The Trinity in Systematic Perspective Paper

Assignment 4-2 for ST5534 Systematic Theology 1

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The over all roles that the trinity plays within Erickson’s book seem to be pretty important from a glimpse. A quick search in logos shows me that the word trinity is used 154 times within Erickson’s systematic theology. After examining a few of the results my search returned I realized that not all 154 references to the trinity are relevant to what I am looking for. Some of the first few results deal with study questions and chapter objectives while others are referencing another source. After I have sifted through some of the irrelevant results I have found many meaningful ones that go through out Erickson’s work.

There are many different topics covered by Erickson within the trinity including The Importance of the Doctrine of the Holy Spirit and The Work of the Triune God, which are in the later half of his theology book. Erickson seems to talk about the trinity consistently within his book through the means of discussing the different persons within the trinity and how they connect. One chapter in Erickson’s book is even devoted to the trinity and tries to explain God’s three in oneness as well as different elements within the trinity. Erickson states the importance of the trinity to his theology when he says “the doctrine of the Trinity is crucial for Christianity. It is concerned with who God is, what he is like, how he works, and how he is to be approached.”[[1]](#footnote-1) If the previous statement is true then you would expect to see the trinity interwoven through out this book in detail, which is exactly what happens. Erickson goes onto talk about the Holy Spirit later in his book and its role within the trinity which states, “the Holy Spirit is the point at which the Trinity becomes personal to the believer. We often tend to think of the Father as transcendent and far off in heaven; similarly, the Son may seem far removed in history and thus also relatively unknowable. But the Holy Spirit is active within the lives of believers; he is resident within us.”[[2]](#footnote-2) Erickson also brings in evidence of the trinity on page 661 stating “there are instances of one member of the Trinity addressing another in Psalms 2:7 and 40:7–8, as well as Jesus’s prayers to the Father.”[[3]](#footnote-3) Erickson not only talks about each individual member of the trinity and how they fit into it but he also talks about many pitfalls/distorted views that are common among many people in regards to this topic.

Overall I can see many areas within Erickson’s systematic theology that point to the trinity and talk in depth about it. Out of 1145 pages Erickson starts talking about the trinity around page 200 and continues interweaving it through his book until page 1097, which is the bulk of his work. I have one last quote from Erickson’s book that I would like to fit in and I believe this speaks directly again to his view on the importance of the trinity when he says “try to explain it, and you’ll lose your mind. But try to deny it, and you’ll lose your soul.” There are many more quotes and sections I could of discussed but I hope that this does a good job at doing a brief summary of Erickson’s work and the impact the trinity has on his topics.

1. Christian Theology 3rd Edition, Millard J. Erickson (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Publishing Group, 2013) [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Christian Theology 3rd Edition, Millard J. Erickson (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Publishing Group, 2013) [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Christian Theology 3rd Edition, Millard J. Erickson (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Publishing Group, 2013) [↑](#footnote-ref-3)