

There would appear to be two fundamental presuppositions of the Christian witness, which proved to be more or less controlling of the later doctrinal developments culminating in Nicæa and Chalcedon.

One of these presuppositions was radical monotheism, the other, the genuine humanity and real historicity of Jesus. Just as Christians never seriously questioned that their trinitarian faith was faith in the one and only God, so they also never seriously questioned that the Jesus whom they believed to be of decisive significance for human existence was a genuine human being and a real figure of the historical past. (Better put: neither of these presuppositions was seriously questioned except at the edges of the Christian community, where its differences from other communities having alternative understandings of human existence became blurred and unclear.)

In tension with the presupposition of radical monotheism, however, was the conviction that God, the one and only God in whom Christians believe, is none other than the God who decisively became, and ever again becomes, event for us through Jesus and the Holy Spirit. Similarly in tension with the presupposition of Jesus' genuine humanity and real historicity was the conviction that he is the one through whom, with the Holy Spirit, God decisively became, and ever again becomes, event for us.

Unitarianism, as I understand it, is the form of Christianity, considered descriptively or historically, in which both of the presuppositions of the Christian witness are affirmed, but only at the expense of the convictions out of which it arises. Thus, for unitarians, God is precisely the one and only God of radical monotheism, even as Jesus is precisely the genuine human being and real figure of the historical past. But the price they pay for this is that Christianity thereby becomes "the religion *of* Jesus," rather than "the religion *about* Jesus," and Christians become those who believe *in* God *with* Jesus and the apostles instead of those who believe *with* the apostles and therefore decisively *through* Jesus *in* God.

Trinitarianism, on the other hand, seems to me to be the form of Christianity, again considered merely descriptively or historically, in which the convictions out of which the Christian witness arises somehow manage to get affirmed together with its two presuppositions, neither being affirmed at the expense of the other.

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