

Why Is the Doctrine of the Trinity a Vital Belief for Christians to Understand?

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When we speak of the Trinity, we must do so with caution and modesty, for, as St. Augustine saith, “Nowhere else are more dangerous errors made, or is research more difficult, or discovery more fruitful.” (St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, Ia q. xxi, 1272)

The biblical doctrine of the Trinity is vital to understand because it concerns *who* God is, i.e., a proper realization of the nature of God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. To understand the Trinity is to understand God as He has revealed Himself to be.

Why is this important? Because if we are to worship God “in spirit and truth” (John 4:24), as Jesus commanded, we must know and worship the one true God as He really is. To fail to do this is to fail to know and worship God—and this cannot bring Him glory. Thus, those who reject the Trinity invariably deny the nature of God.

Consider several examples of professedly Christian religions that forcefully reject what the Bible teaches. By denying the biblical teaching on the Trinity, Jehovah’s Witnesses make Jesus merely a creation of Jehovah and the Holy Spirit Jehovah’s impersonal force. Thus, Jesus “was actually a creature of God” who earned his own salvation and immortality¹ and the Holy Spirit “is not a person at all but is God’s invisible active force by means of which God carries out his holy will and work.”²

In rejecting the Trinity, Jehovah’s Witnesses founder C. T. Russell blasphemously stated that the God of Christianity “is plainly not Jehovah but the ancient deity, hoary with the iniquity of the ages—Baal, the Devil Himself.”³ Second Watchtower President Judge Rutherford declared in a similar fashion, “The doctrine of the Trinity is a false doctrine and is promulgated by Satan for the purpose of defaming Jehovah’s name”—and for keeping others from “learning the truth of Jehovah and his Son, Jesus Christ.” Indeed, “God-fearing persons... find it a bit difficult to love and worship a complicated, freakish-looking three-headed God.”⁴ Surely, teachings that caricature God in this manner do not bring to Him honor and glory.

In a similar fashion, Mormons maintain that the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are not immortal, but were individual spirit-men created by the sexual union of their parent deities, each of whom then later evolved into Godhood.⁵ Mormonism thus

rejects the ontological unity of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit in teaching tritheism, or a belief in three separate Gods.

Indeed, Mormons are ultimately *polytheists* who reject the concept of one true God. As a standard text on Mormon doctrine declares:

As pertaining to this universe, there are three Gods: the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.... To us, speaking in the proper finite sense, these three are the only Gods we worship. But in addition there is an infinite number of holy personages, drawn from worlds without number, who have passed on to exaltation [i.e., Godhood] and are thus gods.⁶

Mary Baker Eddy was the founder of Christian Science, another group that claims to be truly Christian. Yet in her *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, the Bible of Christian Science, she writes:

The theory of three persons in one God (that is, a personal Trinity or Tri-unity) suggests polytheism, rather than the one ever-present I Am.... The name Elohim is in the plural, but this plurality of Spirit does not imply more than one God, nor does it imply three persons in one.⁷

Victor Paul Wierwille, founder of The Way International, reveals additional common consequences of rejection of the Trinity—a denial not only of the Person of Jesus Christ but also of His atoning Work on the cross. Wierwille argues as follows:

Through the years, the more and more I carefully researched God's Word for knowledge, the less and less I found to substantiate a trinity. Even though I had always accepted the idea of a three-in-one-God, I continually found evidence in the Word of God which undermined a Christian trinity.... [Further] If Jesus Christ is God...we have not yet been redeemed.... Our very redemption...is dependent on Jesus Christ's being a man and not God.... So how then did a trinitarian doctrine come about? It gradually evolved and gained momentum in late 1st, 2nd, and 3rd centuries as pagans, who had converted to Christianity, brought to Christianity some of their pagan beliefs and practices. Trinitarianism then was confirmed at Nicaea in 325 by Church bishops out of political expediency.⁸

In essence, the reason the Trinity is important to understand according to its biblical and theological formulation is that failure to do so can lead to heretical views about who God is. This in turn can lead to rejection of the one true God and worship of a false God. But if the Bible is clear on anything, it is clear that faith in and worship of a false God is powerless to save people from their sins. Jesus Himself emphasized the importance of having an accurate knowledge of God when he said, "And this is eternal life, that they may know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent" (John 17:3).

