

LEARNING FOR LIFE

FATHOMING THE TRINITY

(3) In Christian Experience

Introduction

- Process of growth Truth, 'through the mind, to the heart to activate the will'
- Problem of disconnections -belief and action
 -doctrine and God

A: The Mind

1. Summary of essential Biblical teaching Wayne Grudem

- (1) God is three persons
- (2) Each person is fully God
- (3) There is one God

To remove or understate any of these propositions will distort the Biblical doctrine (examples)

2. The Weakness of Analogies

- Three-leaf clover
- Tree
- Musical chord
- Water
- Human diversity
- Mind, heart and will

3. The Dynamic Interactive Love Model

God is love - the necessity of Trinity

- Relational
- Eternal
- Active

B: The Heart

1. Understanding Christian experience in direct connection to the life of the Trinity – ‘Theosis’ (sharing the life of God)

Ps.82: 6-7

2 Peter 1:3-4 and 5-7

2. Not ‘deification’, but a real faith –union with the Trinity, the dynamic relationship of love.

Union with Christ is the core of our experience of salvation (Jn. 15) but ‘to be Christ-centred is not to be Father-forgetful or Spirit-ignoring’ (Sanders).

3. ‘Love is an emotion’. Thus the God who exists is personal. He thinks, acts, and feels, three distinguishing marks of personality. He is not an impersonal force, or an all-inclusive everything. He is personal. When He speaks to us He says ‘I’ and we can answer Him ‘you’ (Francis Schaeffer: True Spirituality) This is another mark of the uniqueness of the Christian faith.

4. Remember the way in to the Christian life

- Faith in Christ’s death and resurrection for me
- United to Christ, we die with Him and are raised with Him
- Divine and human action are both present
- Participating in the divine nature, we receive all the other benefits of salvation.

5. The way in is the way on

- Love and obedience
- Empowerment to speak and live
- Eternal Kingdom perspectives
- The Hallmark is love (Jn13: 35)

C: The will

1. We need consciously to give our lives in relationship to others

- Made for relationships
- Marriage and family
- Church life

Yet we too are distinct persons, who worship and serve God as unique individuals.

2. We need to give ourselves to developing our love relationship with the Triune God

- In prayer and Bible study
- In loving service
- In a sober estimate of ourselves ‘in Him’ (Rom. 12:3)

3. We need positively to embrace God’s diversity within the unity

- In the family
- In the church group
- As the church in the world
- In a joyful life of worship

4. We need to apply our understanding of the Trinity to enrich our life of worship – thankfulness, joy and prayer.

‘Prayer is a sincere, affectionate pouring out of the heart or soul to God, through Christ, in the strength and assistance of the Holy Spirit, for such things as God has promised, or according to the Word, for the good of the church, with submission, in faith, to the will of God’ (John Bunyan, quoted by Sanders p214)

Christian life is ‘being taken up with the life of the Trinity.... Each one of us has got to enter that pattern, take his place in that dance. There is no other way to the happiness for which we were made’ (C.S. Lewis: Mere Christianity).

5. We need to proclaim the Trinity evangelistically – an invitation to a relationship of everlasting love.