


# TIME SERIES NO.23



**AN ABC  
MONOGRAPH**

# TRINITY

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## INTRODUCTION

The doctrine of the Trinity (Describing “The Knowledge of God-triune”) was developed during the early centuries of church history to describe the eternal reality of God’s self-revelation. On this subject the “History of doctrine” assumes real importance though the teaching of Christ & the apostles is fundamentally regulative.

## PLURAL OF MAJESTY A NON STARTER

Wayne Gruden clearly shows diffidence on the idea of the “plural of Majesty (ELOHIM) when he states “Some have suggested they (“let us” and “we” in Genesis 1.26) are plurals of majesty, a form of speech a king would use in saying, for example, “We are pleased to grant your request”. However, in the Old Testament Hebrew there are no other examples of a monarch using plural verbs of plural pronouns of himself in such a “plural of majesty”. I concur and put it that this *suggestion of the scholar* lacks genuine OT support. The Church Fathers saw in these words the *plurality of persons* we call the Trinity.

So, I invite you after the style of Ezekiel to paddle and wade and endeavour to find the joy of being supported by a fundamental doctrine of scripture. This is truth that abuts our great salvation with a Fatherly love that spares not, a redeemer’s grace that stands under our burden and speaks its invitation into our hearts by the Holy Spirit.. Reconciling redeeming and renewing come from Yahweh the life-giver. Our creator redeemer & comforter – the glorious **Trinity** is plainly revealed by:-

- (1) THE O.T.EVIDENCE
- (2) THE TEACHING OF CHRIST & APOSTLES
- (3) THE EARLY CHURCH FATHERS
- (4) MEDIEVAL SCHOLASTICS
- (5) REFORMERS
- (6) POST REFORMATION THOUGHT

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## CHAPTER 1

### OLD TESTAMENT EVIDENCE – GENERAL NOTICES

#### GOD’S COVENANT OF LOVE & OBEDIENCE

In his pristine innocence Adam would appear to be the first to whom God revealed the work of the Holy Spirit who “hovered over the deep”. The

Orthodox Fathers spoke of God's "covenant of life" with Adam.. ***This primary covenant's validity depended on God and on the undertaking implicit in the commitment of the "Lamb slain at the foundation of the world"*** so that if, as subsequently occurred, it was broken by disobedience the initiative of punishment and remedy and potential to restore it lay with God. That was resolved a priori in advance in the key words of the counsel of the triune God "Let us make man" (1.26). Paul in Philippians 2 speaks of Christ enacting that resolution being both in the "form of God" (*μορφή beautiful outward shape or semblance as opposed to inner or unseen being*) and "the nature" *σχημα ( sort)* of a servant.

### **ABRAHAM Genesis 22**

Isaac fretfully queried Abraham, "Behold the fire.....and the wood....but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" "Abraham said, 'My son, **God** will provide Himself ... **The Lamb** for a burnt offering!'" (22.8). And they went on **AS ONE**"(mirror of the unity of Father & Son in the atonement). "*In the mount of the Lord HE will be provided.*" Moses added "JEHOVAH JIREH – To this day it is said 'In the mountain of the Lord He will be provided'"(22.14).

### **MOSES EXODUS 3**

Moses met with God at Horeb and stood without his leather sandals (bespeaking animal sacrifice) before the Holy One who would provide true atonement. Elohim described Himself as Yahweh (Exodus3.14) – to be remembered "for ever" as God who saves. *The God of the "ardens sed virens" bush* will give Himself a willing offering (cf. the burnt offering) and rise gloriously(cf. SED VIRENS) – the Holy One raised up by the Father through the power of the Spirit. For Moses this wonder of being consumed and being alive is his first experience of God the Holy.

### **DAVID AND THE PSALMS**

Psalm 16 For you will not leave my soul in Sheol nor will you suffer your Holy One to see corruption. *David by the Spirit calls Jesus Lord and so we are bound to say that David by regeneration and illumination of the Spirit(Matthew 22.43) knew His Lord (the Christ pre-incarnate) and was consciously moved by the Holy Spirit.*

It is from Psalm 109 that we get our "**My God my God why have you forsaken me**" and as understood by Christians since Jesus first used the words it must be one of the clearest indications of the Father-Son relationship. The famous 110<sup>th</sup> is explicit. It reads "The Lord said to my Lord 'Sit thou on my right hand'". Our Lord pointed to this psalm as prophetic proof positive of David speaking of Christ. David's words "Where shall I go from **your Spirit?**" in Psalm 139render

proof that the Psalmist believed in the omniscience and omnipresence of the Spirit of God. We can say the concept of the trinity transcends the implicit and is quite plain in David.

## **ISAIAH 48.16 & 63.7-14**

(6) “Come near, listen to this, from the beginning I have not spoken in secret. From the time it had existence *I was there*(2) and now *the LORD God* (1)and *His Spirit* (3)have sent *Me*.” Isaiah 9 cf. Chapter6) from the moment of his calling like Moses is clear about the nature of God.

*This privy and vital statement of doctrine is at the heart of divine revelation to Isaiah whose 53<sup>rd</sup> so plainly sets forth Christ. We have one of the clearest references in the entire bible to the three persons of the Trinity – a datum for posterity – a text to challenge the Arian and Unitarian preconceptions and set alongside the ECHAD of composite oneness in the Mosaic Shema of Deuteronomy 6.4.*

## **CHAPTER 2.**

### **CHRIST AND THE APOSTLES**

I trace statements relevant to the “economic” trinity from Matthew – the teaching gospel and supplement from John which carries a special vista on the Father-Son relationship and this is supplemented by reference to 1John. That which is apropos in Acts and further data of theological interest in the Pauline epistles is assembled in this chapter.

## **6. ONLY BEGOTTEN OF THE FATHER MATTHEW 1 16-18**

The thirty-ninth generation from Abraham was humanly begotten. But at the 40<sup>th</sup> we have the verb changing from the active to the passive voice (1.16). Jesus is named under new divine generation which does not afford to man but rather to God the right to “calls Himself” Jesus (*λεγομενος*—middle voice). Matthew also maintains the angelic association of the coming of Christ and the work of the Holy Spirit in Matt.1.18 where we read “She was found with Child “of” the **Holy Spirit**”. In Luke1.35 the seed of the woman is called “That **holy thing**”. The *genitive case γενικη πτωσις* is really a “case of genus” so that the absolute likeness to the Holy Spirit is able to be argued from this statement – the Christ child was absolutely immaculate or sinless as is the Holy Ghost.

## **2. THE BAPTISM OF CHRIST MATTHEW 3.16**

In this event we have the procession of the Spirit from Father to Son simultaneous with the Father’s voice and the convergence we call the economic trinity on account of the united manifestation.

