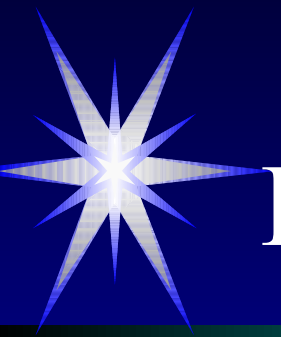


God and the Rise of Science

Vern S. Poythress, Ph.D., Th.D.
Westminster Theological Seminary



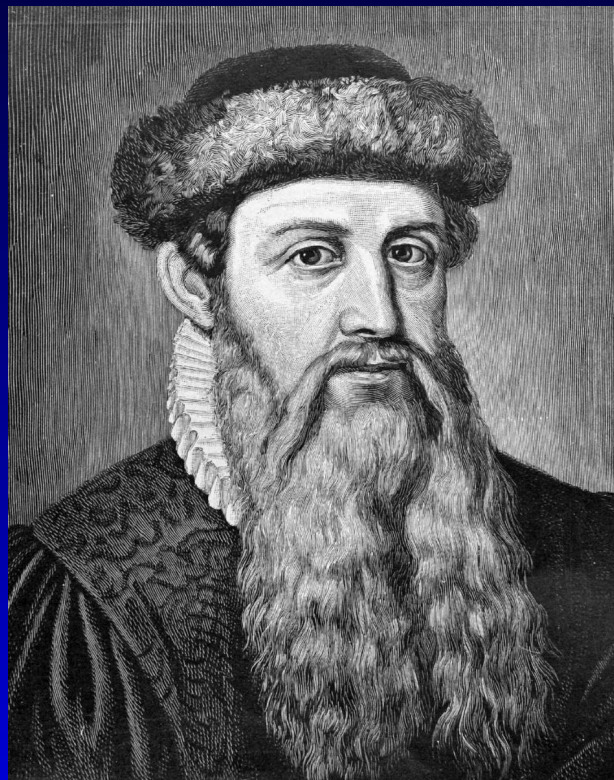
I. The Rise of Science



Medieval Technologies

- blast furnace (Cistercian monks)
- mechanical clock (monasteries?)
- long bow
- printing press with movable type (Gutenberg)

Johannes Gutenberg (c.1400-1468)



printing press
with movable type
(1439)

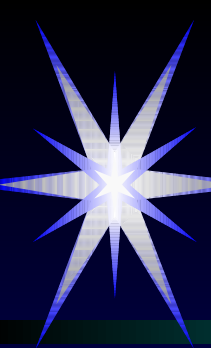
Gutenberg Bible
(1455?)

Nicolaus Copernicus, 1473-1543



earth and planets
travel around
the sun



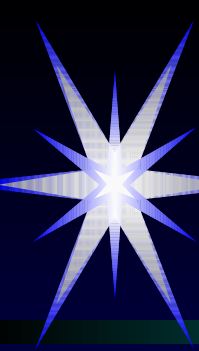


Copernicus's Thought

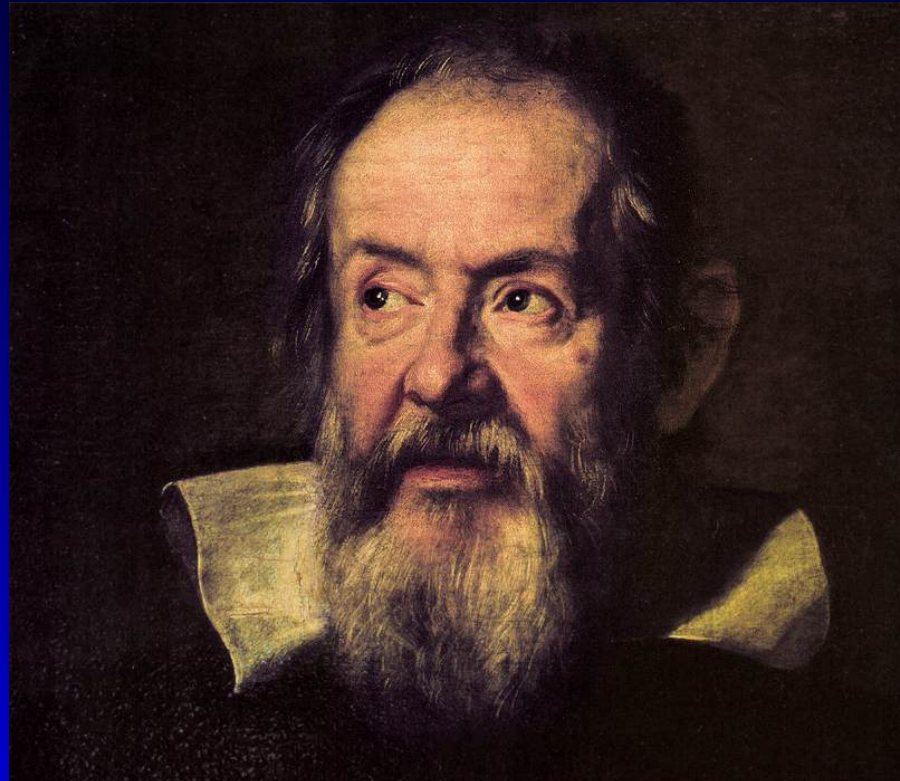
The universe was “built for us by the Best and Most Orderly Workman of all.”

