

# “They Are All Three One”

## An Exposition of Article Eight of the Belgic Confession.

---

### Article 8 – The Trinity

In keeping with this truth and Word of God we believe in one God,<sup>1</sup> who is one single essence, in whom there are three persons, really, truly, and eternally distinct according to their incommunicable properties—namely, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.<sup>2</sup> The Father is the cause, origin, and source of all things, visible as well as invisible.<sup>3</sup> The Son is the Word, the Wisdom, and the image of the Father.<sup>4</sup> The Holy Spirit is the eternal power and might, proceeding from the Father and the Son.<sup>5</sup> Nevertheless, this distinction does not divide God into three, since Scripture teaches us that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit each has his own subsistence distinguished by characteristics—yet in such a way that these three persons are only one God.

It is evident then that the Father is not the Son and that the Son is not the Father, and that likewise the Holy Spirit is neither the Father nor the Son. Nevertheless, these persons, thus distinct, are neither divided nor fused or mixed together. For the Father did not take on flesh, nor did the Spirit, but only the Son. The Father was never without his Son,<sup>6</sup> nor without his Holy Spirit, since all these are equal from eternity, in one and the same essence. There is neither a first nor a last, for all three are one in truth and power, in goodness and mercy.

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor 8:4-6 <sup>2</sup> Mt 3:16-17; Mt 28:19 <sup>3</sup> Eph 3:14-15 <sup>4</sup> Prov 8:22-31; Jn 1:14, 5:17-26; 1 Cor 1:24; Col 1:15-20; Heb 1:3; Rev 19:13 <sup>5</sup> Jn 15:26 <sup>6</sup> Mic 5:2; Jn 1:1-2

---

It is common to hear people say that Christians, Jews and Muslims all worship the same God—the so-called “Abrahamic Faiths.” The reality is that nothing could be further from the truth. Unlike those who worship Allah, or those Jews who claim to worship the God of Abraham, Christians worship the true and living God, who reveals himself as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Often it has been said that Christianity’s most distinctive doctrine is that of the Holy Trinity.<sup>1</sup> Even though in many ways the doctrine of the Trinity is beyond our full comprehension, nevertheless we do as the Athanasian Creed exhorts us to do—we worship the Unity in Trinity and the Trinity in Unity. We do so because this is how God reveals himself to us in his word, as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, the one true God.

We move to that section of our confession which deals with the doctrine of the Holy Trinity (articles eight and nine), the deity of Jesus Christ (article ten) and of the person and deity of the Holy Spirit (article eleven).<sup>2</sup> Yes, the doctrine of the Trinity is always a difficult topic to discuss, and one which

---

<sup>1</sup> Beets, *The Reformed Confession Explained*, 72.

<sup>2</sup> A number of those who have written commentaries on the confession, have noted that this section owes a great deal to Calvin. Cf. Osterhaven, *Our Confession of Faith*, 55; and P. Y. De Jong, *The Church’s Witness to the World*, 172 ff.

stretches the limits of human language and logic. But despite the difficulties this doctrine presents to us, we must believe and confess that God is Triune, because (let me say it again) this is precisely how God reveals himself to us in his word.

While the Bible plainly teaches that there is one God who is revealed in three persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, the formulation of the doctrine of the Trinity as set forth in the ecumenical creeds (Apostles', Nicene and Athanasian Creeds) and Protestant confessions (such as the Belgic Confession), was largely a response to heresy in the early church. As Louis Berkhof points out, "the Trinity is a mystery, not merely in the Biblical sense that it is a truth, which is formerly hidden, but is now revealed; but in the sense that man cannot comprehend it and make it intelligible....[the church] has never tried to explain the mystery of the Trinity, but only sought to formulate the doctrine of the Trinity in such a manner that the errors which endangered it were warded off."<sup>3</sup> It is ironic, therefore, that it is the presence of various doctrinal errors and sinful misconceptions about God which forced the church to seek greater clarity and more precise formulation regarding this particular doctrine, especially during the first five centuries of the church's history.

