

The Foundation of the Foundation:

The Pastoral Importance of the Doctrine of the Trinity in 2LCF 2:3

“There was no one more glorious mystery brought to light in and by Jesus Christ than that of the Holy Trinity And this revelation is made unto us, not that our minds might be possessed with the notions of it, but that we might know aright how to place our trust in him, how to obey him and live unto him, how to obtain and exercise communion with him, until we come to the enjoyment of him.”

– John Owen, *Works*, 3:158

Introduction

For good or for ill, over the last couple of decades Evangelical Christians seem to have renewed their interest in the doctrine of the Trinity and its significance not only within Christian theology but perhaps even more so within the Christian life. The buzzwords of recent Trinitarian discussion are “relevant” and “practical,” and the participants in that discussion write as though their audiences ought to be surprised to find the doctrine characterized as such.¹ Of all people, we as confessional Reformed Baptists should not be surprised to learn that there are concrete, practical ramifications to belief in the Holy Trinity: after all, we confess explicitly that we believe the doctrine to be “the foundation of all our communion with God, and comfortable dependence on Him” (2LCF 2:3). But does even the language of our own Confession at this point still surprise us? We confess it. Do we believe it? Do we even understand it? With the true Church throughout the centuries, we know the Trinity to be of great and grave *doctrinal* importance. But do we appreciate its *pastoral* importance as well?

The task of this letter is to suggest an answer to two questions: “In the light of 2LCF 2:3, [1] why is the doctrine of the Trinity the foundation of our communion with God and comfortable dependence on him, and [2] how may we encourage this among our people?” We will therefore begin with an examination of what the Confession means at this point and then move on to suggest some practical applications to the role of the pastor in bringing this truth to bear on the life of his congregation.

“Why is the doctrine of the Trinity the foundation of our communion with God and comfortable dependence on him?”

These beautiful phrases that round out Chapter 2 of our Confession are not found in the Westminster Confession of Faith, the primary source document for the 2LCF. They come instead from the Savoy Declaration, the confession of the Independent or Congregational churches of England

¹ Though most of the “relevancy” of the Trinity in these writings focuses on its supposed sociological ramifications, especially in relation to gender roles, e.g., Bruce A. Ware, *Father, Son, and Holy Spirit: Relationships, Roles, and Relevance* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2005).

published in 1658, and the editors of our Confession chose to retain them. Of the six members of the committee appointed to draft the Savoy Declaration, only one had not also been a member of the Westminster Assembly: the Prince of Puritans, John Owen. Owen's is all but certainly the hand responsible for the penning of the phrases under consideration, a supposition that is further confirmed by the fact that, just a year prior to the convening of the Savoy Assembly, Owen had published a major work entitled *Of Communion with God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, Each Person Distinctly, in Love, Grace, and Consolation; or, The Saint's Fellowship with the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost Unfolded*. If we are to understand these words in our Confession, we must understand something of Owen and of this work.

"Communion with God"

What did Owen and our Baptist forefathers understand by that phrase "communion with God"? For most today, as J.I. Packer rightly observes, this is "a fuzzy phrase that often means no more than feeling close to God, however conceived, but otherwise it lacks specific content."² While the saint's communion with God was a dominant theme of almost every Puritan author of that era, Owen is particularly helpful here: the first chapter of his book is devoted to defining those words carefully and Scripturally. Far from the modern "fuzzy" or mystical notion, Owen's understanding of "communion with God" is both much more concrete and much more extensive. "Communion" is Owen's preferred translation of the rich (and also often-misunderstood) Scriptural term *koinonia* and its cognates, most frequently rendered "fellowship" in the English translations. The root idea is that of having something in *common*, of sharing or mutual participation. In Owen's own words, "Our communion, then, with God consisteth in his *communication of himself unto us, with our returnal unto him* of that which he requireth and accepteth . . ."³ Or later, it is "that mutual communication in giving and receiving, after a most holy and spiritual manner, which is between God and the saints while they walk together in a covenant of peace . . ."⁴ Our communion with God, in other words, consists in everything that God does for and gives to us in salvation and in everything that we return to God in response. It is a two-way street: hence the idea of *commonality* in it all. Yet the initiative and power behind it is all of God.

