Practical Implications of Trinitarianism for Salvation

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Introduction - Practical and Impractical Doctrines

Most Christians will classify doctrines by two categories: the practical and the impractical. Doctrines in this later category are considered brain teasers for Seminary students and professors to study. Some might even go so far as to say they are so impractical that any thing beyond a cursory one day overview is a waste of time, even for the Seminary student and professor. Doctrines in this impractical category include eschatology, the full work of Christ and its effects, Christology (almost the whole doctrine), the inspiration and character of the Scriptures, and many more. In each case, these doctrines are considered impractical because we don't want to know about God and what God has done. We want to know what we can do for God or ought to be doing. This is reflected in preaching, where an increasing number of Christians want less Bible and more application. Preachers might find it easier to get up front and give their ten tips for a happier life, marriage, family etc. and fore go all the doctrinal foundations upon which our lives are built.

But when we take this attitude toward doctrines we are missing the most foundational element of our Christian life - God and God's activities. Our whole life is built upon God. If you don't understand God, Who God is, What God does you will not understand nor be able to live as God truly desires. Most of my present state of salvation is in the sphere of my spirit. My spirit is that part of my nature which thinks and which relates to God. Throughout the New Testament, the mind or parts of the mind are explained and encouraged to be used. To act without having a frame of mind which is related to God and God's activities is to fail regardless of results. It is a failure because God is not pragmatic. How a thing is done is at least if not more important to God than whether a thing is done. For example, Christ's suffering and death on the cross were absolutely necessary but equally important was the manner in which He suffered and died.

The doctrine of the Trinity probably tops the list of impractical doctrines. For many, it is only practical if you want to "argue" with a Jehovah's Witness or Mormon. It is my intention to allow the scriptures to demonstrate some of the practical implications of Trinitarianism. First we'll look briefly at the doctrine itself and then look at the implications. There are many good books which show extensive Biblical proof for believing in the Trinity.[1] The purpose of this paper is to look at the implications of Trinitarianism.

The Doctrine of the Trinity

We are created beings. We live in a created environment. God is not a created being. God is not part of this creation. God is different! If you can keep that in mind when you study and think about the Trinity, it will save much confusion. The Trinity is mainly confusing because we are trying to relate to God as though God were part of this creation and functioned under the laws which govern this creation. Jehovah's Witnesses attempt to malign the Trinity, claiming that the doctrine is confusing and then quoting 1 Corinthians 14:33, "God is not a God of confusion." "In view of that statement, would God be responsible for a doctrine about himself that is so confusing that even Hebrew, Greek, and Latin scholars cannot really explain it?"[2] But the doctrine isn't confusing. It simply isn't a doctrine illustrated in Creation. The confusion arises over the statement that God is One and God is Three. How can both be true? They are true because they speak of two separate aspects of God. God is one in that there is only one divine spirit essence (like my body, soul, and spirit) and one set of divine attributes. God is three in that there are three Persons who simultaneously and equally possess that essence and those attributes.

This is why there is confusion. No where in creation are there three persons which share absolutely one essence and set of attributes. We are used to one person to one nature. There is only one person that possesses my body, determines its activities and thus is the one responsible for its use - ME! Since I am not spirit alone but also possess a body I am confronted with a difference between God and myself. Even if there were three persons which possessed this body, three persons could not use one of my hands at exactly the same moment to do three distinct actions. For instance, one could not paint a fence, while another wrote a letter and a third juggled apples all with one hand. This is a limitation of my physical nature. However, God did create other beings which have no physical nature. These are known as angels, seraphs and cherubs. But God

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[1] A good text demonstrating by many scriptures the existence of the Trinity is Edward Henry Bickersteth's The Trinity (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1957). Though, many passages which he uses from the Old Testament with reference to God the Father in reality, refer to God the Son. For a brief outline see F. Donald Harris and Ronald A. Harris The Trinity (Neptune, N.J.: Loizeaux Brothers, 1971).

[2] Should You Believe In The Trinity? (Brooklyn: Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania, 1989, p. 5

created them as one person to one spirit essence. God thus stands out as completely unique from His creation. This is something to glory in not to be frustrated by. It reminds us that our God is unique and transcendent.

There is One God

"Jehovah our God is one Jehovah" (Deut. 6:4). This was a key scripture for Israel. Israel did not hold to Trinitarianism. God had not yet clearly revealed the fact of the Trinity. Is this scripture a problem for Trinitarianism? Not at all! In fact it is also a key scripture to understand Trinitarianism. Trinitarians do not believe in three Gods but one God in three Persons. The Son is not a separate God from the Father and Spirit nor the Spirit from the Son and Father. They are all the one God. We are reminded that the number "three" refers to God in a different way than does "one". One refers to the spirit essence and attributes which is possessed by the three Persons. "Three" refers to the Persons who equally share that essence and attributes. This scripture along with such passages as Isaiah 44:6-8 make it clear that there is only one God! Trinitarians are not polytheists. Trinitarians believe in one God and three Persons who are that one God.

This does not mean that we believe there is a God and then three or two other persons that share something with that God. We believe that there are three Persons Who are that one God. Without those three Persons, there would be no God. You would have only an impersonal essence and attributes. Those Three Persons simultaneously and in perfect unity share the essence and attributes. It is inaccurate to say that a characteristic of God is personality.[3] Personality is how a person uses his abilities in a distinct pattern unique to that Person. Each Person has personality, but the divine nature, has no personality itself apart from those Persons. Each of those Persons, whether Father, Son or Spirit uniquely to Himself yet harmoniously with the others expresses His personality by His unique use of the essence and attributes. For example the Father exercised the Divine attribute of love by sending the Son (Jn. 3:16) while the Son exercised the same by laying down His life for us (1 John 3:16). Both loved, but each exercised that love in a way unique to His person and in keeping with their Divine plan.

Neither do we believe that this essence can subsist apart from all Three Persons. All three interpenetrate one another (John 14:10; 12:44). It is inconceivable to think of this essence apart from all Three Persons. Thus God is one God in Three Persons!

Let's take a look at some scriptures that necessity our belief in the Trinity.

There are Three Called God

There are numerous passages which ascribe the title "God" to the Father (e.g. Gal. 1:1). With very few do we have a disagreement over the deity of the Father. The Son and Holy Spirit are however questioned. The Son is frequently considered a created being, a lesser god, or the generated son of the Father. The Holy Spirit is most likely to be treated as an impersonal force, simply the hand of God the Father but not a distinct Trinitarian Person. But both the Son and the Spirit are called God. In Isaiah 9:6 the Son is prophetically called Immanuel - God with us. In Zecheriah 12:10, speaking of the Son's visible physical return to earth it is said of Israel, "They will look on me whom they have pierced." The "me" in the context is Jehovah (vv. 1, 2, 4). As the Word, He is called "God" in John 1:1. Yet Isaiah had written several times that there is no other God but God. There is only one God. For God to move John to write, not in a cryptic fashion but in clear terms, that "the Word continually was God" would contradict Isaiah. Later in his first letter John wrote, "This one is the true God even Eternal Life." (5:20). The context is referring to the Son thus calling Him the one true God. Of the Son Paul wrote that Jesus Christ was originally existing in the possession of the form of God (Phlp. 2:6).

