

A Foundation for Faith
An Introductory Study of Systematic Theology

With References To

The Baptist Confession of Faith of 1689

by

Stanford E. Murrell, Th.D.

*“For other foundation can no man lay than
that is laid, which is Jesus Chris..”
1 Corinthians 3:11*

A FOUNDATION FOR FAITH

Table of Contents

Preface to the Study of Systematic Theology

Part I

Theology Proper: The Study of God

Introduction

- A Confession of Faith
- Definition of Theology
- Theology is Universal

Chapter 1 The Method of Theology

- The Speculative Method
- The Mysticism Method
- The Inductive Method

Chapter 2 The Source of Theology

- Five Kinds of Theology
 - Natural Theology
 - Revealed (Biblical) Theology
 - Dogmatic Theology
 - Practical Theology
 - Theology Proper

Chapter 3 Can God Be Known?

- The Biblical Declaration
- The Argument of the Agnostics
 - A Response to Agnosticism
- The Distinction between Apprehension and Comprehension
- Can God Be Defined?

Chapter 4 Arguments for the Existence of God

- The Ontological Argument
 - Evaluation of the Ontological Argument
- The Cosmological Argument
 - Resistance to Reason
 - A Reasonable Response
- The Teleological Argument
 - Objection to the Teleological Argument
- The Moral Argument
- The Historical Argument

Chapter 5 Anti-Theistic Theories

- Atheism
- Polytheism
- Materialism
- Objections To Materialism
- Pantheism
- The Pain Of Pantheism
- The Promises Of God

Chapter 6 Anti-Christian Theories

- Deism
- History of Deism
- Objections to Deism
- Rationalism
- A Challenge to Rationalism
- Pessimism
- The Doctrine of A Finite God
- Your God Is Too Small

Chapter 7 The Nature Of God

- The Oneness of God
- The Personality of God
 - God Creates
 - God Eliminates
 - God Furnishes what is Needed to Sustain Life
 - God Exalts
 - God Loves
 - God Is Concerned
 - God Answers Prayers
 - God Hates
 - God Repents
- Objections to the Personality of God
- Knowing What Is Known
- The Substance of God
- The Attributes of God
 - Omnipresence
 - Infinitude
 - Eternality
 - Immutability
 - Sovereignty
 - Transcendence
 - Immanence
- A Trinity of Persons
- Proof of the Trinity

- Denial of The Trinity
 - Arianism
 - Sem-Arianism
 - Sabellianism
 - Unitarianism
- Defenders Of The Faith
 - Justine Martyr
 - Iranaeus
 - Clement Of Alexandria
 - Tertullian
 - Hyppolytus
 - Origen
- The Tri-Unity
- The Relation between Father, Son, And Holy Spirit
- The Value of the Doctrine of the Trinity
- The Holy Spirit
- The Spirit Is A Person

Chapter 8 The Decrees Of God

- A Confession of Faith: God Has A Purpose
- A Distinction In The Divine Decree
- The Decree of God
 - God Has Decreed the General Course Of History
 - God Has Decreed Particular Events
 - God Has Decreed the Salvation Of Sinners
 - God Has Decreed the Evil That Men Do
 - God Has Decreed All Accidental Events
 - God Has Decreed the Means As Well As the End of All Things
- The Order of The Decrees
 - Supralapsarian
 - Infralapsarian
- God's Decree Makes Foreknowledge Possible
- The Decree In Reference To Free Agency
- Additional Arguments

Chapter 9 The Works Of God

- A Confession of Faith
- Creation
- Three Possible Explanations of Creation
- Creation and Evolution
- The Sad State of the Theistic Evolutionist
- Remarks On Evolution In General
- Providence
- Is Creation Continual?

The Extent Of Divine Providence
God Governs the Physical Universe
God Governs the Animal Creation
God Governs the Events of Human History
God Governs the Lives of Individuals
God Governs the Smallest Details of Life
God Governs the Fortuitous Events
God Governs the Free Actions of Men
God Governs the Sinful Actions of Men
God Is Not the Author of Sin
Why Sin is Allowed in the Saints
The Purpose of Sin in the Unsaved
Definition of A Miracle
Classification of Miracles
Are Miracles Probable Or Improbable?
A World Without Miracles
Miracles Are Instructive
When and Where Do Miracles Occur?
Objections By Rationalism And Modernism
The Silence of the Skeptics
Special Arguments for Miracles

Part II

Bibliology: The Study of the Bible

Chapter 10 The Scriptures

A Confession of Faith
Definition of Bibliology
The Books of the Bible
A Revelation from God
The Bible: A Book That Can Be Believed
Great Belief Is Not Bibliolatry
A Day of Divine Discovery
The Harmony of the Bible
The Bible Reveals One Story
The Essential Unity in the Scriptural Narrative
The Centrality of Christ
Liberal Theology and The Lord of Glory
Responding to the Rationalists

Chapter 11 Our God Breathed Book: The Bible

The Inspiration of Scriptures
Negative Theories of Divine Inspiration
Plenary And Verbal Inspiration

Inspiration and Inerrancy
The Autographs
What Do the Scriptures Say as to their Own Inerrancy?
Old Testament Claims to Divine Inspiration
The New Testament Affirms the Inspiration of the Old Testament
The Inspiration of the New Testament
Proof Of Inspiration from General Consideration
The Testimony of Jesus Christ
Christ's Appeal to the Scriptures
Inspiration and the Prophets
What About the Various Readings?
The Dead Sea Scrolls
The Septuagint
The Authority of the Scriptures
The Perspicuity (Clearness) Of Scriptures
Is Formal Education Necessary to Understand The Bible?
The Church Fathers
Were The Apostles Deceived?

Part III

Anthropology: The Study Of Man

Chapter 12 The Origin Of Man

A Confession of Faith
A Definition of Anthropology
The Soul is not a Divine Emanation
The Soul is not a Form of God
The Soul is not the Product of Spontaneous Generation
The Soul Cannot Accounted For By Evolution
What is the Soul?
Rational Objections to Evolution
 The Great Gaps
 The Insufficiency of Time
 The Sterility of Birds
 The Remains of Men
 The Discrepancies between Kingdoms
 The Law of Entropy
 The Lack of Visual Evidence
 The Logical Impossibility of the Evolutionary Process
A Theory of Recapitulation
The Recapitulation Theory Does Not Matter
The Harm of Change
The Fossils Say No!
Questions Raised By the Theory Of Evolution

Chapter 13 The Origin Of The Soul

- How Does the Soul Come Into Existence?
- Traducianism
- Arguments from Scripture for Traducianism
- The Case for Creationism
- The Critics of Creationism
- Summary Evaluation

Chapter 14 The Nature Of Man

- Dichotomy: A Division between Soul and Body
- Scriptural Evidence of Dichotomy
- The Trichotomy Theory: Body, Soul, And Spirit
- Arguments Against the Trichotomous Theory
- Three Main Theories as to Free Agency
 - Fatalism
 - Self-determination
 - Free Agency
- The Relation of Free Will to Regeneration

Chapter 15 The Original State Of Man

- From the Hand of God
- The Soul Was Created in the Image Of God
- How Did God Create Man?
- A Selected View of Man's Original State
 - The Pelagian Doctrine of Man's Original State

Chapter 16 The Covenant Of Works

- What Is A Covenant?
- The Doctrine Defined
- The Scriptural Evidence For A Covenant of Works
- A Representative for Posterity
- Probation

Chapter 17 The Fall Of Man

- Was There A Fall?
- Two Difficulties
- Observations
- The Effects of the Fall—Degeneracy And Death
- A Federal Representative
- Imputation of Sin
- The Federal and Natural Headship of Adam
- The Theory of Direct Divine Efficiency
- Objections to A Federal Representation
- The Theory of Physical Depravity
- Objections to the Idea of Physical Depravity

Chapter 18 The Relation Of Adam's Sin To Posterity

- The Fact of Sin is Proved by the Bible
- The Fact of Sin is Proved by Consciousness
- The Fact of Sin is Proved by Casual Observation
- The Fact of Sin is Proved by the Need For Laws
- The Fact of Sin is Proved in Literature
- Definitions of Sin
- A Biblical Definition of Sin
- What Sin Is Not
- Original Sin
- The Scriptures and Original Sin
- The Universality of Sin
- Personal Experience with Sin
- The Nature and Effect of Original Sin
- The Consequences and Characterization of Sin
- Total Depravity
- The Pelagian View of Sin
- The Semi-Pelagian View of Sin
- The Arminian Doctrine of Sin
- Remarks On Arminianism
- Arminianism and The Nature of Original Sin
- Synergism and Salvation

Chapter 19 Total Inability

- A Confession of Faith
- Various Views of Inability
 - The Pelagian View
 - The Semi-Pelagian View
 - The Augustinian / Reformed View
- What Inability Is Not
- The Meaning of the Doctrine of Inability
- Scriptural Evidence of Inability
- What Can Man Do In The Process Of Salvation?
- Objections Answered Against the Doctrine of Innate Inability

Part IV

Soteriology: The Study of Salvation

Chapter 20 Salvation and The Sovereign

- Definition
- Six Presuppositions of Soteriology
- The Fall of Man
- The Order of the Decrees
 - The Infralapsarian View
 - The Supralapsarian View

Election Precedes Salvation
The Covenant of Redemption
Evidence that Such A Covenant Was Made
The Covenant of Grace
The Doctrine of Election

The Extent of the Elective Decree
Various Views of the Nature and Ground of Election
 Conditional Election
 Election is Personal
 Election is to Faith and Good Works

Limiting Election
The Doctrine of a Definite Redemption
Is Election Based upon Foreseen Faith and Works?
Election and the Weak
But Who Will Come?
Free Will Is Not Sufficient To Save
Redemption: Accomplished And Applied
Human Responsibility for Sin
The Results of Election
The Difficulties of Election
Answers to Arguments against Election
The Signs of Election
Election is of God
Election Does Not Rest In Man
Election Demands a Sovereign Savior
The Hope That Is Found In Election
The Great Mystery of Election
The Transcending Thoughts of God
The Purpose of Election
If Men Are Not Saved
The Ground of Election
Election and Reprobation
Summary of the Doctrine of Election
A Confession of Faith: The Doctrine of Predestination
Scriptural Evidence for Predestination

Chapter 21 The Historical Background Of Redemption

The Desire of the Ages
The Typology of Rite and Rituals
Preparation through Prophecy

Chapter 22 Then Came the Redeemer

- A Confession of Faith
- The Incarnation
- The Pre-existence of Christ and His Incarnation Simply Set Forth
- The Days of Humiliation
- The Virgin Birth
- Rejection of the Virgin Birth
- Proof of the Virgin Birth
- The Person of Christ
- The Deity of Christ
 - Jesus Claimed to be Divine
 - The Apostles Taught That Jesus Was Divine
 - The Confession of Others Concerning Christ's Deity
 - The Sacred Titles of God Applied to Christ Prove His Divinity
 - The Works of Christ Prove His Deity
 - The Personal Influence of Christ in the World Asserts His Deity
 - The Authority that has Been Entrusted to Christ Proves His Deity
 - Personal Proof of the Deity of Christ
- The Humanity of Christ
- The Personality of Christ
- The Distinction of Two Natures
- The Hypo-static Union: The Union of the Two Natures in One Person
- Summary Thoughts
- Christ's Sinlessness (Impeccability)
- Errors As to the Person of Christ
 - Denial of His Humanity
 - Denial of His Divinity
 - The Arians
 - The Apollinarians
 - The Nestorians
 - The Eutychians
- The Doctrine Of Kenosis
 - The Socinians
 - The Jehovah Witnesses
- A Confession of Faith: The Mediatorial Offices Of Christ
 - The Mediatorial Office of Christ: Prophet
 - The Mediatorial Office of Christ: Priest
 - The Mediatorial Office of Christ: King

Chapter 23 The Atonement

- The Importance of the Doctrine
- Terms Defined
 - Atonement
 - Guilt
 - Expiation
 - Propitiation

Vicarious
Reconciliation
Imputation
The Two-fold Work of the Atonement
The Atonement Expresses both Divine Justice and Love
The Atonement and the Trinity
The Main Features of the Atonement
 The Atonement was Sacrificial
 The Atonement was Expiatory
 The Atonement was Efficacious
 The Atonement was Vicarious
 Old Testament Scriptures
 New Testament Scriptures
The Atonement and the Law
Arminianism and the Atonement
Summary of the Remonstrance
The Atonement is Propitiatory and Conciliatory
Summary
Objections to the Atonement
Atonement and the Sovereignty of God
Moral Reformation Is Not Enough
The Majesty and Mercy of God
Theories of the Atonement
 The Moral Influence Theory
 The Ransom Theory
 The Legal Theory
From Theory to Truth: Scriptural Satisfaction

Part V

Pneumatology: The Study the Holy Spirit

Chapter 24 A Holy Spirit

Definition
The Holy Spirit and Salvation
What Is Effectual Calling?

Chapter 25 The Greatness Of Grace

Grace Defined
Grace Distinguished

Common Grace
Prevenient
Sufficient Grace
Efficacious Grace
Habitual Grace
Cheap Grace
Costly Grace

Chapter 26 Characteristics of the Holy Spirit

The Personality of the Spirit
The Holy Spirit of God Has A Mind
The Holy Spirit of God Has A Will
The Holy Spirit of God Prohibits
The Holy Spirit of God Guides
The Holy Spirit of God Speaks
The Holy Spirit of God Has Emotions
The Holy Spirit Can Be Grieved
Various Ministries of the Holy Spirit
The Holy Spirit Restraints Evil through Sanctification
The Holy Spirit Instructs In Righteousness
The Holy Spirit Awakens the Sin Saturated Soul
The Holy Spirit Convicts
The Holy Spirit Convinces the Sinner
The Holy Spirit Reveals
The Holy Spirit Regenerates the Soul
The Holy Spirit Sanctifies Each Child of God

Chapter 27 The Work Of Salvation

The Word and Salvation
The Effect of Common Grace
The Resistance of the Heart to Common Grace

Chapter 28 Finding Faith in the Family of God

The Usage of the Word "Faith"
There is An Objective Faith
There is A Subjective Faith
Faith Defined
Faith Distinguished
Historical Faith
Temporary Faith
Saving Faith
The Relation of Faith to Knowledge
Faith In Relation To Salvation
Faith Is the Instrumental Cause of Justification

Chapter 29 A Crisis Of The Heart

- A Confession of Faith
- Conversion: Defined
- Conversion Involves the Whole Person
- A Conversion That Does Not Change
- The Order of Events in Salvation
- The Cause of Conversion
- The Evidence of Conversion
- A Repentance That Needs to be Repented Of
- No Sin Too Great for the Grace of God
- Never Too Late

Chapter 30 A New Life Begins

- What Regeneration Is Not
 - Regeneration Is Not A New Faculty Added to the Soul
 - Regeneration Is Not A Moral Persuasion of Sin
 - Regeneration Is Not the Co-operation of the Human Power With Divine Power
 - Regeneration Is Not Dependent On the Unity Of The Human And The Divine Minds
- What Regeneration Is
 - Regeneration is the Instilling of A Life Principle in the Soul
 - Regeneration is the Illumination of the Understanding
 - Regeneration is the Elevation of the Heart
 - Regeneration is Absolutely Essential To Salvation
 - Regeneration is Instantaneous
 - Regeneration is Irresistible

Summary Statements On Regeneration

Chapter 31 The Justice Of Justification

- A Confession of Faith: The Fact of Justification
- A Definition of Justification
- The Nature of Justification
- The Subjective View of Justification
- The Objective (Forensic) View of Justification
- Scriptural Proof of Justification
 - New Testament Passages
 - Old Testament Passages
- The Ground of Justification
 - First Position
 - Second Position
 - Third Position
 - Fourth Position
 - Fifth Position

The Cause of Justification
No Contradictions
The Results of Justification
 Remission of Sin
 Restoration to Favor with God
 A Spiritual Renewal
Objections to Justification by Faith Alone
The Difference Between Justification and Sanctification

Chapter 32 The Beauty Of Holiness

A Confession of Faith
The Definition of Sanctification
Sanctification: A Supernatural Work
Illustrations of Sanctification
All of Grace
How is the Word Made Effectual To Salvation?
Is Man Co-operative In Sanctification?
The Effect of Sanctification
Sanctification Is Perfected At Death
Perfectionism and the Pelagians
Perfectionism and John Wesley
An Appeal to the Scriptures

Chapter 33 The Safety of the Saint

A Confession of Faith
The Security of the Believer
The Security of the Believer and Election
The Security of the Believer and Christ
The Security of the Believer and Atonement
The Security of the Believer and The Will
The Security of the Believer Brings Peace
The Security of the Believer Produces Humility
The Security of the Believer Provides No License to Sin
Confidence in Salvation May Be Shaken By Sin
Objections to Eternal Security
Answers To the Objections
The Adoption of the Believer

Chapter 34 Holy Ordinances

- The Ordinances: Definitions
- The Number of the Ordinances
- The Effectiveness of the Ordinances
 - The Roman Catholic View
 - The Lutheran View
- Conclusion
- Concerning Baptism
- The Mode of Baptism
- To Dip? Or, To Immerse?
- The Proper Subjects of Baptism

Part VI

Eschatology: The Study of the Future

Chapter 35 The Immortality Of The Soul

- Definition of Eschatology
- Denials of Immortality
 - Atheism
 - Materialism
 - Pantheism
- The Evidence for Immortality
- Revealed Religion: Old Testament
- Revealed Religion: New Testament
- What About Conditional Immortality?

Chapter 36 The State Of The Soul After Death

- A Confession of Faith
- What Happens At Death?
- The Benefits of Death

Chapter 37 The Resurrection Of The Body

- A Confession of Faith
- There will be a Bodily Resurrection
- Is Belief in the Resurrection Realistic?
- The Resurrection Is Miraculous
- The Resurrection of Christ: Its Certainty
- What About the Empty Tomb?
- The Joy of the Resurrection: The Blessings of Belief
- The Identification of the Resurrection
- It is the Same Body That Dies

Chapter 38 A Place for Prophecy

Promises of Prophecy to Keep

The Difficulty of Prophecy

Before Jesus Comes

Characteristics of Christ's Second Coming

Events That Will Accompany The Second Coming Of Christ

Three Views of the Future

A Summary of Pre-Millennialism

Objections to Pre-Millennialism

A Summary of Post-Millennialism

A Summary of Amillennialism [Realized Millennialism]

The Second Coming of Christ Is Historical

Chapter 39 Future Punishment

A Confession of Faith

Universalism

The Punishment of the Wicked

Restoration

Annihilation

Endless Punishment

Objection to the Doctrine of Endless Punishment

Chapter 40 Our Eternal Home

Heaven Is A Real Place For Real People

Heaven Is A State Of Conscious Existence

The Blessedness of the Saved

How Might We Get To Heaven?

A Glimpse of Glory: Revelation 21 and 22

A FOUNDATION FOR FAITH

The Study of God

Theology Proper

PART I

A FOUNDATION FOR FAITH

A Summary of Basic Bible Doctrine

by

Stanford E. Murrell

Dedicated to the memory of

David S. Clark, DD

*Instructor In Systematic Theology
Philadelphia School Of Christian Workers*

Presbyterian and Reformed Churches

*His initial 1921 manuscript provided
the inspiration for
this work in order to help
a new generation of believers have*

A Foundation for Faith

Stanford E. Murrell, Th.D.
1998

A FOUNDATION FOR FAITH

Preface

A Foundation for Faith is offered to the Christian community as a study guide in considering six specific areas of interest.

Part I	<i>Theology Proper</i>	<i>The Study of God</i>
Part I	<i>Bibliology</i>	<i>The Study of The Bible</i>
Part III	<i>Anthropology</i>	<i>The Study of Man</i>
Part IV	<i>Soteriology</i>	<i>The Study of Salvation</i>
Part V	<i>Pneumatology</i>	<i>The Study of The Holy Spirit</i>
Part VI	<i>Eschatology</i>	<i>The Study of The Future</i>

Throughout this work the proposition is embraced that the *Scriptures* are the authoritative source of Christian faith. The fundamental question for the disciple of Christ is, "What has **God** said?" The Divine response received by the converted heart will form *A Foundation For Faith*. "Sermons and books are well enough, but streams that run for a long distance above ground gradually gather for themselves somewhat of the soil through which they flow, and they lose the cool freshness with which they started from the spring head. It is always best to drink at the well and not from the tank. You will find that reading the Word of God for yourselves, reading it rather than notes upon it, is the surest way of growing in grace. Drink of the unadulterated milk of the Word of God, and not of the skim milk, or the milk and the water of man's word." (C.H. Spurgeon)

Part 1

THEOLOGY PROPER: THE STUDY OF GOD

*"Study to shew thyself approved unto
God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed,
rightly dividing the word of truth."
2 Timothy 2:15*

Introduction

A Confession of Faith

"The Lord our God is but one only living and true God; whose subsistence is in and of Himself, infinite in being and perfection, whose essence cannot be comprehended by any but Himself; a most pure spirit, invisible, without body, parts, or passions, who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; who is immutable, immense, eternal, incomprehensible, almighty, every way infinite, 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." (The Baptist Confession Of Faith Of 1689, Chapter 2, Section 1; study 1 Cor. 8:4, 6; Deut. 6:4; Jer. 10:10; Isa. 48:1; Ex. 3:14; John 4:24; 1 Tim. 1:17; Deut. 4:15,16; Mal. 3:6; 1 Kings 8:27; Jer. 23:23; Psa. 90:2; Gen. 17:1; Isa. 6:3; Psa. 115:3; Isa. 16:10; Prov. 16:4; Rom. 11:36; Ex. 34:6,7; Heb. 6:6; Neh. 9:23,33; Psa. 5:5,6; Ex. 34:7; Nah. 1:2,3).

Definition of Theology

The word *theology* is derived from two Greek words: *theos*, God; and *logos*, discourse. Theology Proper is the study of the knowledge of God and His relation to mankind. The student of God's Word, the Bible, has the privilege of constructing and presenting a comprehensive and consistent system of thought concerning the God of the universe who has revealed Himself in various ways to His creation. The quest to know the Lord (Jer. 29:13) must be made according to truth with faith in the promise of Jesus who said, "*Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall set you free*" (John 8:32).

Theology is Universal

Every thoughtful individual is a theologian to some extent for life and destiny are affected by what an individual believes about God and His will. According to Proverbs 23:7, "*As a man thinketh in his heart so is he.*" "*Nothing so affects the spirit and character of a person as his knowledge of God, or the lack of it.*" (David Clark) Because this is true, theology becomes the most vital and fundamental of all studies. "*To this consideration, individuals may well bring the liveliest interest, keenest apprehension, and loftiest powers of the mind. People may engage in the most diligent of spiritual labors while calling upon the soul and all that is within the soul to attend seriously and reverently to the great and solemn subjects that concern God.*" (David Clark) The spiritual heart prays with the Psalmist (119:18), "*Lord, open thou mine eyes that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law*". Such a prayer is needed because, "*Nothing twists and deforms the soul more than a low or unworthy conception of God.*" (A.W. Tozer)

Chapter 1

THE METHOD OF THEOLOGY

Since there are various ways to build a system of religious belief, it is good to remember that the procedure a person decides to pursue will influence the final results. A false or defective process of pre-suppositional inquiry will diminish whatever conclusions are considered. There are several basic methods of theological exploration based upon reason.

The Speculative Method

In this system, everything considered is made to conform to the philosophical principles *previously* assumed. For example, Deism assumes the philosophical principle that God operates only according to Natural Law. Pantheism says that God is all, all is God. Rationalism contends that the mind of man has created God, while Evolution takes the position that man is a product of time + space + chance. Christianity assumes the existence of God. While this foundational principle of faith is pleasing to the Lord (Heb. 11:6), it displeases the philosophies of man which are found to be fundamentally flawed in light of objective evidence. The Christian is warned to, "*Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.*" (Col. 2:8).

The Mystical Method

Individuals who claim special revelations from God embrace the Mystical Method. These revelations are considered to be superior to the Scriptures. Though greatly different, the Gnostics, Ana-Baptist, and the Quaker share a common emphasis on personal revelations from the Lord. In mysticism, everything depends on internal and subjective impressions or convictions rather than on external authority and instruction. For example, the Mormons claim to believe in the *Book Of Mormon* as an addition external revelation from God. However, acceptance of this spurious work is based upon personal testimony to a "*burning in the bosom*" that its words are true. Neither the mystics nor the Mormons would ever say, "*To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them*" (Isa. 8:20).

The modern Pentecostal/Charismatic movement is saturated with spiritual subjective standards, but it is not alone. The cults are also suffer from excessive spiritual experiences that depart from the Scriptures reflected in the followers of William Miller. In October, 1843, the followers of William Miller of the Seventh Day Adventist fixed the date for the Second Advent of Christ. Miller, a former Baptist lay minister, believed that his prayers had been answered concerning prophetic events. He was convinced that he was able to interpret prophecy correctly. Relying on this subjective conviction, Miller convinced others to sell their property, robe themselves in white, and wait for the Second Advent of Jesus. The Lord did not come in October of 1843. What did come was a manifestation of the error of the Mystical Method individuals had chosen to embrace. Truth was set aside in favor of thrilling personal experiences. The seriousness of the Mystical Method is reflected in the Old Testament. "*But the prophet, which shall presume to speak a word in my name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or that shall speak in then same of other gods, even that prophet shall die.*" (Deut. 18:20)

The Inductive Method

The Inductive Method of reasoning moves from a part to a whole, from particulars to generals, or from the individual to the universal. It seeks to gather information for examination from all the areas in which God has revealed Himself: the physical universe, human history, the constitution of the human soul, and the revelation of the written Word. Once the information is collected the attempt is made to combine everything into a harmonious and consistent theological system. The Lord is not opposed to the Inductive Method of inquiry.

- ◆ Proverbs 6:6 *"Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise."*
- ◆ Job 13:3 says, *"Surely I would speak to the Almighty, and I desire to reason with God."*
- ◆ Isaiah 1:18 *"Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool."*

The Deductive Method

Having gathered particular parts of information, the Deductive Method of reasoning is used to move from these particulars to infer general principles by reasoning. The Deductive Method begins with an inference in which the conclusion follows necessarily from the premises. For example, the Bible tells us in such passages as John 3:16 that God loves. The love of God is manifested in many specific instances of tender care and concern. The general principle is established that God is gracious and merciful. Again, the Bible tells us that, *"The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handiwork."* (Psa. 19:1) The heart considers the movements of Pleiades and Orion (Job 38:31) and concludes the wisdom and glory of the Creator.

Chapter 2

THE SOURCE OF THEOLOGY

Five Kinds of Theology

Natural Theology. Natural Theology is that system of belief which appeals to objective *facts* contained in the *works* of God as distinct from the *written* revelation of Scripture. Objective

information is sought from nature, human history, the nature of man, and Providence. Concerning, Natural Theology the following statements can be made.

1. The created universe reveals the existence of God. That is an objective fact.

- ◆ Genesis 1:1 *"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth."*
- ◆ Romans 1:20 *"For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made."*

The story is told that Napoleon once responded to the arguments of skeptics by pointing his finger toward the stars and asking, *"Who made these?"* There was silence.

2. Natural Theology is not sufficient to meet the spiritual needs of humanity for specific reasons.

- Natural Theology tells of no way of pardon and peace with God.
- Natural Theology provides no escape from sin and its consequence.
- Natural Theology offers no way of eternal salvation.
- Natural Theology provides no incentive to holiness.
- Natural Theology contains no sure revelation of the future.

Natural Theology leaves man in the hands of *impersonal laws* which are believed to be irrevocable, irreversible, and impersonal. And yet, those who embrace Natural Law believe that somehow this system of belief has the capacity to turn the heart from cold hard objective facts to sensitive spiritual matters. It was the boast of the Deist of the eighteenth century that they would destroy *revealed* religion and replace it with *natural* religion. Their boast was premature. *"It is the testimony of time that the world has never been made better, nor humanity uplifted, by a purely natural religion."* (David Clark)

3. In Natural Theology man seeks God; in Revealed Theology God seeks man because of infinite grace and not out of necessity. *"God, having all life, glory, goodness, blessedness, in and of Himself, is alone in and unto Himself all-sufficient, not standing in need of any creature 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 He hath most sovereign dominion over all creatures, 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 whatsoever worship, service, or obedience as creatures they owe unto the Creator, and whatever He is further pleased to require of them."* (**The Baptist Confession Of Faith Of 1689**, Chapter 2, Section 2; study John 5:26; Psa. 148:13; 119:68; Job 22:2,3; Rom. 11:34-36; Dan. 4:25,34,35; Heb. 4:13; Ezek. 11:5; Acts 15:18; Psa. 145:17; Rev. 5:12-14).

Though God does not need His creation, He does seek fellowship with it for such is the nature of grace. Even sin has not keep God from seeking man. *"Adam, where art thou,"* is still the Divine call (Gen. 3:9)

Revealed (Biblical) Theology. Revealed Theology is primarily concerned with what is contained in the *Scriptures* of the Old and New Testaments for in them are all the necessary information that is needed in order to know the Lord. Revealed Theology does not disregard true truth found elsewhere. It does insist that Divine revelation is the leading source of knowledge of God, His will, and of man's duty to his Creator. To Joshua the command came, "*This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.*" (Josh. 1:8)

Dogmatic Theology. Dogmatic Theology concentrates on the core doctrines the Church has consistently held to over the centuries concerning Christ. These doctrines include such teachings as the virgin birth, a sinless life, His substitutionary death, the resurrection from the dead, the Second Coming, the Trinity, etc. The Church must be careful to give itself to the foundational teachings. Of the early disciples in Jerusalem it was said that, "*they continued steadfastly in the apostle's doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.*" (Acts 2:42)

Practical Theology. Practical Theology seeks to study the effect of Divine truth upon the lives of professing Christians. The main criteria is whether or not a particular doctrine is effective in the lives of individuals. It has been observed that all doctrine is practical and all practice should be doctrinal. Many of the epistles are divided into two parts: doctrinal and practice (note Eph. 1-3, doctrine cp. Eph. 4-6 practice). Timothy was told to "*continue thou in the things that thou has learned and hast been assured of, know of whom thou hast learned them.*" (2 Tim. 3:14)

Theology Proper. Theology Proper returns to the person of God for the command is given, "*Seek ye the Lord while he may be found*" (Isa. 55:6). The effort to know the Lord is made in order to discern the attributes and essence of God "*Behold, I am the Lord, the God of all flesh: is there any thing too hard for me?*" (Jer. 32:27). Theology Proper seeks to understand and know God as a person God is not an idol. Nor is God the product of man's imaginations. "*For ask now of the days that are past, which were before thee, since the day that God created man upon the earth, and ask from the one side of heaven unto the other, whether there hath been any such thing as this great thing is, or hath been heard like it? Did ever people hear the voice of God speaking out of the midst of the fire, as thou has heard, and lived?*" (Deut. 4:32-33) Man must come to God believing that He exists and that He exists as a person worthy of worship (Heb. 11:6). All true theology must come back to these basic considerations. J. I. Packer explains. "*How can we turn our knowledge about God into knowledge of God? The rule for doing this is demanding, but simple. It is that we turn each truth that we learn about God into matter for meditation before God, leading to prayer and praise to God.*"

Chapter 3

CAN GOD BE KNOWN?

*The manifestation of God in nature,
His revelation in the Scriptures,
and His incarnation in Jesus Christ,
assure us that God can be known*

—Dr. David Clarke

The Biblical Declaration

Many years ago, a little boy lay on his small bed, having just retired for the night. Before going to sleep, he moved in the direction of the large bed on which his father lay and said, "Father, are you there?" And the answer came back, "Yes, my son." In time of personal tragedy, we are prone to ask, "Father, are you there?" And the answer comes back to the hurting heart, "Yes, I am still here and I still care." It is the consistent teaching of the Bible that God can be known.

- ◆ Isaiah 11:9 *"The earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord."*
- ◆ John 17:3 *"This life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent."*

While God can be known, He can only be known in a certain way and that way is Divine illumination of the Spirit concerning the Person and work of Jesus Christ.

- ◆ 1 Corinthians 2:14 *"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."*
- ◆ Matthew 17:5 *"And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him."*

The Argument of the Agnostic

In contrast to the Biblical declaration that God can be known is the view of the Agnostic who says that God cannot be known. Though God may or may not exist, it does not matter for He cannot be known. How happy this thought has made some who want nothing to do with a moral Lawgiver. Why? *"Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be."* (Rom. 8:7)

With the coming of the French Revolution (1789), a stream of opposition to biblical truth developed in Europe to sweep away the historic Christian faith. The French Revolution witnessed the first concentrated attack on the Christian Church since the days of the Roman emperor Diocletian (AD 284-305). In the years to follow, other men picked up pens of poison to write in triumph, *"We have killed God...there has never been a more grandiose act and those who are born after us will belong, because of this act, to a higher history...we are God's assassins"* (Nietzsche) To some extent, the German philosopher Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche (1844-1900) was right. Another generation did emerge to follow the banner of agnosticism. Not knowing God, nor believing that He even existed, the Communist community arose to mock the

Lord. Soviet cosmonaut Gherman Titov laughed and said that during his orbit seventeen times around the globe, he looked into space and did not see God.

A Response to Agnosticism

Certainly God is under no compulsion to reveal His existence to mankind in general, nor to skeptics in particular. What God will do is laugh at those who mock Him for He knows the foolishness of men's thoughts. *"He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision."* (Psa. 2:4) There is nothing to prove with certainty that God cannot be known. The pre-suppositional thinking of the Christian faith declares that God has manifested Himself to man as a sovereign choice of Divine delight. The heart rejoices that there is the Sovereign One who has *"made known unto us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He hath purposed in himself."* (Eph. 1:9)

For many years C. S. Lewis existed as a pagan skeptic until he began to consider the evidence. Then he wrote these words. *"When I was an atheist...my argument against God was that the universe seemed so cruel and unjust. But how had I got this idea of just and unjust? A person does not call a line crooked unless he has some idea of a straight line...Atheism turns out to be too simple. If the whole universe has no meaning, we should never have found out that it has no meaning."* (*Mere Christianity*)

The Distinction between Apprehension and Comprehension

The Christian, in humility, might concede to Agnosticism that there is a difference between apprehension and comprehension. It is true that even when God manifests Himself to His creation, there is still only a partial understanding of ultimate reality. But it is equally true that men can know God *is* without knowing *all* He is, just as a person can touch the earth without being able to embrace it all at once. Those who choose to remain uncertain of the existence of God are to be pitied. *"It is a great irony of life,"* said David Clark, *"that a child can know God while many a philosopher cannot find out the perfections of the Almighty"* (Matt. 18:1-6; 2 Cor. 1:18-31; Col. 1:25-29).

Can God Be Defined?

Men have always struggled to define God. Simonides, a heathen Greek poet of Ceos (6th-5th century BC), being asked by Hiero, king of Syracuse, *"What is God?"* desired a day to think upon an answer. When that day came to an end, he desired two days more. When those were past, he desired four-day still. Then he continued to double the number of days with this explanation, *"The more I think of God, He is still the more dark and unknown to me!"*

Augustine also wondered if God could be adequately defined. *"Surely such a One as he, who, when He is spoken of cannot be spoken of; who, when He is considered, cannot be considered of; who, when He is compared to anything, cannot be compared; and when He is defined, groweth greater by defining of Him!"* While God cannot be limited in any way, there are characteristics which are revealed about God's essential essence and which can be defined. The Bible teaches many things about God.

- God is the only living and true God.
- God's subsistence is in and of Himself.
- God is infinite in being and perfection.

- God's essence cannot be comprehended by any but Himself.
- God is a pure spirit.
- God is invisible. He is without body, parts, or passions.
- God is immutable (unchanging).
- God is immense.
- God is eternal.
- God is incomprehensible.
- God is almighty.
- God is infinite in every way.
- God is holy.
- God is wise.
- God is free.
- God is absolute.
- God works all things according to the counsel of His own immutable (unchanging) and righteous will and for His own glory.
- God is love.
- God is gracious.
- God is merciful.
- God is long-suffering.
- God is abundant in goodness and truth.
- God forgives iniquity, transgression, and sin.
- God is the rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.
- God is just and terrible in His judgments, hating all sin. He will by no means clear the guilty.

Study: 1 Cor. 8:4,6; Deut. 6:4; Jer. 10:10; Isa. 48:12; Ex. 3:14; John 4:24; 1 Tim. 1:17; Deut. 4:15, 16; Mal. 3:6; 1 Kin. 8:27; Jer. 23:23; Psa. 90:2; Gen. 17:1; Isa. 6:3; Psa. 115:3; Isa. 46:10; Prov. 16:4; Rom. 11:36; Ex. 34:6,7; Heb. 11:6; Neh. 9:32,33; Psa. 5:5,6; Ex. 34:7; Nah. 1:2, 3.

Special Note. The attributes of God divide themselves into what are termed *communicable*: which means perfections that belong to Him that are seen in some degree in man as well. Some of these communicable attributes are love, hatred, mercy, justice, and knowledge. Then there are the incommunicable attributes of God which has reference to those perfections that belong to Him alone. These cannot be ascribed unto man. For example. Immutability is an incommunicable attribute. It cannot be found in man, or any other creature but it is part of the Divine essence. (Ferrell Griswold)

In summary, God is altogether wonderful, majestic, and marvelous.

