

## COURSE SYLLABUS

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# ST506: The Doctrine of the Trinity

Course Lecturer: Peter Toon, DPhil

Former President of the Prayer Book Society

### About This Course

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**This course was originally created through the Institute of Theological Studies in association with the Evangelical Seminary Deans' Council. There are nearly 100 evangelical seminaries of various denominations represented within the council and many continue to use the ITS courses to supplement their curriculum. The lecturers were selected primarily by the Deans' Council as highly recognized scholars in their particular fields of study.**

### Course Description

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To know God and to make Him known is our highest calling. By studying the historic, classic, and orthodox doctrine of the Holy Trinity, learners discover how and why the doctrine emerged in the fourth century, as well as the various and progressive ways this doctrine has been understood throughout history. Throughout the course, Dr. Toon demonstrates that a right understanding of the Trinity is essential to a right understanding of God's relation to man and man's relation to God.

### Course Objectives

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Upon completion of the course, the student should be able to:

- Consider that Yahweh-Elohim (The Lord our God who is one Lord) is ONE God in whom is a unity in plurality.
- Recognize the dynamics of the New Testament presentation of the Father, who is God, of the only Son of the Father, who is God, and of the Holy Spirit, who proceeds from the Father (and the Son), and is also God.
- Appreciate the reasons why the early church had to state the biblical doctrine of the Trinity in ontological, essentialist terms.
- Understand the teaching of the Nicene and Athanasian Creeds and to know why "homoousios" is of critical importance for Christian orthodoxy.
- Know the difference between the Eastern and Western expositions of the Unity in Trinity and Trinity in Unity, and to recognize the dangers of Tritheism, Binitarianism, Unitarianism and Modalism.
- Note that the Protestant Reformers followed the classic dogma of the Holy Trinity, as their Confessions of Faith indicate.
- Understand why Liberal Protestantism had little interest in the doctrine of the Trinity in the nineteenth century.

- Be aware of the resurgence of interest in the doctrine of the Trinity since Karl Barth made his formulation of the doctrine the center of his Dogmatics.
- Know the difference between the immanent Trinity and the economic Trinity as these expressions are used in theology today.
- Understand the absolute centrality of the doctrine of the Trinity for Christianity and for its worship, prayer, spirituality, ethics, mission, preaching, teaching, and evangelism.
- Learn by heart both the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed and the Athanasian Creed, so that one's mindset is Trinitarian.

## Accessibility

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If you have particular accessibility needs, please contact the CUGN Registrar at the beginning of the course. This will allow us to work directly with you to make efforts to accommodate your situation and ensure as full as possible accessibility to the course.

## Course Lecturer

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*Peter Toon, DPhil (1939-2009)*

### **Education:**

- Oxford University, DPhil
- University of London and Liverpool University, three master's degrees
- Cliff College, King's College, and the University of Durham

### **Teaching Career:**

- Lecturer at schools around the world (1970s-2009)
- Taught and lectured at more than 50 institutions worldwide, including Oxford, St. John's College of Cambridge University, the University of Dunham, Grand Rapids Theological Seminary, Westminster Theological Seminary, Dallas Theological Seminary, and Trinity Evangelical Divinity School
- Professor Systematic Theology, Nashotah House (1990-1993)

### **Other Career Highlights:**

- President and CEO, Prayer Book Society
- Regarded by colleagues as one of the finest minds of the Anglican tradition
- Special advisor to the Bishops of Durham and Newcastle in the areas of religions and cults
- Ordained in the Church of England in the Diocese of Liverpool
- Parish priest and Vicar, St. Mary's in Staindrop, England
- Expert in various fields such as Puritan History, Evangelicals in the Church of England, and John Owen
- Several denominational boards and committees

### **Publications:**

- More than 25 books, including *God's Statesman: Life and Work of John Owen*; *What We Believe*; *Let God Be God*; *Our Triune God: A Biblical Portrayal of the Trinity*; and *Genuine Godliness and True Piety: Worshipping God in Faith, Hope and Love*
- Countless booklets and articles
- Multiple works on topics such as the Lordship of Christ, justification, and sanctification

## Online Professor

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If you are taking this course for credit, CUGN will assign one of its faculty members as the online professor for this course. This professor will contact you upon enrollment in the course and will guide your study. Your online professor will be available to you by email and, at set times, by chat room or other real-time technology. Your online professor will do the following in order to stimulate student involvement and facilitate effective learning:

- Evaluate and assign grades to all coursework.
- Provide assistance with technological problems that may occur.
- Answer questions that may arise.
- Issue your final grades.

## Course Texts

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### **Required:**

Choose at least one of the following texts, which are listed in the order of the intellectual demands made on the reader:

Bray, G.L. *The Doctrine of God*. Downers' Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993.

Erickson, Millard J. *God in Three Persons*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1995.

Hill, William J. *The Three-Personed God*. Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1988.

### **Reference Books** (for consultation in the library)

*Creeds of the Churches*. Edited by John Leith, 1982.

*Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*. Edited by Norman F. Tanner, 1990.

*Liturgies of the Western Church*. Edited by Bard Thompson, 1961.

*Reformed Confessions of the Sixteenth Century*. Edited by Arthur Cochrane, 1982.

*Service Book of the Holy Orthodox-Catholic Apostolic Church*, 1983.

### **Collateral Reading**

The student should read as a minimum the chosen textbook(s) and Reference books listed above. Further, he/she will be well advised to read in part, or in whole, at least one book from each of the sections set out below.

A. **Biblical** – one of the following:

Bavinck, Hermann. *The Doctrine of God*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1977.