The Holy Spirit is also called God. In Genesis 1:2 He is the Spirit of God. The "of" represents a of Hebrew word construction called a "construct". A construct can but does not necessarily relate two words which refer to the same person.[4] This means that passages such as Genesis 1:2 should probably be translated "the Spirit who is God." The same thing applies in Judges 3:10 using the title "Jehovah" as well as many Old Testament texts. A similar construction exists in the Greek and occurs in such passages as Matthew 3:16, "And he saw the Spirit of God descending . . ." In Acts 5:3-4 Peter not only calls

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[3] Henry C. Thiessen in an attempt to avoid the liberal view that God is some impersonal source, has ascribed personality to the essence, "but the essence can be, and is at once three persons and one personal being." Lectures in Systematic Theology rev. Vernon D. Doerksen, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979), pp. 77-78. On page 77 he defines personality as self consciousness and self determination. But is the essence conscious that it is God? Does the essence make determinations of its own? Rather each Person makes determinations in keeping with the shared desirous will. And all three Persons share the self consciousness - "I on my part am God!" This is a common error which does make Trinitarianism confusing. Personality and Personhood ought to be considered under Trinitarianism not under the qualities of the Divine Nature. A.H. Strong, Systematic Theology (Valley Forge, PA.: Judson Press, 1985), p. 254

[4] Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar Edited and Enlarged by E. Kautzsch (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), describes this as a formal genitive "(d) Of the name," p. 416.

the Holy Spirit God but refers to the Holy Spirit as a person, claiming that Annanias and Saphira had lied to Him. You don't lie to a force or power but to persons. As a Person He is eternal (Hebrews 9:14).

There are Three Who possess the attributes of God

There are particular characteristics which belong to God and describe the parameters in which God is able to act. These are known as attributes. The scriptures either describe the various Persons of the Godhead possessing these attributes or using them. Since God is good (Matt. 19:17) it is true of the Father (Jas. 1:17) the Son (Matt. 19:16) and the Spirit (Neh. 9:20). For each is the One true God. God is Holy (Josh. 24:19): the Father (John 17:11); the Son (1 Cor. 1:30); the Spirit (Rom. 1:4; Eph. 4:30). God is Love (1 John 4:8): the Father(John 5:20): the Son is love (John 13:1); the Spirit (Rom. 5:8). God is all powerful (Gen. 17:1; Matt. 19:26): the Father (2 Cor. 6:18); the Son (Rev. 1:8); the Spirit (Lk. 4:14). God is all knowing (Lk. 16:16): the Father (Matt. 6:8); the Son (Jn. 2:24-25); the Spirit (1 Cor. 2:10). God is righteous (Rom. 1:17): the Father (Jn 17:25); the Son (1 Jn. 2:1); the Spirit is righteous (Rom. 8:10; 1 Tim. 3:16). God is truth (Jn. 3:33): the Father (Jn. 17:3); the Son (Jn. 14:6); the Spirit (Jn. 14:17).

There are Three Who exercise the prerogatives of God

A prerogative is a right or privilege usually exclusive to an individual or group. God alone can judicially forgive sin (Mk. 2:6-7). The scriptures apply this to both the Father and Son (Matt. 6:14; Matt. 9:2; Col. 3:13). God is a jealous God and alone is worthy of worship (Josh. 24:19; Rev. 22:8, 9). So the Scriptures record worship for the Father, Son and Spirit (Jn. 4:24; 9:38; Heb. 10:29). Even the angels are told to worship God the Son (Heb. 1:6). And on numerous occasions Paul worships the Holy Spirit (cf Eph. 4:30). In fact in Psalm 110:1 David speaks of His Lord [Adonai] as distinct from the Lord [Jehovah]. If these two are not distinct persons yet the same God, then David would have been guilty of having other gods. But in fact David was making a distinction between two persons of the God-head. This does not mean that David had an understanding of the Trinity but he understood that there was some distinction.

There are Three Who do the works of God

Spiritual salvation is uniquely God's work (Isa. 43:11) and consistently Jesus is declared to be our Savior (Phlp. 3:20; Tit. 3:6) and the Spirit is said to have done a work which saved us (Tit. 3:5). The Father did the sending and commanding, the Son the work on the cross and the Spirit the application to the individual believer of the Son's work.

Creation is uniquely God's work (Isa. 45:18). John 1:2, 3 describe the Son as the creator. This passage is important because it declares that everything that came into existence, that is, it is not eternal but had a starting point, came to be by Jesus Christ. If He is not the eternal God, then He caused himself to come into being. He would be his own creative cause and that's absurd. Job 26:13 ascribes the creative work to the Holy Spirit. When we read Genesis 1, we often dishonor God by reading the creative activity of God as though the Father were creating and the Spirit and Son were helping. But in keeping with many other scriptures it is better to understand that all Three Persons were equally involved, though in different aspect, in the creative work.

In the instruction concerning baptism, Christ spoke of a singular name shared in common by the Father, Son and Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:20). While the word "name" may refer to a title of a person, it is more likely that Christ was using the word "name" to refer to the shared character, being the character of God. These three Persons each being the one God share in common the character which is God's. There is no indication that Christ intended this to be a formula recited over the one being baptized. Rather, since baptism pictures the believer's induction into the Person of Christ and since all the fullness of the Godhead was settled down at home in Christ, even in His incarnation, and since we are the fullness in Him, we are counted to share in that type of character.

This passage also demonstrates the person-hood of the Spirit. The Spirit possesses this character which is also possessed by the Father and Son. If the Spirit were merely God's impersonal force, or God's power or however He might be described in order to do away with His person-hood, it would have made more sense to place that name after the Father, that is, "in the Name of the Father, and His power, and the Son." But it isn't written like this. Rather it places the Son between the Father and Spirit. Unless each one is absolutely a divine person who is the one God, this verse makes no sense.

The apostle John considered all three Persons to be the source of peace and grace (Rev. 1:3, 4). The Apostle Paul considered each to be the source of those qualities which would make for a real unity: grace, love and fellowship (2 Cor. 13:14).

