

SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY

Lewis Sperry Chafer

Volume One

**Prolegomena • Bibliology
Theology Proper**

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**Angelology • Anthropology
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Biographical Sketch & Index

by

**Lewis Sperry Chafer
D.D., LITT.D., TH.D.**

Late President and Professor of Systematic Theology
Dallas Theological Seminary

Grand Rapids, MI 49501

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by Lewis Sperry Chafer

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WITH DEEP AFFECTION

THIS WORK ON
SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY
IS DEDICATED TO
THE ALUMNI AND PRESENT AND FUTURE STUDENTS
OF THE
DALLAS THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY.

Preface

(which every student should read with care)

Systematic Theology, the greatest of the sciences, has fallen upon evil days. Between the rejection and ridicule of it by the so-called progressives and the neglect and abridgment of it by the orthodox, it, as a potent influence, is approaching the point of extinction. It is a significant fact that of the upwards of two score accredited and notable works on Systematic Theology which have been produced in this and other countries, an exceedingly small portion is now in print and the demand for these works is negligible. The unchanging emphasis in the Scriptures upon doctrine, which subject is referred to in the New Testament more than forty times and is that to which a Christian is to “take heed” (1 Tim. 1:3; 4:6, 16; 2 Tim. 3:10, 16; 4:2, 3), stands as a silent rebuke, whether heeded or not, to all modern notions which belittle the importance of Dogmatic Theology, and also stands as a corrective to those who neglect any portion of it.

It is no secret that the average minister is not now reading Systematic Theology, nor will such writings be found to occupy a prominent place in his library. Shocking indeed this condition would have been to ministers of two generations ago—men whose position was respected in their day because of their deep knowledge of the doctrinal portions of the Bible and whose spoken ministries and writings have gone far toward the upbuilding of the Church of Christ.

The present situation is not one of passing moment. As well might a medical doctor discard his books on anatomy and therapeutics as for the preacher to discard his books on Systematic Theology; and since doctrine is the bone structure of the body of revealed truth, the neglect of it must result in a message characterized by uncertainties, inaccuracies, and immaturity. What is the specific field of learning that distinguishes the ministerial profession if it is not the knowledge of the Bible and its doctrines? To the preacher is committed a responsibility of surpassing import. Men of other professions are tireless in their attempts to discover the truths and to perfect themselves in the use of the forces belonging to their various callings, though these be in the restricted field of material things. The preacher is called upon to deal with the things of God, the supernatural and eternal. His service is different from all others—different as to aims, different as to available forces and, of necessity, different as to adequate

preparation. Few clergymen's libraries will include even one work on theology, but a medical doctor will assuredly possess a worthy work on anatomy. A form of modern thinking tends to treat all matters of doctrine with contempt.

No substitute will ever be found for the knowledge of the Word of God. That Word alone deals with things eternal and infinite, and it alone has power to convert the soul and to develop a God-honoring spiritual life. There is a limitless yet hidden spiritual content within the Bible which contributes much to its supernatural character. This spiritual content is never discerned by the natural ($\psi\upsilon\chi\iota\kappa\omicron\varsigma$), or unregenerate man (1 Cor. 2:14), even though he has attained to the highest degree of learning or ecclesiastical authority. The natural capacities of the human mind do not function in the realm of spiritual things. The divine message is presented "not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth, comparing spiritual things with spiritual" (1 Cor. 2:13), and the Spirit has been given to the regenerate that they might "know the things that are freely given to us of God." When, on the ground of scholarship, unregenerate men have been permitted to dictate to the church what she shall believe, she has descended from her supernatural character to the level of a human institution, and it is safe to conclude that men are unregenerate who deny the only ground upon which a soul may be saved.

Acquiring the knowledge of the spiritual content of the Bible is a life task. The great preachers who have moved the hearts of men with divine power have been saturated with Bible truths secured through a first-hand, daily study of its text. General facts of human learning may be acquired by the usual means, but spiritual truths are apprehended only as taught to the individual heart by the Spirit.

No student of the Scriptures should be satisfied to traffic only in the results of the study of other men. The field is inexhaustible and its treasures ever new. No worthy astronomer limits his attention to the findings of other men, but is himself ever gazing into the heavens both to verify and to discover; and no worthy theologian will be satisfied alone with the result of the research of other theologians, but will himself be ever searching the Scriptures. However, a full-rounded introduction is needed and a method of study must be established if either the astronomer or the theologian expects to continue with ever increasing efficiency. In the case of the theologian, this responsibility of acquiring the introduction to the Bible and its true method of study, without question, rests upon the theological seminary. Too often the seminary has taken the attitude that the study of the English Bible for its spiritual content has no place in a

theological curriculum, assuming that limited exegetical studies in portions of the Hebrew and Greek texts are sufficient. Exegesis belongs to the department of original languages and its importance cannot be overestimated, nor should its prosecution cease with the student's graduation. It is the province of exegetical research to aid in the study of the doctrinal, devotional, historical, prophetic, and practical aspects of divine revelation; but exegesis may, and not infrequently does, degenerate into a mere grammatical and philological study of the text with little attention given to the spiritual content of the Scriptures. Bible institutes may teach lay workers the Bible, but it is the prerogative of the theological seminary to produce authoritative and accurate exegetical expositors of the Scriptures. Regardless of the ideals held by many modern seminaries, the preacher is called to "preach the word," to be "apt to teach," to be one who avoids the "traditions of men," and to be one who is a right divider of the truth. Since the attaining to the knowledge of the Word of God is a life task, no seminary, no matter how true its aim, can hope to do more than to give the student an introduction to the whole text of the Bible, a method and habit of study with true ideals, and to impart a momentum for unceasing research in the Sacred Text itself. To this end every curriculum study should be focused. Studies in theology, original languages, and history should contribute to the one ideal, namely, *the knowledge of the Scriptures*. There are social and pastoral problems concerning which a preacher should be instructed, but these are secondary compared to his call to minister the truth of God. There is also far-reaching value in the knowledge of the history of theological opinion and familiarity with the contentions and conclusions of great men of former generations is essential, but, in vital importance, such knowledge and familiarity are not comparable with the understanding of the living Word of God and the true application of that Word to men today. Similarly, the study of evidences is an important discipline for the student of theology, but evidences do not embrace the truth itself. The chemist who in his laboratory has throughout the day proved the values of various foods will doubtless be pleased to *partake* of food when the work of the day is done. So, also, a preacher should be aware of the scope and trend of the philosophy of his day, but he should understand as well that the one and only successful method of combating error is the positive declaration of the truth of God. A Spirit-filled, truth-imparting preacher will have little time or disposition to descend to mere controversy, but will give out the supernaturally efficacious message of God, against which no error can ever stand.

While it is true that the Bible is the source of the material which enters into

Systematic Theology, it is equally true that the function of Systematic Theology is to unfold the Bible. In its natural state, gold is often passed over by those with undiscerning eyes. Likewise, the treasures of divine truth are observed only by those who are trained to recognize them. In his years of classroom discipline, the theological student should be taken over the entire field of doctrine that he may be prepared to continue his research in every portion of the Bible throughout his ministry, being prepared to proceed intelligently in every phase of the divine revelation. Apart from such a complete introduction to doctrine, no preacher will be able to hold truth in its right proportions, nor can it be assured that he or his auditors will not drift into the errors of unscriptural cults, or into modernistic unbelief. After covering in a general way the entire field of his profession, the physician or lawyer may serve the public as a specialist in some particular aspect of that profession; but the theologian should not specialize in any department of the truth. Doctrinal faddists have been the cause of untold harm in the church, and the only way of avoiding this danger, or that of securing preachers who will not be “tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine,” is to provide a required discipline in Systematic Theology which incorporates a complete consideration under a competent teacher of the essentials of each doctrine with due recognition of the relation of each doctrine to every other doctrine. Rationalism has ever been seeking admission into the Christian church, but it found little welcome so long as theological seminaries gave even an abridged Systematic Theology its rightful place. It is a short step indeed from the ignorance of doctrine to the rejection and ridicule of it, and it can be safely stated that there is no rejection of sound doctrine which is not based on ignorance.

While the seminary student needs as much today to major in Systematic Theology as ever, the trend, unfortunately, is to substitute philosophy, psychology, and sociology for theology. This may be somewhat accounted for by the fact that Biblical doctrine is a revelation and the substitutes are within the range of the thinking of the natural man.

In this age, as in no other, there is a specific message to be preached to every creature and, while there are leadership men who are God’s gift to the Church, the obligation to witness rests upon every Christian alike. Too much recognition cannot be given to the uncounted multitudes of faithful witnesses who are discharging their commissions as Sunday School teachers, mission workers, personal soul-winners, and as living exponents of divine grace. This is the God-appointed New Testament evangelism. The latent evangelizing forces of a congregation of believers are beyond all human calculation; but they need to be

trained for their task, and God has prescribed definitely that they should be trained. How else will they be accurate and skillful even in their limited sphere of service? That they are to be trained is indicated in Ephesians 4:11, 12. There it is stated that the gifted men—apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers, especially the pastors and teachers—are appointed to the task of “perfecting the saints for the work of the ministry”; that is, the ministry which is committed to the saints. The revelation here is not only of the fact that the saints have a witnessing service to perform, but also of the fact that they are to be *equipped* for this service by the gifted men whom God has placed over them as their leaders. The word καταρτισμὸν, here translated *perfecting*, is a noun which is but once used in the New Testament and means *equipment* and refers to that preparation which all saints should have that they may be effective witnesses for Christ. The verb form of this word is found elsewhere in the New Testament, and with significant meaning. According to this passage (Eph. 4:11, 12), the pastor and teacher is responsible for the *equipment* of those given into his care. Although this equipment does involve methods of work, it includes much more, namely, an accurate knowledge of the truth.

But the pastor and teacher must be trained for his leadership task. Under existing conditions this preparation is committed to the professors in the theological seminary. Their responsibility is greater than that of other men inasmuch as the heavenly things transcend the things of earth. Observe this stream flowing forth from its source: whatever truth and ideals the professor imparts to students in training they, in turn, will later impart to the larger groups over which they are given spiritual care. If a congregation is not actively engaged in soul-winning and missionary work, it is usually because of the fact that they have been deprived of the God-intended leadership to that end. If the pastor has no soul-winning passion, no missionary vision, is limited in his proficiency, and inaccurate as an exponent of the Word of God, his lack in these respects may generally be traced to the fact that he has been deprived of the God-intended, spiritual and vital training in the seminary. It may, therefore, be restated that the responsibility of the seminary professor is no less than superhuman. If this be true, no man is fitted to render faculty service in a seminary who is not himself awake to his responsibility and, in addition to that advanced training and accuracy in the truth which his position demands, is himself a worthy example of missionary zeal, evangelistic passion, and tireless soul-winning effort. What revival fires would be set burning and spiritual forces be released should the church demand the purification and perfection of her

fountain sources of doctrinal teaching as well as the worthy illustration of spiritual vitality and soul-winning passion in the life and ministry of those who mold the character of her God-appointed leaders!

This is not an appeal for a lowering of worthy scholarship. The all-too-prevalent notion that scholarship and spiritual passion cannot exist together in one person was forever answered at the beginning of the Christian era in the case of the Apostle Paul, to say nothing of thousands of great preachers of the past who have attained to enviable scholarship without restricting their spiritual lives or restraining their passion of soul.

The question as to the evil effects of an abridged theology may be considered with a full recognition of the fact that an abridgment of doctrine in the seminary leaves the pastor disqualified by so much, and his limitation will be reflected in the stunting not only of his own spiritual life but of the spiritual life and activity of all who wait upon his ministry.

The criticism incorporated in this preface in no way pertains to the material which *is* included in existing works on Systematic Theology. The church owes an immeasurable debt to the great theologians for the work they have done. Attention is called only to certain major themes which strangely do not appear in works on Systematic Theology generally. If it be claimed that, because thus omitted, these themes do not belong to Systematic Theology, it may be replied that men are not appointed to determine the material which enters into this science. Since, as acknowledged by theologians generally, Systematic Theology is the collecting, scientifically arranging, comparing, exhibiting, and defending of *all* facts from any and every source concerning God and His works, it is obvious there could be no valid reason offered for the omission of any vital doctrine from this science. Theologians have no permission from God to restrict the field of theology to the material found in the standards of their respective denominations or the more or less restricted teachings of the uninspired leaders who formulated those standards. The divine revelation in its entirety, and not merely the portions of it which harmonize with accepted dicta, challenges the student of doctrine.

Though interest in Systematic Theology has declined in past years, there has been a growing need for an unabridged, premillennial, dispensational work on theology. Such a work has long been a desideratum. This work proposes to take a step in the direction of the realization of that need.

Why unabridged? Simply because a part of anything is never equivalent to its whole. A lifelong investigation into works on Systematic Theology has resulted

in the discovery that in the field of doctrine at least seven major themes are consistently neglected. Few readers, indeed, are in a position to detect what is left out of a work on theology. These omissions are: (1) the divine program of the ages; (2) the Church, the Body of Christ; (3) human conduct and the spiritual life; (4) Angelology; (5) typology; (6) prophecy; and (7) the present session of Christ in heaven. That the loss to the whole range of doctrine sustained by these omissions may be pointed out, it is necessary to indicate some of the important features of each doctrine.

I. The Divine Program of the Ages

While some phases of the divine program of the ages belong properly to Eschatology, and these will be noticed later under that heading, the subject exceeds the boundaries of Eschatology, and being, as it is, so vast, must be recognized as fundamental to the right understanding of the works of God in relation to this world.

The dispensational study of the Bible consists in the identification of certain well-defined time-periods which are divinely indicated, together with the revealed purpose of God relative to each. A recognition of the divinely indicated distinctions as to time-periods and the messages belonging to each is the very foundation of a science such as Systematic Theology, which proposes to discover and exhibit the truth relative to the works of God. No accounting is possible as to the extent of error which is prevalent because of the careless reading into one dispensation or age of that which belongs to another.

That God has a program of the ages is disclosed in many passages (cf. Deut. 30:1–10; Dan. 2:31–45; 7:1–28; 9:24–27; Hos. 3:4, 5; Matt. 23:37–25:46; Acts 15:13–18; Rom. 11:13–29; 2 Thess. 2:1–12; Rev. 2:1–22:21). Likewise, there are well-defined periods of time related to the divine purpose. The Apostle Paul writes of the period between Adam and Moses (Rom. 5:14); John speaks of the law as given by Moses, but of grace and truth as coming by Christ (John 1:17). Christ also speaks of “the times of the Gentiles” (Luke 21:24), which are evidently to be distinguished from Jewish “times and seasons” (Acts 1:7; 1 Thess. 5:1). Likewise, He spoke of a hitherto unannounced period between His two advents and indicated its distinctive features (Matt. 13:1–51), and predicted a yet future time of “great tribulation” and defined its character (Matt. 24:9–31). There are “last days” for Israel (Isa. 2:1–5) as well as “last days” for the Church (2 Tim. 3:1–5). The Apostle John anticipates a period of one thousand years and

relates this to the reign of Christ, at which time the Church, His Bride, will reign with Him (Rev. 20:1–6). That Christ will sit on the throne of David and reign over the house of Jacob forever is declared by the angel Gabriel (Luke 1:31–33), and that there will be an ever abiding new heaven and new earth is as clearly revealed (Isa. 65:17; 66:22; 2 Pet. 3:13; Rev. 21:1). In Hebrews 1:1, 2 a sharp contrast is drawn between “time past” when God spoke to the fathers by the prophets and “these last days” when He is speaking unto us by His Son. Similarly, it is clearly disclosed that there are *ages past* (Eph. 3:5; Col. 1:26), the *present age* (Rom. 12:2; Gal. 1:4), and the *age, or ages, to come* (Eph. 2:7; Heb. 6:5; note Eph. 1:10, where the future age is termed the *dispensation*—οἰκονμία—of the fullness—πλήρωμα—of times—καιρός).

The use of αἰῶνας in Hebrews. 1:2 and 11:3 with its almost universal reference to *time*, either bounded or unbounded, is of particular significance as bearing on the divine arrangements of time-periods. The former with ἐποίησεν τοὺς αἰῶνας and the latter with κατηρτίσθαι τοὺς αἰῶνας have been much disputed. Dean Alford states: “The main classes of interpreters are two. (1) Those who see in the word its ordinary meaning of ‘an age of time’: (2) those who do not recognize such meaning, but suppose it to have been merged in that of ‘the world,’ or ‘the worlds.’ To (1) belong the Greek Fathers; and some others. On the other hand, (2) is the view of the majority of Commentators” (*N.T. for English Readers*, Vol. II, Part II, p. 599). In several passages, including the two in question, Vincent declares αἰῶνας to refer to “the universe, the aggregate of the ages or periods, and their contents which are included in the duration of the world.” The word, he states, “means a period of time. Otherwise it would be impossible to account for the plural, or such qualifying expressions as *this age*, or the *age to come*” (*Word Studies*, Vol. IV, p. 59).

Considering the accepted meaning of αἰῶνας, the natural interpretation of the passage in question is that God did by Christ arrange the successive periods, far beyond καιρός within χρόνος extending indeed to things eternal or from everlasting to everlasting. This interpretation held, according to Alford, by the Greek Fathers, though not free from difficulties, is of more than passing import to those who do discern the fact, force, and fruition of God’s time-periods.

The student of the Scriptures who is devoted to his task will discover that God’s great time-periods, characterized as they are by specific divine purposes, fall into a well-defined order, moving on with infinite certainty to the glorious completion which God has decreed. There is an order to the creative days. The age of the patriarchs is followed by the age of the judges, and that age, in turn, is

followed by the age of the kings. The “times of the Gentiles,” which terminate the age of the kings, continue to the Day of Jehovah, which extended period is followed by the Day of God, characterized as it is by the new heavens and the new earth which are not only to be holy to an infinite degree but are to abide forever.

God’s program is as important to the theologian as the blueprint to the builder or the chart to the mariner. Without the knowledge of it, the preacher must drift aimlessly in doctrine and fail to a large degree in his attempts to harmonize and utilize the Scriptures. Doubtless a spiritually minded person who does not know the divine program may discern isolated spiritual truths, much as one might enjoy a point of rare color in a painting without observing the picture itself or the specific contribution which that color makes to the whole.

In spite of its importance as one of the qualifying features of doctrine, Systematic Theology, as set forth generally in textbook, is without recognition of the divine program of the ages.

II. The Church, the Body of Christ

Ecclesiology, or the doctrine of the Church, incorporates three main divisions—(a) the true Church, the Body of Christ, (b) the organized or visible church, and (c) the walk and service of those who are saved in this dispensation. Though of tremendous importance, the first and third of these divisions are practically never treated in works of Systematic Theology, while the second, if mentioned at all, is usually restricted to peculiar features of some sect or branch of the visible church with specific reference to organization and ordinances.

The Book of Acts and the Epistles introduce the fact of a new classification of humanity termed the *Church* which group is, also, properly designated as a part of the *New Creation* since each individual within the group has experienced the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit (2 Cor. 5:17; Gal. 6:15).

The works of Systematic Theology generally have recognized the redeemed people of this age, but only as a supposed sequence or continuation in the progress of the divine purpose in Israel. They refer to “the Old Testament Church” and to “the New Testament Church” as together constituting component parts of one divine project, thus failing to recognize those distinctions between Israel and the Church which, being so radical in character, serve to indicate the widest possible difference between them—difference as to origin, difference as to character and responsibility, and difference as to destiny. There are at least

twenty-four far-reaching distinctions yet to be observed between Israel and the Church, while there are about twelve major features common to both; but the obvious similarities do not set aside the differences. The fact that revelation concerning both Israel and the Church includes the truth about God, holiness, sin, and redemption by blood, does not eliminate a far greater body of truth in which it is disclosed that Israelites become such by a natural birth while Christians become such by a spiritual birth; that Israelites were appointed to live and serve under a meritorious, legal system, while Christians live and serve under a gracious system; that Israelites, as a nation, have their citizenship now and their future destiny centered only in the earth, reaching on to the new earth which is yet to be, while Christians have their citizenship and future destiny centered only in heaven, extending on into the new heavens that are yet to be (for both earthly and heavenly blessings see Rev. 21:1–22:7; 2 Pet. 3:10–13; Heb. 1:10–12; Isa. 65:17; 66:22).

With respect to humanity, the time from Adam until now is generally conceded by those who accept the Scripture testimony to be about six millenniums, these being divided into three time-periods of about two millenniums each. In the period from Adam to Abraham there was one stock or kind of humanity on the earth—Gentile; in the period from Abraham to Christ there were two—Jew and Gentile; and in the period from Pentecost to the present hour there have been and are three—Jews, Gentiles, and the Church. In the coming and final millennium there will be, according to much prediction, but two stocks or kinds of people on the earth—the Jew and the Gentile—, and as has been observed, these, having been marvelously transformed, continue as inhabitants of the new earth wherein righteousness dwells. Thus it is seen that the present dispensation only is characterized by the presence on earth of a third grouping of humanity—the Church. Not only did Christ anticipate this body of people (Matt. 16:18), but they appear along with Israel (1) as cosharers in the purpose of His incarnation, (2) as the subjects of His ministry, (3) as the objects of His death and resurrection, (4) as the beneficiaries of His second advent, and (5) as related to Him in His kingdom reign. Of these aspects of truth, it may be observed:

(1) There were two independent and widely different purposes in the incarnation. (a) On the Messianic side and in relation to His office as Israel's King, Christ was born of a virgin and came into this human relationship with indisputable kingly rights in order that He might fulfill the Davidic Covenant (2 Sam. 7:8–18; Ps. 89:20–37; Jer. 33:21, 22, 25, 26). To the Virgin Mary the angel

said, “And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end” (Luke 1:31–33); and as the rightful heir through human lineage, He will be the everlasting occupant of David’s earthly throne, and reign over the house of Jacob forever (Isa. 9:6, 7; Luke 1:33). (b) On the mediatorial and redemptive side and to fulfill the Abrahamic Covenant, it is equally true that by the incarnation the Mediator between God and man is provided with all the inexhaustible blessings which the theanthropic Mediator secures; and through the virgin birth the Kinsman-Redeemer is realized who, as typified by Boaz, is qualified to redeem the lost estate and claim His heavenly Bride—the Church.

While these two widely different objectives obtain in the incarnation, the general facts concerning the incarnation are common to both. When contemplating either the heavenly purpose in the Church or the earthly purpose in Israel, it should be observed that: (a) it was none other than the Second Person of the Godhead who came into this human relationship; (b) to do this He emptied Himself, becoming obedient to His Father’s will; (c) He took a human body, soul, and spirit; and (d) the union thus formed between the divine and human natures resulted in the incomparable theanthropic Person.

(2) Christ revealed two distinct lines of truth. In the first, He presented Himself as Israel’s Messiah and called upon that nation for their long predicted national repentance, in which He also declared the character of His earthly kingdom rule and Himself as the Fulfiller of the great Messianic purposes. At that time He said of Himself, “I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel” (Matt. 15:24). In sending out His disciples He commanded them, saying, “Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel” (Matt. 10:5, 6). In the second, when Israel’s rejection of Him became apparent, He began to speak of His departure and second advent, and of a hitherto unannounced age which should intervene in which the gospel should be preached in all the world to Jew and Gentile alike, and His disciples, whose messages had before been restricted to Israel alone, were then commissioned to declare the glad tidings to every creature. A slight comparison of His farewell address to Israel—“... hated of all nations” (Matt. 23:37–25:46)—with His farewell word to those who had believed on Him to the saving of their souls (John 13:1–17:26), will disclose the most evident distinctions between Israel and the Church. Such contrasts could be

drawn from the Gospels almost indefinitely, and without these distinctions in mind only perplexity can characterize the one who reads with attention.

(3) In His death and resurrection the same two widely different objectives are discernible. To Israel His death was a stumbling block (1 Cor. 1:23), nor was His death any part of His office as King over Israel—"Long live the king!"; yet, in His death Israel had her share to the extent that He dealt finally with the sins committed aforetime, which sins had been only covered according to the provisions of the Old Testament atonement (Rom. 3:25). By His death the way was prepared for any individual Jew to be saved through faith in Him; and by His death a sufficient ground was secured whereon God will yet "take away" the sins of that nation at the time when "all Israel shall be saved" (Rom. 11:27). However, the nation Israel sustains no relation to the resurrection of Christ other than that which David foresaw, namely, that if Christ died He must be raised again from the dead in order that He might sit on David's throne (Ps. 16:10; Acts 2:25–31). Over against this, it is revealed that Christ loved the Church and gave Himself for it (Eph. 5:25–27), and that His resurrection is the beginning of the New Creation of God, which includes the many sons whom He is bringing into glory (Heb. 2:10). In that New Creation relationship, the believer is *in* the resurrected Christ and the resurrected Christ is *in* the believer. This twofold unity establishes an identity of relationship which surpasses all human understanding. It is even likened by Christ to the unity which exists between the Persons of the Godhead (John 17:21–23). By the baptism of the Spirit, wrought, as it is for everyone, when one believes (1 Cor. 12:13), the saved one is joined to the Lord (1 Cor. 6:17; Gal. 3:27), and by that union with the resurrected Christ is made a partaker of His resurrection life (Col. 1:27), is translated out of the power of darkness into the kingdom of the Son of His love (Col. 1:13), is crucified, dead, and buried with Christ, and is raised to walk in newness of life (Rom. 6:2–4; Col. 3:1), is now seated with Christ in the heavenlies (Eph. 2:6), is a citizen of heaven (Phil. 3:20), is forgiven all trespasses (Col. 2:13), is justified (Rom. 5:1), and blessed with every spiritual blessing (Eph. 1:3). This vast body of truth, which is but slightly indicated here, is not found in the Old Testament, nor are the Old Testament saints ever said to be related thus to the resurrected Christ. It is impossible for these great disclosures to be fitted into a theological system which does not distinguish the heavenly character of the Church as in contrast to the earthly character of Israel. This failure on the part of these systems of theology to discern the character of the true Church, related wholly, as it is, to the resurrected Christ, accounts for the usual omission from these theological

writings of any extended treatment of the doctrine of Christ's resurrection and all related doctrines.

(4) The great events predicted for the close of the present age include the Day of Christ when the Church will be taken to be forever with the Lord—some by resurrection and some by translation (1 Cor. 15:35–53; 1 Thess. 4:13–17)—, and the Day of the Lord when Israel will be regathered, judged, and privileged to experience the fulfillment of all her earthly covenants in the land which has been given to her by the oath of Jehovah, which oath cannot be broken (Deut. 30:3–5; 2 Sam. 7:16; Ps. 89:34–37; Jer. 23:5, 6; 31:35–37; 33:25, 26).

(5) In the coming kingdom of Messiah the distinction between Israel and the Church is still more obvious. Israel, as a nation, is seen through prophetic vision to be on the earth as subjects of the kingdom and in her kingdom glory, while the Church is said to be coreigning with Christ (Rev. 20:6). As His Bride and Consort, it is the rightful place of the Church to share in His reign.

Two revelations were given to the Apostle Paul: (1) That of salvation to infinite perfection for individual Jew and Gentile alike through faith in Christ and on the ground of His death and resurrection (Gal. 1:11, 12). That this salvation is an exercise of grace which far surpasses anything hitherto experienced in the Old Testament, is clearly revealed in 1 Peter 1:10, where it is stated, “Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you.” (2) That of the new divine purpose in the outcalling of the Church (Eph. 3:6). This new purpose is not merely that Gentiles are to be blessed. Old Testament prophecy had long predicted Gentile blessings. The purpose consists in the fact that a new body of humanity was to be formed from both Jews and Gentiles, a relationship in which neither Jew nor Gentile position is retained, but where Christ is all and in all (Gal. 3:28; Col. 3:11). The Apostle likewise records the former estate of Gentiles and Jews and the present estate of those who are now saved, whether of one group or the other. We read concerning the Gentile, “that at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world” (Eph. 2:12). Of the Jew we read, “Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen” (Rom. 9:4, 5). But of the Church we read, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly

places in Christ: according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved” (Eph. 1:3–6).

With the same fundamental distinction in view, the Apostle makes separate enumeration of the Jews, the Gentiles, and the Church of God (1 Cor. 10:32); and again in Ephesians 2:11 he refers to the Gentiles as the *Uncircumcision*, and the Jews as the *Circumcision made with hands*; but in Colossians 2:11 he refers to the *Circumcision made without hands*. The latter designation indicates the supernatural standing and character of those who comprise the Body of Christ.

Though in its time established and imposed by Jehovah, Judaism did not merge into Christianity, nor does it now provide the slightest advantage to the individual Jew who would become a Christian. With reference to Christianity, Jews and Gentiles are now, alike, “under sin.” They need identically the same grace of God (Rom. 3:9), and that grace is offered to them on precisely the same terms (Rom. 10:12). Nicodemus, who was apparently a most perfect specimen of Judaism, was told by Christ that *he* must be born again, and the Apostle Paul prayed that the Israelites who had “a zeal for God” might be saved. They were at fault in that after the new and limitless privileges in grace had come through Christ (John 1:17), they still clung to the old meritorious features of Judaism, “going about to establish their own righteousness” and not submitting themselves to the imputed righteousness of God (Rom. 10:1–3).

The one who cannot recognize that the Church is a new, heavenly purpose of God, absolutely disassociated from both Jew and Gentile (Gal. 3:28; Col. 3:11), but sees the Church only as an ever increasing company of redeemed people gathered alike from all ages of human history, will perhaps do well to ponder the following questions: Why the rent veil? Why Pentecost? Why the distinctive message of the Epistles? Why the “better” things of the Book of Hebrews? Why the Jewish branches broken off? Why the present headship and ministry of Christ in heaven? Why the present visitation to the Gentiles and not before? Why the present indwelling by the Spirit of all who believe? Why the baptism of the Spirit—unique in the New Testament? Why two companies of redeemed in the new Jerusalem? Why only earthly promises to Israel and only heavenly promises to the Church? Why should the divinely given rule of life be changed from law to grace? Why is Israel likened to the repudiated and yet to be restored wife of Jehovah, and the Church likened to the espoused bride of Christ? Why

the two objectives in the incarnation and resurrection? Why the new day—the Day of Christ—with its rapture and resurrection of believers and with its rewards for service and suffering—a day never once mentioned in the Old Testament? Why the “mysteries” of the New Testament, including the Body of Christ? Why the New Creation, comprising, as it does, all those who by the Spirit are joined to the Lord and are forever in Christ? How could there be a Church, constructed as she is, until the death of Christ, the resurrection of Christ, the ascension of Christ, and the Day of Pentecost? How could the Church, in which there is neither Jew nor Gentile, be any part of Israel in this or any other age?

Like the doctrine of the resurrection of Christ, the doctrine of the true Church with her supernatural and exalted position and her heavenly destiny is largely omitted from theological writings only because these aspects of truth cannot be fitted into a Judaized system to which Systematic Theology has too often been committed. The stupendous spiritual loss of such an omission is only slightly reflected in the failure on the part of believers to understand their heavenly calling with its corresponding God-designed incentive to a holy life.

III. Human Conduct and the Spiritual Life

It is possible that the modern emphasis upon human conduct expressed in the phrase, “It matters little what you believe, it is the life that counts,” was, when first uttered, a protest against the omission of the theme of human conduct from works of Systematic Theology. True to its limitations, the world of practical men is more interested in a justification by *works* than it is in a justification by *faith*. Much of the Bible is hortatory, and the contemplation of the doctrine of human conduct belongs properly to a science which purports to discover, classify, and exhibit the great doctrines of the Bible. This particular theme includes: (1) human conduct in general and in all ages—past, present, and future; and (2) the peculiar and exalted walk and daily life of the Christian: (a) his motive, (b) his high standards, (c) his method in his warfare against the world, the flesh, and the devil, (d) his sins, (e) his relationships, (f) his witness, (g) his sufferings and sacrifice, his life of faith and prayer, and (h) his contest for rewards.

1. HUMAN CONDUCT IN GENERAL AND IN ALL AGES.

From the beginning, God, in faithfulness, has disclosed to man the precise manner of life that He requires of him. What may be termed *inherent law* embodies all that a Creator expects and requires of His creature. It is well expressed by the phrase, “Be ye holy; for I am holy.” This law has been binding

on that portion of humanity in all ages to whom no other law has been addressed. However, God has disclosed His specific will to particular groups of people in various ages. Identification of the particular responsibility God has imposed upon man in each age is not difficult. During much of human history man has sustained a meritorious or legal relation to God; that is, God's declaration to man concerning conduct was, in substance, If you will do good, I will bless you (cf. Deut. 28:1–14), and if you will do evil, I will curse you (cf. Deut. 28:15–68). All governmental, social, and family affairs, of necessity, proceed upon the principle of the recognition of human merit. It is not difficult, therefore, for men generally to understand the legal aspect of divine government, but it is difficult apparently for them to understand the grace aspect of divine government. The fact that God, in sovereign grace, now either bestows, or assures, all His saving benefits before allowing the individual to do aught for him seems perhaps too good to be true; but it is true, and, until this fact is recognized, the Christian will not be able to walk with God intelligently from the true grace-motive.

Though the Bible sets forth the divine requirements for human conduct in each age, there are three extended systems of divine government which in succession cover the period of human history from the time when the first written Scriptures were given to the end of the mediatorial reign of Christ, namely, (a) the Mosaic law, embodying the manner of life prescribed in the law age, which age existed from Moses to Christ, (b) the grace rule of life, embodying the manner of life prescribed for the present age, which age extends from the first to the second advent of Christ, and (c) the kingdom rule of life, embodying the manner of life prescribed for the yet future kingdom age, which age follows the second advent. Though too often confused, the divine government is different in each of these ages, being adapted perfectly to the relation which the people in their respective dispensations sustain to God. Each of these systems of human government is wholly complete in itself. The Mosaic law contained the commandments, the statutes, and the ordinances, and was an expression of God's will to Israel to whom alone it was addressed. In the teachings of grace addressed only to the Church, God has disclosed in full the manner of life which becomes those who are already perfected in Christ. The kingdom rule of conduct embodies that precise responsibility which will be required when Christ is reigning on the earth, when Satan is in the pit, and when the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea. It is most reasonable that there should be widely different precepts indicated for various groups of people so diverse in their relationships. Human obligation

toward God could not be the same after the death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ, and the Day of Pentecost, as it was before those events. In like manner, human obligation toward God cannot be the same after the removal of the Church to heaven, the return of Christ to reign, and the establishment of the kingdom of heaven over all the earth, as it was before.

As to the essential character of these three systems of human conduct, it may be observed that two are *legal* and one is *gracious*. Two simple tests are available in determining those precepts that are *legal* in distinction to those that are *gracious*: (a) that which is *legal* is demonstrated to be such because of accompanying meritorious conditions which determine the divine blessings (cf. Ex. 20:12; Ps. 103:17, 18; Matt. 5:3–12; 6:14, 15); while that which is *gracious* is an appeal based upon divine blessings already bestowed (cf. Rom. 12:1, 2; Eph. 4:1–3, 32; Col. 3:1). There is much in common among these three great governing systems. Every one of the ten commandments, excepting the fourth, is restated in the grace system. The first commandment alone reappears in that system in one form or another upwards of fifty times, but when thus appearing, it, like other legal features, is always restated in order that it may conform precisely to the essential character of grace. (b) Again, that which is *legal* is demonstrated to be such by the fact that only human ability is appealed to; while that which is *gracious* is evidenced by two facts, that divine enablement is provided and its exercise is anticipated.

In general, the law system is set forth in the Old Testament (cf. Ex. 20:1–31:18); the grace teachings are revealed in portions of the Gospels, the Book of Acts, and the New Testament Epistles; while the kingdom system is set forth in the Old Testament predictions concerning the Messianic period, and in those portions of the synoptic Gospels which record the kingdom teachings of John the Baptist and of Christ. The present importance of these distinctions, especially those that are related to the Church, is obvious.

2. THE PECULIAR WALK AND DAILY LIFE OF THE CHRISTIAN. Conforming to the general divisions of this subject as intimated above, it may be observed:

The *motive* which actuates the conduct and service of the one who is perfectly saved in Christ is of necessity radically different from any and every legal incentive. To the saved one, being perfected forever in Christ, made accepted in the Beloved, and now a recipient of every spiritual blessing, no meritorious appeal is appropriate; and the only motive for correct conduct remaining for such a one is that of *walking worthy of the calling wherewith he is called*. Living with

a view to securing the favor of God, and living in the favor of God already secured in Christ, are two widely different motives. One is legal, the other is gracious, and the gracious manner of life is governed by divine beseechings which are adapted to those who are under grace (Rom. 12:1, 2; Eph. 4:1–3).

As to their demands, the *standards* of living for the Christian under grace far exceed those required of people in other dispensations. This is not to imply that one is more holy than the other, but rather to declare that one requires far more achievement than the other. The law said, “Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself,” but Christ said, “A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you” (John 13:34). The manner of life which becomes a child of God will be found to be superhuman in almost every particular. In fact, God does not have two standards, one for the earth and one for heaven. Being a citizen of heaven, the believer, though still on the earth, is appointed to live according to the high and holy ideals of his native country (cf. 2 Cor. 10:5; Gal. 5:16; Eph. 4:1, 30; 5:2; 1 Thess. 5:19; 1 Pet. 2:9; 1 John 1:7). This divine ideal is twofold: first, victory over evil in every form; and, second, the realization of all the will of God in Spirit-wrought character and service. Spirituality includes both of these achievements. To be divinely delivered from every form of evil is negative and, when realized, does not relieve the necessity of a positive, spiritual output in the Christian’s life to the glory of God. The spiritual life is the greatest New Testament theme next to that of salvation by grace. Every phase of this supernatural life is set forth in the doctrinal portions of the New Testament Epistles. The preacher *must* know these truths if he is to experience any measure of divine power either in his own life or in his ministry. Similarly, he *must* know this body of truth if he is to guide others in the path of holy living and intelligent service. Seminaries, generally, offer no instruction in this important field of doctrine; but, over against this, conventions for the specific study and deepening of the spiritual life have sprung up in various localities. These, it would seem, are, to some extent, a protest against the tragic failure of theological institutions to prepare pastors and teachers for one of the greatest ministries God has committed to them.

The Christian’s *method* in his warfare with the world, the flesh, and the devil is also a specific revelation. At the moment of salvation the believer enters upon a threefold conflict which is superhuman in its forces and far-reaching in its possibilities both as to tragic failure or glorious victory. The whole scope and character of the world-system directed, as it is, by its god, Satan, and offering its attractions and allurements, is faithfully and extensively portrayed in the New

Testament. So, also, the doctrine of the *flesh* (σάρξ), with its ever present enmity against the Spirit and all things spiritual, is as faithfully declared in order that the saved one may not only understand his new complex being, but know, as well, the way in which the life, in spite of the *flesh*, may become *spiritual* (πνευματικός) to the glory of God; and, likewise, the believer faces the arch-enemy of God who is a relentless, cruel foe, and who with superhuman strength and strategy is “walking about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.” The only provision for victory in this threefold conflict is a simple confidence in the power of Another. This plan should not seem strange to one who has already discovered the marvelous results that are secured when the Lord has been trusted for salvation from his lost estate. It is faith that overcomes the world (1 John 5:4); it is confidence in the Spirit of God that overcomes the flesh (Gal. 5:16, 17); and it is faith that overcomes the evil one (Eph. 6:10–16; 1 John 4:4; cf. Jude 1:9).

It is not enough to enjoin Christians to be good. In the light of the superhuman manner of life belonging to their high calling, their own limitations, and the threefold conflict which they wage, their problem is one of “how to perform that which is good” (Rom. 7:18), and until the Apostle learned the precise features which govern the life of faith he knew only defeat (Rom. 7:15–24). The body of truth bearing on the life of victory by the Spirit is as extensive and its principles as divinely arranged as are the same features in the doctrine of salvation. In this body of truth, one is confronted with that particular aspect of Christ’s death which is unto the judgment of the sin nature. This aspect of His death is the righteous foundation for all God’s work in sanctification. This is not merely a question of deciding between what is right and what is wrong; it is distinctly a problem of claiming divine power in God’s prescribed way to live according to the very standards of heaven. Let none suppose that these features of truth are known intuitively. On the contrary, they call for the most careful classroom instruction in addition to heart-searching prayer and far-reaching adjustments in his life if the pastor is to be himself a man of God and one who is intelligent in the directing of spiritual lives.

The character and cure of the *Christian’s sin* is one of the most extensive doctrines in the Word of God including as it does, first, God’s threefold preventative for the Christian’s sin—the Word of God, the indwelling Spirit of God, and the interceding Christ in heaven; second, the peculiar effect of the Christian’s sin upon himself in the loss of fellowship with God, the loss of the peace of God, the loss of the power of God, and the loss of the joy of the Lord;

and, third, the effect of the Christian's sin upon God Himself, and that relief from condemnation which Christ secures as Advocate in heaven. At length the New Testament presents both the ground of cure through a specific propitiation for the Christian's sin (1 John 2:2), and, by precept and example, the way by which a sinning saint may return to full fellowship with God—a doctrine embodying explicit directions harmonious with the Christian's saved estate, and which is as important, indeed, as is the life and service of the saints on earth.

The Christian sustains varied *relationships* which are each and every one set forth in the New Testament Epistles with specific instructions. He sustains a relationship to God the Father, to God the Son, to God the Holy Spirit, to Satan, to the world-system, to himself, to human governments, to the body of Christ, to the unregenerate, to ecclesiastical authorities, husbands to wives, wives to husbands, parents to children, children to parents, masters to servants, servants to masters, the strong to the weak, the weak to the strong.

The Christian is a citizen of heaven and after he is saved is detained here in this world in the capacity of a *witness*. He is a *pilgrim and stranger*, an *ambassador* from the court of heaven. In His High Priestly prayer Christ not only said that the saved ones are not of this world, even as He is not of the world, but that He has sent them into the world as the Father sent Him into the world. To them is committed the word of reconciliation and they are the ones to whom each great commission is addressed. After dying for lost men, there could be no greater desire or purpose in the heart of Christ than that this gospel should be proclaimed to those for whom He died. The pastor is a divinely appointed leader and teacher in the promotion of this enterprise. Missionary endeavor should be the primary activity of every church, the largest feature of its financial investments and prayer, and the never ceasing call to the best young men and young women of the congregation to go as heralds of the gospel to the ends of the earth. Naturally, the theological student who is going to the foreign field will be seeking instruction in missionary statesmanship, but the one who serves as pastor at home needs this instruction even more; for upon him devolves that leadership which secures new lives for missionary service, and the prayer and financial support of those who go.

The Christian is called to *suffering* and *sacrifice* along with the experience of great peace and celestial joy. The suffering will be endured and the sacrifice be made with gladness just so far as the truth of God has reached his heart, and the truth will normally reach his heart only as it is brought to him by a faithful pastor deeply taught in the Word which God has given.

Similarly, efficacious *faith* and prevailing *prayer*, which should be the abiding experience of both pastor and people, come only through a knowledge of the Scriptures and obedience to them.

The doctrine of *rewards* to be bestowed at the judgment seat of Christ for faithfulness in life and service is a counterpart of the doctrine of divine grace, and no preacher or layman will be intelligent in his endeavor nor be possessed with one of the greatest divine incentives who is not actuated by these provisions and revelations.

The major aspects of the doctrine of human conduct and the spiritual life are thus briefly stated. It is all intensely practical and will naturally occupy a large place in the message of the faithful preacher. This theme incorporates more than a mere system of ethics. The whole field of human conduct is involved with its major age-characterizing systems of divine government, and added to this are the more specific features of the Christian's responsibility. Though belonging to God's revelation and though of surpassing importance, there is practically no recognition of the features of human conduct or of the spiritual life set forth in works on Systematic Theology generally and, by so much, uncounted numbers of preachers have been sent out from seminaries without adequate Scriptural preparation for one of the greatest tasks that confronts them.

IV. Angelology

According to divine revelation, the creative work of God falls naturally into three major undertakings and in the following order: (a) the angelic hosts, (b) material things, and (c) life upon the earth with man as its crowning feature. That angels are created beings is asserted in the Bible (Col. 1:16; Ps. 148:2–5), and though there are vast hosts of angels (Heb. 12:22; Matt. 26:53; Ps. 68:17; Rev. 5:11), they were all created at one and the same time, and all will abide numerically unchanged forever since they neither propagate nor die. As there are three major works in creation, there are likewise three distinct results: (a) the angels, or that which is wholly immaterial, (b) matter, or that which is wholly material, and (c) physical life on the earth, or that which combines both the immaterial and the material. Similarly, as there is an order of life below man, so there is an order of life above man.

Scripture alone unfolds dependable information relative to the angels. They are mentioned about 108 times in the Old Testament and 165 times in the New Testament, and each passage, it will be observed, constitutes a distinct

contribution to this vast and important revelation. Although God has given to man no reciprocation in converse with the angels, they are evidently quite aware of the life and activities of men (Heb. 1:14), and the fact of their existence is none the less certain. The Bible discloses also that angels are subject to classification. There are notable angels whose names and ministries are recorded—Gabriel, Michael, the Cherubim, the Seraphim, principalities and powers, elect angels, and the holy angels, who are ever to be distinguished from the fallen angels of which group some are free, and some are bound in chains awaiting impending judgment.

The angels have been, and will be, present at certain events in history. They were present at creation (Job 38:6, 7), at the giving of the law (Gal. 3:19; Acts 7:53; Heb. 2:2), at the birth of Christ (Luke 2:13), at the resurrection (Matt. 28:2), at the ascension (Acts 1:10), and they will be present at the second coming of Christ (Matt. 25:31; 13:39; 24:31; 2 Thess. 1:7). Again, as to their activities they are limited in knowledge (Matt. 24:36), they are available for defense (Matt. 26:53), they separate the righteous from the wicked (Matt. 13:41, 49), they behold the divine rejoicing (Luke 15:10), they hear Christ's confession of the faithful (Luke 12:8), they transport a soul from earth at death (Luke 16:22), they are ministering spirits (Heb. 1:14), they are to be judged by the saints (1 Cor. 6:3), they are not to be worshiped (Col. 2:18), women are to remain covered because of the angels (1 Cor. 11:10). Added to this is the extensive list of activities on the part of individual angels at various times and places reported in upwards of one hundred passages of Scripture.

This division of Systematic Theology is indeed vast, including, as it does, both satanology and demonology. It concerns the first creation of God and discloses a company of creatures higher than man in their sphere of existence (Heb. 2:7). The doctrine of sin, especially as to the origin and ending of evil and the present spiritual conflict, is traceable only in the sphere of truth belonging to satanology. Of more than a dozen standard works on Systematic Theology examined, the majority ignore the angels completely, while others give slight space to certain features of the subject. That a science purporting to discover and set forth the works of God could be so restricted as Systematic Theology is relative to Angelology is indeed difficult to understand.

Since Satan is the deceiver of the whole world, the truth about him, so far as his power may be exercised, will be veiled, distorted, and neglected; but, having explicit divine revelation by which to be guided, theologians, by seeming indifference, have no license to abet these forms of deception which involve

spiritual tragedy of infinite and eternal import.

The divine program of the ages incorporates the stupendous fact of evil and accounts as much for its termination as it does for its beginning or its course through all time. When the doctrine of evil, as to its future, is examined with unprejudiced attention, truth will be discovered which will serve to abolish the Romanist conception of a world-conquering church, or the Protestant ideal of a world transformed by the gospel.

For want of a devout and scholarly presentation of the truth contained in satanology and demonology on the part of carefully trained preachers and teachers, even believers are left to join with the world in its ridicule and levity concerning the solemn revelation regarding Satan and the demons. What could be more arresting, penetrating, or convincing than the words of Christ: “Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell” (Matt. 10:28). Even those who are minded to be serious are too often left to follow grotesque and unscriptural beliefs with their attending evils. There is abundant Scripture setting forth the essential facts regarding Satan—his origin, his first estate, his fall, his present estate, power and authority, his methods, his motives, his relationships, his past, present, and future activities, his judgments in their varied aspects, and his final destiny. Likewise, there is abundant Scripture bearing on the demons—their origin, their number, their abode, their undertakings, and their final doom.

The immense and vital body of truth contained in satanology cannot be outlined here. A few questions may serve to indicate something of the extent of the theme: Who is Satan? From whence does he come? What was his original estate? For what specific purpose was he created? What one extended passage describes Satan’s original state and appointments? What far-reaching truths are discovered by a complete exegesis of this passage? What Scripture records the details of Satan’s sin? What is involved in each of the five “I will’s” of Satan? Which one of these discloses his life motive? What was Satan’s sin according to a literal translation of 1 Timothy 3:6? What are the world-wide results of Satan’s power? What was the basis of Satan’s claim to authority over humanity in the period between Adam and Christ? What did Christ accomplish by His death according to Colossians 2:14, 15? Was Satan’s claim true as revealed in Luke 4:6, 7? What is his authority now? On what right does he now act? Over what realms does Satan now reign? What are the two aspects of the world represented by the word κόσμος How can God love one (John 3:16) and not love the other (1 John 2:15–17; James 4:4)? What precisely is the *world* which the believer must

not love? Who is the god of the κόσμος? What is worldliness in a Christian? Is the world-system all evil in the sight of God? What does 1 John 2:16 add to this doctrine? Does war belong to the world-system? What is the victory that overcomes the world-system? By whose power is the victory gained? How much truth might Satan incorporate into a counterfeit system and yet offer no hope to the lost? What are Satan's future judgments? Where does he spend eternity? What is Satan's relation to God? What is his relation to the universe? What is his relation to believers? Who are the demons? From whence do they come? What is disclosed relative to their number? What important passages state the general features of demonology? Are demons active today? If so, what are they doing? What is their future judgment? Where do they spend eternity?

The man who of God is appointed to preach the Word can hardly escape the responsibility of declaring these features of truth. If the preacher must be excused on the ground that he was not taught these things in the seminary, then he confronts again immeasurable damage which is wrought by an abridged Systematic Theology. As well might an army officer be sent to command a battle who does not know the character, location, equipment, or strength of the foe as for a preacher to take one step from the seminary who does not know God's explicit revelation regarding Satan and the demons.

V. Typology

Dr. Patrick Fairbairn begins his valuable treatise on the types with the following statement: "The Typology of Scripture has been one of the most neglected departments of theological science." This declaration is significant not only for the recognition of an inestimable loss to the Church of Christ, but for the fact that typology is, by this worthy theologian, given a rightful place in the science of Systematic Theology. Dr. Fairbairn does not assert that no attention has been given to typology in generations past. On the contrary, he goes on to show that from Origen's day to the present hour there have been those who have emphasized this theme, and that some have emphasized it beyond reason. The contention is that theology, as a science, has neglected this great field of revelation. Typology, like prophecy, has often suffered more from its friends than its foes. The fact that extremists have failed to distinguish between that which is typical and that which is merely allegorical, analogous, parallel, happy illustration, or resemblance, may have driven conservative theologians from the field. When truth is tortured by faddists and extremists, an added obligation is

thereby imposed upon conservative scholarship to declare it in its right proportions. It is obvious that to neglect truth is a greater error than to overemphasize it or to misstate it; and typology, though abused by some, is, nevertheless, conspicuous by its absence from works on Systematic Theology. That typology is neglected is evident from the fact that of upwards of twenty works of Systematic Theology examined but one lists this subject in its index and this author has made but one slight reference to it in a footnote.

A type is a divinely purposed anticipation which illustrates its antitype. These two parts of one theme are related to each other by the fact that the same truth or principle is embodied in each. It is not the prerogative of the type to establish the truth of a doctrine; it rather enhances the force of the truth as set forth in the antitype. On the other hand, the antitype serves to lift its type out of the commonplace into that which is inexhaustible and to invest it with riches and treasures hitherto unrevealed. The Passover-Lamb type floods the redeeming grace of Christ with richness of meaning, while the redemption itself invests the Passover-Lamb type with all its marvelous significance. While it is true that the type is not the reality, as is the antitype, the elements found in the type are, in the main, to be observed in the antitype. Thus the type may, and often does, guide specifically in the right understanding and structure of the antitype. The type is as much a work of God as is the antitype. Through the recognition of the relation between the type and antitype, like prophecy in its fulfillment, the supernatural continuity and plenary inspiration of the whole Bible is established. The field both in typology and prophecy is vast, there being upwards of one hundred legitimate types, fully one-half of which concern the Lord Jesus Christ alone, and there being even a greater field of prophecy wherein there are upwards of three hundred detailed predictions concerning Christ which were fulfilled by His first advent. There are three major factors which serve to exhibit the unity between the two Testaments: type and antitype, prophecy and its fulfillment, and continuity in the progress of narrative and doctrine. These factors, like woven threads running from one Testament into the other, bind them not only into one fabric, but serve to trace one design which, by its marvelous character, glorifies the Designer.

The two Greek words τύπος and ὑπόδειγμα serve in the New Testament to express the thought of that which is typical. Τύπος means an imprint which may serve as a mold or pattern, and that which is typical in the Old Testament is a mold or pattern of that which is antitypical in the New Testament. The root τύπος is translated by five English words ('ensample,' 1 Cor. 10:11; Phil. 3:17; 1

Thess. 1:7; 2 Thess. 3:9; 1 Pet. 5:3; ‘example,’ 1 Tim. 4:12; Heb. 8:5; ‘figure,’ Acts 7:43; Rom. 5:14; ‘pattern,’ Titus 2:7; ‘print of the nails,’ John 20:25). Δεῖγμα means a ‘specimen’ or ‘example,’ and when combined with ὑπό indicates that which is shown plainly under the eyes of men. Ὑπόδειγμα is translated by two English words (‘example,’ John 13:15; Heb. 4:11; 8:5; James 5:10; and ‘pattern,’ Heb. 9:23). Types are generally to be classified as of *persons* (Rom. 5:14; cf. Adam, Melchizedek, Abraham, Sarah, Ishmael, Isaac, Moses, Joshua, David, Solomon, etc.); of *events* (1 Cor. 10:11; cf. the preservation of Noah and his sons in the ark, redemption from Egypt, the Passover memorial, the exodus, the passing through the Red Sea, the giving of manna, water drawn from the rock, the serpent lifted up, and all the sacrifices); a *thing* (Heb. 10:20; cf. the tabernacle, the laver, the Lamb, Jordan, a city, a nation); an *institution* (Heb. 9:11; cf. the Sabbath, sacrifice, priesthood, kingdom); a *ceremonial* (1 Cor. 5:7; cf. all the Old Testament appointments of service). It is impossible in this space to list the recognized types found in the Old Testament.

A true type is a prophecy of its antitype and, being thus designed of God, is not to be rated as so much human speculation, but as a vital part of inspiration itself. Naturally, Christ is the outstanding antitype since the supreme object of both the Old and New Testaments is “the testimony of Jesus.”

In answer to the question as to how a type can be distinguished from an allegory or analogy, some rules have been advanced. Among these it is declared that nothing is to be deemed typical which is not sustained as such in the New Testament. This statement is subject to two criticisms: (a) In the light of 1 Corinthians 10:11, there is no definiteness to the boundaries of the words “all these things”; yet, whatever is included is there said to be *typical*. (b) There are many easily recognized types which are not directly sanctioned as such by any specific New Testament Scripture. Like the problem of primary and secondary application of the Truth, the recognition of a type must be left, in any case, to the discernment of a Spirit-guided judgment.

It is the prerogative of the science of Systematic Theology to discover, classify, exhibit, and defend the doctrines of the Scriptures, and the precise features of typology are yet uncertain largely because of the fact that theologians have given their attention to other things; but who will dare to estimate the restriction imposed on the theological student’s own spiritual life and blessing and, through him, upon all to whom he ministers, when the types which are God’s great pictures of truth are deleted from every course of study designed to prepare him for a fruitful and worthy ministry of the Word of God! It is not

enough to give these themes a passing recognition in the study of evidences; the student should be so saturated with these marvels of God's message that the whole being is set aglow with that spiritual radiance which can never be dimmed.

VI. Prophecy

The comparative importance of predictive prophecy as related to other aspects of Bible truth is indicated by the fact that at least one-fifth of the Bible was, at the time it was written, an anticipation of the future. Of this extended material much has now been fulfilled, and much remains to be fulfilled. In each step of human progress it has pleased God to declare beforehand precisely what He was about to do. It might be supposed that such a demonstration of supernatural power would impress men; but they ever remain indifferent to this phenomenon. The divine announcement as to the future has usually been revealed as a message to those who were in closest relation to God. His word, "Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do?" (Gen. 18:17), doubtless discloses one of the actuating motives of God in His prophetic revelation. That He still unveils His intentions as they are recorded in the Scriptures to those in close fellowship with Himself is made clear in John 16:12, 13. This context records the words of Christ to His disciples at the end of those memorable three and a half years in which they had been privileged to sit at His feet and learn of Him. After having completed these years of instruction, He said: "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: ... he will shew you things to come". Thus the teachings of Christ are by Him divided into two general divisions, namely (a) those things the disciples could apprehend *before* they were enlightened by the Spirit of God, and (b) those things they might apprehend *after* they were thus enlightened. As an illustration of this division, it was evidenced they could not at that time receive any truth related to Christ's death since they did not then believe that He was going to die (Matt. 16:21, 22); but immediately *after* the coming of the Spirit, Peter declared: "... But those things, which God before had shewed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled" (Acts 3:18). The context of John 16:12, 13 goes on to specify those aspects of truth which the disciples could not then receive, but which they would afterwards be able to grasp through the teaching ministry of the Spirit. Among these, and the first and only theme to be

mentioned specifically, was, “He will shew you things to come”. It is evident from the synoptic Gospels that He had spoken much in their presence of future things, but they did not apprehend His prophetic words any more clearly than they did His references to His death. Before Pentecost Peter doubtless joined with the other disciples in the query, “Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?” (Acts 1:6); but within a period of a very few days after Pentecost Peter was able to say, “And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began” (Acts 3:20, 21). It must, therefore, be concluded that the ability to understand “things to come” is restricted to those only who are in such relation to the Holy Spirit as to be taught by Him.

It is important to note, also, that though predictive prophecy was made clear to the early Church, that great body of truth along with other vital doctrines was lost to view during the Dark Ages and, though not emphasized by the Reformers, is becoming increasingly clear during these past two generations in particular as reverent and scholarly men study the prophetic Scriptures.

The theme of predictive prophecy is vast indeed. It is reasonable to suppose that there is as much to record concerning the future as there is to record concerning the past, and that the theologian who ignores the prophecies which are yet unfulfilled is, therefore, eliminating a large portion of the material which enters into the whole revealed program of God. Even past events will be interpreted with uncertainty by the one who does not apprehend God’s revealed program of future events; for God’s undertakings are an unbroken, indivisible purpose including all that is past and all that is future, and it is as perilous to interpret the past apart from the future as it is to interpret the future apart from the past. As a dividing point in time, the present moment is merely incidental. There was a time when some prophecies now fulfilled were not fulfilled, and there will be a time to come when prophecies now unfulfilled will be fulfilled. The divine program of events so faithfully set forth in the Scriptures of truth and as faithfully revealed to the attentive heart by the Spirit of truth is little concerned with an ever shifting and transitory *now*.

Eschatology, as treated by authors of works on Systematic Theology, has included little more than a brief reference to the resurrection of the body, the intermediate state, a future judgment, a restricted treatment of the second advent of Christ, and an equally restricted reference to heaven and hell. Over against this, it is here insisted that since no given moment of time is a final point of

division between things past and things future, Eschatology, being the orderly arrangement of “things to come”, should include *all* in the Bible which was predictive at the time it was uttered. When Eschatology is thus expanded, the science of Systematic Theology fulfills its worthy purpose, at least in this one division of it. No man has ever been given freedom at any time to eliminate any future work of God from the field of the science of Systematic Theology.

The following is a brief survey of the major features of fulfilled prophecy: the future of Noah’s sons, Israel’s bondage in Egypt, the future of Jacob’s sons, Israel in the land, Israel’s bondage, judgments on the surrounding nations, a partial restoration of Israel, the coming and ministry of John the Baptist, the birth of Christ, the offices of Christ, the ministries of Christ, the death of Christ, the burial of Christ, the resurrection of Christ, the ascension of Christ, the present age, the Day of Pentecost, the forming of the Church, the destruction of Jerusalem, the course and character of this age.

Similarly, a brief survey of the many features of unfulfilled prophecy is here given: the last days for the Church, the first resurrection, the rapture, the Church in heaven, her rewards, the marriage of the Lamb, the great tribulation on the earth, the man of sin, Israel’s last sufferings, the beginning of the Day of the Lord, the second coming of Christ, the battle of Armageddon, the destruction of ecclesiastical Babylon, the destruction of political Babylon, the binding of Satan, the regathering and judgment of sorrowing Israel, the judgment of the nations, the seating of Christ upon His throne, the resurrection of “tribulation saints”, millennial kingdom, the loosing of Satan and the last revolt, the doom of Satan, the great white throne, the destiny of the wicked, the destiny of the saved, the new heaven and the new earth. In addition to the above distinction between fulfilled and unfulfilled prophecy, the student who is preparing for the high calling of a preacher of the Word of God should also be given an introduction to prophecies as related to the two Testaments, the great time-periods, the Jews, the Gentiles, and the Church of God, the great highways of prophecy, and the final consummation of all things toward which every divine movement is tending. Almost countless details of truth are included in this vast body of Scripture; but not more than every preacher must know if he is to fulfill his high and holy appointment as an expositor of the Word of God. When predictive prophecy is slighted, a very considerable portion of the Bible with its sanctifying power is sacrificed; very much of the material which of God is designed to prove His unchanging faithfulness is lost; and the knowledge of His plan and purpose, which alone underlies intelligent cooperation with God in service, becomes

impossible.

VII. Christ's Present Session in Heaven

The present session of Christ in heaven, the last of these major themes of doctrine to be considered, is more generally mentioned in works on Systematic Theology than the themes already presented; but when so introduced it is too often restricted to the space of a few paragraphs and the material embodied extends no further than a slight recognition of the fact of Christ's present intercession and advocacy and the relation the Holy Spirit sustains as Advocate on earth to the advocacy of Christ in heaven. The vital truth as to the measureless value to the believer of Christ's present session in heaven and the far-reaching ministry it becomes to the Church is not included in their brief discussion.

Ignoring almost wholly the forty-day postresurrection ministry of Christ with its demonstration of the fact that the resurrection body of Christ is adapted to life upon the earth as He will yet live here during a millennium of earth's peace, and with the briefest reference to the ascension without recognition of Christ's two entrances into heaven, and the riches of truth thus disclosed in His antitypical work as Fulfiller of the redemption type wherein the high priest presents blood in the Holy of holies and wherein the representative wave-sheaf is waved before Jehovah as prophetic of the first-fruits in the resurrection, these authors move directly on to a slight recognition of the fact that Christ is now seated upon His father's throne in heaven. The far-reaching distinction between Christ's own throne—the throne of David which is the throne of His glory, which throne He will occupy here on the earth—and the throne of His Father, on which He is now seated, is not generally observed by these authors.

No discussion of the present session of Christ will be adequate that does not include certain major revelations:

On the widest plane of His mediatorial ministry, Christ now seated in heaven is "expecting". The Greek ἐκδέχομαι conveys the meaning of one awaiting the reception of something from another. The fact that Christ is now in the attitude of one who is *expecting* is disclosed in Hebrews 10:12, 13. While the realization of all that He thus expects is anticipated in Psalm 2:1–12; Daniel 2:44, 45; 2 Thessalonians 1:7–10, and Revelation 12:10 (in which passages it is stated that the whole world of humanity is to be given to Him and that He will rule them in uncompromising righteousness), it should be observed that the kingdoms of this

world do not become the kingdom of Christ by virtue of human service and ministry, but by the sudden and mighty power of God and in the midst of humanity's rebellion against God on earth.

Upon His ascension it was given to Christ to become "head over all things to the church which is his body" (Eph. 1:19–23). Through His death and resurrection, He received an exaltation and a glorified name (Phil. 2:9, 10), an added joy (Heb. 12:2), an experience through suffering (Heb. 2:10), and to Him it was given of His Father to be "head over all things to the church". By this, as in other Scriptures, it is indicated that the Church had its beginning with the death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ, and the descent of the Spirit. This Headship is not one of mere authority or ministry; it is rather the fact of an organic union between the Head—Christ, and the Body—the Church.

Beginning with His ascension, Christ undertook a threefold priestly ministry in heaven:

As the bestower of gifts (Eph. 4:7–16), and the director of their exercise (1 Cor. 12:4–11), and as typified by the Old Testament priest consecrating the sons of Levi (Ex. 29:1–9), Christ is ceaselessly active in heaven. In this connection, the whole field of Christian service is rightly introduced and the distinction is to be observed between the believer's threefold universal activity as *priest*, and his exercise of a *gift*.

As Intercessor, Christ continues His ministry in heaven which He began here on earth (John 17:1–26). This undertaking extends to His shepherdhood care of those whom He has saved. He ever liveth to make intercession for them, and for that reason He is able to save them evermore who come unto God by Him (Heb. 7:25). He does not pray for the world, but for those whom the Father hath given unto Him (John 17:9). The intercession of Christ has to do with the weakness, immaturity, and limitations of the one for whom He prays. His intercession is said to secure their safekeeping forever.

As Advocate, and as the One who now appears for us in heaven (Heb. 9:24), Christ has to do with the Christian's actual *sin*. In event of sin in his life, the Christian has an advocate with the Father. An advocate is one who espouses the cause of another in the open courts, and there is abundant reason for Christ to advocate in behalf of the one who so constantly sins and whose sin must otherwise condemn him eternally. As Advocate, Christ pleads the efficacy of His own blood on behalf of the sinning child of God, and the thing He accomplishes is so perfect that, while thus advocating for the sinning Christian, Christ wins the title, "Jesus Christ the righteous".

Not only is the doctrine of the Christian's sin centered in the present heavenly ministry of Christ, but Christ's intercession with His advocacy forms the basis of the truth of the eternal security of all who are saved. A full understanding of the Scriptures bearing on the extensive theme of the Christian's sin, as to its effect upon himself, and upon God, is of primary importance to the minister in his own inner life, and to those whom he attempts to guide into intelligent Christian living.

In the light of 1 John 1:4–9; 2:1, 2, and 1 Corinthians 11:31, 32, it could not be doubted that there is special divine attention given to, and provisions made for, the specific sins which are committed by the children of God. The importance of such truth is recognized when it is seen in its vast extent, its practical bearing on spiritual power and godliness, and in the fact that it is as adapted to the needs of the sinning saint as salvation is adapted to those who are lost. Yet the recognition of the peculiar character of the Christian's sin with both its prevention and cure as divinely provided, along with the whole field of truth concerning Christ's present ministry in heaven, is woefully lacking in courses for ministerial training.

In this entire work on theology, quite in contrast to theological works generally, all historical matter is omitted from the immediate discussion. The student does not pursue the study of the history of doctrine as he advances. There is a constructive declaration of theology in its systematic form which is best not interrupted constantly with mere citation of past beliefs. In the plan followed in the Dallas Theological Seminary the student concludes his theological research with an extended course in the history of doctrine which aims to cover all historical aspects of this great science; and thus at a time when all the data on any aspect of truth is in view he may hope to see it in its true historical light.

It is therefore contended that an unabridged treatment of theology is needed. To cover the ground completely, a doctrinal summarization has been added to this work in which more than a hundred doctrines not found in a systematic treatment of theology are analyzed.

Why a premillennial theology? So far as the author knows the present work is the only one approaching theology from an orderly and logical premillennial interpretation of the Scriptures. The supreme value of this interpretation will be observed, it is believed, as one pursues this work.

Why dispensational? Apart from a sane recognition of the great purposes and time-periods of God, no true understanding of the Bible has ever been received.

When Systematic Theology includes the premillennial and dispensational interpretations of the Bible, much added material is discovered and the work is greatly extended.

These pages represent what has been, and is, taught in the classrooms of the Dallas Theological Seminary. One volume of these eight should be covered each semester for six terms. The last two semesters are required for Volume VII.

The author is duly aware of the stupendous task laid upon him to forge for the first time, so far as he knows, a logical, complete system of theology conforming to the premillennial and dispensational interpretation of the Bible. The task completed, these eight volumes are released with true thanksgiving to God for the measure of success attained. Perhaps the way is blazed thus for a more worthy work of this character to be wrought. May God be pleased to use this effort to His own glory.

Appreciation

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LEWIS SPERRY CHAFER

Volume One

Prolegomena • Bibliology

Theology Proper

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PROLEGOMENA

Chapter I

PROLEGOMENA

I. The Word *Theology*

THE TERM *theology*, according to its etymological features, is a compound of two Greek words—Θεός (*Theos*, ‘God’), and λόγος (*logos*, ‘speech’ or ‘expression’). Both Christ as the *Living Word*, and the Bible as the *Written Word* are the *Logos* of God. They are to God what expression is to thought and what speech is to reason. Theology is therefore a Θεο-λογία (*Theo-logia*) or discourse upon one specific subject, namely, *God*. However, since no consideration of God will be complete which does not contemplate His works and ways in the universe which He has created, as well as His Person, theology may be extended properly to include all material and immaterial realities that exist and the facts concerning them and contained in them. Though it is highly impractical to encumber the science of theology with extended discourse covering all the “ologies” of the universe, it remains true, nevertheless, that the basic fact underlying each and every science is its relation to the Creator of all things and His purpose in creation. Though not usually included in the science of theology, the other sciences which engage the thoughts of men would be both sanctified and exalted were they to be approached, as they should be, with that awe and reverence which recognizes in them the presence, power, and purpose of the Creator. Great injury has resulted, it is obvious, from the modern tendency to divorce all subjects which border on the natural from every divine relationship when, in reality, there is no basis upon which these “ologies” can rest other than that of the original purpose of the Creator.

Though not found in the Sacred Scriptures, the word *theology*, being the compound of two familiar Bible words, is Scriptural in character. In Romans 3:2 the words τὰ λόγια τοῦ θεοῦ (*ta logia tou Theou*, ‘the oracles of God’) occur; in 1 Peter 4:11 the words λόγια θεοῦ (*logia Theou*, ‘oracles of God’) occur; and in Luke 8:21 the phrase τὸν λόγον τοῦ Θεοῦ (*ton logon tou Theou*, ‘the word of God’) appears.

II. General Uses of the Word

Within the whole encyclopedia of its import, the term *theology* is used with

various restricted meanings. When recognition of the first exponent of a theological system is desired, the individual's name is combined in the term, as, *Augustinian Theology*, *Calvinistic Theology*, *Lutheran Theology*, *Arminian Theology*. When the source of its material is in view, specific terms are employed, as, *revealed Theology*, *natural Theology*, *Catholic Theology*, and *Evangelical Theology*. So, likewise, theology may be classified by the place of its origin, as, *Genevan Theology*, *Mercersburg Theology*, *Oxford Theology*, *New England Theology*, or *Oberlin Theology*. When the particular content of a given theology is in view it may be named accordingly, as, *Biblical Theology*, *Fundamental Theology*, *Historical Theology*, *Homiletical Theology*, *Ethical Theology*, *Practical Theology*, or *Pastoral Theology*. In like manner, various theologies may be classified by the method they employ, as, *Dogmatic Theology*, *Exegetical Theology*, *New Theology*, *Polemic Theology*, *Rational Theology*, or *Systematic Theology*.

Among these general classifications there are several forms of theology which call for particular definition.

1. NATURAL THEOLOGY. Natural Theology designates a science which is based only upon those facts concerning God and His universe which are revealed in nature.

2. REVEALED THEOLOGY. This term designates a science which is based only on those facts concerning God and His universe which are revealed in the Scriptures of Truth.

3. BIBLICAL THEOLOGY. Biblical Theology designates a science which aims to investigate the truth about God and His universe in its divinely ordered development and historical environment as set forth in the various books of the Bible. Biblical Theology is the exposition of the *doctrinal* and *ethical* content of the Bible. It is not a substitute for Doctrinal or Ethical Theology, but is their historical counterpart. It is the consideration of Biblical truth as originally given in its prophetic proclamation.

4. THEOLOGY PROPER. By this term is designated a limited science which contemplates only the Person of God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and without reference to the works of each.

5. HISTORICAL THEOLOGY. A science which traces the historical development of doctrine and is concerned, as well, with the distinctly sectarian variations and

the heretical departures from Biblical truth which have appeared during the Christian era.

6. DOGMATIC THEOLOGY. Theological truth held with certainty.

7. SPECULATIVE THEOLOGY. Theological truth held in the abstract and apart from its practical import.

8. OLD TESTAMENT THEOLOGY. So designated because it is restricted to the portion of Scripture indicated.

9. NEW TESTAMENT THEOLOGY. So designated because it is restricted to the portion of Scripture indicated.

10. PAULINE, JOHANNINE, AND PETRINE THEOLOGIES. So designated because they are restricted to the writings of the persons indicated.

11. PRACTICAL THEOLOGY. Concerned with the application of the truth to the hearts of men.

12. SYSTEMATIC OR THETIC THEOLOGY. A science which follows a humanly devised scheme or order of doctrinal development and which purports to incorporate into its system all the truth about God and His universe from any and every source. Systematic Theology may be distinguished from *Natural Theology* in that Natural Theology draws its material only from nature; from *Biblical Theology* in that Biblical Theology draws its material only from the Bible; and from *Theology Proper* in that Theology Proper is restricted to the consideration of the Person of God, excluding His works.

In defining Systematic or Thetic Theology, certain misleading and unwarranted terms have been employed. It has been declared to be “the science of religion”; but the term *religion* is in no sense a synonym of the Person of God and all His works. Likewise, it has been declared to be “the scientific treatment of those truths which are found in the Bible”; but this science, while drawing the major portion of its material from the Scriptures, does, nevertheless, draw its material from any and every source. Again, Systematic Theology has been defined as the orderly arrangement of Christian doctrine; but as Christianity represents only a mere fraction of the whole field of truth relative to the Person of God and His universe, this definition is inadequate.

III. Various Definitions

Dr. W. Lindsay Alexander defines Systematic Theology as “the science of God ... a summary of religious truth scientifically arranged, or as a philosophical digest of all religious knowledge” (*Biblical Theology*, I, 1).

Dr. A. H. Strong defines Systematic Theology as “the science of God and of the relations between God and the universe” (*Systematic Theology*, p. 1).

Dr. Charles Hodge declares Systematic Theology has for its object “to systematize the facts of the Bible, and ascertain the principles or general truths which those facts involve” (*Systematic Theology*, I, 18).

Dr. W. H. Griffith Thomas states: “Science is the technical expression of the laws of nature; theology is the technical expression of the revelation of God. It is the province of theology to examine all the spiritual facts of revelation, to estimate their value, and to arrange them into a body of teaching. Doctrine thus corresponds with the generalisations of science” (*Principles of Theology*, p. xxi).

Dr. W. G. T. Shedd defines Systematic Theology as “a science that is concerned with both the Infinite and the Finite, with both God and the Universe. The material, therefore, which it includes is vaster than that of any other science. It is also the most necessary of all sciences” (*Dogmatic Theology*, I, 16).

Augustine denotes Theology to be “rational discussion respecting the deity” (Shedd, *ibid.*, p. 18).

The following definition is submitted by the author: Systematic Theology may be defined as the collecting, scientifically arranging, comparing, exhibiting, and defending of all facts from any and every source concerning God and His works. It is *thetic* in that it follows a humanly devised thesis form and presents and verifies truth as *truth*.

IV. Students of Theology

The individual who engages in the pursuit of the science of Systematic Theology is properly a θεολόγος (*Theologos*) or ‘theologian.’ Should the Greek term θεολόγος be used actively as indicated by its accent, it would denote one who speaks for God, but should it be used passively it would refer to one to whom God speaks. That both of these conceptions inhere in the accepted use of the term *theologian* is obvious. However, of necessity, certain requirements are laid upon the theologian and certain qualifications must be found in him if he is to make any worthy progress in the task committed to him.

V. Essential Requirements

1. THE INSPIRATION AND AUTHORITY OF THE SCRIPTURES ARE ASSUMED.

Though as an apologist the theologian may be called upon, as occasion may demand, to defend specific truths which belong to the domain of his distinctive science, and though among the doctrines which he defends is that of the authority and trustworthiness of the Sacred Writings, he is not primarily engaged with the critical task of proving the inspiration and divine character of the Scriptures, but rather in arranging and exhibiting the positive truth the inspired Scriptures set forth. The Bible being the chief source of all the material which enters into his science, the theologian is called upon to arrange the God-given material in its logical and scientific order. He is a Biblicist, namely, one who not only regards the Bible as the sole rule of faith and practice, but as the only dependable source of information in realms wherein divine revelation speaks. As a chemist will make no advance in his science if he doubts or rejects the essential character of the elements which he compounds, so a theologian must fail who does not accept the trustworthiness of the Word of God. It is the work of the reverent critic to discover and defend the essential character of the divine revelation; but to the theologian is committed the task of systematizing and declaring that divine revelation as it is given.

Because of the fact that the science of Systematic Theology must proceed upon the certitude that the Scriptures are the Oracles of God, this modern, rationalistic age with its doubts as to verbal inspiration, revelation, and Biblical authority, is not concerned with the science of Systematic Theology and is even turning from it with contempt. Granting the fact of the divine revelation, the science of Systematic Theology is both possible and required, and at once is discovered to exceed all other sciences as the Creator exceeds His creation.

2. THE LAWS OF METHODOLOGY ARE AS ESSENTIAL IN THE SCIENCE OF SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY AS IN ANY OTHER SCIENCE.

The theologian creates none of his materials any more than the botanist creates the flowers or the astronomer orders the stars. It is given to the theologian, as to other scientists, to recognize the character of his material and to give to it an orderly arrangement. He should not misrepresent or change the truth committed to him, even by so much as a disproportionate emphasis. If it is to exist at all, scientism, of necessity, repels untruth, part truth, and every form of unfounded prejudice or preconceived notion. The importance of ascertaining and holding the truth in its absolute purity and right proportions cannot be overestimated. This end can be secured only by a systematic method, a scientific attitude, and extended labor.

As the meaning of the truths of Scripture is best expressed in the original languages, it is essential that the theologian shall be an exegete in these languages and thus informed as fully as possible concerning the precise character of the message of God with which he is to deal. It is irrational for any scientist to disregard or underestimate the essential value of any portion of the material with which his science is concerned. In like manner, the science of Systematic Theology will be incomplete and misleading to the extent that it disregards or misinterprets any portion of the divine revelation. The worthy student of Systematic Theology, were he not qualified for the higher and more inclusive title of *theologian*, would be entitled to recognition as a *superscientist*, which he is.

Of the two methods of dealing with the truth of God's Word—*deduction*, by which a theme is expanded into its details of expression, a method belonging largely to the sermonic field, and *induction*, by which various declarations upon a subject are reduced to one harmonious and all-inclusive statement—induction is distinctly the theological method. Inductions are either *imperfect* or *perfect*. *Imperfect* inductions result when *some* but not all the teachings of the Scripture are made the basis of a doctrinal statement. A *perfect* induction is formed when all the teachings of the Scripture, according to their precise meaning, are made the basis of a doctrinal statement. It is evident that to finite minds the perfect induction is more or less ideal, and the fact that varying and imperfect inductions are secured accounts, in some measure, for the wide divergence in doctrinal belief among men of equal sincerity.

3. FINITE LIMITATIONS MUST BE RECOGNIZED. Were it not for the fact that God has made a suitable revelation of Himself to men and that He expects them to give attention to it, it would seem to be unwarranted presumption for the finite mind to seek to comprehend that which is infinite. The theologian should never lose sight of the fact that he, as no other scientist, is called upon to deal with things supernatural, with things which transcend the boundaries of time and space where no unaided human thought can penetrate, and with unseen beings, including the three Persons of the Godhead and the angels. Confronted with such subjects as these, he should ever be in quietude of holy reverence, as was Moses before the burning bush, and ever impressed with the futility of dependence upon mere human opinion, as well as of the disastrous consequences which such dependence may induce. In the simplest of terms, God has spoken of Himself, and of things infinite and eternal. The Bible is that message and, while man

cannot originate any similar truth, he, though finite, is privileged by the gracious illumination of the Spirit to receive, with some degree of understanding, the revelation concerning things which are infinite.

4. SPIRITUAL ILLUMINATION IS NECESSARY AND IS PROVIDED. While, as has been stated, the Bible is couched in the simplest of terms, its message, in many particulars, transcends the range of human understanding; but divine provision is made whereby these human limitations may be overcome. The Spirit of God is given to every saved person as an indwelling *Paraclete*, thus providing a limitless resource both for understanding and teachableness. Christ wrought thus in the hearts of the two who walked with Him on the Emmaus road. The text declares that He not only opened the Scriptures to them but that He opened their understanding that they might understand the Scriptures (Luke 24:27–32, 45). Likewise, the second *Paraclete* would minister in behalf of all in whom He dwells. A vital condition, however, is imposed which involves the question of personal piety and surrender to the will and mind of God. It is in those only who “walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit” that the whole will of God is wrought (Rom. 8:4), and it is the spiritual Christian who discerns all things (1 Cor. 2:15). Thus, there is introduced into the pursuit of the science of Systematic Theology a pedagogical law which is foreign to other laws of research, namely, that divine illumination, by which alone the revelation may be comprehended, is made to depend on a state of heart which is not only yielded to God, but is ever ready to be conformed to the Word He has spoken. Though the historical and hortatory portions of the Bible are comprehensible to the unregenerate man and the unspiritual Christian, the doctrines are, to a large degree, sealed to them; and as Systematic Theology has largely to do with doctrine, that vast science is closed to multitudes who are not lacking in education and culture, but who are lacking in that inward personal adjustment to God, which alone insures a spiritual understanding. The church is ever in peril—and never more so than now—of the disaster which must follow when she allows men of distinction in the sphere of human attainments, who are unregenerate or unspiritual, to dictate as to what her beliefs shall be. It therefore naturally follows that in addition to the prerequisite discipline of mind, every student of Systematic Theology should, before entering this limitless supernatural field of research, give indisputable evidence that he has been born of God, by which birth he has become possessed of the Holy Spirit, the divine Teacher, and that he is yielded to the mind and will of God, not alone as to truth itself but as to personal piety.

Apart from such preparation, study in this science will be to little or no purpose. However, should a student lacking this essential preparation be allowed to graduate and go forth with the man-imposed authority to preach, the results would be no less than a calamity on an infinite plane and he himself would be in danger of the unrevoked anathema of God (Gal. 1:7–9).

5. PATIENT AND TIRELESS STUDY IS REQUIRED. AS one might venture farther and farther on a shoreless sea with no hope of ever reaching its outer boundaries, so the theologian is ever confronted with limitless material in the realm of the doctrines of the Scriptures. It has been customary for the theologian to spend at least three years in classroom introduction to the science of Systematic Theology and under the instruction of those who through patient study and experience are able to guide him in this introductory research. However, the study of Bible doctrine is a life undertaking and ever makes its claims upon time and strength. Happy indeed is the student who secures a full rounded introduction to the vast science of Systematic Theology, but thrice blessed is he who with unrelenting purpose pursues his study to the end of his days on earth. Nothing need be said here of the tragedy which is enacted by a student of Systematic Theology who, for one reason or another, has failed to be introduced to the field of his science, and who therefore continues to preach only on the lower plane of human conduct and never, for lack of requisite understanding, expounds a soul-transforming doctrine of the Scripture.

Many generations have passed since the pulpit has held lower ideals of doctrinal preaching than it holds today. Nevertheless, the human heart is unchanged and God's remedy for sin-sick and unspiritual souls is the same, and the servant of God who would minister to these needs with true efficiency will discover the importance of unceasing study that he may himself prove to be unto God a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth (2 Tim. 2:15).

6. FAITH. AS has been stated, the student of Systematic Theology is called to enter the field of things supernatural. His research is almost wholly restricted to the one Book which is God-breathed and the power to comprehend the message which this Book presents is gained only as he is enabled and taught by the Spirit of God. Not only are these things true; but his high and holy service as exponent of this Book, whether by word of mouth or by worthy embodiment of its truths into his daily life, will be advantageous and effective only as he ministers that Word in the power of God. The Bible is not understood nor received by

unregenerate men (1 Cor. 2:14), nor can its deeper revelations be grasped by carnal Christians (1 Cor. 3:1–3). No more decisive statement could be made on this qualifying truth than is found in Hebrews 11:3, “Through faith we understand.” Due importance should be given to the value of native mental powers and to the virtue of unceasing diligence, but these standing alone avail but little in a science which is supernatural in all its parts. Over the door entrance of no other science is it written as it is over the door of Systematic Theology, “Only men of that *faith* which has secured their regeneration and led them on to a complete self-dedication to God need seek to enter here.” No pedagogical law is more unyielding than that set forth in the words, “If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine” (John 7:17), and “He that is spiritual judgeth [discerneth] all things” (1 Cor. 2:15). Again, “The same anointing teacheth you of all things” (1 John 2:27).

7. SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY SHOULD BE UNABRIDGED. Like every true science, Systematic Theology is interdependent and interrelated in all its parts. The astronomer or chemist would not attempt to organize his materials or to reach dependable conclusions with a third of the elements or facts pertaining to his science unaccounted for. Nor should the theologian expect to reach any true estimation of his various doctrines when vast fields of the divine revelation have been eliminated from his consideration. Theologians, more than any other scientists, are apt to be bound by tradition or mere sectarian prejudice. The field of investigation is no less than the entire Bible, which field extends beyond the boundaries of creeds and that limited body of truth which was recovered in the Reformation. Published systems of theology too often omit the dispensational program of God; the Pauline revelation concerning the Church which is Christ’s Body; the entire field of life truth; Angelology with satanology and demonology; prophecy, which alone occupies more than one-fifth of the text of the Scriptures; typology; and the present ministry of Christ in heaven. Considering the interdependent and interrelated character of theological doctrine, the theologian, having eliminated all or any part of this great field of revelation, cannot hope to hold truth in its right perspective or to give to it its right emphasis. The aim of every theologian should be to hold the entire divine revelation in a true balance of all its parts and free from fads and inaccuracies.

VI. Existing Attitudes Toward the Scriptures

While there are many attitudes on the part of men toward the Bible, these may

be presented in four general classifications.

1. RATIONALISM. The rationalistic attitude toward the Scriptures is subject to a twofold division:

a. *Extreme.* Extreme rationalism denies any divine revelation and represents the beliefs or unbeliefs of infidels, atheists, and agnostics. Though the extreme rationalists were numerous in past generations, their number is greatly increasing at the present time and is destined to increase to the end of the age (Luke 18:8; 2 Tim. 3:13).

b. *Moderate.* Moderate rationalism admits a revelation, but accepts only such parts of the Bible as personal reason approves. The reasons why the moderate rationalist rejects parts of the text of the Scriptures may be based on the supposed findings of higher criticism or upon mere personal prejudice. To these men the Bible becomes no more than a book of errors from which each and every one is free to eliminate any portion he chooses to reject, or to honor as being divinely authoritative in any portion he chooses to receive. The moderate rationalistic attitude toward the Scriptures is that held by the so-called *modernists* of today and includes all classes of liberals from those who merely deny verbal and plenary inspiration to those who reject the whole text of the Scriptures as being a divine revelation.

2. MYSTICISM. Mysticism is subject to a twofold classification:

a. *False Mysticism.* The theory that divine revelation is not limited to the written Word of God, but that God bestows added truth to souls that are sufficiently quickened by the Spirit of God to receive it. Mystics of this class contend that, by self-effacement and devotion to God, individuals may attain to immediate, direct, and conscious realization of the person and presence of God and thus to all truth in Him. False mysticism includes all those systems which teach identity between God and human life—Pantheism, Theosophy, and Greek philosophy. In it are included practically all the holiness movements of the day; also, Spiritism, Seventh Day Adventism, New Thought, Christian Science, Swedenborgianism, Mormonism, and Millennial Dawnism. The founders and promoters of many of these cults make claim to special revelation from God upon which their system is built. With far less complication with error and untruth a false mysticism is discernible in the beliefs and practices of the Friends or Quakers. In presenting their doctrine of the “inner light,” they say that, having the indwelling Spirit, the individual Christian is in contact with the same One who inspired and gave the

Scriptures and that the Spirit is not only able to impart added truth beyond that already given in the Bible, but that He is appointed by Christ to do so according to John 16:12, 13, “I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth.” The church generally has believed that this promise is fulfilled in two ways: (a) by the ability given to the men to whom Christ spoke whereby they were able to write the New Testament Scriptures; and (b) by the ministry of the Spirit in teaching the apostles and all in every age who are yielded to Him, the truth now contained in the Bible.

No voice could speak with more authority for the Quakers than Robert Barclay whose *Apology* was published in 1867. He states: “Moreover, these divine inward revelations, which we make absolutely necessary for the building up of true faith, neither do nor can ever contradict the outward testimony of the Scriptures, or right and sound reason. Yet from hence it will not follow, that these divine revelations are to be subjected to the examination, either of the outward testimony of the Scriptures, or of the natural reason of man, as to a more noble or certain rule or touchstone: for this divine revelation and inward illumination, is that which is evident and clear of itself” (Barclay’s *Apology*, pp. 13–14).

In earlier times this form of mysticism was voiced in the teachings of Francis de Sales, Thomas à Kempis, Madam Guyon, Archbishop Fénelon, and Upham. Montanus advanced these conceptions as early as the second century. They were later sustained by Tertullian and became a vital issue among the Reformers. The extreme spiritual mysticism is known as *Quietism*, which proposes death to self, disregards the attractions of heaven or the pains of hell, and ceases from petitions in prayer or thanksgiving lest self be encouraged. Likewise, those forms of spiritual life teachings are to be included which impose upon the Christian a duty of self-crucifixion in place of the recognition of the fact that self was crucified with Christ, and that the values of His death are now to be received by faith in that which was accomplished on the cross rather than by any human accomplishment. The Word of God teaches that the spiritual life is wrought by the Spirit in the heart of the yielded believer, and the Spirit is made righteously free to annul the works of the flesh on the ground of the fact that Christ died unto the sin nature, and not on the ground of human achievement in the way of self-effacement or self-crucifixion.

b. True Mysticism. True Mysticism contends that all believers are indwelt by the Spirit and thus are in a position to be enlightened directly by Him, but that there

is one complete revelation given, and that the illuminating work of the Spirit will be confined to the unveiling of the Scriptures to the mind and heart. False mysticism ignores the statement found in Jude 1:3 that there is a faith or system of belief “once delivered unto the saints,” and that when the Spirit is promised to “guide into all truth” (John 16:13), it is only the truth contained in the Scriptures (cf. 1Cor. 2:9, 10). There is a unique knowledge of the mysteries or sacred secrets of God accorded to those who are taught by the Spirit of God, but these sacred secrets are already contained in the text of the Bible.

3. ROMANISM. One of the greatest errors of the Church of Rome is that of making the church, and not the Bible, the immediate and final authority in all matters of divine revelation. Her claim is that the church’s authority is restricted to matters of faith and moral conduct, and is not found in the fields of science, art, and history. She argues that there were many things which Christ and the apostles taught which were not recorded in the Bible (John 20:30, 31 and 21:25), but these, it is asserted, have been preserved by the church and are as binding as are those precepts which are written. It is also assumed by the Church of Rome that the voice of her pope is the voice of God, and to his declaration the same obedience should be given as to God Himself. These communications through the supposed vicar of Christ thus become, to the Romanist, as authoritative as are the unrecorded words of Christ and the apostles, which the Roman Church claims to have conserved, or, as authoritative as the written words of Scripture. That the Church of Rome deems the decisions and rules of the church to be infallible and authoritative above the written Word of God is proven by many of her decisions and judgments.

In reply to these unfounded claims, it may be observed that the church has preserved nothing of spiritual value, nor have her traditions added any vital element to that now preserved by God in the Holy Scriptures. Truth did have its saving and sanctifying power in the early church before any word of the New Testament was written, but the saving and sanctifying truth was incorporated into the Bible and, beyond this, the traditions of Rome accomplish nothing but multiplied errors and misleading contradictions.

The theologian is here confronted with the fact and scope of *tradition*. He should examine the Scriptures on this point with care (2 Thess. 2:15; 3:6; Gal. 1:14), and remember that Christ came into the world at a time when the Word of God was encrusted with the “traditions of men” to the point that the authority of God was, to a large degree, annulled. Christ disregarded the traditions of men

and for this was condemned by the religious leaders of His day.

4. THE ORTHODOX PROTESTANT FAITH. Certain well-defined articles of faith concerning the Scriptures have been and are held by the orthodox Protestants:

a. The Bible is the infallible Word of God.

b. The Bible is the only rule of faith and practice.

c. Human reason and knowledge should be wholly subject to the Scriptures.

d. There is no inner light or added revelation ever given beyond what is contained in the Bible. The ungoverned character and danger of the doctrine of individual divine revelation, being without standards by which to test various claims, is obvious; and its susceptibility to gross error is demonstrated on every hand by the claims of those who hold these views. The Spirit does guide the individual in matters of conduct and service, but not in the formulating of doctrine which might be superimposed upon the Word of God.

e. No authority relative to the forming of truth has ever been committed to the church or to men beyond that given to the New Testament writers.

VII. The Major Divisions of Systematic Theology

1. BIBLIOLOGY. A consideration of the essential facts concerning the Bible.

2. THEOLOGY PROPER. A consideration of the facts concerning God—Father, Son, and Spirit, apart from their works.

3. ANGELOLOGY. A consideration of the facts concerning the angels, unfallen and fallen.

4. ANTHROPOLOGY. A consideration of the facts concerning man.

5. SOTERIOLOGY. A consideration of the facts concerning salvation.

6. ECCLESIOLOGY. A consideration of the facts concerning the Church.

7. ESCHATOLOGY. A consideration of all in the Scripture which was predictive at the time it was written.

8. CHRISTOLOGY. A consideration of all the Scripture concerning the Lord Jesus Christ.

9. PNEUMATOLOGY. A consideration of the Scriptures concerning the Holy Spirit.

10. DOCTRINAL SUMMARIZATION. An analysis of each major doctrine in its individual character including various important tenets which, because of their independent character, do not appear even in an unabridged treatment of Systematic Theology.

Conclusion

The study of Systematic Theology has its limitations because of the incapacities of the finite mind; yet its study is both profitable and necessary for all who would be filled with the knowledge, of God and His will, and who, because of that knowledge, would walk worthy of the Lord. Human thought has no objective comparable to the Person of God. As John Dick has said (*Lectures on Theology*, p. 6): “To know this mighty Being, as far as he may be known, is the noblest aim of the human understanding; to love him, the most worthy exercise of our affections; and to serve him the most honourable and delightful purpose to which we can devote our time and talents.”

In his address to theological students, Dr. Dick states (*ibid.*, p. 7):

Theology is not one of those recondite subjects, which it is left to the curious to investigate, and in the contemplation of which, speculative and reflecting men may spend their hours of leisure and solitude. Its claim to universal attention is manifest from the succinct account which has now been given of its nature. Its instructions are addressed to persons of every description, to the learned, and to the unlearned, to the retired student, and him who is engaged in the bustling scenes of life. It is interesting to all, as furnishing the knowledge of God, and his Son, which is the source of eternal life. But in your case, there is a particular reason, besides a regard to your personal welfare, why it should not only engage a share of your thoughts, but be made the principal object of your inquiries. Theology is your profession, as medicine, is that of a physician, and law of a barrister. It should be your ambition to excel in it, not, however, from the same motives which stimulate the diligence of the men of other professions, the desire of fame, or the prospect of gain, but with a view to the faithful and honourable discharge of the duties of the office with which you expect one day to be intrusted. “These men are the servants of the most High God, who shew unto us the way of salvation.”

Thrice solemn is the responsibility laid on the student of Systematic Theology to know what may be known of the vast field of divine revelation: (a) It is the desire of God that all may come to the knowledge of Himself. (b) This Knowledge is essential if the manner of life which will adorn the doctrine that we profess is to be lived. (c) This knowledge is essential, being, as it is, the distinctive message committed to those who would “preach the word.”

Bibliology

Chapter II

INTRODUCTION TO BIBLIOLOGY

SINCE SYSTEMATIC, or Thetic, Theology is the collecting, scientifically arranging, comparing, exhibiting, and defending of all facts from any and every source concerning God and His works, and since the Bible in its original writings is by its own worthy claims and by every test devout minds may apply to it the inerrant Word of God, it follows that, if any progress is to be made in this science, the theologian must be a *Biblicist*—one who is not only a Biblical scholar but also a *believer* in the divine character of each and every portion of the text of the Bible. Primarily, the theologian is appointed to systematize the truth contained in the Bible and to view it as the divinely inspired Word which God has addressed to man. Therefore, such investigations as men may conduct in the field of proof or disproof that the Bible is God's inerrant message to man are, for the most part, extratheological and to be classified as pertaining to Biblical criticism rather than Systematic Theology. The student who in spite of the claims of the Bible to be the Word of God is yet groping for added light on that aspect of truth, cannot even begin the study of Systematic Theology. So-called Christian Science as a pretended rationale and quite apart from its reversal and abandonment of all that is distinctly Christian, could promote no science nor could it share in that which true science has achieved. How could surgery be advanced by a system which predicates a fantastic notion that even denies the existence of a corporal human body? Systematic Theology designs to construct a science or order out of the Biblical revelation and on the basis that it is ὁ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ ('the Word of God'), and, as surgery must proceed on the basis of belief in the existence of the mortal body, so, and in like manner, Systematic Theology must proceed on the basis of the belief that the Bible is, in all its parts, God's own Word to man.

While the word *bible* means 'book,' the words *The Bible* distinguish the supreme, incomparable Book. It does surpass all other books as to authority, antiquity, literature, and popularity, yet its peculiar supremacy is seen in the fact that it discloses the truth concerning the infinite God, infinite holiness, infinite sin, and infinite redemption. It is, therefore, reasonable to conclude that the Bible is itself infinite, and such it proves itself to be, for no human mind has fully comprehended its message or measured its values. Πᾶσα γραφὴ θεόπνευστος ('Every Scripture [is] God-breathed'—2 Tim. 3:16) is the claim of the Bible for

itself and this oracle or dictum is no more open to question than is πνεῦμα ὁ Θεός ('a Spirit God [is]'—John 4:24), ὁ θεὸς ἀγάπη ἐστίν ('God love is'—1 John 4:8), or ὁ Θεὸς φῶς ἐστίν ('God light is'—1 John 1:5). It is here asserted that the Bible claims for itself that on the original parchments every sentence, word, line, mark, point, penstroke, jot, or tittle was placed there in complete agreement with the divine purpose and will. Thus the omnipotent and omniscient God caused the message to be formed as the precise reproduction of His Word. The original text was not only divine as to its origin, but was infinitely perfect as to its form. It is both necessary and reasonable that God's Book—the Book of which He is the Author and which brings the revelation and discipline of heaven down to earth—shall, in its original form, be inerrant in all its parts. It is called *Sacred Scriptures* by way of eminence (John 7:42; 5:39; 2 Tim. 3:15).

Systematic Theology is not an end in itself; its purpose is to classify and clarify the truth set forth in the Scriptures. It should become a grand contribution to the theologian's understanding of the Bible itself.

Consideration will be given in this introduction to (1) the supernatural origin of the Scriptures, and (2) to their general structure:

I. The Supernatural Origin of the Bible

The Bible is a phenomenon which is explainable in but one way—it is the Word of God. It is not such a book as man would write if he *could*, or could write if he *would*. Other religious systems too have their eccentric deviations from the usual course of human procedure, which deviations are not many, and of slight importance; and these, indeed, are to be expected since man is ever determined to believe in a God, or gods, whether his belief is based on facts or not. Bishop Hampden, writing of the good that is recognizable in false religions, states: "Thus we find, even in those superstitions which are most revolting to common sense, some countervailing truths which have both softened and recommended the associated mass of error, otherwise too grossly repulsive for the heart of man ever to have admitted" (*Essay on the Philosophical Evidence of Christianity*, pp. 132, 133, cited by Rogers, *Superhuman Origin of the Bible*, p. 4). But such touches of human nature and its feeble aspirations are incomparable with the vast array of supernatural characteristics which the Bible exhibits.

The student of truth will ever be called upon to recognize counter claims which are both *extra-Biblical* and *intra-Biblical*. That which is extra-Biblical embraces the whole field of humanly devised religions and philosophical

speculations. The intra-Biblical embraces all cults and partial statements of divine truth which, though professing to build their systems on the Scriptures, do, nevertheless, by false emphasis or neglect of truth, succeed in arriving at a confusion of doctrine which is akin to and perhaps more misleading than unmixed error.

The *tout ensemble* of the superhuman character of the Bible presents an almost inexhaustible array of considerations which, if observed with candor, compel one to conclude that this Book could not be a human product.

Though no exhaustive listing is possible, a few of the many superhuman traits of the Bible are here enumerated.

1. THE BOOK OF GOD. By this title it is intended to call attention to the claim everywhere present in the Bible, that it is God's message to man and not man's message to his fellow men, much less man's message to God. To declare the Bible to be *theocentric*, which it asserts for itself, is to declare it to be *anthropoexcentric*. In this Book, God is set forth as Creator and Lord of all. It is the revelation of Himself, the record of what He has done and will do, and, at the same time, the disclosure of the fact that every created thing is subject to Him and discovers its highest advantage and destiny only as it is conformed to His will. Every word of the Bible is the outworking of such sublime declarations as, "There is no God like thee, in heaven above, or on earth beneath" (1 Kings 8:23), and, again, "Thine, O LORD, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is thine; thine is the kingdom, O LORD, and thou art exalted as head above all" (1 Chron. 29:11). "The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth" (Ex. 34:6) "His tender mercies are over all his works" (Ps. 145:9). Thus God is exhibited as exercising an all-pervading and absolute authority over physical, moral, and spiritual realms and as directing things to the end that they may redound to His glory. This divine purpose is being wrought out by human agents and their activities constitute human history; but, when their work is completed, the history of the world will be the history of that original plan of God. Contrary to man's nature, the Bible tends altogether to the glory of God and aims at none other than His honor. According to the Word of God and to human experience, man, apart from divine illumination, is wholly unable to receive or understand the truth about God. Who among blinded humanity is the fiction writer capable of originating the conceptions of the triune God of all eternity that are spread on the pages of the Scriptures? Who among

men has designed the peculiar and perfect balance of the parts each Person of the Godhead takes in redemption, or the divine character in its consistent and unalterable display of infinite holiness and infinite love—the divine judgments, the divine valuation of all things including the angelic hosts and evil spirits? Who among men has been not only able to conceive of such a fabrication of interdependent notions, but has been able to make them express themselves perfectly in an ongoing history which, being fortuitous, is, after all, only sham—a hypocritical, disingenuous counterfeit of truth? How absurd is the assumption that unaided man could write the Bible if he chose to do so! But if man did not originate the Bible, God did, and because of that fact its authority must be recognized.

2. THE BIBLE AND MONOTHEISM. Closely akin, indeed, is this subject to that which has gone before. The fact that God is supreme implies that there is none other to compare with Him; yet almost universally humanity has practiced, with a contumacy which is far from accidental, the abominations of idolatry. The Jewish people, from whom on the human side the Scriptures came, sustain no immunity to this tendency. From the days of the golden calf on through succeeding centuries the Israelites were ever reverting to idolatry and this in spite of abundant revelation and chastisement. The history of the church is stained by the worship of graven images assimilated from heathenism. How earnestly the New Testament warns believers to shun idolatry and the worship of angels! In the light of these facts, how could it be supposed that men—even Israel—apart from divine direction could originate a treatise which, with an eye single to God's glory, brands idolatry as one of the first and most offensive crimes and insults against God? The Bible is not such a book as man would have written if he could.

3. THE DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY. While sustaining monotheism without modification, the Bible does present the fact that God subsists in three Persons or modes of being. This distinction lies between two extremes: on the one hand, that three separate and distinct Persons are merely associated as to purpose and achievement; or, on the other hand, that one Person merely operates in three different characterizing fields of activity, the Biblical doctrine of the Trinity being that God is *one* in essence, yet three identified Persons. Doubtless this is one of the greatest of mysteries. The doctrine reaches beyond the range of human understanding, though it is a fundamental in the divine revelation.

When considered separately, the individual Persons of the Godhead present

the same indisputable evidence as to the supernatural origin of the Bible.

a. God the Father: Vast indeed is the field of Scripture which sets forth the distinctive activities and responsibilities which are predicated of the First Person. He is said to be the Father of all creation, the Father of the eternal Son—the Second Person—, and the Father of all who believe unto the salvation of their souls. This revelation extends to all the details of the Fatherhood relationship and includes the giving of the Son that the grace of God may be revealed. No human mind could originate the conception of God the Father as He is revealed in the Bible.

b. God the Son: The record concerning the Second Person, who, according to the Word of God, is the Son from all eternity, who is ever the manifestation of the Father, and who, though now subject to the Father, is the Creator of material things, the Redeemer and final Judge of all mankind, offers the most extensive and immeasurable evidence of the divine origin of the Scriptures. The Person and work of the Son of God with His humiliation and glory is the dominant theme of the Bible; yet the Son, in turn, dedicates Himself to the glory of the Father. The perfections of the Son can never be compared to, or even comprehended by, the wisest of men. If, after all, this limitless disclosure concerning the Son is only fiction, is it not a reasonable challenge—even to the unregenerate mind—that this supposed author should be discovered, and, on the basis of the truism that the thing created cannot be greater than the one who created it, be worshiped and revered above all that is called God?

c. God the Spirit: The Holy Spirit who is presented in revelation as equal in every particular to the Father and the Son, is, nevertheless, and for the furtherance of the present divine undertakings, portrayed as being subject to both the Father and the Son. In like manner, His service is seen to be the complement and administration of the work of the Father and the Son.

Thus the triune God has disclosed Himself to man in terms which man, even when aided by the Spirit, can but feebly comprehend; and how puerile is the intimation that these revelations are the product of men who without exception since the days of Adam are depraved, degenerate, and unable even to receive or know the things of God apart from divine illumination! Such a conception proposes nothing short of the assumption that man originates the idea of God, and that the Creator is a product of the creature.

4. CREATION. With no ability to receive the things of God or to know them, man is unable to give intelligent consent to the dictum that all existing things

were created from nothing by the immediate fiat of God (Heb. 11:3). Recognizing, however, that all existing things must have a beginning, he proceeds to construct his own solution of the problem of origin. The best he has done is represented by the theories of evolution, which theories, because of their inconsistencies and unproved hypotheses, are somewhat worse than no solution at all. Is man who so fails to discover any reasonable solution of this problem at the same time to be credited with the authorship of the Genesis account of creation, which account is the one basis whereon all subsequent revelation proceeds?

