

GDB

Father Son and Holy Spirit

Radio Sermons



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Father, Son and Holy Spirit

A Study of the Triune Nature of God

Introduction

"For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse." Romans 1:20.

This remarkable verse tells us that the God of creation is revealed in the creation itself. Therefore every human being is devoid of excuse or defense concerning the existence of God. Whether or not a person has ever seen or read God's revelation of Himself as contained in His Word, he cannot escape a confrontation with the true and living God.

Scripture reveals that God exists in three Persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. This truth is known as the doctrine of the Trinity. There is perhaps no teaching of the Scriptures harder for the unbeliever to accept than this doctrine. It has been a stumbling block for millions down through the centuries.

Vigorous denial of this doctrine has spawned scores of pseudo-Christian religions. Many such cults are in existence today, and they thrive on their presentation of a god that can

be visualized and represented in terms that men can understand. None of that "Three in One" and "One in Three" teaching for them! They boldly proclaim the unitarian idea of God, and in so doing they deny that Jesus Christ or the Holy Spirit are co-equal and co-eternal with God the Father.

One of the earliest controversies within the Christian faith centered around the doctrine of the Trinity. Out of this controversy came the formal, orthodox statement at the Council of Nicea in A.D. 325, affirming the "trinity" of God and clearly reflecting the teaching of the Scriptures. The doctrine of the Trinity is accepted by all fundamental Bible-believing Christians. But although they accept the doctrine, many do not really understand either its Scriptural basis or the ways God's creation mirrors the three Persons of God.

The word "trinity" is not found in the Bible. Actually it is not a very good word to describe the concept of God, because "trinity" means "three," never "one." We need to be exceptionally careful in bringing out the triune nature of God because the "unity" (that is, the "oneness") of God must be just as carefully emphasized as the "trinity" (that is, the "threeness"). There must be no unbalance. So careful theologians today prefer to use a word like "triunity" in describing God.

There is Scriptural revelation that distinctly brings out the triune nature of the true and living God. The Apostle Paul also said both the "oneness" and the "threeness" of God appear in creation itself. "For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made." Romans 1:20. Thus we should be able to look at the creation and understand both that God is one and that He exists eternally in three divine Persons.

In this brief study we will look at some Scripture passages in both the New and the Old Testaments which affirm the triune nature of God. The vital corollary teaching of the "oneness" or unity of God will also be examined Scripturally. In the universe there are some striking "triunities," fashioned in this manner by the God of creation. May our faith be strengthened as we see again the clear teaching of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit as revealed in the Bible and also in the basic "building blocks" of His creation.

1.

The "Oneness" of God

"Hear therefore, O Israel, and observe to do it; that it may be well with thee, and that ye may increase mightily, as the LORD God of thy fathers hath promised thee, in the land that floweth with milk and honey. Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD: And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart and with all thy soul, and with all thy might." Deuteronomy 6:3-5.

One of the strongest declarations of the "oneness" of God found anywhere in the Bible is in Deuteronomy 6:4. This verse says, *"Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD."* The word translated "LORD" is the sacred Hebrew name, "JHWH," which we often pronounce as "Jehovah." So the verse could be translated "Jehovah our God is one Jehovah," or "Jehovah is our God, Jehovah alone." But no matter how it is translated, this verse tells us positively that there is but one God. It is an absolute declaration of monotheism, the concept of one deity, one God.

This is not an isolated Scripture. Previously, in Deuteronomy 4:35, Moses declared: *Unto thee it was shewed, that thou mightest know that the LORD he is God; there is none else beside him.*" And in Deuteronomy 32:39 Moses, directly quoting the words of God, wrote, *"See now that I, even I, am he, and there is no god with me: I kill, and I make alive, I wound, and I heal: neither is there any that can deliver out of my hand."*

Moses is not alone among the Old Testament prophets who declared the "oneness" of God. Isaiah 46:9 says, *"Remember the former things of old; for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me."*

The New Testament is equally clear and emphatic in declaring the "oneness" of God. In I Corinthians 8:4-6, Paul wrote, *"As concerning therefore the eating of those things that are offered in sacrifice unto idols, we know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is none other God but one. For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth, (as there be gods many, and lords many,) But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him."*