Wainwright, Arthur W. *The Trinity in the New Testament*. London, England: SPCK, 1962.

Warfield, Benjamin B. "The Biblical Doctrine of the Trinity" in *Biblical and Theological Studies*. Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1968.

**B. Patristic** – one of the following:

Kelly, J.N.D. *Early Christian Doctrine*. Fifth edition. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1978.

Pelikan, Jaroslav. *The Christian Tradition*. 5 vols. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971-1990.

Torrance, T.F. *The Trinitarian Faith: The Evangelical Theology of the Ancient Church*. Edinburgh, Scotland: T&T Clark, 1988.

Rusch, William G. *The Trinitarian Controversy*, 1980.

Leo, Donald Davis. *The First Seven Ecumenical Councils*, 1987.

**C. Modern** – one of the following:

A book listed as a course text but not chosen

Lacugna, Catherine Mowry. *God for Us: The Trinity and the Christian Life*. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1991.

Welch, Claude. *In This Name: The Doctrine of the Trinity in Contemporary Theology*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1952.

Rahner, Karl. *The Trinity*. New York: Herder and Herder, 1970.

Kasper, Walter. *The God of Jesus Christ*. New York: Crossroad, 1984.

Textbooks can be ordered through our online store at CUGN.org, through your local bookstore, or through your preferred eReader when available.

## Academic Honesty

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At CUGN, we believe all we do is "as unto the Lord" and we thus hold to a high academic standard of honesty; we do not tolerate plagiarism and cheating. Students found guilty of any form of academic dishonesty face consequences ranging from interaction with the Academic Dean to expulsion from CUGN.

Quizzes and Exams: Any student found guilty of cheating on a quiz or exam will automatically receive a score of zero for that quiz or exam. A second offense will result in automatic course failure and

possible disciplinary action and/or expulsion from CUGN. Please view the [CUGN Academic Catalog](#) for a full definition and examples of cheating.

**Plagiarism:** If a student's work is found to be plagiarized, consequences will vary depending on the nature of the plagiarism.

If an offense is deemed unintentional, the student will have an opportunity to resubmit the work. A second offense will result in an automatic score of zero for that assignment, which may also result in failure of that course.

More serious plagiarism offenses could result in automatic course failure, disciplinary action, or expulsion from CUGN. Please view the [CUGN Academic Catalog](#) for a full definition and examples of plagiarism. If you have questions about plagiarism, or would like to request resources for learning how to avoid plagiarism, please contact our Registrar's Office at [registrar@cugn.org](mailto:registrar@cugn.org) or toll free at (888) 487-5376 ext. 3.

## Course Methods

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Throughout this course, a number of methods will be used to engage the students in learning and processing information, and applying the learning to their lives. These methods include the following:

### **Media/Materials**

The course will include media presentations of lectures and supplementary materials to be listened to and/or read throughout the lessons of the course.

- **Audio-based teaching**

The primary teaching session in each lesson is provided in audio format. If available, we also provide the option of reading the lesson from a transcript of the audio lecture (found in the course Audio Lecture section).

- **Readings**

Reading from the required textbook(s) is assigned in this syllabus.

### **Mentor Relationship**

Students are required to seek out a mentor with whom they can discuss the spiritual impact of the course on their life. The goal of this process is to facilitate the student's growth through interaction with a mature believer.

### **Spiritual Formation Project**

Ministry preparation and the Christian life require more than academic exercises. Learners also need personal, spiritual formation, which involves theological reflection and critical thinking on their current practices and assumptions. This process occurs as learners engage in self-reflection through the course's Spiritual Formation Project.

## Course Requirements

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1. **Time:** The student is required to spend a minimum of 120 hours in this course. All course requirements must be completed within 6 months of enrolling in the course.
2. **Recorded Lectures:** The student must listen carefully to all of the twenty-four (24) recorded lectures by Dr. Peter Toon.
3. **Reading:** The student must complete all of the required readings, reflection and consideration, taking of notes, investigating and memorizing as required, either before or after hearing each lecture.

The student must complete at least 1000 pages of reading outside of the assigned required and recommended textbooks. These can be taken from the Bibliography at the close of the Study Guide or books under Collateral Reading.

4. **Notebook:** The student should keep a notebook to record his work reflections after listening to each lecture. This should consist of not less than twenty-four times three pages and not more than twenty-four times five pages of double-spaced typing. It should be available to be shown to the tutor or proctor/professor in charge at any time and shall be handed in at the end of the course.

Furthermore, this notebook shall contain as its first page a statement, in 250 words, of what the student (before beginning the course) believes to be the Doctrine of the Trinity. Then, as the last piece of work for the notebook, there shall be a further statement of 250 words describing what the student believes to be the Doctrine of the Trinity. The evaluation of his notebook shall be on the basis of the student's having done the assignments and made the effort to keep up with the work, and not on the quality of the content in terms of theological accuracy.

5. **Report:** The student shall write a report consisting of not less than eight and not more than ten pages of all the books and articles he has read and what benefits and difficulties he found in them. This shall be handed in at the end of the course.

### 6. Spiritual Formation Project

**RATIONALE:** Ministry preparation and the Christian life require more than academic exercises. Learners also need personal, spiritual formation, which involves theological reflection and critical thinking on their current practices and assumptions. This process occurs as learners engage in self-reflection and interaction in a community of learning. With this in mind, CUGN includes in all courses a capstone project addressing these issues and facilitating interaction beyond the formal learning environment (ATS schools, note Standards 3.2.1.3; 4.1.1; 10.3.3.3).