5. SIN. Among many subjects upon which man could have no unprejudiced information, the fact of sin and its evil character is obviously one of the foremost. Yet if it be contended that the Bible—the only source of reliable information on this theme—is not of divine origin, there is no alternative other than the supposition that man, as supposed author of the Scriptures, has sat in judgment on himself and is able to comprehend what everywhere he demonstrates himself to be unable to comprehend, namely, the sinfulness of sin. And the problem does not involve one human author, but at least forty human authors who had their share in the actual writing of the Word of God. All of the forty men see eye to eye on this vast theme concerning which man could know nothing apart from revelation.

6. THE CURE OF EVIL ACCORDING TO THE BIBLE. If fallen man does not naturally know his sinfulness, much less does he have native capacity whereby he can know the divine remedy which is not only revealed to man in the Word of God but has demonstrated its efficacy in every instance in which man has met its terms and claimed its values. This redemption not only provides a perfect salvation for the individual believer, but extends to the new heaven and new earth with sin dismissed forever. It is conceivable that man might dream of a utopia, but what human being could devise the plan of salvation and cause it to be successful in every instance without exception? How could man devise a plan which discredits human merit, which secures the saving power of God, and which tendeth ever to the glory of God and the disillusionment of human vanity? Why should man in his fictitious utopia be concerned that it shall be wrought out only in that manner which preserves the infinite holiness of the One who redeems? It is only *after* man is redeemed that he can even feebly apprehend the mighty workings of divine grace in the salvation of the lost. Yet if one hesitates to receive the Bible as God's Word, he is left with no other choice than to

believe that man is the author of redemption and that it has no more saving value than a fallen man can impart to it.

7. THE EXTENT OF BIBLE REVELATION. Like a telescope, the Bible reaches beyond the stars and penetrates the heights of heaven and the depths of hell. Like a microscope, it discovers the minutest details of God's plan and purpose as well as the hidden secrets of the human heart. Like a stereoscope, it has the capacity to place things in their right relation the one to the other, manifesting the true perspective of the divine intent in the universe. So far as human knowledge goes, the Bible deals as freely with things unknown as it does with the known. It speaks with utmost freedom and assurance of things altogether outside the range of human life and experience—of things eternal as well as of time. There is a border beyond which the human mind, basing its conclusions on experience, cannot go; yet the human authors of the Bible do not hesitate when they reach that boundary, but move majestically on into unknown realms with intrepidity. By what other means than through the Bible may one gaze into eternity either backward or forward? Yet the theory that the Bible does not originate in God alone, imposes the necessity of believing that restricted and temporal creatures of the earth have themselves arisen to the sublime conceptions of eternity and of heaven as well as to the eternal Being of God, and are able to sit in judgment over the eternal destiny of all things. Man could not write such a Book if he would.

8. THE ETHICS OF THE BIBLE. The religions of the heathen concern themselves but little with morals. Their priests speak next to nothing of a life that is pure and true. On the contrary, these religions are often promoters of the lowest vice. It is certain they know nothing of ethics which are the result of, and subordinate to, doctrine. The Bible has introduced something which is foreign to all the moral schemes and systems the world has ever produced. Whether it be the Mosaic Law, the Christian exhortation, or the kingdom standards of rectitude, each becomes an obligation resting upon those to whom it is addressed because of the estate in which each group of people is placed in the sovereign goodness of God. In the Bible, ethics are based on doctrine and become its legitimate fruitage. In no instance is this principle so operative as in the case of the Christian, who, because of his position *in Christ*, is called upon to walk worthy of that high calling. The ethics of the Bible are as supernatural in their origin and holy character as is the estate into which the elect of God are brought.

The Bible presents an unqualified exposure of man's ethical failure as well as the judgments which rest upon him. Man's depraved nature and his inevitable deflection from that which is right strongly preclude the theory that he is the originator of so high a morality as that found in the Word of God; and since on the human side the Bible is the product of Jewish authors, it is pertinent to observe that the men of that nation, even in the face of all their privileges, were little better in their moral rectitude than the men of other nations. Added to this is the fact that the Bible standard of holy living is the testimony of many human authors from every walk of life and over many centuries. How, it may be inquired, could human nature have given spontaneously such a depressing and hopeless description of itself as is contained in the dogmatic statements of the Bible on this subject? There every soul of man is charged with complete failure. The Word of God declares: "The LORD looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God. They are all gone aside, they are all together become filthy: there is none that doeth good, no, not one" (Ps. 14:2, 3). They are "by nature the children of wrath, even as others" (Eph. 2:3). How could incarnate bigotry and depravity become the author and champion of those principles of holiness resident only in heaven?

Still another feature of this general subject, which, however, is only remotely related to the problem of morals, inquires how Jews who were steeped in Judaism could have originated such a Book as the New Testament. There is hardly a feature of Christianity which the Jew does not naturally resist. What could be more repulsive to a Jew than the sentiment, "There is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him" (Rom. 10:12)? Was not Judaism from God and was it not practiced for fifteen hundred years under the divine favor? Because of these indisputable facts, the Jew clutched the elements of Judaism to his heart, and still clutches them. The gospel abruptly broke in upon this religious monopoly and its consequent isolation. Not only had Jewish writers of the Old Testament recorded all the infamies of their own nation and recognized the divine chastisements so justly sent upon them, but now as worthy writers as any of the Old Testament authors are seen to turn from Judaism altogether and to espouse a system which contradicts or supersedes Judaism at almost every vital point. These are problems that should not be passed over lightly by those who question the divine origin of the Scriptures and are compelled, therefore, to account for these oracles as a human product.

9. THE CONTINUITY OF THE BIBLE. The continuity of the message of the Bible is absolute in its completeness. It is bound together by historical sequence, type and antitype, prophecy and its fulfillment, and by the anticipation, presentation, realization, and exaltation of the most perfect Person who ever walked the earth and whose glories are the effulgence of heaven. Yet the perfection of this continuity is sustained against what to man would be insuperable impediments; for the Bible is a collection of sixty-six books which have been written by over forty different authors—kings, peasants, philosophers, fishermen, physicians, statesmen, scholars, poets, and plowmen—who lived their lives in various countries and experienced no conference or agreement one with another, and over a period of not less than sixteen hundred years of human history. Because of these obstacles to continuity, the Bible would be naturally the most heterogeneous, incommensurable, inconsonant, and contradictory collection of human opinions the world has ever seen; but, on the contrary, it is just what it is designed to be, namely, a homogeneous, uninterrupted, harmonious, and orderly account of the whole history of God's dealings with man.

Nor should it be unobserved that other sacred books are the product of one man and therefore involve no problem of continuity such as developed when the writings of forty disassociated men are blended into one perfect whole. Each of the three great monotheistic religions has its written oracles. However, Judaism and Christianity share in this that their writings are a compilation of the writings of various human authors. The book which contains the tenets of Islam is the work of the founder of Islam. It proclaims itself to be the words of God; not, however, written by the hand of the prophet but taken by dictation from his mouth as a so-called revelation. It begins and ends in the person of its first teacher. From these records none of his followers dares take away or add to. Man at best is an ephemeron. His life is circumscribed to his own day and generation and his views are usually correspondingly provincial. By just such men, equally limited in themselves, God has caused a library to be formed into one volume with its incomparable continuity. This Book containing many books has not gained the idiosyncratic impress of many minds. Its harmony is not that of trumpets in unison, but rather orchestration where, though absolutely in tune, the instruments are perfectly distinguished. On what ground could this plenary continuity be explained if it be asserted that the Bible is any less than the Word of God?

10. PROPHECY AND ITS FULFILLMENT. It has always pleased God to

preannounce the thing He is going to do and history records the realization of the prediction. A very great number of prophecies were made by Old Testament writers concerning the coming Messiah and these were declared hundreds, and in some instances thousands, of years before Christ came. Those predictions which in the divine purpose were to be fulfilled at Christ's first advent were literally fulfilled at that time. Many more yet remain to be fulfilled when He comes again, and, it is reasonable to believe, these will be fulfilled with the same precision. Were but two vaticinations made and fulfilled, such as the virgin birth of Christ, to occur in Bethlehem of Judea, the supernatural character of the Scriptures would be proved by the history which records their accomplishment; but when these predictions run into thousands which concern the Persons of the Godhead, angels, nations, families, individuals, and destinies, and each and every one is exactly executed in its prescribed time and place, the evidence is incontestable as to the divine character of the Scriptures. A fiction writer might present an imaginary situation concerning a supposed time and place and in that time and place cause his fictitious character to make a sham prediction. This, in turn, to be followed by a chapter purporting to be at a later time and recording a pretended fulfillment of the sham prediction. Such, indeed, would exhaust the predictive powers of man. The prophecies of the Bible are fulfilled in every instance by actual history. The Bible itself indicates that the acid test of all prophecy is its literal fulfillment. Nor is the intervening time of small importance. Based on obvious conditions, a man might make a fortunate guess as to the turn of events on the day that follows; but the Bible prophecy disregards the element of time. The fact that the twenty-second Psalm is a preview of Christ's death cannot be refuted, and no one can controvert the record of the Bible that a full millennium falls between the prophecy and its fulfillment. Who would be prepared to believe that hundreds of predictions which are fulfilled on the pages of history and extending over thousands of years of intervening time are the work of unaided men? Yet there is no other alternative for the one who questions the divine origin of the Scriptures.

11. TYPES WITH THEIR ANTITYPES. A type is a divinely framed delineation which portrays its antitype. It is God's own illustration of His truth drawn by His own hand. The type and the antitype are related to each other by the fact that the connecting truth or principle is embodied in each. It is not the prerogative of the type to establish the truth of a doctrine; it rather enhances the force of the truth as set forth in the antitype. On the other hand, the antitype serves to lift the type

out of the commonplace into that which is transcendental, and to invest it with riches and treasures hitherto unrevealed. The Passover-Lamb type floods the redeeming grace of Christ with richness of meaning, while the redemption itself invests the Passover-Lamb type with all its marvelous significance. The continuity of the Scriptures, prophecy and its fulfillment, and types with their antitypes, are the three major factors which not only serve to exhibit the unity of the two Testaments and, like woven threads running from one Testament to the other, bind them into one fabric, but serve to trace the design which by its marvelous character glorifies the Designer. A true type is the counterpart of its antitype, and, being specifically devised by God, is a vital part of revelation and inspiration. Even if the human mind could conceive the marvels of the antitype (which it could never do), it could not draw the pattern found in the type nor invent the manifold details—often incorporating many particulars and expansive circumstances which are a part of ancient history. Thus typology as incorporated in the Bible demonstrates the Bible to be such a book as man could not write if he would. It is divine in its origin as it is superhuman in its character.

12. THE BIBLE AS LITERATURE. As a means for the transmitting of thought, the reducing of a language to writing is an achievement of surpassing importance. It is reasonable and to be expected that God, in communicating with man, would put His message into written form. How else could it be either pondered or preserved? It is equally to be expected that the literature thus created, regardless of secondary causes and agencies, would be worthy of the divine Author. This aspect of the Bible's priority even the unregenerate may profitably consider. As might be anticipated, the observations of all the scholarship of the world in general, whether sympathetic or unsympathetic, have agreed upon the one conclusion that, as literature, the Bible is paramount. It is evident, however—and this is not sufficiently considered—that this supremacy of the literature of the Bible cannot be attributed to its human authors. With few exceptions, they were common men of their times who had received no preparatory discipline for the task they assumed. In this connection it is observable that the intruding first personal pronoun (with notable exceptions which are required for the clarity of the truth—cf. Rom. 7:15–25) is absent from these writings. The personal opinions of the human authors on the material they present are of little importance. Had the exceptional literary value of their writings been due to their own ability, it is inconceivable that all of these forty or more authors would have failed to leave some other enduring messages than

those embodied in the Bible. In fact, the Jewish nation, from which source these human authors of the Scriptures are almost wholly drawn, has no ancient literature of importance outside this Sacred Book. The intellectual and moral qualifications of the Jew of early days for this authorship may be measured by the Talmud and the Talmudic writings. To the same end, the later writings of the Jew may be also estimated by a comparison of the canonical Gospels with the apocryphal gospels; the latter tending to hinder rather than help in the knowledge of Christ. A similar contrast may be extended to the writings of the Early Church fathers or to those of such men of holy design and purpose as the Reformers or the Puritans in contrast with the Epistles of the New Testament. No message other than the Bible has ever been written by any man in all past ages that has secured any reasonable recognition as being more than is normally human, or that could sustain any claim to a place in the Divine Library. Each age has witnessed the dismissal of the vast portion of its literature into oblivion, but the Bible abides. It is literally true that books may come and books may go, but the Bible goes on forever. Outside the range of Jewish and Christian literature, the Koran would probably receive first consideration; yet “we feel the justice,” says Castenove, “of Möhler’s dictum, ‘That without Moses, and the prophets, and Christ, Mahomet is simply inconceivable—for the essential purport of the Koran is derived from the Old and New Testaments’ ” (“Mahomedanism,” *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, cited by Henry Rogers, *Superhuman Origin of the Bible*, 5th ed., p. 266).

The devout individual is, to some degree, unable to judge the Bible in the limited field of its literary claims. To him, the words are invested with entrancing, spiritual realities of meaning which at once lift the effect of the message upon the heart far above the range of mere reaction to unusual literary style. What individual gifted with spiritual understanding has not felt, with a good degree of justification, that common words, when used in the Bible, often become incomparably vital? Among people of culture, how general a limited appreciation of the Sacred Text is! What public writer or speaker from the demagogue to the divine has not learned to depend on the mysterious, unfailing impressions of even a brief quotation from God’s Word?

No unaided human writer has ever been able to imitate the simplicity of the Bible language. The greatest truths God has spoken to man are couched in the language of children. To illustrate: Seven monosyllables, not one of which exceeds three letters, serve to state the two most vital relationships which the saved sustain to the resurrected Christ. These are: “ye in me, and I in you” (John

14:20). Similarly, no human skill in condensation could ever compare with declarations found in the Scriptures. No “short story” writer ever produced a thrilling narrative comparable to that found in Luke 15:11–32. The four Gospels, like all other books of the New Testament, are inexhaustible in the ever unfolding truth they convey; yet the text itself is restricted to the point of inimitable brevity. On the other hand, the Bible message is never hurried, cramped, or unreadable. In fact, the narrative at times seems unnecessarily explicit (cf. Matt. 25:34–45).

Unlike the usual writings of men, the Bible employs a purely dramatic form. It affirms certain facts or incidents without prejudicial comment. Human authors seem hopelessly unable to let simple facts speak for themselves, nor are they willing to credit the reader with the requisite sagacity to draw his own conclusions. What novelist has been able to refrain from those extended introductions of their characters which assay to analyze every motive and, to that extent, predetermine the reader’s deductions? When has biography been so written that the reader retained any latitude whatever in the evaluation of character based on the subject in action? The biographer’s *opinion* and not the subject’s *life* is too often exhibited. In the Bible, however, the human author’s analyzing and moralizing efforts are excluded and the complicated field of the application of truth by the Spirit of God is not disarranged. Not a few Bible readers resent every man-made heading in the Sacred Text, only because of that reasonable desire to be allowed to draw their own conclusions directly from the Scripture through the enlightening power of its Author—the Spirit of God.

Without offering the usual barriers found in the literary productions of men, the Bible fascinates the child and entrances the sage. It, as no other book has ever done or could do, has made its appeal to all races and peoples regardless of national bias; which appeal is demonstrated by the fact that the Bible, or portions of it, and to meet the urgent need, has been translated into about one thousand languages and dialects and the output and distribution of these has reached to about forty million copies in a year. This is a striking reversal of Voltaire’s prediction, made one hundred and fifty years ago, that within one hundred years from the time he spoke the Bible would be obsolete. The impulse to translate the Bible into other languages is itself inexplicable. This impulse has served to extend the knowledge of God’s Word and has gone far in stirring the feeble incentive on the part of men to translate other ancient writings. And what, indeed, can be said of the prodigious volume and exalted character of literature, music, and art which the Bible has provoked? The Bible itself represents in

magnitude not a three hundredth part of the extant Greek and Roman literature; yet it has attracted to, and concentrated upon, itself more thought and produced more works, explanatory, illustrative, apologetic—upon its text, its exegesis, its doctrines, its history, its geography, its ethnology, its chronology, and its evidences—than all the Greek and Roman literature combined. Likewise, what can be said of the quotations from the Bible by almost every class of authors in the world? What other book has served to develop, fix, and preserve the languages into which it is translated, or to retard changes and corruption of speech, as has the Bible?

From no angle of approach to its literary properties is the Bible seen to be such a book as man could have written if he would. It is, therefore, the Word of God.

13. THE BIBLE AND SCIENCE. No small problem is confronted when an attempt is made to state scientific truth according to the understanding of one age in a way that will at the same time be acceptable in all succeeding ages. Science is ever shifting and subject to its own revisions, if not complete revolutions. It reflects with a good degree of accuracy the progress from generation to generation of human knowledge. In the field of science, no human author has been able to avoid the fate of obsolescence in later periods; yet the Divine Records have been so framed that there is no conflict with true science in this or any age of human history. It is impossible for human authors to write as the Bible is written in matters of science. It is no argument against the Bible that it employs commonly used terms such as “the ends of the earth,” “the four corners of the earth,” or “the sun going down.” It would be no more understandable to say “the earth is rising” than to say “the sun is setting.” The latter is the thing which, to human vision, occurs. In fact, what term could be used other than that which describes what man sees with his eyes? The Bible is justified in the use of generally used terms, especially since no other terms have ever been proposed, nor could better ones be discovered. God alone could execute the superhuman task of writing a book which, though dispensing facts concerning nature, even from its creation to its final glories, nevertheless avoids a conflict with ignorance and bigotry as these have existed in endless variety from the dawn of human history.

14. THE BIBLE AND TEMPORAL POWER. The Jewish system of government was a theocracy. God was monarch over all. It was not an alliance of spiritual forces and interests with the state; it was a complete incorporation of the two into one

divine purpose. Though in the New Testament believers are enjoined to be subject to, and pray for, those who in civic authority are over them, the government is, as divinely ordained in the present period, known as “the times of the Gentiles,” in the hands of men; and there is no inherent unity possible between the church which is of God and the state which is in the hands of men. The instructions are clear that Christians are not to aspire to temporal power or to depend on civil authority for the furtherance of spiritual ends. The early church was true to the New Testament and her phenomenal progress was made by persuasion and love. It is natural and normal for men to resort to such coercive power as is available to achieve their ends. And history records no movement other than Christianity which has secured its designs by the appeal to heart and mind. Indeed, it is one of the deflections of the Church of Rome that she departed from this spiritual ideal. The intention to surmount human opposition and defeat the forces of evil by reliance upon divine power could never have originated in the human heart. Thus it is to be seen that the Bible is supernatural in its character and could not be the product of men.

15. THE BIBLE’S ENDURING FRESHNESS. As no other literature in the world, the Bible invites and sustains a ceaseless rereading. Its pages are ever flashing new gems of truth to those most familiar with it, and its uplifting moral appeal, like its pathos, never fails to move the sensitive soul. Of no other book than the Bible could it be said truthfully that its message is perennially fresh and effective, and this, in turn, demonstrates the divine character and origin of the Bible.

Great men of all generations, both devout and otherwise, have striven to give expression to their convictions concerning the uniqueness of the Bible. When the Bible is thus contemplated, surpassing eloquence has been stimulated by the eminence of the theme. Among these statements, the following is from Theodore Parker:

This collection of books has taken such hold of the world as no other. The literature of Greece, which goes up like incense from that land of temples and heroic deeds, has not half the influence of this book from a nation despised alike in ancient and in modern times. ... It goes equally to the cottage of the plain man and the palace of the king. It is woven into the literature of the scholar, and colours the talk of the streets. It enters men’s closets, mingles in all the grief and cheerfulness of life. The Bible attends men in sickness, when the fever of the world is on them. ... It is the better part of our sermons; it lifts man above himself. Our best of uttered prayers are in its storied speech, wherewith our fathers and the patriarchs prayed. The timid man, about to wake from his dream of life, looks through the glass of Scripture, and his eye grows bright; he does not fear to stand alone, to tread the way unknown and distant, to take the death angel by the hand, and bid farewell to wife and babes and home. ... Some thousand famous writers come up in this century to be forgotten in the next. But the silver cord of the Bible is not loosed, nor its golden bowl broken, as Time

chronicles his tens of centuries passed by.—Cited by Henry Rogers, *Superhuman Origin of the Bible*, p. 338

The divine origin of the Bible in all its parts is attested by unnumbered facts and features, but enough has been here presented to refute every claim that the phenomenon which the Bible presents can with any show of reason be attributed to man. The conclusion is that, being everywhere discovered to be a truthful message, it is what it claims to be, the Word of God.

II. General Divisions of the Bible

1. THE STRUCTURE OF THE BIBLE. The message of the Bible is complete. It incorporates its every chapter and verse into its perfect unity, and all its parts are interdependent. The mastery of any part necessitates the mastery of the whole. If disproportionate emphasis is tolerated or fads in doctrines indulged, but little progress can be made in its accurate understanding. The sixty-six books, which by divine arrangement make up this incomparable whole, are divided into two major parts—the Old Testament and the New Testament—, and these Testaments lend themselves to the unfolding of two paramount divine purposes—that which is earthly and that which is heavenly. The books of the Old Testament are classified as *historical*—Genesis to Esther—, *poetical*—Job to Song of Solomon—, and *prophetical*—Isaiah to Malachi. The New Testament books are classified as *historical*—Matthew to Acts—, *epistolary*—Romans to Jude—, and *prophetical*—Revelation. As bearing on the Person of Christ—He who is the central theme of all the Scriptures—, the Old Testament is classified as *preparation*; the four Gospels as *manifestation*; the Acts as *propagation*; the Epistles as *explanation*; and the Revelation as *consummation*. The essential analysis of each book, each chapter, and each verse, belongs to other disciplines in the student's training than Systematic Theology.

2. CREATED BEINGS AND THEIR RELATIONSHIPS. The Bible is God's one and only Book. It contains all His revelation to man throughout all ages of human history. It exhibits the origin, present estate, and destiny of four classes of rational beings in the universe, namely, angels, Gentiles, Jews, and Christians. It is germane to true Biblical interpretation to observe the fact that these rational beings continue what they are throughout their history.

a. The Angels. The angels are created beings (Ps. 148:2–5; Col. 1:16), their abode is in heaven (Matt. 24:36), their activity is both on earth and in heaven (Ps. 103:20; Luke 15:10; Heb. 1:14), and their destiny is in the celestial city

(Heb. 12:22; Rev. 21:12). They remain angels throughout their existence, they neither propagate nor do they die. There is no reason for confusing the angels with any other creatures of God's universe. Even though they fall, as in the case of Satan and the demons, they are still classed as angels (Matt. 25:41).

b. *The Gentiles.* As to their original stock, the Gentiles had their origin in Adam and their natural headship is in him. They are partakers in the fall, and though they are subjects of prophecy which declares that they will yet share, as a subordinate people, with Israel in her coming kingdom glory (Isa. 2:4; 60:3, 5, 12; 62:2; Acts 15:17), they, as to their estate in the period from Adam to Christ, are under the manifold indictment "without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world" (Eph. 2:12). With the death, resurrection, ascension of Christ, and the descent of the Spirit, the door of gospel privilege was opened unto the Gentiles (Acts 10:48; 11:17, 18; 13:47, 48), and out of them God is now calling an elect company (Acts 15:14). In the period of time bounded by Jewish captivity to Babylon, on the one hand, and the yet future restoration of Palestine and Jerusalem to the Jews, on the other hand, a dispensation of world rule is committed to the Gentiles which characterizes this period as "the times of the Gentiles" (Luke 21:24). This people, likewise designated as "the nations," go on in their history and are seen both in the prophetic picture of the millennium (Isa. 60:3, 5, 12; 62:2; Acts 15:17) and that of the new earth and as having right of entrance into the city which is to be (Rev. 21:24, 26).

c. *The Jews.* By the call of Abraham and all that Jehovah wrought in him, a new race or stock was begun which, under unalterable divine covenants and promises, continues forever. So different is this race as to distinctive characteristics that all other people are antipodal to them, *i.e.*, they are classified as "the Gentiles" or "the nations" as in dissimilarity to the Jewish nation. Such a divine preference for Israel cannot be understood apart from the records given in the Bible as to Jehovah's eternal purpose in them. The importance in God's sight of the earthly people and all that is related to them is indicated by the fact that about five-sixths of the Bible bears directly or indirectly upon them. In spite of all their sin and failure, the purpose of God for them cannot be broken (cf. Jer. 31:31–37). Their destiny is traceable on into the millennium and the new earth which follows. However, in the present age, bounded as it is by the two advents of Christ, all progress in the national and earthly program for Israel is in abeyance and individual Jews are given the same privilege as the individual

Gentiles of the exercise of personal faith in Christ as Savior and out of those thus redeemed, both Jews and Gentiles, the heavenly people are being called. It is clearly indicated throughout the prophetic Scriptures that when the present purpose is accomplished God will, in all faithfulness, return to the full completion of His earthly promises in Israel (Acts 15:14–18; Rom. 11:24–27).

d. The Christians. An extensive body of Scripture declares directly or indirectly that the present age is unforeseen and intercalary in its character, and in it a new humanity appears on the earth with an incomparable new headship in the resurrected Christ, which Company is being formed by the regenerating power of the Spirit. It is likewise revealed that there is now “no difference” between Jews and Gentiles generally either as to their need of salvation (Rom. 3:9) or as to the specific message to be preached to them (Rom. 10:12). It is seen, also, that in this new Body wherein Jews and Gentiles are united by a common salvation, the middle wall of partition—the age-long enmity between Jew and Gentile—is broken down, itself having been “slain” by Christ on the cross, thus making peace (Eph. 2:14–18). In fact, all former distinctions are lost, those thus saved having come upon new ground where there is neither Jew nor Gentile, but where Christ is all in all (Gal. 3:28; Col. 3:11). The New Testament also records that the individual Christian, being indwelt by Christ, now possesses eternal life and its hope of glory (Col. 1:27), and, being in Christ, is possessed with the perfect standing of Christ, since all that Christ is—even the righteousness of God—is imputed unto him. The Christian is thus already constituted a heavenly citizen (Phil. 3:20) and, being raised with Christ (Col. 3:1–3), and seated with Christ (Eph. 2:6), belongs to another sphere—so definitely, indeed, that Christ can say of such: “They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world” (John 17:14, 16; cf. 15:18, 19). It is likewise to be observed that since this spiritual birth and heavenly position *in Christ* are supernatural, they are, of necessity, wrought by God alone, and that human cooperation is excluded; the only responsibility imposed on the human side being that of *faith* which trusts in the only One who is able to save. To this heavenly people, who are the New Creation of God (2 Cor. 5:17; Gal. 6:15), is committed, not in any corporate sense but only as individuals, a twofold responsibility, namely, (a) to adorn by a Christlike life the doctrine which they represent by the very nature of their salvation, and (b) to be His witnesses to the uttermost parts of the earth. It is similarly believed that the Scriptures which direct the Christian in his holy walk and service are adapted to the fact that he is not now striving to secure a standing with God, but is already “accepted in the beloved” (Eph. 1:6), and has attained unto every spiritual

blessing (Eph. 1:3; Col. 2:10). It is evident that no human resource could enable any person to arise to the fulfillment of these heaven-high responsibilities and that God, anticipating the believer's inability to walk worthy of the calling wherewith he is called, has freely bestowed His empowering Spirit to indwell each one who is saved. Of this same heavenly Company it is declared that they, when their elect number is complete, will be removed from this earth. The bodies of those that have died will be raised and living saints will be translated (1 Cor. 15:20–57; 1 Thess. 4:13–18). In glory, the individuals who comprise this Company will be judged as to their rewards for service (1 Cor. 3:9–15; 9:18–27; 2 Cor. 5:10, 11), the corporate Church will be married to Christ (Rev. 19:7–9), and then return *with* Him to share as His consort in His reign (Luke 12:35, 36; Jude 1:14, 15; Rev. 19:11–16). This New Creation people, like the angels, Israel, and the Gentiles, may be traced on into the eternity to come (Heb. 12:22–24; Rev. 21:1–22:5). But, it will be remembered, the Christian possesses no land (Ex. 20:12; Matt. 5:5); no house (Matt. 23:38; Acts 15:16), though of the household of God; no earthly capital or city (Isa. 2:1–4; Ps. 137:5, 6); no earthly throne (Luke 1:31–33); no earthly kingdom (Acts 1:6, 7); no king to whom he is subject (Matt. 2:2), though Christians may speak of Christ as “the King” (1 Tim. 1:17; 6:15); and no altar other than the cross of Christ (Heb. 13:10–14).

3. THE TIME PERIODS OF THE BIBLE. Several of its important divisions are observable when all time from its beginning to its end is traced through the Scriptures. Some of these divisions are:

a. Divisions Realatyed to Humanity.

(1) *The First Period* of human history, or from Adam to Abraham, is characterized by the presence on the earth of but one stock or people—the Gentiles.

(2) *The Second Period* covering 2,000 years of human history, or from Abraham to Christ, is characterized by the presence on the earth of two divisions of humanity—the Gentile and the Jew.

(3) *The Third Period* of human history, or from the first advent of Christ to His second advent, is characterized by the presence on the earth of three divisions of humanity—the Gentile, the Jew, and the Christian.

(4) *The Fourth Period* declared to be a thousand years (Rev. 20:1–9), or from Christ's second advent to the great white throne judgment and the creation of the new heavens and the new earth, is characterized by the presence of but two classes of humanity on the earth—the Jew and the Gentile.

b. Dispensations. As a time measurement, a dispensation is a period which is identified by its relation to some particular purpose of God—a purpose to be accomplished within that period. The earlier dispensations, being so far removed in point of time from the present, are not as clearly defined as are the later dispensations. For this reason, Bible expositors are not always agreed regarding the precise features of the more remote periods. Some obvious dispensational divisions are:

(1) *The Dispensation of Innocence*, which extended from the creation to the fall of Adam. The time is unrevealed; Adam's divine commission in that period and his failure indicate the course and end of the divine intention within that era.

(2) *The Dispensation of Conscience*, which extended from Adam's fall to the flood, in which age conscience was, apparently, the dominating feature of human life on the earth and the basis of man's relationship with God.

(3) *The Dispensation of Human Government*, which extended from the flood to the call of Abraham, is characterized by the committing of self-government to men, and is terminated by the introduction of a new divine purpose.

(4) *The Dispensation of Promise*, which is continued from the call of Abraham to the giving and acceptance of the Mosaic Law at Sinai. During this age the divine promise alone sustains Abraham and his posterity. While Hebrews 11:13, 39 refer to Old Testament saints generally in that no major Old Testament promise was realized during its own period, these passages are specifically true of those who lived within the age of promise. That Abraham lived by divine promise is a theme of both Testaments.

(5) *The Dispensation of the Law*, which extended from the giving of the Law of Jehovah by Moses and its acceptance by Israel at Sinai (Ex. 19:3–31:18). It continued as the authoritative government of God over His people Israel and thus characterized that age until it ended with the death of Christ. A very brief portion of that age (probably seven years which Christ declared would be shortened—Matt. 24:21, 22), which is Daniel's seventieth week (Dan. 9:24–27), yet remains to run its course.

(6) *The Dispensation of Grace*, which extends from the death of Christ until His return to receive His Bride. It is an age characterized by grace in the sense that in this age God, who has always acted in grace toward any and all of the human family whom He has blessed, is now making a specific heavenly demonstration of His grace by and through the whole company of Jews and Gentiles who are saved by grace through faith in Christ. These are a heavenly people who, because their citizenship is in heaven, are removed both by

resurrection and translation from the earth when their elect number is completed. As stated above, a brief period follows the removal of the Church from the earth, which period is not related to the present era and is not characterized by a demonstration of divine grace, but rather by God's judgments upon a Christ-rejecting world. This age is also a period in which man is tested under grace.

(7) *The Dispensation of Kingdom Rule*, which continues from the second advent of Christ on for a thousand years and ends with the creation of a new heaven and a new earth. It is characterized by the facts that Satan is bound, the covenants of Israel are fulfilled, creation is delivered from its bondage, and the Lord Himself will reign over the earth and on the throne of His father David.

c. The Covenants. God has entered into various covenants. These, too, are well defined:

(1) *The Covenant of Redemption* (Titus 1:2; Heb. 13:20) into which, it is usually thought by theologians, the Persons of the Godhead entered before all time and in which each assumed that part in the great plan of redemption which is their present portion as disclosed in the Word of God. In this covenant the Father gives the Son, the Son offers Himself without spot to the Father as an efficacious sacrifice, and the Spirit administers and empowers unto the execution of this covenant in all its parts. This covenant rests upon but slight revelation. It is rather sustained largely by the fact that it seems both reasonable and inevitable.

(2) *The Covenant of Works*, which is the theologian's designation for those blessings God has offered men and conditioned on human merit. Before the fall, Adam was related to God by a covenant of works. Until he is saved, man is under an inherent obligation to be in character like his Creator and to do His will.

(3) *The Covenant of Grace*, which is the term used by theologians to indicate all aspects of divine grace toward man in all ages. The exercise of divine grace is rendered righteously possible by the satisfaction to divine judgments which is provided in the death of Christ. The phrase *Covenant of Grace* is not found in the Bible and, as often presented by human teachers, is far from a Scriptural conception.

(4) *The Edenic Covenant* (Gen. 1:28–30; 2:16, 17), which is Jehovah's declaration incorporating seven features that conditioned the life of unfallen man on the earth.

(5) *The Adamic Covenant* (Gen. 3:14–19), which is also in seven parts and conditions man's life on the earth after the fall. Much that is in this covenant is

perpetual throughout all generations until the curse is lifted from creation (Rom. 8:19–23).

(6) *The Noahic Covenant* (Gen. 8:20–9:27), which, again, is in seven particulars and discloses the divine intent respecting human government and posterity in all succeeding generations beginning with Noah.

(7) *The Abrahamic Covenant* (Gen. 12:1–3; 13:14–17; 15:1–18; 17:1–8), which, likewise, is in seven divisions or divine objectives. This covenant guarantees everlasting blessings upon Abraham, his seed, and all the families of the earth.

(8) *The Mosaic Covenant* (Ex. 20:1–31:18) which is in three parts, namely, the commandments, the judgments, and the ordinances which, in turn, directed the moral, social, and religious life of Israel and imposed penalties for every failure. The Mosaic Covenant is a covenant of works. Its blessings were made to depend on human faithfulness. It also provided the remedial sacrifices by which the sin and failure of those under the covenant could be cared for and they restored to right relations with God.

(9) *The Palestinian Covenant* (Deut. 30:1–9), which is in seven particulars and discloses what Jehovah will yet do in regathering, blessing, and restoring Israel to her own land.

(10) *The Davidic Covenant* (2 Sam. 7:5–19), which secures three paramount advantages to Israel through the Davidic House, namely, an everlasting throne, an everlasting kingdom, and an everlasting King to sit on David's throne.

(11) *The New Covenant for the Church* (Luke 22:20), which incorporates every promise of saving and keeping grace for those of the present age who believe. Its many blessings are either possessions or positions *in Christ*.

(12) *The New Covenant for Israel* (Jer. 31:31–34; Heb. 8:7–12), which covenant is “new” in the sense that it supersedes as a rule of life the Mosaic Covenant that Israel broke, but it does not alter or conflict with the Palestinian Covenant, the Abrahamic Covenant, or the Davidic Covenant. Its blessings are fourfold and all yet future, though assured unconditionally on the unfailing faithfulness of God.

d. The Prophetic Periods.

(1) *From Adam to Abraham*, in which period Enoch prophesied concerning the second advent of Christ (Jude 1:14, 15), and Noah prophesied in regard to his sons (Gen. 9:24–27).

(2) *From Abraham to Moses*, in which time word is committed to Abraham, which he evidently passed on to others, with respect to his seed (Gen. 15:13),

and Jacob foretold the future of his posterity (Gen. 49:1–27).

(3) *From Moses to Daniel*, during which time the major portion of Old Testament prophecy was written and much of it fulfilled. Attention should be given to Deuteronomy 28:1–33:29 as the seed plot of prediction concerning all future blessings for Israel.

(4) *From Daniel to Christ*, a division of time in which Jehovah reveals through Daniel the beginning, course, and end of Gentile rule as well as future divine purposes in Israel. This specific era includes the writings of Daniel, Ezekiel, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi. To this age, and as an important part of it, should be added all predictions concerning the great tribulation since that time of so great distress is the seventieth week of Daniel’s prophecy and, therefore, a most vital and inseparable part of it, regardless of the fact that centuries which are of a parenthetical nature are thrust in between.

(5) *From the First to the Second Advent of Christ*, which period gathers up all New Testament prophecy both by Christ and the apostles.

(6) *From the Beginning to the End of the Millennial Kingdom*, in which dispensation it is revealed that “your sons and your daughters shall prophesy” (Joel 2:28).

(7) *The Eternal State*, which will be the fulfilling of much prediction, though there is no anticipation recorded that any will then prophesy; in fact, it is declared that prophecy shall then “fail” (1 Cor. 13:8).

e. The Various Aspects of the Earthly Kingdom.

(1) *The Theocracy*, in which the divine rule over Israel is provided in and through the judges (Judges 2:16, 18; 1 Sam. 8:7; Acts 13:19, 20).

(2) *The Kingdom Promised*, in that God enters into unconditional covenant with David as to the unalterable perpetuity of his house, his kingdom, and his throne (2 Sam. 7:5–19; Ps. 89:20–37).

(3) *The Kingdom Anticipated by Prophets*, on which theme there is an extensive body of Scripture embracing the major portion of Old Testament preview. Apart from the immediate evil of their times and the proclamation of judgment upon surrounding nations, the prophets of the Old Testament dwelt much upon the Person of their expected Messiah, the glory and blessing of their coming kingdom, and the place the Gentiles are to occupy in that kingdom. In the midst of these predictions there is a clear recognition of the apostasy of Israel and the chastisement that was to fall on the Davidic house; but not without the assurance that the Davidic Covenant cannot be broken because of the faithfulness of Jehovah (2 Sam. 7:5–19; Ps. 89:20–37). That chastisement was to

take the form of a world-wide scattering of Israel—where they are found today—and which is to be followed by the regathering of that people into their own land when their Messiah returns (cf. Deut. 28:63–68; 30:1–10). These prophecies began to be fulfilled in connection with the last captivity to Babylon six hundred years before Christ and mark the beginning of the period which Christ termed “the times of the Gentiles” (Luke 21:24), and which must continue until the regathering of Israel at the return of Christ, and bears the unmistakable sign that Jerusalem is “trodden down of the Gentiles.” Within this extended Gentile dispensation are other aspects of the kingdom rule on the earth which recognize the presence and authority of Gentile administration.

(4) *The Kingdom Announced as “At Hand,”* but rejected by Israel. The kingdom which is so large a part of Old Testament expectation, in its announcement and rejection occupies much of the synoptic Gospels. The major part of Christ’s precross ministry is concisely described in John 1:11, “He came unto his own, and his own received him not.” Israel’s King was to come to them “meek, and sitting upon an ass” (Zech. 9:9; Matt. 21:5). This explicit prediction as to the manner of Christ’s offer of Himself as Israel’s King at His first advent, is not to be confused with His resistless coming as their Messiah in power and great glory at His second advent (Matt. 24:29–31; Rev. 19:15, 16). By His rejection in the days of His first advent, Israel was made guilty of the overt act of the crucifixion of her King, thus extending the centuries of the chastisement. However, the sacrifice was provided in the death of Christ which answered all the demands of divine holiness against sin and opened a door of blessing to all people of the earth (Rom. 11:25–27).

(5) *The Mystery Form of the Kingdom,* as outlined by Christ in the seven parables of Matthew 13:1–52, continues throughout this age. According to its New Testament usage, the word *mystery* refers to a truth which has hitherto been unrevealed. The present dispensation is characterized by the accomplishment of a divine purpose which is rightly termed a *mystery*. All else is being conformed to this purpose. Ephesians 3:1–6 declares this purpose and there it is seen to be the outcalling into one new Body of both Jews and Gentiles, who, each and every one, are made new creatures by the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit. The kingdom of heaven is God’s rule in the earth and He is now ruling in this the “times of the Gentiles” only in so far as the realization of the New Testament mysteries may require. This is the extent of the kingdom in mystery form (Matt. 13:11).

(6) *The Kingdom to Be Reannounced by the 144,000 in Final Anticipation of*

the Messiah's Return. When about to leave this world and in connection with events which would accompany His second advent, Christ declared, "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world [οἰκουμένη] for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come" (Matt. 24:14; cf. Rev. 7:4–9).

(7) *The Kingdom in Manifestation,* or that age following the second advent of Christ when all prophecies and covenants concerning Jews and Gentiles in the glorified earth will be fulfilled. This era is usually designated as the millennium because of the revelation that it will be for one thousand years (Rev. 20:1–6).

f. Divisions of the Scriptures Relative to the History of Israel in the Land. In the light of the Palestinian Covenant which guarantees to Israel an everlasting possession of the land pledged to Abraham and his seed, it is essential to observe that, according to prophecy and as chastisements, the Israelites were to be three times dispossessed of their land and three times restored to it. It is equally important to note that they are now in the third dispossession of the land and awaiting their restoration to it when their Messiah returns. Having been restored thus, they will go out no more again forever. Since prophecy is much affected by the position Israel occupies at any given time in relation to her land, this division of the Bible's message is of paramount importance.

g. Divisions of the Scriptures Relative to the Gentiles. The far-reaching import of revelation concerning various Gentile positions is second only to that of Israel. They are seen:

(1) *As Outside the Jewish Covenants and Commonwealth Privileges,* which is their estate from Adam to Christ (Eph. 2:12);

(2) *As Receiving a Dispensation of World Rule at the Hour of Israel's Last Dispersion* (Dan. 2:36–44);

(3) *As Now Privileged to Receive the Gospel of Divine Grace,* and, as individuals, to be saved into the new natural headship and heavenly glory of Christ (Acts 10:45; 11:17, 18; 13:47, 48);

(4) *As Brought into Judgment at the End of Their Dispensation of World Rule* and with respect to their treatment of Israel (Matt. 25: 31–46);

(5) *As Seen in Prophecy* as those who are to participate as a subordinate people in Israel's kingdom (Isa. 2:4; 60:3, 5, 12; 62:2; Acts 15:17);

(6) *As Entering and Continuing in Israel's Kingdom* (Matt. 25: 34); and,

(7) *As Partakers in the Glory of the Celestial City,* after the creation of the new heavens and the new earth (Rev. 21:24–26).

h. Divisions of the Scriptures Relative to the Church. Though, as to her earthly history, the Church is restricted to the present age, she may be recognized:

(1) *As Seen in Types* portrayed by certain brides of the Old Testament;

(2) *As Anticipated Directly in Prophecy* (Matt. 16:18);

(3) *As Being Called Out from, and Yet Resident in, the World*, which is true of the Church in the present dispensation (Acts 15:14; Rom. 11:25);

(4) *As Distinct from Judaism*. In the right divisions of the Scripture, nothing is more fundamental or determining than the distinction between Judaism and Christianity. As judged by the proportion of space given to it, Judaism occupies the major portion of the Bible including practically all of the Old Testament and much of the New Testament. The Bible presents both of these great systems, and it is easily one of the greatest mistakes of theologians to suppose that these are one and the same. It is true there are certain features common to both, such as God, man, sin, and redemption; but there are vast differences between them and these differences must be observed. Some of these are listed in Chapters III and XI of Volume IV;

(5) *As Caught Up into Heaven by Resurrection and Translation* and there rewarded and married to Christ (1 Thess. 4:13–18; 2 Cor. 5:10; Rev. 19:7–9);

(6) *As Returning with Christ to His Earthly Reign* (Jude 1:14, 15; Rev. 19:11–16);

(7) *As Reigning with Christ on the Earth* (Rev. 20:6); and,

(8) *As Partakers in the Glory of the New Heaven* and as so related to the celestial city as to give to it the characterizing title, “the bride, the Lamb’s wife.”

4. MAIN DIVISIONS OF BIBLIOLOGY. Bibliology falls naturally into seven divisions, namely, (1) revelation, (2) inspiration, (3) authority, (4) illumination, (5) interpretation, (6) animation, and (7) preservation.

Chapter III

REVELATION

IN ITS THEOLOGICAL usage, the term *revelation* is restricted to the divine act of communicating to man what otherwise man would not know. This extraordinary form of revelation, since it originates with God, is, of necessity, largely dependent on supernatural agencies and means. Nothing could be more advantageous to man, nor is there aught more certain than the fact that God has spoken to man. The satanic question, “Hath God said?” (Gen. 3:1)—ever the substance of human rationalism and doubt as to divine revelation—is engendered by the “father of lies” and is foreign to natural intuition of man.

Having made man in His own image and having endowed man with the capacity to commune with Himself, it is reasonable to expect that this competency in man would be exercised; that in due time God would disclose to man truth concerning Himself and His purposes, also man’s true place in the divine plan of creation—his relation to God, to eternity, to time, to virtue, to sin, to redemption, as well as to all other beings in this universe in which man’s life is cast. Adam, created as he was at the zero point of all knowledge and experience which accrues to man through the process of living, had much to learn even within the sphere of that which is unfallen. God, we are told, came down and talked with Adam in the cool of the day. But if unfallen man needed the impartation of knowledge, how much more does fallen man, whose whole being is darkened, need to be taught of God! To the latter must be given the added truth regarding sin and redemption. God has spoken. To this end the Bible has been written, and the revelation to man of that great body of truth which man could not acquire for himself and which the Bible discloses is its sublime and supreme purpose.

I. Three Important Doctrines Distinguished

1. REVELATION AND REASON. Systematic Theology does draw its material from both revelation and reason, though the portion supplied by reason is uncertain as to its authority and, at best, restricted to the point of insignificance. Reason, as here considered, indicates the intellectual and moral faculties of man exercised in the pursuit of truth and apart from supernatural aid. A right evaluation of reason is too often lacking. Certain men have held that, without

divine guidance or assistance, man can attain to all truth which is essential to his well-being here and hereafter. In all discussions bearing on this problem, reason must be wholly divorced from revelation if it is to be seen in its actual limitations. Such a separation is exceedingly difficult to consummate, since revelation has penetrated to an immeasurable degree into the very warp and woof of civilization. Because of this penetration, some nations are designated *Christian*. Man's true estate under reason and when isolated from revelation is partially demonstrated by the lowest forms of heathenism; but even the heathen are universally convinced of the fact of a Supreme Being and, because of that conviction, are looking for evidence which, in their estimation, expresses His favor or His displeasure. Since Adam walked and talked with God—which revelation he, no doubt, communicated to his posterity—, no man on earth could be entirely void of divine revelation. Though possessed of some slight measure of such revelation, heathen philosophy is a deplorable disclosure of the limitations of human reason. Never have these systems been able to perfect a code of moral duty nor could they discover any authority for their faulty precepts. Similarly, the light of nature and the aid of reason have been too feeble to dispel uncertainties concerning the life beyond the grave. Speaking of future rewards and punishments, Plato said: "The truth is to determine or establish any thing certain about these matters, in the midst of so many doubts and disputations, is the work of God only." And Socrates causes one of his characters to say concerning the future life, "I am of the same opinion with you, that, in this life, it is either absolutely impossible, or extremely difficult, to arrive at a clear knowledge in this matter" (cited by Dick, *Theology*, p. 15). It is not the ancient philosopher but rather the modern unbeliever who contends for the sufficiency of human reason and who ridicules the claims of revelation.

Within the circumscribed boundaries of that which is human, reason is paramount; yet, as compared with divine revelation, it is both fallible and finite.

2. REVELATION AND INSPIRATION. Revelation and inspiration are each in themselves cardinal Bible doctrines and are often confounded. This confusion is perhaps due, to a large degree, to the fact that revelation and inspiration must concur, or converge to one point, in securing that infallible, divine Oracle which the Bible unhesitatingly asserts itself to be. It is, by its own claims, not only a *revealed* body of truth, but is the *only* revealed body of truth. It is a supernatural interposition into the affairs of men. This claim, of necessity, implies two divine operations, namely, *revelation*, which is the direct divine influence which

communicates truth from God to man; and *inspiration*, which is the direct divine influence which secures an accurate transference of truth into language which others may understand.

While these two divine operations do often concur, it is equally true that they often function separately. By revelation of the purest character Joseph was warned of God in a dream that he should flee into Egypt with Mary and the infant Jesus. It is not asserted, however, that he was inspired to record the revelation for the benefit of others. In fact, multitudes heard the voice of God when they heard the gracious revelations which were the substance of Christ's preaching; but none of these, save the chosen disciples, were called upon to undertake the functions of inspired writers.

On the other hand, inspired men presented facts with that accuracy which only inspiration could secure, which facts were not, strictly speaking, revelations. The human authors of the Bible often recorded things they themselves saw or said, in which case there would be no need of direct revelation.

This distinction is further disclosed by the fact that though some men are agreed that the Bible does present a revelation from God they are disagreed concerning the solution of various problems as to how the revelation from God could be transmitted without error through men who in themselves were fallible and even lacking in much of the educational culture of their day. These and other differentiations between revelation and inspiration will naturally be more clearly seen as the consideration of these separate doctrines proceeds.

3. REVELATION, INSPIRATION, AND ILLUMINATION. A clear distinction between revelation and inspiration, on the one hand, and illumination, on the other, is also essential; the last named being that influence or ministry of the Holy Spirit which enables all who are in right relation with God to understand the Scriptures. Of Christ it is written that He "opened" their understanding of the Scriptures (Luke 24:32, 45) Christ Himself promised that when the Spirit came He would "guide" into all truth. Likewise, Paul writes, "We have received ... the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God" (1 Cor. 2:12). And John states of the Spirit that He "teacheth you of all things" (1 John 2:27). However, it is obvious that illumination, being the divine unfolding of Scripture already given, does not contemplate the exalted responsibility of adding to those Scriptures; nor does illumination contemplate an inspired and infallible transmission into language of that which the Spirit

teaches.

Inspiration, by which revelation finds an infallible expression, is confounded by both the Romanists and the rationalists. The Romanists pursue this course that they may maintain their assumption that the Church of Rome, both primitive and present, holds an extra-Biblical authoritative dogma which is equal to that of the Bible—and superior to the Bible, judging from their conclusions whenever a difference between the Bible and the Romish dogma arises. This is a palpable arrogation; for proofs which establish an authoritative, inspired Bible are more than sufficient, while the proofs for an authoritative, inspired church are nil. The rationalist, in pursuit of reason, confounds illumination, or the general influence of the Spirit on all regenerate hearts, with the extraordinary achievements of revelation and inspiration. This they do, even when admitting a specific divine revelation, by attributing to the human authors of the Bible all the variability, uncertainty, and deficiency which characterizes the best of men even when acting under the enabling power of the Spirit.

The experience of Balaam, of King Saul, and of Caiaphas, in declaring a divine revelation is proof that inspiration does not necessarily imply spiritual illumination. And, on the other hand, the fact that the uncounted host of those who are blessed by spiritual illumination do not receive revelation or exercise the functions of inspiration is proof sufficient to disarm the claim of the rationalist.

It is significant that in one passage, namely, 1 Corinthians 2:9–13, there is reference to *revelation* in verse 10, to *illumination* in verse 12, and to *inspiration* in verse 13.

Finally, both revelation and inspiration may be distinguished from illumination in that the last named is promised to all believers; that it admits of degrees, since it increases or decreases; that it depends not on sovereign choice but rather on personal adjustment to the Spirit of God; and without it none is ever able to come to personal salvation (1 Cor. 2:14), or the knowledge of God's revealed truth.

II. The Nature of Revelation

From the first disclosure of Himself to man in the Garden of Eden to the heavenly consummation when the redeemed shall know even as they are known and when that which is in part shall be done away by the advent of that which in the realm of spiritual understanding is “perfect” (1 Cor. 13:9–12)—even though

in times past He has “suffered all nations to walk in their own ways” (Acts 14:15–17)—, God has never left Himself “without a witness.” He has wrought with unfailing faithfulness to the end that men might see beyond their native horizon and apprehend to some degree the facts and features of a larger sphere. God has sought by every available means to manifest Himself, His works, His will, and His purpose. To this end, He has by His Spirit moved men to desire this knowledge. This divine moving of the hearts of men in general is thus expressed by the Apostle Paul to the Athenians: “that they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us” (Acts 17:27); while the more exalted and specific feature of His own deepest desire, in which all the redeemed may share, is thus expressed by the same Apostle: “that I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death” (Phil. 3:10). Since “the chief end of man is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever,” man is not restricted in the sphere of his own being to that in which he was placed by creation. The way is open for him to move on into realms celestial and to know, even now, something of the exalted privilege of “fellowship with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ,” to possess eternal life, and to anticipate a final conformity to Christ. Divine revelation is the making known to man of all he must come to know,—which lies between the zero point at which he began his career as a creature and the finality of understanding because of which he, being redeemed, may hold uninterrupted communion with God in heaven and respond intelligently to the things of God in eternal realms. In general, a divine revelation is accomplished whenever any manifestation of God is discerned or any evidence of His presence, purpose, or power is communicated. Such manifestations are discoverable all the way from the grand spectacle of creation down to the least experience of the lowliest human creature. So stupendous, far-reaching, and complex is this body of truth that any attempt to delineate or classify it will of necessity be incomplete.

It is the common practice of theologians to subdivide revelation into two principal divisions, namely, that which is *general* and that which is *specific*, or that which is *natural* and that which is *supernatural*, or that which is *original* and that which is *soteriological*. The former of each of these twofold categories incorporates that revelation which is communicated through nature and history, while the latter incorporates all that which comes as an intervention into the natural course of things, and which is supernatural both as to source and mode.

For a more comprehensive elucidation, divine revelation is here particularized

under seven modes—(a) God revealed through *nature*, (b) God revealed through *providence*, (c) God revealed through *preservation*, (d) God revealed through *miracles*, (e) God revealed by *direct communication*, (f) God revealed through the *incarnation*, and (g) God revealed through the *Scriptures*.

1. GOD REVEALED THROUGH NATURE. The transcendent earthly glory which awaited unfallen man when created could have had no meaning to him apart from the realization that all he beheld was a work of his Creator, and, to that extent, a revelation of the Creator's wisdom, power, and glory. But even such a display as man saw before the curse fell upon it (Gen. 3:18, 19; Rom. 8:19–21) was augmented immeasurably by the presence of, and communion with, God. Nature's revelation was impressive in itself, but needed then, as now, to be completed by a close and personal intimacy with God. On the relation of the natural and supernatural aspects of revelation in Eden, Dr. B. B. Warfield writes: "The impression is strong that what is meant to be conveyed to us is that man dwelt with God in Eden, and enjoyed with Him immediate and not merely mediate communion. In that case, we may understand that if man had not fallen, he would have continued to enjoy immediate intercourse with God, and that the cessation of this immediate intercourse is due to sin" (*Revelation and Inspiration*, p. 8).

The Bible definitely points to nature as a practical revelation of God. We read: "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge. There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard. Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun. Which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race. His going forth is from the end of the heaven, and his circuit unto the ends of it: and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof" (Ps. 19:1–6). Similarly, nature's revelation, with its restricted value, is declared in Romans 1:19–23. The reason advanced in this passage as to why God's wrath is revealed from heaven against unrighteous men who hold down, or resist, the truth (vs. 18) is said to be "Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. For 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; so that they are without excuse: because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but

became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things.” That which may be known of God through nature has been revealed to all men alike, even invisible things including His eternal power and Godhead. Hence, failing to recognize God as thus revealed and to glorify Him, and turning to idolatry is, on man’s part, without excuse and merits the just recompense which God has imposed. It should be observed in this connection that nature’s revelation presents nothing of the great need and fact of redemption. The heathen world, apart from specific revelation, comes to a feeble recognition of a Supreme Being; but nature does not disclose the truth that “God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” Until informed as to God’s saving grace in Christ Jesus, the heathen would be possessed with an excuse for his ignorance concerning redemption; but there is no intimation that this ignorance will commend him to God’s saving grace.

All naturalistic theistic arguments as to the existence of God are based on the revelation concerning God which nature affords. These (yet to be considered under *Theology Proper*) are none other than an effort on man’s part to reason from nature back to its cause, and since such reasoning is justified, man is “without excuse.”

2. GOD REVEALED THROUGH PROVIDENCE. Providence is the execution in all its details of the divine program of the ages. That such a program exists is not only reasonable to the last degree, but is abundantly set forth in the Scriptures (Deut. 30:1–10; Dan. 2:31–45; 7:1–28; 9:24–27; Hosea 3:4, 5; Matt. 23:37–25:46; Acts 15:13–18; Rom. 11:13–29; 2 Thess. 2:1–12; Rev. 2:1–22:21). The far-flung purposes of God which sweep the ages from eternity past to eternity to come are also perfect in their minutest detail, even embracing the falling sparrow and numbering the hairs of the head. In the discerning of the providence of God, only spiritual vision avails. The restricted perception of the unregenerate, who have not God in all their thoughts, is well expressed in the familiar words, “Chance and change are busy ever,” which words, though a part of a Christian hymn, have no place in a Christian’s relation to God. To a child of God the unfailing providence of God is better expressed in the Word of God: “All things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose” (Rom. 8:28).

The doctrine of divine providence is not without its problems. It cannot be otherwise so long as sin and suffering are in the world. A larger understanding as to the divine purposes and the necessary means God employs to reach these ends offers much in the direction of a solution of these difficulties. God's revelation of Himself through providence is limitless. History is *His Story*, and on the pages of Scripture He has so related Himself to future events, both by covenants and prediction, that assurance is given that there will be a perfect consummation of all things and the end will justify the means used to secure it.

3. GOD REVEALED THROUGH PRESERVATION. The New Testament is specific in its declarations concerning the relation which the Second Person in the Godhead sustains to this material universe. It is written of Him as Creator: "For by him 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" (Col. 1:16). "And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands" (Heb. 1:10). It is also stated that this One who by the Word of His power called all things into existence (Heb. 11:3), does by the same word of power cause them to hold together, or continue as they were: "And he is before all things, and by him all things consist" ("hold together"—Col. 1:17); "And upholding all things by the word of his power" (Heb. 1:3). Christ is also the bestower and sustainer of life (John 1:4; 5:26; Acts 17:25; 1 Cor. 15:45). He it is who gives eternal life (John 10:10, 28), and is Himself that life which He gives (Col. 1:27; 1 John 5:12). As the sap of the vine sustains the branch, so the divine life is ever the vital force in the Christian. It is true that "in him we live, and move, and have our being" (Acts 17:28). God is likewise revealed in the care which He exercises in the preservation of each individual, especially those who trust Him. This truth is expressed in two New Testament passages: "Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? ... for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matt. 6:31–33). "But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus" (Phil. 4:19).

In the Old Testament the title *Almighty God* ('El Shaddai') conveys the truth that God sustains His people. The term indicates more than that God is a God of strength. That He is; but the title includes the impartation of His strength as a

child draws succor from the mother's breast. The word *shad* as combined in 'El Shaddai,' means *breast*, and supports the conception of a mother's nourishment imparted to her child.

Thus it is seen that God is revealed through His preservation of all things in general, and His people in particular.

4. GOD REVEALED THROUGH MIRACLES. Whatever may be relevant to the fullest understanding of all that miracles disclose, it is certain that they serve to reveal God to man. This is no less true in one Testament than it is in the other. The supernatural character of a miracle discloses the divine power, as well as the purpose, of the One by whom it is wrought. Aside from the good which was accomplished, the miracles of Christ served to prove that He was God manifest in the flesh (Matt. 11:2–6). The person and power of Satan is also revealed through supernatural works (2 Cor. 11:14; Rev. 13:1–18).

5. GOD REVEALED BY DIRECT COMMUNICATION. God has spoken to man. This fact presents two different problems, namely, that of God who speaks, and that of man who hears. On the divine side, it is evident that God, who created all the human faculties, is abundantly able to deliver His message to the mind of man. On the human side, men were caused to know with certitude that a message had been given to them from God, and, because of this conviction, they were bold in its delivery to others.

The revelation of God through direct intercourse with men is a far-reaching aspect of this great theme. It includes theophanies, visions, dreams, and the direct *mouth-to-mouth* communication with which Jehovah honored Moses as He honored no other prophet (Num. 12:8; Deut. 34:10); though He did speak directly to Adam, Cain, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and many others. That impenetrable mystery as to how the writers of the Bible received their messages from God, though belonging to the present discussion, will be considered more at length under the doctrine of inspiration.

In contemplating the fact of direct, divine revelation, almost limitless variety as to detail of mode and method is confronted. This is reasonable. God being a Person, and not an automaton, will naturally adapt Himself to the individuals and to the situations involved. The variety of the divine mode of approach to men extends from the theophanies in which Jehovah, or the Angel of Jehovah who is the Second Person of the Godhead, appears and speaks to individuals—and that manner of direct communication continues from the first theophanies of the Old Testament to the Lord's appearance to Paul on the Damascus road and to John

on the Isle of Patmos—to the simplest and most unobtrusive impression by which one is divinely influenced to act or speak. How natural and wholly within the range of the experience of God’s saints is the word of Abraham’s servant: “I being in the way, the LORD led me” (Gen. 24:27)! And, indeed, such leading is the portion of all who are regenerate. We read, “For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God” (Rom. 8:14).

Not always did God require those to whom He spoke to put His words into written form. This is particularly true during those centuries from Adam to Moses when little Scripture was written and when God immediately directed the ways of various individuals. What divine communications preceded the actions of Melchizedek (Gen. 14:18–20), the words of Laban (Gen. 24:50), or those of Balaam (Num. 24:3–9) are not revealed. Inspired men eventually recorded the messages God gave to the men of old and thus the record is preserved (Jude 1:14, 15 presents the only existing report of the words of Enoch).

In every case a message from God is authoritative and, therefore, is not to be deemed of less importance because of the fact that it came by a dream or vision rather than by a *face-to-face* conversation with God. Divine revelation is supernatural and the message given is the pure Word of God. The false prophets “prophesy out of their own hearts” (Ezek. 13:2–17; cf. Jer. 14:14; 23:16, 26). Evidently there was that in the true revelation which convinced the messenger of the divine authority of his message, and the false prophet is everywhere held to be as fully conscious that his words were without divine authority.

Closely akin to that form of revelation which is direct and personal is the experience of all who commune with God in prayer or recognize His voice speaking to them through the Scriptures. God does reveal Himself and His will to those who wait on Him. It is written: “If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him” (James 1:5).

6. GOD REVEALED THROUGH THE INCARNATION. There is much Scripture bearing on this aspect of divine revelation and only a portion may be cited here.

By becoming flesh and dwelling “among us” (John 1:14), the Lord Jesus Christ, “who is ... God” (Rom. 9:5), was, is, and evermore shall be, “God manifest in the flesh” (1 Tim. 3:16). To Peter, who had said “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God,” Christ replied, “Flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven” (Matt. 16:16, 17). Isaiah had declared, “And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed” (Isa. 40:5); and John

records, “We beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father” (John 1:14). Likewise, we are told, “No man hath seen God at any time,” that is, in His divine essence or triune Being, but “the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him” (John 1:18). That declaration contemplated the power and wisdom of God, since it is written, “Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God” (1 Cor. 1:24). As the eternal Λόγος (‘Logos’) of God, the Lord Jesus Christ has ever been the expression, or manifestation, of God—the *living* Word of God, as the Bible is the *written* Word of God. Of the Λόγος it is written, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God... And the Word was made flesh ... and we beheld his glory” (John 1:1, 2, 14). As a word is the expression of a thought, so the Λόγος is to the Godhead. The living Word is ever the Manifester. He was the Angel of Jehovah as seen in all the theophanies, and is the final Revealer of God. He said: “He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father.” Though God “at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets,” He hath “in these last days spoken unto us by his Son” (Heb. 1:1, 2). Christ is the voice of God speaking to men, and that is a direct, uncomplicated revelation of God. When beholding or hearing the Son, men are enabled to know what God is like. This revelation is complete, wanting nothing; for we are told that, “in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily” (Col. 2:9). But there are specific aspects in which the Λόγος is the expression of the Godhead to men. He revealed the *power* of God to the extent that Nicodemus could say, “No man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him” (John 3:2); and the *wisdom* of God to the extent that those who heard Him reported, “Never man spake like this man” (John 7:46); and the *glory* of God to the extent that John could say, “We beheld his glory” (John 1:14); and the *life* of God to the extent that, again, John could say, “That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life; (for the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;) that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you” (1 John 1:1–3). But above and beyond all these attributes of God which the Λόγος manifested, is the revelation of the *love* of God; which love, though conspicuous in every act of Christ throughout His earthly ministry, was, notwithstanding, especially and finally revealed through His death. “God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son.” “God commendeth his love toward us, in that,

while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (Rom. 5:8), and “Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us” (1 John 3:16).

God could not draw nearer, nor could He disclose more clearly the wonders of His Person, the perfections of His purpose, nor the depths of His love and grace, than He has done in the incarnation, which in the scope of its purpose embraced the life, teachings, example, death, and resurrection of the eternal Son, the Second Person of the Godhead. The multitudes of His day heard and were blessed by His gracious words, and thus, though not called of God to write under inspiration what they heard, did, nevertheless, receive a large measure of divine revelation. The inestimable value of that revelation which came by the incarnation, along with other forms of manifestation, has been preserved for all generations on the pages of the inspired and inerrant Scriptures.

7. GOD REVEALED THROUGH THE SCRIPTURES. Of the modes of revelation named above, there is, of necessity, some overlapping and some interdependence. There could be no extended or accurate apprehension of that revelation which nature affords apart from the divine interpretation of it which the Bible provides. There could be no providence apart from preservation, nor preservation apart from providence and these, in turn, can be seen in their true light only as they are set forth on the pages of God’s Word. Miracles are a revelation of God to those who witness them, but the record of them in the Bible extends the value of their testimony to all in all generations who read the divine chronicles of them. What God has said to men directly could easily be forgotten or perverted, but the substance and purity of those *face-to-face* messages have been preserved in the divine record of them. Similarly, the value of the incarnation revelation, while existing quite apart from any written annals, has become a message of infinite riches extending to all the knowledge of God and the way into, and assurance of, eternal life. The life and death of Christ are indisputable facts of history, but the divine blessing is assured to all those who believe the *record* God has given concerning His Son (1 John 5:9–12).

It may be concluded, then, that the Bible is a specific and essential feature of all divine revelation. It, however, presents certain important features:

a. Divine Revelation is Varied in Its Themes. It embraces that which is doctrinal, devotional, historical, prophetic, and practical.

b. Divine Revelation is Partial. It is written, “The secret things belong unto the LORD our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law” (Deut. 29:29).

c. Concerning the Facts Revealed Divine Revelation is Complete. As to the Son, He is the πλήρωμα (*plērōma*, ‘fulness’) of the Godhead bodily (Col. 2:9), and as to the final salvation of all who believe, they are πεπληρωμένοι (*peplērōmenoi*, ‘complete’) in Him (Col. 2:10). Though complete in Him now, they are yet to be conformed to His image (Rom. 8:29; 1 John 3:2).

d. Divine Revelation is Progressive. Its plan of procedure is expressed by the words, “First the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear” (Mark 4:28). Each book of the Bible avails itself of the accumulated truth that has gone before, and the last book is like a vast union station into which all the great highways of revelation and prediction converge and terminate. No complete understanding of revealed truth can be gained apart from its consummation in that book, and that book, in turn, cannot be understood apart from the apprehension of all that has gone before. The last book of the Bible is the Revelation supreme.

e. Divine Revelation is Primarily Unto Redemption. Its progress of doctrine develops hand in hand with the doctrine of redemption. God has spoken to the end that man may be “wise unto salvation” (2 Tim. 3:15). God has caused a record concerning His Son to be written and men who believe that record are saved, and those who do not believe that record are lost (1 John 5:9–12).

f. Divine Revelation is Final. It incorporates the truth “which was once delivered unto the saints” (Jude 1:3). From it naught is to be taken, nor to it is anything to be added.

g. Divine Revelation is Accurate to the Point of Infinity. “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God” and is God’s word *written*.

Chapter IV

INSPIRATION

THE THEOLOGICAL use of the term *inspiration* is a reference to that controlling influence which God exerted over the human authors by whom the Old and New Testament were written. It has to do with the reception of the divine message and the accuracy with which it is transcribed. Whatever concerns the origin of the message itself belongs, as has been seen, to the larger field of revelation. Since by a revelation God has spoken and the divinely given capacity of man to receive a message from God has been exercised, all human thought and action is now subject to that stabilizing message which God has given. In place of man's native agnosticism, born of his fallen human limitations, a God-given Revelation is bequeathed to man in a permanent, written form which not only expands the field of man's knowledge into the realms of infinity, but serves ever as a corrective of those fallible, shifting fancies and theories which human ignorance unceasingly engenders. Happy, indeed, is the regenerate man who listens attentively and submissively to the Word of God. The divine message serves to give form and substance to every doctrine and to none more effectively than to that of *inspiration*. A babel of voices, hopelessly discordant in their relation to each other and unified only in the one feature that they are opposed to the sublime doctrine of inspiration which the Bible sets forth, has characterized every generation of recent centuries. An examination of many books that have been written in the past century and which treat of the doctrine of inspiration discloses the fact that whether of one generation or another each author, in turn, reveals the occurrence that, at the time of his writing, an irreconcilable conflict was on which had reached, what seemed to him to be, a crisis between those who defend and those who oppose the long-accepted beliefs touching the inspiration of the Scriptures. This is revealing; indicating, as it does, the pertinacious opposition which the natural man—scholar though he may be—exerts against all things supernatural.

Without doubt it is the supernatural element, which constitutes the very warp and woof of the Bible doctrine of inspiration, that not only gives to it its distinctive and exalted character but also repels the spiritually darkened mind of the unregenerate man—a darkness which is in no way relieved by human learning. The scholar who finds it easier to believe that, when inanimate matter by accident became “complex enough and in appropriate collection, living

organisms may have emerged,” and that those organisms, in turn, “developed by inherent spontaneity into rational human beings,” than to believe that God created man in His own image and likeness—and only because there is a superficial show of supposedly *natural* processes in the former which relieves the burden of the obvious supernatural element which is the very substance of the latter—, such a scholar will resent the teaching that God has spoken to man and that this message has been, under the guidance of God, transcribed into infallible writings.

Devout men—some of great scholarship—have always agreed in the main as to the inerrant and supernatural qualities of the Bible. This belief has become distinguished as “the traditional view,” or “the doctrine of the church.” This harmony of belief on the part of devout men is not the concord of ignorance, since ignorance is incapable of concord. It is due to the fact that the norm of truth concerning Bible inspiration exists and, having discovered that norm, men are automatically of one mind. Outside that norm only wrangling dissonance will ever be heard. The following from Dr. B. B. Warfield tends greatly to the clarifying of this subject:

This church-doctrine of inspiration differs from the theories that would fain supplant it, in that it is not the invention nor the property of an individual, but the settled faith of the universal church of God; in that it is not the growth of yesterday, but the assured persuasion of the people of God from the first planting of the church until to-day; in that it is not a protean shape, varying its affirmations to fit every new change in the ever-shifting thought of men, but from the beginning has been the church’s constant and abiding conviction as to the divinity of the Scriptures committed to her keeping. It is certainly a most impressive fact,—this well-defined, aboriginal, stable doctrine of the church as to the nature and trustworthiness of the Scriptures of God, which confronts with its gentle but steady persistence of affirmation all the theories of inspiration which the restless energy of unbelieving and half-believing speculation has been able to invent in this agitated nineteenth century of ours. Surely the seeker after the truth in the matter of the inspiration of the Bible may well take this church-doctrine as his starting-point.—*Bibliotheca Sacra*, LI, 615–16, 1894

Could it be demonstrated that the Bible advances no doctrine as to its own inspiration, men might be justified in an attempt to formulate a so-called “theory of inspiration.” But the Bible is especially clear and convincing as to the character of its own inspiration. Its teaching upon this, as upon all major doctrines, challenges the student to vigilant research. It is, however, one thing to give devout, analytical study to the comprehensive doctrine of inspiration as disclosed in the Bible, being amenable to every word God has spoken on this aspect of truth, and quite another thing to ignore what God has spoken and upon a rationalistic basis to invent a *theory*. In fact, the Bible presents no theory regarding its own inspiration which—not unlike the liberalist’s notion that

Christianity must take its place among comparative religions—is called upon to compete with humanly devised schemes. The irrelevance which obtains between revelation and reason is as conspicuous in the field of inspiration as elsewhere, and the theologian must be reminded again that his task is not that of creation or origination of doctrine but rather the induction and scientific arrangement of the truth bearing on this theme which God has been pleased to reveal. To reaffirm: The question is not what men—even great scholars—think is a workable theory as to the manner in which the Bible was written; it is what the Bible declares concerning itself.

It will be conceded that God is able to produce a book which is verbally accurate, the precise statement in every particular of His own thought. Such a book the Bible, as originally written, claims to be. However, in the light of this statement—confessedly dogmatic—, certain problems arise:

I. The Fact and Importance of Inspiration

There is need of a clear understanding of the precise contribution inspiration makes to the whole divine purpose in revelation. As previously demonstrated, inspiration is not revelation. At best, inspiration can only receive the message and add the element of accuracy to the Sacred Writings, which writings are that body of truth God has revealed. In the following section of Bibliology, which deals with *canonicity* and *authority*, it will be demonstrated that the authority of the Bible's message does not depend upon inspiration. However, there is no implication to be drawn from these requisite distinctions that the fact of inspiration in both its verbal and plenary forms, is not momentous. Revelation, inspiration, and authority are Bible doctrines, closely related, yet unconfused; each supplying an immeasurable offering to the grand actuality—*the message of God to man*.

Though the preservation of truth in unerring writings is of untold value to all generations, much that enters into the Scriptures existed before any record was made, and the recording of the realities adds nothing to this substance. If the great essentials of revelation existed only in their written form they would be classed properly as so much fiction, regardless of the perfection of the literature by which they were expressed. Similarly, unfulfilled prophecy, though now wholly dependent on its written form, must, nevertheless, eventuate in actual occurrence.

Granting that God has a body of truth which He would enjoin upon man, it is

not difficult to recognize the importance of an inerrant record of that body of truth. Nor is it a matter of surprise that an increasing pressure is exerted, first from one group and then another, to break down the Bible's own testimony regarding its inspiration. That doctrine of inspiration, which the church has held in all her generations, abides, not because its defenders are able to shout louder than their opponents, nor by virtue of any human defense, but because of the fact that it is embedded within the divine Oracles themselves. Since it is so embedded in the Oracles of God, no saint or apostle could do otherwise than to *believe* the word God has spoken. It may be observed, therefore, that to hold the traditional belief regarding inspiration is not necessarily a blind support of a "lost cause," or a retreat to the Romish position that a thing is true because the church propounds it; it is a recognition and acceptance of the Bible's teaching and that belief brings one into the "goodly fellowship of the apostles and prophets."

Little space need be given to quotation from the writings of the opponents of verbal and plenary inspiration. They have in the majority of cases admitted either directly or indirectly that the men who wrote the Scriptures held the traditional belief as to inspiration. Some admit that Christ may have held that view. Under these conditions it is necessary for these opponents to contend that the human authors were either deceived or were themselves deceivers. A very brief review of these arguments is introduced at this point:

1. CHRIST VERSUS THE APOSTLES. In one conception a distinction is drawn between the supposed beliefs of Christ and those of the apostles. Christ is pictured as opposed to the apostles and seeking to save them from the erroneous traditions of the Jews, which traditions included the belief in the inerrancy of the Scriptures. It is declared boldly: "We conclude with great probability that the Redeemer did *not* share the conception of His Israelitish contemporaries as to the inspiration of their Bible ... from the fact that He repeatedly expresses His dissatisfaction with the manner usual among them of looking upon and using the sacred books. He tells the scribes to their face that they do not understand the Scriptures (Matt. 22:29; Mark 12:24), and that it is delusion for them to think to possess eternal life in *them*, therefore in a *book* (John 5:39), even as He also (in the same place) seems to speak disapprovingly of their searching of the Scriptures, because it proceeds from such a perverted point of view" (Richard Rothe, *Zur Dogmatik*, p. 177, cited by Warfield, *Revelation and Inspiration*, pp. 184–85). As to the two passages offered in evidence, the former was addressed

to the scribes and not to the apostles and there is no evidence that such a criticism could be with any reason directed toward those of the apostles who wrote the New Testament or any who did not write. Whatever may be the interpretation of the phrase in the latter passage—“for in them ye think ye have eternal life”—, there is the clearest assurance that the Scriptures of the Old Testament “are they which testify” of Christ (cf. Luke 24:27). Thus the apostles are discredited, but an effort is made to extricate Christ from the indefensible tradition by which the apostles are supposed to have been bound. By a baseless assumption, Christ is presented as entertaining a liberality and looseness in doctrine in harmony with that which Rothe himself exhibits, and this in turn is made the occasion of a call, “Back to Christ!” which, in this and every other instance, means: come away from the tradition-bound apostles to the modernized Christ.

2. ACCOMMODATION. Again, an argument is advanced against the doctrine as held by the apostles which is to the effect that the apostles thought the Jewish tradition of the inerrancy of the Scriptures was untenable, yet they accommodated their language, though contrary to their own beliefs, to the insuperable prejudices of their day. To quote: “The New Testament writers were completely dominated by the spirit of the age, so that their testimony on the question of Scripture inspiration possesses no independent value” (Stuart, *The Principles of Christianity*, p. 70, quoted by Warfield, *ibid.*, p. 191).

3. IGNORANCE. Likewise, it is contended that the apostles were “ignorant men” (Acts 4:13) and were therefore predisposed to error, and that Christ Himself, on His human side, could have known little more than was current in His day. It is intimated that He could have had no access to the scientific verifications of these modern times and therefore could rise no higher than the level of thought which characterized His own day. What hope is there of concord between two schools of thought, one of which freely questions the authority even of Christ on the ground of a baseless claim that He was, because of His humanity, as fallible and ignorant as other men, while the other ascribes to Him all the omniscience of the Godhead Three? As for the Apostle Paul, his views, though much influenced by Jewish tradition, were not stated dogmatically, it is claimed, and therefore carry little weight.

4. CONTRADICTION. Finally, much is made of alleged “contradictions,” “inaccuracies,” and “inconsistencies.” It is pointed out with much assurance that

an inerrant book could present no such problems. But who is the judge? If the Bible contains errors as seen by God, the case would be serious; if it contains errors as seen by men, the difficulty may be wholly accounted for in the sphere of human misunderstandings. The latter possibility is but little in evidence in the writings of the opposers of the Bible doctrine of inspiration. The Spirit of God has declared "Every word of God is pure" (Prov. 30:5); "The words of Jehovah are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times" (Ps. 12:6); "The law of Jehovah is perfect, converting the soul" (Ps. 19:7); and, "As for God, his way is perfect; the word of Jehovah is tried" (Ps. 18:30). Confronted with such statements as these, a man of reason and candor will at least give some consideration to the possibility that the supposed errors in the Bible might seem to be such because of human limitations.

There are difficulties which do arise in the study of the text of Scripture. In the nineteenth century, Biblical criticism advanced many objections to the credibility of the Bible which, it was claimed, learned research brought to light. The publishing of these claims proved a stimulus to faithful men who were minded to defend the plenary inspiration of the Scriptures. Along with their research came the findings of archaeology; all of which have gone a long way both as a refutation of so-called *errors*, and as a demonstration of the fact that, with sufficient light, so-called *discrepancies* disappear. The part archaeology has played in this so important and far-reaching achievement cannot be estimated; and, we are assured, this demonstration of the accuracy of the Word of God will go on to even greater confirmation of the Bible. It is suggestive at least that research and archaeology have strengthened the claims of the opposer at no point, but have served in every case to confirm the teachings of the Scriptures. Many worthy volumes have been written which set forth the results of recent investigation. These the student should read with exceptional care. Of these supposed errors, Dr. Charles Hodge wrote, even three generations ago, that "for the most part they are trivial," "only apparent," and there are few indeed that are "of any real importance" (*Systematic Theology*, I., 169).

A difference is to be observed between *objections* and *difficulties*. The former, if they existed, might serve to deter one from espousing the doctrine involved. The latter do not tend to the same end. If one holds objections to the doctrine of redemption he will in all probability turn from that doctrine as a whole; whereas, though there are difficulties in the doctrine such as no finite mind has ever solved the way of life may be entered and its eternal values claimed in spite of the difficulties. In such a case, the individual humbly declares that, though he

cannot understand all that is involved, he recognizes that all facts concerning the doctrine are doubtless capable of being harmonized and comprehended where sufficient understanding exists. Especially is one encouraged thus to believe when the doctrine is seen to stand every proper test put upon it. Concerning the doctrine of verbal, plenary inspiration, it is equally reasonable and it is advantageous to stand where the devout men of all generations, including Christ and the apostles, have stood, and from that position to face and seek to solve such difficulties as may arise.

Aside from the definite claim of the Bible as to its verbal, plenary inspiration, there are two important considerations, namely, (a) the Scriptures are in themselves a phenomenon of such a character—presenting truth on so vast a scale and so marvelous that the added claim to divine accuracy appears, *a fortiori*, as a necessary corollary to the whole. Such surpassing revelation could hardly be presented in its perfection of form apart from divine inspiration. And (b) the men who served as human authors of the books of the Bible were in themselves trustworthy witnesses. As such, they are to be credited whether they speak under inspiration or not. These men were not deceived nor were they deceivers. Apart from the claims of inspiration, the basis of faith remains, established, as it is, by credible witnesses. Their claim to inspiration cannot be discredited until the witnesses are discredited. Similarly, it is no small evidence in the case that the human authors—and there were upwards of forty of them extending over a period of 1600 years—, whether inspired or not, are in perfect agreement as to the things which they teach; nor has one of them at any time recorded one intimation that the Bible is *not* the inspired Word of God written.

The question at issue is not new. It has appeared in past generations and will appear in succeeding generations so long as unbelief is in the world. It is a question as to what is to be accepted—the teachings of the Bible, or the teachings of men.

II. Theories of Inspiration

So-called *theories* of inspiration are the attempts men of varying faith have made to frame a relationship between two authorships. Some of these *theories* are here presented:

1. THE MECHANICAL OR DICTATION THEORY. Had God dictated the Scriptures to men, the style and writing would be uniform. It would be the diction and vocabulary of the divine Author, and free from the idiosyncrasies of men (cf. 2

Pet. 3:15, 16). All evidence of interest on the part of the human authors would be wanting (cf. Rom. 9:1–3). It is true that the human authors did not always realize the purport of their writings. Moses could hardly have known the typical significance latent in the history of Adam, Enoch, Abraham, Isaac, and Joseph, or of the typology of Christ hidden in his description of the tabernacle which he wrote according to the pattern that was showed him in the Mount. He could not have understood why no reference should be made to the parents, or the beginning or ending of days, of Melchisedec (Heb. 7:1–3). A message which is dictated is obviously the product of the one who dictates; but if one is left free to write in behalf of another and then it is discovered that, while writing according to his own feelings, style, and vocabulary, he has recorded the precise message of the one in whose behalf he wrote and as perfectly as though it had been dictated by that one, the conviction is engendered that a supernatural accomplishment has been wrought. Under this arrangement, the human author is given full scope for his authorship, yet the exalted message is itself secured. The result is as complete as dictation could make it; but the method, though not lacking in that mystery which always accompanies the supernatural, is more in harmony with God's ways of dealing with men, in which He *uses*, rather than *annuls*, their wills. There is no intimation that God ever dictated any message to man other than that which Moses transcribed when in Jehovah's presence in the holy Mount. This theory is easily classified as one in which the divine authorship is emphasized almost to the point of exclusion of the human authorship.

2. PARTIAL INSPIRATION. According to this conception, inspiration reaches only to doctrinal teachings and precepts, to truths unknowable by the human authors. Thus the objective in all inspiration—to secure inerrant writings—is denied to certain parts of the Bible. It matters nothing as to what the human author may have previously known; inspiration secures accuracy in *all* that he wrote. This theory is an assumption which finds no support in the Bible. It is obvious that it tends to separate the two authorships.

3. DEGREES OF INSPIRATION. The postulate that there are degrees of inspiration is a theory which has claimed many supporters. Advocates of this theory attempt to classify the degrees they propose by such words as “suggestion, direction, elevation, superintendency, guidance, and direct revelation.” Though the Scriptures yield little encouragement to such distinctions, these distinctions do offer a wide field for the play of the imagination and for speculation, the value of which, at best, is most doubtful. This theory is classed as one in which some

parts of the Bible are claimed to be inspired to a greater degree than others, giving latitude for the contention to be made that the Bible is infested with errors. The two authorships are acknowledged, but are not always conceived of as in coalition in any given text.

4. THE CONCEPT AND NOT THE WORDS INSPIRED. This hypothesis attempts to conceive of thoughts apart from words, the theory being that God imparted ideas but left the human author free to express them in his own language. Quite apart from the fact that ideas are not transferable by any other medium than words, this scheme ignores the immeasurable importance of *words* in any message. Even a legal document which men execute over trivial matters may depend wholly upon one word therein. Almost every covenant and promise contained in the Bible depends for its force and value upon one of the words used. Exegetical study of the Scriptures in the original languages is a study of *words*. It is to the one end that the concept may be gained from the words rather than that unimportant words represent a concept. Apart from verbal inspiration reaching to the *words*, exegetical study is at an end. The Bible, when referring to its message, never calls attention to a mere concept; it rather speaks of its message as committed to man in the *words* which the Holy Spirit teacheth (1 Cor. 2:13). Christ said, "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life" (John 6:63), and "I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me" (John 17:8), "and God spake all these words, saying" (Ex. 20:1). Such clear teaching of the Scriptures as to the significance of the specific words which are used is disclosed in hundreds of Bible texts.

5. NATURAL INSPIRATION. As there have been exceptional artists, musicians, and poets who have produced masterpieces which have not been excelled, it is contended by the proponents of this theory that there have been exceptional men of spiritual insight who, because of their native gifts, were able to write the Scriptures. This is the lowest notion of inspiration and emphasizes the human authorship to the exclusion of the divine. One writer states: "Inspiration is only a higher potency of what every man possesses in some degree." To this another has replied: "The inspiration of everybody is equivalent to the inspiration of nobody." The main objective in all Bible inspiration—to secure divine accuracy for every portion of it—is wholly wanting according to this opinion.

6. MYSTICAL INSPIRATION. Since Christians are empowered of God for their various tasks—God working in them "both to will and to do of his good

pleasure” (Phil. 2:13)—, it is held by some that, in like manner, the human authors were enabled to write the Scriptures. If this theory were true, any Christian might at any time by special divine energy write Scripture. The defenders of this scheme are evidently not concerned with the basis on which the authority of the Bible rests. Schleiermacher, who was himself a genius of no small magnitude, is probably responsible for the more general dissemination of this view of inspiration. His statement is that inspiration is “an awakening and excitement of the religious consciousness, different in degree rather than in kind from the pious inspiration or intuitive feelings of holy men.” Of the influence of Schleiermacher upon the general beliefs concerning inspiration, Dr. B. B. Warfield, writing of the mystical view of inspiration, states:

Very varied forms have been taken by this conception; and more or less expression has been given to it, in one form or another, in every age. In its extremer manifestations, it has formerly tended to sever itself from the main stream of Christian thought and even to form separate sects. But in our own century [the nineteenth], through the great genius of Schleiermacher it has broken in upon the church like a flood, and washed into every corner of the Protestant world. As a consequence, we find men everywhere who desire to acknowledge as from God only such Scripture as “finds them,”—who cast the clear objective enunciation of God’s will to the mercy of the currents of thought and feeling which sweep up and down in their own souls,—who “persist” sometimes, to use a sharp but sadly true phrase of Robert Alfred Vaughan’s, “in their conceited rejection of the light without until they have turned into darkness their light within.” ... Despite these attempts to introduce lowered conceptions, the doctrine of plenary inspiration of the Scriptures, which looks upon them as an oracular book, in all its parts and elements, alike, of God, trustworthy in all its affirmations of every kind, remains to-day, as it has always been, the vital faith of the people of God, and the formal teaching of the organized church.—*Bibliotheca Sacra*, LI, 623–24, 1894

Under the stress of the mystical theory of inspiration, the divine authorship is submerged by the emphasis which is placed on the human authorship. It appears only as the usual and general spiritual insight vouchsafed to all believers in degrees which vary according to their personal relation to God.

7. VERBAL, PLENARY INSPIRATION. By *verbal* inspiration is meant that, in the original writings, the Spirit guided in the choice of the words used. However, the human authorship was respected to the extent that the writers’ characteristics are preserved and their style and vocabulary are employed, but without the intrusion of error.

By *plenary* inspiration is meant that the accuracy which verbal inspiration secures, is extended to every portion of the Bible so that it is in all its parts both *infallible* as to truth and *final* as to divine authority. This, as has been stated, is the traditional doctrine of the church and that set forth by Christ and the apostles.

This teaching preserves the dual authorship in a perfect balance, ascribing to each that consideration which is accorded it in the Bible.

Certain citations where dual authorship is recognized are here given: The command, "Honor thy father and thy mother" bears the authority of "God commanded" in Matthew 15:4; but in Mark 7:10 Christ introduces the words "Moses said." In like manner Psalm 110:1 may be compared with Mark 12:36, 37; Exodus 3:6, 15 with Matthew 22:31; Luke 20:37 with Mark 12:26; Isaiah 6:9, 10 with Acts 28:25; John 12:39–41; Acts 1:16 with Acts 4:25. Certain passages, and there are many, combine a reference to both authorships in the one passage: Acts 1:16; 4:25; Matthew 1:22; 2:15 (R.V.). The Holy Spirit is declared to be the voice speaking through the Psalms as quoted in Hebrews 3:7–11; through the Law—Hebrews 9:8; and the Prophets—Hebrews 10:15.

Referring to the Epistle to the Hebrews, Olshausen writes: "In this remarkable epistle, God, or the Holy Ghost, is continually named as the speaker in the passages quoted from the Old Testament; and this not merely in those of which it is said in the context of the Old Testament Scriptures, 'God said,' but also in those in which some human being speaks, e. g. David, as composer of a Psalm. In this the view of the author clearly expresses itself as to the Old Testament and its writers. He regarded God as the Principle that lived, and wrought, and spoke in them all by his Holy Spirit; and accordingly Holy Scripture was to him a pure work of God, although announced to the world by man" (*Die Echtheit des N.T.*, p. 170, cited by Manly, *Bible Doctrine of Inspiration*, p. 172).

III. Dual Authorship

By the term *dual authorship* two facts are indicated, namely, that, on the divine side, the Scriptures are the Word of God in the sense that they originate with Him and are the expression of His mind alone; and, on the human side, certain men have been chosen of God for the high honor and responsibility of receiving God's Word and transcribing it into written form. Granting that it is God's purpose to place His Word in written form into the hands of men, the method He has employed to do this is the natural way in which it would be done. However, the employment of human authors has created many problems. It seems reasonable to conclude that the product of a dual authorship could not be the inerrant Word of God if human authors have aught to do with it. Since He combines in hypostatic union both the divine and human natures, the same

question is propounded concerning the theanthropic Person of our Lord. Does not the merging of a human nature into His unique Being introduce all the restrictions and limitations into that Being which are resident in humanity? Few, indeed, will contend that any Person of the Godhead is not perfect, or that any word God speaks will not be as pure as He is pure. The element of doubt intrudes whenever and wherever the human element is combined with that which is divine.

The term Λόγος (*Logos*—‘Word’) is used in the New Testament about two hundred times to indicate God’s Word written, and seven times to indicate the Son of God—the Living Word of God (John 1:1, 14; 1 John 1:1; 5:7; Rev. 19:13); and it is important to recognize that in either of these forms of the *Logos* both the divine and human elements appear in supernatural union. These two forms of the *Logos* are subject to various comparisons: They are, alike, the *Truth* (John 14:6; 17:17); *everlasting* (Ps. 119:89; Matt. 24:34, 35; 1 Pet. 1:25); *life* (John 11:25; 14:6; 1 Pet. 1:23; 1 John 1:1); *saving* (Acts 16:31; 1 Cor. 15:2); *purifying* (Titus 2:14; 1 Pet. 1:22); *sanctifying* (John 17:17; Heb. 10:14); *beget life* (1 Pet. 1:23; James 1:18); *judge* (John 5:26, 27; 12:48); *glorified* (Romans 15:9; Acts 13:48). While *theology* is the θεολογία (*theologia*, or ‘ology of God’), the Λόγος of God is the expression of God—whether it be in Living or Written form.

Basing its confidence on such Scriptures as Luke 1:35 which reports the angel’s word to Mary—“That holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God”—, and Hebrews 4:15 where it is said that Christ, the perfect High Priest, was in all points tempted like as we are—sin apart, that is, apart from temptations which arise from a sin nature—, the church has with full justification believed that Christ, the Living Logos, was not only free from the *practice* of sin, but was also free from the sin nature, and that the perfection of His Deity was in no way injured by its union with His humanity. In like manner and with the same justification, the church has believed that the perfection of God’s Word has been preserved, even though written by human authors.

The parallel between the Living Logos and the Written Logos is sustained only to a limited degree. There are important dissimilarities as well. An inerrant Book, though produced by the Holy Spirit and though living and active, being used by Him, is far removed from the unending incarnation of the Son of God into union with His own identified and unfallen humanity. There is no hypostatic union or conjunction of natures in the Written Logos; in fact, there is a wide difference to be noted: whereas the humanity of Christ was unfallen and in no

way subject to the Adamic nature, the human authors of the Bible were fallen men whose sin is without hesitation recorded in the Sacred Text. In the case of the Living Logos, the human nature could never sin, since it could never act outside its relation to the divine nature. In the case of the Written Logos, the human element was held to the one and only task of an inspired writing, which in no way tended to govern the human author's personal conduct, nor did the task itself continue beyond the time required to complete it. In the writing of the Scriptures the human authors wrote in such freedom as to leave the evidence of their personal human characteristics; yet these authors did not fall into errors being, as they were during the time of their writing, not allowed to act apart from, or contrary to, the precise mind of God, whose Word they wrote. They were literally "moved," or borne along, by the Holy Spirit (2 Pet. 1:21).

If the truth regarding inspiration is to be given full recognition, both the divine and human authorships must be seen and accepted in their plenitude. God was the sole Author of the Decalogue when it was written by His finger on tables of stone. The element of inspiration and dual authorship appeared when Moses, with the accuracy which inspiration secures, transcribed the Decalogue into the Exodus manuscript. On the other hand, every word of the Bible is of human authorship. It is man's composition, which feature of inspiration is of great importance.

It is perhaps a weakness due to the fall that man seems never able to preserve a balance of truth but tends to swing from one extreme to the other. This proclivity is exhibited toward the theanthropic Person of Christ. Some swing to the right and so emphasize His Deity as to disregard His humanity, while others swing to the left and so emphasize His humanity as to ignore and dishonor His Deity. The truth concerning Christ's theanthropic Person is discovered when, quite apart from man's ability or disability to understand all that is involved, each of the two natures of Christ is recognized in its entirety. Thus, also, the truth respecting inspiration is discovered when, quite apart from man's ability or disability to understand all that is involved, each of the two authorships is recognized in its undiminished, intrinsic character. The Bible is not of man as to its *source*, nor does man contribute any feature of infallibility or authority to it. It is, however, *through* man as the medium or instrument. This medium or instrument is a living, voluntary, and intelligent factor in its production. Doubtless men could better grasp the idea of authorship of the Bible if it came to them either as the sole work of men—a collection of human notions, desires, and guesses which even the wisest of men might compose—, or as an edict from

God—written only and directly by the finger of God. Similarly, the difficulty would be relieved if the Bible were declared to be of two authorships in the sense that some parts of it were the sole product of God and some the sole product of men, thus coalescing only to the extent that the two messages are bound into one volume. Practically every *theory* of inspiration is an exhibition of one or another of these natural tendencies. It is in the way of truth, though somewhat more difficult, to observe and respect the dual authorship of the Bible giving to each its full, inherent, and undiminished import. Having proved the divine authorship of the Scriptures, it is natural, when attempting to protect the purity of the same, to contend that the human authors were mere *pens* in the hand of God, and not penmen; that they without volition and as automatons wrote only as the words were dictated to them. Such a conception diminishes the human authorship to the vanishing point. On the other hand, having proved the human authorship, it is natural, when attempting to conserve the importance of the same, to contend that the Scriptures are as given to limitation and error as would be the product of any human author. This latter line of reasoning may be expanded thus: If there is a human element in the writings, it must be fallible, and if it is fallible it might be, to any degree, inaccurate and untrue.

Though there are secondary suggestions and variations proposed, there are but four primary classifications of opinion with respect to inspiration. These are: (a) The Bible is of divine authorship almost exclusively; (b) The Bible is of human authorship almost exclusively; (c) The Bible is in some parts almost exclusively divine and in other parts almost exclusively human; and (d) The divine and human authorship are both without impairment to either, wholly present in every word from the first to the last. The final of these four classifications is here declared to be the true representation of the fact of inspiration. This solution is doubtless to the natural man more burdened with difficulties than all the other three put together, and only because of the preponderance of the supernatural element in it. Manifestly, the Person of Christ would be more easily comprehended under the Apollinarian hypothesis that He is almost wholly divine, or under the Arian conception that He is almost wholly human. But, regardless of these difficulties to the natural man which the supernatural element introduces, the Scriptures present a theanthropic Person in whom both the divine and human natures subsist each in its undiminished fullness. Thus it is with the dual authorship of the Written Word of God.

If the conjunction of two authorships involved logical contradictions or the compounding of opposing principles, objection might be advanced against it.

But in the case of the dual authorship of the Scriptures the elements which coalesce are the same in nature, and by divine arrangement are made to converge into none other than the Written Oracles of God. If this combined authorship cannot be understood it can be believed. In all matters supernatural, men are unable to understand, but they are able to believe. “A man who refuses to believe anything that he does not understand will have a very short creed” (Manly, *Bible Doctrine of Inspiration*, p. 31). We are not able to explain the mode of union of the authorships, nor are we free to solve the problem by rejecting its claims. Philip Schaff has written: “The Bible is thoroughly human (though without error) in contents and form, in the mode of its rise, its compilation, its preservation, and transmission; yet at the same time thoroughly divine both in its thoughts and words, in its origin, vitality, energy, and effect” (*History of the Christian Church*, I, 93, cited by Manly, *ibid.*, p. 32).

The human side of the dual authorship of the Scriptures is rendered exceedingly complex by the fact that upwards of forty men participate in this incomparable service. In other books than the Bible, human authorship stands alone, but God has exerted His own power by thus working through many writers; yet He has preserved the unity of His revelation, and, at the same time, demonstrated His control over men of varying degrees of authorship qualifications. The human imagination could hardly visualize what the Bible would have been had it been the work of one man. All men are not naturally historians, or poets, or logicians. To secure Scripture which incorporates such diversity of literary features, God evidently employs the personal talents of the human authors, selecting them according to their natural ability for the task He commits to them. Moses the historian, David the sweet singer, and Paul the logician, are examples. When—following the death and resurrection of Christ and the Day of Pentecost—the new system of truth which is termed *Christianity* was to be developed and introduced, God did not draft one of the twelve who, because of three and a half years of association with Christ, would naturally have been selected, but, having called him out from his unregenerate state by salvation, He prepared and used the greatest intellect of his generation, if not of all generations. But whether it be Moses, Isaiah, Daniel, John, or Paul, the standardized fact abides that, apart from the form of literature they produced and their personal qualifications for the same, the individual human author wrote in its purity the sublime message which was committed unto him, and the whole of these writings—unique as they are because of dual authorship—constitutes the Oracles of God.

A threefold statement by Dr. Basil Manly is all-inclusive on the fact of the dual authorship of the Scripture:

“1. The Bible is truly the Word of God, having both infallible truth and divine authority in all that it affirms or enjoins.

2. The Bible is truly the production of men. It is marked by all the evidences of human authorship as clearly and certainly as any other book that was ever written by men.

3. This twofold authorship extends to every part of Scripture, and to the language as well as to the general ideas expressed.

Or it may be summed up in one single statement: The whole Bible is truly God’s word written by men” (*ibid.*, p. 90).

IV. God’s Word About God’s Word

The intra-Biblical evidences that the Bible is the complete and inerrant Word of God are both manifold and manifest. As Bishop Butler has said regarding the evidence of Christianity, so it may be said concerning the evidences of inspiration, they are “of great variety and compass, ... making up, all of them together, one argument; the conviction arising from which kind of proof may be compared to what they call *the effect* in architecture or other works of art, a result from a great number of things so and so disposed, and taken into one view” (*Analogy*, Part II. c. 7, cited by Manly, *ibid.*, p. 174). In fact the intra-Biblical evidence is so extensive that to tabulate it would require a careful study of, and reference to, almost every page of the Scriptures—a task which few, if any, have ever essayed. This vast array of material when assembled and classified, to employ Bishop Butler’s architectural figure, would include every form of averment from the foundation stones of direct assertion to the last adornment of implication. Extended argument of a polemic nature may arise over the use of one word or one text of the Scriptures bearing on some one aspect of inspiration, but the *doctrine* of inspiration itself is all-inclusive, embracing all and representing the induction of all that the Bible declares or implies in its own behalf.

It may be deducted from the extent of the literature provoked, that, of the major passages which support the Bible’s own claim to inspiration, two are of surpassing importance—2 Timothy 3:16 and 2 Peter 1:21. Not only the direct and unqualified claim to inspiration which these passages present, but their all-inclusiveness, has drawn out the most extended and vigorous attempts on the

part of men unsympathetic to the doctrine of verbal, plenary inspiration to tone down by exegetical manipulation the force of evidence which these passages proffer. It is doubtful whether any one original New Testament word has been more scrutinized under the searching rays of scholarship than has θεόπνευστος (*theopneustos*—‘God-breathed’; a word evidently compounded from Θεός—‘God’—, and πνέω—‘breathe,’ cf. the translation of Job 32:8—“the inspiration of the Almighty”); which word, whatever its specific meaning may be, comprehends the central or pivotal idea of the first of these two momentous passages.

It is reasonable to believe that as those languages in which the Oracles of God were written, were, by divine supervision, being developed through the natural processes by which all languages emerge, certain words were divinely introduced and their meaning determined and preserved with a view to the all-important service which they would render and the precise truth they would convey in the written Word of God. It is equally conceivable that certain words would need to be immediately coined which would indicate aspects of supernatural relationships and undertakings that could have had little or no occasion of expression before and at such times when the language in question was serving only as the enunciation of mundane things and that which is born of mere human speculation. The word θεόπνευστος appears but the once in the New Testament, and probably not at all in profane Greek. On the surface of the problem, it is presumable that nothing exactly similar to the idea of God-breathed, written Oracles had arisen among the Hellenistic peoples which called for expression. It is a fair assumption that this crucial word is of divine origin being fashioned by God with a view to the elucidation of a conception which is not only foreign to the range of things human, but supreme in the range of things divine. Thus the New Testament writers found a goodly number of words divinely prepared and introduced which were capable of expansion in their meaning in order to convey truths which had been heretofore unrevealed. The student will do well to note at this point the many compounds with Χριστός and πνεῦμα which his vocabulary affords.

The one text wherein θεόπνευστος appears—2 Timothy 3:16, 17—is as follows: “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.” The phrase *all scripture*, as here used, is naturally identical in the scope of its meaning with the statement in the preceding verse, wherein the Apostle reminds Timothy “that

from a child” he has “known the holy scriptures,” and these, it is declared, are able to make him wise unto salvation through faith which is in Jesus Christ. Varied and wonderful are the things, as enumerated in this context, which the Scriptures are able to do and because of which they are *profitable* to the “man of God.” These asserted values are but little challenged; controversy centers rather upon the two phrases—*all scripture*, and *given by inspiration of God*.

When undertaking to determine just what is included in the phrase *all scripture*, it is well to remember that 2 Timothy is the Apostle’s latest epistle, written, it would seem, near to the time of his martyrdom. By that time almost all the New Testament had been written—excepting only the later writings of the Apostle John. 2 Peter 3:16 clearly designates the writings of the Apostle Paul as “scripture,” and Paul himself, as recorded in 1 Timothy 5:18, when quoting Deuteronomy 25:4—“Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn”—as “scripture,” adds to it Luke 10:7—“For the labourer is worthy of his hire”—as Scripture of equal authority. Thus, and at so early a date, the Gospel by Luke—written by one outside the twelve—is accepted by the Apostle as authoritative Scripture. As to the apostles themselves, Peter writes: “That ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour” (2 Pet. 3:2). Beyond this clear evidence as to the fact that the phrase *all scripture* included the larger part of the New Testament, it is agreeable to a simple faith to believe that He who “callesth those things which be not as though they were” (Rom. 4:17), as He indited the passage in question, included in this phrase all that, in His sovereign purpose, would be written, with the Scripture that had up to that time been written. Thus it may be concluded that the words *all scripture* are no less and no more than that embodied in the Bible.

Over the second phrase—*given by inspiration of God*—there is much more dissension. The English word *inspiration* is from the Latin *spiro* and the passage in question is translated in the Vulgate by *Omnis scriptura divinitus inspirata*, while the Greek is πᾶσα γραφὴ θεόπνευστος (*pasa graphē theopneustos*—‘all Scripture is God-breathed’). Much of interest may be gathered from the various translations of this phrase.

The Æthiopic renders: “And every scripture is in the (by the) Spirit of the Lord.”

Wycliff: “All scripture of God inspired.”

Tyndale: “All scripture is given by inspiration of God.”

Cremer (*Biblico-Theological Lexicon of N.T. Greek*, ed. 2): “promoted by

God, divinely inspired.”

Thayer-Grimm (*Greek-English Lexicon of N.T.*): “Inspired by God.”

Robinson (*Greek and English Lexicon of N.T.*, new ed.): “God-breathed, inbreathed of God.”

Warfield: “Every scripture seeing that it is God-breathed.”

The Revised Version: “Every scripture inspired of God.”

