

Part 2: Doctrine of God

Analytical Framework

Transcendence/Immanence Dialectic

- Transcendence: God's majesty, holiness, "height" metaphor
 - Ps. 97:9-- *For you, LORD, are the Most High over all the earth; you are exalted far above all gods.*
 - Ps. 57:5--*Be exalted, O God, above the heavens; let your glory be over all the earth.*
 - Ecc. 5:2 *Do not be quick with your mouth, do not be hasty in your heart to utter anything before God. God is in heaven and you are on earth, so let your words be few.*
 - God's knowability?

- Immanence: God's nearness, his presence on earth, Immanuel
 - Deut. 4:39-- *Acknowledge and take to heart this day that the LORD is God in heaven above and on the earth below. There is no other.*
 - Isa. 57:15--*For this is what the high and exalted One says-- he who lives forever, whose name is holy: "I live in a high and holy place, but also with the one who is contrite and lowly in spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly and to revive the heart of the contrite.*
 - Eph. 4:4-6-- *There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call— 5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism, 6 one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.*

- History of Thought
 - Transcendence
 - Greek Philosophy
 - Xenophon's criticisms of popular religion/mythology
 - "Mortals fancy gods are born, and wear clothes, and have a voice and arm like themselves."
 - "Homer and Hesiod have ascribed to the gods all deeds that are a shame and a disgrace among men: thieving adultery, fraud."
 - "There never was, nor ever will be, any man who knows with certainty the things about the gods and about all things which I tell of. For even if he does happen to get most things right, still he himself does not know it."
 - Immanuel Kant

- Friedrich Schleiermacher
- Islam
- Immanence
 - Pantheism
 - Penentheism
 - Paul Tillich
 - Christian Atheism

Summary of Trinitarian Doctrine

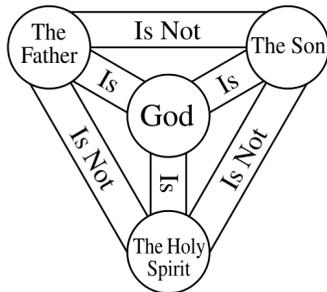
Heidelberg Catechism Q/A 25

Q. Since there is but one God,
why do you speak of three: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit?

A: Because that is how God revealed Himself in His Word:
these three distinct persons are one, true eternal God.

Essential Biblical Truths

1. The equality and unity of Father, Son, and Spirit
2. The Distinguishability of Father, Son and Spirit
3. One God



Classic Objectors

Arianism

- Historical response:
 - "...and in one Lord Jesus Christ the Son of God, begotten of the Father, that is of the substance (ousia) of the Father, God of God, Light of Light, true God of true God, begotten not made, consubstantial with the Father, through whom all things came into existence, both things in heaven and things on earth; who for us men and our salvation came down and was incarnate and became man, suffered and rose again on the third day, ascended into the heavens, is coming to judge the living and the dead." – Council of Nicea

Sebellianism

Islam

- Surah 4:166-172
 - *But Allah [himself] bears witness concerning that which He has sent down to you; with His knowledge has He sent it down; and the angels also testify. And Allah is sufficient witness. Those who disbelieve and obstruct [others] from the path of Allah, they have surely started far away. Those who disbelieve, and do wrong, Allah will never forgive them, either will He guide them to a road. Except the road to Hell, to abide therein perpetually. And that is easy for Allah. O mankind! The Messenger has come to you with the truth from your Lord. Therefore believe; [it is] better for you. But if you disbelieve, still surely to Allah belongs whatever is in the heavens and the earth. Allah is knowing, wise. O people of the book! Commit to excess in your religion, nor say anything but the truth about Allah. The Messiah, Jesus son of Mary, was only a Messenger of Allah and His word which HE conveyed to Mary, and a spirit from Him. So believe in Allah and His Messengers, and say not "three." Cease, [it is] better for you. Allah is only One God. Far it is removed from His transcendence that He should have a son, when His is all that the heavens and all that the earth contains. And Allah is sufficient as [their] custodian. The Messiah will never be too proud to be a slave to Allah, nor will the nearest angels. Those who are too proud to worship Him and are arrogant, all such will He assemble to Him.*