Isaiah wrote of the Three Persons, though it is unlikely that He understood this to be a Trinity. In Isaiah 63:7-10 Isaiah looks back at the history of Israel and God's work with them. Isaiah looks at God the Father's lovingkindness, goodness and mercy to the children of Israel in verse 7. Then he writes of God the Son's work as Savior when He physically redeemed Israel (vv. 7-8). Finally because of Israel's obstinence, they grieved His Holy Spirit (v. 10). Though it is unlikely that anyone could discern the three Persons apart from New Testament revelation, God saw fit to have Isaiah write concerning those three Persons.

That is a very brief summary of Trinitarianism. Scriptures supporting Trinitarianism could be multiplied and it has been done in many cases. Further scriptures could be given which explain Trinitarianism. If there is a need in the Church related to the doctrine of the Trinity it would be an accurate understanding. Most genuine believers have a poor understanding of the Trinity. But it is not the intent of this paper to multiply scriptures supporting the doctrine or to give a detailed explanation. It is my desire to demonstrate briefly some of the practical implications of this doctrine. Trinitarianism is an essential part of New Testament Christianity. We will consider the implications as they relate to our worship and our salvation.

The Implications for our salvation

Our Salvation depends upon our relationship to the Three Persons of the Godhead. Frequently, when we consider salvation we look only at the work of Jesus Christ. The work of the Father and Holy Spirit normally are considered only in so far as they touch on the work of Christ. But like God's Triune work with Israel as expressed for example in Isaiah 63:7-10, the New Testament paints a picture of a full Triune work of the Godhead. That work can be summarized; we are in all three persons and all three persons are in us. If anyone of these three is not absolutely God, then our salvation is incomplete.

The Trinity and the Son's Cross Work

To begin with, lets consider one aspect of Christ's cross work as it involved the Trinity. Since there are two forms of death common to man, spiritual and physical, it was necessary for Christ to experience both in order to bring about our salvation. Christ would not only be separated from His physical earthly body but would experience separation from the Father and Holy Spirit. While very few would claim that Christ's physical death was unnecessary, many do not even hold to or understand Christ's spiritual death. While Christ hung upon the cross, God the Father made Him to become sin for us (2 Cor. 5:21). God the eternal Son had become a man approximately 33 years earlier. Since that time He had two realms of experience: deity - What He had always been; humanity - What He had become. During His earthly life, He had moved between these two spheres, at times relating to things from the sphere of His deity and at others from His humanity. At times this has confused those of us who observe His earthly life as recorded in the gospels. But these two natures is what made Him the mediator. He is the one God and He is man (1 Tim. 2:5).

Yet though He had become a real man, at no time did He ever have any experiential knowledge of sin. In fact the Holy Spirit had overshadowed Mary so that the human nature of the Son referred to as "that holy thing" would have no taint of the sin nature common to mankind (Lk. 1:35). He never ceased to be God during His earthly life. While speaking with Nicodemus He declared that He was also in heaven at that very same moment (Jn. 3:18). But when He went to the cross, God counted Him to become what we had been "sinners". God's promise to David anticipated this when He said, " When He is caused[5] to commit perversity, I will chasten Him." (2 Sam. 7:14). God made Him to become sin for us (2 Cor. 5:21). This is imputation of our sin to Him. It was during this time on the cross that by being a sinner, He experienced separation from the other two persons of the Godhead. It is implied in this experience that He was not moving in the sphere of deity, since you can not separate deity from deity. But just as man can die and God can not, so man can be separated from God.

During this time Christ uttered those words, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" Those words would mean very little if Christ were some created being. Man had been separated from God for 4,000 years. Some of the angels had been separated from God since before that time. But God the Son had never experienced any separation from the Holy Spirit or the Father. Without a Trinitarian God, these words would mean very little. What would be the big deal about being made sin? But when we understand that the man who was hanging on that cross and uttering those words was eternally God, those words take on tremendous weight. As Paul said, "the Church of God, which He purchased with His uniquely own blood" (Acts 20:18). My God became what I was, to save me! Therefore, with a Trinity, one member could experience this separation, while another laid upon Him our sins (1 Pet. 1:18). That also gives great depth to the idea of God's love (1 Jn. 3:16).

The resurrection is as vital to the gospel as Christ's cross work. Without the resurrection there is no gospel (1 Corinthians 15:1-4, 14, 17; 2 Timothy 2:8, 9). But the resurrection was not a one person show. Each person of the Trinity was actively involved. The Father raised the Son (Romans 6:4). The Son raised Himself (John 10:18). The ability to lay one's life down by mere exercise of the will and then to take it up again is a quality unique to God. The Holy Spirit was also involved in raising Christ out from among the dead ones (Romans 8:11).

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[5] This is a Hiphiel Infinitive - a causative form. He would not commit perversity on His own, He would be caused to as God laid all Israel's perversities upon Him.

It might be interesting to point out that those who do not believe in the absolute eternal deity of the Son as a member of the eternal Triune God also have no real savior. Since the one true God did not die in their place and for their sin, in whom can they place their faith? As a result, rather than believing in the perfect work of the Son, they must add their good works. That is no salvation.

The Trinity's Application of our Salvation

Now lets look at how the salvation which is based on Christ's cross work, is actually applied to us. The cross saves no one. God saves. God saves on the basis of the cross work. This means, that what God does for us, is based on a transaction which took place on the cross. From the outset we must be ready to think of salvation as the New Testament writers did, something which had a beginning but is being worked out and will one day be completed. If we think only of salvation as something that took place in one moment with no ongoing work of God, we have missed a major key. For example, eternal life is a vital part of our salvation. But the cross work does not give eternal life. Because of the work Christ did on the cross, God can give us eternal life.

Ephesians chapter one presents just a small sample of the diverse saving work of the members of the Trinity. The Father is viewed as the divine planner (vv. 3-13). The Son is viewed as the intermediate agent, His blood the price and directing the saving activity (vv. 3-13). The Holy Spirit is the immediate divine agent and seal of our salvation (v. 13).

The Indwelling Triune God

From the time I was a child, and I suppose this is true of most believers, I knew that Jesus was in me. We always spoke of Jesus in our heart. But it wasn't until much later in life that I saw the scriptures also clearly taught that the Father and Holy Spirit indwells the believer. The indwelling of the Father and Spirit are as vital to our salvation as that of the Son. Then as I began to read and listen to various Bible teachers I found that very few seemed to believe that the Son really indwells the believer. Since, Christ said He would go away and send the Spirit, they understood this to mean that He would not indwell them. As a result many have described His indwelling as taking place by the Holy Spirit as if the Spirit was proxy for Him. It is better to distinguish first between His deity and humanity. His human nature would go to the Father. His human nature can be in only one place at one moment. His divine nature had always been present with the Father just as it was everywhere. We will see that His indwelling relates to His deity not to His humanity. You can't put one living human inside many humans. Secondly, while God is everywhere - omnipresent, normally the Godhead manifest themselves in particular locations for the benefit of creation. During His earthly life, the Son had been resident on earth. He remained omnipresent everywhere, but He specially manifested Himself upon the earth. Likewise, the omnipresent Spirit had been present to the earth, prior to His being sent by the Father and Son. But having been sent, He would now manifest Himself in a special way upon the earth - He would be resident here. Therefore, when the Bible speaks of Christ being in us, we should understand plainly. And the same applies to the Father.