“How exceedingly fine is the godlike work of the Best and Greatest Artist.”

--Copernicus, *The Revolution of the Heavenly Spheres*



Galileo Galilei, 1564-1642



supported Copernicus;
velocity; gravity;
moons of Jupiter

irritated professors
defended Aristotle,
pushed the church
to investigate



Galileo's Thought

"I do not feel obliged to believe that the same God who has endowed us with sense, reason, and intellect has intended us to forgo their use."

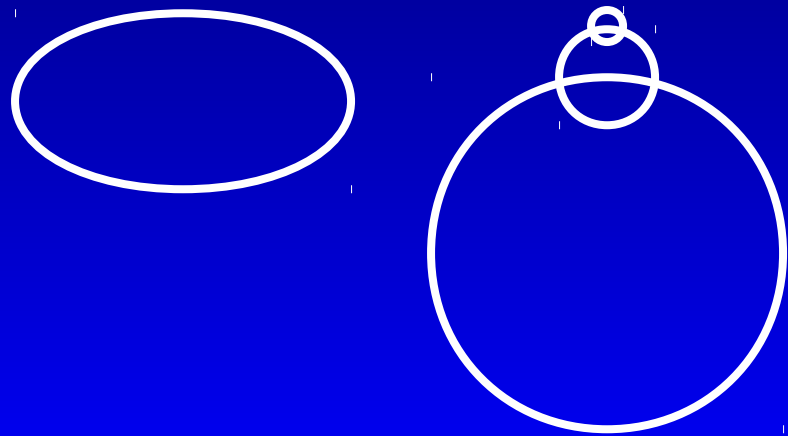
"The Bible shows us the way to go to heaven, not the way the heavens go."

– Galileo Galilei

Johannes Kepler, 1571-1630



planets travel in
ellipses, not circles
on circles on circles





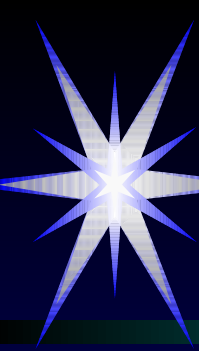
Kepler's Praise

“It now remains that at last, with my eyes and hands removed from the tablet of demonstrations and lifted up towards the heavens, I should pray, devout and supplicating, to the Father of lights: O Thou Who dost by the light of nature promote in us the desire for the light of grace, that by its means Thou mayest transport us into the light of glory, I give thanks to Thee, O Lord Creator, Who hast delighted me with Thy makings and in the works of Thy hands have I exulted....”



Kepler's Goal

“With a pure mind I pray that we may be able to speak about the secrets of His plans according to the gracious will of the omniscient Creator, with the consent and according to the bidding of His intellect. I consider it a right, yes a duty, to search in cautious manner for the numbers, sizes and weights, the norms for everything He has created. For He Himself has let man take part in the knowledge of these things and thus not in a small measure has set up His image in man.”



Blaise Pascal, 1623-1662



Pascal's theorem

Pascal's triangle

probability

hydrodynamics

Jansenist



Pascal's Thought

“The gospel to me is simply irresistible.”

