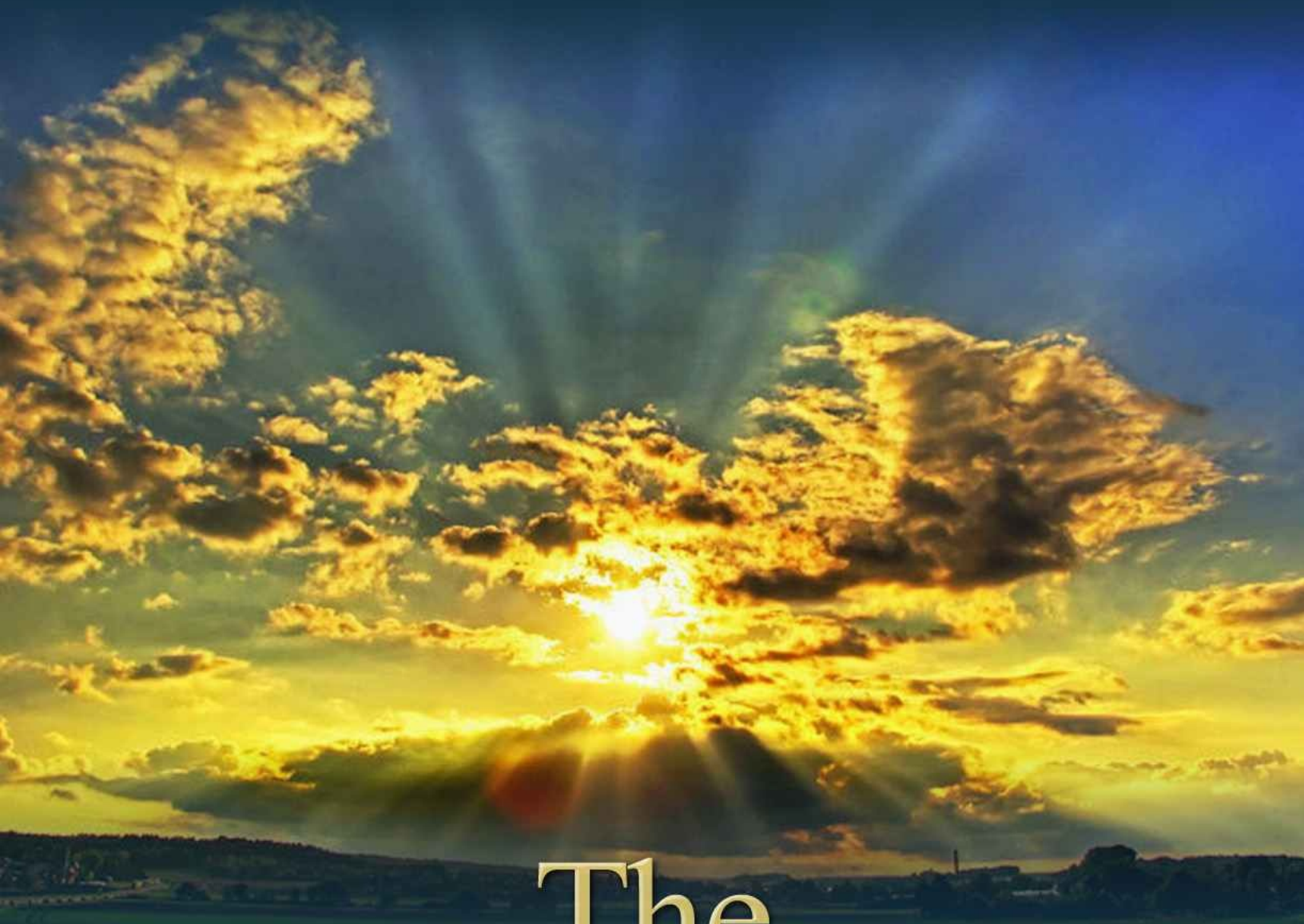
Mike Robinson



The Essential Trinity

Defending the Biblical Truth and Necessity of the Triune God

APOLOGETICS

The Essential Trinity

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Mike Robinson
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New Volumes

> Christianity has been content to defend the existence of but one God. And this God is the Trinity—three eternal persons in one divine essence, just and powerful, holy and merciful. God is personal, sovereign, and simultaneously transcendent and immanent (Edward J. Carnell).

Introduction

Recent polls reveal that a large percentage of church-goers said they do not know how to define the doctrine of the Trinity—and many do not care.

Am I surprised by the numbers? No, not really.

The reason is that, if you break it down by denomination or theology, even many Bible-believing church members lack a workable understanding of the Trinity. For modern church-goers, the numbers are quite high concerning the desire for a fun experience, entertainment, and programs within their church participation, but pretty low for doctrine.

The problem is that many modern Christians are confused. They are not yearning for essential doctrine at all. They are often seeking a wonderful experience at church devoid of the revealed truth of the Triune God.

> Too many Christians, living as functional Unitarians, fail to recognize the Trinity's relevance to their Christian faith and life. The Trinity doctrine is crucial because it reveals What and Who God is (one God in three persons), and this insight allows Christians, though in an obviously limited way, to view the inner working of God's nature and personhood (Ken Samples).

A Christian is to be devoted to a local church, but not with eyes wide-shut. If you

believe, profess, practice, and share the revealed truth of the Triune God, you are a faithful Christian. If you volunteer to minister at your congregation, you are not a super-Christian; you are a normal Christian. If you exercise your right to preach biblical truth, you are practicing the ordinary Christian life.

If you desire a deeper knowledge of the doctrine of the Trinity, justification, and basic biblical theology, you are an average *scripture-based* Christian. Inaction and ambivalence regarding the Triune God are characteristics of the non-Christian.

> I didn't need to understand the hypostatic unity of the Trinity; I just needed to turn my life over to whoever came up with redwood trees (Anne Lamott).
>
> Guard your life and doctrine *closely*. Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you (1 Timothy 4:16; italics mine).

Church leaders do not define Christianity. They are merely the guides who try to bring people closer to the Triune God. Scripture is that which defines Christianity. And scripture doesn’t advocate an entertaining religion, but it instructs Christians to embrace proper doctrine and follow Christ.

The doctrine of the Trinity has been the truth that has empowered the church for two thousand years. Along the way, the fashionable church has stumbled often and continues to do so, and sometimes the ministers lose sight of theological reality. The church’s apologists try to correct the course as they see it by writing articles and books; godly pastors lend a hand by providing a voice to emphasize the importance of Trinitarian dogma. That is upholding the faith. That is defending the truth.

Theology is about belief in God and revealed truth, and should not be dry and dusty. Nonetheless, many of the most brilliant doctrinal volumes are tedious and mind-numbing. In this volume, I aim to avoid the ebb and flow of self-centered religion in addition to imprecise doctrine. I intend to accomplish this while writing in an interesting and engaging manner. I believe that faithful doctrine can be detailed and accurate as well as interesting and thought-provoking. Those are some of my objectives for this volume.

In the meantime, selected modernists and liberals assert that the ardent love of Christians for the Triune God is the thing that must eventually be abandoned if the church is ever to find ongoing relevancy within modernity.

However, the church universal has only one foundation, which is the Triune God. And it cannot survive if it neglects its foundation. That, unfortunately, is what some church growth leaders, religious progressives, and other anti-doctrinal ministers fail to understand.

Let us press on and discover afresh the joy and wonderment of the one true God: The Father, The Son, and The Holy Spirit.

> Come near unto me, hear this; I have not spoken in secret from the beginning; from the time that it was, there I am: and now the Lord God, and His Spirit, has sent Me (Isaiah 48:16).

CHAPTER ONE

The Trinity:
Biblical Truth and Explanatory Power

> Science has gone a very long way towards proving the essential unity of all phenomena.[1]
>
> The Absolute may explain everything; it cannot explain anything in particular.[2]
>
> We really believe that the deity is tri-personal—not mono-personal, but tri-personal. The doctrine teaches that there are three persons in the one Godhead, and not one.[3]

When one reads materials produced by anti-Trinitarian cults, one notices that

their first rhetorical defense, as usual, is to attack a straw man: “Why do Christians believe in three Gods?”

Christians do not believe in more than one God? Isn’t it you, Mr. Jehovah’s Witness, who believes that God the Father is one God and Jesus is another god? That’s two gods (John 1:1 NWT).

And Mr. Mormon, wasn’t Joseph Smith’s vision of two separate gods not only anti-Trinitarian, but also polytheistic? Before, of course, you criticized the doctrine of the Trinity, thereby marginalizing yourself and exposing your illogical dogma to general ridicule (i.e., the Heavenly Father was once a sinful man who progressed into a god and men become gods as women become goddesses), and you were supporting a prophet who was caught looking into occult seer-stones.

Some go so far as to dismiss denials of the Trinity as nonissues (James White).

Is everybody eager to scrap the doctrine of the Trinity? Name a single Christian leader who has called for the *explicit* relinquishment of the doctrine of the Trinity. There aren’t many. On the other hand, quite a few churches that post Trinitarian Statements of Faith on their church websites neglect the consistent teaching of the Trinity. Numerous ministries print Trinitarian creeds in their church bulletins but rarely, if ever, proclaim the Triune God from the pulpit.

That’s not true? An exaggeration? An overstatement?

Since God is sovereign, the truth of the Trinity has not been written off. But the church must produce leaders with deep Trinitarian convictions and a passion to proclaim the truth of the Triune God.

> It is thus that the Christian church has always confessed the revelation of God as the Triune God, and accepted it as such (Herman Bavinck).

For decades within the church, the power of Trinitarian dogma has almost been hidden in doctrinal apathy. No longer. It’s now time for pastors, apologists, and leaders to consistently teach the awesome truth of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit: the one true God.

> If it is necessary in our thinking about God to move to a position beyond naturalism and supra-naturalism, this is no less important in our thinking about Christ. Otherwise, we shall be shut up... to a sterile choice between the two.[4]

> For, in the name of God, the Father and the Lord of the universe, and of our Savior Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Spirit, they receive the washing with water (Justin Martyr's *First Apology, LXI*).

The Scriptural Support

> May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all (2 Corinthians 13:14).

There are numerous Bible verses that reveal to man that God is a plurality persons in one God. This is important since there are many cults and false religions that appeal to the Bible in their attempt to deny the Trinity. The following Bible verses are some of the key passages regarding the doctrine of the Trinity (see Chapter Three for an exhaustive list of scripture verses).

> The Trinity also means that God's creation can be both one and many. Secular philosophy veers between the two extremes of monism (the world is really one & plurality is an illusion) and pluralism (the world is radically disunited and unity is an illusion). Secular philosophy moves from one extreme to the other because it does not have the resources to define a position between the two extremes, and because it seeks an absolute extreme or another-as if there must be an absolute oneness (with no plurality) or else a universe of unique, unconnected elements, creating an absolute pluralism and destroying universal oneness... But the Christian knows there is no absolute unity (devoid of plurality) or absolute plurality (devoid of unity)... The Christian knows that God is the only absolute, and that the absolute is both one and many. Thus we are freed from the task of trying to find utter unity or utter disunity... When we search for ultimate criteria or standards, we look... to the living God.[5]

Some of the tri-unity Scripture verses:

Genesis 1:26, 3:22, 11:6; Psalms 45:6-7;
Isaiah 6:8, 48:11-17; Hosea 1:7;
Zechariah 10:12, 12:10;
Matthew 28:19; 2 Corinthians. 13:14.

Simplicity and triplicity are so mutually opposed that they cannot subsist at the same time (but not simplicity and Trinity because they are said in different respects): simplicity in respect to essence, but Trinity in respect to persons. In this sense, nothing hinders God (who is one in essence) from being three persons (Francis Turretin).

Bible verses that reveal that God is one:

Deuteronomy 6:4; Isaiah 43:10, 44:6, 45:5-6, 48:3-16.

God is the Father, Son and Holy Ghost; which are not diverse names of the same person, nor distinct attributes or properties of the same nature or being, but one, another, a third, all equally that one God, yet really distinguished between themselves by such incommunicable properties as constitute the one to be that one, and the other to be that other, and the third to be that third. Thus the Trinity is not the union or unity of three, but it is a trinity in unity, or the ternary number of persons in the same essence (John Owens).

The Scriptures that reveal that the Father is God:

Matt. 6:8; John 4:23, 17:3; 1 John 2:23.

The verses of Holy Writ that teach that Jesus is God:

John 1:1, 8:58, 10:30; Hebrews 1; Isaiah 9:6, 7:14;
Colossians 1:15;
Acts 20:28.

And without controversy great is the mystery of

> godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory (1 Timothy 3:16).
>
> And Thomas answered and said unto him, “My Lord and my God” (John 20:28).
>
> Behold, he comes with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, says the Lord, who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty (Revelation 1:7-8).

This representation of the divine nature and essence is the divine nature and essence again. So that by God's thinking of the Deity, [the Deity] must certainly be generated. Hereby there is another person begotten, there is another, infinite, eternal, almighty, and most holy and the same God, the very same divine nature. And this person is the second person in the Trinity, the only begotten and dearly beloved Son of God: he is the eternal, necessary, perfect, substantial and personal idea which God hath of himself (Jonathan Edwards).

> **The Bible verses that instruct us that the Holy Spirit is God:**

The Holy Spirit is a person not merely but also very God. And Scriptures provide all the data which are necessary to make this confession. We have only to note that despite the distinction between God and His Spirit … the two frequently exchange places in Scripture, so that it is quite the same whether God or His Spirit says or does a thing. In Acts 5:3-4 the lying to the Holy Spirit is called a lying to God (Hermann Bavinck).

> Acts 10:19-20, 13:2, 21:11; 1 Corinthians 12:11; Galatians 4:6; John 15:26, 16:7; Micah 2:7; Isaiah 61:1, 63:10-11; Psalms 55:11, 139:7.
>
> Then the Spirit said unto Philip, "Go near, and join thyself

to this chariot" (Acts 8:29).

> It is very manifest that the Persons of the Trinity are not inferior one to another in glory and excellency of nature (Jonathan Edwards).

Jesus is not *heter-ousia* with the Father: a different substance or essence from the Father. But the Bible declares that Jesus is one with the Father (John 10:30). The Trinity is rational. However, I do not fully understand God's nature due to the fact that there will always remain some mystery about the being of God. Mysteries are not contradictions.

The Attacks on the Mystery of God

> For it is not we who call God by these names. We do not invent them. On the contrary, if it depended on us, we would be silent about him, try to forget him, and disown all his names. We take no delight in the knowledge of his ways. We tend continually to oppose his names: his independence, sovereignty, righteousness, and love, and resist him in all his perfections. But it is God himself who reveals all his perfections and puts his names on our lips. It is he who gives himself these names and who, despite our opposition, maintains them. It is of little use to us to deny his righteousness: every day he demonstrates this quality in history. And so it is with all his attributes. He brings them out despite us. The final goal of all his ways is that his name will shine out in all his works and be written on everyone's forehead (Rev. 22:4). For that reason we have no choice but to name him with the many names his revelation furnishes us (Herman Bavinck).

Many non-Christian religions and philosophies attack the Trinity as a contradiction. Kant declared that the Trinity "provides nothing ... even if one claims to understand it." Jefferson scoffed, "When we have done away with the incomprehensible jargon of the Trinitarian arithmetic ... we shall then be ... worthy disciples." The reason for the sardonic irritation is the unbeliever's mind is darkened and they apply the wrong arithmetic. One plus one plus one is three. Not one. But what is one multiplied by one and multiplied by one? One.

> The Presbyterian clergy are loudest; the most intolerant of all sects, the

> most tyrannical and ambitious; ready at the word of the lawgiver, if such a word could be now obtained, to put the torch to the pile, and to rekindle in this virgin hemisphere, the flames in which their oracle Calvin consumed the poor Servetus, because he could not find in his Euclid the proposition which has demonstrated that three are one and one is three, nor subscribe to that of Calvin, that magistrates have a right to exterminate all heretics to Calvinistic Creed. They pant to re-establish, by law that holy inquisition, which they can now only infuse into public opinion. We have most unwisely committed to the hierophants of our particular superstition, the direction of public opinion, that lord of the universe. We have given them stated and privileged days to collect and catechise us, opportunities of delivering their oracles to the people in mass, and of molding their minds as wax in the hollow of their hands. But in despite of their fuminations against endeavors to enlighten the general mind, to improve the reason of the people, and to encourage them in the use of it, the liberality of this State will support this institution [University of Virginia], and give fair play to the cultivation of reason (Thomas Jefferson).

The Trinity is a mystery. God is three persons in one being. God in His Almightiness is a mystery. We do not know how the doctrine of the tri-unity of God works. We just know that the Trinity is true. Reject the Trinity and essentially you cannot account for personhood, love, equality, mathematics, justice, morality, and logic. The Trinitarian nature of God is the *a priori* verity condition for understanding reality and truth. Many Christians recoil at defending the Trinity because they think it is a contradiction and a problem. It is not. It is the solution. The Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Spirit is God. And there is only one God, three persons in one being.

The doctrine of the Trinity does not break any of the laws of logic. If the doctrine taught that there are three persons in one person, or three beings in one being that would be a contradiction. The Bible teaches that there are three persons in one being. This doctrine is a mystery, not a contradiction.

> 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 Spirit. But the godhead of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, is all one: the Glory equal, the Majesty co-eternal (Athanasian Creed).

> Believe in God and his apostles and say not three (Sura 4:169).

The contemporary Jewish religion, Islam, and the Jehovah Witnesses proclaim that God is an absolute one, a monad, a unitarian deity. The famous Rabbi Rashi, in his commentary on the third day of creation, taught that before God created the universe: "He was *yachid ba' olam*: all alone." Only the Christian God, the true God, did not create out of necessity, but out of liberty. He is self-existent, He has aseity and needs nothing. God does not need the creation to have someone to care about and love. Within God Himself, He is love and love ensues. He is a Triune being who is actively involved within Himself and His creation. He is stupendous, magnificent, and resplendent in His infinite Triune glory. A god who has "needs" is not perfect and infinite. That god cannot possibly exist. It is not just reasonable to believe in the deity of Christ and the Triune nature of God, the contrary is impossible.

> Thus the connection of the Father in the Son, and the Son in the *Paraclete*, produces three coherent Persons, who are yet distinct One from Another. These Three are one essence, not one Person, as it is said, "I and my Father are One," in respect to unity of substance, not singularity of number (Tertullian on the Trinity).

> We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of all things... And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, begotten of the Father; that is, of the essence of the Father, God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God... being of one substance with the Father... And in the Holy Spirit (The Nicene Creed).

God is Trinity. He dwells within all Christians by faith, and this mystery is the key to understanding our world. The sundry religious theories about God demonstrate the ineptness of man's unaided reason. Without God's revelation in His word, all man-made religions create a god who is a divine monad or the plural pantheon of gods in polytheism. Mankind needs revelation to discover the only true and living God.

> God is self-existent, God has always been... Our Maker exists in an eternal, self-sustaining, necessary way—necessary, that is, in the sense that God does not have it in Him to go out of existence, just as we do not have it in us to live forever. We necessarily age and die,

> because it is our present nature to do that; God necessarily continues forever unchanged, because it is His eternal nature to do that. This is one of many contrasts between creature and Creator... God's self-existence is basic truth (J.I. Packer).

The One and the Many and the Trinity

> God is Triune, and all reality is structured in terms of Him. A brief definition of the Trinity might be this: One God without division in a plurality of Persons, and three Persons without confusion in a unity of essence. … God is One, and God is Three. There are not three Gods; there is only one God. Yet each of the Persons is Himself God … But there is only one God (David Chilton).

Yahweh(יהוה, YHWH) is a self-complete and self-contained unity. There is but one God. God is an absolute personality. There are three persons in the Godhead, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Within the being of God, diversity is no more fundamental than unity. God is a tri-unity. The persons of the one God are mutually eternal and exhaustive of one another.

The Holy Spirit and the Son are ontologically equal with God the Father. This is the solution to the problem of the "one and the many." We baptize in the name (singular) of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit (plurality). The unity of the particulars is grounded in the being of God. There is a unity and a diversity in God and there is a unity and diversity in the cosmos. The cosmos is called the uni-verse. It is a unity and a diversity. A unity and a diversity make up the physical reality. The cosmos has unity that is on par with the diversity because in the nature of the Triune God there are no particulars not in equal relationship with the universals. There is nothing universal that is not equally ultimate in the particulars.

God said, "Let us (plural) make man in our (plural) image (singular) and our (plural) likeness (singular)." No feature of the uni-verse is more ultimate than the other. The unity in the universe is equal with the diversity in the universe. They are equal because the Triune God created and sustains them. Non-Christian worldviews sacrifice the unity for the diversity or the diversity for the unity. God in three persons provides the solution to the problem of "the one and the many."

> The omnipresence of God guarantees that God himself extends the

> presence of language beyond my personal world. All the world conforms to God's language [He created it and has authority and rights over it], because God created it (Vern Poythress).

On Cloud Many Droplets

The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy notes: "As anyone who has flown out of a cloud knows, the boundaries of a cloud (the one) are a lot less sharp up close than they can appear on the ground. Even when it seems clearly true that there is one, sharply bounded, cloud up there; really there are thousands of water droplets (the many) that are neither determinately part of the cloud, nor determinately outside it. Consider any object that consists of the core of the cloud (unity), plus an arbitrary selection of these droplets (diversity). It will look like a cloud, and circumstances permitting rain like a cloud, and generally has as good a claim to be a cloud as any other object in that part of the sky. But we cannot say every such object is a cloud, else there would be millions of clouds where it seemed like there was one.

And what holds for clouds holds for anything whose boundaries look less clear the closer you look at it. And that includes just about every kind of object we normally think about, including humans. Although this seems to be a merely technical puzzle, even a triviality, a surprising range of proposed solutions has emerged, many of them mutually inconsistent. It is not even settled whether a solution should come from metaphysics, or from philosophy of language, or from logic" (*Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*).

> The early Greek philosophers were primarily concerned with the problem of the "One and the Many." Simply stated, the problem involves explaining the infinity of things in the universe (the many). We can see that many separate things can be related to one thing, for instance, there are millions of horses but there is only one concept of a horse. So the myriad and manifold phenomena of the universe must be reducible to a single, unifying substance or concept. The early Greeks believed that this single, unifying thing (the One) was some material substance, like water, or air (www.informationphilosopher.com/problems/one_or_many/).

The relationship between the one and the many has been a philosophical puzzle

that has loomed over all of the history of philosophy. Is our world ultimately a unity (oneness), or is it a diversity (a many)? There is diversity in our world and there is unity. What is more dominant the unity or the diversity? The problem also prompts questions like: Why does language have a unified diversity? Why does *one* paragraph contain *many* sentences? Why does *one* sentence contain *many* words? And why is a man—the one—made up of a diversity of organs—the many? And why are those organs made up of many cells? Why is the earth one planet, yet composed of many pieces and parts? This unity and diversity is found in everything within creation.

> To put it in more philosophical language, God's unity (oneness) and diversity (threeness, individuality) are equally ultimate. God is 'basically' One and 'basically' Three at the same time. And the same goes for all of creation. Both unity and diversity are important– equally important. Neither aspect of reality has priority over the other (David Chilton).

One of the difficulties for the anti-theist is that the collection of sense impressions cannot take particulars and make universals; proceeding from mere sense impressions one cannot account for unchanging universals. In the doctrine of the Trinity, God is equally one being and a plurality of Persons. Accordingly, the Triune God has the capacity to account for the one and many that is found throughout the universe.

God in Trinity as the only Starting Point

> There are three persons in the Godhead: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit and these three are one God; the same in substance, equal in power and glory (Westminster Shorter Catechism).
>
> If any doctrine makes Christianity Christian, then surely it is the doctrine of the Trinity (Kevin DeYoung).
>
> And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent (John 17:3).

The God of the Bible in Trinity is the starting point for epistemology, apologetics, and philosophy. The Triune God is reflected and revealed everywhere in the material and immaterial worlds. The Trinity "confronts"

humanity and all creation everywhere at all times. You cannot look into a microscope or a telescope or a mathematical table and fail to be confronted by the Trinity for the reason that you are gazing at an expression of the one and many. The Triune God is the foundation and the solution to the problem of the one and the many. God is the solution and not the problem. Within the being of the Triune God: unity and diversity, the one and the many are equally ultimate and infinite.

> Each of the persons of the Trinity is exhaustive of divinity of itself (Van Til).
>
> The persons of the Trinity are not divided… [They have] mutual indwelling *circumcessio* or *circumincessio* (John Frame).

We see God in His Triune nature revealed from Genesis to the book of Revelation. We must declare the truth of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, one God in three persons, the blessed Trinity. God is the Alpha and Omega, the First and the Last. We must affirm, trust, and love the true and living God. The Triune God is the solution that makes sense out of everything in the world. This is one reason the believer is to study theology.

Theology is the study of God. Many Christians confess that they dislike theology and try to avoid it. John Muether wrote in the journal *Modern Reformation*, "For many people theology is like underwear—you need it, so you are glad you have it on, but you sure hope it doesn't show."[6] But the foundation for all reality, and understanding that reality, is the Triune nature of God. The explanation of all entities, phenomenon, things, laws, and concrete objects begins with God.

All thought presupposes the true God. This does not mean that we cannot do anything without employing theological rhetoric as Gregory of Nyssa lamented in his time, "If you ask for change, someone philosophizes you on the begotten and the unbegotten. If you ask is the bath ready, someone answers the Son was created from nothing." Presupposing the Trinity, as the solution to all questions and the standard for truth, doesn't mean that we must construct a theological postulation just to perform simple mundane tasks. Yet every simple task, and every piece of routine communication presupposes the Triune God because we see a united diversity everywhere.

God's Nature Reflected in Nature

> He is before all things, and in him all things hold together (Colossians 1:17).

We have a tri-unity in the universe composed of time, space, and matter. Each aspect is comprised of its own tri-unity. In the universe these are three distinct dynamics. All three of these are also divided by three. Space is comprised of height, width, and depth—a tri-unity. All is space, yet a distinct aspect of space. Matter is comprised of solid, liquid, and gas which make up a tri-unity of matter. Time is past, present, and future. Each "time" is fully time. We can see God's Triune nature reflected in His creation.

Not only is the tri-unity of God not a contradiction and not a problem, but it is the solution to the intelligibility of our world. Without the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit as one God, we cannot account for love, motion, communication, relationships, mathematics, and every atom in the universe. God's Triune glory is reflected in His creation.

A monad god cannot be the solution for the problem of the one and the many, and this false god is not reflected in the creation. Gregory Nazianzus mused in sweet transport, "I cannot think of the One without immediately being surrounded by the radiance of the Three; nor can I discern the Three without once being carried back to the One."

> The Trinity is not a mere oneness or a mere threeness, but always three in one. So, the creation is unity in plurality, fact in law, law in fact.[3]

Eastern religions place great stress on the notion of *tat tvam asi*: thou art that. The implication of that phrase is that everything that an individual sees or experiences is you and is one. Thus this circuitously denies the laws of logic (A is A and not Non-A), yet must employ logic in that denial. Hindu dogma rejects the personal Triune God who is the only being with aseity. They posit a god who is dependent, not ultimately purely good, and is part of the cosmos. So Hinduism ultimately lacks explanatory power as per its denial of the independent entirely good God of Christianity. Furthermore, the Trinity solves the problem of the one and many, and like all non-Christian worldviews, Hinduism fails to solve this all-encompassing puzzle of the one and many.

The Puzzle of the One and the Many: Diversity in Unity

> The doctrine of the Trinity can be summarized in seven statements. (1) There is only one God. (2) The Father is God. (3) The Son is God. (4) The Holy Spirit is God. (5) The Father is not the Son. (6) The Son is the not the Holy Spirit. (7) The Holy Spirit is not the Father. All of the creedal formulations and theological jargon and philosophical apologetics have to do with safeguarding each one of these statements and doing so without denying any of the other six. When the ancient creeds employ extra-biblical terminology and demand careful theological nuance they do so not to clear up what the Bible leaves cloudy, but to defend, define, and delimit essential biblical propositions. The Athanasian Creed puts it this way: "Now this is the catholic faith: That we worship one God in trinity and the trinity in unity, neither blending their persons, nor dividing their essence. For the person of the Father is a distinct person, the person of the Son is another, and that of the Holy Spirit, still another. But the divinity of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is one, their glory equal, their majesty coeternal." The two key words here are essence and persons. When you read "essence", think "Godness." All three Persons of the Trinity share the same "Godness." One is not more God than another. None is more essentially divine than the rest. When you read "persons", think "a particular individual distinct from the others" (Kevin DeYoung).

A human being is *one* person (unity—the one), yet that person is made up of *many* parts: arms, legs, eyes, liver, heart (diversity—the many). Each part contains many cells that make up that one organ. Each specific cell contains many molecules; each individual molecule, many atoms. Living things are individual things that are made up of diverse parts.

As discussed earlier, this one book is composed of many chapters. Each chapter is made up of many paragraphs; each one paragraph is made up of many sentences; each sentence, many words; and each word is composed of many letters. The truth of the one and many is an unavoidable aspect of any book. What is more, this truth adjoins everything. A potent and coherent solution was pressed by Van Til. He proposed that the Trinity alone has the capacity to ground the unity and diversity in equal ultimacy. The one and many are coterminous, co-infinite, co-universal, coeternal within the nature of God. God is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (diversity) and is one God (unity). The equal and universal ultimacy of all things is grounded and proceeds from the Trinity.

The Triune God is where unity and particularity harmoniously and infinitely coalesce, associate, commune, and inter-adhere.

Monism, Oneness, and Illusion

> There are two problems which always exist—the need for unity and the need for diversity. Pan-everythingism gives an answer for the need of unity, but none for the needed diversity. Beginning with the impersonal, there is no meaning or significance to diversity. We can think of the old Hindu pantheism, which begins everything with om. In reality, everything ought to have ended with om on a single note, with no variance, because there is no reason for significance or variance. And even if pan-everythingism gave an answer for form, it gives no meaning for freedom. Cycles are usually introduced as though waves were being tossed up out of the sea, but this gives no final solution to any of these problems. Morals, under every form of pantheism, have no meaning as morals, for everything in pan-everythingism is finally equal (Francis Schaeffer: *He Is There and He Is Not Silent*).

> Not everyone agrees that '2 + 2 = 4' is true. Vedantic Hinduism … thinks that all plurality is an illusion, '2 + 2 = 4' is an illusory statement. On the most ultimate level of being, 1 + 1 = 1 (Vern Poythress).

The Triune God: The Downfall of Eastern Religions

If one rejects Christian theism, ultimately, one is bound to a radical diversity or a sharp and unbending unity. If everything is in the end composed of non-relating particulars, there is no place for laws and perceptual norms. This undercuts itself: one must use the laws of logic to assert that claim. In touching communication, this radical diversity cannot unify brute facts and words. This unity is required in person to person communication.

> The doctrine of the incarnation asserts that God took on flesh. The doctrine of monism asserts that out of God flesh and matter appeared, and eventually they must return to (or into) God. Monism implies that God is somehow incomplete.[4]

> What moves, what falls, what stands, what breathes, what does not breathe, what—many are its forms—this, growth together, becomes just One.[5]
>
> If ... all is one absolute reality, Brahman, why should man search for *moksha*? Logically, this pantheistic monism has a terrible defect, because, if all things are part of Brahman, the escape from *samsara* would be utterly unnecessary and meaningless.[6]

If all things are just an illusion, is the assertion that all things are just an illusion —just an illusion?

The idea that everything is one and all the diversity is an illusion is another option (Hinduism and Buddhism). To toss away all the particulars is to toss away the particular theory itself. It saws off the plank it is resting on.

This monism cannot be true for it defeats itself. If one truly believed that all is one and diversity is a mere illusion, why do Hindus and Buddhists look both ways before they cross the street? Why do they flee from a house on fire? Why do they swim away from sharks? If the monist gets hit by a bus (or consumed by fire or eaten) and all that is left of him is a big stain, this helps him meet his goal of oneness with the world. Plus he should not fear pain, since the car, fire, and shark are just illusions as is pain. In actuality, there are no particular things such as cars, fire, and sharks. Obviously this is incongruous. One would not live long if one attempted to live out monism; additionally it is rationally self-demolishing.