Write a **five-to-six page reflective essay** and **interview a mentor**, discussing the spiritual impact of this course on your life. Identify your mentor early in the course, and submit the essay to your grader when you take the final exam. This last project should not be a summary of course content, but an application of course principles. Complete the following:

**A. Personal Reflection and Evaluation:** Reflect on the course – To integrate your academic studies with your walk of faith, reflect on the content of the course and evaluate your life in light of what you learned.



- i. Follow these steps in your reflection:  
Step 1: What one theme, principle, or concept in the course is the most significant to you personally? Why is it significant?  
  
Step 2: What portion(s) of the course brought this theme/principle/concept to light?  
  
Step 3: Think about your past. Why is it vital now for you to deal with and apply this theme/principle/concept?  
  
Step 4: How should this affect your thoughts and actions, and what specific steps should you take to concretely apply what you have learned?
- ii. Write your answers to the above questions in full paragraph form. (Recommended length for this reflection: approximately three pages)
- iii. Give a copy of this reflection to your mentor (see #2).

**B. Community Reflection and Interaction:** Interview a mentor – Since the Holy Spirit uses the input of others to guide and form His people, interview a mentor according to the following guidelines:

- i. Who should you interview? (1-3 are required; 4-6 are recommended)
  1. Someone with whom you have a reasonably close relationship.
  2. Someone who is a mature Christian ministry leader (i.e. a pastor).
  3. Someone who is not your grader or a family member.
  4. Someone who values the spiritual formation process.
  5. Someone who is familiar with and values the subject of the course.
  6. Someone who has experience using the content of the course in ministry.

**NOTE:** Identify your mentor early in the course, and give him/her the page entitled “Guidelines for Mentors.”

- ii. Focus of the interview – Your interview should focus on the issues and questions you raise in your essay. For example:
  - What feedback can your mentor give in response to your essay?
  - In light of the course content, are the conclusions you made appropriate? Why or why not?
  - What additional advice, deeper insights or broader applications might he/she suggest from his/her own life and ministry?

**NOTE:** Conduct this interview either in person (preferred) or over the phone. Do not use

electronic communication (i.e. email, instant messenger, etc). Suggested length: 45 minutes.

**C. Synthesis and Application:** Draw your final conclusions – Having reflected on the course and the discussion with your mentor, synthesize what you have learned in these three sections:

- i. Section 1: Begin your essay with the personal reflection from #1 above. This should be exactly what you gave your mentor for the interview.
- ii. Section 2: Comment on your interview, explaining what you discussed and the insights you gained from your mentor. Include the following:
  - What were the mentor’s comments regarding your essay?
  - What advice did he/she give?
  - How did his/her comments expand or correct your application of the course?
  - Include the person’s name, occupation, and the length of the interview.
- iii. Section 3: Conclude with a synthesis of what you have learned. Answer the following:
  - If your mentor corrected any thoughts in your “Personal Reflection and Evaluation”, how do you feel about these corrections? Do you agree or disagree? Why?
  - Synthesizing your thoughts from section one and your mentor’s insight in section two, what final conclusions have you reached? How is this different from section one?
  - In light of the interview and further reflection, what additional, specific changes need to occur in your life and what concrete steps will you take to implement them?

**NOTE TO STUDENTS:** Your effort in this assignment will determine its benefit. If by the end of this course you have not yet reflected critically on your life in light of what you have studied, allow this assignment to guide you in that process. The instructor for this course will not score your essay based on the amount of spiritual fruit you describe; so do not exaggerate (or trivialize) what you have learned. The primary grading criteria is that you have thoughtfully considered the principles of the course and realistically sought to apply them to your life. If you have done this and met the minimal requirements (as noted above), you will earn the full points for this assignment.

Note on confidentiality: Perhaps the Holy Spirit is dealing with you in some very personal areas of your life. Because of this, your grader will keep your essay entirely confidential and either return or discard it.

Objective: to stimulate reflection and interaction on course principles in order to enhance personal spiritual formation.

7. **Examinations:** The student shall take a one-hour Mid-term and a two-hour Final Examination. He will be expected to know the *Creed of the Council of Constantinople* (the “*Nicene Creed*”) and the *Athanasian Creed* (Part ONE only). These Creeds are included at the end of this Syllabus for the convenience of the student.



## Course Grading

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Your grade for the course will be determined as follows:

Reading Report	10% of Course Grade
Notebook	25% of Course Grade
Spiritual Formation Project	10% of Course Grade
Mid-Term Examination	20% of Course Grade
Final Examination	30% of Course Grade
Memorization of the two Creeds	5% of Course Grade
Total	100%

Grades will be issued within two weeks of the end of the course.

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Course: \_\_\_\_\_ Interview  
Date/Time: \_\_\_\_\_

## Guidelines for Mentors

(Students, give this sheet to your mentor for the Spiritual Formation Project.)

Thank you for your involvement in this student's CUGN coursework. We believe the Christian life is more than an academic exercise, so we encourage students to critically reflect on their life in light of what they learn and then apply those insights to the daily life of faith.

Therefore, students taking CUGN courses are required to complete a final assignment called the "Spiritual Formation Project." This assignment involves two parts: an essay and an interview:

**The ESSAY:** After completing their coursework, students reflect on the content of the course, evaluate their lives, and discuss the one theme, principle or concept that is most significant to them and why. Students are to identify specific ways this theme/principle/concept should apply to their lives and what action steps they plan to take in order to make these changes a reality.