God warned Israel through the prophet Hosea, "My people are destroyed from lack of knowledge" and "You shall acknowledge no God but me, no Savior except me" (Hosea 4:6; 13:4). As their history so amply demonstrates, the Israelites were spiritually ruined because they had rejected true knowledge of God and had turned to false gods and idols. Unfortunately, in a similar manner, those who deliberately reject the Trinity, knowing in advance what the Bible teaches about it, only reveal their own lack of salvation (1 Corinthians 2:14). In other words, no one can consis-

tently dishonor what the Holy Spirit has revealed in Scripture as to the true nature of God and logically claim to be a Christian.

Of course, prior knowledge of the Trinity, especially in its theological formulation, is not necessary for a person to be saved. But once saved, it is vital for Christians to know the true nature of the God who has so graciously pardoned them. This explains why the Church has always recognized the importance of a proper understanding of God and maintained that those who reject the scriptural view of God, as long as they do so, cannot be saved.

For example, in discussing the placing of a divine curse or *anathema* on those who reject God, the Athanasian Creed

...begins and ends with the solemn declaration that the catholic [i.e., universal] faith in the Trinity and the Incarnation is the indispensable condition of salvation, and that those who reject it will be lost forever.... This anathema, in its natural historical sense, is not merely a solemn warning against the great danger of heresy, nor, on the other hand, does it demand, as a condition of salvation, a full knowledge, and assent to, the logical statement of the doctrines set forth, (this would condemn the great mass even of Christian believers); but it does mean to exclude from heaven all who reject the divine truth therein taught. It requires everyone who would be saved to believe in the only true and living God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, one in essence, three in persons, and in one Jesus Christ, very God and very man in one person.⁹

As Vladimir Lossky once put boldly in *The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church* (1957, p. 66), "Between the Trinity and Hell there lies no other choice."

Thus, an examination of religions claiming to be Christian, who yet deny the Trinity, invariably reveals that other key Christian doctrines, such as salvation by grace through faith alone, are also rejected. In other words, if one does not start with a proper respect for Scripture and its understanding of God, it is unlikely one will get much else correct biblically. This is exactly what we find in the world of the cults.

However, before we discuss what the Bible does teach about the Trinity, we must also remember that this doctrine is something finite minds can never fully comprehend. The Trinity may be logically defined, but this is partly the problem because "the infinite truth of the Godhead lies far beyond the boundaries of logic, which deals only with finite truths and categories."¹⁰ In other words, as an infinite being, God can never be fully understood by any finite person. If we can't understand something as basic as particle physics, who would argue we should be able to rationally comprehend all that the infinite God is?

As Dorothy L. Sayers once stated in *Current Religious Thought* (1957),

Why do you complain that the proposition God is three in one is obscure and mystical and yet acquiesce meekly in the physicist's fundamental formula, 'two P minus PQ equals IH over two Pi where I equals the square root of minus one' when you know quite well that the square root of minus one is paradoxical and Pi is incalculable?

Consider that an ant could never comprehend all that a human being is, even if it tried. Yet, if a human being could somehow become an ant, it might be able to

explain enough about what a human is so that the ant could gain something of an understanding as to what a human is.

When we consider that God is, quite literally, infinitely removed from men, the parallel suffers immeasurably. All we can truly understand about God is what He has revealed to us in the Bible. And while this does give us a great deal of accurate information, it obviously does not give us exhaustive information that plumbs the depths of His infinity. Indeed, one of the glories of eternal salvation (John 5:24; 6:47) will be that finite creatures will forever learn wondrous things about the exhaustless glories and perfections of an infinite God. This heavenly knowledge will make the things learned on earth pale in contrast.

Regardless, what Christians can do is accept what God has revealed and what the Church has formulated historically that is in accordance with biblical teaching. So just what does it mean that God is a Trinity?

