

# THE TRINITY REVIEW

For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare [are] not fleshly but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. And they will be ready to punish all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled.

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## Are Baptist Rational?

Michael L. Czapkay

*Editor's note: The Trinity Foundation has awarded Michael Czapkay The Clark Prize in Apologetics for his manuscript, Are Baptists Rational? A reply to Dr. Kenneth Good's book, Are Baptists Reformed? In his manuscript Mr. Czapkay defends the proper role of logic in theology, which Dr. Good and many others deny. The Clark Prize consists of a cash award of \$1,000 for an outstanding essay in Christian apologetics. Mr. Czapkay is the second winner of the Prize in seven years. Mr. Czapkay is a graduate of Santa Clara University in California, where he majored in philosophy, and he is now studying philosophical theology at Oxford University. After taking his M. Phil from Oxford, Czapkay hopes to complete his D. Phil. there as well. His goal is to be a college professor in philosophy. He was initiated into Phi Beta Kappa in 1991 and is the recipient of numerous awards and scholarships. He is 27 years old. For those who would like to obtain a complete copy (140 pages) of Mr. Czapkay's monograph, please send \$20 to The Trinity Foundation.*

Although Barth and Brunner are no longer with us, neo-orthodox sentiments remain a powerful force in the final decade of the twentieth century. The ever-present irrationalism in religious thought today reminds us that the neo-orthodox movement, though evolved, is not dead. There are significant examples of irrationalism in thinkers who, for other reasons, would not be classified as neo-orthodox in

orientation. This alarming fact reveals the long-term and far-reaching effects that the neo-orthodox theologians have had on Christianity.

Sometimes subtle, though often explicit, the disparagement of rationality and the attack on logic by these contemporary theologians, who are outside the neo-orthodox tradition in other areas of theology, have assumed many forms. Nowhere, however, are they more obvious than in the phenomenon of *misology* – the hatred of logic. Although instances of misology could be provided nearly *ad infinitum*, none has proved more personally disturbing than those which the present writer has encountered in theologians in the Calvinistic tradition. It is certainly a serious and foreboding sign when anti-intellectualism works its way into a theological tradition that has been recognized historically for its logical rigor. The fact remains, however, that there are a number of theologians who call themselves Calvinists, but who are subtly propagating a form of irrationalism by their attack on logic. No doubt much of their theology is Calvinistic, but an essential part is not. Their misology is a departure from the philosophical assumptions upon which the theological method in the Calvinistic tradition is based. Consequently, their attack on reason is no minor inconsistency, but an error that places the very foundations of Calvinism in peril.

The remaining chapters of the *(complete)* monograph...particularize this general contention by

examining the misology of the contemporary Calvinistic Baptist, Dr. Kenneth H. Good.

## *The Thesis of Dr. Kenneth H. Good*

"Those Baptists who seriously adhere to that system of soteriology which has been traditionally designated as 'Calvinist' are currently and increasingly being drawn into a rather distressing dilemma." This statement by Dr. Kenneth Good forms the opening line of chapter one of his 1986 treatise entitled *Are Baptists Reformed?* As a preacher, pastor, teacher, and author who has been involved in various aspects of the emerging Sovereign Grace or Calvinist Movement among Baptists in the United States, Dr. Good is committed to both Calvinism and the Baptist tradition. His book, however, derives from his conviction that, although the revival of Calvinism among Baptists has brought them back to their soteriological roots, it has also adversely affected them. Baptists, argues Good, have sacrificed some of their Baptist distinctives by imbibing doctrines in the Reformed or Calvinistic tradition which are both inconsistent with Baptists historically and destructive of Baptist theology.

Good explains this dilemma as follows:

The dilemma for Baptists who adhere to the Doctrines of Grace in the general soteriological tradition of Augustine and Calvin, in radical contradistinction to the system of salvation expressed by Pelagius, Arminius, and the Remonstrant theologians, lies in the fact that in our efforts to be identified with the former, some leaders have oversimplified the problem of making too ready use of the term *Reformed*. Unhappily, the connotations of that term also convey theological positions that are detrimental to, and destructive of, the Baptist position in a number of crucial areas, to be investigated below.

*Are Baptists Reformed?* is Dr. Good's attempt to demonstrate that, although there is an area of

doctrinal agreement between the Baptists and the Reformed (principally in soteriology), there are nevertheless essential doctrinal points upon which they disagree. "Baptist convictions," writes Good, "are incompatible with the Reformed positions in a number of significant areas such as their view of the Word of God, their view of the church, and their view of history." Given this disparity between the Baptists and the Reformed, Good's contention is that the former should not refer to themselves as "Reformed" since this is both misleading and contradictory. Good's conclusion is that Baptists are not Reformed, despite their Calvinistic soteriology.

Dr. Good admits that there are some points of agreement between Baptist and Reformed theology in the area of Bibliology: inspiration, canonicity, and the general authority of Scripture. However, although both groups claim *Sola Scriptura* (the Scriptures alone) as their motto, Good maintains that the Reformed are inconsistent with this motto when it comes to the "sufficiency" of Scripture. According to Dr. Good, Section VI of Chapter One of the *Westminster Confession of Faith* (1647) establishes a principle which denies that the Bible alone is fully authoritative and the sole, as well as complete, source of redemptive knowledge for faith and practice.