The Indwelling Christ

In Christ's last hours with His disciples before He was betrayed, He shared a group of truths which He had not spoken of prior to that evening. We usually refer to this as the Upper Room Discourse since it took place in the Upper Room (Jn. 13-16). In this short time with His disciples, He communicated truths to them which were to prepare them for the events following His death and resurrection and the beginning of the Church at Pentecost. One of those vital truths communicates the resurrected Christ's position in relation to the believer. "In that day, you will know for yourselves that I am in my Father and you in Me and I in you." (Jn. 14:20). We will deal with the first half of this verse latter. Now I wish to consider the last three words, "I in you."

- Eternal Life

When we believed the gospel, the Holy Spirit regenerated us (Tit. 3:5). He caused us to be conceived and to be born anew (Jn. 3:3, 5) in that very same moment. One of the benefits of that new birth is new life. But not just new human life, but a life appropriate to our new birth - eternal life! Christ is my life (Col. 3:4). He is the true God even eternal life (1 Jn. 5:20). But how do I get that eternal life? I get it because I have Christ in me (1 Jn. 5:11). You see, He is God and He possesses eternal life, which is after all God's kind of life. When I believed the gospel, God didn't pull out a syringe and inject me with life separated from Him. I was joined to Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 6:17). By being joined to Him, I was also caused to possess eternal life. Since my union with Christ makes us one spirit I can know that I get that life in the sphere of the spirit.

Keep in mind that eternal life is not a theoretical union with Christ. It is not a life which is only for the future. It is not merely a life which goes on unending. Every human born on this earth will live forever. Some in the blessings God has prepared and some in eternal torment. Paul expressed this relationship, "Christ in you the hope of glory" (Col. 1:27). To limit the hope only to the time beginning with the Rapture is unwarranted. The context would support the idea that Paul

wanted the Colossians to see that since Christ was indwelling them, they could manifest some of God's glory in the here-and-now.

In Titus 1:1-2 we read, ". . . and a full experiential knowledge of truth, the truth which is measured by godliness upon a hope consisting of eternal life, which the unlying God promised before eternal times." Most translations hide the truth Paul meant to express by translating the Greek preposition *epi* "in" rather than "on" or "upon". By translating it "in" they make this a hope of getting eternal life at some future point. This truth is based "upon" a hope which comes from eternal life. This truth is measured by godliness. The hope which comes from Eternal life is that one day there will be no limitations to my use of this life. Eternal life makes it possible. We might say it is the energy necessary for this truth to operate. Since it is also measured by godliness the eternal life plays a part in godliness. Again, we might say that it is the energy necessary for godliness to happen.

Paul wrote that through the Person of Jesus Christ the mystery of godliness was made manifest (1 Tim. 3:16). He goes on to give six events in the earthly life of Jesus Christ: the incarnation; the declaration of His righteousness by the Holy Spirit; the observation of His life by angels; the authoritative proclamation concerning Him among the Nations; the belief concerning Him in the world; the ascension in glory. These six events were chosen as typifying what He manifested in those Thirty-three years. In His garden prayer to the Father, Christ said, "I have manifested [made plain] Your name to the men You gave to Me." (Jn. 17:6). What did He mean when He said He had made the Father's name plain? As in Matthew 28:20 He isn't referring to a title, such as "Father" but to the character of the Father. He was God made plain in flesh (1 Tim. 3:16). In fact, probably only an hour earlier, He had answered His disciples' request to see the Father by saying, "If you have experientially known Me, you have experientially known my Father . . . The one having seen Me, he has seen the Father . . ." (Jn. 14:7a, 9b). Because Jesus Christ was perfectly God, He could manifest deity through His human nature. Now, it didn't have to be that way. But it was part of the plan of the Triune God that when the Son would become incarnate, He would have that life in Himself, just as the Father had in Himself (Jn. 5:26).

Now the significance of this eternal life is that Jesus Christ was the first man to possess eternal life in a human form. There is no record of any Old Testament saint, receiving eternal life during their earthly life. In fact, eternal life was something they were promised to receive in the resurrection (Dan. 12:2). When Jesus Christ came to earth, He began to speak of this promise of eternal life. Some understood this and came seeking how they might inherit it (cp Lk. 10:25; 18:18). When Jesus Christ later spoke with His disciples He made it very clear that they would inherit eternal life in the age that was to come but not at that time (Lk. 18:30: Mk. 10:30; Matt. 19:29). So when read that the Father gave the Son to have that eternal life in Him while He walked this earth, we can realize, that for the first time, mankind had the opportunity to see what God's kind of life is like when it is lived out through a human nature. That's the significance of the mystery. It had never been revealed until Christ came along. Now, since we share in that very same kind of life, we have the potential to live godly. Now, that's salvation.

So, if Jesus Christ is not absolute deity, exclusively co-equal and co-eternal with the Father and Spirit, I have no eternal life! I have no hope that comes from eternal life and godliness is an impossibility. This very issue troubled the spiritually young believers to whom John wrote his first letter, "Everyone denying the Son, he neither has the Father." (1 Jn. 2:23). Notice that John uses the title "Son" which refers to His deity. It is because He is God that I have eternal life. Since the Son is God, if you deny Him as God, you neither have the Father for He is also God. John goes on "If that which you have heard from a beginning remains at ease in you, you also will be at ease in the Son and in the Father, and this is the promise which He Himself promised to you - the Eternal Life." (2:24-25). When you mess with the deity of the Son, you ruin the basis for eternal life. And that is no salvation.

The Indwelling Father

Let's go back to John 14:20. There we saw that Christ said He would be in us. But He had also said that the Father was in Him (14:11). When the Holy Spirit caused us to be regenerated, He not only joined us to the Son as our life but He also joined us to the Father. This union with the Son and Father go hand-in-hand. "I in them and You in Me . . ." (Jn. 17:3). Because the Son is in me the Father is also in me. He isn't in me because the Son represents Him there, but because He is in the Son. So both the Father and Son are in me and in you if you are a believer in the good news of Christ.