The heavens were opened **for Him, to Him by Him**. This is an opening of heaven once for all( which is the effect of the aorist passive). Jesus never lost sight of this through His entire ministry; that heavenly door lies ajar for all who follow Him. We read of Jesus looking up into heaven and saying “Father”. Another use of the dative is “near” – so that the door of heaven was so very reachable for Jesus. All the glory and intimacy of the city of God was His to enjoy while on earth. No wonder He could say “Thy will be done on earth as in heaven” and “!No-one has come down save the Son of man *who is in heaven*”. We must revel in this glorious nugget. Further He saw the Holy Spirit **descend** (the word *καταβαίω* means “coming down as a wrestler” to strive with the evil below). This also marks an ongoing unceasing campaign of the Spirit in the church. It foreshadows the Pentecostal baptism. The shared frontal assault on Satan’s kingdom Matthew details in his narrative. The devil was late, and his cunning plan was to famish and weaken the Lord. The Lord’s preparation involved prayer and fasting. The Lord was hungry throughout these trials – having neither bread nor fruit on this sun-baked scarp. The devil came right up to him and said classically “If you are the Son of God make the epic statement that these rocks “shall become bread”.

### **3. CHRIST’S INTIMACY WITH THE FATHER MATT.11.25-30**

At that highly significant moment when three points of history were in view – the Sodom period, the current time and the postponed future kingdom Jesus said, “Father Lord of heaven and earth, thank You that these things are hid from wise and able and revealed them to babes. This, Father, is as how your pleasure in heaven’s inner council works. All things are handed over to me by my Father and no-one can read the Son but the Father nor the Father but the Son and whoever the Son is resolved to unveil Him.”

### **4. PETER’S CONFESSION MATTHEW 16.13-17 & 20**

Jesus gives another lesson on discipleship at the “cave of Pan”. Caesarea Philippi was a shrine for tutelary gods. Here Peter made the unqualified confession, “You are Christ, God’s Son”; Jesus in framing the question consciously pointed to His humanity as “The Son of man” of scripture. (*Daniel 7.13 & Ezekiel 40.3-48.35 with 8 references to “the man” and 14 to the “Sovereign Lord”*). Consciousness of Christ as God came to Peter not by his father’s home schooling by Jonah but from God the Father.

### **5. THE GREAT COMMISSION OF CHRIST MATTHEW 28.19**

“All authority [*ἐξουσία*] is given me in heaven and on earth. Therefore set out to march and keep on marching [*πορευθεντες*] and never accept defeat – never surrender – never cease to campaign – never grow weary – march once for all – and “make disciples” once for all [*μαθητευσατε*] – of all nations,

baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you”  
The teaching authority of Christ is enhanced in this statement and even the prophetic detail of future history is subject to the teaching role of the Son though as ever co-ordinate with the sovereign will of God.

## JOHN

### 1. THE FATHER-SON RELATIONSHIP JOHN 1.1FF

In the opening syllogism of the gospel “In the beginning was the Word, the Word was with God and the Word was God.” We learn that: –  
Our Lord was there most anciently and in the bosom of God’s counsels and decrees – the very divine oracle or mouthpiece was God sharing the divine nature.

### 2. JESUS CLAIM TO BE IN THE FORM OF GOD AS THE “ANGEL OF THE PRESENCE” 3.13

Now Jesus says something even more worth listening to. ‘No-one has gone up to heaven save the Son of Man (*who appeared to Daniel*) who constantly comes down *καταβας* to carry the spiritual battle among men  
Nicodemus was out of his depth – this is really radical theology – and then Jesus added ‘*even the Son who is in heaven*’. *John does not include this private testimony or debate in his aggregate of cumulative evidences.*

### 3. THE DEITY OF CHRIST 5. 19

A series of four *γαρ* statements expounds “The Son can do nothing unless what he longingly watches the Father do

- (a) **Equal renown.** For what that “renowned” One (*εκεινος* is a term John uses five times in his epistle for Jesus and it is his synonym for Jehovah – whose name Jews do not mention because of its holiness.) wants to do the Son does likewise
- (b) **Equal love.** For the Father loves the Son (*as His intimate friend*) and shows Him (*δεικνυμι* – it maybe by model and detail as to Moses) everything that He is doing – and greater works He will show Him that you may wonder – this *θαυμαζω* speaks of having to square with the intimacy of Father & Son
- (c) **Identical purpose** For as the Father raises the dead & gives life so the Son gives life to those He **wills** to live.
- (d) **Identical honour** For on the other hand the Father judges no-one but has given all judgment to the Son that all **honour** him – to fail so is to dishonour the Father.

### 4. JESUS CLAIMS THE KEYS OF DEATH ARE HIS 8.51

So the Jews reply, ‘Did we not say handsomely and precisely ‘You are a Samaritan with a demon?’ Jesus replied ‘I have not a demon, but I honour my Father and you dishonour me. I seek not my own honour. He who seeks that is judge. Verily if anyone keeps my word he shall not see death into eternity (*i.e. contemplate what death forever is as opposed to life forever*)).

## **5. JESUS AND THE FATHER ONE GOD 10.24**

“My sheep hear and follow and I give them eternal life, no-one plucks them from my hand. My Father who gave them me is greater than all, no-one is able to take them from His hand **“I and the Father are one”** This is a distinctive statement of deity. So Jews were carrying stones about with them (as we would suitcases) that they might stone Him.

Jesus said, ‘Many beautiful works I have shown you from my Father; on account of which are you stoning me?’ The Lord took the intent to be equal to the act, a sin. Here also is the perception of God. ‘For none’ they said, ‘but for blasphemy **because being man you are self-made God.** Jesus referred to *Psalms 82.6*

You dare to call the sanctified Son in precise terminology “a blasphemer” precisely because I say epically **‘I am Son of God’.**

‘If I don’t do the works don’t believe. If I do, believe the works – in order that you may know the Father is in my circle and I in His.’ Jesus is prescriptive on faith – believers get the evidence through the Holy Spirit.

## **6. CHRIST ANTICIPATED RESUMING LIFE IN GLORY 13.31**

So when he went out Jesus said plainly **“Now the Son of man has been glorified, and God will have been glorified in his own circle of deity.”**

When God is glorified in his own circle God will also glorify Him in his own being, and He will immediately glorify Him. (cf. The resumption of glorious prerogatives willingly laid aside).