Chapter 4

ARGUMENTS FOR THE EXISTENCE OF GOD

The Ontological Argument

The Ontological Argument (*ont*, to be; *ology*, study of)

is an argument for the existence of God based upon the meaning of the term *God*. It may be stated in this way: "*The human mind possesses the idea of an absolutely perfect Being therefore that Being must actually exist.*" Dr. Samuel Clarke, a nineteenth century theologian says that, "*It is certain that 'something' has existed from all eternity. Absolute non-entity is inconceivable. Whatever has eternally existed is self-existent, and whatever is self-existent is necessarily existent, and what is necessarily existent cannot be conceived as non-existent. The material world cannot be the 'something' that has eternally existed, because we can conceive of its non-entity [or its non-existence at one time]. Therefore, the 'something' which has eternally existed is God.*"

Evaluation of the Ontological Argument

The Ontological Argument has been universally regarded as valid. "*No nation has been exempt from it. All histories of former and later ages have not produced any one nation but fell under the force of this truth.*" (Stephen Charnock) The Ontological Argument finds confirmation in the Scriptures. The Divine revelation declares that God is from everlasting to everlasting (Psa. 90:2). "*The Lord reigneth, he is clothed with majesty; the Lord is clothed with strength, wherewith he hath girded himself: the world also is established, that it cannot be moved. Thy throne is established of old: thou art from everlasting.*" (Psa. 93:2)

The Cosmological Argument (*cosmos*, the universe; *logos*, study of)

The Cosmological Argument for the existence of God is derived from the law of cause and effect which says that every effect must have an adequate cause. The universe is an effect, therefore it must have had an adequate cause. The question comes, "*Who or what caused the universe?*" Certainly the universe did not cause itself to come into existence, for then it would be both cause and effect. That is illogical. No, the universe is an *effect*, which is proven by the fact that everything in the world is subject to death and decay. The question returns: "*Who or what caused matter to come into existence as a composite of various elements? Where is the beginning of life?*" Basic logic compels a belief in a First Cause whom the Bible calls, God. "*In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.*" (Gen.1: 1). Hebrews 3:4 declares that, "*Every house is builded by some man, but he who built all things is God.*"

Resistance to Reason

One person who resisted the Cosmological Argument in his day was a Scottish philosopher named David Hume (1711-1176). Hume took the position that no one can know anything of original cause. Since no-one has ever seen *how* worlds are made, no one has right to conclude that the world had a cause. In other words, nothing should ever be assumed. Proof should be demanded. God, as the First Cause, should be proved, not assumed.

A Reasonable Response

One response to Hume's demand for ultimate proof of a First Cause is to invite consideration of the unchanging *order* of things. The true sequence of all things is this: first a

cause, then the effect. This order indicates that there is something in the cause that produces the effect. The effect never precedes or produces the cause. For example, thunder does not precede lightning, and heat does not precede fire. Lightning causes thunder, and fire causes heat. There is an order. In like manner, the Divine creative power caused the universe that in turn produced the effect, which is its very existence. In the course of discussing this point, it should be kept in mind that it is not necessary to observe every instances of cause and effect before a legitimate declaration is made that,

"Every effect must have an adequate cause."

When the Law of Gravity is seen even once, the observer is qualified to declare that the Law of Gravity is in operation. The conclusion is this:

*"Every effect not only has a cause,
but must have one."*

Now, *"it is impossible for any to give a beginning and being to itself: if it acts it must exist, and so exist before it existed. A thing would exist as a cause before it existed as an effect. He that is not, cannot be the cause that he is, if therefore, God doth exist, and hath not his being from another, he must exist from eternity."* (Stephen Charnock)

While the Cosmological argument does not by itself prove the existence of God, it can be placed as a link in the chain of evidence. Together, all the links of logical arguments for the existence of God become persuasive, especially when alternative explanations for the origin of the universe are set forth, such as evolution. Certainly the doctrine of evolution cannot explain the universe for no effect can transcend, or be greater than, its cause.

- The stream cannot rise higher than its source.
- Something cannot come from nothing.
- Life cannot arise from non-life.
- Intelligence cannot proceed from the non-intelligent.
- Personality cannot come from the impersonal.

A process of development requires a *maker* of the process. Evolution has no maker and no explanation of the cause of everything. All evolution can do is to *assert* that Nothing + Time + the Impersonal + Space + Chance = Everything. The attempt of evolutionary thought to dismiss God is foolish. It will never be able to explain the First Cause nor will any other system of belief without returning to the Genesis account of creation, *"In the beginning God."* (Gen. 1:1) *"Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened? Or who laid the corner stone thereof?"* (Job 38:6) The honest heart humbly confesses, *"God this all of this and more."*

The Teleological Argument (*telos*, purpose; *logos*, study of)

The Teleological Argument is an argument from the design or purpose of the universe. Anything designed implies a *Designer*. The world exhibits design, therefore it has to have an

intelligent Maker. A beautiful watch with all of its intricate parts demands the recognition of a design and beyond that, a designer. No rational person would ever believed that a watch just happened to come together by a fortunate accident. So it is that the world is full of design. The delicate snowflake, the flight of the bumblebee, the colorful sunset, and the great canyons of the earth reveal a wonderful Designer, God.

Objection to the Teleological Argument

Not surprisingly, the Teleological Argument has been rejected by some, especially evolutionist, on the basis that it can be argued that adaptation may be accidental as well as designed. Just because the universe sustains life, it does not have to mean that the universe was designed to provide subsistence to life. It could all be a wonderful cosmic accident. Or could it? *"The practical problem for those who object to the Teleological Argument is how to account for all the accidents in the universe and all the adaptations. To take just one fact, it is obvious that the eye was designed for sight and was no mere or even fortuitous accident. How is the eye to be explained if there is no Designer? Too many denials invite a justified incredulity."* (David Clark) There is too much design in the universe. There is too much wisdom displayed. Only God could have such wisdom, and He does. *"To God only wise be glory, through Jesus Christ, for ever. Amen."* (Rom. 11:27) *"Men acquire wisdom by the loss of their fairest years; but his [God's] wisdom is the perfection of the Divine nature, not the birth of study, or the growth of experience, but as necessary, as eternal, as his essence. He goes not out of himself to search wisdom: he needs no more the brains of creatures in the contrivances of his purposes, than he doeth their arm in the execution of them. He needs no counsel, he receives no counsel from any (Rom. 11:34 cp. Isa. 40:14). He is the only Fountain of wisdom to others."* (Stephen Charnock)

The Moral Argument

The Moral Argument for the existence of God notes that individuals have a virtuous nature. There is a sense of responsibility. There is a universal belief that people *ought* to answer for what they are and for what they do. When Hellen Keller was first told by Phillips Brooks of the great and good Being called God, she smiled radiantly and replied, *"Why I have known Him all the time only I did not know His name."* The Author of this moral nature *must* be a superior, moral Being who is aware of good and evil, and who rewards the good and punishes the evil. That Being is God whose holiness He has instilled in those made after His image. *"The sum of all God's attributes, the outshining of all that God is, is holiness."* (R. A. Finlayson) The Bible says that, *"He is glorious in holiness."* (Ex. 15:11) *"Holiness belongs to God originally. He is the source and fountain of all holiness. Any holiness seen in the creature is from Him. Holiness belongs to God underivatively. It being original with Him is derived from no one, or thing. Even when God dwelt alone He was the great Holy One. Holiness belongs unto God perfectly. All holiness that is within the creature has a flaw, but in God it is infinitely perfect, with nothing being added unto it. Holiness belongs to God immutably. He always has been, He ever will be the Holy One."* (Ferrell Griswold)

The Historical Argument

The chronicle of the world provides abundant testimony to an over-ruling power and to Divine providence. The presence of God in human history will not be dismissed after a careful consideration of the facts.

- ◆ Psalm 75:7 *"But God is the judge, he putteth down one and setteth up another."*
- ◆ Daniel 2:21 *"And he changeth the times and the seasons: he removeth kings and setteth up kings: he giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding."*
- ◆ Daniel 5:21 *And he [Nebuchadnezzar] was driven from the sons of men; and his heart was made like the beasts, and his dwelling was with the wild asses; they fed him with grass like oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven; till he knew that the Most High God ruled in the kingdom of men and he appointeth over it whomsoever he will."*

The Bible reveals that the dominion of God is extensive and complete. The rule of the Lord is natural, spiritual, and over all. God's dominion is: **Natural**, which is absolute over all creatures, and founded in the nature of God as Creator. **Spiritual**, or gracious which is a dominion over His church as redeemed, and founded in the Covenant of Grace. A glorious kingdom, at the winding up of all, wherein He shall reign over all, either in the glory of His mercy, as over the glorified saints, or in the glory of His justice, in the condemned devils and men." (Stephen Charnock) God is the final cause, or end of all, He is Lord of all: *"for thy pleasure they are and were created."* (Rev. 4:11) *'The Lord hath made all things for Himself'* (Prov. 16:4) It is only reasonable that God should govern the affairs of His creation in a sovereign manner with wisdom and justice.

Chapter 5

ANTI-THEISTIC THEORIES

Atheism (*a*, no; *theism*, God)

While atheism is the belief that there is no God, it is logically incapable of proving this belief. The best that atheism can do is to *assert* denials of God's existence based upon *an emotional hostility* towards a Supreme Being. While atheism is not reasonable it does appeal to the unconverted intellectually by offering alternative explanations for the existence of the universe such as the theory of evolution. While atheism tries to destroy God and rob Him of His glory, it cannot be done. *"A man can no more diminish God's glory by refusing to worship Him than a lunatic can put out the sun by scribbling the word 'darkness' on the walls of his cell."* (C.S. Lewis) Instead of explaining away the universe, it would be far better for atheists to consider their Maker as young Abraham Lincoln did at age 19. *"I never behold the stars that I do not feel that I am looking into the face of God. I can see how it might be possible for a man to look down upon the earth and be an atheist, but I cannot conceive how he could look up into the heavens and say there is no God."*

Polytheism (*polus*, many; *theos*, God)

Polytheism is the belief in many gods. The origin of Polytheism is grounded in the worship of nature whereby personal beings were assigned to preside over the natural elements such as the sun, the moon, and the stars, the rivers, animals and winds. The irony of Polytheism is that it is personal beings (i.e., men) who assigns all of the fictional personal beings (i.e., gods) to preside over the elements. When this was done in Israel, the Lord moved with anger against His people (Jer. 44:8) while the prophets mocked the foolishness of men who carved dumb images of their own imaginations and then worship them as living gods (Isa. 44:9-20).

Polytheism has always led to moral depravity. As animals are uninhibited in their mating habits, so those involved in the worship of nature become promiscuous and began to act like the animals. Licentious behavior is justified, often in the name of religion (study Ex. 32:1-6). A truth is observed: the devote worshiper will never rise morally above the object of worship.

Materialism

Materialism teaches that, *"All is matter, all is spirit, all is both matter and spirit."* In plain language Materialism denies the reality of spirit. It does this by ignoring any distinction between matter and mind. One advocate of this view has said that, *"The brain secretes thought as the liver secretes bile."* Another person has contended that, *"The brain has fibers of thinking as the legs have fibers of motion."* In Materialism, there is no God, no devil, no angel, no human soul; no heaven, no hell, and no immortality of the soul. There is only the persuasiveness of matter and force. The founders of Communism called upon their followers to embrace Materialism. They knew that a belief in Materialism could silence the voice of conscience and allow ruthless measures to be used in advancing a political agenda.

Objections to Materialism

Materialism can easily be refuted. Every person knows that they are more than mere matter. Every human is different from and better than the stones of the field or the trees of the forest. Men and women have a moral nature with a sense of right and wrong which Materialism will never be able to account for. The heart protests the thought that the grave is the end of all existence. And there are other considerations.

- Logically, life must come from life. No spontaneous generation has ever been proven. There is a open canyon that cannot be cross between dead matter and living personality.
- The evidence of intelligent design, and thus a Designer, contradicts belief in a blind Materialism. *"The more I read and discovered, the more grew my admiration for God...and indeed my sense of awe and worship toward Him. I find my mind unable to contain the reality of the HUGENESS of the stellar universe for one thing...let alone the realities of the complexities of its makeup, its history, its origin, its present condition and its future expectation."* (Hart Armstrong)
- Materialists wrongly asserts that all of human life can be explained by the proper chemical combination of material particles. There is no evidence that this is true. What is true is that Materialism is intellectually dangerous. *"The greatest demonstration that Materialism is self-destructive and other destructive is displayed in the fact that it produces social and civil disorder and does not protest open immorality. A philosophy that reduces people to mere matter and puts them on a level with mud or a beast of burden, provides no moral restraints. Materialism dismisses God, downplays human responsibility, and gives all of humanity over to unholy passions and depraved cravings."* (David Clark) The Bible teaches that man is more than body. He has an immortal soul that one day must give an account to its Creator, the Father of all spirits (Luke 12:1-9; Amos 4:12).

Pantheism

Pantheism (*pan* all; *theos*, God) teaches that, *"God is all and all is God."* The major tenets of Pantheism may briefly be summarized.

- Pantheism teaches that in eternity past there existed a "Something" which was designated, "Being." This "Being" was impersonal and unconscious. It had no power of will or choice. It was neither matter nor spirit, but possessed the potentiality of both.
- This "Being" somehow developed, by the Law of Necessity, into the universe as it is and has been. Fortunately, it will continue to develop *ad infinitum* (without end). It has come to its highest development and reached consciousness in man. [How this happened is never addressed.]
- The universe is God, God is the universe, and man is the highest existence-form of God. Nevertheless, there is no personal God aside from personality in man.

- Pantheism continues. All individual forms rise up from this “Being” only to disappear into it again, as the waves of the sea rise to form and lose their individual existence in the waters of the ocean and go on forming new waves of the same substance.
- Since all this is affirmed to be the true state, there is no personal immortality to believe in or hope for. Individuals do appear for a brief time, but they will soon be lost again in the great universe of Being. The material substance of a person may enter into other beings but that is all the future that can be anticipated beyond the grave.

The Pain of Pantheism

Despite its widespread popularity in certain parts of the world, Pantheism is depressing. It assumes the existence of an eternal non-personal "Something" without offering any proof of its existence or even what that "Something" is.

- Pantheism makes personality proceed from something impersonal that is logically impossible.
- Pantheism teaches that God is impersonal which means that He cannot be loved or prayed to. This in turn means that any expressions of a vital religion would be meaningless.
- Pantheism reduces the universe to the law of necessity, and so destroys all free agency.

The Promises of God

In contrast to Pantheism is the revelation of the Bible which declares that God can be loved: *"And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first command"* (Mark 12:30); God can be prayed to: *"Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and shew thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not"* (Jer. 33:3); the world is moving towards a predetermined end: *"Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness"* (2 Pet. 3:13); and man can be redeemed from the bondage of sin and death and set free: *"Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."* (Rom. 5:1).

Chapter 6

ANTI-CHRISTIAN THEORIES

Deism

As a philosophical system of belief, Deism teaches that there is a personal God, that He created the world and impressed on it the laws that govern it. Having done this, Deism argues that God withdrew from the world to leave it to operate according to Natural Law. There is no revelation, no miracle, no incarnation, no supernatural manifestation, no intervention of God in the affairs of men, no providence, no control. God has nothing more to do with the world that He has made. The light of nature, i.e., reason, is man's only reliance to explain all things.

History of Deism

Lord Herbert of Cherbury (1583-1648) is regarded as the "Father of English Deism." Though moral in his private life, Lord Herbert's intellectual infidelity brought great harm to the world as he eloquently combined truth and error, and offered the mixture for consideration and acceptance. Herbert believed that God existed. He embraced a life of personal devotion, and accepted many Christian doctrines regarding repentance and forgiveness, rewards and punishments in this world and the next. However, Lord Herbert dismissed a written revelation (the Bible) and denounced the distinctive Christian doctrines of the incarnation and the substitutionary, atoning work of Jesus Christ. The result: English Deism encouraged the emergence of French Deism, represented by Voltaire (1694-1778), Rousseau (1712-1778), and Diderot (1713-1784). These intellectually gifted men used their natural talents to mock Christ and His Church.

Objections to Deism

If the foundational belief of Deism can be destroyed, then the intellectual super-structure built upon it will collapse. The foundational belief can be destroyed with a simple but profound thought. *"It is incredulous to believe that the sovereign God would make a world and not be concerned for the world that He made. All nature, from the farthest reach of the telescope to the deepest research of the microscope, exhibits the care with which God made the world. That He should not be intimately interested in it, contradicts all our notions of the fitness of things. All evidence of an overruling providence, all sense of responsibility for human conduct, all proof of revelation, stands opposed to Deism. It is subversive of all morality to deny that God is a moral Governor."* (David Clark) The care of God for all of His creation was reaffirmed by Jesus who said, *"Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?"* (Matt. 6:26)

Rationalism

Rationalism emerged with force about the middle of the 18th century to suggest a Natural Theology. One primary objective of Rationalism was to demonstrate that all the doctrines of religion could be judged by reason and accepted or rejected on the basis of the same. In Rationalism, nothing was to be embraced as true unless it could be demonstrated by logic.

A Challenge to Rationalism

Early objections to Rationalism were well grounded for Rationalism dismissed too easily Divine revelation. It also failed to consider the possibility that the reasoning processes of man may have been defiled by sin so that he is incapable of proper reasoning on moral and spiritual matters. Indeed, *"Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this world? Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?"* (1 Cor. 1:20)

The destructive nature of Rationalism was first challenged and then exposed by Immanuel Kant (1724-1804). Kant wrote his *Critique Of Pure Reason* to demonstrate that reason *alone* is not fully capable of proving *any* religious truth, including Christianity. There must be faith, said Kant. Faith, beginning where knowledge ends, is not irrational nor is it based upon mere intuition. Faith is grounded in an *ethical* God who has revealed not only Himself but His will to mankind.

By-passing all other theological arguments, Kant rested his entire belief in God and in religious truth on a *moral* basis. If any system of ethics are to be meaningful then men must live at least *"as if"* there is a God. *"If there is no God, human ethics are worthless and civilization cannot survive. Societies are left with arbitrary traditions that have no moral suasion to them. And because there is no universal "ought" of righteousness, the final "ethical" conduct will emerge based upon brutality and the philosophy that might makes right."* (David Clark) The concluding thought is simple: Christianity, the most moral and ethical of all religions, cannot be based upon a lie. *"It was impossible for God to lie."* (Heb. 6:18) *"No lie is of the truth."* (1 John 2:21) Only unbelief will change the truth of God into a lie (Rom. 1:25).

Pessimism

Pessimism is the philosophy that regards the universe and life as essentially evil. It contends that the world, if not the worst that can be, is at least sufficiently corrupt to be worse than none at all. Pessimism's distinguishing characteristics may be summarized.

*To live is to desire,
to desire is to want,
to want is to suffer,
and therefore, to live is to suffer.*

Pessimism accepts as true the words of the Greek dramatist Sophocles (c. 496-406 BC):

*Never to have been born is the happiest fate,
and the next best thing to die young.*

Pessimism teaches that the more sophisticated forms of life suffer the most and the lower the least. The lowest animals are therefore happier than man. Pessimism insists that if individuals were not so ignorant and knew better what life really is, they would will not to live; they would refuse to preserve themselves, and propagate their species, and would welcome death as the highest good.

In modern times, such men as the German philosopher, Shopenhauer (1788-1860), have articulated the philosophy of Pessimism. Shopenhauer openly displayed great disrespect to the Bible when he said, *"In its explanation of the origin of the world, Judaism is inferior to any other form of religious doctrine, professed by a civilized nation."* With that as a starting point

Shopenhauer went on to boldly promote the right and virtue of suicide. He advocated polygamy, and the keeping of a mistress in the name of women's rights and sexual freedom only to declare that woman should not be entrusted with property or the management of business affairs. In fact, women should be made subject to men in all things. Morally, Pessimism does not want to hear that, *"Marriage is honorable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge."* (Heb. 13:4) Nor do its advocates want to be told that husbands are to *"love their wives as Christ loved the Church, and gave Himself for it"* (Eph. 5:25) As inconsistent and degrading as it was, Shopenhauer's philosophy of Pessimism found a curious public following.

The Doctrine of a Finite God

There is another view of God that has been seriously considered. This view says that God is a limited Being who is subject to a process of cosmic evolution as a deity. It is argued that God is developing under the same laws, or similar laws, as the universe. The acceptance of a finite God seems to some to offer an explanation for the dark side of creation. For example, the English philosopher and economist John Stuart Mill (1806-1873) concluded, from the presence of evil in the world, that God cannot be both good and omnipotent. If God is omnipotent, said Mill, He cannot be good. Either God is malicious and irresponsible in permitting evil, or He is helpless to prevent it. In either case God is limited either in goodness or in power. Professor William James (1842-1910), a philosopher and psychologist of Harvard University, also contended that God is finite. He even dared to conjecture that this finite "God" of the known universe is subordinate to a greater and all-inclusive Absolute.

Your God Is Too Small

The Biblical revelation is that neither God's goodness nor His power is limited by the fact of evil. *"Your thoughts of God are too human,"* said Luther to Erasmus in a letter one day. It is so often true. Men limit the Lord while the supremacy of God is declared time and again in Scripture (Psa. 2:9; 1 Chron. 29:11-12; 2 Chron. 20:6; Job 23:13; 42:2; Psa. 115:3; Jam. 4:13,15; Eph. 1:11; Rom. 11:36). God, being infinitely righteous and omnipotent, may have reasons for the permission of evil that may be incomprehensible to anyone but Himself. *"The imperfection of the finite universe and man does not necessitate imperfections in God. In fact, imperfection belongs to the sphere of the finite. Regarding the concept of an evolving Deity, it simply is not logical. A finite and developing Deity who would have necessarily less in each preceding age gains nothing. An evolving Deity does not solve the question of an ultimate beginning. "Where did God come from?" When such a question is raised, the mind is compelled to go back to the pre-supposition that there is an eternal First Cause."* (David Clark) Until the day dawns when God reveals His reasons for creating the universe as He did, man should be silent and say only that, *"The Lord does all things well."* Certainly the Biblical revelation of God is that He is not limited in power or wisdom. Rather, God *"worketh all things after the counsel of His own will."* (Eph. 1:11) His power glitters in all His works, as well as His wisdom. *"Twice have I heard this, that power belongs unto God."* (Psa. 62:11)

Chapter 7

THE NATURE OF GOD

The Oneness of God

The oneness of God is indicated in part by the Law of Parsimony (i.e., economy) which does not assign more causes than necessary to explain something. It can be argued that the universe is one system indicating one Designer. There is no reason to look for a multitude of other causes for the universe. Reinforcing this law of logic, the *Scriptures* declare that there is but one God.

- ◆ Deuteronomy 6:4,5 *“Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord: And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.”*
- ◆ 1 Kings 8:60 *“That all the people of the earth may know that the Lord is God, and that there is none else.”*

The Personality of God

God displays all of the facets involved in personality including self-consciousness and self-determination.

God Creates

- ◆ Genesis 1:1 *“In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.”*

God Eliminates

- ◆ Genesis 18:20; 19:24,25 *“And the Lord said, Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous...Then the Lord raid upon Sodom and Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven. And he overthrew those cities, and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and that which grew upon the ground.”*

God Furnishes what is Needed to Sustain Life

- ◆ Psalm 104:27-30 *“These wait all upon thee; that thou mayest give them their meat in due season. That thou givest them that gather: thou openest thine hand, they are filled with good. Thou hiddest thy face, they are troubled: thou takest away their breath, they die, and return to their dust. Thou sendest forth thy spirit, they are created: and thou renewest the face of the earth.”*

God Exalts

- ◆ Psalm 75:6,7 *“For promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south. But God is the judge: he putteth down one, and setteth up another.”*

God Loves

- ◆ John 3:16 *“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.”*

God Is Concerned

- ◆ 1 Peter 5:6,7 *“Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time: Casting all your care upon Him; for He careth for you.”*

God Answers Prayer

- ◆ Psalm 94:9,10 *“He that planted the ear, shall he not hear? He that formed the eye, shall He not see? He that chasteth the heathen, shall not He correct? He that teacheth man knowledge, shall not he know?”*

God Hates

- ◆ Proverbs 6:16 *“These six things doth the Lord hate: yea, seven are an abomination to him”*

God Repents

- ◆ Genesis 6:5-6 *“And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved Him to His heart.”*

Objections to the Personality Of God

Materialism, Agnosticism and Rationalism deny that God is a personal Being by arguing that mankind cannot know reality.

- Materialism declares that Ultimate Reality cannot be known because all knowledge of the external world comes through the senses. Individuals perceive only phenomena, and not things themselves. Therefore, no one has any certain knowledge of anything beyond the senses.
- Agnosticism undermines Materialism by teaching that even the senses cannot be trusted--and so knowledge grows more limited!

- Rationalism pretends that the mind cannot reach assurance of anything outside of itself. But if this is true, then Rationalism itself has a problem. The question is raised: "*Is it possible that the mind [i.e. reason] is only clothing itself, or its 'non-self', with conceptions of its own fabrications?*" This disturbing inquiry is called, "*The Relativity of Knowledge.*" In other words, "*Can the mind trust the mind? Can reason really trust reason?*" Who is to say?

The Substance of God

Substance, which has being, power, and permanence, is that in which certain attributes (or characteristics) reside. There are two substances: matter and spirit. The universe is matter while God, angels, and souls of men are spirit. The substance of God is pure spirit unmixed with matter. "*The Lord our God is but one only living and true God; whose subsistence is in and of Himself, infinite in being and perfection, whose essence cannot be comprehended by any but Himself; a most pure spirit...*" (*The Baptist Confession of Faith Of 1689*, Chapter 2, Section 1).

The Attributes of God

An attribute may be defined as a distinguishing mark of the Divine essence. Simply put, an attribute is anything that is true about God. The Bible says, "*God is love*". Love is a Divine attribute. The Bible says that, "*God is merciful.*" Mercy is an attribute of God.

❖ **Special Note:** Sometimes the attributes of God are spoken of in terms associated with physical parts of the body. It must be remembered that when the Scriptures speak of God's eye, ear, and hand they speak in a metaphorical sense called *anthropomorphism* (lit. *form of man*). There is a language of accommodation that is used by which God is described in order for man to understand Him better. Dr. John Gerstner like to point out with humor that God is not a cosmic chicken simply because Psalm 91:4 says that, "*He shall cover thee, with His feathers, and under His wings shalt thou trust: His truth shall be thy shield and buckler.*"

- **Omnipresence.** God fills all space and pervades all things with His invisible and immaterial substance while being distinct from all things. "*Can any hide himself in secret places, that I shall not see him? Saith the Lord. Do not I fill heaven and earth? Saith the Lord.*" (Jer. 23:24) "*No place can be imagined that is deprived of the presence of God; and therefore, when the Scripture anywhere speaks of the presence of God, it joins heaven and earth together: He so fills them, that there is no place without Him.*" (Stephen Charnock) Because of this attribute God is able to make special manifestations of Himself at certain times to particular persons (Psa. 139:7-12; Matt. 18:20).
- **Infinitude.** God has no limitations. He is bounded only by His own nature and will. Solomon recognized this and asked at the dedication of the Temple, "*But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain thee: how much less this house that I have builded?*" (1 Kings 8:27).
- **Eternality.** "*From everlasting to everlasting thou art God*" (Psa. 90:2). God has existed from all eternity and will continue to exist to all eternity having no beginning and no end. The past and the future is equally lucid to Him. There is no succession of thoughts in God. There are no succession of feelings or purposes. As God is eternal, He is self-

existent, and absolutely independent of others as to His purpose, action or Being. *"The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms: and he shall thrust out the enemy from before thee; and shall say, Destroy them."* (Deut. 33:27)

- **Immutability.** God is immutable which means that He is the same yesterday, today, and forever. *"This is a steadfast anchor for the believer in this uncertain time when events are changing with such rapidity that it makes one's head swim! Oh, the JOY to know that He who is in control of all events is the unchangeable One! Oh, to have faith in that fact that all is working according to His eternal purpose, for His glory, and for the good of the elect!"* (Ferrell Griswold)
- **Sovereignty.** As the Lord of creation, God has the absolute right to govern and dispose of the universe as He pleases despite the attempts of man to frustrate His will. It was the Divine complaint to an apostate Israel once that, *"Thou thoughtest that I was altogether as thyself"* (Psa. 50:21) A.W. Pink is correct when he asserts that, *"The absolute and universal supremacy of God is plainly and positively affirmed in many Scriptures."*
 - ◆ 1 Chronicles 29:11,12 *"Thine, O Lord, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory and the majesty: for all in the heaven and all in the earth is Thine; Thine is the Kingdom, O Lord, and Thou art exalted as Head above all...And Thou reignest over all".*
 - ◆ Daniel 4:35 *"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?"*
 - ◆ Matthew 20:15 *"It is not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own?"*
 - ◆ Romans 9:21 *"Hath not the potter power over the clay?"*
- ❖ **Special Note.** Because God is sovereign He can answer prayer. Every man who prays that God would heal the sick or convert a sinner from the error of his ways, acknowledges God's sovereignty. Because God is sovereign man is encouraged to pray and to seek the Lord. *"Seek ye the Lord while He may be found, call ye upon Him while He is near."* (Isa. 55:6) The hope and fate of humanity does not rest with a powerless God but with the mighty One who can save. *"Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither His ear heavy, that it cannot hear."* (Isa. 59:1) The doctrine of God's sovereignty is a most helpful and encouraging doctrine. *"If we had our choice, which would we choose--to be governed by blind fate, or capricious chance, or irrevocable Natural Law, or short sighted and perverted self, or a God infinitely wise, holy, loving and powerful?"* (David Clark)
- ❖ **Special Note.** Because God is sovereign He can do all things as L. R. Shelton notes.

1. God is able to perform that which He promised	Rom. 4:21
2. God is able to deliver us	Dan. 3:17
3. God is able to give us grace to bear temptation	1 Cor. 10:13

- | | |
|---|-------------|
| 4. God is able to make all grace abound toward us | 2 Cor. 9:8 |
| 5. God is able to do abundantly above all that we ask | Eph. 3:20 |
| 6. God is able to subdue all things | Phil. 3:21 |
| 7. God is able to keep that which I have committed to Him | 2 Tim. 1:12 |
| 8. God is able to succor them that are tempted | Heb. 2:18 |
| 9. God is able to save to the uttermost | Heb. 7:25 |
| 10. God is able to keep us from falling | Jude 1:24 |

- **Transcendence.** The attributes of God are further manifested in the fact that He is transcendent to the world that means that God is above and beyond His creation *"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."* (Psa. 139:7-12). Theologians speak of God being *supra mundane* or *extra-mundane* which means that He is above (*supra*) and apart (*extra*) from the world. When belief in the transcendence of God is lost, man's sense of sin and accountability vanish.
- **Immanence.** God's immanence speaks of God being in the world. The Bible declares that God does act within and through His creation. While He is above and separate from the physical universe, He still pervades all things with His mystical invisible substance. This is more than omnipresent law and power; it is immanent personality. The immanence of God is revealed in the way He works. Man works upon matter from without. God can and does work on matter from within. Man builds a house or ship by taking a tree and refashioning it. God builds the tree by instilling the life principle from within to make it grow. *"The transcendence of God must not be stressed to the point that He become a mechanical God. Nor should His immanence be stress so that He is lost in the laws of nature or is made the author of evil. There is still the reality of second causes to account for sin."* (David Clark)

A Trinity of Persons

There are three persons in the Godhead, the Father, Son and Holy Ghost; and these three are one God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory. The doctrine of the Trinity is a matter of truth which could not be know except by Divine revelation. *"In this divine and infinite Being there are three subsistences, the Father, the Word (or Son), and the Holy Spirit, of one substance, power, and eternity, each having the whole divine essence, yet the essence undivided: the Father is of none, neither begotten nor proceeding; the Son is eternally begotten of the Father; the Holy Spirit proceeding from the Father and the Son; all infinite, without beginning, therefore but one God, who is not to be divided in nature and being, but distinguished by several peculiar, relative properties and personal relations; which doctrine of the Trinity is the foundation of all our communion with God, and comfortable dependence on Him."* (**The Baptist Confession Of Faith Of 1689**, Chapter 2, Section 3; study 1 John 5:7; Matt. 28:19; 2 Cor. 13:14; Ex. 3:14; John 14:11; 1 Cor. 8:6; John 1:14,18; 15:26; Gal. 4:6).

Affirmation of the Trinity

Rather than trying to "prove" the Trinity, it is better to simply affirm what the Scriptures teach concerning God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

- Personal pronouns are applied to each of the persons of the Trinity. The Father addresses the Son, the Son addresses the Father. The Father is God (John 6:44-46; Rom. 1:7; 1 Pet. 1:2). The Son is God (Isa. 9:6; John 1:1; 20:28; 1 Tim. 3:16; Tit. 2:13; Heb. 1:8). The Spirit is God (Acts 5:3,4; 2 Cor. 3:17-18; Heb. 10:15-16 cp Jer. 31:34; Heb. 9:14; Matt. 24:36; Rom. 8:9; 1 Cor. 3:16).
 - The Son is God (John 1:1-2). According to 1 Corinthians 8:4-6, there is only one God (cp. Deut. 6:4; Isa. 43:10; 44:6-8; 45:5-6). If Jesus is not the one true God then He is false and evil and all the apostles are evil as well for they wrote of Jesus that He was very God of very God (Phil. 2:6; Rom. 9:5; Tit. 2:13; 2 Thess. 1:12; Col. 2:9; 1:16-17 Eph. 4:10; Heb. 1:8-10).
 - Professing believers are to be baptized as disciples in the name of all three persons "*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). Notice that the word "*name*" is singular, not plural. There is only one name that is ascribed to all members of the Godhead. The Son and the Holy Spirit are as much God as the Father or else the Father is united to beings or creatures in a way that is unworthy of Him.
 - One person of the Trinity sends another. The Father sends the Son (John 16:5), and the Father and Son sends the Spirit (John 15:26). The distinction of three persons is plain.
 - God is proclaimed as the one God (Gal. 3:20 cp. Deut. 6:4; 4:35; Isa. 43:10; 44:6-8; 45:5-6), Jesus claims divinity (John 8:58) and divinity is claimed for Him (John 1:1-2; Phil. 2:6; Rom. 9:5; John 20:28; 1 John 5:20; Tit. 2:13; 2 Thess. 1:12; Col. 2:9; 1:16-17; Eph. 4:10 cp. Psa. 139; Heb. 1:8-10;), and the Spirit is recognized as deity (cf. John 14-16).
- ❖ **Special Note.** Sometimes Jesus refers to the Father as God. This is taken to suggest that Jesus is in some manner less than God. For example, in John 20:17, the Lord said, "*Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father, and to my God, and your God.*" And yet, there is nothing unusual in Jesus referring to the Father as God because that is exactly what God is: Father. During the days of His humiliation, in His incarnation, it should be expected that the Son would refer to God as the Father. But then, the Son is also called the Father. "*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, Counselor, The mighty God, the everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace*" (Isa. 9:6)

- The blessings of Paul include the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (2 Cor. 13:14).
- Peter refers to the election of the Father, the sanctification of the Spirit, and the sprinkling of the blood of Christ (1 Pet. 1:2).
- Jesus accepted the worship of others (Matt. 16:16; John 20:28).
- Jesus was recognized as God by the Apostles (John 1:1 cp. 1:14; 20:28; 1 Jn. :20).
- Jesus is the God of the Old Testament. John 1:18 declares that no one has ever seen God (cp. John 6:46) but at least seventy-eight people did see God according to Exodus 24:9-11; Genesis 18; Isaiah 6:1-3; Numbers 12:6-8; Judges 13:20-23; and Job 42:5. How can this be unless Jesus, the God of the Old Testament is the Son of God? That this is the case is proven in part by Paul in Romans 10:9-13. Paul quotes Joel 2:32 but applies the statement to Christ. Peter does the same thing in Acts 2:21. Quoting Joel, Peter applies the ancient prophecy to Christ (see also Isa. 43:11).

Denial of the Trinity

The doctrine of the Trinity refutes all false doctrines that have been advocated.

- **Arianism.** This heresy which arose c. AD 320 maintains that God the Father alone is eternal, that Christ was created out of nothing as the first and greatest of all creatures, and that He in turn made the universe.
- **Semi-Arianism.** In the fourth century, many in the Church decided to affirm that the Son is in essence like (*homoiousios*), but not identical with (*homoousios*), the Father. This position was taken to mediate between the Arians, who held that the Son is different from the Father (*heteroousios*) and the Nicene Council, which proclaimed their identify. This middle position was wrong and offered no lasting solution to the theological debate. Either Jesus is very God of very God or He is not. The Bible says that He is (John 1:1).
- **Sabellianism.** Deriving its name from the teaching of the third century Sabellius, this view of the Trinity reduced the three persons of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit to three characters, modes, or relations of the Godhead. It was thought that God was one in essence but revealed Himself in three roles much like a man could be considered a husband, a father, and an employee. The biblical revelation is that Jesus is wholly God and no mere mode or function of the Divine essence. Jesus is the eternal, pre-existent Son (John 17:3,5,24). In AD 263 at a church council at Rome, under the leadership of Pope Dionysius (260-267), Sabellius and his teachings were denounced and declared to be heretical.

- **Unitarianism.** Over the centuries Unitarianism has changed to become more and more extreme. Modern thinking has become increasingly humanistic to deny any type of supernaturalism associated with Christ while denying the distinctiveness of the Holy Spirit.

Defenders of the Faith

While there has always been opposition to the Doctrine of the Trinity, the Church Fathers defended the faith from the first. The list of defenders is impressive: Justine Martyr (d. c. 165 AD); Irenaeus (d. c. 200 AD); Clement of Alexandria (d. c. 215 AD); Tertullian (d. c. 230 AD); Hippolytus (d. c. 235 AD); and Origen (d. C. 250 AD). Each person raised his voice to vigorously reaffirm the Doctrine of the Trinity.

