

about the nature and meaning of biblical revelation, and is not in one sense very far from Rudolf Bultmann's contention that all of Scripture is in the language of *myth* (which he defines as otherworldly realities expressed in this-worldly terms), and that the teachings of Scripture must therefore be *demythologized*! Unfortunately, for Bultmann this means that no genuine "revelation" from God to man is possible, and we are left with a this-worldly Bible filled with language that tells man nothing about the nature of God or of the Trinity, but only of man and of the possibilities of authentic human existence! Thus the doctrine of the Trinity is vitally important in its implications.

3. What Evidence Can We Claim as a Basis for Our Answers?

Of the four basic sources from which theological beliefs have been constructed -- reason, religious experience, ecclesiastical authority, and revelation -- various biblical commentators and theologians have employed primarily the first and fourth (reason and revelation) as sources for their constructions of the doctrine of the Trinity. There is no problem with this configuration, so long as biblical revelation is regarded as ultimate and controlling, and reason is not regarded as a *source* of truth, but as an *instrument* for understanding, analysis, synthesis, and explanation of the truth. All too often in the history of doctrine, human reason has *imposed* some sort of pattern on scriptural teaching, 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.

A Fuller Development of our Topic

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

1. The biblical doctrine of the Trinity
2. Some historic orthodox formulations of the doctrine
3. Some historic aberrant views of the doctrine