

Pathway to Apostasy?

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An Inky Publication

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DEDICATION

To my Lord God, Savior and Redeemer Jesus Christ
Who is The Way, The Truth, and The Life.

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*The lost descend to
depths of Sad.*

*The saved ascend to
heights of Glad.*

*No evil triumphs o'r
Calvary's Cross.*

*The curs't will rise to
mourn their Loss.*

PREFACE

Scripturalism (Dogmatics) is a world and life view of men and things thought out together, according to John Robbins.

"It engages non-Christian philosophies on every field of intellectual endeavor. It furnishes a coherent theory of knowledge, an infallible salvation, a refutation of science, a theory of the world, a coherent and practical system of ethics, and the principles required for political liberty and justice. No other philosophy does." (Reference 1, p. 4)

With Robbins, I hold that Christianity, Scripturalism, is the only system of true (revealed) propositions of the faith found in the 66 books of the Bible, along with the logical implications (theorems) deduced from those Biblical propositions. Each of the parts of this system reinforces the others for, if coherent – and they are, its propositions logically imply other propositions, or are implied by still other propositions of the system. In other words, Christianity as Scripturalism is a system

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of doctrines composed of true premises and logically deduced conclusions in which, "each of the theorems, fits into the whole system. If you accept one of the theorems, you must on pain of contradiction, accept the whole." (Reference 1, p. 4)

"In such a system, where propositions are logically dependent on or logically imply other propositions, each part mutually reinforces the others. ... But if we are to be transformed by the renewing of our minds, if we are to bring all our thoughts into conformity with Christ, we must learn to think as Christ does, logically and systematically." (Ibid.)

If the doctrine of the Trinity is essential to the Christian faith, and the deity of Jesus is presupposed in its other doctrines (His Incarnation, Atonement, Crucifixion, Resurrection, and Ascension to sovereign rule over all creation) what logical implications follow if it is denied?

One clear consequence: the system collapses.

Scripturalism, as a system of true doctrines about the Christian faith, if flawed in any one of its doctrines brings into question the entire system.

"A developed Christian philosophical system proceeds by rigorous deduction from one axiom to thousands of theorems. Each of the theorems fits into the whole system. Each of the theorems,

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even though minor, is important. The revelation of God is perfect, and it is all profitable. Take one idea out and the remainder is less than perfect, and we suffer loss. Because Christianity is a system of truth, a person who accepts one of the theorems, must, on pain of contradiction, accept the whole." (Reference 2, p. 3)

"Consequently, there can be no doubt that failure to accept the Trinity will lead to fatal errors in the rest of one's theology." (Reference 3, p. 1)

Trinity in Unity and Unity in Trinity

In logic, *apagogic* reasoning is defined as, "a method of disproving a proposition by showing that its inevitable consequences are absurd." More precisely, it is a method of indirectly proving a position by demonstrating that its negation leads to contradiction and/or absurdity. This is known as proof by contradiction or indirect proof.

In this project, the author uses a type of apagogic argument that is not strictly speaking a *reductio-ad-absurdum*. A straightforward *reductio* assumes the conclusion of the position to be refuted as the premise in an argument, then reasons to a contradiction or an absurdity of treating the contradiction as truth.

The kind of apagogic argumentation here is one adapted to the complexities of the controversy be-

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tween these two: nontrinitarians/monotheists and trinitarian/monotheists. These complexities involve not only different definitions of important terms, but also different programs and purposes. Both parties claim biblical exegesis for their positions: oneness of God, or Trinity of that one God. The latter is not opposed to the Shema of the Old Testament, in fact, argues for it consistently and openly. This however is not perceived by nontrinitarians as adequate, but as the product of a duped mentality. Thus monotheism alone does not provide common ground for a theological meeting of the minds of any kind between nontrinitarians and Trinitarians.

The mode of apagogic argument adapted by this author is one that assumes the falsity of the doctrine of the Trinity to argue to something less than an obvious contradiction, namely, to the significance of dreams or mirages. The position of nontrinitarians, in particular the denial of the deity of Jesus Christ, reasons by implication to the reality of mirages. A mirage is a perception of a reality which upon closer examination proves to be a fake, similar to the reality of a vivid dream. Dreams possess this kind of reality which when one awakes are dismissed as when one discovers that a body of water in a desert proved to be a mirage or a fraud on closer inspection.

The label for this type of argumentation is *apagogic ad*

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mirage, reasoning to a fake-reality, one robbed of all theological significance or the significance that Trinitarians claim, believe, teach, and preach about the Christian faith.

A faith without the Trinity is an empty faith, not the Christian faith of the Scripture.

What is the proposition in question? The negation of the doctrine of the Trinity: the doctrine of the Trinity is false. When the doctrine of the Trinity is assumed to be false, as many advocates believe and teach, and then it is shown that this supposition leads to contradictions regarding almost all of the accepted doctrines of the Christian faith, this constitutes an indirect proof that the doctrine of the Trinity is not false, as claimed, but true.

Let us repeat. Christianity is a *system* of doctrines, true doctrines regarding God, man, creation, and reality. The truth of Christian doctrines is based on the Scriptures, the Word of God, the God of Truth who cannot lie. These doctrines are revealed truths, not discovered or in any sense created by philosophers, theologians, preachers, or teachers. Without the inerrant, infallible, verbal, propositional revealed truths of Scripture, disclosed by God Himself - thereby and therein concerning Himself, His attributes, His creation, and His Sovereign rule over all creatures and creation - there simply would not be any absolute truths known to man about

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himself and God.

The doctrine of the Trinity is one of those truths.

In this project, the author assumes the proposition that the trinity is false doctrine as the premise of an apagogic argument in order to show that this presupposition alone would result in the following:

1. it means negation of the deity of Jesus Christ;
2. it reduces the Incarnation to an irrelevance, and at its core, unnecessary;
3. it dismisses penal, substitutionary Atonement;
4. it destroys the the significance of the crucifixion of Jesus Christ; and
5. it denies the theological significance of the Resurrection and Ascension of Jesus Christ.

The Introduction that follows sets the parameters within the method of apagogic reasoning -- in what amounts to a thought experiment. The form of each chapter's content can be posed as a conditional: If p is false, then what must be the case for q_1, q_2, \dots, q_n ?

It should be noted: No attempt is made in this work to *prove* by either exegesis or logic that the doctrine of the Trinity is true. The project is strictly apagogic, not apologetic.

For the author, the doctrine of the Trinity is revealed-truth believed by faith simply because this is what the

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Bible proclaims without explanation of matters beyond those clearly stated in Scripture. Obviously, the Bible does not explain, as our minds may wish, the miracles of the virgin birth of Jesus, i.e., the incarnation; the numerous miraculous acts of the Old and New Testaments, including the atoning crucifixion, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ; and many other revealed doctrines of the faith. What is of primary emphasis in this project is the truth that,

"Christianity is a comprehensive view of things; it takes the world, both material and spiritual, to be an ordered system. ... Instead of a series of disconnected propositions, truth will be a rational system, a logically ordered series, somewhat like geometry with its axioms and theorems, its implications and presuppositions. And each part will derive its significance from the whole." (Reference 4, p. 24f)

If the the doctrine of the Trinity is central to Christianity, a doctrine that distinguishes it from all other religions, as many theologians claim, then, if it is false, to paraphrase Paul, we who believe it have indeed been duped and are the most miserable. Our faith is in vain; we are still condemned sinners.

In short, if the doctrine of the Trinity is indeed false, then Christianity is futile. As the apostle Paul reasoned:

"1 Corinthians 15:12. Now if Christ be preached

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that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead? 13. But if there be no resurrection of the the dead, then is Christ not risen: 14. And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. 15. Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ: whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not. 16. For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: 17. And if Christ be not raised, you faith is vain, ye are yet in your sins. 18. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. 19. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. 20. But now is Christ risen from the dead and become the first fruits of them that slept. 21. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. 22. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive."

From the denial of the truth of the doctrine of the Trinity, follows step by step the denial of the central doctrines of the Christian faith. Concurrent with these denials, the rejection of God's revealed truths yields a false faith, and belief in a god of one's own imagination.

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*O Jesus, what a name,
High above all world
of fame.
For saints, mediates
above,
For objects of His love.*

INTRODUCTION

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This project addresses two questions: 1. According to the Creeds of the church, What does the Doctrine of the Trinity presuppose or require? and 2. What are the logical consequences of the nontrinitarian – monotheistic position?

The Apostles' Creed*

"I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth; And in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord; Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; he descended into hell; the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy catholic Church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body;

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and the life everlasting. Amen." (The Book of Confessions, 7.110)

The author is not a theologian, a bible teacher, a preacher of the Gospel, and no expert in the original languages of Scripture. There is no seeking here for recognition nor approval; such are the deceptions of a sinful heart that in the guise of seeking truth, fosters the hidden, sinful motives of self-adoration. There will be no attempt here to sway or persuade, either a believer or non-believer, to a position of Trinitarian worship of God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Spiritual Truth is revealed truth that only the Spirit of God, i.e., the Spirit of Truth, can reveal to the mind of the creature in such manner that there is no call for "proofs", no need for debates, conferences, seminars, and the like – though we grant that these and other means may provide the occasion for the Spirit of Truth to take the things of Jesus Christ and show them to those born from above. The Spirit of Truth, proceeding from God the Father and the Son is the sole means by which God makes known his thoughts and work in creation. Creation is the manifestation of His thinking and His works; nothing happens, and nothing that is, was not foreordained, predestined, and decreed by the Holy Trinity as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

For all born in Adam, there are no unbiased minds. This is no more than to agree with the Scriptures that since the Fall, the creature is dead in trespasses and

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sins. It is to be expected that the supernatural revelation of God is a closed book not worthy of time, effort, study or testing – for the unbeliever.

Proofs, logical or otherwise persuasive, do not save, indeed cannot save or convert an unbeliever to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and thus to receive the gift of forgiveness, pardon, adoption as sons, and eternal life with Christ, to be like Him and with Him forever. The non-believer must be born again, born from above by the power and ministry of the Holy Spirit who regenerates the non-believer to new life and truth. The extent of his murderous rebellion against the sinless Triune God reaches the depths of moral depravity when the sinner deliberately, knowingly chooses hell rather than eternal life with Jesus. Such is the hatred of truth, and knowledge of God.

If this be so, then why this project?

An acquaintance, professing to be a fellow-believer, has sought to persuade this author of the depravity of the doctrine of the Trinity, so convinced is he that the doctrine of the Trinity is a false doctrine invented by ancient Greeks of pagan origin and adopted by the church fathers and teachers of the first centuries following the death and resurrection of Christ. As such, the doctrine of the Trinity has its origin, according to this party, in the false religions which were extant before Christ. It is polytheistic worship which stands in

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contradiction to the Shema of the Old Testament: "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD." This is monotheism. Monotheism, pure and simple, according to some, requires the rejection of any trinitarian conception, terminology or speech. Trinitarian declarations are thought to have originated in pagan worship of false gods, and/or man-made constructions based on faulty deductions from the Scriptures. These are the products of depraved minds, according to many anti-trinitarians.**

This anti-trinity advocate claims the backing of many evangelical ministries which an ordinary search of the internet will yield. Appeals to various groups of professing christians are incessantly paraded to cast doubt on the claim that Jesus is God. When faced with the reality that many Christian scholars, philosophers, theologians, and teachers, some dating back to the first century and others presently known and respected by this party are Trinitarian believers, the response consists of a number of informal fallacies of which *argumentum ad hominem-abusive* is favored, but not exclusively.

Trinitarians are dupes, it is said, and the church of Jesus Christ has been duped for over 2000 years into a rejection of *pure* monotheism. Trinitarian-error cannot harmonize with truth and the truth is monotheism, not trinitarian belief or worship. In short, trinitarianism is a heresy and those who believe that trinitarian doctrine

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is the God-revealed means for talk about God, His plan of redemption, His works in creation, and His relation to creation and creatures have been duped by likewise duped teachers down through the centuries who have taught that Jesus Christ is God incarnate, according to the Scriptures. No, Jesus was a created being who thus has a beginning and therefore is not eternal God, according to anti-trinitarian followers.

These "duped ones" may perhaps be saved, for many believe sincerely and claim to be monotheistic as well as trinitarian. They are not necessarily condemned because the belief in this false doctrine of the trinity is not a litmus-test for being saved or lost, according to them. However, the denial of the deity of Christ and the Holy Spirit is held to be the only position which is consistent with monotheistic worship of the one true God. If I believe that Jesus is God bodily, eternal God and man in one person, I may yet be saved, albeit duped!

Oneness theology's drum beat is a repetitious, unrelenting, anti-trinitarian stance that rejects any possibility of being mistaken. Thus, any Scripture that does not support what they take to be monotheistic worship of God must of necessity be attributed to mistakes in translation, faulty grammatical analyses, blindness due to erroneous hermeneutics, and biased exegesis of those Scriptures from which valid deductions of the doctrine of the Trinity are inferred. Logic and the valid

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deductions of necessary inference supporting Trinitarian doctrine are rejected simply because these deductions are, "not in the Scripture." The Bible makes no mention of "the Trinity" or that Jesus is God. In short, the claim is that the doctrine of the Trinity was not taught by the prophets of the Old Testament, the Apostles of the New Testament, or even by Jesus Christ Himself.

Thus, while some Trinitarians are not lost, many run a certain kind of risk that borders on the knife-edge of catastrophe. A "duped salvation" is possible but who in their right mind would knowingly run the risk?

Without this history of personal encounter, an encounter that has convinced me of the centrality of the truth of the doctrine of the Trinity, I would not have dwelt on the significance of the doctrine in its role in God's plan of redemption. God is most Gracious.

It remains then to draw out the implications of anti-trinitarian thought and practice. If the doctrine of the Trinity is false, what follows?

What are the logical implications for the doctrines of the deity of Christ and the incarnation via the virgin birth of Jesus? And is the atonement, its significance and necessity for expiation of the sinners' sins, and propitiation of the wrath of God a necessary consequence of the Trinity? What can be inferred about the

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meaning of the crucifixion and the resurrection of Jesus? Does the doctrine of His ascension to the right hand of the throne of God to rule all creation sovereignly, along with the promise of His return to judge the quick and the dead hinge on the truth of trinitarian teaching?