- **Justine Martyr.** *"For He exclaimed before His crucifixion: 'The Son of man must suffer many things and be rejected by the Scribes and Pharisees, and be crucified, and on the third day rise again.' And David predicted that He would be born from the womb before sun and moon, according to the Father's will, and made Him known, being Christ, as God strong and to be worshipped."* (*The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, volume 1, *Dialogue With Trypho*, LXXV)
- **Irenaeus.** *"Therefore the Father is Lord, and the Son is Lord, and the Father is God and the Son is God; for He who is born of God is God. And thus God is shown to be one according to the essence of His being and power; but at the same time, as the administrator of the economy of our redemption, He is both Father and Son: since the Father of all is invisible and inaccessible to creatures, it is through the Son that those who are to approach God must have access to the Father."* (Joseph P. Smith, *Ancient Christian Writers, Proof of the Apostolic Preaching*)
- **Clement of Alexandria.** *"And the Son is neither simply one thing as one thing, nor many things as parts, but one thing as all things; whence also He is all things. For He is the circle of all powers rolled and united into one unity. Wherefore the Word is called the Alpha and the Omega, of whom alone the end becomes beginning, and ends again at the original beginning without any break. Now God, who is without beginning, is the perfect beginning of the universe, and the producer of the beginning. As then, He is being, He is the first principle of the department of action, as He is good, of moral; as He is mind, on the other hand, He is the first principle of reasoning and judgment. Whence also He alone is Teacher, who is the only Son of the Most High Father, the Instructor of men."* (*The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol. II. *The Stromata, or Miscellanies*, Book IV, chapter XXV)
- **Tertullian.** *"For God alone is without sin; and the only man without sin is Christ, since Christ is also God."* (*Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol. III, *Tertullian*, Parts I-III, Chap. XXI)
- **Hippolytus.** *"For Christ is the God above all, and He has arranged to wash away sin from human beings, rendering regenerate the old man."* (*The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Vol. V. *The Refutation of all Heresies*, Chaps. XXVIII-XXIX)

- **Origen.** *"We worship one God, the Father, and the Son, therefore, as we have explained; and our argument against the worship of other gods still continues valid. And we do not 'reverence beyond measure one who has but lately appeared,' as though He did not exist before; for we believe Himself when He says, 'Before Abraham was, I am.'"* (Origen de Principiis)

The Tri-unity

The story is told of St. Augustine that, on one occasion, when his mind was engaged in the contemplation of the doctrine of the Trinity, he was walking by the sea, and saw a child filling a shell with the water, which it then carried and poured into a cavity in the sand. "What are you doing, my boy, with that water?" asked Augustine. "I am," replied the child, "going to put all the sea into this hole." Augustine smiled and walked on when suddenly a voice seemed to say to him, "And thou too art doing the like, in thinking to comprehend the depths of God in the narrow limits of thy finite mind." While mysterious and incomprehensible (Job 5:7-9; 11:7-9; Psa. 36:5,6, Rom. 11:33), the Bible does teach the unity of the Godhead by ascribing all of the divine attributes equally to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Though the Trinity cannot be fully understood or fathomed, it can be affirmed by faith.

The Relation between Father, Son and Holy Spirit

God the Father stands in a paternal relation to the God the Son (John 8:58) who is called the Only begotten (John 1:15, 27, 39; 3:16; Phil. 2:6-8). The word "beget" or "begotten" as applied to the Godhead, does not express a mode of becoming, but a mode of existing. The Nicean and Athanasian Creeds speak of Christ as "very God of very God." Therefore, the "begetting" of the Son must never be understood as meaning that the substance (i.e., that in which the Divine attributes reside) of the Son was **derived** from the substance of the Father instead of being co-existent and co-eternal with the Father (note John 1:1, 14; 1 John 1:2; 1 Pet. 1:20). Rather, the "begetting" must be understood to mean that the Son **existed** in this mode from eternity past. The Spirit proceeds from Father and Son.

The Value of the Doctrine of the Trinity

"My heart demands the Trinity as much as my reason. I want to be sure that God cares for us, that God is our Father, that God has interfered, stooped, sacrificed Himself for us. I do not merely want to love Christ whose will and character, for ought I know, may be different from God's. I want to love and honor the abysmal God Himself, and none other will satisfy me. No puzzling texts shall rob me of this rest of my heart that Christ is the exact counterpart of him in whom we live and move and have our being. I say, boldly, if the doctrine of the Trinity be not in the Bible, it ought to be, for the whole spiritual nature of man cries out for it." (Charles Kingsley)

The Holy Spirit

The term "Spirit" is not applied to the third person to differentiate His substance from that of the Father and Son for all are equal one to the other. Rather, the term "*Spirit*" is used to distinguish His person from that of the Father and the Son. Where the Holy Spirit is referred to in Scripture it is evident that He is regarded as God. He is united with the Father and with the Son in the Baptismal Benediction of Christ and in the Great Commission (Matt. 28:19-20 cp. Matt. 3:16,17). Divine attributes are assigned to the Holy Spirit such as omnipresence (Psa. 139:7), omniscience (1 Cor. 2:10,11), omnipotence (Gen. 1:2), and eternal existence (Heb. 9:14). Divine worship is offered to Him. Divine works are attributed to Him such as inspiration, regeneration, and sanctification. Divine names are applied to the Holy Spirit (Acts 5:3,4).

- ◆ He is called the Spirit of God 1 Corinthians 3:16
- ◆ He is called the Spirit of Christ Romans 8:9
- ◆ He is called the Spirit of Truth John 16:13
- ◆ He is called the Eternal Spirit Hebrews 9:14
- ◆ He is called the Spirit of Holiness Romans 1:4
- ◆ He is called the Spirit of Wisdom Romans 8:2
- ◆ He is called the Spirit of Grace Hebrews 10:29

The Spirit Is A Person

Personal pronouns are applied to the Holy Spirit (Rom. 8:27). He speaks (Acts 8:29; 10:19) and is spoken to (Acts 13:2). The Church has always prayed to and by the instrumentality of the Holy Spirit (Rom. 8:26).

- ◆ The Holy Spirit reveals John 16:13
- ◆ The Holy Spirit convicts John 3:18
- ◆ The Holy Spirit forbids Acts 16:6,7
- ◆ The Holy Spirit permits Acts 16:10
- ◆ The Holy Spirit regenerates Titus 3:5
- ◆ The Holy Spirit comforts John 14:26
- ◆ The Holy Spirit seals Ephesians 1:13; 2 Corinthians 1:22
- ◆ The Holy Spirit intercedes Ephesians 2:18
- ◆ The Holy Spirit bestows gifts 1 Corinthians 12:7
- ◆ The Holy Spirit loves Romans 15:30

The Christian is commanded not to grieve (Eph. 4:30), quench (1 Thess. 5:19), or lie to (Acts 5:3) the Spirit. To grieve the Holy Spirit involves committing sin. To quench the Spirit is to persist in known sin. To lie to the Spirit is to misrepresent to others one's spiritual intentions and conditions.

Chapter 8

THE DECREE OF GOD

A Confession of Faith: God Has A Purpose

"God hath decreed in Himself, from all eternity, by the most wise and holy counsel of His own will, freely and unchangeably, all things, whatsoever comes to pass" (The Baptist Confession of Faith Of 1689, Chapter 3, Section 1).

The Scriptures prove the decree of God.

- ◆ **Isaiah 14:27** *"The Lord hath purposed and who shall disannul it?"*
- ◆ **Isaiah 43:13** *"Yea, before the day was I am He; and there is none that can deliver out of my hand; I will work and who shall hinder it?"*
- ◆ **Isaiah 46:10** *"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."*
- ◆ **Daniel 4:35** *"He doeth according to His will in the army of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay His hand."*
- ◆ **Acts 15:18** *"Known unto God are all His works from eternity."*
- ◆ **Acts 17:26** *"And hath determined the times before appointed."*
- ◆ **Ephesians 1:11** *"Being predestined according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will."*

A Distinction in the Divine Decree

The divine decree is rooted in the very nature of God who is absolutely sovereign. In His domain nothing is left to chance. As He is eternal and immutable, so are His purposes. *"His plans never require revision: His decrees shall never be revoked."* The good and the bad that men do are but the outworking of His will. When evil things happen they occur because of divine permission as per Acts 2:23. The *"determinate counsel of God"* took place at the hands of *"wicked men."* *"And yet, in executing His purpose God did not violate the moral freedom of the agents through whom His permissive decree took effect in the death of His Son."* (W.G.T. Shedd, *Dogmatic Theology*)

Not all students of Scripture are comfortable with the concept of the decree of God including evil. To try and "protect" the character of God they have made a distinction between a positive decree of God and Divine permission. The positive decree of God is said to include all those things that God purposed to do or wills to do. Divine permission is the allowance of things that are contrary to the revealed perfect will. *"Whether or not a distinction between a positive and permissive facet of the Divine decree is justified is open for discussion. Perhaps it would be better to observe a distinction between what God positively proposes to cause [or permit] in time, from His perceptive [ethical] will which relates to what individuals ought to do or ought not to*

do in time." (David Clark) In all of this the inevitable question returns, "Why does God permit sin?" The problem is without a solution because, as A.A. Hodge puts it, "it is grounded in the inscrutable relations of the eternal to the temporal, of the infinite to the finite."

The Decree of God

The Divine decree embraces all events that shall ever be. "God hath decreed in Himself, from all eternity, by the most wise and holy counsel of His own will, freely and unchangeably, all things, whatsoever comes to pass; yet so as thereby is God neither the author of sin nor hath any fellowship with any therein; nor is violence offered to the will of the creature, nor yet is the liberty or contingency of second causes taken away, but rather established; in which appears His wisdom in disposing all things, and power and faithfulness in accomplishing His decree" (**The Baptist Confession Of Faith Of 1689**, Chapter 3, Section 1; study Isa. 46:10; Eph. 1:11; Heb. 6:17; Rom. 9:15,18; James 1:13; 1 John 1:5; Acts 4:27,28; John 9:11; Num. 23:19; Eph. 1:3-5).

- **God Has Decreed the General Course of History**

- ◆ Acts 17:26 "And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation."

❖ **Special Note.** Though God has decreed the general course of history, yet He is pleased to use means to accomplish His will. "God in His ordinary providence maketh use of means, yet is free to work without, above, and against them at His pleasure." (**The Baptist Confession Of Faith Of 1689**, Chapter 5, Section 3).

- **God has Decreed Particular Events in the General Course of History.** The life of Joseph offers one example while the birth of Christ offers another.

- ◆ Genesis 45:7,8 "God sent me before you to preserve you a posterity on the earth and to save your lives--so now it was not you that sent me but God."
- ◆ 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."

- **God Has Decreed the Salvation of Sinners**

- ◆ Ephesians 2:10 "For we are His workmanship created in Christ Jesus unto good works. "By the decree of God, for the manifestation of His glory, some men and angels are predestinated, or foreordained to eternal life through Jesus Christ, to the praise of His glorious grace; others being left to act in their sin to their just condemnation, to the praise of His glorious justice." (study 1 Tim. 5:21; Matt. 25:34; Eph. 1:5,6; Rom. 9:22,23; Jude 1:4) "These angels and men thus predestined and foreordained are particularly and unchangeable designed, and their number so certain and definite, that it cannot be either increased or diminished." (**The Baptist Confession Of Faith Of 1689**, Chapter 3, Sections 3,4; study 2 Tim. 2:19; John 13:18).

- ◆ John 15:16 **Ye have not chosen me but I have chosen you and ordained you that ye should go and bring forth fruit."**

- **God has Decreed the Evil that Men Do**
 - ◆ Proverbs 16:14 *"All things hath the Lord wrought for their destined purpose; yea, even the wicked for the day of evil."*
 - ◆ 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."*
 - ◆ Acts 4:27, 28 *"For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together. For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done."*
- **God has Decreed all Accidental (Incidental) Events**
 - ◆ Psalm 34:20 *"He keepeth all His bones not one of them is broken."*
- **God has Decreed the Means as well as the end of all Things**
 - ◆ Acts 27:31 *"Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved."* *"As God hath appointed the elect unto glory, so He hath, by the eternal and most free purpose of His will, foreordained all the means thereunto; wherefore they who are elected, being fallen in Adam, are redeemed by Christ, are effectually called unto faith in Christ, by His Spirit working in due season, are justified, adopted, sanctified, and kept by His power through faith unto salvation; neither are any other redeemed by Christ, or effectually called, justified, adopted, sanctified, and saved, but the elect only."* (**The Baptist Confession Of Faith Of 1689**, Chapter 3, Section 6; study 1 Pet. 1:2,3; 2 Thess. 2:13; 1 Thess. 5:9,10; Rom. 8:30; 2 Thess. 2:13; 1 Pet. 1:5; John 10:26; 17:9; 6:64).
 - ◆ 2 Thess. 2:13 *"But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth."*
 - ◆ 1 Peter 1:2 *"Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied."* [Note: If God chooses a man unto salvation, He chooses the necessary means, which will bring him to salvation as well.]

The Order of the Decrees

There are two main positions postulated for the order of the Divine decrees expressed in the technical terms of "*supralapsarian*" and "*infralapsarian*."

- **Supralapsarianism** states that the decree to secure the salvation of individuals *preceded* the decree to create the world and permit the Fall (study John 15:19; Rom. 8:30; 9:13; 11:5-7; Eph. 1:4-6, 9, 11; 2:5, 12; 2 Tim. 1:9; 1 Thess. 5:9; 1 Pet. 1:2). This position places the disposal of all things into the hands of an absolute Sovereign who can and will do whatsoever He pleases according to the counsel of His own essence. *"Those of mankind that are predestinated to life, God, before the foundation of the world was laid, according to His eternal and immutable purpose, and the secret counsel and good pleasure of His will, hath*

chosen in Christ unto everlasting glory, out of His mere free grace and love, without any other thing in the creature as a condition or cause moving Him thereunto.” (The Baptist Confession Of Faith Of 1689, Chapter 3, Section 5; study Eph. 1:4,9,11; Rom. 8:30; 2 Tim. 1:9; 1 Thess. 5:9; Rom. 9:13,16; Eph. 2:5,12).

- **Infralapsarianism** argues that the decree to save and the decision to use all necessary means to secure the salvation of the elect *followed* creation and the Fall. Those who embrace the Infralapsarian view emphasis the point that men as *sinner*s, and not men apart from their sins, are the objects of God's saving grace in Christ. In other words, condemnation is an act, not of sovereignty, but of justice, and is grounded in the guilt of the condemned (Rom. 2:6-11; 2 Thes. 1:5-10). One main purpose of the Infralapsarian view is to shield the image of God from an arbitrary disposal of His universe prior to or apart from sin.

Whether one embraces the supralapsarian or the infralapsarian position, there is common agreement that, *“The doctrine of this high mystery of predestination is to be handled with special prudence and care, that men attending the will of God revealed in His Word, and yielding obedience thereunto, may, from the certainty of their effectual vocation, be assured of their eternal election; so shall this doctrine afford matter of praise, reverence, and admiration of God, and of humility, diligence, and abundant consolation to all that sincerely obey the gospel.” (The Baptist Confession Of Faith Of 1689, Chapter 3, Section 7; study 1 Thess. 4:5; 2 Pet. 1:10; Eph. 1:6; Rom. 11:33; 11:5,6,20; Luke 10:20).*

God's Decrees makes Foreknowledge Possible

In the discussion of the Divine decree, attention is concentrated on the concept of knowledge. The consistent position of Scripture is that God knows all things, past, present, and future (Psa. 33:11), as well as all the alternatives. In His sight, time is an eternal "now" (cp. Isa. 57:15; Psa. 90:4). The reason why God knows all things is because He wrote the program. God foreordains. *"Foreordination means God's ordaining, or decreeing, or determining, or appointing, from eternity, whatsoever is to come to pass"* (Dr. John Gerstner) (study Neh. 9:6; Psa. 33:11; 104:24; Prov. 16:33; Isa. 40:26; 46:10,11; Matt. 10:30; Acts 15:18; Rom. 11:26; Eph. 1:11; Heb. 1:3; Rev. 4:11)

God foreordains because God always acts according to a plan with a purpose. Unfortunately, this position causes concern for some individuals who continually want to know, *"How can the knowledge of God and a decreed plan be reconciled with man being a free agent and responsible. Are all things truly decreed, or merely foreseen?"*

The answer has to be that all things are truly decreed and not merely foreseen for this reason: logically, God cannot foresee anything unless He had decreed it. *"Only that is foreknown which is certain, and that only is certain which is decreed. God's decree cannot rest on an undecreed event for then certainty would rest on uncertainty which is impossible."* (David Clark) What is foreknown must first be predetermined. What is predetermined must be purposed. That which is purposed is purposed because of the Divine will and not because of something foreseen. There is no scriptural basis for believing that God *comes* into knowledge by looking down the corridors of time and seeing how things will transpire. Rather, He is the divine Author who writes the script for the stage of life upon which the creatures of creation appear to perform their parts before being dismissed to other Divine undertakings. *“Although God knoweth whatsoever may or can come to pass upon all supposed conditions, yet hath He not decreed anything*

because He foresaw it as future, or as that which would come to pass upon such conditions" (**The Baptist Confession Of Faith Of 1689**, Chapter 3, Section 2; study Acts 15:18; Rom. 9:11,13,16,18). Rather, God decrees all things according to the pleasure of His will.

The Decree in Reference to Free Agency

Having argued strongly for the sovereignty of God, predestination, and foreknowledge according to divine plan, it can also be argued that the decree of God, though rendering future events certain, does not violate free agency. *"Free agency must not be divorced from the understanding of every person acting according to his nature. Those whose natures are enslaved by birth and by choice to sin are at liberty to act in a way consistent with their nature."* (David Clark) What this means is that sinners will sin.

In like manner, those who have been born again and are regenerated by the Holy Spirit have a "freed" nature from the power of sin and will act according to their re-newed nature. The redeemed will live a righteous life in accordance with the power of God. Paul said, *"For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain."* (Phil. 1:21) *"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."* (Gal. 2:20)

The summary of the situation is this. *"In evil acts, God allows the person to carry out his own will within the confines of his own nature whether that nature is enslaved to sin as a child of Adam, or whether that nature is infected with the remnant of sin notwithstanding the new birth."* (David Clark) Scriptural evidence for the validity of these thoughts may be found in the lives of Nicodemus, Saul of Tarsus, and Judas.

- **Nicodemus.** The night that Nicodemus came to Jesus he did so of his own persuasion. He was influenced by reasonable arguments to yield his will to the ways of God and obey Him. Though not yet born again when he met Jesus (John 3:7), Nicodemus exercised his freed agency in moving to the Master having been morally inclined to do what was right before God.
- **Saul.** Saul was regenerated by God's supreme and gracious power and given a new nature (2 Cor. 5:17). He was not an agent in his regeneration, no person is for regeneration comes to the soul. But Paul was an agent in every act of his life.
- **Judas.** Despite associating with Christ for over three years, Judas yielded to no persuasion either ordinary or extra-ordinary. In the end, God allowed him to follow his own chosen path according. Judas acted as a free agent in his nature. Since his nature was bound to sin, Judas fulfilled the intense desires of the flesh. He coveted money and was willing to let Christ be crucified to satisfy that lust. In the selling of Jesus to the Sanhedrian, Judas committed his dark deeds, not because of outward compulsion, but because of inward pleasure. The fact that God foresaw how Judas (and all sinners) should act does not take away human responsibility.

Additional Arguments

Again, it is argued that foreknowledge is inconsistent with free agency; if anything is foreknown it cannot be free; foreknowledge requires certainty and certainty negates freedom. But all this is not true. A person who can foresee a trip planned in great detail and then goes on the planned trip is no less free in all that happens.

Or take another illustration. Suppose a person is standing on the top of a hill looking down into the valley below. He sees many things, including two cars traveling in opposite direction towards a turn in the road. As the cars approach one another, from the vantage point on the hill, it is certain that they will collide. There is no turning back. Despite the certainty of the situation, despite the foreknowledge of the coming collision, the drivers of each vehicle are still free in their individual acts. Walter J. Chantry say that there is song sung by children which tells the story of the hornets stinging the Canaanites, causing the enemies Israel to flee the land. The chorus then sings:

*God never compels us to go, Oh, no,
He never compels us to go;
God does not compel us to go 'gainst our will,
But He just makes us willing to go.*

If God foreknows what *He* is going to do, it is because He is simply a free agent and the larger point is established: foreknowledge is not inconsistent with free agency; and certainty is not equivalent to necessity. “*Although in relation to the foreknowledge and decree of God, the first cause, all things come to pass immutably and infallibly; so that there is not anything befalls any by chance, or without His providence; yet by the same providence He ordereth them to fall out according to the nature of second causes, either necessarily, freely, or contingently.*” (***The Baptist Confession Of Faith of 1689***, Chapter 5, section 2; study Acts 2:23; Prov. 16:33; Gen. 9:22).

THE WORKS OF GOD

A Confession of Faith

“In the beginning it pleased God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, for the manifestation of the glory of His eternal power, wisdom, and goodness, to create or make the world, and all things therein, whether visible or invisible, in the space of six days, and all very good.” (**The Baptist Confession Of Faith Of 1689**, Chapter 4, Section 1; study John 1:2,3; Heb. 1:2; Job 26:13; Rom. 1:20; Col. 1:16; Gen. 1:31)

Creation

The fact of a Divine creation is declared in the very first statement of the Bible: *“In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth”* (Gen. 1:1). Christians believe this to be true without question and without apology to modern science. There is good reason. Since creation is not observable and has not been repeated then any *“scientific”* explanation of the universe demands faith to receive it. In reality, what people are being asked to do is to make a choice between the science of Humanism and Creation Science. The choice to remain with the Scriptures should be constant for it is part of the Word of God that lives and abides forever. In contrast science keeps changing.

During the latter part of the nineteenth century, the infamous atheist Robert G. Ingersol laughed at Moses for summarizing the whole subject of astronomy in five words: *“He made the stars also.”* Robert Ingersol should not have laughed. The author of Genesis never intended to teach astronomy as much as he wanted to declare a logical and necessary starting point: God was the Creator of all things. Five words were enough to state the obvious.

It is one of the ironies of history and literature that Genesis chapter 1 should be declared unscientific for Genesis chapter 1 has made the study of true science possible. Historically, there was no science, and there could be no science, until men recognized that unity, order, and development are intrinsic in nature. This understanding came as a result of accepting the Divine revelation. It was Christian men who gave the world science because they realized that God was a God of unity, order, and law. The unity, order, and law that God established according to sovereign will could be studied. And so it was that science was born. The world owes a debt of gratitude to the scientists who were Christian.

- | | | |
|-------------------|--|-----------|
| • Francis Bacon | English philosopher | 1561-1626 |
| • Johannes Kepler | German astronomer | 1571-1630 |
| • Galileo | Italian astronomer | 1564-1642 |
| • William Harvey | English physician /anatomist | 1578-1657 |
| • Isaac Newton | English mathematician /
natural philosopher | 1642-1727 |

Of course, not all Christians have appreciated the scientific mind and new discoveries, even of other Christians who were scientists. The story is told that when speaking of Copernicus

(1473-1543), Martin Luther said bluntly, "*The fool wants to turn the whole science of astronomy upside down.*" It was true. Copernicus finally grew bold enough to write, "*As if seated upon a royal throne, the Sun rules the family of the planets as they circle around him.*" Copernicus was correct and consistent with both science and the Scriptures for the Bible never taught the concept that all things revolve around the earth. The Bible never taught that the earth is flat, as it was once believed. In fact, it was Isaiah who saith that, "*It is he that sitteth upon the circle of the earth*" (Isa. 40:22) True science will never replace or disprove the Bible for the Bible provides the starting point of all discoveries: "*In the beginning God.*" Inquiring Christian minds want to know as much as possible how God created things in the beginning while unregenerate minds want to insist that creation occurred apart from God through matter. Matter, modern science now says, is eternal, not God.

Three Possible Explanations Of Creation

There are but three possible explanations of the physical universe.

- The universe is eternal and self-existent, which is impossible. Matter reveals the evidence of the combination of different materials, and also of complex arrangement. Therefore, it is not self-existent. Matter presents the essential characteristics of a *produced* substance. Matter is created
- The universe is an emanation from the substance of God. This concept is unworthy of God who is pure and holy while the universe is defiled by chaos and corruption.
- God created the universe *ex nihilo* (lit. out of nothing).

The only rational position to embrace is that God created the universe *ex nihilo*. Unless nature is viewed as a closed system, it is rational to believe in One who stands outside the system as the Author of all life. It is also good to remember that the lower cannot account for the higher, but the higher may account for the lower. A Supernatural origin of the universe is the only sensible conclusion for all things.

Creation and Evolution

Returning to the theory of Evolution, Materialistic evolutionists deny creation by the fiat (command) of God. They *assume* the eternity of matter and the laws of nature, and make all the ordered universe and its vital living forms to arise by Natural Laws and natural selection. This eliminates all intelligent design and purpose in life. "*The best that can be said for Materialistic Evolution is that it is bad atheism, and blind chance, contradicted on every page of nature and by all human experience.*" (David Clark) A strong case against Materialistic Evolution can be made.

- First, there is the difficulty Materialistic Evolution has by denying a **First Cause**. "*It is vastly more difficult to account for the ordered universe from a materialistic point of view than from Theistic perspective.*" (David Clark) "*Consider the wondrous works of God!*" (Job 37:14).
- Second, there is the difficulty Materialistic Evolution has by a denial of **Final Cause**. There is design in the universe. There is purpose. Materialistic Evolution cannot account

for the design that has been perfectly produced. Consider just the earth. The earth is a minuscule globe only 8,000 miles in diameter and 25,000 miles in circumferences. Yet it is the only means of life and travel in space for humanity. Life lives on the surface of this 6 sextillion (21 zeroes) ton object which travels at breathtaking speed. On its axis the earth revolves daily at the rate of more than 1,000 miles an hour, 25,000 miles a day, 9 million miles a year. The earth spins and moves upon its own. The Scriptures said this before modern science. *"He hangeth the earth upon nothing"* (Job 26:7).

- Third, Materialistic Evolution tries to separate Mind from matter but it cannot be done. There is too much intelligence in the universe. For example. We know our solar system is only a small part of a gigantic Island Universe or Galaxy called the "Milky Way." The Milky Way consists of billions of stars collectively shaped like a watch or a flat disc or platter. Our solar system is located on the outer edge or rim of this incredible disc of stars. Is all this a cosmic accident. *"Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by number: he calleth them all by names by the greatness of his might, for that he is strong in power: not one faileth"* (Isa. 40:26).
- Fourth, the gulf between the living and the non-living cannot be crossed from a materialistic source. Life cannot come from non-life. Dr. Henry Morris has written extensively on this topic and offers the following conclusion. *"Biochemists interested in this field have tried to approach the problem both analytically and experimentally, trying to learn enough of the structure of living materials to see how life could get started on its own and then to try to duplicate this imaginary abiogenesis in the laboratory under conditions simulating those which presumably existed on the primitive earth. Although many such scientists have expressed great confidence in the ultimate solution of this problem, the fact is that a solution is nowhere in sight and will probably never be attained. This is because of the overwhelming difficulties involved in synthesizing by natural means, either analytically or experimentally, a structure of such astounding complexity as even the simplest living thing"* (Scientific Creationism).
- Fifth, the concept of an evolutionary process leading to spontaneous generation is a scientific improbability. The power of the microscope has proven that a cell, the simplest living organism, is not so simple. It is *"a little universe, formed of a host of self-propagating organisms, inconceivably minute and numerous as the stars of heaven"* (quoted in *After Its Kind*, Byron Nelson).
- Sixth, the so called "missing links" necessary to connect plants to animals and animals to man are still missing, because they do not exist. The Bible teaches that God has established boundaries so that one species will not cross over into another. Many examples in nature could be offered as proof. Two will suffice. *"The products of crosses between horses and asses are mules, and male mules are always completely sterile."* Again, *"when bison and cattle are mated, nearly all the progeny are born dead, if a bison male is crossed with a cattle female. The mortality is less when a bison female is crossed with a cattle male. But then sterility enters, just as it does in the case of the mule."* (*After Its Kind*, Byron Nelson).

The Sad State of the Theistic Evolutionist

In a tragic attempt to harmonize the known science of the modern world with the Bible, theistic evolutionists make God the Creator, and evolution the method of His working. According to this compromising position between faith and the latest “science”, God created matter, gave it its laws, imparted life to certain forms, and by controlling providence and immanent power, wrought out the forms of the world's life. Charles Darwin may have been a theistic evolutionist. He once said, *"There is a grandeur in this view of life with its several powers having been originally breathed by the Creator into a few forms, or into one."* The kindest thing that can be said about theistic evolution is that it is not necessary and invites more questions and concerns than it answers or solves. There is no reason to depart from Biblical creationism.

Remarks on Evolution in General

Because evolution cannot explain the origin of matter, force, life, the animal kingdom, nor the species within the kingdom, it is not worthy of acceptance. *"To replace the Biblical doctrine of creation with an obscure theory of development, by mechanical forces without intelligent cause and design, is inadequate both from a scientific and a logical point of view"* (David Clark).

Providence

"God the good Creator of all things, in His infinite power and wisdom, doth uphold, direct, dispose, and govern all creatures and things, from the greatest to the least, by His most wise and holy providence, to the end for the which they were created, according unto His infallible foreknowledge, and the free and immutable counsel of His own will; to the praise of the glory of His wisdom, power, justice, infinite goodness, and mercy" (*The Baptist Confession Of Faith Of 1689*, Chapter 5, Section 1; study Heb. 1:3; Job 38:11; Isa. 46:10,11; Psa. 135:6; Matt. 10:29-31; Eph. 1:11).

Providence embraces two elements: preservation and government. *"God, who called the world into existence, maintains it in continuance, and governs it according principles of moral righteousness. If God should withdraw His preserving power or His Divine supervision then all created things would either cease to be or there would be moral chaos"* (David Clark).

Is Creation Continual?

According to this concept, nothing exists from moment to moment but everything is created *new* each moment by the agency of God. Surprisingly enough, Jonathan Edwards held to this view of a continual creation instead of a Divine preservation of an established creation. However, there does not seem to be anything in Scripture to support this idea. It should be noted that a continual creation would extinguish all second causes, and destroy the responsibility of men for their evil acts. If creation is continual than God is the *only* operative agent in the universe effecting everything. The creature would affect nothing and therefore be without responsibility.

The Extent of Divine Providence

God upholds the entire material universe that stretches into infinity. He continues the existence of all spiritual beings such as angels and He sustains life in plant, animal, and man.

Even those who are wicked are watched over by God while they sin thought God is not the efficient cause of their sin.

God Governs the Physical Universe

- ◆ **Psalm 104:14** *"He causeth the grass to grow for the cattle, and herb for the service of man: that he may bring forth food out of the earth;"*
- ◆ **Psalm 135:7** *"He causeth the vapors to ascend from the ends of the earth; he maketh lightning for the rain; he bringeth the wind out of his treasuries."*
- ◆ **Psalm 147:16** *"He giveth snow like wool: he scattereth the hoarfrost like ashes."*
- ◆ **Psalm 147:17** *"He casteth forth his ice like morsels: who can stand before his cold?"*
- ◆ **Acts 14:17** *"Nevertheless he left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness."*

God Governs the Animal Creation

- ◆ **Psalm 104:21** *"The young lions roar after their prey, and seek their meat from God."*
- ◆ **Matthew 6:26** *"Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?"*
- ◆ **Matthew 10:29** *"Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father."*

God Governs the Events Of Human History

- ◆ **1 Chronicles 16:31** *"Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice: and let men say among the nations, The LORD reigneth."*
- ◆ **Psalm 47:7** *"For God is the King of all the earth: sing ye praises with understanding."*
- ◆ **Daniel 2:21** *"And he changeth the times and the seasons: he removeth kings, and setteth up kings: he giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding:"*

God Governs the Lives Of Individuals

- ◆ **1 Samuel 2:6** *"The LORD killeth, and maketh alive: he bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up."*
- ◆ **Proverbs 16:9** *"A man's heart deviseth his way: but the LORD directeth his steps."*
- ◆ **James 4:15** *"For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that."*

Included in this general principle of Divine providence is the care of God for the Church. “As the providence of God doth in general reach to all creatures, so after a most special manner it taketh care of His Church, and disposeth of all things to the good thereof.” (*The Baptist Confession of Faith of 1689*, Chapter 5, Section 7; study 1 Tim. 4:10; Amos 9:8,9; Isa. 4:3-5)

God Governs the Smallest Details of Life

- ◆ **Matthew 10:30** *"But the very hairs of your head are all numbered."*

God Governs All Fortuitous (Accidental or Casual) Events

- ◆ **Job 5:6** *"Although affliction cometh not forth of the dust, neither doth trouble spring out of the ground;"*
- ◆ **Proverbs 16:33** *"The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of the LORD."*

God Governs the Free Actions Of Men

- ◆ **Philippians 2:13** *"For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure."*
- ◆ **Exodus 12:36** *"And the LORD gave the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they lent unto them such things as they required. And they spoiled the Egyptians."*

God Governs the Sinful Actions of Men

- ◆ **2 Samuel 16:10** *"And the king said, What have I to do with you, ye sons of Zeruah? so let him curse, because the LORD hath said unto him, Curse David. Who shall then say, Wherefore hast thou done so?"*
- ◆ **Psalms 76:10** *"Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain."*
- ◆ **Romans 11:32** *"For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all."*
- ◆ **Acts 4:28** *"For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done."*

God is Not the Author of Sin

Though God governs the sinful actions of men, He is not the Author or Approver of the same. “The almighty power, unsearchable wisdom, and infinite goodness of God, so far manifest

themselves in His providence, that His determinate counsel extendeth itself even to the first fall, and all other sinful actions both of angels and me; and that not by a bare permission, which also He most wisely and powerfully boundeth, and otherwise ordereth and governeth, in a manifold dispensation of His most holy ends; yet so, as the sinfulness of their acts proceedeth only from the creatures, and not from God, who, being most holy and righteous, neither is nor can be the author or approver of sin.” (The Baptist Confession Of Faith Of 1689, Chapter 5, Section 4; study Rom. 11:32-34; 2 Sam. 24:1; 1 Chron. 21:1; 2 Kings 19:28; Psa. 76:10; Gen. 50:20; Isa. 10:6,7,12; Psa. 50:21; 1 John 2:16)

Why Sin is Allowed in the Saints

In the governing of sin God has decreed that it be allowed to continue in time in the lives of the elect for a stated purpose. *The Baptist Confession Of Faith Of 1689* explains. “*The most wise, righteous, and gracious God doth oftentimes leave for a season His own children to manifold temptations and the corruptions of their own hearts, to chastise them for their former sins, or to discover unto them the hidden strength of corruption and deceitfulness of their hearts, that they may be humbled; and to raise them to a more close and constant dependence for their support upon Himself; and to make them more watchful against all future occasions of sin, and for other just and holy ends*” (Chapter 5, Section 5; study 2 Chron. 32:25, 26, 31; 2 Cor. 12:7-9; Rom. 8:28).

The Purpose of Sin in the Unsaved

The purpose of the providence of God in allowing sinful actions to be manifested in the lives of the non-elect is far different from that which is permitted in the redeemed. “*As for those wicked and ungodly men whom God, as a righteous judge, for former sin doth blind and harden; from them he not only withholdeth His grace, whereby they might have been enlightened in their understanding, and wrought upon in their hearts; but sometimes also withdraweth the gifts which they had, and exposeth them to such objects as their corruption makes occasion of sin; and withal, gives them over to their own lusts, the temptations of the world, and the power of Satan, whereby it comes to pass that they harden themselves even under those means which God useth for the softening of others*” (*The Baptist Confession Of Faith Of 1689*, Chapter 5, Section 6; study Rom. 1:24-26,28; 11:7,8; Deut. 29:4; Matt. 13:12; Deut. 2:30; 2 Kings 8:12,13; Psa. 81:11,12; 2 Thess. 2:10-12; Ex. 8:15,32; Isa. 6:9,10; 1 Pet. 2:7,8)

Definition of a Miracle

The term miracle has been understood and defined in different ways. In a narrow sense a miracle is to be limited to the extra-ordinary acts of God in the external world. In the wider sense a miracle would include such spiritual realities as regeneration, conversion, and sanctification. The prevailing usage is in the more narrow sense.

- William G. T. Shedd. "A miracle is an extraordinary act of God."

- A.A. Hodge. *"A miracle is an event in the external world obvious to the senses, which cannot be rationally attributed to any agent but God, which accompanies a messenger from God, to authenticate His message as divine."*
- A.H. Strong. *"A miracle is an event palpable (plain) to the senses, produced for a religious purpose by the immediate agency of God."*

Classification of Miracles

In their *modus operandi* (method of operation), miracles may be classified as immediate and mediate.

- **Immediate miracles** are those in which the agency of God is without intervening means, as the creation of the world, the raising of the dead, the resurrection of Jesus Christ.
- **Mediate miracles** occur when God takes hold of natural forces or elements and uses them in a sovereign manner to exceed their normal performance for a specified end (note Acts 2:22; 2 Thess. 2:9; Heb. 2:4). One example of a mediate miracle would be the Flood whereby the surface of the earth was broken up by the fountains of the great deep. Others examples of mediate miracles would include the dividing of the waters of the Red Sea by a strong east wind (Ex. 10:19), the feeding of Israel with quails (Ex 16:13), the terrible plagues upon Egypt (Ex. 7-11), the destruction of Jabin's army by storm and flood (Judg. 4:2-24), and the destruction of the Assyrian army commanded by Sennacherib (2 Kings 19:16-36). The employment of natural means by God does not cause any occurrence to be any less a miracle for the Divine intervention is understood to be directing the forces.

Are Miracles Probable or Improbable?