Gangadean Surrendra exposes some of the inconsistencies of *dukkha* and *maya*: "The classic metaphysical antinomy between change (all is flux, change, *dukkha*) and permanence (the world of plurality and change is an illusion, *maya*, unreal) either affirms uncaused events or denies change and causality altogether. If there is no permanence of being continuing from one moment to another, then each moment of being is wholly independent in arising and does not and cannot dependently co-arise. Momentariness, over and against any possible form of permanence, is a mere succession of being from non-being. One instance of being from non-being would be infinitely unintelligible. On the other hand, denying all causality by denying all change will be seen to be equally unintelligible" (*Philosophical Foundation*).

Pantheism

> The pantheistic view regards God as the omnipresent substance which all things consist, the irresistible current or force which flows through all movement and life. He is not a person who knows and loves us, for he has no existence except as he exists in things.[7]

> Filled with Brahman are the things we see,
> Filled with Brahman are things we see not,
> From out of Brahman flows all that is:
> From Brahman all—yet is still the same (Upanishads).

Hinduism asserts that the One is the true, ultimate, and final reality. The particulars in our experience are illusionary (*maya*) and unreal. The oneness of the real is all there really is. However, without a ground that places equal ultimacy on both the one and many, an individual cannot account for the particular moral laws as well as the particular and distinct laws of logic that are unified as universal in necessity and application.

Hindu thought stresses the oneness (unity) over the many (diversity). The notion that all is one is called monism and attempts to remove the Creator and creation distinction. This is linked to pantheism: the idea that all is God. If this notion is played out it requires everything to be an illusion. Furthermore, to be enlightened a person is fused into the oneness as he realizes that everything else is a mirage. This is self-nullifying inasmuch as the dogma that everything is an illusion, would thus be an illusion, hence it is erroneous.

The Precondition for Mathematics: One God in Three Persons

> Your throne is established from of old; You are from everlasting (Psalms 93:2).

The true God is Triune. A god who is a solitary person would be in unitary aloneness before he created the angles or mankind. This would mean that love, justice, communication, and relationship cannot be a necessary attribute of this god. The one tri-personal God of Scripture has these traits as part of His being

and nature.

> Great is our Lord, and mighty in power; His understanding is infinite (Psalms 147:5).
>
> How precious also are Your thoughts to me, O God! How great is the sum of them! If I should count them, they would be more in number than the sand; When I awake, I am still with You (Psalms 139:17-18).

Christ sustains and holds all things together (Hebrews 1). This is the basic reason that mathematical truth applies to the physical sciences and physics. Christ lays the foundation so that rational mankind can trust and utilize mathematics and physics. The diverse parts (diversity of particular things—the many) and specific applications of mathematics agree (unity—the one) with one another because of the tri-unity of God. Without God, one could not study mathematics, in principle, because it is a study of the unity and the diversity in our world. The eternal and infinite God is the absolute verity condition that makes mathematics possible.

Allah is the best of deceivers (Sura 3:54).

Allah leads astray whomsoever He wills (Sura 14:4).

In important ways, the proper use of mathematics and of logic requires morality. Disclaim Yahweh and His moral law and there is no obligation to affirm that two plus two equals four, and that “A” cannot be “A” and “non-A” at the same time, in the same way; (remember the Qur’an states that Allah deceives). “Must” I affirm mathematical or logical truth? If so, I must provide objective unchanging moral grounds for the obligation. And that requires an unchanging God who does not deceive. For two plus three not to be four, anywhere at any time, requires a universal truth; which presupposes an all-knowing God (who supplies the moral law). Yahweh’s law commands all men to tell the truth and forbids lying based on His truthful/non-deceptive nature; not so with Allah. This is the reason we “ought” to affirm two plus three equals five.

> They do blaspheme who say: “God is Christ the son of Mary.” They do blaspheme who say: “God is one of three in a trinity: for there is no God except one God Allah” (Sura 5:72-73).

Various Muslims will not believe or perhaps acknowledge that they believe that Allah lacks real attributes and that Allah can lie and deceive. If your converser denies these Islamic fallacies, read them the verses from the Qur'an, accentuate them a little, and then concentrate on disproving the rigid unitarian concept of Allah as you press the law and the gospel on their minds. And always know that men cannot change the hard hearts of the lost, but the Holy Spirit is an expert at doing such, and He does so every day.

> The proper study of the Christian is the Godhead. The highest science, the loftiest speculation, the mightiest philosophy, which can engage the attention of a child of God, is the name, the nature, the person, the doings, and the existence of the great God which he calls his Father. There is something exceedingly improving to the mind in a contemplation of the Divinity. It is a subject so vast, that all our thoughts are lost in its immensity; so deep, that our pride is drowned in its infinity. Other subjects we can comprehend and grapple with; in them we feel a kind of self-content, and go on our way with the thought, "Behold I am wise." But when we come to this master science, finding that our plumbline cannot sound its depth, and that our eagle eye cannot see its height, we turn away with the thought "I am but of yesterday and know nothing" (Charles Spurgeon).

God Is Love

> Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails... For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known. And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love (1 Corinthians 13:4-13).
>
> In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world that we might live through him (1 John 4:9).
>
> God is love (1 John 4:18).

What is love? Is it a warm touch, a sentimental gift to a relative? If yes, one can ask the question: when your loved one is too busy to hug or kiss you, does he now not love you? All men know real love transcends the material world. This demonstrates that the eternal individual-person-god of the unitarianism fails to be an eternal and changeless source of love since he lacked another person to love until he created the angels. This implies that this god needed something (the angels). The true God needs nothing and is self-contained. On the other hand God is love. Love springs from the Triune Lord. God's inter-personal, reciprocal, and communal love for one another is the eternal fountainhead of enduring love.

We are created in the image of God, thus we have love, give love, and seek love. The single monad deity is not the author or foundation of eternal and infinite love; hence unitarian theology cannot account for eternal unchanging love.

> I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me (John 17:20-21).
>
> We may learn by the Word of God that the Godhead or the Divine nature and essence does subsist in love (Jonathan Edwards).

The teaching of scripture reveals that there is eternal love and personal relationship within the Godhead. This occurs eternally because of perichoretis or cicumincession: the distinct persons in the Godhead have mutual interpenetration and indwelling. The three persons are distinct but not independent. The Father loves the Son and the Son the Spirit from everlasting to everlasting. This is the source and ground of fixed personhood, love, relationships, communication, and covenants. God's being is an eternal indwelling communion of perfect love among three distinct persons who mutually inhere in one another in Trinity. The three persons are the "same in substance, equal in power and glory" as God has always existed as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit: one God in three eternal and perfect persons. This involves the doctrine of perichoresis.

Perichoresis describes the eternal and perpetual mutual co-loving, self-giving, and mutual indwelling within the divine godhead of the persons (the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) of the Trinity. It accentuates the truth that each person of the

Godhead indwells the other divine persons at the center of the one being of God. Each divine person is distinct but each member of the Trinity is not a completely independent person inasmuch as God's unity has as much ontic sway as God's tri-personal diversity.

Within the being of God there is a divine oneness that is within his reciprocal indwelling (perichoresis). The very life and activity of God is a tri-personal interchange of ontic necessity and eternality that is inter-loving, intercommunicative, and self-giving; one infinite person indwelling the infinite life of the coequal divine persons.

Perichoresis streams from the ontological reality of the Trinity, nonetheless it has moral and epistemic actualities too. All human experience has the Triune God as the wellspring forasmuch as without the Triune God human experience would be impossible (it would not have a ground for knowledge, ethics, communication, and love).

> It must be supposed that God perpetually and eternally has a most perfect idea of Himself, as it were an exact image and representation of Himself ever before Him and in actual view, and from hence arises a most pure and perfect act or energy in the Godhead, which is the Divine love, complacence and joy. The knowledge or view which God has of Himself must necessarily be conceived to be something distinct from His mere direct existence. There must be something that answers to our reflection. The reflection as we reflect on our own minds carries something of imperfection in it. However, if God beholds Himself so as thence to have delight and joy in Himself He must become his own object. There must be a duplicity. There is God and the idea of God, if it be proper to call a conception of that that is purely spiritual an idea (Jonathan Edwards).

The Triune God Must Exist

> According to these fanatics, imposition of Islamic government is the morally and religiously right solution. Religious tolerance and political pluralism make no sense… A biblical worldview promotes religious and political tolerance (Vern Poythress).

A uni-solitary god would depend on men and angels to fulfill some inner-lacking. This unitarian god would lack love, communication, pluralism, and

equality in his essential nature and being. Without the attributes of love and fellowship, he cannot even be a personal being. If this mono-solitary god needed to create angels, jinn, or men to give and receive love that would imply that this god depends on his creation. This is not God at all.

Love, fellowship, equality, and personhood are essential to God's being. The biblical God has these attributes as essential to His being. God is God, and He does not depend on His creation for anything. Without people and cherubim, God would still love and have fellowship, and not lack anything. Francis Schaeffer rightly summed up the solution that the Trinity provides:

> The Nicene Creed--three persons, one God... Whether you realize it or not that catapulted the Nicene Creed right into our century and its discussion: three Persons in existence, loving each other, and in communication with each other, before all else was. If this was not so, we would have had a God who needed the universe as much as the universe needed God. But God did not need to create; God does not need the universe as the universe needs Him. Why? God is a full and true Trinity. The Persons of the Trinity communicated with each other before the creation of the world. This is not only an answer to the acute philosophic need of unity in diversity, but of personal unity and diversity. The unity and diversity cannot exist before God or behind God because whatever is farthest back is God... The unity and diversity are in God Himself - three persons, yet one God... this is not the best answer; it is the only answer. Nobody else, no philosophy, has ever given an answer for unity and diversity... Every philosophy has this problem, and no philosophy has an answer. Christianity does have an answer in the Trinity. The only answer to what exists is that He, the starting-place, is there.[7]

The true and living God is the personal necessity for knowledge, and the understanding of all human experiences, including the problem of the one and the many. Universal and certain claims are inescapable. The Christian God provides the preconditions for universal and certain claims.

> For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:6).

The Glory of Christ

Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him, even they who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him. Even so, Amen. “I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End,” says the Lord “who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty” (Revelation 1:7-8).

> Jesus of Nazareth, without money and arms, conquered more millions than Alexander, Caesar, Mahomet, and Napoleon; without science and learning, He shed more light on things human and divine than all philosophers and schools combined; without the eloquence of schools, He spoke words of life such as never were spoken before or since, and produced effects which lie beyond the reach of any orator or poet; without writing a single line, He has set more pens in motion, and furnished themes for more sermons, orations, discussions, learned volumes, works of art and sweet songs of praise, than the whole army of great men of ancient and modern times. Born in a manger, and crucified as a malefactor, He now controls the destinies of the civilized world, and rules a spiritual empire which embraces one-third of the inhabitants of the globe. There never was in this world a life so unpretending, modest, and lowly in its outward form and condition, and yet producing such extraordinary effects upon all ages, nations, and classes of men. The annals of history produce no other example of such complete and astonishing success in spite of the absence of those material, social, literary, and artistic powers and influences which are indispensable to success for a mere man (Philip Schaff).

But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name (John 1:12).

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen (2 Corinthians 13:14).

CHAPTER NOTES

1. Julian Huxley, *Religion without Revelation*.
2. Walter Kaufmann, *Critique of Religion and Philosophy*.
3. John Gerstner, *Theology in Dialogue*.
4. John A.T. Robinson, *Honest to God*.
5. John M. Frame, *Apologetics to the Glory of God*.
6. John Muether, *So Great a Salvation* (Phil., PA: Modern Reformation, Vol. 10, Nu. 3. May/June 2001), p. 8.
7. Francis Schaeffer, *Trilogy: He is There And He Is Not Silent* .

CHAPTER TWO

The Early Church Fathers and the Trinity

> The dogma of the Trinity always has been the Church's crucial line of defense against the Judaic and Islamic charge that Christianity palpably was not a monotheistic religion.[1]

Outside of the New Testament, some of the most ancient documents concerning Christianity are form the Apostolic Fathers. Several of these writers were close disciples of Christ's apostles and ministers in the first churches named in the New Testament. Selected quotations I list indicate an affirmation of the one true

God as the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

> No doubt the church would not have succeeded in this effort at the laying of foundations, if it had not been led into the truth by the Holy Spirit, and if in Tertullian and Irenaeus, Athanasius and the three Cappadocians, Augustine, and Hillary, and so many others besides, it had not received the men who, endowed and equipped with unusual gifts of godliness and wisdom, kept to the straight course (Herman Bavinck).

Clement of Rome (96 A.D.)

The Church of God which sojourns at Rome, to the Church of God sojourning at Corinth, to those who are called and sanctified by the will of God, through our Lord Jesus Christ: Grace to you, and peace, from Almighty God through Jesus Christ, be multiplied (*Letter to the Corinthians*).

Let us cleave, therefore, to the innocent and righteous, since these are the elect of God. Why are there strifes and tumults, divisions and schisms, and wars among you? Have we not one God and one Christ? Is there not one Spirit of grace poured out upon us? (*Letter to the Corinthians*).

The Epistle of Barnabas (100 A.D.)

And further, my brethren, if the Lord [Jesus] endured to suffer for our soul, he being the Lord of all the world, to whom God said at the foundation of the world, “Let us make man after our image, and after our likeness,” understand how it was that he endured to suffer at the hand of men.

Ignatius (107 A.D.)

There is one Physician who is possessed both of flesh and spirit; both made and not made; God existing in flesh; true life in death; both of Mary and of God; first possible and then impossible, even Jesus Christ our Lord (*Letter to the Ephesians*).

As being stones of the temple of the Father, prepared for the building of God the Father, and drawn up on high by the instrument of Jesus Christ, which is the cross, making use of the Holy Spirit as a rope, while your faith was the means by which you ascended, and your love the way which led up to God (*Letter to the Ephesians*).

Jesus Christ, who was with the Father before the beginning of time, and in the end was revealed. . . being begotten by the Father before the beginning of time, was God the Word, the only-begotten Son … (*Letter to the Magnesians*).

Polycarp (130 A.D.)

O Lord God Almighty, the Father of thy beloved and blessed Son Jesus Christ, by whom we have received the knowledge of You . . . I give You thanks that You hast counted me, worthy of this day and this hour, that I should have a part in the number of Your martyrs, in the cup of thy Christ, to the resurrection of eternal life, both of soul and body, through the incorruption [imparted] by the Holy Spirit.

I praise You for all things, I bless You, I glorify You, along with the everlasting and heavenly Jesus Christ, Your beloved Son, with whom, to You, and the Holy Spirit, be glory both now and to all coming ages.

Irenaeus (180 A.D.)

And again when the Son speaks to Moses, He says, ‘I am come down to deliver this people,’ (Exodus 3:8 - the burning bush). For it is He who descended and ascended for the salvation of men (*Against Heresies*).

Having first of all distinguished these three — God, the Beginning, and the Word — he again unites them, that he may exhibit the production of each of them, that is, of the Son and of the Word, and may at the same time show their union with one another, and with the Father. For ‘the beginning’ is in the Father, and of the Father, while ‘the Word’ is in the beginning, and of the beginning. Very properly, then, did he say, ‘In the beginning was the Word,’ for He was in the Son; ‘and the Word was with God,’ for He was the beginning; ‘and the Word was God,’ of course, for that which is begotten of God is God (*Against Heresies*).

Clement of Alexandria (200 A.D.)

There was; then, a Word importing an unbeginning eternity; as also the Word itself, that is, the Son of God, who being, by equality of substance, one with the Father, is eternal and uncreated.

Tertullian (200 A.D.)

Everything which proceeds from something else must needs be second to that from which it proceeds, without being on that account separated: Where, however, there is a second, there must be two; and where there is a third, there must be three. Now the Spirit indeed is third from God and the Son; just as the fruit of the tree is third from the root, or as the stream out of the river is third from the fountain, or as the apex of the ray is third from the sun. Nothing, however, is alien from that original source whence it derives its own properties. In like manner the Trinity, flowing down from the Father through intertwined and connected steps, does not at all disturb the Monarchy, whilst it at the same time guards the state of the Economy (*Against Praxeas*).

[God] because [He} already there was attached to Him his Son, a second person, his own Word, and a third, the Spirit in the Word... one substance in three coherent persons. He was at once the Father, the Son, and the Spirit (*Against Praxeas*).

You will say, then, to me: "You said that God ought not to be contained in a place, and how do you now say that He walked in Paradise? "Hear what I say. The God and Father, indeed, of all cannot be contained, and is not found in a place, for there is no place of His rest; but His Word, through whom He made all things, being His power and His wisdom, assuming the person of the Father and Lord of all, went to the garden in the person of God, and conversed with Adam. For the divine writing itself teaches us that Adam said that he had heard the voice. But what else is this voice but the Word of God, who is also His Son? Not as the poets and writers of myths talk of the sons of gods begotten from intercourse, but as truth expounds, the Word, that always exists, inherent within the heart of God. For before anything came into being He had Him as a counsellor, being His own mind and thought. But when God wished to make all

that He determined on, He begot this Word, uttered, the first-born of all creation, not Himself being emptied of the Word, but having begotten Reason, and always conversing with His Reason. And hence the holy writings teach us, and all the spirit-bearing [inspired] men, one of whom, John, says, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God," showing that at first God was alone, and the Word in Him. Then he says, "The Word was God; all things came into existence through Him; and apart from Him not one thing came into existence" (*Theophilus to Autolycus Book II*).

In the case of this heresy, which supposes itself to possess the pure truth, in thinking that one cannot believe in One Only God in any other way than by saying that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost are the very selfsame Person.

As if in this way also one were not All, in that All are of One, by unity of substance; while the mystery of the dispensation is still guarded, which distributes the Unity into a Trinity, placing in their order the three Persons–the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost: three, however, not in condition, but in degree; not in substance, but in form; not in power, but in aspect; yet of one substance, and of one condition, and of one power, inasmuch as He is one God, from whom these degrees and forms and aspects are reckoned, under the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost (*Against Praxeas*).

Origen (225 A.D.)

And that you may understand that the omnipotence of Father and Son is one and the same, as God and the Lord are one and the same with the Father, listen to the manner in which John speaks in the Apocalypse: "Thus says the Lord God, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty." For who else was "He which is to come" than Christ? And as no one ought to be offended, seeing God is the Father, that the Savior is also God; so also, since the Father is called omnipotent, no one ought to be offended that the Son of God is also called omnipotent (*Commentary on Philippians*).

> Polycarp agrees with the teachings of the apostles that Jesus is God. It seems that Irenaeus, as with Justin, viewed Jesus as God, saw the Father and the Son as distinct persons, and yet as one God. … Justin says that the person who appeared in the burning bush to Moses, to the prophets and patriarchs, and who is called "God" is the Son. … What about the

> numerical distinctness between God the Father and Jesus? It is clear that Justin believed that Jesus is God. Yet he viewed Jesus as distinct from God the Father in his person, but never distinguished Jesus and God in terms of their essence. Such fits in with the Christian view of the Trinity and not with the belief that Jesus was a created angel as the JWs believe. … Clement says that the Savior "is truly most manifest Deity" and that he is "made equal to the Lord of the universe, because He was His Son." Therefore, it seems that Clement not only regarded Jesus as God but that he is equal to God, contrary to the tract's claim that Clement wrote that he was "not equal to him."[2]

Many of the early Church Fathers affirmed the Triune God. Nonetheless, one should not ground one's theology on their writings. The only standard to find infallible truth about the Triune God is in scripture. God gave the church teachers, but all teaching must be examined in light of the Word of God.

CHAPTER NOTES

1. Harold Bloom, *Jesus and Yahweh: The Divine Name*.
2. Mike Licona on the errant use regarding quotations of the Church Fathers by Jehovah's Witnesses.

CHAPTER THREE

Numerous Bible Verses Relating to The Trinity

Scripture reveals, presupposes, and teaches the truth of the Trinity. The word "Trinity" is not mentioned in the Bible, but the verity therein is revealed from

Genesis to Revelation. The word “Bible” is also not mentioned in scripture. These sorts of words are often employed by people to abbreviate the truths that scripture reveals in exhaustive detail. One can profess that God is the Trinity in place of saying, “Scripture reveals that God is the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit as the one true God.” Doctrinal words can condense and represent a host of words in order to more easily communicate with clarity.

Various Verses that Reflect the Triune Nature of God

Matthew 28:19 Go therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

Notice the singular word “name” followed by the plural: The Father, The Son, and The Holy Spirit.

1 Corinthians 8:6 But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom [are] all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him.

Only one God and only one Lord. Yet the Bible calls the Father Lord as well as the Sprit.

John 1:1 & 14 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. … 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.

Jesus is the Word, thus He is with God and He is God: The only way to reconcile that is a plurality within a unity.

Genesis 1:26 And God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness…”

*Plural pronouns conjoined to singular nouns for God (*Elohim*).*

John 14:26 But the Comforter, which is the Holy Spirit, 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 unto you.

The Holy Spirit is a "He." All three persons of the Godhead are in this verse.

Acts 5:3-4 But Peter said, Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit, and to keep back part of the price of the land?

Only a person can be lied to. The Holy Spirit is a person, not a mere force.

John 15:26 But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceeds from the Father, he shall testify of me.

All three Persons of the Godhead in one verse. The Holy Spirit is a "He."

John 1:3 All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made.

Jesus made everything and nothing was made or created that He did not make; thus Jesus is not a created being—He is the Creator.

Luke 1:35 And the angel answered and said unto her, the Holy Spirit shall come upon you, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow you: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of you shall be called the Son of God.

All three Persons of the Godhead in one verse.

Isaiah 43:10 You are my witnesses, says the LORD, and my servant whom I have chosen: that you may know and believe me, and understand that I am he: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me.

The "he" is also a "me" and no god of any sort can be made.

Psalm 2:7 I will declare the decree: the LORD has said unto me, “You are my Son; this day have I begotten you.”

The prophecy of the Father speaking well over the Son.

Genesis 3:22 And the LORD God said, “Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever.”

“One of us” speaks concerning the plurality of Persons in the Godhead.

1 Timothy 2:5 For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.

There is only one God.

Colossians 1:16-17 For by him [Jesus] were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him.

Jesus made everything and nothing was made or created that He did not make; thus Jesus is not a created being—Christ is the Creator.

Colossians 1:27 To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

Christ dwells in all believers—a non-omnipresent being could not dwell in uncountable places.

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

Jesus is God.

Galatians 3:20 Now a mediator is not a mediator of one, but God is one.

There is only one God.

John 14:16-17 And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever.

The Holy Spirit is a person, not a mere force. And He is "another" just like Jesus.

Psalms 110:1 The LORD said unto my Lord, "Sit you at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool."

The Lord speaking to the Lord.

Hebrews 9:14 How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

All three persons of the Godhead are in this verse.

Galatians 4:6 And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.

All three persons of the Godhead are in this verse including the "Spirit of the Son."

Acts 13:2 As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, "Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them."

The Holy Spirit speaks. A force cannot speak—the Holy Spirit is a person.

John 17:1-26 These words spoke Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, “Father, the hour is come; glorify your Son, that your Son also may glorify you.”

The Son communicating with the Father: Two persons in this verse confute Modalism.

John 16:7 Nevertheless I tell you the truth; it is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.

The Holy Spirit is called “Him,” a person, not a mere force. And He is the “Comforter” just like Jesus.

John 8:17 It is also written in your law, that the testimony of two men is true.

*Jesus and the Father bear **two** unified testimonies—this rules out modalism (Oneness Pentecostalism, etc.). Jesus is not the Father.*

Matthew 3:16 And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him.

All three Persons of the Godhead in one verse. The three manifesting at the same time.

2 Corinthians 13:14 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

All three Persons of the Godhead in one verse.

Ephesians 4:4-6 There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call— one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

One God, One Spirit, One Lord. All three Persons of the Godhead in one verse.

1 Peter 1:2 According to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in the sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and for sprinkling with his blood: May grace and peace be multiplied to you.

All three Persons of the Godhead in one verse.

John 10:30-36 “I and the Father are one.” The Jews picked up stones again to stone him. Jesus answered them, “I have shown you many good works from the Father; for which of them are you going to stone me?” The Jews answered him, “It is not for a good work that we are going to stone you but for blasphemy, because you, being a man, make yourself God.”

The Jewish people knew that Jesus claimed to be God and wanted to stone Him because of His claim of divinity.

2 Corinthians 3:17 Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.

The Spirit is the Lord.

Luke 1:35 And the angel answered her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God.”

All three Persons of the Godhead in one verse.

Luke 3:21-22 Now when all the people were baptized, and when Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, the heavens were opened, and the Holy Spirit

descended on him in bodily form, like a dove; and a voice came from heaven, “You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased.”

All three Persons of the Godhead in one verse. The three manifesting at the same time.

Zechariah 10:12 “So I will strengthen them in the Lord, and they shall walk up and down in His name,” says the Lord.

The Lord speaking of the Lord as “His” and “I.”

Zechariah 12:10 And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and pleas for mercy, so that, when they look on me, on him whom they have pierced, they shall mourn for him, as one mourns for an only child, and weep bitterly over him, as one weeps over a firstborn.

The Lord is a “me” and a “him” at the same time.

Isaiah 9:6 For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

Jesus is called God in the Old Testament.

Revelation 1:7-8 Behold, he comes with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen. “I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending,” says the Lord, who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty.

Jesus says He is the Almighty.

Revelation 22:13 [Jesus said] “I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end.”

Jesus declares that He is the First and the Last—terms given to God in the Old Testament.

Deuteronomy 6:4 Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one.

There is only one God. The Hebrew word for "one" echad *means a compound unity (i.e., one cluster of grapes).*

Genesis 11:7 Come, let us go down and confuse their language, so that they may not understand one another's speech.

God stating there is an "us" within the one God.

Hebrews 1:8 But of the Son he says, "Your throne, O God, is forever and ever, the scepter of uprightness is the scepter of your kingdom."

The Father declaring that Jesus is God.

John 20:28 Thomas answered him [Jesus], "My Lord and my God!"

Thomas proclaiming that Jesus is the Lord and God.

John 8:58 Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM."

Jesus calling Himself God as He alludes to Exodus 3:14 where God said He was the "I AM."

Daniel 7:13 I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him.

The Son of Man is great and mighty.

Isaiah 48:16 Come near unto me, hear this; I have not spoken in secret from the beginning; from the time that it was, there am I: and now the Lord God, and his Spirit, has sent me.

All three Persons of the Godhead in one verse.

Isaiah 6:8 Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, “Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?” Then said I, “Here am I; send me.”

God stating there is an “us” within the one God.

Job 33:4 The Spirit of God has made me, and the breath of the Almighty has given me life.

The Holy Spirit is called the Almighty.

CHAPTER FOUR

The Triune God is the Foundation for Truth

> And God said to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM.” And He said, “Thus you shall say to the children of Israel, ‘I AM has sent me to you’”

(Exodus 3:14).

> Now when God ascribes this aseity to himself in Scripture, he makes himself known as absolute being, as the one who is in an absolute sense. By this perfection he is at once essentially and absolutely distinct from all creatures. Creatures, after all, do not derive their existence from themselves but from others and so have nothing from themselves; both in their origins and hence in their further development and life, they are absolutely dependent. But as is evident from the word "aseity," God is exclusively from himself, not in the sense of being self-caused but being from eternity to eternity who he is, being not becoming. God is absolute being, the fullness of being, and therefore also eternally and absolutely independent in his existence, in his perfections in all his works, the first and the last, the sole cause and final goal of all things. In this aseity of God, conceived not only as having being from himself but also as the fullness of being, all the other perfections are included (Herman Bavinck).
>
> The aseity of God, therefore, must be the place on which we stand in order to assert anything else about him, given that anything else we say about him depends for its proper understanding and meaning on that aseity. Or, to put it a bit more succinctly, unless God is *a se* (of himself), he is not God, and no characterization of God that excludes aseity can be true of him.[1]
>
> The only alternative to thinking of the Triune God as the ultimate source of unity in human experience, as it is furnished by laws or universals, is to think that the unity rests in a void. Every object of knowledge must, therefore, be thought of as being surrounded by ultimate irrationality.[2]

Since the Triune God is independent, ontologically He has aseity, He can account for universal immutable absolutes (aseity includes immutability and universal power). Nothing else has the ontic capacity to underwrite these absolutes (all material things in the cosmos lack such attributes). God sufficiently supports, sustains, and accounts for immutable universals (the laws of logic and moral absolutes). The mutable material cosmos as an ontic foundation leaves the laws of logic unaccounted for; likewise, the mutable minds

of humanity.

> God, and God only, has ultimate definitionary power. God's description or plan of the fact makes the fact what it is. What the modern scientist ascribes to the mind of man, Christianity ascribes to God.[3]

When it comes to truth we need to distinguish between studying truth as an issue of epistemology and looking at it as an issue of ontology: what sort of thing truth *is* and how truth is possible. Indeed, truth would not exist if God did not exist. Correspondingly, men can know that truth exists (epistemic matter). On the other hand, we can look at truth and what in general truth actually *is* (ontic matter).

Ontology studies the categories of being concerning:

- Man
- Laws of logic
- Thoughts
- Material entities
- Immaterial entities
- Concepts
- Biological life
- And various additional things.

The Triune God: The Immutable Foundation

I am the Lord, I change not (Malachi 3:6).

> Nothing can alter the character of God. In the course of a human life, tastes and outlook and temper may change radically: a kin, equable man may turn bitter and crotchety: a man of good-will may grow cynical and callous. But nothing of this sort happens to the Creator. He never becomes less truthful, or merciful, or just, or good, than He used to be. The character of God is today, and always will be, exactly what it was in Bible times (J. I. Packer).

> God's nature and will are the foundation and standard of what is possible in the universe.[4]

Christians recognize:

I. Since the immutable Triune God with universal reach exists then immutable universal objective truth exists.
II. The immutable Triune God with universal reach exists.
III. Therefore immutable universal objective truth exists.

> God … infinite, eternal, knowing all things, and never changing. There is all the difference in our attitude towards the very same truth if we think of the unchangeableness of God … "I am the Lord," Jehovah, the Self-existent, the Eternal whose being is not under the limitations of succession and time. "Because I am Jehovah, I change not"; and because Jehovah changes not, therefore our finite and mortal selves abide (Alexander Maclaren).

Below is a valid but not biblically acceptable form (it does not ontologically start with God).

IV. If immutable universal objective truth exists the immutable Triune God with universal reach exists.
V. Immutable universal objective truth exists.
VI. The immutable Triune God with universal reach exists.

This is a valid and defendable formulation; nevertheless the issue of the ontology of truth is not merely a matter of reasoning to God utilizing the existence of truth. It understands that all reasoning depends and presupposes God. This includes reasoning with reference to truth.

Additionally, I am not asserting that non-theists do not *know* (epistemic concern) truth. Accordingly, I am contending that the Triune God is ontologically indispensable for the existence (ontic claim) of objective truth. God is the ontological basis and underpinning for "true truth."

> Historic Christianity, biblical Christianity, believes that Christianity is not just doctrinal truth, but flaming truth—true to what is there, true to the great final environment, the infinite-personal God (Francis Schaeffer).

God is the unchanging foundation for unchanging real truth. Since He is the truth and perpetually the same, He is the foundation for unchanging truth. Under non-theism mutable human beings cannot be the ground for immutable truth. Ever-changing men lack the ontic capacity to provide a ground in of themselves (*per se*) for unchanging truth. One cannot give what one does not have (universality and immutability).

> Nature is quite powerless to produce rational thought: not that she never modifies our thinking but that the moment she does so, it ceases (for that very reason) to be rational. For, as we have seen, a train of thought loses all rational credentials as soon as it can be shown to be wholly the result of non-rational causes (C.S. Lewis).

God's Unassailable Immutability

> God is the most obligated being that there is. He is obligated by his own nature. He is infinite in his wisdom; therefore he can never do anything that is unwise. He is infinite in his justice; therefore he can never do anything that is unjust. He is infinite in his goodness; therefore he can never do anything that is not good. He is infinite in his truth; therefore it is impossible that he should lie (J. Gresham Machen).

> We as human beings can make a distinction between the being and the attributes of people. A human being can lose his arm or his leg, or, in a state of sleep or illness, lose consciousness, without ceasing to be human. But in God this is impossible. His attributes coincide with His being. Every attribute is His being. He is wise and true, not merely, good and holy, just and merciful, but He is also wisdom, truth, goodness, holiness, justice and mercy.[5]

God is unchanging in His:

- Being and essence
- Blessedness and glory
- Counsels and decrees
- Kingdom and rule
- Covenant and promise
- Love and grace toward His people.[6]

God is the unchangeable source of truth; all men must repent and truth to Him: the Truth—to find true truth as well as eternal life.