Christianity is a system of true doctrines, true beliefs and knowledge of God, His mind, His thoughts, His promises, His plan of redemption, and His decreed revelations concerning His creation and creatures. As such, this system known as Scripturalism, or Christianity, is without error, for it is God's revelation of Himself, the God of all truth. Man does not choose which of these doctrines to believe as true and which can be rejected without faulting God's revelation of Himself. Only God is omniscient. And since He is also all-powerful, sovereign, the *alpha* and the *omega*, immutable, holy, infinite in wisdom, knowledge, and truth, man, the creature, has no standing to decree which doctrines are to be believed, and which can be discarded without consequences for God and the believer.

Man is the clay; God is the potter. It is God who works in man both to will and to do His good pleasure. (Romans 9:21)

With these revealed declarations in mind, the denial of the deity of Jesus Christ, based on the denial of Trinity, will be seen to logically imply the denial of most, if not

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all, of the doctrines of Christianity to the extent that even the doctrine espoused by anti-trinitarians, monotheism, is brought into disrepute -- for it too is part of the whole. If the central doctrine of the system of truths known as Christianity is deemed to be false, what of the related doctrines of the system? Are they too subject to the charge of useless baggage leading to false beliefs and baseless assurances of redemption and salvation to eternal life with Jesus Christ?

This project then will examine the logical implications that follow a negation of the doctrine of the Trinity.

The doctrine of the Trinity is spelled out in the Creeds and Confessions of the Christian Faith. The definition in the Creeds and the testimony of Christian scholars, teachers, and preachers form the basis for a biblical definition of the the doctrine.

The method of analysis is logic, necessary consequences or logical implications that follow when reasoning assumes as its axiom that the doctrine of the Trinity is false. If this central doctrine of the Christian faith is in error, the system known as Scripturalism is a fraud.

In short, what follows concerning other biblical doctrines if the doctrine of the Trinity is a false doctrine? Do Christians believe and teach false doctrines? Is Christianity based on a false premise? Have Christians been duped by false teachers and preachers of the early

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Christian church? Is our teaching and preaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ as Paul wrote, in vain?

1 Corinthians 15:13. But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen: 14. And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. 15. Yea, and we are found false witnesses, of God; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ: whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not. 19. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable."

*The Book of Confessions,© 1966, The General Assembly of The United Presbyterian Church in the USA, 7.110.

**The terms 'nontrinitarian' and 'anti-trinitarian' in this project are used synonymously, although the latter is used where the sense is not merely to designate those who do not believe the doctrine of the Trinity, but attack it as a heresy.

*O' God my shelter be,
Let me hide myself in
Thee,
Cause love of Thee to
grow,
Burn like heaven's
stars aglow.*

1 IS JESUS GOD?

"III. In the unity of the Godhead there be three persons, of one substance, power, and eternity: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost ^o: the Father is of none, neither begotten, nor proceeding; the Son is eternally begotten of the Father ^p; the Holy Ghost proceeding from the Father and the Son. ^q

o. Matthew 3:16, 17; 28:19; 2 Corinthians 13:14; see Ephesians 2:18.

p. John 1:14, 18; see Hebrews 1:2, 3; Colossians 1:15.

q. John 15:36; Galatians 4: 6." (Reference 2, Westminster Confession of Faith, pp. 6-7)

"4.025. Q. 25. Since there is only one Divine Being, why do you speak of three, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit?

A. Because God has thus revealed himself in his Word, that these three distinct persons are the one, true eternal God." (Reference 3, Heidelberg Catechism, 4.025)

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"5.016. God is Three. Notwithstanding we believe and teach that the same immense, one and indivisible God is in person inseparably and without confusion distinguished as Father, Son and Holy Spirit so as the Father has begotten the Son from eternity, the Son is begotten by an ineffable generation, and the Holy Spirit truly proceeds from them both, and the same from eternity and is to be worshipped with both.

5.017. Thus there are not three gods, but three persons, consubstantial, coeternal, and coequal; distinct with respect to hypostases, and with respect to order, the one preceding the other yet without inequality. For according to the nature or essence they are so joined together that they are one God, and the divine nature is common to the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit." (Reference 4, The Second Helvetic Confession)

Dr. Paul Elliott in an article that asks and answers: Who is Jesus? declares that "to believe in the Christ of the Bible means to believe in the Second Person of the Trinity – a vital doctrine that is little understood in the postmodern Evangelical church."

"We must remember that the doctrine of the Trinity is axiomatic truth. Just as the Bible does not set out to prove the existence of God but states it as a fundamental fact, in the same way

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the Bible states the doctrine of the Trinity as a fundamental fact. According to Scripture, the Trinity is the one true, living, and eternal God, who is composed of three united persons of one substance and power, without separate existence. The Trinity is a doctrine that human wisdom cannot fully comprehend or explain. It can only be accepted and believed, on the basis of God's revelation in His Word. Believe is what God calls upon us to do. We accept the doctrine of the Trinity because God's Word say it is so." (Reference 1, Elliott, p. 2)

Jesus is deity, but also Jesus is truly man. How this is true of the one person, Jesus, is part of the doctrine of the Trinity that is also axiomatic and therefore a truth that is to be believed simply because the Scripture assumes it without explanation or argument. For Elliott, if one does not believe in the Trinity, then one does not believe in the God of the Bible.

"To believe in the Second Person of the Trinity, God the Son, is to believe that Jesus Christ is the eternal God made flesh, and thus he is qualified to be the perfect sacrifice to redeem sinners from the curse, through His blood, as we saw in Colossians 1:14. To believe in the Lord Jesus Christ is to believe in the One who now reigns in Heaven. Acts 2:36 – "Therefore let all of the house of Israel know assuredly that God has

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made this Jesus, who you crucified, both Lord and Christ.' " (Reference 1, Elliott, p. 3)

The doctrine of the deity and humanity of Jesus Christ captured in the unique, unequivocal, true, and coherent set of biblical propositions about Him clearly declares itself to be utterly necessary for God's plan of redemption of fallen, depraved, helpless sinners. Thus, all of the doctrines related to the plan of redemption not only presuppose the deity of Jesus but logically requires it.

Anti-trinitarians however think otherwise. Their view can be expressed in the form of a Modus Ponens syllogism.

If the doctrine of the Trinity is false or otherwise in error, then Jesus Christ is not God. Asserting the antecedent yields the consequent.

If the creeds and confessions of the church teach otherwise, the implication is that the creeds and confessions of the church are mistaken. The source of the error may perhaps be traced to ancient polytheistic religions and pagan Greek philosophy. The word "trinity" is not in the Bible.

Therefore, Jesus is not eternal God. To think otherwise, as anti-trinitarians assert, stands in opposition to the Jewish Shema of the worship of the one and only one God.

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In other words, Jesus had a beginning; he was born of a woman, as all God's creatures are born. Mary, a Jewish maid, betrothed to Joseph gave birth to her first-born, Jesus. Other children followed. The record indicates that Jesus had brothers and sisters. This family did not worship Jesus, for he was a fellow-creature who lived as anyone born in a Jewish family. In fact, his father, Joseph, was a carpenter and Jesus in all probability learned the craft from his father as Jewish sons learned the craft from their fathers. His neighbors knew him as the son of Joseph and Mary. He lived as one of them.

The biblical records make no mention of miracles performed by Jesus as a young boy. The years of his youth record no healings, visions, or education, and nothing that testifies to his deity as the Son of God.

If Jesus had a beginning, there was a time when Jesus was not. More emphatically, this means that Jesus is not eternal. Indeed, all creatures have beginnings. Such is part of the definition of being a created being. There is a beginning-birth, a creaturely-life, and a creature-death. This is the experience of anyone born in Adam. And Jesus was a man like Adam in every respect, although not the sinner that Adam became. In this respect, he was a human being who lived a sinless life, or so the Bible testifies. He was never judged guilty of being a sinner. He observed the Law of Moses strictly and faithfully to the very end.

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No doubt, Jesus performed what we call miracles. Many of the ancient prophets did likewise, thereby indicating that a miracle-worker does not require deity to perform miracles. Indeed, Satan himself, the record shows, performed miracles. Satan is not God or even a god. No doubt, many of God's prophets of the Old Testament and the apostles of the New Testament performed miraculous works that testify to the power of God; however, no attribute of deity for the miracle-worker is thereby required or demonstrated.

For the Jews, to teach that Jesus Christ is God was blasphemy worthy of death according to their (mistaken) beliefs: The law, which they took to be applicable, stated plainly and simply:

"Thou shalt have no other gods before me; thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image or any likeness of any-thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth." (Exodus 20:3-4)

God alone is to be worshipped. Any doctrine that teaches otherwise is polytheism. Christianity is not polytheistic!

In summary, assuming that the doctrine of the trinity is in error, the logical conclusion necessarily is that Jesus is not God. If Jesus is not God, then Jesus is a creature of God, born of human parents, Joseph and Mary.

Their argument can be formulated in this way:

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If the Trinity is false, then Jesus is not God.

The Trinity is false doctrine.

Therefore, Jesus is not God.

If Jesus is not God, then Jesus must be a creature.

Jesus is not God

Therefore, Jesus is a creature.

Thus, the repetitious mantra of nontrinitarians: *There was a time when Jesus was not.*

What does this anti-trinitarian position (an unbiblical position according to the creeds of the church) imply for the incarnation, the virgin-birth of Jesus Christ? The next chapter will address this question.

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3. The Book of Confessions The Heidelberg Catechism, 1563-1963, 400th Anniversary Edition, © 1962, United Church Press, 4.001-4.129. See also 1.2 (Nicene

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Creed); 6.013; 6.044; 6.168; 7.005-.006.

4. _____ The Second Helvetic Confession, 1563-1963, 400th Anniversary Edition, © 1962, United Church Press 5.001; 5.260.

2 INCARNATION

"4.035. Q. 35. What is the meaning of: "Conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary"?

A. That the eternal Son of God, who is and remains true and eternal God, took upon himself our true manhood from the flesh and blood of the Virgin Mary through the action of the Holy Spirit, so that he might also be the true seed of David, like his fellow men in all things, except for sin." (Reference 1, Westminster Confession of Faith, 4.034-.042)

"6.044. 2. The Son of God, the second Person of the Trinity, being very and eternal God, of one substance, and equal with the Father, did, when the fullness of time was come, take upon him man's nature, with all the essential properties and common infirmities thereof, yet without sin: being conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost, in the womb of the Virgin Mary, of her substance. So that two whole, perfect, and distinct natures, the Godhead and the manhood, were inseparately joined together in one person,

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without conversion, composition, or confusion. Which person is very god and very man, yet one Christ, the only Mediator between God and man." (Reference 2, Westminster Confession of Faith)

If Jesus is not deity, that is, He was born a creature with a beginning-birth of and by two human parents, then this scenario did not require a miraculous virgin-birth as Trinitarians insist. The doctrine of the incarnation holds that Jesus birth was a miracle in that he had no human father. Rather, His birth was not "normal," but if not normal then abnormal or miraculous. Thus, Jesus was not born in Adam, for if born in Adam, Jesus could not have escaped the condemnation of all sinners born in Adam: death and hell.

Jesus was born of a virgin and the Holy Spirit. The seed of the woman, not the seed of sinful man, and the third Person of Trinity, the Holy Spirit, together conceived and gave birth to Jesus. This was the origin of the doctrine of the Incarnation of Jesus. Jesus is God bodily. Jesus is the God-Man, true God and true Man, two natures (divine and human) in one Person.

The Holy Spirit, we know not how, brought about in Mary's womb the formation of a human body which the Second Person of the Trinity assumed -- remaining God throughout from birth to death, resurrection, and ascension to sovereign rule over all of God's creation.

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Thus, the doctrine of the Trinity makes the virgin birth of Jesus Christ a requirement, an essential component, for the plan of redemption of a people, the elect saints of God in Christ, and glorification of that same Redeemer.

The argument for the denial of the virgin born birth of Jesus can be expressed in the following way:

If Jesus is not God, then Jesus is a human person like any other creature created in the image and likeness of God.

As the previous anti-trinitarian argument of the previous chapter disclosed, Jesus had a beginning; there was a time when Jesus was not. Therefore, Jesus is a human being and a supernatural origin is not required, i.e., no more than the creation of any human being born in the image and likeness of God.

Symbolically: If p, then q, p; therefore q. (Modus Ponens)

That Jesus may have been blessed subsequently during his adult life at some point with some form of divinity is not denied; although the record is not clear as to when or how such a blessing became a reality. Whether his baptism, transfiguration, or resurrection served as the occasion and means for an acquired divinity, however, does not call for the miracle virgin birth whereby an invisible spiritual agent and a visible human vessel meet to produce a two-natured person, as Trinitarians

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claim.

Nowhere in Scripture is there any record of how two natures in one person exist, communicate, or cooperate. Does one nature, the human even if sinless, cooperate with the divine or pray to the divine within? Is there any record that testifies to any communication between these two natures in one person?

In fact, Jesus does not pray to himself, ever. He prays to God the Father always. And God within Jesus never answers His prayers. God the Father to whom all Christians pray answered Jesus' prayers as He has throughout the history of creation. Jesus himself gave his disciples the model prayer when his disciples asked Jesus to teach them how to pray.

"Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen" (Reference 3, Book of Confessions, 7.109)

In sum, the anti-trinity position that Jesus is not God, forfeits His supernatural, virgin birth. The Christian doctrine of the Incarnation has been compromised thereby – wittingly or not - because Jesus was born of

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human parents. This belief, that Jesus is not deity has implications not only for the doctrine of the incarnation as developed in the creeds and confessions of the church, but for other doctrines that presuppose and believe in the supernatural, virgin-birth of Jesus. According to anti-trinitarians, Christianity does not require the deity of Jesus, or the miraculous union of Spirit and flesh, if Jesus was born of human parents. To believe otherwise, according to nontrinitarians, is to believe in a flawed doctrine and other doctrines that base their propositions on anything less than the monotheism nontrinitarian interpretation of the Scriptures.

This position has consequences even for the significance of the death and crucifixion of Jesus as recorded in the creeds of the church.

References

1. The Book of Confessions. The Heidelberg Catechism, 1563-1963, 400th Anniversary Edition, © 1962, United Church Press. See also, 5.062; 6.044; Westminster Confession of Faith, 7.022; and 7.110.
2. ____ Westminster Confession of Faith, © 1958, United Church Press, 6.044. See also 1.2; 2.2; and 3.06.
3. ____ The Lord's Prayer, (Matthew 6:9-13), 7.109.