The fact of a free and sovereign personal God settles the possibility of miracles. If God is the Creator of the world, His right and power to intervene in it cannot be denied. That He does intervene is the testimony of time. A God of mercy, goodness and love who rules over a suffering and perishing world will certain intervene when and where necessary. The greatest of all miracles is recorded in John 3:16. *"For God so loved the world that He gave His Son."*

A World without Miracles

"If the miraculous is denied and declared to be impossible, then no prayer should ever be offered or encouraged at the bedside of the sick and dying. No cry for help should ever be allowed to arise in face of threatening danger or death. From a blind deaf process of nature a person may only await their destiny. Over the coffin of a loved one, where the heart has longed for the touch of a vanished hand and the sound of a voice that is still, there comes the rudeness of false philosophers which say that there is no resurrection, no recognition in heaven, and no fellowship forever. For those who desire deliverance from an evil nature, the apostles of evolutionary uniformity argue that a new spiritual birth would be an unnatural interruption of a naturally (even sinful) development. If the supernatural is ruled out of life, all the holiest aspirations of the human heart would be buried in the grave of the miraculous. Let the heart of the world answer which is the more probable: is the Creator a moral or a non-moral God? Does the world exist for a physical or a moral end? Proper consideration for these questions will show

how probable it is that miracles will occur when there is a sufficiently important moral or beneficent end to be served thereby.” (David Clark)

Miracles are Instructive

Christ and the Apostles set the teaching value of miracles forth.

- ◆ **Matthew 9:6** *"But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (then saith he to the sick of the palsy,) Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house."*
- ◆ **Matthew 11:5** *"The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them."*
- ◆ **John 3:2** *"The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, 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 5:36** *"But I have greater witness than that of John: for the works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me."*
- ◆ **John 9:30** *"The man answered and said unto them, Why herein is a marvelous thing, that ye know not from whence he is, and yet he hath opened mine eyes."*
- ◆ **John 9:32** *"Since the world began was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind."*
- ◆ **John 20:30** *"And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book:"*
- ◆ **John 20:31** *"But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name."*
- ◆ **John 10:37** *"If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not."*
- ◆ **John 10:38** *"But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works: that ye may know, and believe, that the Father is in me, and I in him. These verses shows clearly that miracles are evidential in their character."*

When and where do Miracles Occur?

Miracles are not to be expected where Natural Law is sufficient. Nor are they to be expected where revelation is sufficient. Miracles may be present when hopeless situations arise or where there is great faith for something special. Miracles are most infrequent in an unbelieving age or place. *"He did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief."* (Matt. 13:58) The early church recorded the occurrence of miracles following the days of the Apostle. Tertullian and Origen testify of the miraculous during the second century. Theodore Of Mopsuestia (d. 429) wrote during his lifetime that, *"Many heathen among us are being healed by Christians from whatsoever sickness they may have, so abundant are miracles in our midst."* The Scriptures indicate that miracles will continue beyond the days of the Apostles.

- ◆ John 14:12 *"He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also, and greater works than these shall he do because I go to the Father."*
- ◆ Mark 16:17-18 *"And these signs shall follow them that believe: In my name shall they cast out demons; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents, and if they shall drink any deadly thing it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover."*

Objections by Rationalism and Modernism

The possibility of miracles in more modern times has been mocked. Rationalism, which arose in the middle of the 18th century (c.1750) to discredit the supernatural has given way to the Modernism of the 19th century which continues to discredit belief in miracles at the end of the 20th century. Miracles have been explain away by assigning them to natural causes. Thunder and lightening are thought sufficient to explain away the miracles on Sinai, Carmel, and the voice of God at Christ's baptism. Liberal ministers dare to teach that the loaves and fishes were not multiplied in a miraculous way. Rather the example of a young child shamed others into sharing their limited lunch supplies. One by one the miracles of the Bible, from Genesis to Revelation, are discredited.

The Silence of the Skeptics

A sufficient response to the skeptic is to point to the mighty works which Christ performed.

- His miracles were performed before the unbelieving Pharisees and before sufficient numbers to verify and multiply the testimony of converts (John 14:11).
- Thomas demanded palpable proof of the resurrection, and received it in a miraculous manner (John 20:24-29)
- The Pharisees could not deny the miracles of Jesus but attributed them to Beelzebub, the Lord of the Flies (Matt. 12:24-27).
- Nicodemus, a brilliant religious leader of the Jews said, *"No man can do the miracles thou doest except God be with him."* (John 3:2). Nicodemus believed in the supernatural, and so should we.

Special Arguments for Miracles

- The denial of miracles is the denial of a free, living, personal God.
- The denial of a free-living personal miracle working God subverts all religion and all moral life. If there are no miracles then there is no salvation and no hope of a future life. Men will neither fear love or serve what has no power over them or relation to them.
- If there are no miracles then Christ was not God incarnate, He never rose from the grave, and He can offer no hope for the future.
- If there are no miracles, all things in nature and history must be explained on the basis of Natural Law which involves greater difficulties than belief in miracles.
- If there are no miracles then there was no special creation as set forth in Genesis.
- If there are no miracles then matter, not God is eternal. There is no preservation or providence and the world has continued itself in existence only by mere chance.
- If there were no Divine creation, man and all of life is the product of spontaneous generation, a scientific absurdity.
- If there are no miracles, an explanation must be given for the survival of the Jewish people, the Bible, prophecy, Christ and His teachings, the disciples and their convictions, the Church, and the new birth. By denying miracles, men are compelled to believe in less believable prodigies (wonders).
- If Jesus Christ is divine, and He is, it would be more incredible if He performed no miracles.
- Finally, the person who has once been the subject of regenerating grace and has experienced the saving power of God, and lives in communion with Him, will have little difficulty in believing in miracles. (suggested by David Clark) *"Tell me how He got the song from the seraph and robed it in feathers got the canary. Tell me, then, what I wish you could tell me, how Jesus came to my gypsy tent. Oh, it is such a mystery to me! I wish somebody would fathom the deep and scale the heights and explain it to me. When there was no Bible, when I could not spell my name, when I was only a little wandering gypsy boy, with my brother and three sisters and my father, without God and without hope in the world--tell me how Jesus came to that old gypsy tent and opened my eyes and made me know He was my Saviour and my Lord. Tell me how, for I do not know. But I know He did it"* (Gipsy Smith).

Part II

BIBLIOLOGY: THE STUDY OF THE BIBLE

Chapter 10

THE SCRIPTURES

*"Heaven and earth shall pass away
But my Words shall not pass away."*

Mark 13:31

A Confession of Faith

"The Holy Scripture is the only sufficient, certain, and infallible rule of all saving knowledge, faith, and obedience. Although the light of nature, and the works of creation and providence do so far manifest the goodness, wisdom, and power of God, as to leave men inexcusable, yet are they not sufficient to give that knowledge of God and His will which is necessary unto salvation. Therefore it pleased the Lord at sundry times and in divers manners to reveal Himself, and to declare that His will unto His Church; and afterward for the better preserving and propagating of the truth, and for the more sure establishment and comfort of the Church against the corruption of the flesh, and the malice of Satan, and of the world, to commit the same wholly unto writing; which maketh the Holy Scriptures to be most necessary, those former ways of God's revealing His will unto His people being now ceased...." (The Baptist Confession of Faith of 1689, Chapter 1, Section 1; study 2 Tim. 3:15-17; Isa. 8:20; Luke 16:29,31; Eph. 2:20; Rom. 1:19-21; 2:14,15; Psa. 19:1-3; Heb. 1:1; Prov. 22:19-21; Rom. 15:4; 2 Pet. 1:19,20)

"We may be moved and induced by the testimony of the Church of God to an high and reverent esteem of the Holy Scriptures; and the heavenliness of the matter, the efficacy of the doctrine, and the majesty of the style, the consent of all the parts, the scope of the whole (which is to give all glory to God), the full discovery it makes of the only way of man's salvation, and many other incomparable excellencies, and entire perfections thereof, are arguments whereby it doth abundantly evidence itself to be the Word of God; yet not withstanding, our full persuasion and assurance of the infallible truth, and divine authority thereof, is from the inward work of the Holy Spirit bearing witness by and with the Word in our hearts." (The Baptist Confession of Faith of 1689, Chapter 1, Section 5; study John 16:13,14; 1 Cor. 2:10-12; 1 John 2:20,27)

A Definition of Bibliology

Bibliology refers to the study of the Scriptures of the Old and the New Testaments. Since the Scriptures are the main source of Christian belief, what a person believes about the Bible is extremely important. Two basic positions are taken regarding the Bible. One position states that the Scriptures are only ordinary human literature. The other position maintains that the Scriptures are the actual words of God, that they are inspired and authoritative because they are of Divine revelation, and that they have been received by God's people. A young theological student in a certain liberal school went to visit his aging grandmother during his vacation. He said to her, "Grandmother, you know the Bible that you say you believe was written in the Hebrew and the Greek languages. It had to be translated by great scholars into our language. How do you know that those who translated it, got it right?" "Ah, Jamie lad," replied grandmother. "Never mind the great men; I have translated a few of those promises myself."

The Books of the Bible

"Under the name of Holy Scripture, or the Word of God written, are now contained all the books of the Old and New Testament, which are these:

OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

Genesis	1 Kings	Ecclesiastes	Obadiah
Exodus	2 Kings	Song of Solomon	Jonah
Leviticus	1 Chronicles	Isaiah	Micah
Numbers	2 Chronicles	Jeremiah	Nahum
Deuteronomy	Ezra	Lamentation	Habakkuk
Joshua	Nehemiah	Ezekiel	Zephaniah
Judges	Esther	Daniel	Haggai
Ruth	Job	Hosea	Zechariah
1 Samuel	Psalms	Joel	
2 Samuel	Proverbs	Amos	

OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

Matthew	Galatians	Hebrews	Revelation
Mark	Ephesians	James	
Luke	Philippians	1 Peter	
John	Colossians	2 Peter	
Acts	1 Thessalonians	1 John	
Romans	2 Thessalonians	2 John	
1 Corinthians	1 Timothy	3 John	
2 Corinthians	2 Timothy	Jude	

"All of which are given by inspiration of God, to be the rule of faith and life. The books called Apocrypha, not being of Divine inspiration, are no part of the canon or rule of the Scripture, and therefore are of no authority to the Church of God, nor to be any otherwise approved or made use of than other human writings" (The Baptist Confession of Faith of 1689, Chapter 1, Section 2; study 2 Tim. 3:16).

A Revelation from God

To believe in Divine revelation does not mean to believe that everything in the Bible has been supernaturally revealed to the mind of men. Much information in the Bible was collected from human records and personal observation and did not require supernatural revelation. In the Old Testament reference is made to various writings that are no longer available (note Num. 221:14; Josh. 10:13; 1 Chron. 29:29; 1 Kings 11:41). Nehemiah and Ezra provides genealogies, letters of Persian kings and other documents. Turning to the New Testament a similar situation exists. There are references to extra biblical sources (Acts 17:28; 1 Cor. 10:33; Tit. 1:2). However, belief in Divine revelation insists that the entire gathering of data was supervised by the God the Holy Spirit in order to be presented as God's message to man in word without error and without change. *"One of the best evidences that the Bible is a revelation from God, is that it is a revelation of God"* (Francis L. Patton).

The revelation of God is the revelation of what God is like. The Bible tells us that God is good. *"O taste and see that the Lord is good: blessed is that man that trusteth in him."* (Psa. 34:8) The regenerated heart agrees, God is good. The goodness of God is manifested by the fact

that He draws close to His creation; He could do not less. *"As it is natural for a loving father to reveal himself to his children, so it is natural that the God who is good and loving would make Himself known to the children He has created in His own image."* (David Clark)

As it is natural for a father to desire fellowship with his children, so it is also natural for the children to seek fellowship with their father. The Bible teaches that man is seeking after God *"If haply they may feel after him and find him"* (Acts 17:27). In an African tribe, a native's first question on meeting a white man was: *"Have you any news from above?"* Despite the presence of sin and the darkness of man's mind, there is still an irrepressible inclination in the human race to search after God in hope that there is a revelation of Him. In the Bible, in the Book of all books, there is that revelation.

The Bible: A Book That Can Be Believed

It is not wrong to honestly ask whether or not the Bible can be believed. Based upon objective observations, the conclusion is that the Bible can be trusted for a number of reasons.

- The Bible provides the answers to the ultimate questions of life. It solves the lonely mystery of existence as an alternative to atheism and agnosticism. And most of all, the Bible tells men how to live forever.
- The Bible tells of God's remedy for sin by showing the way of salvation. At the World's Fair at Chicago in 1893 religious leaders from many faiths gathered together in a lovely building set aside for spiritual activities. One by one, leading men arose and spoke for Buddhism, Confucianism, Hinduism and the faith of Islam. Finally, Joseph Cook arose to address the gathering and to say something on behalf of Christ and Christianity. Holding out his hand, he asked the rhetorical question of Lady McBeth: *"Who will wash white my red right hand?"* Joseph Cook went on to press personal application by asking. *"Can Confucianism wash white my sinful heart stained with the blood of Christ at Calvary? Can Hinduism, Mohammedanism, or Buddhism? They do not even claim to do so! But it is a known fact that Christianity claims to do that very thing and does it!"*

How wonderful it is to know that, *"The blood of Jesus Christ His [God's] Son cleanseth us from all sin."* (1 John 1:7) *"Come now and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool"* (Isa. 1:18). No matter what the sin may be, there is healing to be found in Christ so that no one is without hope. Young or old, rich or poor, educated or un-educated can find in the Bible a message of salvation. It can be believed.

Great Belief is not Bibliolatry

"Evangelical Christians are not, or ought not to be, what we are sometimes accused of being, namely, 'bibliolaters,' worshipers of the Bible. We do not worship the Bible; we worship the Christ of the Bible. Here is a young man who is in love. He has a girlfriend who has captured his heart. As a result he carries a photograph of his beloved in his wallet because it reminds him of her when she is far away. Sometimes, when nobody is looking, he might even take the photograph out and give it a surreptitious kiss. But kissing the photograph is a poor substitute for the real thing. And so it is with the Bible. We love it only because we love Him of whom it speaks" (John R. W. Stott).

A Day of Divine Discovery

If God in His mercy, *on this day*, has opened your heart to this truth so that you have *believed* on the Lord Jesus Christ as your personal Savior (Acts 16:31), and have received from Him forgiveness of sins and life everlasting (John 3:16), please write to the publishers and let them know. They would like to encourage you in your Christian faith and send some free literature to help you in your Christian growth.

The Harmony of the Bible

In the study of the Bible a wonderful harmony is soon discovered among its many different authors. This harmony speaks of a supernatural outcome for it is very difficult to get any group of people to tell the same story without wide disagreement. The more elaborate the narrative, the more difficulty it is to arrange the different perspectives and arrive at the truth. The Bible has no problem with veracity or truthfulness. Here is a Book with a consistent story despite being written by forty different men, from different occupations to include kings, statesmen, scribes, nomads, scholars, peasants, herdsman, fruit vendors, warriors, chiefs, fishermen, publican, tradesmen, physician, and scholars. Even more amazing is the fact that these individuals lived at different times over a time span of 1500 years. Most of the writers never met, nor even communicated with each other thereby having no possibility of collusion. And yet, the holy authors produced a harmonious work.

The Bible Record Reveals one Story

- There is one account of God.
- There is one account of the human race.
- There is one account of the human heart.
- There is one account of sin.
- There is one account of the way of salvation.
- There is one account of the destiny of the world and of men.
- There is one account of human duty and obligation.

The Essential Unity in the Scriptural Narrative

- Genesis tells of sin in the beginning
Revelation shows salvation in the end
- Genesis shows man driven out
Revelation shows man brought back
- Genesis shows a closed gate
Revelation a city open on all sides
- Genesis shows exclusion from the tree of life
Revelation shows admission to the tree of life
- Genesis gives us the promise
Revelation shows the fulfilled
- Genesis shows the curse on sin
Revelation the victory over it
- Genesis shows the first step
Revelation the last step in the process of redemption
- In Genesis we hear the first sob and see the first teardrop
In Revelation we read that, "*God shall wipe away all tears.*"

The Centrality of Christ

Jesus Christ is the central theme of the Bible from beginning to end. He who in Genesis is promised as the seed of the woman, is seen in Revelation sitting on the great white throne judging all the races of men. The covenants of the Old Testament culminate in the covenant of the New as per Hebrews 8. The history of the ancient times was selected as a prelude to the history of the Son of Man. The sacrifices were types of the great sacrifice of Calvary. The prophets spoke of Him; the psalmists sang of him; the hopes of the saints reached out to His coming. *“The Bible is a supernatural witness to a supernatural Person who was to come and who did come to save the world from sin and death.”*

The Transforming Power of the Bible

There is something else. *“The Bible has transformed all of life and sanctified the fallen nature. It has kept mankind sensible of the distance and difference between him and God thereby keeping him humble. But it has also raised his aspirations and made him a helper of his brother.”* In addition, *“The Word of God has created the difference between the Christian and the savage. It has taught him that he is a citizen of a heavenly country, while he is a pilgrim here below. While he pursues his earthly journey, he is looking away with the eye of faith to the city that hath foundation whose builder and maker is God. The Christian is not overwhelmed when calamity overtakes him and earthly things dissolve and disappear. In the evanescence (temporal nature) of all earthly things, the Bible leads souls to rests upon the abiding and eternal Saviour. The faith that the Bible generates is worth more to moral man than all worldly possessions and human learning. Its words are the sweetest that pen has written or tongue has spoken. Its principles are the loftiest that the world has known.*

In its influence on man, the Bible transcends all other agencies ever employed for his benefit. The Bible has hallowed homes, sanctified hearts, soothed away sorrows, dried up tears, cheered the sick, strengthened the weak, upheld the faithful, inspired devotion, re-kindled hope, conquered fears, induced joys, inspired songs, comforted the dying, and given victory over death for a thousand generations that have believed its truth and trusted its promises. Its promises have been proven to be true by the experiences of faithful generations that lived in its glorious light and died in the faith that it proclaims. Millions upon million love the sacred Book “ (David Clark)

*I love the sacred Book of God,
No other can its place supply;
It points me to the saint's abode,
And bids me from destruction fly.*

Sweet Book!

*In thee my eyes discern
The image of my absent Lord;
From thy instructive page I learn
The joys His presence will afford.*

*But while I'm here thou shall supply
His place, and tell me of His love;
I'll read with faith's discerning eye,
And thus partake of joys above.*

~*~

Thomas Kelly

*"Some books are for our inspiration;
the Bible is for our transformation."*

~*~

Unknown

Liberal Theology and the Lord of Glory

In more recent years much modern Liberal Theology has undermined the authority of the Bible by contending that the Bible is not a revelation from God and therefore it is not supernaturally given.

- ◆ The argument is made that the origin of the Scriptures is subjective, not supernatural or, as is sometimes said, "*It came from within, not from above.*" This is not the view that the Bible takes of itself, since it repeatedly declares, "*Thus saith the Lord.*" The Bible claim to be supernaturally inspired. "*All scripture is given by inspiration of God.*" (2 Tim. 3:16)
- ◆ Liberal Theology insists that the Bible has no more authority than any other human literature. In contrast, Jesus said, "*Till heaven and earth pass one jot and one tittle shall in no wise pass from the Law, till all be fulfilled,*" (Matt. 5:18) and, "*The Scripture cannot be broken.*" (John 10:35)
- ◆ Liberal Theology teaches that the Bible is essentially a record of human experience which expresses the convictions men have entertained, in various ages, on the religious questions that concerned them. In certain portions, the Bible is not even historical (Gen. 1-11); it only transmits the stories which the ancient Hebrew mind has developed concerning certain events, or explanations which the ancients gave to particular natural phenomena. "*But this has not been the official view of the Church through the ages, nor of the multitude of simple devout believers who have accepted the teachings of the Scriptures and trusted its promises as the Word of God.*" (David Clark)
- ◆ Liberal Theology insists that the Bible has no consistency. However, that does not matter for this reason: what *seemed* true to men of one age, is out of date and superseded by the convictions of another age. According to Liberal Theology, the Bible is mainly a witness to the *progress* of human beliefs. Religious beliefs are said to have advanced for men have grown wiser by past spiritual experiences. The Bible may be valuable as a history of religious thought, but is not to be taken as expressing authoritative and unchanging truth. In light of the cultic and the occultic practices so prevalent in modern society, it is hard to conceive how it can be argued that men have advanced and grown wiser by their spiritual

experiences when they have not turned to Christ and when they reject the divine revelation of the Bible.

- ◆ Perhaps the worst assault by Liberal Theology is when it says that the Bible is not an infallible rule of faith and practice though many good things may be found in the Scriptures, which commend themselves to human judgment. That is absurd. If the Bible is only a series of tall tales told by idiots who have lied about receiving their messages from God, it is not to be commended to human judgment or anything else. It is to be condemned. The Bible is not a good book, if Liberal Theology is true, but the worst fraud that has ever been fostered upon the human race.

Responding to the Rationalists

Because of its open assault upon the Word of God, and the God of the Word, no Christian can accept Liberal Theology. Liberal Theology as a system of thought has never given proper consideration to the reasonableness of biblical cosmology [worldview]; to the correspondence of type and anti-type; to the fulfillment of predictive prophecy; and to the authority of Jesus Christ. When Liberal Theology is challenged concerning the authority of the Bible, it counters intelligent opposition by asserting that the Scriptures are not essential to Christianity because true Christianity is ultimately demands a life of service rather than a set of beliefs. This concept has led some Liberal theologians to suggest that the Scriptures should be set aside as a basis for Christianity. Why? Because certain Scriptural concepts which are a burden to belief and a hindrance to personal progress! *"There is too much that is negative,"* says the Liberal theologian. *"There is too much attention paid to sin!"* What is needed is the power of positive thinking! *"We are here to worship success,"* declared one well-known advocate of Liberal Theology who hates sin but loves self-esteem concepts. And so it is that the reality of sin and the need for a Saviour is set aside. The bankrupt ideas of Liberal Theology should be understood, rejected, and then resisted as Paul withstood the vain philosophies of his day. The Bible tells Christians to, *"earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints."* (Jude 1:3b)

The fact that the Bible still stands, in spite of the intense opposition of its enemies through the years is a tribute to the providence of God in preserving His Word. John Clifford wrote of this very thing in a poetic tribute to the precious Book. *"I passed last eve beside the blacksmith's door,"* he wrote, *"and heard the anvil ring, the vespers chime and looking in, I saw upon the floor old hammers worn with beating years of time. 'How many anvils have you had,' said I, 'To wear and batter all these hammers so?' 'Just one,' said he, and then with twinkling eye, 'The anvil wears the hammers out, you know.' And so, thought I, the anvil is God's Word, for ages skeptics' blows have beat upon -- but, though the noise of falling blows was heard, the anvil is unchanged; the hammers gone!"*

There it Stands

*Century follows century--There it stands.
Empires rise and fall and are forgotten--There it stands.
Dynasty succeeds dynasty--There it stands.
Kings are crowned and uncrowned--There it stands.
Emperors decree its extermination--There it stands.*

*Atheists rail against it--There it stands.
Agnostics smile cynically--There it stands.
Profane prayerless punsters caricature it--There it stands.
Unbelief abandons it--There it stands.
Higher critics deny its claim to inspiration--There it stands.*

*The flames are kindled about it--There it stands.
The tooth of time gnaws but makes no dent in it--There it stands.
Infidels predict its abandonment--There it stands.
Modernism tries to explain it away--There it stands.*

~*~

A. Z. Conrad

Chapter 11

OUR GOD BREATHED BOOK: THE BIBLE

The Inspiration of the Scriptures

"If we have in the Word of God no infallible standard of truth, we are at sea without a compass, and no danger from rough weather, without can equal to this loss within. 'If the foundation be moved, what can the righteous do?' And this is a foundation loss of the worst kind." (Unknown) The study of inspiration includes many facets as the following points illustrate.

- There is inspiration without revelation as in Luke or Acts Luke 1:1-3
- There is inspiration including revelation as in the Apocalypse Rev. 1:1,11
- There is inspiration without illumination as in the prophets 1 Pet. 1:11
- There is inspiration including illumination as in the case of Paul 1 Cor. 2:12
- There is revelation without inspiration as in the word of God from Mt. Sinai Ex. 20:1,22
- There is illumination without inspiration as in preaching Eph. 2:20

The Bible declares simply enough that, *"All Scripture is given by inspiration of [Gk. theopneustos, lit., God-breathed]."* What does that mean? Various views have been offered to help guide the understanding.

- *"Inspiration is such an influence over the writers of the Bible that all their teachings which have a religious character are trustworthy."* E. A. Park
- *"Inspiration is help from God to keep the report of divine revelation free from error."* W. C. Wilkinson
- *"Inspiration was an influence of the Spirit of God on those powers of men which are concerned in the reception, retention and expression of religious truth—an influence so pervading and powerful that the teaching of inspired men was according to the mind of God."* Alvah Hovey
- *"God has first revealed Himself and then has inspired men to interpret, record and apply this revelation."* Christmas Evans

Negative Theories of Divine Inspiration

*Men who deny the infallibility of the Bible
are usually ready to trust the infallibility
of their own opinion.*

~*~

David Clark

- ◆ **It is argued that there has never been any divine inspiration of Scriptures.**
Response. The argument has tried to be made that the Bible is only a human book. Believing this, the Atheist, Pantheist, Deist, Liberal Theology and the ordinary unbeliever has no use for the Scriptures for they do not have a correct concept of inspiration.
- ◆ **It is argued that the events were inspired but not the record of the event.**
Response. This is a careless concept. If God is truly sovereign and decrees all things that come to pass, then there cannot be a separation between what happens by Divine will and what is faithfully recorded to have happened. It is an dubious position to admit that God might inspire an event and then deny that He would inspire the recording of that event.
- ◆ **It is argued that the thoughts of the Bible were inspired, but not the words.**
Response. This is not possible. As Dr. W. G. T. Shedd points out, "*An idea is an internal word. A word is an external idea.*" They are intrinsically united. The Scriptures recognize this in various passages.

Psalms 14:1 "*The fool hath said in his heart, there is no God.*"

Luke 3:8 "*Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance, and begin not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our Father: for I say unto you, That God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.*"

Thought and words are bound together and cannot be separated the one from the other. Words are "the clothes of ideas". Moses was told, "*I will be with your mouth and teach you what you shall speak.*" (Ex. 4:12) God charged Ezekiel saying, "*And you shall speak my words to them.*" (Ezek. 2:7) Of the Ten Commandments it was said, "*And God spoke all these words*" (Ex. 20:1) Conservative Christian scholars have always insisted that the men who wrote the Bible were inspired; their thoughts were inspired, and their words were inspired. "*The authority of the Holy Scripture, for which it ought to be believed, dependeth not upon the testimony of any man or church, but wholly upon God (who is truth itself), the author thereof; therefore it is to be received because it is the Word of God.*" (*The Baptist Confession Of Faith Of 1689*, Chapter 1, Section 4; study 2 Pet. 1:19-21; 2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Thess. 2:13; 1 John 5:9).

- ◆ **It is argued that the writers were preserved from error in matters necessary to salvation, but not as to other matters like history, chronology, science etc. Response.** It is impossible to tell what is and what is not necessary to salvation. If the history is false, the doctrine cannot be true. If the gospels are mythical, we have no Saviour. If the resurrection of Christ is a fabrication, our faith is in vain. Such vital matters as the incarnation (God in the flesh), atonement, regeneration, calling, salvation, resurrection, and future rewards and punishments require the guidance of an infallible (unerring) Spirit to avoid any doctrinal statement that would be misleading.

Plenary And Verbal Inspiration

The historic doctrine of the Church is that the Scriptures assert a plenary and verbal inspiration.

- ◆ Plenary inspiration means that the Bible is inspired in all its parts in the original autographs. Christ never distinguishes between the books of the Bible as to their divine origin and authenticity, but applies the term, "*Word of God,*" to the whole canon of the Old Testament. The Apostles do the same (2 Tim. 3:16).
- ◆ Verbal inspiration means that in the making of the Scriptures the guidance of the Holy Spirit extended to the precise words that were used and not merely to the thoughts or concepts. The Scriptures constantly claim that their words were given or directed by the Holy Spirit (2 Pet. 1:21; Acts 4:25; 1 Cor. 2:13).

Inspiration and Inerrancy

In discussing the inspiration and inerrancy of the Bible, care should be taken to remember that inerrancy does not mean that the writers themselves were faultless in life. What the doctrine does teach is that the writers were preserved from error in their teaching while they were writing the Scriptures. Individual authors may have embraced wrong conceptions about many things as Peter did at Antioch and had to be rebuked by Paul (Gal. 2:11-17). However, the Holy Spirit sovereignly restrained Peter and all the authors of the Scriptures from teaching error through their scriptural writings.

- Inerrancy does not mean that a wrong interpretation could not be put on the text, or that it could not be misunderstood. The Pharisees misquoted the Old Testament and Peter found the writings of Paul difficult to understand (2 Pet. 3:16).
- Inerrancy does not deny the flexibility of language as a vehicle of communication. It is often difficult to convey an exact statement because language is flexible. It is also possible for words to have a variation of meaning that is why conservative Christians have argued for plenary verbal inspiration in the original autographs (i.e., the first documents).
- What inerrancy does mean is that truth is conveyed in words which, understood as they were meant to be understood, express no error in the original autographs.

The Autographs

"The Old Testament in Hebrew (which was the native tongue of the people of God of old), and the New Testament in Greek (which at the time of the writing of it was the most generally known to the nations), being immediately inspired by God, and by His singular care and providence kept pure in all ages, are therefore authentic; so as in all controversies of religion, the Church is finally to appeal to them. But because these original tongues are not known to all the people of God, who have a right unto, and interest in the Scriptures, and are commanded in the fear of God to read and search them, therefore they are to be translated into the vulgar language of every nation unto which they come, that the Word of God dwelling plentifully in all, they may worship Him in an acceptable manner, and through patience and comfort of the Scriptures may have hope." (The Baptist Confession Of Faith Of 1689, Chapter 1, Section 8; study Rom 3:2; Isa. 8:20; Acts 15:15; John 5:39; 1 Cor. 14:6,9,11,12,24,28; Col. 3:16)

Technically, authenticity and inerrancy is a doctrine that applies only to the *autographs* (i.e., original manuscripts) in Hebrew and Greek. The Church has maintained that those documents were immediately inspired by God the Holy Spirit. According to the will of the Lord, none of the autographs have survived the passage of time. The Scriptures have come down to us in manuscripts of the original languages, in quotations of early writers, and in translations into other languages. Nevertheless, the text is singularly, or at least comparatively, pure. Some alterations and mistakes of copyists have occurred. Our difficulties are chiefly due to these mistakes of transmission, and failure to understand idioms and idiosyncrasies of other ages, and to render them properly. Prior to 1948, the oldest extant Hebrew manuscripts date from the ninth or tenth century AD. The oldest Greek manuscripts of the New Testament are from the third or fourth century. This is not unusual. It is said that there are no manuscripts of Cicero, Caesar, Tacitus, and Josephus within eight hundred years of their time. The most recent and most thorough investigation of the text of the Scriptures entirely vindicate the trustworthiness of the record.

What About the Various Readings?

Some make the various readings of different manuscripts an objection to verbal inspiration. Certainly the various readings do not touch the fact of the original. If God gave us an inspired original, nothing can undo the first act. But the various readings, though numerous, make no vital change in the text, which has been kept pure by the power of God in all ages. The Jew counted the number of words and letters. They could tell how many times *aleph* or *beth* occurred in the Bible; which was the middle letter in the *Pentateuch*; or in any particular book. With such care, has the text been handed down. This fact has been verified by the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls. The Scrolls show only a few and insignificant variations between all the known texts.

What do the Scriptures say as to their own Inerrancy?

Concerning itself, the Bible declares that it is the Word of the God who cannot err. "*Thus saith the Lord,*" is a consistent phrase throughout the authorized text.

Matthew 5:18 Of the Bible, Jesus said, "*Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.*"

John 10:35 The Lord also affirmed that, "*The Scriptures cannot be broken.*"

- ◆ Galatians 3:16. The importance of even a single *letter* is found in this passage for Paul's argument turns on the singular or plural number of a word--seed. "*Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ.*"
- ❖ **Special note.** All of this does diminish the realization that at times the Bible does use the language of common speech with all of the characteristics of everyday conversation. It is to be readily acknowledged that the Bible often uses round numbers in estimating armies, the number of people killed in battle or a plague, periods of years, and the approximate hour the time of day. Such things do not negate the authenticity of Divine inspiration.

Old Testament Claims to Divine Inspiration

- ◆ Deuteronomy 4:2 "*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.*"
- ◆ Deuteronomy 4:5 "*Behold, I have taught you statutes and judgments, even as the LORD my God commanded me, that ye should do so in the land whither ye go to possess it.*"
- ◆ 1 Samuel 23:2 "*The Spirit of the LORD spake by me, and his word was in my tongue.*"
- ◆ Isaiah 1:10 "*Hear the word of the LORD, ye rulers of Sodom; give ear unto the law of our God, ye people of Gomorrah.*"
- ◆ Jeremiah 1:9 "*Then the LORD put forth his hand, and touched my mouth. And the LORD said unto me, Behold, I have put my words in thy mouth.*"
- ◆ Jeremiah 1:2 "*To whom the word of the LORD came in the days of Josiah the son of Amon king of Judah, in the thirteenth year of his reign.*"
- ◆ Ezekiel 3:1 "*Moreover he said unto me, Son of man, eat that thou findest; eat this roll, and go speak unto the house of Israel.*"
- ◆ Ezekiel 3:4 "*And he said unto me, Son of man, go, get thee unto the house of Israel, and speak with my words unto them.*"
- ◆ Hosea 1:1 "*The word of the LORD that came unto Hosea, the son of Beeri, in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam the son of Joash, king of Israel.*"
- ◆ Joel 1:1 "*The word of the LORD that came to Joel the son of Pethuel.*"
- ◆ Amos 1:3 "*Thus saith the LORD; For three transgressions of Damascus, and for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof; because they have threshed Gilead with threshing instruments of iron:*"

- ◆ Amos 3:1 *"Hear this word that the LORD hath spoken against you, O children of Israel, against the whole family which I brought up from the land of Egypt, saying,"*
- ◆ Obadiah 1:1 *"The vision of Obadiah. Thus saith the Lord GOD concerning Edom; We have heard a rumor from the LORD, and an ambassador is sent among the heathen, Arise ye, and let us rise up against her in battle."*
- ◆ Micah 1:1 *"The word of the LORD that came to Micah the Morasthite in the days of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, which he saw concerning Samaria and Jerusalem."*

The New Testament Affirms the Inspiration of the Old Testament

- ◆ Luke 1:70 *"As he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the world began:"*
- ◆ Acts 4:25 *"Who by the mouth of thy servant David hast said, Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things?"*
- ◆ Hebrews 1:1 *"God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets,"*
- ◆ 2 Tim. 3:16 *"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:"*
- ◆ 1 Peter 1: 11 *"Searching 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 Peter 1:21 *"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."*

The Inspiration of the New Testament

- ◆ Matthew 10:19 *"But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak."*
- ◆ John 14:26 *"But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you."*
- ◆ John 15:26 *"But 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 27 *"And ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning."*

- ◆ John 16:13 *"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 shew you things to come."*

Because inspiration was promised to the Apostles, they do not hesitate to present their words as the words of the Holy Spirit

- ◆ Acts 2:33 *"Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear."*
- ◆ Acts 15:28 *"For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things;"*
- ◆ 1 Thessalonians 1:5 *"For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake."*
- ◆ 1 Corinthians 2:13 *"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."*
- ◆ 1 Corinthians 13:3 *"Since ye seek a proof of Christ speaking in me, which to you-ward is not weak, but is mighty in you."*
- ◆ 2 Peter 3:16 *"As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other Scriptures, unto their own destruction."*
- ◆ 1 Thessalonians 2:13 *"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 effectual worketh also in you that believe."*
- ◆ 1 Corinthians 14:37 *"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."*

Proof of Inspiration from General Consideration

The trustworthiness of the Scriptures is the foundation stone of all argument for inspiration. If can be proven that the Bible is historically credible; if, beyond all reasonable controversy, the authors of the Bible are to be trusted; if their records are Found to be trustworthy; if what they say can be accepted, then we are justified in believing what they say about their inspiration. Only on the ground that the Scriptures are *unworthy* of acceptance, should the claims of the biblical authors to divine inspiration be discarded.

The Scriptures are freed from absurdities. The Scriptures avoid the absurdities of their contemporaries--the Chinese, the Hindus, the Persians, the Greek philosophers--and even the views of over zealous early and medieval Christians, and followers of Mohammed. For example, the ancient Egyptians believed that the earth came from an egg with wings, which flew around in the heavens until the process of mitosis was completed and the earth came forth. The fact that Moses, who was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, (Acts 7:22) and did not teach that the sun, stars, and elements were endowed with intelligence, speaks of divine inspiration. Every prophecy whose fulfillment can be verified is proof of supernatural guidance. Every scientific expression that has transcended the age in which it was written is evidence of inspiration. Consider the following texts.

- ◆ Job 26:7 "*He stretcheth out the north over the empty place, and hangeth the earth upon nothing.*"
- ◆ Psalms 135:7 "*He causeth the vapors to ascend from the ends of the earth; he maketh lightning for the rain; he bringeth the wind out of his treasuries.*"
- ◆ Ecclesiastes 1:7 "*All the rivers run into the sea; yet the sea is not full; unto the place from whence the rivers come, thither they return again.*"
- ◆ Isaiah 40:22 "*It is he that sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers; that stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in:”* Only through Divine inspiration could such statements be made.

The evidence for inspiration continues in the life of Christ for Jesus fulfilled every single Scripture concerning Himself.