God has revealed that He is three persons or centers of consciousness within one Godhead. Again, because the concept cannot be fully comprehended does not mean the doctrine cannot be accurately described or defined. One good definition of the Trinity is provided by noted church historian Philip Schaff:

God is one in three persons or hypostases [i.e., distinct persons of the same nature], each person expressing the whole fullness of the Godhead, with all his attributes. The term *persona* is taken neither in the old sense of a mere personation or form of manifestation (*prosopon*, face, mask), nor in the modern sense of an independent, separate being or individual, but in a sense which lies between these two conceptions, and thus avoids Sabellianism on the one hand, and Tritheism on the other. [Sabellianism taught that God was one person only who existed in three different forms or manifestations; tritheism refers to a belief in three separate gods.] The divine persons are in one another, and form a perpetual intercommunication and motion within the divine essence. Each person has all the divine attributes which are inherent in the divine essence, but each has also a characteristic individuality or property, which is peculiar to the person, and can not be communicated; the Father is unbegotten, the Son begotten, the Holy Ghost is proceeding. In this Trinity there is no priority or posteriority of time, no superiority or inferiority of rank, but the three persons are coeternal and coequal.¹¹

It is important to note here that the Bible teaches both monotheism and trinitarianism. It teaches a *monotheistic* view—that there is only one true God—and a *trinitarian* view—that this one true God exists eternally as three persons. This triunity of God was defended from earliest times as Christian theologians and apologists were careful to safeguard both the unity of God against tritheism and to also maintain the respective deity of the three persons. As Gregory of Nyssa stated in his letter to Ablabius,

To say that there are three gods...is wicked...not to bear witness to the deity of the Son and the Spirit...is ungodly and absurd. ...therefore one God must be confessed by us according to the witness of Scripture, "Hear Israel, the Lord your God is one Lord" (Deut. 6:4), even if the word "deity" extends through the holy trinity.¹²

So, how do we know that the doctrine of the Trinity is biblical? That the Trinity is a biblical doctrine can be seen from five simple statements supported by the Bible. And, since the Jehovah's Witnesses are one group so adamantly opposed to the doctrine as being something "pagan," "unreasonable" and "of the devil," we thought it might be instructive to them to cite their own Bible, *The New World Translation* (NWT; 1970 edition), in support of the doctrine. (In the scriptures below, the term "Holy Spirit" is not capitalized because Jehovah's Witnesses believe that "holy spirit" is merely God's active, impersonal force, not a true Person.) Thus, even the *New World Translation* teaches the doctrine of the Trinity.

1. There is only one true God: "For there is *one God*, and one mediator between God and men..." (1 Timothy 2:5 NWT, emphasis added; cf. Deuteronomy 4:35, 6:4; Isaiah 43:10).

2. The Father is God: "There is actually to us *one God the Father*...(1 Corinthians 8:6, NWT, emphasis added; cf. John 17:1-3; 2 Corinthians 1:3; Philippians 2:11; Colossians 1:3; 1 Peter 1:2).

3. Jesus Christ, the Son, is God: "...but he [Jesus] was also calling God his own Father, making himself *equal to God*": (John 5:18 NWT, emphasis added); "In answer, Thomas said to him [Jesus]: 'My Lord and *my God!*'" (John 20:28 NWT, emphasis added, cf. Isaiah 9:6; John 1:1 Romans 9:5; Titus 2:13; 2 Peter 1:1).

4. The Holy Spirit is a Person, is eternal, and is therefore God: "However, when that one arrives, the spirit of the truth, *he* will guide you into all the truth, for *he* will not speak of *his* own impulse, but what things *he hears he will speak* and *he will declare* to you the things coming" (John 14:13 NWT, emphasis added). The Holy Spirit is also eternal: "the Father...will give you another helper to be with you *forever*, the spirit of the truth" (John 14:16-17) "How much more will the blood of the Christ, who through an *everlasting* spirit offered himself without blemish to God..." (Hebrews 9:14, NWT, emphasis added). The Holy Spirit is therefore God: "But Peter said: 'Ananias, why has Satan emboldened you to play false to the holy spirit...?' You have played false, not to men, but *to God*" (Acts 5:3, 4 NWT, emphasis added).

5. The Father, Son and Holy Spirit are distinct Persons with equal authority: "...Baptizing them in the *name* of the Father and the Son and of the Holy Spirit"; "Now I exhort you, brothers, through our *Lord* Jesus Christ and through the *love* of the spirit, that you exert yourselves with me in prayers *to God* for me"; "The undeserved kindness of the *Lord* Jesus Christ and the *love* of God and the *sharing* in the holy spirit be with all of you" (Matthew 28:19; Romans 15:30; 2 Corinthians 13:14 NWT, emphasis added).