Aside from that of the Revised Version which seems to leave room for the idea that *some* Scripture might not be inspired, these translations express, with all the force that language is able to devise, the truth that the Scriptures are God-breathed. The question at issue is one as to whether the term *God-breathed* is to be taken in the *passive* form which implies only that, as to its *source*, all Scripture is the breath of God—its distinctive characteristic being the fact that it originates in, and proceeds from, God—, or whether it is to be taken in its *active* form which would imply that the Scripture is permeated and pregnant with the breath of God—its distinctive characteristic being the fact that it has received by impartation or *inspiration* the breath of God. The passage does go on to say that the Scriptures are potent; for it is much to predicate of them that they are able to “make wise unto salvation,” that they are “profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness,” and that by them the “man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.” There are, it would seem, two statements made: (a) all Scripture is God-breathed and (b) all Scripture is profitable. Doubtless it is profitable because it is God-breathed; but the word θεόνευστος does not refer to the *inspiring* into men of a message, but of the *outspiring* of that message from God. The message is different and its effect surpassing because it is God’s breathing and not because it has been accurately transmitted by men. It has been so transmitted and God’s determining power was over the human authors; but the statement of 2 Timothy 3:16 emphasizes only the out-breathing of God. To quote Dr. Warfield again, and there is no greater authority on all problems of inspiration: “What is θεόπνευστος is ‘God-breathed,’ produced by the creative breath of the Almighty. And Scripture is called θεόνευστος in order to designate it as ‘God-breathed,’ the product of Divine spiration, the creation of that Spirit who is in all spheres of the Divine activity the executive of the God-head. ... It does not express a breathing *into* the Scriptures by God. But the ordinary conception attached to it, whether among the Fathers or the Dogmaticians, is in general vindicated. What it affirms is that the Scriptures owe their origin to an activity of God the Holy Ghost and are in the highest and truest sense His creation. It is on this foundation of Divine origin

that all the high attributes of Scripture are built” (*Revelation and Inspiration*, p. 280).

The result of so much discussion seems both explicit and unequivocal. The Scriptures in their entirety are effective since they are from God, God-breathed, God-given, and God-determined.

The second major passage, 2 Peter 1:21—“holy men of God spake as they were moved [borne along] by the Holy Ghost”—, approaches the problem of inspiration from another angle. As θεόπνευστος indicated that the Scriptures originated with, and are therefore the Word of, God, φέρω (*pherō*—‘borne along’) indicates the fact that the Spirit so wrought in the holy men of God as to secure through them an inerrant record of the mind of God. The two passages are supplementary and together form the entire revelation, namely, that (a) the Word came from God as His own *spiro* or ‘breath,’ and (b) that under the ‘inflatu’ or *inspiro* of God the Word was faithfully transcribed by holy men chosen for that high service.

The context of this second major passage is equally important. Peter has declared that the great theme of prophecy—“the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ” (as anticipated and prefigured in the transfiguration)—is certified by “eye witnesses” who were with Christ in the holy mount; but this truth is made “more sure” by the word of prophecy (or, better, the prophetic word); and reference here is to the inspired Scriptures as a whole and not merely to that portion which brings to notice the exceptional element of prediction. The writers of the Scriptures were all prophets in the larger meaning of that term and their writings were prophetic (cf. Acts 3:21; 10:43), in which *forthtelling* is the essential feature rather than *foretelling*.

The reference to “holy men” is to be received according to the root meaning of the word *holy*, or *sanctified*, which is to be *set apart* unto a specific service or purpose. They were the elect of God for this ministry and there is no reference to the sanctity of their lives. However, the experience of Isaiah in which his lips were purified with a coal from off the altar is suggestive (Isa. 6:1–8).

The word φέρω as used in this passage, contains in it the secret concerning the particularized influence of the Holy Spirit on these chosen men, which influence secured the inspired Scriptures. The word is exceedingly expressive suggesting the effect of the wind on the sails of a boat, by which wind the boat is *borne along*. While φέρω indicates the divine control of the human authors, it allows in its breadth of expression for an indefinite variety of ways in which the end shall be attained.

At this point the so-called *theories* of inspiration are introduced. Too often these *theories* consist in an inquisitive attempt to pry into the unrevealed mystery as to *how* God moved the chosen men to write as they did. Upon this subject the Scriptures are silent. The writers at times bore brief but expressive testimony. We read: “The LORD said unto Moses” (Ex. 4:19; cf. Deut. 34:10); the “vision” which Isaiah “saw” (Isa. 1:1; cf. Hab. 1:1; Mal. 1:1); “The word of the LORD came” to Jeremiah (Jer. 1:2; cf. Hos. 1:1; Jonah 1:1; Micah 1:1; Zeph. 1:1; Hag. 1:1; Zech. 1:1). To Daniel God appeared in “visions” and “dreams.” John declares that his testimony is “true” (John 19:35; 1 John 1:1–3). And the Apostle Paul writes: “If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord” (1 Cor. 14:37). As to *how* the divine revelation was given to the human author, none other than God or the elect man could know. It was wholly within those personal and sacred relationships into which none other might intrude. Here the devout soul will hesitate and the prudent will at least respect the silence of God. It is possible that, as the testimony of these writers suggests, there was not only variety in the manner in which God spoke to different men, but there was variety, as well, in the way in which He spoke at different times to one man. The Scriptures give abundant teaching as to the *fact* of inspiration but do not offer explanation of this phenomenon. The *how* of every miracle is wanting, and inspiration is a miracle. Concerning this and all miracles, man is called upon to *believe* and not to *elucidate*. Christ called attention to man’s limitations when He said: “The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth” (John 3:8). If having *experienced* the miracle of regeneration men are even then unable to apprehend its mystery, how could they discern the workings of the Spirit in realms into which they have never entered?

Concerning these *theories*, or suppositions, some damaging facts may be noted: (a) To those who in their zeal for the authority of God have implied that the human authors were automatons, it may be said that the evidence is complete enough to demonstrate the fact that these chosen men exercised every feature of their own volition and individual characteristics, yet were empowered to write only what the Spirit determined. Apart from this conception of inspiration there could be no dual authorship. (b) To those who claim that these elect men wrote under the influence of the exalted human faculties and the exercise of superior poetical genius, it may be said that the character of the truth disclosed demonstrates that it is the Word of God, being worthy of God, and this it could

never be under the provisions this theory suggests. (c) To those who persist in the notion that inspiration constituted the elect men infallible and omniscient, it may be said that the evidence proves that the men were enabled only in the transcribing of truth and often they could not have comprehended the full import of all that they wrote. (d) To those who fancy that inspiration as it applies to the human authors tends to elevate every passage to the same level of spiritual importance, it may be said that in this sphere of inspiration its aim and purpose is to secure an accurate transcription of the God-given message. The philosophy of Bildad, as recorded in Job, is not of the same usefulness to lost men as is the gospel of divine grace; but both are exactly what God intended to include in His Word—each in its place and for its purpose. Jehovah has said: “So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it” (Isa. 55:11). In like manner inspiration may record the untruth of Satan, but it does not vindicate the lie or sanctify it. It secures the exact record as to what was said—good or bad. Many unworthy actions are recorded but not approved by God.

On the general freedom of the human authors, Alexander Carson has said: “Inspiration ... left the inspired historians under the power and regulation of the same laws and influences that guide other authors in their compositions, with the single exception of supernaturally preserving them from error” (cited by Manly, *Bible Doctrine of Inspiration*, p. 87). This statement leaves no place for the reception of the message. The authors were preserved from error, but they did not originate the message. They might be accurate in declaring their own thought. They were, however, accurate in declaring God’s thoughts which they received from Him.

It may thus be seen that the specific import of 2 Peter 1:21 and its context centers in the word φέρω as it distinguishes the writings of certain chosen men who spoke as they were *borne along* by the Holy Spirit. Their message was the Word of God, and thus the dual authorship is preserved.

Another passage of great significance is John 10:34, 35 where it is reported that Christ, while speaking to the Jews concerning their cherished Scriptures, said: “Is it not written in your law?” and “The scripture cannot be broken”. The three words, *Scripture*, *Law*, and *Prophecy*, are interchangeable when referring, as each often does, to the entire body of revealed truth. In this context Christ states that a thing written in their *Law* is none other than *Scripture* which cannot be broken. This passage is an example of the unvarying and unqualified honor

which Christ gave to the Scriptures as the authoritative Oracles of God. According to the record, His first utterance after His baptism was a threefold challenge of Satan, and Satan's defeat was gained by the words, "It is written." Throughout His ministry, Christ constantly declared that the Scriptures must be fulfilled, thus giving honor to them (Mark 14:49; John 13:18; 17:12; cf. 12:14; Mark 9:12, 13). Similarly, on the Emmaus road He "beginning at Moses and all the prophets ... expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself" (Luke 24:27). He also said, The Scriptures (continuously) "testify of me" (John 5:39). Christ thus assigned to the Scriptures the final word of authority. Turning only to Matthew's Gospel this fact is made clear—4:4, 7, 10; 11:10; 19:4; 21:13, 42; 22:29; 26:31, 56. An equally extended induction could easily be made of the passages which demonstrate the authority which all the New Testament writers accorded the Word of God.

The testimony which the Bible presents as to its own inspiration is diffused throughout all its parts. Each author witnesses to the supernatural character of his writings. But by far the most conclusive evidence that the Bible is inspired is the twofold fact: (a) that Christ so accepted the Old Testament as a whole as well as in every separate portion, and (b) that the New Testament was written at His direction and the human authors were promised superhuman ability to write according to the mind of God.

When contemplating the Bible's own claims to inspiration, of great significance, indeed, are those passages wherein God and His Word are treated as one and the same. It is written in Galatians 3:8 (R.V.): "The scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand unto Abraham." Assuredly the Scriptures as such, which were not then written, did not preach to Abraham, but God did. Thus in Romans 9:17—"The scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up." Yet Exodus 9:16, which text is here quoted, states that it is the Word of Jehovah to Pharaoh through Moses. The fact is patent that the Scripture which was not then written could not be responsible for the raising up of Pharaoh for a specific purpose; but God's Word, whether spoken or written, is the identification of Himself. It is especially observable that such phrases as "He saith," "He spake," and "He beareth witness," etc., indicate the voice of God speaking whatever is said. The oft-repeated expressions, "The word of Jehovah," "The law of the LORD," "The oracles of God," certify without exception the divine authorship. Because it is His Word, it shall stand forever (Isa. 40:8). Men are appointed to preach it as God's Word (Rom. 10:17; 1 Cor. 14:36); and thus it

came, first to Israel (Acts 10:36, 37), and then to the Gentiles (1 Thess. 2:13).

In making its own claim to inspiration, the Bible puts strong emphasis on the fact that individual men were empowered to write or speak the Word of God. “David in spirit [literally, in the Spirit] doth call him Lord” (cf. Ps. 110:1 with Matt. 22:43). “Who [the Holy Spirit] by the mouth of David thy servant hast said” (Acts 4:25). “Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of [by] the Lord by [through] the prophet” (Matt. 1:22; 2:15). “Wherefore (as the Holy Ghost saith ...”) (Heb. 3:7; cf. Ps. 95:7). “Whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us” (Heb. 10:15; cf. Jer. 31:33, 34). To Moses Jehovah said, “Go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say” (Ex. 4:10–12). “I ... will put my words in his mouth” (Deut. 18:18, 19). “My spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth” (Isa. 59:21). “The word of the LORD came unto me, saying ... I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations. ... Thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee, and whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak ... Behold, I have put my words in thy mouth” (Jer. 1:4–9).

The New Testament writers were no less the voice of God. When about to leave this world, Christ committed not only the evangelizing witness to all who comprise His Church, but He gave assurance to chosen men that they would be called upon to record what He had said. The Holy Spirit, they were told, would “teach them all things,” “bring all things to their remembrance,” “guide them into all truth,” and show them “things to come” (John 14:25, 26; 15:26, 27; 16:12–15). While there is a general application of these words to all believers in that the Spirit is their Teacher, it is evident that the specific work of the Spirit in *bringing to remembrance* could be experienced only by those to whom Christ had spoken. The Apostle Paul was not one of the twelve and therefore he never claimed to have had their instruction. Nevertheless, he testifies to the direct energizing power of the Spirit. He wrote: “Which things also we speak, not in the words which man’s wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth” (1 Cor. 2:13; cf. 14:37; 2 Cor. 13:2, 3; Gal. 1:8–12; Eph. 3:1–7; 1 Thess. 2:13; 4:2, 8, 15; 2 Thess. 2:13–15. For other N.T. passages note: 1 Pet. 1:10–12; 2 Pet. 3:1, 2; Rev. 1:3, 10, 11, 19; 22:6, 7, 18, 19).

On this partial induction of all that the Bible asserts as to its own inspiration, enough has been presented to demonstrate that verbal, plenary inspiration alone answers its claims.

V. General Objections to Verbal, Plenary Inspiration

If borne in mind, certain important facts tend to dissolve almost every recorded objection to the doctrine of verbal, plenary inspiration, namely:

(a) The progress of doctrine which is observable from Genesis to Revelation does not imply that earlier and partial revelations were erroneous. At the end of His three and a half years of instruction to His disciples, Christ said to them, "I have yet many things to say unto you" (John 16:12), but that did not imply that what He had taught them at the first was untrue. Again, and somewhat similar to this, a fallacy has a long time been current which greatly dishonors the Word of God. It is to the effect that the Apostle Paul in later years receded from the emphasis on the return of Christ which he exhibited in his early Epistles, notably 1 Thessalonians; and no reason is assigned for this claim other than that this truth does not, it is affirmed, appear in his later writings. The later writings, it is obvious, are upon a different theme; but quite apart from that fact, the last chapter of his last Epistle presents one of the strongest testimonies the Apostle gave concerning the hope of the coming of Christ (2 Tim. 4:6–8). Such a conception intimates that the Apostle was mistaken in his earlier Epistles, which he cautiously corrected in those written later; but who shall say that, had his life been extended, he would not, according to this notion, at the end of his life have discredited *all* that he wrote? To doubt the early writings is to degrade all his writings, and only because of the fact that the essential element of *inspiration* is involved, and not merely the blundering of a sincere man. This situation may well serve to illustrate the distress into which men are plunged who question the trustworthiness of the Bible, whether their doubt arises from the problem of the progress of doctrine as a whole, or over the *suppose* progress of the human authors.

(b) Variations in rendering sometimes occur because of the different languages involved. The superscription over the cross of Christ was written in Hebrew, Latin, and Greek. The Apostle Paul usually quoted the LXX translation of the Old Testament. In every case of quotation from the Old Testament in the New Testament it should be remembered that the Holy Spirit is the Author of both Testaments and that it is wholly within the province of an author, when quoting from his own writings, to change or restate anything he has written before. This does not necessarily imply correction of the earlier writings. It may be, as it is in the case of the Spirit, an adaptation of a truth to a new situation or setting.

Every devout student will believe that, to a very considerable degree, the preserving care of God has been over every worthy translation of the Scriptures

and that in these translations no essential doctrinal value has been sacrificed.

(c) At best, human understanding is imperfect. What may seem a difficulty now—as has so often been demonstrated—is completely dissolved when all the facts are known. At this point archaeology has contributed much and will no doubt continue to do so to the end.

(d) The claim for verbal, plenary inspiration is made only for the original writings and does not extend to any transcriptions or translations. It is also true that no original manuscript is now available. Naturally, these facts give rise to the query whether the present existing translations—notably the text with which one is most familiar—is really trustworthy. This problem is worthy of serious consideration and has received the attention of the greatest textual critics in all generations of the church. But two passages of any considerable length are subject to dispute—Mark 16:9–20 and John 7:53–8:11. Of these two passages, the latter is more discredited than the former. As to textual difficulties generally, the following quotations are significant:

Westcott and Hort:

With regard to the great bulk of the words of the New Testament, as of most other ancient writings, there is no variation or other ground of doubt, and therefore no room for textual criticism; and here therefore an editor is merely a transcriber. The same may be said with substantial truth respecting those various readings which have never been received, and in all probability never will be received, into any printed text. The proportion of words virtually accepted on all hands as raised above doubt is very great, not less, on a rough computation, than seven-eighths of the whole. The remaining eighth, therefore, formed in great part by changes of order and other comparative trivialities, constitutes the whole area of criticism. If the principles followed in the present edition are sound, this area may be very greatly reduced. Recognizing to the full the duty of abstinence from peremptory decision in cases where the evidence leaves the judgment in suspense between two or more readings, we find that, setting aside differences of orthography, the words in our opinion still subject to doubt only make up one-sixtieth of the whole New Testament. In this second estimate the proportion of comparatively trivial variations is beyond measure larger than in the former; so that the amount of what can in *any sense be called substantial variation* is but a small fraction of the whole residuary variation, and can hardly form more than *a thousandth part* of the entire text.—*The New Testament in Greek*, II. 2, cited by Manly, *Bible Doctrine of Inspiration*, p. 223

Dr. Philip Schaff, chairman of the American Committee of the Revisers, writes: “This multitude of various readings of the Greek text need not puzzle or alarm any Christian. It is the natural result of the great wealth of our documentary resources; it is a testimony to the immense importance of the New Testament; it does not affect, but it rather insures, the integrity of the text; and it is a useful stimulus to study.

“Only about 400 of the 100,000 or 150,000 variations materially affect the

sense. Of these, again, not more than about fifty are really important for some reason or other; and even of these fifty not one affects an article of faith or a precept of duty which is not abundantly sustained by other and undoubted passages, or by the whole tenor of Scripture teaching. The *Textus Receptus* of Stephens, Beza, and Elzevir, and of our English Version, teach precisely the same Christianity as the uncial text of the Sinaitic and Vatican manuscripts, the oldest versions, and the Anglo-American Revision” (*Companion to the New Testament*, p. 177, cited by Manly, *ibid.*, p. 224).

Conclusion

Of the almost limitless field of discussion which the doctrine of inspiration affords, enough has been presented to demonstrate that verbal, plenary inspiration is the unqualified claim of the Bible for itself, the teaching of Christ and the apostles, and the belief of the church from her beginning. It has likewise been pointed out that the Word as written came forth from God as His breath and that chosen men were empowered to receive and record that message. As to how He transmitted that Word to them and secured inerrant oracles at their hand, the Scriptures are silent. A dual authorship is preserved—God used the volition and faculties of the human authors without coercion and the human authors exercised their volition and faculties without injury to the divine message. Those who are disposed to disagree with these conclusions must reckon with Christ, the apostles, and the prophets upon whom, after all, we must depend for any knowledge of any truth whatsoever. If their testimony is broken regarding the truthworthiness of the Scriptures, it is broken regarding all else.

The doctrines of revelation, inspiration, canonicity, and authority being closely allied, the following discussion is requisite for the completion of that which has gone before.

Chapter V

CANONICITY AND AUTHORITY

THE INVESTIGATION of the canon of the Bible is an attempt to discover the true basis of its authority. The Scriptures of the Old and New Testament form a canon because of the fact that they are authoritative Oracles. By the term *authoritative* it is implied that the Bible in all its parts is the voice of God speaking to men. Its authority is inherent, being, as it is, no less than the imperial edict—"Thus saith the LORD." When the Scriptures are deemed to be authoritative because of decrees by ecclesiastical councils or laws enacted by human governments, they may be considered to be binding only in so far as human influence extends. But, in contradistinction to such a conception, the Scriptures go so far as to declare God's will to ecclesiastical councils and human governments. Similarly, as worthy authority presupposes the ability to execute decrees, God's Word not only proclaims His assured purposes, but also sets forth the penalty which must follow whenever and wherever men are not amenable to it.

Since the Scriptures are imbued with the legitimate and wholly justifiable authority of God and since they were written at the hand of men and since the canon was, to some extent, determined by men, it is pertinent to inquire about the nature of that divine authority and how it resides in these Oracles. Since doubt has arisen concerning the full inspiration of the Scriptures because of the human share in the authorship, so, and in like manner, doubt has arisen regarding the authority of the Scriptures because of the part the human share has exercised in determining what writings should enter the canon. It has been demonstrated in connection with the study of the doctrine of inspiration that God has used human authors in the writing of the Scriptures and in such a way as to preserve those writings from the imperfections which human limitations might impose. It now remains to exhibit the truth that God, though having used men in the formation of the canon, has used them in such a way that only those writings have been chosen which comprise the divinely constituted Oracles with their perfections of unity and balance and completeness of their parts.

The problems related to the formation of the canon are greatly simplified by a certain actuality, namely, that the Bible is present, and in evidence with its exhibition of divine perfection. Thus the problem becomes one only of tracing back from the starting point which the infallible Scriptures provide. There is no

occasion to theorize as to whether it is possible to assemble a collection of writings—from many human authors whose lives have been lived in different countries and dispersed through many centuries—into one book, which book is worthy of God. Such a stupendous phenomenon is achieved and its reality cannot be disregarded. Reasonable attention to the facts involved will disclose the truth that the method employed in the formation of the canon of the Bible is both natural and supernatural. In this undertaking there is a display of the coordination of divine determination with human cooperation. However, the element of divine determination is paramount in the formation of the canon just as it is in the dual authorship. Reason compels the conclusion that as God has brought to fruition the genesis of certain incomparable writings, He will, as faithfully, overrule not only the assembling of these writings into one unit, and without an error as to their selection, but will determine their final order in this relationship to the end that its unique continuity may be exhibited.

Far-reaching and determining conditions existed at the time the Bible was written and its canon was formed which do not exist now. Full recognition of these conditions must be sanctioned if a true evaluation of the problem of canonicity is consummated.

The Scriptures of both Testaments were written when there were exceedingly few literary efforts being produced. It was not then as now when every individual writes letters freely, when a prodigious array of people aspire to authorship of one kind or another, and when the output of religious literature has reached to staggering proportions. There was then little competition and comparatively little need of elimination. Of the restricted company who could write at all, only those who were moved by God would have experienced the impelling motive that inspiration imparts.

In the case of the Old Testament, the writings were produced, in the main, by the men who were in authority over the religious and, to some extent, civil life of the people. Moses was recognized as Jehovah's representative and lawgiver. His writings, like those of the accredited prophets, were none other than the preservation in written form of what had been proclaimed by word of mouth and with undisputed authority. Few indeed ever resisted the message of Jehovah's recognized messengers.

In the case of the New Testament, the writing was performed, for the most part, by men whom Christ had chosen. The Apostle Paul was no exception in this classification since the Lord appeared to him and called him when on the Damascus road. These men, it is true, exercised no influence in the world about

them and the world had nothing to do with the formation of the canon of the New Testament. The New Testament Scriptures were addressed to a little band of despised (cf. 1 Cor. 1:26–29) believers; yet the spiritual response to these writings on the part of those who constituted the “little flock” had everything to do with the determination as to what would eventually enter into the final form of the canon of the New Testament. Communication was restricted, and for many years the writings which were current and effective in one locality did not reach to all localities. It is probable that no church came to possess a complete copy of all that enters into the New Testament canon until early in the second century. All copies of portions of Scripture were handwritten and few, indeed, could possess these treasures. The portion possessed by the local church was preserved with greatest care and its reading was a large part of the fellowship of believers when they assembled together. They could not have been concerned as to a canon or what belonged to a canon. They knew that their spiritual needs were satisfied as they read these writings and thus the portions became appreciated everywhere, and that is the basis of the formation of the canon. Without design or effort the canon thus came to be approved upon the peculiar merit of each portion. Without consciousness as to the momentous thing they were doing and apart from strife and design of men, the one great and final proof as to what writings were of God’s own inspiration was wrought out. The perfection of the plan and the completeness of the result are an indisputable evidence of the sovereign working of God—working through human agencies. It was natural that the Latin church would be slow in recognizing the supernatural value of the anonymous letter to the Hebrews, and other existing prejudices were doubtless reflected in various localities. In due time and under the guidance of the Spirit of God, all difficulties were overcome and the last book—the Revelation—was added to complete the whole. It would be impossible to determine just when the complete New Testament was acknowledged as such. Accepting the date of the Revelation at 96 A. D., it may be observed that the writings of Ignatius in 115 A. D. are but twenty years later. From these and others of the early Fathers, it is evident that, apart from a natural prejudice among Jewish believers for the Old Bible, the New Testament as it now stands was distinguished as such and obeyed as Scripture early in the second century. No record exists as to what church first acquired a complete Bible, or the precise date of such an occurrence. There is no way of knowing all that may have entered into the process by which any church received a new installment of Scripture to be added to that which they already cherished. No doubt, the fact

that a new portion was accepted without question by some other assembly would go far in its favor. The way in which the New Testament canon was formed was wholly natural, and yet the thing achieved was as wholly supernatural.

There is no reason to believe that there was anything that would correspond to a Bible-forming consciousness among these early Christians. They were exceedingly grateful for any message from one who, because of association with Christ or His apostles, could write or speak with authority. It is evident that not all the messages thus received, though true to facts, were designed of God to be a part of the Bible. That living element which inspiration imparts was—and probably without specific identification of it by any who read those pages—with an irresistible determination sanctifying (by setting apart as infinitely sacred and infallibly true) those particular portions which were divinely appointed to constitute the canon of the New Testament.

In the days of Christ's ministry on the earth, the Old Testament canon was ostensibly as it is now; but, as in the case of the New Testament, no one person or group of persons had acted with authority in the selection of the Old Testament books. The same inherent divine character which inspiration secures had made these particularized books the Word of God in distinction from all other human writings. It is inconceivable that this ineffable element belonging to inspiration should not then, as now, so impress all concerned that dissension, if any, would be negligible. Other writings, such as they were, fell behind, wanting this specific divine quality. However, the canon of the Old Testament had not been closed for there was no human authority to close it. The early church had received the Old Testament with binding supremacy. This is evident from the extent and manner of its quotation in the New Testament. New books were added as an accretion which grew upon, and was thus closely related to, the Old Testament Scriptures. The apostles and prophets who served as writers of the New Testament were every whit as qualified in themselves and as worthy to write by inspiration of the Spirit as were the prophets of the Old Testament. In fact, the fitness of the human author, though of value in the general usefulness of his writings, was not the final basis of evaluation of the Sacred Text. This is proved by the inclusion into the canon of both Testaments of anonymous portions.

The formal closing of the New Testament canon is at least intimated in Revelation 22:18. The dissimilarity in the manner in which the two Testaments end is significant. All the unfulfilled expectation of the Old Testament is articulate as that Testament closes and the last verses give assurance of the

coming of another prophet. But no continued revelation is impending as the New Testament is terminated; rather the announcement is made that the Lord Himself will soon return and the natural conclusion is that there would be no further voice speaking from heaven before the trumpet heralds the second advent of Christ.

Of no small moment is the fact that since the canon of the Bible was divinely closed no attempts have been made to add to it.

Finally, though brought to fruition through human assent and cooperation, God accomplished in the formation of the canon—as He did in the dual authorship of the text of the Scriptures—a stupendous miracle. His own inerrant Word was not only received and penned in incomparable writings, but was as inerrantly assembled into one volume and preserved from that confusion, injury, and miscarriage of the divine purpose which either subtraction from or addition to the canon would impose. God’s determining care over the formation of the canon of the Scriptures is as much in evidence and to His eternal glory as His care over the precise transmission of His truth through human authors.

Since any portion of the Bible is canonical because of the fact that it is an authoritative document, being God’s Word written, it is highly commendable to investigate most carefully the precise source and nature of this authority. The objective in so doing need not necessarily be one of dispelling doubt as to the Godlike constitution of the Scriptures; it may well be the desire to arrive at a more worthy conception of their transcendent import.

Regardless of the infinity of proof that the Bible is God’s Word written and therefore imbued with the same authority which the Creator exercises over His creation and that heaven exercises over earth, the human family are not all amenable to the supremacy and dominion of the Bible. Unregenerate men, who “have not God in all their thoughts,” ignore the Scriptures. The world now weltering in the demoralizing influence of satanic ideals and philosophies cannot be expected to appreciate or to commend the Bible. Nor is their disregard of it other than an indirect proof of its heavenly character.

The authority of the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments which gives to them their canonical preeminence is attributable to at least seven different sources. Of these the first three to be named have been already considered to some length, and, therefore, need little more than enumeration at this point.

I. The Scriptures are Authoritative Being God-Breathed

To predicate of the Scriptures, as they do of themselves, that they are God-breathed, is to assign to them the supreme authority which belongs to God alone, which authority proceeds from God *immediately* and without reductions or complications that might be imposed by contributing factors. This means that in their plenary fullness the Scriptures are, throughout, the Word of God written. They sustain the unique distinction of being no less than the imperial edict —“Thus saith the LORD.”

II. The Scriptures are Authoritative Being Written by chosen men who were “Borne Along” by the Holy Spirit

This aspect of Biblical authority is closely related to the fact that the message which the chosen men received and delivered was God-breathed. The specific contribution which it makes to the whole field of authority is that it guarantees, as has been demonstrated, that the human share in the dual authorship casts no shadow of imperfection on the infinite worthiness and holy excellence of the God-breathed message. It is of surpassing importance that the authoritative divine message shall be conserved in inerrant writings. Reducing the authoritative message to written form adds no supplementary supremacy and dominion to it, but an effectual means is constituted whereby the divine edict may reach to those who are subject to it. That the authority of the Scriptures is not derived from the inspired men or due to the inspiration properly attributed to them is evident from the fact that those books of the Bible which are anonymous are deemed as authoritative as any in the canon.

III. The Scriptures are Authoritative Being Accredited by Those who First Received Them

In the case of the Old Testament, the congregation of Israel under the leadership of their elders, rulers, prophets, and priests, gave sanction to those writings which formed the first canon. In the case of the New Testament, the early church, including her officers and ministers, gave sanction to the second canon. Without consciousness on their part in either case that they were being used of God to accomplish a momentous objective, they did, nevertheless, under the presidency of the Holy Spirit, determine what could not have been postponed to later generations nor surrendered to other peoples, namely, to decide the inclusiveness and exclusiveness of the Bible canon. The inclusion of one page or

one word that was not inspired and designed of God to serve as Scripture would have wrought no less than immeasurable injury to that which was designed to manifest infinite perfection. To the same measure, to have left out one page or one word that was inspired and designed of God with a view to its place in the canon would have marred as disastrously the faultless Word of God. Through the permission of either of these hypothetical defects, the Bible would have been rendered unworthy of its divine Author. Thus it may be seen that acceptance and accrediting of the precise material which was prepared by inspiration and designed of God to comprise His Holy Word, though wrought through human instrumentalities and without regard to their cognizance as to what they did, were achieved altogether through divine superintendency and determination.

IV. The Scriptures are Authoritative Being Attested by the Lord Jesus Christ—the Second Person of the Godhead

The legal term, “The Law of God,” is one of the true and proper designations for the entire Bible, and one which, because it suggests the thought of the divine empire or dominion, is the befitting and pertinent title when the authority of the Scriptures is in view.

In any government which enacts its laws with due regard for the freedom and best good of its subjects, there are represented in the making of those laws two widely different procedures, namely, (a) the bill, or law, is drawn and agreed upon by lawmakers, and (b) it becomes a binding, operative regulation by the attesting signature of the chief ruler—the President of the United States or the King in Great Britain. This process is especially demanded in the latter government named, where established relations between parliaments and the throne exist. These two imperative features—the creation and enactment of laws on the one hand, and the royal assent on the other—are in no way interchangeable nor are they to be confused. These facts, regarding the process by which civil laws are consummated, may serve by way of illustration to bring into view one of the important features of the basis on which the canonical authority of the Scriptures rests.

Pursuing this analogy into more detail, it will be observed that the emanation of the Scriptures from God as His breath, the determining afflation of the human authors, and the divine control of multitudes in their essential agreement which served to single out and seal the canonical Writings, has secured the perfect bill,

or law, but its binding force is greatly enhanced by the attestation, certification, and royal assent of the King of kings. No consideration is given at this point to those functions and activities which belong specifically to the humanity of Christ. It was from the divine side of His Being that He attested the Word of God; on the human side He was subject to it. As corroborating Authenticator of the Scriptures, Christ was not merely one among many who spoke well of the Oracles of God. Likewise, He was not offering the opinion of a human prophet, priest, or king, though He was and is forever all of these. His attestation of the Sacred Writings was no less than that of Deity—the Second Person in the Blessed Trinity. This royal indorsement on the part of the Son of God adds nothing to the inspiration or inherent supernatural character of the Bible which was before His vision as a perfect whole; it rather lends to that perfected whole the immeasurable added *authority* which the royal signature communicates.

It is a misapprehension to suppose that the *authority* of the Bible is vested primarily in either the fact of the inspiration of the human authors or in the actions of any kind by Israel or the Church. The voice of God, attested by the Son, and (a theme yet to be elucidated) the employment of the Scriptures by the Spirit, form the basis of canonical authority. The inspiration of the sacred writers has a side which pertains to the field of letters, having its human aspects. On the other hand, that which constitutes the Bible to be *The Law of God* is not a literary question at all; it is rather to be classed as *theological, moral, and vital*. It is more even than a matter of life and death as those terms are related to this sphere; it embraces no less than the issues of *eternal life* and *eternal death*. Naturally, it is the part of wisdom and in agreement with truth to discover this transcendent authority within the Godhead itself and not in any human cooperation, however exalted.

The four Gospels contain upwards of thirty-five direct references to, and quotations from, the Scriptures on the part of the Son of God. These, it will be discovered, not only record His witness to the divine character and verbal inspiration of the Scriptures, but, taken as a whole, they contemplate the entire Old Testament and thus serve to certify plenary features of its perfection. Since it is in and through these citations by Christ that He has given His royal assent to *The Law of God*, a careful examination of them—such as cannot be undertaken here—is enjoined.

When Christ declared, “I am ... the truth” (John 14:6). He alleged far more than the incontrovertible fact that He is Himself truthful. He declared Himself to be *the Truth* and in the sense that He is the central theme of the Scriptures of

Truth. He is the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness (Rev. 1:5; 3:14. Cf. Isa. 55:4). He said concerning Himself, “To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth” (John 18:37)—not merely a witness to the moral value of truth, but a witness to the Word of God. “Thy word is truth” (John 17:17). The phrase, “for this cause came I into the world,” lifts His ministry of attestation to the highest level of being a primary purpose of the incarnation. To the same end, the Apostle declares, “Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers” (Rom. 15:8). He is, indeed, the divine Confirmer of those Writings which were then identified as “the scriptures,” of which He also affirmed that they “cannot be broken.” Thus the Second Person of the Godhead adds the royal assent to *The Law of God*. If this royal witness seems to comprehend no more than the Old Testament Scriptures, it will be remembered that Christ appointed and commissioned the writers of the New Testament and that He spoke from heaven saying “He which testifieth these things” (Rev. 22:20), and this was said regarding the New Testament canon (vss. 18, 19).

V. The Scriptures are Authoritative Being Received, Delivered, and Attested by the Prophets

The prophets of the old order were the divinely appointed spokesmen for God, and the same was true also of the New Testament prophets. When speaking to the Apostle John, the angel said, “I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren the prophets” (Rev. 22:9). The prophets are among the distinctive leaders of the new order (Eph. 4:11); the Church is being built upon them (Eph. 2:20); and they speak to edification, exhortation, and comfort (1 Cor. 14:3).

The Mosaic Law assigned specific responsibility to various Old Testament groups and officials with respect to the Scriptures.

1. THE CONGREGATION’S RELATION TO THE SCRIPTURES. The congregation of Israel were charged, “Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you” (Deut. 4:2) Thus the people were given no authority to originate or to deliver Scripture, but they were commissioned to keep the commandments of the LORD, which implies their ability to identify those Oracles to which they were to be obedient.

2. THE KING'S RELATION TO THE SCRIPTURES. The king's relation to the Scriptures is stated thus, "And it shall be, when he sitteth upon the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write him a copy of this law in a book out of that which is before the priests the Levites: and it shall be with him, and he shall read therein all the days of his life: that he may learn to fear the LORD his God, to keep all the words of this law and these statutes, to do them" (Deut. 17:18, 19). Though no king would rule in Israel until the days of the Judges were past—a period of about five hundred years—the Mosaic system anticipated the office of the king and provided divine charges governing the attitude of the king toward the Scriptures. The king was granted governmental authority by which he could put prophets and priests to death, but in his relation to the written Word of God, the king was no different than his lowliest subject.

3. THE OFFICIALS' RELATION TO THE SCRIPTURES. The Judges were arbiters in common matters, but if there came before them an issue too hard for the judge it was to be appealed to the priests, who served as a supreme court over all judges. Thus is the judge instructed: "If there arise a matter too hard for thee in judgment, between blood and blood [civil], between plea and plea [ceremonial], and between stroke and stroke [leprosy], being matters of controversy within thy gates: then shalt thou arise, and get thee up into the place which the LORD thy God shall choose; and thou shalt come unto the priests the Levites, and unto the judge that shall be in those days, and enquire; and they shall shew thee the sentence of judgment: and thou shalt do according to the sentence, which they of that place which the LORD shall choose shall shew thee; and thou shalt observe to do according to all that they inform thee" (Deut. 17:8–10). The following verses in this context prescribe the death penalty upon any who refuse to do according to the decision of the last or supreme court over Israel.

The service of the judge, the ruler, or priest with regard to the written Law of God was that of interpretation and administration and never the higher responsibility of drafting or originating laws. They were to "shew the sentence of judgment" according to the Law (cf. Deut. 31:9–13).

4. THE LEVITES' RELATION TO THE SCRIPTURES. To the Levites was given the custody or care of the written Scriptures. Thus they are instructed: "Take this book of the law, and put it in the side of the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God, that it may be there for a witness against thee" (Deut. 31:26).

5. THE PROPHETS' RELATION TO THE SCRIPTURES. To the prophet was

committed the high responsibility of receiving and delivering the Word of God. Not all the writings of the prophets, though the Word of God for the time, became Scripture; nor could all who claimed to be prophets be heard. The test between true and false prophets was both reasonable and natural. The directions were: “And if thou say in thine heart, How shall we know the words which the LORD hath not spoken? When a prophet speakest in the name of the LORD, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the LORD hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously: thou shalt not be afraid of him” (Deut. 18:21, 22).

The commission of the prophet to speak for God and the requirement of the people to hear is set forth in the midst of Israel’s constituted law. No doubt, the passage, as many another, has its final fulfillment in the prophetic ministry of Christ. Christ is the final Prophet of all prophets; the final Priest of all priests; and the final King of all kings. This instruction is an immediate authorization of the prophets who under God were to succeed Moses. The passage reads: “The LORD thy God shall raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken. ... I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him” (Deut. 18:15, 18, 19). The true prophet’s message had to be received and heeded by the whole house of Israel from the king on the throne to the least in the kingdom. Of these messages, however, only such portions as the Spirit of God determined became canonical. The true prophet attested his own message and demonstrated its authority by supernatural evidence. This did not preclude one prophet attesting the message another prophet had received and delivered with authority. Such corroboration is observable, especially in regard to writings which have their place in the New Testament canon.

In the larger meaning of the designation, as before indicated, the prophet was a *forthteller* as well as a *foreteller*. He was always the former and undertook the latter only as specific necessity demanded. The title connotes the receiving and delivering of the message of God on any subject without restriction as to the time of its application. The Old Testament prophets were to continue until John (Matt. 11:13), which abrupt termination reveals the divine plan regarding a new canon and the prophetic writers of this should receive their commissions from the One whom John would announce. Malachi closes with a look on to the

prophetic ministry which John in part fulfilled. “Behold I will send you Elijah the prophet” (Mal. 4:5), and, of John, Christ said, “And if ye will receive it, this is Elias, which was for to come” (Matt. 11:14). Thus the canon of the Old Testament remained open until John, but the New Testament closed with the last writing of the last apostle. The Old Testament, as to its hope, was centered on the first advent of Christ. The New Testament hope is centered on the second advent of Christ; its closing word is from the glorified Lord, “Surely I come quickly.” To this the inspired writer adds, “Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.”

The Church, or those to whom the New Testament came, is said to be built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets (Eph. 2:20), rather than that the apostles and prophets were built on the Church. The Church did not bestow apostolic and prophetic authority upon men, but chosen men, moved of the Holy Spirit, received and delivered the truth and doctrine by which the Church came to be and on which she must ever continue to the end of her pilgrim journey. It is one thing to authorize and ordain a prophet, and quite another thing merely to recognize what God has with sovereign authority constituted. Neither the congregation of Israel nor the Church ever functioned beyond the latter undertaking.

It may be concluded, then, that the highest divine service ever committed to man is that of the prophet, and transcending the usual prophetic ministry was that service, committed to a few among the many prophets, in which they were exercised in receiving and delivering those portions which by sovereign authorization were to constitute the canon of the Scriptures. Since a general forthtelling prophetic ministry is announced and delegated to continue throughout this age (1 Cor. 14:3; Eph. 4:11), it is possible that the averment that prophecy shall “cease” (1 Cor. 13:8) anticipates the close of the New Testament canon; for where there is no divinely designated and duly attested prophet there is no Scripture to be received or delivered.

VI. The Scriptures are Authoritative Being the Word Employed by God the Holy Spirit

Having originated and transmitted the Scriptures by chosen prophets, the authority of those writings is further revealed by the fact that the Spirit employs the Scriptures as His own language in speaking to men. The Bible, being the Word of God, is suitable for perfect expression in every situation in which the Spirit functions in executing the divine ascendancy and purpose. The Scriptures

are “the sword of the Spirit” [Eph. 6:17], and “Thus saith the LORD” is always equivalent to “Thus saith the Holy Spirit.” The phrase, “The Spirit speaketh expressly” (1 Tim. 4:1), might with entire justification be applied to all the Word of God. It is His voice, speaking—not only in the sense that it springs from Him, but in the sense, also, that it is employed by Him as His own vocabulary and phraseology. It is that to which He, to a large degree, confines Himself in His address to men.

VII. The Authority of the Bible is Seen in the Fact that without the Slightest Deflection it Vindicates and Satisfies its Every Claim

This theme, though already considered in its logical place as related to apologetics, may well be pursued briefly at this point and under a somewhat comprehensive classification of its parts, namely:

1. ENDURING POWER. The Bible writers asserted that the Scriptures would endure, being God’s authoritative word to man, which certification has proved true in the supernatural preservation of these Oracles. The engaging consideration of the preservation of these writings is yet to be undertaken more at length.

2. IMPERIAL POWER. The Bible, since it incorporates the gospel, is “the power of God unto salvation” (Rom. 1:16), and, as too often unobserved, the gospel is addressed to man as an imperial edict. It is something to be *obeyed* (Acts 5:32; Rom. 2:8; 10:16; 2 Tim. 1:8; Heb. 5:9; 1 Pet. 4:17). It not only conveys the divine offers of salvation to men but penetrates into the very heart with illuminating, transforming power. “Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Rom. 10:17). “For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart” (Heb. 4:12). The Word of God is to be preached and not the word of men, and wherever the Word of God is preached it justifies its own claim to be “the power of God unto salvation.”

3. SANCTIFYING POWER. The Bible’s authority is asserted and demonstrated in the fact that it has sanctifying power. The Lord prayed, “Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth” (John 17:17). Israel will yet be sanctified by the Scriptures of truth. Jehovah’s covenant declares, “I will put my law in their

inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people” (Jer. 31:33); unmeasured blessings are provided for those in whom the Word of God dwells “richly in all wisdom” (Col. 3:16); and by taking “the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God” (Eph. 6:17), the armor of God, by which the enemy may be defeated, is completed. The lives of countless saints have proved the Bible to be a sanctifying power.

4. REVEALING POWER. The Bible asserts and vindicates its authority in its claim to be a revelation to men. All authoritative information of things celestial or mundane, of time or eternity, of right or wrong, is derived from the Oracles of God. At every point and by every test that man has been able to apply to this vast disclosure of erudition it has proved to be no less than the “wisdom of God” revealed to man.

5. ACCURACY. The Bible’s authority is demonstrated, also, in that it is accurate to the degree of infinity in matters of history and prophecy. Historical data set forth in the original writings are inerrant, and prophecy not only discloses the oncoming events of the future, but provides unfailing assurance that all that is predicted will be executed by the sovereign and therefore irresistible competency of God. Thus has the divine authority of the Scriptures been demonstrated in the grand array of predictions already fulfilled, and thus it will be demonstrated in the plenary realization of all that is yet unfulfilled. “The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.”

6. PREVAILING POWER. The Bible proves its authority by the way it prevails over human activities. Its dominion began with a small and despised people in a restricted locality. It divided its task with no other agency. Like the breaking of a dam it gushed forth submerging the world. In doing this, it conquered empires though unanticipated, hated, and derided. Its advocates were massacred yet without a counter blow being inflicted. Entrenched depravity could not stay its victorious onward movement. Like the building of the temple whereon the sound of no tool was heard, so this mighty edifice of God has advanced. It is not implied that the Bible has transformed the world; but Jehovah’s Word has been and will be fulfilled which announced, “It shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it” (Isa. 55:11). Men, indeed, have not been blind to the fact that this authoritative Book ascribes all its qualities and effectiveness to God alone. No theory that feverish brains could advance can account for the Bible’s irresistible authority. Speaking of His own Word,

Jehovah said, “For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD” (Isa. 55:8).

7. PROPHECY. The Bible demonstrates its authority by proposing a divine program which God alone could complete. To a considerable degree this program has been executed. Apart from such a comprehensive plan, how could Jehovah’s everlasting and all-inclusive covenants with Abraham, David, Israel, and the Church—in which He assumes a determining direction over all generations of human life—be interpreted? Apart from an irresistible divine purpose, how else could the statement, “Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world” (Acts 15:18), be understood? The transcendent authority by which Jehovah will complete His undertaking is equaled in every respect by the authority of His Word which reveals His purpose to men.

Conclusion

Of these seven exhibitions of the authority of the Scriptures, three are primary. (a) The fact that the Bible is the breath of God is consummated in the transmission of that message to chosen prophets and in the recognition and acknowledgment of the sacred canon by those to whom it first came. Neither the part wrought by human authors nor the part wrought by those who under God determined the canon is the basis of the Bible’s authority, though some have asserted that such authority is discoverable in the inspiration of men or the dogmas of the church in her assemblies and councils. (b) The royal assent which the Second Person has given is closely related to the assent of the prophets, but no comparison is tenable between these sources of authority. And (c) the employment of the Scriptures as His own utterance on the part of the Holy Spirit is closely related to the manifest power of the Scripture in operation and demonstrates their final authority. Thus to recapitulate, the authority of the Word of God may be traced to three actualities, namely, (a) the Scriptures are the breath of God—His own Word to man; (b) the Scriptures are given the attestation, or royal assent of the Son of God; and (c) they originate with and are employed by the Holy Spirit of God.

Chapter VI

ILLUMINATION

THE PURPOSE of God in providing the Bible is that man, to whom the Bible is addressed, may be possessed of dependable information regarding things tangible and intangible, temporal and eternal, visible and invisible, earthly and heavenly. In view of man's native limitations, this fund of truth is of measureless value to him. The unfallen man while in Eden depended upon a direct communication from God relative to all things both physical and spiritual. Undoubtedly much was learned by man before the fall, but new and drastic incompetency came to his mind and heart as a result of the calamitous changes which the fall imposed. From that time forth, God contemplated man as in "gross darkness" and "in the shadow of death." Gross, indeed, is the darkness, and deep, indeed, is the shadow of death. The graphic phrase, *the shadow of death*, which recurs about eighteen times in the Bible, is always employed in the Scriptures as a vivid portrayal of the fallen estate of man.

I. Specific Forms of Spiritual Darkness

Added to the original darkness which came by the fall, there are at least four particularized forms of spiritual blindness which, according to the Bible, are experienced by certain classes of humanity and which augment beyond computation man's natural unenlightenment. Some consideration of the need of illumination is essential as a background to an adequate apprehension of all that illumination provides.

1. ISRAEL'S BLINDNESS. In addition to natural blindness, a judicial darkness has fallen upon Israel which Jehovah instructed Isaiah to announce in these words, "Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert [turn about], and be healed" (Isa. 6:9, 10; cf. Matt. 13:14, 15; Mark 4:12; Luke 8:10; John 12:40; Acts 28:26, 27; 2 Cor. 3:14, 15). This blindness was predicted to appear in Israel when their Messiah would come. The blindness came upon them as anticipated and caused that national unbelief which not only rejected their Messiah (Acts 2:22–24), but was the occasion of the breaking off of the natural branches from the olive tree

(Rom. 11:13–25); only, however, for the restricted time of the duration of this age. Isaiah also said, “For the LORD hath poured out upon you the spirit of deep sleep, and hath closed your eyes: the prophets and your rulers, the seers hath he covered. And the vision of all is become unto you as the words of a book that is sealed, which men deliver to one that is learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I cannot; for it is sealed: and the book is delivered to him that is not learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I am not learned” (29:10–12). The blindness, though national, is not universal. In Romans 11:25 it is stated: “For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.” From Ephesians 1:22, 23 it is discovered that the phrase, *the fulness of the Gentiles*, refers to the present purpose of God in the out-calling of the Church from both Jews and Gentiles. Those from among Israel who, being illuminated by the Spirit of God, obey the gospel, are saved into the heavenly glory and are no longer blinded as before.

But the time is coming when the veil now upon national Israel shall be lifted. The “vail is done away in Christ,” but Israel as a people do not yet believe that Jesus is their Messiah. “Nevertheless when it [Israel] shall turn to the Lord, the vail shall be taken away” (2 Cor. 3:14–16). This national illumination, which will, no doubt, break upon them through a new and right understanding of the Scriptures, is predicted by Isaiah in these words: “Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the LORD is risen upon thee. For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the LORD shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee. And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising” (60:1–3).

Thus it is disclosed that for Israelites there are two possible illuminations: one for the individual Jew who believes to the saving of his soul, which illumination dispels all previous darkness; and the other for the whole nation, which will be their portion when the “Sun of righteousness” arises with healing in His wings (Mal. 4:2), and when the Deliverer shall come out of Zion and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob (Rom. 11:26). Since the Word of God shall then be written “in their hearts,” it is evident that the agency which the Spirit will use to enlighten that nation will be the Scriptures of truth.

2. GENTILE DARKNESS. The darkness which is now experienced by the Gentile nations, apart from satanic blindness, is none other than that which has come upon them because of the fall. The unsaved, having never known any other

estate, are unconscious of their condition and therefore almost universally disbelieve those Scriptures which describe their plight. There are many descriptions of this Gentile darkness presented in the Bible. Even when the light, which Christ is, shined in darkness, “the darkness comprehended it not” (John 1:5; cf. Eph. 5:11; 1 John 2:11). But the following from Isaiah, already cited, declares the illumination that will reach them when Christ returns, “The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined” (9:2). It is when the glorious Light of God, the returning Messiah, shall come to Zion that the long-promised blessing shall reach also to the Gentiles.

3. SATANIC DARKNESS. An extraordinary disclosure is made in 2 Corinthians 4:3, 4 of the fact that unregenerate men, individual Jew and Gentile alike, are blinded as to the gospel and that this blindness is as a veil upon the mind. This incapacity to respond to the gospel has been imposed by Satan with a view to impeding the normal reception of the message concerning God’s saving grace. This obstruction is not in evidence concerning any aspect of truth other than the gospel. The passage asserts: “But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.” Two exceedingly important statements by Christ bear on this same incapacity of the unregenerate man. To Nicodemus He said, “Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God” (John 3:3); and of the present relationships of the Spirit, He said, “... the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him” (John 14:17). So, also, the Apostle points out that the knowledge which the world possesses, forged as it is out of a perverted understanding of God’s truth into false philosophies and conceptions, is the very agency which Satan uses to mislead them. He declares, “The world by wisdom knew not God” (1 Cor. 1:21). Likewise, after having pointed out the fact that men have willfully turned away from the truth about God which nature discloses, the same Apostle writes, “Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools”; and that because of their folly God gave them up to “uncleanness,” to “vile affections,” and “a reprobate mind” (Rom. 1:19–32). All of this is an added revelation of the fallen estate of the unregenerate. But these restrictions—both native and satanic—can be overcome by the illuminating power of the Holy Spirit. With this in view, the Spirit reprove, or enlightens, the world with respect to the cardinal features of

the gospel, namely, “sin, righteousness, and judgment” (John 16:7–11). The Scriptures are evidently the primary agency which is used by the Spirit to this end, for “faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Rom. 10:17).

4. CARNAL BLINDNESS. Having depicted the restrictions of the ψυχικός (*psuchikos*, ‘natural’) man respecting his inability to receive the things of the Spirit of God (1 Cor. 2:14) and having appraised the supernatural capacity of the πνευματικός (*pneumatikos*, ‘spiritual’) man (1 Cor. 2:15), the Apostle portrays the restricted spiritual understanding of the σαρκικός (*sarkikos*, ‘carnal’) man and assigns the cause for carnality in the specific group to which he was writing. This revealing passage reads: “And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual [πνευματικός], but as unto carnal [σαρκικός], even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able” (1 Cor. 3:1, 2). The carnal man is here addressed as a *brother* and as a *babe in Christ*, all of which demonstrates that he is saved. However, his reception of God’s Word is limited to its simplest messages—likened to *milk* and in contrast to *meat*—, and this, it is asserted, is due to his unspiritual life. The same unspirituality in believers is in view in Hebrews 5:12–14, “For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.”

Thus it is disclosed that unspiritual living hinders the normal illuminating work of the Spirit of God in the mind and heart of the child of God.

II. The Illuminating Work of the Spirit

The period of time between the two advents of Christ is often designated as *The Age of the Holy Spirit*, and properly so, since these days are characterized by the activity and administration of the Spirit. In these specific days, also, the child of God is blessed to no small degree by the fact that the Holy Spirit indwells him, and the Spirit is thus residing in the Christian to the end that supernatural power may be ever available. Were it not for this divine resource and sufficiency, the superhuman manner of life now expected from each believer would be an impossible and, therefore, an inconsistent requisition. Among the

age-characterizing operations of the Spirit is that of teaching or enlightening the individual in whom He dwells. This reception of truth is not confined to commonplace issues, but may reach out into the “deep things of God,” and the experience of the believer when thus taught by the Spirit is peculiar in this respect, that the divine Teacher is within his heart and he therefore does not hear a voice speaking from without and at stated times, as is the method of human teachers, but the mind and heart are supernaturally awakened from within to apprehend what otherwise would be unknown. It need only be observed here that, of necessity, this awakening ministry of the Spirit may be greatly hindered by sin or by unspiritual ways on the part of the child of God. This truth alone accounts for the existing difference between the spiritual Christian who “discerns all things” and the carnal Christian who cannot receive the deeper and more vital truths which are likened to strong meat (1 Cor. 2:15; 3:1–3).

On the day of His resurrection, Christ walked with two of His disciples on the Emmaus road (Luke 24:13–35) and it is recorded that He “expounded” and “opened” the Scriptures to these disciples. Similarly, at evening when He appeared to the whole company of disciples He opened their understanding to the Scriptures (Luke 24:45). Until the crucifixion, these men had not believed that Christ would die (Matt. 16:21–23), and it was to the end that they might know something of the meaning of His death and resurrection that He opened their understanding (Luke 24:46). Thus a limitless field of truth came to them, even the gospel which they were to proclaim (Luke 24:47, 48); but not without the power which the Spirit coming upon them would secure (Luke 24:49). On the Day of Pentecost, Peter, who had so recently rejected the prediction concerning Christ’s death (Matt. 16:21–23), preached the value of that death with such convincing power that three thousand were saved. It is evident that Peter’s understanding had been opened concerning Christ’s death; this, however, was not Peter’s first experience with the penetrating power of a divine revelation. In answer to Christ’s question, “But whom say ye that I am?” Peter replied, “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.” And to this Christ responded, “Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven” (Matt. 16:15–17). Though in the Scriptures, above cited, the Father and the Son are declared to have revealed definite aspects of truth to various men, the Spirit of God is the divine Teacher since His advent on Pentecost, and a very extensive body of Scripture bears on this specified ministry of the Spirit.

After having preannounced the illuminating power of the Spirit upon the

unsaved by which the satanic veil concerning the gospel is lifted and apart from which none could ever receive Christ as their Savior (John 16:7–11), the Lord proceeded to say, “I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of [“from”—as originator] himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come” (John 16:12–15). The primary statement of this crucial passage is that Christ, who has been teaching these disciples throughout three and a half years, is going on teaching them, but by a new way of approach to their hearts. The phrase, “when he, the Spirit of truth, is come,” no doubt anticipates the advent of the Spirit on Pentecost and the new undertakings that would be made possible by His indwelling presence in their hearts—not the least of which is His service as Teacher. But it must be recognized that the Spirit purposely originates nothing. It is “whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak,” and, “he shall receive of mine,” Christ said, “and shall shew it unto you.” And, again, “he shall take of mine [including the *all things* of the Father], and shall shew it unto you.” It is thus by presenting the message of the ascended Christ that the Spirit will “glorify Christ.” Apart from this so definite yet unprecedented manner of imparting truth, the disciples—as is equally true of all believers from that day until now—could not “bear” the “many things” which, evidently, were still not apprehended after the three and a half years of unbroken schooling. Language could not more explicitly convey the fact that certain aspects of truth—immeasurable indeed—cannot be gained by usual didactic methods. These supermundane revelations must be disclosed from the ascended Lord through the mediation of the Spirit and only then as the Spirit speaks from His incomparable position of nearness—within the heart itself.

The Upper Room Discourse, in which the above passage is found, is the seed-plot of that form of doctrine which is later developed in the Epistles. It is not strange, therefore, that the Apostle Paul takes up this great theme for further elucidation. This is found in 1 Corinthians 2:9–3:4. It reads:

But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man’s wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But

he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man. For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ. And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able. For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men? For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal?

The central truth of this context is presented in the opening verse where it is stated that God hath prepared certain “things” for them that love Him—things which are not gained by the eye, the ear, or the heart (reasoning power; cf. Isa. 52:15; 64:4; 6:9, 10; Matt. 13:15). This negative declaration concerning the eye, the ear, and the heart is abundantly sustained in the following verse, where it is asserted that these specific “things” are *revealed* unto us by the Spirit. These “things” are a present reality, and not, as sometimes supposed, an array of future glories to be experienced in heaven. The Spirit who reveals these “things” is One who “searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.” It is not difficult to believe that the Third Person of the Godhead is in possession of all truth; the marvel is that this Third Person indwells the least Christian, and thus places that Christian in a position to receive and understand that transcendent truth which the Spirit knows. Within his own capacity, the child of God can know no more than “the things of a man,” which are within the range of “the spirit of man which is in him.” Amazing, indeed, is the disclosure that “the Spirit which is of God” has been received, and for the express purpose in view that the children of God “might know the things that are freely given to us of God.” And as written elsewhere: “But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it [He] hath taught you, ye shall abide in him” (1 John 2:27).

Following the stupendous disclosures that the Christian is indwelt by the Supreme Teacher and is therefore already admitted into an inimitable seminary where the instruction is said to be “freely given,” *i.e.*, without limitation, the Apostle proceeds to point out, as before noted, a threefold division of humanity —, and to disclose the proof concerning the classification of each man as found in his attitude toward the Word of God. (a) The natural or unregenerate man cannot receive the Scriptures, since they are by the Spirit discerned, and the natural man, though educated with all that the eye, the ear, and the reasoning power can impart, has not received the Spirit (cf. Jude 1:19 where *sensual* is the translation of the same designation—ψυχικός Cf. 1 Cor. 15:46; James 3:15), and

therefore all revelation is “foolishness” to him. Should this natural man, because of human attainments and ecclesiastical authority, be placed where he molds or directs the affairs of the Church of Christ on earth, his influence must ever be a peril to the things of God. Even reverence and sincerity may not be wanting, but these cannot substitute for the *revelation* which can come only from the indwelling Spirit. (b) The spiritual man is in a position to receive *all* truth (there is no implication that he has already attained to it). He is indwelt by the Spirit and all adjustments concerning his daily life are made with the end in view that the Spirit may not be hindered in His teaching ministry within his own heart. And (c) the carnal Christian demonstrates his fleshliness by his inability to receive the deeper truths which are likened to *strong meat* as in contrast to *milk*. The need of the carnal man is *sanctification* and not regeneration.

Lest that which the Spirit teaches be deemed a small feature in the vast field of human knowledge, it is well to recount what is included in the category of “things” which are taught by the Spirit. These are: “things” related to the Father, “things” related to the Son, “things” related to the Spirit, “things” to come, and “things” related to the kingdom of God; for “except a man be born again [‘from above’], he cannot see the kingdom of God” (John 3:3). Thus, by comparison, the sum total of human knowledge is reduced to the point of insignificance.

There is no didactic discipline in the world comparable to the teaching of Christ by the Holy Spirit, both because of the fact that infinity characterizes the themes which are taught, and because of the Teacher’s method of approach by which He, by the Spirit, enters the innermost recesses of the heart where impressions originate and there not only tells out the truth of transcendent magnitude, but causes the pupil actually to grasp the things thus revealed. “By faith we understand” (Heb. 11:3, R.V.). That Christ would continue the teaching begun while here on earth was clearly promised (John 16:12–15), and implied in Acts 1:1 where reference is made to “all that Jesus began both to do and teach.”

In view of the fact that the minister’s distinctive and essential message is in the realm of spiritual truth which can be discerned only by the Holy Spirit and that the Holy Spirit must require a yieldedness to Himself on the part of the one whom He teaches, the minister or theological student may well seek by heart-searching and confession to be in right relation to the One upon whom all progress in the knowledge of God’s truth depends. A requisite life in conformity to the will of God, on the student’s part, is neither incidental nor optional; it is *arbitrary, determining, and crucial*. There is not the slightest possibility that the most educated and brilliant mind can make one step of progress in the

understanding of spiritual truth apart from the direct, supernatural teaching to the individual heart by the indwelling Spirit. Hence the imperative aspect of the new birth. In like manner, there can be no full or worthy apprehension of God's revealed truth by the Christian who is unspiritual or carnal. Hence the imperative aspect of a yielded life.

Chapter VII

INTERPRETATION

IT IS properly required of the theologian that he both understand and expound the Scriptures. This is the distinctive field in which he serves. However, he confronts a wide latitude of interpretation which is represented when all schools of theological thought are considered. Nevertheless, whether any person or group of persons has ever attained unto it or not, there is but one system of related and interdependent revelation set forth in the Word of God. Though they build their structures on selected proof-texts (which too often receive biased interpretation), the Bible does not lend itself equally in support of Calvinism, Arminianism, various forms of lapsarian beliefs, postmillenarianism, premillenarianism, and amillenarianism. The widely divergent and contradictory claims of these and other systems of interpretation serve to demonstrate the fallibility of sincere men. It is sometimes claimed that anything good or bad may be proved or defended from the Scriptures. Such an impression could be sustained only by the permission of violent misuse or disuse of the Sacred Text. It is noticeable that all theological systems and even modern cults make use of the Bible.

It is probable that, owing to human limitations, no theological system has reached that illation which is exempt from all error and which incorporates into itself all truth in its proper balance. Men of candor have long striven to reach this desideratum, while others, apparently, have too often been lacking in that holy regard for the divine Oracles which leads to a proving of all things and to a holding of that which is good. The unrevoked *anathema* which rests upon all who pervert the gospel of divine grace (Gal. 1:8, 9) may be deemed, to some degree, to be true concerning the misrepresentation of all divine revelation. In view of these considerations, the uncompromising student will do well to give indefatigable study to the Sacred Text and demand of himself that right relation to God which insures the priceless divine guidance into all truth. The conclusions of other men should be given due respect. It is the student's task, having considered and weighed the contribution men have made to the general understanding of the Scriptures, to advance these assured results of scholarship beyond the attainments of past generations, striving to be as humble and true as the fathers have been. Among other things stated, 2 Timothy 2:15 does enjoin "study" which is the application to, and the investigation of, the text of Scripture

itself and not merely a perusal of the writings of other men about the text.

The science of interpretation—usually designated *hermeneutics*, which term denotes the art of interpreting literature, especially the Sacred Scriptures—includes the recognition of the principles upon which a true analysis must proceed. This science is to be distinguished from *exegesis*, which is the application of the laws of interpretation. Both of these disciplines deserve an extended treatment as independent courses of study in every theological curriculum.

Among all the major divisions of Bibliology, hermeneutics, or the science of interpretation, holds a unique place, being, as it is, wholly the work of men. Its results, therefore, at best, are characterized by imperfections due to human limitations, and it is subject to such general rules and principles of procedure as are obviously demanded. When undertaking to interpret the Scriptures, due consideration should be given to:

I. The Purpose of the Bible as a Whole

When searching the Scriptures, it is well to have in mind the fact that beyond the sphere which limits the primary objective for which the Bible as a revelation from God was given, incomplete features appear. The Bible is not a treatise on natural science or history. It is a plenary declaration from God concerning Himself and His works—especially as those works enter into the eternal welfare of men. On other themes the sacred writers did, of necessity, touch at times, and what they wrote is accurate in so far as it goes. This, as has been observed, is notable. With reference to mundane things, these writers were not permitted to go beyond the intelligence of the men of their day by anticipating later scientific discoveries, nor to express themselves within those restrictions in such a manner as would develop absurdities when their writings would be compared with the later development of knowledge, which development was predicted (Dan. 12:4).

II. The Distinctive Character and Message of Each Book of the Bible

Though it demand much labor, the noting of the differentiating characteristics of each book of the Bible is essential, since a vital factor in any revelation is its place in a certain book, and in the light of the specific message of that book. The four Gospels offer an illustration of this verity. The truth set forth in Matthew's Gospel is especially germane to the *kingship* of Christ; the truth set forth in

Mark's Gospel is especially germane to the *servanthood* of Christ; the truth set forth in Luke's Gospel is especially germane to the *humanity* of Christ; while the truth set forth in John's Gospel is especially germane to the Deity of Christ. Each book of the Bible not only maintains a specific purpose, but its contribution to the whole structure of the Bible is to be observed as well.

III. To Whom is a Given Scripture Addressed?

An accurate interpretation of any given Scripture depends very much upon a differentiation between its *primary* and *secondary* applications. As has been stated, "All scripture" is *for* the Christian in the sense that it is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness (2 Tim. 3:16); but not all Scripture is *about* him. This is obvious since all Scripture is not addressed to the angels or to the Gentiles. In like manner, all Scripture is not addressed to the Jew or to the Christian. The Scriptures are "profitable" because they are pregnant with moral and spiritual values; this is true even when they exert only the influence of a secondary application.

A primary application is made when a given Scripture is recognized as pertaining directly to those to whom it is addressed. A secondary application is made when a given Scripture is recognized as not applying directly to a certain person or class of persons, but its moral and spiritual teachings are, nevertheless, appropriated by them. To illustrate this: Much valuable truth may be gained by Christians from the extensive body of Scriptures bearing on the Jewish Sabbath; but if that Scripture is given a primary application to the Christian, to whom it was never directly addressed, the Christian would have no Biblical ground for the observance of the first day of the week (which he certainly has), and he could offer no excuse for his failure to keep the specific features of the Sabbath law. He must, like all Sabbath-breakers, be stoned to death (Num. 15:32–36). In like manner, if all Scripture is of primary application to Christians of this age, then they are in danger of hell fire (Matt. 5:29, 30), of unspeakable plagues, diseases, and sickness, and by reason of these to become few in number (Deut. 28:58–62), and to have the blood of lost souls required at their hands (Ezek. 3:17, 18). Of the Christian it is said that "he cometh not into judgment" (John 5:24, R.V.), and, "there is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 8:1, R.V.). In no way are false theological systems more sustained than by their confusion of primary and secondary applications of the Word of God. It is evident, also, that no feature of interpretation demands more discernment born of

true scholarship than this. The precise application of some passages—especially in the Synoptics—is exceedingly difficult. The Apostle’s plea for “study” is also a warning; for the Scriptures will not be “rightly divided” apart from arduous “study.” However, this is the theologian’s distinctive task and his worthiness may be measured, to a large degree, by his analytical knowledge of, and ability to apply, the entire text of God’s Word.

IV. Consideration of the Context

The character and scope of the truth under contemplation at any point is to be discovered, very largely, by the surrounding context. The student must learn to establish context boundaries regardless of the mere mechanical chapter and verse divisions. No more striking illustration of the context extending beyond chapter boundaries is to be found than in Matthew’s account of the transfiguration of Christ. This context begins with the last verse of chapter 16 and continues into chapter 17. To the general reader, Matthew 16:28 is completely unrelated to 17:1–8 because of the wholly artificial intrusion of a chapter division. Matthew 16:28, standing alone, seems to be a misrepresentation of facts; but when seen as a part of the transfiguration account, its prediction is not only explained, but it lends a very important contribution to the *purpose* of the transfiguration (cf. 2 Pet. 1:16–21). Likewise, the promise of 1 Corinthians 2:9 is seen to be fulfilled, not at some future time in heaven, but *now*, if the reader continues on into verse 10. Again, ἀδόκιμος (*adokimos*, ‘castaway,’ or ‘disapproved’) of 1 Corinthians 9:27 cannot mean the loss of salvation in a context which has only to do with rewards for Christian service.

V. Consideration of All Scripture Bearing on any given theme

A right interpretation will also depend very largely on an induction being made of *all* that the Bible presents on a given subject. The conclusion must be no less than the consensus of that full testimony. Though there is no complete unanimity as to the meaning of 2 Peter 1:20, the majority of expositors favor the interpretation which implies that no one Scripture bearing on a theme is to be considered apart from other Scriptures bearing on that theme. The passage states: “Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation.” There could be no reference here to the privacy of the one who interprets, for, in the end, all interpretation is personal and therefore private.

From the verse which follows, there is some ground for concluding that the lack of privacy belonged to the prophets who did not disclose their private opinions, but were moved by the Holy Spirit. However, it would seem more in harmony with the underlying conditions which all must recognize, that the statement of a doctrine or theme of the Word of God will be true to the mind of God only as all He has said on that theme is brought into view. *Prophecy*, as contemplated in this passage and as has been before pointed out, is that larger forthtelling message which includes all that the Old Testament writers have written.

The necessity of a full induction is indicated when the progress of doctrine is recognized. The early disclosures concerning redemption by blood are not to stand alone, though it will be observed that the early revelation was at one time all that God had revealed. Redemption by blood is consummated in the death of Christ and defined in the doctrinal structure built upon that death by the apostles. Therefore, an interpretation of redemption based on a private or isolated passage of the early Scriptures would be misleading; yet the early passages make a grand contribution to the whole revelation.

VI. Discovery of the Exact Meaning of the determinative words in the text

Apart from the knowledge of the original languages in which the Bible was written, there can be no very accurate conclusions as to what a difficult passage teaches. For this reason the study of both Hebrew and Greek to the extent that worthy exegesis in one's own right is undertaken is most essential and belongs to the preparation of a Bible expositor. The history of the great preachers and teachers of the past relative to the use of the original languages is most stimulating. Those who have not gained a working knowledge of the original languages can hardly be expected to realize what a wealth of disclosure that ability imparts. To be utterly dependent upon the findings of other men, while it may not preclude one from a fruitful ministry, is depressing since the vital authority in utterance (which should be graced with humility) is lacking.

VII. Necessity of Avoiding Personal Prejudices

It is exceedingly easy to twist or mold the Word of God to make it conform to one's preconceived notions. To do this is no less than "handling the word of God deceitfully" (2 Cor. 4:2), and is worthy of judgment from Him whose Word is thus perverted. At no point may the conscience be more exercised and the mind

of God more sought than when delving into the precise meaning of the Scriptures and when giving those findings to others.

These and other instructions relative to logical procedure and scientific method are presented in any complete course in hermeneutics, and all of these taken together provide the best safeguards men have devised against the misrepresentation of, and disproportionate emphasis on, the doctrines of the Bible.

Chapter VIII

ANIMATION

BY THE TERM *animation* reference is made to that inimitable element of vitality or life which obtains in the Bible as in no other book. There are various attributes which are predicated of the written Word of God. In the Old Testament these are presented in two Psalms. Seven appear in Psalm 19: “The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether” (vss. 7–9). Similarly, seven attributes of the Bible are named in Psalm 119. These are: *faithful* (vs. 86), *broad* (vs. 96), *right* (vs. 128), *wonderful* (vs. 129), *pure* (vs. 140), *everlasting* (vs. 160), and *righteous* (vs. 172). The New Testament adds that the Word of God is *truth* (John 17:17), *profitable* (2 Tim. 3:16), *quickness* and *powerful* (Heb. 4:12).

Much, indeed, is asserted when the attributes ζῶν (*zōn*, ‘quick,’ or ‘living’) and ἐνεργής (*energēs*, ‘powerful’) are ascribed to the Scriptures. The word ζῶν, used about 140 times in the New Testament, means *life* either as an actuality or as a manner of conduct. This word root appears in each of the thirteen repetitions of the phrase, “the living God.” Twice the root appears as an integral element in the written Scriptures. It is stated: (a) “For the word of God is quick [‘living’], and powerful [‘active’], and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents [‘ideas’] of the heart” (Heb. 4:12). The reference in this passage to “the word of God,” has been by the Fathers in general and many of later times taken to designate the Logos or Living Word, as that term is used by John; but the context immediately leads away from the thought of Logos to that of the written Word. In Hebrews the Second Person is set forth as the *Son of God*, and 6:5 and 11:3 do not translate Logos, but these passages do translate another word altogether (ῥῆμα, *rēma*), which word is always used to designate a form of utterance and never used of the Person of Christ. Of the interpretation which makes this reference to be of the spoken Word of God as such, it may be pointed out that there is practically no difference in the essential reality of the spoken Word and the written Word, for one is no more than a form in which the other appears. Both are alike the breath of His

mouth. The element of *life*, here asserted to be inherent in the Word of God, is more than that which is now in authority as in contrast to that which has become but a dead letter; it is more than something which supplies nourishment, though this the Scriptures do supply. Scripture is *living* in the sense in which God is the *Living God* (cf. 10:31). The predicates here used are not only revealing, but are so arranged as to form a climax. The Word of God is *living*, it is *energizing*, it is *sharp*, it *pierces*, it *discerns*. (b) “Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever” (1 Pet. 1:23). Here, again ζάω (*zaō*) appears, with the added thought of eternal duration. Not to be overlooked at this point is the utterance of Christ, “The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life” (ζωή—*zōē*, John 6:63).

The second word, already indicated in Hebrews 4:12, is ἐνεργής, which ascribes to the Scriptures the attribute of *energy*. It is the energy which vital life supplies. This element of power, or energy, is not to be accounted for on insufficient grounds. Truth is always potent, and the Scriptures, being *truth* (John 17:17; cf. 8:32), are ever the prevailing voice where conscience and candor obtain; but the *power* of the Word of God is not alone in its indisputable integrity. In like manner, the Word of God is the “sword of the Spirit” (Eph. 6:17); but even the vital force which the Spirit releases when wielding His sword does not fully account for the *energy* of the Bible. The written Word of God is God-breathed. Life inheres in it. This truth does not imply personality or that the Bible possesses the constitution of a living creature. It declares that divine life is resident in the Scriptures. Because of this fact, certain stupendous accomplishments are said to be wrought by the Word of God:

I. The Power of God’s Word Upon the Unsaved

The Word of God is the agency by which faith is generated. It is written: “Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Rom. 10:17). In this same connection the Apostle declares that the Scriptures “are able to make thee wise unto salvation” (2 Tim. 3:15). And Peter states that it is through “great and precious promises” that men may “be partakers of the divine nature” (2 Pet. 1:4). The Psalmist declares, “The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul” (Ps. 19:7). So, also, as “water,” the Word of God cooperates with the Spirit in the accomplishment of the new birth (John 3:5; cf. Titus 3:5). “Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God” (1 Pet. 1:23).

II. The Power of God's Word Upon the Saved

In His High Priestly prayer, Christ made request that those the Father had given Him might be sanctified through the truth, adding, "Thy word is truth. ... And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth" (John 17:17–19). The Word of God is a nourishment imparting strength: "As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby" (1 Pet. 2:2). The Scriptures are of special value to the believer. "For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh [ἐνεργεῖται, 'energizes'] also in you that believe" (1 Thess. 2:13). "And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified" (Acts 20:32). And, lastly, the Word is a purifying agency. Writing of Christ's care for His Church, the Apostle said, "... that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word" (Eph. 5:26; cf. Ps. 37:31; 119:11).

In the light of this body of truth which so definitely predicates of the Word of God that it is a living, vital agency with supernatural power, the preacher has little excuse for the presentation of anything else. The divine promise through Isaiah is, "For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: so shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it" (Isa. 55:10, 11). To the same purpose Jeremiah has written: "Is not my word like as a fire? saith the LORD; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?" (Jer. 23:29). God uses His Word. It is efficacious in the hand of the Holy Spirit in accomplishing supernatural results. For this reason, the Apostle, with that wisdom given him of God, directed his young student, Timothy, to "preach the word."

Chapter IX

PRESERVATION

JEHOVAH'S COVENANT, namely, that His Word will endure forever, has been discharged to the present hour. Men have done what they could to destroy the influence of the Scriptures. They have both testified against them and predicted their subsidence; but at no time in the world's history has the Bible been more a power for good, nor has it ever been more clearly marked off for an ever increasing influence. The preservation of the Scriptures, like the divine care over the writing of them and over the formation of them into the canon, is neither accidental, incidental, nor fortuitous. It is the fulfillment of the divine promise. What God in faithfulness has wrought, will be continued until His purpose is accomplished. There is little indeed that men can do to thwart the effectiveness of God's Word, since it is said of that Word, "Concerning thy testimonies, I have known of old that thou has founded them forever," and, "For ever, O LORD, thy word is settled [established] in heaven" (Ps. 119:152, 89). To the same purpose Christ said, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my word shall not pass away" (Matt. 24:35); and the Apostle Peter asserts that "the word of God" is that "which liveth and abideth for ever" (1 Pet. 1:23).

It is no small distinction conferred on the Bible that it is classed with a very few realities which endure forever. The writer to the Hebrews predicts the time when there will be a removal of all things that can be shaken and the continuation of those things which cannot be shaken. His reference is specifically to the kingdom of God and contemplates, naturally, all that enters into that kingdom (Heb. 12:25–29). Eternal endurance is predicated of the Bible; not that its message in all its parts will need ever to be preached as it is now, but it is indestructible, being the Word of the eternal God. It is not that some one book out of the innumerable books men have written has been arbitrarily singled out for the highest honor. The Bible is eternal in its own right. It abides because of the fact that no word Jehovah has spoken can be removed or shaken. In fact, it is by means of His written Oracles that God announces His binding declarations concerning the "all things" which cannot be shaken. The Scriptures are the legal instrument by which God obligates Himself to execute every detail of His eternal covenants and to fulfill every prediction His prophets have made. The legal instrument which secures this vast consummation must continue, and shall continue, until the last promise, for which it stands as surety, has been realized.

Not one jot or tittle of the divine deposition can pass until all is fulfilled.

Theology Proper

Chapter X

INTRODUCTION TO THEOLOGY PROPER

THE TERM *Theology Proper* is a somewhat modern designation which represents the logical starting point in the study of Systematic Theology, being, as it is, its primary theme, namely, a scientific investigation into what may be known of the existence, Persons, and characteristics of the triune God—Father, Son, and Spirit—and quite apart from their works. Since the whole field of Systematic Theology is so extensive, it is the part of wisdom to reserve the consideration of the works of the triune God, as unfolded in Angelology, Anthropology, Soteriology, Ecclesiology, and Eschatology, for later contemplation. Unabridged investigation of the truth concerning the Second and Third Persons, including their works, is to be undertaken under the two cardinal divisions, Christology and Pneumatology.

Following the period—unknown as to its duration—when unfallen man was in normal, unbroken relations with God, and which ended with the expulsion of man from the presence of God, the thoughtful and sincere from among the human race have been engaged in a feeble attempt to penetrate into the vast field which the knowledge of God represents. Their handicap has been drastic, for it is written: “The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned” (1 Cor. 2:14); and, again, “All his thoughts are, There is no God” (Ps. 10:4, R.V.). Doubtless each generation has added something to the total of finite speculation regarding God. In the midst of all these human gropings after the knowledge of Him, God has spoken in specific revelation of Himself, and to those thus enlightened the disclosure is far-reaching and final. But to the unenlightened little is added through revelation, their neglect of the Scriptures and their native inability to receive them being sufficient proof.

The sources of knowledge about God, which are somewhat interdependent, are four:

I. Intuition

An intuition is confidence or belief which springs immediately from the constitution of the mind. It must ever be so; hence intuition is a necessary human function. Therefore, it may be said that intuitive knowledge is that which the

normal, natural mind assumes to be true. It includes such themes as *time* and *eternity*; *space*, *cause*, and *effect*; *right* and *wrong*; *mathematical demonstration*; *self-existence*, the *existence of matter*, and the *Person of God*. These and other primary truths, being already accepted by the rational mind, are little enhanced by added demonstration, nor are they greatly decreased by counter argument. Intuitive knowledge is little more than a bias in the direction of certain truths. Each intuitive theme offers a field of endless research and conceals inexhaustible stores of reality. This is particularly true of the knowledge of God. The very universality of the belief in God proves that it is intuitive. Such general knowledge is not the superstition of perverted minds, for it is evidently more assertive where culture and education obtain. In the midst of a universe of transcendent marvels, whether observed in their telescopic grandeur or microscopic perfection, the rational mind can find but one explanation for the phenomenon which is observed, namely, a God of infinite wisdom and power. It is true that some men have sought to move themselves away from this intuitive conception of God and profess to be *agnostic*. The Bible recognizes this abnormal mind when it says: "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God" (Ps. 14:1; 53:1).

If by definition is meant a complete statement of all that is in a subject, it is impossible for man to define God. The most that man can do is to recognize the incomparable position which God occupies above all beings, to ascribe attributes to Him, and to frame a general statement of what the mind conceives to be true. The extent of the scope of this declaration will, of necessity, depend on the degree of understanding to which the mind of the author of the statement has advanced. A wide range of individual vision is observable at this point, which extends all the way from the most elemental intuition of the untrained unregenerate person to the full-orbed experience of God which belongs to the most spiritual and mature of saints. A well-defined twofold grouping will be perceived when this wide latitude of human apprehension is analyzed—the apprehension of the unsaved on the one hand and of the saved on the other—with but little in common between them. Of the regenerate persons it may be said that in their knowledge of God they have passed beyond mere intuition and attained unto that insight which is revelation.

Intuition is direct knowledge, a rational perception which by its nature precedes all the processes of observation and deduction. Descartes taught that the intellect finds itself at birth, or when the mind awakens to conscious action, to be in possession of conceptions which need only to be identified for what they

are. Calvin writes: “Those who rightly judge will always agree that there is an indelible sense of divinity engraved upon men’s minds” (*Institutes*, 1:3:3, cited by Strong, *Systematic Theology*, p. 30).

On the ground of their essential nature, intuitive truths are to be tested by certain factors, namely, whether or not (a) they are *universal*—that is, they are common to all men, not that all men understand them or assent to them, but in the sense that all men consciously or unconsciously act upon them; (b) they are *necessary*—that is, they are wrought into the constitution of every normal person; and (c) they are *self-evident* and *self-demonstrating*—that is, they are subject to no other truths for their cognition.

The following from Dr. W. H. Griffith Thomas (*Principles of Theology*, pp. 4, 5) will serve to summarize this theme:

What is the origin of the idea of God? There are two general explanations. By some the idea of God as a Supreme Being is regarded, in technical language, as “an intuition of the moral reason.” St. Paul seems to have recognized in the mind an innate perception of God (Acts 17:28). This means that the belief in a personal God is born in every man, not as a perfect or complete idea, but as involving a capacity for belief when the idea is presented. If this is so, it is one of the primary intuitions of human nature. It is certainly a mistake to suppose that we derive the idea of God from the Bible, for races that have never heard of the Bible possess a definite belief in a Supreme Being. The Bible reveals God’s character and His purpose for man, and thus gives us a true idea of the Divine Being, but the emphasis is on the truth rather than on the mere fact. In the same way it is equally incorrect to say that we obtain the idea of God from reason, for reason is not in this respect originative. By reflection we can obtain a fuller conception of God, but the reason itself is not the source of the conception. By those who hold that our idea of God is intuitive the conception of God is analysed into three elements: first, a consciousness of power in God which leads to a feeling of our dependence on Him; second, a consciousness of His perfection which leads to a realisation of our obligation to Him; third, a consciousness of His Personality which leads to a sense of worship of Him.

Others object to the idea of God as intuitive, and say that it is the result of the reason instinctively recognising Truth, Beauty, and Goodness, and that these coalesce in the thought of one Reality. On this view these three elements afford an argument for Theism.

The latter of these theories is that advanced by Everett in his *Theism and the Christian Faith* (Unitarian and Hegelian) which lacks the support of human experience as well as that of the Scriptures.

II. Tradition

Tradition may be considered either (1) as that which is remote—the early impressions of the race—or (2) as that which is present—teaching which is given to children.

1. THE REMOTE. Scripture records the fact that unfallen man began with the

highest knowledge of God, such as one must possess who walks and talks with God. His memory and sense of the reality of God was not lost in the fall, for even then Adam heard the voice of God in judgment and received the divine provision of clothing from the hand of God, which clothing implied divine grace to the sinful. Adam's testimony concerning God was given directly to succeeding generations, for hundreds of years, with all the force of an original expression, and in a time when tradition as a means of education was paramount. It is, therefore, conceivable that the authoritative, original beginning of traditional knowledge about God was disseminated from generation to generation. On the other hand, it must be conceded that tradition is as potent in the transmission of error as it is of truth, that the fallen nature of man is ever prone to depart from the knowledge of God (Rom. 1:19–32), that if traditional impressions regarding God survive they do so in spite of counter forces.

2. THE PRESENT. The present influence of tradition as represented in the instruction of children is the most vital aspect of education. Children are being taught the faith (or no faith) of their parents, and when the saving knowledge of God pervades a home or community the effect may be traced into succeeding generations. The reverse of this is also true.

The influence of the teacher or parent upon the child's understanding of God and relationship to Him is far-reaching, else the Church of Rome would not assert that it is of little consequence as to what later influences encompass a life provided they have the molding of the early years.

This, it will be observed, is closely related to the general theme of *intuition*; for a child cannot be taught what he has no constitutional competency or faculty to receive. All education proceeds on the principle that the learner has capacity to receive the instruction imparted. There must be a latent ability which needs only to be awakened by the challenge which the facts present. In the knowledge of God, children receive the truth more readily than adults. This is not a feature of *immaturity*. It is due to *purity*. "... the pure in heart: for they shall see God."

On the general relation between tradition and intuition Dr. Samuel Harris declares:

Why is the belief in the existence of a God the common characteristic of humanity? Why has it been so spontaneous, powerful and persistent? How comes man by the ideas of eternity, immensity, unconditionedness? Some say that they come from his knowledge of his own limitations. But how can I have the ideas of finiteness, conditionedness and imperfection except as I contrast them with the ideas of the unlimited, the unconditioned, the perfect? And if it is said that these ideas and the idea of the all-perfect God have been communicated by tradition, this only pushes us back on the question, How did it originate, so that man's ancestors had it to transmit? Certainly, if the belief in a

divinity has no root in the constitution of man, if man has no rudiment of a faculty for knowing God, then this grand idea of the absolute Spirit, infinite in power and perfect in wisdom and love, could not have been originated by man nor even communicated to him by instruction or revelation from without. The idea would simply be impossible to him. —*The Self-Revelation of God*, pp. 357–58

III. Reason

By the term *reason*, reference is made to the highest capacity in man—apart from revelation and the divine energy imparted to man—in his attainment unto the knowledge of God. It is that sanity in man which makes possible the pursuance of logical deductions based on those realities which he observes.

The general subject of *reason* may be considered either (1) on the ground of its own intrinsic value, or (2) on the ground of that which it has accomplished.

1. THE INTRINSIC VALUE. The intrinsic value of reason must incorporate the essential fact that reason is one of the characteristics belonging to God, and that the universe in its order, system, and purpose reflects the perfect reason which is in God. Similarly, all conclusions of rational beings are but the recognition of, and adaptation to, the primary reason which is in God. On the fact that man can know by inference or reason, only as it is assumed by him that God exists and that God acts in perfect reason, Dr. Samuel Harris states:

If the mathematics by which astronomers make their calculations are not the mathematics of all space and time, all our astronomy is worthless. If the law of causation, and the principle of the uniformity of nature that the same complex of causes always produces the same effect, are not true of the whole universe, all our science is invalidated. If the law of love is not the law of all rational beings all ethical knowledge is annihilated. That the principles of reason are everywhere and always the same is the basis of the possibility of rational knowledge. But this is only saying that Reason supreme and universal, everywhere and always one and the same, is energizing in the universe and is the ultimate ground of its existence, constitution and development. And this Energizing Reason is God. Science assumes that the universe is a system of cosmos concatenated and ordered under principles and laws everywhere and always the same, and that by these it can determine what the ongoing of the universe is in its farthest extent in space and what it has been and will be in the remotest past and future. This is possible only because these truths and laws are eternal in the one absolute Reason who expresses them by his energizing in the constitution and evolution of the universe. And the theist adds that the evolution of the universe is the forever progressive expression and realization, not only of truths and laws, but also of rational ideals and ends; ideals and ends of wisdom and love, which are eternal and archetypal in the Absolute Reason, God. —*The Philosophical Basis of Theism*, rev. ed., p. 82

2. THE ACHIEVEMENTS. The value of reason as measured by its achievements may, in the case of God, be observed in the ongoing of the universe. The reason which is in God being absolute, its results are infinitely perfect. The

consummation of all things as predicted in the Scriptures will be a demonstration of this. The value of reason as measured by its achievements in its exercise by men is altogether another matter. All human limitations and imperfections are reflected in the exercise of human reason. Man being finite, his premise and his deduction are too often distorted by error. However, in no sphere has this exalted faculty in man been more exerted than in his attempt to prove, by natural deduction and apart from revelation, the existence of God. None has excelled in this endeavor as has Samuel Clarke (1675–1729). The naturalistic arguments which the great metaphysicians have expounded have, for the most part, had their origin with the ancients; but when followed, apart from revelation, these arguments have led to nothing more real than “a dumb idol of philosophy, neglected by the philosopher himself and unknown to the multitude; acknowledged in the closet and forgotten in the world.” There was naught in these reasonings which made God real to any heart, nor was there enough to keep men from drifting into polytheism, pantheism, or any other antitheistic notion. Turning to idolatry was, to some extent, their attempt to realize the unworthy ideals which grew out of the error of their reasonings.

In general and apart from the usual theistic arguments men have advanced, the process of reasoning in the direction of the discovery of truth concerning God has followed three general methods, namely, by *negatives*, which plan called for the elimination of all imperfections, by *eminence*, which method ascribes all human excellencies to God, and by *deduction*, which process ascribes all perfections and qualities to God which reason assumes to be true of Deity.

IV. Revelation

God has spoken to man through nature, through the manifestation of Himself in His Son, and through the Scriptures of Truth. By means of the written Word of God, man has become possessed of truth in its full and absolute form. The dim lights of intuition, tradition, and reason, are submerged under the blazing irradiation of revealed truth. No measurement can be placed on the advantage the Word of God is to those who humbly receive and profit by its message.

Of these four sources of knowledge concerning God, intuition and tradition add but little to the science of Systematic Theology. Reason and revelation are vital factors, yet revelation surpasses reason as the Word of God surpasses the thoughts of men.

The term *Theology Proper* is a somewhat modern designation which represents the logical starting point in the study of Systematic Theology, being, as it is, its primary theme, namely, a scientific investigation into what may be known of the existence, Persons, and characteristics of the triune God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Quite apart from the works of the members of the Godhead, Theology Proper is subject to a twofold division: (1) *Theism*, which concerns the existence and character of God as an extramundane Being, the Creator, Preserver, and Governor of the universe; and (2) *Trinitarianism*, which is the recognition of the three Persons who comprise the Godhead, with specific reference to their functions and characteristics, and their relationships within the Godhead.

Naturalistic Theism

Chapter XI

NATURALISTIC THEISTIC ARGUMENTS

THE ETYMOLOGY of the word *theism* would give it a wide range of application, but in common usage it has come to mean a belief in God, and incorporates a system of beliefs which constitutes a philosophy, restricted, indeed, somewhat to those findings and conclusions which human reason suggests. Even in its Biblical expression, theism is not confined to Christianity, though Christianity is a theistic system. The term *theism* could with practical value be more largely used and the field of truth which it connotes more clearly defined. I. H. Fichte writes: “It is now time again to install Theism, that inextinguishable and fundamental conviction of humanity, as a science in its true significance; but therewith equally to free it from so many obstructions and veils which long enough have darkened its true light. Theism is neither an hypothesis grubbed out by onesided speculation, as some represent it; nor is it an invention of priestcraft nor of superstitious fear, old ways of representing it which one still unexpectedly meets. It is also not the mere confession of any exclusive school or religion. But it is the ultimate goal of all investigation, silently effective in that which externally denies it” (*Theistische Weltansicht*; “Vorwort,” S. ix, cited by Harris, *Philosophical Basis of Theism*, rev. ed., p. 314).

Since all lines of general study of necessity are related to created things, there is no more exalted subject to which the finite mind may address itself than *theism* with its contemplation of the Person and character of God. Theism, as also the larger field of Theology Proper, excels all other themes, as infinity exceeds that which is finite. To quote William Cooke: “There is, indeed, no element of sublimity either actually existent or even conceivable in Nature, but what is indefinitely surpassed in the idea of God. The proposition, therefore, that there is a God, has no equal, no competitor; it stands alone in unrivalled and unapproachable grandeur; and if its sublimity does not prove its truth, it renders it at least worthy of inquiry, and imposes a weighty task on the unbeliever; for if it be false, it is not only the sublimest of all errors, but is an error more sublime than truth itself—yea, more ennobling and elevating to the mind than any truths which Nature can present to our contemplations. If this be a paradox, its solution is a task devolving on those who deny the being of a God” (*The Deity*, 2nd ed., p. 3).

In the Bible, man is ever reminded of the fact of his own limitations and of

the knowledge-surpassing perfections of God. Antitheistic agnosticism has taken refuge in the denial of divine cognizability; but there is a true knowledge of God—true as far as it is able to go—which does not fully comprehend its subject. Such incompleteness, indeed, may be predicated of very much if not all of human cognizance. In his defense of antitheistic agnosticism, Hamilton declared: “The last and highest consecration of all true religion must be an altar—ἄγνωστον—to the unknown or unknowable God.” It is probable that this inscription represented the highest level to which the unaided philosopher of Athens had attained (Acts 17:23). However, this conception became only a starting point in the God-revealing discourse of the inspired Apostle. There is an approach at this point to an engaging and closely related discussion of the dependability of thought itself as bearing on the contemplation of infinity; but it suffices to indicate that the limitations which antitheistic agnosticism confesses are due to their negative predications concerning God, which result in an utter void quite without substance for rational thinking. The vaguest of all impressions of God is that styled *Absolute*, which pantheism and agnosticism employ. Being without qualities or attributes, it is blank in itself and equally blank as a subject of thought. The lowest fetishism has substance beyond this. Over against this professed ignorance is the fact that God has revealed Himself to men, and this revelation is sustained and enforced by the illuminating work of the Holy Spirit. Added to this, also, is the twofold unveiling in which the Father reveals the Son, and the Son reveals the Father. It is written that the Son said, “All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him” (Matt. 11:27). By the authority of the Son it is asserted that eternal life is given, to the end that the Father and the Son might be know (John 17:3). When praying for His executioners, Christ said, “Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do” (Luke 23:34), and the Apostle, when writing of Christ as the manifestation of the wisdom of God, discloses the precise nature of the ignorance of the executioners of Christ when he wrote: “... Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory” (1 Cor. 2:8). Beyond the mere knowledge of God, which is in the range of theism and common to multitudes, it is possible to *know* God in that intimacy of a son with his own father. And what shall be said of those who by the Spirit press on to know the “deep things of God”? How, indeed, may “Abba, Father” be interpreted if God cannot be known? Agnosticism with its professed ignorance may well give heed to the words of

Christ: “Take heed therefore that the light which is in thee be not darkness” (Luke 11:35).

Passing beyond the low level of agnosticism, there are two distinct fields of theistic research—(a) that which is within those facts which obtain in the sphere of creation, or nature, and is subject to human reason; and (b) that which, though incorporating all that is disclosed in nature, is extended to include the limitless, absolute, and all-satisfying revelation set forth in the Scriptures of Truth. The former investigation is rightly designated *naturalistic theism*, and the latter *Biblical theism*.

Theology Proper enters every field from which any truth may be gained relative to the existence and character of God, or the mode of His Being. However, in view of the basic twofold division of the human family into *saved* and *unsaved* with their varying, attending abilities to comprehend divine truth there is peculiar advantage in a division of the general subject of theism into that which is *naturalistic* and that which is *Biblical*. The unsaved, natural man, though unable to receive the things of God, is, nevertheless, everywhere confronted with effects which connote a Cause and with design which connotes a Designer. To such a one, naturalistic theism with its restricted appeal to creation and reason is peculiarly adapted. To the devout student who, being saved, is able to receive the “deep things of God,” there is none of the ultimate or consummating satisfaction in naturalistic theism that he experiences in Biblical theism. He should, notwithstanding, neglect no part of the divine revelation. All that belongs to naturalistic theism is of vital importance to the theological student in view of the fact that, to a limited degree, God is revealed in His creation (Ps. 19:1–6; Rom. 1:19, 20), and in view of the fact that unregenerate men, especially the educated, are groping in the sphere of those truths which belong in the circumscribed realm of naturalistic theism. To discover, exhibit, and defend all that reason affirms and that revelation discloses relative to that which may be known concerning God, is a task which Systematic Theology assumes. It is the function of naturalistic theism to adduce such arguments and to reach such conclusions as are within the range of *reason*; while it is the function of Biblical theism to recognize, classify, and exhibit the truth set forth by *revelation*. These two fundamental sources of erudition, though wholly dissimilar as to the method they employ and the material they utilize, do, nevertheless, coalesce as the essential parts of the one grand theme—Theology Proper.

In the following discussions the author assumes no originality in the

presentation of rational argument or in the discovery of revelation. Much that is presented has been the contention of writers on these subjects from the earliest times. In fact, so general are many of these lines of thought, as found in the vast literature which the present generation inherits, that to quote an original author would be difficult indeed, if not impossible. Since reason is native to man and revelation is largely an acquisition without which the majority of men have had to live and labor, it is proper that the findings of reason should be weighed before those of revelation.

The book of nature is as much God's book as is the Book of revelation. The universe is His work and therefore must attest His Being, and, as far as it can advance, unfold His ways. The voice of nature and the voice of revelation proceeding from the same source must harmonize; nor can either be slighted with impunity. It is not contended that the book of nature is comparable in extent, exactness, or elucidation, with the Book of revelation. Pious minds, wholly satisfied with the Scriptures of Truth, should not be indifferent to the testimony of nature; nor should the superficial and profane disregard the pleadings of reason. The sincere student of truth will hardly do so. He will not avert his eye from the light of God. As their names denote, philosophy is "the love of wisdom" and science is "the interpretation of nature"; therefore, no worthy philosopher will ignore the Source of all truth and no sincere scientist will shrink from the investigation or right evaluation of the claims of naturalistic theism. The proposition that *there is a God* introduces at once the cause of all causes, the finality of all philosophy, and the alpha and omega of all science. Consistency dictates that the student who is *en rapport* with the sequence which he observes between secondary causes and their effects, should not discontinue abruptly his investigation at the point where they are consummated in the discovery of the First Cause—even God. If the facts and forces of nature are engaging to the serious mind, how much more engaging should be the Person and power of the God who created nature! And how much is added to the importance of this investigation into the proposition *there is a God* when the moral and saving values are included! It was Pilate's error hurriedly to inquire "What is truth?" and then as hurriedly to pass on without waiting for the incomparable answer which might have come from the lips of Him who is the embodiment of all truth.

When the evidence that there is a God is being pursued along the highway of reason, the laws of logic and of deduction are as essential as the truth which is involved. Palpable contradictions and absurdities are to be rejected, while every

proved fact must be accepted and acted upon with fairness and uprightness. How else may any trustworthy progress be made?

The naturalistic theistic arguments, or arguments based on reason, attempt but a limited field of demonstration. The existence, personality, wisdom, and power of God are in view; but no proof from nature or reason can be educed to prove or establish the fact of the love and saving grace of God. All that is related to redemption belongs to revelation, and constitutes an imperative message, which is as much needed by those who believe in a God through nature or reason as it is by those to whom no knowledge of God has come.

Arguments in proof of the existence of God which are restricted to the limitations of naturalistic theism are subject to a twofold general classification, namely, the *argumentum a posteriori* and the *argumentum a priori*.

An *argumentum a posteriori* is inductive in its procedure and conforms more naturally to the processes of human reason. This form of argument moves from phenomena back to ground, from particulars back to principle, from consequent back to antecedent, and from effect back to cause. There are three primary *a posteriori* arguments usually offered in naturalistic theism—the *cosmological*, the *teleological*, and the *anthropological*. The *a posteriori* argument is employed when from the mechanism of a delicate and intricate instrument or work of art the fact of the master mind is implied with its power to design and form. As the Apostle has declared, “Every house is builded by some man; but he that built all things is God” (Heb. 3:4); that is, as the house proves the fact of a builder, so the universe proves the fact of a Creator.

The *argumentum a priori* is deductive in its procedure since it advances from ground to phenomena, from principle to particulars, from antecedent to consequent, and from cause to effect. This form of reasoning is employed by the astronomer when from the laws which govern the movement of the solar system he determines the time of the return of a comet or of an eclipse; or when the paleontologist determines by the principles of comparative anatomy the size and form of prehistoric animals from some geological fossil. The *a priori* argument is one which is based on something which has gone before as an assumed reality, an innate belief, or intuitive impression. To postulate as a premise that miracles are impossible with its syllogistic conclusion that there are therefore no miracles, is to advance an *a priori* assumption and the argument based on that assumption is *a priori* in character. The *ontological* argument is the only *argumentum a priori* which teachers have advanced in the field of naturalistic theism. The *ontological* argument is exceedingly difficult, being too refined for the general

rank and file of mankind to follow. Indeed great metaphysicians have declared themselves to be unconvinced as to its value as evidence. Over against this, as great or greater metaphysicians have stressed its worth.

The *cosmological* argument traces the cosmos back to its Maker. The *teleological* argument recognizes the rational ends in creation, while the *anthropological* argument differs from the *cosmological* and the *teleological* in the sphere of its logical principles, tracing from the mind and spirit of man back to the Creator. The *anthropological* argument is an extension into a specific realm of the more general features of the *cosmological* and *teleological* arguments. Though each of these three *a posteriori* arguments are distinct as to their field of proof, all three are required together to complete the full theistic argument. At best this complete argument, it will be observed, can attempt to prove but a limited body of truth concerning God. But much, indeed, is wrought if by these rationalistic lines of evidence the fact of the existence of God is indicated. To this, *Biblical theism* has very much to add as to the Person, attributes, purpose, and ways of God.

These *naturalistic theistic* arguments are now to be weighed separately and in the order already suggested.

I. The Cosmological Argument

The universe is a phenomenon or an effect which connotes an adequate cause. The cosmological argument adduces evidence that God exists and is the First Cause of all things. Four theories have been entertained by philosophers and metaphysicians as to the origin of the material universe: (a) that the constitution of nature is eternal and its forms have existed forever; (b) that matter has existed forever, but its present constitution and form has been subject to self-development, which was the contention of Epicurus, and is the avowed credence of the modern atheist; (c) that matter is eternal, but its present arrangement and order is the work of God, which was the teaching of Plato, Aristotle and many others; (d) that matter is a created thing, being caused to exist from nothing by the engendering power of God, which is the Biblical revelation. The last of these four philosophies is not to be confounded with the impossible notion that the universe has evolved itself out of nothing. Its declaration is that God has by infinite power caused nonexistent matter to exist. It is written: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth" (Gen. 1:1), and, "... so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear" (Heb. 11:3). Leland declares:

“Few, if any, of the ancient pagan philosophers acknowledged God to be, in the most proper sense, the Creator of the world. By calling him ... ‘the Maker of the world,’ they did not mean, that he brought it out of nonexistence into being; but only that he built it out of pre-existent materials, and disposed it into a regular form and order” (*Necessity of Revelation*, cited by Watson, *Institutes*, I, 274).

The cosmological argument depends upon the validity of three contributing truths: (a) that every effect must have a cause; (b) that the effect is dependent upon its cause for its existence; and (c) that nature cannot produce itself. The essential, fundamental character of these contributing truths as well as the conclusive deduction that the universe is caused by the direct creation of a self-existent, intelligent, and eternal Cause will appear as the pursuance of this form of argument advances.

On the meaning of the word *cause*, a quotation from Dr. Charles Hodge is germane: “The common doctrine on this subject includes the following points. (1) A cause is something. It has real existence. It is not merely a name for a certain relation. It is a real entity, a substance. This is plain because a nonentity cannot act. If that which does not exist can be a cause, then nothing can produce something, which is a contradiction. (2) A cause must not only be something real, but it must have power or efficiency. There must be something in its nature to account for the effects which it produces. (3) This efficiency must be adequate; that is, sufficient and appropriate to the effect. That this is a true view of the nature of a cause is plain.” Dr. Hodge goes on to illustrate these points by human experience. He writes:

(1) ... We are causes. We can produce effects. And all three of the particulars above mentioned are included in our consciousness of ourselves as cause. We are real existences; we have power; we have power adequate to the effects which we produce. (2) We can appeal to the universal consciousness of men. All men attach this meaning to the word cause in their ordinary language. All men assume that every effect has an antecedent to whose efficiency it is due. They never regard mere antecedence, however uniform in the past, or however certain in the future, as constituting a causal relation. The succession of the seasons has been uniform in the past, and we are confident that it will continue uniform in the future; yet no man says that winter is the cause of summer. Every one is conscious that cause expresses an entirely different relation from that of mere antecedence. (3) This view of the nature of causation is included in the universal and necessary belief, that every effect must have a cause. That belief is not that one thing must always go before another thing; but that nothing can occur, that no change can be produced, without the exercise of power or efficiency somewhere; otherwise something could come out of nothing.—*Systematic Theology*, I, 209

The vital distinction between cause and effect inheres in the very nature of human speech. “The language of every nation is formed on the connection

between cause and effect. For in every language there are not only many words directly expressing ideas of this subject, such as cause, efficiency, effect, production, produce, effectuate, create, generate, etc., or words equivalent to these; but every verb in every language, except the intransitive impersonal verbs, and the verb substantive, involves, of course, causation or efficiency, and refers always to an agent, or cause, in such a manner, that without the operation of this cause or agent, the verb would have no meaning. —All mankind, except a few Atheistical and skeptical philosophers, have thus agreed in acknowledging this connection, and they [the skeptics] have acknowledged it as fully as others in their customary language” (Dwight, *Theology*, I, 5, cited by Watson, *op. cit.*, I, 280–81).

The intuitive credence that every effect must have a cause is the basic principle upon which the cosmological argument advances to its certain conclusions. *Ex nihilo, nihil fit*—out of nothing, nothing can arise—is an axiom which has been recognized by philosophers of all the ages. To assert that anything has caused itself to exist is to assert that it acted before it existed, which is an absurdity. Nonexistence cannot engender existence. Had there ever been a situation in eternity when there was neither matter nor spirit, no being of any description—intelligent or unintelligent, created or uncreated—, the universe itself a boundless vacuity, thus it must have remained forever. But two basic ideas are possible, namely, (a) that the universe with all its organized system and complex forms has existed forever—which theory, though void of any semblance of justification, has been the greatest impediment to the rational belief in a First Cause throughout all generations; and (b) that the universe is both designed and created by God and for worthy ends. The former is the atheist’s contention, while the latter is that of the theist.