The principle with which Good takes issue is the theory of "Necessary Consequence" (NC) established by the Westminster theologians in the following portion of the Confession:

The whole counsel of God, concerning all things necessary for his own glory, man's salvation, faith, and life, is either expressly set down in Scripture, or by good and necessary consequence may be deduced from Scripture: unto which nothing at any time is to be added, whether by new revelations of the Spirit, or traditions of men.

Good introduces his objection to this section of the *Westminster Confession* with the following argument:

While the first five sections [of the *Westminster Confession of Faith* state

nothing with which Baptists would take issue, Section VI of the Puritan document introduces a principle to which Baptists cannot subscribe, since they believe it to be inconsistent with the basic intent of *Sola Scriptura*, contrary to what Holy Writ says about itself. Baptists have no problem with the *negative* aspect of Section VI when it speaks *against* Papal tradition or *against* charismatic addition. But they do have a valid objection to the *positive* aspect of this article as it is employed to justify ecclesiastical [*sic*] positions and practices which are actually extra-biblical.... Baptists believe that the Reformed very inconsistently insinuate insufficiency to the Scriptures. *The Reformed speak of sufficiency, but they add the theory of necessary consequence."*

Therefore, when Dr. Good states that "there is a fundamental divergence of thought between Baptists and the Reformed with respect to the Word of God," this "divergence of thought" concerns NC, which he believes implies the insufficiency of Scripture. His general argument is: (Major Premise) All principles which imply the insufficiency of Scripture are false, (Minor Premise) NC is a principle which implies the insufficiency of Scripture, (Conclusion) Therefore, NC is false. The corollary is that NC must be rejected.

An analysis of Good's argument raises two crucial questions. In the first place, What is the Reformed theory of Necessary Consequence? And in the second place, How do we know that it implies the insufficiency of Scripture? The answer to the first question will actually provide the premise to an initial argument demonstrating Good's irrationalism, a conclusion that will follow from further argumentation as well. The second question will reveal that Good's minor premise is false, and that consequently, his argument is unsound. Against Kenneth Good's position, therefore, two counter arguments will be presented: negatively, NC does not imply the insufficiency of Scripture; positively, the rejection of NC implies irrationalism in the form of misology.

## *The Reformed Theory of Necessary Consequence*

The word "consequence" is derived from the Latin *consequentia*, meaning to follow after or from. Necessary, from *necessaria*, denotes that which is inevitable or unavoidable. Etymologically, *necessaria consequentia* (necessary consequence) refers to something that follows inevitably from something else (Y). When X is some effect, Y is some cause or complex of causes. More often, though, X and Y are statements or propositions, and necessary consequence refers to the process of necessary inference whereby X (a conclusion) is derived from Y (premises) according to the principles of deductive reasoning. The inference or consequence is necessary because the connection between the premises and conclusion is such that if the premises are all true, then it cannot be the case that the conclusion is false.

"The specific task of logic," write Cohen and Nagle, "is the study of the conditions under which one proposition necessarily follows and may therefore be deduced from one or more others...." The fundamental question in logic, then, is: "Are the conclusions so related to the evidence or premises that the former necessarily follow from and may thus be properly deduced from the latter?"

In his *Introduction to Logic*, the twentieth-century logician Alfred Tarski identifies necessary consequence with deduction:

....if within logic or mathematics we establish one statement on the basis of others, we refer to this process as a *derivation* or *deduction*, and the statement established in this way is said to be *derived* or *deduced* from the other statements or to be their *consequence*.

Therefore, if all men are mortal, and Socrates is a man, then it follows necessarily that Socrates is mortal; symbolically,  $A(mm) A(sm) < A(sm)$ . In this argument, the conclusion "Socrates is mortal" is a necessary consequence from the premises. To take an example from Scripture, Jesus said: "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that

cometh to me I will in no wise cast out" (*John* 6:37). We may deduce from this that all the people that the Father gives to Christ are those whom Christ will not cast out; that is, none who are given to Christ by the Father are those who will be cast out by Christ. Or, to take an example from the apostle Paul, if a person is justified by faith, then a person is sanctified; but X is not sanctified, therefore, X is not justified. This is essentially Paul's argument for the necessity of a converted life, which is established in *Romans* chapter six. It is an excellent example of necessary consequence.

The contention at this point is that the Reformed doctrine of NC refers to the application of deductive logic to the contents of Scripture; that is, the Westminster theologians meant to establish deductive exegesis by their necessary consequence clause in the Confession. This may be demonstrated textually and historically.

In the Latin text, the *Westminster Confession* reads: "*Consilium Dei universum.. aut expresse in Scriptura continetur, aut consequentia bona et necessaria derivari potest a Scriptura* (The whole counsel of God...is either expressly set down in Scripture or by good and necessary consequence may be deduced from Scripture)." In the first place, "*Consilium Dei universum*" refers to both the commands and propositions given in Scripture. Secondly, there is an obvious contrast being drawn between those commands or propositions that are "expressly set down in Scripture" and those that must be "derived from Scripture." Thirdly, the process of derivation is spoken of as "necessary consequence." Since commands and propositions alone are involved in this process of derivation, it follows that propositions are being derived from propositions, and commands are being derived from commands. Since such consequences can only be identified or recognized as "necessary" through the canons of deductive reasoning, the Confession cannot have any other possible meaning in view except that it wishes to distinguish between the statements of Scripture and logical inferences from them, or what is commonly referred to as the contrast between the explicit meaning and implicit meaning of Scripture.