For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God (John 3:16-21).

See my E-book *A Manual for Converting Atheists* for fully developed arguments extending this argument and methodology on Amazon at: http://www.amazon.com/Manual-For-Converting-Atheists-Boghossian-ebook/dp/B00KY7EBDG

CHAPTER NOTES

1. K. Scott Oliphint: *God with Us*.
2. Cornelius Van Til, *Introduction to Systematic Theology*.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
5. Herman Bavinck: *Our Reasonable Faith*.
6. Edward Pearse, *A Beam of Divine Glory: The Unchangeableness of God*.

CHAPTER FIVE

The Early Church Fathers on the Divinity of Jesus

Did Jesus teach that He was God? Did the apostles believe that Jesus was God incarnate? Did the first generation of the church profess the deity of Christ? Ask Bart Ehrman, Reza Aslan, Dan Brown (*The Da Vinci Code*), the Jesus Seminar, and cultic groups and they will try to persuade you the answer is no. Such sources argue that the doctrine of the incarnation was developed centuries after the time of Christ—a consequence of Greek influences on the church in the fourth century when the council of Nicaea, directed by the Emperor Constantine, voted for the doctrine of the deity of Jesus—this view may be popular, but it is wrong.

The best answer, obviously, is to demonstrate from Scripture that Jesus is God. We can be assured that Jesus is God since the New Testament unmistakably reveals that truth. The biblical case can be made from many verses. A small sampling: Isaiah 7:14, 9:6, 43:10-11; Matthew 1:23; John 1:1, 8:58, 20:28; Acts 20:28; Romans 9:5; 1 Corinthians 1:24; 2 Corinthians 13:14; Philippians 2:6; Colossians 1:15–17; 2:9; 1Timothy 3:16; Titus 2:13; Hebrews 1:3, 8; 2 Peter 1:1; 1 John 5:20; Revelation 1:7-8.

On the other hand, did the early Church Fathers uphold and teach that Jesus Christ was God? Or was Christ's deity finally affirmed only after Constantine ordered the ministers at the Council of Nicaea to communicative the Trinitarian creed?

Below I list numerous quotes from the early Church Fathers that demonstrate the ancient church knew Jesus was God.

Clement of Rome (died 99 A.D.)

Brethren, we ought so to think of Jesus Christ as of God: as of the judge of the

living and the dead (*Second Epistle to the Corinthians*)

Ignatius Bishop of Antioch (died 110 A.D.—disciple of the Apostle John)

For even our God, Jesus Christ, now that He is in the Father… (*Epistle of Ignatius to the Romans*).

I glorify Jesus Christ, the God who made you so wise, for I observed that you are established in an unshakable faith, having been nailed, as it were, to the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ (*Letter to the Smyrnaeans*).

For our God, Jesus the Christ, was conceived by Mary according to God's plan, both from the seed of David and of the Holy Spirit (*Letter to the Ephesians*).

Epistle of Mathetes to Diognetus (130 A.D.)

As a king sends his Son, who is also king, so sent he him, as God…

Justin Martyr (died 165 A.D.)

The word of wisdom, who is himself God, begotten of the Father of all things, and word, and wisdom, and power, and the glory of the begetter… (Dialogue with Trypho).

For Christ is King, and Priest, and God and Lord... He preexisted as the Son of the Creator of things, being God, and that He was born a man by the Virgin (Dialogue with Trypho).

The Father of the universe has a Son; who also, being the first-begotten Word of God, is even God. And of old He appeared in the shape of fire and in the likeness of an angel to Moses and to the other prophets; but now in the times of your reign, having, as we before said, become Man by a virgin (First Apology).

Polycarp (died 160 A.D. Bishop of Smyrna; disciple of the Apostle John)

Now may the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the eternal high priest himself, the Son of God Jesus Christ, build you up in faith and truth . . . and to us with you, and to all those under heaven who will yet believe in our Lord and God Jesus Christ and in his Father who raised him from the dead (Philippians).

Melito of Sardis (died 180 A.D.)

The activities of Christ after his baptism, and especially his miracles, gave indication and assurance to the world of the deity hidden in his flesh. Being God and likewise perfect man, he gave positive indications of his two natures: of his deity, by the miracles during the three years following after his baptism … he concealed the signs of his deity, although he was the true God existing before the ages.

Athenagoras of Athens (died 190 A.D.)

God the Word came down from heaven... He came forth into the world and ... showed Himself to be God.

Irenaeus (died 202 A.D.)

In order that Christ Jesus, our Lord, and God, and Savior, and King... (*Against Heresies*).

But he Jesus is himself in his own right, beyond all men who ever lived, God, Lord, and king eternal, and the incarnate word, proclaimed by all the prophets … (*Against Heresies*).

For I have shown from the Scriptures, that no one of the sons of Adam is as to everything, and absolutely, called God, or named Lord. But that He is Himself in His own right, beyond all men who ever lived, God, and Lord, and King Eternal, and the Incarnate Word, proclaimed by all the prophets, the apostles, and by the Spirit Himself, may be seen by all who have attained to even a small portion of the truth. Now, the Scriptures would not have testified these things of Him, if, like others, He had been a mere man. . . . He is the holy Lord, the Wonderful, the

Counselor, the Beautiful in appearance, and the Mighty God, coming on the clouds as the Judge of all men (*Against Heresies*).

He received testimony from all that He was very man, and that He was very God, from the Father, from the Spirit, from angels, from the creation itself, from men, from apostate spirits and demons (*Against Heresies*).

Christ Jesus is our Lord, and God, and Savior, and King, according to the will of the invisible Father (*Against Heresies*).

Christ Himself, therefore, together with the Father, is the God of the living, who spoke to Moses, and who was also manifested to the fathers (*Against Heresies*).

Clement of Alexandria (died 215 A.D.)

The Word, then, the Christ, is the cause both of our ancient beginning, for he was in God… And now this same Word has appeared as a man. He alone is both God and man, and the source of all our good things. … The Word, who in the beginning bestowed on us life as Creator when He formed us, taught us to live well when He appeared as our Teacher; that as God He might afterwards conduct us to the life which never ends (*Exhortation to the Heathen*).

Tertullian (died 225 A.D.)

The origins of both his substances display him as man and as God: from the one, born, and from the other, not born.

God alone is without sin. The only man without sin is Christ; for Christ is also God (*Treatise on The Soul*).

Hippolytus of Rome (died 235 A.D.)

For Christ is the God above all... He who is over all is God … And well has he named Christ the Almighty.

Origen (died 254 A.D.)

Jesus Christ . . . in the last times, divesting Himself, became a man, and was incarnate although God, and while made a man remained the God which He was (De Principiis).

Novatian (died 258 A.D.)

For Scripture as much announces Christ as also God, as it announces God Himself as man. It has as much described Jesus Christ to be man, as moreover it has also described Christ the Lord to be God (*Treatise on the Trinity*).

Let them, therefore, who read that Jesus Christ the Son of man is man, read also that this same Jesus is called also God and the Son of God (*On the Trinity*).

Scripture Reveals the Deity of Christ

One can easily see that the early church and its leaders believed Scripture when it declared that Jesus Christ is God. The preceding writings were recorded well before the Council of Nicaea, so one can put away the rumored and cultic idea that Nicaea is where Jesus was first voted in as God. Nope. Centuries before the Council of Nicaea (325 A.D.) was held, Christ was revealed as God and Scripture makes that plain as do the early Church Fathers.

CHAPTER SIX

Louis Berkhof, Charles Hodge, and Herman

Bavinck
on The Trinity

Louis Berkhof and Charles Hodge were excellent theologians who loved Christ and the truth of the Triune God. Below are selected highlights of their work on the Trinity.

1. Statement of the Doctrine. The Bible teaches that, while He exists in three Persons, called Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. These are not three persons in the ordinary sense of the word; they are not three individuals, but rather three modes or forms in which the Divine Being exists. At the same time they are of such a nature that they can enter into personal relations. The Father can speak to the Son and vice versa, and both can send forth the Spirit. The real mystery of the Trinity consists in this that each one of the Persons possesses the whole of the divine essence, and that this has no existence outside of and apart from the Persons. The three are not subordinate in being the one to the other, though it may be said that in order of existence the Father is first, the Son second, and the Holy Spirit third, an order which is also reflected in their work.

2. Scripture Proof for the Trinity. The Old Testament contains some indications of more than one Person in God. God speaks of Himself in the plural, Gen. 1:26; the Angel of Jehovah is represented as a divine Person, Gen. 16:7-13; 19:1-22; and the Spirit is spoken of as a distinct Person, Isa. 48:16, 63:10. Moreover, there are some passages in which the Messiah is speaking and mentions two other Persons, Isa. 48; 63:9-10.

Due to the progress of revelation, the New Testament contains clearer proofs. The strongest proof is found in the facts of redemption. The Father sends the Son into the world, and the Son sends the Holy Spirit. Moreover, there are several passages in which the three Persons are expressly mentioned, such as the great commission, Matt. 28:19…

This doctrine was denied by the Socinians in the days of the Reformation,

and is rejected also by the Unitarians and the Modernists of our own day [and the Jehovah's Witnesses]. If they speak of the Trinity at all, they represent it as consisting of the Father, the man Jesus, and a divine influence which is called the Spirit of God.

3. The Father. The name 'Father' is frequently applied in Scripture to the Triune God, as the creator of all things, I Cor. 8:6; Heb. 12:9; as the Father of Israel, Deut. 32:6; and as the Father of believers, Matt. 5:45; Rom. 8:15. In a deeper sense, however, it is applied to the First Person of the Trinity, to express His relation to the Second Person, John 1:14. This is the original Fatherhood, of which all earthly fatherhood is but a faint reflection. The distinctive characteristic of the Father is that He generates the Son from all eternity. The works particularly ascribed to Him are those of planning the work of redemption, creation and providence, and representing the Trinity in the Counsel of Redemption.

4. The Son. The second person in the Trinity is called 'Son' or 'Son of God.' He bears this name, however, not only as the only begotten of the Father, John 1:14 and in virtue of His special birth through the operation of the Holy Spirit, Luke 1:32. His special characteristic as the Second Person of the Trinity is that He is eternally begotten of the Father, Ps. 2:7; Heb. 1:5. By means of eternal generation the Father is the cause of the personal existence of the Son within the Divine Being. The works more particularly ascribed to Him are works of mediation. He mediated the work of creation, John 1:3.

5. The Holy Spirit. Though Socinians, Unitarians, and present day Modernists speak of the Holy Spirit merely as a power or an influence of God, He clearly stands out on the pages of the Bible as a Person, John 14… He has intelligence, John 14:26, feeling, Isa. 68:10, Eph. 4:30 and will, Acts 16:7. Scripture represents Him as speaking, searching, testifying, commanding, revealing, striving, and making intercession. Moreover, He is clearly distinguished from His own power in Luke 1:35; Acts 10:38. His special characteristic is that He proceeds from the Father and the Son by spiration, John 15:26; Rom. 8:9. In general it may be said that it is His task to bring things to completion both in creation and redemption…

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*Taken from *Summary of Christian Doctrine Part II: The Doctrine of God and*

Creation, Chapter VII: The Trinity.

Charles Hodge on The Trinity

1. There is one only living and true God, or divine Being. The religion of the Bible stands opposed not only to Atheism, but to all forms of polytheism. The Scriptures everywhere assert that Jehovah alone is God. (Deut. vi. 4.) "The Lord our God is one Lord." "I am the first, and I am the last; and besides me there is no God." (Is. xliv. 6.) "You believe that there is one God; you do well." (James ii. 19.) The Decalogue, which is the foundation of the moral and religious code of Christianity, as well as of Judaism, has as its first and greatest commandment, "You shall have no other God before me." No doctrine, thererfore, can possibly be true which contradicts this primary truth of natural as well as of revealed religion.

2. In the Bible all divine titles and attributes are ascribed equally to the Father, Son, and Spirit. The same divine worship is rendered to them. The one is as much the object of adoration, love, confidence, and devotion as the other. It is not more evident that the Father is God, than that the Son is God; nor is the deity of the Father and Son more clearly revealed than that of the Spirit.

3. The terms Father, Son, and Spirit do not express different relations of God to his creatures. They are not analogous to the terms Creator, Preserver, and Benefactor, which do express such relations. The Scriptural facts are, (a.)The Father says I; the Son says I; the Spirit says I. (b.)The Father says You to the Son, and the Son says You to the Father; and in like manner the Father and the Son use the pronouns He and Him in reference to the Spirit. (c.)The Father loves the Son; the Son loves the Father; the Spirit testifies of the Son. The Father, Son, and Spirit are severally subject and object. They act and are acted upon, or are the objects of action.

Nothing is added to these facts when it is said that the Father, Son, and Spirit are distinct persons; for a person is an intelligent subject who can say I, who can be addressed as You, and who can act and can be the object of action. The summation of the above facts is expressed in the proposition, The one divine. Being subsists in three persons, Father, Son, and Spirit. This proposition adds nothing to the facts themselves; for the facts are, (1.) That there is one divine Being. (2.) The Father, Son, and Spirit are divine. (3.) The Father, Son, and Spirit are, in the sense just stated, distinct persons. (4.) Attributes being inseparable from substance, the Scriptures, in saying that the Father, Son, and Spirit possess the same attributes, say they are the same in substance; and, if the same in substance, they are equal in power and glory.

4. Notwithstanding that the Father, Son, and Spirit are the same in substance, and equal in power and glory, it is no less true according to the Scriptures, (a.)That the Father is first, the Son second, and the Spirit third. (b.) The Son is of the Father (*evk qeou/*, *the lo,goj*, *eivko.n, avpau,gasma, tou/ qeou*/);and the Spirit is of the Father and of the Son. (c.)The Father sends the Son, and the Father and Son send the Spirit. (d.)The Father operates through the Son, and the Father and Son operate through the Spirit. The converse of these statements is never found. The Son is never said to send the Father, nor to operate through Him nor is the Spirit ever said to send the Father, or the Son, or to operate through them. The facts contained in this paragraph are summed up in the proposition: In the Holy Trinity there is a subordination of the Persons as to the mode of subsistence and operation. This proposition again adds nothing to the facts themselves.

* Systematic Theology

Herman Bavinck

The Eternal Being reveals Himself in His Triune existence even more richly and vitally than in His attributes. It is in this holy trinity that each attribute of His Being comes into its own, so to speak, gets its fullest content, and takes on its profoundest meaning. It is only when we contemplate this trinity that we know who and what God is. Only then do we know, moreover, who God is and what He is for lost man-kind.

We can know this only when we know and confess Him as the Triune God of the Covenant, as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

In considering this part of our confession, it is particularly necessary that a tone of holy reverence and childlike awe be the characteristic of our approach and attitude. For Moses it was an awful and unforgettable hour when the Lord appeared to him in the desert in the flame of fire coming from the bramble bush.

When Moses looked upon that burning fire, which burned but did not consume, from a distance, and when he wanted to hasten to the spot, the Lord restrained him and said: Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon you stand is holy ground. And when Moses heard that he feared greatly, hid his face, and was afraid to look upon God (Ex. 3:1-6).

Such a holy respect suits us also as we witness God revealing Himself in His word as a Triune God. For we must always remember that as we study this fact, we are not dealing with a doctrine about God, with an abstract concept, or with a scientific proposition about the nature of Divinity. We are not dealing with a human construction which we ourselves or which others have put upon the facts, and which we now try to analyze and logically to dismember. Rather, in treating of the Trinity, we are dealing with God Himself, with the one and true God, who has revealed Himself as such in His Word. It is as He said to Moses: I am the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Ex. 3:6). So He reveals Himself to us also in His Word and manifests Himself to us as Father, Son, and Spirit.

It is thus that the Christian church has always confessed the revelation of God as the Triune God, and accepted it as such. We find it in the Twelve Articles of the Apostles' Creed. The Christian is not in that creed saying just how he thinks about God. He is not there giving out a notion of God, nor saying that God has such and such attributes, and that He exists in this and that wise. Instead, he confesses: I believe in God the Father, and in Jesus Christ His only-begotten Son, and in the Holy Spirit: I believe in the Triune God.

In confessing this the Christian gives expression to the fact that God is

the living and the true God, that He is God as Father, Son, and Spirit, the God of His confidence, to whom he has wholly surrendered himself, and upon whom he rests with his whole heart. God is the God of his life and his salvation. As Father, Son, and Spirit, God has created him, redeemed him, sanctified him, and glorified him. The Christian owes everything to Him. It is his joy and comfort that he may believe in that God, trust Him, and expect everything from Him.

What the Christian goes on to confess about that God is not summarized by him in a number of abstract terms, but is described, rather, as a series of deeds done by God in the past, in the present, and to be done in the future. It is the deeds, the miracles, of God which constitute the confession of the Christian. What the Christian confesses in his creed is a long, a broad, and a high history. It is a history which comprises the whole world in its length and breadth, in its beginning, process, and end, in its origin, development, and destination, from the point of creation to the fulfillment of the ages. The confession of the church is a declaration of the mighty deeds of God.

Those deeds are numerous and are characterized by great diversity. But they also constitute a strict unity. They are related to each other, prepare for each other, and are interdependent. There is order and pattern, development and upward movement in it. It proceeds from creation through redemption to sanctification and glorification. The end returns to the beginning and yet is at the same time the apex which is exalted high above the point of origin. The deeds of God form a circle which mounts upward in the form of a spiral; they represent a harmony of the horizontal and the vertical line; they move upwards and forwards at the same time.

God is the architect and builder of all those deeds, the source and the final end of them. Out of Him and through Him and to Him are all things. He is their Maker, Restorer, and Fulfiller. The unity and diversity in the works of God proceeds from and returns to the unity and diversity which exist in the Divine Being. That Being is one being, single and simple. At the same time that being is threefold in His person, in His revelation, and in His influence.

The entire work of God is an unbroken whole, and nevertheless

comprises the richest variety and change. The confession of the church comprehends the whole of world history. In that confession are included the moments of the creation and the fall, reconciliation and forgiveness, and of renewal and restoration. It is a confession which proceeds from the Triune God and which leads everything back to Him.

Therefore the article of the holy trinity is the heart and core of our confession, the differentiating earmark of our religion, and the praise and comfort of all true believers of Christ.

It was this confession which was at stake in the warfare of the spirits throughout the centuries. The confession of the holy trinity is the precious pearl which was entrusted for safekeeping and defense to the Christian church.

* * * * *

If this confession of the trinity of God takes such a central position in the Christian faith, it is important to know on what ground it rests and from what source it has flowed into the church. They are not a few in our time who hold that it is the fruit of human argument and academic learning and who, accordingly, regard it as of no value for the religious life.

According to them the original Gospel, as it was proclaimed by Jesus, knew nothing about any such doctrine of the trinity of God — that is, nothing about the term itself nor about the reality to which the term was intended to give expression. It was only — so the argument goes — when the original and simple Gospel of Jesus was brought into relationship with Greek philosophy and was falsified by it that the Christian church absorbed the person of Christ in His Divine nature, and eventually also the Holy Spirit into the Divine Being. And so it came about that the church confessed three persons in the one Divine being.

But the Christian church itself has always had quite a different idea about that. It saw in the doctrine of the trinity no discovery of subtle theologians, no product of the wedding of Gospel and Greek philosophy, but a confession rather which was materially concluded in the Gospel and in the whole Word of God — a doctrine, in short, which

was inferred by Christian faith from the revelation of God. In answer to the question, Since there is but one Divine Being, why do you speak of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit? the Heidelberg Catechism gives a brief and conclusive answer: Because God has so revealed Himself in His Word (Question 25).

The revelation of God is the firm ground on which this confession of the church also rests. It is the source out of which this doctrine of the one, holy, catholic, Christian church has grown and been built up. God has thus revealed Himself. And He has revealed Himself thus, that is, as a Triune God, because He exists in that way; and He exists in this way because He has so revealed Himself.

The Trinity in the revelation of God points back to the Trinity in His existence.

This revelation did not happen in a single moment. It was not presented and perfected in a single point of time. Rather, this revelation has a long history, spread out over the centuries. It began at the creation, continued after the fall in the promises and deeds of grace which accrued to Israel, and reached its apex in the person and work of Christ, in the pouring out of the Holy Spirit, and the establishment of the church. It maintains itself now throughout the centuries, and over against all opposition, in the ineradicable witness of Scripture and in the rock-firm confession of the church.

Because the revelation has had this long history, there is progress and development also in the confession of God’s Triune existence. God undergoes no change, remaining always the same. But in the progress of revelation, He makes Himself always clearer and more glorious to people and to angels. As His revelation continues, our knowledge grows.

* * * * *

When, in the days of the Old Covenant, God begins to reveal Himself, the thing that stands in the foreground is certainly the unity, the oneness, of God.

For, due to the sin of man, the pure knowledge of God had been lost; the truth, as Paul profoundly says, was held in unrighteousness. Even that which can be known of God in the things that He has made was made vain by their imaginations and was darkened by the foolishness of their hearts. On every hand mankind fell into idolatry and the worship of images (Rom. 1:18-23).

Hence it was necessary that the revelation begin with an emphasis upon the unity of God. It seems to cry out to mankind: The gods before which ye bow are not the true God. There is but one true God, namely, the God who at the beginning made the heaven and the earth (Gen.1:1 and 2:1), the God who made Himself known to Abraham as God the Almighty (Gen. 17:1 and Ex. 6:3), the God who appeared to Moses as Jehovah, as the I-Am-that-I-Am (Ex. 3:14), and the God who, out of sovereign favor, chose the people of Israel, and called them, and accepted them in His covenant (Ex. 19:4ff.). First of all, therefore, the revelation had as its content: Jehovah alone is Elohim, the Lord alone is God, and there is no other God beside Him.

For the people of Israel, too, the revelation of the oneness of God was desperately necessary. Israel was surrounded on all sides by heathen and by heathen who at all times tried to tempt it into apostasy and unfaithfulness to the Lord; moreover, right on up to the captivity a great part of the people of Israel felt themselves attracted to the pagan idolatry and image worship, and again and again fell into the practice of them despite the proscription of the law and the warning of the prophets. Therefore, God Himself placed the emphasis on the fact that He, the Lord, who was now appearing to Moses and who wanted to redeem His people through Moses, was the same God who had made Himself known to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as the Almighty God (Ex. 3:6 and 15).

When He gave His law to Israel He wrote above it as its preamble: I am the Lord thy God, which have brought you out of the land of Egypt. And in the first commandment, and the second, He strictly forbade all idolatry and worship of images (Ex. 20:2-5). Because the Lord our God is one God, Israel must love Him with its whole heart, its whole soul, and all its strength (Deut. 6:4-5). The Lord alone is Israel’s God and therefore Israel may serve only Him.

Nevertheless, despite the fact that the oneness of God is so strongly emphasized, and, as it were, constitutes the first article of Israel's basic law, the distinctions within that unity of the Godhead come to light also as in that revelation His fullness of Being progresses. The very name which is usually employed for designating God in the original Hebrew has a certain significance here. For this name Elohim, is in plural form, and therefore, although it does not, as was formerly generally supposed, designate the three persons of the divine Being, it does, in its character as an intensive plural, point to the fullness of life and of power which are present in God.

It is, no doubt, in connection with this same fact, that God sometimes, in speaking of Himself, uses a plural referent, and by this means makes distinctions within Himself that bear a personal character (Gen. 1:26-27; 3:22; and Isa. 6:8).

Of greater significance is the teaching of the Old Testament to the effect that God brings everything in His creation and providence into being by His Word and Spirit. He is not a human being, who, at the cost of great difficulty and exertion, makes something else out of the materials He has at hand. Instead, simply by the act of speaking, He calls everything into being out of nothing.

In the first chapter of Genesis we are taught this truth in the loftiest way possible, and elsewhere, too, it is expressed most gloriously in word and song. He speaks, and it is done; He commands, and it stands fast (Ps. 33:9). He sends out His word, and melts the morsels of ice (Ps. 147:18). His voice is upon the waters, shakes the wilderness, causes the hills to skip like a calf, and discovers the forests (Ps. 29:3-10). Two truths are contained in this exalted account of God's works: the first is that God is the Almighty One who has but to speak and all things leap into being, whose word is law (Ps. 33:9) and whose voice is power (Ps. 29:4); and the second is that God works deliberately, and not without forethought, and carries out all His works with the highest wisdom.

The word which God speaks is power, but it is also the vehicle of thought. He has made the earth by His power, He has established the world by His wisdom, and has stretched out the heavens by His

discretion (Jer. 10:12 and 51:15). He has made all His works in wisdom: the earth is full of His riches (Ps. 104:24). This wisdom of God did not come to Him from outside Himself, but was with Him from the beginning. He possessed it as the principle of His way, before His works of old. When He prepared the heavens, set a compass upon the face of the deep, established the clouds above, strengthened the fountains of the deep, then wisdom was already there, brought up alongside of Him, daily his delight, and rejoicing always before Him (Prov. 8:22-31 and Job 20:20-28). God rejoiced in the wisdom with which He created the world.

Alongside of this word and wisdom the Spirit of God as the Mediator of the creation makes His appearance just as God at one and the same time is wisdom and possesses it, so that He can share it and can exhibit it in His works, so He Himself is Spirit in His being (Deut. 4:12, 15) and He possesses Spirit, that Spirit by which He can dwell in the world and be always and everywhere present in it (Ps. 139:7).

Without anyone having been His counsellor, the Lord by His Spirit brought everything into being (Isa. 40:13ff.). At the beginning that Spirit moved upon the face of the waters (Gen. 1:2), and He remains active in all that was created. By that Spirit God garnishes the heavens (Job 26:13), renews the face of the earth (Ps. 104:30), gives life to man (Job 33:4), maintains the breath in man’s nostrils (Job 27:3), gives him understanding and wisdom (Job 32:8), and also causes the grass to wither and the flower to fade (Isa. 40:7). In short, by the Word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all the host of them by the Breath of His mouth (Ps. 33:6).

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And this self-diversity of God comes out even more in the works of the re-creation. Then it is not Elohim, but Jehovah, not God in general, but the Lord, the God of the covenant, who reveals Himself and who makes Himself known in wonders of redemption and salvation. As such He redeems and leads His people, not by His word alone which He speaks or has conveyed to them, but also by means of the Angel of the covenant (the Angel of the Lord). This Angel appears already in the history of the patriarchs: to Hagar (Gen. 16:6ff.), to Abraham (Gen.

18ff.), and to Jacob (Gen. 28:13ff.).

This Angel reveals His grace and power especially in the emancipation of Israel from the bondage of Egypt. This Angel of the Lord does not stand on the same plane of importance as the created angels; rather, He is a special revelation and manifestation of God.

On the one hand, He is clearly distinguished from God, who speaks of Him as of His Angel, and yet, on the other hand, is one in name with God Himself, and in power, in redemption and blessing, in worshipfulness and honor. He is called God in Genesis 16:13, the God of Bethel in Genesis 31:13, exchanges places with God or the Lord (Gen. 28:30, 32 and Ex. 3:4), and He bears the name of God within Him (Ex. 23:21). He redeems from all evil (Gen. 48:16), rescues Israel from the hand of the Egyptians (Ex. 3:8), cleaves the waters and dries up the sea (Ex. 14:21), preserves the people of God in the way, brings them safely into Canaan, causes them to triumph over their enemies (Ex. 3:8 and 23:20), is to be absolutely obeyed as though He were God Himself (Ex. 23:20). and always encamps around those who fear the Lord (Ps. 34:7 and 35:5).

Just as in His re-creating work, Jehovah carries out His redemptive activities through this Angel of the covenant, so He by His Spirit gives out all kinds of energies and gifts to His people. In the Old Testament the Spirit of the Lord is the source of all life, all weal, and all ability. He grants courage and strength to the judges, to Othniel (Judges 3:10), Gideon (Judges 6:34), Jephthah (Judges 11:29), and to Samson (Judges 14:6 and 15:14).

He grants artistic perception to the makers of the priests' garments, the tabernacle, and the temple, and He gives wisdom and understanding to the judges who bear the burden of the people alongside of Moses (Num. 11:17, 25). He gives the spirit of prophecy to the prophets, and renewal and sanctification and guidance to all of God's children (Ps. 51:12-13 and 143:10).

In short: the Word, the promise, the covenant, which the Lord gave to Israel at the exodus from Egypt, have existed throughout the ages, and still stood fast even after the Captivity in the days of Zerubbabel, so that

the people had no need to fear (Haggai 2:4-5). When the Lord led Israel out of Egypt He became the Savior of Israel. And this disposition of God towards His people came to expression in the fact that in all their oppression He was oppressed (He regarded the affliction of His people as His own affliction), and that He therefore sent them His Angel to preserve them. He redeemed them by His love and grace and He took them up and carried them as His own throughout those days of old. He sent them the Spirit of His holiness in order to lead them in the ways of the Lord (Isa. 63:9-12).

In the days of the Old Covenant, the Lord through the high priest laid His threefold blessing on the people of Israel: the blessing of vigil, the blessing of grace, and the blessing of peace (Num. 6:24-26).

Thus gradually, then, but ever more unmistakably, the threefold distinction within the Divine being comes to expression already in the history of God's leading of Israel. However, the Old Testament includes the further promises that in the future there will be a higher and richer revelation. After all, Israel repudiated the Word of the Lord and vexed His Holy Spirit (Isa. 63:10 and Ps. 106). The revelation of God in the Angel of the covenant and in the Spirit of the Lord proved to be inadequate: if God wanted to confirm His covenant and fulfill His promise, another and higher revelation would be necessary.

Such a revelation was heralded by the prophets. In the future, in the last days, then the Lord will call up out of the midst of Israel such a prophet as Moses was, and the Lord will put His words in that prophet's mouth (Deut. 18 :18). This one will be a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek (Ps. 110:4); He will be a king out of the house of David (2 Sam. 7:12-16), a rod out of the stem of Jesse (Isa. 11:1), a king, judging and seeking judgment (Isa. 16:5).

A human being, a man He will be, and the son of a woman (Isa. 7:14), and He will be without form or comeliness (Isa. 53:2ff.); but, at the same time, He will be Immanuel (Isa. 7:14), the Lord our righteousness (Jer. 23:6), the Angel of the covenant (Mal. 3:1), the Lord Himself appearing to His people (Hos. 1:7 and Mal. 3:1). And He bears the name of Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace (Isa. 9:6).

This manifestation of the servant of the Lord is to be followed by a richer dispensation of the Holy Spirit. As the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, of counsel and strength, of the knowledge and fear of the Lord, this Spirit will rest upon the Messiah (Isa. 11:2; 42:1; and 61:1). He will be poured out upon all flesh, over sons and daughters, old men and young men, servants and handmaids, and He will give a new heart and a new spirit, so that His people may walk in His statutes, and keep His ordinances, and do them.

Thus the Old Testament itself points out that the full revelation of God will consist of the revelation of His Triune being.

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This promise and announcement the fulfillment of the New Testament fully satisfies. In this respect also, the unity or oneness of God is the point of departure of all revelation. But out of this oneness the difference in the Divine being now, in the New Testament, comes into much clearer light. This happens first in the great redemptive events of incarnation, satisfaction, and outpouring, and next in the instruction of Jesus and His apostles. The work of salvation is one whole, a work of God from beginning to end. But there are three high moments in it, election, forgiveness, and renewal, and these three point to a threefold cause in the Divine being: that is, to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

The very conceiving of Christ already shows us the threefold activity of God. For while the Father gives the Son to the world (John 3:16), and while the Son Himself descends from heaven (John 6:38), that Son is conceived in Mary of the Holy Spirit (Matt. 1:20 and Luke 1:35). At His baptism Jesus is anointed by the Holy Spirit, and is there publicly declared to be the beloved Son of the Father, the Son in whom He is well pleased (Matt. 3:16-17).