Isaac Newton, 1642-1727



theory of gravity,
for earth and planets

optics

biblical prophecy



Newton on God

“He is eternal and infinite, omnipotent and omniscient; that is, his duration reaches from eternity to eternity; his presence from infinity to infinity; he governs all things ,and knows all things that are or can be done.

... And thus much concerning God; to discourse of whom from the appearances of things does certainly belong to Natural Philosophy.”

--Newton, *Principia*, pp. 440-442.

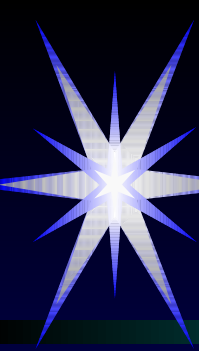
Antoine Lavoisier, 1743-1794



discovered oxygen
and hydrogen

executed by guillotine
during the Terror

exonerated a year
and a half later:
"We're sorry."



Louis Pasteur, 1822-1895



“father of
modern medicine”

germ theory of disease

pasteurization

rabies vaccine

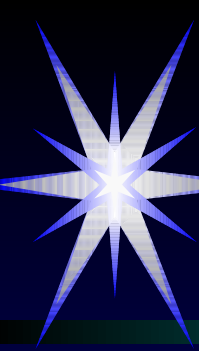
Michael Faraday



discoveries in chemistry:
benzene

early form of
Bunsen burner

field theory of
magnetism

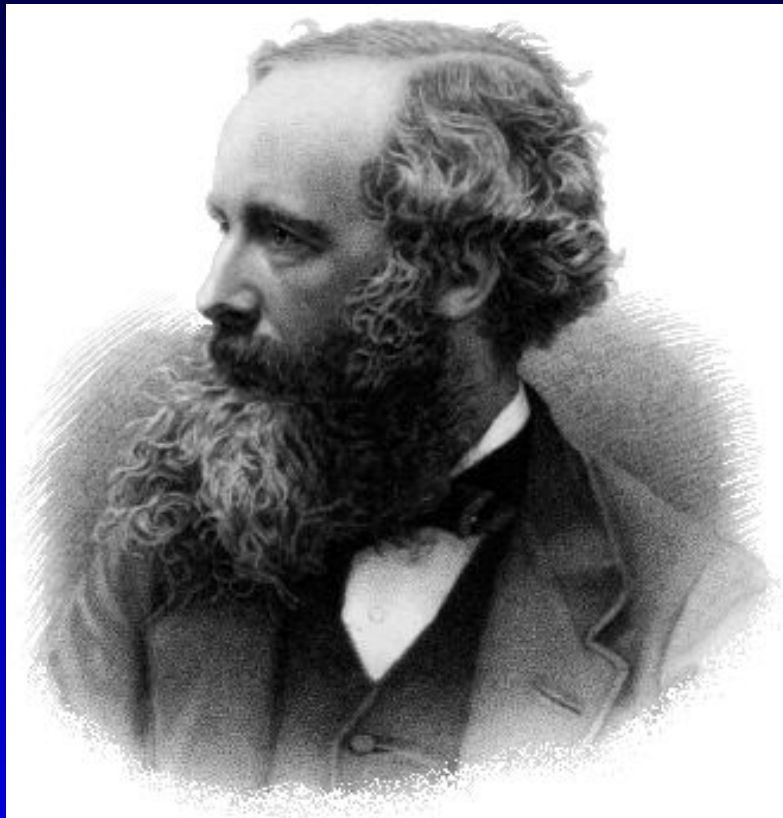


Thought of Michael Faraday

"Yet even in earthly matters I believe that 'the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead,'"

– B. Jones, *The Life and Letters of Faraday: Volume II* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 195-196. Quoted at <http://www.icr.org/article/science-man-god-michael-faraday/>).