THE MAJESTY OF THE MESSIAH MANIFESTED IN PROPHECY FULFILLED

• Genesis 2:13	cp.	Galatians 4:4	The Messiah would be born of a woman
• Genesis 12:3	cp.	Matthew 1:1	The Messiah would be of the seed of Abraham
• Genesis 17:19	cp.	Luke 3:34	The Messiah would be of the seed of Isaac
• Numbers 24:17	cp.	Matthew 1:2	The Messiah would be of the seed of Jacob
• Genesis 49:10	cp.	Luke 3:33	The Messiah would be from the tribe of Judah
• Isaiah 9:7	cp.	Luke 1:32,33	The Messiah would be heir to the throne of David
• Micah 5:2	cp.	Luke 2:4,5,7	The Messiah would be born in Bethlehem
• Daniel 9:25	cp.	Luke 2:1,2	The Messiah would be born after 490 years
• Isaiah 7:14	cp.	Luke 1:26-31	The Messiah would be born of a virgin
• Jeremiah 31:15	cp.	Luke 2:16-18	Many would time at the birth of the Messiah
• Hosea 11:1	cp.	Matthew 2:14ff	The Messiah would flee to Egypt
• Malachi 3:1	cp.	Luke 7:24,27	A Messenger Would Announce The Messiah
• Psalm	cp.	Matthew 3:17	The Messiah would be honored as the Son of God
• Isaiah 9:1,2	cp.	Matthew 4:13ff	The Messiah would minister in Galilee
• Deuteronomy 18:15	cp.	Acts 3:20,22	The Messiah would be a Prophet
• Isaiah 61:1,2	cp.	Luke 4:18,19	The Messiah would minister to the weak of society
• Isaiah 53:3	cp.	John 1:11; Luke 23:18	The Messiah would be rejected by His own
• Psalm 110:4	cp.	Hebrews 5:5,6	The Messiah would be an eternal Priest
• Zechariah 9:9	cp.	Mark 11:7,9,11	The Messiah would come in glory to Jerusalem
• Psalm 41:9	cp.	Luke 22:47,48	The Messiah would be betrayed by a familiar friend
• Zechariah 11:12	cp.	Matthew 26:15	The Messiah would be sold for thirty pieces of silver
• Psalm 35:11	cp.	Mark 14:57,58	The Messiah would be falsely accused
• Isaiah 53:7	cp.	Mark 15:4,5	The Messiah would not defend Himself
• Isaiah 50:6	cp.	Matthew 26:67	The Messiah would be publicly humiliated
• Psalm 35:19	cp.	John 15: 24, 25	The Messiah would be hated without a cause
• Isaiah 53:5	cp.	Romans 5:6,8	The Messiah would suffer a vicarious death
• Isaiah 53:12	cp.	Mark 15:27,28	The Messiah would be crucified with criminals
• Zechariah 12:10	cp.	John 20:27	The Messiah would be wounded in His body
• Psalm 22:7,8	cp.	Luke 23:35	The Messiah would be laughed at and scorned
• Psalm 69:21	cp.	Matthew 27:34	The Messiah would be given vinegar to drink
• Psalm 109:4	cp.	Luke 23:34	The Messiah would pray for those who hurt Him
• Psalm 22:17,18	cp.	Matthew 27:35ff	Soldiers would gamble for the Messiah's garments
• Psalm 34:20	cp.	John 19:32,33ff	No bones of the Messiah would be broken
• Zechariah 12:10	cp.	John 19:34	The side of the Messiah would be wounded
• Isaiah 53:9	cp.	Matthew 27:57	The Messiah would be buried with the rich
• Psalm 16:10; 59:15	cp.	Mark 16,7	The Messiah would live again after death
• Psalm 68:18	cp.	Mark 16:19	The Messiah would ascend into glory for ever
• 1 Cor. 15:4; Eph. 4:8			

Another evidence for inspiration is found in all the Words of the Old Testament which are quoted by and attributed to God.

- ◆ Acts 1:16 *"Men and brethren, this Scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake before concerning Judas, which was guide to them that took Jesus."*

- ◆ Hebrews 1:8. *"But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of thy kingdom."*
- ◆ Hebrews 3:7 *"Wherefore (as the Holy Ghost saith, To day if ye will hear his voice,"*
- ◆ Hebrews 8:8 *"For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah:"*
- ◆ Hebrews 8:13 *"In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away."*
- ◆ Hebrews 10:15 *"Whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us: for after that he had said before."* Following this statement in Hebrews 10:15 there is a long quotation from the Old Testament. *"Passages are quoted from the Old Testament as predictions verified in New Testament history, the relevancy of which depends upon the assumption that they are correct--a verbally correct--report of divine communications."* (Francis L. Patton)

The unity of the Scriptures concerning the Saviour offers another evidence of divine inspiration. *"The Bible tells one story, exhibits one plan, opens with the fact of a ruined race, and the promise of a Deliverer, proceeds to trace the plan of salvation and the history of God's kingdom, and comes to a conclusion that is absolutely fitting and logical. The obvious conclusion is that a divine superintendent wrought out the plan and the record of it; every design implies a designer; and the design in the Scriptures must have had one overruling designing mind."* (David Clark) Because of the unity of Scriptures we find Christ from Genesis to Revelation.

The Man who Changed the World,

***In Genesis He is the Seed of the woman
In Exodus He is the Passover Lamb
In Leviticus He is the Atoning Sacrifice
In Numbers He is the Smitten Rock
In Deuteronomy He is the Prophet***

***In Joshua He is the Captain of the Lord's Hosts
In Judges He is the Deliverer
In Ruth He is the Heavenly Kinsman
In 1-2 Samuel, 1-2 Kings, and 1-2 Chronicles He is the Promised King
In Nehemiah He is the Restorer of the nation
In Esther He is the Advocate***

***In Job He is my Redeemer
In Psalms He is my Saviour
In Proverbs He is my wisdom
In Ecclesiastes He is my Goal
In the Song of Solomon He is my Satisfier***

In the Prophets He is the coming Prince of Peace
In the Gospels He is God in Christ Jesus come to redeem
In Acts He is Alive in the Church
In the Epistles He is Christ at the Father's right hand
In Revelation He is the mighty conqueror

~*~

Herbert Lockyer

Further proof of Divine inspiration is found in the fact that the Word of God was supreme in Israel. From the earliest days of Israel's life, the word of the prophet, God's spokesman, delivered as God's word, was regarded as of divine force, and above all question (study Deut. 4:2; 18:15-20; 17:8-20). Josephus bears witness to this fact. "*Never, although many ages have elapsed, has any one dared either to take away or to add, or to transpose in these, anything whatever; for it is with all the Jews, as it were an inborn conviction from their very earliest infancy, to call them God's teachings, to abide in them, and if necessary, to die joyfully in maintaining them. They are given to us by the inspiration that comes from God.*"

The Testimony of Jesus Christ

Whoever accepts Jesus Christ as Lord must also accept His understanding of the Scriptures. Only by denying the deity of Christ can one dispute the value of His testimony. And the testimony of Christ is this: Jesus always referred to the Scriptures as the Word of God! "*Have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God?*" (Matt. 22:31 cp. Matt. 19:4-5; Mark 7:9,10,13).

In Mark 12:36, Christ quotes Psalm 110 and attributes the reference to God. In Christ's prayer in John 17:17, the Lord says to His Father, "*Thy word is truth,*" referring to the Scriptures (cp. Luke 16:31 and Luke 24:25). It is absolutely unworthy of the Majesty of the Messiah to suggest that Jesus merely voiced the sentiments of His day. It is a disgrace to declare that Jesus was not ignorant of prevailing error but He simply accommodated His teaching to current beliefs in order to communicate better. That is not true. Christ professed a knowledge and authority far beyond the men of His day that embraced the past as well as the future. Jesus could speak knowingly of Abraham and Moses, and just as positively of the judgment day and the scene beyond the horizon of time. Because of His knowledge and authority of the Scriptures, the Lord did not hesitate to correct the wrong views of the Scribes, lawyers and Pharisees. Jesus pointed out the fallacy of many rabbinical teachings; but He never corrected anyone for believing that the Scriptures were divinely inspired and absolutely authoritative.

If Peter was wrong in declaring Jesus to be the Son of God, based upon the Scriptures, Jesus should have disavowed it. If the Jews were mistaken in regarding the Old Testament as the Word of God and of supreme authority, Jesus should have set them right for He said: "*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) The conclusion is that when Christ referred to the Old Testament as the law, the prophets, and the psalms, He referred to a canon that was complete in His day and was without dispute.

Christ's Appeal to the Scriptures

It is instructive to realize that Christ regarded an appeal to the Scripture as final. To the tempter, Satan, Jesus said, "*It is written.*" (Matt. 4:1-10) That settled the matter. What the Scriptures said could not be controverted or broken. "*It is written*" (no matter in what part) was sufficient authority for Him. The Lord frequently said to the scribes and Pharisees: "*Have ye never read?*" This was an appeal to the Scriptures as the final arbiter that settled all disputes. Jesus said to the Sadducees: "*Ye do err not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God.*" (Mark 12:24) What the Scriptures said of any question of concern was the last word. No need of any other appeal, and no higher appeal could be made. "*In all of this it is seen that Jesus Christ took the Scriptures as the law of His life and the supreme test of human conduct. What Christ did and said all must accept who call Him Master and Lord.*" (David Clark)

Inspiration and the Prophets

The prophets did not always understand their own writings. Instead of their own minds being the source from which they drew their wisdom, the Bible reveals that they themselves, "*inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you, searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify when he testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow.*" (1 Pet. 1:10,11) In answer to their diligent search and inquiry, "*it was revealed that not unto themselves but unto us they did minister the things that are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you*" (1 Pet. 1:12). "*Here is the evidence of a directing divine Mind that guided the writings of the prophets to an end beyond their own times and beyond their natural source of information. Another Mind wrought through their minds and wrote His message to generations then unborn.*" (David Clark)

The Dead Sea Scrolls

Until the recent discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls (1948), the oldest extant Hebrew manuscript was about dated to the year AD 900. Since the Hebrew Old Testament was completed about 400 BC there was a time gap of 1300 years. The exciting news is that when the Dead Sea Scrolls were found two important things were discovered. First, the scrolls were well preserved having been carefully sealed and placed in jar in a dry climate c. AD 68 prior to the fall of Jerusalem (AD 70). While the scrolls were sealed in AD 68, some of the actual scrolls dated back to 125 BC. Most of the biblical manuscripts were dated as being written between 200 BC and 68 AD. What all of this meant is that instead of relying upon copied manuscripts 900 years old, Hebrew scholars could look at manuscripts closer to the historic events. They could also see how well the copyists have preserved the texts which is the second great discovery. Thanks to the work of the Talmudists (AD 100-500) with their strict rules for copying the Scriptures, and thanks to the work of the Massoretes (AD 500-900, from *massora*, "*Tradition*") the Hebrew texts were very well preserved. The evidence proved that the Bible had been transmitted with the minutest accuracy. "*The infallible rule of interpretation of Scripture is the Scripture itself; and therefore when there is a question about the true and full sense of any Scripture (which is not manifold, but one), it must be searched by other places that speak more clearly.*" (***The Baptist Confession Of Faith Of 1689***, Chapter 1, Section 9; study 2 Pet. 1:20,21; Acts 15:15,16)

The Septuagint

Following the fall of Jerusalem to the Babylonians in 586 BC, the Jews were scattered throughout the Middle East. Many never returned home as one empire after another dominated the land of Palestine. Because of this Diaspora, the scattered Jews (cp. James 1:1) need a copy of the Hebrew Scriptures in the new international language. During the reign of King Ptolemy Philadelphus of Egypt (285-246 BC), seventy (LXX) scholars gathered in Alexandria, Egypt to translate the Hebrew Scriptures into Greek. The LXX, being very close to the Massoretic Text (AD 916) we have today, helped to confirm the reliability of the transmission of the Scriptures through the years. There are other documents that could be appealed to for verification of the genuineness of the Old Testament manuscripts and their reliability of being faithfully transmitted down through the centuries.

- *The Samaritan Text* (fifth century BC). This document contains the *Pentateuch*.
- *The Targums* (c. AD 500 onward; lit. "*interpretation*"). These documents contain paraphrases of the Old Testament based upon the Hebrew text. Some of the major Targums date to 60 and 30 BC: The Targum of Onkelas and the Targum of Jonathon Ben Uzziel.
- *The Mishnah* (AD 200; lit. "*explanation, teaching*"). These documents contain Jewish traditions and explanations of the oral law. They are written in Hebrew and have been called "*The Second Law*."

The Authority of the Scriptures

Historically, the Church has always stood for the authority of the Scriptures. Irenaeus said, "*Being most assured that the Scriptures are indeed perfect since they were spoken by...the Holy Spirit.*" Augustine said, "*I believe most firmly that not one of these authors has erred in any respect in writing.*" Luther declared, "*The Scriptures have never erred.*" Calvin stated that, "*The Scriptures are the certain and unerring rule.*" John Wesley said, "*If there be any mistake in the Bible there may very well be a thousand. If there be one falsehood in the Book, it did not come from the God of truth.*"

If the Scriptures are the word of God, they are of absolute authority. There is no appeal from the Word of God to any higher court. All importunity from the Scriptures to the Church, or tradition, or reason, or public sentiment is illogical and destructive. The foremost cry of the Reformation was *sola Scriptura* or *Scripture* alone. [Other Reformation principles were *sola gratia*, grace alone; and *sola fide*, faith alone]

- ◆ 1 John 5:9 "*If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater.*"
- ◆ 1 Thessalonians 2:13 "*When ye received the word of God, which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of man, but, as it is indeed, the word of God.*"

“The whole counsel of God concerning all things necessary for His own glory, man's salvation, faith and life, is either expressly set down or necessarily contained in the Holy Scripture: unto which nothing at any time is to be added, whether by new revelation of the Spirit, or traditions of men. Nevertheless, we acknowledge the inward illumination of the Spirit of God to be necessary for the saving understanding of such things as are revealed in the Word, and that there are some circumstances concerning the worship of God, and government of the Church common to human actions and societies, which are to be ordered by the light of nature and Christian prudence, according to the general rules of the Word, which are always to be observed.” (**The Baptist Confession Of Faith Of 1689**, Chapter 1, Section 6; study 2 Tim. 3:15-17; Gal. 1:8,9; John 6:45; 1 Cor. 2:9-12; 1 Cor. 11:13,14; 14:26,40)

The Perspicuity [Clearness] of the Scriptures

The Protestant faith has always maintained that the Scriptures, designed for personal use, can become sufficiently clear to those who have been born again. The Bible may be read and understood by those with little or no formal education. To this end, every believer is commanded to study the Scriptures in order to come to a conclusion that is compatible with his own conscience and is consistent with the doctrines of the apostles (Acts 2:42; Jude 1:3). The Bereans searched the Scriptures daily. *“All things in Scripture are not alike plain in themselves, nor alike clear unto all; yet those things which are necessary to be known, believed, and observed for salvation, are so clearly propounded and opened in some place of Scripture or other, that not only the learned, but the unlearned, in a due use of ordinary means, may attain to a sufficient understanding of them.”* (**The Baptist Confession Of Faith Of 1689**, Chapter 1, Section 7; study 2 Pet. 3:16; Psa. 19:7; 119:130)

Is Formal Education Necessary to Understand the Bible?

It is obvious that there are definite benefits to be found in any formal study of the Bible which takes into account the languages of the Bible, culture, history, and comparative religions. Progress in Scriptural understanding can be enhanced by appealing to and understanding the original texts and by knowing something about systematic theology. But there are practical dangers in formal studies as well, not the least of which are intellectual pride (1 Cor. 8:1) and spiritual blindness (Matt. 15:14). The Scribes and the Pharisees were experts in the Scriptures. They were also spiritually blind and full of intellectual and self-righteous pride (Matt. 23:13-39).

In light of this, the lack of any formal academic training should discourage no-one. The same Spirit who wrote the Scriptures, the same Spirit who has preserved His Word, is the same Spirit who can interpret what He has written to the humble heart that desires to know the will of the Lord. But there is a word of caution. Those who are without academic skills, those who are not students by temperament, and those who are without resources to engage in formal Bible study, should never belittle or dismiss those who can study and who do give themselves to the Word (cp. Acts 6:2 with 2 Tim. 4:13). As there is unholy intellectual pride, so there is an unholy humility that glories in ignorance. Both passions, intellectual pride and feigned humility, are to be crucified as part of the fleshly nature.

The Church Fathers

While the evidence for a reliable Old Testament canon of Scripture is impressive, the evidence of primary source material for the New Testament is overwhelming. No scholar should ever doubt the New Testament as being a competent primary source document from the first century. In addition to the written testimonies of individuals who wrote as eyewitnesses or from first hand information (Luke, Peter, John, Paul etc.), there is supporting evidence of the extra biblical authors such as Eusebius, the bishop of Hierapolis (AD 130), Papias, Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyons (AD 180), Clement of Rome (AD 95), Polycarp (AD 70-156), and Flavius Josephus, the Jewish historian. Each of these authors quoted profusely from the gospels and epistles and thus verified their factual and doctrinal contents.

It should be noted that not all of the extra-biblical authors that could be appealed to were Christians. For example, Aristides was a philosopher at Athens and addressed an apology to the emperor Hadrian in 125 AD. This manuscript was recovered in 1889. Aristides does not quote from the New Testament but he does give a summary of Christian doctrine including the divinity of Christ, His incarnation, virgin birth, resurrection, and ascension. Aristides says that these doctrines are taught in the gospels where men can read it for themselves.

Early in the second century, there were some heretics known as Gnostics (Gk. "knowledge"). One Gnostic was a man named Marcion. Even though he held to unorthodox views, Marcion proves that the Scriptures were in prior existence by the fact that he rejected many of the epistles of the apostles. In fact, it was the teachings of Marcion that compelled the Church to formally decide which books were to be canonical and which ones were spurious.

Moving beyond the early years of the second century, we come to the work of Ignatius (AD 70-110). He was the Bishop of Antioch and was martyred for Christ. Ignatius was a pupil of Polycarp who was a disciple of the apostle John. As a gifted writer, Ignatius quotes the gospels. Clement, who may have been the same Clement which Paul mentions in Philippians 4:3, quotes the gospel of Luke in his writings (17:1,2) as did Origen, Eusebius, and Jerome. The date assigned to the *First Epistle of Clement* is about 95 AD though some would argue for an earlier date of 68 BC or 64 BC.

Another work, the *Epistle of Barnabas* (c. AD 100), is included in one of the oldest manuscripts of the New Testament as if it were a canonical book. This epistle bears witness to the existence of the New Testament by quoting Matthew 22:14. The *Epistle of Barnabas* enjoyed great popularity in the second century for it took the part of Paul against the Judaizers, with whom Paul had so much contention, and is thoroughly versed in the Pauline positions, which would indicate a very early date. Many of the early fathers accepted it as a genuine writing of Barnabas, though it was later not placed in the canon of *Scripture*. The point of all of this evidence is that there is tremendous support for reliable original documents that were copied and preserved in great numbers by the early church fathers in order to be faithfully passed on to the next generation. "*The foundations of our faith,*" wrote Clement of Alexandria (c. 155-215 AD), "*rest on no insecure basis. We have received them through God Himself through the Scripture, not one jot or tittle of which shall pass away till all is accomplished, for the mouth of the Lord, the Holy Spirit, spoke it.*"

Were the Apostles Deceived?

Liberal theologians have suggested that even though the early Church fathers quoted and preserved the writings of the Apostles, it means nothing because the Apostles were themselves deceived. But is that really possible? Did the Apostles write what they knew was false? Or, granted that the books are genuine, is there any chance that we have been imposed on by men who wrote what they knew was not true? What is the likelihood of that having happened?

The first question in response to such unholy suggestions is to ask, Why? Why would the Apostles want to perpetuate such a fantastic lie? What had they to gain? The answer to these questions is simple. The Apostles had nothing to gain by continuing the work of a disgraced and discredited Messiah if they knew He was really dead. It was their unshakable belief that they saw the resurrected Christ that compelled them to believe in the deity of Christ and they gave their lives for that faith.

Nearly all of the Apostles were martyrs. *“These men sealed their testimony with their blood. Since the world began, it has never been heard that a man gave his life for a known lie when he could save it by telling the truth. The Apostles do not exhibit the character of deceivers. They seem to be honest men telling a true story. Moreover, would they utter such appalling judgments upon falsehood and liars if they were guilty of it themselves? ‘All liars shall have their part in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone.’ No, it is not rational to suppose that the world has been regenerated by a lie.”* (David Clark) The conclusion is that Christianity is rationally defensible. The results of historical inquiry validate the Scriptures. We have not followed cunningly devised fables. Therefore, *“The supreme judge by which all controversies of religion are to be determined, and all decrees of councils, opinions of ancient writers, doctrines of men, and private spirits, are to be examined, and in whose sentences we are to rest, can be no other but the Holy Scripture delivered by the Spirit, into which Scripture so delivered, our faith is finally resolved.”* (*The Baptist Confession of Faith of 1689*, Chapter 1, Section 10; study Matt. 22:29, 31; Eph. 2:20; Acts 28:23)

**“Here is my test of orthodoxy: Do we pray to Jesus?
Do we call upon the name of Christ, as did Stephen
and all the early church? Is He our living Lord,
omnipresent, omniscient, omnipotent?
Is He divine only in the sense, in which we are divine,
or is He the only-begotten Son, God manifest in the flesh,
in whom is all the fullness of the Godhead bodily?
What think ye of Christ?”**

~*~

Augustus Strong

Part III

ANTHROPOLOGY: THE STUDY of MAN

Chapter 12

THE ORIGIN OF MAN

A Confession of Faith

“In the beginning it pleased God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, for the manifestation of the glory of His eternal power, wisdom, and goodness, to create or make the world, and all things therein, whether visible or invisible, in the space of six days, and all very good.” (*The Confession of Faith of 1689*, Chapter 4, Section 1; study John 1:2,3; Heb. 1:2; Job 26:13; Rom. 1:20; Col. 1:16; Gen. 1:31).

A Definition of the Doctrine of Anthropology

Anthropology is a word derived from the Greek words (*anthropos*, man, and *logos*, discourse). The doctrine of anthropology primarily concerns itself with the study of the beginning of man. There is no record or proof of the soul of man having a pre-existence. There is no memory or consciousness of it. The Bible declares that there was an original creation and that all of humanity sprang from Adam. If pre-existence is assumed, then man must be either eternally pre-existent, or created by God in that pre-existent state. Neither position is supported in Scripture. The Bible does teach that, “After God had made all other creatures, He created man, male and female, with reasonable and immortal souls, rendering them fit unto that life to God for which they were created; being made after the image of God, in knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness; having the law of God written in their hearts, and power to fulfill it, and yet under a possibility of transgressing, being left to the liberty of their own will, which was subject to change.” (*The Baptist Confession of Faith of 1689*, Chapter 4, Section. 2; study Gen. 1:27; 2:7; Eccl. 7:29; Gen. 1:26; Rom. 2:14,15; Gen. 3:6).

The Soul is not a Divine Emanation

The soul did not emanate from the substance of God for two reasons. First, emanation implies that the substance of God can become disturbed or changed, and this is unworthy of the character of God. God cannot become less than Himself. Second, substance is that in which attributes inhere. If men were able to partake of God’s essential substance they would possess the attributes of God, such as omniscience, infinity, omnipotence, etc. That is not possible. God will not give His intrinsic glory to anyone. (Isa. 48:11)

The Soul is not a Form of God

The soul is not a form of God for that would be Pantheism. God and man are separate beings and are not to be confounded or blended.

The Soul is not the Product of Spontaneous Generation

The soul is not the product of spontaneous generation. Science knows nothing of spontaneous generation except as a theory. Elaborate experiments and the most painstaking efforts and observation have ruled out spontaneous generation for this reason: *"Research sponsored in part by NASA (for the purpose of enabling astronauts to recognize even the most rudimentary forms of life on other planets) has shown that the simplest type of protein molecule that could be said to be "living" is composed of a chain of at least 400 linked amino acids, and each amino acid is a specific combination of four or five basic chemical elements, and each chemical element is a unique assemblage of protons, electrons, and neutrons. It is thus inconceivable (to anyone but a doctrinaire evolutionist) that a living system could ever be formed by chance.* (Scientific Creationism, edited by Henry M. Morris)

The Soul cannot be Accounted for by Evolution

Evolution is a process and a process does not originate anything. Evolution itself requires a beginning and a cause. Evolution requires materials to work upon and a directing "mind" to guide it to proper ends. Charles Darwin believed that God created the first few forms of life from which all genera and species arose. Later evolutionists set aside the need for God and boldly *asserted* that life originated from the molecular motions of dead matter and developed into all subsequent forms of living beings. How did this happen? They did not know, but were confident that it did.

What the Soul Is

According to the Old Testament usage of the word *nepes*, the soul is the essence of man in the totality of his being. The breath of God blown into the body of Adam created "*a living nepes*" (Gen. 1:20; 2:7; Ex. 1:5). The soul is something that can hunger and thirst (Psa. 107:5) and can be distressed (Gen. 42:21). It is often used for the essence of self (Job 16:4; Psa. 124:7).

In the New Testament, the soul (psyche) is the life principle (Acts 20:10; Rev. 8:9) which is distinct from the body. John sees the "*souls of those who had been slain,*" not "*those who had been slain*" (Rev. 6:9 cf. 20:4; Matt. 10:28; Luke 21:19; Jam. 1:21; 5:20).

Rational Objections to Evolution

The rational objections to the evolutionary theory are legitimate because there are no examples of transmutation of species and no missing "links" that have ever been found. For evolution to be true, thousands of "links" or transitional phases would be necessary for a true movement from one species to another. To establish the doctrine of evolution a gradual, or even a provable abrupt change, must be found between:

- the cosmic and organic forms of nature;
- between the vegetable and animal kingdoms
- between the invertebrate and vertebrate;
- between the lower vertebrates and the mammals;
- and between mammals and man.

- **The Great Gaps.** Science shows great gaps between different species and that each came without known antecedents in the lineal descent. One evolutionist, former Professor Joseph Le Conte, University Of California (c.1920), has confessed: *“The evidence of geology today is that species seem to come into existence suddenly and in full perfection, remain substantially unchanged during the term of their existence and pass away in full perfection. Other species take their places apparently by substitution, not by transmutation.”*
- **The insufficiency of Time.** When evolutionists assign millions and millions of years for the process of producing man, they do so without evidence. The Question may be justified whether the earth has been habitable millions of years. The oldest written records with verifiable chronology only dates back to the first dynasty in Egypt (c. 2200-2500 BC). There is a great discrepancy between the theory which says that man's unknown uncommon ancestors lived 30 to 70 million years ago (true modern man arrived 1-3 million years ago), and the record of civilization. While the concept is intriguing of infinite time to form the earth and all the life that is on earth, there is no evidence to support the theory.
- **The Sterility of Birds.** Equally opposed to the theory of evolution is the idea of the crossing of the species. Nature herself has closed the door to this possibility (note Gen. 1:24).
- **The Remains of Men.** The earliest remains of man are of high development, showing that man like the other species came upon the scene in the maturity of his being. There may be evidence for devolution or man going from a higher state of existence to a lower state as per Genesis 1-2, but there is no evidence that any man has gone from a lower state to a higher form of existence. Radiocarbon dating methods have proven to be unreliable for establishing dates of antiquity, and even more damaging is that lack of fossil evidence when population statistics are considered. From all the people that would have lived on earth in the last million years, even with a slow population growth rate, there is little evidence of the preservation of ancient man. If evolution is true, why there so little evidence in the fossil records? In the past, some extraordinary hoaxes have been offered by evolutionists to fool the public.
- **Neanderthal Man.** In 1856 in the Neander Valley, near Dusseldorf, Germany a creature was found that was believed to be semi-erect and sub-human. *“It is now known that Neanderthal man was fully erect and in most details was indistinguishable from modern man, his cranial capacity even exceeding that of modern man.”* (Evolution? The Fossils Say No, Duane T. Gish)
- **Java Man** (*Pithecanthropus erectus*, "erect ape man"). It was in 1891 that Eugene Dubois, a Dutch physician made his discovery of *Pithecanthropus erectus* in Trinil, Java. There was a single skull cap found. The next year, still digging in the same area but fifty feet away, Dubois discovered a thigh bone, along with two molar teeth. Assuming all the pieces belonged together, Dubois dated the find as a half million years old, and told the world. What he did not tell the world until thirty-one years later is that he had also found

- two obviously human skulls at the same time and on the same level as the digs. Just before his death, Dubois conceded that Java man was really the remains of a large gibbon.
- ❑ **Pittdown Man** (*Eanthropus dawsoni*, "Dawn Man"). Charles Dawson is credited with the discovery of "Dawn Man" in Pittdown, England in 1912. From a skull part and a few teeth, the little chap was dated to be from 500 to 750 thousand years old! In 1950, the bones of "Dawn Man" were put under the spotlight of truth: fluoride tests were done and a grand hoax was revealed. The skull portion unearthed had been stained with iron salts and the teeth had been *deliberately* filed down to give it the appearance of age.
 - ❑ **Peking Man**. Unearthed near Peking, China in 1921 by Davidson Bolack, this find consisted of the fragments of thirty skulls and 147 teeth. Today, Pittdown man is believed to be the remains of some large monkeys or baboons which were killed and eaten by those working in an ancient lime-burning quarry.
 - ❑ **Nebraska Man** ("Western Ape Man). Harold Cook informed the world that he had made a wonderful discovery in western Nebraska in 1922. What did he find? One tooth! ONE tooth! The world was made to wonder as an imagine artist drew a mouth around the ape-man that was declared to be six thousand years old. In 1927 the tooth was discovered to have really belong to an extinct pig.
 - ❑ **East Africa Ape** (*zinjathropus*). In 1959, National Geographic Magazine was all too happy to tell the world that Louis S.B. Leakey have made a marvelous discovery in Olduvia, Tanzania. A skullcap and a few bone fragments were produced and dated to be 2-4 million years old. Here at last was a real missing link. Or was it? Just prior to his death, Leakey admitted that he felt his find was nothing more than a variety of *australopithecus* (Southern ape) found in 1924.
 - ❑ **The Discrepancies between Kingdoms**. Nature today, and the fossil records of the past continue to testify against evolution by demonstrating that some kingdoms in nature are vastly superior to others. This would not be the case if evolution were true. Rather, there would be some sort of connection between the kingdoms to form a unified ecosystem. However, there cannot be found in the vegetable kingdom anything from which the characteristic features of animal life could be developed or vice versa. So too there is a vast gulf between the animal and man, despite the attempts of modern science since 1859 to show how similar man and animal are. Some dramatic differences may be noted.
 - ❖ **Man alone is a rational creature**. Animals may solve problems based on a biological urge but only man sits down to think, the way that a philosopher, professor, theologian, or someone in love does.
 - ❖ **Man alone makes things** by reason and free will, not according to instinct. *"The instincts of animals remain the same from age to age. The bird still builds her nest and the bee her cell as they did at the Gate of Eden. There has been no progress in their mental development."* (David Clark)

- ❖ **Only men build machines, which are in themselves productive.** Animals may use tool, but no animal makes a pattern or die press to stamp out other tools for mass production.
- ❖ **Man alone communicates thoughts based upon words and reasons.** Animals communicate with sounds and grunts. They communicate emotions and impulses but nothing that can be asserted to be true or false.
- **The Law of Entropy.** There is a universal law of degeneration, which argues against the evolutionary model. The law of entropy says that everything goes from order to disorder. There is a natural breakdown of all things. Physically, modern man is believed to be inferior to the ante-diluvian civilization (and mentally we may not be above the ancient Egyptians either; their inventions rival ours. It will be interesting to see if modern buildings will stand the test of time like the pyramids.) Rather than ascend ever upward, the body of man is wearing down just like all the things he builds and the universe itself. One day, the sun will stop shining, the earth will rotate no longer, and the starlights shall disappear. The universe is winding down, not up.
- **The Lack of Visual Evidence.** If evolution is a cosmic process, it should be everywhere apparent and in actual operation before our eyes. Why is there no discernable evolutionary processes going on? Has everything in the evolutionary model reached such a stage of perfection that no advance is possible? Evolutionary science is strangely silent before such questions.
- **The Logical Impossibility of the Evolutionary Process.** If *intelligent* cross breeding has failed to produce a single new species in ideal laboratory conditions, what probability is there that *blind chance* or natural selection could do so? Natural selection will not be able to do what intelligent selection cannot do.

A theory of Recapitulation

The Embryological Recapitulation Theory argues that the unborn child passes through the various forms that the race is supposed to have traversed. It is argued that each person in the womb moves from the protoplasmic cell, through invertebrate life, to fish, quadrupeds, and finally to man. This theory was once held to be the most convincing demonstration of the evolutionary claims.

In response, it is admitted that there is a cursory resemblance between the fetus of a human and that of some animal forms. But the resemblances are only superficial for one can see life similarities in other things such as unusual cloud formation, rain puddles, and rock formations. King Ahab said that he saw, "*a little cloud out of the sea, like a man's hand.*" (1 Kings 18:44) The following points are worthy of consideration.

- It is only a pre-suppositional *thought* that says that the human embryo in its early stages is an *actual* representation of a mass of protoplasm that is the same as the lower form of life, which is little more than a globule of protoplasm.
- It is only a pre-suppositional *thought* that say that the elongation into the form of an infant must necessarily reflect the shape of a fish.
- It is only a pre-suppositional *thought* which supposes that as the as legs and arms develop, they have the same likeness to a quadruped.
- It is only a pre-suppositional *thought* that sees the folds in the skin of the neck resembling the gills of a fish. In *reality*, all these things are superficial and prove nothing as to the background of the human race. Besides, the real difference in fetal development lies in that which is not physical but spiritual.

The Recapitulation theory Does not Matter

Even if somehow the recapitulation theory of evolution could be proven true, “*what has been accomplished in building the long stairway from the ameba to man if every man must begin for himself at the lowest point, a cell of protoplasm? If man could begin where the animal development left off, there might be some purpose discerned in the evolutionary process. But how absurd it is to suppose that it took the cosmic forces millions and millions of years to do what the human embryo does in nine months!*” (David Clark).

The Harm of Change

The truth of the matter is that the whole science of reproduction demonstrates that cross breeding small hereditary changes do not accumulate to the making of a species. In addition, both macro and micro-mutations have been proven to be essentially harmful to a species over a period of time. Macro mutation refers to the sudden change in a organism such as an arm, eye, or leg suddenly appearing. Micro-mutation refers to small incremental differences from in a species over a prolonged period.

The Fossils Say No!

Evolutionists have always suspected that nature has destroyed millions of life forms. If these discarded life forms could be recovered, they would prove the evolutionary theory to be correct. (Perhaps nature has a sense of humor in that it destroys the very forms needed by its advocates while preserving the rest.) The truth of the matter is that the fossil record bears witness against evolution. In some fossil sites with a continuous deposit being made of nearly two thousand species, all of them appeared suddenly. No fossil has ever been shown as having passed away to be superseded by other forms. Though embarrassing to the evolutionist, some geological sites in the world reverse the order in which life was supposed to appear on the globe. Pre-Cambrian strata (alleged to be the earliest of geological history) and fossils supposedly *old* lie in complacent conformity to *underlying* cretaceous (chalky) strata (of the Mesozoic era) and fossils supposedly *young*. Why is this? The answer is simple: there are no credible signs of the most infinitesimal, let alone intermediate, variations in the fossil records between one species and another. In the beginning, God created all the animals and all forms of life within a six literal day period. Therefore, the Creationist (Christian) would expect to find things together. As far as the

rock formations being mixed up, the Bible explains this better than the evolutionist. The Biblical answer is that there was a flood that churned up the earth. (Gen. 6-7) The Genesis model of reveals the Catastrophism of the Flood and is more consistent with the known facts than the evolutionary model of Uniformitarianism that teaches that the earth was formed by layers of rock upon layers.

Questions Raised by the theory of Evolution

The theory of evolution raises a number of religious questions that are not easily dismissed by conscientious Christians. (proposed by David Clark)

- *“Is there a beginning as recorded in Genesis 1:1, or is there only an eternal becoming?”*
- *“Is God infinite and eternal, according to the Scriptures, or only a finite and developing deity, a figment of the minds of men who are themselves only the product of time plus space plus chance?”*
- *“Does God reign supreme over His universe, or does He even exist?”*
- *“Is God subject to a higher power or a community of powers?”*
- *“Was man, in his entirety, created in the image of God, or has his body and soul developed from the beast?”*
- *“Did man fall from the image of God, or did he arise from animalism and savagery?”*
- *“Is sin contrary to God’s will, or is sin merely the lack of full spiritual development?”*
- *“Are the doctrines of Judaism and Christianity a divine revelation, or only the outgrowth of innate human tendencies?”*
- *“Did man begin to worship God with fetishes and grew to monotheism, or did man begin worship with monotheism and fell into fetishism and animism?”*
- *“Did the Bible produce civilization, or did civilization produce the Bible?”*
- *“Are the Scriptures inerrant and infallible, a revelation from God, or are the Scriptures merely the record of progressive religious experience?”*
- *“Is salvation a supernatural intervention into the affairs of sinful men, or just the outgrowth of inherent natural forces seeking to feel sorrow?”*
- *“Does prophecy maintains its predictive element, and miracles their supernatural power or. are do these things that have a natural explanation?”*

Chapter 13

THE ORIGIN OF THE SOUL

How Does the Soul Come into Existence?

While people are very careless with their souls, the Bible teaches us its immortal value. Jesus said, "*For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?*" (Mark 8:36,37) Because the soul is of utmost importance, it is good to consider the basics such as the origin of the soul. Concerning this issue, various positions have been advocated.

- ◆ **Traducianism.** Traducianism [from the Latin, *traducere*, "to lead across," "transfer"] teaches that man's soul is *derived from the parents* and therefore mankind is a race or species in regard to soul as well as body. This view was contended for by the Latin Church father Tertullian (AD 160- c. 230) and was tentatively embraced by Augustine who said that, "*In Adam all sinned, at the time when in his nature all were still that one man.*" Later, Augustine came to fear that a strict traducian position might involve a materialistic interpretation of the origin of the soul. In contrast, Luther has no such qualms. "*The reproduction of mankind is a great marvel and mystery. Had God consulted me in the matter, I should have advised him to continue the generation of the species by fashioning them out of clay, in the way Adam was fashioned; as I should have counseled Him also t let the sun remain always suspended over the earth, like a great lamp, maintaining perpetual light and heat.*"

The Traducian Theory is based upon the following arguments.

