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Allan Coppedge (PhD, University of Cambridge) was, before his retirement, Beeson Professor of Theology at Asbury Theological Seminary. He is the author of *Portraits of God: A Biblical Theology of Holiness*, *The God who is Triune: Revisioning the Christian Doctrine of God* and other books and articles. He is a competent historical theologian and is well-qualified to write a book of this nature.

*Trinitarian Theology* is volume two in the series, ‘Holy Love: A Wesleyan Systematic Theology’. This volume and volume one, *Christology as Theology*, written principally by M. William Ury, are the only two volumes currently in print. Francis Asbury Society is the publisher, and the series finds its impetus in Dr Dennis Kinlaw’s work, *Let’s Start with Jesus*.

The current volume is an abridgement of Coppedge’s previous work, *The God Who is Triune*, published in 2007 by IVP Academic, which retains the copyright for the original and the abridgement. The earlier work contained 345 pages compared to the 181 pages of the current volume. For example, chapter one omits most of the section in the original entitled, ‘Triune Life Revealed the Making of Disciples’. In comparing the chapter titles, three chapters of the original have been omitted in the abridgement: ‘The Triune God Creates a Cosmos’, ‘The Nature of Creation’, and ‘The Triune God, Freedom and Providence’. The revisers have undertaken a very thorough abridgement. *Trinitarian Theology* contains an introduction, nine chapters, a bibliography, and an index of scripture and subject references.

‘Introduction: New Testament Foundations for the Trinity’ is strategically placed before the subsequent chapter on the ‘Old Testament Preparation for the Trinity’. Coppedge discusses the traditional approach of amassing biblical texts mentioning the Trinity, which he considers problematic for two reasons: firstly, traditional scholars tend to refer only to biblical texts mentioning all three persons of the Trinity; secondly, such scholars tend not to give due regard to the theology of the passages (11). This section is followed by a section titled ‘Fresh Approaches to Trinitarian Data’ (12ff.). The author insists that due consideration must be given: 1) to broadening the scope of passages of Scripture to include the scriptures referring to only two (rather than three) persons of the Trinity; 2) the literary structure of the various books of the Bible which is occasionally a triadic formula; and, 3) the trinitarian formula of the Great Commission which points less to the form of baptism or the means of evangelising, but underscores the way that believers should relate to the Triune God. Coppedge writes, ‘From this point on, therefore, to be a disciple of Jesus is to be a disciple of the triune God’ (24).

Chapter 1 is titled ‘Old Testament Preparation for the Trinity’. The author discusses the Old Testament intimations of the plurality of God, including God as Father, the Spirit of God, the Word of God, the Wisdom of God, the Angel of Yahweh, a Man of God, theophanies, a dialogue

between God and his Son (Psalm 2), the thrice repetition of the divine name, and the plurality of the divine name. In the first sentence of the chapter, the author summarises the purpose: ‘The trinitarian unveiling in the incarnation and Pentecost revealed to the disciples and to the world the nature of the God of Israel’ (26).

Chapter 2 discusses ‘The Development of the Doctrine of the Trinity’. The early church assumed the task of clarifying the doctrine of the Trinity due to the threat of heresies. Coppedge discusses two historical approaches to the Trinity. First, the Eastern church emphasised the three persons of the Trinity who share the *homoousios* (same essence). The second approach, touted by the Western church, began with an emphasis on the unity of God ‘before discussing the triune nature of God’ (51). Tracing the historical development in this chapter lays a foundation for subsequent chapters.

The third chapter is entitled ‘The Triune God in Relation to Creation’. The author broaches the topic of two ‘approaches’ to the Trinity, i.e. the Economic Trinity and the Ontological Trinity. Rahner’s Rule guides the author’s discussion. There is a diversity or three-ness in redemption and revelation. The objective side of both revelation and redemption is ‘from the Father through the Son and by the Spirit’ (58, 61); the subjective side of the two doctrines is ‘by the Spirit through the Son to the Father’ (60, 63). Yet, the external operations of the Trinity are indivisible (66).

The next chapter continues to apply Rahner’s Rule, but now the focus is on the ontological Trinity. In ‘The Triune God within Himself’, Coppedge advances the argument that the full revelation of the Son precedes epistemologically to an adequate understanding of the Ontological Trinity. Alternatively, the author states, ‘The Economic Trinity helps us to understand the Ontological Trinity; they are complementary’ (69). Coppedge explores the internal workings of the Trinity and the distinctness of persons. He distinguishes between the Western view of the Trinity, which ‘tends to ground God’s unity in the substance of God’, and the Eastern view, which ‘grounded the unity of God in the person of the Father’ who is the ‘cause’ of both the Son and the Spirit (72). Coppedge discusses T. F. Torrence’s proposal, which suggests God’s unity is ‘better found in his Triunity, centered in his perichoresis’ (73). The latter option becomes the basis for the author’s constructive developments in the remainder of this chapter and the book. The final section of the chapter discusses ‘The Mystery of the Trinity’, including several analogies of the Trinity (78f.).