In Ephesians 4:4-6 the Apostle Paul also declared: *"There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all."* Further substantiation is found in James 2:19, *"Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble."*

All these passages are emphatic in stating that there is but one God. And let me emphasize that what is often referred to as the doctrine of the Trinity does not imply in any way that there are three Gods. God is a unity. He is single and unique and there is no other God. *"Hear, O Israel, the LORD, our God is one LORD."*

Does creation exhibit the property of God's "oneness"? Yes, for we know that the creation is one. We even speak of it as a "universe" not a "multiverse." Science recognizes this distinction. Scientists are continually searching for "universal" laws, "unifying" principles and underlying "unities." And yet even in its "oneness" the universe is still a thing of diversity and variety. We certainly cannot

oversimplify the universe and consider it simply as "space." Space alone does not totally characterize this great universe. There is space, but within space there is matter. But that is not all. There is another entity that we call time. Matter occupies space in time. All three of these entities, separate to themselves yet unified in a unique way, form our universe. And should not this fact lead one, perhaps quite subconsciously, to think of the Creator of the universe as a "unity in trinity"?

2.

New Testament Revelation of the Trinity

"The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen." II Cor. 13:14.

This benediction brings out clearly that there are three Persons associated with the Biblical revelation of God. This verse ascribes to each Person a specific personal attribute.

Let's briefly review some of the New Testament teaching of the triunity of God. First, God the Father is recognized as God. This is seldom disputed; but let's look at two passages that clearly bring out this point. In John 6:27 we read, *"Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed."* And the Apostle Peter, in I Peter 1:2, declared that Christians are *"Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father."*

Jesus Christ is also recognized as God. This is denied by those who hold to a unitarian view of God and especially by those cults which operate under the name of Christianity yet vigorously oppose most cardinal points of New Testament doctrine. But the Scriptural evidence for the deity of Christ is overwhelming. "Doubting Thomas" recognized the Lord Jesus Christ as God in John 20:28, when he cried out, *"My Lord and my God."* The Lord Himself confirmed the

correctness of Thomas's view in the next verse, when He replied, "Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed."

The Lord Jesus Christ claimed some of the attributes that only God has. Scripture shows Him to be "omniscient," or "all-knowing": "*And Jesus, knowing their thoughts said, Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts?*" Matt. 9:4. He claimed to be "omnipotent" (all powerful) in Matthew 28:18: "*And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.*" And two verses later, in Matthew 28:20, He claimed to be "omnipresent" (everywhere present). The verse reads, "*Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you, and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.*"

The Lord Jesus Christ also did things only God can do. Christ forgave sins. Mark 2:5 describes the healing of the paralytic: "*When Jesus saw their faith, he said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, thy sins be forgiven thee.*" Those standing by recognized that this was a right reserved only for God when they said, "*Why doth this man thus speak blasphemies? who can forgive sins but God only?*" Mark 2:7.

Further, the New Testament recognizes the Holy Spirit as God. He is definitely spoken of as God in Acts 5:3-4 "*But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land? Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God.*" Peter equated lying to the Holy Spirit with lying to God. We also find numerous New Testament passages ascribing to the Holy Spirit the various attributes of God.

So the Bible does definitely teach that the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are each God. But the Bible also is just as emphatic that there are not three gods but one God. God exists eternally in three Persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Perhaps the doctrine of the trinity of God is best revealed in Matthew 28:19. *"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the NAME of the FATHER, and of the SON, and of the HOLY GHOST."* (Capitals ours, for emphasis.) This verse balances the "unity" and the "trinity" of God. All three Persons are mentioned: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. There can be no doubt about the "threeness" aspect of the Godhead. The verse reads, "baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." The "unity" aspect is also strongly emphasized. A singular word "name" is used rather than the plural word "names." The language is clear and concise. We are to baptize believers in the name (singular) of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. "The name" refers clearly to the one God. But the three Persons are mentioned separately showing that God exists eternally in three Persons — Father, Son and Holy Spirit. So the unity and the trinity of God are brought out clearly in this one verse.

3.