Inevitably, errors regarding the doctrine of the Trinity fall into one of three categories, all of which try to preserve an important aspect of the Trinity but which end-up distorting others: *Unitarianism* which, in its various forms, denies the Triunity of the Godhead by not extending deity to the person of the Son and the Holy Spirit; *Modalism* (Sabellianism), which denies the distinction of the persons in the Godhead in order to preserve the unity of the Godhead, seeing the persons merely as distinct "modes of existence" of the one God; or *Tri-Theism*, which denies the unity of the Godhead in an effort to protect the deity of the individual persons.

While the apostle John was already warning us in his first epistle of the "spirit of Antichrist"—the spirit of Antichrist is the teaching that Jesus was not God in human flesh (cf. 1 John 2:18-23)—it was the heresy of Arius, which perhaps more than any other heresy required the church to carefully formulate its teaching regarding the deity of Christ, and also by extension, the doctrine of the Trinity. While there were many other serious heresies plaguing the church from the beginning, it was Arius, who, about 319 AD, began to openly teach that Jesus was the first creation of the Father, and therefore, Jesus was not eternal nor fully God.<sup>4</sup> This was not only a denial of the full deity of Jesus, it was also an assault on the doctrine of the Trinity, because Arius was denying that the three persons of the Godhead are equal with one another as to their essence (deity). It was the presence of serious error—like that of Arius—which prompted the church to work through these issues in great detail. This explains the technical language we see in our creeds and confessions.

As you probably know, the word *Trinity* is not found in the Bible. One of the most common objections to the doctrine is this very fact. If you've ever talked with a Jehovah's Witness, you know that they'll

---

<sup>3</sup> Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, 89.

<sup>4</sup> Osterhaven, *Our Confession of Faith*, 54. While not many of Arius' writings are still extant, those we do have are certainly very interesting. In Arius' *Letter to Alexander of Alexandria*, he makes the following remarks: "We know one God -- alone unbegotten, alone everlasting, alone without beginning, alone true, alone possessing immortality, alone wise, alone good, alone master, judge of all, manager, director, immutable and unchangeable, just and good, God of Law, Prophets and New Testament -- who begot an only begotten Son *before* eternal times, through whom he made the ages and everything....But as we say, he was created by the will of God before times and ages, and he received life, being and glories from the Father as the Father has shared them with him." Arius, "Letter to Alexander of Alexandria," in Rusch, *The Trinitarian Controversy*, 31.

use this argument, before going on to attempt to make the case that the Trinity has its origins in paganism. While the word *trinitas* was first used by one of the church fathers (Tertullian), near the end of the second century,<sup>5</sup> the fact that the word “Trinity” is not found in the Bible, is not an insurmountable problem. While the specific terminology used to define the doctrine is not always taken directly from the Bible, the doctrine certainly is taught in the Bible. According to B. B. Warfield, “the doctrine of the Trinity lies in Scripture in solution; when it is crystallized from its solvent it does not cease to be Scriptural, but only comes into clearer view.”<sup>6</sup>

If you put the whole of Scripture together (that is, crystalize its various elements), you’ll find that the Bible plainly teaches that there is one God, who exists in three persons. Although we must use philosophical and technical terms to explain how this can be the case, when we do so, we are only elaborating upon what the biblical data reveals, and doing so in such a way as to state the truth more clearly, while refuting the errors of those who deny this doctrine. Object to either the terms that are used or to the concept itself, and you are, says Calvin, objecting to “what is attested and sealed by Scripture.”<sup>7</sup>

When our confession sets forth the doctrine of the Holy Trinity in Article Eight, we begin with the fundamental affirmation that God is one. Our confession puts it this way: “In keeping with this truth and Word of God we believe in one God.” From the outset, we must be clear that any discussion of God must begin with God’s self-revelation of himself, not with speculation or human opinion. Having established in articles three-seven of our confession that Holy Scripture is inspired, authoritative and sufficient, we now turn to what the word of God written reveals to us about the nature of God so that we might believe correctly, as well as confess these things before the watching world.

As we have seen in discussion of Article One (on the nature of God), Scripture very emphatically tells us that God is one. According to Deuteronomy 6:4, the creed of Israel was the famous “shema.” “*Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one.*” Paul affirms the same thing in 1 Corinthians 8:4-6.