- Man being a single entity, consisting of soul and body, must be one; so that he may not be both older and younger than himself--"*that in him which is bodily being first, and the other coming after*" (Eastern Church father, Gregory of Nyssa, c. AD 331-c. 396)
- The fact of hereditary traits in a person's mental and moral make up.
- The sinful nature passed on from Adam to his posterity. **Special note:** Apart from Traducianism, it is hard to maintain the justice of God in the punishment of inherited sin. It is difficult for Creationism's position (i.e., that each soul is created individually) to explain how each soul is created sinful. Traducianism best accounts for the universality of sin.
- ❖ **Special note.** Among the angels, some fell (Rev. 12:4) and some did not (Psa. 148:2) because there was no racial connection and no transmission of sinful nature from one to another in the act of procreation.

Arguments from Scripture for Traducianism

One of the strongest arguments from Scripture for Traducianism is the fact that as all animals were derived from the first parents, so all men are derived from Adam (Gen. 1:27). Only *once* is the spark of life said to be breathed into man, and he became a living soul (Gen. 2:7, cf. 2:22; 1 Cor. 11:8; Gen. 4:1; 5:3; 46:26; cf. Acts 17:21-26; Heb. 7:10). After God created man, He is said to have ceased from His creative work (Gen. 2:2) though His sustaining work continues for it is *"in Him we live, and move, and have our being."* (Acts 17:28) Then there is the matter of heredity whereby the sin nature is passed on and even judged in the third and fourth generation (Ex. 20:5; 34:7; Num. 14:18; Deut. 5:9). Jonathan Edwards understood this principle and prayed for his children and his children's children to the end of time. He believed that the superintending of all things were under the hands of Divine Providence.

- ◆ John 1:13 *"Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."* This verse contrasts spiritual birth with natural birth, implying that natural birth is traducian.
- ◆ John 3:6 *"That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit."* In this citation the word "flesh" is understood to mean the whole man is unregenerate.
- ◆ Romans 1:3. *"Concerning his Son who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh."*
- ◆ Romans 5:12 *"By one man sin entered into the world and death by sin and so death passed upon all men for that all sinned."*
- ◆ 1 Corinthians 15:22 *"As in Adam all die."*
- ◆ Ephesians 2:3 *"By nature the children of wrath even as others."*
- ◆ Hebrews 7:10 *"For he [Levi] was yet in the loins of his father when Melchizedek met him."*

The Case for Creationism

Opposed to Traducianism is Creationism. This view asserts that the soul is not derived from the parents, but is *created for* every individual born into the world. This view is held because of the person of Christ, the indivisibility of the soul's substance, the individuality of each person, and because selected passages of Scripture teach that God is the Creator of the human spirit.

- ◆ Isaiah 57:16 *"The souls that I have made."*
- ◆ Ecclesiastes 12:7 *Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was, and the spirit to God who gave it."*

- ◆ Hebrews 12:9 *“Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh, which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live?”*
- ◆ Zechariah 12:1 *“The Lord who formeth the spirit of man within him.”*

Critics of Creationism

In addition to the Scriptures, Individuality is often urged as an argument for Creationism. It is argued that there are dramatic distinction between the parents and the child that cannot be explained by mere reproduction. Those who oppose Creationism note that the dramatic distinctions between parent and children exist for a logical reason: every child has two parents, four grandparents, eight great grandparents etc. This mixed heritage provides a sufficient cause for the great variety of personalities and individuality between parents and children. Concerning the passages of Scripture speaking of God as creator, they may be regarded as expressing God's mediate agency in the origin of the soul. God is also said to be the Creator of the body (cp. Psa. 139:13,14; Jer. 1:5). Also, in opposition to Creationism, there is the matter of man being better than the animals. If man produces the body through procreation and God creates the soul, then man is not better than the animals for they produce body and spirit after their own image. Finally, God is not the direct author of moral evil which Creationism would have to advocate.

Summary Evaluation

Concerning Creationism and Traducianism, it can be noted that each view faces a difficulty. Creationism must explain the sinful nature of each created soul while Traducianism must explain how an indivisible spiritual substance transmits itself.

Chapter 14

THE NATURE OF MAN

Dichotomy: a Division between Soul and Body

According to Genesis 2:7 man is composed of two substances, and only two, body and soul. Genesis 2:7 declares that, "*The Lord God formed man out of the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul.*" The body is material substance; the soul is spiritual substance. Substance may be defined as that which has being, properties, and potency (power); substance is that in which attributes inhere.

The attributes or properties of matter are: bulk, weight, hardness, form, etc. The attributes of spirit are: thought, volition (choice), affections, and conscience. These substances, body and spirit, are different because their properties or attributes are different and opposite. The properties of matter do not belong to spirit, and the attributes of spirit do not belong to matter and yet these two substances do unite to constitute man. There is the body, which is matter; there is the soul, which is spirit. There are no other substances to man. Of the two, the soul is the more important for it is the soul that gives life to the body. When the soul is withdrawn, the body is dead for the soul is the seat of the personality. Consciousness of these things can lead to a favorable view of the dichotomy: individuals know themselves to be body and soul.

Scriptural Evidence of Dichotomy

In the creation record mention is made of man's body and soul, but nothing more. Elsewhere, the Scriptures frequently mention body and soul together, but nothing more.

- ◆ 1 Kings 17:21 "*Let the child's soul come to him again.*"
- ◆ Ecclesiastes 12:7 "*The dust returneth to the earth as it was, and the spirit unto God who gave it.*"
- ◆ James 2:26 "*The body apart from the spirit is dead.*"
- ◆ Matthew 10:28 "*Able to destroy both body and soul in hell.*"
- ◆ 1 Corinthians 5:3 "*For I being absent in body but present in spirit.*"

The relation of the soul and body to each other is mysterious and almost incomprehensible. How the body acts on the mind, and how the mind acts on the body, cannot be fully comprehended though the experience is known each day. The mind compels the body to act and it acts. The body conveys impressions of the external world to the mind and the mind receives the same. Emotions of the mind affect the body so that there is blushing, or confusion. Diseases of the body, especially of the brain, affect and disorder the mind. Back and forth the interaction of body and mind moves to produce a great mystery.

The Trichotomy theory: Body, Soul, and Spirit

Trichotomy (from *tricha*, 'in three parts' and *temno*, "to cut" = composed of three parts) is the view that man is composed of three substances: body, soul, and spirit. The Eastern Orthodox Church has generally held to Trichotomy. Their belief is best articulated by the Greek Orthodox priest John of Damascus (c. 675-749) who speaks of the soul as the sensuous life-principle which takes up the spirit--the spirit being an emanation from God. The Western church, on the other hand, has generally held to dichotomy. An appeal for Trichotomy is made from the Scriptures.

- ◆ 1 Thessalonians 5:23 *"And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."*
- ◆ Hebrews 4:12 *"For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."*

Arguments against the Trichotomous Theory

Those who advocate the Trichotomous Theory are not united as to what constitutes the substance of soul and spirit independently. Therefore, the following arguments are used against the Trichotomous Theory.

The Scriptures use the Terms Soul (*psyche*) and Spirit (*pneuma*) Interchangeably.

- ◆ Genesis 41:8 *"His spirit was troubled."*
- ◆ Psalms 42:6 *"O my God my soul is cast down within me."*
- ◆ John 13:21 *"He was troubled in spirit."*

To state the matter simply: the soul is the same as the spirit. The term for soul (*psyche*) speaks of man's immaterial part in its inferior powers and activities. Man is a conscious individual. He has a basic form of life along with appetites, imagination, memory, and understanding. However, there is a need to bring attention to the higher capacities which resides within man's faculties. The term spirit (*pneuma*) does this by bringing the individual into the presence of God. In the presence of his Maker, created in His image, man manifests powers of reason, conscience, and will. (A.H. Strong) In summary, *"The distinction between psyche and pneuma is a functional, and not a substantial distinction."*—W.W. Goodwin

□ The terms spirit and soul are used of the animal creation.

- ◆ Ecclesiastes 3:21 *"Who knoweth the spirit of man that goeth upward, and the spirit of the beast that goeth downward to the earth?"*
- ◆ Revelation 16:3 *"And the second angel poured out his vial upon the sea; and it became as the blood of a dead man; and every living soul [i.e., fish] died in the sea."*

- **The soul is ascribed to the Lord.**
 - ◆ Amos 6:8 *"The Lord God hath sworn by Himself" (lit. "by his soul")*
 - ◆ Isaiah 42:1 *"Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth."*
 - ◆ Jeremiah 9:9 *"Shall I not visit them for these things? Saith the Lord: shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?"*
 - ◆ Hebrews 10:38 *"Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him."*

- **Those who are dead are called souls.**
 - ◆ Revelation 6:9 *"And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the Word of God, and for the testimony which they held."*

- **The highest expressions of religion are ascribed to the soul.**
 - ◆ Matthew 22:37 *"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy soul."*
 - ◆ Mark 12:30 *"And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul."*
 - ◆ Luke 1:46 *"And Mary said, My soul doth magnify the Lord."*
 - ◆ Hebrews 6:19 *"Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul."*
 - ◆ James 1:21 *"Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls."*

- **To lose one's soul is to lose everything.**
 - ◆ Mark 8:36 *"Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"*

- **Those passages expressing a three-fold division may be explained.**
 - ❖ In 1 Thessalonians 5:23, Paul does use the expression *"spirit and soul and body,"* but only to express man in his totality; his spiritual nature, his bodily nature, and the functional life due to their union.
 - ❖ In like manner, Hebrews 4:12 speaks of dividing *"the soul and spirit";* however, the sense is not that of separating one from the other, but cutting, or smashing through, as you might cut a steak into two pieces. The words are not meant to two things per se, but the cutting in two of a single thing.
 - ❖ In the account of man's creation and death mention is made of only two substances, the one matter, the other spirit. Therefore, Ecclesiastes 12:7 is right to speak of the spirit going back to God. *"Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was and the spirit to God who gave it."*

Summary Statement

The conclusion is this: the spirit of man is not something higher than the soul of man, nor different from the soul. The soul and spirit are one and the same. *"As to the distinction between "soul" and "spirit" perhaps it is best to say that soul refers to the immaterial part of man regarded as a human personality, while spirit refers to that same immaterial part with reference to its substance, or as to its divine origin."* (David Clark)

Three Main theories as to Free agency

Within the soul of man is the capacity to make choices. The question arises, *"Is man a free agent?"*

- ◆ **Fatalism.** This doctrine teaches that all events are determined by a blind necessity. There is no freedom of the individual, no liberty of choice, and no self-determination. All things must be as they are with no possibility of being different. In this view there is no free agency. The cause of this necessity may be in the nature of things, or the uniformity of natural laws over which there is no intelligent control, or even in the decree of God. Fatalism destroys all responsibility and therefore destroys all morality.
- ◆ **Self-determination.** This doctrine teaches that man's will is independent of his other faculties. Man decides, or may decide, something irrespective of his knowledge, feelings, conscience, desires, inclinations, or inducements. If this is true, it means that man is free to act irrationally.

Self-determinism is partially true: man is free to choose. However, the will does not act regardless of all considerations, but is determined by the contents of the other faculties. The will is always influenced by character or nature and by external inducements. The will is always bound by God and subject to the laws of the universe in which man live's including the laws of his own being. Properly speaking, it is not the will that acts, but the whole man that wills.

- ◆ **Free agency.** The doctrine of Free Agency teaches that a man acts free from compulsion by some external power. Man acts in accordance with his own nature and under the influence of his knowledge, desires, feelings, inclinations and character.

No one denies that man has a will, that is, a faculty of choosing what he wishes to say, do and think. *"God has indued the will of man, by nature, with liberty and the power to choose and to act upon his choice. This free will is neither forced, nor destined by any necessity of nature to do good or evil."* (*The Baptist Confession of Faith of 1689*, Chapter 1, Section 1; study Matt. 17:12; James 1:14; Deut. 30:19)

- **Observation.** While the will of man is not forced, neither is it neutral. The Bible teaches that the will of man in Adam is weak. This is easily proved by circumstances (Gen. 50:20 cp. Prov. 16:9; Jer. 10:23; Luke 12:18-20), and by wrong moral choices (Gen. 6:5; Rom. 3:12; 1:21; 3:11; Jer. 13:23). What man must openly confess is that he is not independent of God, nor of the laws of the universe, nor of his own nature.

The Bible teaches that a man is a free agent, bids him choose, and holds him responsible for his choice. If man were not a free agent, he would have no responsibility. On the whole, man acts as he thinks and feels and in accordance with his character or nature. Free agency, however, has its limitations. The limitations are severe due to the fall into sin. *“Man, in his state of innocence, had freedom and power to will and to do that which was good and well-pleasing to God, but he was unstable, so that he might fall from this condition.”* (**The Baptist Confession of Faith of 1689**, Chapter 9, Section 2; study Eccles. 7:29; Gen. 3:6)

“Man, by his fall into a state of sin, has completely lost all ability of will to perform any of the spiritual good which accompanies salvation. As a natural man, he is altogether averse to spiritual good, and dead in sin. He is not able by his own strength to convert himself, or to prepare himself for conversion.” (**The Baptist Confession of Faith of 1689**, Chapter 9, Section 2; study Rom. 5:6; 8:7; Eph. 2:1,5; Tit. 3:3-5; John 6:44).

- Because of the Fall there are many things in which man’s free agency plays no part. No man has ever had a chance to say whether he would initially exist or not. His consent is never asked in the matter. When existence was given to man, he never had a chance to say either yes, or no. Existence has been thrust upon man, and a heavy hand impels him through a series of experiences, of joys and sorrows, of tears and fears, of wants and woes, of triumphs and tragedies, without pause, without stop, without retreat, or even the possibility of them. Because "Someone" is making a lot of choices on behalf of every person on planet earth, the power of Free Agency should not be overemphasized.
- *“We must recognize the limits of free agency; that we are bounded by God and His absolute sovereignty; and by certain laws and conditions which God hath impressed upon our being and the universe in which we live. We are free agents within certain limits, and beyond these limits we are absolutely dependent on the God who made us, and whose providence controls the arrow’s flight and the sparrow’s fall.”* (David Clark)

Charles Gore, formerly Bishop of Oxford wrote, *“No doubt the free will of men has been absurdly exaggerated. As a fact it is strictly limited. There is no such thing as human independence. All the forces which any man employs, in choosing or carrying out his choice, are drawn from beyond himself. His conditions determine the channels along which he must use the powers which are available. Nevertheless, in the heart of this world of determinate and determinated forces and laws there lies this mysterious and unique thing free choice.”*

C. H. Spurgeon stated forcefully that, *“Free will has carried many souls to hell but never a soul to heaven.”*

The Relation of Free Will to Regeneration

It is to be remembered that regeneration comes by divine intervention to change the nature and determine the life. No free agent is above God. This is proven by the fact that no man is an agent in his regeneration. While the new creation or new birth is not a violation of free agency any more than man's initial creation at birth violates free agency, the truth is this: "*When God converts a sinner, and translates him into a state of grace, He frees him from his natural bondage to sin, and by grace alone He enables him freely to will and to do that which is spiritually good. But because of his remaining corruptions he does not only (or perfectly) will that which is good, but also wills that which is evil.*" (***The Baptist Confession of Faith of 1689***, Chapter 9, Section 4; study Col. 1:13; John 8:36; Phil. 2:13; Rom. 7:15,18,19,21,23).

If God does not regenerate man, if God does free individuals, then they are certain to remain in bondage to sin and, consistent with "*free*" will, they will continue to act according to a depraved nature. The choices will always be sinful (Rom. 6:16-17; John 8:34). A sinner can do nothing but sin (Rom. 8:7-8) until grace sets the soul free (Rom. 6:14-15,18,22 cp. 2 Cor. 5:17).

Chapter 15

THE ORIGINAL STATE of MAN

From the Hand of God

According to Scripture, the body of man came from the hand of the Creator fully developed and endowed with immortality. The Scriptures always represent death both physical and spiritual as the result of the sin. If man had not sinned then he would not subject to death. How then, is man preserved in physical being? The original constitution of man was evidently of high quality. The longevity of the patriarchs, even after sin had entered, shows a remarkable constitution. And the earliest fossil remains of man show him highly developed. A Tree of Life was in the Garden of Eden (Gen. 3:24). It is again referred to in the end of Revelation as being for the healing of the nations.

The Soul was Created in the Image of God

This includes knowledge, holiness, moral nature, rational nature, free agency, dominion, etc. Man was created capable of communion with God. The implications in this fact are many and important; bearing on the being of God, the nature of God, the a priori certainty of a revelation etc.

How did God Create Man?

God created man male and female after his own image in knowledge, righteousness and holiness with dominion over the creatures.

Selected Views of Man's Original State

The Pelagian Doctrine of Man's Original State

Pelagius was a popular British monk who preached in Rome (AD 401-409). Outraged over the immorality of Christians in the Holy City, he argued that everyone may live a life from sin if there is a sincere choice to do so. Man is not in bondage to sin. Man was created neither holy nor unholy; neither righteous nor unrighteous but capable of becoming either. A life of righteousness is a choice of the will.

Observation

The teachings of Pelagius arose because of a desire to make man responsible for his acts. Unfortunately, nothing is really said about the character out of which the acts proceed which need to be turned away from and that is the heart of the issue. The Scriptures show that acts proceed from character. In the final analysis, Pelagianism is nothing more than rationalized moralism. It knows nothing of redemption.

Chapter 16

THE COVENANT of WORKS

What is a Covenant?

A covenant is an agreement or promise between two or more persons based upon specific conditions. God being infinitely superior to Adam might impose a covenant with or without consent; but there is every believe that Adam acquiesced in it.

The Doctrine Defined

The first covenant made with Adam was a covenant of works wherein life was promised to Adam and to his posterity upon condition of perfect and personal obedience. Adam was not to eat of the Tree of The Knowledge of Good and Evil, upon pain of death.

- ◆ Genesis 2:17. *"But of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it, for in the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die."*

The Scriptural Evidences for a Covenant of Works

- ◆ Genesis 2:16,17 *"And the Lord commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: but of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it, for in the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die."*
 - The parties of the First Covenant were Adam and God.
 - The conditions of the First Covenant demanded perfect obedience on the part of man.
 - The penalty of this First Covenant was spiritual and physical death.
 - The promise of the First Covenant went beyond natural life for Adam already had that. The promise is not stated in the narrative but implied in the alternative of death according to Scripture.
- ◆ Romans 10:5 *"For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, that the man which doeth those things shall live by them."*
- ◆ Galatians 3:12, *"And the law is not of faith; but, the man that doeth them shall live in them."*

All the plan of redemption is presented as a covenant: to Noah, to Abraham, and to Israel. The old and new dispensations are covenants. So evidently here. Here are all the signs and parts of a covenant.

A Federal Representative for Posterity

In the Covenant of Works, Adam represented all of his posterity.

Probation

The observance of this covenant for a certain time constituted a fair probation because Adam was fortified by his holy nature, a happy environment, fellowship with God, and positive warnings and promises. Tragically, Adam's holiness was not established by a long continuance in a state of innocence. Because he was not indefectible and because of a capacity to sin, Adam yielded to the insinuations and persuasion of Satan and fell as did all of his posterity with him. Had Adam stood the test his character would have become fixed and immutable like the elect angels in heaven.

Chapter 17

THE FALL OF MAN

Was there a Fall?

When God first created man, he was not confirmed in holiness. Confirmation was to come in the form of a test after a period of probation. If Adam was tempted to sin and resisted, not only would the elect angels rejoice, but also Satan was to have been removed from Eden as righteousness reigned on Earth. The day of testing came. The conditions were clear. Man was not to eat of a particular tree in the garden. It was as simple and as serious as that. *“Besides the law written in their hearts, they [Adam and Eve] received a command not to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, which whilst they kept, they were happy in their communion with God, and had dominion over the creatures.”* (*The Baptist Confession of Faith of 1689*, Chapter 4, Section 3; study Gen. 2:17; Gen. 1:26,28). The Bible records what happened. Ignoring the specific commandment of the Sovereign, Adam ate of the forbidden fruit and immediately fell from an exalted state to an inferior position. Though a fall is denied by evolutionist, pantheists, and others, it remains a historical fact taught in Scripture and supported by the Saviour.

Two Difficulties

- ◆ **A psychological difficulty.** How could a holy creation such as Adam entertain a desire to sin? How could a sinful volition originate in a holy will? If desire and character determine volition, how can a holy character have a sinful volition?

- ◆ **A moral difficulty.** Why did a holy God permit sin?

Observation

God could have prevented sin but He chose to allow sin for reasons not known. The only thing that is certain is that God made man a free agent to choose for himself-- and man chose to do wrong. That is the bad news. The good news is that God can still over-rule acts of sin for eventual good. The best news is that He does. The love of God is more evident in redemption than if man had never sinned. Still, after all is said, the origin of sin must ever remain a mystery and the reason for it inscrutable.

The Effects of the Fall—Degeneracy and Death

The beginning of sin and apostasy is usually in some slight defection that does not shock the moral sense. But the first step having been taken, the descent to greater iniquity follows with increasing rapidity. Adam, having disobeyed, and corrupted his nature, gave a bias to his posterity. Quickly did the fruits appear. The first man born killed the second, and the degeneracy of the race went on by leaps and bounds till it culminated in destruction by the deluge (Gen. 6-7).

The Fall was more than a mere misfortune, it corrupted the spiritual nature of the human race. *“That which is born of the flesh is flesh.”* (John 3:6) All mankind inherited a sinful nature, which in itself is sin. Sinfulness is sin; and all sin and sinfulness is condemned by the law of God. *“We are by nature the children of wrath even as others.”* (Eph. 2:3) The human race was lost in the fall.

A Federal Representative

According to Scripture, the relation of Adam to posterity is set forth as being a federal representative.

- ◆ Romans 5:12 “*By one man sin entered into the world and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men for that all [have] sinned.*”
- ◆ Romans 5:14 “*Death reigned from Adam to Moses even over those that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam’s transgression.*”
- ◆ Romans 5:17 “*By the offence of one death reigned by one.*”
- ◆ Romans 5:19 “*As by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners.*”
- ◆ 1 Corinthians 15:22 “*For as in Adam all die.*”

Imputation of Sin

There has been much debate over whether there was a mediate or an immediate imputation of Adam’s sin to the human race. A *mediate* imputation means that sin is passed on through the medium of natural generation or heredity. An *immediate imputation* means that there is a direct imputation of sin without any medium whatsoever. Did the penalty of sin fall on the human race directly, or indirectly through the medium of an inherited corrupt nature? The evidence indicates that there is an element of immediate imputation of Adam’s sin to the human race for death is the direct and immediate consequence of sin in every generation. The conclusion seems obvious. The human race was prospectively dead the moment that Adam sinned. But there is an element of mediateness in the fact that the corruption of nature and the penalty on the individual took actual effect through a natural generation or transmission of nature.

Chapter 18

THE RELATION OF ADAM'S SIN TO POSTERITY

The Fact of Sin is Proved by the Bible

The existence of sin is pointedly set forth in Scripture.

- ◆ Jeremiah 17:9 *“The heart of man is deceitful above things and desperately wicked.”*
- ◆ Psalms 14:3 *“There is none that doeth good no not one.”*
- ◆ Isaiah 53:6 *“All we like sheep have gone astray.”*
- ◆ Romans 3:9 *“We have before proved both Jew and Gentiles, that they are all under sin.”*
- ◆ 1 John 1:8 *“If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.”*
- ◆ 1 John 1:10 *“If we say that we have not sinned we make him a liar, and the truth is not in us.”*

The Fact of Sin is Proved by Consciousness

Consciousness distinguishes between pleasure and pain; between happiness and misery; between perceptions and intuitions. So it also distinguishes between right and wrong. It thus bears testimony to the fact of evil. The fact of sin is universal conviction. All nations under all forms of religion are conscious of sin, and that sin is a specific thing different from all other affections of the soul. The heathen religions are so many witnesses to the facts of human nature, and all display a consciousness of sin and need of reconciliation with a Supreme Being. Every babe that was ever thrown into the fires of Moloch, or into the pit of a heathen temple or cast into the Ganges to feed the crocodiles, and every act of asceticism, or flagellation, or bodily humiliation, every altar that ever ran red with the blood of a victim is an outstanding confession of the consciousness of sin. The heathen religions are but the mighty efforts of the human spirit to express its religious convictions and solve the age long Question propounded by Job, *“How shall a man be just with God?”* Man everywhere feels himself subject to a law of right and knows that he ought to do the right and refrain from the wrong. He knows also that he has not done the right and has done the wrong. The testimony of consciousness goes farther, it leads to a personal God. The universal human heart feels responsible to a being higher than man and over all men, who commends or condemns him in conduct and character. The sense of obligation in men always relates itself to a being who may be pleased or displeased, and that being and his will constitute the law of right and wrong. Thus man's innate being bears witness to sin.

The Fact of Sin is Proved by Causal Observation

Sin is one of the most obvious and persistent facts in the history of the human race. It has filled the world with misery from Adam's day till now. No one can escape the evidence of it. Every broken heart, every blasted home, every scene of carnage on the battlefield, every reeling drunkard, every felon behind the grated door of a prison presents the sad evidence of sin. It confronts us every day in every scene we look upon. No man can shut his eyes to it, nor shut the consciousness of it out of his heart. If any man denies his own sinfulness it will be quite sufficient to ask his neighbors. Mr. Moody said, "*If any man claims sinlessness, I should like to ask his wife.*" A missionary relates that he was once telling a company of heathen that "*the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin,*" when a heathen man arose and said, "*I deny your premise; I am not a sinner; I have no sin.*" The missionary was disturbed for a moment, he had never heard any one so categorically deny the fact of sin. He paused a moment to form an answer; but he had no need. A voice arose from the assembled crowd: "*HO! he cheated me trading horses.*" Promptly another voice shouted, "*HA! he defrauded a widow out of her inheritance.*" the boaster dropped his head, disappeared and never came back. It is not easy to deny the fact of sin.

The Fact of Sin is Proved by the Need for Laws

All human government recognizes the fact of sin. Constitutions and laws are for the regulation of human conduct. It is only a perfect society that can dispense with civil government. The agitator who decries civil government should recognize that his cult is applicable only to a world that is perfect in character and conduct. All human governments are a testimony to the imperfection of the human race. Peter speaks of governors as, "sent by him [God] for the punishment of evil doers, and for the praise of them that do well" (1 Peter 2:14).

The Fact of Sin is Proved in Literature

Literature is also a great witness to the fact of sin. So much of the writings of this world is tragedy and moral depravity.

A Biblical Definition of Sin

The Bible says that sin is failure to conform to the will of the Lord; it is the transgression of the moral law of God.

1 John 3:4. "*Sin is the transgression of the law.*"

1 John 5:17. "*All righteousness is sin.*"

The true nature of sin is that it is contrary to God. "*This is what makes sin to be sin—not limitation, nor selfishness, nor sensuousness, but discord with God. If there were no law of God there would be no sin, neither would there be any moral good.*" (David Clark) The intent of sin is to live supremely for oneself at all costs. There is no ignorance involved in sin.

◆ John 9:41 "*Jesus said unto them, If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth.*"

- ◆ James 4:17 *"Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin."*
- ◆ John 15:22 *"If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloak for their sin."*
- ◆ John 15:24 *"If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not sin: but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father."*

What Sin is not

- Sin is not a slip. Sin is premeditated, deliberate, and treacherous (1 Tim. 2:4).
- Sin is not a corruption of the substance of the soul.
- Sin is not the mixture of some other substance with the soul. After the fall the soul of man was still a spiritual substance, or a spiritual substance inhabiting a body.
- Sin is a corruption of the faculties and especially of the moral character of the soul.
- Sin has relation to the law of God in that it is a departure from God and from His law.
- Sin includes pollution and guilt. Guilt embraces the two ideas of blameworthiness and liability to punishment. Christ in assuming our guilt took our liability but not our blameworthiness.

An indulgence in Sin

Individuals will pay a high price to indulge themselves in sin if only for a moment.

1. Adam and Eve, for one bit of luscious fruit when they were not even hungry, brought sin, suffering, shame, and death upon themselves and the human race (Gen. 3).
2. Lot's wife, revealing her longing for the things that pertain to earth, took one look back at Sodom and became a pillar of salt (Gen. 19).
3. Esau, to satisfy one hour of fleshly appetite, lightly esteemed his birthright and forfeited his right to the ancestry of Christ (Gen. 25).
4. Achan, for a garment he could not wear, and silver and gold he could not spend, paid with all his possessions, his family, and his life the spoils of sin (Josh. 7).
5. Samson, for the caress of a careless woman, lost his eyes, and finally his life (Judg. 16).
6. David, wanting the wife of another man, left a legacy of adultery, shame, and tears (2 Sam. 11).

7. Ahab, coveting another's vineyard, claimed it for his own after killing for it and heard his own funeral oration, *"In the place where the dogs licked the blood of Naboth, shall the dogs lick thy blood, even thine"* (1 Kings 21).

Original Sin

The doctrine of Original Sin may be established.

- ◆ **Baptist.** *"Although God created man upright and perfect, and gave him a righteous law, which had been unto life had he kept it, and threatened death upon the breach thereof, yet he did not long abide in this honor, Satan using subtlety of the serpent to subdue Eve, then by her seducing Adam, who, without any compulsion, did willfully transgress the law of their creation, and the command given unto them, in eating the forbidden fruit, which God was pleased, according to His wise and holy counsel to permit, having purposed to order it to his own glory."* (*The Baptist Confession of Faith of 1689*, Chapter 6, Section 1; study Gen. 2:16,17; 3:12; 2 Cor. 11:3).

The Scriptures and Original Sin

- ◆ Psalm 51:1. *"Behold I was shapen in iniquity and in sin did my mother conceive me."*
- ◆ Genesis 8:21. *"The imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth."*
- ◆ Matthew 7:16-19. *"Do grapes of thorns or figs of thistles?"*
- ◆ Job 14:4. *"Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?"*
- ◆ Job 15:14. *"What is man that he should be clean and he that is born of woman that he should be righteous?"*
- ◆ John 3:6. *"That which is born of the flesh is flesh."*
- ◆ Ephesians 2:3. *"We were by nature the children of wrath even as others."*
- ◆ Psalm 58:3. *"The wicked are estranged from the womb; they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies."*

The Universality of Sin

If Adam's sin were nothing but a bad example, as the Pelagians hold, there would naturally be many that would escape that example. A sense of sin and guilt has always attended the human race. There is a consciousness of sin as innate and this consciousness as well as the practice of sin is universal. It can be explained on the ground of inborn depravity. There is proof of Original Sin in its early manifestation. Before observation, training, or example become effective the child manifests an evil nature. Psalm 58:3.

Personal Experience with Sin

An honest evaluation of personal experience and consciousness in regard to sin leads the heart to conclude that the beginnings of sin cannot be limited, or ultimately traced, to a definite volition; but goes back to an internal bias in the nature that prompts the volition. There is in the soul what is termed an “immanent preference” for evil. This preference or bias constitutes character out of which choices spring. And, more often than not, the choices bring bondage. Every person has discovered the hard way that, *"The chains of habit are generally too small to be felt until they are too strong to be broken."* A. W. Tozer called upon people to be honest when he wrote, *"All our heartaches and a great many of our physical ills spring directly out of our sins. Pride, arrogance, resentfulness, evil imaginings, malice, greed: these are the sources of more human pain than all the diseases that ever afflicted mortal flesh."*

The Nature and Effect of Original Sin

"Is Original Sin part of the nature of sin?" Also, *"Does Original Sin condemn the soul to an eternal death?"* The answer to both questions is, “Yes.” Original Sin is indeed of the nature of sin and it does condemn the soul to an eternal death. John Calvin wrote, *"We are on account of this very corruption, considered as convicted and justly condemned in the sight of God, to whom nothing is acceptable but righteousness, innocence, and purity."*

The Consequences and Characterization of Sin

Because of sin fellowship with God is lost. The soul is the object of His holy wrath and curse (Rom. 1:32; 2:14-15; Ex. 34:6-7). Sin has left souls susceptible to all the miseries of this life, to death itself, and to the pains of hell forever. *"You have heard,"* said C. H. Spurgeon, *"of the Spartan youth who concealed a stolen fox under his garment, and although it was eating into his bowels, he would not show it, and therefore died through the creature's bites; you are of that sort sinner, you are carrying sin in your bosom, and it is eating out your heart. God knows what it is, and you know what it is; now you cannot keep it there and be unbitten, undestroyed. Why keep it there? O cry to God with a vehement cry, God save me from my sin!"*

Salvation is needed because sin constitutes the natural character as evil and leaves the soul in a state of spiritual death. Sin is the root out of which actual sin springs. The root cannot be better than the fruit, which it bears. *"Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murder, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness."* But here is the problem.

"The nature of sin, as sin, is not only to be vile, but to hide its vileness from the soul. Hence many think they do well when they sin. Jonah thought he did well to be angry with God (John 4:9). The Pharisees thought they did well when they said, Christ had a devil (John 8:48). And Paul thought verily, that he ought to do many things against, or contrary to, the name of Jesus; which he also did with great madness (Acts 26:9,10). (John Bunyan)

- ◆ Romans 6:6. *"Our old man is crucified that the body of sin might be destroyed."*
- ◆ Romans 7:5. *"When we were in the flesh, sinful passions wrought in our members."*
- ◆ Galatians 5:24. *"They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh its affections and lusts."*
- ◆ James 3:11-12. *"The fountain and the tree produce according to their nature."*

- ◆ 1 Corinthians 15:22. "*In Adam all die.*"
- ◆ Romans 5:14. "*Death reigned from Adam to Moses even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's first transgression.*"
- ◆ Romans 5:16. "*The judgment was by one to condemnation.*"
- ◆ Romans 5:18. "*By the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation.*"

The penalty of spiritual death falls on all including infants who have not actually transgressed. If one part of the penalty of Original Sin takes effect on all, it is logical to conclude that the other part does also.

Total Depravity

The doctrine of total depravity does not teach that any man is as bad as can be, but that the whole person is depraved by sin. This depravity affects the totality of the faculties of man with two distinct effects: sin cripples the will and weakens the mind.

The Pelagian View of Sin

Opposed to the doctrine of total depravity is the Pelagian view that teaches that sin consists in voluntary acts or deliberate choices of evil by individuals. However, there is no "*original sin*" imputed to others because of Adam's transgression. Adam may have set a bad example but that is all. All are born as pure and holy as Adam at his original creation which means that all, by nature can do what is required by God to live a virtuous life. Individuals may live without sin, and often do. Salvation is man's own act of choosing the right. In essence, man saves himself.

The Semi-Pelagian View of Sin

This modified position of the Pelagian view argues that individuals are not dead in sin though they are "*sick*" with it having been weakened by the fall. What is needed is the help of divine grace in salvation to complete and perfect the work of redemption. No, man cannot save himself but he can begin the moral movement towards reformation and then God will assist his efforts in the final work of salvation.

The Arminian Doctrine of Sin

The Dutch theologian Jacob Hermann (Latin, *Arminius*, 1560-1609), gave the world a system of theology known as Arminianism. The following positions are commonly held by Arminians.

- Sin consists in acts of the will.
- Adam's guilt was individual and was not imputed to his posterity.
- Man's depravity as a result of the Fall is not total for man has not lost the faculty of self-determination or the ability to choose the good.

- The human will is to be viewed as one of the causes of regeneration (synergism).
- Faith and good works are a ground of acceptance with God.
- There is no imputation of Christ's righteousness to the believer.

Remarks on Arminianism

Arminianism in general embraces much evangelical truth, but Scripture cannot support many things such as an alternative understanding of the nature of Original Sin.

Arminianism and the Nature of Original Sin

The Scriptures teach that man's moral inheritance from Adam is of the nature of sin, and that all men are under penalty of eternal death. Man is by nature the children of wrath. Man is condemnable for what he is as well as for what he does. The depravity of nature is as truly heinous in the sight of God as the actual transgression that springs from it. Arminianism does not fully recognize the evil inherent in human nature. Arminianism does not appreciate the fact that there are no small sins because there is no small God.

Synergism and Salvation

In the end, the Arminian doctrine of salvation divides the effectiveness of salvation between the divine and human will. This mode of salvation is called synergism. The doctrine of sovereign grace assigns the efficiency to God's will alone, and makes human co-operation the effect of Divine grace. "*The dependence upon grace in the Arminian system is partial; in the Calvinistic system it is total*" --William G.T. Shedd.

Chapter 19

TOTAL INABILITY

“Our First parents, by this sin, fell from their original righteousness and communion with God, and we in them whereby death came upon all: all becoming dead in sin, and wholly defiled in all the faculties and parts of soul and body.” (*The Baptist Confession of Faith of 1689*, Chapter 6, Section 2; study Rom. 8:23; Rom. 5:12ff; Tit. 1:15; Gen. 6:5; Jer. 17:9; Rom. 3:10-19).

Various Views

- ◆ **The Pelagian View.** Man has no inability but has full ability to do all that God requires. There is no need of regeneration, or any divine grace in sanctification or spiritual growth.
- ◆ **The Semi-Pelagian View.** Man was weakened by the fall, but not all ability was lost. He needs divine grace to assist his personal efforts.
- ◆ **The Augustinian (Reformed) View** teaches that man, in Adam, was totally disabled by the fall, and so became wholly dependent on the Spirit of God for the inception and development of spiritual life. *“They [Adam and Eve] being the root, and by God’s appointment, standing in the room and stead of all mankind, the guilt of the sin was imputed, and corrupted nature conveyed, to all their posterity descending from them by ordinary generation, being now conceived in sin, and by nature children of wrath, the servants of sin, the subjects of death, and all other miseries, spiritual, temporal, and eternal, unless the Lord Jesus set them free”* (*The Baptist Confession of Faith of 1689*, Chapter 6, Section 3; study Rom. 5:12-19b; 1 Cor. 15:21, 22, 45, 49; Psa. 51:5; Job 14:4; Eph. 2:3; Rom. 6:20; 5:12; Heb. 2:14,15; 1 Thess. 1:10).