*Nothing but my sins
I bring,
Only to His Cross I
cling.*

3 ATONEMENT/CRUCIFIXION

"3.09. That our Lord Jesus offered himself a voluntary sacrifice unto his Father for us, that he suffered contradiction of sinners, that he was wounded and plagued for our transgressions, that he, the clean innocent Lamb of God, was condemned in the presence of an earthly judge, that he suffered not only the cruel death of the cross, which was accursed by the sentence of God; but also that he suffered for a season the wrath of his Father which sinners had deserved. But yet we avow that he remained the only, well beloved, and blessed Son of his Father even in the midst of his anguish and torment which he suffered in body and soul to make full atonement for the sins of his people. From this we confess and avow that there remains no other sacrifice for sin; if any affirm so, we do not hesitate to say that they are blasphemers against Christ's death and the everlasting atonement thereby purchased for us." (Reference 1, The Scots Confession)

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"6.045. The Lord Jesus, in his human nature thus united to the divine, was sanctified and anointed with the Holy Spirit above measure, having in him all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge; in whom it pleased the Father that all fullness should dwell: to the end that being holy, harmless, undefiled, and full of grace and truth, he might be thoroughly furnished to execute the office of Mediator and Surety. Which office he took not unto himself, but was there unto called by his Father, who put all power and judgment into his hand, and gave him commandment to execute the same." (Reference 2, The Westminster Confession of Faith)

Versions of Atonement

One source lists at least nine theories of the atonement. (Reference 3) Of those, according to this source, the theory that most closely reflects the Scriptures, and most accurately reflects revealed truth is the penal substitution theory.

"This theory sees the atonement of Christ as being a vicarious, substitutionary sacrifice that satisfied the demands of God's justice upon sin. With His sacrifice, Christ paid the penalty of man's sin, bringing forgiveness, imputing righteousness, and reconciling man to God. Those who hold this view believe that every aspect of

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man—his mind, will, and emotions—have been corrupted by sin and that man is totally depraved and spiritually dead. This view holds that Christ's death paid the penalty for sin and that through faith man can accept Christ's substitution as payment for sin. This view of the atonement aligns most accurately with Scripture in its view of sin, the nature of man, and the results of the death of Christ on the cross." (References 3 and 4)

The penal substitution of substitutionary atonement refers to Jesus Christ having taken the Christian's place in suffering the penalty of sin that we deserve. *Atonement* means reconciliation; *vicarious* means, "done in the place of or instead of someone else." According to this understanding of the atonement, vicarious substitution was accomplished by Jesus Christ on the bloody cross of calvary. (Reference 5)

In the creeds and confessions of the church, perhaps no other pair of doctrines is so intricately bound together as the doctrine of the atonement and the doctrine of the crucifixion. So interwoven are they that to speak of one is to refer to the other and vice versa. The atonement of Jesus Christ, with the concepts of His penal, substitutionary, vicarious death, having the properties of propitiating God's wrath and expiating man's sin, carries the weight of Calvary's cross. The cross of the crucifixion of Jesus Christ stands as an emblem of horror and splendor of love based grace,

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justice and pardon, punishment and forgiveness, death and life. To deny the atonement is to deny the cross, and vice-versa. To affirm one, establishes the other. The thought of the immeasurable suffering and agony of Jesus Christ reaches its climax in the crucifixion of Jesus Christ.

The creeds teach that the atonement is the penal, substitutionary, vicarious death on the cross of the Son of God on behalf of the God's chosen people. It propitiated the wrath of God against the sins of His people and expiated their sins. Those sins were imputed to Christ in exchange for the righteousness of God imputed to His people. The biblical teaching is that Jesus was made a curse for us that we might enjoy the blessings of grace and peace with God. (Isaiah 53; Galatians 3:13; 2 Corinthians 3:21)

The crucifixion was the sacrifice of the Lamb of God. The sins of the elect people of God are expiated by the sacrifice of the Lamb of God, and God reconciles thereby believing sinners to Himself.

The atonement of our Lord is a profound blessing of love and grace; however, does it presuppose the doctrine of the virgin birth incarnation, and track back to the Trinity as taught by the creeds of the church?

If the doctrine of the Trinity is in error (meaning that Jesus is not God, for there was a time when Jesus was not), how then could a mere creature atone for a vast

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number of sinful people? Jesus was crucified, but does this fact require and presuppose the deity of Jesus, His incarnation in a virgin birth, and an atonement rendered by a sinless individual for guilty sinners born in Adam?

The answer to these questions, according to Trinitarians, is that God alone could satisfy the requirements of the holy law of God. God cannot overlook sin; the penalty for sinners is death. Therefore, since every creature born in Adam is a sinner, God alone was able to atone for the sins of the world and save the lost. No other scenario was possible, if an atonement or reconciliation between God and man is the goal. No man, born in Adam, qualifies as an adequate substitute to satisfy the perfect justice of a Holy God. "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." (John 1:29)

Moreover, according to Athanasius and others, to have effected the salvation of humans required that both the Son and the Holy Spirit be equally divine with the Father. Forgiveness by God, an infinite valuable being, requires an atoning sacrifice of infinite value. Therefore, Jesus must be divine, for only a fully divine being has infinite value.

In other words, man sinned against an infinite valuable being, God Himself. Forgiveness of those sins required an atonement of infinite value. Christ is the

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Lamb of God, no mere man, but the God-Man, sinless man, the perfect Lamb. Thus Christ, if He is God's atonement must be divine. Otherwise, the death of Christ on the cross has no atoning power.

The problem with this line of thought, according to anti-trinitarians, is obvious: God cannot die. There are other objections to the doctrine of the atonement as penal, vicarious, and substitutionary that anti-trinity advocates proclaim. To believe, teach, or preach that God the Father punished the sinless, perfect, innocent person of Jesus Christ for the sins of a people is to picture God the Father as a sadist or something worse — unjust. God is holy and perfectly just. God does not punish the innocent, much less a sinless, obedient Son. God will punish the guilty, but to punish an innocent one for the benefit of guilty ones is to negate that God is love as well as just, according to nontrinitarian theology.

Jesus no doubt offered Himself as a ransom for all sinners who would avail themselves of the free gift of salvation, but this does not require the doctrine of the Trinity, or so antitrinitarians advocate and believe. God may offer a lamb to suffer the penalty for sins to save a people, anti-trinitarians argue, but if Jesus is God, then as God, He cannot die. According to this line of argumentation, the atonement of God in Christ merely demonstrates the depth of God's love for His creatures.

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The moral influence theory of the atonement captures all that nontrinitarians believe and many teach.

"This is the belief that the atonement of Christ is demonstration of God's love which causes man's heart to soften and repent. Those who hold this view believe that man is spiritually sick and in need of help and that man is moved to accept God's forgiveness by seeing God's love for man. They believe that the purpose and meaning of Christ's death was to demonstrate God's love toward man." (Reference 3e.)

Similarly, the example theory of the atonement "sees the atonement of Christ as simply providing an example of faith and obedience to inspire man to be obedient to God." (Reference 3f.)

To summarize. If, as nontrinitarians argue, the doctrine of the trinity is of pagan origins alien to Christianity's monotheism, and if Jesus is not deity, then doctrines like the penal, vicarious, substitutionary atonement are based on the false premises of Trinitarian theology.

The atonement and the crucifixion of Jesus Christ were but one added proof of the love of God for his creatures in the divine plan for man's salvation.

Nothing less and nothing more.

References

1. The Book of Confessions. The Scots Confession: 1560. Edited by Henderson, G. D. Translated by Bulloch, J. The Saint Andrew Press, Edinburgh, 1960, pp. 58-80. Used by Permission. © 1967, The General Assembly of the United Presbyterian Church of the USA. See also 3.08; 5.102.
2. _____. The Westminster Confession of Faith © 1958, The General Assembly of the United Presbyterian Church of the USA. See also 6.046-047.
3. Eight other theories: Got Questions. What are the various theories of the atonement? <http://www.got-questions.org>
 - a. "Ransom to Satan: ... to purchase man's freedom and release him from being enslaved to Satan. It is based on a belief that man's spiritual condition is in bondage to Satan and that the meaning of Christ's death was to secure God's victory over Satan. ... It is unbiblical in that it sees Satan, rather than God, as the one who required that a payment be made for sin. Thus, it completely ignores the demands of God's justice as seen throughout Scripture. It also has a higher view of Satan than it should and views him as having more power than he really does. ... God is the One who requires a payment for

sin.

- b. Recapitulation Theory: ... Christ has reversed the course of mankind from disobedience to obedience. It believes that Christ's life recapitulated all the stages of human life and in doing so reversed the course of disobedience initiated by Adam. This theory cannot be supported scripturally.
- c. Dramatic Theory: This view sees the atonement of Christ as securing the victory in a divine conflict between good and evil and winning man's release from bondage to Satan. The meaning of Christ's death was to ensure God's victory over Satan and to provide a way to redeem the world out of its bondage to evil.
- d. Mystical Theory: ... sees the atonement of Christ as a triumph over His own sinful nature through the power of the Holy Spirit. Those who hold this view believe that knowledge of this will mystically influence man and awake his "god-consciousness." They also believe that man's spiritual condition is not the result of sin but simply a lack of "god-consciousness." Clearly, this is unbiblical. To believe this, one must believe that Christ had a sin nature, while Scripture is clear that Jesus was the perfect God-man, sinless in every aspect of His nature

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(Hebrews 4:15).

- e. Moral Influence Theory: This is the belief that the atonement of Christ is a demonstration of God's love which causes man's heart to soften and repent. Those who hold this view believe that man is spiritually sick and in need of help and that man is moved to accept God's forgiveness by seeing God's love for man. They believe that the purpose and meaning of Christ's death was to demonstrate God's love toward man. ... it denies the true spiritual condition of man, dead in transgressions and sins (Ephesians 2:1), and denies that God actually requires a payment for sin. This view of Christ's atonement leaves mankind without a true sacrifice or payment for sin.
- f. Example Theory: This view sees the atonement of Christ as simply providing an example of faith and obedience to inspire man to be obedient to God. Those who hold this view believe that man is spiritually alive and that Christ's life and atonement were simply an example of true faith and obedience and should serve as inspiration to men to live a similar life of faith and obedience. This and the moral influence theory are similar in that they both deny that God's justice actually requires payment for sin and that Christ's death on the

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cross was that payment. The main difference between the moral influence theory and the example theory is that the moral influence theory says that Christ's death teaches us how much God loves us and the example theory says that Christ's death teaches how to live. Of course, it is true that Christ is an example for us to follow, even in His death, but the example theory fails to recognize man's true spiritual condition and that God's justice requires payment for sin which man is not capable of paying.

- g. Commercial Theory: The commercial theory views the atonement of Christ as bringing infinite honor to God. This resulted in God giving Christ a reward which He did not need, and Christ passed that reward on to man. Those who hold this view believe that man's spiritual condition is that of dishonoring God and so Christ's death, which brought infinite honor to God, can be applied to sinners for salvation. This theory, like many of the others, denies the true spiritual state of unregenerate sinners and their need of a completely new nature, available only in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17).
- h. Governmental Theory: This view sees the atonement of Christ as demonstrating God's high regard for His law and His attitude toward sin. It is through Christ's death that God has a

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reason to forgive the sins of those who repent and accept Christ's substitutionary death. Those who hold this view believe that man's spiritual condition is as one who has violated God's moral law and that the meaning of Christ's death was to be a substitute for the penalty of sin. Because Christ paid the penalty for sin, it is possible for God to legally forgive those who accept Christ as their substitute. This view falls short in that it does not teach that Christ actually paid the penalty of the actual sins of any people, but instead His suffering simply showed mankind that God's laws were broken and that some penalty was paid."

4. <https://gotquestions.org/penal-substitution.html>
5. Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy. History of Trinitarian Doctrines, © Dale Tuggy, 2020. <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/trinity/trinity-history.html>.

4 RESURRECTION

"We undoubtedly believe, since it was impossible that the sorrows of death should retain in bondage the Author of life, that our Lord Jesus crucified, dead, and buried, who descended into hell, did rise again for our justification, and the destruction of him who was the author of death and brought life again to us who were subject to death and its bondage. We know that his resurrection was confirmed by the testimony of his enemies, and by the resurrection of the dead, whose sepulchres did open, and they did rise and appear to many within the city of Jerusalem. It was also confirmed by the testimony of his angels, and by the senses and judgement of his apostles and of others, who had conversation, and did eat and drink with him after his resurrection. (Reference 1, Scots Confession, 3.10)

1. The bodies of men, after death, return to dust, and see corruption; but their souls (which neither die nor sleep), having an immortal subsistence, immediately return to God who gave them.

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The souls of the righteous, being then made perfect in holiness, are received into the highest heavens, where they behold the face of God in light and glory, waiting for the full redemption of their bodies; and the souls of the wicked are cast into hell, where they remain in torments and utter darkness, reserved to the judgment of the great day. ... 2. At the last day, such as are found alive shall not die, but be changed; and all the dead shall be raised up with the selfsame bodies and none other, although with different qualities, which shall be united again to their souls forever. 3. The bodies of the unjust shall, by the power of Christ, be raised to dishonor; the bodies of the just, by his Spirit, unto honor, and be made conformable to his own glorious body. (Reference 2, Westminster Confession of Faith (WCF), 6.162-6.164)

And the Larger Catechism of Westminster Confession of Faith asks in Question 87:

"What are we to believe concerning the resurrection?

Answer: We are to believe, that at the last day there shall be a general resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust: When they that are then found alive shall in a moment be changed; the selfsame bodies of the dead which

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were laid in the grave, being then again united to their souls forever, shall be raised up by the power of Christ. The bodies of the just, by the Spirit of Christ, and by virtue of His resurrection as their head, shall be raised in power, spiritual, incorruptible, and made like to His glorious body; and the bodies of the wicked shall be raised up in dishonor by Him, as an offended judge." (Reference 3, WCF, Larger Catechism, 87)

These citations provide a view of a future that the mind struggles to grasp, for nothing in space-time existence, the world of bodies, things, and events, prepares one for the reality of a resurrection of the dead, and life after physical death.

Even so, the Bible records the reality of resurrections.

Obviously, resurrections of the dead are miraculous events for which no theory or explanation by naturalistic-science is available. And it is doubtful that science will ever consider, on the basis of their naturalistic worldview, the probability or possibility of a resurrection. It is simply ignored, written off as some stupid superstition that small, timid minds have invented for their own comfort when confronted with the reality of death which, inarguably, is a space-time reality as any visit to a local cemetery attests. At best, according to naturalism, this fiction, i.e., the resurrection of the

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dead, functions as a *noble lie*, enabling one to live daily life in false hope, knowing that at some point it will end.

Some critics of the Bible have claimed that the reality of the resurrection of the dead is only a New Testament teaching invented by the Apostles when their beloved teacher Jesus was crucified. But, such is wrong on two counts.