Old Testament Revelation of the Trinity

"Come ye near unto me, hear ye this; I have not spoken in secret from the beginning; from the time that it was, there am I: and now the LORD God, and his Spirit, hath sent me. Isa. 48:16.

The opening chapter of the book of Genesis clearly prepares the reader for the subsequent revelation of the trinitarian nature of God by the use of the plural word for God, "Elohim," and the plural personal pronoun "us" used in reference to God. Genesis 1:1 literally reads, "In the beginning, Elohim created the heavens and the earth." The word "Elohim" is a plural form (that is, it indicates three or more), but it takes a singular article and a singular verb. So in the structure and usage of this very word we have a subtle hint of the triune nature of the God of creation.

In Genesis 1:26 we find these words: "And God (Elohim) said, Let us make man in our image." Both the "us" and the "our" are plural in form, indicating a plurality of Persons in the singular Godhead. The view that this represents a conversation between a unitarian god and the angels of heaven has to be false. Those concerned in this council are all involved in the work of creation, and nowhere does Scripture allow for angels to have participated in the creative works of God. Angels themselves are created beings. They themselves did not create, nor did God consult with them before He created man in His own image.

Most Scripture passages mentioning angels refer to these created beings — God’s messengers and ministering spirits. However, a close reading of Genesis 22:15-16 reveals that the words “angel of the LORD” refer to One recognized as God . . . a condition that, again, can only exist through the triune nature of God. The verses say: *“And the angel of the LORD called unto Abraham out of heaven the second time, And said, By myself have I sworn, saith the LORD for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son.”*

This time it is not an angel, a created being, who is speaking, but the pre-incarnate Christ, God the Son. This passage distinctly indicates two co-equal Persons exist in the nature of God.

In the great messianic passage of Isaiah 9:6, the Messiah (the Anointed One of Israel) is called “The Mighty God.” Also, Micah 5:2, the passage that prophesies the place of our Lord’s birth, ascribes eternal pre-existence to the One who is to be born in Bethlehem.

In the various passages just considered, we have presented somewhat subtle evidence that the Old Testament does teach the triune nature of the Godhead. However, Isaiah 48:16 cannot be considered as subtle. This passage is perhaps the clearest revelation of the triune nature of God contained anywhere in the Old Testament Scriptures. Clearly, the Prophet Isaiah was recording the words of God when he wrote, *“And now the LORD God, and His Spirit, hath sent me.”* This statement only makes sense when we realize that the second Person, God the Son, is speaking of the time of His incarnation. And He said, *“And now the LORD God (God the Father), and his Spirit (God the Holy Spirit), hath sent me (God the Son).”* All three Persons of the Godhead are clearly present in this statement.

So when we look at the Scriptural evidence in both

Testaments, we are forced to conclude that there is one and only one God. Yet the one true God exists eternally in three Persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The well-known theologian B.B. Warfield has formalized a definition of the Scriptural doctrine of the triunity of God: "There is only one true God, but in the unity of the Godhead there are three eternal and co-equal Persons, the same in substance but distinct in subsistence." The word subsistence means "being" or "existence." So Warfield's definition calls attention to the fact that the three Persons of the Godhead, although distinct, are exactly alike in substance, that is, in their make-up or attributes.

The word "person" is really not a good word to describe God because it tends to indicate separate individuals in the Godhead, which is definitely not the teaching of Scripture, but there is no better word in the English language to describe the true relationship.

We can only come to the conclusion that both the Old and New Testaments are united in the teaching of the doctrine of the triunity of God. And the Old and New Testaments in unity (our Bible) are the written Word of God.

4.

The "Triunity" of God's Creation

"The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handwork." Psalm 19:1.

It is impossible to adequately illustrate the doctrine of the triunity of God with any analogy framed by the human mind. We are finite creatures with finite minds. Our trying to comprehend infinite things is something like an ant looking up at the Empire State Building and trying to picture the detailed intricacy of that structure in his mind.

But let's not forget what Paul wrote in Romans 1:20, *"For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse."* This verse tells us that creation itself reflects the Creator and provides the best illustration of His triune nature.

Not only must Jesus Christ Himself be seen in the creation, but also God the Father and God the Holy Spirit must be seen there too. Again, the inspired Apostle Paul has told us that both the fact of God and the nature of God are "clearly understood" by the "things that are made."