Reasoning from the assumed premise that there is no God, the atheist is compelled to predicate of matter that it is eternal and, therefore, self-existent. Matter is composed of innumerable particles which are unrelated or without dependence on each other. Thus to each particle must be attributed the element of eternal self-existence. Added to inert matter must be all chemical forces, nature’s laws, and the principle of life in all its forms. The atheist cannot modify the demands of his philosophy based on the assumed premise that there is no God. Should he retrench by the slightest concession from his claim to the eternal self-existence of matter or allow it to pass as a hypothesis rather than an infallible certitude, the whole structure of atheism falls. The atheist boasts of his incredulity and slavish bondage to reason; yet if the idea that matter is self-

existent and eternal be found to be no more than a conjecture or theory, all is surrendered. In fact, the notion that matter is a self-existent and eternal entity should be capable of demonstration, if true, and be all but an axiomatic proposition. This it is not. The atheistic philosophy rests on an unprovable hypothesis which has been weakened to the point of extinction by the later findings of science. The assertion that the creation of matter is impossible is based on the observation that the creation of matter is impossible to man. But who has ever substantiated the claim that the creation of matter is impossible to the infinite God? The claim that God created all things offers no contradiction, but merely assigns more ability to God than resides in man. Cudworth asserts:

Because it is undeniably certain, concerning ourselves, and all imperfect beings, that none of these can create any *new substance*, men are apt to measure all things by their own scantling, and to suppose it universally impossible for any power whatever thus to create. But since it is certain, that imperfect beings can themselves produce *some things* out of nothing pre-existing, as *new cogitations*, *new local motion*, and *new modifications* of things corporeal, it is surely reasonable to think that an absolutely perfect being can do something more, *i.e.* create *new substances*, or give them their whole being. And it may well be thought as easy for God or an omnipotent Being to make a whole world, matter and all, ... as it is for us to create *a thought* or to move a finger, or for the sun to send out rays, or a candle light, or lastly, for an opaque body to produce an image of itself in a glass of water, or to project a shadow: all these imperfect things being but the *energies*, *rays*, *images*, or *shadows* of the Deity. For a substance to be made out of nothing by God, or a Being infinitely perfect, is not for it to be made out of nothing in the impossible sense, but it comes from him who is *all*. ... But nothing is in itself impossible, which does not imply a contradiction: and though it be a contradiction for a thing to be and not to be at the same time, there is surely no contradiction in conceiving an imperfect being, which before was not, afterward to be.—Cited by Watson, *ibid.*, I, 325–26

As a blind rejection of truth, the atheist's assertion that matter is self-existent and eternal is equalled by the unproved and absurd impression that nature is capable of self-production, that chance is adequate to account for the universe, or that necessity is the ground on which all things exist. Doubtless, in their determined rejection of God, men have encouraged themselves by turning to these false and God-dishonoring notions. However, the cosmological argument for the existence of God as the First Cause of all things stands unlesened in its evidential value.

By the same logic or reasoning which demonstrates that the existing universe cannot produce itself by acting before it existed, so the First Cause is not self-created, but is eternal and therefore self-existent, since He depends on nothing outside Himself, being caused by nothing. The proposal of a sequence of secondary causes, that is, that each cause is the effect of a prior cause, offers no solution of the problem of the origin of things. It is true that the mind may be

stultified by the indefinite extension of such a sequence; but reason avers that there is an Original—a First Cause. This idea of the sequences of secondary causes eventuating in a first cause is illustrated by Wollaston: “Suppose a chain hung down out of the heavens from an unknown height, and though every link of it gravitated toward the earth, and what it hung upon was not visible, yet it did not descend, but kept its situation; and upon this a question should arise what supported or kept up the chain, would it be a sufficient answer to say, that the first or lowest link hung upon the second, or the next above it; the second, or rather the first and second together, upon the third; and so on *in infinitum*? For what holds up the whole? ... And thus it is, in a chain of causes and effects, tending, or (as it were) gravitating towards some end. The last, or lowest, depends, or (as one may say) is suspended, upon the cause above it. This again, if it be not the first cause, is suspended as an effect upon something above it” (*Religion of Nature Delineated*, cited by William Cooke, *The Deity*, 2nd ed., p. 40). To this Dr. Paley adds: “A chain composed of an infinite number of links can no more support itself, than a chain composed of a finite number of links. If we increase the number of links from ten to a hundred and from a hundred to a thousand, etc., we make not the smallest approach, we observe not the smallest tendency toward self-support” (cited by Watson, *op. cit.*, I, 283). There is a First Cause self-existent and eternal, and that First Cause is wise enough to conceive of creation in all its marvel, and powerful enough to bring it into being. The statement of the cosmological argument by Locke is thus: “I exist: I did not always exist: whatever begins to exist must have a cause: the cause must be adequate: this *adequate* cause is unlimited: it must be God” (cited by Watson, *ibid.*, I, xv). Similarly, the statement of the argument by Howe is conclusive: “(1) Somewhat hath existed from *eternity*: hence (2) must be uncaused: hence (3) independent: hence (4) necessary: hence (5) self-active: and hence (6) *originally vital*, and the *source of all life*” (cited by Watson, *ibid.*).

From the foregoing it will be observed the cosmological argument is stressed in proof of various qualities in God, namely, *self-existent*, *eternal*, *all-wise*, *powerful*, *unlimited*, *self-active*, *vital*, and *the source of all life*. Though these conclusions are reached quite apart from revelation and by reason alone, the illation is complete. Space cannot be given here to trace the extended discussion which precedes each of these arguments. This should be undertaken as collateral reading on the part of the student. A quotation from John Howe (1630–1705), English Puritan divine, will serve to state some aspects of the cosmological argument and also to disclose the manner in which the great logicians of the past

ordered their attack upon atheism. To quote:

We therefore begin with God's existence; for the evincing of which, we may be most assured, *First*, that there hath been somewhat or other from all eternity; or that, looking backward, somewhat of real being must be confessed eternal. Let such as have not been used to think of any thing more than what they could see with their eyes, and to whom reasoning only seems difficult because they have not tried what they can do in it, but use their thoughts a little, and by moving them a few easy steps, they will soon find themselves as sure of this as that they see, or hear, or understand, or are any thing.

For being sure that something now is, (that you see, for instance, or are something, you must then acknowledge, that certainly something always was, and hath ever been, or been from all eternity; or else you must say, that, some time, nothing was; or that all being once was not. And so, since you find that something *now* is, there was a time when all being did *begin* to be; that is, that till that time there was nothing; but now, at that time something first began to be. For what can be plainer than that if all being *some time* was not, and *now* some being is, every thing of being had a beginning. And thence it would follow, that some being, that is, the first that ever began to be, did of itself start up out of nothing, or made itself to be when before nothing was.

But now, do you not plainly see that it is altogether impossible any thing should do so; that is, when it was as yet nothing, and when nothing at all as yet was, that it should make itself, or come into being of itself? For surely making itself is doing something. But can that which is nothing do any thing? Unto all doing there must be some doer. Wherefore a thing must be before it can do any thing; and therefore it would follow, that it was before it was; or *was* and *was not*, was *something* and *nothing*, at the same time. Yea, and that it was diverse from itself; for a cause must be a distinct thing from that which is caused by it. Wherefore it is most apparent, that some being hath *ever* been, or did *never begin* to be.

Whence, farther, it is also evident, *Secondly*, that some being was uncaused, or was ever of itself without any cause. For what never was from another had never any cause, since nothing could be its own cause. And somewhat, as appears from what hath been said, never was from another. Or it may be plainly argued thus; that either some being was uncaused, or all being was caused. But if all being was caused, then some one at least was the cause of itself: which hath been already shown impossible. Therefore the expression commonly used concerning the first being, that it was of itself, is only to be taken *negatively*, that is, that it was not of another; not *positively*, as if it did some time make itself. Or what there is positive signified by that form of speech, is only to be taken thus, that it was a being of that nature, as that it was impossible it should ever not have been; not that it did ever of itself step out of not being into being.

And now it is hence farther evident, *Thirdly*, that some being is independent upon any other, that is, whereas it already appears that some being did never depend on any other, as a productive cause, and was not beholden to any other, that it might come into being; it is thereupon equally evident that it is simply independent, or cannot be beholden to any for its continued being. For what did never need a productive cause, doth as little need a sustaining or conserving cause. And to make this more plain, either some being is independent, or all being is dependent. But there is nothing without the compass of all being whereon it may depend. Wherefore to say, that all being doth depend, is to say, it depends on nothing, that is, that it depends not. For to depend on nothing, is not to depend. It is therefore a manifest contradiction to say that all being doth depend; against which it is no relief to urge, that all beings do circularly depend on one another. For so, however the whole circle or sphere of being should depend on nothing; or one at last depend on itself, which negatively taken, as before, is true, and the thing we contend for—that one, the common support of all the rest, depends not on any thing without itself.

Whence also it is plainly consequent, *Fourthly*, that such a Being is necessary, or doth

necessarily exist: that is, that it is of such a nature as that it could not or cannot but be. For what is in being, neither by its own choice, nor any others, is necessarily. But what was not made by itself, (which hath been shown to be impossible,) nor by any other, (as it hath been proved something was not,) it is manifest, it neither depended on its choice, nor any other's that it is. And therefore, its existence is not owing to choice at all, but to the necessity of its own nature. Wherefore it is always by a simple, absolute, natural necessity; being of a nature to which it is altogether repugnant and impossible ever not to have been, or ever to cease from being. And now having gone thus far, and being assured, that hitherto we feel the ground firm under us; that is, having gained a full certainty, that there is an eternal, uncaused, independent, necessary Being, and therefore actually and everlastingly existing; we may advance one step farther.

And with equal assurance add, *Fifthly*, that this eternal, independent, uncaused, necessary Being, is self active; that is, (which is at present meant,) not such as acts upon itself, but that which hath the power of acting upon other things, in and of itself, without deriving it from any other. Or at least that there is such a Being as is eternal, uncaused, &c, having the power of action in and of itself. For either such a Being as hath been already evinced is of itself active or unactive, or hath the power of action of itself or not. If we will say the latter, let it be considered what we say, and to what purpose we say it ...—*Living Temple*, cited by Watson, *ibid.*, I, 281–84

Having indicated the untruth of the atheist's assertion that matter with all its forms is eternal—which conjecture the atheist advances in support of his credence that there is no God, the *argumentum a posteriori* in its cosmological form thus begins with the recognition of the universe as a phenomenon or effect which connotes a cause, and proceeds to indicate that that cause is *self-existent, eternal, all-wise, powerful, unlimited, self-active, vital, and the source of all life*. If there be not a God, from whence does the phenomenon or effect, which the universe is, arise? To what First Cause may all these so evident attributes be ascribed?

II. The Teleological Argument

The teleological argument, being *a posteriori*, adduces evidence that God exists from the presence of order and adaptation in the universe. The term *teleology* is the compound of τέλος and λόγος and thus signifies *the doctrine of ends or rational purpose*. The principle which is germane to the cosmological argument is not abandoned, but, building upon that principle, the teleological argument proceeds to establish, by rational evidence, the intelligence and purpose of God as manifested in the design, function, and consummation of all things. By so much the existence of God is declared. The teleological argument hardly could be stated better than it is by the Psalmist: “He that planted the ear, shall he not hear? he that formed the eye, shall he not see? he that chastiseth the heathen, shall not he correct? he that teacheth man knowledge, shall not he know?” (Ps. 94:9, 10). The fact of design, which is exhibited in every created

thing, exposes the acumen and rational purpose of the Creator. This manifest intent which characterized all of God's works is illustrated—as nearly as the finite can illustrate the infinite—by the fact of design and purpose which is exhibited in the achievements of men, which achievements, because of this design, display the acumen and rational purpose of men. In this age, which is characterized by mechanical development beyond any other, men are justly impressed with that which human ingenuity and inventiveness have effected. But man really originates nothing, and his most cherished feat of devising is never more than a discovery and utilizing of provisions and forces which were already wrought into the creation which God has effected. When man glories in his discovery of the secrets of nature, it is pertinent to inquire who has so created and constituted nature with its unified and systematized marvels, so wonderful, indeed, that no human mind can comprehend its telescopic extent or discern its microscopic perfection. From this array of incomprehensible wonders, man snatches an occasional fraction of something, which fraction at best could be no more than a feeble representation of that whole of which it is a part. It may be concluded, then, that it is the function of the cosmological argument to indicate the evident existence and power of the Creator as these attributes are displayed in the cosmos He has made; to the same end, it is the function of the teleological argument to indicate the evident existence and all-comprehensive design and reason of the Creator as displayed in the order, construction, and end of all things which enter into the constituted universe.

Probably there is no division of naturalistic theism so engaging or so capable of almost endless illustration and expansion as the teleological argument. As to the structure or trend of the argument, the following is quoted from Bowne:

If, then, knowledge be possible, we must declare that the world-ground proceeds according to thought-laws and principles, that it has established all things in rational relations, and balanced their interaction in quantitative and qualitative proportion, and measured this proportion by number. "God geometrizes," says Plato. "Number is the essence of reality," says Pythagoras. And to this agree all the conclusions of scientific thought. The heavens are crystallized mathematics. All the laws of force are numerical. The interchanges of energy and chemical combination are equally so. Crystals are solid geometry. Many organic products show similar mathematical laws. Indeed, the claim is often made that science never reaches its final form until it becomes mathematical. But simple existence in space does not imply motion in mathematical relations, or existence in mathematical forms. Space is only the formless ground of form, and is quite compatible with the irregular and amorphous. It is equally compatible with the absence of numerical law. The truly mathematical is the work of the spirit. Hence the wonder that mathematical principles should be so pervasive, that so many forms and processes in the system represent definite mathematical conceptions, and that they should be so accurately weighed and measured by number.

If the cosmos were a resting existence, we might possibly content ourselves by saying that

things exist in such relations once for all, and that there is no going behind this fact. But the cosmos is no such rigid monotony of being; it is, rather, a process according to intelligible rules; and in this process the rational order is perpetually maintained or restored. The weighing and measuring continually goes on. In each chemical change just so much of one element is combined with just so much of another. In each change of place the intensities of attraction and repulsion are instantaneously adjusted to correspond. Apart from any question of design, the simple fact of qualitative and quantitative adjustment of all things, according to fixed law, is a fact of the utmost significance. The world-ground works at a multitude of points, or in a multitude of things, throughout the system, and works in each with exact reference to its activities in all the rest. The displacement of an atom by a hair's breadth demands a corresponding re-adjustment in every other within the grip of gravitation. But all are in constant movement, and hence re-adjustment is continuous and instantaneous. The single law of gravitation contains a problem of such dizzy vastness that our minds faint in the attempt to grasp it; but when the other laws of force are added the complexity defies all understanding. In addition we might refer to the building processes in organic forms, whereby countless structures are constantly produced or maintained, and always with regard to the typical form in question. But there is no need to dwell upon this point.

Here, then, is a problem, and we have only the two principles of intelligence and non-intelligence, of self-directing reason and blind necessity, for its solution. The former is adequate, and is not far-fetched and violent. It assimilates the facts to our own experience, and offers the only ground of order of which that experience furnishes any suggestion. If we adopt this view all the facts become luminous and consequent.

If we take the other view, then we have to assume a power which produces the intelligible and rational, without being itself intelligent and rational. It works in all things, and in each with exact reference to all, yet without knowing anything of itself or of the rules it follows, or of the order it finds, or of the myriad products compact of seeming purpose which it incessantly produces and maintains. If we ask why it does this, we must answer, Because it must. If we ask how we know that it must, the answer must be, By hypothesis. But this reduces to saying that things are as they are because they must be. That is, the problem is abandoned altogether. The facts are referred to an opaque hypothetical necessity, and this turns out, upon inquiry, to be the problem itself in another form. There is no proper explanation except in theism.—BOWNE, *Philosophy of Theism*, pp. 66–69, cited by Miley, *Systematic Theology*, I, 87–89

On the combining for an advantageous end of otherwise disassociated elements with the impelling evidence of design which the result affords, Paul Janet writes: “When a complex combination of heterogeneous phenomena is found to agree with the possibility of a future act, which was not contained beforehand in any of these phenomena in particular, this agreement can only be comprehended by the human mind by a kind of pre-existence, in an ideal form, of the future act itself, which transforms it from a result into an end—that is to say, into a final cause” (*Final Causes*, p. 85, cited by Miley, *ibid.*, p. 90).

In elucidation of this phenomenon of the combination of disassociated elements into one advantageous end, Dr. John Miley gives this illustration: “The hull of a ship, masts, sails, anchors, rudder, compass, chart, have no necessary connection, and in relation to their physical causalities are heterogeneous phenomena. The future use of a ship is not contained in any one of them, but is

possible through their combination. This combination in the fully equipped ship has no interpretation in our rational intelligence except in the previous existence of its use in human thought and purpose. The use of the ship, therefore, is not the mere result of its existence, but the final cause of its construction” (*ibid.*, I, 90).

The human organism with its relation to the environment in which it functions is a display of design, and therefore denotes both the existence and acumen of the Designer. On this feature of the argument. Paul Janet has written:

The external physical world and the internal laboratory of the living being are separated from each other by impenetrable veils, and yet they are united to each other by an incredible pre-established harmony. On the outside there is a physical agent called light; within, there is fabricated an optical machine adapted to the light: outside, there is an agent called sound; inside, an acoustic machine adapted to sound; outside, vegetables and animals; inside, stills and alembics adapted to the assimilation of these substances: outside, a medium, solid, liquid, or gaseous; inside, a thousand means of locomotion, adapted to the air, the earth, or the water. Thus, on the one hand, there are the final phenomena called sight, hearing, nutrition, flying, walking, swimming, etc.; on the other, the eyes, the ears, the stomach, the wings, the fins, the motive members of every sort. We see clearly in these examples the two terms of the relation—on the one hand, a system; on the other, the final phenomenon in which it ends. Were there only system and combination, as in crystals, still, as we have seen, there must have been a special cause to explain that system and that combination. But there is more here; there is the agreement of a system with a phenomenon which will only be produced long after and in new conditions,—consequently a correspondence which cannot be fortuitous, and which would necessarily be so if we do not admit that the final and future phenomenon is precisely the bond of the system and the circumstance which, in whatever manner, has predetermined the combination.

Imagine a blind workman, hidden in a cellar, and destitute of all intelligence, who, merely yielding to the simple need of moving his limbs and his hands, should be found to have forged, without knowing it, a key adapted to the most complicated lock which can possibly be imagined. This is what nature does in the fabrication of the living being.

Nowhere is this pre-established harmony, to which we have just drawn attention, displayed in a more astonishing manner than between the eye and the light. “In the construction of this organ,” says Trendelenburg, “we must either admit that light has triumphed over matter and has fashioned it, or else it is the matter itself which has become the master of the light. This is at least what should result from the law of efficient causes, but neither the one nor the other of these two hypotheses takes place in reality. No ray of light falls within the secret depths of the maternal womb, where the eye is formed. Still less could inert matter, which is nothing without the energy of light, be capable of comprehending it. Yet the light and the eye are made the one for the other, and in the miracle of the eye resides the latent consciousness of the light. The moving cause, with its necessary development, is here employed for a higher service. The end commands the whole, and watches over the execution of the parts; and it is with the aid of the end that the eye becomes the light of the body.”—*Op. cit.*, pp. 42, 43, cited by Miley, *ibid.*, pp. 90–91

The elaboration of the teleological argument by William Paley (1743–1805) as set forth in his *Natural Theology, or Evidences of the Existence and Attributes of the Deity collected from the Appearances of Nature*, has nothing to excel it. In the following brief passage in which he challenges those who suppose the

universe to be the result of chance, his clear thinking and exquisite diction are disclosed:

“By what art would they make a seed? And which way would they inspire it with a seminal form? And they that think this whole globe of the earth was compacted by the casual (or fatal) coalition of particles of matter, by what magic would they conjure up so many to come together as to make one clod? We vainly hunt with a lingering mind after miracles; if we did not more vainly mean by them nothing else but novelties, we are compassed about with such: and the greatest miracle is, that we see them not. You with whom the daily productions of nature (as you call it) are so cheap, see if you can do the like. Try your skill upon a rose. Yea, but you must have pre-existent matter? But can you ever prove the Maker of the world had so, or even defend the possibility of uncreated matter? And suppose they had the free grant of all the matter between the crown of their head and the moon, could they tell what to do with it, or how to manage it, so as to make it yield them one single flower, that they might glory in as their own production?” (cited by Watson, *Institutes*, I, 304).

Again, a quotation from Cicero to the same end but discloses the fact that the naturalistic theistic arguments were in use a century and more before Christ:

“Can anything be done by chance which has all the marks of design? Four dice may by chance turn up their aces; but, do you think that four hundred dice, when thrown by chance, will turn up four hundred aces? Colours, when thrown upon canvas without design, may have some resemblance to a human face, but do you think they could make a picture as beautiful as the Coan Venus? A hog, in turning up the ground with his nose, may make something in the form of the letter A; but do you think that a hog could describe, on the ground, the Andromache of Ennius? Carneades imagined that, in the stone quarries at Chios, he found in a stone that was split a representation of the head of a little Pan (or sylvan deity). I believe he might find a figure not unlike; but surely not such a one as you would say had been formed by an excellent sculptor like Scopas. The truth is, indeed, that chance never perfectly imitates design” (*De Divinatione*, lib. i., cap. 13, cited by Cooke, *The Deity*, pp. 134–35).

An interesting illustration of the influence of the teleological argument upon an unnamed skeptic is reported by Dr. William Cooke as follows:

Some years ago, I had the misfortune to meet with the fallacies of Hume on the subject of causation. His specious sophistries shook the faith of my reason as to the being of a God, but could not overcome the repugnance of my heart to a negation so monstrous, and consequently left that infinite, restless craving for some point of fixed repose, which atheism not only cannot give, but absolutely and madly disaffirms.

One beautiful evening in May, I was reading, by the light of a setting sun, my favourite Plato. I was seated on the grass, interwoven with golden blooms, immediately on the crystal Colorado of Texas. Dim, in the distant west, arose, with smoky outlines, massy and irregular, the blue cones of an offshoot of the Rocky Mountains.

I was perusing one of the academician's most starry dreams. It laid fast hold of my fancy, without exciting my faith. I wept to think it could not be true. At length I came to that startling sentence, "*God geometrizes.*" "Vain reverie!" I exclaimed, as I cast the volume at my feet. It fell close by a beautiful little flower, that looked fresh and bright, as if it had just fallen from the bosom of a rainbow. I broke it from its silvery stem, and began to examine its structure. Its stamens were five in number; its calyx had five parts; its delicate coral base, five, parting with rays, expanding like the rays of a Texas star. This combination of five in the same blossom appeared to me very singular. I had never thought on such a subject before. The last sentence I had just read in the page of the pupil of Socrates was ringing in my ears—"God geometrizes." There was the text, written long centuries ago; and here this little flower, in the remote wilderness of the West, furnished the commentary. There suddenly passed, as it were, before my eyes a faint flash of light—I felt my heart leap in my bosom. The enigma of the universe was opened. Swift as thought, I calculated the chances against the production of those three equations of five in only one flower, by any principle devoid of reason to perceive number. I found that there were one hundred and twenty-five chances against such a supposition. I extended the calculation to two flowers by squaring the sums last mentioned. The chances amounted to the large sum of fifteen thousand six hundred and twenty-five. I cast my eyes around the forest: the old woods were literally alive with those golden blooms, where countless bees were humming, and butterflies sipping honey-dews.

I will not attempt to describe my feelings. My soul became a tumult of radiant thoughts. I took up my beloved Plato from the grass, where I had tossed him in a fit of despair. Again and again I pressed him to my bosom, with a clasp tender as a mother's around the neck of her sleeping child. I kissed the book and the blossom, alternately bedewing them both with tears of joy. In my wild enthusiasm I called to the little birds on the green boughs, trilling their cheery farewells to departing day—"Sing on, sunny birds; sing on, sweet minstrels! Lo! ye and I have a God."—*Ibid.*, pp. 136–38

III. The Anthropological Argument

The anthropological argument follows the same *a posteriori* order as is followed by the two preceding arguments, but unlike the cosmological argument which contemplates the entire cosmos and the teleological argument which observes the element of design as manifest in all the universe, the anthropological argument is restricted to the field of evidence, as to the existence of God and His qualities, which may be drawn from the constitution of man. There are philosophical and moral features in man's constitution which may be traced back to find their origin in God, and on that ground this argument has been styled either the *philosophical argument* or the *moral argument*. But since the latitude comprehended in the argument is the whole of man's being, the all-inclusive designation—*anthropological argument*—is more satisfactory.

On the basis of the principle declared by the Psalmist—"He that planted the ear, shall he not hear? he that formed the eye, shall he not see? ... he that

teacheth man knowledge, shall not he know?”—the anthropological argument indicates that the elements which are recognized as the innate properties of man must be possessed by his Creator. As a ground for proof, the organic constitution of man belongs to the teleological argument, but there are specific features in man’s being which supply exceptional proof of the divine finality, and these are properly stated in the anthropological argument.

At the opening of his discussion of the anthropological argument, Dr. A. A. Hodge states: “The Cosmological argument led us to an eternal self-existent First Cause. The argument from the order and adaptation discovered in the processes of the universe revealed this great First Cause as possessing intelligence and will; that is, as a personal spirit. The moral or anthropological argument furnishes new data for inference, at once confirming the former conclusions as to the fact of the existence of a personal intelligent First Cause, and at the same time adding to the conception the attributes of holiness, justice, goodness, and truth. The argument from design includes the argument from cause, and the argument from righteousness and benevolence includes both the arguments from cause and from design, and adds to them a new element of its own” (*Outlines of Theology*, p. 41).

Man is composed of that which is material and that which is immaterial, and these two constituent parts are unrelated. Matter possesses the attributes of extension, form, inertia, divisibility, and chemical affinity; while the immaterial part of man possesses the attributes of thought, reason, sensibility, consciousness, and spontaneity. Were it possible to account for the origin of the physical part of man by a theory of natural development (which it is not), the immaterial, as to its origin, remains an insoluble problem apart from the recognition of a sufficient cause.

Though in its general organic structure the material part of man is similar to that of the higher forms of animals, it is so refined as to be superior to all features of material creation. The hand of man executes the exalted designs of his mind in all manner of construction and art; his voice answers the demands of an elevated mind for speech; his ear hears and his eye sees into realms of reality beyond and foreign to the beast. The human body is thus a specific proof of a Creator, since it cannot be accounted for otherwise.

The immaterial part of man, which embodies the elements of life, intellect, sensibility, will, conscience, and an inherent belief in God, presents even a more insistent demand for an adequate cause. Life cannot evolve from inert matter, and though the evolutionist claims to trace all that now is back to an original fire

mist, or protoplasm, all these forms of life, according to this theory, must have been present in latent form in that original something. Such unproved theories would not be tolerated in any field of investigation other than that wherein the darkness of the natural mind is demonstrated in its inability to receive the things of God. Again, the intelligence of man with its achievements in discovery, invention, science, literature, and art, exacts with relentless requisition an adequate cause. Similarly, and under the same unyielding compulsion, both sensibility and will, with their transcendent capacities, demand a worthy cause. And, finally, the conscience as well as the inherent belief in God can be accounted for on no other ground than that man has come forth from One who possesses all these attributes to an infinite degree. A blind force, however exceptional it may be, could never produce a man with intellect, sensibility, will, conscience, and inherent belief in a Creator. The product of a blind force will never betake itself to the pursuit of art and science, and the worship of God.

According to the evolutionary theory of natural development, the creature is the effect of a natural cause and is molded and fashioned according to forces over which he had no control; yet suddenly this effect arises and exerts authority and power over the very nature that is supposed to have produced him, and bends all natural resources to serve his purpose and will. Is it not pertinent to inquire when man became lord over the creation which is supposed to have wrought him? "Can it be conceived," Janet inquires, "that the agent thus endowed with the power of co-ordinating nature for ends is himself a simple result that nature has realized, without proposing to itself an end? Is it not a sort of miracle to admit into the mechanical series of phenomena a link which suddenly should have the power to reverse, in some sort, the order of the series, and which, being itself only a consequent resulting from an infinite number of antecedents, should henceforth impose on the series this new and unforeseen law, which makes of the consequent the law and rule of the antecedent?" (*Final Causes*, pp. 149, 150, cited by Miley, *Systematic Theology*, I, 103.)

Writing of the moral aspects of the anthropological argument, Dr. Augustus H. Strong states:

The argument is a complex one, and may be divided into three parts. 1. Man's intellectual and moral nature must have had for its author an intellectual and moral Being. The elements of the proof are as follows:—(a) Man, as an intellectual and moral being, has had a beginning upon the planet. (b) Material and unconscious forces do not afford a sufficient cause for man's reason, conscience, and free will. (c) Man, as an effect, can be referred only to a cause possessing self-consciousness and a moral nature, in other words, personality. ... 2. Man's moral nature proves the existence of a holy Lawgiver and judge. The elements of the proof are:—(a) Conscience recognizes the existence

of a moral law which has supreme authority. (b) Known violations of this moral law are followed by feelings of ill-desert and fears of judgment. (c) This moral law, since it is not self-imposed, and these threats of judgment, since they are not self-executing, respectively argue the existence of a holy will that has imposed the law, and of a punitive power that will execute the threats of the moral nature. . . . 3. Man's emotional and voluntary nature proves the existence of a Being who can furnish in himself a satisfying object of human affection and an end which will call forth man's highest activities and ensure his highest progress. Only a Being of power, wisdom, holiness, and goodness, and all these indefinitely greater than any that we know upon the earth, can meet this demand of the human soul. Such a Being must exist. Otherwise man's greatest need would be unsupplied, and belief in a lie be more productive of virtue than belief in the truth.—*Systematic Theology*, pp. 45, 46

Summarizing the scope and value of the *a posteriori* arguments, it may be observed: (a) In the cosmological argument the existence of the cosmos, originating in time, constitutes proof of a First Cause who is self-existent and eternal and who possesses intelligence, power, and will. (b) In the teleological argument the evidence of design extends the proof of the intelligence of the First Cause into details of telescopic grandeur and microscopic perfection far beyond the feeble ability of man to discover or comprehend. And (c) in the anthropological argument, while confirming the proofs advanced in the two preceding arguments, an added indication is secured which suggests the elements in the First Cause of intellect, sensibility, and will; and the moral feature of conscience in man declares his Creator to be actuated by holiness, justice, goodness, and truth.

IV. the Ontological Argument

“Ontology is the science or systematic discussion of real being; the philosophical theory of reality; the doctrine of the categories or universal and necessary characteristics of all existence” (*New Standard Dictionary*, 1913). The ontological argument in theism consists in a course of reasoning from God as the absolute First Cause of all things to the things He has caused—specifically, the inherent idea that God exists. God is recognized as the Creator of the human mind in which this conception of Himself is found. The fact of the existence of God is involved in this congenital idea. As the claim of idealism is that material things do not exist, being, as asserted, only an impression of the mind, the ontological argument is a reversal of idealism in that it avers that there is reality or substance where the mind recognizes it to exist. According to this argument the existence of God is certified by the fact that the human mind believes that He does exist. It is an *argumentum a priori* and, as to its value in proof of the existence of God, metaphysicians have always differed. Dr. Shedd uses in his

treatment of this one argument two-thirds of the space given to theistic proofs, while Bishop R. S. Foster declares that he had never caught the meaning or force of the argument at all. Anselm (1033?–1109) is given credit for its first enunciation and his statement of it has never benefited by later revisions. The following from the Encyclopaedia Britannica under *Anselm* is clarifying:

“In the *Proslogion*, as the author himself tells us, the aim is to prove God’s existence by a single argument. This argument is the celebrated ontological proof. God is that Being than whom none greater can be conceived. Now, if that than which nothing greater can be conceived existed only in the intellect, it would not be the absolute greatest, for we could add to it existence in reality. It follows, then, that the Being than whom nothing greater can be conceived, *i.e.*, God, necessarily has real existence” (14th ed.). Gaunilo, the monk, immediately questioned this argument, stating that we readily form the idea of purely imaginary beings, and reality or actual existence cannot be predicated of these ideas. Anselm’s reply was that the objection was cogent with respect to imperfect or finite beings, because with them actual existence is not the necessary content of the conception; but that the objection could not apply to the most perfect Being since actual existence is the very essential feature of the impression. Gaunilo declared that the idea of a “lost island” does not imply that there is such in reality. To this Anselm replied that if Gaunilo will show that the idea of the “lost island” implies *necessary* existence, he will find the island for him and guarantee that it will never be lost again (see Shedd, *Theology*, I, 226–27).

Dr. Samuel Harris writes:

It is evident therefore that the human mind cannot rid itself of the idea of the absolute. It persists in the implicit consciousness, regulating thought, even when theoretically disclaimed. It is evident that without the assumption, explicit or implicit, that the absolute Being exists, the reason of man cannot solve its necessary problems, nor rest satisfied with any intellectual attainment, nor hold steadfastly to the reality of its knowledge, nor know the continuity, the unity and reality of the universe. The necessary conclusion is that the principle that the absolute Being exists is a primitive and necessary law of thought, a constituent element of reason, and a necessary postulate in all thinking about being.

In this exposition of the origin of the idea of the absolute Being and our belief of its existence, I have set forth the so-called *a priori* argument for the existence of God in its true significance. This is an argument from the idea of the absolute or perfect Being to its existence. In order to the conclusiveness of this argument it must be shown both that the idea of the perfect Being is a necessary idea of reason, and that the existence of the Being is necessarily included in the idea; that is, its existence must be as necessary to the reason as the idea of it. This is what has been shown. —*Self-Revelation of God*, pp. 163–64

Of the same argument Milton Valentine writes:

“The germs of this were involved in Plato’s doctrine of ‘ideas,’ but it was first formulated by Anselm in the eleventh century. From the existence in the human mind of the idea of a ‘most perfect being,’ it concluded that the most perfect being exists—because real existence is a necessary part of the idea of the most perfect being. Descartes, Bishop Butler, Leibnitz, Cousin, and many other eminent writers have used this method of argument; but, standing alone, it has often been shown to be unsound, in confounding real objective existence with the simple idea of it in the mind” (*Christian Theology*, I, 189).

Similarly, Dr. Charles Hodge states: “If this argument has any validity, it is unimportant. It is only saying that what must be actually is. If the idea of God as it exists in every man’s mind includes that of actual existence, then so far as the idea goes, he who has the one has the other. But the argument does not show how the ideal implies the real” (*Systematic Theology*, I, 205).

On the same argument Richard Watson writes: “No instance is however I believe on record of an Atheistic conversion having been produced by this process, and it may be ranked among the over zealous attempts of the advocates of truth. It is well intentioned, but unsatisfactory, and so far as on the one hand it has led to a neglect of the more convincing, and powerful course of argument drawn from ‘*the things which do appear*’; and on the other, has encouraged a dependence upon a mode of investigation, to which the human mind is inadequate, which in many instances is an utter mental delusion, and which scarcely two minds will conduct in the same manner; it has probably been mischievous in its effects by inducing a skepticism not arising out of the nature of the case, but from the imperfect and unsatisfactory investigations of the human understanding, pushed beyond the limit of its powers” (*Theological Institutes*, I, 330).

Conclusion

The *argumentum a posteriori* in its three parts has always been valid and vital. The *argumentum a priori* has wrought little or nothing but idle speculation. Of this distinction between the usefulness of the two, Dr. John Dick states: “It is by this argument [the *a posteriori*] that we rise to the knowledge of the uncaused existence of the Author of the universe, and not by abstract speculations on necessity. We should never have known that he exists, but from our own existence and that of other beings around us; and as in this way we ascertain that he does and must exist, it seems absurd to talk of proving his existence *a priori*.”

Whatever use may be made of this argument to prove his perfections, it cannot be employed in proof of his being. Dr. Clarke himself acknowledges, that ‘the argument *a posteriori* is by far the most generally useful argument, most easy to be understood, and in some degree suited to all capacities; and, therefore, it ought always to be distinctly insisted on’’ (*Theology*, p. 83).

To the spiritual Christian to whom God’s illuminating, authoritative “Thus saith the LORD” of the Scriptures has come, little will be added by rationalistic theistic arguments; however, these arguments exist and do contribute to theology that which reason suggests. On this ground these arguments should be pondered by every student of doctrine.

Chapter XII

ANTITHEISTIC THEORIES

THE NATURAL man who does not receive or know the things of God (1 Cor. 2:14), has in all ages sought to answer the problem of a visible universe and by his efforts has unceasingly proved this divine estimation of his limitations to be true. It may be difficult for the spiritually enlightened mind to comprehend the fog of confusion in which the often sincere but unregenerate men are plunged. It should be remembered that argument does not create divine enlightenment. Only by the new birth can one “see the kingdom of God.” The cure for spiritual darkness is “the light of the world.” The gropings of natural men—and sometimes they are men of great mental powers—are varied and complex. However, they have formulated certain general lines of philosophy, and these, like the false religions of the earth, bespeak the spiritual limitations of fallen man.

Theism means a belief in God and in its naturalistic form is a rational philosophy regarding God which is restricted to the one divine Essence. Biblical theism believes that Essence, according to revelation, subsists in three Persons. As a rationalistic philosophy, naturalistic theism is sustained by the traditional arguments already considered, and may be distinguished from certain antitheistic theories.

The cognizance of nature on the part of man and his restless investigation into the facts of the universe and its origin are traced in the history of philosophy. Many schools of thought have appeared, some of which exist at the present time only in the records which constitute their history. These systems of thought reflect the gropings of the human mind when unaided by revelation. It is recorded that some philosophers rejected revelation when it came to them (Rom. 1:18–32). It is also true that others to whom revelation was denied would have responded to, and rejoiced in, the glorious light which it affords. Plato has said: “The philosophers are able to grasp the eternal and immutable ... those who set their affections on that which in each case really exists.” Sincerity which welcomes added light is reflected in these utterances. The earlier philosophers were occupied with cosmology and not until Socrates and Plato was there any serious consideration of moral or intellectual phenomena. The fact that Socrates confused knowledge with virtue suggests the immaturity which his philosophy has evinced. The student of theology will do well to become familiar with the principal antitheistic theories of this and past ages; for these, being more or less

native to the unregenerate mind, are ever reappearing in one form or another. Some of these theories are:

I. Atheism

An open and positive denial of the existence of God is indicated by the term *atheism* (ἄθεος—‘no God’). The designation is not properly applied to mere ignorance of God. A dogmatic atheist is one who assumes himself informed as to theistic claims yet emphatically denies the existence of God. It is probable that a consistent atheist has never existed. He is a sporadic individual who has forced intuition and reason out of poise in an attempt to maintain an assumed, a negative, premise. Man could not, and therefore does not, ever fully adjust himself to the logical conclusions of atheism. If he did so adjust himself, he would not only repudiate God, all moral value, and spiritual reality, but would likewise repudiate the human constitution on its immaterial side. For the consistent atheist there could be no mind, no conscience, no morality, no sensibility, and no will. The theory of the atheist cannot support its own assertions because of the element of mind which such support requires. To the atheist the material universe is only an accident and all its marvels of coordination and development are fortuitous. He knows no cause for anything, even his own existence. He has no hope for himself in time or eternity. When he denies the existence of God it is by an assumption of knowledge which transcends the limitations which his negative creed allows. To quote John Foster (1770–1843):

The wonder then turns on the great process, by which a man could grow to the immense intelligence that can know that there is no God. What ages and what lights are requisite for this attainment! This intelligence involves the very attributes of Divinity, while a God is denied. For unless this man is omnipresent, unless he is at this moment in every place in the universe, he cannot know but there may be in some place manifestations of a Deity, by which even *he* would be overpowered. If he does not know absolutely every agent in the universe, the one that he does not know may be God. If he is not himself the chief agent in the universe, and does not know what is so, that which is so may be God. If he is not in absolute possession of all the propositions that constitute universal truth, the one which he wants may be that there is a God. If he cannot with certainty assign the cause of all that he perceives to exist, that cause may be a God. If he does not know every thing that has been done in immeasurable ages that are past, some things may have been done by a God. Thus, unless he knows all things, that is, precludes another Deity by being one himself, he cannot know that the Being whose existence he rejects does not exist. But he must *know* that he does not exist, else he deserves equal contempt and compassion for the temerity with which he firmly avows his rejection and acts accordingly.—*Essays*, essay i, letter v, cited by Miley, *Systematic Theology*, 1, 113

No more comprehensive definition of atheism has been found than the following by Dr. A. A. Hodge:

Atheism, according to its etymology, signifies a denial of the being of God. It was applied by the ancient Greeks to Socrates and other philosophers, to indicate that they failed to conform to the popular religion. In the same sense it was applied to the early Christians. Since the usage of the term Theism has been definitely fixed in all modern languages, atheism necessarily stands for a denial of the existence of a personal Creator and Moral Governor. Notwithstanding that the belief in a personal God is the result of a spontaneous recognition of God as manifesting himself in consciousness and the works of nature, atheism is still possible as an abnormal state of consciousness induced by sophistical speculation or by the indulgence of sinful passions, precisely as subjective idealism is possible. It exists in the following forms: 1. Practical, 2. Speculative. Again, Speculative Atheism may be (1) Dogmatic, as when the conclusion is reached either (a) that God does not exist, or (b) that the human faculties are positively incapable of ascertaining or verifying his existence (*e.g.*, Herbert Spencer, "First Principles," pt. 1). (2) Skeptical, as when the existence is simply doubted, and the conclusiveness of the evidence generally relied upon is denied. (3) Virtual, as when (a) principles are maintained essentially inconsistent with the existence of God, or with the possibility of our knowledge of him: *e.g.*, by materialists, positivists, absolute idealists. (b) When some of the essential attributes of the divine nature are denied, as by Pantheists, and by J. S. Mill in his "Essays on Religion." (c) When explanations of the universe are given which exclude the agency of an intelligent Creator and Governor, the moral government of God, and the moral freedom of man, *e.g.*, the theories of Darwin and Spencer, and Necessitarians generally.—*Outlines of Theology*, pp. 46, 47

II. Agnosticism

Theism is to be distinguished also from agnosticism, which is the view that there is no sufficient ground for either an affirmative or negative answer to the question: Does God exist? Therefore, it is claimed, judgment on this interrogation must be suspended. In reality it is an unwillingness to accept the impressions of the mind on certain subjects as dependable, or to be convinced by a licit process of reason. The leading agnostics of the past are Sir W. Hamilton, Dean Mansel, Herbert Spencer, and Huxley. The last-named coined the term *agnosticism* about 1870. It is evident from the etymology of the word that it may apply to any degree or shade of unbelief on any subject. It is used, however, with a restricted meaning. To quote the Encyclopaedia Britannica:

"Whereas scepticism, as a technical term in philosophy, denotes varying degrees of doubt as to whether some or all of the psychological processes, purporting to yield knowledge, really do so, agnosticism rather asserts that, of certain kinds of objects or facts, we possess assured knowledge, while as to certain other kinds of alleged existents we have, and can have, none. The kinds of alleged objects, knowledge as to which the agnostic believes to be impossible, are such as are the primary concern of metaphysics and theology: God, the soul

and its immortality, and—more generally speaking—the ultimate realities of which phenomenal things, such as the sciences study, are appearances. Of these phenomenal things, we have ever-increasing and irrefragable knowledge; as to the things *per se*, the ontal or noumenal existents, of which the ‘things’ of common sense and science are the knowable shadows or appearances, we can never have knowledge pure and subjectively undefiled. If we know *that* they are, we cannot know *what* they are; if we can assert their existence, we are ignorant as to their essence” (*s.v.*, Agnosticism, 14th ed.).

Again, as the etymology of the word implies, agnosticism is simply *not knowing*. Its objective is to discredit certitude in the field of human knowledge. It is an attack upon man’s mental powers and engenders a distrust in the common facts and forces of human existence. It is negative in every particular and therefore destructive in its effect upon truth which is gained by the normal functions of the human faculties. Agnostics discard reasonable proofs, which process, if followed consistently, would eliminate the very proofs they advance for their own theories. Of this form of unbelief Dr. George Park Fisher writes:

It is obvious that Agnosticism is the destruction of science. All the investigations and reasonings of science proceed on the foundation of axioms,—call them intuitions, rational postulates, or by any other name. But these, according to Agnostics, denote simply a certain stage at which the process of evolution has arrived. What is to hinder them from vanishing, or resolving themselves into another set of axioms, with the forward movement of this unresting process? What then will become of the doctrines of Agnosticism itself? It is plain that on this philosophy, all knowledge of realities, as distinct from transitory impressions, is a house built on the sand. All science is reduced to *Schein*—mere semblance. It is impossible for the Agnostic to limit his knowledge to experience, and to reject as unverified the implications of experience, without abandoning nearly all that he holds true. If he sticks to his principle, his creed will be a short one. Consciousness is confined to the present moment. I am conscious of remembering an experience in the past. This consciousness as a present fact I cannot deny without a contradiction. But how do I know that the object of the recollection—be it a thought, or feeling, or experience of any sort—ever had a reality? How do I know anything past, or that there is a past? Now, memory is necessary to the comparison of sensations, to reasoning, to our whole mental life. Yet to believe in memory is to transcend experience. I have certain sensations which I attribute collectively to a cause named my “body.” Like sensations lead me to recognize the existence of other bodies like my own. But how do I know that there is consciousness within these bodies? How do I know that my fellow-men whom I see about me have minds like my own? The senses cannot perceive the intelligence of the friends about me. I infer that they are intelligent, but in this inference I transcend experience. Experience reduced to its exact terms, according to the methods of Agnosticism, is confined to the present feeling,—the feeling of the transient moment. When the Agnostic goes beyond this, when he infers that what is remembered was once presented in consciousness, that his fellow-men are thinking beings, and not mindless puppets, that any intelligent beings exist outside of himself, he transcends experience. If he were to predicate intelligence of God, he would be guilty of no graver assumption than when he ascribes intelligence to the fellow-men whom he sees moving about, and with whom he is conversing.— *The Grounds of Theistic and Christian Belief*, rev. ed., pp. 78, 79

Agnosticism is better expressed by the phrase, “*I will not believe,*” than by the phrase, “*I cannot believe.*”

III. Evolution

“In general,” writes the late Dr. Leander Keyser, “evolution is the theory that the cosmos has been developed from crude, homogeneous material to its present heterogeneous and advanced status by means of resident forces” (*A System of Natural Theism*, p. 106). Evolution is either *theistic*. or *atheistic*. The former recognizes God as the Creator of original materials, but contends that evolution is the method by which all development from a supposed primordial state to the present completeness has been wrought. The latter—atheistic evolution—rejects the Person of God, denies His work in creation, and contends that matter is eternal or self-developing.

From the beginning fallen man, having no knowledge of revelation and no disposition to esteem the work of God, has speculated on the problem of the origin and development of the universe as he beheld it. With all its strain upon credulity, the evolutionary theory is the best solution of this problem which the natural man can devise. That it is a godless system is self-demonstrated. “God is not in all his thoughts.” No place is made for Him as a factor in this system, nor is His Word ever referred to by quotation. It could not be otherwise. The Biblical doctrine of creation accounts for all things upon the fact of divine creation, which is a principle diametrically opposed to that proposed by the theory of evolution. On the other hand, the promoters of the evolutionary theory seek to avoid every consideration of the supernatural, attempting, as they do, to reduce the works of God to natural processes. The Biblical doctrine of creation faces toward God; the evolutionary theory, regardless of the supposition of theistic evolution that God created that from which the universe is said to have evolved, faces away from God.

Evolutionists distinguish between living and non-living things and recognize that each of these realities presents its own problem of origin and development. In fact, the evolutionary theory is not properly concerned with origin. It has rather to do with the unfolding or expansion of things from an assumed beginning. As to the origin of the material universe, few, indeed, are prepared to defend the notion that it is eternal or that it is self-wrought. Matter, being unintelligent and inert, could neither exert itself nor could it have acted with a purpose. Only intelligence no less than infinite and capacity equal to the task

could have achieved such a beginning. The immensity of the undertaking and the acumen it connotes are not lessened by the assumption that all once existed in the form of a fire mist or protoplasm. It is doubtful if it is less an effort to make an egg out of which a chicken might come than to make the full-developed chicken. The fire mist or protoplasm which holds this universe potentially within it, would be a miniature of the whole. So far as the evolutionary theory extends, the problem of the cause of the miniature remains unsolved.

In the introduction to its treatise on *evolution*, the Encyclopaedia Britannica states: "From the earliest times man must have speculated on the nature and origin of the multitude of living creatures, both plants and animals, which people the surface of the earth. Some have assumed"—the writer humbly interposes what he believes to be a better phrase, namely, that they *believe* on absolute authority—"that the diverse forms with their different shapes and sizes, properties and habits, were each specially created, probably to fill a particular place and serve a special purpose; others preferred to consider them as the gradually developed products of nature. According to modern doctrine, evolution and the diversity we see around us are due to the action in the past of 'natural causes,' which can be observed still at work in the present. This conception has been applied to the whole cosmos including both living and non-living things."

On the extent to which evolution is now received by educated individuals, the same introduction goes on to remark:

The idea of evolution has penetrated many other departments of thought. Anthropology and ethnology are permeated with it, and so are history and comparative religion. Modern Psychology recognizes that the human mind is unintelligible without an evolutionary background. The idea of evolution has re-emphasized our kinship with the animals; it has dethroned man from his position as lord of creation; but in place of the old idea of fixity it has given us the idea of the possible advancement of the human race, and of man as the trustee of future evolutionary progress. And again, it is now universally held by competent biologists that all organisms, living or extinct, have arisen from remote common ancestors by a process of gradual change or evolution, and further, that living matter or "life" itself, in all probability arose from non-living matter in the first stages of this evolutionary process. The only doubt which remains concerns the exact steps in the process, and the nature and relative importance of the various factors which have contributed to it.—14th ed., VIII, 916–17

The above statement that "life itself in all probability arose from non-living matter" is a pure conjecture. It is, no doubt, the best solution of the origin of life that godless, impious minds can devise. Here the true scientific method of proceeding only upon *proved* facts seems cast to the winds. Evolution is an inference based on a pure hypothesis. Even though all men of learning were to

embrace this inference, it has no right to assert itself to be a final and authoritative science, as evolution now does, until it is verified by *facts*. In defining a *fact*, the New Century Dictionary states: "A deed or act ... also, something that has really happened, or is actually the case; a real occurrence, or state of things, as distinguished from something merely alleged or believed; hence, a truth known by actual observation or authentic testimony" (1936 ed.). The evolutionary hypothesis does not answer to one of these requirements and therefore is void of *facts* on which a science might be grounded. Over against this, having established the truth that the Bible is the Word of God by a demonstration which does conform completely with all that goes to substantiate a fact, it is scientific to believe that "in the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." That statement presents a proved fact which is based on "authentic testimony" and is therefore scientific. However, because of the spiritual darkness resting on the human understanding concerning God and all His works, the Scriptures with equal finality and clarity assert: "Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear" (Heb. 11:3).

In the intellectual world, as in all walks of life, men choose between the only alternatives, namely, the direct creation of all things by God as asserted by His own authoritative Word, or the evolution of this complex and marvelous universe without a cause or a guiding purpose, out of nothing. The choice is finally between God and nothing. And what darkness is evinced on the part of those who choose *nothing*!

Any attempt to analyze the theories of naturalistic evolution should take into account the fact that, in spite of its antiquity, it is a presentday belief and not to be classed with abandoned notions of past ages. The doctrine is not new, having been held, in crude form, by many ancient philosophers. Latterly it appears with the assumed importance which shrewd and cultured men assign to it. In Huxley's day—nearly a century ago—he gave to this theory the weight of his great influence. He stated: "The matter of life is composed of ordinary matter, differing from it only in the manner in which its atoms are aggregated." And again, "I must carefully guard myself against the supposition that I intend to suggest that no such thing as Abiogenesis has ever taken place in the past or ever will take place in the future. With organic chemistry, molecular physics, and physiology yet in their infancy, and every day making prodigious strides, I think it would be the height of presumption for any man to say that the conditions under which matter assumes the properties we call 'vital,' may not some day be

artificially brought together” (cited by Hodge, *Theology*, II, 5). The most recent authoritative statement concerning the present claims of naturalistic evolution will be found in the latest edition of the Encyclopaedia Britannica, where it is asserted—a portion of which statement has been quoted earlier in this work—: “Finally there is the pragmatic value of the evolution theory. The biologist in studying living things, finds that the idea of evolution works and helps him to interpret his facts and to discover new facts and principles; while no other theory so far put forward helps him at all. The idea of evolution is as important a biological tool as, for instance, the microscope ... It is often asserted by irresponsible people that ‘Darwinism is dead.’ This is very far from being the case. In so far as Darwinism was a reasoned assertion of the fact of evolution, it is much more firmly grounded today than it was in Darwin’s own time. and every year brings fresh evidence in its support. Only in regard to the nature of the variations which are to be selected has the theory of evolution by Natural Selection suffered any important modification; in other respects it remains unshaken” (VIII, 916).

There are certain obvious phenomena for which the evolutionary theory offers no explanation, namely, the origin of matter; matter has never evolved life; species remain separate wherever observed and no transmutation of species has ever been observed; motion; life; consciousness; Christ; Christian experience; a future life. So far from being subordinate issues, these are the essential facts of all creation. It will not suffice to claim at this point that evolution is a principle which cannot concern itself with details. The above-named realities are fundamental. Science to be worthy of its name must proceed on the basis of *proved* facts. Scientific men who embrace the unproved theories of naturalistic evolution outrage the requisitions of their profession. As Dr. Miley declares: “Evolution then is an inference from a mere hypothesis. This is not the method of science. Hypothesis is an utterly insufficient ground for any science. No theory can claim a scientific position until it has verified itself by facts” (*Systematic Theology*, I, 135). The explanation of this strange departure on the part of many learned men from the acknowledged fundamental basis of science is that they have no choice. Since “the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God” (1 Cor. 2:14), they find no solution to the problem of origin in the revelation that God created the universe. To such a mind, it is evidently easier to believe in an unproved theory that something evolved out of nothing; that matter produced life, than to believe that God created all things by His own sufficient power and for His own all-wise ends. Spiritual illumination,

and not argument, is the cure for the incapacity of the unregenerate man. How abnormal these things are! How perverted is the intellectual experience of a person who sees “foolishness” in the sublime creative acts of God, but sees no foolishness in the sodden notion that tadpoles and monkeys are the progenitors of men! Faith alone and not scientific reasoning discovers the things of God. “Through faith,” and not all men have faith, “we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear” (Heb. 11:3). The doctrine of divine creation is not only the starting point of revelation, but all subsequent Scripture recognizes that teaching and builds upon it.

IV. Materialism

“The doctrine that the facts of experience are all to be explained by reference to the reality, activities, and laws of physical or material substance. In psychology, this doctrine denies the reality of the soul, as psychical being; in cosmology, it denies the need of assuming the being of God as Absolute Spirit, or of any other spiritual ground or first principle: opposed to *spiritism*. Materialistic theories have varied from the first, but the most widely accepted form regards all species of sentient and mental life as products of the organism, and the universe itself as resolvable into terms of physical elements and their motions” (*New Standard Dictionary*, 1913). To this the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* adds: “It may perhaps be fairly said that materialism is at present a necessary methodological postulate of natural-scientific inquiry. The business of the scientist is to explain everything by the physical causes which are comparatively well understood and to exclude the interference of spiritual causes. It was the great work of Descartes to exclude rigorously from science all explanations which were not scientifically verifiable” (14th ed. *s.v.*).

The world awaits the introduction of a balanced and unprejudiced science which gives to the spiritual its transcendent place above matter. The blind grovelings of modern evolutionists who, for want of spiritual light, are forced to seek the origin of life as an emanation from “physico-chemical complexity” (whatever that may mean—cf. *Encyclopaedia Britannica* on *evolution*) is burying itself in the muck from which it is unable to lift its eyes. As God is greater than the works of His hands, so man’s spirit, being a direct impartation from God (Gen. 2:7), surpasses in importance the mere “earthen vessel” in which it dwells. The history of science is one of endless admissions of misunderstanding and

error. In the field of that which is merely physical, certain progress has been made; but in the field of that which concerns life and spiritual being, there has been no progress, nor can there be until scientific men welcome revelation as a valid source of information. If all science hesitates over the problem of mere animation, when will its high priests awaken to an appreciation of the greater marvel of “the gift of God [which] is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord”?

V. Polytheism

The belief and teaching that there is more than one God is distinguished as *polytheism*, and, by so much, is a great disregard of the first commandment of the Decalogue. It has been the claim of infidels and modern evolutionists that, in their earlier developments from crude animal existence, men have believed in many gods. On the contrary, the intra-Biblical and extra-Biblical evidence demonstrates that men began with a belief in one God and from that belief they departed, being unwilling to “retain God in their knowledge.” No better or more accurate history of this drift could be written than is recorded by inspiration in Romans 1:18–32. To quote Dr. A. A. Hodge again:

Polytheism ... distributes the perfections and functions of the infinite God among many limited gods. It sprang out of the nature-worship represented in the earliest Hindu Veds, so soon and so generally supplanting primitive monotheism. At first, as it long remained in Chaldea and Arabia, it consisted in the worship of elements, especially of the stars and of fire. Subsequently it took special forms from the traditions, the genius, and the relative civilizations of each nationality. Among the rudest savages it sank to Fetichism as in western and central Africa. Among the Greeks it was made the vehicle for the expression of their refined humanitarianism in the apotheosis of heroic men rather than the revelation of incarnate gods. In India, springing from a pantheistic philosophy, it has been carried to the most extravagant extreme, both in respect to the number, and the character of its deities. Whenever polytheism has been connected with speculation it appears as the exoteric counterpart of pantheism.—*Outlines of Theology*, pp. 47, 48

Polytheism presents no similarity whatsoever to the Biblical doctrine of a Trinity of Persons representing one Essence. The Trinitarian belief is grounded in the primary fact that there is one God—Jehovah our Elohim is one Jehovah (Deut. 6:4), and contends that the one God subsists in three Persons. The Bible is, to the last degree, a monotheistic revelation.

VI. Idealism and Realism

Regarding these two opposing systems of thought, the New Standard Dictionary (1913 ed.) asserts: “idealism: That system of reflective thinking

which would interpret and explain the entire universe, things and minds and their relations, as the realization of a system of ideas, or as the progressive evolution of an ideal. It takes various forms as determined by the view of what the idea or ideal is, and of how we become sure of it. Idealism is customarily regarded as, and in particulars often is, the antithesis of *realism*; but the extremes of each are obliged, while denying many, to admit not a few of the claims of the other. On the other hand, while agnosticism admits the possibility of reality as independent of consciousness, it denies the possibility of knowing such reality. Idealism, therefore, differs from agnosticism by refusing to admit the possibility of a non-ideal reality.”

Regarding realism as related to philosophy, it is similarly stated: “The doctrine that the objects of human cognition have real existence, and not merely existence in the subject mind which perceives or otherwise cognizes them. Opposed to *nominalism*, *phenomenalism*, and *skeptical* or *subjective idealism*.”

Thus it is declared that, in the case of idealism, nothing exists except in the thought or impression which the mind sustains; and, in the case of realism, all objects of which the consciousness is aware are realities. It is needless to point out that realism alone is sustained by the Word of God, while idealism has in past ages served for useless and endless speculation.

VII. Pantheism

As the term implies, pantheism is the belief that God is everything and that everything is God, thus confounding God with nature, matter with spirit, and the Creator with the things He has created. Two widely different approaches have been made to pantheistic philosophy. One is that matter originates everything and is God, life and spirit being only modes of the existence of the all-inclusive Absolute. The other is that spirit is everything and that matter has no substantial existence beyond the mental impression, or delusion, that it exists. In either instance, God is all. Thus both idealism and realism are represented in the two forms of this philosophy. As seen in the hoary religions of Brahmanism and Buddhism, this belief has led to the doctrine of the transmigration of the soul, which also contends that the soul derives all existence from God and eventually, after countless reincarnations, returns to, and is absorbed into, God. In the “Veids” it is taught that “the whole universe is the Creator, proceeds from the Creator, and returns to him.” Similarly, from the same source: “Thou art Brahma, thou art Vishnu, thou art Kodra, etc.; thou art air, thou art Andri, thou

art the moon, thou art substance, thou art Djam; thou art the earth, thou art the world! O Lord of the world, to thee humble adoration! O Soul of the world, thou who superintendest the actions of the world, who destroyest the world, who createst the pleasures of the world! O Life of the world, the visible and invisible worlds are the sport of thy power; thou art the sovereign, O Universal Soul; to thee humble adoration!” (cited by Cooke, *The Deity*, rev. ed., p. 170).

The human mind seems to need no more than a thread of suggestion on which to build by imagination mystery upon mystery and fable upon fable, seeming never to challenge itself with the fact that the thing thus imposed is a monstrous delusion. Over against this, revelation has provided a stabilization for the human mind which, otherwise, like the departed demon of Luke 11:24, “walketh through dry places, seeking rest; and finding none,” is prone to deify and worship anything from a “creeping thing” to the universe itself. The extent to which pantheism as a philosophy may go is reflected in innumerable writings—ancient and modern. Lucan said: “Whatsoever thou seest is Jupiter.” Seneca inquires, “What is God?” and answers, “He is all that you see, and all that you do not see” (cited by Cooke, *ibid.*, pp. 171–72). The following versification by Dr. Mason Good of a poem ascribed to Orpheus represents the philosophical thought of its day:

Jove first exists, whose thunders roll above;
Jove last, Jove midmost, all proceeds from Jove.
Female is Jove, immortal Jove is male;
Jove the broad earth—the heaven’s irradiate pale.
Jove is the boundless Spirit, Jove the fire
That warms the world with feeling and desire.
The sea is Jove, the sun, the lunar ball;
Jove king supreme, the sovereign source of all.
All power is his; to him all glory give,
For his vast form embraces all that live.

—cited by Cooke, *ibid.*, p. 171

Pantheism has become the inheritance of every nation on earth and has cursed the streams of human thought beyond all estimation. It assumes the eternity of matter and the absurdity that matter has power to originate life and spirit. In its idealistic form it contradicts human consciousness and destroys the very ground upon which reason is based and the fundamental method of its own procedure. It breaks down the most essential distinctions between existing things, by which alone they are identified. According to pantheism, the potter and the clay are one and the same thing—if they exist at all. The promoters of these notions of necessity contradict in their daily lives the very speculations they propound.

They cannot state a theorem, or even commence to do so, without departing from their major idea. Every effort to build this theory assumes the principle that destroys it. Attempting to support it, they dig down its supposed foundations. The theory obliterates all distinctions. It levels all elements to one item. There is no recognition of the fact that God is infinite while creation is finite; that God is omnipotent while creation is impotent; that God is immutable while creation is mutable; that God is eternal while creation experiences both birth and death. Error is incidental to other minds, but unavoidable and essential to the pantheistic teachers. Though it recognizes a god such as human speculation conceives, pantheism is the mother of atheism and the grossest idolatry. It is promoting the notion that matter is God and God is matter and it is a short step from this to the assertion of the fool that there is no God. It is but a step, likewise, to the worship of any inanimate or animate thing, since the theory contends that it is all a part of God. The system leads to blasphemy and licentiousness. The basis of every moral distinction is obliterated by it. If all nature is God, then human action is not distinct from God but is the very action of God. The whole category of human crime becomes as worthy as virtue itself. The terms by which evil is described are only conventional ideas. Reason is assassinated and virtue defamed. Such is the fruit of modern pantheistic philosophy current in educational centers today. The student of doctrine may well ponder the following utterance which is a normal offspring of pantheistic philosophy: "The belief in a personal living God is the chief foundation and origin of our worm-eaten social state; and further, that so long as mankind shall hang by a single hair to the idea of heaven, there is no happiness to be looked for on earth. Man himself is the religion of futurity. God stands in need of man, but man has no need of God" (cited by Cooke, *ibid.*, p. 186). These revolting assertions are the very creed of atheism and communism, which are clutching the throat of the social interests of the world and which hate the things of God with a perfect hatred.

The following extended quotation from Dr. William Cooke, published in 1862, summarizes the evil character of this philosophy:

Whether we contemplate the system theoretically or practically, it is the most outrageous monstrosity which the human mind has ever yet fabricated or can fabricate. It is the ultimatum of absurdity and immorality. It was generated by conceit, fostered by pride, and matured by the most consummate depravity. Viewed by the eye of philosophy, it is arrant nonsense; by the eye of morality, it is disgustingly obscene; and, by the eye of religion, it is horrid blasphemy. It is repugnant to our reason, and revolting to our moral sense; it is a foul disgrace to the intellect and character of man, which it is both humiliating and loathsome to contemplate; and the disgrace is

deepened when we think of the men, the country, and the age with which the system has sprung up in modern times. A maniac could not equal its folly, nor a demon exceed its wickedness. The Prince of Darkness himself . . . could not desire a more complete abasement of the human intellect, a more entire wreck of the human character and happiness, a more perfect subversion of the authority and designs of Almighty God. Its universal prevalence would consummate the wishes of that apostate and malignant spirit, in dissolving all the bonds of society, uprooting the foundations of social order and happiness, and in filling the earth with lust, violence, and blood. We wonder not at the spread of socialism, communism, libertinism, anarchy, and hatred to religion; we wonder not the vices are open, crimes unblushing, and the vilest of men are held in reputation. There is a cause! Learning and talent have prostituted their powers in advocating an atheistic lie, and have sent it abroad through society; and the lie thus sanctioned, and ministering to the vilest passions of human nature, has produced the effects we deplore.— *Ibid.*, pp. 187–88

VIII. Deism

This term, from the Latin *Deus*, meaning ‘God,’ is closely allied to the Greek word *Theos*. As a philosophy, the contention is that God is personal, infinite, holy, and the Creator of all things; but that He purposely abandoned His creation when completed with the intent that it should be self-sustaining and self-promoting by the forces resident in it. God is not immanent in creation but transcends it. Deism rejects the Scriptures or any suggestion that God is providentially working since creation. According to this system, there is no possibility of reaching God by prayer, or of holding communion or fellowship with Him. It is “the religion of nature” since it contends that all that can be known of God is restricted to such deductions as can be made from creation. There is no moral influence flowing out of Deism and this its followers have demonstrated. Carlyle thus described the Deist conception of God: “An absentee God, sitting idle ever since the first Sabbath at the outside of the universe, and seeing it go” (cited by Strong, *Theology*, p. 204).

IX. Positivism

The philosophy elaborated by Auguste Comte (1798–1857) which is based on the assumption that man’s knowledge is restricted to phenomena, and of these man can know only in part. It rejects all consideration of metaphysics or speculative philosophy. The theistic arguments as to First Cause and design as well as the conclusions of human reason are refused.

X. Monism

“The doctrine which refers the explanation of all the existences, activities,

and developments of the universe, including the physical and psychical or spiritual beings, to one ultimate principle or substance: opposed to philosophical *dualism* and *pluralism*. If this principle or substance is conceived of in terms of personal life, the doctrine takes the form of *idealistic monism*; if in terms of matter and physical mechanism, it is called *materialistic monism*; if in terms which deny the reality of both finite personal life and finite physical existences, but affirm that both are only the phenomenal manifestations of an impersonal ground, the doctrine becomes *pantheistic monism*” (*New Standard Dictionary*, 1913 ed.).

XI. Dualism

“A system or theory which asserts a radical duality or twofoldness of nature, being, or operation. In the history of reflective thinking, four species of *dualism* have developed, which are to some extent interdependent but are not identical, according to the subject-matter of reflection. These are (1) *theological dualism*, or the doctrine that there are two eternal and opposing principles, or divine beings, one good and the other evil. This view was characteristic of Zoroastrianism and certain Gnostic systems, but is opposed by monistic religions like Christianity and Mohammedanism. A special form arose in early Christian controversy, in the doctrine attributed to Nestorius, which held that the Logos dwelt in Jesus as a distinct person, thus regarding Christ as having two personalities, rather than as being one divine-human person. (2) *Philosophical dualism*, or the theory which considers the ultimate being of the universe, or ‘World-Ground,’ to be twofold or to be constituted of two independent and irreducible elements, as opposed either to idealistic or materialistic monism. (3) *Psychological* or *psychophysical dualism*, the theory that the body and mind of man are two different existences ... (4) *Ethical dualism*, or the system of morals which demands and justifies one kind of conduct toward one’s fellows in the same social group and another kind of conduct toward other men” (*ibid.*).

XII. Pluralism

Aside from its general use relative to the plural aspect of things, the term *pluralism* has a specific philosophical meaning in which the essential unity of the world is denied. It contends that “inasmuch as the mind makes its own world, for practical purposes, there are as many worlds as there are minds to make them” (*ibid.*).

Conclusion

Such in general are the naturalistic arguments pro and con for the existence of God, and the philosophical issues which they engender. From this, as important as it is, the spiritual mind turns with relief to the complete, satisfying, and authoritative revelation of God as set forth in His own Word.

Biblical Theism

Chapter XIII

THE PERSONALITY OF GOD

THE PROGRESS in the pursuance of the systematic development of theological truth thus far attained is to be observed in that, under Bibliology, the Bible has been proved to be the Word of God written and, under *naturalistic theism*, the conclusive evidence as to the existence of God which reason affords has been presented. These are cardinal aspects of theological verity and on the ground of these established realities Biblical theism may be approached. It is asserted again that Systematic Theology draws its material both from *reason* and *revelation*. It is also asserted that the Bible, being the Word of God written, and its declarations are, so far as further discussions in this work on theology are concerned, to be accepted as final. There may be problems of *interpretation*, but no problem of *trustworthiness* will be considered. Similarly, the fact of the existence of God, as established by reason, is in no way open to further question.

A spiritual mind, awake to the value of an inerrant revelation, will naturally and properly respond more fully to the truth which revelation delivers, and be but little moved by the results of reason. Nevertheless, the evidence drawn from reason is mighty within its own sphere and assuring, in that when revelation and reason are rightly appraised they are not only agreeable but are supplementary. Truth must always agree with itself regardless of the various angles by which it may be approached or the fields in which it is found. Should reason offer conclusions which are disagreeable to revelation, it must be inferred that reason is wrong since it has no infallible guide apart from revelation.

At no point does the devout soul feel its limitations more than when confronted with the responsibility of a due apprehension of the Person of God. Fallen man is incapable, apart from divine illumination, of comprehending the sovereign Creator, or the limited, dependent creature in the proportionate importance of each; and the saved receive such knowledge of God as they experience, only through the illuminating work of the Holy Spirit. Moses possessed the heritage of truth which belonged to the chosen people and was educated in all that constituted the wisdom of Egypt, yet when standing before the burning bush he must be told to remove his shoes from his feet.

Biblical theism is not, as *naturalistic theism*, limited to the processes of human reason and to the bare facts concerning the existence of God; it is an

unfolding of the details of the marvelous truth concerning God in explicit terms written by divine inspiration and preserved forever. The student must face his individual responsibility in attaining, by prayer and meditation and by the illuminating power of the Spirit, to right thoughts and worthy conceptions of God.

Revealed truth concerning the divine Being may be classified into that which is *abstract*, or that which is within Himself—His Person, His attributes, His decrees, and His names—; and that which is *concrete*, or His manifestation of Himself in three Persons. The *abstract* features of truth relative to God are grounded in the fact that God is a *Unity* or *Essence*. The *concrete* features of truth relative to God are grounded in the fact that God subsists in a trinity of Persons, which body of truth is termed *trinitarianism*. Concerning the *abstract* truth relative to God, the following may be observed:

I. The Personality of God

God declares in unerring Scripture that man, quite unlike other mundane things, is created in His own image and likeness. It is written: “And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness ... So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him” (Gen. 1:26, 27). It therefore follows that there is a similarity to be traced between God and man. After this manner of comparison, the Scriptures proceed in the presentation of the nature and character of God. He is a Person with those faculties and constituent elements which belong to personality. These faculties and elements in God are *perfect* to an infinite degree, but in their *nature* they sustain an extraordinary resemblance to those *imperfect* faculties and elements which belong to man. In opposition to this Biblical conception of God, Archbishop King asserts: “Because we do not know what His faculties are in themselves, we give them the names of those powers that we find would be necessary to us in order to produce such effects, and call them wisdom, understanding, and foreknowledge; yet at the same time we cannot but be sensible, that they are of a nature altogether different from ours, and that we have no direct and proper notion or conception of them” (Sermon on *Divine Predestination and Foreknowledge*, cited by Cooke, *The Deity*, rev. ed. p. 216).

Objection must be entered against this representation. It is true that but little can be known of all that God is, but it is not true that God is so different from man that no proper conception of God is possible. In the matter of faculties and

properties there is resemblance, and in mental and moral attributes there is a correspondence in the *nature* of them though they are incomparable as to the degree of *perfection*. Volition, love, truth, faithfulness, holiness, justice, are realities which belong to both God and man, and though the degree which they represent may be separated immeasurably, the *nature* of these characteristics is the same in each sphere.

Again, the above objection, like many in various fields of truth, fails to recognize the finality of the divine averment that man is made in the “image” and “likeness” of God. The possibility of a distinction between the meanings of these two terms—*image* and *likeness*—as used in the Scriptures, need not be discussed at this juncture. The point at issue is that God with no common emphasis asserts that there is a correspondence between Himself and man. Upon the principle which this affirmation publishes, man is justified in tracing the divine characteristics from the pattern, though incomplete, which his own being supplies.

It is not asserted that man’s corporal nature is involved in this comparison, since it is predicated of God that He is Spirit (John 4:24). It therefore follows that the tracing of this similitude is to be restricted to the immaterial part of man. Anthropomorphisms are set up when the characteristics of God are stated in terms of human elements. These often extend to the human body and its various properties. With reference to God it is declared: “The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms” (Deut. 33:27); “My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father’s hand” (John 10:29); “Thus saith the LORD, The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool” (Isa. 66:1); “The eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him” (2 Chron. 16:9); “Behold the LORD’s hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear” (Isa. 59:1); “For the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it” (Isa. 58:14). Thus reference is made also to the “face” of God (Ex. 33:11, 20), and his “nostrils” (2 Sam. 22:9, 16). Such anthropomorphisms as these are unnumbered in the Bible, and it is to be noted that where physical members are thus ascribed to God, it is not a direct assertion that God possesses these members, or a corporal body with its parts; but that He is capable of doing precisely those things which are the functions of the physical part of man. “He that planted the ear, shall he not hear? he that formed the eye, shall he not see?” (Ps. 94:9). Dr. W. H. Griffith Thomas writes: “Objection is sometimes raised to the Biblical conception of God as

anthropomorphic, but the objection is not sound because we must use human language, and the conceptions of man and personality are the highest possible to us. It is obviously better to use anthropomorphic expressions than zoo-morphic or cosmo-morphic, and when we attribute to God emotions and sensibilities we mean to free Him from all the imperfections attaching to the human conceptions of these elements. In revealing Himself God has to descend to our capacities, and use language which can be understood” (*The Principles of Theology*, p. 15). Is it not a most vital purpose in the incarnation that God may be revealed to men in the terms of human personality such as man is able to grasp?

Richard Watson states: “When it is said God is a spirit, we have no reason to conclude that a distant analogy, such a one as springs out of mere relation, is intended. The nature of God and the nature of man are not the same, but they are similar, because they bear many attributes in common, though, on the part of the Divine nature, in a degree of perfection infinitely exceeding” (*Institutes*, chapter iv). Dr. Chalmers comments: “The mind of man is a creation, and therefore indicates by its characteristics the character of Him to the fiat and the forthcoming of whose will it owes its existence” (*Natural Theology*, I, 306). And after the same manner Robert Hall asserts: “The body has a tendency to separate us from God by the dissimilarity of its nature; the soul, on the contrary, unites us again to him, by means of those principles and faculties which, though infinitely inferior, are of a character congenial to his own. The body is the production of God; the soul is his image” (sermon on *The Spirituality of the Divine Nature*). Theodorus Mopsuestenus offers this vivid illustration: “When God created man, his last and best work, this was as if a king having built a great city, and adorned it with many and various works, after he had perfected all, should command a very great and beautiful image of himself to be set up in the midst of the city, to show who was the builder of it” (*Ap. Petav.*, t. iii., lib. ii., cited by Cooke, *op. cit.*, pp. 219–20).

Discoursing to the same end, Dr. J. J. Van Oosterzee writes:

Of God man can speak only in a human manner; and, if our nature is truly related to that of God, how can we conceive of Him without the admixture of a single trait derived from ourselves? This is the deep significance of Jacobi’s words: “In creating man God theomorphosised; therefore man necessarily anthropomorphosises.” “God condescends to us, in order that we may rise to Him.” Anthropomorphism and Anthropopathism is therefore by no means the antipode, but rather the imperfect approximating expression of eternal truth; and in the interpretation, also, of Holy Scripture, our part is simply to trace out, as far as possible, the truth underlying such expressions. In doing so we must take care that we explain the anthropomorphic conceptions. by the more purely spiritual ones, not the converse, and that we are guarded by a certain spiritual tact against “thinking after an earthly manner” ... of the supreme majesty of God. Thus regarded and explained, even the

anthropopathic expressions of Scripture become the means of a better knowledge of God; a sublime accommodation to human wants and weaknesses, sanctified for the eye of faith, since God's own Son has appeared as man on earth. Anthropomorphism belongs thus also to the necessary form of the revelations of God; and let him who takes offence at the husk see that he does not lose the kernel, to retain—a merely apathetic God.—*Christian Dogmatics*, I, 255

It is equally certain that the weakness and sin of man cannot be predicated of God, and, similarly, there are characteristics in God which could not be expressed in the terms of human life. But man's mental and moral properties do serve to demonstrate the significant and momentous fact that the attributes which are the same in nature, if not in their degree of perfection, are resident in both God and man. To the devout student there is left no latitude for rationalistic speculation as to whether there is a norm or pattern extant of the Person of God. By unmistakable terms God has affirmed that man is by creation's design set forth as an exhibit of certain elements which are in Himself—a tangible disclosure to the extent that man is made in the image and likeness of God. The true impression as to the Person of God is not gained in the line of pantheistic reasoning, which reasoning recognizes no distinct powers or qualities in God; nor is it gained in the line of the superficial notion that God is no more than the sum of His capacities and therefore divisible into as many parts as may correspond to the number of His attributes. God is a *Person*, and no less so because of the fact that He is immaterial and infinite. His capacities flow out of what He is, but His competency is not the measure or equivalent of Himself. There is always a danger that the human conception of God will pause and be satisfied with the apprehension of the divine performance, and not go on to behold the more consequential features of His divine Person. Sir Isaac Newton has expressed it thus: "It is not eternity and infinitude, but the eternal and infinite Being" (cf. Watson, *Institutes*, I, 268). It is not enough to discern the works of God or His characteristics; the heart must come to know God as a Person.

Voltaire stated: "God made man in his own image, and man has returned the compliment" (cited by S. Harris, *God the Creator and Lord of All*, I, 176). The fallacy of this arresting sentence is that man is accredited with having created God in the same sense in which God has created man. Only by an *argumentum a posteriori* does man reason from his own capacities as a person to the Person of his Creator. This argument is in no way to be construed as a making of God on the part of man; it is merely a drawing of conclusions from what God has made. Human reason reflects divine reason and, regardless of the disparity as to degree, it is to be concluded on divine authority that reason in God is of the same nature as reason in man; that sensibility in God is of the same nature as sensibility in

man; and that volition and love in God are of the same nature as volition and love in man. If in his investigation into the works of God man should discover that the essential, motivating parts of his own being are not in their nature corresponding to the essential motivating parts of the divine Being, and therefore subject to the same principles and laws which invariably govern all personality, then all human knowledge is dissolved into the mists of illusion, if not delusion.

The usual conception is that the primary reality is matter, or the force of things tangible, and that the things of the spirit are phantasmic and unreal. Biblical theism, on the other hand, contemplates the Person of God as the primary reality and all else—even man—as a medium of the divine revelation and expression of divine achievement. The first four words of the Bible are decisive and empirical—“In the beginning God.” If the Creator of all things shall say of one specific fragment of His creation, “I have made this an image and likeness of myself,” it becomes His creatures to accept this declaration as true and to act upon it. Such acceptance not only gives God the primary position in His universe, but recognizes that He is a *Person* with all that term implies.

It is therefore to be concluded that the personality of God is to be studied in the light of man’s own being and consciousness. This procedure is according to an essential principle of science, namely, that things which manifest the same qualities are the same in fact. Nothing is clearer than that personality is a unity. It gathers all its past into itself by the faculty of memory, its present by its immediate consciousness, and its future by its method of planning and by the faculty of anticipation. Apart from the recognition of this unity of all parts in one personality there could be no analysis of human life or any science of psychology. Animal life, into which man can penetrate only to a limited degree, owing to his inability to place the animal consciousness in the light of his own, presents no evidence of rational intelligence, freedom of choice, or purpose in worthy ends which belong to personality.

Those elements which combine to form personality are: intellect, sensibility, and will; but all of these acting together require a freedom both of external action and of choice of ends toward which action is directed. Intellect must direct, sensibility must desire, and will must determine in the direction of rational ends. There can be no personality, either human, angelic, or divine, apart from this complex of essentials. As the elements of personality which are in God are discovered, there are variations to be expected from the norm which human personality supplies; but no departure will be found from the fact that these fundamental elements are present. Apart from these there could be no

personality. By the cosmological argument it has been seen that there is a Creator possessed of self-determining will. By the teleological argument it has been seen that there is a Creator possessed with mental powers which design and determine means to an end. And by the anthropological argument it has been seen that there is a Creator possessed of sensibility. To this the Scriptures bear plentiful testimony. This witness of the Bible is that man, angels, and God are all possessed with those essential elements which together constitute personality. Of God it is declared that He is intelligent or omniscient: "Great is our Lord, and of great power: his understanding is infinite" (Ps. 147:5); "Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world" (Acts 15:18); "Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do" (Heb. 4:13). In like manner, it is declared of God that He possesses sensibility. He loves righteousness and hates iniquity. He is of tender compassion. His infinite love has moved Him to the supreme sacrifice by which redemption is provided for fallen man. "God is love" (1 John 4:16). And finally, the element of will is seen to be present in God: "But our God is in the heavens: he hath done whatsoever he hath pleased" (Ps. 115:3); "My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure" (Isa. 46:10); "And he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?" (Dan. 4:35).

Bearing on the fact of the personality of God, Dr. John Miley states: "If God is not a personal being, the result must be either atheism or pantheism. It matters little which. The dark and deadly implications are much the same. There is no God with self-consciousness or the power of rational and moral self-determination, no personal divine agency in the universe. A blind, necessitated force is the original of all. The existence of the world and the heavens is without reason or end. There is no reason for the existence of man, no rational or moral end. God has no interest in him, no rational or moral rule over him. The universal sense of moral obligation and responsibility must be pronounced a delusion. There should be an end of worship, for there is wanting a truly worshipful being. All that remains is the dark picture of a universe without divine teleology or providence" (*Systematic Theology*, I, 173).

Under that aspect of Biblical theism now being considered, the conception of God as of one essence is alone in view. In later developments of this theme there will be due attention given to the fact that God subsists in three Persons, and that personality must be ascribed to each in the full measure of divine perfection.

God has ever sought to reveal Himself to man, not as an influence or blind force, but as a living Person with whom man may hold communion. The invitation to such communion presupposes and necessitates a likeness of nature between those who participate. “And truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ” (1 John 1:3). The Father and the Son reveal each other as Persons (Matt. 11:27), and the Father and Son send the Spirit whose mission is clearly that of a person (John 14:16–17, 26; 15:26; 16:7–11). The foundational truth of all Scripture is the fact that God is one God who subsists in three Persons.

Chapter XIV

THE ATTRIBUTES OF GOD

THOUGH WHOLLY inadequate, man's conception of God is measured by those characteristics which he attributes to God. The Bible presents a revelation which, though limited by the restrictions that language must ever impose, is of a Person, and this revelation attributes to Him those exalted qualities which are His. These qualities thus attributed are properly styled *attributes*. To declare His Person and the sum-total of His attributes, would constitute a final definition of God which man might never hope to form.

To the question *Can God be defined?*, some writers have returned a negative answer and this in recognition of the fact that no definition can completely exhaust the idea in question—especially when that idea is characterized by infinity. However, a definition of a thing is not required to represent a cognition of all its parts. Enough will have been said if so many of its elements are named as shall distinguish it from all other things. According to this more reasonable estimation of a worthy definition, God can be defined. A distinction is evident at once between the definition which rationalistic philosophers advance who, disregarding revelation, attempt to define God within the limited field which reason supplies, and the definition formulated by men who acknowledge the authoritative message which the Bible presents. The rationalistic philosophers have defined God as “a self-existing being, in whom the ground of the reality of the world is found.” Or, again, “God is a being who has the ground of his existence in himself.” To this some add that God is *independent, infinite, necessary* as to His existence, and *eternal*. Those forms of definition are drawn from the *argumentum a posteriori*, and those who offer these elucidations, do so almost wholly from reason apart from revelation. One philosophical definition of God which has met with general approval is, “God is the most perfect being, and is the cause of all other beings.” The intent of this definition is to state that God is the Supreme Being, exalted over all, to whom none can be compared. This definition is seriously lacking in that there is no reference in it to things moral. Kant objected to this conception on the ground of this defect and added that God is *free* in Himself and *pure moral will*.

Turning to the Scriptures, it will be observed immediately that God is not specifically defined in any one assertion, but His existence and attributes are assumed and do appear only as the text in various places and in manifold terms

sets forth what He is and what He does. A true Biblical definition of God will be secured only as an induction of all the Scripture is secured (cf. Gen. 1:1; Job 11:7–9; 36:26; 37:5, 23; Ps. 77:19; 92:5; 97:2; 145:3; 147:5; Prov. 25:2; Isa. 40:28; Jer. 10:10–16; Matt. 11:27; Rom. 11:33, 34; etc.).

It is true, as previously observed, that God, of necessity, is disclosed—even in the Bible—in the expressions which belong to human life and experience. He is presented in anthropomorphic and anthropopathic terms. As is to be anticipated, when the finite mind enters upon the contemplation of the infinite, the knowledge gained is, at best, but partial, and, related to this, there are two distinct and almost paradoxical lines of truth equally sustained by the Scriptures. (1) David, alluding to the divine understanding, said: “Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it” (Ps. 139:6). And the Apostle, writing of the glory of God, declares: “Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honour and power everlasting” (1 Tim. 6:16). So, also, he refers to “the image of the invisible God” (Col. 1:15), and to “the King eternal, immortal, invisible” (1 Tim. 1:17). Yet (2) He is revealed in Christ. John states: “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” (John 1:14). And “no man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him” (John 1:18). Yet, even though God is thus exalted to an incomparable degree of excellence, men are told to be holy and perfect as God is holy and perfect (Matt. 5:48; 1 Pet. 1:16).

With reference to a definition of God, it is probable that nothing more comprehensive or Biblical has been formed than that incorporated into the Westminster Confession of Faith, which thesis has the notable superiority of being the combined work of many devout and scholarly men rather than the work of any one man. This Confession declares:

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 hath 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 hath made, nor deriving any glory from them, but only manifesting his own glory in, by, unto, and upon them: he is the alone fountain of all being, of whom, through whom, and to whom, are all things; and hath most

sovereign dominion over them, to do by them, for them, and upon them, whatsoever himself pleaseth. 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.—*Westminster Confession of Faith*, Chap. II

The attributes of God present a theme so vast and complex and so beyond the range of finite faculties that any attempt to classify them must be only approximate as to accuracy or completeness. So, also, the attributes are so interrelated and interdependent that the exact placing of some of them is difficult if not wholly impossible. It is evident that no feature of Systematic Theology has occasioned more confusion and disagreement among theologians than has the attempt to order the category of the divine attributes. In general, theologians have separated these attributes into divisions under varying terminology. One group of attributes represents, it is claimed, those characteristics which are said to be within God and not found elsewhere in creation; the other group represents those characteristics in God which, to a limited degree, are found in angels and human spirits, or which reach out objectively from God to other beings. Some of these twofold divisions are: incommunicable and communicable; natural and moral; immanent or intransitive and emanent or transitive; passive and active; absolute and relative; negative and positive. Obviously there are shades of distinctions implied in these various designations. It is intended under the term *incommunicable* to represent those attributes which admit of no extension or degrees and belong only to God. Among these self-existence, simplicity, infinity, eternity, and immutability are named. The so-called communicable attributes, which, to a limited degree, are found in created beings, are wisdom, benevolence, holiness, justice, compassion, and truth, etc. The natural attributes are supposed to indicate that which is constitutional in God, while the moral attributes are those which function by virtue of the divine will. The immanent or intransitive attributes are those within God's own Being, while the emanent or transitive reach out from God and produce certain effects. The absolute attributes are said to concern God's relation to Himself, while the relative attributes concern His relation to others. The negative attributes, it is claimed, are those which are free from finite limitations, while the positive attributes are those which, to a limited degree, belong to the creature. Much misunderstanding has been involved when this latter distinction has been proposed. It has been implied

that since the term *negative* in this instance suggests something that is not in God, these attributes might refer to some divine limitation. On the contrary, the term denotes something that is in the creature which is not in God. Of God it may be predicated that He is incorporeal while man is corporeal; He is immutable while man is mutable; He is independent while man is dependent, etc. The so-called negative attributes are sometimes classed under four general heads, namely, self-existence, immensity, eternity, and plenitude.

An attribute is a property which is intrinsic to its subject. It is that by which it is distinguished or identified. The term has two widely different applications, which fact is evidenced by the twofold classifications already named. It seems certain that some qualities which are not specifically attributes of God have been included by some writers under this designation. A body has its distinctive properties, the mind has its properties, and in like manner, there are specific attributes which may be predicated of God. The body is more than the sum-total of all its properties, which is equally true of the mind; and God is more than the sum of all His attributes. However, in each case these peculiar definitives retain an intrinsic value in the sense that the body, the mind, or God Himself cannot be conceived apart from the qualities attributed to them. By abstract thinking, God may be conceived apart from His attributes; but it remains true that He is known by His attributes and apart from them He would not appear to be what He is. On the other hand, while any true conception of God must include His attributes it is required that the attributes themselves must be treated as abstract ideas.

In their search for accurate, discriminating designations, theologians have exhausted the whole range of terminology which language affords. In each grouping, some vital truth serves as its basis. The difficulty is that, owing to the inexhaustible and individual character of each fact concerning God, the basic truth in which the classification is made to rest proves to be insufficient to some degree.

Enough has been presented on the various classifications of the attributes of God as men have arranged them. The plan of this thesis is to present the attributes somewhat in their independent and individual nature, attempting only to distinguish between those revealed facts concerning God which *constitute* His essential Being and those facts concerning Him which *characterize* His essential Being. Wholly satisfactory terms by which this distinction and division within the facts concerning God may be drawn, are not to be found. God is the subject, while His attributes are those facts which may be predicated of Him; but predicates are not the subject. The ocean and sky are blue. The color *blue* thus is

seen to be a predicate of ocean and sky, but the color *blue* is neither ocean nor sky. If this distinction be kept in mind, it matters little whether the terms *attribute, predicate, or definitive* are extended to represent all the facts concerning God—those which constitute His Being along with those which characterize Him. It should be observed, also, that though the emphasis must of necessity fall upon the constitutional facts of His Being, there is no detraction intended from the immanence and the characterizing facts. The whole of the divine essence is in each attribute and the attribute belongs to the whole essence. The attributes belong eternally to the essence. The essence has not first existed apart from the attributes. The consideration of the facts related to God will now proceed after the following order:

I. Personality

Attention has been given previously to the reality of the personality of God; but a reversion to this subject is made since it forms the logical starting point for investigation into certain essential actualities concerning God. Some writers have included *personality* as one of the characterizing attributes of God, whereas it is evidently to be classed as a constitutional attribute. It is itself the very essence of God's being, and that above all else which constitutes Him the subject to whom characterizing attributes may be predicated.

As before stated, personality has its component parts, namely, *intellect, sensibility, and will*. Each of these, it has been demonstrated, is present in God to an infinite degree, and, since these qualities belong to the personality of God, they are not, in their primary usage, to be classed as characterizing attributes.

1. OMNISCIENCE. Intellect in man has its corresponding feature in God, but when predicated of God it is properly termed *omniscience*. Obviously, a vast difference exists between the two. Intellect in man is hardly more than the capacity or readiness to acquire knowledge, which knowledge, when acquired, as compared with omniscience, is even less than elementary, while the understanding of God is all-inclusive and infinite. There are two patent measurements of the divine knowledge: (1) *omniscience*, which includes all things concerning Himself and all His works; and (2) *foreknowledge*, which may be restricted to things specifically foreordained. Investigation into the relation which obtains between foreknowledge and foreordination is reserved for its logical place in Soteriology.

The finite mind cannot grasp the complete truth concerning omniscience any

more than it can grasp divine omnipotence, omnipresence, or divine love. Whatever omniscience is, only omniscience can know in the absolute cognition of it. Nevertheless, some portions of this marvelous divine reality may be comprehended and what cannot be known may be received by faith in God's Word.

The omniscience of God comprehends all things—things past, things present, and things future, and the possible as well as the actual. As set forth in the Bible, the works of God are, as to their time relations, declared to be of the past, of the present, and of the future. By divine arrangement, events do follow in sequence or chronological order. Yet, to God, the things of the past are as real as though now present and the things of the future are as real as though past. He it is who “calleth those things which be not as though they were” (Rom. 4:17; cf. Isa. 46:10). Perfectly known unto Him, as though they were now in process, are all His works from the foundation of the world (Acts 15:18). A man standing on the street is able to see at a given time but the smallest section of a passing procession, and thus man observes the works of God. But as one looking down from a great elevation (Ps. 33:13) sees all the procession at one glance, so God sees all His program of events in their unified whole. From the beginning He knows the end, and from the end He knows the beginning. Omniscience brings everything—past, present, and future—with equal reality before the mind of God. Strictly speaking the distinction of foreknowledge in God is a human conception; for divine knowledge is simultaneous as opposed to succession. It is complete and certain as compared to incomplete and uncertain. It is intuitive and not discursive; yet in this perfection of simultaneous, complete, and intuitive knowledge all future events, both possible and real, are cognized by Him. Charnocke declares: “The knowledge of one thing is not, in God, before another; one act of knowledge doth not beget another. In regard of the objects themselves, one thing is before another; one year before another; one generation of men before another; one is the cause, and the other is the effect; in the creature's mind there is such a succession, and God knows there will be such a succession; but there is no such order in God's knowledge; for he knows all these successions by one glance, without any succession of knowledge in himself” (*God's Knowledge*, cited by Shedd, *Theology*, I, 355).

That God knows all things future which are merely possible and never become actual is disclosed in the Word of God. Every warning from God is a declaration of danger and evil which He knows will follow a wrong choice. Jonah's preaching to the people of Nineveh was concerning a sure destruction

which was averted only by the deepest repentance. Christ said, “Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works, which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment, than for you. And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day” (Matt. 11:21–23; cf. 1 Sam. 23:5–14; 2 Kings 13:19; Jer. 38:17–20).

The omniscience of God may be studied both in its archetypal and present aspects. His archetypal omniscience relates to that in God which first planned and designed the universe before it was brought into being, or made actual by omnipotent creative power. The archetypes of the universe existed from all eternity in the mind of God, and creation was but the exercise of omnipotence by which reality was given to that which omniscience had conceived. Thus, and thus only, arose the order and system which now exists with its perfection of arrangement, its realized purpose, and its stability. Such engendering on the part of God was not a mere organization or application of existing elements, but was the *creation* of materials suitable to the end in view. This arising of all creation with its laws, its congruity, its adaptation, and its varied and selfperpetuating forms of life—including man made in the divine image—,is a manifestation of archetypal omniscience which staggers all human apprehension. According to archetypal conceptions, man’s intuitive genius constructs various mechanisms and is able to anticipate precisely what the results of vast combinations of parts and forces will be, and before any portions are assembled or constructed. Thus it was concerning God, with the additional feature that in divine creation even material itself was created for His incomparable ends.

Though it be true that by archetypal omniscience God discerned the nature of the elements required in the realization of His ends and the precise results of the combination of those elements, any suggestion must be repelled which would intimate that there is in nature any independent power of action. God is the ever-present and all-pervading energy, guiding and directing everything. Not only is it declared of Christ that He created all things visible and invisible, but it is asserted that by Him all things subsist, or hold together (Col. 1:16, 17). He is said to uphold “all things by the word of his power” (Heb. 1:3). Nor is this universe so bounded by laws and forces of nature as to exclude special divine interposition and interruptions. These interventions constitute no exception to the

exactness of divine prescience, or foreknowledge. They are a part of the archetypal omniscience of God and are both foreseen and designed by Him from all eternity.

With the same omniscience or prescience God foreknows the actions of all moral agents. A discussion ensues at this point which has divided theologians into opposing camps, one group asserting that divine prescience is incompatible with free moral action, and the other asserting its compatibility with free moral action. By their assumptions, one side has been encouraged to deny God's complete foreknowledge, while the other side has been by the force of its own logic encouraged to deny man's freedom. It is evident that both positions cannot be wholly true. One or the other or both must be wrong. In the minds of a larger number of theologians no conflict between divine prescience and human freedom exists. Divine prescience of itself implies no element of necessity or determination, though it does imply certainty. A formidable problem does arise concerning the relation between the doctrine of God's decrees and human freedom, which problem must be considered in its proper place.

Metaphysicians may succeed in confusing a person's understanding, but they cannot dispose of that inherent consciousness which every person experiences and which asserts his own freedom to act as he may choose. Doubtless this freedom is circumscribed by larger and unrecognized forces; but, within the range of human self-cognizance, freedom to act is untrammelled. On the one hand, revelation presents God as foreknowing knowing all things including the actions of human agents, and apart from such knowledge God would be ignorant and to that degree imperfect. On the other hand, revelation appeals to the wills of men with the evident assumption that man is capable of a free choice—"Whosoever will may come."

The Biblical teaching, as well as the rational belief that no incongruity exists between divine prescience and free moral action or contingency, is opposed in early times by Aristotle and later by Dr. Adam Clarke and Chevalier Ramsay. Dr. Clarke states: "God has ordained *some* things as absolutely certain. He has ordained other things as contingent. These he knows as contingent." Dr. Clarke, in defense of his belief, asserts: "As omnipotence implies the power to *do* all things, so omniscience implies the *ability* to know all things, but not the *obligation* to know all things ... God, though possessed of omnipotence, does not evidently exert it to its utmost extent—does not do all he might do—so, though he could know all things, yet that he chooses to be ignorant of some things, because he does not see it proper to know everything he might know"

(*Commentary on Acts ii*, cited by Cooke, *The Deity*, pp. 285–86). Chevalier Ramsay writes: “It [is] a matter of choice in God, to think of finite ideas” (cited by Watson, *Institutes*, I, 376).

Aside from the implication which these objections present, namely, that God fears to know the results of free moral action, they introduce a fallacy which is untenable. It is true that omnipotence is of such a nature that it does not commit God to the actual doing of all He is able to do, omnipotence being only the *ability* to act with unlimited power. In contradistinction to this, omniscience is not the mere ability to acquire knowledge, but is the actual possession of knowledge. Dr. Clarke proposes to make God *omniscible* but not *omniscient*. If this supposed parallel between omnipotence and omniscience were true, omnipotence would consist in an infinite act as omniscience consists in the actual comprehending of all things. Richard Watson says of these theories: “The notion of God’s choosing to know some things, and not to know others, supposes a *reason*, why he refuses to know any class of things or events, which reason, it would seem, can only arise out of their nature and circumstances, and therefore supposes at least a partial knowledge of them, from which the reason for his not choosing to know them arises. The doctrine is therefore somewhat contradictory. But it is fatal to this opinion, that it does not at all meet the difficulty arising out of the question of the congruity of Divine prescience, and the free actions of man; since some contingent actions, for which men have been made accountable, we are sure have been *foreknown* by God, because by his Spirit in the prophets they were *foretold*; and if the freedom of man can in these cases be reconciled to the prescience of God, there is no greater difficulty in any other case which can possibly occur” (*Theological Institutes*, I, 376–77).

If God be ignorant of the future actions of free agents, there could be no assured divine control of human destiny as pledged in every unconditional covenant God has made, and as guaranteed in every prophecy of the Scriptures. If God does not know the future actions of free agents, then He is ever coming to know things He did not know before and must be changing His plans and purposes constantly. Of that plight Jonathan Edwards writes: “In such a situation, God must have little else to do but to mend broken links as well as he can, and be rectifying his disjointed frame and disordered movements in the best manner the case will allow. The supreme Lord of all things must needs be under great and miserable disadvantages in governing the world which he has made and has care of, through his being utterly unable to find out things of chief importance which hereafter shall befall his system, which, if he did but know, he

might make reasonable provision for” (cited by Cooke, *op.cit.*, p. 291).

If the question be asked whether the moral agent has freedom to act otherwise than as God foresees he will act, it may be replied that the human will because of its inherent freedom of choice is capable of electing the opposite course to that divinely foreknown; but he will not do so. If he did so, that would be the thing which God foreknew. The divine foreknowledge does not coerce; it merely knows what the human choice will be. The Socinians asserted that until the human choice was made, it was not a subject of knowledge and therefore even God could not know what the choice would be; but this is to confound human ignorance with divine omniscience. What God foreknows is certain, not because He foreknows it, but because of the fact that He has decreed it. The men who crucified Christ did precisely what a thousand years before had been predicted and therefore determined they would do, even to saying, “He trusted on the LORD that he would deliver him: let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him” (Ps. 22:8; cf. Matt. 27:43). And as predicted, they parted His garments among them and cast lots for His vesture. “These things [because it was so prophesied] therefore the soldiers did” (John 19:24). Within their own experience, these men said and did precisely what they freely chose to do; yet they said and did only what had been divinely determined and hence divinely foreknown (Acts 2:23).

The challenge that if God foreknew everything and therefore foreknew sin and could have avoided it, should be expanded to include the fact that God knows that men continue in sin, and that new generations of sinners are being born. Similarly, this challenge should consider the fact that the perfect foreknowledge of God was aware of the fact that sin would call for the greatest sacrifice even God could make—the death of His Son. In spite of the sinfulness of sin and the sacrifice it required, God was not overtaken by unforeseen calamity and failure. His purposes are being executed and will be seen in the end to have been holy, just, and good. Much that enters into this stupendous problem is beyond the range of human understanding, but not outside the divine jurisdiction which is ever compatible with infinite holiness.

A far deeper problem exists than that of the reconciliation of divine foreknowledge with the freedom of moral creatures, namely, the very freedom of God Himself if, indeed, His conception be eternally complete within His eternal prescience. Evidently, there is no problem before God as to a choice between two lines of action, for omniscience directs to that which is right, and that which is right has been discerned and determined from all eternity. What any intelligent being knows, is so closely related to what he purposes and does that it is

somewhat difficult to isolate issues which are restricted to knowledge alone. The holy character of God cannot change. He possesses no freedom which involves a contradiction of His holy character. When confronted with sinful man His displeasure is expressed and His sure judgments are in view; but when the wicked turn to Him and avail themselves of His grace, His mercy is boundless and His judgments are abandoned. In such a case, holiness is unchanged. Though in the one instance it repels and in the other it favors, it is the same holiness throughout. There is no change in God, but there is adjustment to the changes which are in man.

The practical appeal of omniscience is manifold. By the divine arrangement in creation, men are ever within the observation of God. Man can no more escape from God than he can escape from himself. The Mohammedan's proverb, "Wherever there are two persons present, God makes a third" (cited by Cooke, *ibid.*, p. 298), might as well embody the truth that wherever there is one person, God makes a second. The Scripture, "Thou God seest me", announces the fact that none ever escapes His observation. What fatuity is manifest when it is supposed that any sin is secret, and that only because it is hidden to men. The Psalmist speaks of "our secret sins in the light of thy countenance" (Ps. 90:8; cf. Job 42:2; Isa. 29:15; Jer. 23:24; Heb. 4:13). How rich with wisdom is the word of Seneca, "We ought always so to conduct ourselves as if we lived in public; we ought to think as if some one could see what is passing in our inmost breast; and there is One who does thus behold us. Of what avail is it, then, that any deed is concealed from man? Nothing can be hidden from God. He is present with our very souls, and penetrates our inmost thoughts, and, indeed, is never absent from us" (*Seneca*, epist. lxxxiii., cited by Cooke, *ibid.*, p. 299). Truly, man's position before God is to "stand in awe, and sin not" (Ps. 4:4).

The omniscience of God guarantees that all future judgments will be according to truth; nothing will be overlooked or falsely valued. Of this Dr. William Cooke writes: "If the transgressor's eyes could but be opened to the reality of his position, what horror would seize him! A sight more dreadful than Sinai in a blaze—more terrific than the handwriting on the wall of Belshazzar's palace—a sight more awful than the drama of the world's conflagration would burst upon his vision—he would see the offended Deity on every side, he would behold himself enveloped with the presence and attributes of the eternal God, his Maker and his Judge" (*Ibid.*, p. 301). "Though they dig into hell, thence shall mine hand take them; though they climb up to heaven, thence will I bring them down: and though they hide themselves in the top of Carmel, I will search and

take them out thence; and though they be hid from my sight in the bottom of the sea, thence will I command the serpent, and he shall bite them: and though they go into captivity before their enemies, thence will I command the sword, and it shall slay them: and I will set mine eyes upon them for evil, and not for good” (Amos 9:2–4).

The omniscience of God is fraught with great encouragement and comfort to those who are in right relations to Him. Every sincere effort, though fruitless, every suffering through misunderstanding, every trial may be endured in the light of the truth that God sees and knows perfectly. The Old Testament closes with words of great significance: “Then they that feared the LORD spake often one to another: and the LORD hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the LORD, and that thought upon his name. And they shall be mine, saith the LORD of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him” (Mal. 3:16, 17).

Closely akin to divine omniscience, though superior to it, is divine *wisdom*. This, as an attribute of God, implies correct judgment and the right use of knowledge. Indeed, knowledge is the material out of which wisdom builds its structure. God is no less perfect in wisdom than in any other of His attributes. In fact, His wisdom so far transcends that of all other beings that the Scriptures declare Him to be “the only wise God” (Jude 1:25; cf. 1 Tim. 1:17). His wisdom is displayed in the vast, complex, yet perfectly organized universe, in the fact that every purpose of God is the best that infinity can devise, in the perfection of His ways by which all things are by Him achieved. No part of God’s works is lacking in its manifestation of His perfect wisdom. However, in no place has divine wisdom been so displayed as in the plan of redemption. Here God is seen to have solved His greatest of all problems, namely, how He could be just and at the same time be the justifier of sinners. Reference is made to the solution of this problem in 1 Corinthians 1:22–25: “For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom: but we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness; but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.”