James Clerk Maxwell, 1831-1879



James Clerk Maxwell.

electromagnetism

inspired by the Trinity



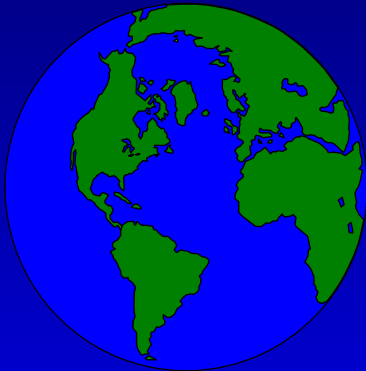
II. Foundations for Science

The Pieces

Law

$$E = mc^2$$

World

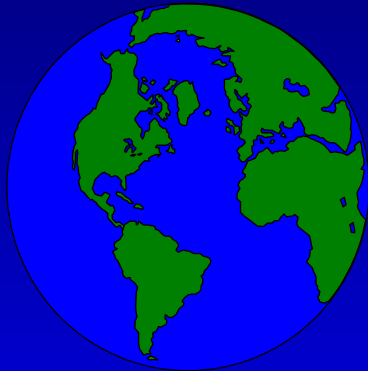


Persons



Polytheism

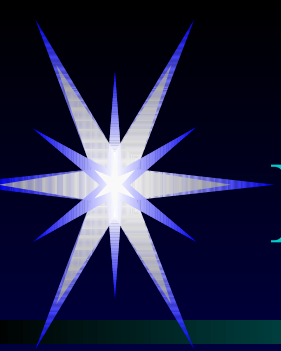
World



gods in
conflict

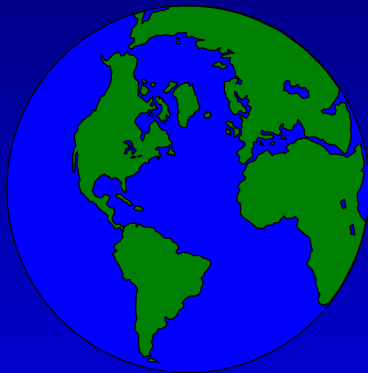
Persons





Philosophical Materialism

World



