

9/29/2021

An Overview of the Trinity and Its Importance for Biblical Worship

Fred Sanders – “The Trinity is like the Father sending the Son and the Spirit.”

1. The Bible and the Trinity

What does the Bible say about the Trinity? (The Ontological Trinity)

How does the Bible make the Trinity known to humanity in history? (The Functional Trinity)

2. The Simplicity of God

Johannes Wollebius (1589-1629) – “He is not compounded of parts, or of genus and species, or of substance and accidents, or of potentiality and act, or of being and essence.”

Gregory of Nazianzus (329-390) – “Monotheism, with its single governing principle, is what we value – not monotheism defined as the sovereignty of a single person... but the single rule produced by equality of nature, harmony of will, identity of action, and the convergence toward their source of what springs from unity – none of which is possible in the case of created nature. The result is that though there is numerical distinction, there is no division in the substance.”

3. The Persons of God

Eternal Relations of Origin

- The Father alone eternally begets the Son.
- The Son alone is eternally begotten (generated) by the Father.
- The Spirit alone is eternally spirated (breathed out) by the Father and Son.

Three Mistakes In Understanding The Persons of the Trinity:
Modalism, Subordinationism, and Eternal Functional Subordinationism.

Modalism - _____

Subordinationism - _____

EFS - _____

4. One God, Three Persons in Action

Scott Swain – “As God’s being is simple and indivisible, so his works are undivided and inseparable. As three distinct person eternally exist within God’s simple, indivisible being, so there is a threefold or operation within God’s undivided, inseparable works.”

The Work of Creation

The Work of Redemption

Developing a Theological Vocabulary - taken from the glossary from Matthew Barrett's book *Simply Trinity*.

1. *Ontological/Imminent* – “The Trinity in and of itself, apart from creation and salvation.”
2. *Functional/Economic* – “God’s operations toward the created order (creation, providence, or redemption). God reveals his triune identity by means of the economy, but is not constituted by the economy.”
3. *Begotten* – “To come forth, to proceed. The Son is eternally begotten from the Father’s essence. Only the Son is begotten. Other terms: eternal generation
4. *Spiration* – “Reflects the name ‘Spirit.’ The Spirit is spirated, eternally breathed out by the Father and Son. Since the Spirit is not another Son, he is not begotten but spirated.
5. *Subsistence* – “Another way to referring to a divine person. The one, simple divine essence subsists or exists in three persons. Each person is a subsisting relation of the divine essence. The divine essence has three modes of subsistence.
6. *Eternal Relations of Origin* – “Distinguishes how each person is related to another, identifying the everlasting provenance (principle/origin/source) from which each person proceeds. Paternity: the Father is unbegotten (without origin), and therefore the eternal origin of the Son. Filiation: the Son’s origin is the Father, begotten (generated) from the Father’s essence from all eternity. Spiration: the Father and the Son are the origin of the Spirit, spirating the Spirit from all eternity. The relations alone distinguish the persons, identifying each person’s personal property. Another phrase, essence of God eternally subsists in each person. Hence, persons are subsisting relations.”

Reflection From The Week:

- Read John 17 and reflect/journal how the Father works through the Son while maintaining his simplicity.

Preparation For Next Week:

- <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/essay/the-attributes-of-god/>

Resources For Going Further:

Scott Swain, *The Trinity: An Introduction*

Michael Reeves, *Delighting In The Trinity*

Matthew Barrett, *Simply Trinity*

John Owen, *Communion With God*