First, the resurrection of Jesus Christ was not invented by the Apostles. Indeed, one apostle would not believe it even when others whom he knew and trusted testified that He had risen. Thomas said, "I will not believe." (John 20:25) He needed "proof," the proof provided by his senses: "Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side."

It should be kept in mind that the Jews (not all) believed in a final resurrection. Among those doctrines that divided the Pharisees and the Sadducees the final resurrection of the dead played a major role. Paul makes explicit this fact in the face of Jewish leadership who sought to silence him.

"But when Paul perceived that the one part were Sadducees, and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the council, Men and brethren, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee: of the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question."

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(Acts 23:6)

For the Sadducees the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead, as the Bible declares, was a false doctrine for which position there is no evidence they ever recanted. Thus, this doctrine was not an invention of the Apostles.

Job, for example, thought it not at all strange that though worms destroyed his body, yet he would see his redeemer: "whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me." (Job 19:25-27) What does such an expectation envision but the resurrection of the body after death?

Second, the Old Testament records miraculous raptures that signal or suggest resurrection-like events, if not outright returns from the dead.

Enoch who lived three hundred and sixty five years walked with God. "And Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him." (Genesis 5:23-24) Apparently, there were no witnesses. Only the Holy Spirit testifies to this profound truth. The writer of Hebrews says that Enoch was "translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God." (Hebrews 11:5; see also 11:35)

Elijah's resurrection-like event had one witness, his servant Elisha. Despite repeated efforts by Elijah for

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his servant to remain at a certain location while he (Elijah) hastened to yet another place, Elisha refused to stay put: "As the Lord liveth, and thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. (2 Kings 2:1-11.) Elisha was told by the prophets at Jericho that Elijah would be taken by God. (vs. 5) He knew and was determined to witness Elijah's departure; and he did: "And it came to pass, as they still went on, and talked, that, behold, there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven." (vs. 11)

Jonah's return from death to life, not in heaven but to the sands of a beach most surely had convinced him of God's miraculous power. Even in the belly of the fish, which was his grave, he cried out: "Salvation is of the Lord." (Jonah 2:9b)

"And said, I cried by reason of mine affliction unto the LORD, and he heard me; out of the belly of hell cried I, and thou heardest my voice."

"3. For thou hadst cast me into the deep, in the midst of the seas; and the floods compassed me about: all thy billows and thy waves passed over me. 4. Then I said, I am cast out of thy sight; yet I will look again toward thy holy temple. 10. And the Lord spake unto the fish, and it vomited out Jonah upon the dry land." (Jonah 2)

The New Testament records resurrections of the dead.

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The son of a widow, her only son, was restored to life by Jesus who had compassion on the widow and her loss. In Luke, we read:

"12. Now when he came nigh to the gate of the city, behold, there was a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow: and much people of the city was with her. 13. And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her, and said unto her, Weep not. 14. And he came and touched the bier: and they that bare him stood still. And he said, Young man, I say unto thee, Arise. And he that was dead sat up, and began to speak. And he delivered him to his mother. (Luke 7)

Perhaps the most stunning of the many resurrections recorded in the New Testament is the resurrection of Lazarus of Bethany. There was no question that Lazarus had been sick and as a result died. His body had been entombed as was the custom of the Jews. In fact, when Jesus ordered that the stone that covered the cave of his grave be removed, Lazarus' sister, Martha, protested saying, "Lord, by this time he stinketh: for he hath been dead four days." (John 11:39b)

"41. Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead was laid. And Jesus lifted up his eyes and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me. 42. And I knew that thou

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hearest me always: but because of the people which stand by I said, that they may believe that thou has sent me. 43. And when he had thus spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth. 44. And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with grave clothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go." (John 11)

At the transfiguration of Jesus Christ, a most astonishing event, three of the disciples were witnesses. Not only was the body of Jesus transformed before three witnesses, Peter, James, and John, but the disciples saw the persons of Moses and Elijah (Elias) with Jesus as they spoke with Jesus about his coming crucifixion. What adds amazement upon amazement is that the disciples recognized the identities of Jesus' transfiguration companions: Moses and Elias. These two were alive though dead.

"2. And after six days Jesus taketh with him Peter, and James, and John, and leaded them up into an high mountain apart by themselves: and he was transfigured before them. 3. and his raiment became shining, exceeding white as snow; so as no fuller on earth can white them. 4. And there appeared unto them Elias with Moses: and they were talking with Jesus. 5. And Peter answered and said to Jesus, Master, it is good for

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us to be here: and let us make three tabernacles; one for thee and one for Moses, and one for Elias. 7. And there was a cloud that overshadowed them: and a voice came out of the cloud saying, This is my beloved Son: hear him." (Mark 9)

The resurrection of Jesus Christ was the occasion for the resurrection of not a few saints, strange as it may be, for we are not told who they were, where they went, who they saw, and to whom they testified. The record is clear, however, that these resurrected souls testified to many in Jerusalem at that time:

"50. Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost. 52. And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, 53. And came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many." (Matthew 27)

The Apostle Paul's testimony concerning the resurrection of Jesus records that five hundred or more, many still alive as he spoke, were witnesses to Jesus' resurrection.

"3. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; 4. and that he was

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buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the Scriptures: 5. And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve: 6. After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep." (1 Corinthians 15; see also 7-8)

In short, the Bible records the reality of resurrections of the dead. Moreover, the creeds of the church affirm the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead. Christ died, was buried, and rose from the dead for our justification:

"4. This office the lord Jesus did most willingly undertake: which, that he might discharge, he was made under the law, and did perfectly fulfill it; endured most grievous torments immediately in his soul, and most painful sufferings in his body; was crucified, and died; was buried, and remained under the power of death, yet saw no corruption. On the third day he arose from the dead, with the same body in which he suffered; with which also he ascended into heaven, and there sitteth at the right hand of his Father, making intercession; and shall return to judge men and angels, at the end of the world." (Reference 6, WCF, 6.046)

According to Paul, the preaching of the resurrection

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of the dead and in particular the resurrection of Jesus Christ is the foundation for the preaching of the Christian faith. Paul's apagogical discourse for the truth of the resurrection concludes that if the resurrection of the dead is denied, then "Christ is not risen." What is more repugnant is that Paul and others who preach Christ are false witnesses of God.

"12. Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead? 13. But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen: 14. And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. 15. Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ: who he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not. 16. For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: 17. And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins." (1 Corinthians 15)

Therefore, the Bible provides numerous events in which the resurrection of the dead is clearly depicted and described. That Jesus arose from the dead was not in and of itself a foreign, strange, or unthinkable event alien to the religion of the Jews. The resurrection of the dead was a doctrine many Jews believed. (Reference 5)

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What then was found to be offensive and even sinful, according to Jewish religion, regarding the resurrection of Jesus Christ?

1. Jesus predicted his death and resurrection – accurately, in fulfillment of all the prophecies of the Bible concerning Him.
2. His prediction and its fulfillment were offered as proof of His deity as the God-Man sent by God.
3. Jesus was resurrected in a glorified body which demonstrated the powers of the Spirit over the natural and physical realms.
4. His resurrection provided the divine seal of approval that justified all of the claims and work of Christ regarding Himself, the redemption of God's people, and the basis for a final judgment of all the living and all the dead, including angels.

All this is most certainly true, but does it require the doctrine of the Trinity, the deity of Jesus, the incarnation of a virgin birth, a penal vicarious atonement and a crucifixion of an innocent, sinless Jesus to propitiate the wrath of God against sinners while at the same time expiating all the sins of God's people?

God is just as well as holy. God is love. God is Spirit, infinite in knowledge, wisdom, power, and truth. God is eternal God as the creeds teach and the Scriptures confirm.

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The argument stands.

If the doctrine of the Trinity is false, then Jesus is not God.

If Jesus is not God, then the doctrines of the deity of Jesus, the incarnation, the atonement, the crucifixion, and the resurrection as taught in the creeds and confessions of the church are in error and need to be re-evaluated.

Anti-trinitarians, therefore, teach that any doctrine based on the Trinity and, in particular, the deity of Jesus must be so interpreted to conform with the Shema's monotheism. No exceptions.

If these doctrines and others that depend on them are in error, the creeds and confessions of the church are mistaken and in need of revisions.

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1. The Book of Confessions, © 1966, The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the USA. The Scots Confession, 1560, X, 3.10, The Resurrection.
2. ____ The Westminster Confession of Faith, Chapter XXXII.
3. Bordwine, James E. A Guide to the Westminster Confession of Faith and Larger Catechism with Scrip-

Resurrection

ture Proofs, © J. E. Bordwine and The Trinity Foundation, Jefferson, MD, 1991.

4. Ibid. Question 87, p. 322.

5. The list of resurrections includes the following:

- i. The Widow of Zarephath's son. (1 Kings 17:17–24)
- ii. The Shunammite Woman's Son (2 Kings 4:18–37)
- iii. The Man Thrown Into Elisha's Grave (2 Kings 13:20–21)
- iv. Jairus' Daughter (Luke 8:49–56)
- v. Tabitha (Acts 9:36–43) Tabitha (Greek name, Dorcas)
- vi. Eutychus (Acts 20:7–12)

6. The Book of Confessions. The Westminster Confession of Faith, © 1966, The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the USA. Chapter VIII, 6.046.

5 ASCENSION

Q49. What benefit do we receive from Christ's ascension into heaven?

A. First that he is our Advocate in the presence of his Father in heaven. Second, that we have our flesh in heaven as a sure pledge that he as the Head, will also take us, his member, up to himself. Third, that he sends us his Spirit as a counterpledge by whose power we seek what is above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God, and not things that are on earth. (Reference 1, Heidelberg Catechism, 4.049)

Christ is truly ascended into Heaven. We believe that our Lord Jesus Christ, in his same flesh, ascended above all visible heavens into the highest heaven, that is, the dwelling place of God and the blessed ones, at the right hand of God the Father. Although it signifies an equal participation in glory and majesty, it is also taken to be a certain place about which the Lord, speaking in

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the Gospel, says: "I go to prepare a place for you" (John 14:2). The apostle Peter also says: "Heaven must receive Christ until the time of restoring all things" (Acts 3:21). And from heaven the same Christ will return in judgment, when wickedness will then be at its greatest in the world and when the Antichrist, having corrupted true religion, will fill up all things with superstition and impiety and will cruelly waste the Church with bloodshed and flames (Daniel, Chapter 11). But Christ will come again to claim his own, and by his coming to destroy the Antichrist, and to judge the living and the dead (Acts 17:31). For the dead will rise again (1 Thessalonians 4:14ff.), and those who on that day (which is unknown to all creatures [Mark 13:32]) will be alive will be changed "in the twinkling of an eye," and all the faithful will be caught up to meet Christ in the air, so that then they may enter with him into the blessed dwelling-places to live forever (1 Corinthians 15:51f). But the unbelievers and ungodly will descend with the devils into hell to burn forever and never to be redeemed from torments (Matthew 25:46). (Reference 2, The Second Helvetic Confession, 5.074)

The ascension of Jesus Christ to the right hand of the throne of God some forty days after His res-

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urrection is described also in the Westminster Confession of Faith in Question and Answer 52 of the Larger Catechism.

There the resurrection of Jesus is attributed to "his own power, whereby he declared Himself to be the Son of God, to have satisfied divine justice, to have vanquished death, and him that had the power of it, and to be Lord of the quick and dead." Christ was exalted in His ascension, according to answers to questions 53 and 54.

1. After His resurrection, He appeared and conversed with His Apostles about matters pertaining to the Kingdom.
2. He gave the command to preach the Gospel to all nations.
3. The proof that He had triumphed over His and our enemies was provided by His visible ascent to the highest heavens.
4. There at the right hand of God, He "receives gifts for men," and prepares, "a place for us where Himself is, and continues until His second coming at the end of the world." Then comes the eternal state with Jesus in the presence of God forever.

These descriptions of the meaning of the ascension are in harmony and at the same time confirm His post-resurrection appearances for which no apologetic is

Ascension

provided either by the creeds of the church, or the Scriptures. (Reference 3, Westminster Large Catechism, pp. 313-314)

Consider these examples.

The appearances to the women.

"5. And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified. 6. He is not here: for he is risen, as he said. ... 7. And go quickly, and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead; ... 9. And as they went to tell his disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, All hail. And they came and held him by the feet, and worshipped him." (Matthew 28)

The appearances of Jesus to His disciples.

"16. Then the eleven disciples went away to Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them. 17. And when they saw him, they worshipped him: but some doubted." (Matthew 28)

"26. And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them: then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you. 27. Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing.

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28. And Thomas answered and said unto him: My Lord and my God. ... 30. And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: 31. But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life through his name." (John 20)

The appearances to the disciples on the road to Emmaus.

"13. And, behold, two of them went that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was from Jerusalem about threescore furlongs. 15. And it came to pass, that, while they communed together and reasoned, Jesus himself drew near, and went with them. 16. But their eyes were holden that they should not know him. ... 30. And it came to pass, as he sat at meat with them, he took bread, and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them. 31. And their eyes were opened, and they knew him; and he vanished out of their sight." (Luke 24; Read 32-53)

The eyewitness accounts of His ascension.

"9. And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up, and a cloud received him out of their sight. 10. And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel;

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11. Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven." (Acts 1)

These post resurrection appearances of Jesus Christ are among the most baffling and gripping demonstrations of the powers of His resurrected, glorified body.

In these appearances and others, it is evident that the laws of physics, chemistry, biology, and other natural sciences were not abolished, but superseded by the Spirit of God: the physical dimensions of existence subject to the spiritual dimension of existence, not in conflict but in subordination to supernatural power. The creeds of the church confirmed by Scripture leave no room to doubt the ascension of Jesus into heaven.

Jesus appeared to his disciples out of nowhere, into closed rooms, on public roads, by the sea; he spoke with his disciples; he asked them to see and feel the wound in his side and the nail holes in his hands; he ate food; he was embraced; he was worshipped; he encouraged his disciples with all the evidences of power to convince even an unbelieving Thomas of the reality of His resurrection from the dead. Then came His ascension -- visible to men and angels.

The Scriptures clearly support the creeds and confes-

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sions regarding the ascension of Jesus Christ. Nevertheless, anti-trinitarians question whether this requires the reality of the Trinity wherein Jesus is co-equal and co-eternal with the Father and Spirit. God is eternal. Anti-trinitarians, however, insist that there was a time when Jesus was not. "Jesus had a beginning; he was created" is their constant refrain.