The fact that God is One should be recognized from the evidence that confronts us that the creation is one. As we have previously seen, the very name "universe" we use to designate God's creation bears testimony to the fact that we recognize it as a unity.

But in its unity, the creation is still recognized as a thing of great variety and diversity. The creation is unified; yet it is actually formed by the interplay of three (and only three) basic entities: Space, time and matter (or energy). Each of these entities is separate and distinguishable one from the other. Yet they are interrelated, and the universe only stands by the existence of all three. Take one away, and we have nothing. Our universe is a "unity in trinity."

Everything that happens in our universe, every event (and that includes every type of physical and biological process) takes place by the existence of matter (that is, energy) in space and through time. We have to remember that matter is just a special form of energy; so really energy is the more basic term. Energy, space and time are basically different in their outward manifestations, but in our universe they are so intertwined that they are essentially indistinguishable from one another.

Our one universe, which manifests itself to us in three conceptual forms, each of which is equally universal, should immediately direct our attention to the Scriptural revelation of the nature of the one triune God of creation.

Scripture clearly tells us that there is one God; yet He is manifest in three distinct Persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The three Persons are each equally God, but they are totally and ultimately inseparable. The revealed interrelationships among the three Persons of the Godhead are distinctly similar to the interrelationships among the three entities of the physical universe, space, time and matter (energy).

Space is everywhere. It is the backdrop (the stage if you please) against which, or on which, the phenomenon of matter manifests itself. So we could say that the entity of space is analogous to God the Father. Space itself is quite invisible and quite indiscernible to the senses; yet it is quite real, and without it there would be no universe.

The entity of matter is analogous to God the Son. Matter (or, more basically, energy) occupies space and makes the occupied space tangible to the senses. Space is manifest and made discernible by the entity of matter, or energy.

The third Person of the Godhead, the Holy Spirit, proceeds from the Father and the Son. He, also, is quite invisible, and He is everywhere present. The ministry of the Holy Spirit is the interpretation and the application of the work of God the Father and God the Son. Similarly, time is the universal entity within which the significance of space and matter must be interpreted, applied and understood. Time itself has no meaning except in the terms of the entity matter (energy) as it manifests itself within the entity of space. But also matter and space are quite inconceivable except in terms of time. Matter can only be manifest within individual segments of time.

The physical universe, as we know it, bears an unique analogy to what Scripture reveals about the triune nature of the Creator. Space and matter and time — each distinct within itself, yet each inseparably interrelated with the other two and each occupying all of the universe — remarkably and uniquely parallel in character what God's written Word reveals about the nature of God Himself. God is Father, Son and Holy Spirit; each distinct yet each inseparably identified with the other two. And each Member of the Trinity is equally and eternally God.

But the analogy does not end with this. Each of the three entities of the physical universe is itself a trinity! Our physical universe is actually a "trinity of trinities." It is necessary to consider space and matter and time, each in turn.

5.

The "Triunity" of Space

"And he that talked with me had a golden reed to measure the city, and the gates thereof, and the wall thereof. And the city lieth foursquare, and the length is as large as the breadth: and he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs. The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal." Rev. 21:15-16.

Three-dimensional space is one of the best illustrations that God has given us of His trinitarian existence. Let's picture the Godhead as a unit volume of space; that is, let's consider a cubic volume of space that has dimensions of one unit in length, one unit in width and one unit in depth. Each of these three dimensions, viewed alone, is exactly the same, and each (if we select our units large enough) fills all of space. In other words, we could say that each of our three dimensions are co-equal in power and glory and each is everywhere present. All three Persons of the Godhead — Father, Son and Holy Spirit — are also co-equal in power and glory, and all three are everywhere present. When viewed alone, each Person is fully God, co-equal and co-eternal. The differences in our three dimensions come by their relationships one to another. Each of our three dimensions forms a ninety degree angle with the other two. Similarly, the differences between the Persons of the Godhead are in their ministries, in their interrelationships one to another.