Law

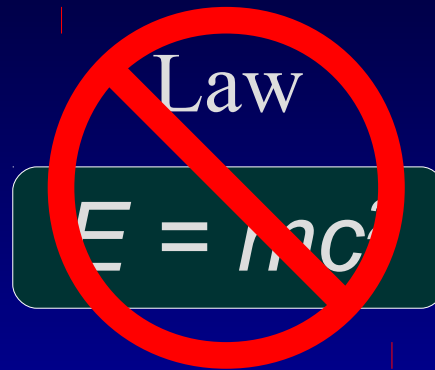
$$E = mc^2$$

Persons





Postmodern Relativistic Subjectivism



Persons



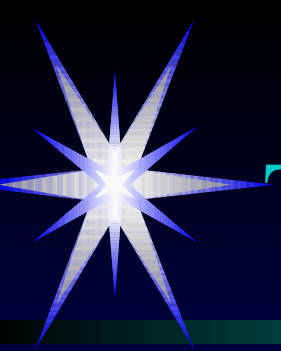


Rationalism

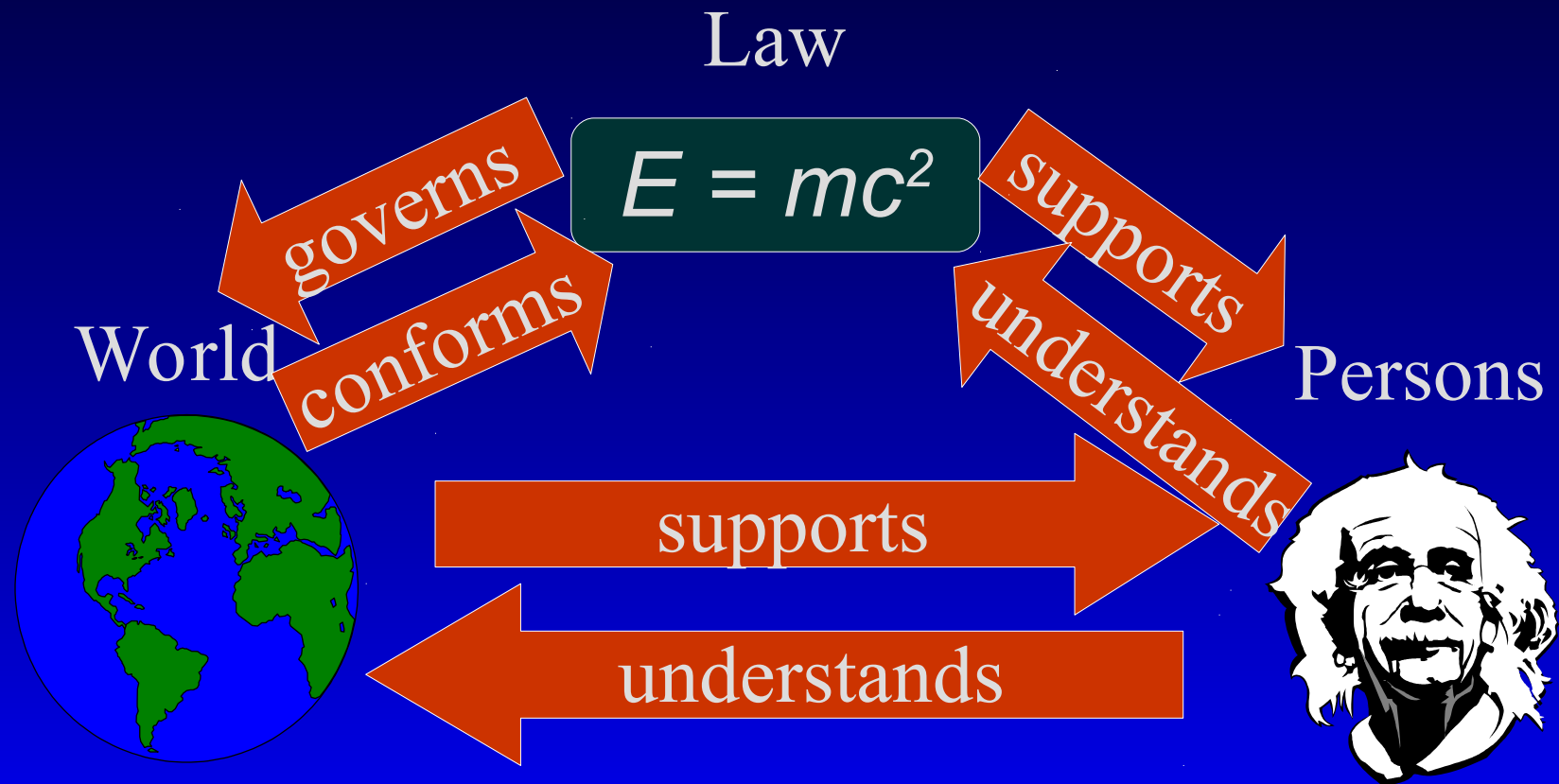
Law

$$E = mc^2$$



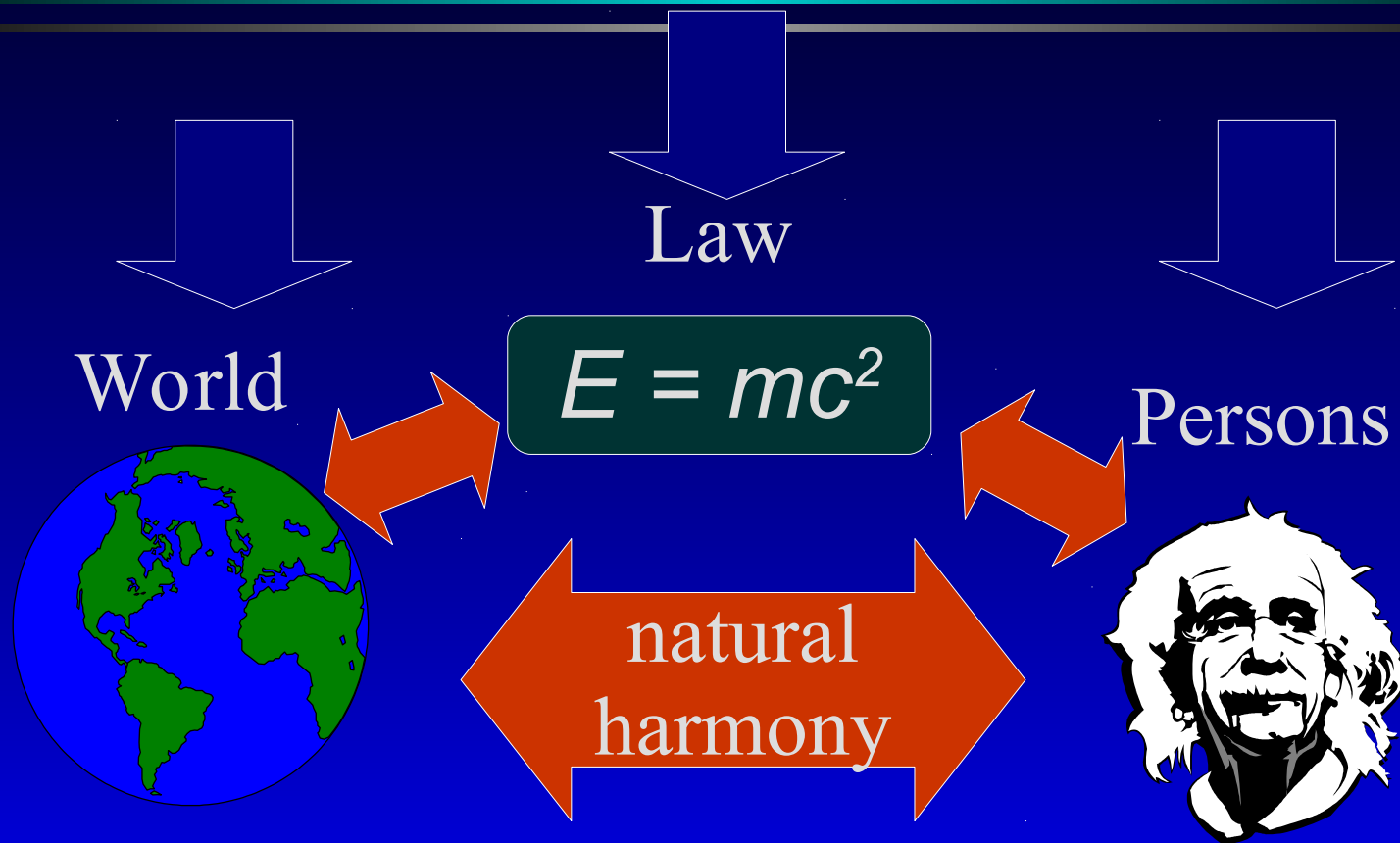


The Mystery of Interaction



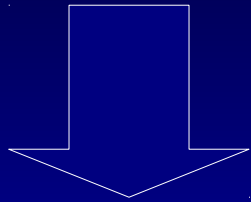


Design

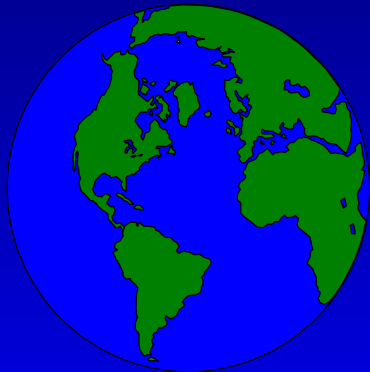




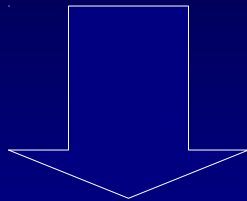
powerful



World



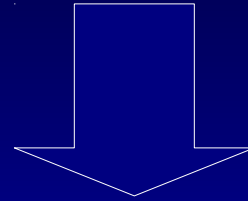
rational



Law

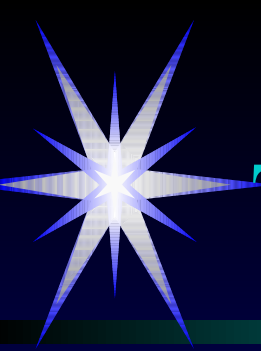
$$E = mc^2$$

personal



Persons





Testimony of God

For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse. — Romans 1:19-20



Divine Nature

powerful

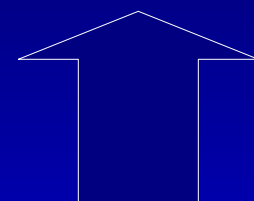
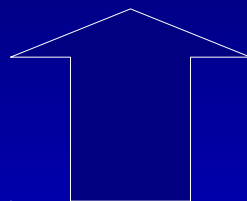
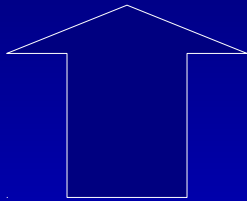
rational