Summary

The Pelagian says man is well; the Semi-Pelagian says that man is sick; the Reformed view says that man is spiritually dead before God. *“From this original corruption, whereby we are utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to all evil, do proceed all actual transgressions.”* (*The Baptist Confession of Faith of 1689*, Chapter 6, Section 4; study Rom. 8:7; Col. 1:21; James 1:14,15; Matt. 15:19).

What inability is not

- Inability is not the loss of any faculty of the soul: intellect, feeling, will or conscience.
- Inability is not the loss of free agency.
- Inability does not mean that fallen man possesses no virtues. Fallen and unregenerate men often display many qualities that are admirable.
- Inability does not mean lack of capacity to know God and to receive grace.

The Meaning of the Doctrine of inability

- Inability does mean that fallen man is unable to keep God's law and merit life by good works.
- Inability means that man is unable to reinstate himself in God's favor.
- Inability means that man is unable to change his nature, regenerate himself or become holy.
- Inability means that man is unable to exercise right affection or inclination toward God.

"By the fall man contracted an unwillingness to that which is good. All motions of the will in its fallen estate; through defect of a right principle from whence they flow and a right end to which they tend, are only evil and sinful. Leave man to himself, remove from him all the restraints which law and order impose, and he will swiftly degenerate to a lower level than the beasts, as almost any missionary will testify. And is human nature any better in civilized lands? Not a whit. Wash off the artificial veneer and it will be that "the carnal mind is enmity with God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be" (Rom. 8:7). Christ will prefer the same charge in a coming day when He was here on earth: "Men love darkness rather than light" (John 3:19). Men will not come to Him that they might have life.

By the fall man contracted an inability to that which is good. He is not only unfitted and unwilling, but unable to do that which is good. Where is the man that can truthfully say he has measured up to his own ideals? All have to acknowledge there is a strange force within dragging them downward, inclining them to evil, which, notwithstanding their utmost endeavors against it, in some form or other, more or less, conquers them. Despite the kindly exhortations of friends, the faithful warnings of God's servants, the solemn examples of suffering and sorrow, disease and death on every side, and the vote of their own conscience, yet they yield. "They that are in the flesh [in their natural condition] cannot please God." (Rom. 8:18) (A. W. Pink)

Scriptural Evidence of inability

- ◆ John 3:3. "*Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.*"
- ◆ John 3:6. "*That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.*"
- ◆ John 6:44. "*No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.*"
- ◆ John 15:4. "*Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.*"

- ◆ John 15:5. *"I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing."*
- ◆ Romans 8:7. *"Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be."*
- ◆ 1 Corinthians 15:10. *"But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me."*
- ◆ 2 Corinthians 3:5. *"Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God."*
- ◆ 1 Corinthians 4:7 *"For who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?"*
- ◆ Ephesians 2:8. *"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:"*

What Can a Person Do in the Process of Salvation?

- A person can prepare the heart to receive the King of glory. The people of Israel were told by John, *"Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight."* (Mark 1:3) One way to prepare the heart is by considering the content of the gospel message.
- A person can listen to the gospel, learn of the sinfulness of sin and the soul's inability to save itself, and remember that confessing sins is no substitute for forsaking them.
- A person can examine the perfection of God's Law and discover how far he falls short of it. *"You see the Law in the hands of the Holy Spirit shows a man the sinfulness of his nature. Sin is not merely a matter of actions and deeds; it is something within the heart that leads to the action. Our Lord said, "Thou shalt not commit adultery." He does not say, "as long as you do not do the act, all is well." No! He said, "that whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.""* (L.R. Shelton, Jr)
- A person can try to obey that Law, which will serve to convince the soul of how impossible it is to keep the Law and earn salvation. *"Hear it again! The Law was never given to save us, but to show us the exceeding sinfulness of sin and our far distance from a thrice Holy God. Romans 3:23 tells us the truth: "all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." We have come short of God's glory as revealed in Christ, short of His holiness, short of all that He is in His perfection and therefore abide beneath the curse of His Law. For we read in Galatians 3:10: "Cursed is everyone that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them." And what says the whole Law*

of God? "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind and with all thy strength and to love thy neighbor as thyself." (Mark 12:30-31) (L. R. Shelton, Jr)

- A person can learn that there is no hope for without divine grace.
- A person can call on God to do the work that cannot be done oneself. The soul can plead with David: "Create in me a clean heart O God, and renew a right spirit within me." (Psa. 51:10)
- A person can receive the love of God by grace through faith and say in the day of salvation:

*Loved, when a wretch defiled with sin,
At war with heaven, in league with hell,
A slave to every lust obscene,
Who, living, lived but to rebel.*

Objections answered against the Doctrine of innate inability

- ◆ **Argument.** "If man does not have a free will, then he is not under any moral obligation to keep God's Law."
 - **Answer.** That depends on how the inability arose. If it is a *created* inability then there can be no obligation. But if the inability is *acquired*, the obligation remains. The Bible teaches in Genesis 2 that man *acquired* the inability to please God through the sinful act of deliberate disobedience. Therefore, man is still responsible despite the fact that his will is no longer free. The will became enslaved to sin and needs to be set free from the power and pollution of sin's bondage..
- ◆ **Argument.** "If man is unable to obey the divine law then he is not free."
 - **Answer.** This objection grows out of a confused idea of freedom. A man is a slave to sin, but acts out of his own inherent proclivities and so is free.

If the question is asked, "Can a sinner repent if he will?" the response is, "That depends on the meaning of 'will.' If by "will" it is meant that there is an inclination or being willing on the whole, then the answer is, "Yes." But that is itself repentance and so all that is meant is, "Can a sinner repent if he repents?" Pharaoh seemed willing to repent each time the hand of Divine discipline fell on him. However, he could not change his nature and close with the Lord in genuine conversion. If by "will" volition is meant, the answer is, "No!," for a man cannot change his nature by a mere volition.

- ◆ **Argument.** "If there is no ability, then there is nothing for man to do."
 - **Answer.** While a person cannot heal himself, he can apply to the physician. Man can go to the Savior and ask for salvation.

- ◆ **Argument.** *“If man has ability to repent in and of himself, then God will wait upon him.”*
- **Answer.** God’s time is now. If man feels his own ability is the issue, then man will take his own time.

- ◆ **Argument.** *“Why would God command a man to do what he cannot do?”*
- **Answer.** Because God bids us to do so. And further God supplies the needed grace, *“My grace is sufficient.”*

Part IV

SOTERIOLOGY: THE STUDY OF SALVATION

Chapter 21

SALVATION AND THE SOVEREIGN

Definition

Soteriology, (*soteria*, salvation, *logos*, discourse) refers to the study of the doctrine concerning salvation. In general, Soteriology embraces God's purpose to save, the Person and work of the Redeemer, and the application of redemption by the work of the Holy Spirit in the hearts and lives of men.

Six Presuppositions of Soteriology

There are six foundational principles on which the doctrine of Soteriology rests.

- God's rule is sovereign.
- God as Creator, Ruler, and Saviour underlies all the provisions of salvation.
- Man is responsible to his Creator because he has the capacity for good and bad.
- The Covenant of Works expresses God's will and man's obligation.
- The Law of God requires perfect obedience.
- God as a perfect Being cannot require less than perfection in His Moral Law.
 - ◆ Matthew 5:48 "*Be ye perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect.*"
 - ◆ 1 Peter 1:16 "*It is written: Be ye holy for I am holy.*"
 - ◆ John 5:17 "*All unrighteousness is sin.*"

The Law of God cannot be lowered or eliminated to accommodate man's weakness for to diminish or abrogate God's Law is to tarnish God's essential nature. The Law must be met to the last letter. Furthermore, mercy cannot infringe on justice else there would be disharmony among the attributes of God's being. So what is to be done? What can be done? How are souls to be saved? There is an urgent necessity for a cleansing Atonement that expresses justice and mercy alike while maintaining the harmony of the Divine nature.

The Fall of Man

Like so many other things in life, it is a great mystery to know how temptation could find a point of contact and acceptance in a holy person made in the image of God. However, Scriptures reveal that man, when first tempted, yielded to temptation and fell from an exalted state of great grace and privilege into sin which brought condemnation and a sentence of death. On the basis of these basic facts Soteriology proceeds.

The Order of The Decrees

Among theologians, there has always been a difference of opinions as to the order of events in the Divine economy. Of particular importance is whether or not the objects of the Divine decree were contemplated as fallen creatures, or merely as men whom God would create on an equal basis (Loraine Boettner, *The Reformed Doctrine of Predestination*). Two views have emerged on this matter.

The Infralapsarian View

The infralapsarian view contemplates the salvation of men *after* the Fall. Those who are chosen to salvation were chosen on the basis of being members of a fallen *race* which means that all who shall come to faith were elected subsequent to the Fall. According to the Infralapsarian View, the order of events would be as follows.

- God decreed to create man in the image of God.
- God decreed to permit the Fall of mankind in Adam.
- After the Fall, God decreed to elect some of the fallen souls to salvation and to leave others in a natural state of condemnation.
- God decreed to provide a Redeemer for the elect whose work of redemption would be sufficient for all.
- God decreed to secure the application of this salvation to the elect by means of the Holy Spirit.

The Supralapsarian View

The term "*supralapsarian*" indicates that the decree of election to salvation took place *before* God created man and *before* He permitted the Fall. According to the Supralapsarian View, the objects of the Divine decree were contemplated merely as men whom God would create, all of whom were on an equal basis in His sight. According to the Supralapsarian View, the order of effects would be as follows.

- In eternity past God proposed to elect some of mankind to eternal life and to condemn others.
- God proposed to create man.
- God proposed to permit the Fall.
- God proposed to send Christ to redeem the elect.
- God proposed to send the Holy Spirit to apply salvation to the elect

Election Precedes Salvation

At whatever precise point God decreed to save souls, once made, the Divine choice necessitated all the preparations involved in the salvation process. Without Divine preparation of the heart, an individual could not exercise any choice at all in a positive direction towards the Lord just as "*no man ever chose when and where he would be born, who would become his parents, how he would be taught and trained, whether the Gospel was to be sent to Europe or America, or whether they were to remain heathen, whether the Gospel should ever sound in his ears or he forever remain ignorant of its contents and call. All these things that enter so much into man's salvation were chosen absolutely and alone by God*" (David Clark).

The Covenant of Redemption

As the order of the Divine decree continues to be contemplated, the biblical revelation is clear that in matchless grace God did not leave all mankind to perish in the estate of sin and misery. Out of His mere good pleasure, and for all of eternity, God did elect some to everlasting life. God entered into a Covenant of Grace with the elect to deliver them out of the estate of sin and misery, and to bring them into an estate of salvation by a Redeemer.

Evidence that Such a Covenant Was Made

There is Scriptural evidence that a Covenant of Redemption was made between the Father and the Son.

- ◆ John 6:37 *"All that the Father giveth to me shall come to me."*
- ◆ John 6:39 *"Of all that He hath given men I should lose none."*
- ◆ John 8:42 *"Neither came I of myself, but He sent me."*
- ◆ John 10:29 *"My Father who gave them to me,"*

The plan of the Covenant of Redemption was to save man by a Redeemer, who should become a Substitute, bear the penalty of sin, fulfill all the demands of God's Law, justify or acquit the sinner on condition of faith, restore the soul to God's favor, sanctify it wholly and glorify it forever. This Covenant of Redemption was made in eternity, but takes effect in time. It first appears in human history after the Fall of man in the Garden of Eden when a Redeemer was promised (Gen. 3:15).

The Covenant of Grace

Issuing from the Covenant of Redemption between the Father and the Son is the Covenant of Grace between man and God. *"The distance between God and the creature is so great, that although reasonable creatures do owe obedience unto Him as their Creator, yet they could never have attained the reward of life but by some voluntary condescension on God's part, and this He hath been pleased to express by way of a covenant* (study Luke 17:10; Job 15:7,8).

Moreover, man having brought himself under the curse of the law by his fall, it pleased the Lord to make a Covenant of Grace wherein He freely offereth unto to sinners life and salvation by Jesus Christ, requiring of them faith in Him that they may be saved; and promising to give to all who are ordained to eternal life His Holy Spirit to make them willing and able to believe (study Gen. 2:17; Gal. 3:10; Rom. 3:20,21; Rom. 8:3; Mark 16:15,16; John 3:16; Ezek. 36:26,27; John 6:44,45; Psa. 110:3).

This covenant is revealed in the Gospel; first of all to Adam in the promise of salvation by the seed of the woman, and afterward by further steps until the full discovery thereof was completed in the New Testament; and it is founded in that eternal covenant transaction that was between the Father and the Son about the redemption of the elect; and it is alone by the grace of this covenant that all the posterity of fallen Adam that ever were saved did obtain life and blessed immortality, man Being now utterly incapable of acceptance with God upon those terms by which Adam stood in his state of innocency" (study Gen. 3:15; Heb. 1:1; 2 Tim. 1:9; Tit. 1:2; Heb. 6:6,13; Rom. 4:1,2; Acts 4:12; John 8:56; ***The Baptist Confession Of Faith Of 1689***, Chapter 7, Sections 1,2,3).

- The Plan of Salvation is always presented as a covenant, with parties, conditions, promises, and penalties.
- The Covenant of Grace takes the place of the Covenant of Works in which man failed through the Fall.
- The Covenant of Grace is the same in all dispensations [periods of time], patriarchal, Mosaic and Christian. To Adam was given the promise of a Redeemer. Rites and sacrifices were instituted to prefigure the Atonement. To Noah after the flood the covenant was renewed. With Abraham and his seed the covenant was re-established. Moses and Israel embraced that covenant as a national obligation. The gospel in the New Testament is still the proclamation of the covenant. The condition is the same in all dispensations and that is belief in the Lord Jesus Christ as He is revealed in every generation. In the Old Testament era, Jesus Christ was revealed as the Messiah that was to come (Isa. 53) In the New Testament era Jesus Christ was and is revealed as the One who has come. And there it is: faith in a Redeemer to come holds the same place as faith in a Redeemer already come. Christ is the Redeemer in all dispensations. The Old Testament saints were saved, not by the works of the Law (Rom. 3:20), but by faith in a Redeemer to come (Zech. 12:10-11). *"For if the inheritance is of the Law, it is no more of promise; but God gave it to Abraham by promise."* (Gal. 3:18)

The Doctrine of Election

Fundamental to understanding the biblical doctrine of election is to define the term. What does the word "Election" mean? A.W. Pink explains. Election, *"signifies to single out, to select, to choose, to take one and leave another. Election means that God has singled out certain ones to be the objects of His saving grace, while others are left to suffer the just punishment of their sins. It means that before the foundation of the world, God chose out of the mass of our fallen humanity a certain number and predestinated them to be conformed to the image of His Son."* Scriptural evidence for election is abundant.

- ◆ Acts 15:14 *"Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles to take out of them a people for His name."*
- ◆ Ephesians 1:4 *"According as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world."*
- ◆ Ephesians 1:5 *"Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,"*
- ◆ John 15:16 *"Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen"*
- ◆ John 15:19 *"I have chosen you out of the world,"*
- ◆ Acts 22:14 *"The God of our fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldest know his will, and see that Just One, and shouldest hear the voice of his mouth."*
- ◆ Romans 8:29 *"For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren."*

- ◆ Romans 8:30 *"Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified."*
- ◆ 2 Thessalonians 2:13 *"God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation."*
- ◆ 1 Peter 1:2 *"Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience."*
- ◆ 1 Peter 2:9 *"But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light:"*
- ◆ Isaiah 41:9 *"Thou whom I have taken from the ends of the earth, and called thee from the chief men thereof, and said unto thee, Thou art my servant; I have chosen thee, and not cast thee away." This passage shows God's distinguishing love.*
- ◆ John 6:37 *"All that the Father giveth me shall come to me;"*
- ◆ John 6:44 *"No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him:"*
- ◆ Acts 13:48 *"And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the LORD: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed."*
- ◆ Romans. 11:15 *"Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace."*
- ◆ Romans 9:11 *"(For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;)"*
- ◆ Ephesians 2:10 *"For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them."*

These passages and others show that God elects individuals to salvation. The election is a personal election (not general). No other interpretation can be put on the texts that embody the doctrine of election.

The Extent of the Elective Decree

Though God elects some individuals to salvation, not all share in the election. There are many souls who shall never be saved (John 17:9,12; Acts 1:25). Salvation is rare and difficult (Matt. 7:13). The extent of the elective decree is better understood by reviewing once more a general view of the Plan of Salvation after the Fall.

- God purposed to save some, but not all, of the humanity which He would create and which He knew would Fall from a glorious estate into sin.

- God chose a Redeemer to secure the salvation of the elect.
- God sent the Redeemer, His own Son Jesus Christ, to earth in the Incarnation.
- Christ made an Atonement for the elect.
- The offer of salvation to is extended to all men without distinction.
- The gospel is sent into all the nations
- When the gospel is proclaimed in local assemblies, the external call is extended to individual.
- Some who hear the external call to salvation are persuaded by the Holy Spirit to accept the call.
- Those who are persuaded by the Holy Spirit are regeneration by the same so that the gospel heard can be believed. Life precedes faith.

Various Views Of The Nature And Ground Of Election

The doctrine of election is a common doctrine within Christendom. Most evangelical Churches embrace the doctrine of election. However, there are divers views.

Conditional Election

In Church history some, like the Socinians, regarded election as entirely conditional. It has been taught that election rests on the condition of faith and holy living. God's decree determines to save the believer and condemn the unbeliever, to reward the righteous and punish the wicked. The decree does not extend farther than this. The condition is supplied by the undetermined will of man. Therefore, election is conditional.

- ❖ **Special Note.** The Socinians find their origin in the French theologian Faustus Socinus, (c.1604). Socinus professed a belief in God and adherence to the Christian Scriptures but he denied the divinity of Christ and consequently the Trinity.

The concept of a conditional election has evident weaknesses, not the least of which is that it takes away the Divine attributes of foreknowledge and omniscience. If anything is undetermined it cannot be truly foreknown by anyone including the Lord. A purely conditional election renders nothing certain and therefore the elect are outside the compass of God's knowledge. The Socinians were honest enough to admit that God can not know the uncertain actions of men. The Arminian theological position is less consistent than the Socinians because it draws back from such a conclusion while teaching it. In contrast to the concept of a conditional election, the Bible teaches that the Divine decree, which includes election, is not conditional nor is it changeable.

- ◆ Isaiah 46:10 *“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.”*
- ◆ Ephesians 2:8,9 *“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.”* If faith is the gift of God, it is not wholly separable from the Divine decree.

Election Is Personal

The language of the Scriptures show that election is personal, and that men are elected to faith and holiness. Therefore, a conditional election does not correspond to the Scriptural representations in the matter.

- ◆ Philippians 4:3 *“And I entreat thee also, true yoke-fellow, help those women which labored with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and with other my fellow-laborers, whose names are in the book of life.”*
- ◆ Hebrews 12:23 *“To the general assembly and Church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect.”*
- ◆ 1 Thessalonians 1:4 *“Knowing brethren beloved, your election of God.”*

Election Is To Faith And Good Works

- ◆ Acts 13:48 *“And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed.”*
- ◆ John 15:16 *“You have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, He may give it you.”*
- ◆ Ephesians 2:10 *“For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.”* Note. If election is “unto faith and good works,” then faith and good works cannot be the condition of election.
- ◆ 1 Peter 1:2 *“Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied.”*

Limiting Election

In an effort to avoid the implications of personal election concept of a limited objective has been proposed. This teaching restricts the Divine decree to the predestination of certain nations, communities, and generations to the knowledge of true religion, and the external privileges of the gospel. There is truth in this view in as far as it goes. It cannot be denied that the gospel has come to Europe and America while many other nations in the world remain in darkness and the curse of false religions. But is that all there is to election? Surely there must be more.

The truth of the matter is that Someone is making many choices on behalf of others. No person has ever had a chance to choose when or where they would be born or even if they should be born. No person has ever had the chance to choose whether his parents should be heathen or Christian, moral or depraved. Divine Providence places some people into favorable situations, and some into unfavorable circumstances. There are those who have the benefit of the means of grace from infancy, and others who enjoy little or none of these advantages. All these things are due to God’s over ruling providence, and not to human choice. The contention that election is the choice of individuals to membership in the external Church and the means of grace does not go

far enough. God's decree determines the external circumstances of a person's life, but the decree does not stop there. The ultimate objective of the decree is the salvation of personal individuals.

"Before Salvation came into this world, Election marched in the very forefront, and it had for its work the billeting of Salvation. Election went through the world and marked the houses to which Salvation should come and the hearts in which the treasure should be deposited. Election looked through all the race of man, from Adam down to the last, and marked with sacred stamp those for whom Salvation was designed. 'He must needs go through Samaria,' said Election; and Salvation must go there. Then came Predestination. Predestination did not merely mark the house, but mapped the road in which Salvation should travel to that house; Predestination did not merely mark the house, but it mapped the road in which Salvation should travel to that house; Predestination ordained every step of the great army of Salvation; it ordained the time when the sinner should be brought to Christ, the manner how he should be saved, the means that should be employed; it marked the exact hour and moment, when God the Spirit should quicken the dead in sin, and when peace and pardon should be spoken through the blood of Jesus. Predestination marked the way so completely, that Salvation doth never overstep the bounds, and it is never at a loss for the road. In the everlasting decree of the Sovereign God, the footsteps of Mercy were every one of them ordained." (Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit, "Things That Accompany Salvation")

The Doctrine of Definite Redemption

Professor Louis Berkhof summarizes the doctrine of a definite redemption in his excellent work, *Systematic Theology*.

1. The intents, purposes, and designs of God are always efficacious and cannot be frustrated by the actions of men.
2. Scripture consistently qualifies those for whom Christ laid down His life in such a way as to point to a very definite redemption. Those for whom Christ died are called "*His sheep*" (John 10:11,15); "*His Church*" (Acts 20:28; Eph. 5:25-27; "*His people*" (Matt. 1:21) and "*the elect*" (Rom. 8:32-35).
3. The doctrine that Christ died for the purpose of saving all men, logically leads to absolute universalism, that is, to the doctrine that all men are actually saved. It is impossible that they for whom Christ paid the price, whose guilt He removed, should be lost on account of that guilt.
4. The Bible clearly teaches that the design and effect of the atoning work of Christ is not merely to make salvation possible, but to reconcile God and man, and to put men in actual possession of eternal salvation (Matt. 18:11; Rom. 5:10; 2 Cor. 5:21; Gal. 1:4; 3:13; Eph. 1:7). The whole concept of a potential salvation limits the extent of the Atonement in a way that should be protested.

"We are often told that we limit the Atonement of Christ, because we say that Christ has not made a satisfaction for all men, or all men would be saved. Now, our reply to this is, that, on the other hand, our opponents limit it, we do not. The Arminians say, Christ died for all men. Ask them what they mean by it. Did Christ die so as to secure the salvation of all men? They

say, "No, certainly not." We ask them the next question--Did Christ die so as to secure the salvation of any man in particular? They answer, "No." They obliged to admit this, if they are consistent. They say, "No; Christ has died that any man may be saved if"---and then follow certain conditions of salvation. We say, then, we will just go back to the old statement---Christ did not die so as beyond a doubt to secure the salvation of anybody, did he? You must say "No"; you are obliged to say so, for you believe that even after a man has been pardoned, he may yet fall from grace, and perish. Now, who is it that limits the death of Christ? Why, you. You say that Christ did not die so as to infallibly secure the salvation of anybody. We beg your pardon, when you say we limit Christ's death; we say, "No, my dear sir, it is you that do it." We say Christ so died that He infallibly secured the salvation of a multitude that no man can number, who through Christ's death not only may be saved, but are saved, must be saved, and cannot by any possibility run the hazard of being anything but saved. You are welcome to your Atonement; you may keep it. We will never renounce ours for the sake of it." (Charles Haddon Spurgeon, *Particular Redemption*, Sermon 181 in the New Park Street Pulpit)

5. The Bible teaches that the design and effect of the atoning work of Christ was not to make salvation possible, but to reconcile God and man, and to put men in actual possession of eternal salvation, a salvation which many fail to obtain (Matt. 18:11; Rom. 5:10; 2 Cor. 5:21; Gal. 1:4; 3:13; Eph. 1:7).
6. The design of God and Christ in securing the salvation of the elect was not conditional. It was not contingent on the faith and obedience of man. This truth is manifested in the fact that the death of Christ purchased faith, repentance, and all other effects of the work of the Holy Spirit, for His people. There are no conditions of which the fulfillment is simply dependent on the will of man. The Atonement alone fulfills the conditions that must be met in order to obtain salvation (Rom. 2 :4; Gal. 3:13,14; Eph. 1:3,4; 2:8; Phil. 1:29; 2 Tim. 3:5,6).

Is Election Based upon Foreseen Faith and Good Works?

It is not possible that election could be based upon foreseen faith and good works for how can God foreknow something unless He first determines its certainty? Foreknowledge rests on predestination. Nothing can be foreknown unless it is certainly determined. *"Arminianism makes man elect himself, and there is therefore no real election by God. If election depends on man's faith and works, then man is the agent of his own election; but all Scriptural representation refers election to God. And if be said: 'But God secures the faith and works as the ground of election,' then that is but to postulate God's purpose prior to man's."* (David Clark) Repentance, faith, and good works are the result of election, not the cause.

- ◆ Ephesians 1:4 *"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:"*
- ◆ 1 Peter 1:2 *"Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied."*

- ◆ Philippians 2:13 *"For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure."*
- ◆ 2 Thessalonians 2:13 *"But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren beloved of the LORD, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth:"*
- ◆ Romans. 8:29 *"For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren."*
- ◆ Ephesians 2:8 *"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:"* If grace is the gift of God it is not the cause of the gift.

Election and the Weak

Despite any hesitation to embrace the doctrine of the election of individuals to salvation, it remains obvious that the salvation of infants, the intellectually challenged, unconscious dying sinners, and the heathen, if they are saved at all, must depend on the sovereign choice of God and not on foreseen faith and works for none exist.

But Who Will Come?

In opposition to the doctrine of a definite redemption, select passages are often quoted with the promises, *"Whosoever will"* or, *"Whosoever believeth,"* (John 12:46; Rev.. 22:17; Rom. 9:33; 10:11). The implication is made that that beliefs and decisions are wholly the acts of man apart from a sovereign election to salvation. True as these statements are they do not address the main point. The deeper and vital issue is this: *"How does a man become willing? Who will come to Christ?"* If any natural man is willing to come to Christ, he can certainly choose to believe and be saved; but the sinful nature is hostile to God. It must be made willing, by God's word, by God's grace, by God's Spirit, or by sovereign intervention. Opposition to definite redemption minimizes the depths to which sin has taken the soul and left it hopeless and helpless in the sight of God.

Free Will Is Not Sufficient To Save

It is not sufficient to say that God has provided an Atonement and presents the alternatives of life and death and leaves it to man to choose between the two. As God did not create the world and leave it to natural laws neither did God make an Atonement and leave it to the capricious decision of man to accept or refuse. In such case the sinful nature of man would inevitably determine every man against God. Sinners need a Saviour for, as Christ said in John 6:44, *"No man can come to me except the Father, which sent me, draw him."*

Redemption: Accomplished And Applied

The biblical revelation is that God has not only made an Atonement, but secures its acceptance upon the heart of Divine affection by the positive operations of the Lord's grace and Spirit (Psa. 68:18; Acts 2:33; Psa. 2:8 cp. Heb. 2:6-9). The element of human decision, while it is an factor in the salvation process, is not exercised apart from the inciting or controlling power of God. Salvation is wholly the gift of God.

Human Responsibility for Sin

It is futile to say: "*Because a man must be drawn to the Lord by the Spirit he is not to be blamed for not coming to Christ for salvation.*" The very argument is an indictment for condemnation. The more a person needs to be drawn the more evil their nature. Such is the disinclination of the sinful nature toward God and good that unless God moves upon it in some way, by grace, or word, or providence, or Spirit, it would stand apart forever by nature and by choice. The sin of unbelief (John 3:18) is not the only sin of man that serves as a basis for just condemnation. There is imputed sin and sins of the flesh that also drag him into hell.

The Results of Election

While the Doctrine of Election is found by some to be offensive, there are some distinct results as A. W. Pink notes. "*First, the Doctrine of Election magnifies the character of God. It exemplifies His grace. Election makes known the fact that salvation is God's free gift, gratuitously bestowed upon whom He pleases. It [election] exhibits His Omnipotency.*

Second, election makes known the fact that God is all powerful, ruling and reigning over the earth, and declares that none can successfully resist His will or thwart His secret purposes. Election reveals God breaking down the opposition of the human heart, subduing the enmity of the carnal mind, and with irresistible power, drawing His chosen ones to Christ. Election confesses--"We love him because He first loved us, and we believe, because He made us willing in the day of His power." (Psa. 110:3)

Third, election ascribes all glory to God. It disallows any credit to the creature. It denies that the unregenerate are capable of predicting a right thought, generating a right affection, or originating a right volition. It insists that God must work in us both to will and to do. It declares that repentance and faith are themselves God's gifts, and not something which the sinner contributes towards the price of His salvation. Its language is, "Not unto us, not unto us," but "unto Him that loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood."

Finally, election guarantees eternal preservation of all God's saints. In the Holy Scriptures the question of our salvation is traced back, not to the moment when we believed, but to a point before time began. Before the foundation of the world, God chose us in Christ (Eph. 1:4). "I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee." This lifts the matter of our salvation out of time into eternity. Were salvation merely a thing of time, it would perish. But because salvation is a thing of eternity, it must endure forever."

The Difficulties of Election

➤ **Argument.** "*Does not Scripture declare that God is no respecter of persons?"*

Answer. *Yes, it does, and Election proves it. The seven sons of Jesse, though older and physically superior to David, are passed by, while the young shepherd boy is exalted to Israel's throne. The scribes and lawyers are unnoticed, and ignorant fishermen are chose to be Apostles of the Lamb. Divine truth is hidden from "the wise and the prudent," but is revealed unto "babes." The majority of the mighty and noble are ignored, while the weak and despised are called and saved. Harlots and publicans are sweetly compelled to come to the marriage feast, while proud Pharisees are suffered to perish in their own self-righteousness.*

- **Argument.** *"Is not man a responsible being, endowed with a free will?"*

Answer. *Man is unquestionably a responsible being. He is no mere machine or automation. Scripture uniformly regards him as one who reaps according as he sows, and as one who shall yet have to render an account for the things done in the body. But nowhere does the Bible predicate the free will of the natural man. Man by nature is the subject of Satan and the slaves of sin, and does not come free until the Son of God makes him free (John 8:36). "No man can come to me [but he can if he is free] except the Father which hath sent Me draw him"--but there is no need to "draw" him if he is free. This is unequivocal*

- **Argument.** *"Does not Scripture say, "Whosoever will, may come?"*

Answer. *It does, and Christ never yet turned away any willing soul. If in the eleventh hour the dying thief who turned unto the Lord was assured a place in Paradise, and if Saul the persecutor of the Church--"the chief of sinners"--found mercy, verily, "Whosoever will, may come." But all are not willing. The vast majority of people have no desire to come to Christ. Had God left it entirely to man's will, none would ever have accepted Him. Consequently, God has to work in us "both to will and to do of His good pleasure" (Phil. 2:13). God does not thus work in all, and that brings in Election.*

- **Argument.** *"Why preach the Gospel to every creature if only a "few" are chosen?"*

Answer. *Because the atoning sacrifice of Christ is sufficient for all, if all will accept it. Because God would have published far and wide the matchless grace and fathomless love of His dear Son. Because the sacrifice of Christ is eminently adapted to all: what suits one sinner, must meet the needs of another. Because it is by the preaching of the Gospel that the elect are called out from the world. Finally, because we are commanded to preach the Gospel to all nations, and,*

**It's not for us to reason why,
It's not for us to make reply,
It's for us to do--and die.**

- **Argument.** *"Will not this doctrine cut the nerve of evangelistic effort?"*

Answer. *In his sermon, *Salvation of the Lord*, Charles Spurgeon answers this question. "Well, then, says one, that will make people sit still and fold their arms. Sir, it will not. But if men did so I could not help it; my business, as I have often said in this place before, is not to prove to you the reasonableness of any truth, nor to defend any truth from its consequences; all I do here--and I mean to keep to it--is just to assert the truth, because it is in the Bible; then, if you do not like it, you must quarrel with my Master, and if you think it unreasonable you must quarrel with the Bible. Let others defend Scripture and prove it to be true; they can do their work better than I could; mine is just the mere work of proclaiming it. I am the messenger; I tell the Master's message; if you do not like the message quarrel with the Bible, not with me; so long as I have Scripture on my side I will dare and defy you to do anything against me. 'Salvation is of the Lord.' The Lord has to apply it, to make the unwilling willing,*

*to make the ungodly godly, and bring the vile rebel to the feet of Jesus, or else salvation will never be accomplished. Leave that one thing undone, and you have broken the link of the chain, the very link which was necessary to its integrity. Take away the fact that God begins the good work, and that He sends us what the old Divines call preventing grace--take that away, and you have spoilt the whole of salvation; you have just taken the keystone out of the arch, and down it tumbles. (extracted from, *The Doctrine of Election*, by A. W. Pink)*

Answers to Arguments Against Election

➤ **Argument.** *“Election is inconsistent with free agency.”*

Answer. First, the man that is convinced, convicted and persuaded by the word and Spirit of God to confess sins and embrace the offered salvation is as free as the man whom you persuade to take a walk or to invest in securities. There is no violation of free agency. And it must be remembered that God can bring to bear sufficient inducements to incline any man. The man who resists God’s call by word and Spirit and providence, and whom God allows to pursue his own chosen way to destruction and perdition, cannot complain that he is not a free agent. He has chosen his way and followed it. Finally, if God intervenes over all opposition and rebellion on the part of the man, and sovereignly regenerates him, as was seemingly the case with Saul of Tarsus, at the height of his rebellion, that man is still a free agent in every act of his life. He was a free agent in his opposition, he is a free agent in his obedience; and in his regeneration he was not an agent at all. In no case does God’s decree contravene free agency. And it is God’s sovereign right to regenerate whom He will. No extrinsic power can limit God nor deprive Him of His sovereignty.

➤ **Argument.** *“Election represents God as partial in His dealings with men.”*

Answer. As a matter of fact God does not treat all men alike. Some are born in heathen lands, some in Christian environments. Some are born with high endowments, some with inferior faculties. God chose Israel for His people while leaving others in ignorance of the true God. He provided salvation for man and left fallen angels to the doom of their sin. The parable of the vineyard laborers shows God to be sovereign in the dispensation of His gifts. *“Shall I not do what I will with my own?”*

➤ **Argument.** *“Election is unjust to the non-elect.”*

Answer. Strict justice would condemn all. God is not under obligation to save any. All salvation is mercy; all condemnation is justice. Dr. A. H. Strong illustrates this point. *“It is not true that, because a governor pardons one convict from the penitentiary, he must therefore pardon all. When he pardons one no injury is done to the rest.”*

➤ **Argument.** *“Election represents God as acting arbitrarily and without reason.”*

Answer. That is asserting more than any man knows. We do not know all God's reasons for saving particular men; nor His reasons for passing some by, except that it is for their sins. "God's mere good pleasure" does not mean that there are no reasons in God's mind why He acts thus or so. Individuals err who think that of God's will, there is no reason except His will. Sovereignty is just a name for what is unrevealed in God.

➤ **Argument.** "A particular election is inconsistent with an offer of salvation to all."

Answer. A.A. Hodge says, "Nothing but a sinful unwillingness can prevent any one who hears the gospel from receiving and enjoying it. The gospel is for all, election is for a special grace in addition to that offer. The non-elect may come if they will. The elect will come. The decree of election puts no barrier before men preventing them from accepting the gospel offer. Any man, elect or non-elect, will be saved if he accepts. The non-elect are left to act as they are freely determined by their own hearts." Rowland Hill was criticized for preaching election and yet exhorting sinners to repent, and was told that he should preach only to the elect. He replied that if his critic would put a chalk-mark on all the elect he would preach only to them. "God bids us preach the gospel to all; that some are not saved, is because of their willful, sinful rejection of the offered mercy." (David Clark)

The Signs of Election

The doctrine of election should cause no one who hears the gospel to despair or be uncertain as to their state and standing before the Lord. The signs of an elect person may be listed.

- The elect have given themselves completely to the Lord. "All that the Father giveth Me shall come to Me" (John 6:37).
- The elect are characterized by gospel obedience. Peter speaks of Christians as "elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience" (1 Pet. 1:2).
- The elect continue to grow in grace and holiness. "Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord" (Heb. 12:14).
- The elect remain faithful to the doctrines of grace and persevere in the sphere of faith. They are able to say at the end of life, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith" (2 Tim. 4:7).

Election Is Of God

The Scriptures speak of an election of **God**. If language has any meaning this must mean that God chooses the individual unto salvation. Any view that substitutes for God's choice a scheme that makes men elect himself does not measure up to the teachings of the Scriptures on this subject.

Election Does Not Rest In Man

If the ultimate and determining element in man's salvation rests in man and not in God, there would be the possibility that no man would ever be saved and Christ might have suffered and died in vain. God not only made certain an Atonement but made certain its application in the saving of men.

Election Demands A Sovereign Savior

If infants, imbeciles, the mentally afflicted and any heathen are saved it must be by the direct and sovereign election of God. If we were called upon to pray for a dying man in his last come we would do so in the full assurance that it was God's undoubted prerogative to answer our prayers and save that man. And thankful would we be that it was God's choice and not man's that determined that man's salvation.