The works which Jesus did were shown Him by the Father (John 5:19 and 8:38), and they are fulfilled by Him in the strength of the Holy Spirit (Matt. 12:28). In His dying He offers Himself to God in the eternal Spirit (Heb. 9:14). The resurrection is a raising up by the Father

(Acts 2:24) and is at the same time Jesus' own act by which He is greatly proved to be the Son of the Father according to the Spirit of holiness (Rom. 1:3). And after his resurrection He, on the fortieth day, ascends in the Spirit which quickened Him on high in heaven and there He makes the angels and authorities and powers subject to Himself.

The teaching of Jesus and the apostles agrees fully with the lesson of those events themselves.

Jesus came to earth to declare the Father and to make His name known among men (John 1:18 and 17:6). The name of father applied to God as creator of all things was also used by the pagans. This meaning of the term is supported also by Scripture at various places.8 Besides, the Old Testament several times uses the designation Father to refer to God's theocratic relationship to Israel because in His marvelous ability He has created and maintained that relationship (Deut. 32:6 and Isa. 63:16). But in the New Testament a gloriously new light is shed upon this name of father as applied to God. Jesus always indicates an essential difference between the relationship in which He Himself stands to God and that in which others, say the Jews or the disciples, stand to Him.

When, for example, He teaches the disciples, at their request, the "Our Father. . ." He says expressly "When ye pray, say. . . ." And when, after the resurrection, He announces His forthcoming ascension to Mary Magdalene, He says: "I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God" (John 20:17). In other words, God is His own Father (John 5:18). He knows the Son and loves Him in such a way and to such an extent as, reciprocally, only the Son can know and love the Father.9 Among the apostles, accordingly, God is constantly referred to as the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ (Eph. 1:3). This relationship between the Father and the Son did not develop in time but existed from eternity (John 1:1, 14; 17:24). God is therefore Father in the first place because in a very unique sense He is the Father of the Son. This is His original, special personal characteristic.

In a derived sense God is further called the Father of all creatures because He is their creator and sustainer (1 Cor. 8:6, and elsewhere). He is called the Father of Israel because Israel is His handiwork by virtue of election and calling (Deut. 32:6 and Isa. 64:8), and the Father of the

church and all believers because the love of the Father for the Son accrues to them (John 16:27 and 17:24) and because they have been accepted as His children and are born of Him through the Spirit (John 1:12 and Rom. 8:15).

The Father is therefore always the Father, the first person, He from whom in the being of God, in the counsel of God, and in all the works of creation and providence, redemption and sanctification, the initiative proceeds. He gave the Son to have life in Himself (John 5:26), and He sends out the Spirit (John 15:26). His is the election and the good pleasure (Matt 11:26 and Eph. 1:4, 9, 11).

From Him proceed the creation, providence, redemption, and renewal (Ps. 33:6 and John 3:16). To Him in a special sense the kingdom and the power and the glory accrue (Matt 6:13). He particularly bears the name of God in distinction from the Lord Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. Indeed, Christ Himself as Mediator calls Him His Father, not only, but also His God (Matt 27:46 and John 20:17) and Christ is Himself called the Christ of God.10 In a word, the first person of the Divine being is the Father because “of Him are all things” (1 Cor. 8:6).

If God is the Father, the inference is that there also is a Son who received life from Him and who shares His love. In the Old Testament the name of son of God was used for angels,11 for the people of Israel,12 and particularly too for the theocratic king of that people.13 But in the New Testament this name takes on a far profounder meaning.

For Christ is the Son of God in a very peculiar sense; He is highly exalted above angels and prophets (Matt. 13:32; 21:27; and 22:2), and He Himself says that no one can know the Son except the Father, and no one can know the Father except the Son (Matt. 11:27). In distinction from angels and men, He is the Father’s own Son (Rom. 8:32), the beloved Son in whom the Father is well pleased (Matt 3:17), the only-begotten Son (John 1:18) whom the Father gave to have life in Himself (John 5:26).

This very special, this unique, relationship between Father and Son did not develop in time by way of the supernatural conception of the Holy Spirit, or of the anointing at baptism, or of the resurrection and

ascension — though many have maintained this — but is a relationship which has existed from all eternity. The Son who in Christ assumed human nature was in the beginning with God as the Word (John 1:1). then already had the form of God (Phil. 2:6), was rich and clothed with glory (John 17:5, 24), was then already the brightness of God's glory and the express image of His person (Heb. 1:3), and precisely therefore He could in the fullness of time be sent out, given, and brought into the world. Hence, too, the creation (John 1:3 and Col. 1:16) and providence (Heb. 1:3) and the accomplishment of the whole of salvation (1 Cor. 1:30) are ascribed to Him.

He is not, as creatures are made or created, but is instead, the first-born of all creatures that is the Son who has the rank and rights of the first-born over against all creatures (Col 1:15) Thus He is also the first-born of the dead, the first-born of many brethren, and therefore among all and in all He is the first (Rom 8:29 and Col 1:18) And even though in the fullness of time, He assumed the form of a servant, He was nevertheless in the form of God. He was in all things like unto God the Father (Phil. 2:6):. in life (John 5:26), in knowledge (Matt. 11:27), in strength (John 1:3 and 5:21, 26), in honor (John 5:23). He is Himself God, to be praised above all else into eternity. Just as all things are of the Father, so they are also all through the Son (1 Cor. 8:6).

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Both, Father and Son, come together and are united in the Holy Spirit and by means of the Spirit dwell in all creatures. True, God is according to His nature a Spirit (John 4:24) and He is holy (Isa. 6:3); but the Holy Spirit is clearly distinguished from God as Spirit. Just as, in a comparative way of speaking, man is a spirit in his invisible nature and also possesses a spirit, by means of which he is aware of himself and is self-conscious, so God is a Spirit by nature and also possesses a Spirit, a Spirit which searches the depths of His being (1 Cor. 2:11).

As such the latter is called the Spirit of God or the Holy Spirit (Ps. 51:12 and Isa. 63:10-11). And this is done in distinction from the spirit of an angel or of a human being or of any other creature. But, although He is distinguished from God, from the Father and the Son, He stands in the most intimate of relationships with both. He is called the breath of

the Almighty (Job 33:4), the breath of His mouth (Ps. 33:6), is sent out by the Father and the Son (John 14:26 and 15:26), and He proceeds from both, not from the Father alone (John 15:26) but also from the Son, for He is also called the Spirit of Christ or the Spirit of the Father (Rom. 8:9).

Although the Holy Spirit is in that way given or sent or poured out by the Father and the Son, He often makes His appearance as a power or a gift which qualifies men for their calling or office. Thus, for example, the Holy Spirit is spoken of at various places in the Acts of the Apostles in connection with the gift of prophecy (8:15; 10:44; 11:15; 15:8; and 19:2).

But it is not warranted to infer from that fact, as many do, that the Holy Spirit is nothing more or other than a gift or power of God. At other places He definitely makes His appearance as a person, one who bears personal names, has personal characteristics, and does personal deeds. Thus in John 15:26 and 16:13, 14 (although the Greek of the word translated Spirit in our language is of neuter gender) Christ uses the masculine referent: He shall testify of Me and glorify Me. At the same place Christ calls Him Comforter, using the same name that is used of Christ in 1 John 2:1, a name translated advocate in the English version.

Besides these personal names all sorts of personal characteristics are ascribed to the Holy Spirit: for example, selfhood (Acts 132), self-consciousness (Acts 15:28), self-determination or will (1 Cor. 12:11). Besides He is credited with all kinds of personal activities, such as investigating (1 Cor. 2:11), listening (John 16:13), speaking (Rev. 2:17), teaching (John 14:26), praying (Rom. 8:27), and the like. And all this comes out most clearly and sublimely in the fact that He is placed on one and the same level with the Father and the Son (Matt. 28:19 and 2 Cor. 13:14).

The last point is the most important and it indicates the fact that the Holy Spirit is a person not merely but also very God. And Scriptures provide all the data which are necessary to make this confession. We have only to note that despite the distinction between God and His Spirit which was pointed out above, the two frequently exchange places in Scripture, so that it is quite the same whether God or His Spirit says

or does a thing. In Acts 5:3-4 the lying to the Holy Spirit is called a lying to God.

In 1 Corinthians 3:16 the believers are called God's temple, because the Spirit of God dwells in them. To these facts we must add that various Divine attributes, such as eternity (Heb. 9:14), omnipresence (Ps. 139:7), omniscience (1 Cor. 2:11), omnipotence (1 Cor. 12:4-6), and various Divine works, such as creation (Ps. 33:6), providence (Ps. 104:30), and redemption (John 3:3) are ascribed to the Holy Spirit quite as well as to the Father and the Son. Consequently He shares in the same glory with those two. He takes His place alongside of the Father and the Son as the cause of salvation (2 Cor. 13:14 and Rev. 1:4).

It is in His name also that we are baptized (Matt. 28:19), and blessed (2 Cor. 13:14). Moreover, the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit is an unpardonable sin (Matt. 12:31-32). In other words, just as all things are of the Father and through the Son, they all exist and rest in the Holy Spirit.

All of these elements of the doctrine of the trinity, spread throughout the Scriptures, were gathered together, so to speak, by Jesus in His baptismal command and by the apostles in their benedictions. After His resurrection and before His ascension, Christ bids His apostles to go out and make all peoples His disciples and to baptize them in the one name in which, nevertheless, three different subjects are revealed. Father, Son, and Spirit are in their oneness and their distinction the fullness of the perfected revelation of God. Just so, too, according to the apostles the whole good and salvation of man is contained in the love of the Father, the grace of the Son, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit.

The good pleasure, the foreknowledge, the power, the love, the kingdom, and the strength are the Father's. The Mediatorship, the reconciliation, the grace, and the redemption are the Son's. The regeneration, the renewal, the sanctification, the redemption are the Spirit's.

The relationship in which Christ stands to the Father corresponds fully with the relationship in which the Spirit stands to Christ. Just as the Son speaks nothing and does nothing of Himself but receives everything

from the Father (John 5:26 and 16:15), so the Holy Spirit takes everything from Christ (John 16:13-14). As the Son testifies of the Father and glorifies the Father (John 1:18 and 17:4, 6), so the Holy Spirit testifies of the Son and glorifies Him (John 15:26 and 16:14).

Just as no one comes to the Father but through the Son (John 14:6), so no one can say that Jesus is the Lord except through the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 12:3). Through the Spirit we have fellowship with the Father and the Son. It is in the Holy Spirit that God Himself through Christ dwells in our hearts. And if this all be so, then the Holy Spirit is, together with the Son and the Father, the one, true God, and is to be eternally lauded and praised as such.

* * * * *

To this instruction of the Holy Spirit the Christian church in its confession of the Trinity of God has said yea and amen. The church did not arrive at this rich and glorious confession without a hard and long struggle of the spirits. Centuries on end the profoundest experience of the spiritual life of the children of God and the doughtiest intellect of the fathers and teachers of the church went into the understanding of this point of the revelation of Scripture and to reproducing it purely in the confession of the church.

No doubt the church would not have succeeded in this effort at the laying of foundations, if it had not been led into the truth by the Holy Spirit, and if in Tertullian and Irenaeus, Athanasius and the three Cappadocians, Augustine, and Hillary, and so many others besides, it had not received the men who, endowed and equipped with unusual gifts of godliness and wisdom, kept to the straight course.

Nothing less than the peculiar essence of Christianity was at stake in this battle of the spirits. From two sides the church was exposed to the danger of permitting itself to be wrested from the firm foundation on which it was built and so to be submerged by the world.

On the one hand, there was the threat of Arianism, so called after the Alexandrian presbyter Arius who died in the year 336. Anus held that the Father alone was the eternal and true God, inasmuch as He alone in

the full sense of the word was ungenerated. Concerning the Son, the Logos, who in Christ had become flesh, he taught that, inasmuch as this Christ was generated, He could not be God but had to be a creature — a creature, it is true, who had been made before other creatures, but nevertheless was made as they were made through the will of God. And, in the same way, Arius held that the Holy Spirit was a creature or else a quality or attribute of God.

On the other side the party of Sabellianism was at work, so called after a certain Sabellius who lived in Rome at the beginning of the third century. Sabellius held that Father, Son, and Holy Spirit were but three names for one and the same God — a God who had made Himself known thus successively as His revelation progressed in various forms and manifestations. In the form of the Father, accordingly, God was operative as Creator and Lawgiver. Thereupon He worked as Redeemer in the form of the Son. And He now works in the form of the Holy Spirit as the Re-creator of the church.

While Arianism tries to maintain the oneness of God, by placing Son and Spirit outside the Divine being and reducing these to the level of creatures, Sabellianism tries to arrive at the same end by robbing the three persons of the Godhead of their independence. This it does by metamorphosing the persons into three successive modes of revelation of the same Divine Being. In the first tendency the Jewish, deistic, rationalistic mode of thinking comes to expression rather characteristically, and in the second the idea of Pagan pantheism and mysticism.

The moment the church set about giving itself a fairly clear account of the truth which was later stated in the confession of the Trinity of God, these two other tendencies arose alongside at the right and left, and they accompany the confession of the church to this day. Always and again the church and each one of its members must be on guard against doing injustice on the one hand to the oneness of the Divine Being, and on the other to the three Persons within that Being. The oneness may not be sacrificed to the diversity, nor the diversity to the oneness. To maintain both in their inseparable connection and in their pure relationship, not only theoretically but also in practical life, is the calling of all believers.

In order to satisfy this requirement, the Christian church and Christian theology in the early period made use of various words and expressions which cannot be found literally in the Holy Scriptures. The church began to speak of the essence of God and of three persons in that essence of being. It spoke of the Triune and the trinitarian, or of essential and personal characteristics, of the eternal generation of the Son and of the proceeding of the Holy Spirit from the Father and from the Son, and the like.

There is no reason at all why the church and the Christian theology should not use such terms and modes of expression. For the Holy Scripture was not given to the church by God to be thoughtlessly repeated but to be understood in all its fullness and riches, and to be restated in its own language in order that in this way it might proclaim the mighty works of God. Moreover, such terms and expressions are necessary in order to maintain the truth of Scripture over against its opponents and to secure it against misunderstanding and error. And history has taught throughout the centuries that a lighthearted disapproval and rejection of these names and modes of expression leads to various departures from the confession.

At the same time, we should, in the use of these terms, always remember that they are of human origin and therefore limited, defective, fallible. The church fathers always acknowledged this.

For example, they held that the term persons which was used to designate the three ways of existence in the Divine Being did not do justice to the truth in the matter but served as an aid towards maintaining the truth and cutting off error. The word was chosen, not because it was accurate in every respect, but because no other and better was to be found. In this matter again the word is far behind the thought, and the thought is far behind the actuality. Although we cannot preserve the actuality in any but this inadequate form, we may never forget that it is the reality itself and not the word that counts. In the dispensation of glory other and better expressions will certainly be laid upon our lips.

* * * * *

The reality itself which is concerned in the confession of the holy trinity

is of the highest importance, both for the mind and the heart.

For it is by that confession that the church maintains, in the first place, both the unity and the diversity in the being of God. The Divine Being is one: there is but one Being that is God and that may be called God. In creation and redemption, in nature and grace, in church and world, in state and society, everywhere and always we are concerned with one, same, living, and true God. The unity of the world, of mankind, of truth, of virtue, of justice, and of beauty depends upon the unity of God. The moment that unity of God is denied or under stressed, the door is open to polytheism.

But this unity or oneness of God is, according to Scripture and the confession of the church, not a contentless unity, nor a solitariness, but a fulness of life and strength. It comprises difference, or distinction, or diversity. It is that diversity which comes to expression in the three persons or modes of being of God. These three persons are not merely three modes of revelation.

They are modes of being. Father, Son, and Spirit share one and the same Divine nature and characteristics. They are one being. Nevertheless each has His own name, His own particular characteristic, by which He is distinguished from the others. The Father alone has fatherhood, the Son alone has generation, and the Spirit alone possesses the quality of proceeding from both.

To that order of existence in the Divine Being the order of the three persons in all Divine work corresponds. The Father is He from whom, the Son is He through whom, and the Spirit is He in whom all things are. All things in the creation, and in the redemption, or re-creation, come from the Father, through the Son and the Spirit. And in the Spirit and through the Son they are come back to Him. It is to the Father that we are particularly indebted, therefore, for his electing love, to the Son for His redeeming grace, and to the Spirit for his regenerative and renewing power.

In the second place, the church in maintaining this confession, takes a strong position over against the heresies of deism (belief in God without revelation) and pantheism (polytheism) and of Judaism and Paganism.

Always there is that dual tendency in the human heart: the tendency to think of God as distant and removed and to think of self and world as independent of God, and the tendency to draw God down into the world, to identify Him with the world, and so to deify the self and the world.

When the first tendency prevails in us we come to the point of thinking that we can do without God in nature, in our calling, in our business, in our science and art, and also in the work of redemption. And, if the second tendency prevails in us, we change the glory of God into the image of some creature or other, deify the world, the sun, the moon and the stars, art, science, or the state, and in the creature, usually conceived in our image, we worship our own greatness. In the first instance God is only afar off; in the second He is only nearby. In the first, He is outside of the world, above it, free from it; in the second, He is inside it and identical with it.

But the church confesses both: God is above the world, distinguished from it in essence, and yet He is with His whole being present in it and at no point in space or time separated from it. He is both afar off and nearby. He is both highly exalted above all creatures and at the same time deeply condescending to them all. He is our Creator who brought us into being by His will as creatures distinct from Him in kind. He is our Redeemer who saves us, not by our works but by the riches of His grace. He is our Sanctifier who dwells in us as in His temple. As the Triune God He is one God and is above us, for us, and in us.

Finally, in the third place, this confession of the church is also of the greatest importance for the spiritual life. Quite unjustifiably it is sometimes maintained that the doctrine of the trinity is merely a philosophically abstracted dogma and that it possesses no value for religion and life. The Reformed Confession of Faith takes an entirely different view of this. In Article XI of that Confession the church stated that God is one in essence and three in persons.

This we know from the witness of Holy Scripture, and from the activities of the three persons, especially those which we sense within us. True, we do not base our faith in the trinity on feeling and experience; but when we believe it, we notice that the doctrine stands in

intimate relationship with the spiritual experience of the children of God.

For the believers come to know the workings of the Father, the Creator of all things, He who gave them life, and breath, and all things. They learn to know Him as the Lawgiver who gave out His holy commandments in order that they should walk in them.

They learn to know Him as the Judge who is provoked to terrible wrath by all the unrighteousness of men and who in no sense holds the guilty guiltless. And they learn to know Him, finally, as the Father who for Christ's sake is their God and Father, on whom they trust so far that they do not doubt but that He will supply for every need of body and soul, and that He will convert all evil which accrues to them in this vale of tears into good. They know that He can do this as Almighty God and that He wants to do it as a faithful Father. Hence they confess: I believe in God, the Father, the Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth.

Thus, too, they learn to know in themselves the workings of the Son, He who is the only-begotten of the Father, conceived in Mary of the Holy Spirit. They learn to know Him as their highest Prophet and Teacher, He who has perfectly revealed to them the secret counsel and will of God in the matter of their redemption. They learn to know Him as their only High priest, who has redeemed them by the one sacrifice of His body, and who still constantly intercedes for them with the Father.

They learn to know Him as their eternal King, who rules them with His Word and Spirit and who shelters and preserves them in their achieved redemption. Hence they confess: I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only-begotten Son, our Lord.

And they also learn to recognize in themselves the workings of the Holy Spirit, He who regenerates them and leads them into all truth. They learn to know Him as the Operator of their faith, He who through that faith causes them to share in Christ and all His benefits. They learn to know Him as the Comforter, He who prays in them with unutterable longings and who testifies with their spirit that they are children of God. They learn to know Him as the pledge of their eternal inheritance, He who preserves them until the day of their redemption. And they

therefore confess: I believe also in the Holy Spirit.

Thus the confession of the trinity is the sum of the Christian religion. Without it neither the creation nor the redemption nor the sanctification can be purely maintained.

Every departure from this confession leads to error in the other heads of doctrine, just as a mistaken representation of the articles of faith can be traced back to a misconception of the doctrine of the trinity. We can truly proclaim the mighty works of God only when we recognize and confess them as the one great work of Father, Son, and Spirit.

In the love of the Father, the grace of the Son, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit is contained the whole salvation of men.

**The Divine Trinity*

CHAPTER SEVEN

The Problem with Mormonism: The Denial of the Triune God and the Affirmation of Polytheism

Mormonism avows that the material cosmos, humanity, and gods are all eternal. I argue that the LDS (Mormon) view of polytheism has many theological,

philosophical, and ontological difficulties. They do not have an unchanging foundation for unity since all the LDS deities change and progress, so that they cannot arbitrate any conflict or disagreement between themselves. If this were true this would result in wide chaos and disorder, yet our universe runs in precision. I contend that the false doctrines of Mormonism have no scriptural support and they are philosophically incongruous as well.

> God himself was once as we are now, and is an exalted man, and sits enthroned in yonder heavens... I am going to tell you how God came to be God. We have imagined and have supposed that God was God from all eternity. I will refute that idea... (Mormon prophet Joseph Smith).
>
> Remember that God, our heavenly Father, was perhaps once a child, and mortal like we ourselves, and rose step by step in the scale of progress (Mormon Apostle).[1]

Mormonism Denies That God alone is Eternal

> The Gods, organized and formed [not created] the heavens and the earth (Abraham 4:1).

Mormonism asserts that the universe, men, and gods are all eternal. If man has always been, and some men have always been progressing into godhood: What came first, a god or a man? If a man was first, who made the man? A god? If a god came first, then from what did he progress in this eternal progression of gods? It's easy to see that not only do the false doctrines of Mormonism have no scriptural support; they are philosophically mistaken as well.

> The LORD is righteous in all His ways, gracious in all His works. The LORD is near to all who call upon Him, to all who call upon Him in truth (Psalms 145:17-18).

Various Questions for Mormons

> As man is, God once was, as God is, man may become (Mormon Apostle Lorenzo Snow).

- If the result of faith and a godly life is godhood as Mormonism claims,

why did Moroni change from a man to an angel and not a god?

- In LDS theology: How did the Holy Spirit become a God without a resurrected physical body of flesh and bones?

- According to Mormon doctrine, at what point in time did Jesus Christ become a God?

- When do Jesus Christ and the Holy Ghost receive planets to be Lord over within the religious system of Mormonism?

Polytheism: Many gods

> I wish to declare: I have always and in all congregations when I have preached on the subject of the Deity, it has been the plurality of Gods (Joseph Smith).
>
> Gods exist, and we better strive to prepare to be one with them (Brigham Young).[2]
>
> The Gods, organized and formed the heavens and the earth (Abraham 4:1).

Joseph Fielding Smith expelled the following out of his begrimed soul: “I will preach a plurality of Gods... I have always declared God to be a distinct personage, Jesus Christ a separate and distinct personage from God the Father, and that the Holy Ghost was a distinct personage of Spirit: and these three constitute three distinct personages and Gods... God the Father had a Father, you may suppose that he had a Father also.” In contrast, Cornelius Van Til councils that polytheism leads to vanity and emptiness because “men have felt a lack in the gods that are made with man’s hands and according to men’s imaginations” (*IST*). Only the Most high God can bless men with joy, peace, fulfillment, and hope (Romans 15:13). A multitude of insignificant spurious gods cannot offer any true hope. Idols can only bring despair.

The LDS take on polytheism (most Mormons will not admit that they are polytheists—they usually profess to only worship the god of this world and no other gods) has many problems. They do not have an unchanging foundation for unity (all the LDS deities change and progress) so that they cannot arbitrate any

conflict or disagreement between themselves. If this were true this would result in wide chaos and disorder, yet our universe runs in precision.

> Our Father in heaven at one time passed through a life and death and is an exalted man... our Father had a father and so on (LDS Prophet Joseph Fielding Smith).

An Insurmountable Problem

I will cry out to God Most High, to God who performs all things for me (Psalms 57:2).

If God the Father has a god, as Smith and other LDS prophets taught, and this god has a god, and his god has a god, how can one claim to worship the Most High God? The true and living God is the Most High. The Latter-day Saint god is not the Most High God, consequently, he is not God.

The Problem with Mormonism: Their god/gods

> Gods exist, and we better strive to prepare to be one with them (Brigham Young).[3]

Mormonism cannot provide the required *a priori* essentials for immutable universals (the laws of logic, mathematical truths, moral law, etc.) because their god is limited to time and space, and wasn't always a god. The LDS god/gods change and lack universal power so they lack the capacity to account for immutable universals. The Triune God revealed in the Bible is the basis for the laws of logic. The laws of logic are unchanging, transcendent, universal, and immaterial and only the Most High God who is unchanging, transcendent, universal in reach, and immaterial can provide the mandatory truth conditions for laws of logic. Thus, it's impossible for Mormonism to be true.

Van Til remarked that "God is absolute. He is autonomous" (*IST*). People cannot be autonomous (not subject to the rule or authority of another) and the LDS notion of their god cannot be autonomous. For strict autonomy one must have aseity, self-rule, and supreme sovereignty which only the true God has. Much of mankind has rebelled against the authority of God and that rebellion is culminated in LDS eternal progression theology. Men seek the crowning glory that is only due God. Van Til comments: "The natural man virtually attributes to

himself that which true Christian theology attributes to the self-contained God" (*IST*).

Those who puff out their chests pinned with little black badges will never become a god, and lacking repentance, their destiny is bleak. Christians must speak the truth in love and tear off the masks of pride and self-sufficiency of LDS members and other nonbelievers. We must do this with patience, respect, hard truth, and compassion. If it were not for God's grace, the Christian could also be stuck in a system that blasphemes the thrice holy God.

Contend for the Truth

Additionally, many Mormons have a persecution complex that can rise up when a Christian discusses the errors of their faith. The Christian should seek to speak the truth in love, but speak the truth even if it hurts the feelings of the Mormon. Gentleness and patience yes, but remember, unlike most faiths the LDS religion propagates sheer blasphemy (men can become gods; God the Father was once a sinful man; etc.).

> They will perish, but You will endure; yes, they will all grow old like a garment; like a cloak You will change them, and they will be changed. But You are the same, and Your years will have no end (Psalms 102:26-27).

Van Til's elucidation that with "the self-contained ontological Trinity we have the foundational concept of a Christian theory of being, of knowledge, and action. Christians are interested in showing to those who believe in no God or in a God, a beyond, some ultimate or absolute, that it is this God in whom they must believe lest all meaning should disappear" summarizes the proper goal of the Christian witnessing to a Mormon.

The Problem for All Imperfect Men

> Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ (Romans 5:1).
>
> Now to him who works, the wages are not counted as grace but as debt. But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness

(Romans 4:4-5).

The problem for flawed men is that heaven is perfect, God is holy, and nothing unholy and unrighteous will enter God's pristine heaven. Biblical justification is the only solution to man's sin and Adam's disobedience. Justification forensically renders the believer righteous and gives him peace with heaven. Without justification, the unbeliever has no peace with God. We must never assert that there is peace for the LDS member when there is no peace between the ungodly and God. Without justification by grace alone, there can be no real peace. "Imputation" is the biblical term for the positive element of justification. Through God's grace by faith, the believer is declared righteous.

Christ preached: "Be perfect, even as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Matthew 5:48). The law demands perfect obedience—a perfection equal to the Father's perfection. Nobody except Christ has accomplished this, so we need a perfect righteousness that is not our own. We need to be justified by the works and righteousness of another. Justification is a forensic term that speaks of the Christian's legal position before God. The believer is declared righteous despite his unrighteous deeds. The justified are given an alien righteousness, a righteousness that is not their own but is imputed unto them by faith. It is the flawless righteousness of Jesus Christ. Not having a righteousness of our own ensures that God gets all the glory.

Saved by Grace Alone: Grace That Does Not Remain Alone

> But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God, and justification, and sanctification, and redemption: that, as it is written, "He who glories, let him glory in the LORD" (1 Corinthians 1:30-31).
>
> But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness (Romans 4:5).

The Mormon ought to be reminded, with care, of his unrighteous position before a perfect God. As Thomas Boston puts it, "We cry down the law when it comes to our justification... The Law drives us to the Gospel that we are justified, then sends us to the Law again to show us our duty now that we are justified." A Mormon charge that often comes to the Christian is: So we can get saved and just go on sinning since we are saved by grace alone? One is saved only by

God's loving grace, but all those who are genuinely saved, are to obey God's commandments out of gratitude. We follow God's law not to get saved, or remain saved, we follow it out of love for God because He saved us. Since the Christian is utterly thankful for Christ dying and rising from the grave, we seek to follow God's word out of gratitude.

> But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior, that having been justified by His grace we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life. This is a faithful saying, and these things I want you to affirm constantly, that those who have believed in God should be **careful to maintain good works**. These things are good and profitable to men (Titus 3:4-8).

God is Perfectly Holy Men are Not

Ralph Venning annunciates the righteousness of God with this: "God is holy, without spot or blemish, or any such thing, without wrinkle, or anything like it... He is holy, that He cannot sin himself... He is without iniquity, and of purer eyes than to behold iniquity... God is holy, all holy, only holy, altogether holy." Our sin is real and God's holiness is pure and true. The only way one enters His perfect heaven is in perfect holiness: no man has that. We need our sins removed and replaced with a perfect righteousness. This is what God demands and God supplies when one puts his faith in Christ.

The Triune God does exist and He did send His Son to die for His people. The contrary is impossible. The truth of the Gospel is that you must flee from wickedness and put all your trust in Jesus Christ and His atoning death and resurrection.

Cast your whole soul upon Christ. Flee to His mercy, love, and truth. He will not only forgive you, but He will secure you since He will never leave you nor forsake you. Jesus died on the cross for sinners and rose from the grave: Come to Christ and find pardon, hope, joy, and love.

> So when Peter saw it, he responded to the people: "Men of Israel, why do

you marvel at this? Or why look so intently at us, as though by our own power or godliness we had made this man walk? The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of our fathers, glorified His Servant Jesus, whom you delivered up and denied in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let Him go. But you denied the Holy One and the Just, and asked for a murderer to be granted to you, and killed the Prince of life, whom God raised from the dead, of which we are witnesses. And His name, through faith in His name, has made this man strong, whom you see and know. Yes, the faith which comes through Him has given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all.“Yet now, brethren, I know that you did it in ignorance, as did also your rulers. But those things which God foretold by the mouth of all His prophets, that the Christ would suffer, He has thus fulfilled. Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, (Acts 3:12-19).

CHAPTER NOTES

1. Orson Hyde, *Journal of Discourses*, 1:123.
2. Brigham Young, *Journal of Discourses*, 7:238.
3. Ibid.

For more see the Innovative eBook *Christian Philosophy and Presuppositions Examine Mormon Theology* **and** Robinson’s numerous books on Atheism, Cults, Philosophy, and World Religions at:
https://www.smashwords.com/profile/view/MichaelRobinson

CHAPTER EIGHT

An Incarnation Prophecy: Proof for God

For unto us a Child is born,
Unto us a Son is given;
And the government will be upon His shoulder.
And His name will be called
Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace
לְמַרְבֵּ ה) הַמִּשְׂרָה וּלְשָׁלוֹם אֵי ן -קֵ ץ, עַ ל -כִּסֵּא דָוִד וְעַ ל -מַמְלַכְתּוֹ ,לם רבה
לְהָכִין אֹתָהּ וּלְסַעֲדָה ,בְּמִשְׁפָּט וּבְצְדָקָ ה ;מֵעַתָּ ה,
עַ ד -עוֹלָ ם, קִנְאַת יְהוָה צְבָאוֹ ת, תַּעֲשֶׂ ה -זֹּאת (Isaiah 9:6: 700
B.C.).

Emmanuel …the Child is born … justly is he called Wonderful, for he is both God and man. His love is the wonder of angels and glorified saints. He is the Counsellor, for he knew the counsels of God from eternity; and he gives counsel to men, in which he consults our welfare. He is the Wonderful Counsellor; none teaches like him. He is God, the mighty One. Such is the work of the Mediator, that no less power than that of the mighty God could bring it to pass. He is God, one with the Father. As the Prince of Peace, he reconciles us to God; he is the Giver of peace in the heart and conscience; and when his kingdom is fully established, men shall learn war no more. The government shall be upon him; he shall bear the burden of it. Glorious things are spoken of Christ's government. There is no end to the increase of its peace, for the happiness of its subjects shall last forever (Matthew Henry on Isaiah 9:6).

Predictions Fulfilled in the Birth of Jesus Christ: Declaring the Things to Come

Let them bring forth and show us what will happen; let them show the former things, what they were… Or declare to us things to come.

