Holy, Holy Holy Trinity

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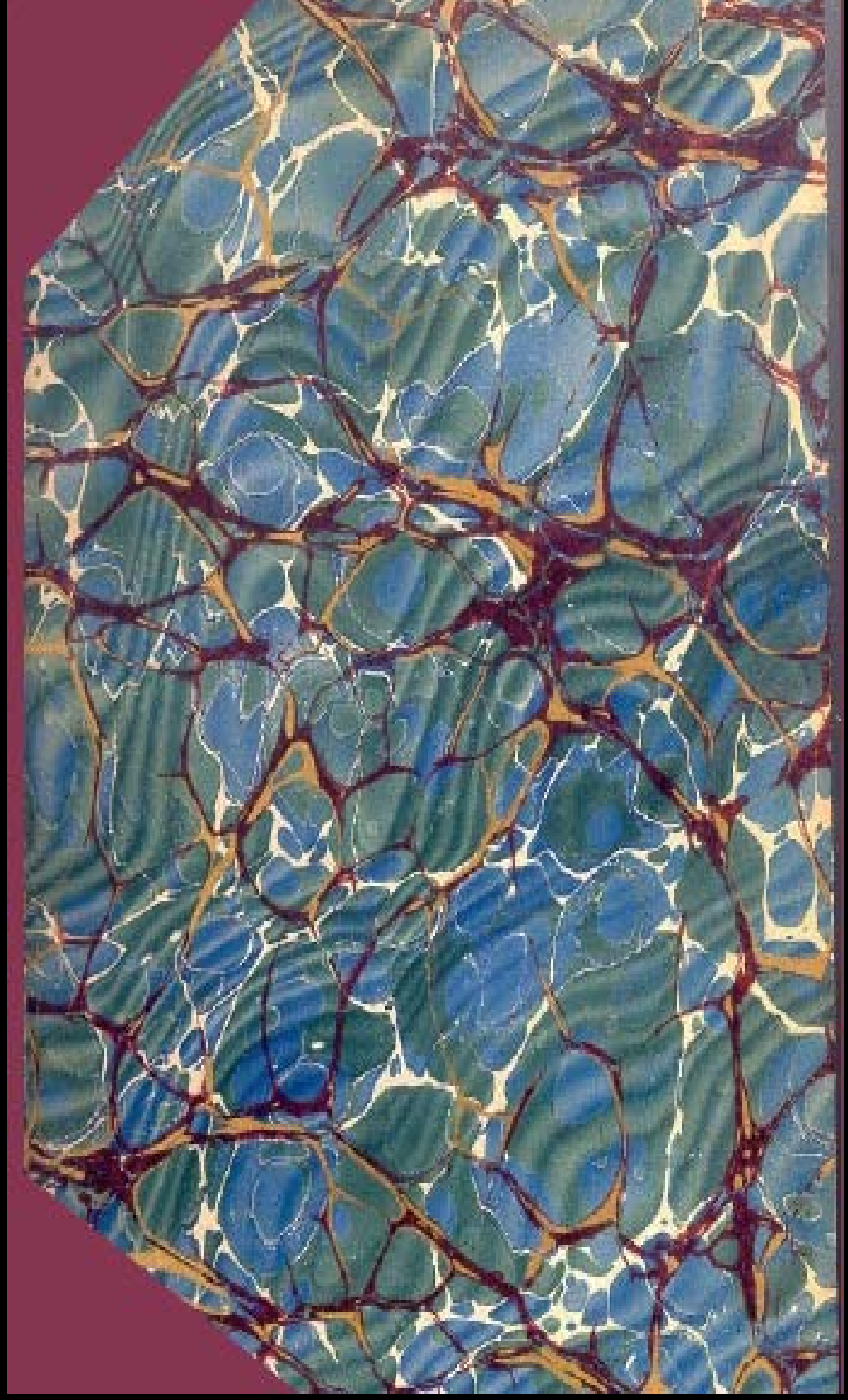
Lionel D C Hartley



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Holy, Holy, Holy Trinity
Lionel Hartley, PhD
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(Readers are encouraged to look these references up in their own Bibles)
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Introduction

Revelation 4:8-11 (KJV), “And the four beasts had each of them six wings about him; and they were full of eyes within: and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come. And when those beasts give glory and honour and thanks to him that sat on the throne, who liveth for ever and ever. The four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on

the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying, Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created”.

Chapter 1:
Worship

Some go to church to take a walk, some go to church to laugh and talk. Some go to church to meet their friends, some go to church their time to spend. Some through habit go to there weekly, others more often, seeking variety. Some go to church to hear the preaching, some go to church to question the teaching. Some go to church to meet each other, some go there a fault to cover. Some go

to church to court a lover, others go to chide a brother. Some go to church to strike a bargain, some go there to seek for pardon. Some go to church to see their children, some go to church to flee their children! Some go to church ‘cause they feel proud, some go to church to sing out loud. Some go to church to rest from labour, some go just to impress a neighbour. Some go to church to doze and nod, the wise go to church to worship God!

Read these words by Reginald Heber:

Holy, holy, holy! Lord God

Almighty! Early in the morning our song shall rise to Thee; holy, holy, holy, merciful and mighty! God in three Persons, blessed Trinity!

Holy, holy, holy! Angels adore Thee, casting down their golden crowns around the glassy sea; thousands and ten thousands worship low before Thee, which wert, and art, and evermore shalt be.