## **7. JESUS CLAIMS DEITY 19.6-10**

Pilate counters the “crucify” shriek of the high priests and their men-at-arms with the taunt “You do it” for to me there is no issue – no crime. Their answer comes back like a boomerang – **“We have a law under which He ought to die for He made Himself Son of God.”** Christ is charged with claiming deity. The “Therefore” of the absolute Lord. **“When Pilate heard that word ‘God’** He was frightened “more”. It is soon after this that Pilate’s wife warms by dream to avoid acting against “the just man” cf. *Matthew 27.19*. Pilate’s fear was compound. It came from acting vindictively – then from the charge from the menacing crowd and finally from the omen his wife sent. Pilate becomes absolutely frank. “Where do you come from?” he asks. Christ gives no reply. **19.10 The “Therefore” of power versus omnipotence** “Are you not going to

talk to me?” said Pilate stressing his delegated authority **ἐξουσία** for capitol sentencing under Caesar. Christ is in full contention now. “You have not one scrap of authority except what has been given long ago from above” – and if the Lord did not point above he made it known his ‘above’ meant heaven. Pilate was saddled with the ultimate decision and outwitted by the Jews yet of himself he did not charge Christ. He buckled finally when the *external* debate renewed and “majestas” charge swelled as a public demand. Pilate himself had to escape the charge of allowing Jesus to contest the rule of Caesar politically.

## **8. THE INSPIRED CREATIVE ACTIVITY OF CHRIST AS GOD JOHN 21.23**

**“There are many other things Jesus did as creator** which if they were written in detail, I think the world itself could not store the books that might have been written. Amen.” *The apostle has selected a mountain of evidence from the 3 year ministry of Jesus. Here he points to the Lord’s pre-existence, there he adduces His omniscience. Here he speaks of his peerless life and there he demonstrates His miraculous power. Here he shows his unbroken contact with the Father and there he shows his unbroken victory over evil. In these and many other ways he attests the Son of God is Lord over all.*

## **ACTS**

The triune co-operation is displayed in the Gospels through the “**schema**” of God in the servant life of Christ in a located or Israel-centred manner and in Acts by the “**eidos**” (cf. Luke3.22 with John 5.37 & Luke9.29) or awareness of God through the Holy Spirit”.

## **6. THE SHEDDING FORTH OF THE SPIRIT 2.29FF**

This “*very Jesus*” God raised to heaven. He shed forth *the Spirit* “alongside the *Father*” – the Spirit of “Jehovah”, wisdom (prophecy dreams vision), discerning or interpreting Christ, of divine counsel, of courageous gospel warriors, of experience of God, of awe **ἡμῶν ἡμῶν ἡμῶν ἡμῶν ἡμῶν** [Isa.11.2] Here Peter sensing the Spirit at work as God urges Israel to know **ασφαλως** without disappointment that Jesus is Christ. The hearers were “nudged” **κατενυγησαν** by the Spirit or spurred as if by a rider move on with God under the “rein” of the Holy Spirit.

## **2. PETER’S DEFENCE 5.31-32**

Peter told Jewish leaders who had put *Christ* to death by crucifixion that God raised him up and he added “We are witnesses to these things *as is the Holy Spirit* whom *God* gives to those who “obey Him.

## **3. STEPHEN ON THE TRINITY 7.51-53**



Stephen spoke of Israel as “resisting or falling upon the Holy Spirit” and killed the prophets of the coming “Righteous one”. As the hearers stone him he looks steadfastly into heaven and saw what he was speaking about – the **Glory of God and Jesus at the right hand of God**. He testified “Look, I see heaven opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God. *Stephen’s experience is written into the “Apostle’s creed” and is of utmost significance as our only ever glimpse of the majesty in heaven where “in the circle of divinity” or the “Majesty on high” Christ stands ready to greet faithful martyrs.*

#### **4. SAUL’S TRINITARIAN EXPERIENCE BEGINS 9.5-12**

Suddenly there shined around about Saul a light from heaven (“above the brightness of the sun at noon” Acts 26.13) **He heard the voice of Jesus** and **saw the Lord** (9.17) The Lord identified with His persecuted followers. He was told **“I am Jesus whom you are persecuting** (“It is hard to kick against the horse spurs” [E Oxford] elided in 2010 NIV. Saul’s was instant surrender and obedience. He was quivering outside and astounded inside. He had to be led to Damascus where in the house of Judah he was fasting and **“giving himself to prayer”**. The Lord informed Ananias of what He had done for Saul whilst in a vision Saul saw Ananias coming and laying his hands on him. Ananias went and told Saul he had come charged with the mission to tell him God would restore his sight and fill him with **the Holy Spirit**.

#### **5. PETER’S TEACHING ON THE TRIUNE GOD 10 34-43**

Peter after his vision speaks with due humility “Of a truth I have taken myself down a peg for God is no respecter of persons”

1. He is **Lord of all**. You know the one who became the message through Judea originating from Galilee – Jesus of Nazareth.
2. Whom **“the God”** anointed with the Spirit and Power; who went throughout voluntarily doing good works whom they killed Him & hanged Him on a tree. This Christ **“the God”** raised the third day
3. He was seen not of all but of witnesses handpicked before by **“the God”**. We ate and drank with Him after the resurrection. He announced that we herald that He is “ordained” on the horizon by “the God” as Judge. All the prophets witness to Him as the name of our forgiveness – Isa. 33.24, 53.5-6, Jer 31.34 Dan. 9.24-**forgiveness is through Him**.

#### **6. PAUL’S PREACHING AFFIRMS THE TRIUNE GOD ACTS 13 25-52**

1. **In his Psidian address [Ac 13 25-32] Paul sets the cross or tree** v.29. at the heart of preaching Deut. 31.23 (Gal.3.13) and tells us that **the curse**

taken away only in *Jesus* whom *God* raised up v.30. through whom we also receive the fullness of *the Spirit* v.52

2. **Before Felix** Paul states “I confess this to you, that according to the Way – which they call heresy – so it is I worship *the Fatherly God* [Acts 24 10-21] (*Greek τῷ πατρῷ θεῷ*), believing all those things written in the law and by the prophets, holding hope in God, which these men also have received, that there is to be a resurrection of the dead, both just and unjust.
3. Jewish leaders **at Rome** [Acts 28.23ff] left without agreement (*απολλῶ.ασυμφωνοι*) among themselves as Paul spoke one historic word. “*The Holy Spirit* spoke once for all beautifully through Isaiah the prophet to our fathers, saying, ‘March to this people and proclaim, ‘Hearing you will hear and not put it all together; seeing you will see and not behold. For the heart of this people has been clotted or enlarged and they are hard of hearing and they have closed their eyes i.e. dropping off to sleep – deadly sleep! Therefore let it be clear and understood by you, that the salvation of *God* is sent to the Gentiles and they will hear. As he spoke these things the Jews left leaving with a lot of searching among themselves. But Paul was a whole two year period in his own rented accommodation and received all who came to him, heralding the kingdom of God and teaching the things of *the Lord Jesus Christ* with all boldness.