As we stated earlier God is omnipresent. But just as with the Son, omnipresence is not the same thing as indwelling. Paul wrote, "one God even Father of all, the One being over all things, and through all things and in us all." (Eph. 4:6). Here are three vital truths. God is transcendent, that is, God is above all things. God never has nor ever will become part of creation or confused with creation, therefore, there can be no pantheism. Second, God is through all things. Every atom of creation is penetrated by God. Every tree, rock, animal, human being, angel and even Satan himself, is penetrated by God. That doesn't mean God is saving them. The preceding phrase told us that God is above all these, so even though He penetrates

them, they do not become God or even god-like. Finally, He is in all us. We should note that some Greek texts do not have the pronoun ημιν. But Paul's point is that while God is transcendent to all creation and while God penetrates all of creation because God is omnipresent God is only in us! God maintains a unique relationship to us. God the Father is in us! He indwells us! And that indwelling is distinct from His penetrating omnipresence to the rest of creation. It has a note of intimacy about it.

That intimacy involves His Fatherhood with respect to us. He is our Father! We are His children! But how did He become our Father? How did we become His children? Millard Erickson expresses the common confusion, attempting to explain that we are God's rebellious children and tying this to adoption as God's means of restoring us to God's intended relationship. "In the formal sense, adoption is a declarative matter, an alteration of our legal status. We become God's children."[6] But John writes, "Everyone believing that Jesus [the One Who died for our sins] is the Christ [the One Who rose again and is glorified], has been born out from God as to source." (1 Jn. 5:1). For years the words adoption and born again bothered me. Are were adopted or are we born from God? In the Scriptures we find that both are true. But each refers to a different relationship in God's family.

For the present lets state that the Biblical term "adoption" does not mean to make someone else's child legally your child. Yet most Christians have such a faulty understanding of our great salvation that we are as confused as Mr. Erickson, believing we were adopted into God's family. But the New Testament Scriptures make it abundantly clear that we are literally God's children, "Behold what unique sort of love the Father has given to us that we should be called the children of God, and we are!" (1 Jn. 3:1). Notice, not merely called His children, but we are His children! Christ spoke to Nicodemus of the need to be "born from above[7] " (Jn. 3:3, 5). For us it is referred to as a second or rebirth[8] . Twice Peter writes, "born again unto a living hope" (1 Peter 1:3), "the ones being born again not out of corruptible seed." (1:23). Paul wrote, "He saved us through means of a washing consisting of regeneration [reconception] and renewal from the Holy Spirit." (Tit. 3:5). Do you see, that we are not merely given God's name through some legal means, we have been literally reborn. But what does that mean? For most of us, we can call the Father, "Father" and we can be called His children. But there is so much more.

When Jesus presented this truth to Nicodemus, Nicodemus initially thought He was speaking of a physical rebirth (Jn. 3:4). But Christ clarifies that going back into the womb and being reborn in that manner would still result in being flesh (v. 6). The birth Christ is speaking of is a birth from the Holy Spirit and it results in the one being born being spirit (v. 5, 6). So this new birth has taken place in the sphere of the spirit. While man is body, soul and spirit, it is only the spirit part of man that has experience this birth. We saw under our consideration of eternal life that we received that life by means of that new birth. But that is not all I received in the new birth. The Holy Spirit not only joined me to the Son but also to the Father. As we saw He is in me. But there is something very important to the New Birth that I received from my Father. If I am really His child, because I was really reconceived and really reborn, then I received something from my spiritual Father.

In a human birth a mother and father come together. The mother contributes an ovum and the father sperm. The ovum from which my birth resulted was a living God quality of Word (1 Pet. 1:23). Peter leaves the "word" anartharous, speaking of its quality. It isn't the total Word of God. I was born by that limited part of God's Word known as the gospel (v. 25). The word translated seed is *spora*. But I get something from my Father, His seed or *sperma* [σπερμα] (1 Jn. 3:9). Just as each human child receives genetic characteristics from his genetic parents, so we have received characteristics from our spiritual Father. His seed remains at ease in us. In the human realm we might say, we have our father's genes. Do you see, this isn't mere adoption. This is the product of a real spiritual conception which resulted in a real birth. But what does it mean that God's seed remains at ease in me? John explains, since I really have my Father's spiritual genes in me I can not go on sinning as a continuous way of life. This is the emphasis of John's present tense "sinning". We will sin, but it will not go on unbroken as the dominant character of my life. Why? Because I really have God the Father's seed in me.

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[6] Millard Erickson, Christian Theology (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1985), p. 962

[7] "Above" is a translation of the Greek preposition ανωθεν. The translation "again" should be reserved for the preposition ανα.

[8] There is a distinction between regeneration and the new birth. Regeneration looks at the process, conception, the giving of life and nature, etc. which results in the new birth. So logically it is Regeneration then the New Birth. In terms of time they are simultaneous.

But that seed results in something - a nature! Again many Christians are confused because they have been taught that God is in the process of making over our old fallen nature.[9] But rather than making over that perverted nature (Rom. 3:10-18), God caused me to be reconceived, reborn, and I am now one who shares in the very kind of nature which God has. "that you might become sharers in a divine quality of nature . . ." (2 Pet. 1:4). Notice that the kind of nature I share in is of a divine [θεια] quality. It is divine because it belongs to my Father. It is His seed which is in me. But also notice, that I am not a total possessor but one who shares. That word partaker is a form of the word "fellowship", meaning that I share it in common with someone else. It's God's nature. I share in just a little bit of that nature, His seed. Just as an aside, the sharing in the nature is what the Holy Spirit uses to produce the Fruit from the Spirit.

My spiritual Father, God the Father, is in me. His in me in a special way distinct from His presence to the rest of creation. Because He is in me, I have His seed in me. I am literally His child. I have qualities or characteristics which I spiritually inherited from Him. I share in that kind of nature which is God's. Now if the Father isn't God, I don't have that seed. I'm not really a child of God, I would still be a child of the devil, just with a different name. And I wouldn't have that nature which makes possible a new quality of life. It would be impossible for me to live like a child of God. That wouldn't be much of a salvation. But I do have those things, because my God is also the Father, and I do have a great salvation.

The Indwelling Spirit

The Third Person of the Trinity who indwells us is the Holy Spirit. He is the Person who affects our regeneration uniting us to the Father and Son. And He is the Person which most Christian's know indwells us. When Jesus spoke of the Spirit's coming, He described the Spirit as another Comforter of the same kind [αλλος]. The same as what? As Himself. The Spirit would be a Comforter like Jesus was. He did not come as some impersonal force but as a very real Person of the Godhead, ready to carry on His work in us. A portion of the work involved teaching and reminding the disciples of Christ's words and witnessing concerning Christ (Jn. 14:26; 15:26).