**The INTERVIEW:** After writing this reflection, students give a copy to their mentor and meet with him/her to discuss their thoughts and get feedback. The goal of this interview is to facilitate the student's growth through interaction with a mature believer.

### NOTES ON THE INTERVIEW:

- You do not need to be familiar with the course to participate in this interview. You will primarily respond to the thoughts of the student. (However, general knowledge of the subject matter of the course and/or experience applying it to ministry is valuable.)
- Prior to meeting with the student, read his/her "Personal Reflection and Evaluation" and prepare to discuss the following:
  1. What feedback can you give the student in response to his/her essay?
  2. Are the student's conclusions from the course appropriate? Why or why not?
  3. What additional advice, deeper insights or broader applications would you suggest from your own life and ministry?
- Meet with the student either in person (preferred) or over the phone. Do not use electronic communication (i.e. email, instant messenger, etc.).
- Suggested length of the interview: 45 minutes

Thanks again for participating in this project! You have a real opportunity to guide this student in the application process and to help him/her connect academics to life – *a valuable process for all who wish to grow in Christ.*

**NOTE: If the student's school makes any changes to this assignment, their requirements should replace those described here.**

## Course Bibliography

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- Aquinas, Thomas. *Faith, Reason and Theology: Questions I-IV of the Commentary on the "De Trinitate" of Boethius*. translated by A. Maurer. Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1987.
- Athanasius of Alexandria. *On the Incarnation*, introduced by C.S. Lewis. London, England: A. R. Mowbray, 1953.
- Augustine of Hippo. *De Trinitate* in translation in the series entitled *Fathers of the Church* vol. 45, New York, 1963; also in *The Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers*, 1st series, Vol. 3., and the *Library of Christian Classics* Vol. VIII, 1955.
- Barth, Christopher. *God with Us. A Theological Introduction to the Old Testament*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans, 1991.
- Barth, Karl. *Church Dogmatics*. Vol. 1/1. Edinburgh, Scotland: T & T Clark, 1975.
- Basil the Great. *On the Holy Spirit*, translated by David Anderson. Crestwood, New York: St. Vladimir's Press, 1980.
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- Bracken, Joseph A. *What are they saying about the Trinity*, New York: Paulist Press, 1979.
- Bracken, Joseph A. *The Triune Symbol: Persons, Process and Community*. Lanham, New York: The University Press of America, 1985.
- Bray, Gerald. *Creeds, Councils and Christ*. Leicester, England: InterVarsity Press, 1984.
- British Council of Churches. *The Forgotten Trinity. Report of the BCC Study Commission*. London, England: British Council of Churches, 1989.
- Brown, David. *The Divine Trinity*. La Salle, Illinois: Open Court Publishing, 1985.
- Calvin and Augustine*. Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1956.
- Calvin, John. *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, 2 vols. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1960.

*The Christian Tradition. A History of the Development of Doctrine, Vol. 1. The Emergence of the Catholic Tradition (100-600), Vol. 2. The Spirit of Eastern Christendom (600-1700), Vol. 3. The Growth of Medieval Theology (600-1300), Vol. 4. Reformation of Church and Dogma (1300-1700), Vol. 5. Christian Doctrine and Modern Culture (since 1700).* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971-1990.

Clendenin, Daniel B. *Eastern Orthodox Christianity*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1994.  
\_\_\_\_\_, ed. *Eastern Orthodox Theology: A contemporary Reader*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1994.

Cochrane, A.C., ed. *Reformed Confessions of the Sixteenth Century*. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1966.

Colle, Ralph Del. *Christ and the Spirit. Spirit-Christology in Trinitarian Perspective*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1994.

Danielou, Jean. *God's Life in Us* (translation of *La Trinite et le Mystere de l'Existence*). Denville, New Jersey: Dimension Books, 1969).

Davies, Brian. *Thinking about God*. London, England: Geoffrey Chapman, 1985.

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Davis, Leo David. *The First Seven Ecumenical Councils (325-787). Their History and Theology*. Wilmington, Delaware: Michael Glazier Inc., 1987.

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*Early Christian Doctrines*. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 5th ed., 1978.

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*God as the Mystery of the World*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans, 1983.

Gregory of Nyssa. *From Glory to Glory*, edited by Jean Danielou. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1961.

Gregory of Nazianzus. *The Five Theological Orations*, with introduction and commentary by F. W. Norris. Leiden, Netherlands: E. J. Brill, 1990.

Gruenler, Royce Gordon. *The Trinity in the Gospel of John: A Thematic Commentary on the Fourth Gospel*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1986.

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# Lesson Assignments

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## Lesson 1: Christianity is Trinitarian

1. Before listening to the lecture, write in your notebook on one page what you believe to be the Doctrine of the Trinity.
2. Listen to Lecture 1.
3. In your notebook, write down your own reflections upon whether or not the Doctrine of the Trinity is neglected today by preachers.
4. Take your New Testament and read the following texts slowly and carefully paying attention to the context. After reading each one write a very brief comment in your notebook which highlights the Trinitarian structure within or underlying that text.
  - A) Matthew 28:18-20
  - B) Mark 1:9-11
  - C) II Corinthians 13:14
5. Set aside at least one hour to read slowly through the Letters from Paul to the churches of Colossae and Philippi and to notice the underlying Trinitarian structure. Allow your mind through Paul's letters to ponder God-as-God-is-towards-us.