## EXCERPTS FROM THE PAULINE EPISTLES

### 6. ROMANS 1.4 & 7

Paul opens his letter with a crystal clear “trinity” statement “*The gospel regarding His(God’s )Son who through the Spirit of holiness was appointed the Son of God in power by His resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord*”.(Peterson [the message] puts it “*His descent from David roots him in history; his unique identity as Son of God was shown by the Spirit when Jesus was raised from the dead, setting Him apart as the Messiah, our Master*”.)

Paul writes, **Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from the LORD Jesus Christ.**

### 2. ROMANS 8 14-17

In this one of the greatest chapters of scripture Paul makes reference to the working Trinity in the first paragraph winding his truth about holiness around the holiness of God Himself. Let me from this point quote Peterson’s version “*This resurrection life you received from God is not a timid, grave-tending life. Its adventurously expectant, greeting God with a childlike “What’s next, Papa?” God’s Spirit touches our spirits and confirms who we really are. We know who he is, and we know who we are : Father and children. And we know*

we are going to get what's coming to us-an unbelievable inheritance! We go through exactly what **Christ** goes through.

Being “led” in a love relationship to Christ means sharing His future as Heirs. This conscious experience began with “Abba Father”v.15. The Spirit of God ‘groans’ [Greek **στεναζω** – to sigh over ‘others’ plight’ or “evil things”. He ‘intercedes’ [Greek **εὐτυγχάνω** – meaning to come to assist ‘when the bridge is broken’]. When “we do not appear on the landing place” as passengers waiting for God’s time the Holy Spirit keeps the plan on the road before God [Greek **κατα θεος**] v27.

#### 6. **ROMANS 9 1-5**

I quote “The Message” “You need to know that I carry with me at all times a huge sorrow. It’s an enormous pain deep within me, and I’m never free of it. I’m not exaggerating – **Christ** and **the Holy Spirit** are my witnesses. It’s the Israelites...If there were any way I could be cursed by the Messiah so they could be blessed by him, I’d do it in a minute. They’re my family. I grew up with them. They had everything going for them-family, glory, covenants, revelation, worship, promises, to say nothing of being the race that produced the Messiah, the Christ, who is **God over everything**, always, Oh, Yes!” New NIV footnote offers also as “The Lord is our God, the Lord alone.”

#### 6. **ROMANS 10.9 (with 1 Cor12.3)**

“This is the core of my preaching. Say the welcoming word-“**Jesus** is my Master”- embracing , body and soul, **God’s** work of doing in us what he did in raising Jesus from the dead” with “You know perfectly well that the Spirit of God would never prompt anyone to say “Jesus be damned!” Nor would anyone be inclined to say “Jesus is Master!” without the insight of **the Holy Spirit**”.

#### 6. **ROMANS 15.17-19**

Again to quote the 2010 NIV we read “I glory in **Christ Jesus** in my service to **God**. I will not venture to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through me in leading the Gentiles to obey **God** by what I have said and done-by the power of signs and wonders, through the power of **the Holy Spirit of God**”.

#### 6. **ROMANS 15.30**

Pray strenuously with and for me to **God the Father**, through the power of our Master Jesus, through **the love of the Spirit** – that I will be delivered from the

lion's den of unbelievers in Judea." In prayer the triune God is dynamically engaged.

### **7. 1 CORINTHIANS 3 11-16**

*"No-one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ...Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in your midst?"* When the apostle speaks of the church and its foundational nature he speaks of the "Church of God"- God's temple – God's building – for in its construction the triune God is fully exercised. **The church cannot exist without the trinity.**

### **8. 1 CORINTHIANS 6.15-19**

The beauty of God's holiness, likeness to Christ and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit are of one piece in creating the holy walk. (15) *"Do you not know that your bodies are the members of Christ Himself?"* (19) *"Do you not know that your bodies are the temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you received from God?"* Trinity is & creates holiness.

### **9. 1 CORINTHIANS 12. 4, 5, 6.**

Paul shows that the Spirit distributes gifts as He determines; the Son uses gifts for God's glory and our profit and the Father is operating or galvanizes the work. **A gifted Church demonstrates Trinity at work.**

*"(4)There are different kinds of gifts but the same Spirit distributes them"*

*"(5)There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord". "(6) There are different kinds of working or galvanizes, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work".*

### **10. 1 CORINTHIANS 14.36-37**

The sovereignty of the triune God in outreach is put plainly by Paul. *Did the word of God originate with you? Or are you the only people it reached? If any thinks they are a prophet or otherwise gifted by the Spirit, let them acknowledge that what I am writing to you is by the Lord's command."*

### **11. 1 CORINTHIANS 15.15**

*"... We have testified about God that He raised Christ from the dead."* Jesus also said "I have power to lay down my life and power to take it up again" But Paul additionally argues that *"If the Spirit of Him who raised up Christ dwells in you then He who raised up Christ from the dead(God) will enliven your bodies which are liable to death through his Spirit that indwells you".*

**Resurrection has the distinctives of Trinity writ on it as an act – each participates.**

## 12. 2 CORINTHIANS 3.3

*“You are making plain that you are an epistle of **Christ**, ministered by us, written not with ink but by the **Spirit** of the living **God**, not on flat tomb like stones(πλαξι) but on the flat tomb-like stone of fleshly hearts”* They are going around with the inscription of the end of the past written all over them by the work of the triune God and the believers are now like an “open letter” wherever they go.

## 13. 2 CORINTHIANS 5.1-5,10

*“For we know that if the earthly house of this tent should have been destroyed, we have or hold a building from God not formed by hands –eternal in the heavens. For in this(earthly body) we also are groaning (στεναζομεν cf. Romans 8.22)desiring greatly to put on over us as an outer garment – our delightful fixed dwelling place (οικητηριον)which is that out of heaven.”(5)But the one who has wrought (as a workman cutting and polishing stone)us towards this same is **God**, who has given us the down payment of the **Spirit...**(10)”For the whole lot of us must essentially appear before the **Bema of Christ** that each may carry off a benefit or acknowledge the debt (κομιζω) of the things he or she has done through the body – be it either good or a paucity.”*

## 14. 2 CORINTHIANS 13.14

*“The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the intimate intercourse of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen”.* Paul desires the Corinthians to manifest grace and love and a walk that is in step with the Holy Spirit.