Nontrinitarians and Trinitarians believe the ascension of Jesus to the right hand of the throne of God is a foretaste of the believer's eternal state. In due course upon His second coming and the final judgment, Christ will vindicate not only the power of the One God, but the power of the Triune One Eternal God. This, nontrinitarians will not accept. That the power of the One Eternal God will be vindicated is confirmed by both the creeds of the church and Scripture. However, according to nontrinitarians, it is the power of the One Eternal God, not a trinity of Gods to which every knee will bow.

Nontrinitarians reject the Trinity without due consideration of the implications of their rejection: the rejection of Truth.

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1. The Book of Confessions. Reprinted from The Heidelberg Catechism, 1563-1963, 400th Anniversary Edi-

Ascension

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2. _____ The Second Helvetic Confession, Reprinted from Reformed Confessions of the 16 Century by Arthur C Cochrane. © MCMLXVI (1966), W. Jenkins, The Westminster Press, © 1962. United Church Press. Office of the General Assembly of the United Presbyterian Church in USA, New York, NY: 1966, 1967.

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6 EPILOGUE

"John 1:1. In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2. The same was in the beginning with God. 3. All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made. 4. In him was life; and the life was the light of men. 5. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not."

The Path named Destruction

This project could be framed as a thought-experiment: What are the logical implications of an axiom that declares the doctrine of the Trinity as described in the various creeds of the church is mistaken? This exercise led step by step, doctrine by doctrine to this conclusion:

"It is vital that we understand that Jesus Christ is nothing less, and no one less, than God Himself. If Jesus Christ is anyone less than God Himself, we have no Savior from sin. If Jesus Christ is anyone less than God Himself, we have no hope of

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a future resurrection. If Jesus Christ is anyone less than God Himself, then the Bible's promise of eternal life to the believer is the greatest fraud and falsehood the world has ever known." (Reference 1, Elliott, p. 1)

In this article, Paul Elliott asserts that if Jesus Christ is not God, then we have no Savior from sin. If Jesus Christ is not God, the promises of eternal life to the believer of the Gospel of Jesus Christ is "the greatest fraud and falsehood the world has ever known."

The Apostle Paul arrived at the same conclusion, citing only one of the various New Testament doctrines related to the doctrine of the Trinity: the doctrine of the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

"13. But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen: 14. And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. 15. Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ: whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not. ... 17. And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. ... 19. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable." (1 Corinthians 15)

Thus if the doctrine of the Trinity is assumed to be false, as many nontrinitarians believe and argue, then

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Jesus is not God. That is to say, Jesus had a beginning. There was a time when Jesus was not. Jesus is a creature made in the image of God as any creature born in Adam.

If Jesus is not deity, co-equal, co-eternal God, then the miraculous incarnation of Jesus birth conceived by the Holy Spirit in the womb of a virgin, was not only not necessary, but of little or no theological significance. To insist on the miracle of a supernatural incarnation as a Christian doctrine is not required of the birth of someone who has a beginning, a creature. If the doctrine of the Incarnation is robbed of miraculous significance, and the doctrine of the Atonement demands, according to the creeds, a divine person, i.e., a person of infinite value, to propitiate the wrath of a Holy God against sinners, and to expiate sinners' sins, then the doctrine of the atonement offers nothing more than a profound example of God's love for his creation.

The assumption of the non-deity of Jesus also casts doubt on the significance of the crucifixion as proclaimed by the creeds wherein the cross represents the accomplishment of a penal, substitutionary, vicarious sacrifice of the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

On these premises and conclusions, the burial and miraculous resurrection of the body of Jesus may have

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no more significance than the numerous other resurrections recorded in Scripture: the return from death to life of a creature for a period of time.

As to the doctrine of the ascension, the creeds make no qualification for it on the basis of deity, according to nontrinitarians. They may appeal to evidence that others have ascended to heaven, perhaps not as dramatically observed by witnesses as recorded in the New Testament concerning Jesus, but an ascension, *per se*, does not require the deification of anyone who goes to heaven.

In due course, a day of judgment awaits all of creation for the creature must and will render an account of life on earth, and the angels also. God will punish the guilty, and reward the believer in the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

God is Spirit, infinite, eternal, immutable in his being, wisdom, power, holiness and justice, goodness and truth; God is omniscient, and omnipotent. (WCF, SC, Question 4) He is the Sovereign God, according to the creeds and affirmed by the Scriptures. Christianity requires belief in One God, revealed in the persons of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit wherein epistemological truth is searched for and found.

Therefore, if one assumes that the doctrine of the Trinity is false, Christianity as described in the creeds of the church, according to anti-trinitarians, is a fraud

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and believers are the most miserable of all creatures.

Of course, one could begin with the denial of any of the doctrines mentioned and discover that in process of apagogic reasoning many, if not all, of the other doctrines suffer a similar fate. It is essential to bear always in mind that Christianity is a system of interwoven beliefs such that the denial of one entails the rejection of other doctrines. (Reference 2, Westminster Confession of Faith)

It is important to keep in mind that Christianity is a system of truths (doctrines) not a system of emotions or feelings. It is intellectual from beginning to end for it involves knowledge, knowledge of one's sinful condition, knowledge of the remedy provided by God in Jesus Christ, knowledge of God (theology), knowledge of heaven and hell. How one feels about this is irrelevant. Faith, saving faith, is not a feeling, not an emotion or a good experience; it is belief in the Gospel that consists of true propositions about God's plan of redemption for sinners bound for hell. Saving faith is a gift from God, not something I generate from myself; it is the work (regeneration) of the Holy Spirit that causes me to believe the gospel. I contribute nothing to my salvation for I am dead in trespasses and sins.

"With the exception of the formal principle of the Reformation, namely, the truth of Scriptures, the basis of the Christian faith is the doctrine of

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the Trinity. Nothing is more fundamental. The Atonement, which is always central in our preaching, gains significance only from the Person who made atonement. Divergent views concerning that Person and his relation to the Father completely alter one's view of the nature and value of his work on Calvary." (Reference 3, Trinity, p. 20)

The doctrine of the Trinity is true, not because the creeds of the church affirm this truth, but because the Word of God so testifies about the Son of God. The argument that the word Trinity is not in the Scripture is itself a creed of non-trinitarians in support of their unbelief in the deity of Jesus Christ. This unbelief is recorded in the Bible. All such are on the road to apostasy – the wide road to destruction.

"Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat." (Matthew 7:13)

Gordon Clark stated that Christianity is what the Bible teaches. (Reference 4, Clark, p. 83)

"Instead of a series of disconnected propositions, truth will be a rational system, a logically ordered series, somewhat like geometry with its theorems and axioms, its implications and pre-suppositions. ... Christianity is a comprehensive

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view of all things: it takes the world, both material and spiritual, to be an ordered system." (Reference 4, Clark, pp. 24-25)

Christianity, as a rational system of truths, places "emphasis on the systematic unity of all truths, and the supposition that a particular truth derives its meaning or significance from the system as a whole does not imply that a man must know everything in order to know anything." (Reference 4, Clark, p. 25)

In other words, Christianity is self consistent.

In short, if Jesus is not God, the system known as Christianity, a system of revealed truths or doctrines collapses and one is left with nothing but speculations, baseless hopes.

God is infinite Spirit, one God, and to speak of Him as One is to think and talk of Him ontologically. "In Him we live, and move and have our being." (Acts 17:28) To understand God's revelation of Himself is to think and talk epistemologically: God as God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. (See Appendix B.)

Jesus Christ is God and the deity of the Son assures the believer that all of the doctrines related to creation, redemption, glorification are without doubt revealed truths of God, given by Him for our comprehension, and leading to belief and the gift of salvation. God is the God of Truth.

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Jesus Christ is the way, the truth, and the life. (John 14:6)

If the doctrine of the Trinity is false, then Jesus is not God.

Jesus is the truth.

Truth is Eternal.

Therefore, Jesus is Eternal.

Therefore, Jesus is God.*

"But Jesus Christ is, as the old theologians used to put it, 'very God of very God.' God Himself. Nothing, and no one less than that. He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. He is the only Savior from sin and eternal judgment in the fires of Hell. He is our hope and guarantee of a future glorious resurrection. He is the One who is preparing an eternal dwelling place for His people. He Himself is the hope and promise of eternal life for every believer. And it is all because He is, as Paul says it here, the image of the invisible God, the firstborn' – the eternally pre-eminent One – 'over all creation.' "(Reference 5, Elliot, p. 1)

*Similarly,

1. God is the God of truth. (Deuteronomy 32:4; Psalm

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31:5; Isaiah 65:16; Colossians 1:6; Romans 2:2, 15:8)

2. Jesus said: I am the truth. (John 4:24, 14:6; 1 John 4:6; Titus 1:2) He also said: "I and my Father are one." (John 10:30, 17:11 & 22; 1 Corinthians 8:6)

3. If He who is truth is God, and Jesus is truth, then Jesus is God. (Barbara) John 10:30: "I and my father are one." The Trinity and Monotheism meet.

(If the argument's propositions are structured as AAA-2, then that form of the argument is obviously invalid: Undistributed Middle Term.)

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2. Bordwine, James E. A Guide to The Westminster Standards. ©J. E. Bordwine & The Trinity Foundation, Jefferson, MD: 1991, p. 5)

"V. We may be moved and induced by the testimony of the Church to an high and reverent esteem of the Holy Scripture. And the heavenliness of the matter, the efficacy of the doctrine, the majesty of the style, the consent of all the parts, the scope of the whole (which is to give glory to God), the full discovery it makes of the

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only way of man's salvation, the many other incomparable excellencies, and the entire perfection thereof, are argument whereby it does abundantly evidence itself to be the Word of God."

3. Clark, Gordon H. *The Trinity*, © The Trinity Foundation, Jefferson, MD: 1985.
4. _____. *A Christian View of Men and Things*, © The Trinity Foundation, Jefferson, MD: 1991.
5. *Ibid.*, Elliott.

7 FINAL THOUGHTS

"John 1:14. And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth.

Colossians 2:9. For in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily."

Although there are other arguments in support of the doctrine of the Trinity, those opposed invariably construct counter-arguments as they declare all argument in support of the Trinity invalid or in error at some point. Monotheism alone, not Monotheism/Trinity, is the essence of Christianity, according to anti-trinitarians. The claim that every Christian doctrine flows out of the reality of a trinitarian Godhead is rejected as false – a heresy.

The doctrine of God and our Christian belief consists of the ontological reality of One God, expressed in the realities of three Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Not only is this what the Scriptures reveal (and neces-

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sarily so) but it is likewise perfectly suited for epistemological inquiry. Monotheism is revealed in the Trinity of three Persons and is appropriate for epistemological investigations leading to comprehension of the revelation of God, His creation, His plan for the redemption of sinners, and the glorification of believers transformed to the image of the Son of God.

"Romans 11:33. O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!"

The doctrine of the Trinity is not something that must be proven or established by argument, but a doctrine to be believed. Our One God is past finding out. The Trinity however, and as it happens, is God making Himself accessible to human inquiry through three consubstantial, co-eternal, co-equal Persons appropriate and necessary for thinking God's thoughts after Him. God is not the god of confusion; He is the God of Truth.

"Hebrews 11:3. Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear."

1 Peter 1:19. But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: 20. Who verily was foreordained before the

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foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you, 21. Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God."

God is infinite Spirit, One God: Monotheism. Understanding God's revelation of Himself and His plan for redeeming sinners necessitates the three realities of the Trinity. Every Christian doctrine, from the doctrine of creation to the doctrine of the eternal state, is grounded in the sovereign decrees of One God through the work of the Trinity.

God is not the origin or source of confusion:

"For God is not the author of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints." (1 Corinthians 14:33)

The doctrines of creation, fall, incarnation, atonement, calvary, death and burial, resurrection, ascension, second coming, judgment day, and eternal state are decreed by God. Moreover, they are implemented and accomplished by the Trinity of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. This is God's redemption plan, not man's.

To repeat. Christians are not commanded to prove, or asked to approve of God's plan of redemption. Every doctrine of God's plan is a decreed reality that we are to believe, not confirmed by any means other than the Scriptures. Saving faith is belief in the understood

Final Thoughts

propositions of Scripture. We are saved by faith alone, in the Scriptures alone, by grace alone, through faith in Christ alone: *Sola Fide; Sola Scriptura; Sola Gratia, and Solus Christus*.

In short, every doctrine of God's redemption of sinners both presupposes and requires belief in the deity of the Son and the Holy Spirit as revealed in the Holy Scriptures. Moreover, the Son is God-man for that is what the truth of all the doctrines of God for redemption of sinners require – nothing less.

"God cannot die" is most certainly true; however, the incarnate God-man can and did on Calvary's cross. This God-man reality, Jesus, is the reality (the things of Christ) that the indwelling Holy Spirit, sent by Father and Son shows to every believer.

"John 16:13. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. 14. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you. 15. All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you."

Belief is a gift of God. (Ephesians 2:8)

Christians live by faith, "the just shall live by faith" (Romans 1:17b); are justified by faith, "a man is justified by

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faith" (Romans 3:28, 5:1); walk by faith, "walk by faith, not by sight" (2 Corinthians 5:7); and are saved through faith, "by grace are ye saved through faith" (Ephesians 2:8).

Christians are sanctified by the Holy Spirit.

"John 17:17. Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth. 21. That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou has sent me."

Christ alone saves; there is no other name by which man is saved.

"Acts 4:12. Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."

Soli Deo Gloria!

*Hear the Lord all ye
who claim,
Who shout and crave
for all that's fame.
"I, the Potter, the I AM
Alone,
You? the clay in flesh
& bone."*

GLOSSARY

Adoptionism: Teaches that God chose Jesus and adopted Him because of His sinless life (Dynamic Monarchianism).

Anti-trinitarian: Opposed to the doctrine of the Trinity. (See nontrinitarian)

Apagogic: Proving indirectly by showing the absurdity or impossibility of the contrary; disproving the proposition that contradicts the one to be established.

Apostasy: Abandonment of previous religious faith; defection; a defiance of an established authority or system.

Argument: A series of connected reasons in support of a position or a conclusion.

Arianism: The view that Jesus is a finite created being not eternal, not divine in and of himself; created by God; Arius denied the deity of Jesus holding that Jesus was created by God as the first act of creation.

Ascension: The literal, bodily return to heaven of Jesus Christ signaled the end of Jesus earthly ministry,

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the success of His earthly work; His exultation by the Father; indicated the beginning of His new work as High Priest and Mediator of the New Covenant.