Holy, holy, holy! Though the darkness hide Thee, though the eye of sinful man Thy glory may not see; only Thou art holy; there is none beside Thee, perfect in

power, in love, and purity.

Holy, holy, holy! Lord God Almighty! All Thy works shall praise Thy name, in earth, and sky, and sea; holy, holy, holy; merciful and mighty! God in three Persons, blessed Trinity!

This poem (now a hymn) focuses entirely on God, and we will make reference to it more than once throughout this treatise. Many hymns are as much about us as they are about God. They concentrate on our relationship and our response to God or ask for his help and guidance in our lives.

These are all wonderful and

important things to reflect on and to sing about, but sometimes it is good to just stop - and find the time, not to think about ourselves at all, but to just focus on, and worship, God for who He is, and not for what he can do in our lives.

And that is what this hymn does so beautifully and so that is what we can try to do each day - to take a little time out and delve a little more deeply into who God is.

These lyrics were written by Reginald Heber 200 years ago and are based on John’s visions of heaven in the book of Revelation, at the very end of the bible. John’s

vision shows God symbolically sitting on a throne surrounded by heavenly creatures and people from every part of the world who are all worshipping Him and saying “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come”.

And Heber picks up on this phrase and much of the other imagery from Revelation in this hymn to help us to better understand the glory, the holiness and the love of God.

Reginald Heber was born in 1783 into a wealthy educated family. He was a clever child, translating

Latin texts into English when he was just 7, and later winning poetry prizes whilst at Oxford University. He was ordained aged 24 and for the next 16 years was rector of his family's church in Hodnet, near Shrewsbury in a role he would later describe as being "a half-way station between a parson and a squire".

But he always had a bigger vision both of God, as we see in this poem/hymn that he wrote whilst at Hodnet, and of God's call on his life. And so, in 1825, 44-year-old Reginald Heber and his young family set sail for India where he would be appointed the

second bishop of Calcutta.

And this rôle certainly met his dreams of having a bigger impact for God – He was moving from a parish of a few thousand people in Shropshire to a diocese covering many millions of people. As bishop of Calcutta, he was not just responsible for the church in that city, but for all of modern-day India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Australia and even significant parts of Southern Africa. It’s perhaps not surprising then that he died utterly exhausted only 3 years later!

But in that short time, he

achieved so much, travelling extensively, absorbing and appreciating much of the Indian culture, establishing a theological college and ordaining the first Indian national as a priest. And he died leaving us this wonderful hymn to the majesty and holiness of God. It was written specifically to focus on one of the great mysteries and most misunderstood aspects of God’s character. That He is, as the hymn says, “God in three persons, blessed Trinity”

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Chapter 2:
Really?

Theologian Andre Holtslag has called our understanding of the Trinity, "The most important doctrine [that] you rarely think about." The author of 'Pilgrim's Progress', John Bunyan believed in the Trinity simply because the Bible says so. In relation to the Trinity doctrine, he wrote, "Therefore know…, that the Word, if it saith and expresseth that this or that is

so and so, as to the matter in hand, thou art bound and obliged, both by the name, profession, and the truth, unto which thou hast joined thyself, to assent to, confess, and acknowledge the same, even then when thy carnal reason will not stoop thereto.”

Now the Trinity is quite a hard concept for us to get our heads around: the Bible is explicit, right from the very beginning, that there is, and can only ever be, ONE God and yet it then consistently presents that one God as three very distinct and different persons: God the Father, God the Son (Jesus) and God the Holy Spirit. It says

very clearly that the Father is God, the Son is God and the Spirit is God.

Jesus tells his disciples to baptise in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit (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) and if you go to a church where they say a creed they will say something along the lines of “I believe in the Father, I believe in the Son and I believe in the Holy Spirit”

Sir Thomas Trenton built a

triangular lodge in Northamptonshire in England in 1590. It was intended as an expression of his faith, a ‘sermon in stone’. Everything about the little house is designed with the number three to symbolize the Trinity. The building is thirty-three feet high and has three stories with three windows on each side. Each of the three sides represents one member of the Trinity. There are three biblical quotations, with thirty-three characters each. It is the most unusual expression of the Trinity that you are likely to see.

So, what is all this about? How can God be three but also one?

Many Christians are tempted to leave this in the ‘too hard’ basket. I have some sympathy with that and we certainly will not be able to do much more than scratch the surface today, but I believe even if we only manage a little progress, we will, like Reginald Heber, be more able to see and understand just what an amazing God we have.

A. W. Tozer (1897-1963) wrote, “A popular belief among Christians divides the work of God between the three Persons, giving a specific part to each: creation to the Father, redemption to the Son, and regeneration to the Holy

Spirit. This is partly true but not wholly so, for God cannot so divide himself that one Person works while another is inactive. In the Scriptures the three Persons are shown to act in harmonious unity in all the mighty works that are wrought throughout the universe.”

Chapter 3:
What’s in a Name

Trinidad is an island of 1,980 square miles or 3,200 square kilometres, with less than one million inhabitants of mixed races. The Island has a colourful history. The British took possession of the island in 1797 and administered it until 1962, when it was granted independence. It was originally discovered by Christopher Columbus on his third voyage across the Atlantic. At the

commencement of that voyage he had vowed to dedicate his first landfall to the Holy Trinity hence the name ‘La Trinidad’, which means in Spanish, ‘The Trinity’.

Tertullian, the first notable Latin theologian, coined the word Trinity about the year 200 AD.

