

THOUGHTS ON THE TRINITY



(Image from Presbyterian Mission Agency, PC(USA) Website)

A Trinitarian Prayer



Of the Father's love begotten
ere the worlds began to be,
he is Alpha and Omega,
he the Source, the Ending he,
of the things that are, that have been,
and that future years shall see,
evermore and evermore!

Aurelius Clemens Prudentius (348-410)

Thoughts on the Trinity



1. The Mystery of Mysteries
2. Enigmas and Issues: The Oneness of the Three
3. “Specialties”: The Threeness of the One
4. The Trinity in our Lives and Our Faith

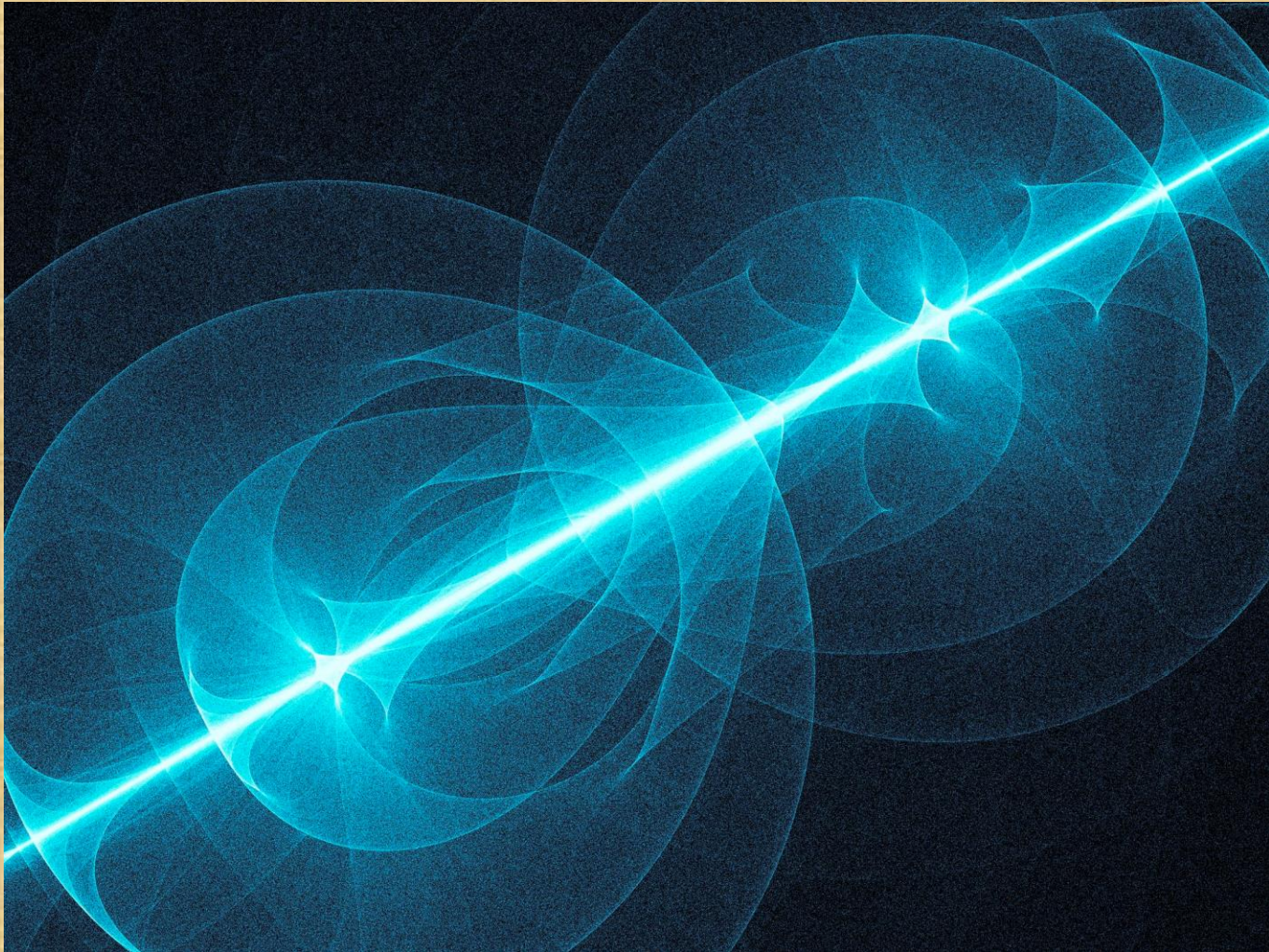
God's Glorious Creation



O LORD, our Lord,
how majestic is your name in all the earth!
You have set your glory above the heavens.
When I look at your heavens, the work of
your fingers...
the moon and the stars that you have made...

