

# The Incorporation of the Triune God in the Character and Service of the Apostles (2)

by Kerry S. Robichaux

*Since you seek a proof of the Christ  
who is speaking in me.  
(2 Cor. 13:3)*

In this article I wish to continue an examination of the ministry of the New Testament apostles insofar as it relates to their incorporation of the operations of God, Christ, and the Spirit in their character and service. My previous article focused on this incorporation in the character of the apostles; here I wish to consider the incorporation of the Triune God in the apostles' service. This article serves as the seventh installment of an ongoing study of incorporation among the divine persons and by the believers (including the apostles) as portrayed in the Gospel of John, Acts, and the Epistles. I hope that I have sufficiently shown in previous articles in this series that the New Testament often describes the operation of Christ and the Spirit as one which Witness Lee has characterized as incorporation (*Issue 21-22, 24-26, 40-42*). By the term *incorporation* Witness Lee (and I) wish to refer to the principle that when any one of the three of the Divine Trinity acts, all three operate. In other words, when any one of the three acts, He incorporates the operation of the other two in His action. What is manifest is the action of the one, but in that manifest action there is the incorporate operation of the other two. Thus, every action of God, of Christ, and of the Spirit is an incorporation of the operations of the Triune God. Even in actions that have been traditionally associated with only one of the three (for example, the incarnation, death, and resurrection of Christ), all three are in operation in the one manifest action of the one, the one incorporating the operations of all three. Certainly, the distinctions between the three are preserved, and thus, we should rightly understand, for example, that it was the Son of God who became flesh, died for our redemption, and rose from the dead. Yet at the same time we should recognize that in what are distinctly the Son's manifest

actions, the Father and the Spirit operate by way of the Son's incorporation of them in His being and doing. The same is true of the actions of the Father and the Spirit.

In my six previous articles in this series I have attempted to show in detail the textual basis in the New Testament for the principle of incorporation. The Gospel of John is especially rich in showing the incorporate operations of the Triune God in the manifest actions of Christ, and perhaps one example from it will help to more clearly illustrate the principle. In John 14:10 the Lord Jesus says,

Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me? The words that I say to you I do not speak from Myself, but the Father who abides in Me does His works.

Here two discrete aspects of the relationship between the Son and the Father are explicitly referred to, and a third is implied. These three aspects more finely define what I wish to describe by the term *incorporation*. The implied aspect is one of mutual interdependence of existence, whereby the Son is the Son in the Godhead because there is a Father in the Godhead, and the Father is the Father in the Godhead because there is a Son in the Godhead. In terms of classical Latin theology this mutual interdependence of existence is called *coinherence*, or *circuminsession*. But also in this verse we explicitly see the mutual indwelling of the Son and the Father: "I am in the Father and the Father is in Me." This aspect of the relationship between the Son and the Father has more technically been called *perichoresis* (Greek for "mutual interpenetration") in Greek theology and *circuminsession* in Latin thought. Here the point is not a mutual interdependence of existence but a mutual interpenetration of hypostases and a dynamic fellowship in the divine life that exists among the persons of the Trinity. But also John 14:10 explicitly refers to the hidden mutual operation of the Father in the manifest action of the Son on the earth.