Moreover, the logical force of the phrase "necessary consequence" is easily perceived once we understand that the Westminster theologians, unlike contemporary ones, were trained in logic, as were most of the post-Westminster divines of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. "The authors of the [Westminster) Confession had a very high regard for human reason," pointed out John Leith of Union Theological Seminary in Virginia. In fact, the *Form of Presbyterian Church Government* agreed upon by the Westminster Assembly in 1645 required a knowledge of logic and philosophy for any candidate for the ministry.

He shall be examined touching his skill in the original tongues, and his trial to be made by reading the Hebrew and Greek Testaments, and rendering some portion of some into Latin; and if he be defective in them, inquiry shall be made more strictly after his other learning, and whether he hath skill in logick and philosophy.

One need not even go beyond the members of the Westminster Assembly to discover that "necessary consequence" meant deductive reasoning for the framers of the Confession. George Gillespie, minister of Edinburgh (d. 1648), was one of the Scottish commissioners to the Assembly who elaborated on the theological method agreed upon by the Assembly and indicated by the necessary consequence clause of the Confession.

That necessary consequences from the written Word of God do sufficiently and strongly prove the consequent or conclusion, if theoretical [i.e., propositional or descriptive], to be a certain divine truth which ought to be believed, and, if practical [i.e., prescriptive), to be a necessary duty which we are obliged unto, *jure divino*.

William Cunningham (1805-1861), who was Professor of Church History at New College, Edinburgh, made the following statement with respect to the Reformed position on NC:

It has been the generally received doctrine of orthodox divines, and it is in entire

accordance with reason and common sense, that we are bound to receive as true, on God's authority, not only what is "expressly set down in Scripture," but also what, "by good and necessary consequence, may be deduced from Scripture"; and heretics, in every age and of every class, have, even when they made a profession of receiving what is expressly set down in Scripture, shown the greatest aversion to what are sometimes called Scripture consequences,— that is, inferences or deductions from scriptural statements, beyond what is expressly contained in the mere words of Scripture, as they stand in the page of the sacred record.

Benjamin B. Warfield, the eminent twentieth-century Calvinist and Professor of Didactic and Polemic Theology at Princeton Theological Seminary, also identified NC with logic; as such, he maintained that NC is essential to Christian theology. Warfield, in his book *The Westminster Assembly and Its Work*, writes:

This is the strenuous and universal contention of the Reformed theology against Socinians and Arminians, who desired to confine the authority of Scripture to its literal asseverations; and it involves a characteristic honoring of reason as the instrument for the ascertainment of truth. We must depend upon our human faculties to ascertain what Scripture says, we cannot suddenly abnegate them and refuse their guidance in determining what Scripture means. This is not, of course, to make reason the ground of the authority of inferred doctrines and duties. Reason is the instrument of discovery of all doctrines and duties, whether "expressly set down in Scripture" or "by good and necessary consequence deduced from Scripture": but their authority, when once discovered, is derived from God, who reveals and prescribes them in Scripture, either by literal assertion or by necessary

implication.... It is the Reformed contention, reflected here by the Confession, that the sense of Scripture is Scripture, and that men are bound by its whole sense in all its implications. The re-emergence in recent controversies of the plea that the authority of Scripture is to be confined to its expressed declarations, and that human logic is not to be trusted in divine things, is, therefore, a direct denial of a fundamental position of Reformed theology, explicitly affirmed in the Confession, as well as an abnegation of fundamental reason, which would not only render thinking in a system impossible, but would discredit at a stroke many of the fundamentals of the faith, such e.g. as the doctrine of the Trinity, and would logically involve the denial of the authority of all doctrine whatsoever, since no single doctrine of whatever simplicity can be ascertained from Scripture except by the use of the processes of the understanding.... The recent plea against the use of human logic in determining doctrine... destroys at once our confidence in all doctrines, no one of which is ascertained or formulated without the aid of human logic.

Warfield is not alone in his position regarding the use of reason in theology and the meaning of NC. Others in the twentieth century have shared his sentiments. Commenting on the necessary consequence clause of the Westminster Confession, George Hendry, a former Professor of Systematic Theology at Princeton, said that the Confession "states that even the answers to questions about things necessary for salvation are in some cases obtainable only by logical deduction from the express utterances of Scripture." Gordon Clark, one of the twentieth century's leading apologists in the Calvinistic tradition, held that the derivations of which the Confession speaks are conclusions arrived at by deductive reasoning, "by human logic that is logical because it is first divine logic."

In the *Assembly at Westminster*, Dr. John Leith takes note of the fact that "the Westminster

theologians preferred an exact theology" which "required abstract words and logical formulations," and a "meticulous care for propositions, precision, and logic." Discussing their method, Leith declares that the "deductive method was no doubt involved in the Assembly's acceptance of 'necessary consequence.' "

Expounding on NC as the third principle of biblical interpretation adopted by the Westminster Assembly, Dr. Leith says:

The Assembly then ordered that another method by which the will and appointment of Jesus could be set forth was necessary consequence. The Assembly simply confirmed in debate the theological method that was widely used by Puritan preachers and theologians. All theology is in some measure dependent on this method, as all theologians have known since the time Augustine reflected upon the theological task. The distinguishing characteristic of the Westminster Assembly was the evident confidence in the power of reason, especially a regenerate reason, to carry out the theological task.