> Show the things that are to come hereafter… Thus says the LORD … I am the First and I am the Last; besides Me, there is no God. And who can proclaim as I do? … I have declared the former things from the beginning; … Suddenly I did them, and they came to pass... Even from the beginning I have declared it to you; before it came to pass I proclaimed it to you... (Isaiah 41:22-23, 44:6-8, 48:3-20).

An important segment of "proof" for Christianity is the messianic prophecies that were fulfilled by Jesus Christ. The Old Testament foretold the coming of the Messiah in precise detail. The Old Testiment (*Tanakh*) was written centuries before the coming of Jesus and predicted more than three hundred prophecies about Him including His birth. No other founder of any religion can provide a similar prophetic record of their life written down centuries before their birth. Joseph Smith, Ellen G. White, David Berg, Mohammad, and Buddha did not supply a widely transmitted, pre-existing written record that accurately predicted the specific details of their lives. Isaiah 9:6 is one of my favorite prophecies and serves as a wonderful text for celebrating the birth of Jesus. In the text the prophet Isaiah reveals that the future Messiah will be a "Son given" (see John 3:16) and "Mighty God" (see Revelation 1:7-8). The baby boy will be born as God manifested in the flesh—what a glorious truth to rejoice in.

> But Saul increased all the more in strength, and confounded the Jews who dwelt in Damascus, *proving* that this Jesus is the Christ (Acts 9:22; italics mine).

The three hundred prophecies of the coming Messiah were predicted and predestined by God (Acts 2:23). The Bible foretold events and historical details about the coming of Jesus prior to His birth. All these predictions came true in the birth, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth. No other spiritual leader or prophet had predictive material written about their lives recorded before they were born. Jesus Christ had more than three hundred predictions about His life that were fulfilled in exact detail. An agent on The *X-Files* once said: "The best way to predict the future is to invent it." And only one with extreme power (God's omnipotence qualifies) to perfectly arrange history could create a future where one man could fulfill hundreds of predictions—most of which were out of a normal man's control to arrange.

Christ's Virgin Birth Foretold

> Then He (Jesus) said to them, “These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me” (Luke 24:44).

Christ’s virgin birth was predicted about seven hundred years before He was born in Isaiah chapter seven verse fourteen: “So the Lord Himself shall give you a sign. Behold, the virgin will conceive and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call His name Emmanuel.” His place of birth was recorded in Micah 5:2, hundreds of years prior to the event: “And you, Bethlehem ... out of you He shall come forth to Me, to become Ruler in Israel, He whose goings forth have been ... from eternity.” The exact date of His entry in Jerusalem was predicted by Daniel in chapter nine. God prophesied the Palm Sunday event recorded in Zechariah 9:9, “Rejoice greatly … O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your King is coming to you; He is just and having salvation, lowly and riding on a donkey, a colt, the foal of a donkey.”

Christ’s death on the cross was foretold long before that method of execution was even invented. Psalm 22:1-16 announced the crucifixion hundreds of years before it happened: “I am a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised by the people. All who see me laugh me to scorn; they shoot out the lip; they shake the head, saying, He trusted on the LORD; let Him deliver him; let Him rescue him, since He delights in him! … I am poured out like water, and all my bones are spread apart; my heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels and you have brought me into the dust of death. For dogs have circled around me; the band of spoilers have hemmed me in, they pierced my hands and my feet.”

An unknown author tells the story of a secular psychologist, Jewish by race, who, on hearing the prophecy of Christ’s passion and death (Isaiah 52:13-53:12), answered: “What’s so impressive about that? Anyone standing at the foot of the cross could have written that.” He was amazed to learn that the passage had been written many centuries before Jesus’ crucifixion. That was the beginning of the end of his introverted secularism. Today that doctor is a Christian.

Powerful Mathematical Proof for God in Christ

Utilizing a mere eight of these prophecies concerning the Messiah, Peter Stoner

applied the science of probability to demonstrate the chance that eight predictions would be fulfilled in one person. It was found to be 1 in 100,000,000,000,000,000. When Stoner's findings were submitted to the American Scientific Affiliation for confirmation, the Executive Council found them "dependable and accurate in regards to the scientific material presented."

It is more than implausible that 1 in 100,000,000,000,000,000 could be fulfilled as a consequence of mere happenstance. In the book *Evidence That Demands A Verdict*, Josh McDowell writes that one could take 100,000,000,000,000,000 silver dollars and cover the state of Texas with them and mark one of the silver dollars in order to bury it and conceal it. You then let another person with a blindfold roam around Texas as long he desired with the goal to stop and pick up the one marked coin. He is to stop at a place of his own choosing and then pick up one silver dollar. He would have the same chance of selecting the correct coin as one person would have of fulfilling just eight of the 333 prophecies about the Messiah—Jesus fulfilled them all!

Tacit Assumptions and the Acceptance of Truth

The biblical witness concerning the resurrection of Christ is convincing to me and other believers as well. But non-Christians have a different set of background assumptions which complicates the communication of the evidence. The scriptures do not instruct us to press only the brute evidence, but to contend for the universal requisite of the truth of Christian theism. God does not probably exist. It is impossible for God not to exist inasmuch as He is the precondition for all intelligent exchanges. The immaterial, universally powerful, and unchanging God provides the necessary preconditions for the use of immaterial, universal, unchanging laws of logic (A = A; A ~~A). Christianity is the worldview that provides human reasoning a foundation for its proper function. All human thought requires the employment and assumption of the universal and invariant laws of logic. The transcendent, immaterial, and unchanging God, who came to men in Bethlehem, provides the necessary truth conditions for the actuality of immaterial, universal, and unchanging laws of logic.

In addition, it is God’s grace alone, revealing the truth from scripture, which will dislodge unbelievers from the self-defeating nature of their own intellectual tacit assumptions and precommitments. Thus, let us lay aside any excessive worries regarding unbelievers. Let us lift up the glory of Christ now and throughout the year—the Mighty God came as Emmanuel to save men from their sins.

> These great things for the church, shall be done by the Messiah, Emmanuel. The Child is born; it was certain; and the church, before Christ came in the flesh, benefitted by his undertaking. It is a prophecy of him and of his kingdom, which those that waited for the Consolation of Israel read with pleasure. This Child was born for the benefit of us men, of us sinners, of all believers, from the beginning to the end of the world (Matthew Henry).

See my book that defends the historical truth of the life, death, and resurrection of *Jesus Killing Christ: Contesting Trendy Critics* **on Amazon at http://amzn.to/18mzR08**

CHAPTER NINE

Allah: The Foundation of Islam is Deficient

> The Muslim concept of God is rationally objectionable. … Islam has a morally deficient concept of God.[1]

The Triune God is the transcendental necessity who provides the preconditions for knowledge of reality. Allah, devoid of true immutability and fixed honesty, cannot supply the transcendental prerequisites that are needed for the law of non-contradiction, objective moral values, and the additional universal operational features of human experience.

To rightly understand reality one must have universals to generalize the particulars (the one and the many). This implies that the strict unity of Allah cannot, essentially, supply the general and universal realities that must be present for the necessary and unavoidable transcendental conditions listed beforehand—those issues are merely the opening rational difficulties with Islam.

Christianity is the Foundation for Reason

> [W]hen one reflects on Islam's unitarianism, fatalism, moral concepts, lack of redemption, etc. Islam can be internally critiqued on its own presuppositions.[2]
>
> My first principle is this: Christ laid down one definite system of truth which the world must believe without qualification.[3]
>
> All truth is given by revelation, either general or special, and it must be received by reason. Reason is the God-given means for discovering the truth that God discloses, whether in his world or his Word. While God wants to reach the heart with truth, he does not bypass the mind.[4]
>
> Heart commitments aren't neutral.[5]

All men, from every religious or non-religious position, bring a personal view of reality to the investigation, examination, and affirmation of human experience; their worldview (bundle of presuppositions) interprets reality and forms their theory of knowledge. Thus one's ethical and rational precommitments determine how they view history, science, law, and human relationships.

A person's worldview can be detected by asking the following questions:

- What can human beings know and what in fact do they know (epistemology)?
- What makes up reality (its nature, composition, power, and motion) and how did it come to exist and what sustains it (metaphysics)?
- Do moral absolutes subsist (ethics)?

- Does certain and immutable truth exist (epistemology)?

The God revealed in the Bible is the foundation and source of all meaning, purpose, and rationality. He is the absolute ontic source to ground what men know. Yahweh is the one who makes rationality and argument possible. Without the Triune God, men cannot account for anything in the universe including the rational tools used in all argumentation. The Muslim, in reality, has no argument. Yahweh must live or we could not argue at all.

There must be many things we presuppose in order to communicate with others; all men come to the knowledge enterprise with some tacit understanding. All those basic assumptions make dialogue possible. And without presupposing the existence of God, one could not account for communication. Language and communication would be impossible without the biblical God since communication utilizes immutable universals which God grounds; besides we do communicate, and we would have to communicate even to attempt to negate Yahweh's existence. Allah fails to account for these immutable universals, Allah lacks real ontic attributes and he deceives, thus he lacks explanatory power to account for communication.

The remarkable thing about this truth is that it grows in power when the non-Christian attacks it. The argument grows in force because the unbeliever must use the laws of logic to make an intellectual challenge. Yet these laws of truth require the Triune God for an ultimate explanation and epistemic accounting. Christianity supplies the necessary pre-environment for the laws of logic. So every time a non-Christian rationally attacks Christian theism, in one sense, he is demonstrating that Yahweh lives. Without Christian theism, no rational assertion could be made. Every time a person says anything, he is increasing the force of the argument that the God revealed in the Bible lives.

The old science-fiction film that features an energy monster illustrates this point. The monster grows larger and stronger every time someone uses a weapon in attempting to kill it. The energy monster is ready to take over America so the President orders the army to hit it with an atomic bomb. The troops launch the bomb, and as the mushroom cloud slowly starts to dissipate and the smoke clears, they are stunned by the horror of horrors—the colossal monster has survived. Not only has it survived, it now is ten times larger.

The energy monster absorbed the massive energy from the bomb and did not get

weaker but grew in size and strength. Similarly, non-Christians will attempt to fire intellectual weapons at the argument (i.e., Universal operational features require Yahweh: the Triune God. There are universal operational features. Ergo, Yahweh) that contends that Yahweh exists. Nevertheless, all their attacks will only be consumed by the truth, while the defense of the truth grows stronger and larger since the attacks utilize the universal operational features which Christian theism supplies.

There is nothing a Muslim can assert without ultimately relying on Christian theism, since the Triune God provides the necessary truth conditions for the laws of reason (universal immutables). Thus the non-Christian's argument will presuppose Yahweh.

> Christianity offers the Triune God, the absolute personality, containing all the attributes enumerated, as the God in whom we believe ... Any other sort of God is no God at all and to prove that some other sort of God exists is, in effect, to prove that no God exists.[6]

The Triune God is the preexisting foundation for all consideration and discussion. Even Kant, like a man awakened at night from a deep slumber, stumbled upon something when he wrote, "I think to myself merely the relation of a being, in itself completely unknown to me, to the greatest possible systematic unity of the universe." He has a relation to a being—God—that is "completely unknown" to himself; of course he does know at least that about this being. Thus he refutes his notion that he does not know anything about God. Kant merely staggers in his tired state and falls to the floor in his semi-agnosticism. Conversely, Kant was correct when he stated that God brings about the "greatest possible unity in the universe."

The truth of the biblical God supplies the foundation for employing logic and our empirical senses. The Triune God unifies all the diversity in the universe and all its particulars.

Know Assuredly

> God has raised up [Christ], having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be held by it. … Therefore let all the house of Israel *know assuredly* that God has

> made this same Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ (Acts 2:24 & 36; italics mine).
>
> But our God is in heaven; He does whatever He pleases (Psalm 115:3).
>
> If the real is … intelligible, God exists. But the real is … intelligible. Therefore, God exists.[7]

A simple argument based on the Christian worldview is that the Triune God is sufficient to account for everything. Yahweh, as the precondition for all things, has the ontic capacity to account for the laws of logic, communication, and knowledge. The material mutable cosmos is outright ontologically undersupplied to account for the laws of thought for these laws are immaterial immutable universals. This is an assured argument that rests on the ontic sufficiency of the Triune God.

- Islam = a knowledge claim.
- Knowledge presupposes and requires the LNC.
- The LNC presupposes and requires Christian theism.
- Islam, as a knowledge claim, presupposes and requires Christian theism.

Bahnsen contends that any "logical argument against the existence of God affirms the existence of [the Triune] God. All atheists and agnostics assume the laws of logic, but cannot account for them. A physical world cannot produce nonphysical laws of logic. If there is such a thing as proof then there is logic, thus there is a God."[8]

When one deploys the "argument from the impossibility of the contrary" it increases in power when the non-Christian assaults it. The argument rises in force because the non-Christian must use the laws of thought to make his intellectual challenge. These laws require Christian theism. Christianity supplies the necessary pre-essentials for the laws of thought. Consequently every time a non-Christian rationally attacks the Triune God he is, unintentionally, signifying that the Triune God lives. He is trying to dig a hole by shoveling more dirt into the opening. Without Yahweh, he cannot make a formal accounting for any rational assertion.

> Therefore let all the house of Israel *know assuredly* that God has

> made this Jesus whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ (Acts 2:36; italics mine).

An Unchanging Foundation

> Consider what you owe to his (God's) immutability. Though you have changed a thousand times, He has not changed once; though you have shifted your intentions, and your will, yet He has not once swerved from His eternal purpose, but still has held you fast.[9]

> God is unchanging in his character, will, and covenant promises.[10]

A changing foundation (Allah, humanity, or the cosmos) for epistemology (knowledge) makes unchanging knowledge impossible. If the ground for knowledge is not fixed, it can change in the future. The Christian has a worldview that delivers immense explanatory clout and a changeless basis for knowledge; Islam lacks such since Allah has no real knowable attributes, including the attribute of immutability.

> Allah was deceptive, for Allah is the best of deceivers (Sura 3:54).

> None deems himself safe from Allah's deception except men that perish (Sura 7:99).

> God is not human, that he should lie (Numbers 23:19).

> *Al Takeyya* (also spelled *al-Taqiyya*) is an Islamic concept allowing Muslims to deny or hide their faith when forced to do so to avoid harm. The Arabic word, *Takeyya*, means "to prevent," or guard against. This principle gives Muslims the liberty to lie under certain circumstances.[11]

Islam posits the notion that Allah can deceive and lie. That he is not bound to truth telling. It would appear under Islam, in principle, there cannot be a ground for a universal prohibition against immoral deception and lying. Denying a universal while using particulars is more than difficult; and, the denial of a moral law prohibiting lying yields rational and communication infeasibilities. Additionally, the conception of Allah as the foundation of Islam, fails to account for all the universal operational features in human experience; thus, Islam is

deficient and miscarries as a coherent worldview.

For more check out my book *Christian Presuppositions Refute the Islamic Concept of Allah* at: https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/101585

Chapter Notes

1. William Lane Craig: http://bit.ly/1a1YuWc
2. Greg Bahnsen: http://bit.ly/1fnwQTj
3. Tertullian: *Prescription Against Heretics*.
4. Jonathan Edwards: *Religious Affections*.
5. Wiliam Edgar: *Reasons of the Heart*.
6. Cornelius Van Til: *Defense of Faith*.
7. Bernard Lonergan: *Insight*.
8. Greg Bahnsen: *Bahnsen and Stein Debate*.
9. Charles Spurgeon, *Sermons 1856, Vol. Two*.
10. Louis Berkhof: *Systematic Theology*.
11. *Islamic Review*.

CHAPTER TEN

Refuting Mormon Polytheism

Polytheism: There Are Many gods

> I wish to declare: I have always and in all congregations when I have preached on the subject of the Deity, it has been the plurality of Gods.[1]
>
> Gods exist, and we better strive to prepare to be one with them (Brigham Young, *Journal of Discourses*, 7:238).
>
> The Gods, organized and formed the heavens and the earth (Abraham 4:1).
>
> It is the verdict of both history and biblical theology that Joseph Smith's religion is a polytheistic nightmare of garbled doctrines draped with the garment of Christian terminology. This fact, if nothing else, brands it (the Mormon religion) as a non-Christian cult system.[2]

Joseph Fielding Smith expels this out of his begrimed soul: "I will preach a plurality of Gods... I have always declared God to be a distinct personage, Jesus Christ a separate and distinct personage from God the Father, and that the Holy Ghost was a distinct personage of Spirit: and these three constitute three distinct personages and Gods... God the Father had a Father, you may suppose that he had a Father also."[3] Van Til councils that polytheism leads to vanity and emptiness because "men have felt a lack in the gods that are made with man's hands and according to men's imaginations."[4] Only the Most high God can bless men with joy, peace, fulfillment, and hope (Romans 15:13). A multitude of insignificant spurious gods cannot offer any true hope. Idols can only bring despair.

The LDS take on polytheism (most Mormons will not admit that they are polytheists—they usually profess to only worship the god of this world and no other gods) has many problems. They do not have an unchanging foundation for unity (all the LDS deities change and progress) so that they cannot arbitrate any conflict or disagreement between themselves. If this were true this would result in wide chaos and disorder, yet our universe runs in precision.

The LDS dogma also calls for an eternal universe with eternal men. This doctrine then bumps into the problem of an actual infinite regress in a physical world. An infinite series of events can never exist in a material universe because one could not number an infinite set in a physical universe. Nonetheless, we can

and do number things: thus, it's impossible for an actual infinite series to be in a limited material universe. This precludes the LDS doctrine of the eternity of the cosmos and men. LDS polytheism cannot account for the laws of logic, moral law, love, and mathematics.

An Insurmountable Problem

I will cry out to God Most High, to God who performs all things for me (Psalms 57:2).

If God the Father has a god, as Smith and other LDS prophets taught, and this god has a god, and his god has a god, how can one claim to worship the Most High God? The true and living God is the Most High. The Latter-day Saint god is not the Most High God, consequently, he is not God.

Some Difficult Questions for Mormons

- If the result of faith and a godly life is godhood as Mormonism claims, why did Moroni change from a man to an angel and not a god?

- In LDS theology: How did the Holy Spirit become a God without a resurrected physical body of flesh and bones?

- According to Mormon doctrine, at what point in time did Jesus Christ become a God?

- When do Jesus Christ and the Holy Ghost receive planets to be Lord over within the religious system of Mormonism?

The Bible is the Word of God

Many Mormons assert that the Bible was changed and corrupted over time; it cannot, therefore, be fully trusted. Ultimately, to come to this conclusion, one has to apply the laws of logic. Mormonism cannot provide the required *a priori* essentials for the laws of logic because their god is limited to time and space, and wasn't always a god. The Lord God revealed in the Bible is the basis for the laws of logic. The laws of logic are unchanging, transcendent, aspatial, and

immaterial and only the Most High God who is unchanging, transcendent, aspatial, and immaterial could provide the mandatory truth conditions for laws of logic. Thus, it's impossible for Mormonism to be true.

Frequently allotheists argue that the Bible was written many years after the events, thus it has been corrupted. But papyrus scholar Peter Thiede has maintained that a copy of the Book of Luke, located in a Paris museum, is dated around 50 AD.[5] Thiede has also demonstrated that the Magdalene Manuscript of the Gospel of Matthew is dated around 40-50 AD, and the Barcelona manuscript of the Sermon on the Mount was copied around 66 AD.[6] And last but not least, Thiede has dated a copy of the Gospel of Mark around 50 AD or earlier. This reveals that there was not enough time for the Bible to be corrupted or changed.

The Certain Proof: The Triune God Must Live

The issue isn't just about evidence for the Bible and the Trinity. Without God, one cannot account for evidence because God is the essential truth condition for the laws of truth (A = A; A~~A). The laws of truth, including the law of non-contradiction (LNC), must be utilized in marshaling, analyzing, and pondering any evidence. Mormonism fails to supply the necessary *a prior* essentials for the laws of truth. Only Christianity supplies the necessary preconditions for the transcendent, absolute, unchanging, universal, and immaterial laws of truth.

A changing, non-universally powerful god cannot provide the needed *a priori* conditions for the laws of truth. These laws require a transcendent, absolute, unchanging, and immaterial God. This is a sure argument. This argument grows in power when one attacks it. The argument grows in force because the rival must use the laws of truth to make an intellectual challenge.

The LNC is essential and a precondition for any intelligent communication, but it was not invented by philosophers. The LNC is the foundational instrument necessary for all discourse, debate, and science. Without using this law of truth, one cannot even deny that it is mandatory for communication. The precondition for the LNC is the true God. Without the sovereign, non-physical, transcendent, and immutable God who holds universal power, one cannot justify transcendent, non-physical, universal, and immaterial laws of truth. These laws are absolutely necessary for the intelligibility of life and true God is absolutely necessary for these laws.

The argument for the biblical God swallows up any argument against it. Those who contend against the God of the Bible are just throwing thimbles full of water into the vast and deep ocean of God's truth inasmuch as they are utilizing the laws of logic in their rational dispute against the Lord God. So every time a Mormon or an unbeliever attempts to disprove the Lord God, they are just aiming a flashlight at the sun; they are throwing a small lit match into a huge raging volcano. One must employ the laws of logic to argue against Christianity; still the laws of logic and thus all argument, require the one true God.

The true God is the foundation for all debate since debate must utilize the laws of logic. Deny the true God and one cannot account for the debate regarding anything.

The main pursuit of the Christian apologist is training oneself to be good at dodging intellectual bullets from the unbeliever (including Latter-day Saint members). Greg Bahnsen befittingly argued: "The Christian cannot forever be defensively constructing atomistic answers to the endless variety of unbelieving criticisms; he must take the offensive and show the unbeliever that he has no intelligible place to stand, no consistent epistemology, no justification for meaningful discourse, predication, or argumentation."[7] It is not possible for Mormon anti-theism to be true, and the duty of the believer is to defend Christianity against all false religions by challenging their ultimate commitments.

Anti-theism presupposes theism.[8]

The god of the LDS faith has progressed and changed, and the laws of reason do not change. This demands that the laws of reason could not have been derived from the LDS god. Something that is immutable cannot come from that which is mutable. This alerts all that the Mormon faith cannot provide the necessary truth conditions for the intelligibility of our world.

The Impossibility of the Mormon Concept of Deity

- *The LDS god changes*
- *The true God cannot change*
- *The LDS god is not the true God*

- *All false gods do not exist*
- *The LDS god does not exist.*

CHAPTER NOTES

1. Joseph F. Smith ([compiled] *Teachings of Joseph Smith*.
2. Walter Martin, *Kingdom of the Cults* .
3. Smith, *Teachings of Joseph Smith*.
4. Van Til, *Introduction to Systematic Theology*.
5. Peter Thiede, *Rekindling The Word: In Search of Gospel Truth*.
6. Ibid.
7. Greg L. Bahnsen, *Always Ready*.
8. Cornelius Van Til, *Survey of Christian Epistemology*.

For more: Don't miss my Innovative apologetics book that refutes Mormonism -- Christian Truth & Presuppositions Examine Mormonism at https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/119109

CHAPTER ELEVEN

A Critique of The Jehovah's Witnesses

> God does not require us to submit contrary to reason, but to submit as seeing the reason and ground of submission.—Hence, the bare consideration that God is God, may well be sufficient to still all objections… (Jonathan Edwards).

The Jehovah's Witnesses are an exclusive millennialist cult inspired by the

Seventh Day Adventist Church and formed by self-appointed pastor Charles Taze Russell. The original name he gave his group was the International Bible Students Association. This group was birthed in Pittsburgh (1872). The authoritative magazines that promote their unique teachings are: *The Watchtower* and *Awake!* This aberrant religious group has its headquarters in Brooklyn, New York; moreover it perverts the gospel of Christ, denies the Trinity, and proclaims that the Watchtower Society (WT) is the exclusive way to salvation. This essay will prove from scripture that the Triune God alone is God and that the Watchtower is a false religious group founded upon false prophecies from a false deity (the tactic I employ strikes at the foundation of the Watchtower belief system: the ontological status of their god/gods. Thus I do not utilize much of the traditional means to refute them. There are numerous writers who take a more traditional approach by Walter Martin, Ron Rhodes, Robert Morey & others).

> In the unity of the Godhead there are three Persons of one substance, power, and eternity: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost. The Father is of none, neither begotten nor proceeding; the Son is eternally begotten of the Father; the Holy Ghost eternally proceeding from the Father and the Son (WCF).
>
> The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen (2 Cor. 13:14).

The Only Inescapable Foundation: God in Trinity

> I think it hard to see how … any religion based on belief in a unitary god, can possibly account for human personality or explain the diversity in unity of the world.[1]

The unitarian god the Watchtower promulgates does not possess the eternal diversity in his unified nature to account for diverse and necessary laws (the Law of Non-contradiction distinct from the Law of Identity, and the particulars within the unified moral law) and other unified multiplicities (predication, ethics, knowledge, etc.). Additionally it is deficient in its **ontic** (being, what exists, substances, nature, essence, nature of a being) features to account for the particulars in the cosmos (people, forces, dynamics, concepts, and things). The WT's theology cannot account for nor explain the problem of unity in diversity

(the one and many). A uni-personal being lacks the capacity to account for eternal and temporal particulars. Additionally one cannot provide that which one does not possess, ergo the Watchtower doctrine of god is not a god of eternal love, truth, and relationship.

> He (Yahweh) is all-determining and irresistible power, but also a caring parent. He is not contingent (that is, dependent) on the world, but neither is he 'removed from the contingencies of the world,' for He is very much involved in the world he has made. He...abounds in love and responsiveness, generosity, and sensitivity. He is a person, not merely a metaphysical principle.[2]

A strict unitarian god cannot be the indispensable foundation for the unity of human experience and knowledge. Van Til warns that "the only alternative to thinking of the Triune God as the ultimate source of unity in human experience, as it is furnished by laws or universals, is to think that the unity rests in a void. Every object of knowledge must, therefore, be thought of as being surrounded by ultimate irrationality,"[3]

If one disallows the inexorableness of the Triune God, the world must be encircled by irrationality, but that is not possible. The WT's doctrine of god leaves room "neither for diversity, diversity in unity, nor a person grounding creation…"[4] A unitarian god is a solitary monad with strict unity, accordingly it is short of the vital ontic features to ground diversity and unity as ultimate coequals. The Watchtower clearly and completely denies the Trinity and so it falls into foolishness on its own ground. It fails since is unsuccessful in accounting for the diverse immutable universals required for predication, knowledge, and intelligibility. Even its fallacious assertions and false notions presuppose the truth of the Triune God.

The Only True and Living God

The allotheists (subsuming the Jehovah's Witnesses) must rationally take for granted the Triune God even as they dispute His existence and supremacy. "The existence of the God of Christian theism is presupposed by all rational thought and behavior."[5] Men are mortal and dependent. The true God is transcendent and necessary. "If God is the covenant head, then He is exalted above His people; He is transcendent."[6] One must have a fixed, timeless, and transcendent ground for knowledge. The human mind (including Pastor Russell's and the minds within

the WT) is too limited, temporal, and mutable to be the epistemic root for knowledge. Anti-Triune theism (and all other ideas) presupposes Christian theism inasmuch as the Triune God alone provides the transcendental conditions necessary for rationality, predication, and knowledge. Christianity must be true; the contrary is not logically viable.

The biblically based presuppositional argument is compelling and assured. To attempt to argue against it would be like attempting to remove the water in an overflowing swimming pool by pouring more water into the pool. The extra irrigate does not reduce the size or the weight of the water in the pool, it only adds volume to it. Likewise the arguments from anti-Triune theists only build more into this argument because they have to utilize rational laws and ethics in their attempt to make their case.

Since the WT's god cannot confer the needed rational pre-environment for the always in force laws and universals, yet these anti-Trinitarians are stuck using them, all their arguments presuppose Christianity and just add more epistemic weight and strength to it. Stern confessed that the attraction of transcendental arguments is that they "undercut the ground which the skeptical worries are built."[7] The Watchtower religion cannot intellectually dole out the foundation for the laws of logic that they are required to employ every time they assert anything about religion or human experience.

> Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness…" (Genesis 1:26).

The truth of the Triune God's existence is not probable; it is assured. God's existence is the absolute precondition for all our questions and even our doubts. We must rationally operate within the bounds and through the use of immaterial immutable universals as we ask all our questions and raise all our doubts, thereby affirming that the Triune God lives. Christianity is the only worldview that provides human reason a foundation for its apposite function.

The WT's system of thought cannot furnish a foundation for the necessary features of human experience (the Law of Non-contradiction, immutable moral law, and all other incessant ever-enduring changeless universals); thus, those systems of thought can only offer self-stultifying worldviews. Unless one believes in the Triune God, one cannot account for human knowledge, understanding, predication, and practice.

Knowledge is obtained by more than observation, experiments, and measurements. One has to operate within the a priori rational apparatus to understand and interpret the data observed by sense perceptions. Some of these tools are the laws of logic. These laws are necessary and without them all other assumptions about anything become impossible. Deny the laws of logic (plural): the Law of Identity and the Law of Non-contradiction (unity in diversity) and knowledge is not possible. Watchtower theology fails to underwrite these laws, thus it fails as a coherent worldview.

The Impossibility of the Watchtower god

- WT's god/gods fail to supply transcendental necessities (laws, changeless truths, etc.).
- Without transcendental necessities the Watchtower can't account for knowledge.

- There must be knowledge.

- The Watchtower is false.

Witnessing to Jehovah's Witnesses

> But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness, which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior, that having been justified by His grace we should become heirs, according to the hope of eternal life (Titus 3:4-7).

The foremost thrust in witnessing to a Jehovah's Witnesses is for one to demonstrate that all men, including the Jehovah's Witnesses, are under God's judgment for breaking the Lord's moral law. All people are sinners and everyone needs an eternal infinite Savior who is both God and man to redeem them (see my book below for more). The Jehovah's Witnesses' false Christ is a finite angel who gives his people a fresh start to work for their salvation. The false Christ they offer is not infinite nor is he eternal; he is not fully God and fully man; hence he cannot deliver biblical justification (Romans 4:5, 5:1; Psalm 32; Titus

3; etc.).

The Jehovah's Witnesses need an atonement that is eternally and infinitely effectual inasmuch as men have sinned against an infinite and eternal God; they need to repent and trust the biblical Jesus Christ (the non-temporal/infinite Son of God).

> Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me" (John 14:6).

The initial truth that must be presented to a Jehovah's Witnesses (or a person of any religion or irreligion) is the law of God. Before the Christian proclaims grace to the unredeemed one must inform the nonbeliever of his sin problem. Jesus commanded: "Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect" (Matthew 5:48). Perfection is required to be accepted by God and to enter into the perfectly pristine heaven; a perfection given to the believer by grace alone. Without justification by grace alone, there can be no real peace.

"Imputation" is the Biblical term for the positive element of justification. Through God's grace by faith, the believer is declared righteous. The law demands perfect obedience—a perfection equal to the Father's perfection. Nobody except Christ has accomplished this, so we need a perfect righteousness that is not our own. We need to be justified by the perfect works and righteousness of another: Jesus. Justification is a forensic term which speaks of the Christian's legal position before God. The believer is declared perfectly righteous despite his unrighteous deeds. The justified are given an alien perfect righteousness, a righteousness that is not their own but is imputed unto them by faith. Not having a righteousness of our own ensures that God gets all the glory.

The unbeliever must know that perfection is the standard as opposed to meager human goodness. He must be told of his sin and that he, as have all humans, has transgressed God's law and broken the Lord's commandments. This, under God's sovereign will and saving grace, provokes a desire for the mercy, pardon, and love the Savior alone provides.

- Pray for the Jehovah's Witness and yourself
- Share the law and their sinful shortcomings
- Preach the Gospel to them and call them to repent (1Cor. 15:1-4; Acts 3:19)

- Set up times to meet with the Jehovah's Witnesses to disciple them (Matthew 28:19-20)
- Pray for them

Transcendental Analysis Defeats the Anti-theism of the Watchtower

"Come now, and let us reason together," says Yahweh (Isaiah 1:18).

A single-person god cannot make available the necessary presuppositions for knowledge. This unitarian god cannot supply universals, besides he cannot even make sense of the particulars in human experience. That is one of the reasons Van Til propagated the notion that one must presuppose the Triune God and "not merely another fact of the universe." Consequently this includes a singular god who is a singular fact, thus he lacks ontic diversity and cannot exist.