Because the word trinity is not found in the Bible, Advent church pioneers chose different terminology. EJ Waggoner was challenged, perhaps rightly, on his views of the Godhead. However in the Present Truth magazine, Feb 6 1902, he wrote, “You ask what we teach about the Trinity. Inasmuch

as we find no such expression in the Scriptures, we do not teach anything about it. But as to the Being of God, — the Godhead, — Divinity as revealed in the Father, the Word ([that is] the Son), and the Holy Spirit, we believe and teach just what the Bible says, and nothing else. No man can by searching, find out God. No creature can understand the Almighty to perfection. The finite mind cannot comprehend infinity."

There is a great deal about God that we cannot understand. John Wesley very appropriately said, "Bring me a worm that can comprehend a man, and then I will

show you a man that can comprehend the Triune God”.

Lewis Sperry Chafer’s textbook on systematic theology says, “The doctrine of the Trinity is so complex yet so simple as to demand a divine origin for the Bible. The Trinity is three persons in one God. Stated, it is simple, yet the explanation has evaded man since the subject was undertaken for study.

We cannot explain the how of the Trinity only the fact of it. The work each member of the Trinity is involved in, is also very complicated — the Fatherhood of

God, or the perfections of Christ. Man cannot adequately explain these things so how could he devise them?”

Probably, the biggest challenge when trying to understand the Trinity is simply the limitations of both our language and our experience. Even the theologian Augustine said “When the question is asked: three what? Human language labours under great poverty of speech”. He even he concluded that we use the words ‘three persons’ to describe the Trinity simply because there aren’t any better ones and not because they really capture the full truth.

In the same way we have no reference to anything else where one plus one plus one equals one. Many analogies have been used over the years, such as a 3-in-1 dish-washer tablet which has 3 distinct sections, each one having different ingredients and doing a different job, but all 3 making just one tablet. Another uses the illustration of water as a solid ice, liquid water or vapour steam, but still all H2O.

A certain Church Statement on Marriage says, “Arising from the diversity of the two human genders, the oneness of marriage images in a singular way the unity

within diversity of the Godhead”.

About the year 441AD, Saint Patrick of Ireland used the three-leaf clover or shamrock leaf as an example of the Trinity citing it was but one leaf yet consisting of three leaves.

It does sort of help, but I think you’ll agree that it doesn’t really get us to the full depths of what the Trinity is!

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Chapter 4:
One God

Every faithful Jew is familiar with the Shama as found in Deuteronomy 6:4, “Shema Yisrael, Adonai Eloheinu, Adonai ehad” = Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord. The word here for ‘one’ is ‘ehad’. It is the same word used in Genesis 2:24 (Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.) as referred to by

Jesus in Matthew 19 and Mark 10 and by Paul in 1 Corinthians 6 and Ephesians 5, “Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be *one* flesh” (emphasis mine).

The Septuagent, Vulgate, Syriac, Arabic, and Samaritan texts all read, “they *two* shall be *one* flesh” (emphasis mine). In contrast, when the Bible talks about a uniqueness, a single-oneness it uses either ‘*yahid*’ or ‘*eesh*’ which is a contraction of ‘*en-oshe*’ as in Genesis 10:5 (By these were the isles of the Gentiles divided in their lands; every *one* after his

tongue).(emphasis mine)

The Hebrew word for God, ‘*Elohim*’, in its plural form occurs about 2, 500 times in the Old Testament, while the singular form (mostly referring to false gods) only occurs 250 times. At the burning bush it was Elohim (plural) who spoke to Moses. yet Elohim did not say, “We are that we are,” but “I am that I am” (Exodus 3:14 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).

One cannot escape the fact that

all through the Bible God is presented as a plurality and yet as one, as having both diversity and unity. This is unique among all the world's religions.

In the end, if God is small enough to be understood, He will not be big enough to be worshipped.

The author John Arrowsmith confessed, "The Trinity is a mystery which my faith embraces as revealed in the Word, but my reason cannot fathom".

Vernon Grounds wrote, "Explain the Trinity? We can't even begin. We can only accept it as a mystery,

disclosed in Scripture. It should be no surprise that the triune Being of God baffles our finite minds. We should be surprised, rather, if we *could* understand the nature of our Creator. He would be a two-bit deity, not the fathomless Source of all reality".

The erroneous belief that God is a single being is held by both Moslems and orthodox Jews, who insist that Allah and Jehovah are single entities. It is also held by pseudo-Christian cults such as the Jehovah's Witnesses and Mormons, and by various atypical Christian groups who also deny the deity of Christ. Some Pentecostals

claim that God is a single being and that Father, Son and Holy Spirit are God's three "titles" or "offices."

That God must have both unity and diversity is clear. The Allah of Islam and the Jehovah of Jehovah's Witnesses and Jews, for instance, is incomplete in himself, unable to experience love, fellowship and communion before creating beings with whom he could have these experiences. The Bible says that "God is love." But the God of Islam and Judaism could not be love in and of himself. For whom could he truly love if he was alone before

creation?

The belief that God is three persons existing eternally in One God is called ‘Trinitarianism’. The belief that God is a single entity, called ‘Unitarianism’, was first formulated in the early church around 220AD by a Libyan theologian named Sabellius. He attempted to retain Biblical language concerning Father, Son and Holy Spirit without acknowledging the Triune nature of God.

Sabellius claimed that God existed as a single being who manifested Himself in three

activities, modes or aspects: as Father in the creation, as Son in redemption, and as Holy Spirit in prophecy and sanctification. This heresy, though condemned by the vast majority of Christians, survives to this day.

