

THE STRAIGHT CUT

A Concluding Note on the Triune God

“The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ
and the love of God
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit
be with you all” (2 Cor. 13:14).

The grace of the Lord is the Lord Himself as life to us for our enjoyment (John 1:17; 1 Cor. 15:10), the love of God is God Himself (1 John 4:8, 16) as the source of the grace of the Lord, and the fellowship of the Spirit is the Spirit Himself as the transmission of the grace of the Lord with the love of God for our participation. These are not three separate matters but three aspects of one thing, just as the Lord, God, and the Holy Spirit are not three separate Gods but three “hypostases...of the one same undivided and indivisible” God (Philip Schaff). The Greek word for *hypostasis* (used in Heb. 11:1), the singular form of *hypostases*, refers to a support under, a support beneath, i.e., something underneath that supports, a supporting substance. The Father, the Son, and the Spirit are the hypostases, the supporting substances, that compose the one Godhead.

The love of God is the source, since God is the origin; the grace of the Lord is the course of the love of God, since the Lord is the expression of God; and the fellowship of the Spirit is the impartation of the grace of the Lord with the love of God, since the Spirit is the transmission of the Lord with God, for our experience and enjoyment of the Triune God—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, with Their divine virtues. Here the grace of the Lord is mentioned first because 2 Corinthians is on the grace of Christ (1:12; 4:15; 6:1; 8:1, 9; 9:8, 14; 12:9). Such a divine attribute of three virtues—love, grace, and fellowship—and such a Triune God of the three divine hypostases—the Father, the Son, and the Spirit—were needed by the distracted and confused yet comforted and restored Corinthian believers. Hence, the apostle used

all these divine and precious things in one sentence to conclude his lovely and dear Epistle.

This verse is strong proof that the trinity of the Godhead is not for the doctrinal understanding of systematic theology but for the dispensing of God Himself in His trinity into His chosen and redeemed people. In the Bible the Trinity is never revealed merely as a doctrine. It is always revealed or mentioned in regard to the relationship of God with His creatures, especially with man, who was created by Him, and more particularly with His chosen and redeemed people. The first divine title used in the divine revelation, *Elohim* in Hebrew, a title used in relation to God’s creation, is plural in number (Gen. 1:1), implying that God, as the Creator of the heavens and the earth for man, is triune. Concerning His creation of man in His own image, after His own likeness, He used the plural pronouns *Us* and *Our*, referring to His trinity (1:26) and implying that He would be one with man and express Himself through man in His trinity. Later, in Genesis 3:22 and 11:7 and Isaiah

6:8, He referred to Himself again and again as *Us* in regard to His relationship with man and with His chosen people.

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In order to redeem fallen man that He might again have the position to be one with man, He became incarnated (John 1:1, 14) in the Son and through the Spirit (Luke 1:31-35) to be a man, and lived a human life on the earth, also in the Son (2:49) and by the Spirit (4:1; Matt. 12:28). At the beginning of His ministry on the earth, the Father anointed the Son with the Spirit (3:16-17; Luke 4:18) in order that He might reach men and bring them back to Him. Just before He was crucified in the flesh and resurrected to become the life-giving Spirit (1 Cor. 15:45), He unveiled His mysterious trinity to His disciples in plain words (John 14—17), stating that the Son is in the Father and the Father is in the Son (14:9-11), that the Spirit is the transfiguration of the Son (vv. 16-20), that the three, coexisting and coinhering simultaneously, are

abiding with the believers for their enjoyment (v. 23; 17:21-23), and that all that the Father has is the Son's and all that the Son possesses is received by the Spirit to be declared to the believers (16:13-15). Such a Trinity is altogether related to the dispensing of the processed God into His believers (14:17, 20; 15:4-5) that they may be one in and with the Triune God (17:21-23).

After His resurrection He charged His disciples to disciple the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit (Matt. 28:19); that is, He charged the disciples to bring the believing ones into the Triune God, into an organic union with the processed God, who had passed through incarnation, human living, and crucifixion and had entered into resurrection. Based on such an organic union, the apostle, at the conclusion of this divine Epistle to the Corinthians, blessed them with the blessed Divine Trinity in the participation in the Son's grace with the Father's love through the Spirit's fellowship. In this Divine Trinity, God the Father operates all things in all the members in the church, which is the Body of Christ, through the ministries of the Lord, God the Son, by the gifts of God the Spirit (1 Cor. 12:4-6).

The entire divine revelation in the book of Ephesians concerning the producing, existing, growing, building up, and fighting of the church as the Body of Christ is composed of the divine economy, the dispensing of the Triune God into the members of the Body of Christ. Chapter one of Ephesians unveils that God the Father chose and predestinated these members in eternity (vv. 4-5), that God the Son redeemed them (vv. 6-12), and that God the Spirit, as a pledge, sealed them (vv. 13-14), thus imparting Himself into His believers for the formation of the church, which is the Body of Christ, the fullness of the One who fills all in all (vv. 18-23). Chapter two shows us that in the Divine Trinity all the believers, both Jewish and Gentile, have access unto God the Father, through God the Son, in God the Spirit (v. 18). This indicates that the three coexist and coinhere simultaneously, even after all the processes of incarnation, human living, crucifixion, and resurrection. In chapter three the apostle prayed that God the Father would grant the believers to be strengthened through God the Spirit into their inner man, that Christ, God the Son, may make His home in their hearts, that is, occupy their entire being, that they may be filled unto all the fullness of God (vv. 14-19). This is the climax of the believers' experience of and participation in God in His trinity. Chapter four portrays how the processed God

as the Spirit, the Lord, and the Father is mingled with the Body of Christ (vv. 4-6) so that all the members of the Body may experience the Divine Trinity. Chapter five exhorts the believers to praise the Lord, God the Son, with the songs of God the Spirit, and give thanks in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, God the Son, to God the Father (vv. 19-20). This is to praise and thank the processed God in His divine trinity for our enjoyment of Him as the Triune God. Chapter six instructs us to fight the spiritual warfare by being empowered in the Lord, God the Son, putting on the whole armor of God the Father, and wielding the sword of God the Spirit (vv. 10, 11, 17). This is the believers' experience and enjoyment of the Triune God even in the spiritual warfare.

The apostle Peter, in his writing, confirmed that God is triune for the believers' enjoyment, referring the believers to the election of God the Father, the sanctification of God the Spirit, and the redemption of Jesus Christ, God the Son, accomplished by His blood (1 Pet. 1:2). And John the apostle strengthened the revelation that the Divine Trinity is for the believers' participation in the processed Triune God. In the book of Revelation he blessed the churches in different localities with grace and peace from God the Father, Him who is and who was and who is coming, and from God the Spirit, the seven Spirits who are before His throne, and from God the Son, Jesus Christ, the faithful Witness, the Firstborn of the dead, and the Ruler of the kings of the earth (1:4-5). John's blessing given to the churches indicated also that the processed Triune God, in all

He is as the eternal Father, in all He is able to do as the sevenfold intensified Spirit, and in all He has attained and obtained as the anointed Son, is for the believers' enjoyment, that they may be His corporate testimony as the golden lampstands (vv. 9, 11, 20).

Thus, it is evident that the divine revelation of the trinity of the Godhead in the holy Word, from Genesis through Revelation, is not for theological study but for the apprehending of how God in His mysterious and marvelous trinity dispenses Himself into His chosen people, that we as His chosen and redeemed people may, as indicated in the apostle's blessing to the Corinthian believers, participate in, experience, enjoy, and possess the processed Triune God now and for eternity. Amen.

by Witness Lee

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