> The oneness may not be sacrificed to the diversity, nor the diversity to the oneness. To maintain both in their inseparable connection and in their pure relationship, not only theoretically but also in practical life, is the calling of all believers (Herman Bavinck).

The unembellished biblically based argument is: Without Yahweh, one cannot account for anything, including the claims of various religionists. Yahweh, the tri-personal God, is the precondition for the laws of reason, moral law, mathematics, and everything else in the cosmos. All rational equipment, concepts, dynamics, and laws necessarily make use of changeless universals with particular apprehension and application whilst only the God with equal ultimacy of unity and diversity can account for such. This is an irrefutable argument that is unavoidably true.

There is nothing that a disbeliever can avouch without ultimately relying on Christian Triune theism, since the multi-person God alone provides the preconditions for the unchanging universals and their expression in real world particulars. Thus, the Watchtower's anti-Trinitarian arguments will always presuppose the true God, the very one whom the Watchtower rejects, because the Watchtower cannot supply the a priori environment for the unified diverse laws of logic, and perpetual universal truths. The Triune God is the preexisting foundation for all debate in view of the fact that debate must by necessity mount its position presupposing immutable universals. Deny the Trinity and one cannot account for a debate concerning anything, including religion.

The Only True and Living God

The allotheists (subsuming the Jehovah's Witnesses) must rationally take for granted the Triune God even as they dispute His existence and supremacy. Colin Brown observed, "The existence of the God of Christian theism is presupposed by all rational thought and behavior." Men are mortal and dependent. The true God is transcendent and necessary. "If God is the covenant head, then He is exalted above His people; He is transcendent."[8] One must have a fixed, timeless, and transcendent ground for knowledge.

The human mind (including Pastor Russell's and the minds within the WT) is too limited, temporal, and mutable to be the epistemic root for knowledge. Anti-Triune theism (and all other ideas) presupposes Christian theism inasmuch as the Triune God alone provides the transcendental conditions necessary for rationality and knowledge. Christianity must be true; the contrary is not logically viable.

The biblically based TA is compelling and assured. To attempt to argue against it would be like attempting to remove the water in an overflowing swimming pool by pouring more water into the pool. The extra irrigate does not reduce the size or the weight of the water in the pool, it only adds volume to it. Likewise the arguments from anti-Triune theists only build more into TATG because they have to utilize rational laws and ethics in their attempt to make their case.

Since only the Trinity can confer the needed rational pre-environment for the always in force laws and universals, yet the anti-Trinitarians are stuck using them, all their arguments presuppose Christianity and just add more epistemic weight and strength to it. Stern confessed that the attraction of transcendental arguments is that they "undercut the ground which the skeptical worries are built." Non-Trinitarian religions cannot intellectually dole out the foundation for the laws of logic that they are required to employ every time they assert anything about religion or human experience.

> Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness…" (Genesis 1:26).

The truth of the Triune God's existence is not probable; it is assured. God's existence is the absolute precondition for all our questions and even our doubts.

We must rationally operate within the bounds and through the use of immaterial immutable universals as we ask all our questions and raise all our doubts, thereby affirming that the Triune God lives. Christianity is the only worldview that provides human reason a foundation for its apposite function. Non-Christian systems of thought cannot furnish a foundation for the Law of Non-contradiction (and all other incessant ever-enduring changeless universals); thus, those systems of thought can only offer self-contradictory worldviews. Unless one believes in the Triune God, one cannot account for human knowledge, understanding, predication, and practice. God is the precondition for all assertion, argument, proof, evidence, and reason. All human thought requires the employment and assumption of universal and invariant laws and universal interminable truths. Only the transcendent and unchanging Triune God provides the necessary preconditions for the use of transcendent and unchanging truths. To argue at all, one must presuppose that the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob exists.

Knowledge is obtained by more than observation, experiments, and measurements. One has to operate within the a priori rational apparatus to understand and interpret the data observed by sense perceptions. Some of these tools are the laws of logic. These laws are necessary and without them all other assumptions about anything become impossible. Deny the laws of logic (plural): the Law of Identity and the Law of Non-contradiction (unity in diversity) and knowledge is not possible.

> Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world (John 1:29).

All people require a spiritual cleansing. Only Jesus Christ and His death on the cross can wash away all their transgressions, misdeeds, and sins. Jesus died and rose again. No one else has accomplished such marvelous things. Van Til presses: “If God was to continue communication with His creature, it was either to be by condemnation or by atonement.” God through His mercy provided a perfect and effectual atonement through the death of Jesus Christ on the cross and His resurrection. Believe on Him and you will be saved.

> But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness, which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior, that having been

justified by His grace we should become heirs, according to the hope of eternal life (Titus 3:4-7).

How to witness to a Jehovah's Witnesses

1. Place the dread of God's law on his mind with wise and patient discretion.

2. Disclose to the Jehovah's Witnesses how you have personally broken God's law and inform him how he has too. Use specific commandments.

3. Notify him that he needs an infinite atonement and a Savior to remove his sins.

4. After he admits his need, offer him the gospel: Jesus died for our sins, was buried, and rose again on the third day and a sinner is saved by faith alone, grace alone, and Christ plus zero (1 Corinthians 15:1-4).

5. Call him to repent and trust in Christ.

The Athanasian Creed

1. Whosoever will be saved, before all things it is necessary that he hold the catholic (universal) faith; Which faith except every one do keep whole and undefiled, without doubt he shall perish everlastingly.

2. And the catholic (universal) faith is this: That we worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity;

3. Neither confounding the persons, nor dividing the substance.

4. For there is one Person of the Father, another of the Son and another of the Holy Spirit.

5. But the Godhead of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit is all one, the glory equal, the majesty co-eternal.

6. Such as the Father is, such is the Son and such is the Holy Spirit.

7. The Father uncreated, the Son uncreated, and the Holy Spirit uncreated.

8. The Father incomprehensible, the Son incomprehensible, and the Holy Spirit incomprehensible.

9. The Father eternal, the Son eternal, and the Holy Spirit eternal.

10. And yet they are not three eternals, but one eternal.

11. As also there are not three uncreated nor three incomprehensibles, but one uncreated and one incomprehensible.

12. So likewise the Father is almighty, the Son almighty, and the Holy Spirit almighty;

13. And yet they are not three almighties, but one almighty.

14. So the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Spirit is God;

15. And yet they are not three Gods, but one God.

16. So likewise the Father is Lord, the Son Lord, and the Holy Spirit Lord;

17. And yet they are not three Lords, but one Lord.

18. For like as we are compelled by the Christian verity to acknowledge every person by himself to be God and Lord;

19. So are we forbidden by the catholic (universal) religion to say: There are three Gods or three Lords.

20. The Father is made of none, neither created nor begotten.

21. The Son is of the Father alone; not made nor created, but begotten.

22. The Holy Spirit is of the Father and of the Son; neither made, nor created, nor begotten, but proceeding.

23. So there is one Father, not three Fathers; one Son, not three Sons; one Holy Spirit, not three Holy Spirits.

24. And in this Trinity none is afore, nor after another; none is greater, or less than another.

25. But the whole three persons are co-eternal, and coequal.

26. So that in all things, as aforesaid, the Unity in Trinity and the Trinity in Unity is to be worshipped.

27. He therefore that will be saved must thus think of the Trinity.

28. Furthermore it is necessary to everlasting salvation that he also believe rightly the incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ.

29. For the right faith is that we believe and confess that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is God and man.

30. God of the substance of the Father, begotten before the worlds; and made of the substance of His mother, born in the world.

31. Perfect God and perfect man, of a reasonable soul and human flesh subsisting.

32. Equal to the Father as touching His Godhead, and inferior to the Father as touching His manhood.

33. Who, although He is God and man, yet He is not two, but one Christ.

34. One, not by conversion of the Godhead into flesh, but by taking

of the manhood into God.

35. One altogether, not by the confusion of substance, but by unity of person.

36. For as the reasonable soul and flesh is one man, so God and man is one Christ;

37. Who suffered for our salvation, descended into hell, rose again the third day from the dead;

38. He ascended into heaven, He sits on the right hand of the Father, God Almighty;

39. From thence He shall come to judge the living and the dead.

40. At whose coming all men shall rise again with their bodies;

41. And shall give account of their own works.

42. And they that have done good shall go into life everlasting, and they that have done evil into everlasting fire.

43. This is the catholic (universal) faith, which except a man believes faithfully, he cannot be saved.

And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifested in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen by angels, preached among the Gentiles, believed on in the world, and received up in glory (1 Timothy 3:16).

See my books that refute world religions and cults including: *Christian Philosophy and Presuppositions Refute the Jehovah's Witnesses* **on Amazon at: http://www.amazon.com/Presuppositional-Apologetics-Examines-Jehovahs-Witnesses-ebook/dp/B00AXCVKGS** (also in Paperback)

CHAPTER NOTES

1. Robert Letham: *The Holy Trinity*.
2. John Frame: *No Other God*.
3. Cornelius Van Til: *Survey of Christian Epistemology*.
4. Ibid., Letham.
5. Colin Brown: *Philosophy and The Christian Faith*.
6. John Frame: *The Doctrine of the Knowledge of God.*
7. Robert Stern: *Transcendental Arguments and Skepticism*.
8. Frame: *The Doctrine of the Knowledge of God*.

CHAPTER TWELVE

Muhammad vs. Jesus: There's No Comparison

Muslims profess that Muhammad is the final and greatest prophet sent from Allah. I maintain that the Qur'an is inconsistent since it ascribes outstanding attributes and titles to Jesus Christ that are not said of Muhammad. Jesus Christ is unique, exceptional, and superior; even Islamic scripture acknowledges such. No other religious leader has Christ's divine nature. No other spiritual teacher has accomplished what He did and communicated what He taught (Revelation 1:7-8). Jesus died for the sins of His people and rose again on the third day. He performed many miracles. He revealed that He is God and demonstrated His divinity.

Considering that Islam claims that Muhammad is the last and greatest prophet, it

appears more than a bit conflicting that the Qur'an asserts the following concerning Jesus Christ in contrast to Muhammad:

- Jesus was born of a virgin (Sura 19:16-35): not Muhammad.
- Jesus is a Spirit from God (Sura 4:171): not Muhammad.
- Jesus is the Word of God (Sura 4:171): not Muhammad.
- Jesus was sinless (Sura 19:19): not Muhammad.
- Jesus gave life to the dead (Sura 3:49 and 22:73): not Muhammad.
- Jesus is coming back again as a sign of the hour of judgment (Sura 43:61): not Muhammad.
- Jesus performed many miracles (Sura 3:49 and 100:110): not Muhammad (Sura 29:47-51).
- Jesus is the Messiah (Sura 4:171): not Muhammad.

There is something very special about Jesus Christ; even the Qur'an avows such. No other prophet or false prophet has His divine nature and accomplished what He did and taught what He taught (John 1:1, 10:30, 5:18, 8:24, 8:58, 20:28; 1 Timothy 3:16; Colossians 1:16-17, 2:9; Matthew 22:42-45; Mark 14:64). Buddha, Joseph Smith, Krishna, Sun Yung Moon, and Muhammad never did what Jesus Christ did. Jesus died for our sins and rose again on the third day. He performed many miracles. He claimed to be God and demonstrated His deity.

Jesus Never Sinned

> For God made Christ, who never sinned, to be the offering for our sin, so that we could be made right with God through Christ (2 Corinthians 5:21).

Jesus never sinned and was faultless. Roman rule noted Christ's faultlessness: Pilate said to Him, "What is truth?" And when he had said this, he went out again to the Jews, and said to them, "I find no fault in Him at all" (John 18:38-39). Additionally, Herod held that Jesus was innocent (Luke 23:15). A criminal affirmed that Jesus was innocent (Luke 23:41) and a soldier claimed Christ was without fault (Luke 23:47) as did Pilate in an additional pronouncement (Luke 23:14). Furthermore, in the sight of Jesus' contemporaries, Paul affirmed Christ's sinlessness (2 Corinthians 5:21).

The Qur'an concedes that Muhammad had to repent of his sins (Sura 40:55, 47:19, 48:1-2, 33:36-38). Jesus did not sin. Jesus was affirmed sinless by the combative religious leaders of His day; the Romans said he was sinless; the traitor Judas asserted that Jesus was sinless; and those who lived with Jesus for three years professed that He had never sinned. Adam, Moses, Abraham, David, and Jonah all sinned (Sura 2:36, 7:22-23, 26:82, 28:15-16, 37:142, 38:24-25). Only Jesus was and is sinless. He died on the cross for the atonement of believers; no other religion has provided an eternally effectual atonement. Heaven is perfect and men are not; men must have their sins expiated. All mortals require a perfect all-effectual atonement to enter heaven. Every man needs his sins atoned for, only Christianity has an infinite atonement. Christ's sacrifice and resurrection justifies those who repent and trust Him. One can have legal, forensic righteousness to enter into the perfect purity of heaven, or reject Christ and attempt to live a religious life that cannot remove your past sins (Romans 4:5, 11:6).

What the Qur'an asserts regarding Christ is interesting, but ultimately inconsequential. What the Bible reveals is significant, essential, and vital. Below are two of the numerous passages in God's word that make known the divinity of Christ.

> And Thomas answered and said unto him, "My Lord and my God" (John 20:28).
>
> Behold, he comes with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, says the Lord, who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty (Revelation 1:7-8).

The Harshness of the Law Leads One to the Savior

> The Book of good deeds and bad deeds will be set before you; and you will set the sinful in great terror because of what is therein; they will say, "Woe to us! What a book is this! It leaves out nothing small or great, but takes account thereof" (Sura 18:49).

> Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. ... For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet, perhaps for a good man, someone would even dare to die. But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us (Romans 5:1-8).

The doctrine of justification by grace alone is absent from Islam. Islam stresses that the balance of one's righteous deeds must outweigh their unrighteous deeds in order to "attain salvation" in Paradise. Those whose unrighteous works outweigh their righteous works are doomed to hell (Sura 23:102-3). In Christianity, justification is by grace alone through faith alone. Justification is a forensic term laid out in various books in the Bible (Genesis 15; Psalm 32; Romans 3-5; Galatians; etc.). Since Christianity alone supplies true forgiveness and justification, one only has to remind the person who follows another religion that they are a sinner before you extend the relief of the gospel. The zealous preacher, Robert M'Cheyne, offered this inspiring quote: "If the mercies and if the judgments do not convert you, God has no other arrows in His quiver." The terror and thunder of Sinai will invoke fear in the sinner. Then, if God changes the sinner's heart through the gospel, the convert will flee God's judgments and hurl himself upon Christ and His eternal mercy (John 1:12-13).

> I say to you that likewise, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance (Luke 15:7).

When one shares the love of God without preaching God's exactness in law, it often weakens the sinners' sense of sin. Then the lost sinner is not interested in the grand truth of the cross and justification. The law and the gospel, these are the means God uses to save lost sinners through grace by His Spirit. Soteriological truth's summation is "to know nothing but Christ and Him crucified." God is the righteous King, whom all men have offended in every point of His holy law, and Christ the Savior died for our transgressions, of that very same law.

Jesus Left Heaven for His People

> No one has ascended to Heaven but He who came down from Heaven, that is, the Son of Man who is in Heaven (John 3:13).
>
> Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you … that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that He was buried and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures (1 Corinthians 15:1-4).

Jesus Christ stepped out of the celestial beauty of Paradise into a sinful and dark world. The Lord came and treaded on the surf of a stormy sea as He ultimately aimed for the Cross. Jesus came; the God-man; the Light of the world went marching on the swells and then He spoke calm to the wind: a stoppage of a storm. He would also heal many hurting and ailing people. Later there would be a crucifixion, a burial, and then a grand resurrection blast that would hush death, hell, and the grave. Jesus came; thank God, Jesus came; the blaze, the light—full of power and grace: the Lord Jesus.

> According to the working of His mighty power which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come (Ephesians 1:19-21).

Jesus rose on wings of exaltation as His glorified body, blushing with majesty and sweet transport, established salvation. And this Jesus, with eye fixed on His sheep, had the Cross shake the world and is now shaking defiance at all the foes of truth and all princedoms of Hades; we serve a King robed and crowned with glory: Jesus is the song of deliverance and the elation of eternity.
What a Savior; What a Lord!

Fairest Lord Jesus

Fairest Lord Jesus, ruler of all nature,
O you of God and man the Son,
You will I cherish, You will I honor,
thou, my soul's glory, joy, and crown.

Fair are the meadows, fairer still the woodlands,
robed in the blooming garb of spring:
Jesus is fairer, Jesus is purer
who makes the woeful heart to sing.

Fair is the sunshine, fairer still the moonlight,
and all the twinkling starry host:
Jesus shines brighter, Jesus shines purer
than all the angels Heaven can boast.

Beautiful Savior! Lord of all the nations!
Son of God and Son of Man!
Glory and honor, praise, adoration,
now and forevermore be thine.

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Appendix A

The Economy of the Trinity

by Jonathan Edwards

1062. Economy of the Trinity. We should be careful that we do not go upon uncertain grounds, and fix uncertain determinations in things of so high a nature. The following things seem to be what we have pretty plain reason to determine with respect to those things.
1. That there is a subordination of the Persons of the Trinity, in their actions with respect to the creature, that one acts from another, and under another, and with a dependence on another, in their actings, and particularly in what they act in the affairs of man's redemption. So that the Father in that affair acts as Head of the Trinity, and the Son under him, and the Holy Spirit under them both.

2. It is very manifest that the Persons of the Trinity are not inferior one to another in glory and excellency of nature. The Son, for instance, is not inferior to the Father in glory, for he is the brightness of his glory, the very image of the Father, the express and perfect image of his person. And therefore the Father's infinite happiness is in him, and the way that the Father enjoys the glory of the deity is in enjoying him. And though there be a priority of subsistence, and a kind of dependence of the Son, in his subsistence, on the Father, because with respect to his subsistence, his is wholly from the Father and is begotten by him. Yet this is more properly called priority than superiority, as we ordinarily use such terms.

There is dependence without inferiority of deity, because in the Son the deity, the whole deity and glory of the Father, is as it were repeated or duplicated. Everything in the Father is repeated, or expressed again, and that fully: so that there is properly no inferiority.

3. From hence it seems manifest that the other Persons' acting under the Father

does not arise from any natural subjection, as we should understand such an expression according to the common idiom of speech. For thus a natural subjection would be understood to imply either an obligation to compliance and conformity to another as a superior and one more excellent, and so most worthy to be a rule for another to conform to, or an obligation to conformity to another's will, arising from a dependence on another's will for being or well-being. But neither of these can be the case with respect to the Persons of the Trinity, for one is not superior to another in excellency: neither is one in any respect dependent on another's will for being or well-being.

For though one proceeds from another, and so may be said to be in some respects dependent on another, yet it is not dependence of one on the will of another. For it is no voluntary, but a necessary proceeding, and therefore infers no proper subjection of one to the will of another.

4. Though a subordination of the Persons of the Trinity in their actings, be not from any proper natural subjection one to another, and so must be conceived of as in some respect established by mutual free agreement, whereby the Persons of the Trinity, of their own will, have as it were formed themselves into a society, for carrying on the great design of glorifying the deity and communicating its fullness, in which is established a certain economy and order of acting. Yet this agreement establishing this economy is not to be looked upon as merely arbitrary, founded on nothing but the mere pleasure of the members of this society, not merely a determination and constitution of wisdom come into from a view to certain ends which it is very convenient for the obtaining. But there is a natural decency or fitness in that order and economy that is established.

It is fit that the order of the acting of the Persons of the Trinity should be agreeable to the order of their subsisting. That as the Father is first in the order of subsisting, so he should be first in the order of acting. That as the other two Persons are from the Father in their subsistence, and as to their subsistence naturally originated from him and are dependent on him, so that in all that they act they should originate from him, act from him and in a dependence on him.

That as the Father with respect to the subsistences is the fountain of the deity, wholly and entirely so, so he should be the fountain in all the acts of the deity. This is fit and decent in itself. Though it is not proper to say, decency obliges the Persons of the Trinity to come into this order and economy. yet it may be said that decency requires it, and that therefore the Persons of the Trinity all consent

to this order, and establish it by agreement, as they all naturally delight in what is in itself fit, suitable and beautiful.

5. This order or economy of the Persons of the Trinity with respect to their actions ad extra, is to be conceived of as prior to the covenant of redemption: as we must conceive of God's determination to glorify and communicate himself as prior to the method that his wisdom pitches upon as tending best to effect this. For God's determining to glorify and communicate himself must be conceived of as following from God's nature, or we must look upon God from the infinite fullness and goodness of his nature, as naturally disposed to cause the beams of his glory to shine forth, and his goodness to flow forth. Yet we must look on the particular method that shall be chosen by divine wisdom to do this as not so directly and immediately owing to the natural disposition of the divine nature, as the determination of wisdom intervening, choosing the means of glorifying that disposition of nature.

We must conceive of God's natural inclination as being exercised before wisdom is set to work to find out a particular excellent method to gratify that natural inclination. Therefore this particular invention of wisdom, of God's glorifying and communicating himself by the redemption of a certain number of fallen inhabitants of this globe of earth, is a thing diverse from God's natural inclination to glorify and communicate himself in general, and superadded to it or subservient to it. And therefore, that particular constitution or covenant among the Persons of the Trinity about this particular affair, must be looked upon as in the order of nature after that disposition of the Godhead to glorify and communicate itself, and so after the will of the Persons of the Trinity to act, in so doing, in that order that is in itself fit and decent, and what the order of their subsisting requires.

We must distinguish between the covenant of redemption, that is an establishment of wisdom wonderfully contriving a particular method for the most conveniently obtaining a great end, and that establishment that is founded in fitness and decency and the natural order of the eternal and necessary subsistence of the Persons of the Trinity. And this must be conceived of as prior to the other.

It is evident by the Scripture that there is an eternal covenant between some of the Persons of the Trinity, about that particular affair of men's redemption, and therefore that some things that appertain to the particular office of some of the

Persons and their particular order and manner of acting in this affair, do result from a particular new agreement; and not merely from the order already fixed in a preceding establishment founded in the nature of things, together with the new determination of redeeming mankind.

There is something else new besides a new particular determination of a work to be done for God's glorying and communicating himself. There is a particular covenant entered into about that very affair, settling something new concerning the part that some at least of the Persons are to act in that affair.

6. That the economy of the Persons of the Trinity, establishing that order of their acting that is agreeable to the order of their subsisting, is entirely diverse from the covenant of redemption and prior to it, not only appears from the nature of things, but appears evidently from the Scripture, being plainly deduced from the following things evidently collected thence.

First. It is the determination of God the Father, whether there shall be any such thing admitted as redemption of sinners. It is his law, majesty and authority, as supreme ruler, legislator and judge, that is contemned.

He is everywhere represented as the Person who, (in the place that he stands in among the Persons of the Trinity), is especially injured by sin, and who is therefore the Person whose wrath is enkindled, and whose justice and vengeance are to be executed, and must be satisfied.

And therefore, it is at his will and determination whether he will on any terms forgive sinners, and so whether there shall be any redemption of them allowed any more than of fallen angels. But we must conceive of the determination that a redemption shall be allowed for fallen men, as preceding the covenant or agreement of the Persons of the Trinity relating to the particular manner and means of it; and consequently, that the Father, who determines whether a redemption shall to be allowed or no, acts as the Head of the society of the Trinity, and in the capacity of supreme Lord and one that sustains the dignity and maintains the rights of the Godhead antecedently to the covenant of redemption; and consequently, that that economy by which he stands in this capacity is prior to that covenant.

Second. Nothing is more plain from Scripture than that the Father chooses the Person that shall be the Redeemer and appoints him, and that the Son has his

authority in his office wholly from him: which makes it evident, that that economy by which the Father is Head of the Trinity, is prior to the covenant of redemption. For he acts as such in the very making of that covenant, in choosing the Person of the Redeemer to be covenanted with about that work.

The Father is the Head of the Trinity, and is invested with a right to act as such, before the Son is invested with the office of a Mediator. Because the Father, in the exercise of his Headship, invests the Son with that office. By which it is evident, that that establishment, by which the Father is invested with his character as Head of the Trinity, precedes that which invests the Son with his character of Mediator, and therefore precedes the covenant of redemption, which is the establishment that invests the son with that character.

If the Son were invested with the office of a mediator by the same establishment and agreement of the Persons of the Trinity by which the Father is invested with power to act as Head of the Trinity, then the Father could not be said to elect and appoint the Son to his office of Mediator, and invest him with authority for it, any more than the Son elects and invests the Father with his character of Head of the Trinity, or any more than the Holy Ghost elects both the Son and the Father to their several economical offices, and the Son would receive his powers to be a mediator no more from the Father, than from the Holy Ghost.

Because in this scheme it is supposed that prior to the covenant of redemption, all the Persons act as upon a level, and each Person, by one common agreement in that covenant of redemption, is invested with his proper office: the Father with that of Head, the Son with that of Mediator, the Spirit with that of common emissary and consummator of the designs of the other two. So that by this supposition no one has his office by the particular appointment of anyone singly, or more than another, but all alike by common consent: there being no antecedent establishment giving one any power or headship over another, to authorize or appoint another.
Third.

That the forementioned economy of the Persons of the Trinity is diverse from all that is established in the covenant of redemption and prior to it, is further confirmed by this: that this economy remains after the work of redemption is finished, and everything appertaining to it brought to its ultimate consummation, and the Redeemer shall present all that were to be redeemed to the Father in perfect glory, having his work completely finished upon them, and so shall

resign up that dominion that he received of the Father subservient to this work, agreeably to what had been stipulated in the covenant of redemption.

Then the economical order of the Persons of the Trinity shall yet remain, whereby the Father acts as Head of the society and supreme Lord of all, and the Son and the Spirit shall be subject unto him. Yea, this economical order shall not only remain, but shall then and on that occasion become more visible and conspicuous, and the establishment of things by the covenant of redemption shall then, as it were, give place to this economy as prior. For thus the apostle represents the matter, 1 Cor. 15:24-28. “Then cometh the end when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule, and all authority, and power. For he must reign till he has put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he says all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted which did put all things under him. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.”
Now if that establishment that settles the economy of the Persons of the Trinity, was no other than the covenant of redemption itself, or that agreement that the Persons of the Trinity entered into establishing their order of acting in that affair, and assigning each one his part and office in that work, it would at least be unreasonable to suppose that this economy or order of the persons of the Trinity should be least conspicuous and manifest while this work lasts, and most so after the Redeemer has finished it and resigned his office, and that the resignation of his office should be to that end: that things might return to that economical order, and be governed more conspicuously and manifestly agreeable to it.

Fourth. Another argument that shows the covenant of redemption to be entirely a distinct establishment from that which is the foundation of the economy of the Persons of the Trinity, is this: that the place and station that the Son attains to by this establishment is entirely distinct from that which he stands in by the economy of the Trinity, insomuch that by the covenant of redemption the Son of God is for a season advanced into the economical seat of another Person, viz., of the Father, in being by this covenant established as the Lord and Judge of the world, in the Father’s stead and as his vicegerent, and as ruling in the Father’s throne, the throne that belongs to him in his economical station. For by the economy of the Trinity, it is the Father’s province to act as the Lawgiver and Judge and Disposer of the world.

Fifth. Another argument of the same thing is this, that the Scriptures do represent that the promises made to the Son in that covenant are made by the Father only, and that the honor and reward, that he has by that covenant, are granted only by the Father. Whereas, if the economy empowering the Father thus to act as the Son's Head, in making promises to him and making over rewards to him, were not prior to the covenant in which these promises are made and these things made over, the Father could have no power to make such promises, and grant such things to the Son: nor would it be done by the Father any more than by the Holy Spirit. For it would be done equally by all the Persons of the Trinity acting conjunctly.

Concerning the Covenant of Redemption. In order rightly to understand it and duly to distinguish it from the establishment of the economy of the Persons of the Trinity, the following things may be noted:

1. It is the Father that begins that great transaction of the eternal covenant of redemption, is the first mover in it, and acts in every respect as Head in that affair. He determines to allow a redemption, and for whom it shall be. He pitches upon a Person for a Redeemer. He proposes the matter unto him, offers him authority for the office, proposes precisely what he should do, as the terms of man's redemption, and all the work that he should perform in this affair, and the reward he should receive, and the success he should have.

And herein the Father acts in the capacity in which he is already established, viz., that of the Head of the Trinity and all their concerns, and the fountain of all things that appertain to the deity, and its glorification and communication.

2. Though the Father, merely by virtue of his economical prerogative as Head of the Trinity, is the first mover and beginner in the affair of our redemption, and determines that a redemption shall be admitted, and for whom, and proposes the matter first to his Son, and offers him authority for the office. Yet it is not merely by virtue of his economical prerogative, that he orders, determines and prescribes all that he does order and prescribe relating to it. But he does many things that he does in the work of redemption in the exercise of a new right, that he acquires by a new establishment, a free covenant entered into between him and his Son, in entering into which covenant the Son (though he acts on the proposal of the Father), yet acts as one wholly in his own right, as much as the Father, being not under subjection or prescription in his consenting to what is proposed to him, but acting as of himself.

Otherwise there would have been no need of the Father and Son's entering into covenant one with another, in order to the Son's coming into subjection and obligation to the Father, with respect to any thing appertaining to this affair. The whole tenor of the gospel holds this forth, that the Son acts altogether freely and as of his own right, in undertaking the great and difficult and self-abasing work of our redemption, and that he becomes obliged to the Father with respect to it by voluntary covenant engagements, and not by any establishment prior thereto. So that he merits infinitely of the Father in entering into and fulfilling these engagements. The Father merely by his economical prerogative can direct and prescribe to the other Persons of the Trinity in all things not below their economical characters.

But all those things that imply something below the infinite majesty and glory of divine Persons, and which they cannot do, without, as it were, laying aside the divine glory, and stooping infinitely below the height of that glory: these things are below their economical divine character. And therefore the Father cannot prescribe to the other Persons anything of this nature, without a new establishment by free covenant empowering him so to do. But what is agreed for with the Son concerning his coming into the world in such a state of humiliation, and what he should do and suffer in that state, is his descending to a state infinitely below his divine dignity. And therefore the Father has no right to prescribe to him with regard to these things, unless as invested with a right by free covenant engagements of his Son.

3. From what has been said it appears that besides that economical subordination of the Persons of the Trinity that arises from the manner and order of their subsisting, there is a new kind of subordination and mutual obligation between two of the Persons, arising from this new establishment, the covenant of redemption, the Son undertaking and engaging to put himself into a new kind of subjection to the Father, far below that of his economical station, even the subjection of a proper servant to the Father, and one under his law, in the manner that creatures that are infinitely below God and absolutely dependent for their being on the mere will of God, are subject to his preceptive will and absolute legislative authority. The Son engaged to become a creature, and so to put himself in the proper circumstances of a servant: from which engagements of the Son, the Father acquires a new right of Headship and authority over the Son, to command him and prescribe to him and rule over him, as his proper Lawgiver and Judge. And the Father, also, comes under new obligation to the Son, to give

him such success, rewards, etc.

4. It must be observed that this subordination that two of the Persons of the Trinity come into, by the covenant of redemption, is not contrary to their economical order, but in several respects agreeable to it, though it be new in kind. Thus, if either the Father or the Son be brought into the subjection of a servant to the other, it is much more agreeable to the economy of the Trinity, that it should be the latter, who by that economy is already under the Father as his Head. That the Father should be servant to the Son would be contrary to the economy and natural order of the Persons of the Trinity.

5. It appears from what has been said that no other subjection or obedience of the Son to the Father arises properly from the covenant of redemption, but only that which implies humiliation, or a state and relation to the Father wherein he descends below the infinite glory of a divine Person: all that origination in acting from the Father, and dependence on and compliance with his will, that implies no descent below his divine glory, being no more than what properly flows from the economical order of the Persons of the Trinity. No other subjection or obedience is new in kind, but only that which implies humiliation.

