

The Forgotten Trinity

In the 1990s, James B. Torrance -- a Scottish Presbyterian pastor and theologian -- published a collection of lectures entitled *Worship, Community and the Triune God of Grace* (InterVarsity Press). Torrance's love for the Church, and for the Church at worship, is obvious. Overall, his aim in these lectures is to "show us just why real trinitarian theology is the very fiber of Christian confession."

In laying out his ideas, Torrance writes, "The human person is someone who finds his or her true being in relation, in love, in communion. For too long, Western theology has been dominated by a substance ontology of individuals with attributes in our interpretation of God, Jesus and ourselves as human beings. We need to recover, in the manner of the great Greek Fathers..." This thought is compelling, in the way it may transform our concept of self.

We who have been born into the American culture and have grown up with the idea that our time here on earth is to figure out our self-worth, or come to self-realization. We want to create self-esteem, have self-fulfillment, and know our self-identity. We have grown up in a culture of *my* needs, *my* wants, *my* desires, and this has begun to transform our life in the church and in the way we worship. We have forgotten that our first and foremost duty as a Christian is to know God, not ourselves. This is not meant to be a punishment, a sacrifice, or neglect to ourselves as a person. It is because everything we are, and shall come to be is through our relationship with God. Without God at the center of our lives; we will never succeed at knowing our true role.

Luckily for us Torrance doesn't leave us hanging here. He tells us exactly how he thinks we can combat this change in our increasing sense of self-worth. He tells us to return to the basics of early Christianity, return to "the forgotten Trinity --to an understanding of the Holy Spirit, who delivers us from a narcissistic preoccupation with the self to find our true being in loving communion with God and one another --to hear God's call to us, in our day, to participate through the Spirit in Christ's communion with the Father and his mission from the Father to the world--to create in our day a new humanity of persons who find true fulfillment in other-centered communion and service in the kingdom of God?"

To fully summarize Torrance, we are being asked to take ourselves back to the basics in worship. To remember what God gave us through the son and the Holy

Spirit. And most importantly to remind us that from the first day God made man, it was known we were not made to be alone; hence the creation of Eve. We were made to live in community with one another and this is where we will find ourselves and be one with our Triune God.

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