Let's first consider the teaching ministry. While all believers may experience some of the Spirit's teaching ministry (1 Jn. 2:27), the Spirit had a special teaching ministry for the apostles. He would remind them of all things which Jesus Christ had said (Jn. 14:26). This was a promise unique to those disciples who had heard Jesus speak. Since I did not hear Jesus speak, there is nothing for the Spirit to remind me. But for them, this would enable them to teach those things which He was commanding them (cp Matt. 28:20; Jn. 13:34). This demonstrates that a portion of the Spirit's teaching ministry was unique to those early years of the Church.

Paul explained a part of this unique teaching ministry. Paul wrote the Corinthians that there were things which God has prepared for those who love Him (1 Cor. 2:9). But these things haven't come by any natural means: observation, listening, or imagining. There was only one way in which these things could be known, the Spirit would have to reveal them. He revealed them to Paul, who first taught and later wrote concerning these things. This Spirit is not some lesser being taking instructions from a superior creator. Neither is He God's power or force. He is a Person. "The Spirit searches [or "traces out] the things of God, even the deep things concerning God." (v. 11). If He is not truly God, how could He be revealing the things of God? How could He be searching the deep things of God? But because He is God, He is able to trace out those things. He is able to reveal these things to men.

Paul goes on to say that no one could know these things except the Spirit of God (2:11). The Greek word "God" is in the Genitive/Ablative form. Clearly in verse 12, where this word form occurs again, it is Ablative because it is accompanied by the ek preposition, "the Spirit, the One out from God." In verse 12, Paul is explaining the fact of the Spirit being sent from God the Father. This was what Christ spoke of in the Upper Room, when He said that He and the Father would send the Spirit. But in verse 11 Paul is using "God" as a Genitive of Description[10]. The idea of this Genitive can be expressed, "The Spirit Who is God". Do you see Paul's punch? The Spirit is not only sent from God, but that Spirit Who has been sent to us is very God Himself. That is why He can so effectively reveal these things to Paul. This in turn is how the Spirit could use Paul to precisely reveal these things. He knew exactly what needed to be said and exactly how to say it. Now, if the Spirit isn't God, what kind of dependable revelation would we have? None. And how would that affect our salvation? We

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[9] "One way of accounting for spirituality is to say, with Reformed theology, that the Spirit begins to effect real and positive changes in the human nature of the regenerate person and that, because of this miraculous grace, the Christian is enabled to grow spiritually." John Gerstner, Wrongly Dividing the Word of Truth (Brentwood, Tenn.: Wolgemuth & Hyatt, 1991), p. 236

[10] H.E. Dana & Julius R. Mantey, A Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament (Toronto: The MacMillan Co., 1957 (ed)), p. 75f. This form is called a Genitive of Description by C.F.D. Moule, An Idiom Book of New Testament Greek (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1959) p. 37f.

couldn't even know for sure that there is salvation, apart from the divine work of the Holy Spirit. This teaching and revealing ministry necessitates the Holy Spirit's being God. Now that's salvation.

But the Spirit does far more than teach and reveal. Because the Spirit indwells us, our physical bodies[11] are temples (1 Cor. 6:19). While Paul uses a plural verb it has a collective sense.[12] He is writing to them as a group of individuals. This word ναος viewed the temple as the place in which God dwelt. It was considered "the sanctuary in the Temple, into which only the priests could lawfully enter."[13] Unless the Holy Spirit is God, how could our bodies be temples? If the Holy Spirit is a separate, lower type of deity, then God would be authorizing a form of idolatry. If the Holy Spirit is merely the power or force of God, the body would not be a temple for God's personal active presence would be absent. You would be no different than the unsaved man who has God's essence moving through him but has no personal relationship to God (cp Eph. 4:6).

Back in chapter 3, the whole assembly is viewed as a temple (3:16-17). Whereas the problem in chapter 6 is individual morality the issue in chapter 3 is the whole assembly realizing that each is only a part of God's work, and those serving are merely laborers under God. Thus, as Paul encourages these saints to consider the outcome of their labors, he writes, "Do you all not know intuitively that you all are a quality of temple and the Spirit of God dwells in you all." (v. 16). The Spirit constitutes the whole as a temple of God. The conjunction και translated "and" may be emphatically ascensive and would be translated "even" or "certainly".[14] The expression "Spirit of God" as in 2:11 would be clearer "The Spirit of the quality [who is] God". Paul's point is that because the Holy Spirit indwells the assembly, and since this Spirit is indeed God Himself, then He constitutes the whole as a temple. If He isn't God, there is no temple. If there is not temple both on the individual level and on the group level, it diminishes our salvation.

An important facet of our spiritual lives is the Fruit from[15] the Spirit (Gal. 5:22, 23). While this fruit is produced by the Holy Spirit in the believer, it is produced on the basis of the believer's sharing in the divine quality of nature. In Ephesians 5:9 reads, "For the fruit consisting of light is in the sphere of all goodness and righteousness and truth." This verse contains a textual problem of whether is should be "light" [φως] or "Spirit" [πνευμα]. The textual evidence given in the United Bible Societies' Third Edition is spread broadly over all four of the major text-types in favor of "Spirit".[16] But "light" seems to a be the harder reading [It would be less likely that someone would change the word to "light" than to "Spirit"]. "Light" also seems to fit the preceding context a little bit better than does "Spirit" which fits the following context.

The fruit which is characterized as light is in the sphere of these three qualities which are each an attribute of God (Mk. 10:18; Ps. 119:49; Jn. 14:6). Here, Paul doesn't say precisely what that fruit is but qualities in which they exist. He does

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[11] That Paul is speaking of our individual physical bodies and not the Body of Christ is supported by His concern of their physically joining with a prostitute thus making a member of Christ a member of a prostitute (vv. 15-16). Then in verse 18, having described the character of sin as being an action produced external to the body, Paul points out the particularly serious nature of fornication, it is a sin done "in view of [because - a causative use of ειι] of his uniquely own body". In the expression "you are not yourselves"' Paul uses the reflexive pronoun, which with the distributive plural pronouns means "you are each existing not belonging to yourself". Finally, Paul's closing instruction is to glorify God in the body and in the spirit belonging to you, which sort are the Lord's" (v. 20). Each believer within the whole is to glorify God in this manner.

[12] S.G. Green Handbook to the Grammar of the Greek Testament (New York: Fleming H. Revel Co. nd) p. 168 § 175. Green calls this "Rational Concord".

[13] W.E. Vine Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words (Mac Lean, Virginia: MacDonald Publishing Co., nd) p. 1138.

[14] Dana & Mantey op cit. pp. 250-251

[15] This is either a Subjective Genitive - producing the fruit; or an Ablative of Source - coming from the Spirit. In either case, the idea is not that the Fruit belongs to the Spirit but that He is the One who produces this Fruit for and through the believer.

