The Divine Conspiracy of God the Holy Trinity

Holy Trinity Sunday; May 27, 2018

So then, brothers, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, "Abba! Father!" The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs —heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him. [Romans 8]

Jesus [said], "…unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God…unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit…the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life." [John 3]

The Trinity's "divine conspiracy" to regenerate and adopt us as children of God
Christian and Georgia baptized into Christ by "water and the Spirit" for eternal life
How can Christian and Georgia—and we—be assured of salvation?
We turn to Romans, the biblical book *par excellence* of the Trinity's divine conspiracy.

1.

For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. [Rom 8.13-14]

First, God the Holy Spirit

All children of God have the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit leads them "to put to death the deeds of the body." So to live by the Spirit is to make war against our sin.

A first way we have assurance that we are a child of God: We hate our sin, and we fight by the Spirit against it.

"When our Lord and Master Jesus Christ said, 'Repent' (Mt 4:17), he willed the entire life of believers to be one of repentance." [Thesis 1 of Luther's *95 Theses*]

The Holy Spirit's daily work of sanctification in us causes us to confess, "I am saved! I have eternal assurance! For I am a child of God because I know I'm both a saint and a sinner. But I want to be more a saint and less a sinner. I hate my sin and fight it."

2.

For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, "Abba! Father!" The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God…[Rom 8.15-16]

Second, God the Father

By the Spirit we cry out as adopted daughters and sons of God, "Abba! Father!"

God's children know that their Abba/Daddy/Father "so loved the world that He gave…"

A second way we have assurance that we are a child of God: We cry, "Abba! Father!"

That's the Holy Spirit talking. It's not simply saying the word but *crying* from our hearts —by faith, with tenderness, sincerity, authenticity—that we love and trust our Abba.

3.

…and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him. Rom 8.17

Third, God the Son

In the baptism "of water and the Spirit" into Christ, we are joined with Him in His suffering "in order that we may also be glorified with him" as His children.

A third way we have assurance that we are a child of God: We suffer with Jesus Christ.

We suffer with God the Son

- in Holy Baptism ("buried with Him by baptism into death"),
- in Holy Communion ("The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ?"), and
- in our own sufferings ("suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.")

Suffering with Christ means that we're God's children and "if children, then heirs"—what do we inherit?

- The world to come (Rom 4.13)
- God and His glory (Rom 5.2; Rev 21.3)
- A new, redeemed body (Rom 8.23)

Glory to God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit and thanksgiving for His divine conspiracy to make and keep us His own children forever!