## Lesson 2: On Knowing God

1. Take five minutes to recall the content of your reading concerning the biblical doctrine of the Trinity.
2. Listen to Lecture 2.
3. Consider the different ways in which we use the word know and be clear as to what "to know God" means.
4. Write in your notebook preliminary explanations of the "Economic Trinity" and the "Immanent/Ontological Trinity."
5. Reflect on the question: "In what sense is the Trinity a biblical doctrine?" Consider whether it is there within the sacred text as the presuppositional doctrine of all doctrines, or whether it is required by the content of the text. Make some notes to record your thinking.
6. Set aside one hour to read the Letters of John and to notice therein the Trinitarian structure. Meditate upon God-as-God-is-towards-us as He is presented in the Johannine Letters.

### **Lesson 3: Introductory Matters**

1. Take time to remember your reflections upon the distinction between the “Economic Trinity” and the “Immanent Trinity” as well as the relation of the doctrine of the Trinity to the actual content of Holy Scripture.
2. Listen to Lecture 3.
3. Carefully read the Nicene Creed and note its three fold structure.
4. Carefully read the Athanasian Creed and note the precision of the presentation of the “Immanent Trinity.”
5. Make notes on the different approaches of the East and West in the stating of the doctrine of the Trinity.
6. Carefully read Ephesians 1 and spend time meditating upon the way in which God is revealed to us there. In your notebook, make clear with reasons whether the doctrine of the Trinity found there is the “Economic Trinity” or the “Immanent Trinity” or both.

### **Lesson 4: The Trinity in the Old Testament**

1. Read Genesis 18-19.
2. Listen to Lecture 4.
3. Read Exodus 3:13-14 and Deuteronomy 6:4 and carefully ponder what is said of God there.
4. Consider the difference between oneness in terms of the number one and oneness in terms of unity. Then consider what Yahweh-Elohim suggests (singular and noun-plural noun) as you also read and reflect upon Genesis 1:26; 3:22; 11:7 and Isaiah 6:8. Write your thoughts in your notebook.
5. Read for one hour the part of your textbook on the biblical doctrine which specifically relates to the content of the Old Testament concerning the Word, Wisdom and Spirit of God.
6. If you have time, look up in a book on “The Theology of the Old Testament” what is said there concerning the doctrine of God in the Old Testament.

### **Lesson 5: God the Father**

1. Recall your considerations of Yahweh-Elohim as an Unity in plurality.
2. Listen to Lecture 5.
3. In your notebook make notes on the theological distinction between the Father as “the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ” and the Father as “our Father who is in heaven.” Which of these is primary and why is it so?

4. Read the first paragraph of the Nicene Creed and in your notebook explain the biblical significance of the words "... one God the Father...?"
5. Consider the pastoral and theological problems involved in thinking of the Fatherhood of God in terms of the best human father as a model and then transferring to God his virtues and then saying that God is, of course, "a thousand times better." Write down in your notebook how we are to think of God as the Father (the Father of the Son and secondly the Father of those who are in the Son).

## **Lesson 6: The Deity of Jesus Christ**

1. Recall the Biblical teaching concerning "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ."
2. Listen to Lecture 6.
3. Seek to place yourself in the first century with the early disciples and their belief that "The Lord our God He is One Lord," and remember that they did not have the knowledge of the developed doctrine of the Trinity. Then write down briefly in your notebook what you think were their thoughts when they called Jesus of Nazareth "God" and "Lord"; when they offered to Him prayer and worship; and when they claimed for Him an essential place in creation, salvation and judgment.
4. Read for one hour that part (those parts) of your textbooks which specifically relates to the content of the New Testament.
5. Meditate upon the first Christian confession, "Jesus Christ is Lord."

## **Lesson 7: The Deity of the Holy Spirit**

1. Reflect upon the ways in which the word "Spirit/spirit" is used today in the religious sphere.
2. Listen to Lecture 7.
3. In your notebook write down reasons why it has always been easier for people to think of the Spirit as something other than God but yet as clearly linked to God. And add reasons why it is difficult to think of the Spirit of God as being truly and really God as a Person of the Holy Trinity, rather than only a dynamic, personal force from God.
4. Under what circumstances and in what conditions is it appropriate to pray to the Holy Spirit? Consider any choruses or hymns you know which do this. Put a brief answer in your notebook, planning to return to pondering this question when you have studied the development of the doctrine of the Trinity by the Councils of the church.
5. Read for one hour those parts of your textbooks which are devoted to the biblical doctrine of the Holy Spirit.
6. Meditate upon what is said by Jesus of the Holy Spirit in John 14-16.

## Lesson 8: Toward Clarity of Mind

1. Recall that Christianity made some impression and made some Jewish converts within Palestine but that its major impact was Westward, within the Roman Empire and into a primarily Greek culture. While there was a specifically Jewish Christianity in the early centuries, it did not grow and attract the number of converts that Gentile Christianity did.
2. Listen to Lecture 8.
3. Look at the *Apostles' Creed* (or other early baptismal creeds in Leith, *Creeds*) and note the simple Trinitarian structure. What does this tell you about the faith of the early church? Write your thoughts down in your notebook.
4. Putting yourself as far as you are able into the sandals and culture of second century Christians, make notes in your notebook on what you think would have been the major factors and forces leading them to think of the one God as Unity in Plurality.
5. Read in your textbooks the chapter(s) dealing with the development of the doctrine of the Trinity up to the Arian controversy and before the calling of the Council of Nicea in 325.