## 15. GALATIANS 3. 1-6

*“O foolish Galatians, who has cast a spell on you that you should not have confidence in the truth, to whom in front of your very eyes **Jesus Christ** has been advertised as by public notice as having been crucified. This one matter I wish to learn from you ‘Did you receive the **Spirit** from works of law or from hearing or obedience of faith? Are you so mindless? Having begun **in the Spirit** are you now paying everything off or doing religion in the flesh? Have you suffered as you have in vain? Or is it (the suffering-yours and His) also in vain? Therefore He who additionally supplies the **Holy Spirit** to you and works mighty deeds among you, is it from works of law or from obedience of faith? Abraham alike believed **God** and it was counted to him for righteousness. Surely you know that they who are from faith-these are the sons of Abraham. For scripture foreknew that **God** would justify the nations from faith”* Paul desired the Galatians to see the work of God in Christ sending His Spirit as one work of one God three in one.

## 16. GALATIANS 4 4-6

*“But when the set time had fully come, **God sent His Son**, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those under the law, that we might receive adoption to son-ship, Because you are his sons, God sent **the Spirit** of his Son into our hearts, the spirit who calls out, “**Abba**”, **Father**.”* Paul further appraises the Galatians of the special relationship Christ introduces –namely “Son-ship”.

## 17. GALATIANS 6 2 & 7-8

*“Carry each other’s burdens, and in this way you will fill up **the law of Christ**...Do not be deceived: **God cannot be mocked**. A man reaps what he sows. Whoever sows to please their flesh, from the flesh will reap destruction, whoever sows to please the Spirit, from **the Spirit** will reap eternal life”.* Paul shows the perfect linkage of Christ’s brotherly love, the Spirit’s fruit and the Father’s approval.

## 18. EPHESIANS 2 17-18

*“**He (Christ)** came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near. For through him we both have access to **the Father** by **one Spirit**.”*

Like the vision of the Man of Macedonia God was going before as the Captain of salvation before Joshua – it was even so in Galatia.

## 19. EPHESIANS 3 14-17

*“For this reason I bow my knees before **the Father** of our Lord Jesus Christ, from whom the Father’s whole family in heaven and earth takes its name, that he would give you -in accordance with the riches of His glory to have been strengthened as prevailers by power (increasing capacity) through **his Spirit** in your inner man, that **Christ** should settle in as governor in your hearts through faith.”* Paul’s prayer is for

“victory” in Ephesian lives – the capacity to rise to all new challenges not so much in the outer world but the heart-which God would hold and cleanse and bring to joyful confidence.-filled with love and alvanize by the fullness of the Holy Spirit.

## 20. EPHESIANS 4 3-6

*“Study and be quick to keep the oneness of **the Spirit** in the mutual bond of peace-one body one Spirit- just as you have been called in one hope of your calling. There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in you all.”* Paul has eight singularities that emphasise the unity of the Godhead and the unity of the church yet allow for

diversity in the Christian body & Trinity. *Membership* is a felicitous concept to use in the context of the Trinity.

## **21. EPHESIANS 4 30-32**

*“Do not grieve the **Holy Spirit** of God in whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Bear away as rubbish(αρθητω) of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be Christly kind and with heartfelt compassion continue swiftly gracious to one another just as **God in Christ** has been very gracious (χαριζω) to you.”* Paul appeals for love & initiative in resolutions.

## **22. EPHESIANS 5.18-20**

*“Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery, instead, **be filled with the Spirit, speaking** to one another in psalms hymns and spiritual songs form the Spirit. Sing and make music from your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to **God the Father** for everything, in the name of our **Lord Jesus Christ.**”* These are the words of an apostle to whom it is second nature to be “inclusivist” of the three “members” of the Trinity in the unapproachable light of deity.

## **23. PHILIPPIANS 1.2& 18B-19**

*Grace to you and peace from **God our Father** and our Lord Jesus Christ. For what (of it)? Above or apart from each method, whether in ostentatious superficiality or a shifting changeable manner (**prophasis**) or in truth **Christ is preached as victor.** And in this I rejoice and will rejoice. For I know from watching it that this will prove or go out carefully (as a passenger gingerly disembarking) from me through your prayer and the continuous provision of **the Spirit of Jesus Christ** for salvation.”* The 2010 NIV adds “God’s provision” to the Spirit which intimately links the Spirit with Jesus and the Father and this is seen in prayer itself where the Son is the means of approach and the Spirit the provision that issues and the Father the Almighty origin of Loving care.

## **24. PHILIPPIANS 1.27-30**

*“Only be citizens worthy of the gospel – that whether I am coming and looking at you or whether I am away, I will hear of the affairs that surround you - that you stand in one **Spirit**, as athletes contesting with one soul and mind for the faith of the gospel and not alarmed in anything by those who are placed against you – which is an exhibition or indictment to them that they will be vanquished (in the contest) but of your salvation and this **from God.** For you*

*have been favoured not only to believe in **Christ** but also to suffer for His name having this same alvanize contest that you see in me and now hear to centre in me.”* Paul stirs the believers in Philippi to assurance about the victory of the faith and alvanizes them to a unity with him which reflects the triune membership of God’s own being.

## **25. PHILIPPIANS 2 1 & 5-8**

*If there is anything as drawing alongside in Christ, if there is any softening of love, if any common care of the **Spirit**, if there is any deep feelings that go out sacrificially and sense of pity or sorrow fulfil my joy that you be of like (humble)mind having the same love...For you must have this mind in you that was also in **Christ Jesus** – who being beyond beginning in the form(MORPHE) of God, thought it not plunder to be snatched to be equal with **God** – but He poured out of Himself ( KENOO expended to the point of destitution), taking the form of a servant, becoming or being born in the likeness of men, and having been found in the appearance (SCHEMA)as man, He humbled Himself becoming obedient to death even that of the cross.”* Paul carefully threads us through the incarnation maintaining that God who is love and free from pride can stoop down to us. This was utterly demonstrated in Christ’s life and death and continued manhood yet is there no demur on membership in the triune majesty.

## **26. PHILIPPIANS 3.3**

*For we are “the” circumcision who serve **God** with our all in **the Spirit** and make our boast in **Christ Jesus** and have not placed our trust in the flesh.* Paul is speaking of that work in the heart of the Christian which applies the blood of Christ, brings the peace of God and is marked by the seal of the Spirit. We have the MARK of separated ones.

## **27. COLOSSIANS 1.9B-10**

*We continually ask that you will be filled with the knowledge that conveys (EPIGNOSIS) His will in all wisdom and understanding (SUNIESIS-NT for “getting it together”) belonging to **the Spirit**, conducting your life worthy of **the Lord** to all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work and increasing towards that capacity of knowledge of **God** that teaches.(EPIGNOSIS)”* Paul is speaking of a “competence” that comes of the Spirit’s work in His fullness in the heart – reflecting the “divine nature” in the life of Christ.