Abundant testimony is borne by the Bible both to the knowledge and wisdom of God:

“For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him. Herein thou hast done foolishly: therefore

from henceforth thou shalt have wars” (2 Chron. 16:9); “But he knowesh the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold” (Job 23:10); “O LORD, how great are thy works! and thy thoughts are very deep” (Ps. 92:5); “O LORD, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all: the earth is full of thy riches” (Ps. 104:24); “To him that by wisdom made the heavens: for his mercy endureth for ever” (Ps. 136:5); “O LORD, thou hast searched me, and known me. Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off. Thou compasses my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O LORD thou knowest it altogether. Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid thine hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it. Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me. If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me. Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to thee” (Ps. 139:1–12); “For the LORD taketh pleasure in his people: he will beautify the meek with salvation. Let the saints be joyful in glory: let them sing aloud upon their beds” (Ps. 149:4, 5); “The LORD by wisdom hath founded the earth; by understanding bath he established the heavens” (Prov. 3:19); “Behold, the former things are come to pass, and new things do I declare: before they spring forth I tell you of them” (Isa. 42:9); “For Jacob my servant’s sake, and Israel mine elect, I have even called thee by thy name: I have surnamed thee, though thou hast not known me” (Isa. 45:4); “For I know their works and their thoughts: it shall come, that I will gather all nations and tongues; and they shall come, and see my glory” (Isa. 66:18); “He hath made the earth by his power, he hath established the world by his wisdom, and hath stretched out the heaven by his understanding” (Jer. 51:15); “And the Spirit of the LORD fell upon me, and said unto me, Speak; Thus saith the LORD, Thus have ye said, O house of Israel: for I know the things that come into your mind, every one of them” (Ezek. 11:5); “That thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly. Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him. (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things” (Matt. 6:4, 8, 32); “Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence” (Eph. 1:8); “To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God” (Eph. 3:10); “O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!” (Rom. 11:33).

2. SENSIBILITY. By this term the second element in personality is introduced. Both in philosophical and theological usage, the designation *sensibility* includes the higher forms of feeling and stands as much for the rational and moral as for the lower appetences. Though a difference as to degree and essential purity is recognized between the divine and the human sensibility, the reality of the divine cannot be questioned. To dispose of the vast body of Scripture bearing on this theme by maintaining that divine sensibility as set forth in the Bible is no more than an anthropomorphism, does not meet the exigency; rather, and far more in agreement with the truth, the human sensibility but feebly reflects that which subsists in God to the degree of infinite perfection. The fact that in God the emotions of love and patience, and the attributes of holiness, justice,

goodness, mercy, and faithfulness exist, goes far to indicate the true quality of God as in contrast to the errors of deism and pantheism. Too frequent, indeed, have been the efforts of theological writers to remove from the thoughts of men the warm and sentient nature which, by every form of utterance, the Scriptures seek to uphold. Defining God by negatives is justified only when the elements of weakness and imperfection, which are resident in man, are to be eliminated. This procedure is carried too far when God is presented as pure intelligence and action apart from those emotions which sustain the divine attitude and motivate the divine action. Sensibility in God is as well defined as are the other essentials of personality—intelligence and will. Apart from the feeble experience of human love, men could comprehend nothing of the revelation set forth in the words of Christ to His Father, “For thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world,” and the words of Christ to men, “God so loved the world.” It is no limitation in God that He requires an object for His love, or that His love varies with different objects. There is peculiar force in the words addressed to Israel, “I have loved thee with an everlasting love” (Jer. 31:3), and in the words, “Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated” (Rom. 9:13; cf. Mal. 1:2–4).

The sensibility of God includes His rational Being. In the universe He has expressed His ultimate desire, and of that universe, in its original form, He could say, “It was very good.” Having contemplated the beautiful in creation, none could doubt the aesthetic nature in God. That man derives his aesthetic nature from God, is well stated by Hugh Miller: “I must hold that we receive the true explanation of the *man-like* character of the Creator’s workings ere man was, in the remarkable text in which we are told that ‘God made man in his own image and likeness.’ There is no restriction here to moral quality: the moral image man had, and in large measure lost; but the intellectual image he still retains. As a geometrician, as an arithmetician, as a chemist, as an astronomer—in short, in all the departments of what are known as the strict sciences—man differs from his Maker, not in kind, but in degree—not as matter differs from mind, or darkness from light, but simply as a mere portion of space or time differs from *all* space or *all* time. I have already referred to mechanical contrivances as identically the same in the divine and human productions; nor can I doubt that, not only in the pervading sense of the beautiful in form and color which it is our privilege as men in some degree to experience and possess, but also in the perception of harmony which constitutes the *musical* sense, and in that poetic feeling of which Scripture furnishes us with at once the earliest and the highest examples, and which we may term the *poetic* sense, we bear the stamp and impress of the divine

image” (*Testimony of the Rocks*, pp. 259–60, cited by Miley, *Theology*, I, 197). Similarly Bowne writes:

We hold, therefore, that God is not only pure thought, but he is also absolute intuition and absolute sensibility. He not only grasps reality in his absolute thought, but he sees it in his absolute intuition, and enjoys it in his absolute sensibility. We cannot without contradiction allow that there is any thing in the world of the thinkable which is excluded from the source of all thought and knowledge. Our notion of God as pure thought only would exclude the harmonies of light, sound, and form from his knowledge; and limit him to a knowledge of the skeleton of the universe instead of its living beauty. The notion of God as sensitive appears as anthropomorphic only because of mental confusion. To the thoughtless, sensibility implies a body; but in truth it is as purely spiritual an affection as the most abstract thought. All the body does for us is to call forth sensibility; but it in no sense produces it, and it is entirely conceivable that it should exist in a purely spiritual being apart from any body. There can hardly be a more irrational conception of the divine knowledge than that which assumes that it grasps reality only as it exists for pure thought, and misses altogether the look and the life of things. On the contrary, just as we regard our reason as the faint type of the infinite reason, so we regard our intuitions of things as a faint type of the absolute intuition; and so also we regard the harmonies of sensibility and feeling as the faintest echoes of the absolute sensibility, stray notes wandering off from the source of feeling and life and beauty.—*Metaphysics*, pp. 201–2, cited by Miley, *ibid.*, pp. 198–99

There are certain modes to be observed of divine, moral sensibility, and all of these, in turn, are well-defined attributes of God.

a. Holiness: The holiness of God is *active*. As a primary motive, it incites all that He does; therefore He is righteous in His ways. Though infinitely holy, He nevertheless maintains a relation to fallen creatures; not a quiescent aloofness from them, but a vital, pulsating nearness. His is not a holiness which is engendered by a sustained effort or preserved by segregation from other beings. The holiness of God is intrinsic, uncreated, and untarnishable; it is observable in every divine attitude and action. It embraces not only His devotion to that which is good, but is also the very basis and force of His hatred of that which is evil. Thus there is in divine holiness the capacity for reaction toward others which is both positive and negative.

The following Scriptures, selected from the great volume of Biblical testimony on this theme, will serve to declare the holiness of God:

“And he said, Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground” (Ex. 3:5); “Speak unto all the congregation of the children of Israel, and say unto them, Ye shall be holy: for I the LORD your God am holy” (Lev. 19:2); “There is none holy as the LORD: for there is none beside thee: neither is there any rock like our God” (1 Sam. 2:2); “Behold, he putteth no trust in his saints; yea, the heavens are not clean in his sight” (Job 15:15); “But thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel” (Ps. 22:3); “God reigneth over the heathen: God sitteth upon the throne of his holiness” (Ps. 47:8); “He sent redemption unto his people: he hath commanded his covenant for ever: holy and reverend is his name” (Ps. 111:9); “And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full

of his glory” (Isa. 6:3); “For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones” (Isa. 57:15); “This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all” (1 John 1:5); “And the four beasts had each of them six wings about him; and they were full of eyes within: and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come” (Rev. 4:8); “And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?” (Rev. 6:10); “Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest” (Rev. 15:4).

b. *Justice.* This is a legal term and refers to the essential character of the divine government in that highest excellence agreeable to which that government ever advances. At this point it is well to observe that God has absolute right and authority over His creatures. In his rebellion against God, the creature steadfastly refuses to recognize the truth concerning the Creator’s right and authority. God could have created or not at His pleasure. Other beings than those made might have been made and those made might have been left without existence. He has perfect right to dispose of all His works as it may please Him. If reflection is pursued on these relationships, it will be evident that man’s rightful sphere is that of the dependent creature and that man’s highest destiny will be reached, not by resisting the Creator, but by a complete conformity to His will. Since the Creator’s authority is absolute, it is a superlative cause for gratitude that God is perfect in justice. What wretchedness would be the creature’s portion if it were otherwise!

Divine justice is exhibited in the fact that righteous laws are given to men, that these laws are sustained by proper sanctions, and that these laws are given an impartial execution. No favoritism is ever indulged, though infinite favor is extended to those who come under the righteous provisions for salvation made possible through Christ’s sacrifice for sin. On this it may be remarked, that at no point is divine justice more observable than in the plan of redemption. What is done on the divine side for lost men through Christ’s sacrifice, is wrought in perfect justice—such justice, indeed, as is consonant with infinite holiness. Justice demands that the penalty, having fallen upon Another and that benefit having been embraced as the ground of hope by the offender, shall not fall again upon the offender. Holiness dictates that there shall be no leniency toward evil on the part of God. It is true that He considers our frame and remembers that we are dust; but God never condones sin. God is not said to be merciful or kind when He justifies the one who believes on Christ; He is said to be *just* (Rom.

3:26). To the same end, when forgiving and cleansing the Christian who confesses his sin, God is said to be *faithful* and *just* (1 John 1:9; cf. 1 Cor. 11:31, 32). In His administrative and theocratic dealing with nations—especially Israel—, there are extensions of both His blessings and judgments on into succeeding generations. None of these extensions of judgment or penalty became a finality of divine dealing with the individual in God’s retributive justice, which renders to each individual according to his personal relation to God. One, and only one, provision has been made—and that at infinite cost—whereby the wicked may escape the penalties of outraged justice. To reject this open door of salvation which Christ is and wherein God without impairment to His holy justice can execute complete and perfect grace toward the sinner, becomes at once the final, allcondemning sin.

Finally, the justice of God will be seen in His disposition of all creatures in the end—eternal glory to those who through redemption have come into those relations with Him which give Him freedom to do for them in perfect justice all His infinite love disposes, and eternal reprobation on those who persistently repudiate Him. Justice requires that saints shall be rewarded for faithfulness—some more and some less. With the same consistency, justice demands that there shall be degrees of experience in the estate of the lost. It is written: “For as many as have sinned without law [the law of Moses] shall also perish without law [the law of Moses]: and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law ... in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel” (Rom. 2:12–16). It is true that the crime increases in God’s sight in ratio to the light accorded the sinner. It is not intended in the above passage to imply that those without the Mosaic law (cf. 1 Cor. 9:21) will escape judgment (these have sinned against a law as is stated in verses 14 and 15), but the Jew to whom more light was given will be subject to the greater condemnation. The normal experience is that all shall “perish” (cf. vs. 12, also John 3:16; 10:28). The abnormal experience is that the Jew, to whom the Mosaic law was given, shall suffer greater condemnation. M. R. Vincent writes: “*Both* classes of men shall be *condemned*; in both the result will be *perishing*, but the judgment by *the law* is confined to those who have the law” (*Word Studies* on Rom. 2:12). And Godet adds: “The Jews alone will be, strictly speaking, subject to a *detailed inquiry* such as arises from applying the particular articles of a code” (cited by Vincent, *loc. cit.*). They, one and all, shall be lost eternally (cf. Rev. 20:12–15).

The Scriptures testify to the justice of God: “Wherefore now let the fear of the LORD be upon you; take heed and do it: for there is no iniquity with the LORD

our God, nor respect of persons, nor taking of gifts” (2 Chron. 19:7); “Shall mortal man be more just than God? shall a man be more pure than his maker?” (Job 4:17); “The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether” (Ps. 19:9); “Justice and judgment are the habitation of thy throne: mercy and truth shall go before thy face” (Ps. 89:14); “Tell ye, and bring them near; yea, let them take counsel together: who hath declared this from ancient time? who hath told it from that time? have not I the LORD? and there is no God else beside me; a just God and a Saviour; there is none beside me” (Isa. 45:21); “Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead” (Acts 17:31); “And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints” (Rev. 15:3).

c. Love. Certain terms—three in all—are used in the Scriptures as comprehensive descriptions of God, namely, *Spirit*—“God is a Spirit” (John 4:24)—; *light*—“God is light” (1 John 1:5)—; and *love*—“God is love” (1 John 4:8). By the word *comprehensive* it is asserted that the terms *Spirit*, *light*, and *love* refer not merely to peculiar virtues among many which are in God, but that God is Himself precisely what these terms denote. More specifically concerning *love*: God has not attained unto love, nor does He by an effort maintain love; it is the structure of His being. He is the unfailing source of all love. It is, because of this fact, preeminently the thing which He requires. “Love is the fulfilling of the law.” Without the attribute of *love*, God would not be what He is. As no other attribute, love is the primary motive in God, and to satisfy His love all creation has been formed. It is because of the fact that God has no need which He depends on others to supply, that He is ever bestowing and imparting. It is essential, also, that He shall have those upon whom His benevolence may be conferred; hence the innumerable creatures who are above all else the objects of His affection. Christians are addressed under the meaningful title, *beloved*, which title means simply that they are to *be loved* of God.

That infinite love has always existed between the Persons of the Godhead and that God in the most worthy sense loves Himself supremely, cannot be questioned. The divine love thus did not begin to be exercised only when creatures—the objects of His love—were created. Even His love for the creature was in His anticipation. Within God Himself it is true that from all eternity “mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each

other” (Ps. 85:10). It is the advent of evil into God’s creation that set up a conflict within the attributes of God. Holiness condemns sin while the love of God seeks to save the sinner. Love alone could make the sacrifice requisite that the sinner might be saved. This undertaking should not be interpreted as though one God (Christ) is saving the sinner from another God (the Father). It is within the very nature of God that adjustment between the attributes has been wrought. “God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself” (2 Cor. 5:19). Divine love, though so measureless in itself, is ever amenable to divine reason and divine righteousness. The adjustment between holiness and love, as these attributes are affected by sin, though wrought out in time and at the cross, was anticipated from all eternity. Of Christ it is said that He is a “Lamb slain from the foundation of the world” (Rev. 13:8). The love of God had its perfect manifestation in the death of Christ (John 3:16; Rom. 5:8; 1 John 3:16). It is not a mere affection, but is rather a free choice of God which may be recognized in all that He does. “God is love.”

d. Goodness. This attribute, if contemplated as that which is within God, is akin to His holiness; if contemplated as that which proceeds from God, is akin to love. The infinite goodness of God is a perfection of His being which characterizes His nature and is itself the source of all in the universe that is good. The specific terms employed in setting forth the goodness of God are (a) *benevolence*, which is goodness in its generic sense as embracing all His creatures and securing their welfare; (b) *complacency*, which is that in God which approves all His own perfections as well as all that conforms to Himself; (c) *mercy*, which is God’s goodness exercised in behalf of the need of His creatures; and (d) *grace*, which is God’s free action in behalf of those who are meritless, which freedom to act has been secured through the death of Christ. The terms, *mercy*, *love*, and *grace* are too often confused. They appear in the limited context of Ephesians 2:4, 5 and are there used with due discrimination: “But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) ...”

There is a threefold, present, and immediate exercise of divine mercy. First, God is said to be merciful to those who put their trust in Him. To them He is “the Father of mercies” (2 Cor. 1:3), and they are invited to draw near to His throne of grace where, they are assured, they will now “obtain mercy” (Heb. 4:16). Second, the divine mercy will yet be manifested in behalf of Israel when they are regathered into their own land (Isa. 54:7). Third, mercy is exercised,

also, when the individual sinner is called from his lost estate and saved by the grace of God (Rom. 9:15, 18; 1 Tim. 1:13). However, the mercy of God has had its supreme manifestation in the giving of His Son for the lost of this world. Sinners who believe are not now said to be saved through the immediate and personal exercise of divine mercy; but rather, since the mercy of God has provided a Savior who is the perfect Substitute for them, both as a sin-bearer, that they might be forgiven all trespasses, and as the righteous ground of a complete justification, God is said to be “just” when He justifies the one who does no more than to “believe in Jesus” (Rom. 3:26). Thus, from every angle of approach, God is seen to be “rich in mercy.”

e. Truth. The character of God is in view when He is called the God of truth. He not only advances and confirms that which is true, but in faithfulness abides by His promise, and executes every threat or warning He has made. Apart from the element of *truth* in God there would be no certainty whatsoever in this life, and men would wander on in comfortless perplexity not knowing whence they came or whither they are going. Without *truth* in God, a revelation is only a mockery. On the contrary, as asserted in the Bible, “Let God be true, but every man a liar” (Rom. 3:4). Though men deceive, the veracity of God can never be questioned in the slightest degree.

Truth in God is surety that what He has disclosed is according to the nature of things and that His disclosures may be depended upon with plenary certainty. This certainty characterizes alike every revelation from God by whatever means. God has given to men their senses which, under normal conditions, give true and accurate information regarding objects which God would have men recognize. The very philosophers who contend that matter does not really exist but is only an impression within the mind, do themselves contradict their notions by avoiding the dangers and forces of nature. Again, reason, though not sufficient in itself, is, where its conclusions are grounded on facts, another disclosure of divine reality. The final setting forth of God’s truth is in the Bible. It, being the Word of God, is true in all its parts. There is a vast array of truth, themes, and subjects about which man of himself could know nothing. The Bible supplies this dependable information. “The words of the LORD are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times” (Ps. 12:6). He is declared to be a covenant-keeping God. Some of His covenants contain only promises and some contain promises and warnings. He is faithful to every word He has said. “God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it

good?” (Num. 23:19). “He is faithful that promised” (Heb. 10:23). In case man fails in his part of a conditional covenant, God is freed from that covenant. If He then does otherwise than proposed in the covenant, He is not untrue. Having promised Abraham without a condition that Abraham’s seed would be delivered from Egypt (Gen. 15:13, 14), it is written: “And it came to pass at the end of the four hundred and thirty years, even the selfsame day it came to pass, that all the hosts of the LORD went out from the land of Egypt” (Ex. 12:41). It is ever true, because God is true, that “there failed not ought of any good thing which the LORD had spoken.”

God is equally true in the execution of all threatenings, but there is implied a release for those who turn to Him. He declares: “At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, and to pull down, and to destroy it; if that nation, against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them” (Jer. 18:7, 8). In like manner, it is declared that God reckons the unsaved to be already under condemnation, and that, “he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.” But, on the other hand, it is promised, “He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life” (John 3:36). There is no greater certainty of perdition than is found in the fact that God, who cannot lie, has said that it shall be so.

The faithfulness of God is the unfailing source of comfort and assurance to those who are right with Him, or partakers of His covenants of promise. It was a word of great meaning when Christ said, “I am the ... truth” (John 14:6).

3. WILL. The third essential element in personality is *will*, and of the will of God very much may be observed. Will is that in God which puts into effect all He has designed. Evidence that will belongs to God is established by the fact that it belongs to personality, that it belongs to perfection, that it belongs to independence, that it has been exercised in creation, and that it is directly ascribed to God in the Scriptures (John 1:13; Rom. 8:27; 12:2; 1 Cor. 1:1; Eph. 1:5). The will of God may be considered as *free* and *omnipotent*.

a. Freedom. The will of God is *free*. It acts in the way of wisdom, is exercised by infinite power, and upholds only His righteous purposes and ways; yet it is free in the sense that it is independent of all His creatures as well of all their actions. When reflecting upon this aspect of the will of God, theologians sometimes distinguish between the *decretive* will of God and the *preceptive* will of God. The decretive will is yet to be considered more fully in the next section

of this treatise. This aspect of the divine will is His efficacious purpose concerning all that is, or will be, in the creation He has wrought. Over against this, the preceptive will of God is that which merely commands but does not compel His creatures. These two aspects of will are not in conflict. Preceptive will may be resisted, as it too often is. Each rejection of His command, though foreknown, is not approved by Him. Preceptive will offers a precept which men may receive or reject. The will of God does not determine what is right or wrong. The idea sometimes obtains that God by sovereign decree might cause wrong to be right and right to be wrong. What God wills is right because it expresses His holy character. However, it was concerning things, some of which were good and some evil, that Christ prayed: "Yea, Father: for so it was well-pleasing in thy sight" (Matt. 11:26, R.V.).

Another distinction in the free will of God is that some of His purposes are secret, termed *voluntas beneplaciti*, and some are revealed, termed *signi*. God commanded Abraham to offer his son, yet it was in the secret will of God that Abraham would be spared that ordeal. The distinction between *beneplaciti* and *signi* is stated in Deuteronomy 29:29: "The secret things belong unto the LORD our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law" (cf. Ps. 36:6; Rom. 11:33, 34).

b. Omnipotence. The infinite power of God, which is termed *omnipotence*, is employed in the realization of all that God wills. Much that God does is by a direct volition apart from means and agencies. God said, "Let there be light: and there was light." This is omnipotence operating through volition. The will of man is restricted to thoughts, purposes, volitions, and certain bodily movements. Man can cause nothing to exist by the force of his will. The divine ability to bring a universe into existence out of nothing by volition is the grand manifestation of power. Such power belongs alone to God. He is able to do whatever He wills, but He may not will to do to the full measure of omnipotence. His will is directed in the way of holy and worthy ends. He cannot contradict himself. John Howe has said, "It belongs to self-existent being, to be always full and communicative, and to the communicated, contingent being, to be ever empty and craving" (cited by Watson. *Institutes*, I, 363).

Mr. Richard Watson has written somewhat at length on divine omnipotence. The following is vital:

In the revelation which was thus designed to awe and control the bad, and to afford strength of mind and consolation to the good under all circumstances, the omnipotence of God is therefore

placed in a great variety of impressive views, and connected with the most striking illustrations.

It is presented by the fact of *creation*, the creation of beings out of *nothing*, which itself, though it had been confined to a single object, however minute, exceeds finite comprehension, and overwhelms the faculties. This with God required no effort—"He spake and it was done, he commanded and it stood fast." The *vastness* and *variety* of his works enlarge the conception. "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth his handy work." "He spreadeth out the heavens, and treadeth upon the waves of the sea; he maketh Arcturus, Orion, and Pleiades, and the chambers of the south; he doeth great things, past finding out, yea, and wonders without number. He stretcheth out the north over the empty place, and hangeth the earth upon nothing. He bindeth up the waters in the thick clouds, and the cloud is not rent under them; he hath compassed the waters with bounds until the day and night come to an end." The *ease* with which he sustains, orders, and controls the most powerful and unruly of the elements, presents his omnipotence under an aspect of ineffable dignity and majesty. "By him all things consist." He brake up for the sea "a decreed place, and set bars and doors, and said, Hitherto shalt thou come and no farther, and here shall thy proud waves be stayed." "He looketh to the end of the earth, and seeth under the whole heaven, to make the weight for the winds, to weigh the waters by measure, to make a decree for the rain, and a way for the lightning of the thunder." "Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, meted out heaven with a span, comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the winds in a balance?" The descriptions of the Divine power are often *terrible*. "The pillars of heaven tremble, and are astonished at his reproof; he divideth the sea by his power." "He removeth the mountains, and they know it not; he overturneth them in his anger, he shaketh the earth out of her place, and the pillars thereof tremble; he commandeth the sun and it riseth not, and seaeth up the stars." The same absolute subjection of creatures to his dominion is seen among the intelligent inhabitants of the material universe, and angels, men the most exalted, and evil spirits, are swayed with as much ease as the least resistless elements. "He maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire." They veil their faces before his throne, and acknowledge themselves his servants. "It is he that sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers," "as the dust of the balance, less than nothing and vanity." "He bringeth princes to nothing." "He setteth up one and putteth down another," "for the kingdom is the Lord's and he is governor among the nations." "The angels that sinned, he cast down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment." The closing scenes of this world complete these transcendent conceptions of the majesty and power of God. The dead of all ages shall rise from their graves at his *voice*; and the sea shall give up the dead which are in it. Before his *face* heaven and earth flee away, the stars fall from heaven, and the powers of heaven are shaken. The dead, small and great, stand before God, and are divided as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats; the wicked go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal.

Of these amazing views of the omnipotence of God, spread almost through every page of the Scripture, the power lies in their *truth*. They are not eastern exaggerations, mistaken for sublimity. Every thing in nature answers to them, and renews from age to age the energy of the impression which they cannot but make upon the reflecting mind. The order of the astral revolutions indicates the constant presence of an invisible but incomprehensible power:—the seas hurl the weight of their billows upon the rising shores, but every where find a "*bound* fixed by a perpetual decree;"—the tides reach their height; if they flowed on for a few hours, the earth would change places with the bed of the sea; but under an invisible control they become refluent. "He toucheth the mountains and they smoke," is not mere imagery. Every volcano is a testimony of that truth to nature which we find in the Scriptures; and earthquakes teach, that before him, "the pillars of the world tremble." Men collected into armies, and populous nations, give us vast ideas of human *power*: but let an army be placed amidst the sand storms and burning winds of the desert, as, in the east, has frequently happened; or before "*his frost*," as in our own day, in Russia, where one of the mightiest

armaments was seen retreating before, or perishing under an unexpected visitation of snow and storm; or let the utterly helpless state of a populous country which has been visited by famine, or by a resistless pestilential disease, be reflected upon, and it is no figure of speech to say, that “all nations are before him *less than nothing and vanity*.”

Nor in reviewing this doctrine of Scripture, ought the fine practical uses made of the omnipotence of God, by the sacred writers, to be overlooked. In them there is nothing said for the display of knowledge, as, too often, in heathen writers; no speculation without a *moral* subservient to it, and that by evident *design*. To excite and keep alive in man the fear and worship of God, and to bring him to a felicitous confidence in that almighty power which pervades and controls all things, we have observed, are the reasons for those ample displays of the omnipotence of God, which roll through the sacred volume with a sublimity that inspiration only could supply. “Declare his glory among the heathen, his marvellous works among all nations; for great is the Lord and greatly to be praised. Glory and honour are in his presence, and strength and gladness in his place. Give unto the Lord, ye kindreds of the people, give unto the Lord glory and strength; give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name. The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid? If God be for us, who then can be against us? Our help standeth in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth. What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee.” Thus, as one observes, “our natural fears, of which we must have many, remit us to God, and remind us, since we know what God is, to lay hold on his almighty power.”

Ample however as are the views afforded us in Scripture of the power of God, we are not to consider the subject as bounded by them. As when the Scriptures declare the eternity of God, they declare it so as to unveil to us something of that fearful peculiarity of the Divine nature, that he is the fountain of being to himself, and that he is eternal, because he is the “I AM”; so we are taught not to measure his omnipotence by the actual displays of it which have been made. They are the *manifestations* of the principle, but not the *measure* of its capacity; and should we resort to the discoveries of modern philosophy, which, by the help of instruments, has so greatly enlarged the known boundaries of the visible universe, and add to the stars, visible to the naked eye, new exhibitions of the Divine power in those nebulous appearances of the heavens which are resolvable into myriads of distinct celestial luminaries, whose immense distances commingle their light before it reaches our eyes; we thus almost infinitely expand the circle of created existence, and enter upon a formerly unknown and overwhelming range of Divine operation; but we are still reminded, that his power is truly *almighty* and *measureless*—“Lo, all these are parts of his ways, but how little a portion is known of him, and the thunder of his power who can understand?” It is a mighty conception to think of a power from which all other power is derived, and to which it is subordinate; which nothing can oppose; which can beat down and annihilate all other powers whatever; a power which operates in the most perfect manner; at once, in an instant, with the utmost ease: but the Scriptures lead us to the contemplation of greater depths, and those unfathomable. The omnipotence of God is inconceivable and boundless. It arises from the infinite perfection of God, that his power can never be actually exhausted; and in every imaginable instant in eternity, that inexhaustible power of God can, if it please him, be adding either more creatures to those in existence, or greater perfection to them.—*Ibid.*, I, 360–63

II. Constitutional Attributes

In the previous discussion, the attributes of God related to personality have been contemplated with little or no regard for their classification as either *constitutional* or *characterizing*. Insuperable difficulty must be confessed by every attentive student who attempts an arbitrary classification of all the

attributes of God. The present grouping of the attributes includes those which are distinctively *constitutional* and these complete the list of the characteristic predicates of God. These are predicables of His essential Being. They are not communicated to other beings. The fact that they are peculiar to God and absent in all others at once creates a difficulty not met with in the study of attributes which are, to some degree, reflected in the creature's sphere. Having some vital relation to good as in contrast to evil, man may by analogy reason from his ideals of that which is good on to the perfect righteousness of God; but such a basis of reason or such a source of impression does not exist when the constitutional attributes are investigated. The entire theme is abstract, theoretical, and abstruse, so far as human experience is involved. The designation, *constitutional attributes*, is employed only for want of a better term. There is a very worthy question to be raised as to whether simplicity, infinity, omnipresence, immutability, eternity, and sovereignty are attributes at all. These predicables arise outside the perfection of His personal attributes and are equally a reality of each. The holiness, love, and justice of God are all infinite in their scope, and that which characterizes other attributes can hardly itself be an attribute. These constitutional attributes are:

1. SIMPLICITY. By this term it is indicated that the divine Being is un compounded, in complex, and indivisible. Man is a compound of spirit and matter. Angels, if they are without bodies adapted to the sphere in which they exist, would be nearer the ideal of divine simplicity than men, but would lack the perfection of simplicity which belongs to God alone. Complexity is not the highest ideal in any being. As in works of art, the more simplified a thing is the more its properties satisfy and abide. Thus it is with God. He being the perfect One, is to be worshiped as the finality and infinity of simplicity. On the simplicity which God is, Dr. A. A. Hodge writes:

The term simplicity is used, *first*, in opposition to material composition, whether mechanical, organic, or chemical; *second*, in a metaphysical sense in negation of the relation of substance and property, essence and mode. In the first sense of the word human souls are simple, because they are not composed of elements, parts, or organs. In the second sense of the word our souls are complex, since there is in them a distinction between their essence and their properties, and their successive modes or states of existence. As, however, God is infinite, eternal, self-existent from eternity, necessarily the same without succession, theologians have maintained that in him essence, and property, and mode are one. He always is what he is; and his various states of intellection, emotion, and volition are not successive and transient but co-existent and permanent; and he is what he is essentially, and by the same necessity that he exists. Whatever is in God, whether thought, emotion, volition, or act, is God.

Some men conceive of God as passing through various transient modes and states just as men

do, and therefore they suppose the properties of the divine nature are related to the divine essence as the properties of created things are related to the essences which are endowed with them. Others press the idea of simplicity so far that they deny any distinction in the divine attributes in themselves, and suppose that the only difference between them is to be found in the mode of external manifestation, and in the effects produced. They illustrate their idea by the various effects produced on different objects by the same radiance of the sun.

In order to avoid both extremes theologians have been accustomed to say that the divine attributes differ from the divine essence and from one another, 1st, not *realiter* or as one thing differs from another, or in any such way as to imply composition in God. Nor 2d, merely *nominaliter*, as though there were nothing in God really corresponding to our conceptions of his perfections. But 3d, they are said to differ *virtualiter*, so that there is in him a foundation or adequate reason for all the representations which are made in Scripture with regard to the divine perfections, and for the consequent conceptions which we have of them.—*Outlines of Theology*, pp. 136–37

When attempting to define simplicity as manifest in God, confusion sometimes arises. (1) Simplicity of Being in God is not a contradiction of the Trinity of Persons in which mode He subsists. The fact of the Trinity does not predicate three Essences; it rather predicates one Essence and the one Essence is *simple* in itself. The whole of the Essence is in each Person. (2) The attributes of God are not detached portions of His Being which when compounded compose God. His Essence is in every attribute and each attribute sets forth some fact related to His uncompounded Essence. As J. F. Bruch has stated: “The Divine attributes belong to God, not as though they made up His nature, as though His whole being consisted only of the combination of the same; but because they are the *forms* and *outward expressions*, in which His Being is revealed and becomes manifest” (cited by Van Oosterzee, *Dogmatics*, I, 253). And (3) God, being infinite simplicity, is not diffused as an efflux of particles might go out from a source to form new entities of existence. As Creator, He is the Author of all things. He breathed into man the breath of life and man was so made that he manifests the “image” and “likeness” of God; but human life is not a part of God as a contributing element in the Being of God. Whatever is God retains its uncomplicated character as God, indivisible and undiminishable. Nothing can be compounded without the possibility of its being divided. Added to this is the fact that a thing which is compounded is the workmanship of some other being and God is the First Cause of all things and Himself compounded or created by none. The simplicity of God is essential to the very mode of His Being.

2. UNITY. Closely allied to the attribute of simplicity is that of unity, the difference being that though God were compounded in contradistinction to His simplicity, He would still be a *unity*, or *one* in Himself. He would still be a unity

or single entity if He, like man, were composed of matter and spirit. If there were but one man in the world, to him the word *unity* would apply, and if there could be but one man in the universe to him the designation *essential unity* would apply. Similarly, the word *unity* is to be distinguished from the fact that God is a Spirit since He could be more than pure Spirit and yet retain His unity.

The theological import of the word *unity* as applied to God is that God is one essence. Trinitarianism is not tritheism. Unitarians are no more committed to the doctrine of divine unity than are Trinitarians. "The LORD our God is one LORD" (Deut. 6:4). The entire Bible emphasizes the fact of the unity of God and in no portion more than in the Decalogue. In like manner it is written: "See now that I, even I, am he, and there is no god with me" (Deut. 32:39); "Thus saith the LORD the King of Israel, and his redeemer the LORD of hosts; I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God" (Isa. 44:6); "There is none other God but one" (1 Cor. 8:4). This sublime theme could hardly be stated more convincingly or adequately than it is in the Athanasian Creed. It declares "that 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 Ghost; but the Godhead of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost is all one; the glory equal, the majesty coeternal. So the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Ghost is God; and yet there are not three Gods, but one God" (cited by Watson, *Institutes*, I, 474).

The unity of God is a predicable. It does not determine what God is in Himself. It has to do only with His mode of existence. Unity, therefore, by some theologians is refused a place among the attributes of God. The logical place for its full consideration is under the treatment of the Trinity (which see).

3. INFINITY. This, a negative predicate of God, is negative only in the sense that God is infinite and, therefore, *not* finite. The fact of the infinity of God relates itself to all attributes in that they are what they are to an infinite degree, or without termination. God transcends all limitations which time or space impose. He cannot be imprisoned either in time or space. In like manner, He knows all things perfectly. He is able to bring things to pass, even to create as He wills apart from means or material, and always in measureless perfection. In every moral quality He is complete to infinity.

God has been styled "The Absolute," which is an attempt to express the fact that He exists eternally by no cause whatsoever outside Himself and that He alone is the sufficient cause of all that is. This is infinity in its outmost

demonstration.

4. ETERNITY. By the word *eternity*, the relation which God sustains to duration is denoted. God, being the Author of time, is in no way conditioned by it. He is free to act in relation to time and is equally free to act outside its limitations. Acting in time He said to Abraham, "Is any thing too hard for the LORD? At the time appointed I will return unto thee, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son" (Gen. 18:14). Thus, again, "But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son" (Gal. 4:4).

The word *eternity* is employed in two ways: (1) to describe that which is either from eternity past, or that which is unto eternity to come. Creation has no part in the eternity which is past, since it had a beginning. On the other hand, both men and angels have a relation to eternity to come, since they can never cease to exist. (2) Eternity is more properly the designation of eternity as gathered into one conception. It is in this aspect of eternity that God is said to be "the eternal God." He is from everlasting to everlasting. The problem as to how time is disposed of in eternity is beyond the penetration of finite minds. In like manner, it is of little profit to speculate as to how and by what means time began and what, if ever, will be the cause of its end. The pure idea of eternity is too vast for human thought. On this obvious truth, Dr. Samuel Harris has written:

The eternal Being exists without beginning or end. Existence limited in time must have a beginning and may have an end. A dependent being has no guarantee of itself that it will exist forever. Its existence may be terminated by the power on which it depends. These limitations are denied of God. In respect to these no difficulty is usually felt.

Another limitation of a being in time is that its existence is transitional through a succession of events. This commonly occasions more difficulty. The following statement, so far as it goes, seems to give a real meaning. God as the absolute Spirit exists independent of time. Time, with the universe conditioned by it, is dependent on him. Acting in time God remains through all its succession and changes immutable and the same. He is not in the chain of causes and effects. He does not exist in transition through successive forms of being. In his being and his essential attributes as personal Spirit, he is immutably the same, the eternal One from whom all succession of events issues and by comparison with whom as the unchanging standard succession is possible. He is the I AM. Even in our own being we find an analogy with this. Every personal being persists in identity, while the subject of successive acts and events. A man, in the likeness of God in his rational free personality, is also an I AM; he abides one and the same person, unchanging in his personality and its essential attributes, through all the transitions and changes of his life. Matter is in constant action and flux. Yet even this gives us a faint analogy. We are obliged to think of ultimate atoms unchanged and unabraded by all the collision and grinding of this energetic action ever since the worlds were made. God is unchanged and eternal not only in his being and his essential attributes, but also in the fulness of his knowledge, without increase or diminution, and therefore without succession. But as God's exemption from limitation in time does not preclude his presence and acting in it, so it does not preclude his knowledge of the distinctions of time and of events as present, past, or future. The universe in its whole existence is archetypal in the reason of God; he

sees in it the map or plan of all that is being progressively realized in time. But he sees the difference between a being existing in time and another seen only ideally as about to exist in a distant future or that has existed in the past and exists no longer. If he could not know this he would be limited in time. He would be not only unable to act in it, but even to see into it. But his Reason is an open eye, seeing all which is, has been, or will be, and seeing it in its relation to time as actually measured by events. ... God's purpose to realize this archetypal plan in the finite universe in the forms of space and time is an unchanging and eternal plan. Yet immanent and ever active in the universe, he is progressively realizing it by his action in time. And his love, which constitutes his character, is an eternal and unchanging love which he is continuously and progressively expressing in all his action of creation, preservation, providence, and redemption.

The result which we have reached is, not eternity as immeasurable time, but the eternal and immutable God existing in all time and progressively revealing himself in the universe as it exists in time. God is the I AM. The universe is that which becomes. God is eternal. The universe is the progressive and never-completed revelation of him in time and space.

The eternity of God is involved in his self-existence. He is uncaused. Therefore he must be without beginning. He transcends the whole chain of causes and effects. Therefore he can never cease to be.—*God the Creator and Lord of All*, I, 123–24

5. IMMUTABILITY. As defined by the New Standard Dictionary (1913 ed.), immutability is the state or quality of being that which is “not capable or susceptible of change, either by increase or by decrease, by development or by self-evolution; unchangeable; invariable; permanent; as, God is *immutable*.” In no sphere or relationship is God subject to change. He could not be less than He is, and, since He filleth all things, He could not be more than He is. He could be removed from no place, nor is His knowledge or holiness subject to change. The Scriptures state:

“I said, O my God, take me not away in the midst of my days: thy years are throughout all generations. Of old hast thou laid the foundation of the earth: and the heavens are the work of thy hands. They shall perish, but thou shalt endure: yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment; as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed. But thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end” (Ps. 102:24–27); “Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure” (Isa. 46:9, 10); “For I am the LORD, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed” (Mal. 3:6); “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning” (James 1:17).

Not only is there no change in God Himself, but the moral principles which He has published are abiding. Of this Dr. Miley writes: “Sacred history discloses a changing frame-work of expediency in the older dispensations of revealed

religion, and a great change from the elaborate ceremonials of Judaism into the simple forms of Christianity, but the same moral principles abide through all these economies. Change within the sphere of expediency is entirely consistent with the unchangeableness of God, while the changeless moral principles are a profound reality of his immutability. That he regards the same person now with reprehensive displeasure, and again with approving love, is not only consistent with his immutability, but a requirement of it in view of the moral change in the object of his changed regards” (*Systematic Theology*, I, 221).

As intimated by Dr. Miley, certain passages seem at first sight to teach that God is subject to change. The statement set forth in Genesis 6:6, that “it repented the LORD that he had made man”, must be considered in the light of Numbers 23:19, “God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent.” In one chapter-1 Samuel 15—it is recorded that God said “It repenteth me that I have set up Saul to be king” (vss. 11, 35); yet He also said through Samuel, “And also the Strength of Israel will not lie nor repent: for he is not a man, that he should repent” (vs. 29). God, though immutable, is not immobile. If He consistently pursues a righteous course, His attitude must be adapted to every moral change in men. “God’s unchanging holiness requires him to treat the wicked differently from the righteous. When the righteous become wicked, his treatment of them must change. The sun is not fickle or partial because it melts the wax but hardens the clay,—the change is not in the sun but in the objects it shines upon. The change in God’s treatment of men is described anthropomorphically, as if it were a change in God himself,—other passages in close conjunction with the first being given to correct any possible misapprehension. Threats not fulfilled, as in Jonah 3:4, 10, are to be explained by their conditional nature. Hence God’s immutability itself renders it certain that his love will adapt itself to every varying mood and condition of his children, so as to guide their steps, sympathize with their sorrows, answer their prayers. God responds to us more quickly than the mother’s face to the changing moods of her babe” (Strong, *Systematic Theology*, p. 124).

6. OMNIPRESENCE OR IMMENSITY. The relation God sustains to space is introduced by the terms *omnipresence* and *immensity*. The conception of God which is sustained by the Scriptures is that He is everywhere present. Such an apprehension is indeed hard for the finite mind to form. It is equally declared in the Bible that God—each of the three Persons—is resident in one place at a given time. Of the Father, the statement is: “Our Father which art in heaven”

(Matt. 6:9); of the Son it is said that He, upon ascending from the earth, “sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high” (Heb. 1:3); and of the Spirit in relation to the Church it is written, “in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit” (Eph. 2:22; cf. Ps. 113:5; 123:1; Rom. 10:6, 7; 1 Cor. 3:16; 6:19). On the other hand, the Father is said to be in the Son as the Son is in the Father (John 17:21) ; the Father is “above all, and through all, and in you all” (Eph. 4:6); the Son is present where two or three are met together unto His name (Matt. 18:20; cf. 28:20; Col. 1:27). The Spirit, like the Father and the Son, is said to indwell every believer (Rom. 8:9).

The difficulty for the finite mind arises when both revelation and abstract reason assert the ubiquity, or omnipresence, of God. All other beings known to man, including angels, are restricted to a given place at a given time. When they are here they are not there. Material things occupy some part of space, but never all of it. Space has been defined as “extension void of matter or body, and capable of receiving or containing matter or body” (cited by Dick, *Theology*, 98). It is thus that space exceeds all that it contains. God is the cause of space and is therefore not subject to it (cf. 1 Kings 8:27). Respecting His creation, including space, God is both immanent and transcendent. If space is defined by bounds, He exceeds it by infinity.

It is probable that the terms *omnipresence* and *immensity* represent somewhat different ideas. Omnipresence naturally relates God to the universe where other beings are and as present with them, while immensity surpasses all creation and extends on without end.

There are at least three arguments for the divine immensity and omnipresence which abstract reason advances. (1) The perfection of God demands that He be everywhere present. If some place were void of Him, the human mind could conceive of a greater being who filled all places and thus God would be imperfect to the degree in which He did not answer the idea of immensity. On this important consideration Dr. Dick writes: “The result is, that in our opinion it is better for a being to be in many places than in few, to be in all places than in many. To suppose, therefore, God to exist only in one part of the universe, to be in heaven but not upon earth, to circumscribe his essence within any boundaries however widely extended, would be to conceive of him as similar to his creatures. It would be easy to imagine a being still more perfect, for certainly he would be more perfect who was present at the same time in heaven and on earth. Thus it appears that it is agreeable to reason to ascribe immensity to God” (*Ibid.*, p. 99). (2) The very nature of God requires that He be everywhere present. The

exercise of His attributes is not restricted to locality but is ubiquitous, hence, as He is where His attributes are, He is Himself ubiquitous. (3) Reason further contends that, since God used no mechanism or agents in creation and since all came into being at the same time, He was present at that time wherever creation took place.

The error of pantheism which claims that God is the sum-total of all life that exists—the soul of the universe—, has before been pointed out; but there is danger that the mind, when attempting to make real the ubiquity of God, will think of Him as diffused abroad in the sense that only a minute part of Him is present in a given place, as human life is but partially present in any particular part of the body which it occupies. God, however, is wholly present in every place. If the divine nature is resident in many places, that is not accomplished by diffusion to the end that each may share a small portion of that nature. He is wholly present as fully as though He were nowhere else—Father, Son, and Spirit—in every human temple in which He dwells, and in every part of His dominion. Dr. Samuel Clarke has well said: “That which we can most safely affirm, and which no atheist can say is absurd, and which nevertheless is sufficient to all wise and good purposes, is this; that whereas all finite and created beings can be present but in one definite place at once, and corporeal beings even in that one place very imperfectly and unequally, to any purpose of power and activity, only by the successive motion of different members and organs; the Supreme Cause, on the contrary, being an infinite and most simple essence, and comprehending all things perfectly in himself, *is at all times equally* present, both in his simple essence, and by the immediate and perfect exercise of all his attributes, to *every point* of the boundless immensity, as if it were really all but one single point” (*Discourse on Being and Attributes*, p. 46, cited by Dick, *ibid.*, p. 100).

It is in no way reasonable for the finite mind to suppose that it can understand the divine mode of omnipresence. The words of the Psalmist express the thoughts of the wisest of men: “Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it” (Ps. 139:6). The Scriptures abound with declarations regarding the divine ubiquity, and no passage is more direct and conclusive than Psalm 139:7–12, “Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me. If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me. Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee;

but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to thee.” To this may well be added Amos 9:2, “Though they dig into hell, thence shall mine hand take them; though they climb up to heaven, thence will I bring them down.”

To reasonable men, the omnipresence of God becomes a power to stay the impulse to wrong action. “Thou God seest me” (Gen. 16:13). With similar effectiveness, the omnipresence of God is an indispensable consolation to the righteous. On this aspect of this theme Dr. Dick writes with his unique eloquence:

Lastly, to the righteous this doctrine is a source of abundant consolation. In every place they meet a friend, a protector, and a father. Does the voice of thunder, or the raging of the ocean, or the fury of the tempest, announce his presence? They have nothing to fear, for love to them presides over the commotions of the elements. Do they perceive Him in the more tranquil scenes of nature, in the silent progress of vegetation, in the smiles of the heavens, and in the regular beneficence which supplies their returning wants, and diffuses so much happiness among all classes of animated beings? Oh! how delightful the thought that He, in whom they repose confidence, is so near that they may always assure themselves of ready and effectual aid! This thought is fitted to enliven every scene, and to sweeten every condition. It will make the springs of joy burst out in the parched and thirsty wilderness, and clothe the naked and cheerless waste with verdure. It will give a relish to a dry morsel, and a cup of cold water. It will lighten the pressure of poverty, and soothe the pangs of affliction. It will dissipate the horrors of a dungeon, and console the exile from his country and his friends. How transporting the thought, that we cannot go where God is not! A good man may be bereaved of his reputation, his liberty, his earthly all; but the deadly hatred of his enemies can never so far succeed as to draw from him the mournful complaint, “Ye have taken away my God, and what have I more?” With whatever afflictions his faith and patience may be tried, and whatever change of circumstances a wise providence may appoint him to undergo, although there should be no human heart to sympathise with him, and no kind hand to perform the offices of friendship, he can express his faith and joy in the words of an ancient saint, “Nevertheless I am continually with thee; thou holdest me by my right hand. Thou wilt guide me by thy counsel, and afterward receive me to thy glory” (Ps. 73:23, 24).—Dick’s *Theology*, p. 102

7. SOVEREIGNTY. By many writers, *sovereignty* is not included among the attributes of God. It is more properly a *prerogative* of God than an attribute and owes all its reality to the divine perfections which have here been named. Sovereignty is the very foundation of the doctrine of decrees—yet to be attended. However, when contemplating the transcendent completeness of the divine Person, it is required that His sovereignty shall be included.

The sovereignty of God is discerned in the absolute manner in which all things have been assigned their respective places in creation, in appointing to men their day and generation as well as the bounds of their habitation, and in the exercise of saving grace. There is perfect peace and highest destiny for those who, knowing the will of God, are subject to it. There is distress and anguish

awaiting those who, knowing the will of God, disregard it. Because of divine sovereignty, the saving gospel of Christ is, in various Scriptures, presented as something to be *obeyed*. Again, the authority of God is displayed in the fact that things which were only possible were not allowed by Him to become actual. In relation to existing things, God is in absolute authority, which may arise from one or more of certain affiliations. (1) He is Creator and His dominion is perfect and final. He is free to dispose of His creation as He will; but His will, as has been seen, is wholly guided by the true and benevolent features of His Person. All majesty and glory belong to God. All material things are His by the most absolute ownership. Men hold property by rights which are only temporary and permitted by God. "For every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills" (Ps. 50:10). (2) The authority of God is established over the redeemed by the purchase which that redemption has wrought. And (3) He is in authority over those among the redeemed who willingly yield their lives to Him. The Scriptures set forth the divine appraisal of God's sovereignty as no words of man could ever do. "The LORD killeth, and maketh alive: he bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up. The LORD maketh poor, and maketh rich: he bringeth low, and lifteth up. He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill, to set them among princes, and to make them inherit the throne of glory: for the pillars of the earth are the LORD'S and he hath set the world upon them" (1 Sam. 2:6-8); "Thine, O LORD, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is thine; thine is the kingdom, O LORD, and thou art exalted as head above all. Both riches and honour come of thee, and thou reignest over all; and in thine hand is power and might; and in thine hand it is to make great, and to give strength unto all" (1 Chron. 29:11, 12); "And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: for thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen" (Matt. 6:13).

Conclusion

The attributes of God form an interwoven and interdependent communion of facts and forces which harmonize in the Person of God. An omission or slighting of any of these, or any disproportionate emphasis upon any one of them cannot but lead to fundamental error of immeasurable magnitude. A mighty task is committed to the student of theology to discover these attributes and exhibit them according to truth. On the communion of the attributes of God, Dr. Morris

Roach has written: “The failure which we have just noted in an abnormal emphasis of God’s attributes may be corrected by the communion of attributes. Pantheism, polytheism, deism, materialism, idealism, and evolution reveal abnormalities in the character of God to which they subscribe their belief. The errors of all false conceptions of God could be corrected by an explanation of His true character as it is completely and systematically balanced by the communion of these elements of His nature. Christian theology is the only field which gives proper and proportionate thought to the character of God as a product of His attributes. It is not possible to ascribe power to God in the sense of ‘sheer almightiness.’ Character cannot be the product of power. Love alone is not an all-inclusive attribute, and is not, in itself, a sufficient basis for character. Full and complete character cannot be ascribed where only a portion of the attributes of God are considered. Character in God is the product of all His attributes in their objective relationship one with the other” (*The Personality of God*, unpublished dissertation (1933), Dallas Seminary, pp. 174–75). The vast theme of the conflict which sin occasioned between the holiness and love of God must be considered under Soteriology.

In the foregoing, an effort has been made to present some features of the perfections of God. Comparatively little has been said when the incomprehensible character and Being of God are considered. God alone can declare His glory. He is One of whom man should not think without the deepest reverence flooding his heart. God is a terrible Enemy against those who repudiate Him; but to those—even the most sinful—who believe on His Son, He is their God, and all His limitless perfections are engaged in their behalf, and this guarantees that all shall work together for good.

“Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen.”

Chapter XV

DIVINE DECREES

IN ITS THEOLOGICAL implications, the term *decree* betokens the plan by which God has proceeded in all His acts of creation and continuation. That He has such a plan is not only the justified deduction of reason—He being perfect in wisdom —, but is the clear testimony of the Bible. Those numerous passages which assert the *decree*, the *purpose*, the *determinate counsel*, the *foreknowledge*, the *foreordination*, and the *election*, by which God is said to act, combine to establish the truth that, either directly or indirectly and as stated in the Westminster Confession, He originates and executes “whatsoever comes to pass.” No deductions concerning God could be more dishonoring or misleading than the suppositions that He is not sovereign over His works, or that He is not working according to a plan which articulates the dictation of infinite intelligence. Could the imagination of man picture a situation before any creative act of God was wrought, when God, as it were, had before Him an infinite variety of possible plans or blueprints from which to choose—each and every one of which represented a possible program of divine action as far-reaching and elaborate as the one now being executed—, it would be reasonable and honoring to God to conclude that the present plan as ordained and as it is being achieved is, and in the end will prove to be, the best plan and purpose that could have been devised by infinite wisdom, consummated by infinite power, and that which will be the supreme satisfaction to infinite love. Such an exercise of the imagination would be at fault in the one particular, namely, that it supposes that the plan and purpose of God which is now in process has not been in anticipation from all eternity. This fact but serves to emphasize the point in view, which is that the present plan is as perfect as its Author. It is most essential to clear thinking on the part of devout minds that all suggestions which tend to imply that God is not following a plan which is worthy of Him, or that He is but partially in authority, or that He has failed and is seeking to salvage something out of the wreckage, or that He is conforming to existing things over which He has no control, shall be rejected and that, in spite of the immediate problems which the presence of sin and suffering create, it shall be accredited to God that, in the end, He shall have wrought that which alone is consonant with infinite wisdom and goodness. Such an evaluation of the present order is demanded in the light of the revelation, already considered, as to the essential character of God, being the

only conclusion which unprejudiced reason can approve.

When weighing the facts of the sovereignty of God in the execution of His eternal purpose, problems arise—problems more difficult than those encountered when weighing the truths concerning God’s Person and attributes. In the latter instance, knowable realities are projected into infinity, but without the element of seeming contradiction. In the former instance, or when contemplating divine sovereignty as seen in the control by a holy God over a universe into which sin has entered and in which there is said to be the freedom to act on the part of beings other than the sovereign God, conflicting relationships arise. Some of these problems cannot be solved in this world; they never have been solved here, nor will they ever be. In the previous discussion the issue which the presence of sin in the world engenders was approached in the light of divine *foreknowledge*. It must now be approached in the light of the divine *purpose* and *permission*. When this issue is reduced to its lowest dimensions, there remain but two general overtures: either (1) that God is sovereign and all that ever has existed or will exist is within His plan, or (2) that He is not sovereign and there is more or less in the universe which exists in defiance of His holy character and over which He has no authority. The latter overture, in the extreme form in which it is here presented, is discredited by all devout and thoughtful individuals, though too often some modification of that overture is adopted as a supposed release from the burden which the problem of sin in God’s universe imposes. No modifications of divine sovereignty can be allowed without challenging the worthiness of God. Not a vestige of a praiseworthy conception of God remains in the mind of the one who supposes that, to the slightest degree, God has failed, has been defeated, or is making light of sin. Insurmountable difficulties arise in the outworking of either of these overtures, but those engendered by the former are far less than those engendered by the latter. It is, therefore, better to approach the difficulties from the position wherein the absolute sovereignty of God and worthiness of all His works are upheld. No doubt should be entertained as to the just and authoritative way in which God achieves His ends. Having established by the investigation of the attributes of God the holy character of God, His infinite righteousness, His omniscience and omnipotence, it is incumbent upon the rational mind to approach the difficulties, which arise when an adjustment is attempted of all that the sovereignty of God imposes, from the standpoint of all that God has been proved to be. At its best, man’s understanding is fallible and this limitation is ever being demonstrated by the shallow and hasty way in which men deal with these difficulties. To suspect the wisdom of men is not a serious

matter; yea, they might all be found to be liars without transgressing the bounds of revelation concerning the moral corruption of the human heart. It is, however, a most serious thing to suspect the wisdom, holiness, or authority of God. Moses has recorded in Deuteronomy 29:29 that there are secret things which belong to God, and that there are revealed things which belong to men. It is folly to suppose that the revealed things include all that there is to be known. The theologian is not to be discredited but rather commended who, when confronted with the secret things of God, is able to say, *I do not know*.

Concerning revealed things, it may be said again that very much that belongs in that category has no part in the divine message to the unregenerate, to whom the things of God are, at most, only “foolishness” (1 Cor. 2:14). Likewise, much that is revealed belongs not at all to those regenerate persons who, because of their immaturity or carnality, can receive only the “milk of the word.” Some portions of the divine revelation, being divinely classed as “strong meat,” are not intended for babes. The extent of harm that has been wrought in certain periods of the church’s history by the indiscriminate preaching to all classes of men of the doctrines of *sovereignty*, *predestination*, and *election*, cannot be estimated. Unregenerate men are not burdened with the necessity of ascertaining whether they are elect or not. God speaks to them with absolute faithfulness to the end that they may exercise faith in His Son as their Savior and thereby be saved. The evangelist when declaring his message to lost men properly ignores all problems which arise concerning issues which belong to conditions obtaining before the fall of man. It is enough for the unregenerate to know that they are rightfully condemned and that a perfect salvation is secured for them through the saving grace of God in Christ Jesus. Unlike this, it is incumbent on the student of theology, to whom God’s deeper revelation is addressed, to penetrate into that which may be known about how man came to be lost and what could have brought it to pass in the midst of a universe wherein a holy God rules supreme. Speaking of God’s saving grace for the unregenerate, Bishop Moule declares: “Grace is the unmerited complement of need”; but, it may be added, the gospel of grace includes the discussion of no obscure and difficult themes such as surround the doctrine of *election* or the permission of sin in the world. Nor are such themes adapted to backward saints such as the Apostle described when he said: “For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat” (Heb. 5:12).

I. The Decree of God

The doctrine of divine decree is only another method of assigning to God the position of first cause of all that exists. There is one comprehensive plan in which all things have their place and by which they proceed. The Westminster Shorter Catechism asserts that it is “his eternal purpose, according to the counsel of his will, whereby, for his own glory, he hath foreordained whatsoever comes to pass” (Question 7). God did not, however, decree anything concerning Himself—as to His existence, His attributes, the mode of His subsistence in three Persons, or any inherent relationship or assumption of responsibilities within the Godhead. Nor did God decree regarding His own existence and transitive acts as though He commanded Himself to create, to uphold, or to govern His universe. The decree of God relates to His acts which are not immanent and intrinsic and are outside His own Being.

The term *decree of God* appears first in the singular, since God has but one all-inclusive plan. He sees all things at a glance. For convenience, the separate features of this plan may be called the *decrees of God*; but there should be no implication in this that the infinite understanding of God advances by steps or in a train. And there is no possibility that the one plan will be altered by omissions or additions. Nor is it true that God sustains a distinct and unrelated purpose concerning each aspect of His one intention. With God there is one immutable decree embracing in itself every detail, even the falling of a sparrow. It is the divine cognition from all eternity. “Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world” (Acts 15:18).

It should be observed that God formed His decree in eternity, though its execution is in time. The decree being eternal, all its parts are, in the mind of God, but one intuition, though in its realization there is succession. Christ’s earthly mission was seen in one conception, yet an interval of thirty-three years fell between His birth and His death. He was “foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times” (1 Pet. 1:20). Augustine states: “God willeth not one thing now, and another anon; but once, and at once, and always, he willeth all things that he willeth; not again and again, nor now this, now that; nor willeth afterwards, what before he willed not, nor willeth not, what before he willed; because such a will is mutable; and no mutable thing is eternal” (*Confess.*, XII, xv, cited by Shedd, *Theology*, I, 395). The power to conceive of a thing as a whole before it is executed in the order which its intention requires, is not altogether outside the range of finite minds.

There is every reason to believe that Solomon foresaw and designed every detail of the temple before any work was begun. That vision accorded him was as comprehensive concerning those features that were to be wrought out at the end of the process as concerning those which were first in the order of procedure. The capstone is no less evident in the architect's mind than is the foundation. It is true that human foresight is subject to development and change, which mutability is never true of the divine archetypal vision.

Having thus emphasized the *eternal* character of the divine decree, it may yet be added that the decree of God is *wise*, being the product of infinite wisdom. There is a worthy reason for all that God has ever done or will do. Even His permission of evil will, like the wrath of man, be made to praise Him (Ps. 76:10). "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!" (Rom. 11:33).

Likewise, the divine decree is *free*. "Who hath directed the Spirit of the LORD, or being his counsellor hath taught him? With whom took he counsel, and who instructed him, and taught him in the path of judgment, and taught him knowledge, and shewed to him the way of understanding?" (Isa. 40:13, 14). Being alone when His decree was made, His determinations were influenced by no other being. Aside from the fact that He must act according to His wisdom and holiness, He was free to do or not to do. Within the sphere of His perfections, He could do what He would. It is near to impiety to assert that God *could* not have done otherwise than He has done, though it is probable that He *would* not have done otherwise, being guided by that which is worthy of Himself.

Lastly, the divine decree is absolutely *unconditional*. The execution of it is in no way suspended upon conditions which may or may not emerge. The Arminian notion that the will of man is sovereign in its power to resist the Almighty must be denied, since it is everywhere refuted in the history of God's dealing with men. God may, for good reasons, allow man's will to prevail; but He does not have to do so. He has power over every will to cause it to do His good pleasure. "Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure" (Isa. 46:10). "Who worketh all things after the counsel of his will" (Eph. 1:11, R.V.). Such a statement could not be made in truthfulness if the execution of His purpose depended upon a cooperation with others which was in their power to withhold. This phase of the theme is yet to be attended more at

length.

Reference may be made again to the distinction within the knowledge which God holds concerning future events, by which He recognizes some things as merely *possible* but never to become *actual* and therefore not to be included in His eternal decree, and things which are divinely *determined*. Of the total which all His knowledge and all His almighty power might achieve, He purposed to do some things only, and that purpose made those specific things forever certain. There are those who at this point would intrude another distinction within the knowledge of God. They claim to recognize that certain things—notably the free acts of men—are not at all derived from God, but rather from the creature. To these free acts it is asserted that God could have no relation other than to foreknow what the creature will do. This notion is advanced by those who maintain that God's decrees are conditional, to the end that some are chosen to eternal life on the basis of divine foresight as to their faith and obedience. This theory, if it were true, would support the wholly unscriptural idea that, in the end, men are saved on the ground of their own merit and worthiness. This claim not only opposes the doctrine of salvation by grace alone, but leaves the question as to whether God is the Author of sin unanswered and places God in the unworthy position of being dependent upon His creatures. The Scriptures, while recognizing a freedom of action in man, do, nevertheless, assert that man is not exempt from the control of his Creator. It may be said that God does know what the actions of men will be when placed under certain circumstances. It is equally true that He is the Author of circumstances. God knew that when placed under the circumstances which obtained, Adam would fall. God could have arranged matters otherwise, but this He did not do. The question as to the relation between the divine and the human responsibility is, in such a development, exceedingly complex. God did not fail to warn Adam, nor, when pronouncing sentence upon him after his sin, did God assume any portion of the responsibility. It may be further observed that had Adam obeyed God, as God commanded him to do, there would have been no need of a Redeemer; yet the Redeemer as well as the need for Him was evidently in the decree of God from all eternity (Rev. 13:8). This problem, yet to be considered more fully, is far reaching, but is not solved by any theory which seeks escape from the difficulties through the exit of a supposed irresponsible divine fore-knowledge.

If no certain knowledge of God were accorded to men, they might be pardoned for supposing that God does not know what He is doing, that He has no power to rescue Himself from the dilemmas into which ignorance would

plunge Him or that He maintains no standards of holiness. Such conclusions might be accounted for among heathen people to whom no revelation has come. But God is revealed to men and they are without excuse if they hold conceptions of Him which disregard His perfections. Problems exist, but every such must be approached and solved—in so far as it can be solved—without the slightest departure from the infinite worthiness of God. Certain systems of theology begin with man, center about man, and end with man; and God is introduced only as He conforms to this man-centered notion. On the other hand, certain systems of theology begin with God, center about God, and end with God; and man is introduced only as he conforms to this God-centered idea. It is obvious to which of these two general systems the Bible lends its support, and which, in the end, gives rest and satisfaction to the heart of man. The greatest of all problems emerges when man directs his thoughts to the sovereignty of God and all that sovereignty implies. These problems are never solved by minimizing God, holiness, sin, or human responsibility. Published systems of theology which either omit the doctrine of divine decree, or oppose the doctrine, are justly reprehensible. They remove the rudder from the ship and set it afloat subject to wind and tide. It is a dishonor even to a man to assert that he does not act with purposed, rational ends in view, or that he does not employ worthy means to realize those ends. The doctrine of divine decree of itself introduces nothing mysterious or profound. It declares that God both designed and willed before He acted, and that all His actions are in harmony with His perfect character and attributes. Problems appear when man, with his own free will, and the fact of sin enter upon the scene.

The term *divine decree* is an attempt to gather up into one designation that to which the Scriptures refer by various designations—the *divine purpose* (Eph. 1:11), *determinate counsel* (Acts 2:23), *fore-knowledge* (1 Pet. 1:2; cf. 1:20), *election* (1 Thess. 1:4), *predestination* (Rom. 8:30), the *divine will* (Eph. 1:11), and the *divine good pleasure* (Eph. 1:9). When reference is made to divine counsels it does not suggest conference on the part of God with other beings, but that His counsels are consummately wise. In like manner, the reference to the divine will does not suggest capricious or unreasonable action. Infinite wisdom directs the divine determination. In this sense His decree is said to be the “counsel of his will.” These terms certainly signify that God acts only according to an eternal purpose which incorporates all things.

When seeking to arrive at a right understanding of the doctrine of the divine decree, it is essential to distinguish decree from predestination and

predestination from election and retribution. The divine decree embraces all that was or is future. Whatever was to transpire in time was decreed from eternity, whether good or evil, whether great or small, whether wrought directly by God or indirectly through agencies. The decree itself provided for the free actions of creatures and included what men are pleased to call *accidents*. Regarding that which is good in contradistinction to that which is evil, a discrimination is usually made: the one being by divine *appointment* and the other by divine *permission*. The divine decree embraces the entire ongoing of the universe including things material and things immaterial. The term *predestination* is restricted to the creatures of God whether angelic or human and, regardless of the fact that in the Scriptures it is usually applied to those that are good, is, in its larger meaning, properly used concerning the destination of all created beings—some of whom are the elect and some reprobate. Again, *election* is narrower in its meaning than predestination, since it refers only to those who are in right relations to God and destined to eternal blessings; and over against this is *retribution* which includes in its designation all that are non-elect.

Had not sin entered into the universe and had all creatures remained in their first estate, it is probable that no objection to the doctrine of *divine decree*, with its recognition of sovereignty, would have been elicited. In this connection it is worthy of note that there are vast realms of the universe and spheres of the divine authority wherein the divine sovereignty has not been controverted. Within what is, comparatively, an exceedingly limited portion of the universe, holiness and sin are now in dispute and the duration of this conflict is restricted to that inconceivable fraction of eternity which is represented by time. He who in the eternity past reigned supreme, will yet reign in the eternity to come with all enemies destroyed. It is an improbability of surpassing magnitude— even when subjected to reason alone—that He who reigns in all eternity over the vast domain of the universe, has met His defeat and become impotent rather than omnipotent in the face of moral issues which in His eternal counsels He has permitted to exist for a restricted time. The Scriptures assert the never-failing sovereignty of God, and never more emphatically than when they predict the fast-approaching hour when sin shall be no more. Who, indeed, is determining the hour when sin shall cease? Is it to cease by mere caprice? Or does God sustain no more vital relation to its cessation than to foreknow that it will cease? Who maketh wars to cease? By whose power and authority will Satan be bound and confined to the abyss and finally cast into the lake of fire? Who prepared that lake of fire? Is it a mere accident, about which God only foreknows, that this

universe will yet be purged of all evil? Or is it a fable that the Creator will yet pronounce sentence upon His every foe? To God alone be majesty, dominion, and power for ever and ever—Amen!

Having thus ascribed a feeble note of praise to God, it now is necessary—as is incumbent upon all students of Biblical theism—to give attention to the problems which the theme of divine sovereignty engenders. There are issues involved in such a contemplation which are too vast for the finite mind to fathom, and no intelligent, reverent person will be surprised to discover the boundaries of his finite mind. When standing on the border between the finite and the infinite, between time and eternity, between the perfect, irresistible will of God and the impotent, perverted will of man, between sovereign grace and hell-deserving sin, who among men is too proud to exclaim, *There are some things which I do not understand?*

The perplexing issues which arise are not the burden of any particular system of theology. They belong properly to all, and none is commendable which assumes that it is not concerned with such issues.

It is probable that these questions are difficult largely because of man's limited knowledge of the essential character of sin, of the essential, yet widely different, scope of the human will as compared with the divine will, and of the true and ultimate purpose of God. With these qualifying facts in mind, the problems are, as to their general amplitude, really but two, namely, (1) *the moral problem*, or the fact that evil is present in a universe over which God reigns supreme, and (2) *the problem of the will*, or the seeming irreconcilability of the free will of man with the sovereignty of God. These are now to be examined.

1. TWO BASIC PROBLEMS.

a. **THE MORAL PROBLEM.** The permission and presence of sin in the universe over which the infinitely holy God rules interpolates a clash of ideas which in all its involvements no human mind can fully harmonize. Considering the two dissonant realities, namely, God and sin, it is certain that the solution of the difficulty will not be discovered in the direction of any assumption that God was unable to prevent sin from eventuating in the universe, or that He cannot cause it to cease at any moment of time. To the same end, it is certain that the dilemma will not be adjusted or relieved by any supposition that sin is not exceedingly sinful in the sight of God—that which He hates with a perfect hatred. The issue must stand without modification that God, who is actively and infinitely holy and who is utterly free in all His enterprises, being able to create or not create

and to exclude evil from that which He did create, has, nevertheless, permitted evil to appear and run its course in angelic and human spheres. This perplexity is also intensified to a measureless degree by the fact that God knew when He permitted sin to be manifest, that it would cost Him the greatest sacrifice it is possible for God to make—even the death of His Son. The Scriptures state with abundant certainty that (a) God is all-powerful and is not, therefore, imposed upon by sin against His permissive will; (b) that God is perfectly holy and hates sin unqualifiedly; and (c) that sin is present in the universe with all its injury to created beings and that this injury, because of the failure of some to enter into redeeming grace, will continue upon them for all eternity to come.

If the Scriptures assert a thing to be true, it should be so received by every Christian. Should there seem to be a conflict of ideas, as noted above, the fact remains that the Biblical account of each item in the consideration is *true*, the perplexity being attributable to insufficient understanding by the human mind. The Bible attempts no explanation of those dilemmas which men observe. The seeming conflict of ideas evidently has no reality or existence in the mind of God. By attentive contemplation of certain issues, the perplexity may be somewhat relieved.

(1) *The Essential Nature of Sin.* Though the whole field of hamartiology is indicated at this point in this discussion, its full treatment must be reserved for its rightful place as a subdivision of Anthropology. The problem of the presence of sin in God's universe is lessened to no small degree when due consideration is given to the precise nature of sin. Too often it has been assumed that evil is a divine creation and therefore had no actuality until God gave it place among existing things; whereas evil, as an abstract reality, is no more a created thing than is virtue. So long as God has existed, virtue has existed; and so long as virtue has existed, there has been a conceivable opposite to it, though there was not the slightest possibility that the opposite of virtue could find expression until beings were created who had the ability to sin. Such a deduction is not to be judged as even a mild form of dualism, else the foreknowledge of God which foresaw the present conflict between good and evil, and, in fact, the present conflict itself, is dualism. How in the purpose of God could the Lamb be slain, as an offering for sin, from all eternity if the potential fact of evil were not under divine consideration? On the other hand, the problem of how evil could enter the universe and find manifestation by divine permission only, is most difficult to comprehend. So far as the first human sin is concerned, there was a sinister tempter present to whom much responsibility is assigned; but in the case of the

first sin of the angels the issue is baffling indeed, for neither outward temptation nor inward depravity was present. Certainly a passive divine permission generates no impelling disposition to evil. This feature of the whole inquiry relative to the permission of sin is doubtless its intrinsic essence or nature, and is wholly outside the range of finite comprehension.

As to what purpose the presence of sin in the universe may serve, various suggestions have been advanced, none of which, nor all combined, have proved a complete answer to the question. (a) The ultimate purpose of God being to bring men into the similitude of Himself, they, to reach this end, must come to know to some degree what God knows. They must recognize the evil character of sin. This God knows intuitively, but such knowledge can be gained by creatures only through observation and experience. Obviously, if the divine purpose is to be realized, evil must be permitted its manifestation. What the demonstration of sin and the experience of it may mean to angels, is not revealed. (b) There is that in God which no creature had ever seen—though they had viewed His glory, His wisdom, and His power—, namely, His *grace* toward the fallen and sinful. But no demonstration of grace is possible unless there are objects of grace, and there could be no objects of grace apart from the presence and experience of sin. (c) Likewise, the principle of sin—a thing opposite to virtue—must be brought into complete and final judgment. The universe must be purged of the realities of sin and its possibilities. An abstract thing cannot be rightfully judged until it has become concrete. Thus it may be judged in its actual character, as it was judged at the cross. But the very bringing of evil into concrete form involved its present manifestation in the universe.

From these suggestions, proffered by reason, it may be concluded that the primary divine purpose was neither to avoid the presence of sin in the universe, for God could have prevented it, nor to dispose of it before His appointed time, for its whole reality could be terminated and dismissed at any moment by a word of His command. That there may be many sons in glory capable of singing the song of redemption (Rev. 5:9) and that the whole universe may be purged of all evil, are knowledge-surpassing divine purposes; but these desired ends are wholly dependent for their fruition upon the presence of sin in the world. Such contemplation should never lessen the human estimation of the divine hatred for sin, nor be any encouragement to a creature to sin. That sin is infinitely evil is demonstrated by the ruin it has wrought among the angels, the present depravity of humanity with all its woes, and the fact that no cure for sin could be found at a less cost than the blood of the Son of God. It is near to an unpardonable

assumption for the finite mind to presume to evaluate and sit in judgment upon the course which God pursues. He is trustworthy and should be trusted wholly. “He hath done all things well,” and it is the worthy anticipation of every believer that he shall be satisfied when he awakes in His likeness (Ps. 17:15).

(2) *The Permission of Sin.* Calvinistic theologians generally have made a distinction within the whole field of occurrences embraced in the divine decree, dividing these vast issues into two aggregations—the decrees which they are pleased to style *efficacious* and those which they style *permissive*. The efficacious decrees are those which determine occurrences directly by physical causes (Job 28:26), and by spiritual forces (Phil. 2:13; Eph. 2:8, 10; 4:24). The permissive decrees embrace only moral features which are evil. The term *permissive* intimates that God does not actively promote the execution of the decrees that are thus indicated. In contrast to the efficacious, energizing divine purpose which works to the end that men *will* and *do* His good pleasure, He, by way of permission, “in times past suffered all nations to walk in their own ways” (Acts 14:16); “He gave them their own desire” (Ps. 78:29; cf. 106:15). In respect to His permissive will, it is claimed, God determines not to hinder the course of action which His creatures pursue; but He does determine to regulate and control the bounds and the results of such actions. John Howe has said on this point: “God’s permissive will is his will to permit whatsoever he thinks fit to permit, or, not to hinder; while what he so wills or determines so to permit, he intends also to regulate, and not to behold as an idle unconcerned spectator, but to dispose all those *permissa* unto wise and great ends of his own” (*Decrees*, Lecture I, cited by Shedd, *Theology*, I, pp. 406–7).

Due consideration should be given to the fact that, in permitting sin, God decrees the thing which He hates, and which, as has been noted, would cost Him the greatest of all sacrifices. Such a decree is related to His “good pleasure,” only to the extent that He, for reasons known unto Himself, permits evil its entrance and present procedure. The problem is confessedly a difficult one for all concerned, but it does not stand alone. The permission of evil *continues* with every succeeding hour of human history. That which in His own counsels He did not hinder in the beginning, He does not hinder in all its subsequent development. The manifestation of evil must run its determined course and arrive at its determined ends. The Arminian approach to the solution of this problem assigns to God no relation to the advent of sin into the universe other than that He foreknew that it would eventuate. This view is wholly inadequate, since foreknowledge on the part of God carries with it, of necessity, all the force

of a sovereign purpose. A thing cannot be fore-known that is not certain, and nothing is certain until God's sovereign decree makes it thus. Objection to the doctrine of divine decree is raised by some on the ground that it renders human actions *necessary*. But human action is no less necessary when viewed from the standpoint of foreknowledge than from divine decree. The least of all things which God foreknows can no more be uncertain than the universe itself. God created angels and men with the full cognizance that they would sin. Reason asserts that the responsibility for the issues of His creation must, in the end, rest upon the Creator. On this theme the Scriptures give final revelation. At no point are creatures permitted to trace responsibility from themselves back to God. When God pronounced judgment upon Adam, He did not say *I am partly to blame since I created you*. The blame rested on Adam alone. The race fell in Adam and became what they are, "the children of wrath" (Eph. 2:3), and the original sin with all its fruitage is never linked to God in any way. This principle obtains as well in the sphere of rewards which are yet to be given to the faithful. It is to be acknowledged by all that each and every virtue or worthy service is wrought only by the enabling power of the Spirit of God; yet, when conferring His rewards, God is not expected to say, *I claim the larger share in all you did for me*. The honor and credit for service will rest upon the faithful alone as undividedly as though they had wrought it in their own strength.

The divine permission of evil in the human sphere extends beyond the one sin of Adam. It is written that God hardened Pharaoh's heart to the end that a demonstration of divine power might be fully displayed. By that demonstration the whole multitude of the Egyptians came to know something of Jehovah (Ex. 14:4). Again, and as a revelation concerning God's attitude toward sin, the fact is obvious that God commanded Adam *not* to sin, and yet, unless Adam did sin, there would be no need of the Redeemer, of which Redeemer it had been decreed in eternal ages before Adam that He would come (Rev. 13:8). Similarly, God said to King Saul that if he had kept the commandments given to him, his house would have been established forever (1 Sam. 13:13); yet by decree it was determined and prophecy foretold that the everlasting throne and kingdom for Israel was to come through the tribe of Judah and not through the tribe of Benjamin, to which tribe Saul belonged (Gen. 49:10). To the same end it may be perceived that, in the controversy between Jehovah and Satan as recorded in the first two chapters of Job, Satan admits that he can bring no testing upon Job apart from the permission of Jehovah; and it is stated that Jehovah gave Satan this permission. Again, the experience of an individual who sins is suggestive.

After the sin has been committed, the one who sins could say: *God is to be blamed. He could have prevented me from sinning, but He did not.* That, however, the sinner does *not* say, since there is within him a consciousness that he alone is responsible. Martyrs could have prevented the sin of murder on the part of their slayers had they but recanted from their position relative to the truth in question. Even Christ Himself could have prevented an uncounted number of men from the measureless sin of the crucifixion of the Son of God, had He come down from the cross. All this suggests the obvious fact that the mere avoidance of sin is not always the primary issue.

With all these situations in view, the candid mind refuses to predicate sin of God either directly or indirectly.

It may be concluded, then, that sin is in the universe by the permission of God who hates it perfectly and who, being sovereign, had power to keep it from manifestation, had He chosen to do so. That He did not hinder the manifestation of sin, demonstrates that He, being what He is, must have a purpose in view other than the averting of sin. Here as nowhere else in the affairs of the universe, the end justifies the means.

b. The Problem of the Will. This difficulty lends itself to various presentations. It may in general be stated thus: If God be sovereign and only those things occur which are determined in His decree, is there any sphere left in which a creature may exercise his own free will? Or, again, could the human will ever act outside the decree of God, and, if it does not, is its action free?

To the problem stated in these questions, more or less clarifying answers have been made. But before these answers are considered, it is well to give some attention to the precise nature of the issues involved.

As first created, both angels and men were gladly and perfectly subject to the will of God. Such, indeed, is the present estate of unfallen angels and there is no need to inquire concerning them and the exercise of their wills. They are determined to do only that which pleases God. Freedom to do otherwise is accorded them as fully as it was accorded those angels “who kept not their first estate” (Jude 1:6). They continue in His will and doubtless will do so throughout eternity. The first sin to be committed in heaven and in the universe itself was committed by the greatest of all the angels and before—perhaps ages before—the creation of man. The angel who first sinned in heaven is described, both as to his person and divine appointment, in Ezekiel 28:11–15 and under the title of “the king of Tyrus.” The nature of that sin is recorded in Isaiah 14:12–14 where that angel is introduced under the title of “Lucifer, son of the morning,” and

where the precise character of his fivefold sin is revealed. It will be seen that the sin consists in the exercise of the angel's will in opposition to the will of God. No imagination could picture nor could any language express the awfulness of the moment when, for the first time, a creature opposed the sovereign will of his Creator. It was this same being who as the consummation of his own sin had said, "I will be like the most High" (Isa. 14:14), that later appeared in the Garden of Eden and, following the creation of man, there counseled the first man and woman to *be as God* (Elohim, cf. Dan. 5:11). The A.V. translation, "Be as gods," is open to question, since the name of Deity which is used here by the Spirit is *Elohim*. It is a plural name, indeed, but is the original from which the English title *God* is almost universally translated throughout the Old Testament. He who had sinned and fallen by saying, "I will be like the most High," now proposes to unfallen man that he by disobedience *be as God*. Only in the one respect— independence—could either angel or man be as God.

Over against this, it is revealed that the perfect manhood of Christ was wholly subject to the will of His Father. It is written of Him that, "when he cometh into the world, he saith, ... Lo, I come ... to do thy will, O God" (Heb. 10:5–7; cf. Ps. 40:6–8). There could be no perfect humanity or creaturehood which is not completely subject to the will of God; and the first step in salvation on the part of those for whom redemption is provided is that they shall *obey* the gospel (Acts 5:32; 2 Thess. 1:8; Heb. 5:9; 1 Pet. 4:17). With this provision in view, there is no need that any should be lost who desire to be saved.

The human choice of that which is good, like the choice of that which is evil, originates *within*, as the individual's volition and is *free* in the sense that the individual is not conscious of any necessity being imposed upon him. All human action is included in this conception. Since human action appears to be restrained by nothing other than moral suasion or by emotions, the interrogation is in order as to what extent the human will is free. Over against the sense of freedom to act which the individual experiences, the Scriptures teach that there are far-reaching restraints upon that will. Of the unregenerate it is asserted that they, being children of disobedience, are energized (ἐνεργέω—*energeō*) by Satan (Eph. 2:2), which fact denotes almost unlimited domination over those thus energized. Concerning the regenerate it is revealed that "it is God which worketh [ἐνεργέω] in you" (Phil. 2:13), which fact denotes almost unlimited domination by God over those who are saved. Thus the entire human family— both those who are unsaved and those who are saved—is included, and not one of these is really free from a superior influence. This influence, potent as it is,

may be wholly unrecognized within the range of human experience. The Bible plainly asserts that God influences the unregenerate, as, to some extent, Satan and the power of a fallen nature influence the regenerate. The influence of God upon the unregenerate must be exercised if ever they are to turn to Him in saving faith. Christ declared, “No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him” (John 6:44); and the Apostle has written by the Spirit, “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God” (Eph. 2:8; cf. Phil. 1:29). Much perplexity is caused by the statements that God at times hinders spiritual vision and hardens hearts. He commanded concerning Israel: “Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed” (Isa. 6:10). This is a judgment upon the nation for their evil ways and serves also as the blinding of that people, as predicted, throughout the present age in which Jews and Gentiles alike are confronted with the saving grace of God and His purpose in the outcalling of the Church (Rom. 11:25). Seven times it is stated that God hardened Pharaoh’s heart (Ex. 4:21; 7:3; 9:12; 10:20, 27; 11:10; Rom. 9:17, 18), and three times it is said that Pharaoh hardened his own heart (Ex. 8:15, 32; 9:34; cf. Deut. 2:30. Note, also, Ex. 7:13, 22; 8:19). Thus it is also recorded in 2 Thessalonians 2:11 that God shall give the people of the coming tribulation age “strong delusion” (or, better, “the working of delusion”) that they should believe the falsehood. This delusion is to the end that they all may be judged, who received not the love of the truth so that they might be saved. There is no mere *permissiveness* here or in the case of Pharaoh. God is definitely said to be the *cause* of these states of heart, as He is also the *cause* of Israel’s blindness. In these instances, as elsewhere and often, God apparently asks not to be relieved from the direct responsibility that He causes all that is predicated of Him. It is certain that in the above-named instances, God does not create the evil heart, but rather brings out into overt action that which is latent within the heart to the end that it may be judged. “Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth” (Rom. 9:18).

The will of the creature is a creation of God and in relation to it God sustains no timidity or uncertainty. He made the creature’s will as an instrument by which He might accomplish His sovereign purpose and it is inconceivable that it should ever thwart His purpose. As bearing upon the sovereignty of God over all creatures, the student should read with reverent attention Isaiah 40:10–31 and Job 38:1–41:34.

When exercising his will, man is conscious only of his freedom of action. He determines his course by circumstances, but God is the author of circumstances. Man is impelled by emotions, but God is able to originate and to control every human emotion. Man prides himself that he is governed by experienced judgment, but God is able to foster each and every thought or determination of the human mind. God will mold and direct in all secondary causes until His own eternal purpose is realized. How else could He fulfill His covenants which commit Him to the control of the actions and destinies of men to the end of time and into eternity? His election is *sure*; for whom He predestinates, them—not more or less—He calls; and whom He calls, them—not more or less—He justifies; and whom He justifies, them—not more or less—He glorifies. When predestinating, He assumes the responsibility of creating, calling, saving, and completing according to His own purpose. In calling He moves those to believe to the saving of their souls, whom He has chosen. In justifying He provides a substitutionary, efficacious Savior by whose death and resurrection He is legally able to place the chief of sinners in as perfect a relation to Himself as that of His own Son. And in glorifying He perfects all that infinite love has designed. The precise number that will be glorified will be the precise number and the same individuals—not more or less—that He predestinated. Each one will have believed, have been saved, have been perfected and presented like Christ in glory. Men enter consciously into this great undertaking only at the one point of believing, or responding to the efficacious call. Naturally, it seems to them that they, acting in freedom within the restricted sphere of their consciousness, determine everything. Their action is vital, for no link in God's chain can be lacking. The point where misunderstanding arises is with reference to the fact that, so far as their cognizance serves them, they are certain that they act freely; yet every truly regenerate person will testify that he would not have turned to God apart from that all-important divine drawing of his heart. Divine election is absolute. If this seems to some to be taking things out of the hands of men and committing them into the hands of God, it will at least be conceded that, when thus committed to God, things are in better hands and this, after all, is God's own universe in which He has sovereign right to do after the dictates of His own will. It will also be conceded that the sphere of human action, so far as it can mean anything in the sphere of human consciousness, is left in perfect freedom of action. It should be deemed no crime on the part of God that He discloses to His own elect that His sovereign power and purpose are working through and over all human forces and secondary causes.

Writing of the proposed solutions of the problem which two wills engender, Dr. John Dick states:

Here we come to a question which has engaged the attention, and exercised the ingenuity, and perplexed the wits of men in every age. If God has fore-ordained whatsoever comes to pass, the whole series of events is necessary, and human liberty is taken away. Men are passive instruments in the hands of their Maker; they can do nothing but what they are secretly and irresistibly influenced to do; they are not, therefore, responsible for their actions; and God is the Author of sin. To this objection it is replied, that the divine decree is extrinsic to the human mind; that it exerts no force or influence upon our faculties; and that, while it insures the futurition of events, it leaves them to be accomplished in the exercise of our liberty. While it determines that some things should be brought to pass necessarily, it determines that other things should be brought to pass freely. God has decreed, not only that men should act, but that they should act freely, and agreeably to their rational nature. He determined the act; but men being free agents, it was possible, in respect of their liberty abstractly considered, that they might act differently. When, however, you have reflected upon this answer, and stripped it of its technical form, you will find that it amounts to nothing. It just says, that, notwithstanding the decree of God, man retains his liberty of action; and, consequently, puts us off with an assertion under the pretext of giving us an explanation. Believing that all things are immutably fixed in the divine counsels, we wish to know how the predetermination is consistent with liberty. To what purpose is it to tell us, that God has decreed that some things shall take place necessarily, and other things freely? What information does this answer give us? what doubt does it solve? Still the question remains, How can those actions be free, which were so fixed that they could not be avoided?

It is a more intelligible method to explain the subject by the doctrine, which makes liberty consist in the power of acting according to the prevailing inclination, or the motive which appears strongest to the mind. Those actions are free which are the effect of volition. In whatever manner the state of mind which gave rise to the volition has been produced, the liberty of the agent is neither greater nor less. It is his will alone which is to be considered, and not the means by which it has been determined. If God fore-ordained certain actions, and placed men in such circumstances that the actions would certainly take place agreeably to the laws of the mind, men are nevertheless moral agents, because they act voluntarily, and are responsible for the actions which consent has made their own. Liberty does not consist in the power of acting or not acting, but in acting from choice. The choice is determined by something in the mind itself, or by something external influencing the mind; but, whatever is the cause, the choice makes the action free, and the agent accountable. If this definition of liberty be admitted, you will perceive that it is possible to reconcile the freedom of the will with absolute decrees; but we have not got rid of every difficulty. By this theory, human actions appear to be as necessary as the motions of matter according to the laws-of gravitation and attraction; and man seems to be a machine, conscious of his movements, and consenting to them, but impelled by something different from himself.

Upon such a subject, no man should be ashamed to acknowledge his ignorance. We are not required to reconcile the divine decrees and human liberty. It is enough to know that God has decreed all things which come to pass, and that men are answerable for their actions. Of both these truths we are assured by the Scriptures; and the latter is confirmed by the testimony of conscience. We feel that, although not independent upon God, we are free; so that we excuse ourselves when we have done our duty, and accuse ourselves when we have neglected it. Sentiments of approbation and disapprobation in reference to our own conduct or that of other men, would have no existence in our minds if we believed that men are necessary agents. But the tie which connects the divine decrees and human liberty is invisible. "Such knowledge is too wonderful for us; it is high, we

cannot attain unto it". If every thing in religion were level to the comprehension of reason, there would be no room for faith. It is better to believe humbly, than to reason presumptuously. And presumptuous all those reasonings may be called, which lead to the denial of the immutability of the divine counsels, or of the freedom of the human will; which make man a machine, and God the author of sin.—*Lectures on Theology*, p. 186

2. PREDESTINATION. The term *predestination* signifies a predetermining of destiny. The body of truth which this term represents is properly a subdivision of the doctrine of divine decree. It does not relate to the destiny of material things, but in its broadest meaning it concerns the destiny of all intelligent creatures, including angels and men. For want of specific revelation, little is known concerning the destiny of angels. It is assumed that the holy angels will abide in that estate and they are seen in the eternal city (Heb. 12:22–24). Those angels which kept not their first estate are destined to the lake of fire (Matt. 25:41; cf. Rev. 20:10), and there is no intimation that any redemption is ever offered to them. A far more determining revelation is found in the Bible as to the destiny of men. And as certainly as God foreordains whatsoever cometh to pass, the future of each human being is marked off in God's eternal plan. Like the larger doctrine of divine decree, this particular aspect of predestination is fraught with perplexities, all of which, it may be believed, are due to the restrictions which encompass the human mind. Since divine predestination is taught in the Bible without diminution, it is to be received and believed. Rationalistic attempts to modify this revelation, as might be expected, have resulted in greater complications.

Outside the predetermined destiny which belongs to Israel and the nations who "inherit the earth," the doctrine of predestination falls into two divisions, namely, (1) election and (2) retribution. In its earlier and basic significance the term *retribution* had to do as much with the rewards which accrue to the saved as to the penalties which accrue to the unsaved. Election and retribution are counterparts of each other. There can be no election of some that does not imply the rejection of others.

a. Election. The election which is set forth in the Scriptures, apart from the elect nation Israel—not now under consideration—is that favor of God, notably a full and free salvation, which is accorded to some, but not to all. Of some it is said that they are "chosen in the Lord" (Rom. 16:13); "chosen ... to salvation" (2 Thess. 2:13); "chosen ... in him before the foundation of the world" (Eph. 1:4); predestined to the "adoption of children" (Eph. 1:5); "to be conformed to the image of his Son" (Rom. 8:29); "elect according to the foreknowledge of God"

(1 Pet. 1:2); and “vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory” (Rom. 9:23). The term *election* should not be construed to mean only a general divine purpose to *provide* salvation for all men. It refers to an express divine purpose to confer salvation on some, but not all. Nor should the term imply that God will bless those who believe. It rather specifies those who will believe. Some, but not all, are written in the Lamb’s book of life. Evasion of the plain words of Scripture secures nothing in the understanding of this most solemn subject. Whatever may be the case of the nonelect, it is written of the saved that He “hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began” (2 Tim. 1:9); “according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love” (Eph. 1:4).

There is no mere arbitrary caprice in divine election, for God in this, as in all He does, is governed by infinite wisdom, holiness, and love. As the ground of His election, He foresaw no difference in character of one over another. His choice is not based on anticipated worthiness. Election is an act of grace apart from works. Neither faith nor good works is the cause of divine election. They are rather the fruit of election. Men are not first holy and then chosen; but are first chosen and then holy. It was that they might be holy that they were chosen. The destiny of Isaac’s sons was determined before they had done anything good or bad, that the fact of sovereign election might stand without complication (Rom. 9:11–13). The fact that a supposed *conditional* election is the belief of the majority is due, doubtless, to the reluctance on the part of man to admit that no merit resides in his natural self.

To the same purpose, the election of God is *immutable*. Some have contended that it is in the power of the elect to disappoint the calculations of the Almighty. Such sentiments as these are written: “It is false to say that election is confirmed from everlasting.” “Men may make their election void.” They may “change themselves from believers to unbelievers,” from elect to nonelect. To such teachers, there is no word or work of God that is sure. Nevertheless, God hath said: “Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure” (Isa. 46:9, 10).

The supralapsarians hold that God’s ultimate purpose in creation is the manifestation of His perfection and that His mercy will be revealed in the

election of some and His justice will be revealed in the reprobation of all others. Thus far a solemn truth is declared; but they then advance to an inconsistency. To reach their desired end, they claim that God first decreed to create man and then to place him in circumstances wherein he would fall, and to send His Son to die for those He chose for salvation. In this arrangement, God is seen to treat the fall of man only as a means to an end. Men were elected or rejected before the decree concerning the fall and without reference to the fall. Thus they were not seen as sinners, but as creatures, and as such they were chosen or rejected without a ground for their rejection or without an occasion for the exercise of grace. The effect of this doctrinal scheme is to rob God of all pity and love and to present Him as One who disregards the suffering of His creatures. Such a doctrine may answer to the cold, erring reason of man, but it wholly disregards the full testimony of the Word of God wherein the compassion of God is stressed.

The sublapsarians contend that, in the order of His elective decree, God first permitted the fall and then determined the destiny of men from that starting point as a meritless position before Him. This conception does at least provide a ground for the exercise of grace and a basis for the condemnation of the lost.

Closely related to the lapsarian controversy is the question whether some who are predestined unto life were so chosen in view of the fact that Christ would die for them, that is, for His sake, or that He did die for them because they were the chosen of God. The latter would seem to be true, since God first loved the world and, because of that love, He gave His only begotten Son.

The doctrine of election is a cardinal teaching of the Scriptures. Doubtless, it is attended with difficulties which are a burden upon all systems of theology alike. However, no word of God may be altered or neglected. No little help is gained when it is remembered that revelation and not reason is the guide to faith. When the former has spoken, the latter is appointed to listen and acquiesce.

b. *Retribution.* There is that in the purpose of God which is styled *retribution*. As an act of God, the term means that some are rejected whom He does not elect. The word *preterition* has been preferred by some as being less severe. Surely, no thoughtful believer would choose to employ terms in relation to the doom of the lost which are unnecessarily strong. The theme is one of surpassing solemnity and it is no evidence of compassion when men purposely express themselves respecting the future estate of the unregenerate in harsh and unfeeling terms. It is a theme which should ever bring one to tears. It is intended by the choice of the word *preterition* to imply that God assumes no active attitude toward the

nonelect other than to pass them by, leaving them under the just condemnation which their lost estate deserves. Thus it is supposed that, to some extent, God is relieved of responsibility if it is predicated of Him that He *pretermits* rather than *reprobates* the nonelect. Such distinctions are more a delusion of words than a discrimination of facts. Apart from this awful theme and under any circumstances more congenial, such a labored selection of words would hardly be suffered. It is impossible actively to choose some from a company and not, at the same time and by the same process, actively to reject the remainder. Yet a real distinction exists in the divine way of dealing with one class as compared with the other. New and wholly undeserved blessings are extended to the elect, while the nonelect reap only the just recompense of their lost estate. God does for one class what He does not do for the other, but both aggregations pass before His mind and become objects of His determination. Exceedingly painful expressions are used in the Scriptures to describe the divine decision regarding the nonelect. They are “not written” in the book of life (Rev. 13:8); they are “vessels of wrath fitted to destruction” (Rom. 9:22); they were “before ... ordained to this condemnation” (Jude 1:4); they “stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed” (1 Pet. 2:8). God is said to love some less than others (Mal. 1:2, 3). Some are called the “election,” and some are called “the rest” (Rom. 11:7). A dispassionate reading of Romans, chapters nine and eleven, will result in the assurance that, whatever men may believe or disbelieve regarding the matter, the Word of God is bold in declaring that some are appointed to blessing and others are to experience condemnation. Human limitations and perverse reasoning can hardly render true judgments on these issues. It is plain that the doom of the nonelect is not apart from a due consideration of their unworthiness. God is presented as an object of adoration and love, which He could not be were He revealed as One who merely exercised authority apart from goodness and justice. The real problem may be stated thus: Was God just in decreeing to reprobate transgressors of His holy will? In other words, Is evil worthy of eternal separation from God? Upon this issue the human mind can throw no light. What the true nature of sin is as valued by God who is infinitely holy, must be accepted in the terms of revelation. Being against God, sin assumes the quality of infinity. Naturally, the inquiry arises, Could God not have elected to save all? To the same end, another inquiry arises, Would He not have been justified in reprobating all? To all such questions, though sincere, no reply is possible. God is proved to be worthy of unquestioning trust, and assurance is given that He is doing what is best. That conclusion will be

embraced by all when the task is done. In the one company, He is demonstrating His grace; in the other, His justice may be seen. The nonelect are judged for their demerit, while the elect, who are in every respect as unworthy, are made the objects of His grace.

One danger which may result from attending upon these themes and which must be due to human misunderstanding, is that the heart may, for the time, lose sight of the revelation that God is of infinite compassion, not desiring that any should perish, and because of that truth no person, no matter how sinful, who desires to be saved, need fail of that eternal grace. The invitation is to all. Nothing is more agreeable to God than the exercise of His grace.

Reason symphonizes with revelation in asserting that every part of God's creation will serve a purpose, and revelation adds that it will redound to His glory; even the wrath of man shall praise Him (Ps. 76:10). Thus it is intimated that no evil shall go beyond the bounds of that which may in the end be to His glory. That the wicked may contribute to God's final glory has been well stated in the Westminster Confession: "The rest of mankind, God was pleased, according to the unsearchable counsel of his own will, whereby he extendeth or withholdeth mercy as he pleaseth, for the glory of his sovereign power over his creatures, to pass by, and to ordain them to dishonor and wrath for their sin, to the praise of his glorious justice" (chap. III, sec. VII).

3. OBJECTIONS TO THE DOCTRINE OF DIVINE DECREE. Almost endless discussion has emerged over the doctrine of divine decree and its subdivision, predestination. The major disagreement between Calvinistic and Arminian systems centers at this point. No phase of the subject has been neglected and it is impractical, were it possible, to undertake in this work a review or analysis of these extended arguments. The usual theological library is replete with such material.

Concerning objections in general it may be said: Even reason in its unfallen state would not have been qualified to sit in judgment on supernatural revelation. How much less is fallen reason able so to do! The Holy Spirit has spoken, and the sovereign determination of God is as clearly asserted in the pages of the Bible as are any of the prerogatives of men. After all, what does man know about God or the issues involved in reaching those ends which infinite wisdom has predetermined? It ill becomes the wisest of men to speculate even on what God ought, or ought not, to do. Much that is written on these subjects is distinguished for its shocking irreverence. Objections to the doctrine of divine

decree are usually in two classes, namely, (1) those which involve the moral character of God, and (2) those which involve the moral agency of man. Of the latter, no word will be added here beyond what has gone before.

a. *The Justice of God.* Predestination, it is objected, represents God as a respecter of persons. He would be a respecter of persons if among those that were all deserving He saved some and passed by the remainder; but not one of all the fallen human race has within himself the ground of any claim upon God. Those He saves are saved without the slightest respect to human merit. God acts in saving grace as a *sovereign* and not as a *judge*. The Word of God, which so insistently states the absolute authority and freedom of God, also declares by the mouth of the Apostle Peter, “Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons” (Acts 10:34, cf. Lev. 19:15). With immediate issues in view, men inquire why God caused any creature to exist whom He foreknew would be lost forever; but this question implies that God was free to create or not create, it also assumes that the welfare of each human being is the primary divine objective. Though such a supposition is the natural conclusion of a self-centered human being, it has little or no support from the Scriptures. The whole query penetrates far beyond the border of human understanding and can only tend to wrong thoughts concerning God.

b. *The Love of God.* It is challenged that since God is revealed as loving all men, He could consistently reprobate none. In an attempt to meet this assertion some Limited Redemptionists have taken the ground that God loves only the elect; but such a conclusion is evidently reached quite apart from the teachings of the Bible. It is not only contrary to the teaching of the Bible, but it dishonors God and hinders all freedom in gospel preaching. There is a real difficulty involved in this challenge; yet it is easily possible that, while having genuine and universal affection for all His creatures and desires for their good—which is the testimony of the Scriptures—, yet for greater reasons unrevealed to men, He does not gratify all His desires. Intelligent men repress their desires and affections in the interests of greater ends. Such action is as possible in the range of divine reason as it is in the range of human reason.

c. *Predestination Predetermines that Men Shall Sin.* Such a revolting inference might on the surface seem to some minds to have a foundation. Already it has been pointed out that neither the Bible nor the consciousness of men ever accuses God of promoting sin; nor do the Scriptures retreat from the assuring averment that God has preordained all things which come to pass. Such a seeming

contradiction is harmonized in God, if not in the mind of man. No more clarifying illustration of this seeming contradiction is to be found than is involved in the death of Christ and God's eternal purpose in that death. God had determined that His Lamb should be slain and predicted that He would be slain at the hands of wicked men. His prediction even anticipated the very words these men would utter at the time of Christ's death (Ps. 22:8). The manner of Christ's death and the precise words of His executioners were not merely foreknown by a foresight which determines nothing. These wicked men did their deed and uttered their words under that necessity which predetermination imposes; but within the sphere of the consciousness of these men, they did precisely what they wanted to do without thought of necessity. They would have resented with vehemence any suggestion that they were fulfilling to the letter the most important decree of God. The strange harmony between predestination and human sin is asserted in Acts 2:23, "Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain."

d. Predestination and the Means to Its Ends. This objection inquires, Will the elect be saved whether they give their salvation concern and conform themselves to the truth or not? In reply it is stated that predestination includes all the required means and anticipates every step in reaching its ends. If the elect must be called and justified in order to be prepared for the glory, God asserts that He will attend to their call and their justification. The call will include the response of saving faith, which in its experimental exercise will be to each individual as the unaided action of his own free will. Having thus decreed human free will as a necessary step in the fulfilling of all His eternal purpose, it becomes as essential in the sight of God as any other link in the chain.

e. Predestination and Gospel Preaching. The objector questions (a) the need of a proclamation of the gospel to those that are elect, (b) the uselessness of it to the nonelect, and (c) the sincerity in the preaching of the gospel to the nonelect. The first issue has been answered in the preceding paragraph. Regarding the second issue, it may be stated that no man knows who are elect or who are not, therefore the divine instruction to the preacher is that he go into all the world and preach the gospel to *every* creature. Concerning the question of divine sincerity in offering the gospel to those who are nonelect, it may be observed that one of the sins of the unsaved for which a just penalty rests upon them is the sin of rejection of Christ, or of unbelief. It is evident no rejection can be predicated of those who have not had the gospel presented unto them, and therefore have not

actually refused it (Rom. 2:12).

f. Predestination and Fatalism. The term *fatalism* may mean that all things are so predetermined by God that no human choice is possible or “that all events, including human choices, are absolutely determined in a mechanical way by their antecedent physical causes; physical determinism” (New Standard Dictionary, *s.v.*). This conception is gained whenever the sovereignty of God is stressed to the exclusion of the free action of men, or when God is left out of the reckoning and men imagine they are driven by blind forces over which they have no control. The most important choice the human heart can ever make is that of the acceptance of Christ as Savior, and the will of man alone is appealed to in this decision. If man is free in the realm of things most vital and eternal, it is to be supposed that He is equally free in matters of lesser import.

g. Divine Decree and Human Suffering. This, the last of the objections to divine sovereignty to be examined, calls the wisdom and goodness of God in question in view of the suffering and death which is in the world. A theodicy is indicated, that is, a defense of the worthiness of God in the face of all the distress and agony that is in the world. Much that has gone before in this discussion has been to the one end that God may be vindicated against the conclusions of human misunderstanding. The contents of any theodicy will naturally be determined by the number of problems presented for consideration. Only the problem of human suffering remains in this inventory. This issue has been before the race since the days of Job. Men have been perplexed, not only by the presence of human suffering in the world where God who is infinite goodness reigns, but by the fact that often the wicked prosper while the godly languish in suffering and loss. As recorded in Psalm 73, the writer of the Psalm testifies that he was “plagued, and chastened” every morning as he beheld the prosperity of the wicked. It was not until he went into the sanctuary that he understood their end. God has revealed Himself to His own in the world. They are able to rise above the present distress because of the surpassing assurance with which their knowledge of God enriches them.

Suffering may be as a discipline for the saint or as a penalty upon the sinner (1 Pet. 3:17). In either case there is but one Hand that bestows—He who never errs or fails—He who can be and should be trusted implicitly—He who out of this midnight of evil will yet bring forth His own righteousness as the noonday. Suffering is a means which God employs to the realization of His most perfect will. He is never wrong; He is never mistaken. “Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing

happened unto you: but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy. If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified. But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men's matters. Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf" (1 Pet. 4:12–16). Even Christ with all His perfection was not spared suffering. It is written: "Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin" (1 Pet. 4:1).