Perhaps some examples would be useful, and that is what Owen proceeds to give in the rest of his book. What we receive from God in this communion Owen summarizes in his title as "love, grace, and consolation." Each of these gifts he relates primarily to one of the Persons of the Godhead: love from the Father, by which he principally means electing love; grace from the Son, a comprehensive category that fills the bulk of the book, encompassing everything to do with the accomplishing of our redemption; and consolation from the Spirit and all He does in the application of redemption to us. What we return to God, then, in response to all that He gives us are such things as our faith, love,

² J.I. Packer, "A Puritan Perspective: Trinitarian Godliness according to John Owen," in *God the Holy Trinity: Reflections on Christian Faith and Practice*, ed. Timothy George (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006), 101.

³ *The Works of John Owen*, ed. William H. Goold (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, 1997) 2:8 (emphasis original).

⁴ *Ibid.*, 2:9.

obedience, and worship. As can easily be seen, communion with God, according to Owen, is quite a comprehensive category.

“Comfortable Dependence”

What, then, is meant by that further phrase in the Confession, “our comfortable dependence on him,” that is, on God? This exact phrase is not found frequently, if ever, in Owen’s writings; however, Owen is quite fond of that one word “comfortable.” Modern usage of that term refers almost exclusively to that which produces *physical* comfort, but Owen and others of his day used it far more frequently of that which produced *spiritual* comfort. “Comfortable dependence on God” then would be dependence on God that is spiritually comforting, that results in spiritual comfort. In other words, this is the language of assurance, an aspect of Christian experience that received much attention from the Puritans in general and from Owen in particular; and it is in such contexts that he most frequently employs that adjective. Owen’s common description of what we now more commonly call “assurance” was the phrase “comfortable persuasion.”⁵ As is clear even from the title of his book, Owen considered this comfort or “consolation” to be the particular gift of the Third Person of the Trinity, the Divine *Comforter*. As such, this second phrase of our passage in the Confession ought to be understood not as a blessing completely separate from the first; rather, our “comfortable dependence” on God is to be understood as one specific facet of our overall “communion with God,” a facet which Owen and our Baptist forefathers determined was deserving of special emphasis in this context.

The Trinity as “The Foundation”

So how is the doctrine of the Trinity “the foundation” of these blessings? After all that has been said so far, this claim seems all the more striking than it did at first glance. If our communion with God truly is such an expansive concept, consisting of each and every blessing that God confers upon His people in salvation, including particularly a comforting assurance that they are all ours, and consisting of each and every response of faith and love and obedience and worship from His people back to God – if all of this is indeed comprehended under that category of “communion with God,” then how are we to understand the Trinity to be its very *foundation*? Again, Owen’s writings are instructive.

It is difficult to overemphasize how central and essential Owen believed the doctrine of the Trinity to be. Time and time again he returns to it in his works, even where one might least expect it. Part of the reason for this emphasis was certainly his concern to head off the influence of the anti-Trinitarian Socinians of his day; but the Trinity for Owen played a far more positive and constructive role in his theology, appearing in many non-polemic contexts as well.⁶ He truly saw it as “foundational.”

The actual phrase “foundation of all our communion with God” appears twice in the first chapter of Owen’s *Communion with God*, but its immediate reference is not to the Trinity: it is to what

⁵ E.g., *Ibid.*, 2:23, 193, 240-43, 252; 3:598, 603-4 (“comfortable assurance” and “comfortable evidence”); 10:160 (as opposed to “a dangerous, uncomfortable, erroneous persuasion”), 186.

⁶ This thesis has been developed far more extensively and ably than the current author possibly could by Carl R. Trueman, *The Claims of Truth: John Owen’s Trinitarian Theology* (Carlisle, Cumbria, U.K.: Paternoster, 1998).

we would probably expect – to the gospel, the work of Christ. Following upon a discussion of sinners' natural enmity toward, distance from, and lack of communion with God, Owen concludes,

By Jesus Christ alone, then, on all considerations as to being and full manifestation, is this distance taken away. He hath consecrated for us a new and living way (the old being quite shut up), "through the vail, that is to say, his flesh," Heb. x. 20; and "through him we have access by one Spirit unto the Father," Eph. ii. 18. "Ye who sometimes were far off, are made nigh by the blood of Christ, for he is our peace," etc., verses 13, 14. *Of this foundation of all our communion with God*, more afterward, and at large. Upon this new bottom and *foundation*, by this new and living way, are we sinners admitted unto communion with God, and have fellowship with him.⁷

Owen later identifies "the foundation of all that communion we have with God" as "that *union* which in Jesus Christ we have with him."⁸ So it would seem that, according to Owen, the "foundation" of communion with God is the gospel, the work of Christ on our behalf, reconciling us to God, and our union with Him by faith. Why, then, does he later speak in the Savoy Declaration of the Trinity as the foundation of these things?