## Lesson 9: Gnosticism, Tritheism, Modalism

1. Recall what you know of the Greek mindset with its dualism in which God is totally separated from all other spiritual and physical reality. Remember that God was seen as relating to the world not directly but through created, intermediary beings who are found between the wholly transcendent and impassible God and the created worlds of the heavens and the earth.
2. Listen to Lecture 9.
3. Make notes in your notebook on the doctrine of God held by Arius and his supporters: as you do so pay specific attention to its relation to the Greek (in contrast to Hebraic) doctrine which was widely held within the Roman Empire of that time.
4. Take the anathemas of the *Nicene Creed* of 325 and turn them into positive statements.
5. That is, write down in your notebook the major themes of Arius's doctrine of Jesus Christ.
6. Do you know of any modern cults or religions which teach a doctrine of God and Christ similar to that of Arius? If you do, write it down in your notebook. If you do not, then ask others and make a note later.
7. Read about Arianism up to 325 in your textbooks.

## Lesson 10: The Nicene Creed (AD 325)

1. Recall the teaching of Arius.



2. Listen to Lecture 10.
3. Make a careful note in your notebook of (a) what the use of *homoousios* was intended to achieve, and (b) what are the basic differences between the Arian doctrine of God and the doctrine set forth in the *Nicene Creed* of 325.
4. Do you think that the Creed contains Greek philosophy (i.e., in the use of *ousia/homoousios*) or contains a Greek philosophical technique to elucidate the truth of God? Write a few comments in your notebook.
5. In what sense do we have the Immanent Trinity and the Economic Trinity in the Creed (with its anathemas) of 315? Write a short paragraph of explanation in your notebook.
6. Read in your textbooks the chapter on the theology of the *Nicene Creed*.

### **Lesson 11: The Development of Dogma**

1. Recall your thoughts on the meaning of the *homoousios* and its relation to the teaching of the Holy Scripture.
2. Listen to Lecture 11.
3. Take time to consider the meaning and reality of differentiated consciousness and seek to identify it from within your own experience.
4. Does it make sense to you to have a Creed which is confessed by the whole person in the common sense mode (i.e., undifferentiated consciousness), but in which there are phrases which can only be truly appreciated at the level of differentiated consciousness? Give reasons for your answer in your notebook.
5. Write down briefly in your notebook what you understand by “development of doctrine.”
6. If you have access to Lonergan, *The Way to Nicea*, read chapter one. Otherwise continue reading in your textbooks for one hour.

### **Lesson 12: From Nicea to Constantinople**

1. Distinguish in your mind historical theology from dogmatic or systematic theology. Recall that the development of doctrine is from one kind of clarity to another and not from a lesser to a great clarity.
2. Listen to Lecture 12.
3. Why do you think Christians disagreed so deeply in the fourth century concerning the relation of Jesus Christ to the Father? Can you think of any examples of major doctrinal disagreement from modern times which parallels the Arian controversy? Make brief notes in your notebook.

4. Does the doctrine one holds concerning the precise relation of Jesus Christ to the Father really matter? Does it affect one's salvation? Write down your thoughts in your notebook.
5. Spend time pondering these questions. Is there any difference in meaning between "relation" and "relationship?" Is there a place for both words in speaking of the union between the Father and the Son? Is there a place for both words in speaking of the covenantal union between God and man?
6. Continue to read about the historical debates in the early church about the identity of Jesus Christ.

### **Lesson 13: Athanasius and Orthodoxy**

1. Recall the various options facing the Church with regard to *ousia* - "of the one and the same...", "of like or similar...", "of a different..." (*homoousios*, *homoiousios*, *anomoios*).
2. Listen to Lecture 13.
3. "Every party has its extreme wing." Ponder this in relation to the content of the lecture and with respect to the orthodox part led by Athanasius.
4. "We confess God to be one through the Triad, and we entertain a belief in one God[head] in a Triad, for there is but one form of God[head]." In your notebook indicate whether this confession of Athanasius can be termed Modalism or Sabellianism.
5. Why do you think that the identity of the Holy Spirit and His precise relation to the Father was doctrinally developed as late as the fourth century? Write your brief answer in your notebook.
6. Read for one hour in your textbooks on the development of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit.

### **Lesson 14: The Cappadocian Theologians**

1. Recall the teaching of Athanasius on the identity of the Holy Spirit.
2. Listen to Lecture 14.
3. Some Christians in the fourth century appeared to think of the Holy Spirit as the noblest of creatures, produced by the Son at the bidding of the Father and active as the illuminator and sanctifier of the faithful. What was attractive in this doctrine which was taught, for example, by Eunomius? Make a few notes in your notebook.
4. Consider how the Cappadocians overcame the difficulty of speaking of the Holy Spirit in personal terms so that He is to be worshiped and glorified with the Father and the Son. Using your textbooks to help you, make precise notes in your notebook on the Person of the Holy Spirit.
5. Continue for one hour your reading or re-reading of the development of the doctrine of the Trinity in the early church.

## Lesson 15: Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed (AD 381)

1. Recall the teaching of the Cappadocians on the Holy Spirit and on the Holy Trinity.
2. Listen to Lecture 15.
3. Carefully compare and contrast the texts of the *Nicene Creed* (325) and the *Constantinople Creed* (381). Write down the major (not minor) differences in your notebook and comment on them.
4. Does the *Constantinople Creed* make absolutely clear that the Holy Spirit is truly and really God? Or can it be read as meaning that the Holy Spirit is such a superbly wonderful creature that He is worthy of being worshiped and glorified? Ponder this matter and write down your thoughts in a concise way in your notebook.
5. Begin to learn by heart the text of the Constantinople (that is, the *Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed*) and be sure to note that the *filioque* was a later, western addition.
6. Continue to read in your textbooks concerning the Greek, patristic doctrine of the Holy Trinity.