Just as our unit cube of space has three different yet identical and equal dimensions, so the Godhead is formed

of three Persons, each co-equal and co-eternal. We can note that all three dimensions are absolutely necessary to our cube of space. Take one dimension away, and our cube of space no longer exists. Similarly all three Persons of the Godhead are absolutely necessary for the existence of God. The three Persons are inseparable. The unit cube of space is analogous to the "unity" of God. There is one, and only one, true and living God. But the three dimensions of our unit cube of space are also analogous to the three Persons of the Godhead. Thus we have within our cube also an analogy of the "trinitarian" nature of God.

Next let's consider the "mathematics" of the Trinity. Many unbelievers look at the trinitarian mathematical concept something like this: God the Father is One, God the Son is One and God the Holy Spirit is One; therefore, we have one plus one plus one equals three. And they come to the conclusion that the Bible extends a concept of three Gods. But the mathematics of the Trinity is not one plus one plus one equals three. The correct mathematics of the Trinity can be seen from our unit cube of space. It has a length of one, a width of one, and a depth of one. But the three dimensions are orthogonal, (at 90 degree angles) and they cannot be arithmetically summed. They can be combined only as a product. The mathematics of the cube is one times one times one equals one. And that is the "mathematics" of the Trinity also: one Person times one Person times one Person equals one God.

When we consider space, we realize that each of the three dimensions is infinite in extent and each occupies the whole of space. Although it is possible to conceive of the one dimensional figure that we call a line, even if the one dimension were infinite in itself, it is really impossible for us to picture such a thing in our minds or to illustrate it to others without the use of a second dimension. When we draw a line, it's necessary to provide some "width" to the line in

order to make it visible to the eye. And, of course, when the second dimension is provided, our figure is no longer a line but rather it is now a plane. So the existence of one dimension can only be illustrated by a figure constructed in two dimensions: In other words, we could say that the second dimension must be present in order for the first dimension to be revealed. The reality of the dimension that we might label "length" can only be demonstrated by the simultaneous presence of "width."

But when both "length" and "width" are present, then the visualization of the physical truth of the existence of either, or both, dimensions is quite possible. The technique of two-dimensional representation of all physical reality is quite widely used. In fact, it is the best and most common method we have for representing physical things. Pictures of real things (whether they are drawings, paintings or photographs) are representations of three-dimensional things in two dimensions. Construction plans (blueprints) are two-dimensional representations of three-dimensional realities. We actually find it easier to visualize things in two dimensions than in three dimensions. We could say that the two-dimensional representation is both necessary and sufficient for the revelation of both the reality of one dimension and the interrelationships of three dimensions.

And here we have a very clear analogy to the triune nature of God. The reality of the nature of the one God eternally existing in three Persons is brought out in a very vivid way in this analogy. The one-dimensional line is analogous to God the eternal Father, and the third dimension (depth) is analogous to God the Holy Spirit. The reality of both God the Father and God the Holy Spirit is demonstrated and represented visibly by the presence of the Incarnate Word, the Son of God, the Second Person of the Godhead. So the second dimension of space, the dimension that we might call "width," is analogous to God the Son.

But remember a two-dimensional figure, a "plane," in itself also does not represent total physical reality. We can visualize a plane, but we can live in our universe only by the existence of the third dimension, "depth." We can only experience the real presence of God by the existence of the Holy Spirit. So there is a one to one correspondence between the dimensions of space and the Persons of the Godhead.

The description of the holy city, the New Jerusalem, by the Apostle John in Revelation 21:15-16 reminds us that Scripture always describes the place in which God chooses to make His presence known among men as having the dimensions of a perfect cube. The Holy of Holies of the tabernacle of Moses was a perfect cube. The Holy of Holies of the temple of Solomon and of the later rebuilt temple of Zerubbabel were both perfect cubes. And the enlarged temple of Herod that stood in the day of our Lord's earthly ministry had a Holy of Holies that was constructed as a perfect cube.

The New Jerusalem of the eternal state is the dwelling place of God as well as the dwelling place of redeemed men. And, as we might expect, it also is a perfect cube. "The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal."

6.

The "Triunity" of Time

"I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty." Rev. 1:8.