[16] Textual support for φως - Alexandrian - P 49 a A B P 33 81 1739* 1881 1962 2127
Western - D* G
Caesarean - 629 2492
Byzantine - none

Textual support for πνευμα Alexandrian - ∏ 46 Y 104 326 1241 1739$^{marg.}$
Western - D^{c} 88 181
Caesarean - 436 451 614 630 1877 2495
Byzantine - K a

delineate that fruit in Galatians 5. The word "light" is helpful because it ties the fruit from the Spirit to the Nature or Attributes of God. As we have already seen, we share in common in a divine quality of nature (2 Pet. 1:4). That nature constitutes our new nature. But how do we go about making use of that nature?

We can illustrate it as the major parts of an automobile. The nature is the engine. It is fueled by the life which we also share. We are the framework in which this nature and engine have been put. But a great engine and great fuel are no good if there is not means to transfer them into expressed power. That is where the Holy Spirit comes in. He functions like the transmission taking the work of the new nature and expressing outwardly.

Since I am a human being and part of creation, I am limited in how that divine quality of nature may be expressed through me. So while God is good, holy, love, omnipotent, omniscient, righteous and truth those attributes are communicated through me as love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faith, meekness, and self-control. Now how do you do that? I don't have to worry about how. That's the Holy Spirit's work. He works out the nature I received from my Father through my incapable created person and produces this incredible fruit which I can then use to the glory of God (Jn. 15:8; 1 Cor. 6:20; 1 Pet. 4:13, 14).

Now if the Holy Spirit is not a divine Person indwelling me, I could not have that fruit. I would have no means of using that nature in which is share. That wouldn't be much of a salvation. Take a concordance and look up those parts of the fruit in the epistles, and notice how important they are to are daily spiritual life. Take them away and are salvation is greatly diminished. But the Spirit is God. He does indwell me. He does produce that fruit and that's a great salvation.

The Spirit's relationship to us is also important to our future salvation. While I receive the nature and life from the Father and Son as we have just seen, it is the Spirit Who makes possible our use of that life and nature. Because of the Spirit's active work in our salvation Paul calls Him the earnest of our salvation (Eph. 1:14; 2 Cor. 1:22; 5:5). He is the down payment on what we will fully receive when our salvation is brought to its completion. I have only a small portion of my salvation at present. My body awaits its complete salvation (Eph. 4:30; Rom. 8: - απολυτροσις- complete redemption or loosing) as does my soul (1 Pet. 1:9). Thus in each of the passages describing the Spirit as an earnest, it relates to our completed salvation. In Ephesians 1:14, He is the guarantee that I will receive the whole inheritance promised me, which will coincide with my complete redemption [απολυτροσις]. He is the earnest of God's promises which are yes (1 Cor. 1:20, 22). He is the earnest that our mortality will be swallowed up by the life (2 Cor. 5:4, 5).

We might ask, why are the Father and Son not called an earnest? Because while we receive real life and real seed from Them, it is the Holy Spirit Who causes us to live out that life and nature. He is the earnest because He takes that life and nature and produces a real foretaste of our complete salvation. As John wrote, we are called the children of God and we are the children of God (1 Jn. 3:1). But despite that fact, John added that it is not yet plain what we shall be (3:2). What John means, is that we will be different than we are at present. We have limits in our present existence because I have only a portion of my salvation at present. In the future, when Christ comes to take us to Himself, we will be changed. Our humble, limited body will be transformed so that it is conformed to the physical body characterized by His glory (Phil. 3:21). By the Holy Spirit's indwelling and continuing work in our lives, we sample what our completed salvation will be. Paul refers to this as the first-fruit from the Spirit (Rom. 8:23). The first-fruit is a sample of what the whole will be. The Spirit produces this sample. Can an angel give us a foretaste? Can God's impersonal power or force produce a sample of our completed great salvation. Can someone other than God really be the earnest of that completed salvation, which was planned by the Triune God, purchased by death of one who is God, and is implemented by the Triune God? Not at all! Only God does this. That makes our salvation great!

The Trinity as our Position

In the last section we were considering the implications of the indwelling Trinity upon our salvation. Now, we wish to consider the other side or our "in" relationship to the Trinity - we in Them. Let's return to John 14:20, "In that day, you shall know that, I am in the Father and you in me . . ." Just as the Father is in us because He is in the Son and the Son is in us, so to reverse that, we are in the Father because we are in Christ and Christ is in the Father. If I placed a dollar bill in an envelope and then placed the envelope in my wallet, is the dollar bill only in the envelope? No, it is in both the envelope and in my wallet. In this way, we have the Father in us, but we are also in the Father. It is tied to our relationship to the Son. Some may consider this a technicality, but it reinforces the deity of both the Father and Son. It also helps us understand how we are in the Father.

I first want to briefly to explain the idea of this position, how it comes about and what it does. At the moment I believed the gospel, the Holy Spirit placed me into Christ (1 Cor. 12:13; Rom. 6:3). Both of these passages use a form of the English word "baptize." Many commentators and theologians mistake the meaning of the Greek word βαπτισμος. The

literal meaning is to "an act of dipping or immersion"[17]. Many among we immersionists become confused at this point, because they read too much into the symbol of water baptism. You can't immerse an individual into water and keep them there or they would drown. Thus the removal from the water has been made as much a part of the symbol as the immersion. Yet it is the immersion that is the symbol of a real immersion into Christ. The removal is a technicality.

So, I am put into Christ. I am put into His death and burial (Rom. 6:3) as well as His resurrection (Col. 2:12), "being co-buried with Him by means of baptism [Spirit] in which also you were co-raised . . ." The relative clause ejn wJ refers to the baptism accomplished by the Holy Spirit. So in that same act of immersion into Christ, I was put into death, burial and resurrection. But God says much more about us me in Christ. He says I am seated in the heavenlies near to God (Eph. 2:6, 13). I am part of the one new man, the new creation, the Christ (1 Cor. 12:12; 2 Cor. 5:17; Eph. 2:15). I am the fullness (Col. 2:9, 10). Since this paper is about the Trinity we use these to demonstrate that these are all true of the human nature of God the Son. He died was buried and rose again as a man not as God. In His human nature He sat down at the right hand of the Father, for as we have seen, as God, He was always omnipresent. It is as a man that He is the head of the body. It was in the realm of His human nature that all the fullness of the godhead settled down at home bodily. This serves to illustrate that much of what I receive in my position in Christ is primarily related to His human nature and the work done in His human nature not His work in the sphere of His deity. But it is the Triune God Who applies these benefits.