Summarizing the Westminster theological method, Leith writes:

The *Confession* embodies a theology that attempts to state the Christian faith in precise, abstract propositions that are bound together by impeccable logic. The authors of the *Confession* had found that logic had a high value. As teachers in pulpits and classrooms, they had discovered that precision and logic were aids in teaching as well as in the solution of theological problems.

'The identification of NC with logical deduction is made explicit by Dr. Kenneth Good himself. After expressing his dissatisfaction with A. A. Hodge's "differentiation between what is 'explicitly or implicitly taught in Scripture' " as a commentary on the clause in question, Good favorably quotes Cunningham and Warfield as above. "Warfield,"

writes Good, "capably expounds the Reformed position on 'necessary consequence' with an unmistakable clarity." Since Warfield defines NC as the application of deductive reasoning to Scripture, and since Good understands Warfield to accurately represent the Reformed position with which Good himself disagrees, we may conclude that Good understands NC to refer to logical deduction. This may be further proved by phrases such as "necessary and consequential deductions," "theological deductions," "deductions," "deduced from Scripture," and "logical theological deductions," which Good uses interchangeably with NC.

Therefore, Good's minor premise may be modified to assert: the use of deductive reasoning implies the insufficiency of Scripture. Good's attack on NC is unequivocally an attack on logical deduction as a method to derive theological truths. Good's demand that Baptists reject NC cannot escape the charge of misology. That NC does not imply the insufficiency of Scripture will require a more extended and intricate argument, but, *prima facie*, Good's rejection of NC implies irrationalism.

A brief historical consideration is necessary to establish the essential role that logic has played in Christian theology. Such a survey will reveal the radical discontinuity between Dr. Good's position and the traditional view of logic in theology, especially in the Calvinistic tradition. My object, then, is to prove that Dr. Good's rejection of logic is an historical novelty, that it is out of step with the dominant tradition in the history of Christian theology and especially contrary to the Reformed and Baptist traditions.

### *Patristic and Medieval Theology*

In *De Doctrina Christiana* Augustine emphasized the necessity of using logic in the interpretation of Scripture. In Book Two he argues to what extent the Christian should make use of other aids (such as history, natural science, dialectics, and rhetoric) in interpreting Scripture and formulating Christian doctrine. Chapters 31-35 are of particular interest as they relate to Augustine's discussion of the use of logic or dialectics. "The science of reasoning,"

writes Augustine, "is of very great service in searching into and unraveling all sorts of questions that come up in Scripture...." The justification for the use of logic according to Augustine is that some branches of knowledge are not the inventions of men, but are ordained by God. Logic is an example of such a discipline. Moreover, it is the example par excellence, for logic is not merely ordained by God, but it is actually ontologically grounded in the Divine mind. "[T]he validity of logical sequences," explains Augustine, "is not a thing devised by men, but it is observed and noted by them that they may be able to learn and teach it; for it exists eternally in the reason of things, and has its origin with God."

It is, of course, impossible to overlook the role that logic played in theology during the era of medieval philosophy, chiefly as the result of the influence of Aristotle. So overwhelming, though, are the number of developments and contributions that no adequate treatment can be given here. Boethius (c. 480-524) is well known for his translations of Aristotle's *Categoriae* and *De Interpretatione*, as well as for his own treatises on logic in which he discussed categorical and hypothetical syllogisms and dialectical and rhetorical arguments. Anselm (1033-1109) rigorously applied logic to theology by undertaking proofs for the articles of faith, his most notable being the ontological proof for the existence of God in the *Proslogium*. In addition to this, though, he composed the *Dialogus de Grammatico* in which he elucidated the distinction between the "meaning" and "reference" of terms. Peter Abelard (1079-1142), in his *Dialectica*, systematically treated the parts of propositions, categorical propositions and syllogisms, logical consequence, hypothetical syllogisms, and definition and division. Other thinkers such as William of Sherwood, Peter of Spain, William of Ockham, and Jean Buridan were instrumental in the development of medieval logic beyond its Aristotelian origins.

The development of logic in the schools and universities of western Europe between the eleventh and fifteenth centuries constituted a significant contribution to the history of philosophy. But no less significant was the influence of this development of logic on medieval theology. It provided the necessary conceptual apparatus for the

systematization of theology. Abelard, Ockham, and Thomas Aquinas are paradigm cases of the extent to which logic played an active role in the systematic formulation of Christian theology. In fact, at certain points, for instance in modal logic, logical concepts were intimately related to theological problems, such as God's knowledge of future contingent truths.

As far as the use of logical deduction goes, it was a staple of medieval theology, as is evident in the development of Scholasticism. Aquinas, for instance, in his *Summa Theologica*, established that sacred doctrine (i.e., theology based upon divine revelation as opposed to the theology based upon human reason) is deductive in its structure, as is essential to any science. He wrote, "Although arguments from human reason cannot avail to prove what belongs to faith, nevertheless, this doctrine [sacred doctrine] argues from the articles of faith to other truths." Because theology is a science it is augmentative, for it involves moving from certain first principles to their logical implications according to the canons of deductive logic.

Aquinas explains this as follows:

As the other sciences do not argue in proof of their principles, but argue from their principles to demonstrate other truths in these sciences, so this doctrine does not argue in proof of its principles, which are the articles of faith, but from them it goes on to prove something else....