Atonement: Penal Substitution Theory; atonement of Christ was a vicarious, substitutionary sacrifice that satisfied the demands of God's justice upon sin; Christ's sacrifice paid the penalty of believer's sin, brought forgiveness, imputing righteousness and reconciling him to God.

Axiom: First principle or premise such that it need not and cannot be demonstrated; the basis for all argument and demonstration.

Contradiction: Refers to the opposition between two propositions which cannot both be false together and cannot both be true together.

Creed: A set of fundamental beliefs.

Deity: Divine status, quality, or nature; god; supreme being; one exalted and revered as supremely good and powerful.

Destiny: An ultimate event or end, the predestined eternal state as decreed by the Sovereign God.

Docetism: Jesus Christ only seemed to have a human body; denies Jesus' full humanity.

Doctrine: Teaching imparted by an authoritative source; instruction in righteousness; profitable for reproof, for correction, to help one understand the will

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of God for one's life.

Epistemology: The study of how we know what is claimed to be known, theory of knowledge.

Gospel: The good news; revealed truth that Christ died for sins of the elect according to the Scriptures; He was buried, and He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures; propositions about these historical events with consequences and implication for all creatures and creation.

Image of God: Innate logic, truth, knowledge, meaning, understanding, and reason from God, with God as the absolute, ultimate, sole frame of reference for all thought and life; apriori or innate equipment for learning.

Implication: The relation between two propositions in virtue of which one is logically deducible from the other.

Incarnation: Means "the act of being made flesh"; Jesus the Son of God took on human flesh affirming His humanity.

Law of Excluded Middle: States that everything must either be or not be; a or not-a; symbolized as: (a v a').

Law of Identity: States: if any proposition is true, then it is true; symbolized: a < a.

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Law of Noncontradiction: States that the same attribute cannot at the same time belong and not belong to the same subject and in the same respect: symbolized: *not both a and not-a*; or (aa)'.

Life: God breathed existence; the spiritual gift of contingent being from the origin, source, and sustainer of all life: God.

Man: A knowing, thinking, judging creature in the image of God; a mind (nous).

Meaning: The message that is intended, expressed, or signified; the idea intended in the denotation or connotation of a term, phrase, or sentence; a proposition.

Mind: The gift of the spiritual dimension of life consisting of intellectual life of thought and reason originally meant to guide the will and control the emotion of a person created in the image of God.

Modalism: Views God as one Person instead of three Persons and believes that the Father, Son, and Spirit are different modes or forms of the same divine Person. Modalistic view holds Jesus was God as one of God's manifestations

Modus Ponens: Valid formal argument form; "a way of construction:" symbolically: "If p, then q; p; therefore, q."

Modus Tollens: Valid formal argument form; "a way

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of destroying;" symbolically: "If p, then q; not-q; therefore, not-p."

Monarchianism: Views the single rule or unity of God to the point that denies God's triune nature. Dynamic (adoptionism) view holds that Jesus is not God but at baptism was empowered to perform miracles.

Monotheism: The belief in one true God who is the only creator, sustainer, and judge of all creation. A philosophical manner of speaking about God – ontologically.

Nihilism: The belief that there is no value, no meaning in the universe; no value in being itself.

Nontrinitarianism: The theological view that rejects the doctrine of the Trinity: God revealed through three Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, co-eternal and co-equal, sharing one nature in perfect unity.

Oneness: Teaches that there is only one God, denies the tri-unity of God; Jesus Only movement views Jesus as the Father and Jesus as the Spirit which are different modes of manifestations of God.

Ontology: Theory of reality; the metaphysical study of the nature of being and existence.

Patipassianism: The teaching that God the Father suffered on the cross, or as the Son was crucified.

Penal Substitutionary Death: Refers to Jesus Christ

Glossary

dying as a substitute for sinners; Christ took the punishment upon Himself in our place, substituted Himself for us and for what we rightly deserved – death and eternal death.

Person: Following Clark: A person is a congeries, a system, a collection, a complex of thoughts or propositions, for a man is what he thinks. (The Trinity, p. 106; Incarnation, pp. 54, 64). A unique, composite set of propositions.

Polytheism: The belief that there are many gods.

Proposition: The meaning expressed by a declarative sentence; a form of words in which the predicate is affirmed or denied of the subject; either true or false meanings.

Reason: The ability to grasp necessary inference of logical argument.

Reference Point: (or point of reference): An indicator that orients the relation between the spoken and written word or phrase and its denotation or connotation by which denotative (objects) and connotative (properties) meanings are defined.

Regeneration: An instantaneous and immediate enabling of belief (faith) of the truth of God's gift of the Good News.

Resurrection: A doctrine of beliefs concerning the return to life of the dead; the condition of having been

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restored to life.

Right Hand of God: In prophecy, refers to the Messiah to whom is given power and authority to subdue His enemies; the truth that Jesus Christ is of equal position, honor, power and authority with God.

Sabellianism: The oneness of God as opposed to God's triunity is taught; God manifests Himself as the Father at creation, as the Son in redemption, and as the Spirit in sanctification.

Shema: The Hebrew word for "hear": "The LORD our God is one Lord." (Deuteronomy 6:4)

Sin: Any want of conformity unto or transgression of the Law of God; lawlessness.

Socinianism: The view that Jesus was merely human; trinity rejected for Unitarianism; son of God did not exist until Jesus' birth; rejects the propitiatory view of the atonement for the example theory of the atonement; Jesus' sacrifice incites us to abandon our sins.

Sola Scriptura: Means that Scripture alone is authoritative for the faith and practice of the Christian; the rallying cry of the Protestant Reformation.

Sovereign: Greatest in status, in authority, in power, and in knowledge; ultimate; supreme; superior; and autonomous for all thought and life.

Subordinationism: To think of a lower rank or a subservient position; two types: economic and ontological;

Glossary

economic subordination refers to what God does; ontological subordination refer to who God is.

System: An organized set of doctrines or principles forming a unified coherent whole.

Theorem: A proposition deduced from an axiom and/or other theorems.

Trinitarianism: The teaching that God is Triune, that He has revealed Himself to be three co-equal, co-eternal persons. A philosophical way of speaking about God – epistemologically.

Trinity: One God existing in three Persons; three co-existent, co-equal, co-eternal Persons who are God.

Truth: All that Sovereign God declares, reveals, commands, decrees, and wills according to His good pleasure in the propositions of His Holy Word to the Glory of God including all valid deductions from these biblical propositions. That which God Himself is.

Ultimate: Basic, fundamental, final, definitive, supreme, underlying all reality.

Virgin Birth: Jesus' birth was the result of the Holy Spirit working within Mary's body; God performed the miracle of incarnation; the virgin birth circumvented the transmission of the sin of Adam, allowing the eternal God the Son to be perfect man.

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*How grand the scheme
That knows no dream,
Caresses one's
perception.
To live a lie, until you
die,
To wake to Hell's de-
ception.*

APPENDIX A: SCRIPTURALISM

2 Timothy 3:16. "All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for training in righteousness, 17. that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work."

[Condensed from Essays on Worldview Epistemology. © E. Carranza. An Inky Publication, Chapter 3, pp. 23-34. 2021]

Scripturalism can be thought of as the system of truth deduced from Scriptures alone. In other words, its axiom is The Bible is the word of God from which one deduces Scripturalism, the biblical worldview or frame of reference.

Definition

In the Trinity Review, "How Does Man Know God?" Gordon H. Clark states that the first principle for the Christian worldview is *Sola Scriptura*.^{*} "Let the Christian axiom be the truth of the Scriptures." (Clark, Reference 1, p. 3)

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Shawn Lazar wrote concerning this first principle, "Axiom: The Bible is the word of God without error, true in all it teaches, affirms, or implies." With this definition, he demonstrates in a convincing fashion how Scripturalism passes the tests of reason, the test of skepticism, the test of explanatory power, and the test for hard common sense. (Reference 2, pp. 19-61) These worldview tests incorporate Ronald Nash's tests of reason, outer experience, inner experience, and practice. (Reference 3, pp. 26-28)

1. The test of Reason.

By this test, Nash means logic's law of noncontradiction.

"The presence of logical contradiction is always a sign of error. ... A conceptual system is in obvious trouble if it fails to hang together logically." (Nash, Reference, 3, p. 26)

2. The test of Outer Experience.

If there is conflict with what is known about our experience of space-time reality, then objection is not improper.

"The human experience that functions as a test of worldview beliefs includes our experience of the world outside of us. ... No worldview deserves respect if it ignores or is inconsistent with human experience." (Nash, Reference, 3, pp. 26-

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27)

3. The test of Inner Experience.

Similarly, that which does not fit or agree with what we know about our inner experience, merits a right and even an obligation to reject that which ignores the inner world.

"Worldviews also need to fit what we know about ourselves. ... Worldviews that cannot do justice to an internalized moral obligation or to the guilt we sense when we disobey such duties ... are clearly defective when compared with the biblical worldview." (Nash, Reference, 3, pp. 27-28)

4. The test of Practice.

Does a worldview fail the practical test of consistency or harmony with what is professed by a worldview?

"It is one thing for a worldview to pass certain theoretical tests (reason and experience); it is another for the worldview to pass a practical test, namely, can people who profess that worldview live consistently in harmony with the system they profess? Or do we find that they are forced to live according to beliefs borrowed from a competing system?" (Nash, Reference 3, p. 28)

According to Nash, many people are unaware that they own a worldview. Nevertheless, ignorance does not

Appendix A: Scripturalism

cancel this fact: all people operate with a worldview frame of reference. If all operate with a frame of reference, an important question to ask is who (or what) is the ultimate reference point. Is it the creature or the Creator?

Adam's Folly

Adam's folly was to frame thought and life with reference to himself as the ultimate reference determinant. With his self-referenced presuppositions as axioms, the creature's attempt to displace the Creator as the epistemological starting point began, and continues to this day. Thus, two major worldview reference sources divide humanity: God's, as the ultimate reality, and the creature's self.

Cogito

Most people go through life quite ignorant of the notion of worldviews, including the presuppositions of their own worldview. Though some do develop an awareness that everyone has a worldview, it is normally a given to consider their own exempt from the need for serious study or analysis. On the other hand, if some reflection leads to the need for self-analysis, many will believe their own worldview to be the only true one. They assume that their perceptions of reality are the sanest, most real, most rational, in fact, the only way of viewing and judging everything. Thus, autonomy of self retains its hold as the implicit frame of reference,

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and becomes the willing victim of a self-serving worldview.

Scripturalism Defined

John Robbins defined Scripturalism, the Christian Worldview, as follows:

"Scripturalism is the logically consistent application of Christian -- that is, Scriptural -- ideas to all fields of thought. Sola Scriptura means 'an uncompromising devotion to Scripture alone. All our thoughts -- there are no exceptions -- are to be brought into conformity with Scripture, for all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are contained in Scripture'." (Robbins, Reference 4, Pt. I, p. 2; Crampton, Reference 5, pp. 52, 72f, 91)

Scripturalism as the epistemological frame of reference is what the entire Bible teaches about God who is the prime reality of creation and before creation. Scripturalism does not combine secular and Christian notions. It divides philosophically into four categories:

1. Epistemology: Propositional Revelation (The Bible is to be believed because it is God's divine, inerrant revelation to man.)
2. Soteriology: Faith Alone (Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved.)
3. Metaphysics: Theism (In Him we live, move and

Appendix A: Scripturalism

have our being.)

4. Ethics: Divine Law (We ought to obey God rather than men.)

Epistemology is the study of theory of knowledge. It is the key component of Scripturalism. Gordon Clark asked:

"How can we know anything? The answer to this question, technically called the theory of epistemology, controls all subject matter claiming to be intelligible or cognitive." (Clark, Reference 1, p. 1)

The Scripture reveals knowledge of God and His creation in true propositions. In Scripture alone, God reveals His plan of redemption, the way of salvation leading to ultimate glorification. The Bible sets forth the ultimate basis for moral obligations and duty to God, others, and society. Christ Jesus, the *logos* of God, is the Light that shines in every mind. Christ is meaning itself. Man is not born *tabula rasa* as some allege. The *logos* is the logic or wisdom of God that lights every mind as innate equipment.

Only the Christian Worldview reveals the truth of our hopeless state and the way of escape. It declares that we come into this world according to a purpose and design of Almighty God. No creature is born by accident or a product of chance. Birth and death are fixed times. Each individual's life history is a predetermined

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journey that includes agent choices governed by a worldview. Because man possesses innate knowledge of God and creation as givens but suppresses it, man is accountable to the Judge of all creation.

Scripturalism's Either/Or

Human destiny is either hell or heaven. This is the biblically true worldview of man's destiny. The world's wisdom may offer a variety of worldviews; however, all except Scripturalism lead to death – physical and eternal. The biblical disjunction is life in heaven or death in hell. The options are mutually exclusive. The Christian worldview, expounded in Scripture, declares redemption to be the gracious offer from a gracious God who, through Christ's Atonement, offers eternal life to those who believe the Gospel.

The testimony of the failure of an anti-God worldview is near at hand, within reach of the living. A visit to any cemetery will do in most cases. There, the important questions easily come to mind without prodding, without argumentation or debate, without the uncertainty of questions of an afterlife. The cemetery, however, while providing a menu for ultimate questions offers no answers. The graves are silent. The conscience continues restless, not silenced.

Christians live in this world but are not of the world. Their view of men and things is that which is revealed in Scripture that which is declared by the Creator of

Appendix A: Scripturalism

the universe in true propositions.

When we are born from above, we receive a renewed frame of reference of true presuppositions about creation and the creature's past, present, and future. Moreover, the Christian Worldview, its source being the Scripture alone, not only reveals truth about space-time creation, but true knowledge throughout eternity. Truth is eternal.

Robbins provides this summary of Scripturalism:

"Scripturalism – Christianity – is a whole view of things thought out together. It engages non-Christian philosophies on every field of intellectual endeavor. It furnishes a coherent theory of knowledge, an infallible salvation, a refutation of science, a theory of the world, a coherent and practical system of ethics, and the principles required for political liberty and justice. No other philosophy does." (Robbins, Reference 4, Pt. 2, p. 4; Crampton, References 5, p. 91)

"The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever." (Isaiah 40:8)

*Scripturalism: 2 Samuel 7:28; Psalms 119:160; Proverbs 30:52; Matthew 5:18; John 17:17; 2 Timothy 3:16; Titus 1:2 2; Hebrews 6:18; Peter 1:20-21.

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4. Robbins John W. "An Introduction to Gordon H. Clark. Parts 1 & 2" The Trinity Review, Nos. 101/102, July/August, 1993.
5. Crampton, G. W. The Scripturalism of Gordon H. Clark. Unicoi, TN: The Trinity Foundation. 1999.