In Scripture, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are clearly distinguished, yet there is only one God. Thus, "There is... one Spirit... one Lord [Jesus]... one God and Father of all..." (Ephesians 4:4-6; cf., 1 Corinthians 12:4-11). Further, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are never identified as one Person only, as modern modalists teach, such as the United Pentecostal Church/"Jesus Only" groups. For example, in John 6:38 Jesus says, "I came down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of Him that sent me." In that the will is the essence of personality, we

certainly have two personalities here.

For 1,900 years the historic Christian Church has found in the Bible the doctrine of the Trinity. This can be seen by anyone who reads the Church Fathers and studies the historic creeds. The creeds declared faith in only one God, yet clearly taught that both the Son and the Holy Spirit were God. For example, the Creed of Nicaea in 325 A.D. was the creed of 318 church fathers. It reads, "We believe...in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, begotten of the Father as only begotten,... Light from Light, *true God* from true God, begotten not created."¹³

The Constantinopolitan Creed of 381 A.D., a creed of 150 church fathers, reads, "[We believe] in the Holy Spirit, *the Lord and Life-giver*, Who proceeds from the Father, Who is *worshiped and glorified together with the Father and Son*,..."¹⁴

Although the official, precise definition and explanation of the Trinity codified at Nicaea (325 A.D.) and Constantinople (381 A.D.) is lacking in the New Testament and writings of the early church leaders, the fact of the Trinity was clearly recognized by both the apostles and post-apostolic fathers. Scholars of historical theology could be cited in abundant confirmation, e.g., "The second-century Fathers were convinced that the Godhead is a triad."¹⁵

And,

From the Old Testament and the Judaism of the intertestamental period, the early church accepted the conviction that God, the maker of heaven and earth, is one.... In addition, *even before* the canonization of the New Testament books, the apostolic traditions and *popular faith of the church* were indelibly marked by the notion of a *plurality of divine persons*...the idea of the triadic manifestation of the Godhead was present *from the earliest period as part of Christian piety and thinking*. But no steps were taken to work through the implications of this idea and to arrive at a cohesive doctrine of God. The triadic pattern supplies the raw data from which the more developed descriptions of the Christian doctrine of God will come.¹⁶

Thus, in his book on the Trinity, *God in Three Persons*, E. Calvin Beisner has provided an in- depth study of the historic development of the Trinity from apostolic times through the final form of the Nicene Creed which was adopted at the Council of Constantinople in A.D. 381. He includes a line-by-line comparison of the Creed with New Testament teaching, proving that the doctrine of the Trinity as thus formulated is biblical.¹⁷

Indeed, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are so effortlessly and consistently linked in Scripture that to assume God is *not* three Persons makes it impossible to understand some passages. For example, consider the following Scriptures:

Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19).

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all (2 Corinthians 13:14).

For through him [Jesus] we both have access to the Father by one Spirit (Ephesians 2:18; cf., 3:11-16).

But you, dear friends, build yourselves up in your most holy faith and pray in the Holy Spirit. Keep yourselves in God's love as you wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring you to eternal life (Jude 20, 21).

To further illustrate, try answering the following questions without concluding that the Bible teaches the doctrine of the Trinity:

1. Who raised Jesus from the dead? The Father (Romans 6:4; Acts 3:26; 1 Thessalonians 1:10)? The Son (John 2:19-21; 10:17, 18)? The Holy Spirit (Romans 8:11)? Or *God* (Hebrews 13:20; Acts 13:30; 17:31)?
2. Who does the Bible say is God? The Father (Ephesians 4:6)? The Son (Titus 2:13; John 1:1; 20:28)? The Holy Spirit (Acts 5:3, 4)? Or *God* (Deuteronomy 4:35; Isaiah, 45:18)?
3. Who created the world? The Father (Ephesians 3:9-14; 4:6)? The Son (Colossians 1:16, 17; John 1:1-3)? The Holy Spirit (Genesis 1:2; Psalm 104:30)? Or *God* (Genesis 1:1; Hebrews 11:3)?
4. Who saves and regenerates man? The Father (1 Peter 1:3)? The Son (John 5:21, 4:14)? The Holy Spirit (John 3:6, Titus 3:5)? Or *God* (1 John 3:9)?
5. Who justifies man? The Father (Jeremiah 23:6, cf. 2 Corinthians 5:19)? The Son (Romans 5:9; 10:4; 2 Corinthians 5:19, 21)? The Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:11; Galatians 5:5)? Or *God* (Romans 4:6; 9:33)?
6. Who sanctifies man? The Father (Jude 1)? The Son (Titus 2:14)? The Holy Spirit (1 Peter 1:2)? Or *God* (Exodus 31:13)?
7. Who propitiated God's just anger against man for his sins? The Father (1 John 4:14; John 3:16; 17:5; 18:11)? The Son (Matthew 26:28; John 1:29; 1 John 2:2)? The Holy Spirit (Hebrews 9:14)? Or *God* (2 Corinthians 5:19, 21; Acts 20:28; 1 John 4:10)?