---

<sup>5</sup> Osterhaven, Our Confession of Faith, 54. One of a trio of Anti-Gnostic fathers (along with Irenaeus and Hippolytus), Tertullian (160-220) taught that “the threefoldness of God’s intrinsic being is disclosed in creation and redemption.... Tertullian is actually the first to introduce the Latin *trinitas* into Christian literature....Tertullian states that the Father, Son and Spirit are one in substance. Threeness involves only grade or aspect of these persons of one substance. Tertullian’s clear distinction between the three that are of one substance will be an important element in the Nicene formulation.” See William G. Rusch, The Trinitarian Controversy (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986), 10.

<sup>6</sup> According to Warfield: “The term ‘Trinity’ is not a Biblical term, and we are not using Biblical language when we define what is expressed by it as a doctrine that there is one only and true God, but in the unity of the Godhead there are three coeternal and coequal Persons, the same in substance but distinct in subsistence. A doctrine so defined can be spoken of as a Biblical doctrine only on the principle that the sense of Scripture is Scripture. And the definition of a Biblical doctrine in such un-Biblical language can be justified only on the principle that it is better to preserve the truth of Scripture than the words of Scripture. The doctrine of the Trinity lies in Scripture in solution; when it is crystallized from its solvent it does not cease to be Scriptural, but only comes into clearer view. Or, to speak without figure, the doctrine of the Trinity is given to us in Scripture, not in formulated definition, but in fragmentary allusions; when we assembled the *disjecta membra* [disjointed members] into their organic unity, we are not passing from Scripture, but entering more thoroughly into the meaning of Scripture. We may state the doctrine in technical terms, supplied by philosophical reflection; but the doctrine is a genuinely Scriptural doctrine.” Cf. B. B. Warfield, “The Biblical Doctrine of the Trinity,” in Biblical Doctrines (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1981), 133.

<sup>7</sup> According to Calvin: “Now, although the heretics rail at the word ‘person,’ or certain squeamish men cry out against admitting a term fashioned by the human mind, they cannot shake our conviction that three are spoken of, each of which is entirely God, yet that there is not more than one God. What wickedness, then, it is to disapprove of words that explain nothing else than what is attested and sealed by Scripture!” Calvin, Institutes, I.viii.3

Therefore, as to the eating of food offered to idols, we know that “an idol has no real existence,” and that “there is no God but one.” For although there may be so-called gods in heaven or on earth—as indeed there are many “gods” and many “lords”—yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist.

Then again in 1 Timothy 2:5, Paul writes: “*for there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.*” Therefore, when we believe and confess the doctrine of the Trinity, we do not believe and confess that there are three Gods. Rather, we believe and confess that there is one God who is revealed in three distinct persons.

This is why our confession immediately goes on to state that we believe, “one God, who is one single essence, in whom there are three persons, really, truly, and eternally distinct according to their incommunicable properties—namely, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.” That there are three persons in the Godhead is not at all inconsistent with the fact that God is one in essence. When our confession speaks of God’s incommunicable attributes, recall that we are referring to those attributes unique to God and which cannot be communicated to his creatures, such as his eternity, his immutability and so on. In other words, there is but one God, who reveals himself as three distinct persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Each of these three persons, fully possesses and participates in the divine essence which is incommunicable. As someone once put it, “there is one what” (essence) “and three whos” (persons). “There are not three whats, but one what.”

While article nine goes on to list some of the main Biblical texts which speak of the Holy Trinity, there are several biblical texts cited by our confession which clearly affirm that there are three distinct persons in the Godhead: Matthew 3:16-17 we read of all three members of the Godhead manifest in the baptism of Jesus.

And when Jesus was baptized, immediately he went up from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on him; and behold, a voice from heaven said, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.”

The same thing is stated later on in Matthew’s gospel (28:19) in connection with the great commission. The disciples are commanded by Jesus to “*go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.*” Notice, there is one name (one God) and three persons (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit). An identical mention of the three distinct divine persons set forth side by side as equal objects of worship can be found in the famous benediction of 2 Corinthians 13:14 which we read most every Sunday, and in which Paul writes, “*the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.*”<sup>8</sup>