Writing on the general theme of objections to the doctrine of divine decree and with a word of timely warning, Dr. John Dick states:

It can serve no great purpose to muster up objections against the infallibility of the Divine decrees, or the responsibility of man; to listen to them when proposed by others; to revolve them in our minds; to perplex ourselves with attempts to answer them, and to allow ourselves to be disquieted and to doubt because our endeavours are not successful. Although we should prove to our satisfaction, as many have done to theirs, that the decrees of God are not absolute, or that man is not free, all that we have gained is, to confirm our minds in the belief of a falsehood; for both doctrines must be true, as they are expressly declared in the Scriptures. To their authority let us bow; and by their decision let us regulate our thoughts and our conduct. If we still oppose our reasonings to their dictates, we must take our course; but let us beware lest we dispute ourselves into infidelity or atheism, and seek a refuge from our doubts in the rejection of revelation, because it inculcates truths which to us appear contradictory, or in the cheerless conclusion, that we live in a fatherless world, where chance bears sway, that man is the phantom of an hour, the sport of accident and passion, and that, as he knows not whence he came, so he cannot tell whither he is going. In opposition to this comfortless and impious conclusion, let us hold fast the creed which is consonant to reason as well as to revelation, that the Supreme Being manages the affairs of the universe which he created; that all creatures are dependent upon him, and all events are subject to his control: that while good men obey him from choice, the wrath and wayward passions of the bad are subservient to his design; that, while his almighty power bends them to his purpose, he is a moral Governor and Judge, whose righteousness will be displayed in punishing transgressors, even for those actions which were the means of executing his own decrees.—*Lectures on Theology*, p. 195

5. MAJOR MANIFESTATIONS OF THE DIVINE DECREE. Various major manifestations of divine decree should be noted specifically:

a. Creation. The Biblical account of creation declares that of His own free will and not of necessity, and by an act rather than by a process, God created from nothing all things that exist. A distinction is indicated between the revelation that a sufficient cause, in the Person of the Eternal God, created all things from nothing, and the atheistic notion that matter is either eternal or self-evolved. The phrase *creatio prima seu immediata* denotes that form of creation which brought

all necessary elements into existence. The phrase *creatio secunda seu mediata* denotes a subsequent act of God by which He brought order and form out of the chaos which followed the original creation. This is the order of events as set forth in the opening verses of the Bible. There are three general attitudes toward the Biblical account of creation, namely, (a) that it is only allegorical, (b) that it is the basis for a spiritualizing process of teaching, and (c) that it is historical. The last-named attitude is the only one which conforms to the narrative as given in Genesis and to the upwards of fifty subsequent statements in all the Sacred Text (cf. Ps. 33:6; 148:5). Throughout the Bible, God is honored as the sovereign Creator, and all things created are absolutely dependent upon Him (cf. Neh. 9:6; Acts 17:28; Rom. 11:36; 1 Cor. 8:6; Col. 1:16; Rev. 4:11). The Bible also asserts that God existed before the things which He created (cf. Ps. 90:2; John 17:5, 24). The Bible as clearly assigns the work of creation to each of the three Persons of the God-head separately—to the Father (1 Cor. 8:6); to the Son (John 1:3; Col. 1:16, 17; Heb. 1:10–12); to the Spirit (Gen. 1:2; Job 26:13; 33:4; Ps. 33:6; 104:29, 30; Isa. 40:13); and to God—*Elohim*, the plural name (Gen. 1:1, 26).

It remains to be observed that since God alone was in existence before the creation of the universe, He must have created all things for His own pleasure and so that He who is worthy might be glorified.

b. The Program of the Ages. The unrestrained, sovereign purpose of God is seen in the ordering of the succession of the ages. That God has a program of the ages is disclosed in many passages (cf. Deut. 30:1–10; Dan. 2:31–45; 7:1–28; 9:24–27; Hos. 3:4, 5; Matt. 23:37–25:46; Acts 15:13–18; Rom. 11:13–29; 2 Thess. 2:1–12; Rev. 2:1–22:31). Likewise, there are well-defined periods of time related to the divine purpose. The Apostle Paul writes of the period between Adam and Moses (Rom. 5:14); John speaks of the law as given by Moses, but of grace and truth as coming by Christ (John 1:17). Christ also speaks of the “times of the Gentiles” (Luke 21:24), which are evidently to be distinguished from Jewish “times and seasons” (Acts 1:7; 1 Thess. 5:1). Likewise, He spoke of a hitherto unannounced period between His two advents and indicated its distinctive features (Matt. 13:1–51), and predicted a yet future time of “great tribulation” and defined its character (Matt. 24:9–31). There are “last days” for Israel (Isa. 2:1–5) as well as “last days” for the Church (2 Tim. 3:1–5). The Apostle John anticipates a period of one thousand years and relates this to the reign of Christ, at which time the Church, His bride, will reign with Him (Rev. 20:1–6). That Christ will sit on the throne of David and reign over the house of Jacob forever is

declared by the angel Gabriel (Luke 1:31–33), and that there will be an ever abiding new heaven and new earth is as clearly revealed (Isa. 65:17; 66:22; 2 Pet. 3:13; Rev. 21:1). In Hebrews 1:1, 2 a sharp contrast is drawn between “time past” when God spoke to the fathers by the prophets and “these last days” when He is speaking unto us by His Son. Similarly, it is clearly disclosed that there are *ages past* (Eph. 3:5; Col. 1:26), the *present age* (Rom. 12:2; Gal. 1:4) and the *age, or ages, to come* (Eph. 2:7; Heb. 6:5; note Eph. 1:10, where the future age is termed *the dispensation*—οἰκονομία—of the fullness—πλήρωμα—of times—καιρός).

The use of αἰῶνας in Hebrews 1:2 and 11:3 with its almost universal reference to *time*, either bounded or unbounded, is of particular significance as bearing on the divine arrangements of time-periods. The former with ἐποίησεν τοὺς αἰῶνας and the latter with κατηρτίσθαι τοὺς αἰῶνας have been much disputed. Dean Alford states: “The main classes of interpreters are two. (1) Those who see in the word its ordinary meaning of an ‘age of time’; (2) those who do not recognize such meaning, but suppose it to have been merged in that of ‘the world,’ or ‘the worlds.’ To (1) belong the Greek Fathers; and some others. On the other hand, (2) is the view of the majority of Commentators” (*N.T. for English Readers*, Vol. II, Part II, p. 599). In several passages, including the two in question, Vincent declares αἰῶνας to refer to “the universe, the aggregate of the ages or periods, and their contents which are included in the duration of the world.” The word, he states, “means a period of time Otherwise it would be impossible to account for the plural, or such qualifying expressions as *this age*, or the *age to come*” (*Word Studies*, IV, 59).

Considering the accepted meaning of αἰῶνας, the natural interpretation of the passage in question is that God did by Christ arrange the successive periods, far beyond καιρός within χρόνος, extending indeed to things eternal or from everlasting to everlasting. This interpretation held, according to Alford, by the Greek Fathers, though not free from difficulties, is of more than passing import to those who do discern the fact, force, and fruition of God’s time-periods.

c. Preservation. This form of divine activity is but the continuous working of God by which He maintains and consummates the objects of His creation. The doctrine of *preservation* answers the claim of Deistic philosophy, and asserts that the sovereign decree of God will be perfected forever (cf. Neh. 9:6; Ps. 36:6; Col. 1:17; Heb. 1:2, 3).

d. Providence. Again, God is revealed in providence as the sovereign One who, that His eternal purposes may be revealed, molds all events both moral and

physical. While preservation continues the existence of things, providence directs their progress. It extends to all the works of God. Dr. A. A. Hodge thus explains Biblical providence:

God having from eternity absolutely decreed whatsoever comes to pass, and having in the beginning created all things out of nothing by the word of his power, and continuing subsequently constantly present to every atom of his creation, upholding all things in being and in the possession and exercise of all their properties, he ALSO continually controls and directs the actions of all his creatures thus preserved, so that while he never violates the law of their several natures, he yet infallibly causes all actions and events singular and universal to occur according to the eternal and immutable plan embraced in his decree. There is a design in providence. God has chosen his great end, the manifestation of his own glory, but in order to that end he has chosen innumerable subordinate ends; these are fixed; and he has appointed all actions and events in their several relations as means to those ends; and he continually so directs the actions of all creatures that all these general and special ends are brought to pass precisely at the time, by the means, and in the mode and under the conditions, which he from eternity proposed.—*Outlines of Theology*, p. 262

The doctrine of providence may be extended to embrace nearly all that enters into both naturalistic and Biblical theism. It falls naturally into a fourfold division: (a) *preventative* (cf. Gen. 20:6; Ps. 19:13): God uses parents, governments, laws, customs, public opinion, His Word, His Spirit, and conscience as means to a providential impediment to evil. The Spirit, the Word, and prayer avail much for the Christian; (b) *permissive*, which embraces that which God does not restrain (cf. Deut. 8:2; 2 Chron. 32:31; Hos. 4:17; Rom. 1:24, 28); (c) *directive*, by which action God guides the ways of men and often outside their consciousness of that guidance (cf. Gen. 50:20; Ps. 76:10; Isa. 10:5; John 13:27; Acts 4:28); (d) *determinative*, by which action of God He decides and executes all things after the counsel of His own will.

The providence of God so combines with human freedom that, though the ways of God are sure, it is in no sense *fatalism*. Likewise, the providence of God is the opposite of chance. The divine care reaches to the least detail of life as well as to its greater aspects. Certain attributes of God demand the exercise of His providence. His justice prompts Him to secure all moral good; His benevolence prompts Him to care for His own; His immutability insures that what He has begun He will complete; and His power is sufficient to execute all His desire.

e. Prayer. Though God conditions certain actions of His own on prayer, it does not follow that those things thus conditioned are uncertain. This, again, is the problem of the divine and human wills being combined in such a way as to realize the precise divine purpose through the free choice of men. Efficacious prayer is to the glory of the Father (John 14:13), in the name of the Son (John

14:14), and in the enabling power of the Holy Spirit (Rom. 8:26, 27). Compliance with these conditions insures that the human will is in agreement with the divine will. Transforming things, mighty indeed, are wrought by prayer, but only such things as comport with the will and purpose of God. Why, then, should prayer be offered? Only because of the fact that the divine purpose, which the answer to prayer represents, includes the prayer feature. It is as much decreed that it shall be done in answer to prayer as it is decreed that it shall be done at all. “We must add to this that true prayer is not *merely* human, but sustained and carried on by the Divine Spirit as the Spirit of prayer, and that it has to such an extent a prophetic character, in which the Providence of God is one with the presentiment of man. Hence the sealing of prayer by the Amen. ... Prayer comes forth from the eternal freedom of the child, and goes back to the eternal freedom of the Father” (Lange, cited by Van Oosterzee, *Dogmatics*, I, 350).

f. *Miracles.* That in the physical world which surpasses all known human or moral powers and is therefore ascribed to supernatural agencies is called miracle. It is a sufficient power acting outside the range of natural causes and effects. But miracles do not imply that God has introduced something unforeseen in His eternal purpose, for the miracle, like all else, is included in His eternal Plan. Miracles are such only as viewed by men; to God they are but extraordinary events in the providence of God. Though miracles are wonders (Acts 2:19) in the eyes of men and display the power of God, their true purpose is that of a “sign” (Matt. 12:38; John 2:18). They certify and authenticate a teacher or his doctrine. For this reason false doctrine has always resorted to supposed supernatural occurrences to establish its claims. Satan is accredited with miraculous power (2 Thess. 2:9; Rev. 13:13–15). Since the Word of God has been written in its perfection and preserved, there is no further need of signs. The present need is the guidance of the Spirit into all truth, which ministry is provided for all who will yield themselves to Him.

g. *Grace.* Though many objectives are disclosed, the supreme purpose of God in creation seems to be the demonstration of His *grace*. The manifestation of divine grace as it is in Christ (Titus 2:11) and as it will be displayed by the redeemed in glory (Eph. 2:7), is not only within the divine decree, but is a major feature of that decree.

Conclusion

As intimated at the beginning of this discussion on the doctrine of divine decree, the secret things of God cannot be solved by any finite mind. As much has been attempted as becomes any man, namely, some unnecessary misunderstandings have been examined; and if the problems have been relieved to that extent, the work is not in vain.

In concluding the translation of about sixty-five pages on the decree of God and predestination by Hermann Venema in his *Institutes of Theology*, the translator—Rev. Alex. W. Brown—writes a comment which may well serve as a concluding observation to what has here been written on this so difficult division of theology:

After the lengthy and ingenious discussion by the author on the subject of predestination, we confess we feel ourselves just where we were. In attempting to reconcile the doctrine of election with the universality of the Gospel offer and with the expressed unwillingness of God that men should perish; he has only shifted the difficulty, he has not removed it. The fact is, they are hopelessly irreconcilable in our present state, and those who have made the attempt had much better have left it alone. It is a truth revealed in Scripture that all who are or who shall be saved are and shall be so in consequence of the eternal purpose of God, in other words, that all believers are elected persons, chosen in Christ before the world began, and that none will believe in Christ and be made partakers of his salvation except those who are the subjects of this divine purpose or decree. It is also revealed in Scripture that there is a divine purpose in regard to those who are not elected or chosen. It is impossible, we think, to admit the one without admitting the other. Election is an act of mind on the part of God in regard to some—reprobation or preterition or whatever other name may be employed is also an act of mind on the part of God in regard to others—he refused to choose them. Do we read for instance that the names of some were written in the book of life? we read also that the names of others were not so written. Do we find some spoken of as vessels of mercy prepared afore unto glory? we find others spoken of as vessels of wrath fitted for destruction. Is it said that some were chosen in Christ before the world began? it is also said that others were of old ordained to condemnation, who stumble at the word, being disobedient, whereunto also they were appointed. Now we must take God's word as we find it and receive its statements as true with whatever difficulties the reception of them may be attended. We may not be able to see how the existence of these decrees can consist with human liberty and responsibility or with the justice and goodness of God. But the fact, is, we have nothing whatever to do with the reconciling of these apparently contrary things. That is God's province, not ours. If we find both clearly revealed, we are bound to receive both. Our reason must be silent before this and every other mystery contained in his word. It must be treated just as Zacharias was treated by the angel. When the priest to whom he communicated the glad news of the birth of a son, asked "Whereby shall I know this?" the angel stops his mouth; "Behold," says he, "thou shalt be dumb." Just as Hagar, while obedient to Sarah, was entertained as a servant, but when she usurped and contradicted and would not submit was expelled from the household of Abraham, so reason as long as it is subject to revelation is to be kindly entertained as a useful handmaid, but the moment it begins to oppose faith is to be abandoned and cast out as giving law to one who is invested with an authority to which it should meekly and willingly submit. The duty devolving upon those who preach and hear the Gospel in regard to this difficulty is plain. The doctrines of election and reprobation are to be believed because God has revealed them. But in delivering the message of mercy the preacher has nothing whatever to do with them—he must proclaim that message as if there were no such things in

existence, and no more allow them to interfere with his presenting to all the offer of a free and full salvation in Christ, than the physician would in discharging the duties of his profession. There is predestination in the latter case as well as in the former—a predestination that embraces both the end and the means. Some are appointed to die, others to recover. But he deals with all, as if his skill in every case were to be followed with success. The same holds true in regard to those who hear the Gospel. The fact that God has chosen some to eternal life and passed by the rest should not be allowed to interfere with the duty that devolves upon them to seek to be saved, any more than the fact of God's decrees extending to all the ordinary occupations of life should interfere in any degree with the attention they should give to these. Their rule of duty in both cases is not what God has purposed but what God has said. All events are foreordained—those which relate to their temporal as well as those which relate to their spiritual condition. But just as, without taking into consideration the fact that the day and hour of their death are fixed before which they will not leave the world, and beyond which all their efforts cannot carry them, they nevertheless labour as strenuously as if the preservation of their life depended solely upon their own exertion; in the same way, without seeking to pry into the mysteries of God's government in spiritual matters, they should render submission to the statement "he that believeth shall be saved", and labour as diligently in the use of means that salvation in this way may be theirs as if success depended wholly upon themselves. Let them give all diligence to prove their calling by closing with the offer of mercy held out to them and by striving to do the will of their heavenly Father, and then they may rest assured of their election.—Pp. 334–35

Chapter XVI

THE NAMES OF DEITY

AS NO ARGUMENT is presented in the Old Testament to prove the existence of God, so in like manner there is no argument advanced to demonstrate that God may be known. Men of those times knew God because of His presence with them. That truth does not imply His bodily appearance. In fact there is little that borders on a physical conception nor, on the other hand, is there much doctrine that establishes the fact of the divine essence. The Old Testament's delineation of God is almost wholly ethical. With reference to the way in which God is revealed, Dr. A. B. Davidson in his *Theology of the Old Testament* states:

The peculiarity of the Old Testament conception rather comes out when the question is raised, *how* God is known. Here we touch a fundamental idea of the Old Testament—the idea of *Revelation*. If men know God, it is because He has made Himself known to them. This knowledge is due to what He does, not to what men themselves achieve. As God is the source of all life, and as the knowledge of Him is the highest life, this knowledge cannot be reached by any mere effort of man. If man has anything of God, he has received it from God, who communicates Himself in love and grace. The idea of man reaching to a knowledge or fellowship of God through his own efforts is wholly foreign to the Old Testament. God speaks, He appears; man listens and beholds. God brings Himself nigh to men; He enters into a covenant or personal relation with them; He lays commands on them. They receive Him when He approaches; they accept His will and obey His behests. Moses and the prophets are nowhere represented as thoughtful minds reflecting on the Unseen, and forming conclusions regarding it, or ascending to elevated conceptions of Godhead. The Unseen manifests itself before them, and they know it ... But, however much the Old Testament reposes on the ground that all knowledge of God comes from His revealing Himself, and that there is such a true and real revelation, it is far from implying that this revelation of God is a full display of Him as He really is. An exhaustive communication of God cannot be made, because the creature cannot take it in. Neither, perhaps, can God communicate Himself as He is. Hence Moses saw only a form, saw only His back parts. His face could not be beheld. Thus to the patriarchs He appeared in the human form. So in the tabernacle His presence was manifested in the smoke that hung over the Ark. So, too, in Eden He was known to be present in the cherubim, who were the divine chariot on which He rode. All these things signified His presence, while at the same time intimating that in Himself He could not be seen.—Pp. 34, 35

Bible names of persons have a meaning, which meaning usually conveys some impression as to the intrinsic character of the one who bore the name. This truth is accentuated by the fact that, when a person acquired some new significance, the name was changed accordingly—Abram to Abraham, Jacob to Israel, Solomon to Jedidiah. God Himself calls Moses and Cyrus by name. The disclosure of character through a name is true of Deity to an absolute degree. God has not only inspired the pages whereon His names appear, but He has

announced or revealed His names specifically to men and with special reference to the meaning of these names. In the beginning Adam gave names to all things God had created, but the names of God are self-revealed. Thus the student enters at this point on no field of idle speculation. Far-reaching revelation is involved, and truth concerning God which is disclosed in no other way and by no other means. A large place, therefore, should be given to this source of truth. All theistic investigation is with the purpose in view that the reality which God is may become known by man, and attention given to the divine names and their meaning will be most advantageous. Dr. W. Lindsay Alexander writes: “In proceeding to consider the Bible revelations concerning God, the first thing that demands our attention is the *Names* by which God there designates Himself. As the Bible professes to make known to us, not God as He is in Himself, but His *Name* or outward manifestation of Himself to His intelligent creatures, so it attaches special importance to the words by which this manifestation is indicated to us. All the names by which the Bible designates God are significant; and thus each of them stands as the symbol of some truth concerning Him which He would have us to receive. All this renders it of importance to us that we should rightly apprehend the import of the Divine Names in Scripture” (*System of Biblical Theology*, I, 25).

Noticeable, indeed, is the occurrence that the names of Deity fall into groupings of three, some of these instances being (1) the three primary names of Deity in the Old Testament—*Jehovah*, *Elohim*, and *Adonai*; (2) three major compounds with *Jehovah*—*Jehovah Elohim*, *Adonai Jehovah*, *Jehovah Sabaoth*; (3) three compounds with *El*—*El Shaddai*, *El Elyon*, and *El Olam*; (4) three general classes of divine names—the one proper and peculiar name *Jehovah*, appellatives such as *Elohim* and *Adonai*, and attributive or epithetical types such as *Almighty* and *God of Hosts*; (5) the full title of Deity in the New Testament—*Father*, *Son*, and *Holy Spirit*; (6) the full title of the Second Person—*Lord Jesus Christ*; and (7) the trinitarian distinction—*The First Person*, *The Second Person*, and *The Third Person*.

I. The Primary Names of Deity in the Old Testament

The primary Old Testament titles do not present an individualized revelation of three Persons, but rather three characterizing realities within the Godhead. In addition to various other meanings, the name *Jehovah* exhibits the innermost depths of the divine Being, the name *Elohim*, being plural in its form, intimates

the fact of three Persons, and the name *Adonai* proclaims divine authority. As indicated above, the name *Jehovah*—printed in the A.V. by LORD and L with all letters capitalized—is divinely reserved for its ineffable service as the unpolluted and unshared name of Deity. *Elohim* and *Adonai* are less distinctive since these titles are sometimes ascribed to creatures. In the A.V., *Elohim* is printed ‘God,’ and *Adonai* is printed ‘Lord,’ with only the initial letter in each instance capitalized. No complete philological study of the various names of Deity will be pursued in this thesis, that exercise belonging properly to the field of original languages.

1. JEHOVAH. Notwithstanding all the research that scholars have given to the name *Jehovah*, but little is known beyond that which is preserved in the Sacred Text. Its original pronunciation has been lost, and that is due largely to the unwillingness of the Jews during many centuries to pronounce the name. Whether their attitude in this be styled superstition or reverence makes no difference with regard to the loss itself. The name *Jehovah* is more fully defined in the Scriptures as to its meaning than all other titles of Deity together. In the Psalms the original is sometimes contracted to *Jah*, which is the concluding syllable of *hallelujah* (cf. Ps. 68:4). Some perplexity has arisen from the fact that this name appears many times in the Scriptures (notably, Gen. 15:2) before it is declared in Exodus 6:3, “And I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of God Almighty, but by my name JEHOVAH was I not known to them.” This seems to be a contradiction. There are two explanations current: (a) that the name was used freely from Adam to Moses, as the Scriptures record, but that its meaning was not at any time disclosed; (b) that it appears in the text as a prochronism or a prolepsis, by which terms it is intimated that, as Moses wrote the Genesis account, he used the term to designate Deity, but the people of those many generations before did not use the name. This latter explanation fails at all points where it is recorded that men actually spoke to or of Deity as *Jehovah* (cf. Gen. 15:2), while the former solution, though not free from its problems, seems to be the more reasonable. However the title is used, it is obvious that Scripture sheds no light, other than by inference, upon the meaning of the name until it is specifically disclosed to Moses. Even Moses himself seems to stand in need of instruction concerning this title when it is explained to him (cf. Ex. 3:14). The new revelation is of *Jehovah* as the self-existent One—“I AM THAT I AM”—, and the word *hayah*, cf. *Yahwe*, from which the word *Jehovah* is evidently formed, conveys also the idea of a

continuous coming to be, that is, by an ever-increasing revelation. Thus by this cognomen it is revealed that Jehovah is “The self-existent One who reveals Himself.” Regarding this phase of this subject, Dr. Gustav Friedrich Oehler writes: “The name signifies, *He who is*, according to Ex. 3:14; more particularly, *He who is what He is*. But as it is not the idea of a *continuous existence* which lies in the verb *havah* or *hayah*, but that of *existence in motion*, of becoming and occurring . . . , so also the form of the name as derived from the imperfect leads us to understand in it the existence of God, not as an existence at rest, but as one always becoming, always making itself known in a process of becoming. Hence it is wrong to find in the name the abstract notion of ὄντως ὄν. God is rather Jahve in as far as He has entered into an *historical* relation to mankind, and in particular to the chosen people Israel, and shows Himself continually in this historical relation as He who is, and who is what He is. While heathenism rests almost exclusively on the *past* revelations of its divinities, this name testifies, on the other hand, that the relation of God to the world is in a state of continual living activity; it testifies, especially in reference to the people who address their God by this name, that they have in their God a future” (*Old Testament Theology*, p. 95).

The designation *Jehovah* appears in the Sacred Text after the creation of man and is generally used where relationships between God and man are involved, and especially in man’s redemption. It is in respect to Israel’s redemption from Egypt that the true meaning of the term is elucidated. All divine attributes which share in redemption are betokened—holiness, justice, and love for the sinner. It is with their Redeemer that Israel has to do, and therefore His covenants with them are largely under the *Jehovah* name (cf. Ex. 20:2; Jer. 31:31–34). It was Jehovah Himself who imparted to Moses the meaning of this title: “And the LORD descended in the cloud, and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the LORD. And the LORD passed by before him, and proclaimed, The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children’s children, unto the third and to the fourth generation” (Ex. 34:5–7); “And he said, I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before thee; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy” (Ex. 33:19); “In Judah is God known: his name is great in Israel” (Ps. 76:1). The name, as revealed to Moses, is, first of all, the unveiling of the truth

of the *eternity* of Deity. Such a disclosure is to be expected and should be heeded. Jehovah *lives* as no other being lives. He is not caused, but is rather the cause of all that is. He is unchangeable, infinite, and eternal. To these lofty conceptions the Scriptures constantly direct the thoughts of men. He changes not (Mal. 3:6); He as King must reign forever (Ps. 10:16; 99:1; 146:10); He is the Author and Creator of all things and the universal Ruler (Amos 5:8; Ps. 68:4; Jer. 32:27). No instructed Jew who was present missed the fact that Christ asserted of Himself that He is the “I am,” the *Jehovah*, of the Old Testament. The record declares: “Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad. Then said the Jews unto him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham? Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am. Then took they up stones to cast at him: but Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by” (John 8:56–59).

As before noted, confusion occurs regarding the name *Jehovah* from the fact that for many centuries—the very centuries in which a large part of the Old Testament was written—the Jewish people out of sheer reverence refused even to pronounce this name, and when the name was written pointings belonging to another title of Deity were added to the *Jehovah* name by which the reader was directed in the substitution of another designation. Thus the writing of the name *Jehovah* in the text is complex. The avoidance of the actual pronouncement of this name may be judged as mere superstition; but plainly it was an attempt at reverence however much misguided, and doubtless this practice, with all its confusing results, did serve to create a deep impression on all as to the ineffable character of God.

2. ELOHIM. This, the appellation most frequently used in the Old Testament, appears sometimes as *El*, or *Eloah*. The designation *El* is traced through Babylonian, Phoenician, Aramaic, Arabic, as well as Hebrew, writings. To some degree, it belongs to the whole Semitic world. *Elohim* is the plural and *Eloah* the singular, the latter appearing usually in sacred poetry. The derivation of this name is naturally something of a problem. Some trace it to a root which means *The Strong One*, and others to a root which denotes *fear*, and from this it is claimed the essential idea of reverence springs (Gen. 31:42, 53). J. B. Jackson, in his *Dictionary of Scripture Proper Names* (p. viii), declares that “some names are capable of being derived, with equal accuracy, from two, or even three different roots, as *e.g.*, when the root is one with a feeble radical, or doubles the

second radical, the inflection of such verbs being to some extent similar". No doubt all that these two root ideas originate as to the meaning of Elohim is true. He is the Strong One who is faithful to all His covenants and to be revered and feared because of what He is. An ascription of praise and itself revealing as to the meaning of the name, not unlike that of Jehovah in Exodus 34:5–7, is given in Psalm 86:15, where it is written, "But thou, O Lord, art a God full of compassion, and gracious, longsuffering, and plenteous in mercy and truth."

Until more recent times, theologians believed that the plural form of *Elohim* with its varying combinations with either singular or plural pronouns, adjectives, and verbs, indicated the trinity of Being in one Essence. Oehler gives to Dietrich the credit (1846) for the first denial of the idea that the plural form suggests the trinity of Persons, though Richard Watson refers to Buxtorf (the younger, 1599–1664) as "opposed" to the general belief of the church and Buxtorf implies that he follows certain Jews in thus opposing himself. He does admit, however, that it is as difficult to read *ad extra* powers into this plural form as it is to read *ad intra* plurality of persons (see Watson's *Institutes*, I, 468). Dietrich's thought, like that of Buxtorf, is that the plural form is not numerical but quantitative and denotes unlimited greatness. Oehler styled it a plural of "infinite fullness," Delitzsch, an "intensive plural" (cited by Oehler, *op. cit.*, p. 88). Others assert that it is a "plural of majesty." Dietrich has the support in the present day of all who comprise the modern school of theology, while some theologians and most expositors cling to the original belief. The arguments advanced for this violent departure from the belief of so long standing have been examined and are found to prove nothing beyond a human opinion. Over against this, there are important considerations to be noted: (a) The Bible opens with the assertion that *Elohim* is the Creator and the plural form is recognized by plural pronouns thus: "And God said, Let us make man in our image" (Gen. 1:26); again, "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them" (1:27). The plural pronoun in the one case and the singular in the other are legitimate in that *Elohim* may serve to indicate the plurality of Persons, or the one Essence. In other portions, the Word of God distinctly assigns the work of creation to each of the three Persons separately (Gen. 1:1, 2; Col. 1:16). It is therefore both reasonable and consistent that the plural of divine Persons should be indicated in the Genesis account of creation. Of great significance is Psalm 100:3 on this point, since it also assigns creation to Elohim: "Know ye that the LORD he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture." (b) Again, the fact of the trinity of Persons

in the Godhead is one of the cardinal teachings of the Bible and touches the very center of the divine Being, and the fact that it is the purpose of the divine names to disclose this Being affords the strongest supposition that the doctrine of the Trinity is included in the revelation which the names portend. Assuredly nothing new or disorderly is introduced if one of the divine names is found to disclose the plural form of Being in the Godhead. It could hardly be otherwise. (c) Though the doctrine of the Trinity is not as conspicuous in the Old Testament as it is in the New, it is there, and, if there at all, it will naturally inhere in the names by which God specifically reveals Himself to men. The larger consideration of the doctrine of the Trinity as found in the Old Testament is yet to be attended in a later division of Theology Proper. No sufficient argument having been advanced to the contrary, this thesis proceeds on the basis of the ancient and worthy belief that the trinity of Persons is implied in the plural name *Elohim*.

Deuteronomy 6:4 (R.V.) is a passage of great importance in the present discussion, "Hear, O Israel: Jehovah our God [*Elohim*] is one Jehovah." Perhaps the key word to the meaning of this passage is *·eḥādh*, here translated 'one.' This word, often found in the Old Testament text, is nevertheless somewhat specific in its meaning. While it is used many times with particular emphasis on the distinct solidarity of the thing represented, it is the word universally used when a thing is in view which is compounded out of unified parts, as, 'evening and morning, *one* day'; 'they two shall be *one* flesh.' It is not possible to prove that *·eḥādh* as used in the passage in question represents unification of parts, which in this case would indicate that the plurality in the Godhead is *one* Essence. If it is not thus, the passage asserts that *Jehovah* our *Elohim* is One in the sense that there is no other. This is an important teaching of the Old Testament. If the word *one* is used here in its unifying sense, the passage records that *Jehovah*—always singular in number—our *Elohim*—plural in number—is nevertheless One—plurality in One—*Jehovah*—singular in number. With such an interpretation, this passage appears of tremendous importance in the general field of the trinitarian teaching of the Old Testament. In any case, the word *one* in this text is not *yahadh* which denotes absolute indivisible unity.

Likewise, much importance inheres in the right interpretation of Genesis 3:5 where Satan's words to Adam and Eve are recorded: "For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil." The phrase, "ye shall be as gods," is, for want of consistency on the part of the translators, quite misleading. The use of the word

gods in the plural and without a capital letter suggests, to some minds, a reference to the angels who are in certain instances, they believe, designated as *sons of God* (cf. Gen. 6:4; Job 1:6; 2:1). But the thought is not restricted to the angels (cf. Isa. 43:6). Again, the word *gods* might be thought to refer to heathen gods; but since there were no heathen at the time Satan appeared in Eden, nor had the notion of “gods many” occurred to anyone’s mind, such an interpretation is impossible. The original word which is translated *gods* is none other than *Elohim*. The plural would be justified if it were at all the practice of the translators elsewhere, which it is not. The omission of the initial capital letter is without excuse. Satan who had said, “I will be like the most High”. (Isa. 14:14), said to Adam and Eve, “Ye shall be as *Elohim*.” The word *Elohim* occurs twice in Genesis 3:5 and there is no more reason for translating it *gods* in the one case than in the other.

To the same purpose, Psalm 138:1 is important as bearing on the plural form of *Elohim*. The text reads “Before the gods will I sing praise unto thee.” The LXX implies that angels are in view. The word is *Elohim* and its plural need not mislead anyone at this point. The omission of the initial capital letter is again misleading. *Elohim*, it is suggested, may be taken in this Scripture to betoken or embody the place of His abode in the holy of holies, and before *Elohim*’s place of abode the Psalmist offers praise (cf. Ps. 5:7).

Having pointed out that *Elohim* with the article is indicative of the one true God, Dr. W. Lindsay Alexander writes of the title without the article thus:

Elohim, however, without the article has the same force, and is so used in a multitude of passages. When used of God it is usually construed with verbs and adjectives in the singular. For this peculiar construction of a plural substantive with singular adjuncts various suggestions have been offered by way of accounting. All are agreed that it is a *constructio ad sensum*; but what is the sense thereby indicated, critics are not agreed. The older theologians held that the fact of the Trinity was thereby indicated, the plural substantive being expressive of the distinction in the Godhead, the singular adjunct intimating that nevertheless God is one. This is now almost universally rejected; but I am not sure that it deserves to be so. It is undoubtedly a law of Hebrew syntax that an object in which plurality is combined into a unity is construed in the plural with verbs and adjectives in the singular. ... This being an established usage of Hebrew speech, it does not appear to me at all improbable that it was because the ancient Hebrews knew somewhat at least of the distinction in the Godhead that they construed not only *Elohim*, but other designations of the Deity in the plural with verbs and adjectives in the singular.—*System of Biblical Theology*, I, 34, 35

Similarly, Richard Watson remarks, after having discussed various passages in which the plural of Deity is implied: “These instances need not be multiplied: they are the common forms of speech in the sacred Scriptures, which no criticism has been able to resolve into mere idioms, and which only the doctrine

of a plurality of persons in the unity of the Godhead can satisfactorily explain. If they were mere idioms, they could not have been misunderstood by those to whom the Hebrew tongue was native, to imply plurality ... The argument for the trinity drawn from the plural appellations given to God in the Hebrew Scriptures, was opposed by the younger Buxtorf [1599–1664]; who yet admits that this argument should not altogether be rejected among Christians, ‘for upon the same principle on which not a few of the Jews refer this emphatical application of the plural number to a plurality of powers or of influences, or of operations, that is, *ad extra*; why may we not refer it, *ad intra*, to a plurality of persons and to personal works? Yea, who certainly knows what that was which the ancient Jews understood by this plurality of powers and faculties? (*Theological Institutes*, I, 468).

This line of discussion might be pursued indefinitely; but since it anticipates the truth yet to be contemplated under *trinitarianism*, further evidence will be reserved for that thesis.

3. ADON, ADONAI. This name of Deity appears in the Old Testament with great frequency and expresses sovereign dominion and possession. On this name Dr. C. I. Scofield writes:

(1) The primary meaning of *Adon, Adonai*, is Master, and it is applied in the Old Testament Scriptures both to Deity and to man. The latter instances are distinguished in the English version by the omission of the capital. As applied to man, the word is used of two relationships: *master* and *husband* (Gen. 24:9, 10, 12, “master,” may illustrate the former; Gen. 18:12, “lord,” the latter). Both these relationships exist between Christ and the believer (John 13:13, “master”; 2 Cor. 11:2, 3, “husband”).

(2) Two principles inhere in the relation of master and servant: (a) the Master’s right to implicit obedience (John 13:13; Matt. 23:10; Luke 6:46); (b) the servant’s right to direction in service (Isa. 6:8–11). Clear distinction in the use of the divine names is illustrated in Ex. 4:10–12. Moses feels his weakness and incompetency, and “Moses said unto the LORD [Jehovah], O my Lord [*Adonai*], I am not eloquent,” etc. Since *service* is in question, Moses (appropriately) addresses Jehovah as Lord. But now *power* is in question, and it is not the Lord (*Adonai*) but Jehovah (LORD) who answers (referring to creation power)—“and Jehovah said unto him, Who hath made man’s mouth? ... Now therefore go, and I will be with thy mouth.” The same distinction appears in Josh. 7:8–11.—*Scofield Reference Bible*, p. 24

II. Compounds

The supreme name, *Jehovah*, is compounded with *Elohim*, as *Jehovah Elohim*, translated in the A.V. as ‘LORD God’ (cf. Gen. 2:4; with *Adonai*, as *Adonai Jehovah*, translated in the A.V. as ‘LORD GOD’; and with *Sabaoth*, as *Jehovah Sabaoth*, translated in the A.V. as ‘LORD of hosts.’

The primary name *Elohim* is compounded with *Shaddai*, as *El Shaddai*, translated in the A.V. as ‘Almighty God’ (Gen. 17:1); with *Elyon*, as *El Elyon*, translated in the A.V. as ‘Most High,’ or ‘most high God’ (Gen. 14:18); and with *Olam*, as *El Olam*, translated in the A.V. as ‘everlasting God’ (Gen. 21:33).

Again, *Jehovah* is compounded with seven appellatives. (a) *Jehovahjireh*, “the LORD will provide” (Gen. 22:14); (b) *Jehovah-rapha*, “The LORD that healeth” (Ex. 15:26); (c) *Jehovah-nissi*, “The LORD our banner” (Ex. 17:8–15); (d) *Jehovah-shalom*, “The LORD our peace” (Judges 6:23, 24); (e) *Jehovah-rā-ah*, “The LORD my shepherd” (Ps. 23:1); (f) *Jehovah-tsidkenu*, “The LORD our righteousness” (Jer. 23:6); and (g) *Jehovah-shammah*, “The LORD is there” (Ezek. 48:35).

III. Old Testament Epithets

God is mentioned metaphorically in the Old Testament as King, Lawgiver, Judge, Rock, Fortress, Tower, Deliverer, Shepherd, Husband, Husbandman, and Father.

IV. New Testament Names of Deity

As these terms and their relationships are yet to be considered under the trinitarian discussion shortly, only a brief outline is introduced here.

The full and final name for Deity is *Father*, *Son*, and *Holy Spirit*. This may be made more explicit, as, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. The titles of the First Person are largely restricted to combinations associated with the word *Father*. He is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ; the Father of Mercies; He is addressed as Abba, father; Heavenly Father; Father of Spirits; Holy Father; Righteous Father; Father of Lights; and Father of Glory.

There are in all about three hundred titles or designations in the Bible which refer to the Second Person. However, His full and final name is Lord Jesus Christ, *Lord* being the title of Deity, *Jesus* being the title of humanity, and *Christ* being the title of His office as Prophet, Priest, and King, or the Messiah of the

Old Testament. It is evident that the selection of the names and the order of their arrangement in any given text is with divine purpose and manifests divine wisdom in every instance.

There are no names of the Holy Spirit revealed. He is known by descriptive titles as *The Spirit of God*, *The Spirit of Christ*. There are upwards of twenty such designations.

Conclusion

At the end of this examination into the essentials of theism and before entering upon the engaging investigation into the triune mode of the divine existence, a brief backward look may not be without profit. Having demonstrated the fact of the authoritative and trustworthy nature of the Scriptures and having established the ground of belief in the existence of God to the satisfaction of reason, an effort has been made to set forth from revelation the character and infinity of God as represented in His attributes, His sovereignty as manifested in His decree, and His glory as disclosed in His names. Though of necessity some questions remain unsolved, the overwhelming reality of God's Person, character, and ways has been exhibited and defended. He thus stands forth before the devout and attentive mind as the One who is Supreme over all His creation and its sole object of adoration and glory. Imperfections must always attend such an effort as this. The finite mind cannot fully portray the infinite either by imagination or by word. It should now be clear that God is All in All. Without such belief in the reality which He is, all that seems certain becomes uncertain and incomprehensible. The idea that God exists is not a mere hypothesis; it is the only basis upon which human reason and understanding can build their frail structures. How without remedy all such edifices are demolished when the essential truth concerning God is questioned! In the light of the whole disclosure which theism affords, a personal faith is demanded in rational beings and should be established by theistic study. Such a faith is a treasure needing to be guarded and defended against hostile attacks, and every effort should be made to advance in the knowledge of Him.

Trinitarianism

Chapter XVII

INTRODUCTION TO TRINITARIANISM

HAVING INVESTIGATED the fundamental truth of the existence of God and having exhibited some evidence as to His perfections as seen in His attributes, His sovereign purpose, and His self-revelation through His names—all of which is embraced under *theism* and is a general division of *Theology Proper*—, it now remains to inquire whether God is, as to His mode of existence, an *absolute* unity, or subsists as a plurality of Persons. If He subsists as a plurality of Persons, what manner of Persons are these and what is their number?

Recognizing that the word *trinity* is not found in the Sacred Text and that the doctrine which it represents is not directly taught therein, Dr. W. Lindsay Alexander states:

But though a truth be not formally enunciated in Scripture, it may be so implied in the statements of Scripture that it becomes the proper and necessary expression of these statements. In this case the doctrine is a conclusion drawn inductively from what Scripture announces, and so is as truly a doctrine of Scripture as any natural law—that of gravitation, *e.g.*—is a doctrine of nature. Whilst, then, we admit that the doctrine of the Trinity does not stand on exactly the same ground as the doctrines formally enunciated in Scripture, we claim for it an equal authority on the ground that it lies involved in the statements of Scripture, and is the proper evolution and expression of these. As a doctrine it is a human induction from the statements of Scripture; but the induction being fairly made, it is as much a part of God's teaching in His word as is any of those doctrines which He has formally enunciated there. The phenomena (to use the Baconian phraseology) with which we have here to deal are, on the one hand, the clearly revealed fact that there is but one God; and, on the other, the no less clearly revealed fact that there are three to whom the attributes and qualities of Deity in the highest sense are ascribed, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Both these statements must be received by all who acknowledge the Scriptures as the rule of faith: the question is, How are they to be construed so as that, without doing injustice to either, a just and harmonious expression of the whole truth contained in them shall be obtained?—*System of Biblical Theology*, I, 94, 95

In this division of Theology Proper, the greatest mystery of all revealed truth is confronted. Mere difficulty in conceiving what is peculiar and befitting the infinite One should offer no objection to a doctrine based on revelation. The nature of God must present mysteries to the finite mind, and the triune mode of existence is perhaps the supreme mystery. M. Coquerel states: "God is the only intelligent Being, for Whom no mystery exists. To be surprised, to be indignant at encountering mysteries, is to be surprised, is to be indignant at not being God" (*Christianisme Experimental, cited by Crusaders of the Twentieth Century*, W. A. Rice, p. 228). Unavoidably, some anticipation of this problem has been met

when considering the plural form of *Elohim*. The mode of the divine existence is an essential feature of knowledge if right conceptions of God are to be formed. So important a disclosure, it may be expected, will claim a large place in revelation, and should, to some extent, be confirmed by reason. It is obvious that, with reference to revelation and in passages too numerous to be adduced, there is clear reference made to distinctions in the Godhead. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are constantly named as separate Persons with specific operations said to be wrought by each. All this appears in narrative, in doctrine, and in worship which is prescribed for the creature in his relation to the Creator. All the divine attributes as well as the properties of personality are ascribed to each Person of the Godhead with so much certainty and frequency, that the fact of a triune mode of existence cannot be doubted by an unprejudiced mind. On the other hand, disclosures equally plain and numerous are made which present God as essentially One. These two averments of the Bible are alike authoritative and, therefore, to the same degree demanding as to their recognition. Though no finite mind has ever comprehended how three Persons may form but one Essence, that precise truth is the testimony of all parts of the Bible. It is not possible to define these distinctions and all they imply. No doubt, there is a distinct consciousness which identifies each Person, yet there is a united possession of attributes and of nature. This disclosure presents a knowledge-surpassing complexity, but is free from the element of contradiction; for a contradiction exists where two contraries are predicated of the same thing and in the same respect. Such contradictions do not appear in revelation and attempts to claim such a thing have failed. The doctrine of the Trinity is drawn wholly from revelation, since creation is incapable of serving as a medium of expression for the issues involved. The doctrine as presented in the Scriptures is therefore believable if not explicable. The *how* of any superhuman reality is not, and probably could not be, apprehended by the finite mind. It is enough to know from a trustworthy source that the reality *does* exist. To understand a proposition is one thing; to understand the truth or fact asserted in that proposition is quite another thing. These two aspects of understanding are constantly distinguished in human experience. No scientist or philosopher has an explanation to offer as to how mind acts upon matter, nor can they discover the mysteries which are related to life itself—nutrition, assimilation, and growth—, nor can they understand the inner workings of a vast array of proved facts and forces which nature presents. Inability to penetrate into the depths of such phenomena is not considered a reason for rejection of the obvious facts themselves. The triune

mode of existence of the three Persons who form one Essence belongs to a category of ultimate facts and the inexplicable feature is not to be confounded with the evidence for the abstract and actual truth itself. No argument has been advanced against the trinitarian conception other than that it does not conform to the limitations of the mind of man. In a defense of Unitarianism Dr. Channing writes of this doctrine as an “outrage on our rational nature,” and “contradicting and degrading our reason.” If Dr. Channing meant by “rational nature” that he could accept only what the human mind understands and therefore human reason approves, it may be asserted that neither Dr. Channing nor any other man has ever confined his actions to such restricted limitations. Each human being employs a never-ending succession of realities and forces concerning which no explanation can be offered. Are not these, as well, to be classed as “outrages upon our rational nature” as much as the inexplicable doctrine of the Trinity?

Revelation concerning a trinity of Persons related in one Essence contradicts no absolute truth. It is evident that as to wholly separated and individually identified subjects, one is not three, nor are three one. Such is a contradiction. The doctrine of the Trinity asserts no such inconsistency. It affirms no more than that a being may be singular in one sense and plural in another. Various illustrations of such realities in nature might be introduced. In the constitution of a human being there is conjunction of unity and plurality. The immaterial and material elements combine to form one individual. Each of these elements is essential to human existence in this sphere. Thus it is seen that a human being may be singular in one sense and plural in another. If plurality and unity are both required in human existence, why should plurality and unity be denied in the case of the divine existence? Should it be supposed that God may include in His creature what He cannot manifest in Himself? By this analogy no attempt is made to demonstrate that a human person combining in himself the material and immaterial is comparable as to elements or order with three persons subsisting in one divine Essence. The analogy goes no further than to establish a *principle*. In the case of the human being, there is one consciousness with a twofold subsistence; in the case of Deity, there are three consciousnesses and but one nature. The principle that plurality is not incompatible with unity is thus proved. In the one case, being common to human experience, there is no doubt entertained about it; in the other case, being outside the range of human experience, there is unreasoned objection raised. It is probable, if both of these positions were wholly and equally outside the range of human experience, there would be as much perplexity engendered by the presentation of the one as by the

other. Which, after all, is the more abnormal: a being purely spiritual subsisting as three persons with one nature, or one person subsisting with two natures which are as widely different from each other as the material and the immaterial? In their abstract form, one proposition is no more complex than the other, and since the conjunction of plurality with unity is the most obvious fact of human life, it should not be styled an insult to human reason when it is asserted by God Himself, and on the authority of revelation, that God represents the conjunction of plurality and unity—one Essence subsisting in three Persons.

The restrictions which are generally imposed upon the scope of Theology Proper, namely, that it comprehends only the Persons of the God-head apart from their works, are to be observed in this treatise. The doctrine of the Trinity falls into four major divisions: (1) The fact of the Trinity; (2) God the Father, the First Person; (3) God the Son, the Second Person; and (4) God the Holy Spirit, the Third Person. It is anticipated that the third of these divisions, or that concerning the Son, will yet be treated more fully under Soteriology and Christology, and that the fourth division, or that concerning the Holy Spirit, will yet be treated more fully under Soteriology and Pneumatology.

I. Preliminary Consideration

Advancing further in the attempt to apprehend that which may be known relative to the triune mode of existence, two errors are to be avoided: (a) that it may be supposed that the Godhead is composed of three distinct Persons—as Peter, James, and John—who are related to each other only in the loose fashion in which men may associate themselves together relative to certain ideals and principles, which supposition, in the case of God, would be *tritheism*; or (b) that the Godhead is one Person only and that the triune aspect of His Being is no more than three fields of interests, activities, and manifestations, which supposition would be Sabellianism. Burden is laid upon the student of theology to recognize that, regardless of the mystery involved, he is appointed to discover and defend the truth that the Bible is monotheistic to the last degree, contending, as it does, that there is one God and only one; yet as certainly it asserts that this one God subsists in three definite and identified Persons.

The term *personality* as applied to God is not to be understood or taken in its strict philosophical sense, in which case wholly distinct beings are indicated. God is one Being, but He is more than one Being in three relations. Well-defined acts which are personal in character are ascribed to each Person of the Three.

These acts unequivocally establish personality. Language labors under difficulties at this point. The Persons are not separate, but distinct. The Trinity is composed of three united Persons without separate existence—so completely united as to form One God. The divine nature subsists in three distinctions—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Personality is expressed in such terms as *I, thou, he*—and it is thus that the Persons of the Godhead address each other—, and in personal acts; but it is not required that the one God shall be restricted to one Person, though that restriction obtains throughout creation. Therefore, no reason exists for denying this complexity to the Godhead. The term *person* is not generally employed in the Bible, though all that constitutes personality is repeatedly predicated of each member of the Trinity. This will hardly be disputed. In Hebrews 1:3 it is stated that the Son is “the express image” of the *person* of the Father. While the word used here may signify any specific identity such as an essence or person, it does serve to assert the distinction which exists between two Persons of the Godhead and the equality of Them. Various Greek words were reduced to their most exact meaning when the controversy was waged against Arius who denied that Christ was of the same substance as the Father, and against Sabellius who allowed the Deity of the Son and Spirit but denied to Them proper personality. Biblical terms have thus stood the most searching tests and the proof of the doctrine of the Trinity is written large in the history of the church. The conclusion of the church as to the teaching of the Bible concerning relationships within the Godhead is well stated by Hermann Venema in his *Institutes of Theology*:

1. We say that there are three ὑποστάσεις or subsistences, truly and properly so called, who are mutually distinct—each possessed of intelligence, subsisting by itself, and not communicated or communicable to the others—and whom we call persons, according to the definition we have given of that term. We do not mean by this that there are three modes of subsistence or three modes of manifestation, but, as we have said, three intelligent subsistences really distinct from each other. For a person suggests the idea of one possessed of intelligence and power, and subsisting by himself, and such is our meaning when we say that there are three persons in the Godhead.

2. We say that the three persons or subsistences have each really a divine nature—a nature including all the attributes which we have already spoken of as belonging to a perfect Being, such as independence, eternity, immutability, omnipotence, etc.

3. We say that these subsistences have not a separate but one and the same divine nature. There is but one God, as we have said, and therefore there must be but one divine nature existing in each—the same *numerical* and not merely the same *specific* essence common to the three.

4. We say, moreover, that the three persons partaking of one and the same essence stand in close relation to each other—the second person being from the first and the third from the first and second. This relation is implied in the names Father, Son, and Spirit—the Father being the source of the one essence which is partaken of by the other two. This participation of essence, in reference to the Son, is called *generation*—and, in reference to the Spirit, *procession* or *spiration*.

Such is a simple and, as far as we can attain to it, a clear explanation of the mystery of the Trinity—from which we may know at least generally what we are to understand by this doctrine—
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Probably no doctrine of the Word of God is more far-reaching in its implications than that of the Trinity. Those who fail to see this and who minimize its importance usually embrace some heresy regarding the two Persons—the Second and the Third. Dr. Joseph Priestley said: “All that can be said for it is, that the doctrine, however improbable in itself, is necessary to explain some particular texts of Scripture; and that, if it had not been for those particular texts we should have found no want of it, for there is neither any fact in nature, nor any one purpose of morals, which are the object and end of all religion, that requires it” (*History of Early Opinions*, cited by Watson, *Institutes*, I, 452).

This statement, quite characteristic of those who oppose the doctrine of the Trinity, makes “the facts of nature” and “purpose of morals” the “object and end of all religion,” and ignores the whole idea of a divine self-revelation, the work of redemption, and eternal destiny. Obviously, it is in these fields thus neglected that the truth concerning the Trinity has its fullest manifestations. The denial of the doctrine of the Trinity results in dishonor to Christ, to the Holy Spirit, and to the testimony of the Bible. This threefold dishonor may well be specifically observed:

II. Three Dishonors

1. CHRIST. In the consideration of the doctrine of the Trinity, the crucial question as to the absolute Deity of Christ as Second Person and the Spirit as Third Person is involved. Those who oppose the doctrine of the Trinity automatically reject the Deity of the Son and the Spirit. An important distinction is to be observed between the claim that God as one Essence is only one Person, and the claim that God though one Essence is three equally divine Persons. Both claims could not be true and those, whoever they may be, who are in error in this matter are altogether wrong and little removed from the hallucinations of the pagans. Too long it has been deemed by many that it is an optional matter whether the triune existence of God is recognized or not, the baseless assumption being that if the trinitarian conception is rejected, the “one God” idea still remains to bless mankind, whereas the only reliable source of any knowledge of God is in the Bible and the Bible knows nothing of “one God” who does not subsist in a threefold Personality. Waterland states: “If God be Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, the duties owing to God will be duties owing to

that triune distinction, which must be paid accordingly; and whoever leaves any of them out of his idea of God, comes so far short of honouring God perfectly, and of serving him in proportion to the manifestations he has made of himself” (cited by Watson, *Institutes*, I, 453). Over against this assertion that those who deny the triune existence of the Godhead do not worship the God of the Bible, is the alternative that Trinitarians are guilty of idolatry when rendering complete divine honor to the Son and the Spirit, were it proved that the triune existence as a revelation is without worthy evidence in its support.

Dr. Priestley, in accord with some others of a more recent day, sees no place for the Trinitarian claim either in nature or morals; but nature, the Bible declares, is the creation of the Son, is sustained by Him, and exists in a peculiar sense for Him (Col. 1:16, 17). Similarly, while it might be conceived that moral ideas could be derived from the Unitarian notion of God, there could be no redemption for those who fail, apart from that which is wrought by the Son in His substitutionary sacrifice. A moral scheme which provides no cure for those who fail is the doom of all, since all fail. The sentiment that God might forgive sin as an act of mere generosity is an insult to holiness and divine government. The imperative need of redemption for the world in its present estate is evinced by the fact that God, who knows all that is involved, has provided it at such measureless cost. It was Jehovah who was pierced (Zech. 12:10); God who purchased the Church with His own blood (Acts 20:28); it was ὁ Δεσπότης—‘the High Lord’—that bought sinners (2 Pet. 2:1); and the Lord of Glory was crucified (1 Cor. 2:8)—cf. Watson, *Institutes*, I, 459.

Not only does the whole plan of salvation impinge upon the Deity of the Son, but the measure of God’s love is reduced to naught if God gave only a creature to man as His love-gift to them (John 3:16; Rom. 5:8; 2 Cor. 9:15; 1 John 3:16). Such an expression of divine love would be feeble indeed. In the same manner, if Christ is only a creature, as opponents of trinitarianism contend, His love for man is little more than an incidental item. To quote Waterland again: “If Christ was in the form of God, equal with God, and very God, it was then an act of infinite love and condescension in him to become man; but if he was no more than a creature, it was no surprising condescension to embark in a work so glorious; such as being the Saviour of mankind, and such as would advance him to be Lord and Judge of the world, to be admired, revered, and adored, both by men and angels” (*Importance of the Doctrine of the Trinity*, cited by Watson, *Institutes*, I, 458). It was Christ’s own love which led Him to come to this world as a Savior. No creature could, with any reason, say to the Father: “And now, O

Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was” (John 17:5).

It is this love of Christ which motivates all Christian love. This is a great theme, but of little force if Christ is not God. Richard Watson has expressed it well:

The love of Christ to us also as a motive to generous service, sufferings and death, for the sake of others, loses all its force and application. “The love of Christ constraineth us; for we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead.” That love of Christ which constrained the apostle was a love which led him to die *for* men. St. John makes the duty of dying for our brother obligatory upon all Christians, if called to it, and grounds it upon the same fact. “He laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for our brethren.” The meaning, doubtless, is in order to save them; and though men are saved by Christ’s dying for them, in a very different sense from that in which they can be saved by our dying in the cause of instructing, and thus instrumentally saving each other; yet the argument is founded upon the necessary connection which there is between the death of Christ and the salvation of men. But, on the Socinian scheme, Christ did, in no sense, die *for* men, no; not in their general mode of interpreting such passages, “*for the benefit of men:*” for what benefit, independent of *propitiation*, which Socinians deny, do men derive from the voluntary death of Christ, considered as a mere human instructor? If it be said his death was an *example*, it was not specially and peculiarly so; for both prophets and apostles have died with resignation and fortitude. If it be alleged, that it was to confirm his doctrine, the answer is, that, in this view, it was nugatory, because it had been confirmed by undoubted miracles. If that he might confirm his mission by his resurrection, this might as well have followed from a natural as from a violent death; and beside the benefit which men derive from him, is, by this notion, placed in his *resurrection*, and not in his *death*, which is always exhibited in the New Testament with marked and striking emphasis. The motive to generous sacrifice of ease and life, in behalf of men, drawn from the death of Christ, have, therefore, no existence whenever his Godhead and sacrifice are denied.—*Ibid.*, I, 460–61

Thus of the all-sufficiency of Christ, Dr. Richard Graves has declared: “If the Redeemer were not omnipresent and omniscient, could we be certain that he always hears our prayers, and knows the source and remedy of all our miseries? If he were not all-merciful, could we be certain he must always be willing to pardon and relieve us? If he were not all-powerful, could we be sure that he must always be able to support and strengthen, to enlighten and direct us? Of any being less than God, we might suspect that his purposes might waver, his promises fail, his existence itself, perhaps, terminate; for of every created being, the existence must be dependent and terminable” (*Scriptural Proofs of the Trinity*, cited by Watson, *ibid.*, I, 461).

2. THE HOLY SPIRIT. Equally involved in this problem is the Deity of the Holy Spirit, who, according to the Scriptures, exercises every power and function of God. William Sherlock, in his *Vindication*, has written convincingly: “Our salvation by Christ does not consist only in the expiation of our sins, etc., but in communication of Divine grace and power, to renew and sanctify us: and

this is every where in Scripture attributed to the *Holy Spirit*, as his peculiar office in the economy of man's salvation: it must therefore make a *fundamental change* in the doctrine of Divine grace and assistance, to deny the Divinity of the Holy Spirit. For can a creature be the universal spring and fountain of Divine grace and life? Can a *finite* creature be a kind of universal soul to the whole Christian Church, and to every sincere member of it? Can a creature make such close application to our minds, know our thoughts, set bounds to our passions, inspire us with new affections and desires, and be more intimate to us than we are to ourselves? If a creature be the only instrument and principle of grace, we shall soon be tempted either to deny the grace of God, or to make it only an external thing, and entertain very mean conceits of it. All those miraculous gifts which were bestowed upon the apostles and primitive Christians, for the edification of the Church; all the graces of the Christian life, are the fruits of the Spirit. The Divine Spirit is the principle of immortality in us, which first gave life to our souls, and will, at the last day, raise our dead bodies out of the dust; works which sufficiently proclaim him to be God, and which we cannot heartily believe, in the Gospel notion, if he be not" (cited by Watson, *ibid.*, I, 461–62).

3. THE SCRIPTURES. To assert that the Scriptures teach the divine Unity subsisting in three Persons is not to beg the question. It is rather to disagree with those who fail to account for the Biblical testimony, and it is to agree with the wisest and greatest of men who have their part in the Church of Christ. As to the testimony of the Scriptures bearing on the Trinitarian view, Richard Watson may well be quoted again:

But the importance of the doctrine of the holy trinity may be finally argued from the manner in which the denial of it would affect *the credit of the Holy Scriptures* themselves; for if this doctrine be not contained in them, their tendency to mislead is obvious. Their constant language is so adapted to deceive, and even to compel the belief of falsehood, even in fundamental points, and to lead to the practice of idolatry itself, that they would lose all claim to be regarded as a revelation from the God of truth, and ought rather to be shunned than to be studied. A great part of the Scriptures is directed against idolatry, which is declared to be "that abominable thing which the Lord hateth;" and in pursuance of this design, the doctrine that there is but *one* God is laid down in the most explicit terms, and constantly confirmed by appeals to his works. The very first command in the decalogue is, "Thou shalt have no other Gods before me;" and the sum of the law, as to our duty to God, is that we love HIM "with all our heart, and mind, and soul, and strength." If the doctrine of a trinity of Divine persons in the unity of the Godhead be consistent with all this, then the style and manner of the Scriptures are in perfect accordance with the moral ends they propose, and the truths in which they would instruct mankind; but if the Son and the Holy Spirit are creatures, then is the language of the sacred books most deceptive and dangerous. For how is it to be accounted for, in that case, that, in the Old Testament, God should be spoken of in plural terms, and that this plurality should be restricted to three? How is it that the very name *Jehovah* should be

given to each of them, and that repeatedly and on the most solemn occasions? How is it that the promised, incarnate Messiah should be invested, in the prophecies of his advent, with the loftiest attributes of God, and that works infinitely superhuman, and Divine honours should be predicted of him? and that acts and characters of unequivocal Divinity, according to the common apprehension of mankind, should be ascribed to the Spirit also? How is it, that, in the New Testament, the name of *God* should be given to both, and that without any intimation that it is to be taken in an inferior sense? That the *creation* and *conservation* of all things should be ascribed to Christ; that he should be *worshipped* by angels and by men; that he should be represented as seated on the throne of the universe, to receive the adorations of all creatures; and that in the very form of initiation by baptism into his Church, itself a public and solemn profession of faith, the baptism is enjoined to be performed in the *one name* of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost? One God and two *creatures*! As though the very door of entrance into the Christian Church should have been purposely made the gate of the worst and most corrupting error ever introduced among mankind,—*trust and worship in creatures as God*; the error which has spread darkness and moral desolation over the whole pagan world—*Ibid.*, I, 462–63

In concluding this plea for a right and Biblical recognition of the triune mode of the divine existence, it may be observed that the whole economy of man's redemption serves to bring to man the revelation of God in His threefold subsistence, and dim, indeed, is the spiritual vision which receives no instruction from this limitless disclosure which God has proffered to man.

III. General Definition

In its teaching, the Bible is neither *polytheistic*—gods many—, nor *tritheistic*—gods three—, nor Unitarian—one god who exercises his interests and powers in various ways. The monotheistic doctrine of one God subsisting in a plurality of Persons—three, no less and no more—is that which accords with all Scripture and, though characterized by mystery when approached by the finite mind, is, nevertheless, without contradiction and is perfect in all its adaptation and parts. It is as perfect as the God whom it discloses. Testimony relative to the Trinitarian conception of God might be adduced from the early Fathers and later writers almost without end. The following will suffice:

Augustine, “All those catholic expounders of the divine Scriptures whom I have been able to read, who have written before me concerning the Trinity, who is God, have purposed to teach, according to the scriptures, this doctrine, that the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit intimate a divine unity of one and the same substance in an indivisible equality; and therefore that there are not three Gods, but one God” *Tertullian*, “He is God and the Son of God, and both are one. And thus Spirit from Spirit and God from God becomes another *in mode of being, not in number*; in order, not state or standing (*i.e.*, as divine); and has gone forth, but has not gone out of (or separated from) the original (divine) source. ... They are three, not in substance but in form, not in power but in a specific distinction; but of one substance and power. ... Hold fast always the rule which I avow, in accordance with which I testify that the Father, Son, and Spirit are not separated. When I say that they are distinct, only ignorance or perversity will take this as meaning a diversity which issues in

separation. ... For the Son is other than the Father, not by diversity, but by distribution; not by division, but by distinction. The Father and Son are not the same, but they differ one from the other in their mode of being (*modulo*)." *Athanasian Creed*, "We worship one God in trinity, and trinity in unity; neither confounding the persons nor dividing the substance." *Gieseler*, "The unity and equality of the persons, which necessarily resulted from holding sameness of essence, was not fully acknowledged at once, even by the Nicenians, but continued to be more clearly perceived, until at last it was expressed by Augustine for the first time with decided logical consequence" (*Church History*, translation revised by H. B. Smith, Vol. I, p. 313). The *Westminster Larger Catechism* states of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit that they "are one true, eternal God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory (Q. 9)." On the numerical aspects of the doctrine, Dr. Samuel Harris says: "We see, therefore, that the prevalent doctrine of the church and its theologians has been that God, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, is numerically and indivisibly one in his substance or essential being. Therefore, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are not three Gods, one in a merely generic unity, as men are one in the unity of the genus; nor in a merely moral unity, as persons of the same moral character and purpose are one. They are distinguished as three only within the numerical and indivisible oneness and onliness of God"—*God the Creator and Lord of All*, I, 324–25, cf. p. 323 also for the above quotations

Any true conception of this doctrine must include three major features, namely, "The *oneness* and *onliness* of God; the three eternal distinctions or modes of being of the one only God—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; and the proper Deity of each of the three—God, the One indivisible Absolute Spirit in each of these peculiar and eternal modes of being" (cf. Harris, *ibid.*, p. 322). As an exercise of his discernment, the student will do well to scrutinize most critically the following definitions of the Trinitarian idea as set forth by various well known theologians and teachers:

Dr. John Dick: "While there is only one divine nature, there are three subsistences, or persons, called the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, who possess, not a similar, but the same numerical essence, and the distinction between them is not merely nominal, but real" (*Theology*, cited by Wardlaw, *Theology*, II, 6).

A. H. Strong: "In the nature of the one God there are three eternal distinctions ... and these three are equal"; (words of E. A. Park cited here) "the doctrine of the Trinity does not on the one hand assert that three persons are united in one person, or three beings in one being, or three Gods in one God (tritheism); nor on the other hand that God merely manifests himself in three different ways (modal trinity, or trinity of manifestations); but rather that there are three eternal distinctions in the substance of God" (*Theology*, p. 144).

Joseph Cook: "(1) The Father, Son and the Holy Ghost are one God; (2) each has a peculiarity incommunicable to the others; (3) neither is God without the others; (4) each, with the others, is God" (cited by Strong, *loc. cit.*).

Augustine: "The Father is not the Trinity, nor the Son the Trinity, nor the Spirit the Trinity; but whenever each is singly spoken of, then they are not spoken of as three, in the plural number, but one, the Trinity itself" (cited by Scofield, *Correspondence Course*, 558–59).

Scofield: "God is one. ... He subsists in a personality which is threefold, indicated by *relationship* as Father and Son; by a *mode of being* as Spirit; and by the *different parts* taken by the Godhead in manifestation and in the work of redemption" (*Reference Bible*, p. 1044).

Charles Hodge: The Scriptural facts are, (*a.*) The Father says I; the Son says I; the Spirit says I.

(b.) The Father says Thou to the Son, and the Son says Thou 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 Thou, 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” (*Theology*, 1, 444).

Calvin: “God predicates that He is unique (*unicum*), yet so as that He distinctly proposes to be considered in three persons; which unless we hold, there will flutter in our brain only the bare and empty name of God without the true God. Moreover, lest any should dream of a threefold God, or think that the simple essence of God is torn by three persons, we must seek a short and easy definition, which may free us from all error” (*Institutes*, Bk. 1, c. 13, par. 2, cited by W. L. Alexander, *Theology*, I, 99–100).

Dean Swift: “God commands us to believe there is a union and there is a distinction; but what that union is or what that distinction is all mankind are equally ignorant; and must continue so, at least till the day of judgment, without some new revelation. Therefore I shall again repeat the doctrine of the Trinity as it is positively affirmed in Scripture: That God is there expressed in three different names as Father, as Son, and as Holy Ghost; that each of these is God, and that there is but one God. But this union and distinction are a mystery utterly unknown to mankind” (*Works*, Vol. III, p. 434, cited by Alexander, *ibid.*, p. 101).

Dr. Pye Smith: “In the absolute perfect unity of the Divine Essence there are three objects of our conception, or subjects known by different properties, which are in the Scriptures designated by the attribution of such appellations, pronouns, qualities, and acts as are proper to rational, intelligent, and distinct Persons. Instead of Persons the term subsistence is by many preferred. These three Divine Subsistences are not separate Essences (this notion would be Tritheism). Nor mere names, or properties, or modes of action (Modalism or Sabellianism); but this unity of Subsistences is an essential, necessary, and unchangeable property of the Divine Essence. There are Hypostatical Characters or Personal Properties which are distinctive of each Person, and which express the *relations* of each to the others” (*Theology*, p. 277, cited by Alexander, *ibid.*, p. 102).

The Nicene Creed: “We believe in one God, Father Almighty, Maker of all things seen and unseen; and in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, begotten of the Father, only-begotten, that is, from the essence of the Father, God of God, light of light, very God of very God, begotten not made, of one essence with the Father; by whom all things were made, both which are in heaven and which are on earth, etc., and in the Holy Ghost. Those that say that there was a time when He was not, and that He was not before He was begotten, and that He was made of things that are not; or say that He is of a different hypostasis or essence from the Father, or that the Son of God is created, nourished, and capable of being changed, the Catholic Church anathematizes” (cited by Alexander, *ibid.*, p. 98).

The Athanasian Creed: “The Catholic faith is that we venerate one God in Trinity, and Trinity in unity, neither confounding the Persons nor separating the substance. The Person of the Father is one, of the Son another, of the Holy Spirit another. But the Divinity of Father, Son, and Spirit is one, their glory equal, coeternal their majesty ... The Father is neither made, nor created, nor begotten: The Son is from the Father alone, not made, nor created, but begotten: The Holy Spirit is from the Father and the Son, not made, nor created, nor begotten, but proceeding. Therefore there is

one Father, not three Fathers; one Son, not three Sons; one Holy Spirit, not three Holy Spirits. And in this Trinity there is nothing prior or posterior, nothing greater or less; but all the three Persons are coeternal and coequal, so that in all things both a Trinity in unity and a unity in Trinity is to be worshipped” (cited by Alexander, *ibid.*, 98–99).

A satisfactory summarization of this great averment of the Bible is made by Dr. W. L. Alexander as follows:

That as respects the distinction in the one Godhead it is real and eternal, and is marked by certain properties peculiar to each Person and not communicable. These properties are either *external* or *internal*; the latter relating to the modes of subsistence in the divine essence, the former to the mode of revelation in the world. The *notae internae* are personal *acts* and *notions*; the former being (1) That the Father generates the Son, etc., and breathes the Spirit; (2) That the Son is begotten of the Father, and with the Father breathes the Spirit; (3) That the Spirit proceedeth from the Father and the Son. The personal *notions* are (1) Unbegottenness and paternity as peculiar to the Father; (2) Spiritation as belonging to the Father and Son; (3) Filiation as peculiar to the Son; (4) Procession (*spiratio passiva*) as peculiar to the Spirit. The *external notes* are (1) The *works* in the economy of redemption peculiar to each: the Father sends the Son to redeem and the Spirit to sanctify; the Son redeems mankind and sends the Spirit; the Spirit is sent into the minds of men and renders them partakers of Christ’s salvation. (2) The attributive or appropriative works, *i.e.* those which, though common to the three Persons, are in Scripture usually ascribed to one of them, as universal creation, conservation, and gubernation to the Father through the Son; the creation of the world, raising of the dead, and the conduct of the last judgment, to the Son; the inspiration of the prophets, etc., to the Spirit.—*System of Biblical Theology*, I, 104

It cannot but prove of practical benefit if the student, having considered the testimony given above, shall attempt the formation of a definition of the Trinitarian idea, avoiding the errors which have been indicated.

IV. The True Emphasis

Since the Second Person of the Godhead is revealed as the concrete declaration or manifestation of God to men (John 1:18; 2 Cor. 4:6; 5:19), the investigation into the doctrine of the Trinity by theologians has too often centered upon the Second Person to the neglect of the doctrine itself. Such action on the part of men is natural, for the whole of the Christian faith is—perhaps more than elsewhere—compressed in the words, “God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them” (2 Cor. 5:19). With reference to this text, Neander says: “We recognize there in the essential contents of Christianity summed up in brief” (cited by Harris, *God the Creator and Lord of All*, p. 294). It is in the work of redemption that the distinctions between the Persons of the Godhead more clearly arise. This is emphasized by Dr. James Orr in his book *The Christian View of God and the World*: “The doctrine of the trinity is not a result of mere speculation, not a theory or

hypothesis spun by theologians out of their own fancies, still less, as some eminent writers would maintain, the result of the importation of Greek metaphysics into Christian theology. It is, in the first instance, the result of a simple process of induction from the facts of the Christian revelation. ... The triune conception of God is justified, when it is shown to be the conception which underlies the triune revelation God has given of himself, and the triune activity in the work of redemption” (pp. 303–4, cited by Harris, *ibid.*, p. 322).

It is exceedingly difficult for Jews, Mohammedans, and Unitarians to understand that Christians are as much committed to the doctrine of *one* God as are they, and, more so, since it is to the Christian not only a revelation of the Scriptures, but it is a fundamental theme which he is appointed to exhibit and defend. To acknowledge the triune mode of existence, does not impair, diminish, or complicate the doctrine of the *one* God, or lessen the obligation to uphold it. The Koran reflects this misconception: “Say not, *There are three gods*; forbear *this*; it will be better for you. God is but one God. ... They are certainly infidels who say, God is the third of three; for there is no god besides one God. ... And when God shall say *unto Jesus at the last day*, O Jesus son of Mary, hast thou said unto men, Take me and my mother for two gods besides God? He shall answer, Praise unto thee! it is not for me to say that which I ought not” (cited by Rice, *Crusaders of the Twentieth Century*, pp. 212–13). The Jew resists this doctrine, since to acknowledge the Trinity in the Godhead is, on his part, to recognize the Deity of the One whom he identifies as *Jesus of Nazareth*. The Unitarian resists this doctrine, since otherwise he must acknowledge the need and way of redemption through Christ. The Mohammedan resists this doctrine, since to acknowledge it is to ignore the warning of the Koran and, to his mind, depart from the foundation of his faith, namely, *there is one God*. The Christian missionary to Islam faces this resistance as does the missionary to the Jew, and the inexplicable mystery which the triune mode of existence presents is an added problem in his work. W. A. Rice, M.A., writes in *The Crusaders of the Twentieth Century*, “Nothing would be easier than to win proselytes among Hindus and Mohammedans if only this doctrine of the Trinity were given up” (p. 230). None of these various peoples are wholly open to the Scriptures. The Jew rejects the New Testament; the Unitarian rejects the trustworthiness of all Scripture; and the Mohammedan rejects the Bible itself. Mohammed evidently gained what impression he had of Christianity from the Roman Catholic Church, and it is evident his acquaintance with the true testimony of the Scriptures was meager.

In approaching the theme of the Trinity, the student may well be prepared to

confront a deep mystery which, of necessity, is not explained to finite minds. The fact that the doctrine is enshrouded with mystery tends to restrict its consideration to those who are by spiritual illumination minded to believe the testimony of God relative to things unknowable. To others the doctrine of the Trinity presents no problem, since it is by them rejected completely. Failure to respect the silence of God here, as always, leads to confusion. Such, indeed, has been the character of much theological controversy over the Trinitarian contention. With some native acumen, Dr. Robert South (1634–1716) has said of this doctrine: “As he that denies it may lose his soul; so he that too much strives to understand it may lose his wits” (*Works*, Vol. II, p. 184, cited by Harris, *op. cit.*, p. 295). Similarly, John C. Doederlein (1780) has said: “We have reached a field which we have long been dreading, ample for crops, yet sown and tangled with briars the seeds of which have been sown broadcast by the fruitful ingenuity of theologians and nourished by the heats of councils and synods mingled with the tempests of anathemas; crops which many good men seem to think ought to be cut down, or, if the sacred thicket must be spared, abandoned to theologians to cultivate it” (*Institutio Theologiae Christianae*, Vol. II, p. 333, 332, cited by Harris, *loc. cit.*).

Chapter XVIII

PROOF OF THE TRINITARIAN DOCTRINE

PROOFS of the essential doctrine of the Trinity may be drawn from both reason and revelation, though the usefulness and validity of the former has often been challenged. The fact that men of equal sincerity disagree relative to the possibility of reason serving in the field of this doctrine is evidence that unaided human minds fail in their attempts to search the deep things of God. But more objectionable than the attempts of reason, are the efforts to illustrate that which has no counterpart in human life or in nature. The triune existence of God is vastly more than the exercise of three primary functions such as power, intellect, and will; or correspondence to three divisions of a human being into body, soul, and spirit; or any suggestion created by motion, light, and heat as related to the sun; or three tones blending into one chord effect; or (as suggested by Sir D. Brewster) that a single ray of light may be decomposed by a prism into three primary colors—red, yellow, and blue—with their varying intensity of chemical powers. Because of their irrelevance, such illustrations may be said to “darken counsel” with words which are void of import. Richard Baxter (1615–1691) states: “But for my own part, as I unfeignedly account the doctrine of the trinity the very sum and kernel of the Christian religion, (as exprest in our baptism,) and Athanasius his creed, the best explication of it that ever I read; so I think it very unmeet in these tremendous mysteries to go farther than we have God’s own light to guide us” (*Christian Religion*, cited by Watson, *Institutes* I, 449). Not so much as a fraction of relevance can be established between such incidental occurrences within finite realms and the infinitude of reality which the triune mode of the existence of the one God presents. An illustration which fails to illustrate is somewhat worse than nothing.

I. Reason

This approach to the doctrine of the triune mode of the existence of God is properly a continuance of that already presented under the rationalistic arguments for the reality which God is, and such qualification as were there advanced and imposed respecting the scope and value of reason in the pursuance of things divine apply at this point as well. As before asserted, reason cannot give intelligent assent to all that revelation discloses, which fact is due to the

limitations of reason. Nevertheless, there can be no final contradiction set up between reason and revelation, since revelation is, above all else, the disclosure of infinite reason. God is the ultimate perfection of reason and whatever He discloses is none other than the manifestation of infinite reason. Owen Feltham (d. 1668) has testified: "I believe there is nothing in religion contrary to reason, if we knew it rightly" (cited by Cooke, *The Deity*, p. 470). It is equally true that, if it were really understood, there is no word of revelation to which reason would not give an affirmative response. Belief in the doctrine of the Trinity—one God subsisting in three modes of existence—should not be founded upon reason. It is a revelation. It is, however, quite legitimate to observe, as one may do with some attention, that reason, so far as it is able to go, acquiesces in that which revelation discloses. The Bible, being infinitely true, seeks no support from finite reason. Of this Hermann Venema maintains: "But although reason affords us no assistance by making any express affirmation on the subject, neither does it deny nor oppose. It teaches the unity of the divine essence; but, although it cannot prove that that essence subsists in several persons, it can advance nothing in refutation of such a doctrine. It leaves it in its own proper place" (*System of Theology*, p. 197).

A restatement is in order, to the end that it may not be understood that reason is called upon to assent to the impossible notion that one is three and three are one. The doctrine of the triune existence of God bears no semblance to such abstract contradictions, the assertion being that in the Godhead there are distinctions in personal consciousness which are combined with identity of nature and of attributes. Previously it has been proved that there is no absurdity involved when it is contended that plurality does coexist with unity. The element of mystery, which is present is normal. The problem is not the how of the mystery, but the *fact*. Any experienced logician will distinguish between these so widely different propositions.

In moving forward along lines of rationalistic contemplation of this great doctrine, no claim is made to originality. The arguments advanced are those employed by various writers—too many, indeed, for any identification as to human authorship. The line of reasoning will be in a series of independent propositions, namely:

1. THE DIVINE ATTRIBUTES ARE ETERNAL. Since God exists eternally, His attributes, which exist necessarily, exist eternally. No attribute of God is derived, since this would make Him dependent to that degree. Likewise, no attribute of

God is acquired, since that would imply that God has existed at some time as an imperfect Being. His attributes coexist with His existence. Since all-sufficiency, immutability, omnipresence, omniscience, omnipotence, goodness, love, holiness, and a disposition for communion are attributes of God now, they have been His attributes in precisely the same manner from all eternity.

2. ETERNAL ACTIVITY OF THE ATTRIBUTES. The attributes of God are eternally active. This truth led some of the ancients to conclude that God, to satisfy His attributes, was eternally creating material things. Aristotle contends: “God, who is an immovable (immutable) nature, whose essence is energy, cannot be supposed to have rested or slept from eternity, doing nothing at all, and then, after infinite ages, to have begun to move the matter, or make the world” (*Met. Lib.*, xiv., c. 6, cited by Cooke, *The Deity*, p. 476). This line of reasoning fails, in that it is based on the fallacy that God’s activity is confined to the creation of material things. Though the attributes of God have been eternally active, creation had its beginning. To assert of God that His omniscience has not been eternally active is to claim that there was a time when He knew nothing. There is no time when, in the exercise of omnipotence, He did nothing. Thus, and with specific meaning at this juncture, there was never a time when His disposition for communion was not active. No thought can be entertained that implies that there was ever a time when divine holiness, justice, and goodness were not active. It is equally evident that as God lives in the realization of His attributes, they have been active from all eternity, and thus He will be related to His attributes for all eternity to come. It is to be observed, however, that God is not, as an automaton, governed by His attributes, but is ever acting in intelligence and reason which may involve some variety in the emphasis given to some attributes over others under extenuating circumstances.

3. THE ATTRIBUTES REQUIRE BOTH AGENT AND OBJECT. The exercise of the divine attributes implies that there is required both an agent and an object. Power, love, and disposition to communion, like all other attributes, necessitate both agent and object. Similarly, generally speaking, the agent cannot be numerically, identically, and individually the same. Requiring reciprocal relations, they cannot arise and be exercised within one absolute unity. If any exception exists, it is in the realm of omniscience wherein self-knowledge is recognized. The familiar illustration is that of a spirit wholly isolated from all other beings with no knowledge that any other exists. Could such a spirit under such circumstances exercise objective power, love, or disposition for

communion? Thus it would be with God. He is a perfect Agent in the exercise of infinite perfections and attributes; but who, it may be inquired, is the object? Creation presents a vast array of objects and these are all benefited by His agency; but the question is more demanding in that it inquires who served as object in the exercise of the eternal attributes in that situation which existed before aught was created. The attributes of God were active prior to creation and, if so, there must have been both agent and object then as now. To restrict the divine object to creation is to deprive God of the exercise of His qualities and characteristics during that period preceding creation. It also follows that, since creation was a matter of divine choice and thus contingent, it is to restrict the exercise of God's attributes to that which is contingent. In such a case the divine attributes might as easily have never been exercised at all. All this suggests the absurdity that the divine attributes were not exercised in eternity past, that they might not under certain circumstances be exercised now, and that they might never be exercised at all. Such reasoning must be rejected. Cicero represents Velleius as proposing to his opponents the strange inquiry, "What was it that induced God to adorn the heavens with stars and bright luminaries? whether he was previously like one who lived in a dark and comfortless habitation, and desired a better residence? If so, why was he so long a period without the gratification of his desire?" (*De Natura Deorum*, Lib. i., c. 9, cited by Cooke, *ibid.*, p. 493). While this reference is more or less irrelevant to the point, it is true that the exercise of the divine attributes did not begin with creation. God was as tranquil and complete in Himself before creation as after. It is equally imperative to recognize that a finite universe has never been, nor can it ever be, the full satisfaction objectively of the infinite Being. A man may enjoy his faithful dog, but all the activities and capacities of a man are not satisfied with a dog as object. It may be noted here that even man who is made in the image of God is not finally satisfied with creation as his object. He finds no rest or complete satisfaction until he draws largely on the infinite One. The Psalmist utters this truth when he says: "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God" (Ps. 42:1). The destiny of man is of eternal duration. He will observe the creation of new heavens and a new earth and, if redeemed, will enjoy them forever. Having received the gift of eternal life, he is little encouraged to set his affections on things of time and sense. He is rather enjoined to set his affections on things above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God (Col. 3:1-3).

God is not dependent upon creation as an object for the exercise of His

qualities. He depends on nothing beyond Himself; hence

4. GOD IS SUFFICIENT IN HIMSELF. Reason thus asserts that there is within God that which corresponds both to agent and object. All attempts to discover an adequate divine object outside of God must fail. Something must be discovered, for it certainly exists, which is anterior and infinitely superior to all that creation affords. At this point it may be noted that the anticipation of creation could not serve as an adequate object; for, if creation, when realized, is insufficient to serve as an infinite object, it could not so serve when it existed as a mere archetypal idea. It is in harmony with the independence and infinite excellence of the Godhead to assert that His resources are in Himself, and it is equally true that He is also the answer to every desire of His own Being. In His relation to creation, He gives but receives nothing. He is the source of all blessing and He finds in Himself His own felicity. He is the only sphere in which He may exercise His own infinite nature. The exercise of His attributes is as essential as their existence. Thus, if there is no other sphere which corresponds to His infinity, these attributes must be exercised within Himself and within Himself He has found satisfaction throughout eternity. It is therefore necessary to conclude that the very mode of the divine Being answers all these demands. The agent and the object are embraced within Himself. A plurality is thus predicated of the Divine nature.

5. THE AGENT AND OBJECT ARE PERSONS. Since the divine nature includes plurality, it must be a plurality of Persons. Such a plurality cannot be predicated of the divine Essence, for the Scriptures distinctly testify to the truth that there is but *one God*. Similarly, this plurality cannot be that of mere offices or modes of manifestations, for such could not serve in their relation to each other as agent and object. Nothing short of Persons can serve in this reciprocity. In the case of the exercise of the attributes which are moral, both the agent and the object must exhibit intelligence, consciousness, and moral agency. In the experience of communion, the necessity is as much on the object as it is on the agent, that there shall be similarity in thought, disposition, will, purpose, and affection. If the agent be a Person, the object must be a Person also; whatever pertains to Deity is of necessity eternal. Nothing in God, as has been seen, can be contingent or adventitious. Every attribute and divine quality is eternal, and, in like manner, the Person, or Persons, to whom these attributes pertain are eternal. None of these Persons within the Godhead could be lacking in the essential features and attributes of Deity and maintain any place in the communion which comprises

the Godhead. By the most empirical necessity these Persons are coequal. No gradations belong to infinity. There is no sphere of existence intermediate between infinite Deity and finite creaturehood. Whatever is within the Essence of Deity is lacking nothing which belongs to infinite completeness. All must be equal in power, glory, wisdom, benevolence, dignity, and disposition to communion. These attributes ever have been and ever will be exercised by each Person within the Godhead. In all the fullness of infinity, these attributes, have been eternally active in each Person. Therefore, as each Person has ever exercised these attributes to infinity and eternally, it becomes evident that each has been and ever will be infinitely active as agent and object. It is impossible for a finite mind to comprehend the intimate and enduring affection which infinite love has generated within the Godhead. Each loving and each receiving in return. Each with infinite understanding appreciating the perfections of the others. The holy will of One in absolute agreement with the holy will of the Others. There need be no surprise that the Father said of the Son, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased."

6. PLURALITY IN GOD IS A TRINITY. Thus far in this argument, only a plurality within the Godhead has been asserted, but some proof may be advanced as evidence that this plurality is a trinity—no less, and no more. This is the clear testimony of revelation, but it is the purpose of this argument first to demonstrate whatever may be discovered through reason before turning to revelation. It has been seen that there must be a plurality of Persons in order that the divine attributes may be exercised within the Godhead and apart from creation, and that each Person must serve both as agent and object in the communion and reciprocity which belongs to the relationship; but if all the forms of activity of Persons are to be experienced, there must be conjoint action as well as that which is individual. The united fellowship and agreement which has especial significance among men on earth (Matt. 18:19) doubtless has its counterpart in the fellowship within the Godhead. To no small extent, such conjoint action is implied in communion and agreement between the Persons of the Godhead, which agreement has been recognized. It therefore follows that as the element of conjoint action as agent is experienced by two, there must be a third Person who serves as object. There is no need for more than three Persons in the Godhead and there could not be less. *Three* is the number of divine completeness, not only on the testimony of the Bible, which is sufficient and final, but on the ground of the fact that within a triad of Persons every demand which reciprocity might

present is satisfied. Two infinite Persons agreeing as agents for the conjoint function of Beings must have as object a third Person equally as qualified as themselves. Thus Father and Son being conjoint agents, say, in the exercise of infinite love, have the Holy Spirit as their object; the Son and Spirit being conjoint agents, have the Father as their object; and the Father and the Spirit being conjoint agents, have the Son as the object of their love. Thus it is seen that there is a large measure of agreement between revelation and reason concerning the Godhead three.

The individual objector to the Trinitarian dogma will do well to give heed to the teachings of the Bible on this subject; but if he, through unbelief, is not amenable to the Word of God, he should attend upon the less exact, yet nevertheless empirical, dictates of reason. The starting point of the Christian witness, whether he be dealing with Jew, Unitarian, Mohammedan, or agnostic, is a defense of the unity of God. The Christian yields first place to none in his insistence that there is but *one God*. The Christian is in full possession of all that to which the Jew or Mohammedan lays claim, and infinitely more.

7. THE BIBLE SUSTAINS REASON. Yet, again, and continuing under the general theme of *reason*, it will be seen that the Bible sustains and justifies every rational conclusion as to the triune mode of the existence of God. Truth existed before any revelation in written form was made. It therefore does not depend on revelation for its truthfulness. To the same end, it may be said that some truths, though recorded and in no way opposed to reason, are not demonstrable by reason. If, as has been proved, revelation is infinitely true, it follows that, should reason advance a contradiction to revelation, reason is at fault. The doctrine of the Trinity is one of the most unequivocal teachings of the Bible. Though reason has no occasion to aid revelation in regard to this doctrine, revelation may assist reason. Attention is now drawn to this field of investigation. The available Scriptures will be only such as assert the eternal existence of the Godhead. Some things, the Scriptures aver, have existed *from* the foundation of the world, or within the boundaries of time, while other Scriptures affirm that some things existed *before* the foundation of the world, or from all eternity. Christ is said to have been slain *from* the foundation of the world (Rev. 13:8), but to have been foreordained *before* the foundation of the world (1 Pet. 1:20).

a. The Eternal Exercise of Love. In His High Priestly prayer Christ said to His Father: “for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world” (John 17:24). Love is a divine attribute which, like all attributes, as has been demonstrated, is

not only eternal and therefore exercised before the creation of the universe and apart from the universe, but requires that it, as agent, shall have an object in every way coequal and reciprocal. This declaration on the part of Christ refers to that eternal exercise of love. By these words of Christ the reader is carried back to that awesome eternity which preceded creation, when there was no agent nor object other than the Persons within the Godhead. God did not, as an individual Person, merely love Himself, but He loved other Persons than Himself, who comprise the one Essence which God is.

b. The Exercise of Mutual Glory. In the same prayer and when speaking directly to His Father of things perfectly understood between themselves, Christ said: “And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was” (John 17:5). The phrase *παρὰ σεαυτῷ* (“with thine own self”) is definite, indicating a glory with the Person of the Father apart from external dignities or honors. The same is expressed again by the words, *παρὰ σοί* (“with thee”). From everlasting the Son has participated in the essential glory which belongs to Deity. The glory is that of dignity, perfection, and infinite blessedness. God being immutable, His glory can never change. The dating of this glory should not be unobserved. It is before creation of worlds and doubtless prior to the existence of any angelic beings who were present to gaze upon that glory. Some intimation of this glory may be gained from Revelation 21:23, where that same unchangeable glory is said to be manifest in eternal ages to come.

c. The Exercise of Knowing. A plurality of Persons in the Godhead provides for a mutual communion in knowledge between agent and object. Such is the case now and such it has ever been. The words of Christ on this aspect of eternal reciprocity are of great import: “As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father” (John 10:15); “... no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son” (Matt. 11:27). In like manner it is disclosed that the Spirit knows. It is written: “And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God” (Rom. 8:27); “But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God” (1 Cor. 2:10). Thus not only the reciprocity of agent and object in the sphere of knowledge is assured, but the eternity of both the Son and the Spirit is declared.

d. The Exercise of Divine Disposition to Communion. Had the triune existence been that

of wholly distinct Beings without mutual relations to bind them, it would be easy, under such circumstances, for these Beings to have become separated from each other and disturbed by rival interests; but, being of one Essence, there could be no separation prompted by self-interests. The significant word *with* is employed to denote this eternal communion. As noted above, Christ speaks to the Father of the glory which He had *with* Him in past ages, and John opens his Gospel with the sublime declaration: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God” (John 1:1, 2). The same relationship is presented in 1 John 1:2. It is written of the Christ that He was “that eternal life, which was with the Father.” The phrase *in the beginning*, as used here by John, could hardly be a reference to aught else than the eternity past which was prior to the event mentioned in the next verse, namely, “All things were made by him.” At such a time and under such circumstances, it is asserted that the Son, or Logos, was *with* God, and also that then, as now, and as He ever will be, the Son, or Logos, was and is God. There never was, nor could there ever be, anything but mutual communion, all-satisfying to both agent and object, between these Persons of the Godhead. This communion, being apart from all that is created, was as perfect and complete before creation as after. It is within the sphere of the Godhead three that there is an incomprehensible depth of meaning to the word: “The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father,” and, “As thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee,” and “I am in the Father, and the Father [is] in me,” and yet again, “All things that the Father hath are mine.”

Thus it is seen that the deductions which finite reason affirms are sustained by the Word of God, which is infinitely true. There is a plurality in the Godhead from all eternity and these in the reciprocity of agent and object have maintained mutual love, glory, knowledge, and communion from everlasting—a relationship so sufficient that infinite demands have been satisfied. To this, creation, coming later in time, could add nothing.

II. Revelation

As the Scriptures assume the existence of God on the ground of the fact that He never began to be, in like manner and for the same reason, the Scriptures assume the triune mode of the existence of Deity. The three Persons concur as the Authors of revelation and are, on that account, not to be magnified alone as the subjects of revelation. The existence of the author of any book is assumed,

and, true to these realities, the doctrine of the triune existence is not based upon direct Biblical assertion, or any use of the word *trinity*, which word is not found in the Sacred Text. The word *trinity* came into use in the second century. It is of great import that the names of God are self-revealed and that, in the Old Testament, the name *Elohim* is plural, and that, in the New Testament, the name Θεός, though singular, is represented in triune plurality as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. It is noted, also, that the primary Old Testament message respecting Deity is of His unity, but there are many indications that there is a plurality of Persons. So, and to the same purpose, it is to be noted in connection with the New Testament, as having to do with the various aspects of redemption, which parts are assumed by the different Persons of the Godhead, that its primary message relative to God is of the three Persons with definite indications that, back of this representation, there is but one God.

1. THE DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY AS SET FORTH IN THE OLD TESTAMENT.

Attention has been called earlier in this treatise to the importance of the truth that the word *Elohim* is plural and hence that it is used properly with plural forms of speech; but this, like much Old Testament doctrine, is incomplete apart from the progress of doctrine which is consummated in the New Testament, where the distinctions between Father, Son, and Spirit appear. Why should the declaration that the Old Testament name *Elohim* is a veiled reference to the trinity of Persons in the Godhead be resisted, when the New Testament states that the trinity of Persons exists and has always existed? If there were no further development of the Trinitarian doctrine than the intimation advanced by the plural form of *Elohim*, the case would be different, for the plural of *Elohim* is not sufficient and final proof of the triune mode of existence; but does not the singular form of Θεός, when by authoritative Scripture it is seen to represent three distinct Persons, guide unerringly in the right solution of the problem which the plural of *Elohim* generates? The case is even stronger when it is discovered that the objector offers no argument against this interpretation, but would merely substitute another notion.

By no means is the Old Testament witness to the plurality of Persons in the Godhead restricted to that which may be derived from the plural form of *Elohim* and its associated forms of speech. Definite distinction is made in the second Psalm between Jehovah and His Messiah (vs. 2). In this Psalm Jehovah states, “Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion” (vs. 6), and the Son, who is the King, declares, “Jehovah said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I

begotten thee.” Similarly, a distinction is drawn in many passages between Jehovah and Jehovah’s Servant, or the Angel of Jehovah. Quite in keeping with the truth that God is one Essence in which three Persons subsist, is the fact that the Angel of Jehovah is at times One other than Jehovah, and at other times He is Jehovah Himself. Again, in the twenty-second Psalm, which records the prayer of Christ addressed to His Father when Christ was on the cross, it is recorded that He said, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” (vs. 1); so, also, in verse 15, “and thou hast brought me into the dust of death.” Thus, likewise, the name *Immanuel* is interpreted by inspiration to mean “God with us,” which indicates no less a fact than that God has entered the human sphere in the incarnation of the Son, who became flesh and dwelt among us. Nor is it of small importance that the three primary names of Deity in the Old Testament are directly ascribed to each of the three Persons. That the First Person is *Jehovah*, *Elohim*, and *Adonai* need not be pointed out. Yet it is equally true that these names are applied to the Second Person. He is called *El* (Isa. 9:6), *Jehovah* (Ps. 68:18; Isa. 6:1–3; 45:21). So, also, the Spirit is called *Jehovah* (Isa. 11:2, literally *Spirit of Jehovah*; cf. Judg. 15:14), and the Spirit is *Elohim* (Ex. 31:3, literally *Spirit of Elohim*). Thought should be given, also, to the benediction which the high priest used in invoking a blessing upon the people of Israel, and by divine authority: “The LORD bless thee, and keep thee: the LORD make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: the LORD lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace. And they shall put my name upon the children of Israel; and I will bless them” (Num. 6:24–27). The three parts of this benediction comport with the ministries of the three Persons in the Godhead. The following from J. Pye Smith’s *Person of Christ* presents this feature of truth well: “The first member of the formula expresses the benevolent ‘love of God;’ the father of mercies and fountain of all good: the second well comports with the redeeming and reconciling ‘grace of our Lord Jesus Christ;’ and the last is appropriate to the purity, consolation, and joy, which are received from the ‘communion of the Holy Spirit’ ” (cited by Watson, *Institutes*, I, 470). There is a striking correspondence here with the benedictions recorded in the epistles of the New Testament, which so clearly name the Persons of the Godhead and assign to them their respective ministries (cf. 2 Cor. 13:14).

Because of its great meaning, attention is directed to the threefold ascription of Isaiah 6:3. On this passage Richard Watson has written:

The inner part of the Jewish sanctuary was called the *holy of holies*, that is, the holy place of the *Holy Ones*; and the number of these is indicated, and limited to *three*, in the celebrated vision of

Isaiah, and that with great explicitness. The scene of that vision is the holy place of the temple, and lies therefore in the very abode and residence of the *Holy Ones*, here celebrated by the seraphs who veiled their faces before them. And one cried unto another, and said, “*Holy, holy, holy* is the LORD of hosts.” This passage, if it stood alone, might be eluded by saying that this act of *Divine* adoration here mentioned, is merely *emphatic*, or in the Hebrew mode of expressing a *superlative*; though that is assumed, and by no means proved. It is however worthy of serious notice, that this distinct *trine* act of adoration, which has been so often supposed to mark a plurality of persons as the objects of it, is answered by a voice from that excellent glory which overwhelmed the mind of the prophet when he was favoured with the vision, responding in the same language of plurality in which the doxology of the seraphs is expressed. “Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?” But this is not the only evidence that in this passage the *Holy Ones*, who were addressed each by his appropriate and equal designation of *holy*, were the *three* Divine subsistences in the Godhead. The being addressed is the “LORD of hosts.” This all acknowledge to include the *Father*; but the Evangelist John. 12:41, in manifest reference to this transaction, observes, “These things said Esaias, when he saw his (Christ’s) glory and spake of him.” In this vision, therefore, we have the *Son* also, whose glory on this occasion the prophet is said to have beheld. Acts 28:25, determines that there was also the presence of the Holy Ghost. “Well spake the *Holy Ghost* by Esaias the prophet unto our fathers, saying, Go unto this people and say, Hearing ye shall hear and not understand; and seeing ye shall see and not perceive,” &c. These words, quoted from Isaiah, the Apostle Paul declares to have been spoken by the Holy Ghost, and Isaiah declares them to have been spoken on this very occasion by the “LORD of hosts.” “And he said, Go and tell this people, Hear ye indeed but understand not, and see ye indeed but perceive not,” &c.

Now let all these circumstances be placed together—THE PLACE, the holy place of the Holy Ones; the repetition of the homage, THREE times, Holy, holy, holy—the ONE Jehovah of hosts, to whom it was addressed,—the plural pronoun used by this ONE Jehovah, US; the declaration of an evangelist, that on this occasion Isaiah saw the glory of CHRIST; the declaration of St. Paul, that the Lord of hosts who spoke on that occasion was the HOLY GHOST; and the conclusion will not appear to be without most powerful authority, both circumstantial and declaratory, that the adoration, Holy, holy, holy, referred to the Divine three, in the one essence of the Lord of hosts. Accordingly, in the book of Revelation, where “*the lamb*” is so constantly represented as sitting upon the Divine throne, and where he by name is associated with the Father, as the object of the *equal* homage and praise of saints and angels; this scene from Isaiah is transferred into the fourth chapter, and the “living creatures,” the seraphim of the prophet, are heard in the same strain, and with the same *trine* repetition, saying, “*Holy, holy, holy*, Lord God Almighty, which *was*, and *is*, and *is to come*.”—*Ibid.*, I, 470–71

Similarly, the threefold benediction which Jacob implored on the sons of Joseph is well described by Hermann Venema:

“God, before whom my fathers ... did walk, the God which fed me all my life long unto this day, the Angel which redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads.” Gen. 48:15, 16. If the doctrine of the Trinity be not revealed in this passage, it will be difficult to account for so long a preface. But let us examine it a little more closely. We have mention made in the words of Jacob of three distinct persons—“God before whom my fathers did walk,” and “the Angel who redeemed me”—here we have at least *two* persons; but it is further said, “the God which fed me.” The last of these is unquestionably distinguished from the Angel, and also from God before whom his fathers walked. There are thus three distinct persons, under three personal names and performing distinct works. “The God which fed me” and “the Angel who redeemed me” are each represented as possessed of what is peculiar to a divine person, and as standing on the same footing with the true God. Divine

works are ascribed to each. They are mentioned as the object of divine worship and as the source of blessing. Jacob invokes a blessing from the three. But the true God is the only object of worship—the only being to whom prayer may be addressed. We nowhere read of the Old Testament saints praying to or invoking blessings from any except God. As if Jacob had said, Let him who is the fountain of blessing bless the lads. No creature can effectually bless them. The other two, therefore, whom Jacob mentions are really divine persons. This is confirmed by Scripture which describes God the Father as the leader, the teacher, or him before whom our fathers walked—the Son of God as the Göel, the Angel who redeemed,—and God who is the author of all illumination, sanctification, and comfort, as the Holy Spirit who furnishes us with spiritual food and feeds us therewith. —*System of Theology*, pp. 210–11

Three distinct Persons are indicated in 2 Samuel 23:2, 3; Isaiah 48:16; 63:7–10. Likewise, in view of the fact that creation is predicated of each Person of the Godhead separately as well as of *Elohim* by the words, “And God [*Elohim*] said, Let us make man in our image” (Gen. 1:26), it is a strong confirmation of the same truth that Ecclesiastes 12:1 has the plural, reading, as it does, “Remember now thy Creator [‘creators’] in the days of thy youth,” and Isaiah 54:5, which reads, “Thy Maker [‘makers’] is thy husband.”

As a summarization of the doctrine of the Trinity as found in the Old Testament, Dr. W. H. Griffith Thomas states in his *Principles of Theology* (pp. 25, 26), and under the heading “The Doctrine Anticipated”:

At this stage, and only here, we may seek another support for the doctrine. In the light of the facts of the New Testament we cannot refrain from asking whether there may not have been some adumbrations of it in the Old Testament. As the doctrine arises directly out of the facts of the New Testament, we do not look for any full discovery of it in the Old Testament. We must not expect too much, because, as Israel’s function was to emphasize the unity of God (Deut. 6:4), any premature revelation might have been disastrous. But if the doctrine be true, we might expect that Christian Jews, at any rate, would seek for some anticipation of it in the Old Testament. We believe we find it there. (a) The use of the plural “*Elohim*,” with the singular verb, “*bara*,” is at least noteworthy, and seems to call for some recognition, especially as the same grammatical solecism is found used by St. Paul (1 Thess. 3:11, Greek). Then, too, the use of the plurals “our” (Gen. 1:26), “us” (3:22), “us” (11:7), seems to indicate some self-converse in God. It is not satisfactory to refer this to angels because they were not associated with God in creation. Whatever may be the meaning of this usage, it seems, at any rate, to imply that Hebrew Monotheism was an intensely living reality. (b) The references to the “Angel of Jehovah” prepare the way for the Christian doctrine of a distinction in the Godhead (Gen. 18:2, 17; 18:22 with 19:1; Josh. 5:13–15 with 6:2; Jud. 13:8–21; Zech. 13:7). (c) Allusions to the “Spirit of Jehovah” form another line of Old Testament teaching. In Genesis 1:2 the Spirit is an energy only, but in subsequent books an agent (Isa. 40:13; 48:16; 59:19; 63:10 f.). (d) The personification of Divine Wisdom is also to be observed, for the connection between the personification of Wisdom in Prov. 8, the Logos of John 1:1–18, and the “wisdom” of I Cor. 1:24 can hardly be accidental. (e) There are also other hints, such as the Triplicity of the Divine Names (Numb. 6:24–27; Psa. 29:3–5; Isa. 6:1–3), which, while they may not be pressed, cannot be overlooked. Hints are all that were to be expected until the fulness of time should have come. The special work of Israel was to guard God’s transcendence and omnipresence; it was for Christianity to develop the doctrine of the Godhead into the fulness, depth, and richness that we find in the revelation of the Incarnate Son of God.

2. THE DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY AS SET FORTH IN THE NEW TESTAMENT.

Within the New Testament, the field of testimony and investigation relative to the doctrine of the Trinity is greatly enlarged. There are those, and not a few, who declare that no certain proof of the triune mode of existence can be established from the Old Testament, that is, apart from the retroactive influence of the New Testament revelation. Certain godly Jews did, it is evident, sense the plural aspect of the divine existence. Such men as served as translators of the LXX did search the Scriptures, but little is on record as assurance that they came to any clear understanding of a triune mode of existence of the one God whom they worshiped. The instruction was vigorously given to them to defend the monotheistic conception of Deity. As is true of all saints of all the ages, their belief concealed in itself vast realities to which they did not attain. Even if the plural aspect of Deity were divinely apprehended by some, more than by others, the full-orbed disclosure awaited the fullness of the time.