## **28. COLOSSIANS 3. 15-16**

*Let the **word of God** dwell in you richly in all wisdom teaching and nurturing yourselves in mind and heart with psalms hymns and **Spirit inspired odes** singing with joy in your hearts to **the Lord**. And whatever it is you do, in word*



or action, do everything in the circle of the name **Jesus is Lord**, rejoicing in **God the Father** through Him. The praise of God in the bible's own words is especially promotes our joy in the relationship with God as our Father.

Hark the glad sound the Saviour comes!

The Saviour promised long;

Let ev'ry heart exult with joy.

And ev'ry voice be song!

(Paraphrase of Luke4 18-19)

### **29. 1 THESS 1.4-6**

*“Knowing, beloved brothers and sisters, your commission and choice(EKLOGE) is by **God** for our gospel did not come to you in word only but also in power and in the **Holy Spirit**, and in full assurance(literally “a full cart”)as you know what we had been among you on your account, and you became mimics of us and of the **Lord**.”* Paul tells the new church in Europe that they got the full message – the Christian model. They got the doctrine of God and of Christ and the Spirit from Paul's teaching.

### **30. 1 THESS 5.16-19**

*“Rejoice always, pray without ceasing leaving off throughout your prayer vow, In everything give thanks for this is the will of **God** in **Christ Jesus** for you. Do not quench **the Spirit**, do not set prophesy at naught, test everything!”* The young church is being reminded as Paul closes his letter from Athens that the Holy Spirit continues to speak to us as we keep daily and minute by minute in touch with God.

### **31. 2 THESS 2 13b-14**

*“God won and carried you off or raised you(AIREOMAI)from the beginning for salvation in the **Holy Spirit** and by faith of truth into which **He** called you through our gospel to secure and possess you –the expectation or glory of **our Lord Jesus Christ** . Paul's imagery appears to be that of a bride which the Lord won and will keep for He looks to her full beauty when He comes.*

### **LATER PASTORALS**

#### **32. 1 TIMOTHY 1.17 & 3.16 & 6.15-16**

*“To the king of the aeons immortal invisible **the only wise God**, be honour and glory for ever and ever, Amen” ....”**God has appeared in flesh**, has been justified in the circle of the **Spirit**, seen of angels, preached among nations, believed on in the world, received up in glory.”... **King of kings, Lord of lords, the only one having deathless life, light dwelling beyond approach, whom no man is able to see, to whom be eternal honour and power .**” Paul as he writes*

to Timothy sets out most plainly the triune relationship and maintains the deity of Christ alongside his humanity.

### **33. 2 TIMOTHY 1.6-9**

On this account I remind you to stir up the charisma of God that is in you through the laying on of my hands. For *God* did not give us the *Spirit* of fear but of power and love and spiritual wisdom. Do not therefore be ashamed of the *witness of our Lord Jesus* nor of me His bond slave but join me in suffering ill for the gospel according to the power of God *who saved us and has called us with a holy calling* not according to our works but according to His own purpose notice or calculation and grace provided for us *in Christ Jesus* before the ages of time.

### **3 TITUS 3 4-6**

But when *Christ-like kindness* and friendly clemency or benevolence (PHILANTHROPIA) of *God our Saviour* appeared, not from works in righteousness that we had accomplished, but according to his mercy He saved us through the laver of the new birth and the *renewal of the Holy Ghost* which He poured out upon us richly through *Jesus Christ our Saviour*, that justified by the grace of that man we should become inheritors in accordance with the hope of eternal life.

### **TRINITARIAN REFERENCES ENUMERATED**

In **Matthew** there are **7**

In **Mark** there are **2** namely 1.10-11 & 3.29-34

In **Luke** we find **5** namely 1.35, 1.41-43, 1.67-69, 2.25-26 & 4.38

In **John** there are **10**

In **Acts** **10**

In **Paul's writings** **41** (Rom7 1Cor7, 2 Cor3, Gal3, Eph8, Phil4, Col2 Thess3, Tim-Tit 4

Within the remaining NT books **Hebrews to Jude** there are **12** additional references namely Hebrews 2 3b-4, 9.14, 10.12-15; James 4 5-10. 1Peter 1 3,10-12; 4.14.

2 Peter 1.17-20; 1 John3 23-24, 4.1-2, 4 13-14, 5.7-9.

Then in the **Apocalypse** there are **12** more: Rev. 1 8-10, 2.7 with 28&11, 2.12& 17, 2.18 with 27&29, 3.1, 3.7 with 12 & 13, 3.14 &22, 4.2 with 5 & 7, 14.12-14, 19 9-10, 22 16-18 –making **99 at least**-and I'm fairly certain I have missed one!

## **CHAPTER 3 (HISTORICAL THEOLOGY) THE EARLY CHURCH FATHERS**

## **COUNCILS, HERESY AND COMPLEXITY**

“*Christianity Today*” in April 1997 carried an article by Christopher Hall entitled “Adding up the Trinity” in which there appeared a quote from Gregory of Nyssa that ran as follows “If you ask for change (from the banker) someone philosophizes to you on the begotten and the un-begotten. If you asks the price of bread you’re told the Father is greater and the Son inferior. If you ask is the bath ready, someone answers “the Son was created from nothing”. Jonathan Edwards was nearer the mark in when he spoke of Trinity as “(eternally) sharing in divine love”.

## **APOSTLES CREED**

The creed we know as “**The Apostles’ Creed**” was given to Julius bishop of Rome by Marcellus the exiled bishop of Ancrya whose position was challenged by Arianism and found himself in Rome and the residence at Rome was circa 340. About 400 A.D. The creed reads “*I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth: And in Jesus Christ hi only Sp our Lord, Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, Born of the Virgin Mary, Suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried, He descended into hell: The third day he rose again from the dead, He ascended into heaven, And sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost...*” A priest of Aquileia argued it was the rule of faith of the Apostles at Jerusalem. The weakness is there are no historical links over the first 3 centuries to prove the point.

## **EUSEBIUS’ CREED**

**The Eusebian Nicene Creed of 325** states “*We believe in one God, the Father All sovereign, the maker of all things visible and invisible; and in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Word of God, God of God, Light of Light, Life of Life, Son only-begotten, Firstborn of all creation, begotten of the Father before all ages, through whom also all things were made; who was made flesh for our salvation and lived among men, and suffered, and rose again on the third day, and ascended to the Father, and shall come again in glory to judge the living and dead; we believe also in one Holy Spirit.*” This creed was composed by Eusebius bishop of Caesarea and Church Historian. Its teaching on Christ was modified to counter Arianism.