In a work published later in 1658, Owen appeals to the doctrine of the Trinity as proof of the divine origin of Scripture and there gives a helpful summary of his earlier work on communion with God, elaborating explicitly on how the Trinity is so foundational to it. He states again that our communion with God consists of two parts: what God gives to us and what we return to Him. "These two," he writes, "comprise the whole of the intercourse between God and man. Now, when the mind of man is exercised about these things, he finds at last that they are so wrapped up in the doctrine of the Trinity, that without the belief, receiving, and acceptance of it, it is utterly impossible that any interest in them should be obtained or preserved." These are strong words. What does he mean by them? He goes on, "For the first [part of our communion with God], or the communication of God unto us in a way of love and goodness, it is wholly *founded* upon and inwrapped in this truth [the Trinity], both as to the *eternal spring* and *actual execution* of it." By the words "eternal spring," Owen goes on to reveal that he means the eternal Covenant of Redemption, the making of which necessarily presupposes the distinction between the members of the Trinity since more than one party is needed to make a covenant. "Take away, then, the doctrine of the Trinity, and . . . there can be no purpose of grace by the Father in the Son – no covenant for the putting of that purpose into execution: and so the *foundation* of all fruits of love and goodness is lost to the soul." The same is true as to the "actual execution" of God's saving purposes as expressed in the Covenant of Redemption: it implies and necessitates the Trinity. There must be a Son to become incarnate and accomplish that redemption, and there must be a Spirit to apply that redemption to the elect. "Deny the Trinity," Owen concludes, "and all the means of the communication of grace, with the whole of the satisfaction and righteousness of Christ, fall to the ground. Every tittle of

⁷ *Works*, 2:7 (emphasis added).

⁸ *Ibid.*, 2:8 (emphasis original).

it speaks this truth: and they who deny the one reject the other.”⁹ It is no coincidence that every person and every group throughout Church History who have rejected the Trinity have also jettisoned the true gospel. The latter presupposes the former.¹⁰

The case is the also same with the other side of our communion with God, our return to him of faith, love, obedience, worship, etc. In explanation of the necessity of the Trinity to these as well, Owen simply refers his reader back to his treatise on *Communion with God*, with the reminder that all true obedience to and worship of God must of necessity be directed to each person of the Trinity distinctly yet together. In that earlier work, a key text for Owen had been Ephesians 2:18: “In that *heavenly directory* [as opposed to the more earthly Directory for Public Worship?] which we have, Eph. ii. 18, this whole business is declared. Our access in worship is said to be ‘to the Father;’ and this ‘through Christ,’ or his mediation; ‘by the Spirit,’ or his assistance.”¹¹ Even our side of our communion with God presupposes and is made possible only by the distinct works of each member of the Trinity. “Hence,” Owen concludes, “the Scripture speaks not of any thing *between God and us* but what is founded on this account.” Without the Trinity, “There is neither any foundation left of the communication of love to [the soul], nor means of returning obedience unto God.”¹²

The Trinity is particularly essential to that one aspect of the saint’s communion with God that the Confession highlights: “comfortable dependence” on God, or assurance. What is so comforting about the doctrine of the Trinity? Owen again points us to that one glimpse we are granted of the intra-Trinitarian workings before the foundation of the world: the Covenant of Redemption. The Covenant of Redemption, and the Triune God that it presupposes, was central to Owen’s thinking, both doctrinally and pastorally; and he appeals to it time and again to the comfort of his readers. For instance, it is the terms of this Trinitarian covenant that give Christ the right to stand as head of and substitute for the elect in order to satisfy the wrath of God against them.¹³ This covenant imparts to the redemption that is in Christ its particularity and consequent efficiency, as Owen argues in the beginning of his famous defense of particular redemption, *The Death of Death*.¹⁴ Owen also argues that the Covenant of

⁹ *Ibid.*, 16:340-41 (emphasis added). Our Confession uses similar language to make this same point: the Covenant of Grace itself “is founded in that eternal covenant transaction that was between the Father and the Son about the redemption of the elect” (2LCF 7:3).