---

<sup>8</sup> As D. A. Carson notes above, the New Testament is replete with such triple formulas. Again, keeping the redemptive-historical context in view, the New Testament does not reveal the Nicene doctrine of the Trinity as such. What it does reveal is three distinct persons, each possessing divine attributes and each described as objects of worship and praise. Ralph Martin concludes that “It was inevitable that the church should seek to develop a doctrine that expressed (as best it could) its understanding of God. Paul never confounded the distinction between God and Jesus Christ (cf. Phil 2:11).” See Ralph Martin, *2 Corinthians*, Word Biblical Commentary, Vol. 40 (Waco: Word Books, 1986), 496-97. It was not until various controversies arose (i.e., confrontation with Judaism, the gnostics, Marcion, etc.) that the church was forced to advance the simple Trinitarian formula beyond these triple affirmations found in the NT to philosophical discussions of the “substance” of the Godhead culminating in the Nicene Creed. Also useful in this regard is B. B. Warfield’s essay, “God our Father and the Lord Jesus

After making clear the unity of the Godhead and then distinguishing among the persons, our confession moves on to set forth the unique properties of each of the three persons of the Holy Trinity.

Our confession sets forth the unique properties of three persons as follows.

The Son is the Word, the Wisdom, and the image of the Father. The Holy Spirit is the eternal power and might, proceeding from the Father and the Son. Nevertheless, this distinction does not divide God into three, since Scripture teaches us that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit each has his own subsistence distinguished by characteristics—yet in such a way that these three persons are only one God.

The Bible speaks of the fatherhood of God in several important ways. The first, and surely the most important aspect of this, is that God is the eternal father of the Son, which is the original fatherhood of which all earthly fatherhood is but a faint reflection.<sup>9</sup> While a number of noted Evangelical theologians have been somewhat reluctant to affirm the eternal sonship of Jesus Christ, it is clearly taught in Holy Scripture. In Psalm 2:7, we read of father in eternity past, saying to the son: *“I will tell of the decree: The LORD said to me, ‘You are my Son; today I have begotten you.’”* God has always been Father while Jesus has always been the Father’s Son.

Likewise in Micah 5:2, we read of the eternal generation of the Son, *“from you [Judah] shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel, whose coming forth is from of old, from ancient days”* (i.e. “Everlasting”), as we do in Proverbs 8:22-23: *“the LORD possessed me at the beginning of his work, the first of his acts of old. Ages ago I was set up, at the first, before the beginning of the earth.”*<sup>10</sup> Simply put, there never was a time when God was not father, nor was he ever without his eternally begotten Son. In distinction from the second person of the Holy Trinity (the only begotten son), the unique property of the Father is that he is unbegotten, while the unique property of the Son is that he is eternally begotten. As the orthodox used to say in response to the Arians, “there never was a time when the Son was not. He always was.”

The fatherhood of God is also seen in the fact that the father is said to be creator of all things. In a text we have already had occasion to read (1 Corinthians 8:6), Paul says *“yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist.”* In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus speaks of our father in heaven both in the context of prayer and in terms of our absolute dependence upon God for life and sustenance (Matthew 6:9; 7:11). In John 4:21, Jesus speaks of worshiping our father in heaven, while the author of Hebrews speaks of God as the Father of our spirits (12:9). We not only depend upon God the Father for food and shelter, we depend upon him for life itself.

Another way in which the fatherhood of God is seen is in his relationship to his covenant people, Israel. As the drama of redemption unfolds it is clear that the people of Israel are the Lord’s children and he is their father. In Deuteronomy 32:6, we read: “do you thus repay the LORD, you foolish and senseless

---

Christ,” in Biblical Doctrines (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1981), 213-231.

<sup>9</sup> De Jong, The Church’s Witness to the World, 175.

<sup>10</sup> The eternal sonship and generation of Christ is discussed in great detail in Turretin, Institutes of Elenctic Theology, I.292-302.

people? Is not he your father, who created you, who made you and established you?” In the 63<sup>rd</sup> chapter of his prophecy, the prophet Isaiah declares *“for you are our Father, though Abraham does not know us, and Israel does not acknowledge us; you, O LORD, are our Father, our Redeemer from of old is your name.”* And in Jeremiah 31:9, the Lord himself declares: *“with weeping they shall come, and with pleas for mercy I will lead them back, I will make them walk by brooks of water, in a straight path in which they shall not stumble, for I am a father to Israel, and Ephraim is my firstborn.”* Even though God is all of those things mentioned in article one—“there is a single and simple spiritual being, whom we call God—eternal, incomprehensible, invisible, unchangeable, infinite, almighty; completely wise, just, and good, and the overflowing source of all good”—he is nevertheless our heavenly father, who graciously gives us life and breath and our daily bread. While it may be difficult to fully comprehend the doctrine of the Trinity, it is not difficult to understand that God is our father. Our “heavenly” father loves us, he implores us to pray to him because he is near to us through the cross and righteousness of his Son Jesus Christ, our most gracious mediator who brings us near to God.