So we are in the Father (John 17:21), in the Son (Romans 6:11), and in the Holy Spirit (Romans 8:6-9). Christ spoke of this in His garden prayer (John 17). Verses 21-22 record Christ request to the Father for the unity of His disciples and those who would believe upon their word. Through the history of the Church unity has frequently been an issue and rightly so, Christ said, "in order that the World might believe that you sent me." But many attempt to foster unity by the wrong means. Christ's request demonstrates the real center of unity for New Testament believers, our position in both the Father and Son, "you Father, in Me, and I in You, in order that these also may be one in Us." (v. 21). Paul wrote the Colossians in regard to this, "in order that their hearts might be comforted, being knit together be means of love and in view of [eiı] all the riches coming from the full assurance of an understanding, in view of [eiı] a full experiential knowledge of the mystery of the God, even the Father, and of the Christ." (Colossians 2:2).[18] The interpenetrating oneness of the Father and Son exists because They are both absolutely the one true God. As Christ said, "I and the Father are one thing." (John 10:30). In Christ we are one thing, the body (Ephesians 4:4). With Christ as our head we together are the Christ (1 Corinthians 12:12). Rather than seeking some earthly means of producing unity, believers ought to frame their minds with their position in not only Christ but also the Father. As Paul wrote, it would knit the hearts of believers together.

We are sanctified or set apart to God in our position (1 Corinthians 1:30). We are sanctified by the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit (Jude 1; Hebrews 13:12; 1 Peter 1:2). The Father is the Person who reckons the sanctified position, the Son is the position in which we are sanctified, and the Holy Spirit is the Person who places us into the Godhead.

In our position in Christ, we are placed into a particular location and given an appropriate spiritual gift[19] . But because we frequently refer to these gifts as "spiritual" we also neglect to attach the work of the Trinity to the process of giving these gifts. Yet Paul does exactly that in the opening verses of 1 Corinthians 12. We read, "Now a diversity of grace gifts exist but the same Spirit and a diversity of ministries exist but the same Lord, and a diversity of empowerments exist but the same God is energizing the all things in all ways." (4-6). Notice diversity of gifts, which in turn are ministries [areas of service], which in turn are areas of God's energizing. Each member of the Trinity has a necessary relationship to our service.

In our position we are seen as sons - mature ones with a position and privilege. This is the key distinction between being a child and a son. We are children by the new birth, this is real. We are counted to be sons at the same time in our position, this is imputed. Each member again plays a necessary role in our placement as sons. The Father bound us to be placed as sons (Ephesians 1:3-5). While the Trinity counseled together, it is the Father's plan which they are bringing to pass. The Son redeemed the Jews out from under the Law, that we might all be placed as sons (Galatians 4:4-5). The person of the

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[17] Thomas Sheldon Green A Greek-English Lexicon to the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1970 ed.) p. 29. Similar definitions are given for the cognates βαπτιζω and βαπτισμα.

[18] Notice that Paul calls this truth a mystery, yet Christ spoke of it in His garden prayer. No contradiction exists if we remember: 1) that Christ's disciples slept through His prayer (cp Luke 22:45). 2) that Jesus Christ never spoke of the Christ which was still unrevealed.

[19] In Ephesians 4:12, Paul refers to these as grace gifts [δωρεα χαρις] as he does in 1 Corinthians 12:30, 31 and Romans 12:6 [χαρισματα]. Paul is looking at these gifts from different perspectives, πνευματικα are gifts related to the work of the Holy Spirit. Charismata are gifts viewed as being graciously given or given as a result of God's grace, a spiritual gift which is not deserved or earned.

Holy Spirit is called the Spirit of son placement[20] in Romans 8:15. He is the means by which believers call out "Daddy, Father".

It is in our position that we have forgiveness. The Holy Spirit placed us into Christ where we experience redemption (1 Corinthians 12:13; 1:30). Because the redemption is the application of the sufficient price resulting in a loosing or freeing, the sins are sent away[21] and this also happens in Christ (Colossians 1:14). Christ's blood was the price of the redemption, applied by an act of the Father (Ephesians 4:32). Without the Trinity, I would have no forgiveness. And without forgiveness, God could not impute righteousness to me. And that righteousness, isn't some "human" righteousness, "that we might become God's [Deity] kind of righteousness in Him." (2 Corinthians 5:21). If I had only the Father, I would have no position in the Son, in whom I am forgiven, made God's kind of righteous, made a son . . . And if I had only the Son, I could be in him, but God the Father is the One who counts me to be these things in Christ. And If I had only the Holy Spirit, He would have no one into whom He could place me as the basis of my forgiveness. Hopefully this also demonstrates that Christian's need not only a better understanding of our Trinitarian God but a better understanding and appreciation of the great salvation our God has designed and is carrying out.

Again, though this was brief, even our position in Christ and in the other two persons of the Trinity, loose their impact of our God is not a Trinitarian God. Each Person carries out different responsibilities. They work harmoniously yet distinctly. Each is necessary. My salvation would be poor, and worthless if not for the full work of all three Persons of the Trinity.

Conclusion

The Trinity is not a doctrine for theologians, pastors, or people with too much time on their hands. It is a practical doctrine. It is a doctrine vital to our salvation. But due to a deplorable ignorance of what we possess in our salvation, many fail to see the necessity of the Trinity's work all through our salvation. Due to an inaccurate understanding of the Trinity, how They are related, and the Biblical basis for such a truth, many have difficulty understanding a fundamental doctrine. No doctrine, expressed in the Word of God should be considered esoteric. Too often we Christians face doctrine from a solely utilitarian position. If I can apply it tomorrow, then I'll listen, otherwise, I haven't the time. But whatever happened to being a God-centered people. I frequently find myself thinking of the early Church, undergoing one of their first really threats in Acts 4. Having been released, Peter and John return to the assembly, and together [ὁμοθυμαδον] they worship and make a request to God,

> Absolute Master, You are God, the One making the heaven and the earth and the sea and all the things in them, the One saying through the mouth of David your servant, why do the Gentiles rage and the peoples plan a vain thing? The kings of the earth stood by, the rulers were gathered upon this same thing, against the Lord and against His Christ, for they were assembled upon a truth, against your holy servant Jesus, Whom you anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with Gentiles and the Israel people, to do whatsoever your hand and your counsel bound to come to be. And now these things Lord, you look upon their threats and give to your slaves, with boldness to speak all your word. . ." (vv. 24-29).

Notice, the confidence they had foremost in God. The more we understand our God, the greater the foundation for relating to God on a daily basis and God's work. If we were more God-minded, perhaps we would be less inclined to bemoan our difficulties and more likely to turn in real confidence to our great Trinitarian God Who has things well under control and has planned out this great salvation.

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[20] ὑιοθεσια is not the process of taking another's child and making him yours, but, "a father's declaration that his natural-born child was officially a son or daughter, with all the rights and privileges that this included. footnote pg. 663 The NKJV Greek English Interlinear New Testament (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1994).

[21] αφιημι - translated "forgive" refers to a sending away, a removal.