## Lesson 16: Augustine of Hippo

1. Recall what you learned (Lecture 3) about the difference between the developed Greek and Latin approaches to the Doctrine of the Trinity.
2. Listen to Lecture 16.
3. Make an effort to track down an English translation (of the whole or of part) of Augustine's *De Trinitate* and spend one hour reading selections from it. (Since it is available in a variety of editions and collections be sure to make a careful search and choose one which appears readable. The aim is to get a sense of what it is all about.)
4. Carefully read summaries of Augustine's Trinitarian teaching in books on the theology of Augustine (again check your library) or in your textbooks. If you can get hold of Edmund Hill, *The Mystery of the Trinity*, section IV provides a briefly and simply written summary of Augustine's teaching in *De Trinitate*.
5. Take several of the analogies used by Augustine for the Trinity and ponder them. Write down in detail in your notebook one such meditation in which you engage.

(If this work is more than you can manage then let it run over to the next section.)

## Lesson 17: The Athanasian Creed

1. Recall the teaching of Augustine on the Trinity.
2. Listen to Lecture 17.
3. Carefully read, and re-read the first half of the *Athanasian Creed*.

4. Be sure that you know the difference between (a) Modalism; (b) Western Arianism of the fourth/fifth centuries, and (c) Augustinian Trinitarianism. Make careful notes in your notebook.
5. Finish off the assignments from Lecture 16.
6. Begin to learn by heart the first half of the *Athanasian Creed*. (See the booklet for the text.)
7. Reflect again upon the distinction between God-as-God-is-in-Himself and God-as-God-is-towards-us. Write in your notebook any new thoughts you have concerning the relation of the Immanent Trinity and the Economic Trinity, with special attention to the *Athanasian Creed*.

## Lesson 18: Christian Worship

1. Recite, as far as possible from memory, the *Nicene Creed* and the *Athanasian Creed*.
2. Listen to Lecture 18.
3. Carefully recall the worship of your own church and then consider the theological content in terms of the relation of God to man and of man to God. Does it presuppose “from the Father, through the Son in the Spirit—to the Father, through the Son and in the Spirit?” Write down your observations and considerations in your notebook.
4. Peruse the hymnbook used by your church and seek to determine what doctrine of the Trinity is presupposed by the hymns and choruses you most often sing. Again, make notes in your notebook.
5. In your notebook, prepare the outline of a sermon that you would preach on the text from Matthew 28, “Baptize them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.”
6. Spend ten minutes in considering which, if any, of those two forms of the Gloria is most appropriate for worship: “Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit: as it was in the beginning is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.” Or, “Glory be to the Father, through the Son and by the Holy Spirit: as it was...”

## Lesson 19: Eastern Orthodoxy

1. Recite, as far as possible from memory, the *Nicene-Constantinople Creed* and ponder again the *homousios* and the teaching on the worshiping of the Holy Spirit.
2. Listen to Lecture 19.
3. Try (a) to borrow one of the books of one of the Greek theologians named in the Lecture and then spend an hour “getting the feel of its contents.” For example, John of Damascus, *On the Orthodox Faith*: AND, OR,  
  
(b) to borrow a copy of the Greek Liturgy and spend an hour noticing how the Holy Trinity is named and addressed. (If you live near an Orthodox Church, go along to the Divine Liturgy and carefully follow the English text of the service, noticing how often and eloquently God is named and addressed.)

4. Either (a) read the essay by Thomas Hopko in Kimel, *Speaking the Christian God*; or (b) read for one hour in J. Pelikan, *The Christian Tradition*, Vol. 2, *Eastern Christendom*, chapter 5; or in D.B. Clendenin, *Eastern Orthodox Christianity*, chapter 3.
5. In your notebook write a brief meditation on the Greek way of stating the doctrine of the Holy Trinity—"One God the Father, and the only begotten Son of the Father, and the Holy Spirit who proceeds from the Father and rests in the Son."

## Lesson 20: Medieval Theologians

1. Recite, as far as possible from memory, the *Athanasian Creed*, and recall the distinction between the Immanent Trinity and the Economic Trinity.
2. Listen to Lecture 20.
3. Make and attempt to read from Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, Questions 33 - 43 in Ia., where he expounds the doctrine of the Holy Trinity and sets the pattern for later western thinking. There are brief summaries of Aquinas' doctrine of the Trinity in Franks, Lacugna, Fortman and E. Hill. See also the essay by J. A. DiNoia in Kimel, *Speaking the Christian God*.
4. For a summary of the scholastic method of western medieval theology read , if you have time, J. Pelikan, *The Christian Tradition*, Vol. 3, *Medieval Theology*, chapter 6.
5. In your notebook seek to prepare definitions of the major words being used in western trinitarian theology—particularly "Person" and "Substance"—and be sure to note what they do not mean in terms of the modern use of these words today. Pay attention to the definitions of Boethius, Richard of St. Victor and Aquinas.
6. Bearing in mind that the theologizing of the western church was done in the context of the recital of the Daily Office and the attendance at Daily Mass, do you think that theologians emphasized too much the Immanent Trinity? Write a brief comment in your notebook.

## Lesson 21: Medieval, Western Councils

1. Recite, as far as possible from memory, the *Athanasian Creed* and again reflect upon God-as-God-is-in-Himself as He is confessed therein.
2. Listen to Lecture 21.
3. If you have access to it, borrow *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils* (ed. Tanner) and read for yourself in there what was confessed concerning the Holy Trinity at the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215, the Second Council of Lyon in 1271 and the Council of Florence in 1439. Read also Fortman, chapters 11 and 12.
4. In your notebook seek to add to your notes from the last lecture by further notes on "Relation" and "Processions."