Even Martin Luther subscribed, in part, to this belief. Even though he wrote, “The Creed confesses three persons as comprehended in one divine essence, each one, however, retaining his distinct personality”, he lowered his guard when he added, “To the Father we ascribe the work of creation; to the Son the work of redemption; to the Holy Spirit the power to forgive

sins, to gladden, to strengthen, to transport from death to life eternal”.

Pope John the 23rd declared, “The Trinity attributes to the Father those works of the Divinity in which power excels, to the Son those in which wisdom excels, and those in which love excels to the Holy Ghost”.

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Chapter 5:
Are They God?

One Trinitarian doctrine called ‘Arianism’ was promoted by Arius who lived around 250-336AD. Arianism denied the divinity of Christ and focused on the dissimilarity between the Father and Son. Arianism suggested that the Son was created and, hence, had a beginning unlike the eternal Father who always existed. Arians believed the Son was subordinate

to the Father; that he earned his rank from participation in grace or adoption by God. Arianism is still upheld by some faith communities.

Historian Elise M Bender expands our understanding by saying, “Around 320, Arius’s beliefs were questioned by Bishop Alexander of Alexandria. Later, Arius was excommunicated by the entire Egyptian episcopate. Athanasius, successor to Bishop Alexander, also protested against Arianism. Despite these setbacks, Arius gained support from Eusebius of Caesarea and Eusebius of Nicomedia during his travels to Palestine, Syria, and Asia Minor.

The Arian controversy led to a serious division between the East and West. The Emperor Constantine succeeded in suppressing Arianism for a brief time by summoning the Council of Nicaea I (325). After Constantine, the popularity of Arianism rose again because of support from emperors Constantius II (337- 361) and Valens (364-378). After Valen's death, the threat of Arianism subsided with Theodosius, who summoned a council in Constantinople (381) that sealed the faith of Nicaea for all the Church."

In a devotional reading, Margaret

G Payne said, “We do not worship a God who set the world in motion and then disappeared. We do not worship a prophet who was put to death. We do not worship a spirit that drifts in a realm beyond our reach. We worship the mysterious, intermingled partnership of a creator God, revealed to us through Jesus Christ, who gives faith and power through the Holy Spirit. These three persons of God are one God: uncreated, infinite, eternal, equal, and almighty. Yet God is as close to us as our breath and loves each of us with no strings attached. It is a mystery”.

But despite all these challenges,

it is still worth exploring because the Trinity is at the core of virtually all that matters in Christianity, the heart of the Trinity is the love and relationship that exists between the Father, the Son and the Spirit.

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Chapter 6:
A Lonely God

John Hull said, “The Trinity … is a social Trinity, the life of a social God. … The social God offers us a model for human community. If God was a solitary God, so to speak, it would be too much like the rule of a benevolent dictator, and if it was a binary, just two persons, the Father and the Son, this would suggest a kind of mutual preoccupation of one with the other like two human lovers

who only have eyes for each other. But three is a society.”

This means that God has never been, and never will be, a lonely God, who somehow needed to create the universe to find relationship and love. He already has perfect relationship and perfect love within the Trinity between Father, Son and Spirit. He therefore does not need more. He is complete already.

And understanding that fact is really important because it means that God had no need to create the universe or you and me, because he was and is already complete.

That means that both our creation and our redemption, Jesus saving us, are not things done by God because he had to or because something was missing, but they are simply acts of pure grace, of God's free, eternal and infinite love.

God created us and then saved us because he chose to, because he wanted to express his love and not because he was lonely or because he needed to. Nothing has been pushed on God.

We also saw much more of God in the hymn 'Holy, Holy, Holy'. We saw his four key attributes - his

glory, his lordship, his holiness and his love… all of which are essential to who He is and what make Him such a wonderful God.

CS Lewis made an observation that personalises what we have been saying. He wrote, “An ordinary simple Christian kneels down to say his prayers.... But if he is a Christian, he knows that what is prompting him to pray is also God: God, so to speak, inside him. But he also knows that all his real knowledge of God comes through Christ, the man who was God — that Christ is standing beside him, helping him to pray, praying for him.”

“You see what is happening. God is the thing to which he is praying — the goal he is trying to reach. God is also the thing inside him that is pushing him on — the motive power. God is also the road or bridge along which he is being pushed to that goal. So that the whole threefold life of the three-personal Being is actually going on in that ordinary little bedroom where an ordinary man is saying his prayers.”

In the second verse of the hymn ‘Holy, holy, holy’, Reginald Heber picks up on John’s vision of cherubim and seraphim, types of angels, falling down before God,

and of saints laying down their crowns before him in worship.

“Holy, holy, holy! Angels adore Thee, casting down their golden crowns around the glassy sea; thousands and ten thousands worship low before Thee, which wert, and art, and evermore shalt be.” In this hymn, Heber paints us a picture of each of God’s attributes, starting with God’s glory.

Now ‘glory’ is a word that is used a lot in the Bible, but can be a little tricky to tie down. It points us towards God’s divine majesty, his sheer “Godness” if you like.