The New Testament revelation is all but limitless. The mention of a name of Deity or its related pronoun is at once the declaration of a trinitarian distinction. Like the element of moral virtue in the Christian's prescribed conduct, the triune mode of existence of Deity is everywhere present and assumed throughout the New Testament. It is so completely the sphere of all relationships that it defies analysis. Nonetheless, some of the most glorious features of this truth may be considered separately with profit. Four general lines of investigation follow, namely, (a) the names of God, (b) the attributes of God, (c) the works of God, and (d) the worship of God.

a. The Trinity and the Names of God. Direct application is made of the names of God to each of the three Persons. There is no question raised as to the divine titles belonging properly to the Father. Yet the Son and Spirit bear the same designations. The Son is called *God* (John 1:10), *the true God* (1 John 5:20), *the blessed God* (Rom. 9:5), *the great God* (Titus 2:13). So, also, the Holy Spirit is called *God* (Acts 5:3–9) and *Lord* (2 Cor. 3:17).

While the different names of the Persons in the Godhead are everywhere fully employed throughout the New Testament, the complete designation for God as revealed in the New Covenant is declared in, and as a part of, the Great Commission, to wit: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" (Matt. 28:19). As baptism stands as the initial act of a believer in a public witness for Christ, so, on that threshold, the full title is proclaimed of the God into whose fellowship the candidate enters. In this connection, it is significant that the first public

appearance of Christ was that of His baptism, and that, though no formula is recorded as having been pronounced over Christ by John on that occasion, the three Persons of the Godhead were present and identified. The Father owned the Son—“This is my beloved Son”—; the Son was visibly present; and the Spirit was seen to descend upon Christ in the form of a dove. Direction is given in the Great Commission that baptism should be administered in the *name*, not *names*—the one name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. The phrase, *the name*, is a strong declaration of the divine unity which subsists as Father, Son, and Spirit. The ordinance in view is to be performed by the authority of that incomparable name, but that name is threefold.

b. The Trinity and the Attributes of God. It is a challenging fact that the attributes of Deity are ascribed to each of the Blessed Three. (a) Of the Father it is said, “From everlasting to everlasting, thou art God” (Ps. 90:2); of the Son it is said that He is the “Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, the first and the last,” that He “was in the beginning with God,” and that His goings forth have been from the days of eternity (Rev. 1:8, 17; John 1:2; Micah 5:2); of the Spirit it is written, “Christ through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God” (Heb. 9:14). (b) Infinite power is exercised by each Person. Of the Father it is said: “Who are kept by the power of God” (1 Pet. 1:5); of the Son—“Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me” (2 Cor. 12:9); of the Spirit—signs and wonders were wrought “by the power of the Spirit of God” (Rom. 15:19). (c) Omniscience is ascribed to each of the triune Persons: The Father “searcheth the heart” (Jer. 17:10); the Son—“All the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts” (Rev. 2:23); the Spirit—“Even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God” (1 Cor. 2:11). (d) So, omnipresence belongs to each Person: God has said, “Do not I fill heaven and earth?” (Jer. 23:24); Christ said, “Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them” (Matt. 18:20); the Psalmist wrote of the Spirit, “Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence?” (Ps. 139:7). (e) Holiness is the character of each of the Trinity: Of the First Person it is inquired, “Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy” (Rev. 15:4); Christ is the Holy One—“But ye denied the Holy One” (Acts 3:14); and the Spirit is everywhere said to be the *Holy Spirit*. It is not to be wondered that angels exclaim “Holy, holy, holy, is Jehovah of hosts” (Isa. 6:3, R.V.). (f) Truth is ascribed to each Person: Of the Father, Christ said, “He that sent me is true” (John 7:28); of the Christ it is written, “These things saith he that is holy, he that

is true” (Rev. 3:7); and of the Spirit, “It is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth” (1 John 5:6). (g) Equally, indeed, are the three Persons benevolent: Of the Father it is declared, “The goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance” (Rom. 2:4); Christ loved the church (Eph. 5:25); “Thy good Spirit” (Neh. 9:20). (h) The disposition for communion is shared by each Person: The Father and Son are said to have fellowship with saints, “And truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ” (1 John 1:3); and testimony is borne as to the *communion* of the Holy Spirit (2 Cor. 13:14).

The same equality might be set forth concerning every aspect of the character of God. What is true of one Person is true of each of the others and this is conclusive evidence that the Godhead is a Trinity of infinite Persons, yet *one God*.

There is no intimation that one Person of the Godhead sustains these attributes in respect to the other two Persons, or that the attributes are held in any partnership. All is predicated of each as though no others existed. Thus the peculiar relationship of One in Three, and Three in One, is upheld apart from those usual interdependent sharings which characterize all human combinations and mutual manifestations. The fact that each Person possesses all the divine characteristics and so completely that it would seem that no other need to possess them, speaks of the distinction between the Persons as such. On the other hand, the fact that they all manifest these characteristics in identically the same ways and to the same measure, speaks of the unity from which their mode of existence springs.

c. The Trinity and the Works of God. Each distinctive work of God is not only said to be wrought by a Person of the Godhead, but the major works of God are predicated of each of the Three Persons. In no instance are these Persons said to be combined in what they do; it is rather that the same thing in one Scripture is attributed to one Person that is in another Scripture attributed to another, and so on until each of the Three is credited with the work and, in each case, it is as though no other Person was ever related to it. No outward partnership is recognized. The fact that each One is announced as wholly achieving a given undertaking, quite apart from the Others, indicates the truth that the Persons maintain a distinction the One from the Others. On the other hand, the fact that each does completely and perfectly the given task and in a way that it would imply that no other need undertake it, indicates a mysterious unity far more vitally concentrated than is known in any aspect of human experience. Some of these major works of God which are declared to be wholly wrought by each

Person and quite independent of the others should be noted specifically:

(1) *Creation of the Universe.* The stupendous enterprise of calling an immeasurable universe into existence is set forth as being wrought by each Person quite apart from partnership, sharing or cooperation. Of God the First Person it is stated, “Of old hast thou laid the foundation of the earth: and the heavens are the work of thy hands” (Ps. 102:25); of Christ it is stated, “For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible” (Col. 1:16); and of the Spirit it is written, “The Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters” (Gen. 1:2), and, “By his Spirit he hath garnished the heavens” (Job 26:13). All of this is combined in the one sublime statement that “in the beginning God [*Elohim*] created the heaven and the earth” (Gen. 1:1). The separate, yet complete, act of creation on the part of each Person is gathered up in the assertion that *Elohim*—which name portends the mystery of plurality in unity and unity in plurality—achieved the undertaking.

(2) *Creation of Man.* The creation of man is the creative act of God, since of no other has it been said that the thing created is made in His image and likeness. This creative act of God is also the work of the separate Persons in the Trinity: *Jehovah Elohim*, it is said, “formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul” (Gen. 2:7); of Christ it is written that “by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible” (Col. 1:16); so, to the same end, it is declared, “The Spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life” (Job 33:4). In view of this, the wise man admonishes, “Remember now thy Creator [plural word in original] in the days of thy youth” (Eccl. 12:1); and to Israel it is written, “Thy Maker [also plural] is thine husband” (Isa. 54:5).

(3) *The Incarnation.* Three Persons are present in the incarnation: the Spirit generates the Son, but in such a manner that the Son ever addresses the First Person as *Father*. Such is the nature of regeneration in the case of lost souls. While that regeneration is wrought by the Spirit, the saved one ever, from that time forth, addresses the First Person as *Father*.

(4) *The Life and Ministry of Christ.* He, the Son, did always the will of the Father and, to this end, the Spirit was given to the Son without measure.

(5) *The Death of Christ.* When on the cross and there addressing His Father, it is recorded of Christ that He said, “And thou hast brought me into the dust of death” (Ps. 22:15). Similarly, it is written of the Father, “He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all” (Rom. 8:32). Likewise, “God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son” (John 3:16); the Son spoke for

Himself saying, “No man taketh it [my life] from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down” (John 10:18). Again, Paul testified concerning the sacrifice of Christ that He it was “who loved me, and gave himself for me” (Gal. 2:20). Of the Spirit’s part in Christ’s death it is said, “Christ ... through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God” (Heb. 9:14).

(6) *The Resurrection of Christ.* Among many direct statements which assert that the Father raised the Son from the dead, one declares, “... whom God hath raised up” (Acts 2:24); and the Son said of His life in resurrection, “I have power to take it again” (John 10:18), and “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up” (John 2:19). Of the Spirit, in this same connection, it is said, “Christ [was] ... put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit (1 Pet. 3:18).

(7) *The Resurrection of All Mankind.* It is recorded of both the Father and the Son, “For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will” (John 5:21), and of the Third Person it is stated: “But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you” (Rom. 8:11).

(8) *The Inspiration of the Scriptures.* Here the Three Persons appear in various passages: “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God” (2 Tim. 3:16); “The prophets ... searched ... what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow” (1 Pet. 1:10, 11); and of the Spirit —“But holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost” (2 Pet. 1:21).

(9) *The Minister’s Authority.* It is written of the Father, “Our sufficiency is of God; who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament” (2 Cor. 3:5, 6); and of the Son, the Apostle testified, “He counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry” (1 Tim. 1:12); and the same Apostle instructs the elders of the Church in Ephesus, “Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood” (Acts 20:28).

(10) *The Indwelling Presence.* There is “one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all” (Eph. 4:6). The believer’s new life is declared to be “Christ in you, the hope of glory” (Col. 1:27). And, “Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you?” (1 Cor. 6:19).

(11) *The Work of Sanctification.* Jude writes to believers as to those “that are

sanctified by God the Father” (Jude 1:1); again, of Christ it is said, “For both he that sanctified and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren” (Heb. 2:11). Thus, also, the Apostle writes of the Holy Spirit in relation to believers, “Ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God” (1 Cor. 6:11).

(12) *The Believer’s Safekeeping.* Various aspects of this feature of truth might be presented. Christ declared of the Father that “no man is able to pluck them out of my Father’s hand” (John 10:29); and not only is the same thing promised by the Son Himself (John 10:28), but the Son has wrought in four effectual ways to the same end. It is written, “Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us” (Rom. 8:34). Nothing could be more assuring than that the believer is “sealed [by the Spirit] unto the day of redemption” (Eph. 4:30).

Marvelous, indeed, are the works of God and of surpassing import is the fact that these works are, in each case, said to be wholly wrought by each of the Trinity separately, not in partnership or mutual cooperation, and sufficiently in each instance to make it appear to be unnecessary for the work to be undertaken by Another! Thus unity and plurality are demonstrated as existing in the Godhead on a plane of relationship above and beyond the range of human experience.

d. *The Trinity and the Worship of God.* All created intelligences are appointed to render worship to God, and their worship, such as it is, comprehends the triune Godhead.

(1) *By Angels.* As has been observed, the angels ascribe worship to three Persons when they say, “Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts” (Isa. 6:3), and the “living creatures” are saying, “Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come” (Rev. 4:8).

(2) *By Saints.* All prayer and worship is now directed, by divine instruction, to the Father, in the name of the Son, and in the enabling power of the Holy Spirit (John 16:23, 24; Eph. 6:18).

(3) *The Benedictions.* In Numbers 6:24–26, the blessing implored by the high priest upon the people is recorded as, “The LORD bless thee, and keep thee: the LORD make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: the LORD lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace.” In 2 Corinthians 13:14 the most used benediction of the church is recorded, “The grace of the Lord Jesus

Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen.”

As a summarization of his extended discussion bearing on the doctrine of the Trinity, Dr. Horace Bushnell writes:

To hold this grand subtonic mystery, in the ring of whose deep reverberation we receive our heaviest impressions of God, as if it were only a thing just receivable, not profitable; a dead truth, not a living; a theologic article, wholly one side of the practical life; a truth so scholastic and subtle as to have in fact no relation to Christian experience; nothing, we are sure, can be less adequate than this, or bring a loss to religion that is more deplorable, unless it be a flat denial of the mystery itself. In this view we cannot but hope that what we have been able to say may have a certain value ... preparing some to find how glorious and how blessed a gift to experience, how vast an opening of God to man, how powerful, transforming, transporting, this great mystery of God may be. We can wish the reader nothing more beatific in this life than to have found and fully brought into feeling the practical significance of this eternal act or fact of God, which we call the Christian Trinity. Nowhere else do the bonds of limitation burst away as here. Nowhere else does the soul launch upon immensity as here; nowhere fill her burning censer with the eternal fires of God, as when she sings,

One inexplicably three,
One in simplest unity.

... Neither will it do for us to suffer any impatience or be hurried into any act of presumption, because the Trinity of God costs us some struggles of thought, and because we cannot find immediately how to hold it without some feeling of disturbance and distraction. Simply because God is too great for our extempore and merely childish comprehension, he ought to be given us in forms that cost us labor and put us on a stretch of endeavor. So it is with all great themes. ... Let no shallow presumption turn us away, then, from this glorious mystery till we have given it time enough and opened to it windows enough by our praises and our prayers, to let in the revelation of its glory. Let it also be a welcome commendation to our reverence, that so many friends of God and righteous men of the past ages, such as bore a greater fight than we and grew to greater ripeness in their saintly walk, bowed themselves adoringly before this holy mystery, and sang it with hallelujahs in the worship of their temples, in their desert fastings and their fires of testimony. And as their *Gloria Patri*, the sublimest of their doxologies, is in form a hymn for the ages, framed to be continuously chanted by the long procession of times till times are lapsed in eternity, what can we better do than let the wave lift us that lifted them, and bid it roll on: Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost, as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.—*New Englander*, Vol. 12, Nov., 1854, cited by Harris, *God the Creator and Lord of All*, I, 406–7

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
Praise Him, all creatures here below;
Praise Him above, ye heavenly host;
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. —Amen.

Chapter XIX

GOD THE FATHER

PROCEEDING TO a more comprehensive investigation into that which revelation discloses concerning the individual characteristics and relationships of each of the Blessed Three, that which is peculiar to the First Person, known as the *Father*, is foremost in order. First, it is essential to observe the difference between that notion concerning God which is advanced by the monotheists of the Unitarian class and the Biblical representation of the *Father*. It has too often been assumed that all systems which recognize God at all, agree with the Christian system to the extent that the First Person is shared by all, that is, the Christian belief is satisfied if two other Persons are added to the One God whom all are supposed to acknowledge alike. The error of this assumption is made evident when it is seen that the Christian's conception, based on the teaching of the Scriptures, is not that the *one God* of the Unitarian is the First Person plus two more who sustain doubtful titles to the honors of Deity; but that the *one God* is that whole Essence which subsists as Father, Son, and Spirit, and that if any one of these three Persons is to be designated as a representative of the Unitarian idea of God to whom the Christian would add two more, any one of the Three, they being absolutely equal in every particular, might be drafted with impartial propriety for such fancied discrimination. The monotheistic notion, as voiced by Jews, Mohammedans, and Unitarians, is of a God who is one Person; while the Christian's idea is of one God who answers every claim of Biblical monotheism, yet subsists in three equal Persons. The Father is not the one God of the Bible any more than is the Son or the Spirit. The Three are *one God*. It is recognized that, for the purposes of manifestation and redemption, the Son has voluntarily elected to do the will of the Father and to do that will in dependence upon the Spirit. To the same end, the Holy Spirit has voluntarily chosen not to speak from Himself as the Author of what He says, but to speak whatsoever He hears. It is unscriptural, shallow, and a dishonor to both the Son and the Spirit to assume that these voluntary subjections are due to inherent inferiority. Such a claim robs these two Persons of one of their great glories—that of voluntary subjection to the end that worthy objectives may be realized. Unitarianism, so far as it concerns itself with the Scriptures at all, lays hold of those passages wherein this voluntary subjection is asserted and by these passages seeks to prove that the Scriptures declare an inherent inferiority of the Son and of the Spirit. To reach

these conclusions, they must either discredit or wholly reject that larger body of Scripture (to be attended later) which declares the absolute Deity of the Son and Spirit. It may be concluded, then, that, outside of these more or less temporary relationships which the voluntary subjections engender, the Father is in no inherent respect superior to either the Son or the Spirit. The Fatherhood of God has several manifestations. In Ephesians 3:15 the phrase, “the whole family” over which God is said to be Father, is better rendered *every fatherhood*, which discloses the truth that this Fatherhood includes various filiations, and is itself that norm after which all fatherhoods are patterned and from which they are named. The distinctive Fatherhoods of God are:

I. Fatherhood Over Creation

The Fatherhood of God over creation is one of measureless extent. In the Ephesian passage, referred to above, there is allusion to families in heaven and on earth. In Hebrews 12:9 God is mentioned as “the Father of spirits,” and in James 1:17, He is designated “the Father of lights.” Similarly, in Job 38:7 angels are called sons of God (cf. Job 1:6; 2:1; Gen. 6:4). As to the more restricted relationship of the divine Fatherhood over humanity, it is written of Adam—after having traced the genealogy of Christ backward to Adam—that he is a “son of God.” Thus, also, in Malachi 2:10 it is stated: “Have we not all one father? hath not one God created us?” Yet, again, in Acts 17:29, it is recorded that the Apostle said in his sermon to the men of Athens on Mars’ Hill: “Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God.” These passages, with 1 Corinthians 8:6 where it is declared, “But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things,” teach that it is within the latitude of the Biblical use of the word *Father*, as applied to God, to comprehend all created beings as belonging to that Fatherhood. Thus it is revealed that there is a form of universal Fatherhood and universal brotherhood which, within its proper bounds, should be recognized; but this, as important as it may be, is in no way to be confused with that Fatherhood and brotherhood which is secured by the regenerating work of the Spirit. It should be added as a qualifying fact that this general form of kinship between Deity and creation is not usually predicated of the Father, but is declared to be between God and His creation. His love for all humanity is expressed in the words, “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son.”

II. Fatherhood by Intimate Relationship

The intimate relationship between Jehovah and Israel, which owed all its reality to the gracious working of God, is divinely expressed by the figure of father and son. In Exodus 4:22 record is given that Jehovah instructed Moses to say to Pharaoh: “Thus saith the LORD, Israel is my son, even my firstborn.” There is no record that they were children of God by regeneration. Nor were they at that time a redeemed people, as they were later when departing from Egypt. In anticipating God’s precious nearness to Solomon for his father’s sake, God said to David: “I will be his father, and he shall be my son” (2 Sam. 7:14). In like manner, in an effort to bring God near to the hearts of His people, the Psalmist says: “Like as a father pitieth his children, so the LORD pitieth them that fear him” (Ps. 103:13).

III. The Father of Our Lord Jesus Christ

The phrase “the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ” is the full title of the First Person of the blessed Trinity, and it incorporates, also, the full title of the Second Person. True, God the Father is also the Father of all who believe, but for all eternity to come He must first be recognized by that surpassing distinction which, in part, has been His throughout the eternity past, namely, the *God and Father* of our Lord Jesus Christ. The relation of the Second Person to the First Person has from all eternity been that of a Son, and, like all else relate to the Godhead, is not only eternal but is unchangeable. He did not become a Son of the Father, as some say that He did, by His incarnation, or by His resurrection, nor is He a Son by mere title, nor is He temporarily assuming such a relationship that He may execute His part in the Covenant of Redemption. Of these claims, that of sonship by the incarnation has had many exponents and none more effective than Ralph Wardlaw, who made certain distinctions which others of that school of interpretation failed to note, namely, that the title *Son of God* is not, according to this specific belief, to signify that He is a Son through the channel of His humanity alone—which idea borders on the Unitarian opinion—nor is it true that the title belongs to His Deity alone. Dr. Wardlaw claims that it belongs to the Person of Christ including His Deity and His humanity as they both resided in Him following the incarnation. This incarnation theory of sonship does not question the preexistence of the Second Person as the Logos of God, but it does assert that the specific title *Son of God* does not apply to the Logos until the hypostatic union of the divine and human natures is formed by

the incarnation. It becomes, then, a question as to *when* the title began to have a proper use. Theologians generally have been emphatic in their insistence that the divine sonship is from all eternity. Their belief in this matter is based upon clear Scripture evidence. He was the *Only Begotten* of the Father from all eternity, having no other relation to time and creation than that He is the Creator of them. It is evident that the Father and Son relationship sets forth only the features of *emanation* and *manifestation* and does not include the usual conception of derivation, inferiority, or distinction as to the time of beginning. The Son, being very God, is eternally on an absolute equality with the Father. On the other hand, the First Person became the *God* of the Second Person by the incarnation. Only from His humanity could Christ address the First Person as “My God.” This He did in that moment of supreme manifestation of His humanity when on the cross He said, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” And again, after His resurrection, He said, “I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God” (John 20:17). On this point of His eternal Sonship, Dr. Van Oosterzee says:

This relation between Father and Son had not a beginning, but existed from all *eternity*. Clearly enough is this assured to us by the Lord Himself (John 8:58; 17:5, 24), and by His first witnesses (John 1:1; Rev. 22:13; Col. 1:17, and many other places). For there is as little ground here for accepting a purely ideal pre-existence, as for speaking of a period of time before the Creation, at which the Son—previously not existing—was called into existence by the Father. Arianism, which asserts this last, is properly regarded exegetically absolutely unsupported. A sound exposition of Colossians 1:15, 16 shows, not that the Son is here placed on a level with the creature as opposed to the Father, but on a level with the invisible God as opposed to the creature. ... As a legitimate consequence of all that has been said, it may be deduced that the Father gives the most perfect *revelation of Himself* in and through the Son. If the Father dwells in a light unapproachable, in the Son the Unseen has become visible (John 1:18). In the Father we adore in like manner the Hidden One, in the Son we contemplate the God who reveals Himself (Heb. 1:3). “As the human figure reflects itself in the mirror, and all that is in the seal is found also in the impression thereof, so in Him, as the outbeaming of His invisible being, the Unseen has become visible. God finds Himself again, and reflects Himself in the Logos, as in His other I” (Tholuck). Thus is the Son one with the Father, in the communion of the Holy Ghost.—*Christian Dogmatics*, I, 278–79

Dr. Van Oosterzee, in the course of his argument, confuses the issue by drafting passages which teach the eternity of the Logos or Second Person, but do not involve any reference to the eternal Son. It will be found that but few passages give direct support to the eternity of the sonship relation; but enough of these are in evidence, it is believed, to sustain the doctrine. None of these is more conclusive than Colossians 1:15, 16, which Dr. Van Oosterzee employs in the above quotation. God is said to give His Son to be a Savior. This does not mean that God gave the Eternal Logos or Second Person who, in turn, became a

Son by being given. Dr. Wardlaw, along with others, is in error, it seems, in attempting to prove the theory of sonship by incarnation from Hebrews 1:2–4. In this context the Son is said to be “appointed heir of all things.” As the appointment antedates the incarnation, so the appointment was given to the Son before the incarnation. Dr. Wardlaw makes an important comment on the scope of the meaning to be assigned to the two titles—*Son of God*, and *Son of Man*.

If, therefore, it be alleged that the same thing which we have been saying of the title Son of God might equally well be affirmed of the title Son of Man, we at once grant it. The one and the other are alike titles of His person. Neither does the one represent Him as only God, nor the other as only man; but both distinguishing Him as Emmanuel, “God manifest in the flesh.” “The name ‘Son of God’ imports that He is really God; and ‘Son of Man’ that He is really man. But as ‘Son of Man’ does not mean that He is only a man, so neither does Son of God imply that He is only God. Under the appellation Son of Man, He speaks of Himself as having come down from heaven, and being in heaven while on earth (John 3:13), as having power to forgive sins (Matt. 9), to raise the dead, and to judge the world (Matt. 25:31, 32; John 5:27). Therefore this name must include more than His human nature. Speaking of Himself under the appellation Son of God, he declares He can do nothing of Himself (John 5:19), and that the Father is greater than He (John 14:28), therefore the name Son of God must include more than His divine nature. The truth is, these names are used indifferently to denote the one person of Emmanuel, and not to give us a separate or abstract view of His natures and their peculiar actions, this being easily known from the natures of the actions themselves. In His person we find God performing the actions of man, and a man performing the actions and exercising and displaying the perfections of God; for though He was possessed of two distinct natures, yet such is their union in Him that they make but one self; so that if we abstract or separate them, we lose the person of the Son; it is no more Himself” (M’Lean’s Works, vol. iii, pp. 308, 309).—*Systematic Theology*, II, 52, 53

Various passages imply the generation of the Son,—“the only begotten of the Father”; “the only begotten Son”; “the only begotten Son of God.” On the basis of these and other terms the theological distinction is set forth to the effect that the Son is eternally generated. As “the firstborn of every creature” Christ is wholly unrelated to created beings, being, as He is, begotten *before* all created beings. This distinction between Christ and creation is profound, a mystery, since its realities are outside the range of human cognition. Christ is by generation and not by creation. He is the Creator of all things. Generation is not predicated of the Father or the Spirit. This feature is peculiar to the Son. It is not the result of any divine act, but has ever been from all eternity. The words of the Nicene Creed are: “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”; of the Athanasian: “The Son is from the Father alone; neither made, nor created, but begotten ... generated from eternity from the substance of the Father” (cited by A. A. Hodge, *Outlines of Theology*, pp. 116, 118).

It is probable that the terms *Father* and *Son*, as applied to the First and Second Persons in the Godhead, are somewhat anthropomorphic in character. That sublime and eternal relationship which existed between these two Persons is best expressed to human understanding in the terms of *father* and *son*, but wholly without implication that the two Persons, on the divine side, are not equal in every particular. On the doctrine of the subordination of the Son, Dr. John Miley has well said: “In the divine economies of religion, particularly in the work of redemption, there is a subordination of the Son to the Father. There is, indeed, this same idea of subordination in the creative and providential works of the Son. However, the fullness of this idea is in the work of redemption. The Father gives the Son, sends the Son, delivers up the Son, prepares a body for his incarnation, and in filial obedience the Son fulfills the pleasure of the Father, even unto his crucifixion (John 3:16, 17; Rom. 8:32; Psa. 40, 6-8; Heb. 10:5–7; Phil. 2:8). The ground of this subordination is purely in his filiation, not in any distinction of essential divinity” (*Systematic Theology*, I, 239).

IV. Fatherhood Over All Who Believe

Under this the fourth aspect of the divine Fatherhood, a most intimate relationship and abiding reality is in view. Generation and regeneration are closely akin. The former is the begetting of life which is the starting point of physical existence, while the latter is the begetting of life which is the starting point of spiritual existence. With the authority of God the Scriptures testify that men in their natural estate of generation are spiritually dead until born anew, or from above. This birth, with its impartation of the divine nature, is a great mystery. It, like the blowing of the wind, is discernible as to its effects, but not disclosed to man as to its operation. As to their relation to God, men are either perfectly lost, being unregenerate, or perfectly saved, being regenerate. This discriminating transformation is wholly wrought of God—He alone is able—, and, like all divine undertakings, can be aided in no way by human cooperation or virtue. The one and only relation man can sustain to this work of God is that of *faith*, belief, or confidence in God to do what He alone is able to do. Having promised this blessing in answer to faith, He never fails to do even as He has promised. The faith attitude is itself of necessity wrought of God, since the unregenerate have no such capacity of themselves. Those who believe and are saved, are the elect of God. Among many features of divine undertaking in salvation, regeneration is one. This new birth is wrought by God the Holy Spirit

and results in legitimate Fatherhood on the part of God, and legitimate sonship on the part of the one who believes. Regeneration is God's own plan by which the lost may enter into that relation to Himself which is infinitely near and real, and it is no small commendation of the plan that it is wholly satisfying to infinite love. The extended soteriological aspects of regeneration need not be introduced here. Enough is said at this point if it is made clear that each individual who is born of God has thus become a son of God in the most vital and immutable meaning of sonship and has been received into the household and family of God. The regenerate one may say, and he does say, *Abba, Father*—a term of filial relation. This sonship, though it brings the believer into the position of an heir of God and a joint-heir with Christ, is not on the same plane with the Sonship of Christ which is from all eternity. Christ never used the phrase *our Father*. The so-called "Lord's prayer" is no exception to this since that is a prayer He taught His disciples to pray but did not and could not pray Himself. He spoke of "my Father, and your Father; my God, and your God." Nevertheless the Fatherhood and Sonship relations between God and believers are wonderful and glorious beyond expression.

Chapter XX

GOD THE SON: HIS PREEXISTENCE

THE UNITY of God, as has been indicated, is an essential fundamental of revelation. It is presented in the Scriptures with great solemnity and is there guarded with the utmost care. Direct precepts, promises, threatenings, and examples of punishment for idolatry all tend to emphasize this basic truth. Yet added to this so vital truth and without qualification or diminution of it, the further revelation is presented, namely, that this one God subsists in three Persons. This plurality is so clearly proclaimed even in the Old Testament that the devout Jew could not have failed to observe it; nor had he any reason for rejecting it until his prejudices were aroused against the claims of One who appeared with all the credentials of his long-expected Messiah. In the exercise of that blind detriment, he departed from whatever truth he had held respecting the Deity of his Messiah and of the Spirit. He became the defender of a form of monotheism which his cherished Scriptures do not sustain. As before asserted, it is not now a matter of adding two persons to the one whom the Jew is pleased to acknowledge as his God or of designating that One to be One of Three; it is rather a recognition of the added revelation that the one God, whom all acknowledge alike, subsists in a threefold plurality. Advantaged by that disclosure, the illuminated mind becomes aware of the great truth that the Three Persons are equal in every respect and that the same honor and adoration are alike due to each. To that spiritual mind which is guided by the Scriptures, each Person of the Godhead, because of specific and individual functions, occupies a distinct place. Reference has been made already to these features which are peculiar to the Father, and reference will yet be made to those features which are peculiar to the Spirit. The present objective is the examination of those features which are peculiar to the Son, and by so much is introduced the greatest theme of Systematic Theology. Because of its surpassing, determining import, the doctrinal conflicts—and there have been many—of the Christian era have been waged over this subject. In some instances strife has been between those who believed and those who did not; but more often it has been between men of equal sincerity who sought to determine what is true respecting the God-man, the Lord Jesus Christ. His complete humanity is clearly set forth, yet of Him it is as clearly disclosed that He is equal with the Father and the Spirit. To Him are given the titles of Jehovah, Redeemer, and Savior, and He is invested with every

attribute belonging to Deity. He is the greatest theme of prophecy; about Him things are written which could not be true of any angel or man. Because of His claim to be what He is, He died under the charge of blasphemy. He bore the sins of the world in a sacrificial death, and, because of that accomplishment, He forgave sin and for His sake alone sin is forgiven to the end of the world. He arose from the dead, thus sealing His every claim to Deity. He is now seated on the Father's throne and all power is given unto Him both in heaven and on earth. He is declared to be the Creator of all things visible and invisible, the source of eternal life, the object of worship both by angels and men. He will yet raise the dead and, as Judge, determine the future estate of all created beings. On the Godward side, He is the manifestation of God to men and the Bestower of every element in human life which is acceptable to God. Such contrasts as are set up between His humanity and His Deity could not but draw out the fire of fierce and prolonged controversy—a controversy too often waged in the interests of mere metaphysical and ontological considerations without due respect to the simplicity of that reality concerning Him which the Word of God asserts. The church has learned much from these dissensions, and no truth more empirical than that the “things of Christ” are revealed only to spiritual minds and only by revelation.

As the true starting point for all worthy thinking regarding the Christ, the theologian will do well to fix in mind the essential fact that the Second Person is intrinsically equal in every respect to the other Persons in the Godhead and that He remains what He ever has been regardless of misconceptions arising either from His eternal generation, or His Sonship, or from any natural deductions arising from the fact of His incarnation or His humiliation. No approach to a Biblical Christology is possible which does not ground itself on, and proceed from, the all-determining truth that the incarnate Second Person, though He be a “man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief,” is the eternal God. The Socinian distinction between the words *Deity* and *Divinity* and their claim that Christ was not Deity but was Divinity in the sense only that He partook of divine elements, must be rejected. He is divine in the sense that He is absolute Deity—else the language of the Bible wholly misleads. A candid mind must acknowledge the array of evidence as to Christ's Deity, or else show equally valid reason for not doing so. The trifling attempt of Unitarians to dispose of the vast body of truth which asserts the Deity of Christ is unworthy of consideration. No more vital question has ever been propounded than this: “What think ye of Christ?” and, similarly, “Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?” Outwardly religious

men have ever said in reply: “John the Baptist, Elias, Jeremias, or one of the prophets.” Others who stood nearer to Him have ever said: “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God” (Matt. 16:13–16). No ground is left for argument with the Jew, the Mohammedan, or the atheist who repudiates the whole doctrine of Christ’s supernatural being. The Arians professed great adoration for Christ, even acknowledging His preexistence; but they, believing Him to be a creation of God, rejected the truth of His *eternal* preexistence. In more recent times, the controversy has been with the Socinians and their successors, the Unitarians, all of whom with patent inconsistency have sought to retain the worthy name *Christian* while they dishonor the One whose name they espouse. This immeasurable insult to Christ would be serious enough were it confined to those who bear the Unitarian name, but these heretical teachings are again, as they have done before, penetrating the whole Christian profession under the gloss of scholarship which, being motivated by unbelief and being as dark as the natural heart of man, tends ever to promote its cherished liberalism. So-called *modernism* is not to be accounted for on the basis of a supposed weakness in the Biblical testimony. The greatest scholars of the Christian era have bowed with full submission to the authority of the Scriptures and have hailed its message as perfect and final. Unitarianism and its other self—modernism—reflect the downward pull of that unbelief which characterizes the unregenerate. The same truth abides which has sustained saints in life and filled the martyr with glory in death. The Unitarian has seldom been a martyr. Dr. Joseph Priestley was highly indignant when told by the Jew, David Levi, that when looking into the New Testament he (Levi) saw that Jesus of Nazareth was there represented as God, and for that reason he did not consider Dr. Priestley, with all his claims to the contrary, to be a Christian. The identical proofs which demonstrate to the satisfaction of the Unitarian (of whatever name) that God the Father is Deity, go on to a demonstration of equal extent and force that the Lord Jesus Christ is Deity. Basing all upon the Word of God which alone bears dependable witness, some aspects of the vast field of Christology will now be attended.

The importance of this theme may be gathered from the fact that, directly or indirectly, about all that enters into Systematic Theology might be incorporated into Christology. Since in this work a whole volume is devoted to Christology, only such phases of this discipline will be taken up under trinitarianism as may be required in preparation for the study of Anthropology, Soteriology, Ecclesiology, and Eschatology. Likewise, since it is in the scope of Theology Proper to restrict the contemplation of the Christ to His Person apart from His

works, this present treatment will conform to that dictum. The larger disquisition on Christology (Vol. V) is subject to these seven major divisions: (a) His preexistence, (b) His incarnation, (c) His death, (d) His resurrection, (e) His ascension and session, (f) His return and reign, and (g) His eternal authority and relationships. The present, more restricted discussion is divided thus: (a) His preexistence, (b) His names, (c) His Deity, (d) His incarnation, (e) His humanity, (f) the kenosis, and (g) the hypostatic union.

May the Spirit, whose work it is to take of the things of Christ and show them unto His own, illuminate the mind of the one who writes and the mind of all those who in patience pursue these pages!

The first step in the proof that the Lord Jesus Christ has His equal and rightful place in the Godhead is taken, when the truth is substantiated that He existed before He came into the world in human form. Of necessity, evidence bearing on such a stupendous theme as the preexistence of Christ will be drawn only from the Bible. No other source of information exists. The demonstration that Christ preexisted is not, however, a complete proof that He is very God. Such proof does refute the Socinian contention, namely, that He is only a man, for no man has ever existed before his birth; but it does not refute the Arian hypothesis, which is that Christ is a created being who existed as such before entering this human sphere. Decisive evidence as to the Deity of Christ will appear under another division of this general theme. Space may not be claimed here for investigation of secondary passages which only *imply* that Christ preexisted. There are various phrases in which this implication resides. He said of Himself that He was sent into the world (John 17:18); likewise it is written that He came in the flesh (John 1:14); He took part of flesh and blood (Heb. 2:14); He was found in fashion as a man (Phil. 2:8). He said, "I am from above" (John 8:23); and "I am not of the world" (John 17:14); He spoke also of descending out of heaven (John 3:13). Here it is indicated that He preexisted and no utterances such as these could have any place in the experience of human beings. Attention is rather to be directed: (a) to major passages of indisputable import and (b) to the Person of the Angel of Jehovah.

I. Major Passages on Preexistence

John 1:15, 30. Twice in these passages John the Baptist asserts of Christ that "he was before me." A time relationship is indicated, and, though John was older in years than Christ, he declares that Christ was *before* him. The Unitarian notion

that John was stating that by divine appointment Christ is higher in rank and dignity than John, is impossible and cannot be sustained by unprejudiced exegesis. Had John made reference only to matters of appointment and dignity he would have said, “He *is* before me,” and not, “He *was* before me.” The text declares that, in point of time, Christ preceded John.

John 6:33, 38, 41, 50, 51, 58, 62. In this context is written a sevenfold declaration made by Christ that He “came down from heaven.” To this may be added Christ’s words to Nicodemus: “And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven” (John 3:13). Similarly, the assurance is made emphatic by repetition as presented in John 3:31, “He that cometh from above is above all: he that is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth: he that cometh from heaven is above all.” As a disposition of this body of truth, and as a pure invention which has not a vestige of support either Biblical or traditional, the Socinians offered the hypothesis that some time after His birth Christ was transported to heaven, that He might receive the Word of Truth which was committed to Him, and from thence He came down from heaven. Later promoters of this form of doctrine have assumed that these passages assert that Christ had been “admitted to an intimate knowledge of heavenly things.” Were this the case, Christ would be in no way superior to Moses or any of the prophets. In John 3:13 it is pointed out that no man hath ascended into heaven and that Christ is the only One who has been in heaven—as one translation gives it, “No man, excepting myself, ever was in heaven.” To the same end, John 6:62 not only anticipates the literal ascension recorded in Acts 1:10, but states that, when He ascended, He returned “where he was before.” On this controversy an early writer, Dr. Edwards Nares, may be quoted with profit: “We have nothing but the positive contradictions of the Unitarian party, to prove to us that Christ did not come from heaven, though he says of himself, he did come from heaven; that though he declares he had seen the Father, he had not seen the Father; that though he assures us that he, in a most *peculiar* and *singular* manner came forth from God, he came from him no otherwise than like the prophets of old, and his own immediate forerunner” (*Remarks on the Imp. [Unitarian] Version*, cited by Watson, *Institutes*, I, 481).

John 8:58. Most emphatic, indeed, is this claim on the part of the Savior to preexistence. He said, “Before Abraham was, I am.” That the phrase *I am* sets forth the meaning of the ineffable name, *Jehovah*, and that it asserts no less than eternal existence, has been demonstrated under the general theme of *Biblical theism*. It is evident, too, that the Jews recognized that by this statement Christ

declared Himself to be Jehovah. This is seen in their bitter resentment. How could He, being not yet fifty years old, have existed before Abraham? In answer to this query Christ replied that He not only existed *before* Abraham, but that He had always existed prior to the time when He was speaking. Such is the claim embodied in the application of the eternal *I am* to Himself. For the last degree of blasphemy, which the Jews believed this to be, they were by their law obligated to stone Him to death. This they proceeded to do, but Christ displayed the very supernatural power which He had professed by disappearing from their midst. The Unitarian theories that Christ was asserting that His existence at that time was prior to the time when Abraham would become the father of many nations through the preaching of the gospel to the Gentiles, or that Christ merely preexisted in the foreknowledge of God, are not worthy of consideration. Faustus Socinus interpreted this passage thus: "Before Abraham became Abraham, *i.e.* the father of many nations, I am or have become the Messiah" (cited by Alexander, *Theology*, I, 369). This statement was later included in the Socinian confession of faith. This momentous event is better described by John Whitaker after this manner:

"Your Father Abraham," says our Saviour to the Jews, "rejoiced to see my day; and he saw it, and was glad." Our Saviour thus proposes himself to his countrymen, as their Messiah; that grand object of hope and desire to their fathers, and particularly to this first father of the faithful, Abraham. But his countrymen, not acknowledging his claim to the character of Messiah, and therefore not allowing his supernatural priority of existence to Abraham, chose to consider his words in a signification merely human. "Then said the Jews unto him, Thou art not fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham?" But what does our Saviour reply to this low and gross comment upon his intimation? Does he retract it, by warping his language to their poor perverseness, and so waiving his pretensions to the assumed dignity? No! to have so acted, would have been derogatory to *his* dignity, and injurious to *their* interests. He actually repeats his claim to the character. He actually enforces his pretensions to a supernatural priority of existence. He even heightens both. He mounts up far beyond Abraham. He ascends beyond all the orders of creation. And he places himself with God at the head of the universe. He thus arrogates to himself all that high pitch of dignity, which the Jews expected their Messiah to assume. This he does too in the most energetic manner, that his simplicity of language, so natural to inherent greatness, would possibly admit. He also introduces what he says, with much solemnity in the form, and with more in the repetition. "Verily, verily, I say unto you," he cries, "BEFORE ABRAHAM WAS, I AM." He says not of himself, as he says of Abraham, "Before he was, I was." This indeed would have been sufficient, to affirm his existence previous to Abraham. But it would not have been sufficient, to declare what he *now* meant to assert, his full claim to the majesty of the Messiah. He therefore drops all forms of language, that could be accommodated to the mere creatures of God. He arrests one, that was appropriate to the Godhead itself. "Before Abraham *was*," or still more properly, "Before Abraham was *MADE*," he says, "I AM." He thus gives himself the signature of *untreated* and *continual* existence, in direct opposition to *contingent* and *created*. ... He attaches to himself that very stamp of *eternity*, which God appropriates to his Godhead in the Old Testament; and from which an apostle afterward describes "Jesus Christ" expressly, to be "the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever." Nor did the

Jews pretend to misunderstand him now. They could not. They heard him directly and decisively vindicating the noblest rights of their Messiah, and the highest honours of their God, to himself. They considered him as a mere pretender to *those*. They therefore looked upon him, as a blasphemous arrogator of *these*. “Then took they up stones, to cast at him” as a blasphemer; as what indeed he was in his pretensions to be God, if he had not been in reality their Messiah and their God in one. But he instantly proved himself to their very senses, to be both; by exerting the energetic powers of his Godhead, upon them. For he “*hid himself; and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them; and so passed by.*”—Cited by Watson, *op. cit.*, I, 482–83

John 1:1–4, 14. This familiar portion reads: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men. . . . 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.” No Scripture is more conclusive as to the preexistence of Christ than this. Like the preceding passage (John 8:58), the attempt is made to express the thought of eternal existence by the use of the imperfect tense with the thought implied that it is an eternal present. He *is*, not merely *was*, in existence at a time of beginning which was before He had created all things by the Word of His power (cf. vs. 3). He was not only *with* God, but He *was* God. He who ever *is*, never began to be. With fullest assurance the inspired text goes on to recount that this eternal One “was made flesh, and dwelt among us.” To the order of these events, the truth they disclose, and the majesty here described, Dr. B. B. Warfield has made an illuminating comment:

John here calls the person who became incarnate by a name peculiar to himself in the New Testament—the “Logos” or “Word.” According to the predicates which he here applies to Him, he can mean by the “Word” nothing else but God Himself, “considered in His creative, operative, self-revealing, and communicating character,” the sum total of what is Divine (C. F. Schmid). In three crisp sentences he declares at the outset His eternal subsistence, His eternal intercommunion with God, His eternal identity with God: “In the beginning the Word was; and the Word was with God; and the Word was God” (Jn. 1:1). “In the beginning,” at that point of time when things first began to be (Gen. 1:1), the Word already “was.” He antedates the beginning of all things. And He not merely antedates them, but it is immediately added that He is Himself the creator of all that is: “All things were made by him, and apart from him was not made one thing that hath been made” (1:3). Thus He is taken out of the category of creatures altogether. Accordingly, what is said of Him is not that He was the first of existences to come into being—that “in the beginning He already had come into being”—but that “in the beginning, when things began to come into being, He already *was*.” It is express eternity of being that is asserted: “the imperfect tense of the original suggests in this relation, as far as human language can do so, the notion of absolute, supra-temporal existence” (Westcott). This, His eternal subsistence, was not, however, in isolation: “And the Word was with God.” The language is pregnant. It is not merely coexistence with God that is asserted, as of two beings standing side by side, united in a local relation, or even in a common conception. What is suggested is an active relation of intercourse. The distinct personality of the Word is therefore not

obscurely intimated. From all eternity the Word has been with God as a fellow: He who in the very beginning already “was,” “was” also in communion with God. Though He was thus in some sense a second along with God, He was nevertheless not a separate being from God: “And the Word was”—still the eternal “was”—“God.” In some sense distinguishable from God, He was in an equally true sense identical with God. There is but one eternal God; this eternal God, the Word is; in whatever sense we may distinguish Him from the God whom He is “with,” He is yet not another than this God, but Himself is this God. The predicate “God” occupies the position of emphasis in this great declaration, and is so placed in the sentence as to be thrown up in sharp contrast with the phrase “with God,” as if to prevent inadequate inferences as to the nature of the Word being drawn even momentarily from that phrase. John would have us realize that what the Word was in eternity was not merely God’s coeternal fellow, but the eternal God’s self.—*International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia*, IV, 2342–43

John 17:5. In His prayer to His Father the Savior said: “And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.” This unqualified declaration that He had shared personally and rightfully in the glory which belonged only to Deity before the world was, is another proclamation of the truth that Christ existed before His incarnation and, being, as it is, a part of His prayer to the Father, is not subject to those restrictions which are required when men are addressed. He is speaking to the Father concerning things which belong to the eternal relationship within the Godhead. The Unitarian gloss proposes that Christ shared in the glory only in the sense that He was anticipated in the eternal counsels of God. If that were true, consistency would require that His petition to be restored to that glory was no more than a request to be returned to that nonexistent anticipation, with no expectation that He would ever attain to an actual glory.

Philippians 2:6. Here it is written: “Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God.” This decisive passage—yet to be examined under the kenotic implications, is adduced here for but the one reason of its clear affirmation that Christ, before the incarnation, existed in the form of God. The kenotic question is one of His human form—the preincarnate, divine form being hardly subject to question, except by those who must subvert or invalidate every Scripture which opposes their preconceived ideas born of unbelief. Of the important foundation on which this passage is based, namely, the essential Deity and preexistence of Christ, Dr. B. B. Warfield has written at length, a part of which is here quoted:

The statement is thrown into historical form; it tells the story of Christ’s life on earth. But it presents His life on earth as a life in all its elements alien to His intrinsic nature, and assumed only in the performance of an unselfish purpose. On earth He lived as a man, and subjected Himself to the common lot of men. But He was not by nature a man, nor was He in His own nature subject to the fortunes of human life. By nature He was God; and He would have naturally lived as became

God—"on an equality with God." He became man by a voluntary act, "taking no account of Himself," and, having become man, He voluntarily lived out His human life under the conditions which the fulfilment of His unselfish purpose imposed on Him. The terms in which these great affirmations are made deserve the most careful attention. The language in which Our Lord's intrinsic Deity is expressed, for example, is probably as strong as any that could be devised. Paul does not say simply, "He was God." He says, "He was in the form of God," employing a turn of speech which throws emphasis upon Our Lord's possession of the specific quality of God. "Form" is a term which expresses the sum of those characterizing qualities which make a thing the precise thing that it is. Thus, the "form" of a sword (in this case mostly matters of external configuration) is all that makes a given piece of metal specifically a sword, rather than, say, a spade. And "the form of God" is the sum of the characteristics which make the being we call "God," specifically God, rather than some other being—an angel, say, or a man. When Our Lord is said to be in "the form of God," therefore, He is declared, in the most express manner possible, to be all that God is, to possess the whole fulness of attributes which make God God. Paul chooses this manner of expressing himself here instinctively, because, in adducing Our Lord as our example of self-abnegation, his mind is naturally resting, not on the bare fact that He is God, but on the richness and fulness of His being as God. He was all this, yet He did not look on His own things but on those of others. It should be carefully observed also that in making this great affirmation concerning Our Lord, Paul does not throw it distinctively into the past, as if he were describing a mode of being formerly Our Lord's, indeed, but no longer His because of the action by which He became our example of unselfishness. Our Lord, he says, "being," "existing," "subsisting" "in the form of God"—as it is variously rendered ... Paul is not telling us here, then, what Our Lord was once, but rather what He already was, or, better, what in His intrinsic nature He is; he is not describing a past mode of existence of Our Lord, before the action he is adducing as an example took place—although the mode of existence he describes was our Lord's mode of existence before this action—so much as painting in the background upon which the action adduced may be thrown up into prominence. He is telling us who and what He is who did these things for us, that we may appreciate how great the things He did for us are.—*Ibid.*, pp. 2338–39

II. The Angel of Jehovah

The unanimity of belief on the part of all devout scholars that the Angel of Jehovah is the preincarnate second Person of the Trinity, is most significant. The entire scope of this theme cannot be introduced here. Two lines of evidence should be pursued: (a) that this Angel is a divine Person and not merely one of the created heavenly hosts; and (b) that this Angel is none other than the Christ of God, the second Person of the Blessed Three.

1. A DIVINE PERSON. The fact of appearances of a divine Person will not be questioned by any who accept the testimony of the Bible. It is recorded that He appeared once in the consummation of the age to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself (Heb. 9:26), that He now "appears in the presence of God for us" (Heb. 9:24), and that He will yet "appear the second time without [apart from] sin unto salvation" (Heb. 9:28). But as Angel of Jehovah He appeared over and over again in the outworking of Jehovah's purposes and dealings with the Old

Testament saints This mighty One is sometimes designated *the Angel of Jehovah*, and sometimes *the Angel of the countenance*—meaning that He was ever before the face of God. Far removed, indeed, is this Being from those angels who are created. He is an angel only by *office*. This means that He is one of the Godhead who serves as messenger or revealer. He is ever the manifestation of God (John 1:18). The first proof to be advanced is that this Angel is Deity, regardless of appearances or service rendered.

The primary evidence that this Angel is of the Godhead is in the fact that, among various appellations, He bears the titles belonging to Deity alone—*Jehovah* and *Elohim*. As such He dwelt among Israel as the supreme and final object of their worship. To the people it was said “Thou shalt have no other gods before me.” Thus, whom they worshiped under divine favor was, of necessity, Deity. Concern at this point has only to do with the one designation, *Jehovah*. This title above all others is peculiar to Deity, since it is at no time applied to any other. Emphasizing this truth the Scriptures declare: “Seek him that maketh the Pleiades and Orion, and turneth the shadow of death into the morning, and maketh the day dark with night; that calleth for the waters of the sea, and poureth them out upon the face of the earth (Jehovah is his name)” (Amos 5:8, R.V.); “That they may know that thou alone, whose name is Jehovah, art the Most High over all the earth” (Ps. 83:18, R.V.); “I am Jehovah, that is my name; and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise unto graven images” (Isa. 42:8, R.V.). When this ineffable name is thus freely ascribed to the second Person, the Lord Jesus Christ, the evidence is complete that the Savior is not only Deity, but that He existed as such from all eternity. When this highest of all titles in heaven or in earth is given to One who bears the name *Angel*, as the cognomen *Angel of Jehovah* specifies, it is not that the name has been employed contrary to the Scriptures, but it indicates a Person of Deity, who, because of His peculiar service and relationships, though uncreated, is termed *Angel*. Certain passages (cf. Ex. 17:15; Num. 10:35, 36; Ezek. 48:35) wherein Jehovah is associated with material objects, provide no exception, nor should confusion arise because of the fact that this Angel is sometimes called *Jehovah* and at other times *Jehovah’s Messenger*. It is recorded that Jehovah said, “I will send my angel [or, messenger],” but that Angel is as clearly said to be Jehovah Himself. The same Person is evidently in view whether Jehovah says, “I will send my angel,” or “I will go.” If an insoluble mystery arises at this point, it is none other than that which permeates the entire doctrine of the Trinity with its one Essence. All passages bearing on the Angel of Jehovah are evidence and should be

considered (Gen. 16:7; 18:1; 22:11, 12; 31:11–13; 32:24–32; 48:15, 16; Ex. 3:2, 14; Josh. 5:13, 14; Judg. 3:19–22; 2 Kings 19:35; 1 Chron. 21:15, 16; Ps. 34:7; Zech. 14:1–4). From these Scriptures the demonstration is conclusive that the Angel of Jehovah is part of the eternal Godhead.

2. PART OF THE TRINITY. In like manner, the Scriptures are equally clear in presenting the truth that the Angel of Jehovah of the Old Testament is the Christ of the New Testament. To a considerable degree, the understanding of all that is set forth must depend upon the recognition of the fact that the words *messenger* and *servant*, as used of Jehovah, are equivalent to the name *Angel of Jehovah*. The appearances of Deity as recorded in the Old Testament are very rarely of the First Person as such. It is rather the Manifester, the Messenger, of Jehovah—His Angel, or the Angel of Jehovah, who appears and who undertakes. It is none other than the One by whom all things were created, who is designated in the New Testament as the Christ of God (Col. 1:16; Heb. 1:2). As the Messenger of the covenant He appeared to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, and Hagar. He led Israel out of Egypt. He administered the law at Sinai, and He will be the Executor as well as the Sustainer of the covenant yet to be made with Israel (Jer. 31:31–33). There could be no doubt but that the tabernacle, and later the temple, were to be the place where Jehovah was pleased to dwell and to meet His people. Malachi declares that the Messenger of the covenant will suddenly come to His temple. That it is styled *His temple* implies that the Messenger is Jehovah who abode in the temple and for whom it existed. The passage, which evidently refers to the second advent of Christ, reads: “Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the LORD of hosts” (Mal. 3:1). However, He had come as suddenly to the tabernacle which Moses built in the wilderness, and as suddenly to the temple which Solomon built and dedicated to Jehovah. Thus He will come, as Malachi predicts, to the temple which will be in Jerusalem and from thence enter into those long-anticipated judgments which are yet to fall upon Israel. But, when Christ was here on earth and when in Jerusalem, He was ever in the temple. It was to Him the house of His abode. The crucial event which had the greatest significance concerning His relation to the temple in the time of His first advent was His formal entrance into the temple, as the consummation of His so-called “triumphal” entry into Jerusalem—which event all Evangelists are careful to report. This occurrence, it will be seen, is a

conspicuous advent of Jehovah to His temple. When approaching Jerusalem from Galilee, Christ stopped at the foot of the Mount of Olives and sent two disciples on to a village to procure the colt of an ass which He might ride into the city. The remaining distance was less than a mile. The securing of this conveyance was not for personal distinction of a self-centered kind, nor was it due to weariness. It had been predicted that He would so enter the city in the days of His lowly guise. The act was specified in the program for the Messiah as definitely as was His birth of a virgin in Bethlehem. Every instructed Jew was aware of this. The prophecy reads: “Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass” (Zech. 9:9; cf. Matt. 21:1–10; Mark 11:1–10; Luke 19:29–40; John 12:12–15). Thus Christ fulfilled the expectation concerning the Messiah and was none other than Jehovah’s Messenger of the Old Testament. The reaction of the people can be explained in no other way than that they unwittingly, or otherwise, cooperated in the fulfillment of this so-important prediction. They said, “Hosanna to the son of David: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord [Jehovah]; Hosanna in the highest” (Matt. 21:9). It was Passover and the city was filled with Jews from many foreign places. Up to this time Christ had avoided display lest His enemies should precipitate His death before His ministry was completed. It was at its end and now, by this act, He asserts His Messianic claim. Were the hosannas of the multitude to be suppressed, the stones would cry out—so great, indeed, was the imperative demand that prophecy be fulfilled. Speaking with the authority of Jehovah, He said as He entered the temple: “My house is the house of prayer: but ye have made it a den of thieves.”

Regarding the ministry of John the Baptist, it is said that he fulfilled the prophecy by Isaiah—“the voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the LORD [Jehovah], make straight in the desert a highway for our God” (Isa. 40:3). Thus Christ, whom John announced, *was* and *is* Jehovah and, if He is Jehovah, He preexisted from all eternity. After the same manner, the Angel who appeared to Abraham, to Jacob, to Moses at the bush, and as the voice which shook the earth, is as clearly identified as the Christ of the New Testament. He is the Angel of Jehovah. On this conclusion which is sustained by the Scriptures, upheld by the early Fathers, and by all interpreters who seek the honor of Christ, Richard Watson writes: “It has now therefore been established that the Angel Jehovah, and Jesus Christ our Lord, are the same person; and this

is the first great argument by which his Divinity is established. ... We trace the manifestations of the same person from Adam to Abraham; from Abraham to Moses; from Moses to the prophets; from the prophets to Jesus. Under every manifestation he has appeared in the form of God, never thinking it robbery to be equal with God. 'Dressed in the appropriate robes of God's state, wearing God's crown, and wielding God's sceptre,' he has ever received Divine homage and honour. No name is given to the Angel Jehovah, which is not given to Jehovah Jesus; no attribute is ascribed to the one, which is not ascribed to the other; the worship which was paid to the one by patriarchs and prophets, was paid to the other by evangelists and apostles; and the Scriptures declare them to be the same august person,—the image of the Invisible, whom no man can see and live;—*the Redeeming Angel, the Redeeming Kinsman, and the Redeeming God*" (*Theological Institutes*, I, 504).

In view of the testimony of so extended a body of Old Testament Scripture, none can reasonably doubt but that Jehovah is coming to establish a reign of righteousness in all the earth. Thus it is written in Psalm 96:11–13 (R.V.) and repeated in substance in Psalm 98:7–9, which emphasis should not be unnoticed: "Let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein; let the floods clap their hands; let the hills sing for joy together before Jehovah; for he cometh to judge the earth: he will judge the world with righteousness, and the peoples with equity" (R.V.). This is a description of the second advent of Messiah and the response of the enlightened heart is prepared in the closing phrase of the Bible—"Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

Chapter XXI

GOD THE SON: HIS NAMES

THE MESSIANIC character of Psalm 45 cannot be questioned. Its closing verse is a promise and a prophecy, "I will make thy name to be remembered in all generations: therefore shall the people praise thee for ever and ever." Because of all that is disclosed in the name of the Messiah, He shall be praised in all generations. Large indeed is the sum total of all His names, His titles, and His descriptive designations. Because of His incarnation, His work in redemption, and His multiplied relationships, the number of His appellations exceeds those of the Father, the Spirit, and all the angels so far as these are revealed. As is true of each Person of the Godhead, the names of the Second Person are a distinct revelation. It is probable that almost every essential truth resident in the Second Person is expressed in some specific name, e.g., *Emmanuel* speaks of His incarnation relationships, *Jesus* of His salvation, the *Son of man* of His humanity, the *Son of God* of His Deity, *Lord* of His authority, the *Son of David* of His throne rights, *Faithful and True* of His manifestations, and *Jesus Christ the Righteous* of the equity with which He meets the condemnation due the Christian because of sin. Some of the major titles are to be considered more specifically.

I. Jehovah, Lord

Some truth relative to the Jehovah character of the Second Person has been set forth in the previous discussion. Without restating what has gone before, added evidence may well be advanced to the end that the glory may be unto Him to whom it belongs. He is properly styled *Jehovah*. This is because of the fact that He is *Jehovah*; yet it will be remembered this designation is applicable to none but Deity. It is the ineffable name which represents that eternal exaltation which cannot be communicated to any creature. In Psalm 83:18 it is written: "That men may know that thou, whose name alone is JEHOVAH, art the most high over all the earth." Similarly, in Isaiah 42:8, "I am Jehovah, that is my name; and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise unto graven images" (R.V.). No greater proof of Deity could be presented concerning Christ than that He should rightfully be called *Jehovah*. Only a little attention need be exercised to discover how constantly the Jehovah title is ascribed to Christ. In Zechariah 12:10 Jehovah predicts concerning Himself: "And I will pour upon the house of

David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his first-born.” Of none other of the Godhead than Christ could it be said that He was “pierced” and one for whom the people would “mourn,” yet this is Jehovah who speaks. What other application could be given of Revelation 1:7, which reads, “Behold, he cometh 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”? To the same end, the prophecy presented in Jeremiah 23:5, 6 declares that the Righteous Branch, a son of David, who is Himself a King, shall be called *Jehovah our Righteousness*. It is Christ and not another who is made unto believers *righteousness* (1 Cor. 1:30), and it is only *in Christ* that they are *made the righteousness of God* (Rom. 3:22; 2 Cor. 5:21). Again, Jehovah who ascended up on high and led captivity captive, according to Psalm 68:18, is, in Ephesians 4:8–10, none other than Christ. And in Psalm 102 where the name *Jehovah* appears many times and in verse 12 with special significance, that enduring Person is declared in Hebrews 1:10 ff. to be the Lord Jesus Christ. Isaiah’s testimony, “Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD [Jehovah] of hosts,” is interpreted by the Apostle John to be a reference to Christ. He states: “These things said Esaias, when he saw his glory, and spake of him” (Christ—John 12:41). It may yet be added that as Jehovah of the Old Testament declares Himself to be the First and the Last (Isa. 41:4; 44:6; 48:12), so Christ, according to Revelation 1:8, 17, 18; 22:13, 16 is the same First and Last. The hosts of heaven have no thought of withholding from Christ the honor due unto Jehovah. Of their song it is written, “And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints. Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest” (Rev. 15:3, 4). As has been observed, Christ is Jehovah of the temple (cf. Matt. 12:6; Mal. 3:1; Matt. 21:12, 13), and He is Jehovah of the Sabbath (Matt. 12:8).

A distinct and extensive proof that Christ is Jehovah is to be seen in the New Testament title of *Lord* which is applied to Him upwards of a thousand times. *Jehovah* is a Hebrew term which is not brought forward into the New Testament. Its equivalent is κύριος, which title is also applied to the Father and the Spirit. It

is a justifiable procedure to treat the name *Jehovah* of the Old Testament as continued in its specific meaning into the New Testament by the name *Lord*. Such would be the natural meaning of many exalted declarations: “Lord of all” (Acts 10:36), “Lord over all” (Rom. 10:12), “Lord of glory” (1 Cor. 2:8), and “King of kings, and Lord of lords” (Rev. 17:14; 19:16).

II. Elohim, God

The body of Scripture in which this title is assigned to the Second Person is manifold indeed. In two notable passages in Isaiah the advent of Christ is anticipated and there in each He is styled *Elohim*. Predicting the ministry of the forerunner and his message, the prophet writes: “The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God” (Isa. 40:3). In the fulfillment of this anticipation, Luke declares that Christ is in view. He states: “As it is written in the book of the words of Esaias the prophet, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight” (3:4). It is evident that the word *our* as used in this prophetic passage includes the saints of all the ages and affirms the truth that the one who bears this title is Creator, Benefactor, and Judge, and that to Him supreme adoration is ever due. None from among men could ever answer the claims of this exalted name. After the same manner in a passage none will misinterpret, Isaiah, in the midst of other equally significant appellations, states that Christ is *the mighty El*. The passage reads, “For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God [El], The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this” (9:6, 7). The accompanying ascriptions in this passage are as exalting as the title, *mighty God*. He is Wonderful, Counsellor, Father of eternity, and a King who will establish a kingdom of perfect peace. This mighty God is born as a child. The Ancient of days becomes an infant in a woman’s arms; the Father of eternity is a Son given to the world. Each appellation breathes out the character of Deity and together they without question belong to the Second Person alone.

The New Testament bears even a greater witness. Of John the Baptist it was said that he would turn many to “the Lord their God.” The Apostle John certifies

that “the Word was God.” Emmanuel, Matthew says, is “God with us”—not as a mere spiritual presence, but a complete identification with the human family forever. The Apostle Paul enjoins the elders at Ephesus to “feed the church of God, which he [God] hath purchased with his own blood” (Acts 20:28). The writer to the Hebrews says of Christ: “Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever.” Thomas, in spite of his incredulity, declares, “My Lord and my God,” and the Apostle Paul in another Scripture anticipates the return of Christ as “the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ” (Titus 2:13). It may be accepted as true that in the combined titles such as *God and Father, Christ and God, God and our Saviour, the great God and our Saviour*, but one Person is in view. Thus Christ is specifically called *God* (cf. Rom. 15:6; Eph. 1:3; 5:5, 20; 2 Pet. 1:1). In 1 John 5:20, 21, Christ is designated, “the true God, and eternal life.” So He is “the blessed God” and “God over all” (Rom. 9:5).

III. Son of God, Son of Man

An interesting and fruitful study is presented in these two titles. Christ did not often designate Himself as *Son of God*, though He accepted that address whenever it was offered to Him by others. That He asserted that He is the *Son of God* led to the charge of blasphemy in His trial (Luke 22:67–71). In this instance He was asked two direct questions, namely, “Art thou the Christ?” and, “Art thou the Son of God?” It is possible that, in the estimation of the Jews, to claim to be Messiah was not as great an evil as to claim to be the Son of God. He was condemned for blasphemy because of His unqualified assertion that He is the Son of God. John adds in John 5:18, “Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God,” and, again, in 10:33, “The Jews answered him, saying, For a good work we stone thee not; but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God.” It is evident also that Christ spoke repeatedly of God as His Father, and though He reminded His followers that God is their Father, His own Sonship is a reality which He never classed with others. This is true regarding every form of sonship which the Bible recognizes and especially is it true of the sonship which believers sustain to God through regeneration. He taught His disciples to pray “Our Father which art in heaven,” but He did not, and could not, pray that prayer with them (cf. Matt. 11:27). John’s Gospel makes much of the *Son of God* title and properly, since it is the Gospel of His Deity. In that Gospel, *the Son*—which evidently is an

abbreviation of the full title *the Son of God*—executes judgment (5:22); He has life in Himself and quickeneth whom He will (5:26, 21). He gives eternal life (10:10); it is the will of the Father that all men should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father (5:23); the Son does only what He sees the Father do (5:19), and only that which He hears from the Father does He speak (14:10); and the Son confesses that, on the divine side, He has a Father and, on the human side, He has a God (20:17). A conclusive and arresting Scripture in this connection is Matthew 28:18–20, which reads: “And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.” Here it is seen that not only all authority is given to the Son, but He is named in the Trinity on an equality with the other Persons of the Godhead. The Apostle Paul began His incomparable ministry with no uncertain word as to the Son of God. It is written of him: “And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God,” and his continued emphasis upon the Deity of the Son is well set forth in Romans 1:1–4: “Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God, (which he had promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures,) concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; and declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection, from the dead.”

Concerning the name *Son of man*, the fact is to be recognized for all that it connotes, that Christ almost universally referred to Himself by this title. He so represents Himself thirty times in Matthew, fifteen times in Mark, twenty-five times in Luke, and twelve times in John. The designation, as belonging to Christ, appears once in Acts (7:56) and twice in Revelation (1:13; 14:14). This cognomen appears in certain parts of the Old Testament, notably, Psalms, Ezekiel, and Daniel. In later years much consideration has been given to the problem why Christ chose this designation rather than the more exalting name—*Son of God*. The impression generally held in earlier years was that the term *Son of God* emphasizes the Deity of the Savior, while the term *Son of man* emphasizes His humanity. It is highly probable that in the majority of cases this difference obtains. However, such is not always the case. The *Son of man* title covers a wide range of reality. In Mark 2:28 it is declared that “the Son of man is Lord also of the Sabbath.” while in Matthew 8:20 Christ appears under the same

name in lowly guise, “The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head.” Some have sought to account for Christ’s continued use of this name on the ground that it appears in the Old Testament. Such a connection can hardly be established, though there is clear anticipation of the Messiah under this designation in Daniel 7:13, 14. The choice of this appellation on the part of Christ does not seem to be restricted to Messianic aspects of His ministry. The people inquired, “Who is this Son of man?” (John 12:34), and Christ inquired, “Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?” (Matt. 16:13). The varied reply, like the question on the part of the people, hardly indicated that this specific title was associated generally with the Messianic hope. It would seem rather from His own viewpoint, with the background of His Deity from all eternity in mind, the natural feature of His Person to be stressed while here on the earth was that which was new—His humanity. In this He was drawing near to those to whom He spoke and to whom He was ministering. Doubtless a contact was established under the relationship which the humanity title suggested, that could not have been secured under the divine title. The use of the *Son of man* title by the Savior did not preclude Him from presenting Himself in any exalted position which occasion might demand. An important disclosure is made in Mark 10:45 concerning the Son of man: “For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.”

IV. Lord Jesus Christ

Essential truth relative to the Person of the Redeemer is revealed in this, His complete and official title. The name *Lord*, being none other than Jehovah, declares His Deity. The name *Jesus* belongs to His humanity and the way of salvation through His redeeming Sacrifice—“A body hast thou prepared me.” The title *Christ*, though used as a general identification of the Second Person, in its technical implication means all that is anticipated in the Old Testament—Prophet, Priest, and King. Since these offices as represented by these titles occupy so large a place in Christology and must be yet considered at length in other divisions of Systematic Theology, they will not be pursued further here.

The first sentence of the first preserved writing of the Apostle Paul employs a designation of Deity, which seems to be that commonly used by him, “God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Thess. 1:1. Cf. 2 Thess. 1:1; Gal. 1:1; 1 Cor. 1:3; 2 Cor. 1:2; Rom. 1:7; Eph. 1:2; 6:23; Col. 1:2; Philemon 1:3; Phil. 1:2; 1

Tim. 1:2; Titus 1:4; 2 Tim. 1:2). From this, the exalted character of this name and of the One who bears it may be seen. The designation, *Lord Jesus Christ*, is as elevated as the term *God*, with which it is coupled.

Chapter XXII

GOD THE SON: HIS DEITY

AS THERE is no question among professing Christians about the Deity of either the Father or the Spirit, it is reasonable to suppose that there would have been no question raised about the Deity of the Son had He not become incarnate in human form. The Deity of the Son is asserted in the Bible as fully and as clearly in every particular as is the Deity of the Father or the Spirit. On the other hand, the humanity of the Savior is as dogmatically set forth. To those who in their thinking keep these two natures of Christ separate both with respect to substance and manifestation, there is less perplexity about Christ's Deity. Difficulty arises with those who, assuming that they must blend these natures, attempt to strike an average in which His Deity is lowered and His humanity is exalted to a point of equivalence. To such persons, the resulting error is twofold: the Deity of the Lord is submerged in doubt and the humanity of the Lord is deprived of all its naturalness. Under those conditions, the Scriptures which so clearly present each of these two natures must either be disputed or qualified beyond effectiveness. The hypostatic union of the two natures in Christ is to be considered in another section of this general theme. However, it should be observed at this place, that the true scientific method would be first to establish the fact of the two natures of Christ before undertaking to enter upon the mystery involved. The truth of the two natures is fully demonstrated; the mystery resides in their coexistence in one person. Of this scientific method Dr. A. B. Winchester has written:

The bush burning and unconsumed was a great mystery. Moses might have turned from it to consider something "practical"—as men of affairs say. If he had done so what a vision, an experience, a life-work, a character, and a glory he would have missed! All progress of knowledge in *any* kind is made possible only by the recognition at once of fact and of mystery. Every fact has its mystery, and each mystery has its fact. The scientific procedure is to make the known, the stepping stone to the unknown; to advance from the simple to the complex; from the fact to the mystery. To invert that order, ignore the fact and begin with the mystery is unscientific and an effective barrier to any possible advance in knowledge. Remember this is the inexorable law of advance in knowledge of any kind, secular or religious. "Great is the mystery of godliness: *God* was *manifest* in the *flesh*." ... (1 Tim. 3:16.) In studying this "great mystery" we must follow the same order, *i.e.*, first the fact, then the mystery. This is precisely what rationalistic theologians and skeptics have not done. Moses was scientific. His attention was arrested by the fact of the bush and the fact of the flame. He would investigate the facts reverently and carefully, waiting patiently for the unfolding of the mystery. Beloved, do not miss that important lesson. That lowly bush burning unconsumed is a type radiant with the glory of the angel of the Covenant, our gracious and glorious Lord Jesus Christ. It foreshadows Him in the mysterious constitution of His complex Person and in

the great redeeming work which necessitated for its accomplishment the union (not blending) of the divine and human natures in one mysterious and glorious Person. The flame in the unconsumed bush typified the presence of Jehovah-Jesus, anticipating, as in other types, the future appearing in “flesh” of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ.—*God Hath Spoken*, pp. 179–80

The Second Person has ever been the manifestation of Deity and never more so than in and through the incarnation. So vital is this truth that He could say, “He that hath seen me hath seen the Father” (John 14:9), and “All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him” (Matt. 11:27). The manifestation of the Godhead is not dependent alone upon the humanity of the Son secured through the incarnation, for He was the perfect Revealer for all eternity. Because of this, He only served as the Angel of Jehovah. There is abundant reason to believe that finite humanity, of itself, could never serve as a medium through which infinity might be expressed. It follows from Christ’s words recorded in John 5:23 (R.V.) and 1 John 2:22, 23, that he who fails to see God in Christ does not see God at all. It follows, also, that the first step to be taken in an approach to the understanding of the Person of Christ is an unprejudiced recognition of His Deity. Certain lines of evidence establish this reality:

I. Divine Attributes Belong to Christ

There is no attribute of Deity which is not declared to be in Christ and to the full measure of infinity. Of these note may be made of:

1. ETERNITY. This attribute can be applied to none but God. It is possible that angels have lived to observe uncounted ages come and go, but multiplied ages do not make an eternity. It is a specific and peculiar assertion to claim for any being the attribute of *eternity*. In Isaiah 9:6, Christ is styled “The everlasting Father,” or *Father of eternity*, and Micah declares that this same Jesus who on the human side was to be born in Bethlehem, was, on the divine side, He “whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting” (Mic. 5:2). Thus, also, John announces that this Logos of God *was* in the beginning and is none other than the eternal God (John 1:1, 2). Of Himself He said, “Before Abraham was, I am” (John 8:58). By this declaration Christ proclaimed His Deity and His enemies so understood Him, for they took up stones to kill Him on the charge of blasphemy. He is *eternal life* and the bestower of it. A creature by generation may beget after its kind, but none but an eternal Being could beget eternal life.

The new birth is “from above.”

2. IMMUTABILITY. No created thing can be said to be immutable. Jehovah can say of Himself, “I am the LORD [‘Jehovah’], I change not” (Mal. 3:6). Psalm 102:25–27 is a message concerning Jehovah which is quoted in Hebrews 1:10–12, and there applied to Christ, and after this manner, “Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands: they shall perish; but thou remainest; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment; and as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail.” The Lord Jesus Christ is “the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever” (Heb. 13:8).

3. OMNIPOTENCE. As before indicated, the title *Almighty God* is used as a designation of Christ (Rev. 1:8). It is written that He shall reign until all enemies are destroyed (1 Cor. 15:25), and that “He is able even to subdue all things unto himself” (Phil. 3:21).

4. OMNISCIENCE. It is as definitely maintained that Christ knew all things. John states that He knew from the beginning those who would not believe, and the one that would betray Him (John 6:64), and that He knew “what was in man” (John 2:25). Peter said, “Lord, thou knowest all things” (John 21:17). The Lord said of Himself, “As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father” (John 10:15). Of Mark 13:32 where it is recorded that Christ declared that He did not know the day or the hour of His return, it may be observed that the passage is not unlike 1 Corinthians 2:2, where the Apostle wrote, “For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified,” the thought being *not to make known*, or *not to cause another to know*. The truth mentioned was not then, as to its time, committed either to the Son or to the angels to publish.

5. OMNIPRESENCE. No attribute is more distinctive in the realms of that which is peculiar to Deity than omnipresence, and none more foreign to the creature; yet of Christ it is said that He “fillet all in all” (Eph. 1:23). Christ promised that He whose residence was to be in heaven would, with the Father and as Jehovah walked with Israel (Lev. 26:12), come and make His abode with the believers (John 14:23). He also promised that, where two or three are gathered together unto His name, He would be in the midst of them (Matt. 18:20). So, also, He has declared to His messengers in all lands and throughout the age, “Lo, I am with you always” (Matt. 28:20, R.V.).

6. OTHER MAJOR ATTRIBUTES. To these divine attributes already named as belonging to the Savior, may be added all others, notably, *life* (John 1:4; 5:26; 10:10; 14:6; Heb. 7:16); *truth* (John 14:6; Rev. 3:7); *holiness* (Luke 1:35; John 6:69; Heb. 7:26); and *love* (John 13:1, 34; 1 John 3:16).

Thus it is effectively reasoned that, if attributes represent the elements of being and the divine attributes are the distinguishing features of Deity and every divine attribute is fully ascribed to Christ, He is Deity in the most absolute sense.

II. The Prerogatives of Deity are Ascribed to Christ

It is predicated of the Savior that He is Creator of all things and their Preserver, and that He has authority over His creation. He forgives sin, He will raise the dead, and He will judge the world. True worship is offered to Him and is received by Him. He is honored as Deity by inspired writers, and those who know Him best love and serve Him most. Some of these patent truths may well be considered more at length:

1. HE IS CREATOR OF ALL THINGS. But three major passages need be introduced in support of this declaration. With what seems to be some consideration of the Mosaic account concerning creation, John declares, *positively*, that “all things were made by him” (the Logos); and, *negatively*, “without him was not any thing made”; and, *universally*, “the world was made by him” (John 1:3, 10). A more conclusive, dogmatic assertion could not be framed. The very material world in which He lived and moved was the work of His own hands. With the same positive and universal signification the Apostle, by the Spirit, states, “For by him 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: and he is before all things, and by him all things consist” (Col. 1:16); and with the added truth that all elements in His universe are held together by Him. Lastly, in Hebrews 1:10 it is written, “And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands.” Therefore, if to create all things as *Originator* of them and to be the object of them as *Proprietor*, is a mark of Deity, the Lord Jesus Christ is, in the absolute sense, God.

2. HE IS PRESERVER OF ALL THINGS. The Lord of glory, the Savior of the world, upholds all things by the word of His power (Heb. 1:3), and, as noted

above, is that One by whom all things are sustained (Col. 1:17). As vast as the universe may be, it is one organic whole which is bound and held by one omnipotent Person—the Christ of God.

3. HE PARDONS SIN. The right and authority to pardon sin, since sin is evil because of its offense against God, could be exercised only by God Himself. Hence when, as in various instances, Christ acted directly in the pardon of sin He, by so much, asserted that He is God. On one occasion He wrought a notable miracle to convince the scribes that “the Son of man hath power upon earth to forgive sins” (Luke 5:24). Thus, also, it is disclosed that Christ forgives the sins of believers. The Apostle writes: “Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye” (Col. 3:13).

4. CHRIST WILL RAISE THE DEAD. This He did while here on earth. When identifying that which is peculiar to Deity, the Apostle writes: “that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead” (2 Cor. 1:9). To the same purpose Christ said, “For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will” (John 5:21). John 5:28, 29 presents a clear prediction: “Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.” So emphatically, indeed, has Christ the power to raise the dead that He is styled “the resurrection, and the life” (John 11:25).

5. CHRIST APPORTIONS THE REWARDS OF SAINTS. Though delivered from all judgment due to sin and because of the fact that Christ has borne their sins, the redeemed of this age do, nevertheless, all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, there to receive His approval or disapproval concerning their service for Him (2 Cor. 5:10).

6. THE JUDGMENT OF THE WORLD IS COMMITTED TO CHRIST. The Lord Himself said, “For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son” (John 5:22). With this in view, it is to be noted that the dead, small and great, shall stand before *God* and be judged by Him (Rev. 20:12). Thus Christ is identified as God and declared to be God.

7. THAT WORSHIP WHICH BELONGS ONLY TO GOD IS FREELY RENDERED TO

CHRIST. Worship of God is primarily on the ground of the fact that God is the Creator. The Psalmist says, “O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the LORD our maker” (Ps. 95:6). In the same manner Christ declared: “Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven” (Matt. 6:10). No man—not even an apostle—would suffer himself to be worshiped (cf. Acts 10:25, 26; 14:8–15); nor will any unfallen angel accept the worship which belongs to God alone (Rev. 22:8, 9). Yet Christ stated: “that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent him” (John 5:23). The sense in which Christ is to be honored may be determined by the way in which the inspired writers honor Him. On His ascension to heaven, they worshiped Him (Luke 24:52), and the early Christians were designated as those who call upon the name of Christ (Acts 9:14; cf. 22:16; Rom. 10:13; 1 Cor. 1:2). To those at all familiar with the New Testament text, it need not be pointed out that, as He was worshiped in His preincarnate glory (Isa. 6:3), so Christ is even more presented as the object of worship after His incarnation. It is no small feature of this consequence that all prayer is now to be made in Christ’s name (John 14:13, 14), and that those who knew Him best were by so much the more impelled to adore Him. He has always proved Himself to be the satisfying portion of all the saints of this and past ages.

How complete, then, is the evidence which establishes Christ’s actual Divinity! It has been demonstrated that He existed from all eternity in the form of God, that He bears the titles of Deity, that the attributes of Deity are predicated of Him, and that He functions in all the prerogatives of Deity—He is Creator and Preserver of the universe, the Pardoner of sin, the One who raises the dead, who bestows eternal life and eternal rewards, who judges the world, and who receives the worship of angels and of men. No more is declared of the Father or the Spirit than is declared of the Son. To question this body of evidence is to reject proof altogether, which path leads logically to the rejection of God and to atheism. Either the Lord Jesus Christ is God in the fullest sense or there is no God at all.

No better summarization in brief form of the evidence that Christ is God has been found than that by Samuel Greene:

In the Holy Scriptures we learn of Christ, that his *name* is Jehovah; the Lord of Hosts; the Lord God; the Lord of Glory; the Lord of all; he is the true God; the Great God; and God over all; the First and the Last; the self-existent I AM. We see that all the *attributes* and incommunicable perfections of Jehovah belong to Christ. He is Eternal, Immutable, Omnipresent, Omniscient, Omnipotent! We see that the *works* which can be done by none but Jehovah himself, are done by

Christ. He created all worlds; upholdeth all things by the word of his power; governs the whole universe, and provides for all creation; the power of his voice will call forth all the millions of the dead at the resurrection; he will judge them all in the great day. Although the company before his awful tribunal will be innumerable as the sand upon the seashore, yet will he perfectly recollect all their actions, words, and thoughts, from the birth of creation to the end of time: too much for man, but easy to Christ! He is also *to his Church* what none but God can be. He hath chosen his people before the world was; the Church is his own property; he redeemed a lost world; he is the source of all grace and eternal salvation to his people; and it is he that sends the Holy Ghost down to prepare the Church for glory, which he presents unto himself at last, and gives her the kingdom. And we are *to act towards Christ* exactly in the same manner as we are to act towards God the Father; to believe in him; to be baptized in his name; to pray unto him; and to serve and worship him, even as we serve and worship the Father. These are the things which irresistibly prove the Godhead of Immanuel. What stronger proofs than these have we of the existence of Jehovah?—*Present Day Tracts. Christology.* “The Divinity of Jesus Christ,” p. 30

Objections

It is not the purpose of this work to dwell to any extent on the negative side of any truth; but like the foundational doctrine of the inspiration of the Scriptures, so has the equally foundational doctrine of the Person of Christ been assailed. Objections usually disclose the inability of the objector to recognize and receive the truth set forth in the Word of God. This is especially true in the two fundamental doctrines named. In each there is a union of that which is divine with that which is human. The dual authorship of the Bible is an insolvable mystery to the unregenerate mind; so, also, is the union of two natures in Christ. Concerning the objections which are made against the truth of Christ’s Deity, a fair illustration is presented by Dr. B. B. Warfield from the writings of Schmiedel:

Proceeding after this fashion Schmiedel fixes primarily on five passages which seem to him to meet the conditions laid down; that is to say, they make statements which are in conflict with the reverence for Jesus that pervades the Gospels and therefore could not have been invented by the authors of the Gospels, but must have come to them from earlier fixed tradition; and they are preserved in their crude contradiction with the standpoint of the evangelists, accordingly, only by one or two of them, while the others, or other, of them, if they report them at all, modify them into harmony with their standpoint of reverence. These five passages are: Mk. 10:17 ff. (“Why callest thou me good? None is good save God only”); Mt. 12:31 ff. (blasphemy against the Son of Man can be forgiven); Mk. 3:21 (His relations held Him to be beside Himself); Mk. 13:32 (“Of that day and of that hour knoweth no one, not even the angels in heaven, neither the Son but the Father”); Mk. 15:34, Mt. 27:46 (“My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?”). To these he adds four more which have reference to Jesus’ power to work miracles, viz.: Mk. 8:12 (Jesus declines to work a sign); Mk. 6:5 ff. (Jesus was able to do no mighty works in Nazareth); Mk. 8:14–21 (“The leaven of the Pharisees and of Herod” refers not to bread but to teaching); Mt. 11:5; Lk. 7:22 (the signs of the Messiah are only figuratively miraculous). These nine passages he calls “the foundation-pillars for a truly scientific life of Jesus.” In his view, they prove, on the one hand, that “he [Jesus] really did

exist, and that the Gospels contain at least some trustworthy facts concerning him,”—a matter which, he seems to suggest, would be subject to legitimate doubt in the absence of such passages; and, on the other hand, that “in the person of Jesus we have to do with a completely human being, and that the divine is to be sought in him only in the form in which it is capable of being found in a man.” From them as a basis, he proposes to work out, admitting nothing to be credible which is not accordant with the non-miraculous, purely human, Jesus which these passages imply.—*Christology and Criticism*, pp. 189–90

Further comment is uncalled for beyond the statement of the truth, that if the Christ of God be set forth as both God and man, it is to be expected that His humanity will be presented along with His Deity. That this is the plan and intent of the Bible needs no defense.

Richard Watson has written a worthy declaration of Christ’s essential Deity. It should be preserved and read by all:

Of Christ, it will be observed that the titles of Jehovah, Lord, God, King, King of Israel, Redeemer, Saviour, and other names of God, are ascribed to him,—that he is invested with the attributes of eternity, omnipotence, ubiquity, infinite wisdom, holiness, goodness, etc.,—that he was the Leader, the visible King, and the object of the worship of the Jews,—that he forms the great subject of prophecy, and is spoken of in the predictions of the prophets in language, which if applied to men or to angels would by the Jews have been considered not as sacred but idolatrous, and which, therefore, except that it agreed with their ancient faith, would totally have destroyed the credit of those writings,—that he is eminently known both in the Old Testament and in the New, as the Son of God, an appellative which is sufficiently proved to have been considered as implying an assumption of Divinity by the circumstance that, for asserting it, our Lord was condemned to die as a blasphemer by the Jewish sanhedrim,—that he became incarnate in our nature,—wrought miracles by his own original power, and not, as his servants, in the name of another,—that he authoritatively forgave sin,—that for the sake of his sacrifice, sin is forgiven to the end of the world, and for the sake of that alone,—that he rose from the dead to seal all these pretensions to Divinity,—that he is seated upon the throne of the universe, all power being given to him in heaven and in earth,—that his inspired apostles exhibit him as the Creator of all things visible and invisible; as the true God and the eternal life; as the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God and our Saviour,—that they offer to him the highest worship,—that they trust in him, and command all others to trust in him for eternal life,—that he is the head over all things,—that angels worship him and render him service,—that he will raise the dead at the last day,—judge the secrets of men’s hearts, and finally determine the everlasting state of the righteous and the wicked.—*Theological Institutes*, I, 473

Chapter XXIII

GOD THE SON: HIS INCARNATION

THE INCARNATION is rightfully included as one of the seven major events in the history of the universe from its recorded beginning to its recorded ending. These events in their chronological order are: (1) the creation of the angelic hosts (Col. 1:16); (2) the creation of material things, including man (Gen: 1:1–31); (3) the incarnation (John 1:14); (4) the death of Christ (John 19:30); (5) the resurrection of Christ (Matt. 28:5, 6); (6) the second advent of Christ (Rev. 19:11–16); and (7) the creation of the new heavens and the new earth (Rev. 21:1; Isa. 65:17).

These stupendous events are not only the greatest divine undertakings, each one of them, but they, in turn, indicate the beginnings of a new and measureless advancement in the mighty program of divine achievement. The incarnation is by no means least in this series, it being no less a far-reaching event than the entrance of the Second Person of the eternal Godhead into the human sphere, partaking of the human elements—body, soul, and spirit—with the distinct purpose of remaining a partaker of all that is human for all eternity to come. True, that in Him which was mortal has put on immortality (1 Tim. 6:16), and He has been, and is now, glorified with the highest glory known to infinity (Eph. 1:20, 21; Phil. 2:9–11; Heb. 1:3).

Certainly, from the divine viewpoint, such a descent, from the ineffable heights of heaven in which the Second Person dwelt in the eternity past, to the sphere inhabited by the mere creatures of His hand, in order that He might lift them to the sphere of His eternal glory, constitutes an event of boundless importance. This unprecedented and never-to-be repeated crisis-experience in the eternal existence of the Second Person is, of itself, beyond the range of human understanding, while its effect on that company of redeemed ones taken from among His creatures who, through the inherent right established by His advent into their sphere, are finally presented in eternal glory conformed to His image, constitutes an achievement of surpassing importance, whether the achievement be valued by the dwellers on earth or by the highest of angels in heaven.

The transcendent importance of this doctrine is to be seen in the truth that what the unique God-man is and what He does is altogether grounded in the reality of His incarnation—His essential Deity, His humanity, His Personality, and His virgin birth being contributing factors to His theanthropic Person.

Though His Deity has been previously contemplated, it is germane to the right understanding of this theme to inquire, (a) Who became incarnate? (b) How did He become incarnate? and (c) For what purpose did He become incarnate?

I. Who Became Incarnate?

In arriving at even a semblance of an answer to this momentous question, it is requisite that a true apprehension of the Person of Christ shall be held with worthy convictions. The doctrine of *the Person of Christ* is not one of mere speculative interest; it undergirds the very structure of Christianity itself, as well as all that enters into the Messianic hope for Israel and for the world. The founders of ancient religions served only to originate ideals and systems which could as well have been fostered by any other men. The men who initiated these systems did not remain as the fountain source of all that they proposed, or the living executors of the affairs of the universe in which men and angels reside. Even within Judaism and Christianity men like Moses and Paul might have been replaced by other equally good men, but it is not so with Christ. On this theme Charles Gore writes:

To recognize this truth is to be struck by the contrast which in this respect Christianity presents to other religions. For example, the place which Mohammed holds in Islam is not the place which Jesus Christ holds in Christianity, but that which Moses holds in Judaism. The Arabian prophet made for himself no claim other than that which Jewish prophets made, other than that which all prophets, true or false, or partly true and partly false, have always made,—to speak the word of the Lord. The substance of Mohammedanism, considered as a religion, lies simply in the message which the Koran contains. It is, as no other religion is, founded upon a book. The person of the Prophet has its significance only so far as he is supposed to have certificated the reality of the revelations which the book records.

Gautama, again, the founder of Buddhism, one, I suppose, of the noblest and greatest of mankind, is only the discoverer or rediscoverer of a method or way, the way of salvation, by which is meant the way to win final emancipation from the weary chain of existence, and to attain Nirvana, or Parinirvana, the final blessed extinction. Having found this way, after many years of weary searching, he can teach it to others, but he is, all the time, only a preeminent example of the success of his own method, one of a series of Buddhas or enlightened ones, who shed on other men the light of their superior knowledge. ...

It was plainly the method of Buddha, not the person, which was to save his brethren. As for the person, he passed away, as the writer of the Buddhist scripture repeatedly declares, “with that utter passing away in which nothing whatever is left behind,” living on only metaphorically in the method and teaching which he bequeathed to his followers. We are touching on no disputed point when we assert that according to the Buddhist scriptures, the personal, conscious life of the founder of that religion was extinguished in death. But this single fact points the contrast with Christianity. The teaching of Jesus differs in fact from the teaching of the Buddha not more in the ideal of salvation which he propounded than in the place held by the person who propounded the ideal. For Jesus Christ taught no method by which men might attain the end of their being, whether He

Himself, personally, existed or was annihilated: but as He offered Himself to men on earth as the satisfaction of their being—their master, their example, their redeemer—so when He left the earth He promised to sustain them from the unseen world by His continued personal presence and to communicate to them His own life, and He assured them that at the last they would find themselves face to face with Him as their judge. The personal relation to Himself is from first to last of the essence of the religion which He inaugurated.—*The Incarnation of the Son of God*, pp. 7–10

Christ not only originates the universe as its Creator and formulates those ideals and principles which are the intrinsic glory of the Bible, but He continues to impart Himself to finite men and to execute and consummate the program which Infinity has devised. With these truths in mind, wonder need not be entertained that the Person of Christ has been, and is, the central point of all moral and religious controversy. The history of this contention will be pursued by the theological student in another division of his discipline. Without the reality of the God-man, there is no sufficient ground for the truths of salvation, for sanctification, or for a lost world. This theanthropic Person is the hope of men of all ages and of the universe itself.

With these considerations in view, recourse may be had to a previous discussion in this thesis, wherein the preincarnate Christ has been investigated with specific attention. There it was demonstrated from many Scriptures, and seen to be the witness of all the Scriptures, that the One who came into this world is none other than the Second Person of the Godhead—equal in every respect to the Father or the Spirit. The hypostatic union of natures which the incarnation accomplished, being as a theme assigned to a specific division of this treatise as are each of His natures separately, extended treatment of these aspects of truth is not now to be undertaken. Suffice it to point out that Christ is God in His divine nature and man in His human nature, but in His Personality as the God-man He is neither one nor the other apart from the unity which He is. Isolation of either nature from the other is not possible, though each may be separately considered. The divine nature is eternal, but the human nature originates in time. It therefore follows that the union of the two is itself an event in time, though it is destined to continue forever. This union is a far reaching accomplishment, which is the unique reality of the theanthropic Person. The truth which this union embodies is well stated in the Athanasian Creed as follows: “Perfect God and perfect man, of a reasonable soul, and human flesh subsisting—Who although he be God and man, yet he is not two; but one Christ: one, not by conversion of the Godhead into flesh; but by taking the manhood into God; one altogether, not by confusion of substance, but by unity of person; for as the reasonable soul and flesh is one man, so God and man is one Christ.”

The same truth is also presented in the second article of the Creed of the Church of England: “The Son, which is the Word of the Father, begotten from everlasting of the Father, the very and eternal God, of one substance with the Father, took man’s nature in the womb of the blessed virgin of her substance, so that the two whole and perfect natures, that is to say, the Godhead and manhood, were joined together in one person, never to be divided, whereof is one Christ, very God and very man” (both creeds as cited by Watson, *Institutes*, I, 617).

The Bible provides the best manner of speech, in its declaration of the truth that it was one of the Godhead Three who by incarnation became the God-man.

Isaiah 7:14. “Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.” This twofold prediction is explicit in that it avers that One is to be born of a woman, which under no circumstances could imply, as to derivation, more than that which is human; yet this One thus born is Immanuel, which, being interpreted, is “God with us”—but *with us* in the deeper sense of these words, which is, that He has become *one of us*.

Isaiah 9:6, 7. “For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.” Again the complex, twofold Person is delineated. He is a Child born and a Son given. Reference is thus made both to the human and divine natures. The Child that is born will sit on David’s throne, but the Son that is given bears the titles of Deity and carries all the government and authority of the universe upon His shoulders.

Micah 5:2. “But thou, Beth-lehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.” In like manner, One is seen to come to a geographical location on earth—Bethlehem—, which is a human identification, yet His goings forth are from everlasting.

Luke 1:30–35. “And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God. And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end. Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this

be, seeing I know not a man? And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.” No more explicit assurance of a twofold reality could be formed within the bounds of human language than is presented in these verses. That which is so clearly human is predicated of the One who is the Son of the Highest and who was, as no human could be, “that holy thing.”

John 1:1, 2, 14. “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. . . . 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.” In an earlier exposition of this passage it has been pointed out that here, more positively than elsewhere, it is declared that the eternal God, the Logos, became flesh that He might tabernacle among men. As the context discloses, He it was who created all things and from Him all life proceeds—especially that eternal life which those that *believe* on His name and *receive* Him (vs. 12) do possess.

Philippians 2:6–8. “Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.” This great Christological portion of the Word of God places Christ in three positions, each of which is final as to the entire incarnation revelation: (a) He was in the form of God, (b) He is equal with God, and (c) He appeared on earth in the likeness of men. Beyond a few words of exposition, the more extended treatment of this passage must be reserved for the later consideration of the *kenosis*. The determining word in this context is μορφή, which indicates that the preincarnate Christ was in the *form* of God in the sense that He existed *in* and *with* the nature of God. He *was* God and therefore occupied the place of God and possessed all the divine perfections. Bishop Lightfoot, writing on this Scripture, *in loc.*, and μορφή in particular, states: “Though μορφή is not the same as φύσις or οὐσία, yet the possession of the μορφή involves participation in the οὐσία also: for μορφή implies not the external accidents but the essential attributes.” His preexistence in the *form* of God is complete evidence that He is God, but it is this same One who took upon Him the μορφή of a servant and ὁμοίωμα of men. In both the divine and human *form* there is complete actuality.

Colossians 1:13–17. “Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and

hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: in whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins: who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: for by him 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: and he is before all things, and by him all things consist.” The order of notation is reversed in this sublime passage, but the direct declaration is undiminished. The One, being human and having provided a redemption through His blood, is, nevertheless, none other than the eternal Son who is Creator of all things visible and invisible.

1 Timothy 3:16. “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.” At this point the reader is confronted with a direct assertion, namely, “God was manifest in the flesh”; and all else which is here predicated of Him serves only to strengthen this well-established truth.

The Book of Hebrews. This epistle abounds with Christological revelation. Most conclusive, indeed, is the teaching that the eternal Son and Creator who is described in chapter 1, is the One who, according to chapter 2, is partaker, along with the “children,” of “flesh and blood.”

These passages conduct the mind that is amenable to the Word of God to one grand conclusion, namely, that the eternal Son of God has entered the human sphere. The *method* and *purpose* of this stupendous move on the part of God are yet to be considered.

II. How Did the Son Become Incarnate?

The Scriptures answer this question as explicitly as they testify to the incarnation. He was born into the human family and thus came to possess His own identified human body, soul, and spirit. In this may be seen the difference between a divine *indwelling*, which implies no more than that human beings may partake of the divine nature, and *incarnation*, which is no less than the assumption on the part of Deity of a complete humanity that is in no way the possession of another. That the Christ of God was born of a virgin is also expressly asserted and without the slightest contrary suggestion. The generating of that life in the virgin’s womb is a mystery, but it is in no way impossible to God who creates and forms all things. That Christ was virgin-born asserts that

He received no fallen nature from His Father; and, lest it should be thought that a fallen nature was permitted to reach Him through His human mother, it was declared to Mary by the angel who announced His birth, that the “holy thing” to be born of her would be, because of that holiness, called “the Son of God.” Recognition of the Biblical emphasis upon the truth that Christ was not only free from sinning but also free from a sin nature, is most essential. And, again, there is no intimation to the contrary.

The doctrine of the *virgin birth* is in no way coextensive with the doctrine of the *incarnation*. In the one case recognition is given only of an important step in the whole incarnation undertaking, whereas, in the doctrine of the *incarnation*, consideration must be extended to the whole of the life of the Son of God from the virgin birth on to eternity to come. Every revelation of the incarnation bears some intimation of its abiding character. It is unto conformity to the glorified God-man, that saints of the present age are to be brought and thus to be in fellowship with Him forever. Their bodies whether translated or resurrected are to be “like unto his glorious body” (Phil. 3:21). Of Christ it is declared, “He only hath immortality, dwelling in the light” (1 Tim. 6:16). Resurrection is of the body and thus it was in the case of Christ. His human body was raised, seen of many witnesses, and ascended into heaven where it appeared as the firstfruits of all the saints who will appear like Christ in glory. Christ’s glorified human body has become a revelation to all angelic hosts of that reality which the saints will display in heaven when they, too, shall have received their resurrection bodies. Of Christ and in relation to His second advent it is said that “His feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east” (Zech. 14:4), He will be recognized by the physical wounds which He bears (Zech. 13:6), and as David’s Son He will sit on David’s throne (Luke 1:32). Little specific reference is made to Christ’s human soul and spirit. The same is true of the saints in their future glory. This is doubtless due to the fact that the Bible employs the term *body* to include all that is human (cf. Rom. 12:1; Heb. 10:5, 1 Tim. 3:16; Heb. 2:14).

In becoming an identified individual member of the human race, it was both natural and reasonable that Christ should enter that estate by the way of birth and pursue the normal process of development through childhood to manhood. Any other approach to this estate would not only be unnatural, but would have left Him open to grave suspicion that His manner of existence was foreign to the human family. Further consideration of the more intricate problems connected with the union of two natures in one Person will appear under the treatment of

the hypostatic union.

III. For What Purpose Did He Become Incarnate?

The doctrine of the *incarnation* is a revelation of the purest character, and in no aspect of it is the student more dependent upon the Word of God than when seeking an answer to the present question. At least seven major reasons are disclosed, namely, (a) that He might manifest God to man, (b) that He might manifest man to God, (c) that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest, (d) that He might destroy the works of the devil, (e) that He might be Head over a new creation, (f) that He might sit on David's throne, and (g) that He might be the Kinsman Redeemer. Considering these more at length, it may be observed:

1. THAT HE MIGHT MANIFEST GOD TO MAN. The incarnate Christ is the divine answer to the question, What is God like? The God-man expresses as much of the infinite One as can be translated into human ideas and realities. Christ is God; therefore no fiction was enacted when that which is so unlike fallen man is reduced to the comprehension of those who so greatly need to be informed and whose minds are supernaturally darkened. It is true that when here on earth the Lord displayed the *power* of God. Nicodemus testified: "Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him" (John 3:2), but Christ did not come primarily to display the power of God. In like manner, He displayed the *wisdom* of God. They said of Him, "Never man spake like this man" (John 7:46), yet He did not come primarily to display the wisdom of God. Thus, also, He manifested the *glory* of God. This He did on the Mount of Transfiguration, and according to 2 Corinthians 4:6, "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God [is] in the face of Jesus Christ"; but He did not come primarily to exhibit the glory of God. However, He did come to unveil the *love* of God. He who is ever in the *bosom* of the Father is a declaration of that bosom. It is written, "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him" (John 1:18). God in these last days is speaking through His Son (Heb. 1:2) not of power, nor of wisdom, nor of glory, but of *love*. It is also to be noted that Christ manifested the love of God in all His earth ministry, but the supreme disclosure of that love came with His death upon the cross. To this the Scriptures bear witness: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16); "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that,

while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (Rom. 5:8); “Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us” (1 John 3:16); “Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins” (1 John 4:10). The death of Christ for “sinners” and “enemies” is the paramount expression of divine love. The death of Christ for a lost race is not the outshining of a crisis experience on the part of God. Could the divine attitude be seen as it is now, it would disclose the same sublime love and willingness, were it called for, to make the same sacrifice for those in need that was made at Calvary. The love of God knows no spasmodic experience. It is now and ever will be what in a moment of time it was exhibited to be. This revelation of God to men is made possible and tangible by the incarnation.

The incarnation is related to the prophetic office of Christ, since the prophet is the messenger from God to men. In anticipation of Christ’s prophetic ministry Moses wrote: “The LORD thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken; ... I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him” (Deut. 18:15, 18, 19). The surpassing importance of this prediction is seen in the fact that it is referred to four times in the New Testament (cf. John 7:16; 8:28; 12:49, 50; 14:10, 24; 17:8). It is stated that this predicted Prophet was to be “of thy brethren,” who is divinely “raised up” from “the midst of thee.” This is a clear anticipation of the humanity of the incarnate Christ.

2. THAT HE MIGHT MAIFEST MAN TO GOD. Whatever the estimation may be that a fallen race is inclined to place on the qualities and dignity of the first Adam, it is true that, in His humanity, the Last Adam is the all-satisfying ideal of the Creator, the One in whom the Father takes perfect delight. Of Him the Father said, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” This voice from heaven was heard at the baptism—His induction into the priestly office (Matt. 3:17)—; at the transfiguration—when His prophetic ministry was recognized (Matt. 17:5)—; and will yet be heard when, according to Psalm 2:7, He ascends the Davidic throne to fulfill the office of King. Whatever might have been in store for the first Adam and his race had there been no fall, is not revealed. However, a divine ideal for the Last Adam and His redeemed ones—which reaches on into heavenly glory—fills the divine expectation to infinite

perfection. It being the essential requisite of man as a creature that he do the will of the Creator, the Last Adam—the perfect Man—did always those things which His Father willed. In this He is the example to all those who are *in Him*. There is a reasonable ground for the call extended to all the redeemed, to be like Christ: “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 2:5); “For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps” (1 Pet. 2:21). Thus that ethic which is the normal result of sound doctrine has not only an emphasis in the written Word, but is embodied and enacted in the Living Word.

3. THAT HE MIGHT BE A MERCIFUL AND FAITHFUL HIGH PRIEST. As in the theme just concluded Christ is seen before God as the representation of all that is perfect in the human sphere, so as Priest He may be seen as man’s representative to God in sacrifice and in behalf of imperfection in the human sphere. No law within the kingdom of God is more arbitrary in its unyielding necessity than that a blood-sacrifice is required for human sin. Whatever may have been accepted in the realm of things typical, the final, efficacious blood could be only of one of the Godhead and without the least complicity with the human sin which it was designed to remedy. Only God can perform a sacrifice that will meet the demands of infinite holiness. There is deep significance in the Word of the eternal Son addressed to His Father and at the time of His coming into the world: “A body hast thou prepared me” (Heb. 10:5), and that in contrast to “the blood of bulls and of goats” in its incapacity to “take away sins.” This Scripture implies that the sacrifice as agreed upon in the divine counsels was to be made by the Son, the Second Person in the Godhead, and that the necessary blood-shedding body had been prepared by the Father. It is, therefore, not the blood of a human victim, but the blood of Christ who is God (cf. Acts 20:28, where the blood is said to be the blood of God). It is the function of the priest to make an offering for sin. Christ, as Priest, offered *Himself* without spot to God (Heb. 9:14; cf. 1 Pet. 1:19). He served both as the Sacrifice and the Sacrificer. That “precious blood” thus shed becomes the ground upon which God may ever deal with human sin. It avails for those who are lost if they choose to be sheltered under its saving power. It is ever the cleansing of those who are saved (1 John 1:7). As a merciful and faithful Priest, the Lord of Glory “ever liveth to make intercession for them” who “come unto God by him” (Heb. 7:25). Underlying all this is the necessity that the Second Person, who undertakes the stupendous task of representing lost men to God, shall have somewhat to offer in sacrifice—an

acceptable sacrifice of purer blood than that of any man or beast. To this end the incarnation became a divine necessity.

4. THAT HE MIGHT DESTROY THE WORKS OF THE DEVIL. As is to be contemplated later under satanology, the relation that existed between Christ and Satan extends out into spheres wholly beyond the range of human comprehension. Some things are revealed. The attentive mind may trace much in the field of comparison between the failure of the first Adam under satanic temptation and the victory of the Last Adam under similar circumstances. But all temptation or testing is within human spheres (James 1:13) and therefore, in the case of Christ, presupposes the incarnation. Again, the death of Christ is said to be the judgment of the “prince of this world” and the spoiling of principalities and powers (John 12:31; 16:11; Col. 2:15); but death is purely a human reality and if the Christ of God must die to bring the works of Satan into judgment, it follows that He must become incarnate.

