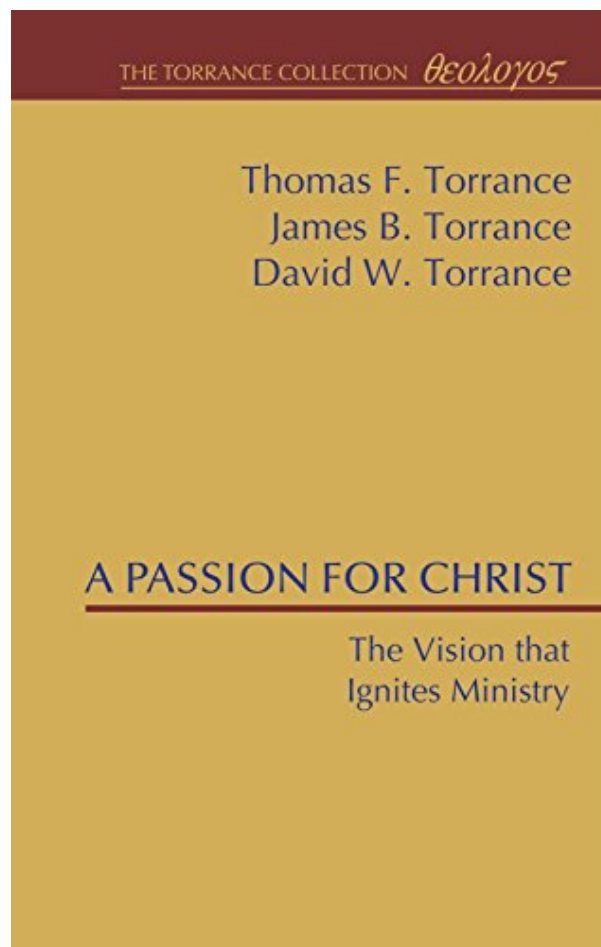


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## A PASSION FOR CHRIST

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## About the Author

Thomas F. Torrance (1913-2007) occupied the chair of Christian dogmatics at the University of Edinburgh for twenty-seven years. He was the recipient of the Templeton Foundation Prize for Progress in 1978, and he served as moderator of the Church of Scotland and coeditor of the Scottish Journal of Theology. He wrote extensively, contributing more than twenty major works of theology and hundreds of articles in a variety of languages.

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The three Torrance brothers here offer a vision of how Jesus Christ monumentally impacts both our larger world (neighbors, acquaintances, family) and our own world (salvation, sanctification and from within through our mystical union with him etc.). Each brings their own understanding of Christ's importance to the little book which in many regards is a re-writing of themes seen before either from Thomas and James in the University as professors or by David in the pastorate. As a pastor myself, I particularly enjoyed reading David's papers (having seen Thomas's and James's in different contexts before). Each article should be read slowly, carefully, and repeatedly. This is a marvelous contribution from a dynamic Christian family; and beautiful book that one must have on one's shelf. Excellent!

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The book is great, but even better is the incredible, glorious, amazing, holy God that this book helps us better understand

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I highly recommend this book for anyone serious about understanding who our God is. The Torrance brothers are not for your average every day christian but are for those with the patience and willingness to utilize their teaching to better understand what the Bible teaches us about our Triune God. What is even more amazing than the book is the God that it helps us to understand.

3 of 4 people found the following review helpful.

Excellent

By Andrew

What could I share with my church? There are two different views and practices of worship, and we must be sure which view we take. Is it something we do in church on Sunday? Jesus taught us how to do it and gave us an example of it. We are therefore the only priesthood making our offering and sacrifice. There is no necessity for a mediator so it is Unitarian, human centered and non-sacramental. The practice is watching a minister do his thing while we do our thing that some call 'legal worship' while the early church fathers called it 'Arian' or 'Pelgains.' This first view is powerfully American to the core bringing a political Declaration of Independence into worship with a spiritual bill of rights. This can create weariness in us.

The second view of worship participates in the communion of the Jesus and the Father. What Jesus has done for us and continues to do for us is manifest in our worship as the bread we break is representative of his body and the cup his blood. We receive our sonship through adoption because of the work Jesus did by laying down his life, burial, resurrection and ascension. When we pray for anything from personal, local, regional, national or international requests, we also participate in the intercession of Jesus. We are never independent in our humanity before God. Therefore this view is Trinitarian and sacramental. Although we are a priesthood of believers, this cannot exist without the High Priesthood of Jesus. We must not substitute his priesthood, sacrifice, merits and intercession in ourselves. God has accepted the work of Jesus and accepts us through and in this but not independent of it. This will release joy in us.

How would I summarize this to a friend? The joy of worship is entirely a response to the response Jesus made on our behalf. It is not something we simply do on a Sunday but the response of joy, assurance and security. As Israel had a High Priest to represent God to humanity, and humanity to God, we have Jesus who, in his own person, became the one on behalf of many. Israel was created from one man, Abraham, to be a priesthood, a holy nation and a worshipping people as the recipient of God's grace. They were called out of Egypt which was deeply embedded into their practice of worship. We were also called out of darkness to worship him in light. The High Priest was bone of their bone and flesh of their flesh. He was one of them. Jesus is God's son but he became one of us, of our bone and flesh to represent us. As the Israelite High Priest

wore the name of Israel on his chest and shoulders so Jesus has borne our names on the cross and bares them now before God. We are a chosen people acceptable because of what Jesus did and is now doing. Jesus said, "I am returning to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God." (John 20:17). When the High Priest entered the Holy of Holies all of Israel was entering through him.

This builds rich God-human relationship and transforms human relationships. Our worship is the God-human movement of grace given to us in and through Jesus. Grace summons us to respond in faith but this is not a response of human-God but of responding to Jesus' response on our behalf. If the response was simply human-God without Jesus then it does not give justice to the meaning of grace. Jesus came to do for us what we could not do for ourselves. Even now we cannot worship by ourselves. We need to participate in and through Jesus to experience full grace. The beauty of worship is that we can become with `others' in Christ what we are already with Jesus as our Savior. Even in repentance we must not say, `If I repent then God will forgive me.' This places a condition on unconditional grace. God's grace is never dependent on what we do but what Jesus did on the cross and is doing as High Priest and Mediator. Repentance is a response to grace by faith. Therefore, our relationships to others should be powerfully influenced by the inclusion, acceptance and embrace of God towards us. I believe this is what John Calvin intended in his opposition to `legal worship.' If I fall out with a friend but go to him and say, `I forgive you' am I not implying he is guilty? My friend may react feeling condemned refusing to submit to the verdict I am implying. It looks like grace but it is not. It does not change his heart and rejects the forgiveness offered. But what if my friend came back to me and confessed he was wrong? Would he not imply his guilt, acceptance of my forgiveness and a change of heart?

Jesus' incarnation, life, death, burial, resurrection, ascension, intercession and return were God's expression of love and at the same time judgment and condemnation. The guilty verdict was announced on Jesus making him the perfect response to God. He does not tell us we are forgiven and throw us back on ourselves to respond. We are summoned to repent but as a response to Jesus' great response. Again, this should open up our changed hearts to include, embrace and accept `others.'

By Andrew Fox author of Real Ses Does Not Come From A Website

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