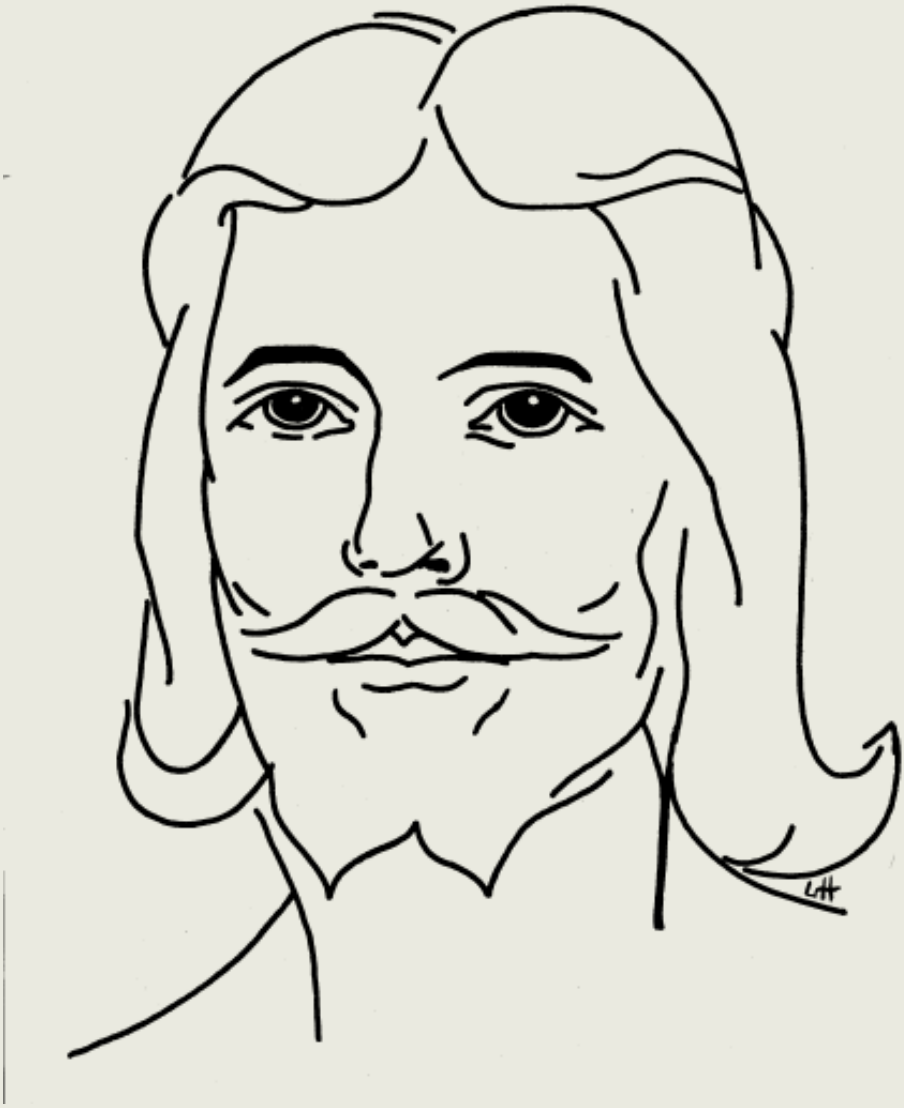
When theologians think about this they often use the word ‘transcendent’. That means he is beyond our reality, beyond our understanding, beyond our comprehension, beyond anything we can see and experience here on earth.

God’s glory is that he is infinite, without limit and with no dependence on anything or anyone. He was there in the beginning and will be there in the end. He will never change. He is before all things and he is above all things.

He is also Lord of all things. This

lordship shows us that he is all-powerful, all knowing and present everywhere throughout time and space.

The Gospel is simply wonderful and wonderfully simple. Yet some pedantic theologians, it seems, try to complicate it with arcane words like omnipotent (all-powerful), omniscient (all knowing) and omnipresent (present everywhere at once). Not to mention omnicompetent (able to deal with all matters), omnifarious (varied in all his ways) and omnium gatherum (mysterious in all his ways).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Chapter 7:
A Holy God

And He is Holy.

We explore God's holiness when we sing hymns such as Stuart Kine's 'How Great Thou Art'. It means he is separate, above and apart from all other beings. He is perfect, pure and good. There are no grey areas. And as we saw in 'How great Thou Art', God's holiness means that he seeks

justice and opposes anything that is not equally holy.

Because of God’s holiness there will be judgement. But because of God’s holiness, his glory and his lordship, there is also his fourth attribute, and that is God’s perfect love.

It is unconditional love that lies at the heart of the Trinity and it is unconditional love that lies at the heart of God’s relationship with us. It is for love that we are created, and it was by love that we were saved, and it is with love that we live our lives with our God. It is to this God that we find it is our duty,

privilege and joy to worship,
simply for His own sake.

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Chapter 8:
Beyond Understanding

The author King Duncan tells us that St. Augustine was walking along the seashore one day while pondering the doctrine of the Trinity - Father, Son, and the Holy Ghost. He seemed to hear a voice saying, “Pick up one of the large sea shells there by the shore.” So he picked it up. Then the voice said, “Now

pour the ocean into the shell.” And he said, “Lord, I can’t do that.” And the voice answered, “Of course not. In the same way, how can your small, finite mind ever hold and understand the mystery of the eternal, infinite, triune God?”

A gentleman passing a church with the statesman Daniel Webster asked him, “How can you reconcile the doctrine of the Trinity with reason?” The statesman replied by asking, “Do you understand the arithmetic of heaven?”

The poet Frederick William Faber penned these lines:

“Timeless, spaceless, single, lonely, / Yet sublimely Three, / Thou art grandly, always, only / God is Unity! Lone in grandeur, lone in glory, / Who shall tell thy wondrous story? [Awe-filled] Trinity”.