¹⁰ Cf. Trueman, 24: “. . . for Owen, both the divine plan of salvation and Christ’s work in accomplishing that salvation rest ultimately upon a thoroughgoing Trinitarianism. The Trinity does not have the status of an optional extra in his theology, but represents the necessary ontological framework of his entire soteriology.”

¹¹ *Works*, 2:269

¹² *Ibid.*, 16:342

¹³ *Ibid.*, 12:496-508.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 10:157-168. He argues that the doctrine of general redemption is in fact “uncomfortable” in that it gives one no assurance that Christ’s atonement will be effective for him when it fails to be so for others for whom He also died.

Redemption stands behind the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints.¹⁵ How are these “comfortable” truths made even more comforting by the doctrine of the Trinity? Perhaps the Preacher summed it up best: “a threefold cord is not easily broken” (Eccl. 4:12, ESV). If each member of the Triune Godhead has covenanted together to accomplish the redemption of God’s elect, they will by no means fail. The Triune God has purposed their redemption, and each Divine Person will execute that purpose flawlessly. In the words of our Savior, referring to that eternal covenant, “All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out. For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me. And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day” (John 6:37-39, ESV). Here, Christ gives comforting assurance to His people, and He bases that assurance on the inviolability of the Covenant of Redemption and the immutable purposes of the Triune God who made it.

How is the doctrine of the Trinity “the foundation of all our communion with God, and comfortable dependence on him”? Owen helps us to realize that those blessings are founded on the gospel, and that the gospel is in turn founded on the Trinity. The doctrine of the Trinity is therefore the foundation of the foundation. Without the Triune God, there could be no Covenant of Redemption, and there could be no execution of the plan of Redemption. There would be no Father to administer redemption, there would be no Son to accomplish redemption, and there would be no Spirit to apply redemption. And without redemption we could enjoy no communion with God or comfortable dependence on him. Everything about the salvation that God grants to us and everything we return to God in grateful response for that salvation is intrinsically Trinitarian, presupposes the Trinity as its very foundation, and could not exist or occur without the Trinity. To ask whether a non-Triune God could have determined or accomplished such a redemption would be to engage in the kind of fruitless speculation that Owen despised and Paul condemns. The saving God who is revealed to us in Scripture is the Triune God; the salvation revealed in the Scriptures is a Trinitarian salvation; and we can commune with God in no other way than as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, approach the Father in no other way than through His Son and by His Spirit.

“How may we encourage this among our people?”

If Owen and our Confession are correct in all of this, if the doctrine of the Trinity truly is so foundational not only to Christian doctrine but also to the Christian life, then what can we as pastors do to help the congregations that God has entrusted to our care better understand and appreciate this glorious truth? Following are three simple, preliminary suggestions: each reader is encouraged to give earnest and prayerful thought to this question himself.

1. Develop a deeper and fuller appreciation for the doctrine of the Trinity ourselves.

The aspects of Christian doctrine and practice that receive the greatest emphasis in the life of a congregation are generally those aspects that receive the greatest attention within the heart of its pastors. The opposite is also true: if a shepherd neglects a particular facet of God’s truth, that neglect will generally be mirrored in his flock. If that is the case, what does the level of Trinitarian awareness

¹⁵ Ibid., 11:204 ff.

within our churches say about us? We will never be able effectively to communicate the vital doctrinal and pastoral importance of the Trinity to our people until we develop a deeper understanding of and appreciation for it ourselves.

How can we do this? Well, we can begin by studying it. Here, the writings of the church of the past might prove more beneficial than most more modern works.¹⁶ Start with Owen. The great contribution of Owen's *Communion with God* is his emphasis on the ways in which we enjoy direct and *distinct* communion with each of the Three Persons of the Trinity. Yet this distinction is not a division: Owen is no Tritheist but is ever careful to remind us that communion with any one of the three Divine Persons is always communion with the one God. Greater acquaintance with our Confession is another helpful way we can strengthen our Trinitarianism. Our Confession refers to the Trinity far more frequently than we might think, and it does so in very concrete and "practical" terms. For instance, our Confession highlights for us the Trinitarian nature of creation (4.1), of the Covenant of Grace (7.2) and Covenant of Redemption (7.3), of the incarnation and earthly ministry of Christ (8.1-3), of our effectual calling (10.1,2), our justification (11.4), our adoption (12.1), our sanctification (13.3), our faith (14.2), our repentance (15.3, 5), our perseverance (17.1,2), our assurance (18.2), our regeneration (20.4), our worship (22.2), our prayer (22.3), of the gathering of Christ's church (26.5), of the appointment of pastors (26.9), of baptism (29.3), of the Lord's Supper (30.7, understanding "spiritually" to mean "by the Spirit"), of the final resurrection (31.3) and the final judgment (32.1). In each one of these places (and in others), the distinct yet united activity of the Divine Persons of the Trinity is mentioned explicitly by our own Confession. How often do we think of these fundamental truths in a similarly Trinitarian fashion? Perhaps we as pastors could work harder at developing what Robert Letham calls "a Trinitarian mindset."¹⁷ Unless we develop one ourselves, it is doubtful that our people ever will.