Calvinism itself owes much to medieval thought, not the least of which is the logical rigor it inherited from Scholasticism. If a dependence upon logic was a staple of the medieval mind, it has been no less essential to the Reformed or Calvinistic tradition. [Calvin's] commitment to logic is evident in his appeal to the law of contradiction and syllogistic arguments. As William J. Bouwsma points out, John Calvin was very attracted to and highly influenced by Scholastic modes of thought:

In fact Calvin was fully prepared to exploit the resources of Scholastic discourse, with which he was well acquainted. He respected the acuteness in its conceptual

distinctions. As he noted in connection with the hard question of God's responsibility for human affairs, "distinctions concerning relative necessity and absolute necessity, likewise of consequent and consequence, were not recklessly invented in the schools." He insisted that definition is basic to controversy; it is "the hinge and foundation of the whole argument."...

The theological rationalism of the Calvinistic tradition has been very pronounced in its greatest theologians since the time of the Westminster Assembly. We have already referred to A. A. Hodge, William Cunningham, and B. B. Warfield. Warfield, though, is worth repeating: "the plea against the use of human logic in determining doctrine...destroys at once our confidence in all doctrines, no one of which is ascertained or formulated without the aid of human logic." In the introduction to his *Dogmatic Theology* William G. T. Shedd stated that "the proper mode of discussing any single theological topic" is twofold: Exegetical and Rational. "The first step to be taken is, to deduce the doctrine itself from Scripture by careful exegesis; and the second step is, to

justify and defend this exegetical result upon grounds of reason." Notice the prominent place Dr. Shedd gave to logical deduction. This was no mere passing comment on Shedd's part. It was an integral part of his theological method, which he persistently emphasized: "When the individual doctrines have been deduced, constructed, and defended by the exegetico-rational method, they are then to be systematized."

It is also interesting to note the role that logic plays in apologetics for Shedd. The defense of the faith, he tells us, must be undertaken upon "grounds of reason." By "reason" Shedd means "logic." The aim in defending the faith is to prove that the doctrines of Christianity are self-consistent. He makes this explicit in the following statement:

It is important to notice at this point, that in respect to the doctrines of Christianity the office of reason is discharged, if it be

shown that they are self-consistent. A rational defence of the doctrine of the Trinity, for example, consists in demonstrating that there is no contradiction between the several prepositions in which it is stated. To require of the theologian a complete explanation of this truth in proof of its rationality is more than is demanded of the chemist or the astronomer in physical science.

Space does not permit a discussion on apologetics and the problem of the justification or rationality of beliefs, but what we can note here is that, at least for Shedd, logic is not only essential to the formulation of theological propositions, but it is also essential to the defense of theological propositions in apologetics. I would suggest that this has also been basic in the Reformed tradition, especially the notion that self-consistency or coherence entails rationality.

Charles Hodge also maintained that logic (and reason in general) is necessary to theology. "The first and indispensable office of reason, therefore, in matters of faith," he asserted, "is the cognition, or intelligent apprehension of the truths proposed for our reception." After stating that Christianity demands faith in the incomprehensible, Hodge adds that "it is no less true that the impossible is incredible, and therefore cannot be an object of faith." He continues: "Christians concede to reason the *judicium contradictionis*, that is, the prerogative of deciding whether a thing is possible or impossible." He makes a number of references to the law of contradiction, saying, for instance, "that is impossible which involves a contradiction." Faith, as Hodge explains elsewhere, may be "above" reason, but it is not against or contrary to reason. The truths of the Bible "involve no contradictions or absurdities." Hodge was convinced that faith in the irrational is simply impossible, and that "[n]othing, therefore, can be more derogatory to the Bible than the assertion that its doctrines are contrary to reason."

In addition to Shedd and Hodge, Abraham Kuyper can be called as a witness to the Reformed



commitment to logic. In his *Principles of Sacred Theology* he specifically addressed the importance of logic to the theological project.

As for Logic, the saying that it is an auxiliary to the theologian reduces it by no means to the rank of a handmaid of theology. It renders this service equally to all the other sciences. As far as logic is concerned, this entire representation of the handmaid (*ancilla*) was simply a matter of custom. It is, indeed, a patent fact, that in every science man is the thinking agent, and if he shall undertake intellectual pursuits in an accurate and prepared way, and in the full consciousness of self, the knowledge and practice of the faculty of thought are indispensable to him. A theologian who undervalues Logic, as being little necessary to him, simply disarms himself. This was by no means the practice of our older theologians. They always emphasized most strongly the study of formal logic, together with its related arts.

In the twentieth century, Gordon H. Clark has reaffirmed the primacy of the intellect, both with respect to epistemology and logic, in the Calvinistic tradition. As a consequence of his rigorous application of logic to theology, Clark often spoke of the systematic and deductive structure of theology, likening it to mathematics.

Instead of a series of disconnected propositions, truth will be a rational system, a logically ordered series, somewhat like geometry with its theorems and axioms, its implications and presuppositions. And each part will derive its significance from the whole. Christianity therefore has, or, one may even say, Christianity is a comprehensive view of all things: it takes the world, both material and spiritual, to be an ordered system.