Let’s reflect on the amazing infinite God that we have, • A God who is Father, Son and Holy Spirit • A God of Glory who is infinite, unchanging and worthy of our worship • A God who is Lord, who is all powerful, all knowing and above over all things • A God who is the Holy one, perfect, exalted and separate, and • A God of love, who is everlasting, gracious and

redeeming.

That is the God we worship: glorious, holy, perfect and full of love, or as Reginald Heber so beautifully put it: ‘Holy, holy, holy! Lord God Almighty; only thou art holy; there is none beside thee perfect in power, in love, and purity’.

Patrick Appleford wrote, “Holiest Trinity, perfect in unity, / Bind in thy love every nation and race; / May we adore thee for time and eternity, / Father, Redeemer, and Spirit of grace”.

Chapter 9:
Who is God the Father?

Let's suppose an artist sent you a picture of himself that he had painted. The picture would tell you something about him, give you a glimpse of his knowledge and ability. However, if he sent you a long descriptive letter explaining his innermost thoughts and feelings, you would begin to feel you really knew him.

And finally, if he decided to send to you his son who possessed the same features as he and was like him in ability and character, this would reveal the father to you much better. (John 1:18 - The only begotten son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him”)

Psalm 68:5 (He is a father of the fatherless.)

A certain church has this statement as a fundamental of faith: God the eternal Father is the Creator, Source, Sustainer, and Sovereign of all creation. He is just and holy, merciful and gracious,

slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness. The qualities and powers exhibited in the Son and the Holy Spirit are also revelations of the Father.

Genesis 1:1 (In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.)

Revelation 4:11 (Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.); 1 Corinthians 15:28 (And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto

him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.); John 3:16 (For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.); 1 John 4:8 (He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.); 1 Timothy 1:17 (Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen.); Exodus 34:6 (And the Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed, The Lord, The Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth.);

Exodus 34:7 (Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation.); John 14:9 (Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Show us the Father?)

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Chapter 10:
Who is Jesus?

Preamble: *Obviously this brief book on the Trinity is not the vehicle for an extensive treatise on the identity of Jesus and so your author would refer you to other writings on the subject, specifically the Gospels.*

The author Brett Blair has us ponder, “Imagine how the folks in Nazareth felt when they heard that an anointed

prophet, maybe even the messiah, was coming to town. They went to synagogue that morning with great anticipation but they were disappointed. ‘Where is this Messiah? They promised us a Messiah? That man’s no messiah. He’s a common carpenter. That’s Mary’s Son and the brother of James, Joseph, Judas, and Simon. Aren’t his sister’s still living right here with us today?’

If I had been there, I too, would have been disappointed. My line of questioning would have been the same: What gives him the right to stand up in church and teach us? After all, he’s no different than

me.”

A certain church has this statement as a fundamental of faith: God the eternal Son became incarnate in Jesus Christ. Through Him all things were created, the character of God is revealed, the salvation of humanity is accomplished, and the world is judged. Forever truly God, He became also truly man, Jesus the Christ. He was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He lived and experienced temptation as a human being, but perfectly exemplified the righteousness and love of God. By His miracles He manifested God’s

power and was attested as God's promised Messiah. He suffered and died voluntarily on the cross for our sins and in our place, was raised from the dead, and ascended to minister in the heavenly sanctuary in our behalf. He will come again in glory for the final deliverance of His people and the restoration of all things.

(See also John 1:1-3, 14; Colossians 1:15-19; John 10:30; 14:9; Romans 6:23; 2 Corinthians 5:17-19; John 5:22; Luke 1:35; Philippians. 2:5-11; Hebrews 2:9-18; 1 Corinthians 15:3, 4; Hebrews 8:1, 2; John 14:1-3.)

Jesus is God’s Son - Mark 1:1 (The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God).

Jesus is God - John 1:1-2 (In the beginning was the Word [referring to Jesus – see verse 14], and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2) The same was in the beginning with God.) And Hebrews 1:8-10 (…unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom. 9 Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows. 10

And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands) Paul calls Jesus God (Gk. kurios) - Philippians 2:11 And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.)

Jesus is our creator – John 1:1-3 (In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2) The same was in the beginning with God. 3) All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.)

Colossians 1:16 (For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him.)

And Hebrews 1 and Hebrews 2:1 (God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, 2) Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; 3) Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by

the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; 4) Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they. 5) For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son? 6) And again, when he bringeth in the first-begotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him. 7) And of the angels he saith, Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of

fire. 8) But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom. 9) Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows. 10) And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands: 11) They shall perish; but thou remainest; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment; 12) And as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: but thou art the same,

and thy years shall not fail. 13) But to which of the angels said he at any time, Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool? 14) Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation? 2:1) Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip.

This passage also tells us that Jesus is not an angel but above (over) the angels (elsewhere referred to as the archangel)

An evil spirit recognises him as

God - Mark 1:21-28 (And they went into Capernaum; and straightway on the Sabbath day he entered into the synagogue, and taught. 22) And they were astonished at his doctrine: for he taught them as one that had authority, and not as the scribes. 23) And there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit; and he cried out, 24) Saying, Let us alone; what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God. 25) And Jesus rebuked him, saying, Hold thy peace, and come out of him. 26)

And when the unclean spirit had torn him, and cried with a loud voice, he came out of him. 27) And they were all amazed, insomuch that they questioned among themselves, saying, What thing is this? what new doctrine is this? for with authority commandeth he even the unclean spirits, and they do obey him. 28) And immediately his fame spread abroad throughout all the region round about Galilee.)

