

and in doing so has gently (or sometimes violently) bent the scriptural data into shapes hardly recognizable! Whenever human reason has become the ultimate, controlling source of truth about the Trinity, inevitably the result has been an aberration from the truth and a plunge into heresy. Although this paper is subject to the same dangers, hopefully it will avoid them and make a modest contribution to our understanding of the doctrine of the Trinity, as our faith seeks understanding.

This brings us to our second major emphasis,

II. A FULLER DEVELOPMENT OF OUR TOPIC

In this section we will attempt to say something about each of the following subtopics:

- A. The biblical doctrine of the Trinity
- B. Some historic orthodox formulations of the doctrine
- C. Some historic aberrant views of the doctrine
- D. The meaning of the unity of God
- E. The meaning of the plurality of God
- F. The essential equality of the three Persons
- G. The economic subordination of the three Persons
- H. Mystery versus complete rational penetrability in the formulation of the doctrine
- I. Summary of the doctrine

Most of what I am going to say will not be new to most of the members of this audience; some of what I am going to say may sound new to some of the members. I ask only that you keep an open mind until the completion of this paper; then close your mind around that which the Spirit of God through the Word of God witnesses to as truth, and throw all the rest away!

A. The biblical doctrine of the Trinity

The Bible does not use the word "Trinity," but it does teach each of the distinct truths out of which the theological doctrine of the Trinity has been constructed. The Bible simply tells us that God is one (Deuteronomy 6:4), and that there are three distinct Persons who are God. The Father is God (Jude 1); The Son is God (Titus 2:13); and the Spirit is God (Acts 5:3-4). Whatever it