James Oliver Buswell, though representing a departure from the Reformed tradition at certain

doctrinal junctures, stated that logic is implicit in the Christian's very commitment to Scripture and the presupposition of the Triune God revealed therein. For Buswell, though, "when we accept the laws of logic, we are not accepting laws external to God to which he must be subject, but we are accepting laws of truth which are derived from God's holy character."

Although the relationship between logic and Scripture will be investigated in chapter six (of the full monograph), at the present it should be noted that Buswell emphasized the necessary connection between Scripture and logic. The former entailed the latter.

If we accept the sovereign Triune God as revealed in the Bible, it follows that we accept propositional truth, and the laws that are inherent in the nature of propositional truth. These laws are not imposed upon our basic presupposition but are implicit in it and derived from it. The Bible is a book in human language. If we are not talking nonsense we must then believe in the rules of linguistic expression. The Bible as a book written in human language claims to speak the truth. If the word truth is not meaningless, it implies the laws of truth, that is, the laws of logic.

Dr. Good, of course, might draw attention to the fact that the theologians quoted in this section were Reformed, not Baptist. Therefore, these references to Warfield, Shedd, Hodge, Kuyper, Clark, and Buswell might be dismissed on the grounds that they represent Reformed Calvinism, not Baptist Calvinism. Since Baptists are not Reformed, and these references are "typically" Reformed, these references are "typically" un-Baptist. Consequently, Good might argue that they do not prove him to be inconsistent with his own theological tradition. In the first instance, though, this would not prove damaging to the argument of this chapter, since I am presenting a complex argument of historical discontinuity. In the first instance, I am asserting that Good is inconsistent with a long standing tradition in the history of Christian theology, and one that has been an integral part of Reformed

Calvinism. He may want to disassociate himself from this tradition (as he seems to be doing in his book), but this is all the better for the present argument.

However, my argument is also designed to show that Dr. Good is, at some level, guilty of intellectual impropriety. This is to be found, I think, in his contention that he is representing the Baptist tradition, that the rejection of NC is a Baptist distinctive. The thesis I am advocating is that the rejection of NC is not, nor should it be, a Baptist distinctive. The Reformed Calvinists quoted earlier are not typically "Reformed" in their espousal of logic and deductive reasoning, but they are typically "Calvinistic" with respect to this commitment. Dr. Good thinks otherwise, but, although he parades his anti-logic banner under the auspices of "Baptist distinctives," he never quotes a Baptist theologian in his defense. The readers should think it a bit odd that such a patent "Baptist distinctive" should go without any supporting references.

In the introduction to his *Body of Doctrinal and Practical Divinity* Dr. John Gill argued extensively for the necessity of systematizing the articles of faith. "Systematical Divinity, I am sensible, is now become very unpopular. Formulas and articles of faith, creeds, confessions, catechisms, and summaries of divine truths, are greatly decried in our age; and yet, what art or science so ever but has been reduced to a system?" Like John Calvin, Gill defended the use of an extra-Biblical vocabulary as essential to theology. He also emphasized the necessary role of reasoning or using logic, citing the apostle Paul as the Biblical example.

Under his discussion of the perspicuity of Scripture, Gill made the following statement endorsing the use of "just and necessary consequences":

Nor is every doctrine of the Scripture expressed in so many words; as the doctrine of the Trinity of persons in the Godhead; the eternal generation of the Son of God, his incarnation and satisfaction, &c. but then the things signified by them are clear and plain; and there are terms and phrases answerable to them; or they are to

be deduced from thence by just and necessary consequences.

James Petigru Boyce, the nineteenth-century Baptist theologian and principal founder of the first Southern Baptist Seminary, asserted that reason was essential to faith and theology. He defined reason as

that power in man, which enables him to have mental perceptions, to exercise thought, and reflection, to know facts, to inquire into their mutual relations, and to deduce, logically, the conclusions which may be drawn from them.

Finally, Augustus Strong wrote:

The proper office of reason (in theology in this large sense is ... [t]o estimate and reduce to system the facts of revelation ... [t]o deduce from these facts their natural and logical conclusions.

I think the objective of this chapter has been reached. Dr. Good's thesis calling for the rejection of NC is an aberration from the traditional role that logic has been assigned in Dr. Good's thesis calling for the rejection of NC is an aberration from the traditional role that logic has been assigned in theology, especially in the history of Reformed theology. Moreover, the high regard for logic in the Reformed tradition should more properly be viewed as a consequence of Calvinism per se, as is evidenced in the continuity of the view of logic between Reformed and Baptist theologians in the Calvinistic tradition. Good's position is, therefore, incongruous with his commitment to Calvinism.

## *Contemporary Theology*

Although the misology that characterizes Dr. Kenneth Good's position is a novelty in the history of Christian theology, it is regretfully all too common in contemporary theology. The case was made in chapter one [of the full monograph] that the twentieth century has witnessed a crisis in theology – the crisis of irrationalism. In a sense, then, Dr. Good's thesis only particularizes a more general tendency in the twentieth century to disparage the intellect, a tendency not limited to the religious

world. The attack on logic in particular, though a novelty in the larger historical perspective, is not a novelty in theology today. In the religious world misology has not only characterized Charismatics and Fundamentalists, but – as Dr. Good exemplifies – even the intellectual tradition of Calvinism has been susceptible to this philosophical disease. Dr. Good stands in the company of other Calvinists such as Cornelius Van Til, Rousas J. Rushdoony, and John Frame who have made their attack on logic explicit.