A remarkable picture of the triune Godhead is found in the physical entity of space. Our universe is a space-matter-time continuum — it is a "trinity." And each of the three members of this "physical trinity" is also a trinity. The next in normal order of the three universal entities of the physical world is matter, or energy. However, in order to properly understand the trinitarian nature of energy (the more general term of which matter is a special case), it is necessary to have a proper understanding of both space and time. So let's consider the entity of time first.

No doubt all of us have realized, perhaps subconsciously, that time is of a tri-partite nature. By the very form of the language we use, we constantly classify time into its three parts. Time is considered as future, present and past. Each of these three classifications of time is quite distinct in meaning; yet each encompasses the whole of time. All time has been future and all time will be past. And in the process of going from future to past, all time passes through the present. Here again we have a remarkable analogy to the trinitarian nature of the Godhead.

Revelation 1:8 brings out clearly the eternal being of God as well as the deity and the position in the Godhead of

our Lord Jesus Christ. He is the one who *is* in the present, who *was* in the past, who *is to come* in the future. God's eternity of being is actually spoken of in His very name that He gave to His chosen people Israel in the Old Testament. The name JHWH, which we often pronounce "Jehovah," is a form of the Hebrew verb of being. It includes the concept of eternal being within itself, and it could probably be translated as "who is, who was and who is to come." In Exodus 3:14 it is simply translated as "I AM." *"And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you."* And it is the word that is spoken by the Lord Jesus Christ in John 8:58: *"Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am."*

The eternal existence of God is brought out over and over again by Scriptures of both the Old and New Testaments. However, it seems often overlooked that such passages as Revelation 1:8 also appear to call attention to an analogy that exists between the triune nature of God and the triune nature of the universal entity, time.

Each category of time, future, present and past, is identical in essence; that is, each is precisely the same thing. However, each is distinct in subsistence; that is, it manifests itself in a different way. The differences fall into the area of the interrelationships between the categories, that is, we might say that the differences are in respective ministries. And, of course, the Word of God tells us that this is essentially the nature of the three Persons who eternally exist as the one God.

Our perception of time is only in the present. But, nevertheless, future time is real, just as past time is real. Both future and past time have significance to our perception of present time, and it is impossible to imagine a present without a past or future. This is like trying to imagine one-dimen-

sional space. Without all three categories of time — future, present and past — time could not exist at all.

Again these interrelationships of future, present and past time are closely analagous to the three Persons of the Godhead. The Father is the unseen source of all things, and we can see an analogy between future time and God the Father. From the Father proceeds God the Son, by whom God the Father is visibly revealed. From the Father and the Son proceeds God the Holy Spirit, who interprets and makes meaningful in actual experience both God the Son and God the Father. We can see that there is a direct analogy between the Son and the present and between the Holy Spirit and the past.

7.

The "Triunity" of Matter (Energy)

"Bless the LORD, O my soul. O LORD my God, thou art very great; thou art clothed with honour and majesty. Who coverest thyself with light as with a garment: who stretchest out the heavens like curtain: Who layeth the beams of his chambers in the waters: who maketh the clouds his chariot: who walketh upon the wings of the wind: Who maketh his angels spirits: his ministers a flaming fire: Who laid the foundations of the earth, that it should not be removed for ever."
Psalm 104:1-5.

Now we come to the final of the three entities of our universe: matter; or, in more general terminology, energy. We have previously noted that the entity of space is embodied and revealed in matter, and both are comprehended and manifested in terms of time. It should be obvious that matter is understood and comprehended in terms of the volume of space that it occupies and the increment of time for which it occupies that space.

Matter, of course, is just a special form of energy and the term "energy" is really broader and more comprehensive than the term "matter." In addition to matter, the term energy includes light, heat, sound, radiation, mechanical motion, etc. It is more appropriate to use the term "energy" to describe this particular entity. In discussing this aspect of our universe, the term energy will be used instead of the term matter.

Every manifestation of energy necessarily involves some form of motion. No matter what the form — light, heat, sound — all energy has velocity. The very presence of energy is always necessarily manifest in the form of motion, or velocity. Energy is defined as the ability to do work, and work is defined in terms of motion. If energy is present it will produce motion.

