manhood, we all admit,— with gratitude and worship. But it was contingent upon His eternal position in the Father's affections.

The preposition '*eis*' is, I judge, the only one that could fully represent what the Holy Spirit would have us to understand at that point. For the distinction of His eternal Personality in Deity, the preposition '*pros*' (with, by, or near), was used by the Spirit in John 1: 1,2: "The Word was '*pros*' God." And be it noted, the eternal Personality so defined is "the Word," Scripture does not teach that the eternal One Who was with God became the Word; but that the **Word** Who was eternally with God, and was God, became flesh. He was the Word before He became flesh.

Nor could '*en*' or '*epi*,'—the words used for the disciples' position on the bosom of Jesus in

John 13—that simply describe the physical position in John's case,—'have been suitably employed in John 1: 18. For it was not a mere position of external nearness, or juxtaposition, that qualified our Lord to declare God.

It was as the only begotten Son that He had inherent access to the innermost thoughts and affections of His Father. For in all the blessed activities of that God Who is Love, and Who longed to declare Himself, there was full responsive movement on the part of the only begotten Son. There was not and is not a pulsation of God's blessed Nature, even in absolute Deity, as well as in all the counsels in which Deity was to reveal Itself, to which the Son did not yield an answering flow. This inter-communication of Divine Love, in which God is glorified before our hearts, bows us in profound worship. We see the Son in unique and ineffable blessedness taking up every attribute of God, and every activity of the Father's love, and in a competency that no Christian dares to question, responding to it. In the volume of the book it is written, "I delight to do Thy will, O my God."

Returning to the use of the preposition '*eis*,' with its implication of *motion towards* an object, what other word could so aptly suggest this active response to "all that in that bosom lies"? It is not a question of mere position, or place, or proximity of Persons, but the fact of our Lord's competency to respond «to the whole nature and mind of God, which qualified Him to be the Declarer of all that God is. Taken up in affection more grateful to the Father's heart than we can ever tell, the Eternal Son became Man, the Word became flesh. And a universe filled with the knowledge of God, and with infinitely varied blessing, will be the outcome of the Son's love to the Father, and devotedness to His will. It will delight every family named of the Father to know that all its bliss issues from the Son's glorious response to all that was in the Father's bosom. This is conveyed in the preposition used in John 1: 18. Deprive Him of His eternal place "in the Father's bosom," and His eternal response as Son to all that God is, and you deprive Him of His competency to reveal and declare God.

Very affectionately your brother,

Wm. Hy. WESTCOTT.