309. Trinity. The name of the second person in the Trinity, Ëïãïò, evidences that he is God's idea, whether we translate the word "the reason of God" or "the Word of God." If the reason or the understanding of God, the matter is past dispute, for everyone will own that the reason or understanding of God is his idea. And if we translate it "the Word of God," it is either the outward Word of God or his inward. None will say he is his outward. Now the outward word is speech, but the inward word, which is the original of it, is thought, the Scripture being its own interpreter. For how often is thinking in Scripture called speaking, when applied to God and men! So that it is the idea, if we take Scripture for our guide, that is the inward word.

336. Trinity. All the metaphorical representations of the Holy Ghost in the Scripture, such as water, fire, breath, wind, oil, wine, a spring, a river of living water as proceeding from God, do abundantly the most naturally represent the perfectly active flowing affection, holy love and pleasure of God. So the Holy Ghost is said to be poured out, and shed forth; Acts 2:32). So love is said to be shed abroad in our hearts.

341. Trinity. I can think of no other good account that can be given of the apostle

Paul's wishing "grace and peace," or "grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ" in the beginning of his epistles without ever mentioning the Holy Ghost, but that the Holy Ghost is the grace, the love and peace of God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ. We find it so fourteen times in all his salutations, in the beginning of his epistles, and in his blessing at the end of his 2nd Epistle to the Corinthians, where all three Persons are mentioned, he wishes grace and love from the Son and the Father, but the communion of the Holy Ghost, that is the partaking of him. The blessing from the Father and the Son, is the Holy Ghost, but the blessing from the Holy Ghost is himself, a communication of himself.

362. Trinity. We have a lively image of the Trinity in the sun. The Father is as the substance of the sun; the Son is as the brightness and glory of the disk of the sun, or that bright and glorious form under which it appears to our eyes; the Holy Ghost is as the heat and powerful influence, which acts upon the sun itself, and being diffusive enlightens, arms, enlivens, and comforts the world. The Spirit, as heat is God's infinite love and happiness, is as the internal heat of the sun, but as it is that by which God communicates himself, he is as the emitted beams of God's glory: 2 Cor. 3:18 that is, we are changed to glory or to a shining brightness, as Moses was from, or by God's glory or shining, even as by the Spirit of the Lord, i.e. which glory or shining is the spirit of the Lord. The word, that is translated from with respect to glory, and by with respect to the Spirit, is the same in the original: it is, in both, and therefore would have been more intelligibly translated, "we are changed by glory into glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." Moses was changed by God's glory shining upon him, even as we are changed by God's Spirit, shed as bright beams on us.

The Spirit of God is called the Spirit of glory, 1 Pet. 4:14), The Spirit of glory rests upon you, upon two accounts, because it is the glory of God, and as it were his emitted beams, and as it is the believer's glory, and causes him also to shine.

Indeed the whole animal creation, which is but for the shadows of beings, is so made as to represent spiritual things. It might be demonstrated by the wonderful agreement in thousands of things, much of the same king as is between the types of the Old Testament and their antitypes, and by their being spiritual things — being so often and continually compared with them in the Word of God. And it is agreeable to God's wisdom that it should be so, that the inferior and shadowy parts of his works should be made to represent those things that are more real and excellent, spiritual and divine, to represent the things that immediately

concern himself and the highest parts of his work. Spiritual things are the crown and glory, the head and soul, the very end and Alpha and Omega of all other works.

What, therefore, can be more agreeable to wisdom than that they should be so made as to shadow them forth? And we know that this is according to God's method, which his wisdom has chosen in other matters. Thus the inferior dispensation of the gospel was all to shadow forth the highest and most excellent which was its end. Thus almost everything that was said or done, that we have recorded in Scripture from Adam to Christ, was typical of gospel things. Persons were typical persons: their actions were typical actions, the cities were typical cities, the nation of the Jews and other nations were typical nations, their land was a typical land, God's providences towards them were typical providences, their worship was typical worship, their houses were typical houses, their magistrates were typical magistrates, their clothes were typical clothes, and indeed the world was a typical world. And this is God's manner to make inferior things shadows of the superior and most excellent, outward things shadows of spiritual, and all other things, shadows of those things that are the end of all things and the crown of all things. Thus God glorifies himself and instructs the minds that he has made.

370. Trinity. The various sorts of rays of the sun and their beautiful colors do well represent the Spirit, and the amiable excellency of God, and the various beautiful graces and virtues of the Spirit. The same we find in Scripture are made use of by God for that purpose, even to signify and represent the graces and virtues of the Spirit. Therefore I suppose the rainbow was chosen to be a sign of the covenant, and St. John saw a rainbow round about the throne of God, Rev. 4:3 and a rainbow upon the head of Christ, 10:1.

There is yet more of an image of the Trinity in the soul of man. There is the mind, and its understanding or idea, and the will or affection, or love: answering to God, the idea of God, and the love of God.

376. Trinity. It can no other way be accounted for, that in the first of 1 John 1:2-3 "Our fellowship" is said to be "with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ," and that it is not said to be also with the Holy Ghost, but because our communion with them consists in our communion of the Holy Ghost with them. It is in our partaking of the Holy Ghost, that we have communion with Father and Son, and with Christians. This is the common excellency and delight, in

which they all are united: this is the bond of perfectness, by which they are one in the Father, and the Son, as the Father is in the Son and the Son in the Father.

405. Trinity. It may be thus expressed, the Son is the Deity, generated by God's understanding or having an idea of himself. The Holy Ghost is the divine essence flowing out, or breathed forth in infinite love and delight, or which is the same, the Son is God's idea of himself, and the Spirit is God's love to and delight in himself.

446. Trinity. Christ is called the "face" of God, Exo. 33:14 and the "angel of God's face" (Isa. 63:9, the word in the original signifies face, or looks, form, or appearance of a thing. Now what can be so fitly called so as God's own perfect idea of himself, whereby he has every moment a view of his own essence? This is that face, aspect, form, or appearance, whereby God eternally appears to himself, and more perfectly than man appears to himself by his form or appearance in a looking glass. The root, that the word comes from, signifies to look upon or behold. Now what is that which God looks upon, or beholds, in so eminent a manner, as he does on his own idea, or the perfect image of himself, which he has in view. This is that which is eminently in his presence, this is the angel of his presence.

Nicene Creed Traditional Wording

I believe in one God,
the Father Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
and of all things visible and invisible;

And in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the only begotten Son of God,
begotten of his Father before all worlds,
God of God, Light of Light,
very God of very God,
begotten, not made,

being of one substance with the Father;
by whom all things were made;
who for us men and for our salvation
came down from heaven,
and was incarnate by the Holy Ghost
of the Virgin Mary,
and was made man;
and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered and was buried;
and the third day he rose again
according to the Scriptures,
and ascended into heaven,
and sitteth on the right hand of the Father;
and he shall come again, with glory,
to judge both the quick and the dead;
whose kingdom shall have no end.

And I believe in the Holy Ghost the Lord, and Giver of Life,
who proceedeth from the Father [and the Son];
who with the Father and the Son together
is worshipped and glorified;
who spake by the Prophets.
And I believe one holy Catholic and Apostolic Church;
I acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins;
and I look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. AMEN.

Chalcedonian Creed (451 A.D.)

This creed was adopted at the Fourth Ecumenical Council, held at Chalcedon, located in what is now Turkey, in 451, as a response to certain heretical views concerning the nature of Christ. It established the orthodox view that Christ has two natures (human and divine) that are unified in one person.

I could use your help

If you liked this book and you desire to see books that defend Christian truth—works that make a real impact on culture and individuals, please write a short (or long and detailed) review of this book. It helps a lot and I would be very grateful.

It's on Amazon.

If you want to be placed on my Mailing List email me at MRobLV@gmail.com

WARNING: READ THIS

I want to alert you to read the quotes I put at the head of the chapters. Some of these quips come from inconsistent Christians. Many are from the pens of brilliant Christian thinkers. I challenge you to do some thinking, and use the Bible as your standard for discerning whether the quote is true or absurd. You will also notice that the main theme of this book is asserted in an almost uninterrupted manner. My hope is that it will not smother you, but will inculcate you with the simple scriptural way to preach the gospel.

The God of Christian theism

The God I profess is revealed in the Old and New Testaments and His person and divine nature is summarized in the Westminster Confession of Faith: Chapter Two, Of God, and of the Holy Trinity:

> I. There is but one only living and true God, who is infinite in being and perfection, a most pure spirit, invisible, without body, parts, or passions, immutable, immense, eternal, incomprehensible,

almighty, most wise, most holy, most free, most absolute, working all things according to the counsel of his own immutable and most righteous will, for his own glory, most loving, gracious, merciful, long-suffering, abundant in goodness and truth, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin; the rewarder of them that diligently seek him; and withal most just and terrible in his judgments; hating all sin; and who will by no means clear the guilty.

II. God has all life, glory, goodness, blessedness, in and of himself; and is alone in and unto himself all-sufficient, not standing in need of any creatures which he has made, nor deriving any glory from them, but only manifesting his own glory in, by, unto, and upon them; he is the alone foundation of all being, of whom, through whom, and to whom, are all things; and has most sovereign dominion over them, to do by them, for them, or upon them, whatsoever himself pleases. In his sight all things are open and manifest; his knowledge is infinite, infallible, and independent upon the creature; so as nothing is to him contingent or uncertain. He is most holy in all his counsels, in all his works, and in all his commands. To him is due from angels and men, and every other creature, whatsoever worship, service, or obedience he is pleased to require of them.

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. The Father is of none, neither begotten nor proceeding; the Son is eternally begotten of the Father; the Holy Ghost eternally proceeding from the Father and the Son.

For we must always remember that we study this fact, we are not dealing with a doctrine about God, with an abstract concept, or with a scientific proposition about the nature of Divinity. We are not dealing with a human construction which we ourselves or which others have put upon the facts, and which we now try to analyze and logically to dismember. Rather in treating of the Trinity, we are dealing with God Himself, with the one and true God, who has revealed Himself as such in His Word. It is as He said to Moses: “I am the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob” (Exodus 3:6) So He

> reveals Himself to us also in His Word and manifests Himself to us as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Herman Bavinck: *Our Reasonable Faith*).
>
> The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen (2 Corinthians 13:14).
>
> And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory (1 Timothy 3:16).
>
> Behold, he comes with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, says the Lord, who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty (Revelation 1:7-8).

The Trinity: A Mystery Revealed

The Trinity is very mysterious (John Frame).

The Trinity is a mystery, the *doctrine* has some paradoxical elements. God is three persons in one being. God in His almightiness is a mystery. We do not know how the doctrine of the tri-unity of God works; even so, discard the Trinity and one will find it difficult to account for personhood, love, equality, mathematics, justice, morality, and logic. Many Christians recoil at defending the Trinity because they think it is a contradiction and a problem; rather, it is the solution. The Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Spirit is God. And there is only one God, three persons in one being.

> 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 Spirit. But, the Godhead of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, is all one: the Glory equal, the Majesty co-eternal (Athanasian Creed).

Herein my apologetic foundation is the biblical worldview revealed by the Lord God Almighty of the Bible and not any other professed god or gods.

The Gospel

Moreover, brethren, I declare to you **the gospel** which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand, by which also you are saved, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you… that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the scriptures, and that He was seen by Cephas, then by the twelve. After that He was seen by over five hundred brethren at once... (1Corithtians 15:1-6).

But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness, just as David also describes the blessedness of the man to whom God imputes righteousness apart from works: "Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, And whose sins are covered; Blessed is the man to whom the LORD shall not impute sin" (Romans 4:5-8).

For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God (John 3:16-18).

> When all the suns and nebulae have passed away, each one of you will still be alive (C.S. Lewis).
>
> The evil deeds of a wicked man ensnare him; the cords of his sin hold him tight (Proverbs 5:22)

Cast your whole soul upon Christ. Flee to His mercy, love, and truth. He will not only forgive you, but He will secure you since He will never leave you nor forsake you. Jesus died on the cross for sinners and rose from the grave: Come to

Christ and find pardon, hope, joy, and love.

> So when Peter saw it, he responded … "The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of our fathers, glorified His Servant Jesus, whom you delivered up … But you denied the Holy One and the Just … and killed the Prince of life, whom God raised from the dead, of which we are witnesses. … But those things which God foretold by the mouth of all His prophets, that the Christ would suffer, He has thus fulfilled. Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord" (Acts 3:12-19).

> The Lord is a sun: He is the Source of all light and life. to live apart from Him is death, but His fellowship is life for us. And the Lord is a shield: He protects and preserves His people from all the powers of evil that seek their destruction. He does not in this life, remove all evil and affliction from them, but He gives them grace which is sufficient unto every need. He makes us taste His goodness even in the way of adversity and makes that way subservient to our glory. Never does He withhold any good thing from those that walk in His way (Herman Hoeksema).

Jesus loves His people and He will never leave them (Matthew 28:19-20). His love endures all things (1 Corinthians 13:1-4) and His love never fails since it flows from His unchanging being. He is love and He loves His sheep unconditionally. Focus on His person, delight in His love, and love Him because He first loved you.

> Nothing binds me to my Lord like a strong belief in His changeless love (Charles Spurgeon).

God is the Ultimate Reference Point

> Christianity is not a theory but a description of what actually takes place … salvation by grace (Ludwig Wittgenstein).

God is the foundation for all meaning, purpose, objective moral values, and rationality. God alone is the one who makes any rational argument possible and reasonable. There is assured proof that God lives. Bahnsen put it well when he

specified: “The Christian offers the self-attesting Christ to the world as the only foundation upon which a man must stand to give any ‘reasons’ for anything at all. The whole notion of ‘giving reasons’ is completely destroyed by any ontology other than the Christian one. The Christian claims that only after accepting the biblical scheme of things will any man be able to understand and account for his own rationality” (*Always Ready*). All anti-theists intellectually fail to ground the atheistic ground are standing on.

For the purpose of illustration, Bahnsen likens the argument that God does not exist to the argument that air does not exist. One needs to be breathing air while arguing that it does not exist. If air did not exist, one could not live in order to debate the subject. Atheists take enormous swigs of God’s logic as they endeavor to disprove theism. Anti-theists depend on God to make their arguments against His existence (illustration originated by Van Til). God is the compulsory preexistent condition for making any argument possible, including an argument against theism. As the unbeliever debates God’s existence he presupposes that God does in fact live.

> There is only one door, one bridge, one ladder, between earth and heaven: the crucified Son of God (J.C. Ryle).

Words and Terminology You Can Use

The following definitions are needed to provide clarity for the remainder of the book. If you are not familiar with apologetics and its terminology, you will want to place a bookmark on this page and refer to it until you are fluent in the vocabulary.

- **Apologetics**: The study and application of defending the faith (See 1 Peter 3:15; Jude 3; Acts 17-20).

- ***A Priori* Argument**: An argument prior to or independent of observation and experience, which is assumed to be true without the necessity to prove it. It is fully and universally independent of experience, discernment, and discovery by the five senses.

• **Empiricism**: The belief that truth is to be found through the use of the five senses alone. Observation and measurement are the means to discover reality. All truth is discovered by the senses—what we can see, feel, observe, and measure.

• **Epistemology**: The study of how we know what we know; the nature and basis of knowledge; the accounting and justifying of knowledge claims; and the sources and scope of knowledge.

> What do people ordinarily mean, when they say that they "know" something? (Greg L. Bahnsen: *Van Til's Apologetic*).

A true belief (epistemic feature) reflects the way a thing really is or how reality really is (metaphysical feature), thus ontology and metaphysics relate to the knowledge process and its justification (epistemology). Consequently the knower must begin with a worldview that is the foundation for one's epistemic position. Epistemic rights abide only in a system of knowledge that provides universals and invariants.

A skeptic won't take *know* for an answer (author unknown).

• **Explanation**: Parrish offers this definition of explanation: "Another term to be defined is 'explanation' For the purpose of this work, an explanation will be a cause or reason for something (entity, event, state of affairs, etc.) simply to exist, or to exist in a particular manner. Explanations are given by referring to principle(s) and/ or entity(ies) which constitutes the reason or cause. In explaining something, one says it exist in the manner it does because of some other principles(s) or entity(ies) that cause it to be in this certain manner. Although, 'explanation' is normally used to refer to some other, often more basic principle(s) and/ or entity(ies), it may also sometimes just mean the answer to the question of why some situation(s) exists in the manner it does. 'Giving an account' is a broader term than 'explanation.' Giving an account' includes everything that can signify an 'explanation' but also includes any possible objects or events which arise and exist in the manner they do for no reason at all" (*God and Necessity*: p. 2).

• **Immutable**: Unchanging; invariant; that which cannot change; always remaining the same; not mutable; perpetually the same, unceasingly unchanging,

changeless (God, the laws of logic, and moral law are immutable).

• **The Laws of Logic**: Abstract, non-concrete laws of thought and reason that are immaterial, aspatial, atemporal, universal, obligatory, necessary, immutable, and absolute. Some academics identify them as the laws of thought or the laws of reason. A few scholars strongly prefer to name them the laws of logic because they are independent of human minds. All rational thinking (and communication) presupposes and uses the laws of logic.

The most well-known law is the Law of Non-contradiction: A cannot be A and Non-A at the same time in the same way. Consequently a man cannot be his own father.

The laws of logic reflect the nature and mind of God; thus, they have ontological grounding—that is, they are grounded in the very nature of truth itself and cannot be reduced to human convention, opinion or psychology. Without these laws, knowledge and rational thinking are impossible. To deny the laws of logic, one must use these laws in one's attempt to deny them. Those who deny the laws of logic are participating in a self-defeating endeavor.

The law of logic known as the Law of Non-contradiction (LNC), the Principle of Contradiction or the Law of Contradiction is perpetually necessary and in the words of Aristotle: "One cannot say of something that it is and that it is not in the same respect and at the same time."

> Logic is "a type of thinking which seeks conformity to God's thoughts …" (Greg Bahnsen: *Foundations of Christian Scholarship*).

• **Naturalism:** Parrish using Angeles' definitions states: "In the contrast to theism, 'naturalism' holds that the physical universe is ultimate. Here is part of Angeles definition of 'naturalism': The universe (nature) is the only reality. It is eternal, self-activating, self-existent, self-contained, self-dependent, self-operating, self-explanatory. The universe is neither derived from nor dependent upon any supernatural or transcendent being or entities. Natural phenomena cannot be 'interfered' with, 'violated'; 'suspended' There is no supernatural realm. It should be noted one can be naturalist and believe in a god or gods. Any gods that existed would be material beings, or at least spatially and temporally in and dependent upon the material universe" (Parrish: *God and Necessity*).

> Methodological naturalism: Only material causes are permitted. That rule is the basis for Darwinian accusations that ID is creationism. ID does admit non-material causes, thereby flouting the (recently imposed) rule obliging scientists to adhere to naturalism all the way (Tom Bethell).

• **Necessity:** Stephen Parrish uses Plantinga's definition of necessity: "The notion of necessity which I will emphasize the most is what Alvin Plantinga calls a broadly logical necessity. He writes: 'In the first place, truths of logic-truths of propositional logic and first order quantification theory let us say-are necessary in the sense in question. Such truths are logically necessary in the narrow sense... But the sense of necessity in question-call it 'broadly logical necessity'--is wider than this. Truths of set theory, arithmetic and mathematics generally are necessary in this sense, as are a host of homelier items.

• **New Atheists:** A group of contemporary militant atheists who often rest on emotion to offer caustic and angry diatribes against God and all forms of religion.

• **Ontology**: The study of the nature of being; from the Greek word *ontos*. Ontology is the study and analysis of "existence," or reality in general, in fundamental categories as well as relations thereof.

> General ontology is the most basic aspect of metaphysics, and there are three main tasks that make up this branch of metaphysical study. First, general ontology focuses on the nature of existence itself. What is it to be or exist? Is existence a property that something has? Does nothingness itself exist in some sense? It there a sense of being such that fictional objects like the unicorn Pegasus have being even though they do not exist? (Moreland and Craig).

Ontic actuality is predicated of a thing; one thing that is always predicated and essential is that the thing exists forasmuch as all things that may be intelligible are in the class of things that exist as material, abstract, mental, or spiritual kinds. Some scholars use the terms metaphysics and ontology interchangeably; some make distinctions. Selected views have metaphysics as a broader discipline that includes everything. P.F. Strawson observes: "There is a massive central core of human thinking which has no history — or none recorded in histories of thought; there are categories and concepts which, in their most fundamental

character, change not at all. Obviously these are not the specialities of the most refined thinking. They are the commonplaces of the least refined thinking; and are yet the indispensable core of the conceptual equipment of the most sophisticated human beings. It is with these, their interconnexions, and the structure that they form, that a descriptive metaphysics will be primarily concerned" (Strawson: *Individuals*).

> Truth is that which corresponds to its referent (that to which it refers). Metaphysical truth is that which corresponds with reality or reflects reality—what really is. By "correspondence" we mean agreement with something—in this case, a thought or statement about reality agrees with reality. By "reality" we mean that which is, or exists (Josh McDowell).

- **Perichoresis**: A theological term concerning the doctrine of the Trinity that specifies the intimate union, mutual indwelling, and mutual interpenetration of the three members of the Trinity (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) in relation to one another within the one God.

> In the seventh century, John of Damascus described the relationship of the three persons of God as perichoresis. This word literally means "the circle dance" (Tobin Wilson).

- **Physicalism/Materialism:** All that exists is composed of or depends on matter and motion.

> Physicalism is the thesis that everything is physical, or as contemporary philosophers sometimes put it, that everything supervenes on, or is necessitated by, the physical. The thesis is usually intended as a metaphysical thesis, parallel to the thesis attributed to the ancient Greek philosopher Thales, that everything is water, or the idealism of the 18th Century philosopher Berkeley, that everything is mental. The general idea is that the nature of the actual world (i.e. the universe and everything in it) conforms to a certain condition, the condition of being physical. Of course, physicalists don't deny that the world might contain many items that at first glance don't seem physical — items of a biological, or psychological, or moral, or social nature. But they insist nevertheless that at the end of the day such items are either physical or supervene on the physical (*Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*).

I employ the terms atheism, materialism and physicalism interchangeably: I apply these three positions as strict materialism. There are selected scholars who make distinctions even though they all ultimately appear to reduce to strict materialism. Subsequently, general atheistic materialism is a physical-only philosophy. It asserts the belief that only the physical/material universe exists; there are no gods, angels, or spirits. The advocate for strict materialism tries to prove that only the material world is there, all the while he uses immaterial reason, thus he supplies his own defeater. Hard materialism cannot justify immaterial objective moral values and the laws of logic.

> Contrary to Sam Johnson the criterion of the real is not its kick-ability, but its susceptibility to becoming known through propositions (Ben Meyer: *Critical Realism and the New Testament*).

> If our own minds can intrude on matter in ways that cannot be explained by materialists, is it not possible that some larger or more encompassing Mind can impact the world of nature? No, say the materialists. Why not? Because, in their philosophy, matter is all that exists. That’s why they call themselves materialists. Materialism, sometimes called naturalism, is the belief that matter — molecules in motion — is all that exists. Everything else: mind, consciousness, spirit — must somehow be reduced to the

orchestrated firing of neurons (Tom Bethell).

• **Presupposition**: One's primary rational principle. A preeminent belief held to be true and taken as a precommitment. It is the belief that is held at the most foundational level of one's grid or web of beliefs. It is the lens through which one interprets reality; it is taken for granted and assumed in making a statement or a theory. It is one's rational starting point; primary and fundamental assumption; and metaphysical foundation. Everyone has presuppositions—primary belief patterns that influence one's thinking and outlook. Reason, logic, mathematics, knowledge, predication, and morality are only consistent with Christian presuppositions (see below for additional explication).

It's not what you look at that matters, it's what you see (Henry David Thoreau).

> A presupposition is something assumed or supposed in advance. A good definition is to require or involve necessarily as an antecedent condition. One could say that to "presuppose" is to conclude something before the investigation is commenced (Josh McDowell).
>
> The lordship of Christ is not only ultimate and unquestionable, not only above and beyond all other authorities, but also over all areas of human life. In 1 Corinthians 10:31 we read, "Whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God" (cf. Rom.14:23; 2 Cor. 10:5; Col. 3:17 & 23; 2 Tim. 3:16-17). Our Lord's demand upon us is comprehensive. In all that we do, we must seek to please him. No area of human life is neutral (John Frame: *Apologetics to the Glory of God*).

Presuppositions do not nullify one's position—if it did all positions would be nullified, since all people hold to presuppositions regarding every idea they uphold. But what worldview provides the ontological and epistemic resources to account for intelligibility required to hold to presuppositions and to have a worldview? Strict naturalistic atheism fails. It falls short because strict naturalistic atheism lacks the ontological apparatus and tools to underwrite indispensable features of human experience (knowledge, logic, objective moral norms, etc.). God is the ultimate reference point and He provides all the resources required for intelligibility. Strict naturalistic atheism lacks the ontological machinery to underwrite the rational resources necessary for intelligibility needed to hold presuppositions.

- **Proof**: The evidence, demonstration or argument that establishes an assertion as true or factual. Otherwise the validation of a proposition using inductive or deductive demonstration. Proof is distinct from persuasion as bias and precommitments may keep one from acknowledging the proof as true, but proof can be compelling to an honest inquirer.

• **Rationalism**: The belief that truth is found only by the right use of reason and logic.Brown notes: “Rationalism has come to mean the attempt to judge everything in the light of reason” (Colin Brown: *Philosophy and the Christian Faith*).

> Rationalism: from the Latin *ratio*, meaning ‘reason,’ is a point of view that states that reason plays the main role in understanding the world and obtaining knowledge. Whilst rationalism has existed throughout the history of philosophy, it is usually associated specifically with three philosophers during the Renaissance:
>
> **1.** René Descartes (1596-1650)
> **2.** Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646-1716)
> **3.** Baruch Spinoza (1632-1677).
>
> All 3 of these philosophers shared the belief that we can best understand the world through logic and reasoning. However, this does not mean that they were uninterested in science and experiment —on the contrary, both rationalists and empiricists were keen on scientific enquiry.
> (http://www.philosophyonline.co.uk/tok/rationalism2.htm).

• **Reason**: Rational capacity, and the ability and proclivity to follow the same in a logical manner. To reason or to use one's reasons in an orderly manner. The concept of reason is closely related to the concepts of language and logic, as reflected in the multiple meanings of the Greek word "logos", the root of logic, which translated into Latin became "ratio" and then in French "raison", from which the English word "reason" was derived. In contrast to reason more generally, language refers not to the thinking as such, but to the communication or potential communication of rational thoughts.

> Reason is the power or capacity whereby we see or detect logical relationships among propositions (Alvin Plantinga: *Warranted Christian Belief*).
>
> I do not believe Van Til defines reason anywhere, but it is clear that he views it primarily as a human capacity or faulty. Specially, reason is the capacity of a person to think and act according to logical

> norms, including the capacity to form beliefs, draw inferences, and formulate arguments (Frame: *CVT*).

• **Self-refuting Statements:** Norman Geisler identifies self-refuting statements as "those which fail to satisfy their own criteria of validity or acceptability. They are called self-referential … self-destructive, and self-falsifying." He finds applications for the apologist because the principle of self-refutation "is a handy apologetics tool, since most, if not all, non-Christian views involve self-defeating statements. … The principle of self-falsification is not a first principle, such as the law of non-contradiction. Rather, it is based on the law of non-contradiction" (Norman Geisler, *Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics*).

• **Transcendental Argument (TA)**: Dr. Greg L. Bahnsen states "A transcendental argument begins with any item of experience or belief whatsoever and proceeds, by critical analysis, to ask what conditions (or what other beliefs) would need to be true in order for that original experience or belief to make sense, be meaningful, or intelligible to us." TAs begin with the form "p presupposes q" in contrast to arguments for theism which begin with the premise "p implies q."

I affirm that TAs are lofty arguments inasmuch as all men must begin with some *a priori* assumptions within sound or even unsound argument forms. Additionally, TAs can be sound in an affirmation or even a denial of their premise (e.g. "anti-theism presupposes theism").

Transcendental arguments "attempt to discover the preconditions of human experience." For x (some aspect of human experience) to be the case, y must also be the case since y is a precondition of x. Since x is the case, y is the case. It is "not a deductive consequence of the premises of the argument but rather the metaphysical and logical ground of the very possibility of the premises themselves."

> Transcendental arguments are partly non-empirical, often anti-skeptical arguments focusing on necessary enabling conditions either of coherent experience or the possession or employment of some kind of knowledge or cognitive ability, where the opponent is not in a position to question the fact of this experience, knowledge, or cognitive ability, and where the revealed preconditions include what the opponent questions. Such arguments take as a premise some obvious fact about our mental life—

> such as some aspect of our knowledge, our experience, our beliefs, or our cognitive abilities—and add a claim that some other state of affairs is a necessary condition of the first one. Transcendental arguments most commonly have been deployed against a position denying the knowability of some extra-mental proposition, such as the existence of other minds or a material world. Thus these arguments characteristically center on a claim that, for some extra-mental proposition P, the indisputable truth of some general proposition Q about our mental life requires that P (*Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*: Transcendental Arguments).

• **Truth**: Truth is that which is consistent with actuality; it objectively matches reality and is not merely reliant on subjective convictions. "While God wants to reach the heart with truth, he does not bypass the mind" (Jonathan Edwards). Lawson comments: "What is truth? It is defined as that which conforms with fact or reality. It is genuineness, veracity, or actuality. In a word, truth is reality. It is how things really are. Theologically, truth is that which is consistent with the mind, character, glory, and being of God."

> Truth is only the agreement between reason which judges and reality which the judgment affirms. Error, on the other hand, is but their disagreement. I say that Peter exists; if this judgment of existence is true, it is because Peter does indeed exist. I say that Peter is a rational animal; if I am speaking truly, it is because indeed Peter is a living being endowed with reason. (Etienne Gilson).
>
> God's existence is essential for the discovery of truth because He is the springhead for truth. All truth is given by revelation, either general or special, and it must be received by reason. Reason is the God-given means for discovering the truth that God discloses, whether in his world or his Word (Jonathan Edwards).
>
> To say of what is, that it is, and of what is not, that it is not, is true (Aristotle).
>
> Those who reject the correspondence theory either take their own utterances to be true in the correspondence sense or they do not. If the former, then those utterances are self-defeating. If the latter, there is no reason to accept them, because one cannot take their utterances to be true (Craig and Moreland: *Philosophical*

Foundations for a Christian Worldview).

> Truth is the cry of all, but the game of few (George Berkeley).

I argue that what is true depends on and presupposes what there is. I maintain this position in the face of all sundry ontic kinds and sorts since all things exist and are sustained by God. God *is* and He is ontologically necessary for truth. Matter and motion actually exist because God created all things. Essentially, Christianity and its worldview are necessary to provide a proper accounting for all things that exist including diverse ontological categories.

- **Universals**: A universal is something that is true or applies everywhere and at all times. Unchanging laws in mathematics and logic are universals. Universals are applicable to or affecting all things, individuals, conditions, or cases; in general. Existing or prevailing everywhere, applicable or occurring throughout or relating to everything everywhere in the cosmos and outside the material cosmos. An assertion, statement, or proposition that affirms or denies something about every member of a class, as in all men are mortal; a general term or concept or the type such a term signifies all of one thing, concept, or truth; a metaphysical entity taken to be the reference of a general term, as distinct from the class of individuals it describes.

In general, I employ this term in reference to laws or entities that are not limited ontologically to the spatio-temporal realm; the Law of Non-contradiction and the Law of Identity are examples of universals.

There are diverse meanings and applications of the term “universal,” but herein I develop the classification above.

- **Worldview (WV)**: An overall perspective of life. One sees and defines the world through a basic grid of presuppositions, a worldview. It is the rational network used to evaluate reality.

> A worldview is a conceptual scheme by which we consciously or unconsciously place or fit everything we believe and by which we interpret and judge reality (Ronald Nash).
>
> Phrases like “interpretive framework” and “conceptual scheme,” are two ways of saying the same thing. Other synonymous expressions

consist of conceptual framework and noetic structure. A “worldview” is a maximal noetic structure (or maximal conceptual framework, etc.). It is itself a noetic structure and includes other, smaller (involving fewer propositions) noetic structures. A person with a particular worldview will have included in it a certain smaller noetic structure about history. But a worldview may not be contained in another noetic structure. This is why it is called maximal (Stephen Parrish).

A set of beliefs so derived constitutes a coherent worldview. A worldview seeks to make sense of all aspects of human experience in order to satisfy the human need for meaning. A coherent worldview provides and retains meaning in light of the internal and external challenges of reason. A coherent worldview thus secures the basis of a lasting culture (Surrendra Gangadean: *Philosophical Foundation*).