## **MODIFIED CREED OF NICEA**

That section of **the Creed of Nicea** reads “*We believe...in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, begotten of the Father, only begotten, that is, of the substance of the Father, God of God, Light of Light, true God of true God, begotten not made, of one substance with the Father, through whom all things were made, things in heaven and things on the earth; who for us men and for our salvation came down and was made flesh, and became man, suffered, and rose on the third day, ascended into the heavens, is coming to judge living and dead.*”

## **NICENE OR CHALCEDONIAN CREED**

As if this were not complex enough The Nicene Creed arrives from an extract of the lecture notes of Cyril of Jerusalem dated 374A.D and is approved at Chalcedon 451 A.D. Thus the Chalcedonain Creed is virtually the Nicene Creed with an important statement about the gift of the Holy Spirit as being “from Father and Son”(The filioque clause) added.. It reads *“We believe in one God the Father All-sovereign, maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible; and in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, Begotten of the Father before all the ages, Light of Light, true God of true God, begotten not made, of one substance (homousios) with the Father, through whom all things were made; who for us men and fore our salvation came down from the heavens, and was made flesh of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary, and became man, and was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate, and suffered and was buried, and rose again on the third day according to the Scriptures, and ascended into the heavens, and sitteth on the right hand of the Father, and cometh again with glory to judge living and dead, of whose kingdom there shall be no end: and in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and the Life-giver, that proceedeth from the Father, who with the Father and Son is worshipped together and glorified together, who spake through the prophets.”*

### **ATHANASIUS ON TRINITY AND UNITY OF THE GODHEAD**

Henry Bettenson in “Documents of the early church” (**World’s Classics Oxford Univ. Press 1959**) refers to a letter of rebuke by Athanasius to Dionysius of Alexandria who came close to Tri-theism. He was in danger of setting forth three gods in place of one with three faces. The relevant passage reads *“The Divine Word must of necessity be united to the God of the Universe, and the Holy Spirit must have his habitation and abode in God; thus it is absolutely necessary that the Divine Triad be summed up and gathered into a unity, brought as it were to an apex, and by that unity I mean the all sovereign God of the universe. . . . Equally to be censured are they who hold that the Son is a work (cf. Arius) and think that the Lord came into being, whereas the Divine Oracles testify to a generation fitting and becoming to him, but not to any fashioning or making. . . . for if he came to be a Son, there was when he was not; but he was always, if, that is, he is in the Father, as he himself says, and if the Christ is Word and Wisdom and Power, as you know, the Divine Scriptures say he is, and if these are attributes of God. For if the Son came into being there was when these attributes were not; which is most absurd. . . . Neither then must we divide into three deities the wonderful and divine Monad: not hinder the dignity and exceeding majesty of the Lord by describing him as “a work”. But we must believe in God the Father all sovereign, and in Jesus Christ his Son and in the Holy Spirit, and hold that the Word is united to the God of the universe. For “I” says he. “and the Father are one” and “I in the Father and the Father in me” For thus both the Holy Triad and the holy preaching of the Monarchy will be preserved.”*

### **THE ATHANASIAN CREED**

There can be no dispute but that Athanasius was the champion of the faith and known in his time for his courage and clarity as “Athanasius against the world”(for his stand against Arianism and other heresies).

The relevant section of the ATHANASIAN Creed reads *“We worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity; Neither confounding the Persons; nor dividing the substance. For there is one person of the Father, another of the Son: and another of the Holy Ghost. But the Godhead of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, is all one; the Glory equal, the Majesty co-eternal. Alike uncreate, incomprehensible, eternal. Yet there are not three Eternals, Incomprehensibles or Almightyies or Gods but One God and one Lord. The Father is of none. The Son is of the Father alone begotten. The Holy Ghost is of the Father and the Son proceeding. In this Trinity none is afore, or after other; none is greater, or less than another. **He that will be saved must thus think Trinity.** Furthermore it is necessary to everlasting salvation: that he also believe rightly the Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ as God and Man-one Christ not by confusion of Substance( i.e two distinct natures); but by unity of Person. For as the reasonable soul and flesh is one man: so God and Man is one Christ; Who suffered for our salvation...”* The glory of Athanasius is that in amazing short compass he puts the essential quintessence of long convoluted thought of orthodox councils and bishop plainly. All Christian history stands in his debt.

## CHAPTER 4 (HISTORICAL THEOLOGY) THE MEDIEVAL SCHOLASTICS

### **COUNCIL OF TOLEDO**

In 675 this 11<sup>th</sup> council met in the Spanish city of Toledo. It declared that whereas the Son is begotten the Holy Spirit proceeds from both Father and Son and is like the Son of one nature and substance with the Father. “Yet He is called the Spirit not of the Father alone nor of the Son alone but of both the Father and the Son. For He does not proceed from the Father to the Son, nor from the Son to sanctify creatures, but He is shown to have proceeded from both at once, because He is known as the love or the holiness of both. *Toledo defined the use of “God” as representing the unity but not the tri-unity of relationship.*

### **ANSELM (PLATONIC IN THOUGHT PATTERNS)**

Anselm called his verdict on the atonement “the satisfaction theory. The only answer to the search for a ransom greater than creation itself is God Himself. It is as if the Father says “Receive my only Son and offer Him for thyself” while the Son says “Take me and redeem yourself!”

This theory is fine as far as it goes but it makes no reference to the *Holy Spirit of God*. We do have to factor in the fact that Christ “*through the eternal Spirit* offered Himself unblemished to God”(Hebrews 9.14).

### **RICHARD OF ST VICTOR circa 1250**

Whereas Augustine chose to expound the Trinity by allusion to the inner working he observed in the human mind. Richard by contrast, chose to expound the glory of the sharing or social love of the triune God. He said “If there were but one person in the divinity there would be none with whom to share the riches of his greatness. The fullness of goodness does not permit the supremely good One to keep riches for himself. On account of the greatness of his honour he rejoices at sharing his riches. The argument is not a logical proof but derives its force from social necessity on the basics of ethics and is used by evangelical theologian .....

### **AQUINAS (ARISTOTELIAN IN THOUGHT PATTERN)**

Aquinas imagines a world without the fall and the incarnation. He states that the incarnate Word of God gained no virtue by assuming flesh and might have *repaired human nature* without assuming flesh. He even urges that God should not expect more from man than he can give. He slides towards heresy saying that “for Christ to become man reduces or ruins man’s reverence for God.” There he halts, turns about and insists that **man needs to be delivered from perdition**. He sees John 3.16 and the giving of the Son of God to death as **essential on that account**. As Christ’s sacrifice was done to bring us into fellowship with God and was voluntary it was acceptable. His final reply is that Christ’s death **freed man from the bondage of sin** and freed man **from servitude to the devil**. Second by incurring the penalty of the justice of God Christ’s death made a sufficient and superabundant sacrifice for the human race, freeing us from the **penalty of the divine justice**. Aquinas has little room and apparently no need for the Holy Spirit in his system of theology and falls into the terrible fallacy that **God could have restored man through His omnipotence**. This is disannulled by the question in the garden of Gethsemane “Father take this cup from me nevertheless not my will but thine be done!”