First there is energy, the invisible but powerful source, that produces and manifests itself in motion (motion is observed by velocity, which is the passing through a given space in a given time), and finally is experienced in terms of the effect produced. And here we see one way of viewing the trinitarian nature of energy. There is energy, motion and effect (or phenomena). Each is inseparably related to the other two, and each is universally present wherever there is matter (or any other form of energy). Matter is equivalent to energy, energy produces motion and motion produces phenomena.

And we again have a specific analogy to the three Persons of the Godhead. The unseen source of motion and phenomena is energy; both of the former proceed from the latter. So energy is analogous to God the Father, who is the invisible source from which proceeds the Son and the Holy Spirit. Motion is the entity of trinity that is detectable to the senses; it embodies and manifests energy. And, as such, motion is analogous to God the Son, who visibly reveals the Father to us. And, lastly, phenomena (or effect) proceeds from both energy and motion; and motion produced by energy is experienced in phenomena. So here we have an analogy to God the Holy Spirit. He proceeds from both the Father and the Son, and through Him we experience the reality of both the Father and the Son.

Every phenomenon has a beginning and an end in space and a beginning and an end in time and we can call each an "event." The definition of "event" includes all physical

phenomena, all mental phenomena, all biological phenomena and all spiritual phenomena. A solar system, a mountain, a book, a person, a thought or a prayer, all are "events." All involve the entity of energy, and all have a beginning and an end in space and time.

Events, however, are not self-generating. In order for an event to occur in space and time, there must be a "cause." The cause itself also has a cause, and this goes on back through a chain of causes and events to the beginning of the creation. The "results," or what we might say "consequences," of every event continue to spread throughout space and time, causing other events as long as this creation, our universe, remains. Therefore, each event is inseparably linked to its cause and to its consequence. The cause is the invisible source of the event, and the consequence is that which proceeds from both the cause and the event. And here we have the basic trinity that is such a remarkable analogy to the trinity of the God of creation.

The Father is the unseen source, and He is visibly manifest in the Son; and both the Father and the Son are known and understood by the Spirit — Father, Son and Holy Spirit: "cause, event and consequence."

Our universe is a "trinity of trinities;" made up of the interaction of space, time and energy (or matter). Take away one, and you have nothing. Space is three-dimensional: length, width and depth. Time is tri-partite: future, present and past. And matter (energy) in a broad sense is cause, effect and consequence. Or we can consider it also as energy, motion and phenomena.

Throughout God's great creation we see this recurring triune relationship of source, manifestation and meaning. These relationships are basic and obvious and although many of us may not often think of them in this analytical way, they are nevertheless understood relationships of the creation.

8.

The Manifestation of Three Persons of God

"Now when all the people were baptized, it came to pass, that Jesus also being baptized, and praying, the heaven was opened, And the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him, and a voice came from heaven, which said, Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased."
Luke 3:21-22.

In the scene of our Lord's baptism, the trinitarian nature of the Godhead is clearly revealed. We have the manifest presence of all three Persons of God as our Lord Jesus Christ is baptized by John in the River Jordan. God the Son is present in the flesh. God the Holy Spirit takes on the visible form of a dove as He descends upon the Son of God. And, at the same time, the voice of the unseen Father speaks from Heaven: "Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased." Father, Son and Holy Spirit — all are present. But also in this scene all are inseparably related — the three Persons are one true and living God. The triunity of God, in this scene, is clearly brought forth for all to see.

We have seen that there is a basic triunity that pervades all nature and (if we are at all observant) we cannot escape an awareness of this fact. The universe as a whole consists of space, energy (matter) and time. Space is three-dimensional: length, width and depth. Time is tri-partite: future, present and past. And energy (including matter) is ultimately tri-partite also. In its broadest sense, it is cause, event and consequence.

The things that have been brought out in this study do not prove, in the strict legal sense and to the satisfaction of the natural man's finite mind, that the Creator of this universe is a triune God. But the Bible, God's written Word, clearly reveals God's triune nature. And with the remarkable picture that God has given us in the creation, we certainly should not stumble over God's written revelation. It would seem that this really should be the natural way to think of the God of creation.