For instance, in *A Christian Theory of Knowledge* Dr. Van Til wrote:

To be faithful to the system of truth as found in Scripture one must not take one doctrine and deduce from it by means of a syllogistic procedure what he thinks follows from it. One must rather gather together all the facts and all the teachings of Scripture and organize them as best as he can, always mindful of the fact that such ordering is the ordering of the revelation of God, who is never fully comprehensible to man.

Rushdoony has written an article specifically to refute the notion that logical deduction from Scripture is *a* legitimate method of Biblical exegesis.

The failure to distinguish between God's commandments and inferences made from them has, over the centuries, led to serious moral problems in Judaism and Christianity.... Not even a valid inference is a commandment....

The trouble with inferences is that, when repeated over and over again, they become a part of the meaning of the law, and the people read them into the text.

...At times, by inferences, the original meaning is turned around....

God's law is very plain, so that all may understand. Inferences take us into the realm of human conclusions. Anything

important enough to be a law and bind our conscience is plainly stated by God: it is not left to men to discover....

If it is not plainly written as law by God Almighty, let no man bind your conscience with it.

In his essay "Rationality and Scripture" John Frame discusses the importance of reason, only to follow it up by a discussion on the limitations of reason, in which he seems to nullify the positive points made in the former discussion. Unfortunately, space does not permit an analysis and refutation of the comments of Van Til, Rushdoony, and Frame. I rather suspect, though, that much of the argumentation in the present monograph would be applicable to them. I will let the reader make that application, as an adequate treatment of these Reformed thinkers goes well beyond the scope of this paper. However, in quoting them, it is obvious that Dr. Good is not alone in his anti-logic position. Moreover, I would suggest that there does appear to be a common presupposition shared by those writers who disparage logic in the Calvinistic tradition. All of them to my knowledge (though Good does not address himself to this point) maintain that the laws of thought, the laws of logic, are created principles. This, at least in one writer's opinion, is the ground of its limitations.

Richard Pratt, in *Every Thought Captive*, explains the created status of logic and its consequent limitations.

Second, logic is not above the Creator-creature distinction. When we speak of human use of reason, we must remember that logic is *at best* merely a reflection of the wisdom and knowledge of God. Although in Scripture God does stoop low and reveal Himself in terms of creaturely reason, logic, as we know it, is not above or equal to God, nor is it a part of God's being. Logic, even in its most refined and sophisticated forms, is within the sphere of creation and a quality of man as the image of God, not God Himself.

Because logic is a part of creation, it has limitations. To begin with, logic is a changing and developing system. In fact, there are several systems of logic which are at points in conflict with each other. There is even no definition of "contradiction" that is universally accepted. Besides this, even if all men could agree on one system of reasoning, human logic could not be used as the judge of truth and falsehood. Christianity is at points reasonable and logical but logic meets the end of its ability when it comes to matters like the incarnation of Christ, and the doctrine of the Trinity. Logic is not God and it should never be given the honor due to God alone. Truth is found at the judgment seat of God, not the court of logic.

Van Til also asserted the created status of logic:

In like manner, too, man's thought since the entrance of sin has been characterized by *self-frustration*. It is quite true that the sinner was able to accumulate a great deal of knowledge, after a fashion. Though his body as a tool with which he had to obtain much of his knowledge was weakened, and though his logical powers themselves were weakened, as he sees with his own eyes and constantly when he makes false conclusions about matters of fact in the physical world, yet, in spite of all this, man has been able to know a great deal. The laws of logic as God has created them in the universe were not broken by sin, but man's ability to use them rightly was weakened, and still it is true that in his logical interpretation man has, *in form of the matter*, come very close to the truth. This is the first point to note when we say that man's knowledge has been characterized by self-frustration.

Although it may appear pious to confine logic to the created order, and thus make it on a par with the physical laws of the universe (e.g., the law of gravity) it is none the less the language of infidelity.

I am not suggesting that those who believe that logic is created by God are personally not Christians; they may well be, but their ideas – at least at this juncture – are not. If the law of contradiction is a created law, and thus on a par with the law of gravity, then if God can set aside the created physical laws, say by miracles such as the resurrection, it would seem to follow that the law of contradiction is equally susceptible to being set aside or violated by God if He so chose to do so. After all, logic is not a part of God's being. According to Pratt this even includes logic "in its most refined and sophisticated forms." Presumably this means the law of contradiction. It follows from this separation of God and logic that there is always a possible discontinuity between the mind of man and the mind of God even with respect to the fundamental laws of thought.

A number of consequences follow from this, none of which is particularly favorable. First, it seems to abolish any notion of "eternal truths." If all truth depends upon the law of contradiction, and it turns out that this law is a mere created fact, then it is impossible to maintain that there are any eternal truths. So, it is only a created fact that "No Reformed theologians are Baptist" and "Some Reformed theologians are Baptist" cannot both be true. Presumably, since logic is not a part of God's being, "No a is b" and "Some a is b" can both be true in the divine mind, the eternal mind of God. If the Christian thinks that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and this is true, can God think that this proposition is false? As stated earlier, the distinction between truth and falsity presupposes logic, Frame's so-called "meaningless" formal truth. But if the Scriptures say that God speaks the truth and cannot lie, this implies that God cannot contradict Himself. Formal truths are nonetheless truths. The relationship between p and not-p is hardly a meaningless formality.