5. THAT HE MIGHT BE HEAD OVER THE NEW CREATION. The New Creation is a company of human beings united to Christ, and these, through redeeming grace, are individually saved and destined to appear in glory conformed to their risen Head (Rom. 8:29; 1 John 3:2). They are *in Him* by a relationship which, in the New Testament, is likened to that of members of a human body united to, and dependent on, its head. They will have resurrection bodies conformed to His glorified body (Phil. 3:20, 21), but the humanity of Christ requires His incarnation.

The two remaining divisions of this general theme, namely, *the Davidic throne*, and *the Kinsman Redeemer*, represent the twofold divine purpose—excluding the self-revelation of God in Christ. The Davidic throne is the consummation and realization of the earthly purpose (cf. Ps. 2:6), while the Kinsman Redeemer is the means unto the sublime end that many sons may be received into glory (Heb. 2:10). Due recognition of these so widely different and yet unchanging divine undertakings is fundamental to the right knowledge of the Bible. This twofold distinction reaches to every portion of the text of the Scriptures and characterizes it throughout all things eschatological as well as historical. This twofold division of truth is especially to be observed in the outworking of the incarnation. Since these themes occupy so large a place in the truth yet to be considered, the briefest possible treatment will be accorded them here.

6. THAT HE MIGHT SIT ON DAVID'S THRONE. Noticeable, indeed, is the fact that the two greatest passages bearing on the virgin birth of Christ assign but one purpose for that birth—that He might sit on David's throne. These passages read: "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this" (Isaiah 9:6, 7); "And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary; for thou hast found favour with God. And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David; and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end" (Luke 1:30–33). This same earthly purpose is in view in the resurrection of Christ. Peter, on the Day of Pentecost, with reference to the message of Psalm 16:8–11, states that Christ was raised up to sit on David's throne: "Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; he seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption" (Acts 2:30, 31). Similarly that great earthly purpose is in view in the second advent of Christ: "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory" (Matt. 25:31; cf. 19:28; Acts 15:16).

The highway of prophecy regarding the Davidic throne begins properly with God's covenant with David as recorded in 2 Samuel 7:16. After having told David that he would not be permitted to build the temple but that Solomon would build it, and that David's kingdom would be established forever in spite of the evil which his sons might commit, Jehovah said to David, "And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever." David's understanding of this covenant is revealed in the verses which follow (18–29) and his interpretation of it is in Psalm 89:20–37. David accepts this sovereign covenant, recognizing its endless duration. From the Scriptures bearing on the divine covenant concerning David's throne, little ground may be discovered for the prevalent theological notion that Jehovah is anticipating in this covenant a spiritual kingdom with the Davidic throne located

in heaven. Since Jehovah has directly decreed that the Davidic throne would pass to Solomon and his successors, a serious problem arises for the spiritualizer of this covenant to assign the time when, and the circumstances under which, the throne passes into heaven and when the authority of that throne changes from that which is earthly to that which is heavenly.

Jeremiah announces the same continuity in succession as that revealed to David: “Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will perform that good thing which I have promised unto the house of Israel and to the house of Judah. In those days, and at that time, will I cause the Branch of righteousness to grow up unto David; and he shall execute judgment and righteousness in the land. In those days shall Judah be saved, and Jerusalem shall dwell safely: and this is the name wherewith she shall be called, The LORD our righteousness. For thus saith the LORD; David shall never want a man to sit upon the throne of the house of Israel. ... Thus saith the LORD; If my covenant be not with day and night, and if I have not appointed the ordinances of heaven and earth; then will I cast away the seed of Jacob, and David my servant, so that I will not take any of his seed to be rulers over the seed of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob: for I will cause their captivity to return, and have mercy on them” (Jer. 33:14–26). This prediction was fulfilled to the time of Christ both by the succession of kings so long as the Davidic throne continued, and then by those named in Matthew 1:12–16 who were, in their respective generations, entitled to sit on David’s throne. With the birth of Christ into this kingly line—both through His mother and through His foster father—He who ever lives and ever will live, completes the eternal promise to David which Jeremiah declares. Had the anticipated Davidic kingdom been that supposed spiritual reign from heaven, there would be no occasion for the throne rights to pass to any earthly son of David, nor would there be any occasion for an incarnation into the Davidic line. Authority over the earth had been freely exercised from heaven in previous ages and could have continued so. Apart from the earthly, Davidic throne and kingdom, there is no meaning to the title ascribed to Christ, “the son of David.” Great significance is to be seen in Christ’s answer to Pilate’s question, “Art thou a king then?": “Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth” (John 18:37).

It may be concluded, then, that the Second Person became incarnate that the promise to David might be fulfilled. To that end, the throne and kingdom of the incarnate One is said to abide forever, being occupied by the eternal Messiah of Israel. Such is the direct and uncomplicated witness of the Word of God. Thus

the incarnation is required that the King may sit on David's throne forever.

7. THAT HE MIGHT BE A KINSMAN REDEEMER. When the major division of Systematic Theology, Soteriology, is under consideration, it will be demonstrated that at least fourteen reasons are assigned in the Bible for the death of Christ, and, since He was born to die, it follows that He was born, or became incarnate, for each and all of these reasons. However, the major portion of these reasons are but varying aspects of the general theme of the cure of sin, which, so far as the incarnation is concerned, may be attended under the one aspect of soteriological truth—the Kinsman Redeemer. As in so many instances, a doctrine is now confronted which transcends all human understanding; for none could ever fully know in this life the *occasion* for redemption which is sin, the *price* of redemption paid which is the precious blood of Christ, or the *end* of redemption which is the estate of those who are saved. The truths involved in this theme are foreshadowed in the Old Testament under what is properly designated *the Kinsman Redeemer type*. Two general lines of teaching inhere in the Old Testament type: (a) the law governing the one who would redeem (Lev. 25:25–55) and (b) the example of the redeemer (the Book of Ruth). The type of redemption is most simple; but the antitype as wrought out by Christ on the cross is complex indeed, though it follows implicitly the same lines found in the type. The lines of the type are: (a) the redeemer must be a kinsman (Lev. 25:48, 49; Ruth 3:12, 13); (b) the redeemer must be able to redeem (Ruth 4:4–6; cf. Jer. 50:34); and (c) the redemption is accomplished by the redeemer, or *goel*, by paying the righteous demands (Lev. 25:27). Redemption was of persons and of estates, and in the typical-redemption provision was made whereby the individual might redeem himself, which amounted to no more than that a position or inheritance could not be withheld from the former and rightful owner should he become able to reclaim it. Back of this is the divine bestowal of the land to the tribes and the families which, as was intended, should remain as a permanent inheritance arrangement through succeeding generations. The feature of self-redemption has no place in the antitypical redemption; for there is no occasion for Christ to redeem Himself, nor is there any ground upon which a sinner may redeem himself from sin. The great redemptive act of the Old Testament is that wrought by Jehovah when He redeemed Israel from Egypt. In that act, which is true to the plan of redemptive truth and in which there are many types to be seen, redemption is wholly wrought by Jehovah (Ex. 3:7, 8); it is wrought through a person—Moses; it is by blood (Ex. 12:13, 23, 27); and it is

by power—Israel was removed from Egypt by supernatural power. The New Testament redemption follows the same steps. It is wrought of God, through Christ, by His blood, and deliverance from the bondage of sin is by the power of the Holy Spirit. Israel's redemption was of the nation for that and all future generations. They stand before Jehovah as a redeemed nation forever. Their redemption on typical ground was verified and established in the death of Christ.

Returning to the major features of the Old Testament kinsman redeemer type, it may be seen (a) that the redeemer must be a *kinsman*. This, indeed, is the reason within the heavenly purpose for the incarnation of the eternal Son into the human family. That bondservants to sin might be redeemed whose estate before God is lost, it was necessary that the One who would redeem should be a kinsman to them. However, what is seen to be essential in the type does not create the necessity in the antitype. It is the opposite of this. The necessity which is seen in the antitype creates the necessity in the type. The type can do no more than reflect what is true in the antitype. (b) That the redeemer must be able to redeem is a truth which, when contemplated in the antitype, involves facts and forces within God which man cannot fathom. The fact that, when acting under the guidance of infinite wisdom and when possessed of infinite resources, the blood of God (Acts 20:28) was shed in redemption indicates to the fullest degree that no other redemption would avail. Christ's death being alone the answer to man's lost estate, the Kinsman Redeemer, or *goel*, was able to pay the price; He being the God-man could shed the "precious blood" which, because of the unity of His being, was in a very actual sense the blood of God. (c) One of the most vital revelations concerning Christ was that He was Himself *willing* to redeem. The rationalistic supposition that the Father's provision of a sacrifice in the Person of His Son was an atrocious and immoral imposition—an act which even a human father would not commit—, breaks down when it is recognized that the Son was wholly agreeable and cooperating in that sacrifice. In truth, the unity within the Godhead creates an identity of action which is well expressed in the words: "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself" (2 Cor. 5:19).

The entire theme of the subjection of the Son to the Father is as extensive as the earth life of the Son. Speaking of the Father, the Son said, "I do always those things that please him" (John 8:29). However, the subjection of the Son to the Father is wholly within the relationship of the humanity of the incarnate Person to His Father and is not primarily a subjection of the Deity, or Second Person, to

the First Person. Between the two divine Persons there is eternal cooperation, but not subjection. It is further to be seen that subjection to the Creator on the part of man is that which is inherent in the very order of things created, and the God-man cannot be the *perfect* man which the incarnation secures should He not, as man, be wholly subject to the Father. Thus the *goel*, the Kinsman Redeemer, Christ, fulfills the type by being *willing* to redeem.

As John 18:37, with its declaration that Christ is a King, bears upon the earthly purpose of God, so John 12:27, with its reference to Christ's death, bears on the heavenly purpose of God. In both passages there is this note of finality—"For this cause came I."

Conclusion

It is thus demonstrated that the *incarnation* is of surpassing importance. Whatever momentousness belongs to the doctrine of Christ's *Deity* or to the doctrine of His *humanity*, the doctrine of the *incarnation* includes both; even later studies of the hypostatic union and the kenosis will serve only to elucidate the fuller meaning of the *incarnation*.

Chapter XXIV

GOD THE SON: HIS HUMANITY

A SPECIFIC TREATMENT of the humanity of the Lord Jesus Christ is indicated in any Christological thesis. Unavoidably, this aspect of truth concerning Christ has been anticipated to some extent in previous sections of this discussion, and the theme must reappear in that which is to follow. A new reality is constituted in the Person of Christ, by the adding of His humanity to that which from all eternity has been His undiminished Deity. Apart from this union of two natures there is no theanthropic Person, no Mediator, no Redeemer, and no Savior. The whole truth relative to the Christ has not been reached when perchance His essential Deity has been demonstrated, nor has it been reached when a similar demonstration of His essential humanity has been made. The Christ of God is the incomparable—and to no small degree, the unknowable—combination of these two natures. The weighing of that which is divine, or that which is human, in the God-man—apart from natural limitations on the part of the student—is comparatively an uncomplicated matter. Endless complexity arises when these two natures combine in one person, as they do in Christ. This complexity will be considered in the division of this thesis which follows. The objective in the present investigation is the discovery and recognition of Christ's humanity.

The Christian era has seen a reversal of emphasis in its Christology. The early centuries were characterized by discussions calculated to establish the *humanity* of Christ, while the present requirement seems to be the recognition of, and emphasis upon, His Deity. In his Gospel the Apostle John has presented the Deity of Christ, and in his Epistles he has as faithfully asserted His humanity. It was indicative of the time in which he wrote when he said: "Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: and every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world" (1 John 4:2, 3).

A strong incentive arises at this point to go into the historical aspects of this phase of Christology. Richard Watson has compiled an admirable condensation of the early controversy over the humanity of Christ the quotation of which will suffice:

The source of this ancient error appears to have been a philosophical one. Both in the oriental and Greek schools, it was a favourite notion, that whatever was joined to *matter* was necessarily

contaminated by it, and that the highest perfection of this life was abstraction from material things, and, in another, a total and final separation from the body. This opinion was, also, the probable cause of leading some persons, in St. Paul's time, to deny the reality of a resurrection, and to explain it figuratively. But, however that may be, it was one of the chief grounds of the rejection of the proper humanity of Christ among the different branches of the Gnostics, who, indeed, erred as to both natures. The things which the Scriptures attribute to the human nature of our Lord they did not deny; but affirmed that they took place in appearance only, and they were, therefore, called *Docetae* and *Phantasiastae*. At a later period, Eutyches fell into a similar error, by teaching that the human nature of Christ was absorbed into the Divine, and that his body had no real existence. These errors have passed away, and danger now lies only on one side; not, indeed, because men are become less liable or less disposed to err, but because philosophy,—from vain pretences to which, or a proud reliance upon it, almost all great religious errors spring,—has, in later ages, taken a different character. While these errors denied the real existence of the *body* of Christ, the Apollinarian heresy rejected the existence of a human *soul* in our Lord, and taught that the Godhead supplied its place. Thus both these views denied to Christ a proper humanity, and both were, accordingly, condemned by the general Church. Among those who held the union of two natures in Christ, the Divine and human, which, in theological language is called the hypostatical, or personal union, several distinctions were also made which led to a diversity of opinion. The Nestorians acknowledged two persons in our Lord, mystically and more closely united than any human analogy can explain. The Monophysites contended for one person and one nature, the two being supposed to be, in some mysterious manner, confounded. The Monothelites acknowledged two natures and one will. Various other refinements were, at different times, propagated; but the true sense of Scripture appears to have been very accurately expressed by the council of Chalcedon in the fifth century,—that in Christ there is *one person*; in the unity of person, *two natures*, the Divine and the human; and that there is no change, or mixture, or confusion of these two natures, but that each retains its own distinguishing properties. With this agrees the Athanasian Creed, whatever be its date.—*Theological Institutes*, I, 616–17

The Scriptures declare that Christ possessed a human body, soul, and spirit, and that He experienced those emotions which belong to human existence. Much difficulty arises when the thought is entertained of two volitions—one divine and one human—in the one Person. Though this problem is difficult, it is clearly taught in the New Testament that Christ, on the human side, possessed a will which was wholly surrendered to the will of His Father. The surrender of the will, while it obviates any possible conflict between the will of the Father and the will of the Son, does not at all serve to remove the human will from His unique Person. The human will was ever present regardless of the use He may have made of it.

The truth concerning Christ's humanity may, by the inerrant Scriptures, be proved in a manner wholly scientific. The reality of His human nature is determined by the presence of facts which are distinctly human. This principle is all that science requires in the pursuance of any investigation. The facts concerning Christ's humanity may be summarized in part as follows:

I. Christ's Humanity Was Anticipated Before the Foundation of the World

This is stated in Revelation 13:8, where Christ is declared to be the “Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.” All references to Christ as the “Lamb” are of His humanity. They concern His human body, the perfect sacrifice for sin. The humanity of Christ, like the whole plan of redemption, was purposed by God before the foundation of the world. The cross, with its human sacrifice, is timeless in its purpose and effect.

II. The Old Testament Expectation Was of A Human Messiah

This expectation was twofold: (a) as outlined in the types and (b) as foretold in prophecy:

1. THE TYPES. Of upwards of fifty types of Christ found in the Old Testament, the majority either directly or indirectly represent, among other features, the humanity of Christ. It is obvious that, where blood is shed, a body sacrificed, or a typical person appears, the human element is indicated.

2. PROPHECY. A very few selections from the body of prophetic Scriptures must suffice: “And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel” (Gen. 3:15). “Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign: Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel” (Isa. 7:14). A virgin conceiving and bearing a son is human; yet this is to be Immanuel, which being interpreted is “God with us.” “For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this” (Isa. 9:6, 7). The patriarch Job was conscious of an insuperable distance between himself and God. His desire was for a “daysman” who could lay his hand both upon God and upon man. This is his cry for a mediator: “For he is not a man, as I am, that I should answer him, and we should come together in judgment. Neither is there any daysman betwixt us, that might lay his hand upon us both” (Job 9:32, 33).

III. A Specific New Testament Prophecy

Added to the Old Testament expectation concerning Christ's humanity is the message of the angel to Mary: "And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end. ... The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God" (Luke 1:31–35).

IV. The Life of Christ on Earth

It is written: "Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren" (Heb. 2:17). He is declared to be human by

1. HIS NAMES. *Jesus* is His human name. It is related to His human life, His body, His death, and the acquired glory bestowed because of His redeeming grace (Phil. 2:5–9). Several times He is called "The man Christ Jesus," and about eighty times He is called "The Son of man." This latter title was the name He most often gave Himself. It was as though, from the divine standpoint, the human aspect of His Person needed most to be disclosed.

2. HIS HUMAN PARENTAGE. Several unmistakable phrases are used of Christ concerning His parentage: "fruit of the loins," "her firstborn," "of this man's seed," "seed of David," "His father David," "the seed of Abraham," "made of a woman," "sprang out of Judah." His humanity is stated by each of these phrases.

3. THE FACT THAT HE POSSESSED A HUMAN BODY, SOUL, AND SPIRIT. Note these Scriptures: "Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: and every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come" (1 John 4:2, 3); "Then saith he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death" (Matt. 26:38); "When Jesus had thus said, he was troubled in spirit" (John 13:21).

4. HIS HUMAN LIMITATIONS. At this point we are confronted with the strongest contrasts between the Deity and the humanity of Christ. He was weary; yet He called the weary to Himself for rest. He was hungry; yet He was "the

bread of life.” He was thirsty; yet He was “the water of life.” He was in an agony; yet He healed all manner of sicknesses and soothed every pain. He “grew, and waxed strong in spirit”; yet He was from all eternity. He was tempted; yet He, as God, could not be tempted. He was self-limited in knowledge; yet He was the wisdom of God. He said, “My Father is greater than I” (with reference to His humiliation, being made for a little season lower than the angels); yet He also said, “He that hath seen me hath seen the Father,” “I and my Father are one.” He prayed, which is always human; yet He Himself answered prayer. He said, “This is your hour, and the power of darkness”; yet all power is given unto Him in heaven and in earth. He slept on a pillow in the boat; yet He arose and rebuked the storm. He was baptized, which was only a human act; yet at that time God declared Him to be His Son. He walked two long days’ journey to Bethany; yet He knew the moment that Lazarus died. He wept at the tomb; yet He called the dead to arise. He confessed that He would be put to death; yet He had but a moment before received Peter’s inspired declaration that He was the Christ, the Son of the living God. He said, ‘Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?’; yet John tells us, “He needed not that any should testify of man: for He knew what was in man.” He was hungry; yet He could turn stones into bread. This He did not do; for had He done so, He would not have suffered as men suffer. He said, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?”; yet it was that very God to whom He cried who was “in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself.” He dies; yet He is eternal life. He freely functioned in His earth-life within that which was perfectly human, and He as freely functioned in His earth-life within that which was perfectly divine. His earth-life, therefore, testifies as much to His humanity as to His Deity, and both of these revelations are equally true.

The all-characterizing offices of Christ—Prophet, Priest, and King—, seen in the Old Testament as well as the New, are each in their turn dependent to a large degree upon the humanity He possessed.

V. The Death and Resurrection of Christ

Apart from His humanity no blood could be shed; yet that blood is rendered exceedingly “precious” by the fact that it was the blood of one of the Godhead Three. God did not merely *use* the human Jesus as a sacrifice; God was *in* Christ as a reconciling agent. “For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins. Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith,

Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, ... neither hadst pleasure therein; which are offered by the law; then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. ... By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all” (Heb. 10:4–10).

VI. The Humanity of Christ is Seen in His Ascension And Session

While they steadfastly looked they saw Him go into heaven with His resurrection, human body. He sat down “at the right hand of the throne of God.” He is also spoken of as “the Son of man which is in heaven.” Stephen, when he saw Him after His ascension, said “Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God.” Through His humanity, Christ has been made “a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God.” He is now in heaven as our High Priest. His humanity is declared by His ascension and present ministry in heaven.

VII. The Humanity of Christ is Evident in His Second Advent And Kingdom Reign

The angel messengers said, “This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.” He said of Himself, “They shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven.” He will then “sit upon the throne of his glory,” He shall sit “on the throne of his father David.” The humanity of Christ is seen, then, in His return to the earth and in His kingdom reign.

Conclusion

So apparent and everywhere present are the facts which connote Christ’s humanity, that to dwell upon them is similar to an effort to prove His existence. The danger is, and ever has been, that, in the light of these patent realities, the mind may tend to release its proper apprehension of His Deity. It is not, on the other hand, an impossibility so to magnify His Deity as to exclude a right conception of His humanity. The controversies of the church which have crystallized into creeds have wrought much in stabilizing thought regarding the theanthropic Person. Nevertheless, even though by these creeds a highway has been paved on which to tread, each mind must be instructed personally and by

its own contemplation arrive at right conclusions.

As an important discrimination in the general doctrine of Christ's *humanity*, Dr. John Dick writes: "A distinction has been made between the condescension and the humiliation of Christ; the former consisting in the assumption of our nature, and the latter in his subsequent abasement and sufferings. The reason why the assumption of our nature is not accounted a part of his humiliation, is, that he retains it in his state of exaltation. The distinction seems to be favoured by Paul, who represents him as first 'being made in the likeness of men,' and then 'when he was found in fashion as a man, humbling himself, and becoming obedient to the death of the cross' (Phil. 2:7, 8). Perhaps this is a more accurate view of the subject; but it has not been always attended to by Theological writers, some of whom have considered the incarnation as a part of his humiliation" (*Lectures on Theology*, p. 323). According to the Hebrews Epistle, He who was the effulgence of the divine glory and the express image of the divine Being *condescended* to the level whereon He took part in flesh and blood with men. However, this same exalted One entered the sphere of *humiliation* by His death and the manner of it. The humiliation was in view when He came into the world, since He was born to die. He said, "For this cause came I unto this hour" (John 12:27). On this major purpose of Christ in assuming the human form, Dr. B. B. Warfield writes:

The proximate end of Our Lord's assumption of humanity is declared to be that He might die; He was "made a little lower than the angels ... because of the suffering of death" (Heb. 2:9); He took part in blood and flesh in order "that through death ... " (2:14). The Son of God as such could not die; to Him belongs by nature an "indissoluble life" (7:16 m.). If He was to die, therefore, He must take to Himself another nature to which the experience of death were not impossible (2:17). Of course it is not meant that death was desired by Him for its own sake. The purpose of our passage is to save its Jewish readers from the offence of the death of Christ. What they are bidden to observe is, therefore, Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels because of the suffering of death, "crowned with glory and honor, that by the grace of God the bitterness of death which he tasted might redound to the benefit of every man" (2:9), and the argument is immediately pressed home that it was eminently suitable for God Almighty, in bringing many sons into glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect (as a Saviour) by means of suffering. The meaning is that it was only through suffering that these men, being sinners, could be brought into glory. And therefore in the plainer statement of verse 14 we read that Our Lord

took part in flesh and blood in order “that through death he might bring to nought him that has the power of death, that is, the devil; and might deliver all them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage”; and in the still plainer statement of verse 17 that the ultimate object of His assimilation to men was that He might “make propitiation for the sins of the people.” It is for the salvation of sinners that Our Lord has come into the world; but, as that salvation can be wrought only by suffering and death, the proximate end of His assumption of humanity remains that He might die; whatever is more than this gathers around this.—*Biblical Doctrines*, pp. 186–87

Chapter XXV

GOD THE SON: THE KENOSIS

IN THIS DIVISION of this treatment of Christology, consideration must be given to one passage of Scripture which, due to the fact that unbelief has misinterpreted and magnified it out of all proportion, is more fully treated exegetically by scholars of past generations than almost any other in the Word of God. Reference is made to Philippians 2:5–8, which reads: “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.”

The problem centers upon the verb ἐκένωσεν which, with reference to Christ, declares that He *emptied* Himself. The immediate context is clear about what it was that He released. This specific truth will be attended more fully. From this verb the word *kenosis* has entered theological terminology, being the corresponding noun. The *Kenosis Theory* is usually an extreme view of Christ’s self-emptying, which self-emptying took place at the incarnation when He exchanged what may be termed His eternal mode of existence for that related to time, from the form of God to the form of a servant or bondsman. Certain penalties or forfeitures were involved in this exchange, which by the unbelieving have been enlarged beyond the warrant of the Scriptures. The theological discussion which has been engendered is far removed from the simplicity of the faith of the early church, which faith this passage reflects, and equally as far removed from the intent of the great Apostle who wrote these words. Naturally, the phrase *emptied Himself* may suggest, to those whose minds so demand, the notion that He divested Himself of all divine attributes. Devout scholars cannot accept this conception and they evidently have not only the support of the context but that of all Scripture. The one group have made much of the human limitations of Christ, while, on the other hand, the other group—quite mindful of these limitations—see also the emphasis which the Word of God assigns to the manifestations of His Deity. The controversy is between those who with natural limitations of their own see little of the realities of the theanthropic Person, and those opposed who, being illuminated by the Spirit, recognize the uncomplicated and undiminished presence in Christ of both the divine and human natures. A

portion of the great volume of literature which this discussion has produced should be read by every theological student.

Both the *condescension* of Christ—from His native heavenly sphere to the position of man—and the *humiliation* of Christ—from His position as a man to the death of the cross—are indicated in this passage. The kenosis question is not so much concerned with the humiliation of Christ as it is with the condescension. The question inquires. How much did He release? The answer, naturally, is to be found in the discovery of that which enters into His theanthropic Person. If in His incarnation God the Son abrogated the estate of Deity, the surrender is beyond all computation. If, on the other hand, He retained His Deity, suffering certain manifestations of that Deity to be veiled for a moment of time, the surrender may more easily be comprehended. The fundamental truth that the eternal God cannot cease to be what He is has been demonstrated earlier in this work, and any theory which supposes that God the Son could cease to be what He ever has been and ever will be, is error of the first magnitude. But, it is inquired again. Do not the avowed human limitations (cf. Matt. 8:10; Mark 13:32; Luke 2:52; Heb. 4:15; 5:8) imply the absence of divine perfections? Is it not this double reality of the functioning of two natures in one Person which constitutes His uniqueness? He is the God-man, mysterious, indeed, to finite minds, but none the less actual according to the testimony of the Scriptures. If He is to serve as the Mediator between God and man, it is to be expected that He will be complex beyond all human comprehension.

In approaching this notable passage, the purpose in the Apostle's mind should be in view. This is stated in verse 4: "Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others." To do this is to have the mind of Christ, since that is precisely what He did when He, without grasping selfishly the estate which was His own by right, released it in behalf of others, or in similar words which express the same truth concerning Christ: "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich" (2 Cor. 8:9). Evidently there is no occasion to convince the Philippian Christians that the One who appeared in the form of a servant had already existed in the form of God, and that He, before He became in fashion as a man, thought it not robbery to be equal with God. All this is accepted truth with them. The Apostle's message is practical rather than theological in its purpose: "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus" (vs. 5). This incidental and more or less familiar manner of referring to the preexistence of Christ argues strongly that the doctrine was received by the

Philippian believers.

This context, so far as it is claimed by kenoticists, may be given a threefold divisional treatment, namely (a) “the form of God,” (b) the condescension, and (c) “the form of a servant ... the likeness of men.”

I. “The Form of God”

The first revelation concerning this great movement on the part of Christ from that eternal glory which pertains alone to Deity to a felon’s death on a cross is that He subsisted (*being*, or *existing*, as variously rendered) in the form of God. The verb does not convey the thought of an estate which once was, but no longer is. “It contains no intimation, however, of the cessation of these circumstances or disposition, or mode of subsistence; and that, the less in a case like the present, where it is cast in a tense (the imperfect) which in no way suggests that the mode of subsistence intimated came to an end in the action described by the succeeding verb (cf. the parallels, Lk. 16:14, 23; 23:50; Acts 2:30; 3:2; II Cor. 8:17; 12:16; Gal. 1:14). Paul is not telling us here, then, what Our Lord was once, but rather what He already was, or, better, what in His intrinsic nature He is; he is not describing a past mode of existence of Our Lord, before the action he is adducing as an example took place—although the mode of existence he describes was Our Lord’s mode of existence before this action—so much as painting in the background upon which the action adduced may be thrown up into prominence. He is telling us who and what He is who did these things for us, that we may appreciate how great the things He did for us are” (B. B. Warfield, *Biblical Doctrines*, p. 178).

The phrase, “the form—μορφῆ—of God,” has not the meaning of a mere outward appearance; it avers that Christ was essentially and naturally *God*. Though He was this, He looked not greedily upon that estate. If μορφῆ means here only outward appearance, then Christ left but little to come into this sphere. Similarly, the word μορφῆ is used in this context as a contrast to describe His servanthood and this, too, was not a mere outward appearance, else His condescension is diminished to naught. The measure of the “grace of our Lord Jesus Christ” is being exhibited by two extremes. To minimize either one, or both, is to falsify that which God solemnly declares to be true. Fortunately, this passage does not stand alone. All Scriptures which present the truth of the preincarnate existence of Christ as Deity, seal the force of this declaration that He subsisted on an equality with God, and was God. Thus, also, all passages

which affirm His Deity after the incarnation—and there are many—establish the fact that Deity was not surrendered or any attribute thereof when He became flesh. A change of position or relationship is implied, but no surrender of essential Being is indicated, nor is such a surrender possible (cf. Rom. 1:3, 4; 8:3; 2 Cor. 5:21; Gal. 4:4). All fulness dwells in Him (Col. 1:19), and even more emphatically, “In him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily” (Col. 2:9). It was none other than God Himself who was “manifest in the flesh” (1 Tim. 3:16). The same God is manifest by the appearing of the Savior Jesus Christ (2 Tim. 1:10); and He who is to come, the glorified theanthropic Person, is declared to be “the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ” (Titus 2:13). Even if Philippians 2:6 were obscure, it would in no way be subject to a “private interpretation,” but would require conformity to this overwhelming testimony of the Scriptures that the Deity of the Son of God in no way ceased because of the incarnation.

It is too often assumed that the coming of Christ into the world was an unprepared and abrupt visitation. This simulation has rendered the whole divine revelation more difficult of apprehension for many. Looking backward through the medium of the Word of God, it may be seen that there has been continuous progression in the revelation of God to men and that the first advent of Christ, though related to the problem of sin, is now being unfolded by the Holy Spirit and is a preparatory step toward the finality of disclosure when the presence and power of God will be seen at the second advent. The extent of Christ’s estate which was His before He came into the world is well described by Dr. Samuel Harris: “Thus in the knowledge of Christ we are lifted above the ‘provincialism of this planet’ and brought into fellowship with angels and archangels, with finite spirits of all orders and all worlds. God, in that eternal mode of his being called the Logos, the Word, the Son, existed and was working out the great ends of eternal wisdom and love before his advent in Christ on earth. In the mystery of his eternal being, he was uttering himself, bringing himself forth in action as the eternal personal Spirit, the eternal archetype and original of all finite rational persons. In ways unknown to us, he may have revealed himself to the rational inhabitants of other worlds in his likeness to them as personal Spirit. He may have been trusted and adored by innumerable myriads of finite persons from other worlds before he revealed himself on earth in the son of Mary. So he himself says in prayer to his Father in heaven, ‘The glory which I had with thee before the world was.’ And he describes himself as the Son of man who came down from heaven, and who, even while on earth, was in heaven” (*God the*

Creator and Lord of All, I, 413). Another has suggested that this earth might be “the Bethlehem of the universe,” and the thought is reasonable in the light of revealed truth concerning all that exists. There are those, Dr. I. A. Dorner in particular, who hold, and with much reason and some Scripture, that the first advent was not alone a mission related to the cure of sin, but that it was required in the progress of divine self-revelation. He maintains that to see God revealed in Christ Jesus is an essential experience for any and all who will reach the realms of glory, whether they have sinned or not. What deep and hidden meaning is contained in the words that Christ while here on earth was “seen of angels”? At any rate, the narrowing of that eternal mode of existence and the veiling of the effulgence of His glory to the end that God might be manifest to men and redemption for the lost might be secured, is the story of the incarnation.

II. The Condescension

The extent of the transition from heaven’s highest glory to the sphere of men could not be estimated. “When he cometh into the world, he saith, ... Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God” (Heb. 10:5–7). This text records a word spoken by Christ before He reached the age of maturity—perhaps it was spoken before He was born of the virgin; for it is written in Psalm 22:10 that, while on the cross, He said to His Father, “I was cast upon thee from the womb: thou art my God from my mother’s belly.” In unknown past ages He was appointed to be the Lamb slain (Rev. 13:8). Added to all this the Spirit of God has caused many predictions to be written which anticipate Christ’s coming—one, indeed, in the Garden of Eden. Thus the condescension is previewed and recorded. It represents a divine arrangement, being designed and wrought by God. Christ was the Father’s gift to the world; yet He chose to come and to be subject to the will of Another. He *delighted* to do His Father’s will, both out of joyous obedience and because of His infinite understanding and vital participation in all that was proposed in the eternal counsels of God. What other meaning can be placed on the phrase, “when the fulness of the time was come”? Is it not that the moment in time had been reached when “God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law” (Gal. 4:4)? Of all marvels of the universe none is greater than this, that He who was in the beginning with God, and was God, has become flesh. John testifies that He was seen and handled by men (John 1:1; 1 John 1:1). The fire in the bush—typifying His Deity—did not consume the bush which typified His humanity.

Though lowly in its origin, that which the bush represents abides unconsumed forever.

III. “The Form of a Servant...The Likeness of Men”

As for God, no one hath ever seen Him; God’s only begotten who is in the bosom of the Father [ever abiding], He hath declared Him (John 1:18). This is the Messenger of all messengers, the Servant more effective than all servants. To this end He became all that He was required to be that He might thus serve as the Revelation and the Redeemer. He thus served both God and man as the Revelation, and He thus served both God and man as the Redeemer. He said, “I am among you as he that serveth,” and, in actual experience of humble service, He washed the disciples’ feet. The phrase, “the form of a servant,” is identical as to actuality with the phrase “the form of God.” By the latter it is declared that originally He was all and everything that makes God God; by the former it is declared that He is all and everything that makes a servant a servant. His servant-title, *Faithful and True* (Rev. 19:11), is revealing. It implies both perfect obedience and perfect achievement. This was pursued by Him to the point of death—even the death of the cross. With prophetic vision He said, even before His death, “I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do” (John 17:4), and when He reached the moment of death He said, “It is finished” (John 19:30). How great is the Revelation! How perfect the Redemption!

He who subsisted immutably as the precise form or reality which God is, assumed that which is human, not in place of the divine, but in conjunction with it. He added to Himself the precise form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men. He was *man*, but that term was not sufficient to define Him. Because of His theanthropic Person, His manhood, though fully present, was better styled, “the likeness of men.”

Since it is recorded that He “emptied himself,” the kenosis inquiry is, of what did He empty Himself? That His Deity was diminished, or that He surrendered any divine attribute, is equally impossible because of the immutability of Deity, nor are such notions sustained by any word of Scripture. It may be observed again that all the doctrinal revelation which the kenosis passage presents was drawn out as an illustration of the human virtue, then being enjoined, of not looking on the things of self, but rather on the things of others. The subordination of self in behalf of others does not require the discarding of self. Christ emptied Himself of self-interest, not clutching His exalted estate, however rightfully His own, as a

prize too dear to release in behalf of others. To do this, He condescended to a lowly position, His glory was veiled, and He was despised and rejected of men. They saw no beauty in Him that they should desire Him. He was a root out of dry ground without form or comeliness (Isa. 53:2). On the cross He said of Himself, "I am a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people. All they that see me laugh me to scorn" (Ps. 22:6, 7). The very essential glory of this condescension is not that Deity had forsaken Him, but that God thus wrought. It was God that was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself (2 Cor. 5:19).

With reference to the kenosis passage and the general forms of interpretation of it, no better statement has been found than that of Dr. Charles Lee Feinberg in *Bibliotheca Sacra* (XCII, 415–18), which is here quoted:

Any scriptural explanation of the doctrine of the Person of Christ must give this passage a prominent, if not a central, place. But in the expounding of it men's minds have been wont to ask: Of what did Christ empty Himself? In what did the kenosis consist? This whole question was pushed prominently to the fore in the early decades of the last century when the Reformed and Lutheran branches of the German Protestant Church attempted to effect a feasible basis of union. Such passages as John 14:28 and Mark 13:32 where it is written: "my Father is greater than I" and "But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father," formed the starting point, apart from Philippians 2:5–11, for much of the thinking and discussion on the subject. On the very face of it, consideration of this subject is inevitable: if Christ was God in His preexistent state and then became man, what did He give up in the transaction? There have been four general kenotic theories, all aiming at the same end. According to Bruce, "The dominant idea of the kenotic Christology is, that in becoming incarnate, and in order to make the Incarnation in its actual historical form possible, the eternal preëxistent Logos reduced Himself to the rank and measures of humanity" (*The Humiliation of Christ*, p. 136). The four types of kenotic speculation are: (1) the absolute dualistic type; (2) the absolute metamorphic type; (3) the absolute semi-metamorphic type; (4) the real but relative.

The first view, which is set forth by Thomasius and others, maintains that the attributes of God can be divided into two sharply distinct groups: the ethical or immanent and the relative or physical. The former are really those that are essential to Godhead. The attributes of the immanent trinity cannot be parted with; those of the economical trinity can. The divine attributes of omnipresence, omniscience, and omnipotence are merely expressive of God's free relation to the world and need not be considered indispensable. The essential attributes of deity are supposed to be absolute power, absolute love, absolute truth, and absolute holiness. This theory cannot stand, because it sets up too sharp a distinction between the attributes of God and deduces therefrom conclusions that are untenable. Could Christ be truly God, though He maintained absolute holiness, if He lost omniscience or omnipresence? This theory depotentiates the Logos to an unwarrantable degree. Besides the denial of the omnipresence of the incarnate Logos appears quite weak in the face of a statement like that made in John 3:13 where the Lord Jesus said: "And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven."

The second view, upheld by such men as Gess, Godet, and Newton Clarke, really holds to an absolute metamorphism by "divine suicide." According to this position the preincarnate Logos so humbled Himself and emptied Himself of all divine attributes, that He became purely a human soul. In order to relieve themselves of the stigma of Apollinarianism they make it clear that they assert,

not that the Logos took the place of the human soul in Christ, but that He became the human soul. His eternal consciousness ceased, to be regained gradually until He attained once more in the plerosis to the completeness of divine life. This theory is so untrue to the scriptural representation of the hypostatic union in history, which must ever be the measuring rod for any and all views of Christ's Person, that it needs no minute refutation.

The third theory, advanced by Ebrard, contends that the Eternal Son in becoming man underwent not a loss but a disguise of His deity, in such a sense that "the divine properties, while retained, were possessed by the Theanthropos only in the time-form appropriate to a human mode of existence. The Logos, in assuming flesh, exchanged the form of God, that is, the eternal manner of being, for the form of a man, that is, the temporal manner of being" (*The Humiliation of Christ*, A. B. Bruce, p. 153). This exchange is both perpetual and absolute. This view fares no better than the former two when judged on the basis of the Word; if this theory is true then Christ was not fully God and fully man at one time as the Scriptures portray Him to be.

There remains now to note the fourth theory of the kenosis Christology which declares that the incarnate Logos still possesses His Godhead in a real and true sense, but He does so within the restricted confines of human consciousness. True deity is never in existence outside of the true humanity. The properties of the divine nature are not present in their infinitude, but are changed into properties of human nature. The objection to this theory is that the attributes of God are not as elastic as this view would have us believe,—to be enlarged or contracted at will. Omniscience is just that always; omnipresence is always such; omnipotence connotes the same thing always. There is not a limited omnipresence, because although the Logos was in the body of Christ, He was also in heaven (Jn. 3:13).

What, then, is a true theory of the kenosis or self-emptying of Christ? First of all, the principle must be laid down that "the Logos ... ceases not for a single moment (in spite of His voluntary humiliation) to be that which He was in His eternal nature and essence" (*Christian Dogmatics*, J. J. Van Oosterzee, Vol. II, p. 515). When the preëxistent and eternal Logos took on humanity, He gave up the visibility of His glory. Men could not have looked upon unveiled deity. The kenosis, furthermore, implies that Christ gave up, as Strong aptly suggests, the "independent exercise of the divine attributes" (*Systematic Theology*, p. 382). Christ was possessed of all the essential attributes and properties of deity, but He did not use them except at the pleasure of the Father. We believe just this is meant when Christ declares: "The Son can do nothing of himself" (Jn. 5:19). A proper explanation and understanding of Philippians 2:5–11, then, as well as the issues involved in a scriptural view of the kenosis, are indispensable bases for any Christological discussion.

Conclusion

A simple illustration—that of Christ's self-denial—employed by the Apostle to enforce the Christian grace of self-denial, has, largely because of the immeasurable truth involved in that which Christ accomplished and somewhat because of the misunderstanding of terminology, developed into a major controversy among theologians; yet the declaration is clearly that of the truth of the incarnation and all that is involved in it. The supreme act of God would hardly be altogether within the range of finite understanding, though finite beings, who are amenable to the Word of God, need not be misled in regard even to the most exalted of realities.

Chapter XXVI

GOD THE SON: THE HYPOSTATIC UNION

THE TERM *hypostatic* is derived from *hypostasis*, which word, according to the New Standard Dictionary, means “the mode of being by which any substantial existence is given an independent and distinct individuality.” Thus it follows that a union of hypostasis character is a union of natures that are within themselves independent and distinct. The expression *hypostatic union* is distinctly theological and is applicable only to Christ in whom, as in no other, two distinct and dissimilar natures are united. History records no instance of any other being like Christ in this respect, nor will any other ever appear. He is the incomparable theanthropic Person, the God-man, the Mediator and Daysman (cf. Job 9:32, 33). There need be no other, for every demand, whether it be for divine satisfaction or for human necessity, is perfectly answered in Christ. This unique Person with two natures, being at once the revelation of God to men and the manifestation of ideal and perfect humanity, properly holds the central place in all reverent human thinking, as His complex, glorious Person has engaged the disputation of past centuries. He is not only of surpassing interest to men, but in Him and in Him only is there any hope for humanity in time or eternity. He is God’s gift, God’s one and only solution for a lapsed race. Within man, there are no resources whereby he might provide a daysman whose right and authority are both perfectly divine and perfectly human. Nothing that man could produce could redeem a soul from sin or could provide the essential sacrificial blood which alone can satisfy outraged holiness. The pity is that the trend of theological discussion regarding the unique Person of Christ has been metaphysical, theoretical, and abstract, while so little attention has been directed toward the truth that His wonderful Person is mediatorial, saving, and satisfying forever. The study of the controversies of past centuries over the Person of Christ is a discipline in itself and is not to be included in the plan of this work on Systematic Theology, other than from this line of historical truth certain warnings about disproportionate emphasis may be drawn. The specific theme, the hypostatic union, is to be approached under two main divisions, namely, (a) the structure of the doctrine and (b) the relationships of the theanthropic Person.

I. The Structure of the Doctrine

Four vital factors constitute the structure of this specific doctrine: (a) His Deity, (b) His humanity, (c) the complete preservation of each of these two natures without confusion or alteration of them and their unity.

1. HIS DEITY. The proofs already adduced in a previous section of this thesis are depended upon at this point as a declaration of the Deity of Christ. That evidence demonstrated the truth that Christ is not only an equal member in the Godhead before His incarnation, but that He retained that reality in “the days of His flesh.” It remains, however, to be seen that this experience of the incarnation by which two natures are united in one Person belongs only to the Son. The Father and the Spirit are seen to be associated and active in all that concerns the Son; but it was the Son alone who took upon Him the human form and who is, therefore, though glorified, a Kinsman in the human family. As complex and difficult as it may be to human minds, the original Trinitarian unity abides as perfectly after the incarnation as before (cf. John 10:30; 14:9, 11).

2. HIS HUMANITY. Similarly, a former section of this thesis has demonstrated that by the incarnation Christ assumed a complete and perfect humanity. This He did not possess before, and its addition to His eternal Deity has resulted in the God-man which Christ is. Though His Deity is eternal, the humanity was gained in time. Therefore, the theanthropic Person—destined to be such forever—began with the incarnation. It is also revealed that though the assumption of His humanity was first a condescension and afterwards a humiliation, through His death, resurrection, and ascension He acquired a surpassing glory. There was a joy which was “set before him” (Heb. 12:2), and, because of the obedience manifested in the cross, God “hath highly exalted him” (Phil. 2:9). Reference is thus made to a glory and joy exceeding every glory and joy that had been His before. His condescension and humiliation were not relieved by a dismissal of His humanity, but by its glorification. A glorified man whose humanity has not been renounced is in heaven. As such He ministers in behalf of His own who are in the world, and as such He is seated upon the Father’s throne expecting until, by the authority and power of the Father committed unto Him, His enemies shall be made the footstool of His feet (Heb. 10:12, 13) and the kingdoms of this world are become “the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ” (Rev. 11:15).

Therefore, it is to be recognized that the theanthropic Person is *very God* and *very man*, and that His humanity, perfect and complete, is as enduring as is His Deity.

3. THE COMPLETE PRESERVATION OF EACH OF HIS TWO NATURES WITHOUT CONFUSION OR ALTERNATION OF THEM AND THEIR UNITY. The present effort is not one of defending either the Deity or the humanity of Christ, separately considered, that endeavor having been made on previous pages. It is rather one of defending the truth so evidently taught in the New Testament, that undiminished Deity—none other than the Second Person, whom He eternally is—incorporated into His Being that perfect humanity which He acquired and ever will retain. Of these two natures it may be affirmed from the evidence which Scripture provides, that they united in one Person, and not two; that in this union, that which is divine is in no way degraded by its amalgamation with that which is human; and, in the same manner and completeness, that which is human is in no way exalted or aggrandized above that which is unfallen humanity.

The reality in which undiminished Deity and unfallen humanity united in one theanthropic Person has no parallel in the universe. It need not be a matter of surprise if from the contemplation of such a Being problems arise which human competency cannot solve; nor should it be a matter of wonder that, since the Bible presents no systematized Christology but rather offers a simple narrative with its attending issues, that the momentous challenge to human thought and investigation which the Christ is, has been the major issue in theological controversy from the beginning to the present time. On the supernatural verities the greatest and most devout minds have pondered, the greatest theologians have written, and the most worthy of God's prophets have proclaimed. The ordering and systematizing of truth relative to the theanthropic Person not only could not be avoided, but became at once the greatest burden resting upon those who exercised leadership in the church of Christ. The creeds of the church are easily read and professed, but it is well to remember the white heat of controversy out of which these priceless heritages have been forged. The Word of God counsels men to give heed to doctrine (1 Tim. 4:13, 16), and here, concerning Christ, is a limitless field in which priceless treasures are hid and truths are discovered which not only determine the destiny of men, but awaken every human capacity for meditation, worship, and praise. The greatest divine objective and the supply of the greatest human need are dependent for their realization upon the theanthropic character of the Christ of God. If the hypostatic union of two diverse natures in Christ is subject to superficial gloss, it is rendered ineffectual at every point, the purpose of God is thwarted, men are still in their sins and doom, Christianity becomes only a refined paganism, and the world is without

hope. To repeat: it is not a matter at this point of a correct view as to the Deity or the humanity of Christ separately considered; it is a matter relative to the God-man—what He is, being the incarnate theanthropic Person. With reverence it is said that the Deity which Christ is could not, unaccompanied, save the lost, nor could the humanity which Christ is, acting solitarily, redeem. The issues involved are as great as the eternal purpose of God and as imperative as the need of all lost souls combined. So delicate is the adjustment of these two natures in Christ that to emphasize one at the expense of the other is to sacrifice the efficacy of all. It is natural to estimate that divine nature in Christ as so far transcending the human nature in dignity, eternal Being, and intrinsic glory, that the importance of the human nature all but disappears. Whatever may be the rightful disparagement between Deity and humanity when severed and standing each as a representation of its own sphere, it must be observed that manifestation, redemption, and much future glory resides to a large degree in the humanity of Christ.

It is equally natural to suppose that the divine nature would be injured to some extent if combined with that which is human, and the human nature would be exalted out of its precise limitations if combined with the divine. The teaching of the Scriptures serves to save the reader from such natural conclusions. The Deity of Christ is unimpaired by its union in one Person with that which is unfallen human nature, and the unfallen humanity retains its normal limitations. The confusion and uncertainty that would follow if these natures were subject to problematical alterations is beyond estimation.

It is natural, also, to conclude that the presence of two natures must result in two personalities. This could not be true, for Christ is ever represented as one Person, though He be the coalition of two so widely diverse qualities. On this deeply important phase of this theme, Dr. B. B. Warfield has written with his accustomed clarity:

There underlies, thus, the entire literature of the New Testament a single, unvarying conception of the constitution of Our Lord's person. From Matthew where He is presented as one of the persons of the Holy Trinity (28:19)— or if we prefer the chronological order of books, from the Epistle of James where He is spoken of as the Glory of God, the Shekinah (2:1)—to the Apocalypse where He is represented as declaring that He is the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End (1:8, 17; 22:13), He is consistently thought of as in His fundamental being just God. At the same time from the Synoptic Gospels, in which He is dramatized as a man walking among men, His human descent carefully recorded, and His sense of dependence on God so emphasized that prayer becomes almost His most characteristic action, to the Epistles of John in which it is made the note of a Christian that He confesses that Jesus Christ has come in flesh (I Jn. 4:2) and the Apocalypse in which His birth in the tribe of Judah and the house of David (5:5;

22:16), His exemplary life of conflict and victory (3:21), His death on the cross (11:8) are noted, He is equally consistently thought of as true man. Nevertheless, from the beginning to the end of the whole series of books, while first one and then the other of His two natures comes into repeated prominence, there is never a question of conflict between the two, never any confusion in their relations, never any schism in His unitary personal action; but He is obviously considered and presented as one, composite indeed, but undivided personality. In this state of the case not only may evidence of the constitution of Our Lord's person properly be drawn indifferently from every part of the New Testament, and passage justly be cited to support and explain passage without reference to the portion of the New Testament in which it is found, but we should be without justification if we did not employ this common presupposition of the whole body of this literature to illustrate and explain the varied representations which meet us cursorily in its pages, representations which might easily be made to appear mutually contradictory were they not brought into harmony by their relation as natural component parts of this one unitary conception which underlies and gives consistency to them all. There can scarcely be imagined a better proof of the truth of a doctrine than its power completely to harmonize a multitude of statements which without it would present to our view only a mass of confused inconsistencies. A key which perfectly fits a lock of very complicated wards can scarcely fail to be the true key.—*Biblical Doctrines*, pp. 206–7

The truth concerning the complex Person which Christ is, is set forth in the New Testament. It is the work of the theologian to discover its proper order and to discern its precise meaning. This will not be the result if human opinion is allowed to intrude. To reach a correct estimation of the Person of Christ has been the aim of the greatest scholars whose conclusions have been crystallized into creeds. The Chalcedonian symbol has been the norm of orthodox thinking since its drafting in the fifth century. It reads: “We, then, following the holy Fathers, all with one consent, teach men to confess one and the same Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, the same perfect in Godhead and also perfect in Manhood; truly God and truly man, of a reasonable [rational] soul and body; consubstantial [co-essential] with the Father according to the Godhead, and consubstantial with us according to the Manhood; in all things like unto us, without sin; begotten before all ages of the Father according to the Godhead, and in these latter days, for us and for our salvation, born of the Virgin Mary, the mother of God, according to the Manhood; one and the same Christ, Son, Lord, only begotten, to be acknowledged in two natures, *inconfusedly, unchangeably, indivisibly, inseparably*; the distinction of natures being by no means taken away by the union, but rather the property of each nature being preserved, and concurring in one Person and one Subsistence, not parted or divided into two persons, but one and the same Son, and only begotten, God the Word, the Lord Jesus Christ; as the prophets from the beginning [have declared] concerning him, and the Lord Jesus Christ himself has taught us, and the Creed of the holy Fathers has handed down to us” (*Creeds of Christendom*, Schaff, Vol. II, pp. 62, 63, cited by Miley, *Theology*, II, 7). The declaration made in the Westminster Confession of Faith is

true to this Chalcedonian creed, though stated in different language. There it is written: “The Son of God, the second person in the Trinity, being very and eternal God, of one substance and equal with the Father, did, when the fulness of time was come, take upon Him man’s nature, with all the essential properties and common infirmities thereof, yet without sin; being conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost, in the womb of the Virgin Mary, of her substance. So that two whole, perfect, and distinct natures—the Godhead and the manhood—were inseparably joined together in one person, without conversion, composition, or confusion. Which person is very God and very man, yet one Christ, the only Mediator between God and man” (Chap. viii. sec. 2, cited by Cunningham, *Historical Theology*, 3rd ed., I, 311).

There is little question on the part of devout men but that the Deity of Christ is ever present and abides. The humanity, originating in time, is subject to many suppositions, and only the infallible Word of God is to be followed. A brief quotation from Dr. W. Cunningham is full of meaning:

The distinctive constituent elements of a man, of a human being, of one who is possessed of perfect human nature, are a body and a soul united. Christ took to Himself a true body and a reasonable soul, and He retained, and still retains them in all their completeness, and with all their essential qualities. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost, in the womb of the Virgin Mary, “of her substance,” as is said in the Confession of Faith and Larger Catechism; these words, “of her substance,” being intended as a negation of an old heresy, revived by some Anabaptists after the Reformation, to the effect that He was conceived *in* Mary, but not *of* her; and that He, as it were, passed through her body without deriving anything from her substance; and being intended to assert, in opposition to this notion, that she contributed to the formation of Christ’s human nature, just what mothers ordinarily contribute to the formation of their children. Having thus taken a true body, formed of the substance of the Virgin, He continued ever after to retain it, as is manifest in the whole history of His life, of His death, and of the period succeeding His resurrection; and He has it still at the right hand of God. He took also a reasonable soul, possessed of all the ordinary faculties and capacities of the souls of other men, including a power of volition, which is asserted in opposition to the error of the Monothelites. We see this clearly manifested in the whole of His history, both before and after His death and resurrection; and the proofs of it might very easily be drawn out in detail in a survey of the whole record which God has given us concerning His Son.

—WILLIAM CUNNINGHAM, D.D., *Historical Theology*, 3rd ed., I, 313

Dr. John Miley has done a real service in tracing the development of Christological thought through the early centuries. Though of some length, a portion is here reproduced:

In Christianity, even from the beginning, Christ was the great theme of the Gospel and the life of Christian experience and hope. Therefore he could not fail to be the subject of much thought. Nor could such thought limit itself to merely devotional meditations, but inevitably advanced to the study of his true nature or personality. For the deepest Christian consciousness Christ was the Saviour for whose sake all sin was forgiven, and in whose fellowship all the rich blessings of the

new spiritual life were received. For such a consciousness he could not be a mere man. It is true that in the history of his life he appeared in the fashion of a man and in the possession of human characteristics; still, for the Christian consciousness he must have been more than man. But how much more? And wherein more? Such questions could not fail to be asked; and in the very asking there was a reaching forth of Christian thought for a doctrine of the person of Christ. In such a mental movement the many utterances of Scripture which ascribe to him a higher nature and higher perfections than the merely human would soon be reached. Here it is that a doctrine of the person of Christ would begin to take form. He is human, and yet more than human; is the Son of God incarnate in the nature of man; is human and divine. Reflective thought could not pause at this stage. If Christ is both divine and human in his natures, how are these natures related to each other? What is the influence of each upon the other on account of their conjunction or union in him? Is Christ two persons according to his two natures, or one person in the union of the two? Such questions were inevitable. Nor could they remain unanswered. The answers were given in the different theories of the person of Christ which appeared in the earlier Christian centuries. It is not to be thought strange that theories differed. The subject is one of the profoundest. It lies in the mystery of the divine incarnation. The divine Son invests himself in human nature. So far the statement of the incarnation is easily made; but the statement leaves us on the surface of the profound reality. With a merely tactual or sympathetic union of the two natures, and consequently two distinct persons in Christ, the reality of the divine incarnation disappears. With the two distinct natures, and the two classes of divine and human facts, how can he be one person? Is the divine nature humanized, or the human nature deified in him? Or did the union of the two natures result in a third nature different from both, and so provide for the oneness of his personality? The Scriptures make no direct answer to these questions. They give us many Christological facts, but in elementary form, and leave the construction of a doctrine of the person of Christ to the resources of Christian thought. Soon various doctrines were set forth. In each case the doctrine was constructed according to what was viewed as the more vital or determining fact of Christology, as related to the person of Christ. Opposing views and errors of doctrine were the result. More or less contention was inevitable. The interest of the subject was too profound for theories to be held as mere private opinions, or with indifference to opposing views. The strife was a serious detriment to the Christian life. Hence there was need of a carefully constructed doctrine of the person of Christ; need that the construction should be the work of the best Christian thought, and that it should be done in a manner to secure the highest moral sanction of the Church.

The state of facts previously described called for some action of the Church which might correct or, at least, mitigate existing evils. Certainly there was need that errors in Christology should be corrected and contending parties reconciled. A council which should embody the truest doctrinal thought of the Church seemed the best agency for the attainment of these ends. The Council of Chalcedon was constituted accordingly, in the year of our Lord 451. The Council of Nice was specially concerned with the doctrine of the Trinity. The doctrine constructed clearly and strongly asserted the true and essential divinity of Christ, but expressed nothing definitely respecting his personality. For more than a century this great question still remained without doctrinal formulation by any assembly properly representative of the Church. The construction of such a doctrine was the special work of the Council of Chalcedon. The subject was not a new one. Much preparatory work had been done. Many minds were in possession of the true doctrine, which was already the prevalent faith of the Church. There was such preparation for the work of this Council. Indeed, the notable letter of Leo, Pope of Rome, to Flavian, Patriarch of Constantinople, so accurately and thoroughly outlined a doctrinal statement of the person of Christ, that little more remained for the Council than to cast the material into the mold of its own thought and send it forth under the moral sanction of the Church.—*Systematic Theology*, II, 5–7

II. The Relationships

A practical approach to the right understanding of the theanthropic Person is through the major relationships He, as God-man, sustained while here on earth. These are:

1. TO THE FATHER. On the divine side of His Being, the Christ of God always occupied the exalted place of fellowship with the Father on the ground of equality—notably His High Priestly prayer as recorded in John 17:1–26; and every reference to His Deity implies this equality and oneness. On the human side of His Being, that which is inherently the creature’s relation to the Creator is expressed to perfection, namely, perfect submission to the Father’s will. The complete obedience of Christ to the Father has been made the occasion of doubt as to His equality with the Father. Strong emphasis is needed at this point, which enforces the truth that His subservient attitude is altogether the function of His humanity. There was that in His own divine nature which was first *willing* to be the obedient One. He *willingly* left the glory, and that exercise of His volition preceded His incarnation (Heb. 10:4–7). In like manner, He will exercise authority in all future ages by the appointment of the Father. He reigns forever and ever, but on the ground of the truth that all authority is committed unto Him of the Father (Matt. 28:18; John 5:27; 1 Cor. 15:24–28).

2. TO THE SPIRIT. Another difficult aspect of revelation concerning the relationships of the God-man is resident in the truth that He did His mighty works by the power of the Holy Spirit. It is written that the Spirit generated the humanity of the God-man (Luke 1:35); He descended upon Christ (Matt. 3:16); He filled Christ without measure (John 3:34; cf. Luke 4:1); Christ asserted that His works were wrought by the Holy Spirit (Matt. 12:28); and He offered Himself to God by the eternal Spirit (Heb. 9:14). This dependence of Christ upon the Holy Spirit is a theme which must have its full treatment under Pneumatology. It may suffice to observe at this point that the humanity of Christ is again in view. Being equal to the Spirit, it was wholly within His own power to minister in every mighty work, but this would most evidently complicate the inner relationships of His own Being and remove Him from the position of One who is an example to His followers. Christians are privileged to serve in the power of the Spirit; and so the Christ of God served, but only within the sphere of His humanity. It may be observed, likewise, that the cooperation of the Persons of the Godhead may form some basis for these relationships. Over

against the truth that Christ wrought by the power of the Holy Spirit, is the corresponding truth that the Spirit was subject to Christ, for Christ sends the Spirit into the world (John 16:7), which is a divine prerogative; and the Spirit originates no message of His own, but speaks only what He hears, namely, the message of Christ (John 16:13).

3. To HIMSELF. Unceasing discussion has continued, and many and varying opinions have been expressed as to what Christ's own consciousness could have been. How could He know and sense the might and wisdom of infinity and yet preserve that which is normal human weakness and limitation? How could He know and not know? How could He be the source of all power and yet be prone and exposed to human frailty? If two personalities were predicated of Him, it is conceivable that one, being divine, might be conscious of things belonging to that realm while the other, being human, might be conscious of things which are restricted. The Word of God lends no sanction to the idea of a dual personality in Christ. Whatever His varied abilities and qualities may be, He remains an individual Person.

Consideration is naturally directed toward the problem as to when in His development from babyhood to manhood He became conscious of His Deity and thus assured of His limitless resources. This question has been before all generations and seems to appeal to those even who evince little interest in more vital features of Christological study. One writer has recently suggested, and it is not a new notion, that at the time of the incarnation Christ's Deity passed into a state of coma from which there was a gradual recovery as the years progressed. However sincere such a writer may be, such a proposal is nothing short of an insult to the Deity of Christ. No truth could be more established than that which declares that Deity, being immutable as to every feature that enters into divine existence, could never be subject to the slightest experience of unconsciousness. It is no more a problem as to how conscious Deity can combine with human babyhood, than it is as to how Deity can combine with humanity at all. On the divine side of His Being—even when He existed as a fetus in the virgin's womb—He could have spoken the word of command and dismissed all material things back to nothing from which He had once called them forth. The field of contrast between the two natures of Christ is widened, as it appears to finite minds, when the Creator of all things is contemplated as a helpless infant in a human mother's arms. The mystery is that of the incarnation itself, and is a problem of faith and not of understanding.

Christ was far from being a normal child. It must be believed of Him that He never sinned in childhood any more than He sinned in manhood. For a child to reach the age of maturity having never sinned in that absolute sense in which Deity cannot sin, is hardly normal from the human viewpoint. Mary had many things to “ponder” and the purity of her child was one of them. The approach to this complexity is too often wholly wrong. It is assumed that Christ was first a human infant who sometime in His experience took on the consciousness of Deity. The truth is that He was God from all eternity with a divine consciousness which can never be dimmed, and, in the unchangeable experience of Deity, He took on or entered into the realms common to a human body, soul, and spirit. Evidently, in some minds, Christ was more *anthropotheistic* than *theanthropic*. In His childhood, as in the period of gestation, He awaited the hour of a fuller manifestation; but He was ever the conscious Logos of God who was present. Whatever may have been the solution of the problem of two wills—the divine and human—in the one Person, the problem of the divine and human consciousness in one Person is still more baffling. It is only one of many enigmas. How could He be tempted when God cannot be tempted? How could He die when God cannot die? These are problems the finite mind cannot solve. Certainly there is none other to compare with Him. He is “God manifest in the flesh,” the only theanthropic Person the universe will ever behold. Why, indeed, should man be surprised if he cannot understand God? To be surprised thus is to be amazed at the revelation that God is greater than man.

4. TO ANGELS UNFALLEN AND FALLEN. A very wide field of relationship is indicated in the Bible between the unfallen angels and the Lord of Glory. They evidently attended Him and observed Him from His birth to His ascension. The incarnation of their Creator and the events incident to a perfect redemption were of greatest moment to the holy angels.

In respect to the fallen angels, there arises a relationship which is more or less paradoxical. One line of testimony concerning Him is that He commanded the evil spirits with complete divine authority. They never resisted His sovereign will. They even anticipated His coming judgments upon them when they declared, “What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? art thou come hither to torment us before the time?” (Matt. 8:29). Yet, on the other hand, He Himself was tested by Satan. This testing was wholly within the sphere of His humanity and concerned issues which had to do with the Father’s will for Him. In the one instance, His Deity is acting in ways which are divine. In the other

instance, His humanity, being what it was, is subject to that peculiar form of temptation. The answer is all sealed in the truth that He is the theanthropic Person—the God—man.

5. TO HUMANITY. Sufficient emphasis upon the truth of Christ's humanity has been given in an earlier portion of this theme. He is *Immanuel*—God became man, a member of this race. It is not one who *was* God, or who ceased to be God, who became flesh; it is God manifest in the flesh. Had He ceased to be God, or had He failed to become man, He could not have been the Kinsman Redeemer. No greater honor was ever conferred on the race as such than that disclosed in the word *Immanuel*.

6. TO SIN AND THE SIN NATURE. In this relationship all is negative so far as the Person of Christ is concerned. A very great theme, belonging to Soteriology, is introduced, quite foreign here, when it is declared that He became “sin for us” (2 Cor. 5:21). Regarding His Person, it is true that His humanity was as sinless as His Deity. As the unfallen man He is free from a sin nature, but it is equally true that He never sinned. As to the sin nature, He was announced by the angel, even before His birth, to be “that holy thing” (Luke 1:35), and in all points He was tempted as a man apart from those temptations which arise from the sphere of a sin nature (Heb. 4:15). With respect to the fruit of a fallen nature He fearlessly challenged His enemies, saying: “Which of you convinceth me of sin?” (John 8:46). And none in any succeeding generation has been any more successful in laying any sin to His account. Though living among men as one of them for thirty-three years, He retained the holiness of Deity in every respect.

a. The Impeccability of Christ. A serious question, quite hypothetical, yet vital, arises whether Christ, being human, had the ability to sin. Was He peccable or impeccable? Here the fact of the *unity* of His Person is involved and becomes in a large measure the key to the solution of the problem. There are those who, desiring to accentuate the reality of Christ's humanity, have taught that He could have sinned, and, apparently, without due regard for all that is involved. Some have taken the ground that, because of His infinite wisdom and power, He *would* not sin. Others contend that, being God, He *could* not sin. In the course of the argument which this problem engenders, it is essential to recognize that, as demonstrated in the case of the first Adam, an unfallen human being may sin; and from this it may be reasoned, were there no other factors to be considered, that the unfallen humanity of Christ could have sinned. It is at this point that error intrudes. If isolated and standing alone, it is claimed that the humanity of

Christ, being unsupported, could have willed against God as Adam did. The misleading fallacy is that the humanity of Christ could ever stand alone and unsupported by His Deity. With Adam there was but one nature and it could stand in no other way than unsupported and alone. The humanity of Christ was not, and could not be, divorced from His Deity, nor could it ever be in a position of uninvolved responsibility. Dr. W. G. T. Shedd has used the illustration with good effect that a wire may be bent by human hands, but, when welded into an unbendable bar of steel, it cannot be bent. If it be argued that Christ's humanity seemed to act separately in matters of knowledge, human weakness, and limitations, this may be conceded; yet not without a reminder that, though His humanity might seem to act independently in certain ways which involved no moral issues, because of the unity of His Person His humanity could not sin without necessitating God to sin. From such a conclusion all devout persons must shrink with holy fear. In God is no darkness at all (1 John 1:5), nor is there in God so much as a shadow cast by turning (James 1:17). This vexing problem is thus reduced to the simple question whether God could sin; for Jesus Christ is God. If it be admitted that God cannot—not merely *would* not—sin, it must be conceded that Christ *could* not—not merely *would* not—sin. It remains only to observe that, since He is “the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever” (Heb. 13:8), had He been capable of sinning on earth, He is still capable of sinning now. In such a situation, the believer's position and standing *in Christ* must ever be in jeopardy. It is a question whether the one theanthropic Person could sin. When thus viewed, there could be no ground for further discussion on the part of those who honor the Son as they honor the Father (John 5:23).

The impeccable Person of Christ is well set forth by Dr. Charles Lee Feinberg:

First of all, the hypostatic union gave the world an impeccable Person. This predicates of Christ, mark you, not only anamartesia, but impeccability. It is not just a matter of *posse non peccare*, but of *non posse peccare*. It is not enough to say Christ did not sin; it must be declared unequivocally that He could not sin. To entertain for a moment the thought that Christ could sin, would involve issues that call for a radical revolution in our conception of the Godhead. To say that Christ could not sin is not tantamount to maintaining He could not be tempted. Because He was man He could be tempted, but because He was God He could not sin, for there was no sin principle in Christ that could or would respond to solicitation to sin. When Satan tempted the Last Adam in the wilderness, He was tempted and tested in all points (1 Jn. 2:16) like as the first Adam, and the human race ever since, yet in His case without sin. Sin as an inherent nature or as an outward act was foreign to Christ. Luke records that the angel disclosed to Mary that of her would be born that holy thing which was to be called the Son of God (Lk. 1:35). The hereditary sin nature that Mary had received mediately from Adam through her progenitors was not transmitted to Christ because of His miraculous conception through the operation of the Holy Spirit of God. Christ could later challenge,

not His friends mind you, but His enemies to convince Him of sin (Jn. 8:46). He knew that when the prince of this world was come, he would find nothing in Him (Jn. 14:30). Paul says of Him that God made Him to be sin for us who knew no sin (2 Cor. 5:21). Though tempted in all points as we are, He was nevertheless without sin (Heb. 4:15); indeed, we are told, He was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners (Heb. 7:26). In short, the combined testimony of Scripture reveals that in Him is no sin (1 Jn. 3:5).—*Bibliotheca Sacra*, XCII, 422–23.

7. TO THOSE WHO ARE SAVED. All that Christ is to the Christian may be classified as either benefit flowing from His Deity, or as benefit flowing from His humanity. In the sphere of redemption and all that accrues to those who are saved through Christ's blood, the humanity and Deity are too closely related to be easily separated. As to the pattern, ideal, and example which Christ is, all originates in His humanity. No human being is asked to imitate God; he is asked to be Christlike, which relates to Christ's adorable and perfect human perfections. In this respect the believer should be holy since God is holy. All this is made possible in the Christian through the enabling power of the Holy Spirit.

Conclusion

It is the work of the Spirit of God to take of the things of Christ and to show them unto men. Apart from this revelation, Christ must ever be a confusing mystery. A liberal writer has said: "He was at the same time humble and proud, acute-minded and weak-minded, clear-sighted and blind, sober-minded and fanatical, with profound knowledge of men and no self-knowledge, clear in his insight of the present, and full of fantastic dreams of the future. His life was, as Lepsius strikingly said, 'a tragedy of fanaticism.'" Far removed is this declaration from the honor which inspired apostles who lived with Christ ascribed to Him. This is not the adoration of the martyrs who died out of sheer devotion to their Savior, nor is it the voice of the worthy saints and scholars throughout the history of the Church on earth. From the days of the apostles, the theanthropic Person has been recognized and adored in His complex two natures. Dr. B. B. Warfield gathers up this theme in characteristic manner: "The doctrines of the Two Natures supplies, in a word, the only possible solution of the enigmas of the life-manifestation of the historical Jesus. It presents itself to us, not as the creator, but as the solvent of difficulties—in this, performing the same service to thought which is performed by all the Christian doctrines. If we look upon it merely as a hypothesis, it commands our attention by the multiplicity of phenomena which it reduces to order and unifies, and on this lower ground, too, commends itself to our acceptance. But it does not come to us

merely as a hypothesis. It is the assertion concerning their Lord of all the primary witnesses of the Christian faith. It is, indeed, the self-testimony of our Lord Himself, disclosing to us the mystery of His being. It is, to put it briefly, the simple statement of ‘the fact of Jesus,’ as that fact is revealed to us in His whole manifestation. We may reject it if we will, but in rejecting it we reject the only real Jesus in favor of another Jesus—who is not another, but is the creature of pure fantasy. The alternatives which we are really face to face with are, Either the two-natured Christ of history, or—a strong delusion” (*Christology and Criticism*, pp. 309–10).

A further word from Dr. Feinberg is of especial value:

To recapitulate, then, we have pursued our discussion on the hypostatic union along several lines—creedally, noting the course of Christological thinking to show its use as a basis for later theological thought; prophetically, showing the union to be a definite subject of prophecy; historically, setting forth the scriptural representation of the union as an indisputable matter of history; critically or analytically, calling attention to the implications of the doctrine; and finally, functionally, making clear the consequences or benefits that flow from this union. In conclusion, we stand amazed in the presence of this great thing which God hath brought about—the hypostatic union with all its unfathomable mystery yet superabounding benefits—and when we recall that this God-man is the center of God’s two-fold eternal purpose wherein He determined “That in the dispensation of the fullness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth,” we proclaim with Paul: “O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! ... For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen” (Eph. 1:10; Rom. 11:33, 36).—*Op. cit.*, XCII, 425–26

To all this may be added the words of the inspired Apostle: “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 Tim. 3:16); “Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the commandment of God our Saviour, and Lord Jesus Christ, which is our hope” (1 Tim. 1:1).

Chapter XXVII

GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT

IN APPROACHING this great feature of Biblical doctrine, three determining considerations are immediately in view, namely, (a) though it is the design of this work to adhere closely to the prevailing custom of treating under Theology Proper only the *Person* and not the work of the members in the Godhead, the revelation concerning the Spirit—He being Administrator of divine undertakings—is almost wholly contained in Scriptures which disclose some form of His activity, and, therefore, some notice of such activity is unavoidable. (b) Since an entire volume will yet be devoted to Pneumatology, no more of this doctrine will be introduced here than is deemed essential as a preparation for that which intervenes. (c) It is not intended in this presentation of Systematic Theology to follow an established custom of slighting, and to that degree dishonoring, the Holy Spirit; yet at this juncture the reader may be reminded that in the field of evidence respecting the Deity of the Spirit, much the same arguments, based on similar Scriptures as already employed touching the Deity of the Son, are pertinent and germane here. Such discussion of this doctrine as is admitted into this thesis at this point will follow a sevenfold division: (a) the personality of the Holy Spirit, (b) the Deity of the Holy Spirit, (c) the witness of the Old Testament, (d) the witness of the New Testament, (e) His titles, (f) His relationships, and (g) His adorable character.

I. The Personality of the Holy Spirit

As the burden of the course of reasoning concerning God the Son centered about His theanthropic Person, in like manner the burden of the course of reasoning respecting the Holy Spirit centers about what may be known about His Person, but with no complexity such as arises where a union of two natures is involved. The issue is whether the Spirit is a Person at all. Naturally those who oppose themselves against the truth that God subsists in three equal Persons have always sought to degrade the Spirit to a mere influence, as they have sought to degrade the Son to a mere man. Such opposers, and many uninstructed persons have carelessly joined them, have made much of the truth that the term *spirit* signifies that which is most ethereal, being symbolized by the wind and by breath. Here it will be easily seen that whatever argument is based on the mere

fact of the incorporeality of the Holy Spirit is as properly applicable to God the Father and to the angels. Abundant evidence has been adduced to demonstrate that a being is no less a person because of an incorporeal mode of existence. Corporeality adds but little to the three elements of personality—intellect, sensibility, and will. The following passages suggest the ethereal character of the Spirit: “The Spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life” (Job 33:4); “And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost” (John 20:22). Obviously these texts assert that both the old creation of material things and the new creation of spiritual realities are the result of the work of the Spirit as the breath of God. Doubtless the creative acts here mentioned are the supreme works of God and these could hardly be wrought by the wind or His breath as such, nor could they be wrought by any impersonal influence proceeding from God. In like manner, the same reply may be made to those who aver that the Holy Spirit is but an attribute of God. No attribute ever functioned as Creator, nor have the divine attributes any essentials of personality. The mere citation of such a passage as John 16:13, which reads, “Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will skew you things to come,” contradicts the notion that the Spirit is no more than a divine attribute (cf. John 14:16, 17, 26; 15:26; 16:7–15; Matt. 28:19). That *wisdom* is a title of Christ as used in the book of Proverbs is no basis upon which Christ may be deemed only the attribute of God which is *wisdom*. In the same way it is clear that, because of the fact that the Spirit exercises *power* and *influence*, it cannot be said that He is no more than the divine attributes which these words represent. Two similar passages—Romans 7:6 and 2 Corinthians 3:6—have been thought by some to imply that the Spirit is only an attribute of God. The passages read: “But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter” (Rom. 7:6); “Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life” (2 Cor. 3:6). Here two dispensations are in view, the former being dominated by the Law which ministers death, and the present being dominated by the Spirit who ministers life.

Science reaches its conclusions on the basis of the attending facts. If this procedure be followed relative to the existing evidence bearing on the Spirit’s personality, it will be seen that He, as being the divine Administrator who is ever

in action displaying every element of personality, is even more entitled to be recognized as a person than any other. Citation of Scripture at this point would be superfluous, since, of the hundreds of references to the Spirit which the Bible presents, one will serve as well as another. The inclusion of the Spirit distinctly, separately, and equally in ascriptions to Deity—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—, and the fact that Christ referred to Him as another Paraclete, capable of functioning in every respect as He Himself had done, serve to terminate doubt as to the personality of the Spirit.

II. The Deity of the Holy Spirit

Some specific and additional arguments as to the Deity of the Spirit—above those already presented concerning the Deity of the Son in which arguments the Spirit shares—should be considered. These may well fall into four general groups:

1. THE HOLY SPIRIT IS CALLED GOD. In the Old Testament, the Spirit is spoken of as Jehovah (Isa. 61:1). In the New Testament, Peter accuses Ananias of having lied unto the Holy Spirit, which he declares is a lie against God. The passage states: “But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land? Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God” (Acts 5:3, 4). Thus, also, in 2 Corinthians 3:17 the Spirit is said to be *Lord*, which is clearly the Jehovah title.

2. THE HOLY SPIRIT IS ASSOCIATED WITH GOD. As already observed, it is truth of no small moment that the Spirit is associated with the Father and the Son upon an equality of Being, position, and responsibility. For reasons quite unrelated to the position or ability of the Persons of the Godhead, the Son is given second place and the Spirit the third in the order in which the whole and complete title of God appears in the New Testament. Every characteristic of Deity belongs as much to the Spirit as to the Father or the Son.

On the relationship between the Persons of the Godhead, Richard Watson writes, incorporating an extended quotation from Bishop John Pearson:

As to the *manner* of his being, the orthodox doctrine is, that as Christ is God by an eternal FILIATION, so the Spirit is God by *procession* from the Father and the Son. “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 Son together, is worshipped and glorified” (*Nicene Creed*). “The Holy Ghost is of the Father

and of the Son, neither made, nor created, nor begotten, but *proceeding*" (*Athanasian Creed*). "The Holy Ghost, *proceeding* from the Father and the Son, is of one substance, majesty, and glory, with the Father and the Son, very and eternal GOD" (*Articles of the English Church*). The Latin Church introduced the term *spiration*, from *spiro*, to breathe, to denote the manner of this *procession*; on which Dr. Owen remarks, "as the vital breath of a man has a continual emanation from him, and yet is never separated utterly from his person, or forsaketh him, so doth the Spirit of the Father and the Son proceed from them by a continual Divine emanation, still abiding one with them." On this refined view little can be said which has obvious Scriptural authority; and yet the very term by which the third person in the trinity is designated WIND or BREATH may, as to the third person, be designed, like the term Son applied to the second, to convey, though imperfectly, *some intimation of that manner of being by which both are distinguished* from each other, and from the Father; and it was a remarkable action of our Lord, and one certainly which does not discountenance this idea, that when he imparted the Holy Ghost to his disciples, "he BREATHED on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost" (John 20:22).

But whatever we may think as to the doctrine of "*spiration*," the PROCESSION of the Holy Ghost rests on direct Scriptural authority, and is thus stated by Bishop Pearson:—

"Now this procession of the Spirit, in reference to the Father, is delivered expressly, in relation to the Son, and is contained virtually in the Scriptures. First, it is expressly said, that the Holy Ghost proceedeth from the Father, as our Saviour testifieth, 'When the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me,' John 15:26. And this is also evident from what hath been already asserted: for being the Father and the Spirit are the same God, and being so the same in the unity of the nature of God, are yet distinct in the personality, one of them must have the same nature from the other; and because the Father hath been already shown to have it from none, it followeth that the Spirit hath it from him.

"Secondly, though it be not expressly spoken in the Scripture, that the Holy Ghost proceedeth from the Father and Son, yet the substance of the same truth is virtually contained there; because those very expressions, which are spoken of the Holy Spirit in relation to the Father, for that reason because he proceedeth from the Father, are also spoken of the same Spirit in relation to the Son; and therefore there must be the same reason presupposed in reference to the Son, which is expressed in reference to the Father. Because the Spirit proceedeth from the Father, therefore it is called the Spirit of God and the Spirit of the Father. 'It is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you,' Matt. 10:20. For by the language of the apostle, the Spirit of God is the Spirit which is of God, saying, 'The things of God knoweth no man but the Spirit of God. And we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God,' 1 Cor. 2:11, 12. Now the same Spirit is also called the Spirit of the Son; for 'because we are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into our hearts,' Gal. 4:6: the Spirit of Christ; 'Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his,' Rom. 8:9; 'even the Spirit of Christ which was in the prophets,' 1 Peter 1:11; the Spirit of Jesus Christ, as the apostle speaks, 'I know that this shall turn to my salvation, through your prayer, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ,' Phil. 1:19. If then the Holy Ghost be called the Spirit of the Father, because he proceedeth from the Father, it followeth that, being called also the Spirit of the Son, he proceedeth also from the Son.

"Again: because the Holy Ghost proceedeth from the Father, he is therefore sent by the Father, as from him who bath by the original communication, a right of mission; as 'the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send,' John 14:26. But the same Spirit which is sent by the Father is also sent by the Son, as he saith, 'When the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you.' Therefore the Son bath the same right of mission with the Father, and consequently must be acknowledged to have communicated the same essence. The Father is never sent by the Son, because he received not the Godhead from him; but the Father sendeth the Son, because he communicated the Godhead to him: in the same manner, neither the Father nor the Son is ever sent

by the Holy Spirit; because neither of them received the Divine nature from the Spirit: but both the Father and the Son sendeth the Holy Ghost, because the Divine nature, common to both the Father and the Son, was communicated by them both to the Holy Ghost. As therefore the Scriptures declare expressly, that the Spirit proceedeth from the Father; so do they also virtually teach that he proceedeth from the Son.”—*Theological Institutes*, I, 628–30

3. THE ATTRIBUTES OF GOD ARE PREDICATED OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. The Spirit is *eternal* (Heb. 9:14). He is *omnipresent*, since He is said to dwell in every believer (1 Cor. 6:19). He is *omniscient*. He it is who searcheth all things, even the deep things of God (1 Cor. 2:10). He is one of *supreme majesty*, for to vex Him, to do despite to Him, or to blaspheme Him, is sin in its most serious form. He giveth life (John 6:63). He inspires the Scriptures (2 Tim. 3:16); He teaches (John 16:13); He regenerates (John 3:6); He is the Spirit of “truth,” of “grace,” and He is *holy*, being especially honored with that descriptive title.

4. THE HOLY SPIRIT MAY BE BLASPHEMED. No person other than Deity could be the object of blasphemy, and in the case of the Spirit and under the circumstances which obtained when Christ was here on earth, the Spirit could be blasphemed by ascribing to Satan the works which were wrought by the Holy Spirit (Matt. 12:31).

It may be concluded, then, that the Spirit is one who shares equally in the Godhead and, though the Son and the Spirit sustain specific relations with respect to the *manner* of their position, it does not follow that either the Son or the Spirit is any less Deity than the Father. This conclusion is harmonious with all the Word of God, which assigns to the Spirit equal honor with the Father and with the Son.

III. The Witness of the Old Testament

At this point that progress of doctrine which the Bible exhibits is again in evidence. Much concerning the Spirit of God is discovered in the Old Testament; but, as in the case of the Son, or more exactly, the doctrine of the Trinity, the direct and complete revelation of the triune mode of subsistence is reserved for the New Testament. With the earlier and more limited disclosures and with the all-important burden resting upon Old Testament saints to maintain monotheistic truth in its essential purity, sufficient reason is apparent for the fact that the full disclosure of the triune mode of subsistence should be withheld and be revealed at the time when the Second and Third Persons have their ministries more fully revealed. Nevertheless, the doctrine of the Holy Spirit suffers less change in passing from one Testament to the other than does the doctrine of the

Son. Place must be made in the instance of the Son for the incarnation and earth-life and all that these connote, while the Spirit, apart from the fact that He undertakes different activities in different ages and is actually resident in the world throughout this age, is the same in His essential mode of Being in all ages. Though much added truth concerning the Spirit awaits a larger expression in the New Testament, the Old Testament leaves no vital feature unannounced.

The title by which the Third Person is most commonly known is confronted in the opening verses of the Bible and without introduction or preparation. His Person and power are assumed. But, while this is true, it will be seen that various books of the Old Testament make no reference to the Spirit; He appears in every book of the New Testament save Philemon and 2 and 3 John, and more frequently, indeed, in the writings of the Apostle Paul than in all the Old Testament together. On the identity of the Spirit as He is presented in the New Testament in harmony with the records of the Old Testament, Dr. James Denney writes: "The Apostles were all Jews,—men, as it has been said, with monotheism as a passion in their blood. They did not cease to be monotheists when they became preachers of Christ, but they instinctively conceived God in a way in which the old revelation had not taught them to conceive him. ... Distinctions were recognized in what had once been the bare simplicity of the Divine nature. The distinction of Father and Son was the most obvious, and it was enriched, on the basis of Christ's own teaching, and of the actual experience of the Church, by the further distinction of the Holy Spirit" (cited by Warfield, *Biblical Doctrines*, p. 103). Dr. B. B. Warfield as definitely asserts:

The New Testament writers identify their "Holy Spirit" with the "Spirit of God" of the older books. All that is attributed to the Spirit of God in the Old Testament, is attributed by them to their personal Holy Ghost. It was their own Holy Ghost who was Israel's guide and director and whom Israel rejected when they resisted the leading of God (Acts 7:51). It was in Him that Christ (doubtless in the person of Noah) preached to the antediluvians (1 Pet. 3:19). It was He who was the author of faith of old as well as now (2 Cor. 4:13). It was He who gave Israel its ritual service (Heb. 9:8). It was He who spoke in and through David and Isaiah and all the prophets (Matt. 22:43, Mark 12:36, Acts 1:16, 28:25, Heb. 3:7, 10:15). If Zechariah (7:12) or Nehemiah (9:20) tells us that Jehovah of Hosts sent His word by His Spirit by the hands of the prophets, Peter tells us that these men from God were moved by the Holy Ghost to speak these words (2 Pet. 1:21), and even that it was specifically the Spirit of Christ that was in the prophets (1 Pet. 1:11). We are assured that it was in Jesus upon whom the Holy Ghost had visibly descended, that Isaiah's predictions were fulfilled that Jehovah would put His Spirit upon his righteous servant (Isa. 42:1) and that (Isa. 61:1) the Spirit of the Lord Jehovah should be upon Him (Matt. 12:18, Luke 4:18, 19). And Peter bids us look upon the descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost as the accomplished promise of Joel that God would pour out His Spirit upon all flesh (Joel 2:28, 29, Acts 2:16). There can be no doubt that the New Testament writers identify the Holy Ghost of the New Testament with the Spirit of God of the Old.—*Ibid.*, pp. 103–4

Various writers have adopted a threefold division of the ministration of the Spirit as represented in the Old Testament. These ministrations, though outside the accepted range of Theology Proper, may be mentioned here in support of the contention that the Spirit is of the Godhead and proved to be by His administration of the things of God. This threefold division is:

1. THE HOLY SPIRIT IN COSMICAL UNDERTAKINGS. From the opening verse on to the end of the Old Testament there is testimony given relative to the Spirit as the active power in God who created all things and by whom they are sustained. The impression which the text conveys is that there is one in the Godhead who is transcendent, who speaks the word of command, who may be designated *the Word of God*, and one who executes that which is determined. God said, Let things appear (or, come into being), and He who brooded over all things caused it to be done. Much light is thrown in subsequent Scriptures on the stupendous events so briefly mentioned in the early verses of Genesis. In the opening of John's Gospel, it is declared that the Word is God and that all things were made by Him. This account confirms the truth already intimated, namely, that by the command of the Word all things were wrought, and wrought by Him who administers and executes the divine will and purpose. Thus some slight ground is offered for the apprehension of the otherwise perplexing truth that each of those who comprise the Godhead is in turn said to have functioned separately as Creator. Thus the Persons of the Godhead are said to have wrought in the incarnation, in the death, and in the resurrection of the Second Person. In like manner, they are seen working in the new creation when the soul of man is born of the Spirit to a relationship in which God is his Father, and the ground of that salvation is the redeeming work of the Son. Every divine calling-forth in creative authority and purpose is executed by Him who administers the divine will. Confirmation in later Scriptures of the Old Testament's testimony relative to the Spirit's work in creation, and in addition to the account given in Genesis 1:1, 2, is of great importance. It is written: "By his spirit he hath garnished the heavens" (Job 26:13); "Thou sendest forth thy spirit, they are created: and thou renewest the face of the earth" (Ps. 104:30); "The Spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life" (Job 33:4). Here, also, there is abundant evidence set forth as to the Spirit's personality which controverts the claim of pantheism, and God is seen to be both immanent and transcendent in His relation to the world He has made. The work of the Spirit in the sphere of divine government is yet a more pronounced feature of the Old Testament

doctrine.

2. THE HOLY SPIRIT'S WORK IN THINGS GOVERNMENTAL. This vitally important theme must not be restricted to the mere government of men in which the Spirit takes so great a part; it reaches out, as well, to the divine government of all things and contemplates the authority of God which is displayed not only in directing but in creating spiritual realities. At this point the contrast between pre-cross ages and the present time becomes obvious. Then the Spirit came upon individuals apparently without regard for personal qualifications; at the present time He is the abiding, indwelling Presence in all who believe. Writing of the Spirit's authority and undertakings, Oehler states: "It rules within the theocracy (Isa. 63:11, Hag. 2:5, Neh. 9:20), but not as if all citizens of the Old Testament theocracy as such participated in this Spirit, which Moses expresses as a wish (Num. 11:29), but which is reserved for the future community of salvation (John 3:5). In the Old Testament the Spirit's work in the divine kingdom is rather that of *endowing the organs of the theocracy with the gifts required for their calling*, and those gifts of office in the Old Testament are similar to the gifts of grace in the New Testament, 1 Cor. 12 ff" (*Old Testament Theology*, p. 141). The oft-repeated phrase, "The Spirit of Jehovah came upon," characterized so many who discharged rule and acted directly for God. This is especially true of chosen men who wrought in the building of the tabernacle and the temple. The outstanding manifestation of the Spirit upon men of the Old Testament period is that which is termed *the Spirit of prophecy*. God raised up His prophets in all generations, but few of these were called upon to write and of those who did write not many were appointed to write Scripture. The prophet's supreme authority was recognized by kings and rulers. Other men might enforce the law, but the prophet proclaimed the law of God which was to be enforced. The fact that the prophets of the Old Testament were especially empowered by the Spirit of God is asserted in the New Testament: "For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (2 Pet. 1:21). Two exceedingly vital passages tend to disclose the high expectation of the people and the provisions divinely made: "According to the word that I covenanted with you when ye came out of Egypt, so my spirit remaineth among you: fear ye not" (Hag. 2:5); "Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts" (Zech. 4:6). It was within the one sacred nation, Israel, that the divine power wrought, protecting, instructing, and leading, and all to the end that the will of God for that people should be realized.

As in the cosmical undertakings which were so evidently outside the thing wrought and to the confusion of all pantheistic notions, likewise, in governmental undertakings, the Spirit is seen as the sovereign one who uses material in ways of His own design and wholly apart from the volition of the instrument. It is from without and quite apart from such natural gifts as the instrument might possess. This approach to men from without is emphasized in the fact that the Spirit is given unto them specifically from God (Isa. 42:1). God fills men with His Spirit (Num. 11:25; Ex. 28:3; 31:3). This is, as in the case of the filling of the Spirit enjoined in the New Testament, a coming *upon* men (Judges 14:6, 19; 1 Sam. 11:6). So, also, the Spirit “falls” upon the prophet (Ezek. 11:5), and clothes Himself with a man (Judges 6:34). Much of this is in strong contrast to the New Testament relationship wherein each believer is a temple of the Spirit and is commanded to be “filled with the Spirit,” which blessing dependeth not on sovereign divine action, but on human adjustment to the will of God. Similarly, the contrast is further seen in that the presence of the Spirit in the New Testament believer is not merely for a moment, corresponding to the duration of some specific divine enterprise, but is an abiding reality to the end of the pilgrim’s path. It is true that the Spirit wrought immediately in and through the instrument for each occasion or need. Concerning this feature of truth, Dr. A. B. Davidson writes: “The view that prevailed among the people—and it seems the view of the Old Testament writers themselves—appears to have been this: the prophet did not speak out of a general inspiration of Jehovah, bestowed upon him once for all, as, say, at his call; each particular word that he spoke, whether a prediction or a practical counsel, was due to a special inspiration, exerted on him for the occasion” (*The Expositor*, July, 1895, p. 1, cited by Warfield, *Biblical Doctrines*, p. 117).

No consideration of the governmental aspect of the Spirit in relation to Israel will be complete that does not contemplate one great Messianic passage in which, as nowhere else in the Word of God, it is taught that even the kingdom rule of Messiah will be exercised in the power of the Spirit: “And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots: and the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD; and shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the LORD: and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears: but with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth with the rod of

his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked” (Isa. 11:1–4). In this context, the Spirit is introduced in His sevenfold fulness, which reference does not imply that there are seven separate spirits, but rather the complete or full measure of the one Spirit.

It is equally important to note the Old Testament’s expectation of the Spirit’s relation to Christ during His first advent. One passage records this anticipation: “Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him; he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles. He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street. A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench: he shall bring forth judgment unto truth. He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth: and the isles shall wait for his law” (Isa. 42:1–4). Yet again, the prophet Isaiah foresees both the first and the second advent of Christ and the Spirit of Jehovah is said to be upon Him as much for the one advent as for the other. The portion of this prediction which belongs specifically to the first advent is identified and indicated by Christ Himself; the record is in Luke 4:16–21. The whole prediction in which both advents appear is as follows: “The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn; to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he might be glorified” (Isa. 61:1–3). Yet another Old Testament passage describes the work of the Spirit in relation to the second advent and the setting up of Messiah’s rule: “And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: and also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit” (Joel 2:28, 29).

3. THE HOLY SPIRIT IN RELATION TO INDIVIDUALS. While attention has been given above to the Spirit’s work in the cosmos and the government of God over Israel both past and future, this the third division of truth relative to the Spirit as disclosed in the Old Testament is of His relation to individuals, each in the sphere of his own life and experience. A doctrine embracing the Old Testament

teaching as to the Holy Spirit cannot be formed with the same completeness as that which embraces the truth of the New Testament. The doctrine of regeneration by the Spirit came as a surprise and bewilderment to Nicodemus. The Spirit is not said to indwell all Old Testament saints who were counted as the covenant people of God. Nor is there any word in the Old Testament related to the *baptism* of the Spirit, by which ministry the New Testament believers are joined to the Body of Christ. The Israelite began by being born into a covenant relation with Jehovah and from then on was able to continue in right relation to Jehovah through the sacrifices which were, in the event of sin, the basis of forgiveness and restoration. That many Old Testament saints went on experimentally into deep fellowship with God is demonstrated in a very extended number of individuals, many of whom are named in Hebrews 11:1–40. One striking case is that of King Saul. Upon his choice to be king, Samuel declared: “And the Spirit of the LORD will come upon thee, and thou shalt prophesy with them, and shalt be turned into another man. And it was so, that when he had turned his back to go from Samuel, God gave him another heart: and all those signs came to pass that day” (1 Sam. 10:6, 9). It will be remembered that with all his equipment of divine enablement, Saul failed and Jehovah Himself declares when speaking to David of the reign of Solomon: “But my mercy shall not depart away from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away before thee” (2 Sam. 7:15). That the Spirit once given might be withdrawn is continually intimated in the Old Testament (cf. Ps. 51:11; Isa. 63:10, 11).

Since the Messianic age is so much the expectation of Old Testament prophets, those passages which bear upon the Spirit’s relation to men in that age are properly introduced here. Israel’s judgments will be “until the spirit be poured upon us from on high, and the wilderness be a fruitful field, and the fruitful field be counted for a forest” (Isa. 32:15). The kingdom promise is: “For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring ...” “As for me, this is my covenant with them, said the LORD; My spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed’s seed, saith the LORD, from henceforth and for ever” (Isa. 44:3; 59:21; cf. Ezek. 11:19; 18:31; 36:26; 37:14; 39:29). So, also, Zechariah prophesies of the same people and of the same kingdom-conditions that will be: “And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they

shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn” (Zech. 12:10; cf. Joel 2:28, 29).

In concluding this examination of the Old Testament’s witness to the Holy Spirit, the one question remains whether the text is sufficiently explicit to justify the belief that Old Testament saints, having no other Scriptures than their own, recognized this distinct and separate Person in the Godhead. Is it within the scope of the Old Testament teaching so to introduce the Person and work of the Spirit that He would be seen in that individuality which belongs to the Persons of the Trinity? No better conclusion will be found than that by Dr. B. B. Warfield, which reads:

Such an identification need not involve, however, the assertion that the Spirit of God was conceived in the Old Testament as the Holy Ghost is in the New, as a distinct hypostasis in the divine nature. Whether this be so, or, if so in some measure, how far it may be true, is a matter for separate investigation. The Spirit of God certainly acts as a person and is presented to us as a person, throughout the Old Testament. In no passage is He conceived otherwise than personally—as a free, willing, intelligent being. This is, however, in itself only the pervasive testimony of the Scriptures to the personality of God. For it is equally true that the Spirit of God is everywhere in the Old Testament identified with God. This is only its pervasive testimony to the divine unity. The question for examination is, how far the one personal God was conceived of as embracing in His unity hypostatical distinctions. This question is a very complicated one and needs very delicate treatment. There are, indeed, three questions included in the general one, which for the sake of clearness we ought to keep apart. We may ask, May the Christian properly see in the Spirit of God of the Old Testament the personal Holy Spirit of the New? This we may answer at once in the affirmative. We may ask again, Are there any hints in the Old Testament anticipating and adumbrating the revelation of the hypostatic Spirit of the New? This also, it seems, we ought to answer in the affirmative. We may ask again, Are these hints of such clearness as actually to reveal this doctrine, apart from the revelation of the New Testament? This should be doubtless answered in the negative. There are hints, and they serve for points of attachment for the fuller New Testament teaching. But they are only hints, and, apart from the New Testament teaching, would be readily explained as personifications or ideal objectifications of the power of God. Undoubtedly, side by side with the stress put upon the unity of God and the identity of the Spirit with the God who gives it, there is a distinction recognized between God and His Spirit—in the sense at least of a discrimination between God over all and God in all, between the Giver and the Given, between the Source and the Executor of the moral law. This distinction already emerges in Genesis 1:2; and it does not grow less observable as we advance through the Old Testament. It is prominent in the standing phrases by which, on the one hand, God is spoken of as sending, putting, placing, pouring, emptying His Spirit upon man, and on the other the Spirit is spoken of as coming, resting, falling, springing upon man. There is a sort of objectifying of the Spirit over against God in both cases; in the former case, by sending Him from Himself God, as it were, separates Him from Himself; in the latter, He appears almost as a distinct person, acting *sua sponte*.—*Ibid.*, pp. 124–26

IV. The Witness of the New Testament

Whatever may have been the force of the Old Testament revelation regarding the Holy Spirit and that under the prescribed limitations which a divinely arranged progress of doctrine imposed, it is evident that the full manifestation of His personality and Deity, the full import of His equal position in the Godhead, and the specific scope and objective in His work, are declared in the New Testament. That the truth concerning the Spirit forms a major theme in practically every book of the New Testament is a fact which must be arresting to all who are concerned. It is outside the range of the scope of this present discussion to attempt at this point any general presentation of so vast a theme except to say, that, as pointed out above, it is the same Holy Spirit who is disclosed in the New Testament who appears so fully in the Old Testament, though very much truth is added by the New Testament message. The progress of doctrine is in evidence and not any change in the Person being considered. Without an expanding prelude the Spirit, as God Himself, is seen in the New Testament in the full ordered majesty of His own divine Person. He is presented as One who is coming into the world and that by the promise of both the Father and the Son (John 14:26; 16:7), and thus He came on the Day of Pentecost. In view of the Old Testament revelation which avers that He was already in the world, a problem arises about the meaning of these promises that He would come into the world. The answer is hidden in the distinction which obtains between an *omnipresence*, which is the mode of the Spirit's presence in the world before the Day of Pentecost, and *residence*, which is the mode of the Spirit's presence after Pentecost. It yet remains to occur that He whose residence is now in the Church, the temple of living stones (Eph. 2:18–22), will as definitely leave the world when His temple is removed; and yet, after being removed from the world as a resident, He will still be in the world as the omnipresent One. This it will be recognized is no new procedure, since the same is true of the Second Person who was first in the world in the omnipresent sense and, after being resident here for thirty-three years, left the world, but still retained the omnipresent presence since He indwells every believer (Col. 1:27) and is attending wherever two or three are met in His name (Matt. 18:20).

V. His Titles

Strangely, indeed, no name has been revealed by which the Spirit may be designated. He is rather differentiated by descriptive titles. The following is at least a partial representation of these designations: "Spirit of your Father" (Matt.

10:20), “Spirit of God” (Matt. 12:28), “Spirit of the Lord” (Luke 4:18), “Holy Spirit” (Luke 11:13), “Spirit of Truth” (John 14:17), “Spirit of life” (Rom. 8:2; Rev. 11:11), “Spirit of adoption” (Rom. 8:15), “the Lord is that Spirit” (2 Cor. 3:17), “Spirit of his Son” (Gal. 4:6), “Spirit of Jesus Christ” (Phil. 1:19), “Spirit which he hath given us” (1 John 3:24), “eternal Spirit” (Heb. 9:14), “Holy Spirit of promise” (Eph. 1:13), “the Spirit” (John 7:39), “the Comforter” (John 15:26), “the Spirit of glory” (1 Pet. 4:14), “the seven spirits” (Rev. 1:4).

No final reason may be assigned for the fact that only descriptive titles are used for the Spirit in the Bible. He who does not speak *from* Himself as the originator of His message, but declares what is said to Him by the Son (John 16:13, 14), is, nevertheless, and in spite of all His submission in this age, none other than the glorious Person—the Third in the blessed Trinity.

VI. His Relationships

Here, again, the course of this theme leads on to the work of the Spirit and therefore must be restricted at this point to mere intimation with a larger consideration in anticipation. Certain of the Spirit’s relationships, if considered separately, may serve to amplify what should be apprehended regarding Him:

1. TO THE FATHER. Of the Spirit it is declared that He proceeds from the Father. He executes the designs of the Father. The broad titles, “the Spirit of God” and “the Spirit of your Father,” may be received as references to the One who is thus related to the Father. God who is Himself a spirit (John 4:24), bestows His Spirit upon the Son (John 3:34), and upon all who believe (John 7:39).

2. TO THE SON. The relationship between the Second and Third Persons of the Godhead introduces a limitless theme reaching out to all those works of the Son which were wrought by the power of the Spirit. It is believed by some that Christ accomplished all His mighty works by the power of the Spirit and thus is an example to believers who are appointed to live and serve by the Spirit. The Third Person is sometimes termed the Spirit of Christ (cf. Rom. 8:9), which title evidently relates Him to the Second Person as One whom the Second Person sends (John 16:7), and who executes the purpose and applies the values which arise in and through the Second Person.

3. TO THE WORLD. Two illuminating passages relate the Spirit to the world. First, 2 Thessalonians 2:6, 7, which Scripture presents the Spirit, though the

identity is not directly asserted, as the present restraining power over the world. The passage reads: “And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way.” And second, John 16:7–11, in which the Spirit is presented as the One who reproveth, or enlightens, the world with respect to sin, righteousness, and judgment. This, it would seem, is a work of the Spirit in the heart of the individual unregenerate person, which is essential preparation of that person for an intelligent acceptance of Christ as Savior. To quote: “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. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they believe not on me; of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.” Similarly, as the world is one of the three major foes which the believer encounters, the Spirit is that enabling power who delivers from the enticements of the world.

4. TO THE FLESH. The flesh with its inherent Adamic nature is said to be “contrary” to the Spirit, and “lusts against” the Spirit, even as the Spirit “lusts against” the flesh. Thus two widely different walks, or manners, of life are indicated—that of the flesh and that of the Spirit. It is true that to walk in the flesh is to disannul the power of the Spirit (Rom. 8:6, 13), and to walk in the Spirit is to disannul the works of the flesh (Rom. 6:6; 8:4; Gal. 5:16).

5. TO THE DEVIL. Again the sphere of the Christian’s conflict is in view. And, as in the encounter with the world and the flesh, the victory is only through the power of the Spirit. The central passage—Ephesians 6:10–17—points to the truth that the conquest must be by being “strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might” and by putting on “the whole armour of God.” The complete provision is implied in 1 John 4:4, “Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.”

6. TO CHRISTIANS. Far-reaching and characterizing are the relationships between the Spirit and the Christian. The Spirit regenerates, indwells or anoints, baptizes, seals, and fills, thus not only creating the essential factors which together make the Christian what he is, but empowering him to walk worthy of that high calling.

7. TO THE DIVINE PURPOSE. Though somewhat of a recapitulation, the last

relationship to be mentioned here comprehends the measureless undertakings of the Spirit as Administrator and Executive of the whole divine purpose from its beginning to its final consummation in glory.

VII. His Adorable Character

For specific reasons not revealed, the Third Person bears the distinctive title of *Holy Spirit*. It could not be concluded upon any basis which the Scriptures provide that He is more holy than the Father or the Son; it is rather that the emphasis thus falls on His adorable character. There is strong probability that, as He indwells sinful beings of earth, this impressive appellation is employed by way of contrast. Assurance is given that when the Second Person became incarnate—thus related to humanity—He was described by the angel as “that holy thing” (Luke 1:35). Thus the Third Person, though resident in human hearts, is still and ever will be the *Holy Spirit* of God.

Conclusion

Though strangely slighted, neglected, and unrecognized, the Spirit is the adorable, majestic, ever glorious, equal member of the Godhead Three. That He is disregarded cannot be due to any failure on the part of the Bible to declare His Person, or to set forth the boundless character and infinite importance of His work. Naturally, human thought begins with the First Person and extends to the Second Person, and it is highly probable that, having contemplated these, the point of saturation is so nearly reached there is little ability left that might respond to the proper claims of the Third Person in the Godhead. It becomes the solemn duty of every student of God’s Word to correct, so far as possible, every tendency to ignore the truth concerning the Spirit, and by prayer and meditation to come into a deeper realization of His Person and presence. Reprovable indeed is the Christian who does not know some facts concerning the One whose temple he is. It is true that it is the Spirit’s ministry to glorify Christ, but there is no warrant from the Word of God for the indignity which a common disregard for the Spirit imposes on Him.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost; ... world without end. Amen.