personal

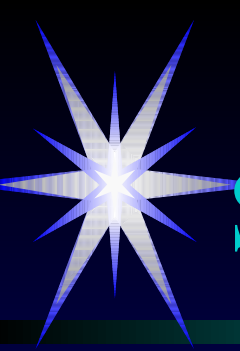
omnipotence

rationality,
wisdom

personality

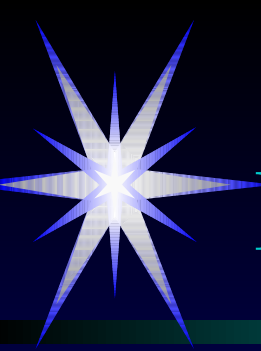


divine nature



Suppressing the Truth

... who by their unrighteousness
suppress the truth. – Romans 1:18

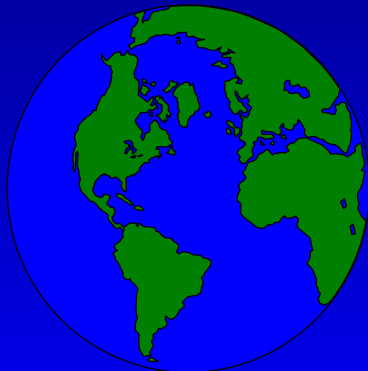


Multiple Testimony

powerful

testifies

World



rational

testifies

Law

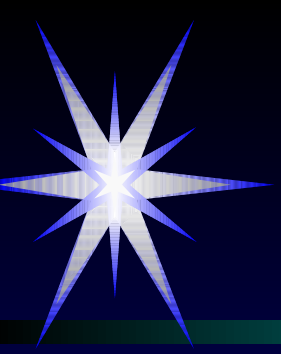
$$E = mc^2$$

personal

testifies

Persons





Father wisely plans

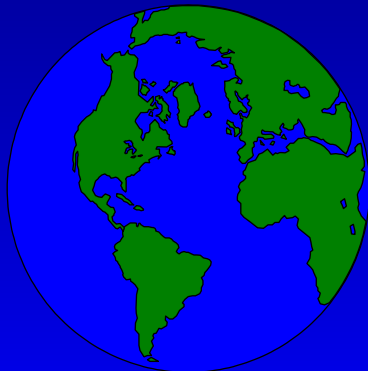
GOD

Son powerfully executes

Spirit personally present

powerful

World



rational

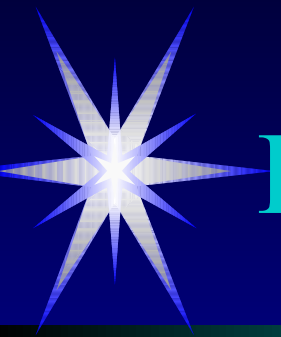
Law

$$E = mc^2$$

personal

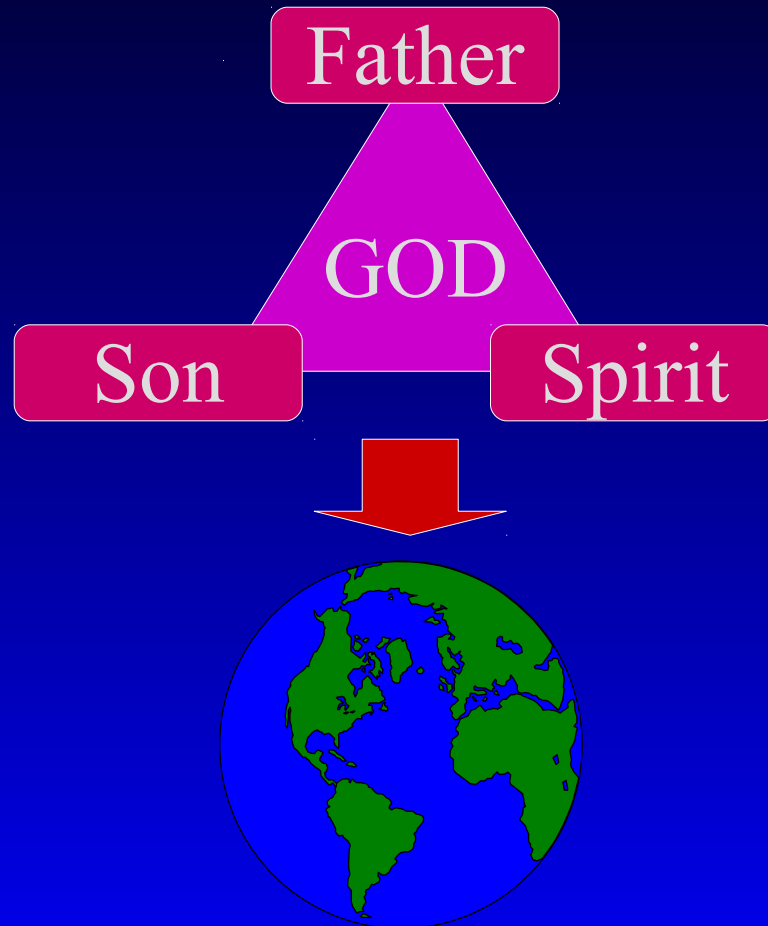
Persons





III. Worldviews

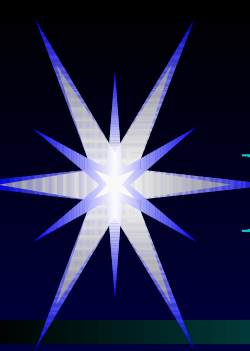
Christian Worldview



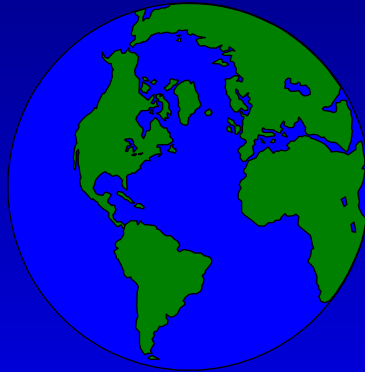


Liberalism/Modernism





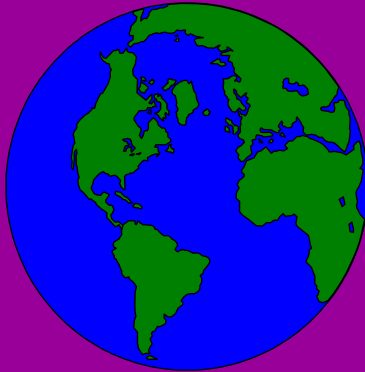
Philosophical Materialism





New Age Spiritualism

spirit(s)





Whatever (relativistic postmodernism)