This brings us to that section of our confession which discusses the unique properties of the second person of the Godhead, the Son (Jesus Christ), which are set forth as follows: “The Son is the Word, the Wisdom, and the image of the Father.” The prologue of John’s gospel (verses 1-18 of chapter one) describes Jesus as the *“word made flesh”* (John 1:14), about whom John can say in verses 1 and 2: *“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God.”* Because of his eternal relationship with the Father, Jesus is called the word of God, because he fully and savingly reveals the father’s will in the law and the gospel.<sup>11</sup> As described in Proverbs 8:22-31 (our Old Testament lesson), Jesus is said to be the wisdom of God personified. All that true wisdom is or could ever be, is found in the person of Jesus Christ.

In Colossians 1:15, Paul speaks of Jesus as *“the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.”* The author of the Book of Hebrews describes Jesus as “the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high” (Hebrews 1:3). In chapter 5 of his gospel, John describes Jesus as saying, *“Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming, and is now here, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live. For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself”* (vv. 25-26).

As the Word, Wisdom and image of God, we believe and confess that Jesus is of the same essence as the father, and while a distinct person, is in no sense subordinate to the father in regard to that essence. The Scripture clearly teaches that Jesus Christ is the image [*ikone*] of the father, and the exact representation of his being. As the father gives life, so does the son.

Then our confession goes on to say of the third person of the Holy Trinity, “the Holy Spirit is the eternal power and might, proceeding from the Father and the Son.” While our confession affirms the deity of the Holy Spirit in Article Eleven, the point is made here that the personal property of the Holy Spirit is that as the third distinct person within the Godhead, the Holy Spirit eternally proceeds from both the Father and the Son, a point clearly set forth in John 15:26: *“But when the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness about me.”* The Holy Spirit is not some impersonal force, or merely God’s power, or some other nebulous manifestation of God (in other words, an “it”), but as John puts it, the Holy Spirit is a person (a “he”) whose distinctive

---

<sup>11</sup> De Jong, The Church’s Witness to the World, 176.

and particular ministry is to testify of Jesus.

Having summarized the biblical data regarding the unity of the Godhead and then likewise noted the biblical distinctions among the persons of the Godhead, our confession goes on to speak of the way in which these three persons are related to one another.

Our confession makes special mention of those three errors into which people have been most apt to fall, putting it this way: “Nevertheless, this distinction does not divide God into three [contra tri-theism], since Scripture teaches us that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit each has his own subsistence distinguished by characteristics [contra modalism]—yet in such a way that these three persons are only one God [contra Unitarianism, which denies the deity of the Son and the Spirit].

What we must believe and confess is that there is one God (essence) who exists in three persons (subsistences), Father, Son and Holy Spirit. While each of these persons is distinct (and therefore possesses distinct personal properties), each person possesses all of the attributes of deity. Charles Hodge’s oft-quoted comments in regard to the distinction of persons within the Godhead are especially helpful because they so very effectively summarize the biblical teaching on this point.

The Father says I; the Son says I; and Spirit says I. The Father says Thou to the Son, and the Son says Thou to the Father; and in like manner the Father and the Son use the pronouns He and Him in reference to the Spirit. The Father loves the Son; the Son loves the Father; the Spirit testifies of the Son. The Father, Son and Spirit are severally subject and object. They act and are acted upon, or are objects of action. Nothing is added to these facts when it is said that the Father, Son and Spirit are distinct persons; for a person is an intelligent subject who can say I, who can be addressed as Thou, and who can act and be the object of action. The summation of the above facts is expressed in the proposition, The one divine Being subsists in three persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. This proposition adds nothing to the facts themselves; for the facts are (1). That there is one divine Being. (2). The Father, the Son and Spirit are divine. (3). The Father, Son and Spirit are in the sense just stated, distinct persons. (4). Attributes being inseparable from substance, the Scriptures, in saying that the Father, Son and Spirit possess the same attributes, say they are one in substance; and, if the same in substance, they are equal in power and glory.<sup>12</sup>