Secondly, the Christian doctrine of God as a Trinity of persons entails that logic is a part of God's being. After all, the doctrine of the Trinity affirms that there are three eternal distinctions in the Godhead: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. But if logic is not a quality of God, then there may be five, six, or seven eternal distinctions in the Godhead. Maybe there is

none. Perhaps God is one in the same way that he is three. Without the laws of identity and contradiction as essential to the nature of God, the Father could be the Son, the Son could be the Spirit, and the whole Godhead could have been incarnated. Does any of this even make a difference? Orthodox theology says "Yes." In so replying, though, orthodox theology reveals its commitment to logic as an attribute of God himself. If the Christian God is eternal, then logic must be eternal; if logic is not eternal, then there is neither the One nor the Many.

The preceding in no way implies that logic is independent of or superior to God. This is a conclusion often drawn from the assertion that God thinks according to the principles of logic. Pratt makes this point: "Men wish either to reject reason in favor of blind faith or to give logic some amount of independence from God." He takes this "independence from God" to be a consequence of the denial that logic is a part of creation. But why must such a denial entail that logic is somehow independent of God? To be sure, creation is dependent on God; but the converse need not be true. For instance, one might say that a person's thoughts are dependent upon the person thinking them. This is surely one sense of the term "dependent." In similar fashion, God's thoughts are dependent upon God; but this does not make them a part of creation. God is eternal spirit; his thoughts are inseparable from him....

The laws of logic are neither prior nor subsequent to God; they are neither above nor below him. Logic is God thinking. It is dependent on him only in the sense that it is a characteristic of his thinking, his mind. To put it in rather crude terms, logic forms the structure of God's mind. "God is a rational, thinking being," wrote Clark, "whose thought exhibits the structure of Aristotelian logic." God cannot violate the laws of logic because he cannot contradict himself. God is truth. If this means anything, logic must be a part of God's being, the most fundamental aspect of his nature – the mind of God.

This, of course, closes up the religious irrationalist's gap between the divine and human mind. Man is the *imago Dei*. This implies, among other things, that

whatever constitutes the "image" of God must be first and eternally found in God himself; otherwise it would not be the image "of God." Pratt is correct when he stated that logic is a quality of man as the image of God, but it is precisely because of this that one must conclude that if logic is a part of that image, then logic must also be found in the nature of God. Therefore, God's revelation to man is intelligible. Man can understand the propositions of divine revelation only because he is the image of God. Thus, if man thinks: If p then q, p, therefore q; God cannot think: If p then q, q, therefore p. If man thinks, Not both p and not-p, then God cannot think, both p and not-p. In other terms, God and man can and do think the same truths. It is logic that provides this fundamental point of coincidence between the mind of man and the mind of God. Therefore, "knowing God and using logic are the same identical act."

William Shedd made it clear that reason in God does not differ in kind from reason in man. He grounds this notion in the *imago Dei*:

this [fallacious] reasoning implies that a man can believe what appears to him to be self-contradictory. This is impossible. It also implies that a contradiction for the human mind may be rational and logical for the Divine mind. This makes reason in man to differ in kind from reason in God; so that what is logical and mathematical for one would be illogical and unmathematical for the other. If this be so, man was not created in the image of God.

Most recently, Gordon Clark has emphasized the fallaciousness of contrasting divine and human logic:

Human logic says, if all men are mortal, and if Socrates is a man, then Socrates is mortal. But if divine logic is different, then all men can be mortal and Socrates can be a man, yet Socrates will not be mortal. Or, again, if human mathematics says that two plus two is four, and if divine truth differs from ours, then for God two and two are five or ten or anything but four. The point

here is that human logic and divine logic are identical. Human logic is part of the divine image in man. It is God's trademark stamped upon us. Only by rejecting the Biblical doctrine of God's image can one contrast human language with divine language and divine logic with human.

## The Horror File

"Right theology does not save us. One can believe the right things and go to Hell." – *Ray R Sutton, President, Philadelphia Seminary of the Reformed Episcopal Church*

The rejection or disparagement of logic, then, whether it be by the religious irrationalist, the orthodox Reformed theologian, or a Calvinistic Baptist, is manifestly unscriptural. God is a God of truth, wisdom, and knowledge. Man was created in his image, endowed with an *a priori* reason by which he can think God's thoughts after him. God's revelation is rational because it is the revelation of the divine mind. Man can understand that revelation because he was created in the divine image. The Biblical writers reason, they construct arguments, they think in terms of the laws of logic. The Bible is, therefore, a rational revelation from God to man. Christian theology, because it is based upon that revelation, is inherently rational.

The suggestion of this concluding chapter is a basic one. If theologians would reconsider the relationship between God and logic, that belief in the former entails a commitment to the latter, the intellect will be restored to its rightful place in theology. The primacy of reason will thwart the forces of irrationalism in general and misology in particular. Theology will be, as Augustine once said, "*de divinitate rationem sive sermonem,*" rational discussion respecting the Deity.

The theological defense of logic is an argument quite easy to follow. Since theology implies Scripture, and Scripture implies logic, it follows that theology implies logic. Or, in other terms: to reject logic is to reject truth, and to reject truth is to reject God; therefore, misology is the rejection of God.

*In the beginning was the Logic,  
and the Logic was with God,  
and the Logic was God.*

– *John 1:1*