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Historical Theology (TH721.OA)

5-3-1: Allison, Chapter 11: God in Three Persons: The Trinity

**Questions**

1. What two movements presented formidable problems for the early church's emerging Trinitarian formulation?
2. What concept was a major Trinitarian contribution of the Cappadocian fathers (Basil the Great, Gregory of Nyssa, and Gregory of Nazianzus)?
3. What is the double procession of the spirit?
4. Why was the doctrine of the Trinity deemphasized in the Modern period?
5. How is Christianity distinguished from other religions around the world?

**Answers**

1. Dynamic monarchianism and modalistic monarchianism
2. The concept of perichoresis which states that the Father, Son, and Spirit possess unity
3. The Spirit proceeds from both the Father and the Son
4. The rise of materialism, agnosticism, and Atheism
5. By its Trinitarian doctrine

**Terms**

1. Trinitarianism - belief in the deity of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit
2. Economic Trinity - the different roles or activities of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in relationship to the world
3. Homoousios - of the same nature

**Summary**

The early church affirmed belief in the triune God in its baptismal formula, its praying, worship, ecclesiology and apologetics. In the middle ages, the change to the Nicene Creed to affirm the double procession of the Spirit sowed seeds of division between Eastern and Western Christendom. In the Reformation and post-Reformation era, the traditional doctrine of the Trinity was shared by Protestant and Catholic churches. In the modern period, the doctrine of the Trinity is tragically neglected due to the rise of materialism, agnosticism, and atheism.