Jesus' challenged the disciples question his identity - Mark 4:35-41 (And the same day, when the even was come, he saith unto them, Let us pass over unto the other side. 36 And when they had

sent away the multitude, they took him even as he was in the ship. And there were also with him other little ships. 37 And there arose a great storm of wind, and the waves beat into the ship, so that it was now full. 38 And he was in the hinder part of the ship, asleep on a pillow: and they awake him, and say unto him, Master, carest thou not that we perish? 39 And he arose, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. 40 And he said unto them, Why are ye so fearful? how is it that ye have no faith? 41 And they feared

exceedingly, and said one to another, What manner of man is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?)

Peter acknowledges even though hid didn’t understand - Mark 8:27-30 (And Jesus went out, and his disciples, into the towns of Caesarea Philippi: and by the way he asked his disciples, saying unto them, Whom do men say that I am? 28 And they answered, John the Baptist: but some say, Elias; and others, One of the prophets. 29 And he saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Peter answereth and saith unto him, Thou art the Christ. 30 And he

charged them that they should tell no man of him.)

A Roman officer recognised Jesus' identity - Mark 15:39 (And when the centurion, which stood over against him, saw that he so cried out, and gave up the ghost, he said, Truly this man was the Son of God).

In the fifth century the theologian Nestorius claimed that there were two separate persons within Jesus, a divine person and a human person. Mary was the mother of the human Jesus but not the divine Jesus. The inference of Nestorius' claims about Mary was to

undermine the integrity of the person of Jesus. The Council of Ephesus in 431AD reinforced the view that Christ is fully human as well as being fully divine.

Jesus reminds us that He is a Comforter when He refers to the Holy Spirit as “another Comforter” (John 14:16 And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever)

Jesus, as God, is love - 1 John 4:7,8 (Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. 8) He that

loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.) and 1 John 4:16 (And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.)

Many years ago when author Steven Mosley was teaching at an English school in Japan, he met a young woman named Yasuko. Yasuko's family had a history of abandonment and broken relationships. Her father died when she was young, and her mother, who had never experienced love and security, was not able to pass on these qualities to Yasuko. After Yasuko became a Christian, she

struggled to understand the perfect love of her Heavenly Father.

One day, Yasuko ran into one of her father's old friends. He began sharing with Yasuko one very special memory. Her father had often thrown wild parties at which he became quite drunk. Whenever he got drunk, he would start giving away whatever food he found in the pantry. This was right after the war, when jobs were scarce and hunger and poverty stalked their town. Most of the men at these parties would have starved if it hadn't been for Yasuko's father's drunken generosity.

After the man left, Yasuko's mother told her the truth: Yasuko's father never drank alcohol. In Japanese culture, accepting charity is a form of dishonour. If Yasuko's father had given his friends food, they would have been too ashamed to accept it. But under the guise of his "drunken" parties, he was able to help his friends and keep them from "losing face." He had made himself look foolish in order to protect his friends' pride. In her father's sacrifice, Yasuko began to understand the love of a God who gave up His own power and died to save us from our sins.

In chemistry, Jesus turned water

to wine; in biology, Jesus was born without normal conception; in physics, Jesus disproved the law of gravity when He ascended into Heaven; in economics, Jesus disproved the law of diminishing return by feeding 5000 men with two fish and five loaves of bread; in medicine, Jesus cured the sick and the blind without administering a single dose of drugs; in history, Jesus is the beginning and the end; in government, Jesus said that He shall be called wonderful counsellor, prince of peace; in religion, Jesus said no one comes to the father except through Him.

Jesus had no servants, yet they called Him ‘Master’; Jesus had no University degree, yet they called Him ‘Teacher’; Jesus had no medicines, yet they called Him ‘Healer’; Jesus had no army, yet kings feared Him; Jesus had won no military battles, yet He conquered the world; Jesus had committed no crime, yet they crucified Him; Jesus was buried in a tomb, and yet He lives today.

C. S. Lewis in his book, ‘Mere Christianity’ wrote, “A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic—on the level

with the man who says he is a poached egg—or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God: or else a madman or something worse.”

A challenge: Who is Jesus? He claims to be God. If we agree, then we ought to give Him our allegiance as our God. If he is not God, if he is not a “God-man”, if he is not a good man, if he is not a prophet, and if he is not a spiritual man then he is a liar and a fraud. The decision is ours.

Chapter 11:
Who is the Holy Spirit?

The Holy Spirit is a gift (Luke 11:13 If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?).

The Holy Spirit is a Person and acts like a Person.

For example, He teaches (John 14:26 But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.), He testifies (John 15:26 But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me:), He comforts (John 14:16 And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever) and (John 16:7 Nevertheless I tell you the

truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.), He convicts of sin (John 16:8 And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment), He guides into truth (John 16:13a Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth), He speaks and hears (John 16:13b for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come.) He forbids (Acts 16:6-7 Now when they had gone throughout Phrygia

and the region of Galatia, and were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia, 7) After they were come to Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia: but the Spirit suffered them not.) and He intercedes (Romans 8:26 Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.)

The Holy Spirit possesses the attributes of a person such as a will (1 Corinthians 12:11 But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man

severally as he will.), thoughts (Romans 8:27) And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.), knowledge (1 Corinthians 2:10-11 But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. 11) For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.), speech and language (1 Corinthians 2:13 Which things also we speak, not in the words which

man’s wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual.) and love (Romans 15:30) Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ’s sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me).