Having spelled out both the unity of the Godhead and making distinctions among the persons as revealed in the biblical data, our confession concludes by reminding us of the dangers of confusing God’s unity and persons, and in doing so uses language which virtually restates the ecumenical creeds (especially the Athanasian). “It is evident then that the Father is not the Son and that the Son is not the Father, and that likewise the Holy Spirit is neither the Father nor the Son. Nevertheless, these persons, thus distinct, are neither divided nor fused or mixed together. For the Father did not take on flesh, nor did the Spirit, but only the Son. The Father was never without his Son, nor without his Holy Spirit, since all these are equal from eternity, in one and the same essence. There is neither a first nor a last, for all three are one in truth and power, in goodness and mercy.”

We must be constantly on guard not to confuse the persons of the Trinity, nor divide God’s essence. This is why we should not use the common analogies, such as that of an apple, human nature, or steam, which fail so miserably to explain how there can be one God who reveals himself in three distinct persons. All

---

<sup>12</sup> Charles Hodge, Systematic Theology, I.444).

of these tend toward the heresy of modalism or tritheism.<sup>13</sup>

But having issued that caution, it is important not to overlook the fact that at this point our confession introduces a very brief discussion of the so-called “economic Trinity.” This is where the doctrine of the Trinity moves from technical theological categories (the discussion of the so-called ontological Trinity) to those passages of Holy Scripture which directly focus upon what the Triune God does to save us from our sins. In other words, the focus is not so much upon God as he is in himself, but upon what God does to rescue us from the consequences of our sins. This is the way in which we find God most often revealing himself to us in redemptive history.

Keeping the unique properties of each of the three persons in mind, God the father is often revealed in Scripture as our creator, Jesus Christ (God’s son) as our redeemer, and the Holy Spirit as our sanctifier. Neither the Father nor the Holy Spirit became incarnate, took on human flesh and died for our sins. Only the Son has taken upon himself a true human nature so that we might be saved from God’s wrath which is coming upon the earth. In this gracious work of redemption, we see that the Trinity is no abstract doctrine. The doctrine of the Trinity is the very foundation of our salvation from the guilt and power of sin. The doctrine of the Trinity is also the foundation upon which we live lives of gratitude for what God has done for us in Jesus Christ.

If we are to be delivered from the guilt and power of our sins, God the father must decree our salvation, send his Son to accomplish salvation for us through Jesus’ active and passive obedience, and send the Holy Spirit, who illumines our minds to understand the gospel, who regenerates us and calls us to faith when that gospel is proclaimed to us. When the members of the Holy Trinity act in unity, but according to their unique personal properties to save us from our sins, we see most clearly their power, goodness, and mercy. To believe and confess that God is our Father, Jesus is our Savior, and the Spirit is our sanctifier, presupposes that God is one in essence, yet revealed in three distinct persons, with distinct personal properties, all of which are manifest in our own salvation.

This is why we must believe and confess that God is revealed as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and that they are all three one. For we are created, justified, and sanctified by the Triune God. This God is not Allah. Nor is this the God of modern Judaism, which denies that the God of Abraham was Father, Son and Holy Spirit. This is the one true God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen!

---

<sup>13</sup> Warfield points out the innate difficulty with the use of analogies in the explaining the doctrine: “In point of fact, the doctrine of the Trinity is purely a revealed doctrine. That is to say, it embodies a truth which has never been discovered, and is undiscoverable by natural reason. With all his searching, man has not been able to find out for himself the deepest things of God....As the doctrine of the Trinity is undiscoverable by reason, so it is incapable of proof from reason. There are no analogies to it in Nature, not even in the spiritual nature of man, who is made in the image of God. In His Trinitarian mode of being, God is unique; and, as there is nothing in the universe like Him in this respect, so there is nothing which can help us to comprehend Him.” Warfield, “The Biblical Doctrine of the Trinity,” 133-134.