

Holy Trinity – Epistle

Why Triune?

2 Corinthians 13:11-13

Holy Trinity

Analysis by Cathy Lessmann

2 Cor 13:11 Finally, brothers and sisters, farewell. Put things in order, listen to my appeal, agree with one another, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you. 12 Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the saints greet you. 13 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with all of you.

DIAGNOSIS: God against Us

Step 1: Initial Diagnosis (External Problem) – *No One Is Dependable*

It's unanimous: Creation was a smashing success, declared downright "good." God the Creator rested. But wait! What's happened? The pinnacle of creation-humans-has gone berserk! Look, they're hurting each other, arguing with each other, warring with each other. Everyone is looking out only for himself or herself. The cruelty! The destruction! Even creation itself is being taken down with them.

Step 2: Advanced Diagnosis (Internal Problem) – *Dependents Have Declared Independence*

What's gone wrong? Answer: The divine blueprints have not been followed. The Creator-God created all things to run off (to depend on) Him. But humans have declared independence. Just as

children depend on their parents for life and love, so does humanity (indeed, all of creation) depend on “the Father” for life and love. But humans (falsely) equated dependence with slavery, confusing dependence as dependency. In an all-out push (misguided, remember the snake?) for freedom, humans declared independence. But without the Father there is nothing to depend on but the self. Voila! A billion little gods pop up all over the place, all intent on “doing it my way,” believing that “my way” is freedom. When the self turns inward, there is no longer “fear, love, or trust”-that is, dependence-on the Father.

Step 3: Final Diagnosis (Eternal Problem) – *Independence Is Really Slavery*

Sadly, that kind of independence is not freedom at all. Rather, it is slavery. Worse, it is slavery that destroys and kills the enslaved. One can just picture the disgusted, critical Creator-God throwing his hands up saying, “Fine, have it your way! You want independence? You’ll get independence. I’ll see to that. I am out of your picture.” But with God out of the picture, so is everything that comes from Him: in particular, love and life. The blueprints must be followed. [Note: it doesn’t take a triune God to get to this point.]

PROGNOSIS: God for Us

Step 4: Initial Prognosis (Eternal Solution) – *The Dependent Who Restores Dependence*

A triune God is great news for enslaved humanity. How so? Long before the creation of the world, God the Son, or, “God the Dependent” existed with the Father (“begotten of the Father from eternity”). This second member of the deity was a dependent long before he became a human being. Unlike humanity, he reveled in his dependence, understanding it to be not a humiliation (as Arianism supposed) or a demotion (as we might interpret), but rather, the very glory of his Godhood. His dependence is “the

very thing about the Son which the Father so admires and rewards" (Robert Bertram, "Christening"). In order to re-establish that dependent relationship with humanity, "God the Dependent" "took the form of a slave, being born in the likeness of human beings" (Philippians 2:7). To put it crudely, he voluntarily became a God-damned independent so that by his enslavement humanity's enslavement might be ended. That independence cost him his life as he bore humanity's condemnation. When the Father raised him from the dead, slavery was overcome.

Step 5: Advanced Prognosis (Internal Solution) – Dependence Transferred/Bestowed

Jesus, the depending Son, now so identified with humans, that he dares (with bold confidence!) to bring his sisters and brothers (you and me) along with him, back into the lap of his doting Father (a dependent relationship). He confidently depends on the Father to cherish us bastards and delinquents simply because he asks the Father to do so! What a bold Child, and what a good-natured Father! Jesus has such confidence in the Father that he assures us that the Father will treat us the same way Jesus himself is treated. But how does his confidence rub off onto us? Answer: The third member of the deity, the Holy Spirit, steps in and takes over. It is that member's job to transform independents into dependents by "christening" us, that is, making us co-dependents on the Father. The Spirit gets us to depend because Christ does, even when we cannot depend as he does. In fact, knowing that we are not capable of depending ourselves, the Holy Spirit depends for us. She gets Jesus' confidence to rub off onto us so that slowly, yes, weakly, but eventually, we begin to depend on the Father ourselves. But then she magnifies that teeny, tepid depending into full-blown, secure, God-pleasing dependence.

Step 6: Final Prognosis (External Solution) – Liberated

Dependents

Humanity once again dependent is, of all things, liberated. Free! Free to fully receive and enjoy life and love from the Father. That's free and glorious childhood – son- and daughtership, sister- and brotherhood. Look at how that dependence gets lived out: Everyone becomes preoccupied with tending to each other. Instead of hostility and exploitation, there is peace, there is community, there is hugging and holy kissing going on. The triangle between God, the self, and the other is open, harmonious and exceedingly joyful.

So why is God triune? The simple answer is: For your sake and mine. [Note: It takes all of God-Father, Son, and Holy Spirit-to make all of the creation all free.]