2. Make a conscious effort to work the Trinity into our preaching and teaching.

Our calling as ministers of the New Covenant is to proclaim "the whole counsel of God." Not only is the doctrine of the Trinity one part of that whole counsel, if what we have said above is true, it is *foundational* to every other part as well. How often, then, does the Trinity find mention in our regular teaching and preaching? Certainly we all should consider preaching and/or teaching directly on the doctrine of the Trinity, but that would only be a good starting-point. To quote Letham again, "Not only must the Trinity be preached, but *all* preaching must be shaped by the active recognition that the God whose word is proclaimed is Triune."¹⁸ On the one hand, the very act of preaching is Trinitarian: God speaks to His people through His Son, the incarnate Word, and by the power of His Holy Spirit. Each Person of the Godhead is fully engaged and active whenever God's Word is proclaimed faithfully by His appointed messengers, and we as His messengers ought ever to be conscious of that glorious truth. But on the other hand, every truth that we proclaim from the Word is a Trinitarian truth. If everything that

¹⁶ With notable exceptions such as Robert Letham, *The Holy Trinity: In Scripture, History, Theology, and Worship* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2004).

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 423.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 423.

God does for and gives to His people in salvation is from the Father, through the Son, and by the Spirit, and if everything that God's people return to Him is by the Spirit, through the Son, and to the Father, then it should not be too difficult to find a natural opportunity to make explicit mention of the Trinity *in every sermon we preach* – unless, of course, our sermons say nothing about what God has given to us or about what we must give back to God, in which case they do not deserve to be called sermons in the first place!

3. Make a conscious effort to be explicitly Trinitarian in our corporate worship.

In the ancient words of the Athanasian Creed, “Whoever will be saved: before all things it is necessary that he hold the Catholic Faith And the Catholic Faith is this: That we worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity.”¹⁹ All true Christian worship must be and is by definition Trinitarian. If God is indeed Triune, then we cannot worship Him in any other way than as Triune. As A.W. Pink observed, “[T]he true God subsists in three co-essential and co-eternal Persons, and therefore he who worships any but the triune God is merely rendering homage to a figment of his own imagination.”²⁰ Or in the famous words of John Calvin, God demands “to be contemplated clearly in three persons. Unless we grasp these, only the bare and empty name of God flits about in our brains, to the exclusion of the true God.”²¹ Yet how often could our worship give the *appearance* of being directed toward a generic, non-triune (and therefore false) god? How often could our worship be accused of *seeming* baldly, blandly monotheistic? Perhaps we could ask the question this way: how many of our worship services would a Unitarian feel perfectly comfortable sitting through? How many of our hymns could he sing? To how many of our prayers could he respond with a hearty “Amen”? Granted, our worship is always at least *implicitly* Trinitarian, and we *understand* all our references to God to be addressing the Triune God of the Scriptures. But perhaps we could stand to make our Trinitarianism a bit more *explicit* in our worship, raising it to the level of our congregation's conscious thinking and not leaving it to each worshipper to define what kind of God or god he is worshiping for himself.

What will this look like? Ideally, it would mean more than simply tacking on an occasional “Triune” to our addresses to God in worship. Simple ways to be more-than-tacitly Trinitarian in worship would be to choose explicitly Trinitarian hymns (of which the aptly named *Trinity Hymnal* contains more than most) and to draw our people's attention to that Trinitarianism. Bless them at the end of the service with that great Trinitarian benediction in II Corinthians 13:14. Draw out the implications of baptism in the one name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and of the operations of each Person of that Trinity in the confessional Reformed understanding of the Lord's Supper.