### **THE MOUSETRAP THEORY OF AUGUSTINE**

*Augustine for his part ends up consenting to the incarnation and the cross simply as a “demonstration of love” and believed that God could have saved man another way. Augustine says the Son of God established “the faith” and took on manhood that man should walk towards faith with more assurance. He thinks God became man as an example-that we might know whom we are following. He became man to confer full divinity and to enable man to reckon the devil is not his superior. Augustine believed that the incarnation alone dealt with the presumption that “the grace of God could be conferred without previous merits on our part.” Why then, we might ask Augustine did Christ die? He would reply “That the devil should be overcome”(His mousetrap theory).*

## **CHAPTER 6 POST REFORMATION THOUGHT**

## LUTHER

Luther's three most striking candidates are (1) *Speaker, Spoken Word, and listener* (2) *the Father as the one who wants to comfort, the Son who prays for the comforter, and the Spirit who is the comforter* and, admittedly in more scattered form (3) *the Promiser, the Promised One, and the one who points to, illumines, and glorifies the one promised.*' Such depictions, born not of rational reflection but of Gospel-informed exegesis, represent an evangelical Trinitarianism of the highest theological order. At their best, today's Trinitarian theologians express themselves in these kerygmatic terms (*D.Lumpff Concordia Theological quarterly*)/ Luther wrote, "When Christ speaks of the Father, do not flutter about, do not run away, do not seek God in heaven while you ignore this Man Christ. Outside this Man Christ I must not search for God, and I will find no God. If I do find one, it will not be the true and the right God, but a wrathful one." (*Sermon on John 6.46*)

## CALVIN

In his *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, John Calvin wrote with deep insight into the doctrine of the Trinity. He dismissed as "an absurd fiction" (*Institutes XIII:29*) the scholastic teaching on the eternal generation of the Son. **To him, the idea that the Father eternally generated the Son's divine essence was the worst kind of theological speculation.** *With this I am in absolute agreement.* Instead, he proposed that "the Godhead is absolutely of itself [*autotheos*]. And hence also we hold that the Son, regarded as God, without reference to his person, is also of himself [*autotheos*]; though we also say that, regarded as Son, he is of the Father. Thus his essence is without beginning, while His **person** has its beginning in God". (*Institutes XIII:25*).

## KARL BARTH

My own BD work on Karl Barth in earlier years leads me to appreciate the comment of Bromiley and Torrance on the Trinity in his *Church Dogmatics* as "**undoubtedly the greatest treatise on the Trinity since the Reformation.**"

Let me cite a few considerations that come from Barth's work. Barth believed that the very distinctiveness of Christianity is constituted by this datum-hence he places the Trinity at the head of his masterpiece as utterly fundamental.

- (1) For Barth God's act in Jesus Christ is the exclusive source of spiritual knowledge and supremely inclusive for in Christ the Trinity of God is revealed along with the full potential of Christian doctrine. Trinity for Barth is **divine being in revealing action** throwing light on creation, reconciliation etc.
- (2) The ultimate ground of revelation is "God revealing himself as Lord". The "triply one" voice of Father Son and Spirit speak in revelation

Scripture and proclamation. Thus the Trinity creates its own evidence in the kerugma, the bible and church proclamation today.

- (3) As to the Trinitarian being of God Barth speaks of “ways of being” and Barth argues that “from creation past revelation and reconciliation to the redemption to come He who acts is the Father and Son and the Spirit” *Doctrine of the Trinity 2.6*
- (4) God triune is *ultimate reality*. For Barth “we cannot call God the Father without the Son and the Spirit, and we cannot call the Son Saviour or the Spirit Comforter without implying the Father in both cases.” *Church Dogmatics 1.1446*
- (5) Barth has re-unified the “immanent”(God in himself) and “economic”(God in revelation) aspects of the Trinity in presenting God as inwardly and outwardly shown in distinctively Trinitarian action which is indivisible through mutual appropriation both in Creation and Redemption and Judgment.

## **JURGEN MOLTSMANN**

“We have to think of our Lord Jesus as still awaiting His future, of the Spirit in connection with the forthcoming resurrection and of God who waits to be “all in all”. What we read in the bible is good – it is God triune at work – the economic Trinity-but it should not pronounce on how God is in Himself.” This was an issue between Barth and Moltmann. **For my part the fact that God subjected all things in hope Romans 8.20 cannot mean that his own nature was imperfect or in process.** Moltmann believes that the history of the world events involves events between the persons of the Trinity that cannot leave the relationships between the persons of the triune God the same as before. The unity of God is defined as “community of will” which is what HOMOUSIOUS is then taken to mean. I believe that this eternal “community of will” is not altered by the incarnation. God is unchanged in His will and covenant of love.

## **AS YAHWEH ELOHIM**

The Hebrew descriptive of God (ADONAI ELOHIM) in His essential being are indispensable though over 3500 years in circulation. There are 2,700 uses of ELOHIM in the Old Testament. The plural usage is often accompanied by the singular YAHWEH and as frequently with the plural ADONAI. I have never been satisfied that the argument for the “plural of majesty” carries any weight-especially in the light of the primeval divine self manifestation in the creative pronouncement “Let us make man in our own image”.

## **AS THREE MEMBERS OF ONE GODHEAD**

The term “Trinity” is felicitous though Paul appears to use the term “members” and construct a “familial” picture of God glorious living in the



original dimension of his power in heaven. Paul’s reference to “membership” is familial insofar as love is shared and light is revealed by one and all of the members of the body of Christ (Eph. 5.30 1Cor. 12.27). Our Lord made it emphatic that just as He was one with the Father so we are one with Him. This is a unity of membership for we are members of His flesh and of His bones as He Himself said. There is unity in the godhead and membership of personae and there is a unity of the church with Christ such as involves both the Father and the Holy Spirit precisely because God not unlike any head of family can replicate His nature and character without losing His identity or glorious distinctives. This is in keeping with the use of ECHAD in Deuteronomy 6.4 where we read in the Shema “The Lord our God is one unity”(as of membership).

The apostle adds writing also to the Ephesians (4.3) “*Study and be quick to keep the oneness of **the Spirit** in the mutual bond of peace – one body one Spirit – just as you have been called in one hope of your calling. There is **one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father** of all who is over all and through all and in you all.*” There is an absolute solidarity and familial identity about the church reflecting that in the Godhead and both reflect the family characteristic of love.

**GLORY BE TO THE FATHER AND TO THE SON  
AND TO THE HOLY GHOST  
WORLD WITHOUT END  
AMEN**

*Bob Coffey  
ABC Classics*

# TIME SERIES NO.23



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