

When we began the fuller development of our topic (which, incidentally, is entitled "The Trinity: Fides Quarens Intellectum" -- faith seeking understanding), we noted that the Trinity is a biblical doctrine, and that all of the elements of the doctrine are clearly found in Scripture. We looked at some creedal statements, particularly the Athanasian Creed, and identified this as the classic creedal formulation of the Trinity. We then sampled some heretical views, including those of Dynamic Monarchianism, Modalistic Monarchianism or Sabellianism, Arianism, and Socinianism, with its contemporary counterpart, Unitarianism.

In examining the meaning of the unity of God, we discovered that the one in Deuteronomy 6:4 ("the Lord is one") can be understood as a dynamic unity, thus permitting three Persons to be viewed as sharing one divine essence and life. And in examining the meaning of the plurality of God, we discovered that scriptural events clearly reveal interaction and personal interrelationships between the three Persons of the godhead, and that the term "person" is a good word with a long pedigree. We suggested a safeguard, however, in stressing that the three Persons are not separate individual Gods, but distinct subsistences united in the single being and life of God.

In attempting to distinguish between the "essential equality" and "economic subordination" of the three Persons, we discovered that the Scriptures teach that whatever it is to be God, all of the Persons are that. We also discovered that there is an order among the Persons, but that it is not grounded in the "eternal generation of the Son" or the "eternal procession of the Spirit," but rather in the eternal relationships within the godhead. We also discovered that the Persons of the Trinity perform various functions in the implementation of the Plan and Purpose of God.

In relation to the need of striking a balance between mystery and complete rational understanding, we suggested that we allow Scripture to set the limits of our understanding, but that we not foreclose our investigations prematurely.

I would like to close this study by quoting a portion of the second chapter of the *Philadelphia Confession of Faith* of 1689. This excellent formulation of doctrine states:

The Lord our God is but one only living and true God;