¹⁹ As found in *The Greek and Latin Creeds with Translations*, vol. 2 of *The Creeds of Christendom: With a History and Critical Notes*, ed. Philip Schaff (1931; reprint, Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007), 66.

²⁰ Pink, Arthur W. (2012-06-18). *Gleanings from Paul: His Prayer (Arthur Pink Collection)* (Kindle Locations 1795-1797). Prisbrary Publishing. Kindle Edition.

²¹ John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, vol. 1, ed. John T. McNeill, trans. Ford Lewis Battles (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1960), 122 (I.xiii.2).

But beyond all of these, we should work to develop a conception of what it means to worship each Divine Person *distinctly*. Here we must be careful not to slip into an appearance of Tritheism: our worship of Father, Son, and Spirit can be *distinct* without being *divided*. Letham is correct in noting, “No one has expressed this better than John Owen.”²² Owen’s entire work on *Communion with God* is dedicated to delineating the ways in which we have *distinct* communion with each Divine Person, the distinct blessings that each gives to us and the distinct ways in which we must respond to each; yet he develops these distinctions in a way that is faithful to the dictums of classic orthodox Trinitarianism. He holds tenaciously to the Augustinian notion that the external works of the Trinity cannot be divided, as though each does his own work independently of the others. In every act of God, the Father works through the Son and by the Spirit. And yet, he is also aware of the equally orthodox doctrine of *appropriations*, that in each of these external Trinitarian works, each Person appropriates that aspect that is most fitting to His internal relationship to the others. Thus, it is appropriate to attribute certain aspects of God’s united actions distinctly and primarily to one or another of the Divine Persons. These distinctions *can* and, Owen would argue, *even ought to be* reflected in our worship, especially in our prayers as we address our praises and petitions for various blessings to the most appropriate member of the Trinity.²³ We can do this because, as Owen writes,

The *divine nature* is the reason and cause of all worship; so that it is impossible to *worship any one person*, and not worship the *whole* Trinity The proper and peculiar object of divine worship and invocation is *the essence of God*, in its infinite excellency, dignity, majesty, and its causality, as the first sovereign cause of all things. Now, this is common to all the three persons, and is proper to each of them; not formally as a person, but as God blessed for ever. All adoration respects that which is common to all; so that in each act of adoration and worship, all are adored and worshipped.²⁴

We worship the Three in One and the One in Three. As we direct our worship to any one of the distinct Three, we direct it to the united One, and vice versa. We must ever keep both the Trinity and the Unity in mind: as the Greek Father Gregory Nazianzen famously stated, “No sooner do I conceive of the One than I am illumined by the Splendour of the Three; no sooner do I distinguish Them than I am carried back to the One.”²⁵ Or in the words of our Confession, “Religious worship is to be given to God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit” – the distinguished Three – “and to Him alone” – the united One (2LCF 22:2).

Conclusion

²² Letham, 419.

²³ For an excellent model of this kind of prayer, see “The Trinity” in *The Valley of Vision*, ed. Arthur Bennett (Carlisle: Banner of Truth, 1975), 2-3.

²⁴ *Works*, 2:268-69 (emphasis original).

²⁵ *Cyril of Jerusalem, Gregory Nazianzen*, vol. 7 of *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers: Second Series*, ed. Philip Schaff and Henry Wace (1894; reprint, Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2004), 375 (Oration XL.xli).

The Trinity is a vast and mysterious truth, but even in its mystery it calls for our worship. To quote Pink again, the truths of the Oneness and yet the Threeness of God

are equally above reason, and real Christians do not attempt to fathom them; yet their incomprehensibility so far from being an objection is a necessary condition of confidence in revelation and faith in Him who is revealed. If the Bible presented no heights beyond the powers of reason to scale, if it contained no depths unfathomable to the keenest mental acumen, this writer for one would have discarded it as being nothing more than a human production and imposture. For our part we would no more worship a "god" that we could measure by our intellect than we would honor an image that our hands fashioned.

Whenever we attempt to discuss the revelation God has made of His three Persons we should do so with bowed heads and reverent hearts, for the ground we tread is ineffably holy.²⁶

We need to hold these glorious truths consistently before the congregations God has called us to serve because our Confession is right: the "doctrine of the Trinity is the foundation of all our communion with God, and comfortable dependence on Him."

²⁶ Pink, (Kindle Locations 1820-1825).