Psalm 8:1-3

Is Light a Wave or Particle??



The Nicene Creed



Nicaea:

325 AD

“First Ecumenical Council”

Constantinople:

381 AD

“Second Ecumenical Council”

Official name: *Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed*

Four Points Re Nicaea



Augustine's Caution:

“The formula three persons has been coined, not in order to give a complete explanation, but in order that we might not be obliged to remain silent”!

Four Points Re Nicea

1. *In the “economy” of salvation, God has revealed God’s self as Father, Son, & Spirit.*

Deut. 6:4-5 Hear, O Israel: The LORD is our God, the LORD alone. You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might.

John 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

Acts 1:8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.

Nicaea: Full Divinity of the Three

We believe in one God, the **Father**, the Almighty...

We believe in one Lord, **Jesus Christ**, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten not made. Of one Being with the Father...

We believe in the **Holy Spirit**, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified...

Four Points Re Nicea

2. *The economic Trinity corresponds to God's inner being, i.e., the "immanent" Trinity.*

- God reveals God's self as God really is.
- The Son (and Spirit) are equally divine and eternal with the Father.

Two Rejected Views



Modalism: Father, Son, and Spirit are in fact simply three different ways God has revealed God's self.

Adoptionism: the Son is a perfect human being, adopted by God to be Savior of the world

Arius (256-336): *"There was a time when He was not."*

Catherine LaCugna



“The defeat of the doctrine of the Trinity”

[Gradually after Nicaea] “the doctrine of the Trinity was identified as the science of God’s inner relatedness. The result was a one-sided theology of God that had little to do with the economy of Christ and the Spirit.”

Four Points Re Nicea

3. God is to be understood as three persons in one undivided substance.

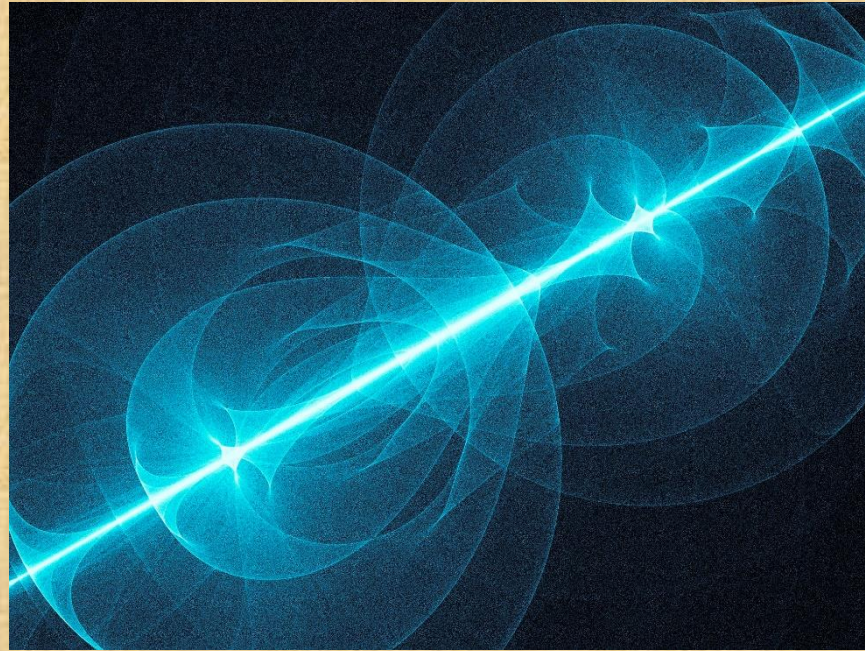
hypostasis → 3

in

ousia → 1

(God is personal, but God is not 3 persons as independent, individual beings!)

The Principle of Complementarity



Niels Bohr: Wave and particle models are logically incompatible, but...both are necessary!

Four Points Re Nicaea

4. God's Oneness exists in an eternal inter-penetrating communion of the three in each other.



Perichoresis! (“circulate,” “rotate”)



Andrei
Rublev

“Trinity”

15th c.