Thus, although one member of the Trinity may have a more prominent part in a specific action or role such as creating, redeeming, etc., all three Persons are still involved. What this means is that it is proper for purposes of illustration to substitute (or include) any specific Person of the Trinity in any event in the Old Testament or New Testament where the term "God" is used. In fact, Scripture itself does this. In Acts 28:25-26 the Holy Spirit is said to speak to Isaiah, but in Isaiah 6:8-9 the speaker of the same words is said to be God.

In his *Christian Theology*, Millard J. Erickson offers six points that must be included in a proper understanding of the doctrine of the Trinity:

1. There is only one God.
2. Each Person in the Godhead is equally deity.
3. The threeness and oneness of God constitute a paradox or an antinomy—merely an apparent contradiction, not a genuine one. This is because God's threeness and oneness do not exist in the same respect—i.e., they are not simultaneously affirming and denying the same thing at the same time and in the same manner. God's oneness refers to the divine essence; His threeness to the plurality of persons.
4. The Trinity is eternal—there have always been three persons, each of

whom is eternally divine. One or more of the Persons did not come into being at a point in time or at some point in time became divine. There has never been any change in the essential divine nature of the triune God. He is and will be what He has always been forever.

5. The function of one member in the Trinity may for a time be subordinate to one or both of the other members, although this does not mean He is in anyway inferior in essence. Each Person of the Trinity has had, for a period of time, a particular function unique to Himself. In other words, the particular function that is sometimes unique to a given Person in the Trinity is only a temporary role exercised for a given purpose. It does not represent a change in His status or essence. When the second Person of the Trinity incarnated and became Jesus Christ, He did not become less than the Father, although He did become subordinate to the Father functionally. In like manner, the Holy Spirit is now subordinated to the ministry of the Son (John Chs. 14-16), as well as to the will of the Father, but He is not less than they are.

Certain examples may illustrate this. A wife may have a subordinate role to a husband, but she is also his equal. Equals in some business enterprise may elect one of their number to serve as head or a chairperson for a period, without any change in rank. During World War II, the highest ranking member of an aircraft, the pilot, would nevertheless carefully subordinate his decisions to the bombardier, a lower ranking officer.

6. Finally, as noted, the Trinity is incomprehensible. Even when we are in heaven and fully redeemed, we will still not totally comprehend God because it is impossible that a finite creature could ever comprehend an infinite being: Thus, "Those aspects of God which we never fully comprehend should be regarded as mysteries that go beyond our reason rather than as paradoxes which conflict with reason."¹⁸

Indeed, the problems inherent in fully comprehending the doctrine of the Trinity are also inherent in the Person of Jesus Christ. Thus, the doctrine known as the hypostatic union assimilates all the biblical data in order to accurately describe the nature of the Incarnation. It declares that Jesus is undiminished deity and full humanity in one person. Jesus Christ is both God and man. Jesus is not part human and part divine—he is fully man and fully God.

Because of this He has two natures, one divine and one human. But He is not two persons i.e., He is not schizophrenic. Further, He is one person with two different kinds of consciousness (a divine consciousness and also a human consciousness). Also, He is one person with two wills (if He truly has two natures, then He must have two wills, one human and one divine), however, Jesus Christ never had a conflict of wills.