• **Yahweh (** יהוה**, YHWH)**: The Lord God of the Bible sometimes imprecisely called Jehovah and translated in the Old Testament as LORD (all caps). The tetragrammaton (Greek τετραγράμματον means "four letters") is the Hebrew that is transliterated into English as YHWH. Christians profess that He is the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit as one God. He alone is the true and living God. He also calls Himself “I AM that I AM” (Exodus 3:14; John 8:24, 58). He is the only true and living God.

By the ever-living God there is truth somewhere, and that truth we will find out if we can; and, having found it, we will hold it fast (Spurgeon).

Dedication

To Robert Morey, thank you for your scholarship: “And He Himself [God] gave some to be … teachers” (Ephesians 4:11).

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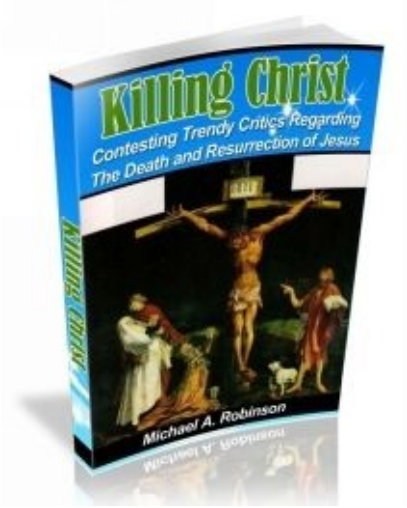
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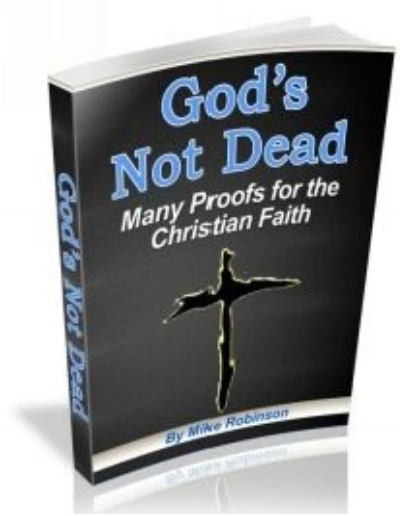
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God's Not Dead: Many Proofs For the Christian Faith

God's Not Dead: Many Proofs For the Christian Faith



In parts of the world the growth of Christianity is spectacular, yet in the West, atheism and skepticism are fervently seeking converts. "The many proofs for the existence of God must be clearly presented to our generation," says author Mike Robinson. "The goal of those who declare that 'God is Dead' is to remove God from our culture, schools, and civilization—this threat must be met head-on with the truth and

evidence of the Christian faith." *God's Not Dead* is inspired by the film directed by Harold Cronk, and stars Shane Harper, Kevin Sorbo, Jim Gleason, David A.R. White, Marco Khan, Korie Robertson, Wilie Robertson, the Newsboys and Dean Cain. It aims to show the world that God's not dead.

God's Not Dead helps the reader understand answers to questions like:

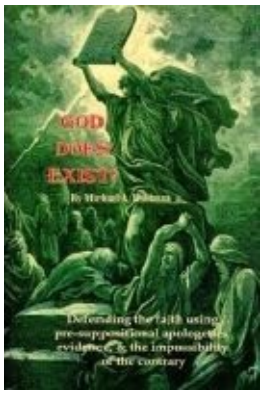
• Does God exist?
• Doesn't evolution disprove the Bible?
• What are the reasons to affirm the Resurrection of Christ?
• How can I prove that God's not dead?
• If life has a purpose, how do I find meaning in my life?
• How can the believer answer the problem of evil?
• How is Jesus Christ unique?
• How can one claim to have certain truth?
• Why is true faith not blind, but based on truth and evidence?

Are you sometimes concerned that someone will ask you a question about your faith that you can't answer? Have you tried to learn how to prove and contend for your faith, but have gotten lost in puzzling language and concepts? Have you struggled with periods of doubt yourself? This new, easy-to-understand book provides simple but powerful tools to help you defend the existence of God.

Yes, this *God's Not Dead: Many Proofs for the Christian Faith* is geared for average believers; however, this book is not just for beginners. The author refines very difficult and complex intellectual issues and makes them accessible to all, even though it may challenge many seasoned apologists and scholars—great for students as well as skeptics.

God Does Exist!: Defending the Faith using Presuppositional Apologetics, Evidence, and the Impossibility of the Contrary

Paperback - All encompassing apologetics



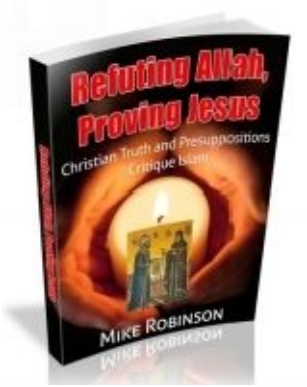
GOD DOES EXIST! You will encounter recent apologetic research employing Van Til's and Bahnsen's Presuppositional argument through a fresh street-level approach that allows you to:

- Refute atheism and agnosticism
- Demonstrate that the triune God exists
- Intellectually defeat vain philosophy
- A Great Introduction to Presuppositional Apologetics
- Learn how to share your faith with confidence
- Discover how logic, morality, and mathematics presuppose God
- Apply Presuppositional Apologetics to disprove Darwinism
- Utilize Evidential Apologetics within a Covenantal Apologetic framework.

Purchase in Paperback *God Does Exist!* on Amazon **HERE**

Refuting Allah, Proving Jesus: Christian Truth and Presuppositions Critique Islam

By Mike Robinson - World Religion Apologetics eBook Format



It’s difficult to find books that refute Islam using worldview criticism and Christian philosophy. But herein Robinson produces an innovative book that argues that Islamic thought fails the test of reason and that Christian theism is not only true, but Christianity is rationally necessary and assured. *Refuting Allah, Proving Jesus* is a readable volume; accessible yet scholarly.

This volume is a must for everyone concerned about defending Christian theism against the claims of Islamic thought.

If you desire to find out how a philosophical, biblical, theological, and transcendental analysis refutes the Qur’an and Islamic thought, then this book is for you.

Within its pages are numerous deductive and transcendental arguments which make it a very unique book regarding comparative religion. It’s a fine resource for a searching non-Christian, those with apologetic or philosophical interests, religious scholars, and ministers.

In *Refuting Allah, Proving Jesus Islam* is a clearly written and fairly presented statement of what Islamic Theism implies and how we as Christians can argue for the truth of the Triune God as we present the

claims of Christ to Muslims in a persuasive and caring manner.

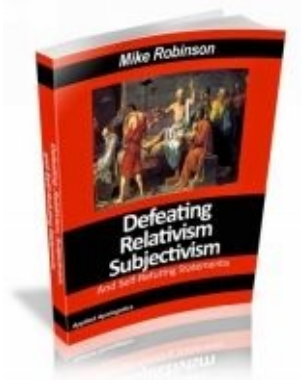
Logically meticulous, apologetically relevant, and philosophically indispensable, this is a richly illuminating work. Anyone interested in sharing the truth with Muslim friends or understanding the doctrines and theological foundation of Islam will appreciate this new apologetic resource.

Using an easy–to–follow format this book helps the reader answer questions like:

- Did Mohammad exist and what are to flaws of the Qur'an?
- Muhammad and Jesus Christ—what are their roles and who has a legitimate claim to authority?
- The Qur'an and the Bible—what kind of inspiration and authority do they have?
- Islamic Theology—What are the theological, philosophical, and logical problems?

Check out *Refuting Allah, Proving Jesus* on Amazon **HERE**

Defeating Relativism, Subjectivism, and Self-Refuting Statements
An eBook by Mike Robinson New-Age & Relativism Apologetics

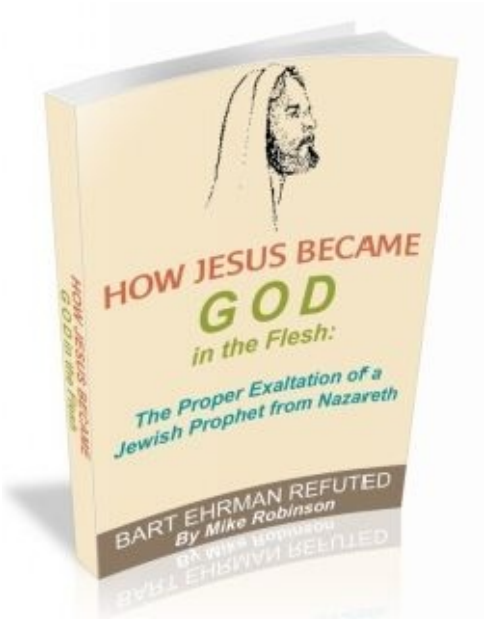


Countless skeptics, atheists, and secularists are utilizing relativism to challenge Christians in the public square. The new apologetics

book *Defeating Relativism, Subjectivism, and Self-Refuting Statements* shows that relativism is not just false, but intellectually unmanageable. The author demonstrates that absolute truth and objective moral values do exist and the contrary is not possible. This volume may contain the largest list of Self-refuting statements (and proper replies) in one resource.
Check out *Defeating Relativism, Subjectivism, and Self-Refuting Statements* **HERE**

How Jesus God Became in the Flesh: Refuting Bart Ehrman

Historical Apologetics Grounded on Ultimate Precommitments - eBook Format



No man in the past or the present has provoked such widely differing opinions as Jesus Christ. Some say He was merely a good and decent man, while others say He must be God in the flesh. In many trendy books, Christ's story is altered to suit the whims of those seeking to make Him a supporter of numerous political or ethical causes. Today, fashionable skeptics like Bart Ehrman follow in the footsteps of the

Jesus Seminar as they reject the biblical depiction of Jesus. They do not depict Him as God who came to atone for the sins of humanity. They attempt to reduce Christ to a mere man to suit their quirks and odd notions—they attempt to depict Christ as a zealot, a mystical sage, or a prophet for progressive values.

In *How Jesus God Became in the Flesh*, you will discover:

• Innovative Ways to Refute Critics of the Bible
• How the Foundation of Hypercritical Scholarship Collapses
• A Powerful Defense of the Trinity
• The Historical Evidence for Christ and the New Testament
• The Early Church Father's Proclamation of Christ's Divinity
• The Proof that Jesus Christ is God
• The Church Did Not Make Christ Divine by Vote

Jesus Christ's influence on our world is commanding, unavoidable, constructive, and often reviled. It is commanding because He is the Lord who fulfils His word; it is unavoidable for the reason that He is God and His name is known in every nation; it is constructive in light of the wisdom, love, education, and salvation it has produced; it is reviled because He makes moral demands upon humanity.

In *How Jesus Became God in the Flesh*, Mike Robinson robustly defends the divinity of Christ, His incarnation, and the doctrine of the Trinity. He rests on Scripture as he explores philosophy, ontology, history, and textual criticism. In this innovative volume, Robinson maintains Jesus Christ is God—the contrary is not possible.

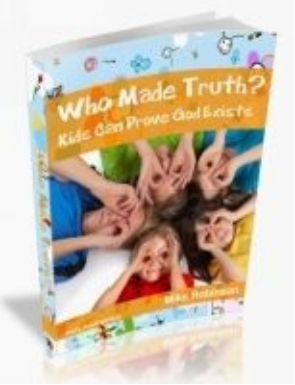
Not only is there compelling evidence that Jesus was something loftier than a mere man—that He was, in fact, God in the flesh. By wrestling with the biblical view of the Logos and the accounts of His birth, ministry, death, and resurrection, Robinson clarifies the scriptural

depiction of Jesus of Nazareth: God the Son—he undercuts the critics at their foundation. This reader-friendly book examines events, sayings, teachings, and the history of Jesus, using the Greek texts, ancient Rabbinical documents, and modern philosophy in service of the truth—God came to the earth to save men. Grab a warm beverage, pull up a seat, participate in the discussion, and learn how captivating the conversation regarding the historical Jesus can be.

Check out *How Jesus Became God in the Flesh: Refuting Bart Ehrman* **HERE**

Who Made Truth? Kids Can Know God Must Exist

by Michael Robinson - Children's & Teens Apologetics



A unique and easy way for your Kids, young teens, and middle school children to learn how to prove Christian truth. Do you want to reach America's largest mission field? Look in your home or Sunday School classroom: Young People! And with this new book they can learn to defend the Christian worldview.

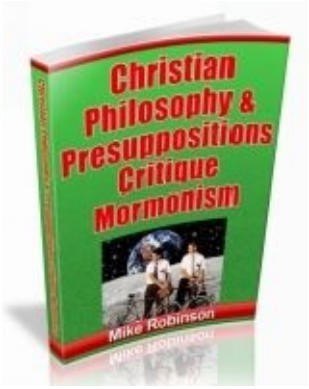
Many intellectuals spend the greater part of their life carefully guarding their ideas and shielding their worldview and ultimate pre-

commitments from critical analysis; especially Biblical critics and skeptics. In this new book Robinson challenges the rational assumptions and ethical presuppositions that drive unbelief as he offers potent arguments for Christian theism.
Check out *Who Made Truth* on Amazon **HERE** Purchase paperback through ALrob2020@gmail.com

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Christian Philosophy & Presuppositions Critiques Mormonism

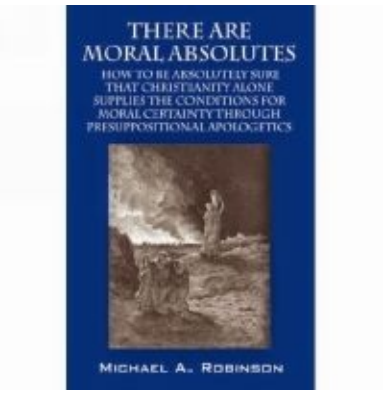
by Michael Robinson - Cult and Mormonism Apologetics - eBook Format



Christian Philosophy and Presuppositions Critique Mormonism is not just another book in the standard collection of recent works refuting the Mormon faith. The great majority of books which disprove Mormonism use arguments that demonstrate the absurdity of the claims of the Book of Mormon & Joseph Smith. Instead, Robinson deploys unique "How-to" arguments which refute Mormonism at its core. It offers a unique and fresh approach.

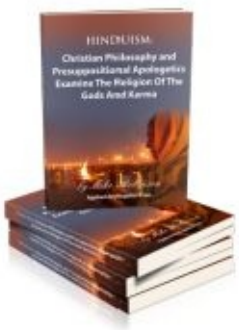
The Sure Existence of Moral Absolutes: The Proof God Exists Employing the Truth of Objective Moral Values

by Michael Robinson - Moral Apologetics



This unique book demonstrates, with an easy-flowing style, that Moral Absolutes must exist and God is the necessary ground for unchanging moral norms. *The Sure Existence of Moral Absolutes: The Proof God Exists* provides precise arguments in a simple to understand manner--step-by-step ways to demonstrate that God exists. This volume helps you refute: 1. Atheists 2. Agnostics 3. False religions.
Check out Paperback *There Are Moral Absolutes* on Amazon **HERE**
See eBook *There Are Moral Absolutes: Proof for God* on Amazon **HERE**

Hinduism Christian Philosophy And Presuppositional Apologetics Examine The Religion Of The Gods And Karma
by Michael Robinson - World Religion Apologetics - eBook format

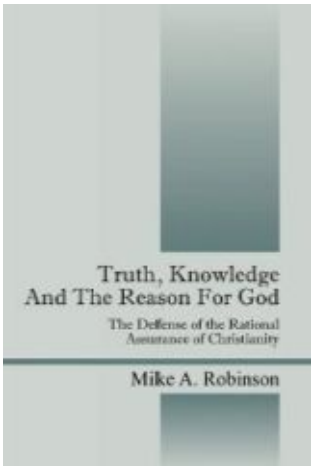


If you desire to find out how a philosophical, biblical, theological, and

presuppositional analysis refutes Hinduism, New Age Thought, & Eastern Religions, then this book is for you. This book is simple, powerful, unique, and accessible to the non-scholar. Examines: Hindus, New Agers, Sikhs, Krishna, The Vedas, the Bhagavad Gita and more.
Check out ***Hinduism Christian Philosophy And Presuppositional Apologetics Examine The Religion Of The Gods And Karma HERE***

Truth, Knowledge, and The Reason for God

by Mike Robinson - Paperback - Rational and Worldview Apologetics



Within these pages Robinson contends that the worldview revealed in Scripture is the precondition for all knowledge. The God of the Bible is the source and the basis of every element of mankind’s experience, knowledge, and value. This is a fine resource that will help believers and unbelievers discover the enormous amount of evidence that exists for the truth of Christianity. In "Many Infallible Truths" the reality of Theism is made clear: Men know that God exists. All men have their ultimate rational criteria, yet only a worldview based on Christian theism can provide absolute reasons to justify truth and knowledge. Robinson supplies powerful and vital arguments for the existence of God.

In *Truth, Knowledge, and the Reason for God*, one discovers:

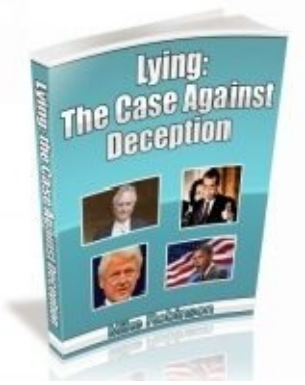
•a case for Christian theism built upon the rational and ethical bedrock required for knowledge
•an expansion of recent advancements concerning:
◦a) the argument from knowledge
◦b) the argument from reason
◦c) and the argument from the laws of thought using a concatenation of rational necessities.

•How can one utilize Justification in one's apologetic approach?

Included is new and distinctive material that will help the reader refute the arguments from the hostile "new atheists."
Purchase in Paperback on Amazon *Truth, Knowledge, and the Reason for God* **HERE**

Lying: The Case Against Dishonesty

Moral Apologetics eBook format



Many types of personal vice and public immorality flow from and are sustained by lies. Acts of infidelity and other personal disloyalties,

financial deceit, government dishonesty—even killing and massacres—usually involve an additional moral flaw: a readiness to lie.

Yes, *Lying: The Case Against Dishonesty* provides precise arguments in a simple-to-understand way, as Robinson offers deep scriptural, apologetic, and philosophical truths concerning lying. If, as a Christian, you know that lying is wrong, but you don't know how to demonstrate this fact, then this book will help clear it up. “Lying” gives you simple step-by-step ways to understand and apply the deep-seated moral value of honesty.

This fresh volume helps you refute:
• Atheists
• Agnostics
• People in false religions
• Secularists
• Cult members

You will learn the reasons why lying is wrong while discovering numerous proofs for the existence of God—much of the material discusses lying within the context of objective moral values. The author affirms and works from an innovative approach that will equip you with the latest apologetic research; the book is path-breaking in its readability of difficult concepts.

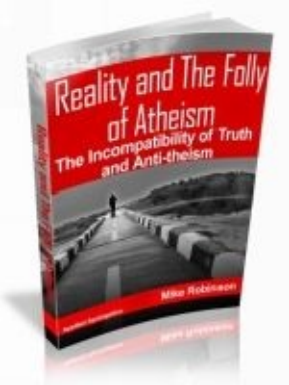
Lying: The Case Against Dishonesty allows you to:

• Understand how men and nations can be dishonest
• Comprehend how dishonesty affects your relationships
• Demonstrate that the God of the Bible exists
• Learn how to have absolute certainty
• Discover how honesty and morality require and presuppose God

In Lying, top-selling author and pastor Mike Robinson contends that we can fundamentally better our lives and improve culture by simply telling the truth in situations where others often lie. Purchase on *Lying* on Amazon **HERE**

Reality and The Folly of Atheism: The Incompatibility of Truth and Anti-theism

by Michael Robinson - Worldview Apologetics for the New Atheism - eBook Format

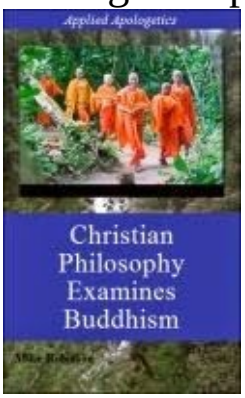


Frequently summoned as justification for atheism and skepticism, modern science actually offers reasons for Christian theism. More than that, without the truth of Christianity, one could not even do science. Robinson challenges the dogmas of atheism, relativism and materialism as he demonstrates that only the existence of God explains reality, including: matter, order, science, design, and ethics.

Purchase *Reality and The Folly of Atheism: The Incompatibility of Truth and Anti-theism*

Christian Philosophy & Presuppositions Examine Buddhism

by Michael Robinson - World Religion Apologetics - eBook

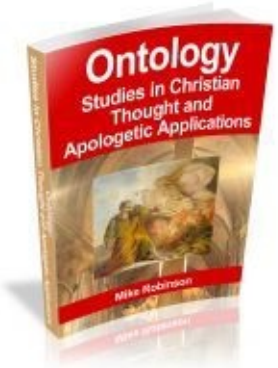


It's difficult to find books that attempt to disprove Buddhism (and non-Christian religions) using Christian philosophy. In *Christian Philosophy and Presuppositional Apologetics Examine Buddhism*, Robinson produces an innovative thought-provoking book that argues that only Christian theism is true and certain, and that Buddhism is false.

Check out *Christian Philosophy and Presuppositional Apologetics Examine Buddhism* **HERE**

Ontology: Studies in Christian Thought & Apologetic Applications

Christian Philosophical Apologetics by Michael Robinson



Confrontational atheism is on the warpath. In recent years pop-atheists have written a steady stream of combative books belittling Christian

theism. These authors are merely the leading edge of a larger movement that includes various E-atheists. In response, Mike Robinson, author of twenty books, delivers a fascinating defense of Christianity based upon the nature of God: His matchless ontology.
Check out *Ontology: Studies in Christian Thought and Apologetic Applications* **HERE**

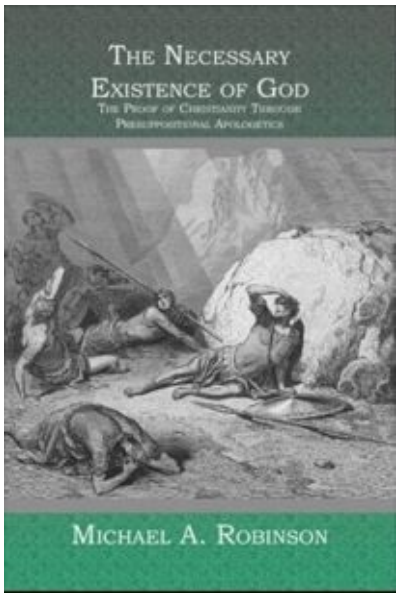
God and Logic: Proof, Rationality and Theism

Philosophical Logic Apologetics by Michael Robinson

In *God and Logic: Proof, Rationality and Theism*, Mike Robinson approaches the topic of logic using confident apologetics as he gives careful attention to crucial questions and concerns; including the relationship between God and logic, the existence of the true God, the power of the truth of the Trinity, and the problems inherent in atheism. Unique, informative, and very useful. Buy *God and Logic* **HERE**

And numerous other E-Book titles.

The Necessary Existence of God by Michael A Robinson

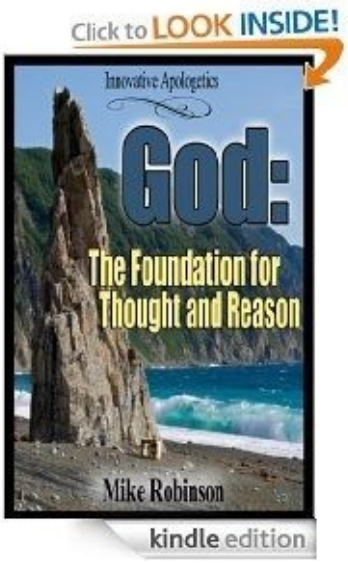


This book is a powerful and effective defense for the certain and necessary existence of God. It lays out a simple method to prove that God exists in a clear and rigorous way.

An indispensable book for anyone searching for God and those engaged in apologetics.

Available on Amazon

God: The Foundation for Thought and Reason



All men have their ultimate rational criteria, yet only a worldview based on Christian theism can provide absolute reasons to justify truth and knowledge.

Within this innovative book are answers to questions like:

* Does the Christian God exist?

* What are the reasons to affirm the Resurrection of Christ?

* Can one prove Christian theism?

* How can the believer answer the problem of evil?

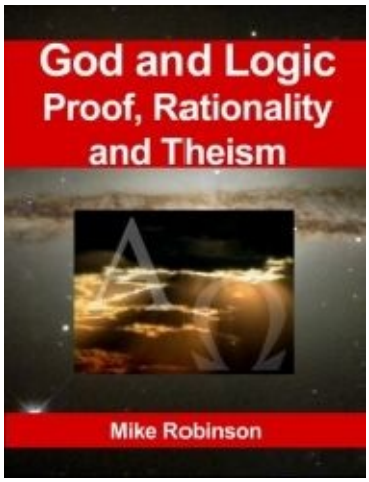
* How is Jesus Christ unique?

* How can one utilize justification in one's apologetic approach?

Yes, this new work is geared for apologetic apprentices; however, this book is not just for beginners. The author refines very difficult and complex intellectual issues and makes them accessible to all, even though it

may challenge many seasoned apologists and philosophers.
"God: The Foundation for Thought and Reason" makes the powerful reality clear: God exists and all men know this truth.
Purchase on Amazon at:
http://www.amazon.com/God-Foundation-Requirement-Christian-ebook/dp/B00ASEGM5A

God And Logic: Proof, Rationality, and Theism

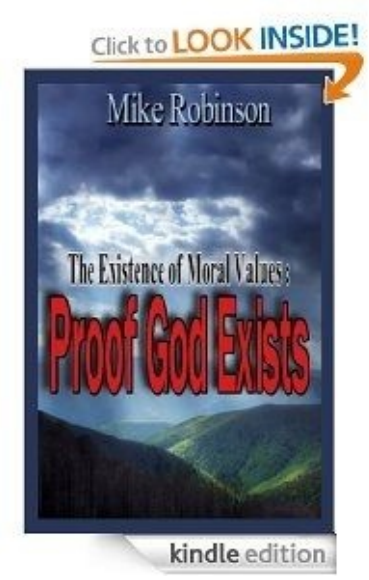


In “God and Logic: Proof, Rationality and Theism,” Mike Robinson approaches the topic of logic using confident apologetics as he gives careful attention to crucial questions and concerns; including the relationship between God and logic, the existence of the true God, the power of the truth of the Trinity, and the problems inherent in atheism. Unique, informative, and very useful.

Purchase at: https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/121406

Buy on Amazon at
http://www.amazon.com/God-Foundation-Requirement-Christian-ebook/dp/B00ASEGM5A

The Existence of Objective Moral Values: Proof God Exists



"The Existence of Objective Moral Values: Proof God Exists" provides deep scriptural, apologetic, and philosophical truths. If as a Christian, you know that there are moral absolutes, but you don't know how to demonstrate this fact, then this book will clear it all up. This volume gives you simple step-by-step ways to understand and apply the truth of objective moral values.

This fresh volume helps you refute:

1. Atheists

2. Agnostics

3. People in false religions

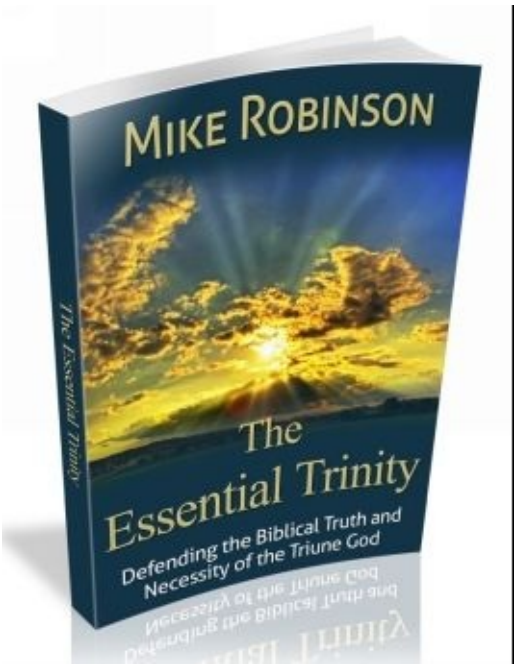
4. Secularists

5. Cult members

You learn this while reading proof after proof for the existence of God. And much of the material is leading-edge application of the truth of moral absolutes. This is employed as a proof for God's existence.

The author affirms and works from an innovative approach that will equip you with the latest apologetic research; pathbreaking in its readability of difficult concepts.
Buy on Amazon at:
http://www.amazon.com/Existence-Objective-Moral-Values-ebook/dp/B00AM4IB1Y/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1382061771&sr=1-1&keywords=moral+absolutes+proof+god+robinson

The Essential Trinity



“The Essential Trinity” is a fresh look at the most important truth of the Christian faith. Too often Christians have been uninformed and even neglectful regarding the doctrine of the Trinity. Discover anew the powerful truth concerning the God of the Bible.

This volume defines God's being and essence as it reveals how God relates to His people and creation. In “The Essential Trinity: Defending the Biblical Truth and Necessity of the Triune God” the reader will find an easy-to-understand explanation of the Trinity loaded with solid illustrations and scripture verses.

Robinson refutes old cultic falsehoods as well as many modern philosophical errors regarding the God of the Bible. This volume provides the proof for the Trinity while it takes the reader into a deeper relationship with God.

In “The Essential Trinity” You will discover:

- How to use the Old Testament in defending the doctrine of the Trinity
- Fresh ways to refute Mormons, Jehovah’s Witnesses, Oneness

Groups, and Muslims when they attack the Trinity
- How to use the New Testament to confound atheists, agnostics, and false religionists
- The early Church Fathers taught the doctrine of the Triune God and the Deity of Christ
- Why anti-Trinitarian heresies arose and how the false teachings were defeated
- How to know the Triune God must exist
- The arguments that modern philosophers, theologians, and apologists use to defend the Trinity
- How to apply contemporary implications of the Trinity for personal, church, and heavenly devotion
- The significant work of past theologians that support the doctrine of the Trinity

God is the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit as one divine being. Get ready for a fresh look and innovative applications regarding the relationship among Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—mighty truths that will inspire personal devotion and equip you to defend essential Christian truths.

Now purchase through mail!
Send check or money orders to PO Box 1052, Granbury, TX 76048.

Mike A. Robinson, longtime pastor and teacher at Christ Covenant Bible School, Granbury, Texas has equipped numerous Christians in utilizing Applied Apologetics. He is available for speaking and teaching seminars:
MRobLV@gmail.com
http://GodDoesExistallknowit.blogspot.com/

Applied Apologetics Press, Las Vegas, Nevada.

Mike A. Robinson, is the pastor and instructor at Full Life Bible School,

Granbury, Texas has equipped numerous Christians in utilizing Applied Apologetics. He is available for speaking and teaching seminars:
MRobLV@gmail.com
http://GodDoesExistaUknowit.blogspot.com/

Applied Apologetics Press, Las Vegas, Nevada.

Online Resources

The Christian Blog below reviews numerous Apologetic Books:

Also take a look at my website for my articles and books:

http://GodDoesExistAllKnowIt.blogspot.com/

(See my Books: *Letter to An Atheist Nation; God's Necessary Existence; God Does Exist!* On Amazon).

http://GodDoesExistAllKnowIt.blogspot.com/

http://www.amazon.com/Killing-Christ-Contesting-Resurrection-ebook/dp/B00EPQ5COE/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1377280541&sr=1-1&keywords=killing+christ+robinson

or check out my Numerous e-Books at SmashWords:

https://www.smashwords.com/profile/view/MichaelRobinson

*** Please Note:**

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The information in this document is not to be stolen or borrowed. I would implore you not share this information with others--You purchased this book, and you have a right to use it on your system alone. Another person who has not purchased this book does not have that right. It is the sales of this information that makes the continued publishing of my books possible. If enough people disregard that simple economic fact, my apologetics' work will no longer be viable or available. I have a family to care for and unlawful sharing hurts their modest standard of living.

If your friends think this information is valuable enough to ask you for it, they should think it is valuable enough to purchase on their own. After all, the price is low enough that just about anyone should be able to afford it. They can purchase it at: Amazon.

Exodus 20:15 "You shall not steal."

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