*Seek ye joy on earth
below?
Here death's embrace
is all we know.
Seek rather, heaven
above all sight,
There all paths glow
bright in Light.*

APPENDIX B: TALK ABOUT GOD

Westminster Confession of Faith, Shorter Catechism

Q. 4. What is God?

A. God is Spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable, in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth.

Q. 94. What is Baptism?

A. Baptism is a sacrament, wherein the washing with water, in the name of the Father, and the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, doth signify and seal our ingrafting into Christ, and partaking of the benefits of the covenant of grace, and our engagement to be the Lord's. (Reference 1, The Book of Confessions.)

Christianity is both monotheistic and trinitarian in doctrine. Both doctrines are wedded together in the creeds of the Church. (Reference 2) The Athanasian Creed expresses this union as Unity in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity. An ancient expressed this somewhat perplexing language as not being able to dwell on the

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unity of the Godhead without almost immediately having to think of the trinity of the Godhead. The reverse was just as true: to think of the trinity of the Godhead drew him to think of the unity of the Godhead.

One could ask: Why is such the case?

There is no question that the Old Testament majors in monotheism. The Shema captures this emphasis: "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord." (Deuteronomy 6:4) The New Testament does not deny monotheism, but unfolds from it the revelation of God the Father by God the Son through the power the Spirit of God. Perhaps no single passage in the New Testament captures the triunity of this identity more succinctly than the great commission: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." (Matthew 28:19) One name, God; three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

This construct has caused consternation and has been the source of much debate, disagreement, research, writing and publishing, and even acrimonious conflict which has pitted one party against another without hope of resolution. Trinitarians are monotheists. However not all monotheists reciprocate, but are staunchly anti-trinitarian or nontrinitarian claiming that the word "trinity" is not in the Bible and that nowhere in Scripture is the doctrine taught or even mentioned. Even the

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logical deduction of the doctrine of the trinity, as with other Christian doctrines, is not allowed by nontrinitarian monotheists.

The Westminster Confession declares logic to be a God-ordained grace for the more complete comprehension of revealed truth.

"6.006: The whole counsel of God, concerning all things necessary for his own glory, man's salvation, faith, and life, is either expressly set down in Scripture, or by good and necessary consequence may be deduced from Scripture: unto which nothing at any time is to be added, whether by new revelations of the Spirit or traditions of men. Nevertheless we acknowledge the inward illumination of the Spirit of God to be necessary for the saving understanding of such things as are revealed in the Word." (Reference 3, Westminster Confession of Faith)

The Bible alone is the Word of God. The Bible is the axiom from which hundreds and no doubt thousands of theorems can be deduced by logic and the illumination of the Holy Spirit. Revealed truth is progressive. Revelation unfolds more and more for truth is eternal. God is the God of Truth. What then of the ongoing controversy among scholars, teachers, and preachers? Should Christianity be based solely on the Old Testament's truth of monotheism, or should it also teach

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and preach the Gospel in the one name: the Father + the Son + the Holy Spirit as commanded in Matthew 28:19.

To formulate this theological conundrum as a case of arithmetic gone wrong heaps ridicule on Trinitarians, as if what they require is a course in remedial arithmetic. How can $1 + 1 + 1 = 1$, when the truth is that addition yields 3? And how can 3 be 1, as if $3 = 1$? Anyone who thinks that Trinitarians believe their doctrine rests on faulty arithmetic or calculations needs to re-think their presumptions carefully, for Biblical truth does not rest on faulty arithmetic or even true mathematical calculations. It is true, of course, that we have come to a more complete understanding of our universe through mathematics to such an extent that mathematicians and scientists consider this fact something close to a miracle. However, the truth of the trinity in unity and unity in trinity requires not the discovery of a superior, supernatural mathematics, but rather something less difficult, more accessible to human minds. Truth.

The Scripture contains many difficult to understand doctrines other than the doctrine of the trinity. The doctrine of the deity of Jesus Christ presents a most strange combination of categories: how could the infinite become finite and yet retain the former? And what of the doctrine of the incarnation of Jesus Christ? How can God, who is Spirit, be born, live, and

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die in a material body? The body of Jesus itself was not the product of human sexual union, for the Holy Spirit "overshadowed" Mary. Whatever that *overshadowing* of Mary means is a mystery as well. The atonement of Jesus Christ as a penal, substitutionary, vicarious sacrifice of his life for the lives of sinful, evil, guilty sinners boggles the mind. Is God holy and just? How can God punish His sinless, obedient, holy, dear Son with the suffering, death and horror of the cross? Is not God love? How can a loving, just, holy God punish an innocent one for the guilt of the real criminals and evildoers? The list of questions grows with each doctrine, and the answers are not obvious to thinking minds. To top it all, there is the resurrection of a corpse, as if to argue that all that preceded was theologically necessary to accomplish yet another mystery, the doctrine of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Without a resurrection, there is no ascension doctrine that has Jesus ruling the universe at the right hand of the throne of God, there until all his enemies are brought to defeat. This is what the creeds teach as biblical truth to which is added the doctrine of the Trinity: One God expressed and revealed in three persons.

Of course there is more and deeper mystery for when one asks, What is God? the answer of the creeds is that God is Spirit. But what is Spirit? And how can we come to know infinite Spirit? These are two questions that, although related, require separate treatment for a better

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understanding of Christianity as a system of true doctrines. Christians do not need a remedial course in arithmetic, or a new math, or genius IQ, or the mastery of Greek and Hebrew languages, or an expensive education in philosophy and theology for believing the doctrines of the faith. God saw fit to reveal His truth to ordinary human beings and bring them to belief and saving faith. We may note well:

"At that time Jesus answered and said, I think thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes." (Matthew 11: 25; see also Luke 10:21)

While the truth of God is set forth and available for all, without exception, young, old, rich, poor, student, teacher, of low estate or high, learned or not, nevertheless, its understanding requires the indwelling work of the Holy Ghost, the third person of the holy trinity. It is the Spirit of Truth that takes the things of Christ and shows them to the human mind. As Jesus said, "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said to you." (John 14:26) The believer is sanctified through the truth: Christ prayed: "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth." (John 17:17) Here Jesus the Son, prays to His God the Father, for the sanctification of the believer by God the Holy Spirit.

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Clearly then, what is needed is to learn how to think, pray to, and talk about God who is Spirit, one Spirit not two or three, who is infinite, eternal, immutable in his wisdom, being, power, justice, goodness, and truth. The Christian believer is not called upon to resolve the profoundly mysterious doctrines of the faith, but to believe them -- for they are truth revealed.

In short, we Christians need to learn how to think and talk about God.

This comes to mind: To think and speak of God as One Spirit is to talk about God ontologically; to speak or think about God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is to talk about God epistemologically. (Reference 4)

Consider the following, not as a solution to trinitarian controversy but as a way to reduce needless or useless debate:

1. Frame the monotheism position as essentially an ontological inquiry about the One God's nature as undivided and simple infinite Spirit or Mind.
2. Frame the trinitarian doctrine as primarily an epistemological inquiry geared to an understanding of and knowledge about the One God in terms of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit as distinct but inseparable. Thus, to think of one is to think of the One God -- for though distinct persons, the three are inseparable. To think of One God, we are drawn to the work of three inseparable persons; and to think of a distinct person

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is to think of the One God -- who is one Spirit or Mind.

The former (One God) requires God-referenced thinking; the latter (the Persons) requires man-referenced thinking (confirmed by the Scriptures) for it is man who seeks to know truth. Thus, ontological inquiry concerning the what-ness of God requires God-referenced thinking, not man-referenced thought. Epistemological inquiry necessitates man-referenced thought, for man seeks knowledge, true knowledge about the One God.

Of course, framing the controversy within the boundaries of two related but distinct frames of reference does not eliminate the mystery surrounding the doctrine of the Trinity, but it may serve to focus on the logical necessity for the Trinity in acquiring knowledge about God and God's plan of redemption. (Reference 5)

Ontology and epistemology are two branches of the discipline of philosophy that includes the study of logic, ethics, aesthetics and much more. Ontology is the study of Being, the what-ness, of something. Thus, the what-ness of God is Spirit according to the Westminster Confession of Faith, one Spirit, one unity, one God. Now, if someone inquires, how do we come to know something of this what-ness, or how can a human come to comprehend this One Spirit in order to

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learn how to relate to and understand the significance for life of this One Spirit, such inquiry launches one into an epistemological investigation of God the Spirit. Ontology leads to the what-ness of oneness; epistemology leads to the knowledge made comprehensible by the doctrine of the Trinity: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Epistemology is the study of the theory of knowledge. To talk about God epistemologically is to articulate how one may come to understand God or to know God. Man seeks true, justified beliefs about God.

To talk about God ontologically is to articulate how one can believe God, that God exists as the Infinite Sovereign, Absolute, Ultimate, Just, Holy, Omniscient, Omnipotent, Gracious, Loving source of all life, knowledge, values, and truth. Recall. God is Spirit — One Spirit, not two or three spirits.

Thus to talk about God epistemologically is to express how one can comprehend that One Spirit, His Creation, His Plan of Redemption, and His Perfections through the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, the three persons of the Trinity. [See Figure 1 Chart, God Talk at end of this appendix.]

To confuse or conflate ontology and epistemology by using the categories appropriate to one branch of philosophy to investigate the other branch, i.e., to make

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use of or apply the categories of ontology to epistemological inquiry produces misunderstanding or perplexity and at worse, nonsense.

Does this "solve" the mysteries of any of the doctrines of God as witnessed in the Scriptures? Of course not. God is infinite being. Christians are not called on to solve any mystery found in the Bible; we are called to believe, to apprehend the Scriptures, to exercise faith in what God has revealed, for God is the God of Truth. Epistemological comprehension, yet another miracle, is the work of the indwelling Holy Spirit who takes the deep things of God and Christ and shows them to believers. Understanding is based on belief, on faith alone, a faith that saves.

Ontology, biblical ontology, emphasized in the Old Testament is the basis for epistemology, the theory of knowledge about God and Christ and the Spirit more fully revealed in the New Testament. The Trinity of the Godhead, both rests and springs forth in the New Testament from the Old Testament teaching: The Lord our God is One.

To know God is to believe that He is.

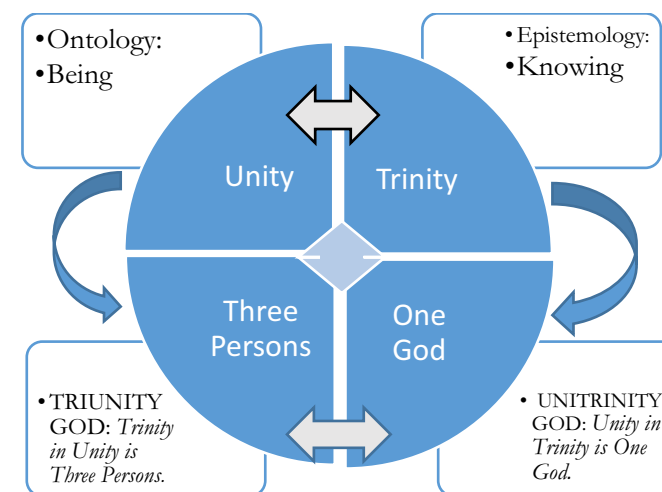
"Hebrews 11:3. Through faith, we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear. 6. But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to

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God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."

Amen.

Figure 1 Chart: God Talk



Gregory of Nazianzus: "I cannot think on the one without quickly being encircled by the splendor of the three; nor can I discern the three without being straightway carried back to the one."

References

1. The Book of Confessions. WCF: The Shorter Catechism, © The General Assembly of the United Presbyterian Church in the USA. New York: 1967.

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2. Athanasian Creed:

"And the catholic faith is this, that we worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity; Neither confounding the Persons, nor dividing the Substance. For there is one Person of the Father, another of the Son, and another of the Holy Ghost. But the Godhead of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost is all one: the glory equal, the majesty coeternal. Such as the Father is, such is the Son, and such is the Holy Ghost. The Father uncreated, the Son uncreated, and the Holy Ghost uncreated. The Father incomprehensible, the Son incomprehensible, and the Holy Ghost incomprehensible. The Father eternal, the Son eternal, and the Holy Ghost eternal. And yet they are not three Eternals, but one Eternal. As there are not three Uncreated nor three Incomprehensibles, but one Uncreated and one Incomprehensible. So likewise the Father is almighty, the Son almighty, and the Holy Ghost almighty. And yet they are not three Almightyies, but one Almighty. So the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Ghost is God. And yet they are not three Gods, but one God. So likewise the Father is Lord, the Son Lord, and the Holy Ghost Lord. And yet not three Lords, but one Lord. For like as we are compelled by the Christian verity to acknowledge every Person by Himself to be God

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and Lord, So are we forbidden by the catholic religion to say, There be three Gods, or three Lords." (<https://bookofconcord.org/three-universal-or-ecumenical-creeds/athanasian-creed/>)

3. The Book of Confessions. Westminster Confession of Faith, 6.006 (6) © The General Assembly of the United Presbyterian Church in the USA. New York: 1967.

4. "Ontology is the branch of philosophy that studies concepts such as existence, being, becoming, and reality. It includes the questions of how entities are grouped into basic categories and which of these entities exist on the most fundamental level. Ontology is sometimes referred to as the science of being and belongs to the major branch of philosophy known as metaphysics. Ontologists often try to determine what the categories or highest kinds are and how they form a system of categories that provides an encompassing classification of all entities. Commonly proposed categories include substances, properties, relations, states of affairs and events. These categories are characterized by fundamental ontological concepts, like particularity and universality, abstractness and concreteness, or possibility and necessity. Of special interest is the concept of ontological dependence, which determines whether the entities of a category exist on the most fundamental level."

Appendix B: God Talk

(<https://duckduckgo.com/?q=what+is+ontology&t=h_&ia=about&iax=about> Wikipedia.)

5. To know God requires thinking epistemologically about God, not primarily thought or talk about what God IS, ontology. Still, epistemological inquiry of the persons of the trinity may lead to discussion of the ontological status of each. If so, the what-ness of God the Father is the unbegotten one; the what-ness of the Son is the eternally begotten one; the what-ness of the Holy Spirit is the eternal one who proceeds from the Father and the Son.

APPENDIX C: CREDO

"Galatians 2:20. I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ lives in me, and the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the son of God who loved me and gave Himself for me."

PART I

Q1: According to Scripture: Who is God?

A1: God is Spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable, in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth. God is the Sovereign, Autonomous, and Immutable Creator of all and over all.