Christ's two natures were not altered by their union within the one person of Christ; both divine and human characteristics and deeds may be attributed to the Person of Christ under any of His names whether they are divine or human titles. Also, both the human and divine natures of Christ may be manifested during a single event. Finally, the union of Christ's two natures was not altered by His death, burial, resurrection or ascension but will remain throughout eternity.¹⁹

The above material illustrates the importance of precision for accurately formulating the biblical data—and also how easily misconceptions might arise concerning the nature of God. This is why God encourages and commands us to “Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, handling *accurately* the word of truth” (2 Timothy 2:15). Christians should therefore study the doctrine of the Trinity in order to know how to effectively deal with the biblical data and answer the arguments of those in opposition:

And the Lord’s servant must not quarrel; instead, he must be kind to everyone, able to teach, not resentful. Those who oppose him he must gently instruct, in the hope that God will grant them repentance leading them to a knowledge of the truth, and that they will come to their senses and escape from the trap of the devil, who has taken them captive to do his will (2 Timothy 2:24-26).

Thomas a Kempis once stated Christian priorities eloquently when he wrote what is also a fitting conclusion to this article:

Grant to us, O Lord, to know that which is worth knowing, to love that which is worth loving, to praise that which pleaseth Thee most, to esteem that which is most precious unto Thee, and to dislike whatsoever is evil in Thy eyes. Grant us with true judgment to distinguish things that differ, and above all to search out and to do what is well pleasing unto Thee, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Notes

¹ q.v., “Jesus Christ,” Watchtower Bible and Tract Society, *Aid to Bible Understanding* (Brooklyn, NY: Watchtower Bible and Tract Society, 1971), p. 918, p. 437; Anthony A. Hoekema, *The Four Major Cults* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1970), p. 295 citing *Let God Be True* (1952), p. 74.

² Watchtower Bible and Tract Society, *Things in Which It Is Impossible for God to Lie* (Brooklyn, NY: Watchtower Bible and Tract Society, 1965), p. 269.

³ C. T. Russell, *Studies in the Scriptures - Vol. 7: The Finished Mystery*, p. 410 cited by Wilton M. Nelson and Richard K. Smith, “Jehovah’s Witnesses” in David J. Hesselgrave, ed., *Dynamic Religious Movements: Case Studies of Rapidly Growing Religious Movements Around the World* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1978), p. 181.

⁴ Cited by Charles S. Braden, *These Also Believe: A Study of Modern American Cults and Minority Religious Movements* (New York: Macmillan, 1970), p. 371 quoting Judge Rutherford’s *Uncovered* (Brooklyn, NY: WBTS, 1937), pp. 48-49; *Let God Be True* (1946), pp. 82-83, 93.

⁵ See John Ankerberg, John Weldon, *Everything You Ever Wanted to Know About Mormonism* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 1992), ch. 10.

⁶ Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1977), pp. 270, 576-77.

⁷ Mary Baker Eddy, *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* (Boston, MA: The First Church of Christ, Scientist, 1971), pp. 256, 515.

⁸ Victor Paul Wierwille, *Jesus Christ Is Not God* (New Knoxville, OH: American Christian Press, 1975), pp. 2-3, 6-7, 25.

⁹ Philip Schaff, ed., rev. by David S. Schaff, *The Creeds of Christendom: With a History and Critical Notes - Vol. 1: The History of the Creeds* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1983), pp. 39-40.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 38.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, the Greek term was transliterated.

¹² “Gregory of Nyssa...to Ablabius,” in William G. Rusch, trans. and ed., *The Trinitarian Controversy* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980), pp. 149, 151-52.

¹³ John H. Leith, *Creeds of the Churches: A Reader in Christian Doctrine from the Bible to the Present* 3rd ed., (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1982), pp. 30-31.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 33, emphasis added.

- ¹⁵ J. G. Davies, *The Early Christian Church: A History of Its First Five Centuries* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1980), 97.
- ¹⁶ Rusch, 2, emphasis added.
- ¹⁷ E. Calvin Beisner, *God in Three Persons* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale, 1984).
- ¹⁸ Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1986, one vol. edition), pp. 337-338.
- ¹⁹ For a good discussion see Robert Glenn Gromacki, *The Virgin Birth: Doctrine of Deity* (New York: Thomas Nelson, 1974), chs. 9, 11-13.