The Holy Spirit Can Be Treated Like a Person. He can be lied to (Acts 5:3 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?), tempted (Acts 5:9 Then Peter said unto her, How is it that ye have

agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord? behold, the feet of them which have buried thy husband are at the door, and shall carry thee out.), resisted (Acts 7:51) Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye.), grieved (Ephesians 4:30 And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.), blasphemed (Matthew 12:31 Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven

unto men.) and called upon (John 16:13 Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth … and he will show you things to come).

The Holy Spirit is always spoken of in the masculine gender. Although the word “spirit” is neuter, the pronouns used with the Holy Spirit are always masculine.

The Holy Spirit is God. He possesses divine attributes such as being all-knowing (1 Corinthians 2:10) But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.), ubiquitousness or

everywhere at once (Psalms 139:7) Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence?), all-powerful (Zechariah 4:6 Then he answered and spake unto me, saying, This is the word of the Lord unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts.), has unsearchable greatness (Isaiah 30:18 And therefore will the Lord wait, that he may be gracious unto you, and therefore will he be exalted, that he may have mercy upon you: for the Lord is a God of judgment: blessed are all they that wait for him.) and is eternal

(Hebrews 9:14 How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?)

The Holy Spirit is equal with Jesus and the Father. We are to baptise in the name (singular) of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost (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). As mentioned earlier, Jesus is a “Comforter” and He calls the Holy Spirit “another Comforter” (John 14:16 And I will pray the

Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever). We are the temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:19 What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?). The Spirit works with Jesus and Father in giving gifts (1 Corinthians 12:4-6 Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. 5) And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. 6) And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all.)

See also 2 Corinthians 3:17 Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty; 2 Corinthians 3:2 Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men; John 4:24 God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth; John 4:3 He left Judaea, and departed again into Galilee; and 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? 4) 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.

Old Testament passages that refer to God that are applied to Holy Spirit in New Testament.

Compare Isaiah 6:8-10 (Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me. 9) And he said, Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. 10) Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with

their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed.) with Acts 28:25-27 (And when they agreed not among themselves, they departed, after that Paul had spoken one word, Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet unto our fathers, 26) Saying, Go unto this people, and say, Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive: 27) For the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and

understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.)

And compare Exodus 16:7 (And in the morning, then ye shall see the glory of the Lord; for that he heareth your murmurings against the Lord: and what are we, that ye murmur against us?) with Hebrews 3:7-9 (Wherefore (as the Holy Ghost saith, To day if ye will hear his voice, 8) Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness: 9) When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works forty years.)

The Work of the Holy Spirit:

The Holy Spirit convicts of sin, righteousness, and judgment (John 16:8-9 And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: 9) Of sin, because they believe not on me).

The Holy Spirit regenerates (John 3:5-8) Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. 6) That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. 7) Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.

8) The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.)

The Holy Spirit baptises us into the body of Christ - 1 Corinthians 12:13 (For by one Spirit are we all baptised into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.) and Galatians 3:26-27 For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. 27) For as many of you as have been baptised into Christ have put on Christ.

The Holy Spirit dwells within the believer (1 Corinthians 6:19) What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? (1 John 2:27) But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him. And (Romans 8:9) But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ,

he is none of his.

The Holy Spirit is the earnest or guarantee of our salvation and inheritance (2 Corinthians 1:21-22) Now he which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God; 22) Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.) And (Ephesians 1:14) Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.

The Holy Spirit seals the believer (Ephesians 1:13-14) In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the

word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, 14) Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory. And (Ephesians 4:30) And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.

The Holy Spirit fills and empowers believers (Ephesians 5:18) And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit. And (Romans 8:9) But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of

God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.

The Holy Spirit is the author of the Scriptures (2 Timothy 3:16) All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness. And (2 Peter 1:20-21) Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. 21) For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

The Holy Spirit had a part in creation (Genesis 1:1-3) In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. 2) And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. 3) And God said, Let there be light: and there was light. (Etc.)

And finally, The Holy Spirit does not speak of himself, but of Christ (John 16:13) Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you

things to come.

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Epilogue

Elizabeth Charles (née Rundle) was born January 2, 1828, into a prominent family in the Devon area of England. She began writing poetry in childhood, and no less than Alfred Lord Tennyson commended her early works. Elizabeth was a bundle of talent — a linguist, painter, musician, poet, church historian, and author who wrote over fifty books.

In her Trinitarian hymn,

originally titled, “Praise Ye the Triune God,” she used un-rhymed but splendid verse to praise our God, the Three in One.

It has been quaintly referred to as an intergenerational hymn for “Young men and maidens, old men and children”.

I suggest that a fitting close to this book would be the words of her hymn:

Praise ye the Father for His loving kindness, tenderly cares He for His erring children; praise Him, ye angels, praise Him in the heavens; praise ye Jehovah!

Praise ye the Saviour, great is the compassion, graciously cares He for His chosen people; young men and maidens, ye old men and children, praise ye the Saviour!

Praise ye the Spirit, comforter of Israel, sent of the Father and the Son to bless us; praise ye the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, praise the Eternal Three!

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for His chosen people; young men and maidens, ye old men and children, praise ye the Saviour!

Praise ye the Spirit, comforter of Israel, sent of the Father and the Son to bless us; praise ye the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, praise the Eternal Three!

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