Q2: What is the significance of the Sovereignty of God?

A2: Sovereign God means that God alone is the Absolute and Ultimate Reference Point (AURP) of all meaning, all truth, all

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knowledge, and all value); God is the autonomous point of reference for all thought and life, "For in Him we live, and move, and have our being." (Acts 17.28a)

Q3: What is the significance of God being the AURP?

A3: God only is autonomous; He alone is the I am that I am. God causes and determines all things for He alone possesses all perfections.

Q4: What are God's perfections?

A4: God's perfections are his attributes: Im-mutable, Omnitemporal, Omnipresent, Om-niscient, All Powerful, All Good, being Right-eous, Holy, and Just; Supreme, the Alpha and Omega, Creator and Sustainer of all creation.

PART II

Q1: What was Adam's folly, both individually and as federal head of the human race?

A1: Against knowledge, truth, reason, and warning, Adam turned from God to self as the AURP in disobedience to God's prohibition not to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil.

Q2: What consequences flow from Adam's failure?

A2: In turning from God to self as the AURP, Adam turned from God's sovereign rule to self-rule in his thought and life, a humanly ir-reversible state of *non posse non peccare*.

Q3: Why did Adam's attempt at autonomy fail?

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A3: No created being, being mutable, can fulfill the role of the AURP.

Q4: What triggered Adam's attempt to be the AURP?

A4: Adam's attempted autonomy in self-reference to human desire rendered him a slave to the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life: not able not to sin.

Q5: How may we summarize Adam's folly?

A5: Adam capitulated to his desire for Eve, self, and autonomy.

Q6: Did God cause Adam's folly?

A6: God causes all things; God in His knowledge, power, and wisdom decreed Adam's failed attempt to be the AURP.

Q7: To what purpose did the Sovereign Creator decree Adam's folly?

A7: Three reasons: (1) To show His wrath and to make His power known God endures vessels of wrath prepared for destruction; (2) To make known the riches of His grace and glory on the vessels of mercy; (3) To establish for all that only Holy God the Creator is the AURP.

Q8: What was the basis for Adam's foolish attempt to exercise his will and declare himself independent of God's sovereign rule?

A8: Only God possesses a perfect, free, holy

Appendix C: Credo

will. God alone is immutable; man has no free will from God, but enjoys free agency related to and framed according to the mutability of creaturely existence as the Image of God as Man. The Scripture nowhere declares that Adam possessed a free will from God.

Q9: If God causes all things, why is the sinful creature responsible and accountable for what God causes?

A9: Sovereign God decrees man responsible and accountable. God is the absolute, ultimate cause of everything that happens; the mutable creature as the Image of God possesses innate knowledge and truth of God and creation and knows that the creature is accountable to his Creator.

Q10: How does one respond to the protest, "It's not fair!"

A10: God as the AURP determines all meaning, all truth, all knowledge, all value, including what is or is not fair.

Q11: Did Adam believe he could determine what is meaning and what if anything is meaningful?

A11: Adam rebelled against his Creator; he desired to replace the Sovereign God with himself as the AURP to live and rule his life according to the desires of his mutable thought and life.

Q12: Who would determine what is right or wrong for Adam if not God his Creator?

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A12: Adam deemed that he himself would determine what is right or wrong according to his desires, preferences, pleasures, and needs.

Q13: Who would determine what is truth and what is false for Adam, if not God his Creator?

A13: Adam deemed that he himself would determine what is truth, what is false as circumstances and events become known to him, and for the best course of action for his space-time dimensions of existence.

Q14: Who determines what was to be known or ought to be known for Adam, if not God his Creator?

A14: Adam, not God, would determine what is known, can be known, and ought to be known or worthy to be known.

Q15: What consequences resulted from Adam's folly in rejecting God as the AURP and thereby declaring himself sovereign in all matters pertaining to thought, life, and destiny?

A15: Adam's foolish attempt to usurp ultimate authority proved to be the disaster of man's existence: suffering, calamity, wars, murders, disasters, and death leading to hell for all except the predestined elect of God in Jesus Christ.

Part III

Q1: What is the creature's history and destiny?

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A1: Augustine described 4 stages: (1) Pre-Fall Man: Able to Not Sin; (2) Post-Fall Man: Not able to Not Sin; (3) Re-Born Man: able to Not Sin; and (4) Glorified Man: Not able to Sin. Able to Sin is in stages 1-3. The unbeliever's destiny falls in (2); the believer's in (4).

Q2: In what respect do the Elect differ from the Lost?

A2: The saved enjoy *posse non peccare* life here, *non posse peccare* (not able to sin) life in eternity; the Lost are *non posse non peccare* here and remain so in eternity.

Q3: In what respect is the believer like the unbeliever?

A3: Both believer and unbeliever share *not able not to sin* life here; at regeneration the believer receives the gift of *posse non peccare* life applied by the Spirit in the believer's sanctification.

Q4: How does regeneration differ from sanctification of the believer?

A4: Regeneration is instantaneous and immediate. Sanctification is the process of transforming the creature to the image of Jesus Christ from *non posse non peccare* state to *posse non peccare* life leading to *non posse peccare* life eternal.

Q5: How is the saved creature not able to sin in Eternity yet remaining mutable in other respects?

A5: Glorification confirms the believer to a sinless holy life in his savior Jesus Christ, even

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as the holy angels. The creature remains mutable, growing in knowledge of God and Truth, but no longer able to sin.

Q6: Is there repentance or confession of sins in hell for the unregenerate?

A6: The damned in hell do not repent and do not confess as they are under the curse of *non posse non peccare* existence forever.

Q7: In what respects will the saved creature be like his Savior?

A7: "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love him." (1 Corinthians 2:9)

Q8: Does Time cease in Eternity?

A8: Time is a property of creaturely existence; the believer, conformed to the image of Jesus Christ, will partake of all blessings, gifts, and powers necessary for *non posse peccare* life in the eternal-now.

Q9: What is the eternal-now enjoyed with Jesus Christ in eternity?

A9: The eternal-now is the spiritual dimension of life wherein time is subject to the glorified creature's capabilities even as Jesus Christ displayed to his followers after His resurrection and before His ascension to Heaven.

"For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we

Appendix C: Credo

also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself." (Philippians 3.20-21. NKJV).

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*God in Unity is one,
Begets eternal
Jesus-Son.
He died for us
ungodly lost,
In substitution,
Calvary's Cross.*

AUTHOR BOOKS

Logic Primer



The purpose of the Logic Primer with Exercises is to study necessary inference in deductive and valid arguments. The Primer divides into seven chapters. Chapter 1 defines some basic terms to enable the reader to begin the investigation of logic. Chapter 2 describes the four standard propositional forms, their formal properties, and methods for translating non-standard into standard form. Chapter 3 discusses immediate inference. Chapter 4 examines the syllogism's elements, valid moods and figures, and methods for determining validity. Chapter 5 introduces a number of additional valid argument forms and two important fallacies. Chapter 6 discusses truth-table analyses of extended arguments. Chapter 7 examines a number of informal fallacies, their classification, and the need for definition as a

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means for avoiding informal fallacies. Each chapter ends with questions for review and exercises to test the student's progress. An appendix contains answers to all of the exercises. A glossary of terms with chapter numbers in parentheses serves as an Index.

Logic Primer Workbook

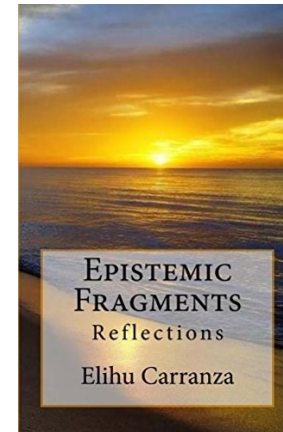


The Logic Primer workbook consists of exercises, tests, and answers that supplement the logic exercises in the Logic Primer. This workbook is intended to be an aid to students learning logic. As an examination of the Logic Primer will show, at the end of each of the chapters of the Logic Primer, the student will find exercises to evaluate understanding and progress in the study of basic logic. This workbook contains additional exercises following the pattern set forth in the Primer. As with the Logic Primer, answers for each of the exercise items are included at the end of the workbook. The workbook consists of seven chapters following the pattern of chapters of the Primer: 1-Definition, 2-Propositions, 3-Immediate Inference, 4-Syllogism, 5-Argument Forms, 6-Truth Tables, and 7-Informal Fallacies. Each chapter has four sections: (1) Introduction, (2) True/False Exercise, (3) Fill in Blanks Exercise, and (4)

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Writing Assignment on a concept covered in each section and chosen by the student. Additional material consists of Glossary, Appendices, Resources, and the Answers Key.

Epistemic Fragments



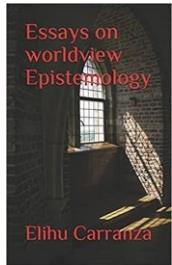
The Christian worldview holds that all humans possess God's endowment: the Image of God. Each person is created with a vast library of spiritual characteristics in profound complexity, experienced in daily thought and life. Everyone at some stage of life will ask what lies beyond the epistemic horizon.

Avoidance of ultimate questions is not a live option. Naturalism's hypotheses, theories, or models are unsatisfactory because its worldview limits knowledge to its methods and conclusions, all of which are probabilistic and subject to subsequent revision or rejection. Its closed space-time system of matter in motion plus chance, wherein all reference to the supernatural is suppressed or denied begets a reductionist frame of reference leading to nihilism. Beyond the boundaries of materialism, the supernatural beckons with a question: Who is the Absolute, Ultimate Point of Reference for

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thought and life: Man or God? Part 1 contains reflections on the endowment's Image of God: Life, Memory, Meaning, and Truth. Part 2 records thoughts on Confusion, Misology, Logic, and Destiny. Part 3 offers reflections for the faith of "unyielding hope": Gospel, Resurrection, Time, and Worldview. A Glossary, Index, Appendices, and Resources close the project.

Worldview Epistemology



Epistemology is the study of the theory of knowledge. What is knowledge about God, reality and self? This project is an exercise in applied epistemology. Worldviews provide the environment for thinking that leads to a better understanding of God and reality.

Worldview thinking may also provide the means for the person to acquire knowledge, justified true beliefs about God and reality. The exercise's focus is on understanding or comprehension; knowledge or justified true beliefs, are a secondary concern that falls more properly into metaphysics. Worldviews provide the environment for rational thought to achieve understanding about God, self, and reality. The result is an interpretation that can be apprehended or believed as justified true belief based on the authority of the Scriptures as the fountain of truth. This project is limited to comprehension; apprehension is left as a project for the

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reader. The related subjects of truth or theories of truth, including meaning, and misology may be found in the remaining essays. Readers are encouraged to seek out an approach to the order of reading these essays that seems the most appropriate. The reader may then draw whatever conclusions logically follow from the application of Ronald Nash's rules for testing worldviews. Epistemology applied in this manner allows the reader to examine his or her own worldview and to contrast or compare it to Scripturalism, if so led. A Glossary of Terms, Index, Appendices: Gospel, Logic, and Credo follow. Also included are Resources, Author Books and About the Author sections.

Buck Calhoun novellas by Tweedy Flynych:

One Murder One

One Murder Two

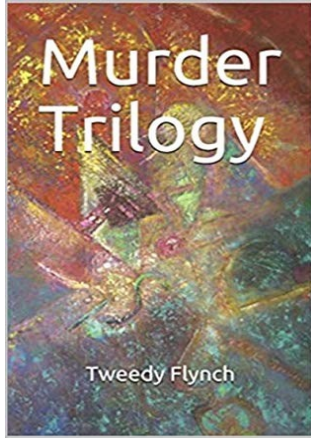
One Murder Three

Murder By Template

Murder In Therapy

Murder Trilogy

Murder Trilogy



This volume joins three murder novellas in one publication to emphasize the contrast between two worldviews: Naturalism and Christian Theism. There are worldviews other than these two; however, in America, Christian Theism has been caricatured as the enemy of naturalistic sci-

ence. Christian Theism, many claim, is at best the remnant of a religious fanaticism based on dogmas of a pre-scientific, pre-modern era. Thus, any link between the naturalism of modern science and the supernatural of Christian Theism is ridiculed, disparaged, or simply denied as unnecessary, irrelevant, or stupid. A comparison of these two worldviews, the natural and the supernatural, their presuppositions in contrast, will shed light on the belief systems of each. The reader may then judge which worldview addresses in consistent fashion the ultimate questions human being have posed about reality, life, meaning, knowledge, values, and destiny. Other subsidiary considerations played a minor role in this anthology of three books. First, the three novellas share similar titles. The theme is murder and the method emphasizes the use of logic to resolve

not so much a "who donnit?" as the formulation of a thought-experiment using logic and available evidence to reconstruct a plausible, coherent account of an event, then testing the model according to two principles: systematic consistency and smooth empirical fit. Second, the novellas are short exercises in theory building. As such, the facts of each case involve the death of an individual. The death or murder in each case is a "closed case." Nevertheless, questions, troublesome questions, remain for which some logical explanation is required by interested parties who are willing to pay for the services of a Private Investigator (PI). The job of the PI requires a complete, thorough reassessment of all the evidence, police reports, and the victim's personal data relevant to the tragic event of death. Third, the contrast of worldviews seeks to make clear that the supernatural cannot be ignored in any attempt to achieve a rational explanation that is consistent with all the known evidence of a death or murder of a human being and, in short, "make sense." Thus, the rationale for this volume of three novellas: One Murder One, One Murder Two, and One Murder Three. The reader is encouraged to exercise God's gift of logic in the evaluation not only of the two worldviews, Naturalism and Christian Theism, but to reflect on the axioms, beliefs, or presuppositions of his or her own worldview. "As a person thinks, so is he."

*One's secrets, all
known,
That day to be shown,
For all that's now
concealed,
To sight to be revealed.*

Author

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Elihu Carranza, Ph.D. Professor Emeritus, Communication Studies, San Jose State University in California taught courses in Logic, Philosophy, Humanities and Communication Studies. He was Director of the Educational Opportunity Program (EOP); Chairman of Mexican American Graduate Studies; and Associate Dean of Student Services. On official leave from the University, he served as Provost, Evergreen Valley College, San Jose, CA. Besides a B.A. in Philosophy, he earned his M.A. in Philosophy at Washington University in St. Louis. He was a Mott Fellow, Michigan State University where he earned his doctorate. He served honorably as a Seaman in the U.S. Navy, World War II, and subsequently as a Jet Fighter Pilot in the U.S. Air Force. He resides in Napa, CA.



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