

teaches that God is One, and teaches with equal clarity and force that the Father, the Son, and the Spirit are equally, distinctly, and contemporaneously God.

The oneness and uniqueness of God has been mentioned. And the distinctness of the Persons has been shown in the cases of interaction between them. We cannot dismiss either aspect of this truth. And we cannot smooth out the problem by viewing interaction between the Persons as mere appearance contrary to reality.

Thus we are shut up to the scriptural assertions and representations, and must formulate the doctrine so as to fit the biblical data, rather than ignore or distort the biblical data to favor a preferred theological model.

3. The mystery of the Trinity

Millard Erickson states:

The Trinity is incomprehensible. We cannot fully understand the mystery of the Trinity. When someday we see God, we shall see him as he is, and understand him better than we do now. Yet even then we will not totally comprehend him. Because he is the unlimited God and we are limited in our capacity to know and understand, he will always exceed our knowledge and understanding. We will always be human beings, even though perfected human beings. We will never become God. Those aspects of God which we will never fully comprehend should be regarded as mysteries that go beyond our reason rather than as paradoxes which conflict with reason.

William G. T. Shedd says:

The great mystery of the Trinity is, that one and the very same substance, can subsist as an individual whole in three persons simultaneously. That a substance can be divided up, and distributed, so as to constitute a million or a billion of individuals, as in the instance of the human nature or species, is comparatively easy to comprehend. But that a substance without any division, or distribution, can at the same instant constitute three distinct persons, baffles the human understanding. In the sphere of matter, this would not only be incomprehensible, but absurd. A pint of water could not possibly be contained in three different pint cups at one and the same instant. But spirit is not subject to the conditions of matter; as the whole human soul may all of it be in every part, and every point of the body, at one and the same instant, so the Divine essence may all of it be in each of the three Divine persons simultaneously.