‘The Nature of the Triune God’ underscores classic theology’s approach to discussing the divine attributes, which ‘begins with the existence and attributes of God and then moves to a discussion of the triune nature of God’ (85). Coppedge’s approach discusses the trinitarian nature of God first and then addresses the divine attributes. The result is a more personal rendering of the attributes with holiness and love as first and second indicators, respectively, of the divine being.

Guided by his Trinitarian Theism, Coppedge begins in chapter six with the personal and moral attributes of God, which ‘gives way to a Trinitarian reordering of the attributes in light of the essential nature of God’ (94), as holiness and love. He discusses the personal and moral attributes first, making ‘person-to-person relationships much more important’ (115). In fact, his discussion begins with the personal and moral attributes in chapter six; the same trinitarian reading of the relative and absolute attributes continues in chapter seven. Coppedge asserts, ‘The absolute and relative attributes are governed by God’s personal and moral character...’ (115). The divine personal attributes are discussed through the lens of Jesus’ life; however, the relative and absolute attributes are discussed in light of the personal attributes and the perichoretic Trinity. What seems essential to Coppedge is evident in his stress upon the personal, trinitarian lens in limiting the doctrine of divine sovereignty from how it is generally understood in classical theism (115). In the

conclusion of chapter seven, Coppedge stresses that Trinitarian Theism guards the appropriate balance between immanence and transcendence (132-133).

Chapter 8, 'The Roles of the Triune God: The Way the Economic Trinity Works', introduces analogical language in a relatively short chapter. The author opts to discuss the idea of roles because they align with his personal and relational ideas. The section on 'The Roles of the Triune God' mentions the eight roles of the Triune God and discusses them in a cursory manner.

In chapter 9, Coppedge discusses 'The Triune God's Work of Providence'. He clears the air in discussing four erroneous ideas of God's dealings with creation: deism, pantheism, fatalism, and chance. Preservation, concurrence, and governance are presented as three components of providence. The section, 'Jesus as the Model: The Way of Understanding Providence', describes the nature of the relationship that God desires with human beings. Here, the author stresses that God seeks loving and free human relationships. The chapter closes with a description of God's ordering of life through 'permission, restraint, overruling, prevention, and guidance' in his providential dealings with humans (160-162).

Francis Asbury Press has done a valuable service in making volumes one and two of 'Holy Love: A Wesleyan Systematic Theology' series available to the public. In *Trinitarian Theology*, Coppedge argues for Trinitarian Theism as a polemic against classic theism, open theism, and process theism; however, his arguments are more precise and convincing in *The God Who is Triune*. Numerous strains of thought have been omitted from the original in this abridged edition. For example, the thoroughgoing discussion on 'the order of being' and 'the order of knowing' found in the original was omitted from *Trinitarian Theology*. Is not 'the order of revelation' the more accurate terminology for 'the order of knowing'? The astute theologian desiring a more detailed, comprehensive discussion of Trinitarian Theism should consult *The God Who is Triune*. Nevertheless, the abridged edition provides a reliable read for an intermediate reader.

Readers should be aware of the dependence upon the Reformed theologian T. F. Torrance's thought, the limited number of references to John Wesley and of even fewer references to Wesleyan theologians, the lack of any updating of *Trinitarian Theology* with the more current writings (e.g. Elmer M. Colyer's *The Trinitarian Dimension of John Wesley's Theology* and T. A. Noble's *Christian Theology, vol. 1, The Grace of Our Lord Jesus Christ*) since the original work was published in 2007, and the occasional interruptions in the flow of thought due to abridgement. Readers committed to the Wesleyan tradition should anticipate the unfolding discussion in these volumes as it develops from a Christocentric theism (volume 1), which reveals the Trinitarian focus (the current volume) to the understanding of humans as personal and relational beings, reflecting the Triune Creator and to a Trinitarian doctrine of holiness in the subsequent volumes. *Trinitarian Theology* contributes to the series as it begins with Christ and develops from Christology the doctrine of the Trinity, which is used as a foundational doctrine for a personal and Trinitarian understanding of God, laying the basis for the providential divine dealings with creation.