Nevertheless, even in Bible-believing, fundamental Christian groups, the so-called doctrine of the Trinity has been considered difficult. This doctrine has also been a focal point of many errors throughout the history of the Christian church. One error that dates back to very earliest centuries (and that crops up again and again) is that the Holy Spirit is a mere "influence" and not a living Person who is God. Many sincere Christians have a tendency to think of Him in this way, even though outwardly they voice the Scriptural teaching that He is a divine Person.

Another common error is that the Lord Jesus Christ is regarded as inferior and subordinate to God the Father. By some He is even regarded as a created being, and this position is a clear denial of the Scriptural teaching that He is eternal God. This, of course, is a denial of the person of "the Lord who bought us," which Peter called a "damnable heresy." II Peter 2:1. The denial of the full deity and of the eternal existence of our Lord Jesus Christ is a mark of nearly all the cultic religions of our day, those which claim a link with Christianity but which deny most of the cardinal doctrines of the Christian faith. And, of course, there is another error that regards the concept of the trinity as simply different "modes," or manifestations, of a single Person who is God. But, again, God's written Word condemns all these concepts.

Let's ask the question, is the teaching of the triunity of

God important? This could be answered with another question. How else could one conceive of our redemption being accomplished apart from the existence of a triune God? It is pretty hard to conceive of God becoming a man, living a perfect life, dying as a perfect sacrifice for the sin of the world and being raised from the dead for our justification, without a knowledge of God's triune nature. All the basic concepts of God's perfect plan for redemption are wrapped up in this doctrine. One who rejects the doctrine of the Trinity will also be found to reject the doctrine of substitutional atonement and all the other concepts of salvation by God's grace alone. So the doctrine of the triunity of God is extremely important.

9.

The Eternal Son

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not." John 1:1-5.

The "Word," the "Logos," spoken of by John is the Lord Jesus Christ. This identification is made clear in John 1:14. *"And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth."* It is none other than the Lord Jesus Christ, God the Son, the second Person of the triune Godhead, of whom John spoke in these opening words of his inspired book. "In the beginning was the Lord Jesus Christ (God the Son), and the Lord Jesus Christ (God the Son) was with God, and the Lord Jesus Christ (God the Son) was God. The same was in the beginning with God."

John's inspired words forever confirm the deity and the eternal existence of the One who walked the earth for some thirty-three years as Jesus of Nazareth. When the universe had its beginning, God the Son already was. It is the same beginning mentioned by Moses in Genesis 1:1 that John had in view here. The opening verse of the Bible contains the words: *"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."* And the opening verse of John's Gospel assures us that at the time that all created things had their beginning,

the Son of God, Jesus Christ, already was. He, as the eternal God, existed in eternity past. "In the beginning was (already existed) the Word."

But the Word was not alone in the Godhead: "and the Word was with God." The One who was born into the world as that little Babe in Bethlehem was not alone in eternity past. He was with God. The first part of John 1:1 assures the reader that the Living Word (the Lord Jesus Christ) already existed prior to the time when all created things were created. This, in itself, is an attribute of deity. God the Son is not a created being. But the second part of the verse also assures the reader that this eternally existing One experienced fellowship in the Godhead, even before the time of the creation. "And the Word was with God." Other Persons of the eternal Godhead were also present in eternity past, and the Living Word experienced fellowship with Them.

But lest the reader might think that the Eternal Word was in any way inferior or subordinate to the other Persons of the Godhead, John ended the first verse of his Gospel with these words: "And the Word *was* God."

The Living Word, our Lord Jesus Christ, was fully God — co-equal and co-eternal with God the Father and God the Holy Spirit. He was and is fully God. His unchangeableness as God the Son is also assured by John's words. "The same was in the beginning with God."

Even in the incarnation, the second Person of the Godhead was unchanged. His eternal deity remained the same, both before and after the human nature was added at the time of the incarnation. The same Person of God who walked the earth as man was the God who in eternity past enjoyed fellowship with God the Father and God the Holy Spirit.

Not only that, but God the Son, the very One who went to the cross to pay the penalty for sin, was the active Creator

of the universe. *"All things were made by him, and without him was not anything made that was made."* Father, Son and Holy Spirit; all are eternally One omnipotent, omniscient omnipresent God.

The End