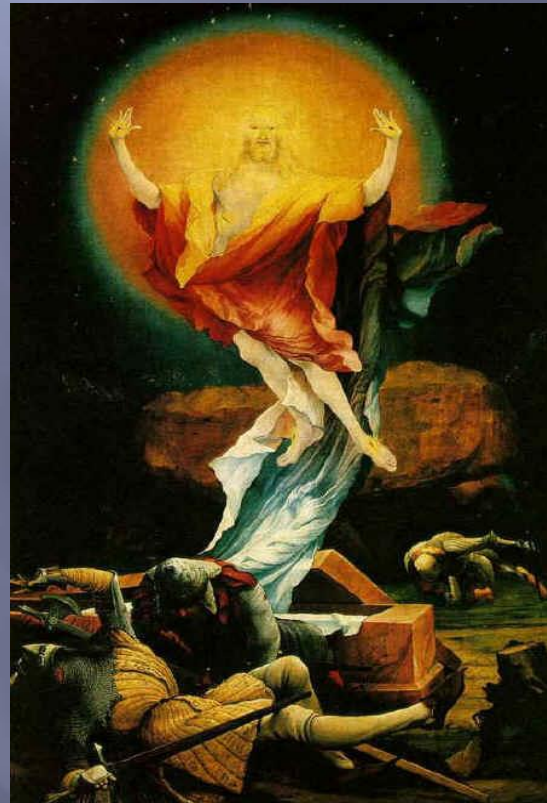


The Supremacy of God in the Care of Souls



What is human flourishing?

The capacity, tendency, and often experience humans have of developing their myriad powers of personhood-in-communion to maturity and expression in life.

-adapted from Christian Smith, *To Flourish or Destruct*

What is glory?

The outshining of God's internal, Trinitarian greatness, beauty, love, and excellence

-adapted from Jonathan Edwards, *The End for Which God Created the World*

What is the glory of the Trinity?

The beauty of their personhood-in-communion
and its manifestation over time

“God is love” (1Jo 4:8)

“And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth” (Jo 1:14)

“And now, glorify me together with yourself, with the glory which I ever had with you before the world was.”
(Jo 17:5)

The Manifestation of the Trinity's Glory in the Creation

▣ How does God's glory outshine?

In theophanies

In the beauty of creation (incl. culture)

In his verbal revelation

In the story of the Son of God, Jesus Christ: his incarnation, life, death, resurrection, and ascension

In the work of the Holy Spirit in his Church as its members flourish according to God's design plan

The Manifestation of the Trinity's Glory in Humanity

- ▣ All creation glorifies God (Ps 19:1-2)
- ▣ So how do images of God especially glorify God?
 - ▣ By most resembling God
- ▣ How do humans resemble God?
 - ▣ Broadly: Having the same form, relationality, and rule (this requires development)
 - ▣ Narrowly: Loving God supremely, like God loves himself (this requires regeneration)

The Manifestation of the Trinity's Glory in Humanity

- ▣ Jesus Christ is the true and perfect image of God (Col 1:15)
- ▣ So humans most glorify God by resembling Christ
- ▣ How was Christ the true and perfect image of God?
 - ▣ Conscious awareness of God and his supremacy
Worship, fear, praise, and love of God above all else (incl. ourselves), and in spite of our suffering
 - ▣ Active receptivity (Jn 5:19): participating in God's goodness and sharing it with others
 - ▣ Loving others like the Trinity loves

The Manifestation of the Trinity's Glory in Humanity

- ▣ But God could have made it a lot easier for humans to glorify him in this universe
 - ▣ Humans are now sinners and sin is a kind of “anti-glory”
 - ▣ Humans suffer more or less and suffering creates a tension between created desires to avoid suffering and our love for God (see the book of Job)
 - ▣ Humans are also more or less damaged, so they do not resemble God equally (consider schizophrenia or autism)
- ▣ So there is a lot less glory among humans than there could be

The Manifestation of the Trinity's Glory in Humanity

- ▣ The only hope of humans flourishing as God intended is be united with Jesus Christ, the true and perfect image, and his story (his life, death, resurrection, and exaltation)

Then, we can grow in conformity to Christ *in Christ*

And learn how to overcome our personal and social hindrances to glory *in Christ*: Sin, suffering, and damage to our bodies/souls

And deepen in our communion with others *in Christ*

And learn how to work, rest, and play *in Christ*

GLORY IS A DEVELOPMENTAL JOURNEY FOR HUMANS

From the City of Humanity/Destruction
to the City of God/Celestial City



Christian looks for a way of escape outside the City of Destruction.

Because humans are temporal, sinful, and damaged, so
their capacity to glorify God can increase over time

What is the special glory of the Trinity?



Their communal love

What is the love of the Trinity like, according to Aquinas, Stump, and Edwards?

- ▣ The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit delight in one another as unique persons
- ▣ They fully desire each other's good
- ▣ They enjoy complete union with each other
 - ⌘ Involving joint attention, and
 - ⌘ Perfect mutual intimacy: thoughts, feelings, desires, and plans are totally shared

As perfect persons, they can do this perfectly

So the Apostle John tells us, "God is love" (1Jn 4:8)

What does communion with the Trinity look like?

- ▣ The Trinity delights in us as unique persons, because we are in union with Christ by faith (Col 3:12)
- ▣ The Trinity desires our perfect good, incl. that we participate in and reciprocate their communal love
- ▣ The Trinity desires union with us (Jn 17:21-26)
 - ❧ Though face-time (joint attention)
 - ❧ And mutual intimacy: Sharing our souls (thoughts, feelings, needs, desires) and stories (see the Psalms)
This gives us experiences of healing integration, limited by *our* current internal division

Made in the image of God, our love with each other is to be like *that*

- ▣ Delighting in one another as unique persons
 - ▣ Desiring the true of each other: a flourishing life in communion with God and others
 - ▣ Desiring healthy union with each other, according to the relationship
 - ❧ Sharing joint attention or “face-time,” and
 - ❧ Mutual intimacy: Sharing our souls (thoughts, feelings, needs, desires) and our story with each other — empathic connection
- But mutual intimacy requires that both persons are internally undivided

The Manifestation of the Trinity's Glory in a Developing Humanity

The glory of God is a human alive!

Irenaeus

Creational development (the platform for love)

Awareness, memory, emotions, rationality, relationality

Fallen development in self and others?

Sin, suffering, damage (hindrances to love)

Our fallenness creates our “conditions for glory”

Redemptive development (the unfolding of new creation)

Love of God, others, and self

The more Christians flourish (become more beautiful),
the more they glorify God, so development matters

How can we participate in the Trinity's glory and flourish?

Participating with God's glory/love in Christ is the apex of human flourishing, intended by God to permeate all of life and promote the fullest human wellbeing

- ▣ Worship is the purest of joys
 - We are made for this
 - Better/higher than all creaturely joys
 - This joy carries over into rest of life (bec/ it deals with the core dimension of life)
- ▣ God's glory/love gives us a sense of peace
- ▣ Living for God's glory/love reduces sin (which hurts us and others)

How can we participate in the Trinity's glory and flourish?

- ▣ Meditating on God's beauty is good for our brains
 - It reduces stress, anxiety, depression, promotes physical health
- ▣ The beauty of God wondrously distracts us from our troubles
- ▣ God's glory/love gives us transcendent sense of purpose/meaning
- ▣ We flourish by knowing we are not God
- ▣ God's glory/love makes suffering bearable (e.g. loving a difficult spouse)