A pillar.



A wall.



A rope.



A fan.





IV. Scriptural Teaching



God's Greatness

In them he has set a tent for the sun,
which comes out like a bridegroom
leaving his chamber,
and, like a strong man, runs its course
with joy.

Its rising is from the end of the heavens,
and its circuit to the end of them,
and there is nothing hidden from its heat.

-- Ps. 19:4-6



God's Law to Us

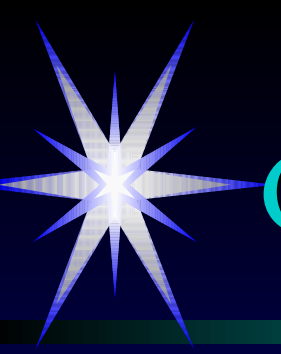
The law of the LORD is perfect,
reviving the soul;
the testimony of the LORD is sure,
making wise the simple;
the precepts of the LORD are right,
rejoicing the heart;
the commandment of the LORD is pure,
enlightening the eyes.

-- Ps. 19:7-8

God Acting for Grass



“You cause the grass to grow for the livestock,
...” (Ps. 104:14).



God Showing Himself

- Romans 1:19-20
- Psalm 19:1-2
- Romans 1:21-23



Psalm 19:1-2

The heavens declare the glory of God,
and the sky above proclaims his handiwork.

Day to day pours out speech,
and night to night reveals knowledge.