5. Consider whether or not it is appropriate and right to use the definite article “the” when speaking of the Three Persons of the Blessed and Holy Trinity. Have we become careless today in the use of the definite article in ordinary speech and then transferred this carelessness to the statement of the doctrine of the Trinity? Write your comments in your notebook.

## Lesson 22: Protestantism

1. Recite, as far as possible from memory, both the *Athanasian Creed* and the *Nicene Creed*.
2. Listen to Lecture 22.
3. Making use of *Creeds of the Churches* (ed. Leith) or another collection of texts, carefully read what the Protestant Confessions and Catechisms said concerning the Holy Trinity. In your notebook make comments on how this teaching is related to the historic orthodoxy of the East and West.
4. Further, make notes in your notebook on the relation of the Immanent Trinity and Economic Trinity in the teaching of the Reformation.
5. Read either Bray, *Doctrine of God*, chap. 5, or B.B. Warfield on “Calvin on the Trinity” in his *Calvin and Augustine*.
6. What justification do you believe was there for the call by the radicals (e.g., the Socinians) to reject the doctrine of the Trinity because it was a speculative and non-biblical doctrine? Make notes in your notebook of your answer.

## Lesson 23: Surveying the Modern Scene

1. Recite the *Nicene Creed* and the *Athanasian Creed*.
2. Listen to Lecture 23.
3. Either (a) if you have access to Hill, *The Three-Personed God*, look over the contents of the chapters on the modern period and sample what he says here and there. Alternatively, do the same with Lacugna, *God for Us*, or with Welch, *In this Name*, OR  
(b) spend at least one hour looking over the contents and reading Jenson, *The Triune Identity* or Moltmann, *The Trinity and the Kingdom*, or any other major writer’s presentation of this doctrine since the 1950’s. (Leave Barth’s *Church Dogmatics* for your S.T.M. work or for later reading.)
4. Consider how far the doctrine of the Immanent Trinity is connected to the doctrine of the infallibility and inerrancy of the Holy Scriptures, especially those of the New Testament. Make notes of your thoughts in your notebook.



## Lesson 24: Conclusion

1. Recite both the *Nicene* and *Athanasian Creeds*.
2. Listen to Lecture 24.
3. What is wrong with naming the Trinity as “Creator, Redeemer and Sanctifier”? Write down your answer in your notebook.
4. What value, if any, is there in thinking of the relations of the members of the Holy Trinity as a “community”? Write down your critical comments in your notebook.
5. Are there any modern equivalents to the classic words of Trinitarian vocabulary—Person, Substance, Relation, Procession, etc.? Ponder this question for 15 minutes or more.
6. Bearing in mind all your thinking about the Immanent Trinity and the Economic Trinity, close your notebook with your statement as to what is the doctrine of the Trinity.

### TEXTS TO BE LEARNED BY HEART

(Both Translations by J.N.D. Kelly)

#### 1. The Creed of the Council of Constantinople

We believe in one God the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible;

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten from the Father before all ages, light from light, true God from true God, begotten not made, of one substance with the Father, through Whom all things came into existence, Who because of us men and because of our salvation came down from heaven, and was incarnate from the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary and became man, and was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate, and suffered and was buried, and rose again on the third day according to the Scriptures and ascended to heaven, and sits on the right hand of the Father, and will come again with glory to judge the living and dead, of Whose kingdom there will be no end;

And in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and life-giver, Who proceeds from the Father, Who with the Father and the Son is together worshiped and glorified, Who spoke through the prophets; in one holy Catholic and apostolic Church. We confess one baptism to the remission of sins; we look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.

#### 2. The Athanasian Creed (Part 1)

Whoever desires to be saved must above all things hold the Catholic faith. Unless a man keeps it in its entirety inviolate, he will assuredly perish eternally.

Now this is the Catholic faith, that we worship one God in Trinity and Trinity in unity, without either confusing the persons or dividing the substance. For the Father’s person is one, the Son’s another, the Holy Spirit’s another; but the Godhead of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit is one, their glory is equal, their majesty coeternal.

Such as the Father is, such is the Son, such also the Holy Spirit. The Father is increate, the Son increate, the Holy Spirit is increate. The Father is infinite, the Son infinite, the Holy Spirit infinite. The Father is eternal, the Son eternal, the Holy Spirit eternal. Yet there are not three eternals, but one eternal; just as there are not three increates or three infinities, but one increate and one infinite. In the same way the Father is almighty, the Son almighty, the Holy Spirit almighty; yet there are not three almighties, but one almighty.

Thus the Father is God, the Son God, the Holy Spirit God; and yet there are not three Gods, but there is one God. Thus the Father is Lord, the Son Lord, the Holy Spirit Lord; and yet there are not three Lords, but there is one Lord. Because just as we are obliged by Christian truth to acknowledge each person separately both God and Lord, so we are forbidden by the Catholic religion to speak of three Gods or Lords.

The Father is from none, not made nor created nor begotten. The Son is from the Father alone, not made nor created but begotten. The Holy Spirit is from the Father and the Son, not made nor created nor begotten, but proceeding. So there is one Father, not three Fathers; one Son, not three Sons; one Holy Spirit, not three Holy Spirits. And in this trinity there is nothing before or after, nothing greater or less, but all three persons are coeternal with each other and coequal. Thus in all things, as has been stated above, both Trinity in unity and unity in Trinity must be worshiped. So he who desires to be saved should think thus of the Trinity...