The Hope That Is Found In Election

If the initiative of salvation is with God, and conviction, persuasion, and enabling are the work of God's Spirit, then election is a forgone conclusion. It can be observed that God's sovereign election affords a larger hope than any other view of election that can be considered. If God may sovereignly elect whom He will, then all ages, races, and conditions are open to His benevolent choice. We may therefore indulge a hope for many who have never heard the gospel, and for the man at whose bedside we pray though sunk into the unconsciousness that precedes death. If the determining choice rests with the perverted, rebellious, depraved human will, how few will be saved! But if on the will of the God who loved, and gave, and died to save, then a great multitude whom no man can number. Election is not therefore a horrible doctrine of narrow limitation; but the ground of world-wide expectation. It is a source of real comfort and a blessed matter of thankfulness as we look on a world ruined by sin and contemplate its chance of salvation.

The Great Mystery Of Election

While there are questions in the doctrine of election before which man must bow in humility, as to the fact of an elect, the Scriptures leave no-one in doubt. Election is a great mystery. *"The motives and purposes that lie in the Divine mind are beyond apprehension, and above comprehension. For this reason it is wrong to sit in judgment of God's actions. How the Divine mind acts on the human mind is, in its deeper reaches, inscrutable. How God affects man below the sphere of consciousness is not open to observation. No-one understands how the immanent God inter-penetrates the physical universe and upholds it by the word of His power; or how that immanence, in substance and power, relates itself to the human mind, and becomes effective in action or restraint."* (David Clark)

The Transcending Thoughts Of God

In all discussions of the doctrine of election, it should be kept in mind that the heart of humanity is dealing with a Being who is infinitely kind and good, and who is equally sovereign and just. In addition, it is to be realized afresh that God is dealing with individuals who are not innocent and do not deserve any mercy. That mercy is show to man is because of God's great grace.

The Purpose of Election

The doctrine of election is evidently designed to show, in its practical import, that the whole of man's salvation is due to God's mercy and grace and no part of it to man's merit, wisdom, or virtue. Let this not be forgotten. The chief difficulty in the doctrine of election lies on the side of the unsaved, about whose apostasy, and about the philosophy of it, the Scriptures have not given extended explanation. We may, however, presume to say that God gives to all normal men some light, some knowledge, some operation of His Spirit. This is called common grace.

If Men Are Not Saved

If men are not saved it is because of their sinfulness and resistance of God's grace. It is proper to say that if men did not resist, God's grace would save every man. Many may so resist that God may give him up to his own way, and he reaps the doom he has chosen. After God has done all and more for the sinner than he deserves, he may leave him to his own sinful choice. But in all circumstances God is sovereign and almighty. He never surrenders his sovereignty. He may, if He chooses, step over all man's resistance, and regenerate the man even at the height of his rebellion. One man effectually resists the grace of God and another does not; but the effectual resistance is not due to any limit of God's power. Judas and Saul both resisted; and Judas was allowed to "*go to his own place,*" while Saul was made a "*chosen vessel.*" The ground of the elective decree means the reason that determines the decree to be what it is. Sometimes the word "*ground*" is used to express the consideration for which a thing is done; as in Justification. Sometimes it is used in the sense of determining cause or reason.

The Ground of Election

It must be kept in mind in all this discussion that the elective decree is a positive decree; while so far as the reprobate is concerned it is only a permissive decree. A man is elected to be saved; he is not elected to be lost, except as God chooses to permit him to follow his chosen way. When, therefore, we ask for the ground of election, that is to say, "*Why a man is saved?*" or, "*What determines God to save that man?*" The Arminian answers: "*Foreseen faith and works.*" The Calvinist answers: "*God's love, mercy, grace and goodness exercised toward the man.*"

In the case of the lost, the love, mercy, grace, goodness and Spirit of God would incline him to salvation, did he not resist and rebel. In the case of Saul, and probably of most of us, God overcame the resistance and rebellion by the persuasions of His word, or providence, or Spirit; or perhaps by immediate regeneration. In the case of Judas and Dives (Luke 16), if he were real, God did not overcome their resistance, but left them to their own determined choice. When pressed to explain why did God not overcome the resistance of Judas, Dives and others, as he did that of Saul; why God did not exert His omnipotence and sovereignty; why God permitted them to have their own way, there is no answer. There are secrets in the mind of God which He has not chosen to reveal.

Election and Reprobation

Though foreseen faith and works cannot constitute the ground of election, foreseen unbelief and disobedience does constitute the ground of reprobation. No person shall ever be saved on the ground of perceived virtues, but they will be condemned on the ground of sin. While some are saved from their unbelief and disobedience, in which all are involved, and others are not, it is still the sinner's sinfulness that constitutes the ground of reprobation.

Election and reprobation proceed on different grounds; one the grace of God, the other the sin of man. It is not right to say, as some have, that because God elects to save a irrespective of character or deserts, that therefore He elects to damn irrespective of character or deserts. That is not true. No one shall ever be condemned in an unjust or unworthy manner.

Summary of the Doctrine of Election

1. Election is God's decision, from eternity past, to save souls of His own choosing.
2. The elective decree contemplates the race as already fallen.
3. Election is from a state of sin and misery unto salvation.
4. Election is personal, that is, terminates on the individual. It includes both means and end, is both general and particular. Election is consummated by the efficient grace of God.
5. Men are brought into a state of grace by the Spirit of God working when, and where, and how, and on whom he pleases; by means or without means; by appeal to the mind and heart, or by immediate sovereign regeneration; constraining by persuasion, or by conferring a new nature.
6. God's grace and Spirit would incline all men to good if not resisted.
7. Men are lost because of their sinfulness and resistance of God's grace; not because they have no chance, but because they reject the grace and help proffered.
8. God may permit men to follow the evil they have chosen, to their own destruction.
9. God, in His sovereignty, could regenerate the apostate.
10. Why God does not save all, why He permits some to follow their own way, is not know.
11. Permission is classified in theology as a decree.
12. The judge of all the earth will do right, and bestow mercy even where it is not deserved.

A Confession Of Faith: The Doctrine Of Predestination

The doctrine of predestination may be defined very simply for it sets forth the truth that from eternity God has foreordained all things which come to pass, including the final salvation or reprobation (judgment) of man.

"Those whom God hath predestinated unto life, He is pleased in His appointed and accepted time, effectually to call, by His Word and Spirit, out of that state of sin and death in which they are by nature, to grace and salvation by Jesus Christ; enlightening their minds spiritually and savingly to understand the things of God; taking away their heart of stone, and giving unto them an heart of flesh: renewing their wills, and by His almighty power determining them to that which is good, and effectually drawing them to Jesus Christ; yet so as they come most freely, being made willing by His grace." (**The Baptist Confession Of Faith Of 1689**, Chapter 10, Section 1; study Rom. 8:30; 11:7; Eph. 1:10,11; 2 Thess. 2:13,14; Eph. 2:1-6; Acts 26:18; Eph. 1:17,18; Ezek. 36:26; Deut. 30:6; Ezek. 36:27; Eph. 1:19; Psa. 110:3; Song of Sol. 1:4).

Scriptural Evidence for Predestination

- ◆ Ephesians 1:5 *"Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,"*
- ◆ Ephesians 1:11 *"In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will:"*
- ◆ 2 Timothy 1:9 *"Who 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, "*
- ◆ Romans 9:11 *"(For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;)"*
- ◆ Romans 9:15 *"For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion."*
- ◆ Romans 11:5 *"Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace."*
- ◆ Romans 11:6 *"And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work."*

*"Since God is the sovereign God, Whose counsel stands forever, Whose will can be frustrated, and Whose purpose is not disannulled; we must conclude that His will and determination is sovereign particularly **in salvation**. It can not be that man is the one who determines, by his own will, whether or not he will be saved. Certainly man must seek God, love Him, and serve Him out of a **willing** heart. But ultimately, since God is sovereign, salvation must depend solely upon His **sovereign choice**. For He is the infinite Creator Who has the right and the power to do with His finite creatures exactly what He pleases--even with respect to our eternal destiny" (Steven Houch).*

Chapter 21

The Historical Background of Redemption

The Desire of the Ages

Before the Covenant of Redemption was finally realized, there were long periods of preparation which came and passed. Hope arose and then subsided for another time. If our first parents expected the Redeemer in their immediate offspring, it was not to be (cp. Gen. 4:1). The centuries came and went. Finally, "*when the fullness of time was come God sent forth His Son.*" (Gal. 4:4) Part of the preparation for Christ coming to fulfill the Covenant of Redemption was the teaching that took place through the typology of rites and rituals of the Old Testament sacrifices, ceremonies, and symbols.

The Typology of Rite and Rituals

A type is a pre-figuration of spiritual things in visible form. From Genesis to Malachai the Scriptures abounded in types. For example, in Romans 5:4 the First Adam is made the type of the Last Adam, Christ. In the Garden of Eden, the Lord made Adam and Eve coats of skins typifying the need for blood atonement for sin. Abel brought the firstlings of his flock and the type was set forth of the Lamb of God who would one day come to take away the sin of the world. (John 1:29) The trial of Abraham's faith in Genesis 22 illustrates the surrender of a beloved son, the submission of that son, and the fact of vicarious deliverance. (cp. John 3:16) In John 8:56 Jesus said plainly that, "*Abraham rejoiced to see my day, he saw it and was glad.*" In John 3:14, Christ represents the brazen serpent as a type of the crucifixion (cp. Num. 21:9) In Matthew 12:40, Jonah is the type of Christ's burial. (cp. Jon. 1:17) "*Now all these things happened unto them as types, and they are written for our admonition*" (1 Cor. 10:11).

The rites in regard to the sin-offering, the rites on the great Day of Atonement, and the Passover observances were also rich in typology. "*Every smoking altar, every bleeding victim, every ascetic privation, every priestly intervention was a testimony to the guilt of sin and the need of remission. The whole mighty fabric of heathen religion, in all its variety, awfulness, and degradation was an age-long revelation of the need of a Saviour and salvation. And the hopelessness and ineffectiveness of it only enhanced the testimony. Man was learning the bitter lesson of apostasy from God. And the utter failure of all human plans and efforts to regenerate the human race showed clearly the helplessness of man without God and his revelation. The heathenism of the world was thus over-ruled by God to make preparation for the coming Redeemer. And when the fullness of time came, the Gentiles, from their experiences of failure and defeat, showed as much receptiveness for Christianity as the people of Israel, if not more.*" (David Clark)

Preparation Through Prophecy

Prophecy also served to prepare the world for the Covenant of Redemption being fulfilled. From the first promise found in Genesis 3:15, "*The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head,*" till the announcement of John, "*Behold the Lamb of God,*" the whole scope of predictive prophecy was educational and preparatory. The world grew in knowledge and expectation through the centuries of a coming Messiah. Later, Roman historians would remember this spirit of anticipation and write of it. Suetonius noted that, "*There had spread over all the Orient an old and established belief, that it was fated at that time for men coming from*

Judaea to rule the world" (Suetonius: *Life of Vespasian*, 4:5). Tacitus tells of the same expectation declaring that *"there was a firm persuasion ... that at this very time the East was to grow powerful, and rulers coming from Judaea were to acquire universal empire."* (Tacitus: *Histories*, 5:13) The Jew had the hope that *"about that time one from their country should become governor of the habitable earth."* (Josephus: *Wars of the Jews*, 6:5,4) And in the fullness of time, God brought forth His Son (Gal. 4:4).

Chapter 22

Then Came the Redeemer

A Confession of Faith

*"It pleased God, in His eternal purpose, to choose and ordain the Lord Jesus, His only begotten Son, in accordance with the covenant made between them both, to be the Mediator between God and man; to be Prophet, Priest, and King, the Head and Saviour of His Church, the Heir of all things, and the Judge of all the world. To the Lord Jesus He gave, from all eternity, a people to be His seed. These, in time, would be redeemed, called, justified, sanctified, and glorified by the Lord Jesus (**The Baptist Confession Of Faith Of 1689**, Chapter 8, Section 1; study Isa. 42:1; 1 Pet. 1:19,20; Acts 3:22; Heb. 5:5,6; Psa. 2:6; Luke 1:33; Eph. 1:22,23; Heb. 1:2; Acts 17:31; Isa. 53:10; John 17:6; Rom. 8:30).*

The Incarnation

The only Redeemer of God's elect is the Lord Jesus Christ, who being the eternal Son of God, became man, and so was, and continueth to be, God and man, in two distinct natures, and one person forever. Christ the Son of God, became man, by taking to himself a true body and a reasonable soul, being conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost, in the womb of the Virgin Mary, and born of her, yet without sin. Christ is the Messiah which was to come. The promised Seed of the woman (but not of the man) was fulfilled in the virgin birth (Gen. 3:15).

"The Son of God, the second person in the Holy Trinity, being very and eternal God, the brightness of the Father's glory, of one substance and equal with Him; Who made the world, and Who upholdeth and governeth all things He hath made, did, when the fullness of come, take upon Himself man's nature, with all the essential properties and common infirmities thereof, yet without sin; Being conceived by the Holy Spirit in the womb of the Virgin Mary, the Holy Spirit coming down upon her: and the power of the Most High overshadowing her; and so was made of a woman of the tribe of Judah, of the seed of Abraham and David, according to the scriptures; So that two whole, perfect and distinct natures 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." (**The Baptist Confession Of Faith Of 1689**, Chapter 8, Section 2; study John 1:14; Gal. 4:4; Rom. 8:3; Heb. 2:14,16,17; 4:15; Matt. 1:22,23; Luke 1:27,31,35; Rom. 9:5; 1 Tim. 2:5). There were many prophecies concerning Christ. The prophets had said:

- Messiah was to be born of Abraham's seed Gen. 22:18
- Messiah was to be of the tribe of Judah Gen. 49:19
- Messiah was to be a Prophet like unto Moses Deut. 18:15
- Messiah was to be the son of David Isa. 11:1; Jer 23:5
- Messiah was to appear while the second temple stood Hag. 2:9; Mal. 3:1
- Messiah was to come at the end of the seventy weeks Dan. 9:25
- Messiah was to be born in Bethlehem Mic. 5:2
- Messiah was to be preceded by a forerunner Isa. 40:3; Mal. 3:1
- Messiah was to be declared to be God Isa. 9:6; Isa. 7:14
- Messiah's ministry was to be a blessing Isa. 61:1-3; Lk. 4:18-21
- Messiah was to be crucified Psa. 22
- Messiah was to be offered as a vicarious sacrifice Isaiah. 53

All of these prophecies and more found fulfillment in the Person of Christ showing that Jesus is the Messiah foretold.

The Pre-existence Of Christ And His Incarnation Scripturally Set Forth

- ◆ John 8:38 *“I speak that which I have seen with my Father: and ye do that which ye have seen with your father.”*
- ◆ John 8:42 *“Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me.”*
- ❖ **Special Note.** Many religious groups such as the Mormons, Jehovah Witnesses, and Christian Science practitioners, are willing to declare a belief in Christ’s pre-existence; but they do not believe in His deity.

The Days of Humiliation

The days of His Incarnation involved great humiliation for the Lord. The abasement of Christ consisted of many things: being born in a stable; being brought up in an obscure village; being made under the law; having to endure the hardships of life; being the object of the outpouring of Divine wrath; having to suffer the cursed death of the cross; being buried; and continuing under the power of death for three days and nights (Phil. 2:6-9) But Christ endured all of the shame and suffering and humiliation in order to bring many sons into glory. The heart of the redeemed looks through eyes of faith and sees God's Son upon the tree.

*Before the cross in awe I stood,
Beholding brow and pierced hand;
For me it was He bled and died,
No other price for sin beside
Could pay the price for me.*

*His precious blood, there flowing red,
Was love's best gift, most freely shed;
No one but He the price could pay,
Or save from death and point the way
For sinners, you and me.*

*And as I gaze, I seem to hear
Him gently say, "My son, draw near;
New life I give and power withal,
Free unto all who on Me call,
Now and eternally."*

~*~

Ernest O. Sellars

The Virgin Birth

The doctrine of the virgin birth of Christ has been part of the faith of the Church from the first. The earliest creed is the Apostle's Creed (c. 100-150). It says in part that Jesus was, "*conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary.*" For 1500 years this tradition was virtually undisputed within the Church. Suddenly, there came an attack on this precious doctrine by individuals from the Age of Enlightenment. The French infidel Voltaire (1694-1778), and the English pagan Thomas Paine (1737-1809), author of *The Age of Reason*, united with others to use wit and worldly wisdom to assault the teaching of the virgin birth. The German Rationalistic schools of the nineteenth century continued the relentless attack against the Lord through textual criticism. Then came the modern era and Unitarianism stressing the brotherhood of mankind and the Fatherhood of God. The unique person and work of Jesus Christ was dismissed along with the doctrines about Him such as the virgin birth. The age of miracles was declared to be over at the dawn of the twentieth century.

Rejection of the Virgin Birth

Historically, anti-supernaturalism consistently repudiates all miracles. Meanwhile, subjective speculation is substituted for the authority of the Scriptures and arguments are set forth against the doctrine of the virgin birth.

- **Argument.** "*The doctrine of the Virgin Birth was not part of the teaching of Christ or the Apostles.*"

Answer. Not everything that Christ or the Apostles preached and taught is known. But even if they did not preach anything about it, the doctrine still stands on the testimony of the written gospels.

- **Argument.** "*Mark and John do not mention the Virgin Birth.*"

Answer. Mark did not write anything about the boyhood of Christ but began with the Lord's public ministry. In like manner, John immediately concerns himself with the Deity of Christ and not with the early days of His humanity.

- **Argument.** "*Paul did not preach the doctrine of the virgin birth.*"

Answer. Paul does say that Christ was "*made [born] of a woman*" (Gal. 4:4), with emphasis on woman, and then goes on to write about the "*mystery of godliness,*" (1 Tim. 3:16) and that Christ was "*in the form of God, took on him the form of a servant.*" (Phil. 2:7)

Proof of the Virgin Birth

The gospels of Matthew and Mark teach the glorious doctrine of the virgin birth. These books are the genuine writings of the men whose names they bear. All manuscript evidence testifies to this. The Incarnation involves Christ's exaltation. The statement of this doctrine covers His resurrection, ascension, session at the right hand of God, and His coming judgment to the world at the last day.

The Person of Christ

Christ the Son of God became man by taking to Himself a true body and a reasonable soul; being conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost in the womb of the Virgin Mary and born of her yet without sin. According to *The Baptist Confession Of Faith Of 1689* (Chapter 8, Section 2), "*The Son of God, the second person in the Holy Trinity, being very and eternal God, the brightness of the Father's glory, of one substance and equal with the Him, who made the world, who upholdeth and governeth all things He hath made, did—when the fullness 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 Holy Spirit in the womb of the Virgin Mary, the Holy Spirit coming down upon her, and the power of the Most High overshadowing her, and so was made of a woman, of the tribe of Judah, of the seed of Abraham and David, according to the Scriptures; so that two whole 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.*" (Study John 1:14; Gal. 4:4; Rom. 8:3; Heb. 2:14,16,17; 4:15; Matt. 1:22,23; Luke 1:27,31,35; Rom. 9:5; 1 Tim. 2:5)

"The Lord Jesus, in His human nature thus united to the Divine, in the person of the Son, was sanctified and anointed with the Holy Spirit above measure, having in Himself all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge; in whom it pleased the Father that all fullness should dwell in Him, to the end that being holy, harmless, undefiled, and full of grace and truth, He might be thoroughly furnished to execute the office of a Mediator and Surety; which office He took not upon Himself, but was thereunto call by His Father; Who also put all power and judgement in His hand, and gave Him commandment to exercise the same." (***The Baptist Confession Of Faith Of 1689***, Chapter 8, Section 3; study Psa. 14:7; Acts 10:38; John 3:34; Col. 2:3; Col. 1:19; Heb. 7:26; John 1:14; Heb. 7:22; Heb. 5:5; John 5:22,27; Matt. 8:18; Acts 2:36).

As a Mediator, Christ fulfilled all the legal responsibilities of the Law in order to be a perfect Sacrifice for sin. *"This office the Lord Jesus did most willingly undertake, which that He might discharge He was made under the law, and did perfectly fulfilled it, and underwent the punishment due to us, which we should have borne and suffered. being made sin and a curse for us; enduring most grievous sorrows in His Soul and most painful sufferings in His body; was crucified, and died, and remained in the state of the dead, yet saw no corruption: on the third day He arose from the dead with the same body in which He suffered, with which He also ascended into Heaven, and there sitteth at the right hand of His Father making intercession, and shall return to judge men and angels at the end of the world."* (***The Baptist Confession Of Faith Of 1689***, Chapter 8, Section 4; study Psa. 40:7, 8; Heb. 10:5-10; John 10:18; Gal. 4:4; Matt. 3:15; Gal. 3:13; Isa. 53:6; 1 Pet. 3:18; 2 Cor. 5:21; Matt. 26:37,38; Luke 22:44; Matt. 27:46; Acts 13:37; 1 Cor. 15:3,4; John 20:25,27; Mark 16:19; Acts 1:9-11; Rom. 8:34; Heb. 9:24; Acts 10:42; Rom. 14:9,10; Acts 1:11; 2 Pet. 2:4)

The Deity of Christ

Jesus is God, the second person of the Trinity. This is proven in several ways.

Jesus Claimed To Be Divine

- ◆ John 6:38 "*For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of Him that sent me.*"

- ◆ John 8:58 *“Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am.”*
- ◆ John 10:38 *“But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works: that ye may know, and believe, that the Father is in me, and I in him.”*
- ◆ John 8:42 *“Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me.”*
- ◆ John 14:9 *“Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father?”*
- ◆ John 14:10 *“Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works.”*

The Apostles Taught that Jesus Was Divine

- ◆ Matthew 1:23 *“Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.”*
- ◆ Matthew 16:26 *“For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?”*
- ◆ Mark 1:1 *“The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God;”*
- ◆ Luke 1:35 *“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.”*
- ◆ John 1:1 *“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”*
- ◆ John 1:14 *“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 20:31 *“But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.”*
- ◆ Philippians 2:6 *“Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:”*

- ◆ Colossians 1:16 *“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:”*
- ◆ Colossians 2:9 *“For in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.”*

The Confession Of Others Concerning Christ’s Deity

- ◆ Isaiah 9:6 *“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, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.”*
- ◆ Matthew 27:54 *“Now when the centurion, and they that were with him, watching Jesus, saw the earthquake, and those things that were done, they feared greatly, saying, Truly this was the Son of God.”*
- ◆ Luke 4:41 *“And devils also came out of many, crying out, and saying, Thou art Christ the Son of God. And he rebuking them suffered them not to speak: for they knew that he was Christ.”*

The Sacred Title of God Applied to Christ Prove His Divinity

- Jesus is called Emmanuel Matt. 1:23
- Jesus is called God John 20:28
- Jesus is called the Alpha and Omega Rev. 1:11
- Jesus is called the King of kings and Lord of lords 1 Tim. 6:15

The Works of Christ Prove His Deity

- Miracles John 20:30
- Resurrection Acts 2:32-36
- Supernatural knowledge Matt. 9:4
- His unique teachings Luke 4:22; 2:47

The Personal Influence of Christ in the World Asserts His Deity

*More than 1900 years ago there was a Man born contrary to the laws of life.
This Man lived in poverty and was reared in obscurity...
Only once did He cross the boundary of the country in which He loved:
That was during His exile in childhood...*

*In infancy He startled a king: in childhood He puzzled the doctors:
In manhood He ruled the course of Nature, walked upon the billows
as if pavement, and hushed the sea to sleep.*

*He never wrote a book, and yet all of the libraries of the country
could not hold the books that have been written about Him.*

He never wrote a song, and yet He has furnished the theme for more songs than all the song writers combined.

He never founded a college, but all the schools put together cannot boast of having as many students...

*The names of the past proved statesmen of Greece and Rome have come and gone
The names of past scientists, philosophers and theologians have come and gone; but the name of this Man abounds more and more.*

Though time has spread 1,965 [1,998] years between the people of this generation and the scene of His crucifixion, yet He still lives.

Herod could not destroy Him, and the grave could not hold Him.

He stands forth upon the highest pinnacle of Heavenly glory, proclaimed of God, acknowledged by angels, adored by saints, and feared by devils, as the living, personal Christ, our Lord, our Saviour and our God.

--The Man Who Changed The World, Herbert Lockyer

The Authority that has Been Entrusted to Christ Proves His Deity

- ◆ John 5:22 *“For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son:”*
- ◆ Acts 10:42 *“And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead.”*
- ◆ Acts 17:31 *“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.”*

Personal Proof of the Deity of Christ

The best proof is the experience of Divine grace that regenerates the soul. Mel Trotter was a desperate alcoholic to the point that at the funeral of his young daughter he actually slipped into the funeral parlor and stole her shoes. He thought he could sell the child's shoes for another shot of whiskey. Then the day came when he met the Master. Mel Trotter became a preacher of the gospel. He often went back to the Pacific Garden Mission in Chicago where the Lord found him to give his testimony. One evening while he was speaking, a half drunk fellow stood up and yelled, *“How do you know you are converted?”* And Mel Trotter immediately replied, *“Why, bless your dear heart, old fellow, I was right there when it all happened!”*

The Humanity of Christ

As Christ was very God of very God, so He was true humanity. The Bible tells us that Christ had a human body which could be seen, felt, and handled (1 *John* 1:1). The Lord was born, grew, came to maturity, appeared in form as a man, ate, drank, thirsted, slept, was weary, died, was buried, rose and was recognized by His physical characteristics.

- ◆ Luke 24:39 *“Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have.”*
- ◆ Romans 1:3 *“Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh;”*
- ◆ Hebrews 2:14 *“Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil;”*

The Personality of Christ

In addition to being God incarnate, the Scriptures reveal that Jesus had a human soul with its powers of intellect, feeling, will and conscience. The Lord loved, sympathized, wept, exercised the feelings of a man, thought, talked, willed, made choices, groaned in spirit, and was troubled.

- ◆ Hebrews 2:16 *“For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham.”*
- ◆ Hebrews 2:17 *“Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.”*
- ◆ Luke 2:52 *“And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man.”*
- ◆ Matthew 26:38 *“Then saith he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me.”*
- ◆ Mark 13:32 *“But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father.”*

If Jesus did not have a human soul as well as a human body, He would not be truly man.

The Distinction of Two Natures

The word “*nature*” refers to substance with its attributes. The two natures are the human soul with its faculties and a Divine substance with its attributes. These two natures stand together in the person of Christ. The Logos or the second person of the Godhead does not take the place of, and exclude the human soul of Jesus, as some of the ancients believed. In such case there would be no true humanity. There is a complete human nature and a complete Divine nature in Jesus Christ.

The two natures are not mixed or confused so as to make a third something neither human nor Divine; as an acid and alkali unite and form a neutral salt. If the two natures were mingled Christ would be neither truly God nor truly man; and He is declared to be both God and man. Each nature retains its attributes, just as the body and soul of man are one person and two natures, and each nature retains its peculiar attributes. The body does not partake of the attributes of the soul, nor the soul partake of the attributes of the body. So Christ's humanity does not partake of the attributes of divinity, nor His divinity partake of the attributes of His humanity. Christ's human mind increased in wisdom; but His Divine mind was always omniscient. His human will had only human power, but His Divine will was omnipotent.

The Hypo-static Union

The Doctrine of the Hypo-static Union has reference to the union of two natures in one. In the person of Christ there is a complete human nature, body and soul, and a complete Divine nature, with all its attributes. These are one person and not two. It might be thought that the human nature of Jesus constituted a person and the Logos or second person of the trinity constituted a person and therefore there were two persons. But the human nature of Jesus was never a separate person. It never had any existence apart from the Divine nature and it had no individual subsistence. The Logos united not with a human person, but with a human nature. The two natures never address each other nor send each other as is the case with the persons of the Trinity. The one person of Christ is spoken of in terms true of both natures, but always as one Person as He lived and worked. Concerning the person and work of Christ, the following points should be noted.

- Some of the Lord's acts were purely **Divine** such as creation, preservation, and resurrection.
- Some things which were said of Christ as a person were true of His **Divine** nature only: "*Before Abraham was I am,*" true of the Divine nature. "*The glory which I had with thee before the world began.*"
- Some of the acts of Christ are purely **human** such as eating drinking, and sleeping.
- Some things which were said of Christ as a person were true of His **human** nature only: "*I thirst.*" "*My soul is sorrowful even unto death.*"
- Of the acts of Christ, some were *theanthropic*, which are instances in which both natures are manifested. One illustration is that God spoke to us by His Son. Then there is the work of redemption at Calvary and after that when Jesus sat down on the right hand of God.
- This linguistic usage shows that the two natures are regarded as but one person. We are two natures in one person and sometimes designate ourselves by one of the natures. We say, "*I walk,*" or "*I think.*" The same I that walks is the same I that thinks.
- The union in Christ is not the transmutation of one substance into another. The Divine nature does not become human and the human nature does not become Divine. 1 John 1:14 which teaches that "*the Word became flesh,*" must not be pressed to mean a transmutation or transubstantiation of the Divine into the human. That would take away the divinity. If the

Divine nature should take on the limitations of the human it would cease to be Divine. A spirit has not flesh and bones neither becomes flesh and bones. The attributes of matter are the opposite of those of spirit and vice versa. We must understand this text in the light of what we know from other sources and passages. The word “*became*” does not have the force of something being transmuted, but means, something that came to pass, occurred, or took place. What occurred or came to pass? A new visible human personality, the God-man, the human mode of existence in which Christ appeared. This came into existence. John further expresses the Incarnation by saying in 1 John 1:2 that the life was manifested. (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;) And in 1 John 4:2 Jesus is the Christ come IN the flesh. He was in the flesh, but not identical with it.

- ◆ 1 John 4:2 "*Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God:*" “Flesh” here means the whole human nature and not merely “body.”
- ◆ 2 John 1:7 "*For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist.*"
- ◆ 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.*"
- ❖ **Special Note.** When we are taught that “*God became man,*” it means that God united Himself with man, so that He appeared as man; and not that He changed Himself into a man.

In the God-man there is a union and communion of natures but not a communication, importation, or transfer of the attributes of one nature to the other. The humanity does not impart its limitations to the Divine nature, and the Divine nature does not make the humanity infinite, omnipresent, or omnipotent. The human does not become Divine or the Divine human. The attributes of matter cannot be transferred to spirit, nor the attributes of spirit to matter; but they may exist in a personal union as is the case with our bodies and souls.

But there is a union and communion of natures in the *theanthropos* which does impart knowledge and power without making the human Divine. One person can impart knowledge and inspiration to another but a person cannot impart the substance or faculties of their mind. The Jews asked, “*How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?*” Christ’s knowledge was more than that gained in ordinary ways. The human Jesus had as much knowledge and power as the Divine nature contributed to Him; but that doubtless limited by a human capability.

If the Lord knew the thoughts of men and read their hearts, it was the Divine nature that conveyed such knowledge to the human mind of Christ, and the human was the medium of expression for the Divine mind.

If Jesus was ignorant of the Day of Judgment, it was because the Divine nature had not disclosed the thing to His human intelligence. When Christ was a babe in the manger His Divine nature was just as omnipotent and omniscient as ever (Hebrews 10:5-9). The relation of the human mind in Christ to the Divine mind was similar to the relation of a prophet's mind to God. As the prophet Isaiah could know no more of the secrets of God than God disclosed to him, so the human mind of Christ could know no more than the Logos made known.

Summary Thoughts

- There is in the Godhead three persons in one substance.
- There is in Jesus Christ three substances: human body, human soul, and the Divine nature.
- In man there is one person in two substances.
- In Jesus Christ there are two sets of faculties; a human mind, feeling and will; and a Divine mind, affection and will; and these two sets of faculties are so united as to constitute but one person.

Christ's Sinlessness (Impeccability)

Sinlessness means without sin. Impeccability means not conquerable by sin. Christ is universally believed to be sinless, not all are agreed as to His impeccability. Some say that temptation implies there may be a high degree of temptation where there is no possibility of its succeeding. But it is answered that there may be a high degree of temptation where there is no possibility of its succeeding. Impeccability means not that temptation could not appeal to Christ, but that it could not conquer Him. This was due to the support of His Divine nature, as the Divine nature would be involved in culpability if the person yielded to sin. No temptation to Christ arose out of a sinful nature as is true of man; but the solicitation addressed to his holy nature may have been quite as powerful. When Hebrews 4:15 teaches that Christ was, "tempted in all points like as we are yet without sin," the meaning is that He was tempted as we are except by those desires that arise from inward evil.

Errors as to the Person of Christ

Denial of His Humanity

The Gnostics denied Christ's humanity on the ground of their Manichaeian philosophy that taught that evil arises from matter. Man consists of a spirit combined with a material body and this union with the material defiles the spirit. Salvation therefore consists in emancipation from the body. To effect this redemption Christ came into the world. It was necessary He should appear as a man; but as He could not be connected with matter and retain His spirituality His body was only a phantasm, a mere appearance without substance or reality. He therefore was not born nor did He suffer and die. Some admitted he had a body not of matter but some ethereal or celestial substance. The Docetics were a Gnostic sect who made this position famous.

Denial of His Divinity

- **The Arians** (followers of Arius, a presbyter in Alexander, Egypt, c. AD 320) held that God was one eternal person and that Christ was the first created being, by whom God created the world, super-angelic, became incarnate in Jesus of Nazareth. Nevertheless, He was a creature of different substance from God (Gk. *heter-ousios*). The Semi-Arians held that the absolute self-existent God was one person. The Son was a Divine Person, not equal with the Father, not identical in substance, but similar (Gk. *homo-i-ousios*). Unitarians now deny the Deity of Christ. They consider Him a mere man.
- **The Apollinarians** held that Jesus Christ had a human body and a human soul but no human mind or spirit. The Logos replaced these things. This position was embraced because of a belief that *every* man's soul was part of the Divine substance. They therefore attacked the two complete natures in Christ.
- ❖ **Special Note.** The Apollinarians were followers of Apollinaris of Laodicea (d. AD 390) a Bishop of Laodicea in Syria. His system of belief was condemned by synods of the Church. After his death the movement terminated and rightly so for while man is made in the image of God, he is also distinct from the substance and essence of God. Man is not God.
- **The Nestorians** denied the union of the two natures in one person. They insisted on the distinction of the two natures till they practically made two persons. David Clark explains the problem. *"If there are two natures in Christ as separate as two coins then there must be a human person that says 'I', and a Divine person that says 'I.'"*
- ❖ **Special Note.** In AD 428 Nestorius was appointed Bishop of Constantinople. Wanted to purify his diocese of any hint of unorthodoxy, he attacked the popular veneration being given to the Virgin Mary while trying to reassure the followers of Mohammed that Christianity taught the worship of one God. His teachings led to the conclusion that the human Jesus could not be worshiped and that unity of Christ's person between the mortal and the immortal, the flesh and the Divine was merely a union of the will rather than a true hypostatic union. Opposed by Cyril of Alexandria, Nestorius was deposed at the Council of Ephesus in AD 431 and exiled in AD 436. Nestorianism continued to flourish in Persia and encouraged missionary activity in Arabia, India, Turkey, and China.
- **The Eutychians** (fifth century AD) went to the opposite extreme and said there was only one nature and that was Divine. Everything about Christ was Divine, even His body was Divine. According to Eutyches, living in a monastery outside Constantinople, it was the Logos that was born, and the Logos that suffered and died. Eutyches said that there were two natures before the union, but only one after the Incarnation. The two natures of Christ were so unified as to become one.
- ❖ **Special Note.** The controversy which Eutyches created led to the Council of Chalcedon (AD 451) which reaffirmed the orthodox position of Christ having two natures. Not satisfied with that position, the Egyptian Church, along with the Ethiopian, adopted the doctrine of one nature in Christ, the Divine.

The Doctrine of Kenosis

This important doctrine is based upon the Greek word for “emptying” in Philippians 2:7. This view teaches that the Logos became man by reducing Himself to the capacity of a babe and increased in wisdom and power till at length He assumed Divine nature much like the flame in a gas heater can be started by a small spark and then turned up. *"This makes God to be less than deity and makes the Redeemer not truly man. If this were true, then Jesus would not be the seed of Abraham if He had no human soul."* (David Clark) Nevertheless, the willingness to reject the deity of Christ has plagued the Church throughout the centuries and now in modern times.

- **The Socinians** held that Christ was a mere man in Himself, had no prior existence but had a miraculous birth, and was baptized with the Holy Ghost and became Divine and is to be worshipped. The Unitarians are really a branch of the Socinians, followers after Fausto Sozzini (or Socinus, 1539-1604). In the tradition of the radical skepticism of the Italian Renaissance, Socinus denied the deity of Christ, predestination, original sin, total depravity, a substitutionary Atonement, and justification by grace through faith alone. He preferred a salvation by works. The teachings of Socinus found fertile soil in Poland, where he died.
- **The Jehovah Witnesses** reflect more modern deniers of the deity of Christ. They believe that Christ was a man on earth but became God and yet Christ was called God while on earth and claimed to be God while on earth. He was called Son of God before He was born.

A Confession Of Faith: The Mediatorial Office Of Christ

Christ, in the work of mediation, acteth according to both natures, by each nature doing that which is proper to itself; Yet, by reason of the unity of His person, that which is proper to one nature is sometimes in Scripture attributed to the person denominated by the other nature. (The Baptist Confession Of Faith Of 1689, Chapter 8, Section 7; study John 3:13; Acts 20:28)

To all those for whom Christ hath obtained eternal redemption, He doth certainly and effectually apply and communicate the same, making intercession for them; uniting them to Himself by His Spirit, revealing to them in the Word and by the Word the mystery of salvation. persuading them to believe and obey, governing their hearts by His Word and Spirit, and overcome all their enemies by His almighty power and wisdom, in such manner and ways as are most consonant to His wonderful and unsearchable dispensation; and all of free and absolute grace, without any condition foreseen in them to procure it. (The Baptist Confession O Faith Of 1689, Chapter 8, Section 8; study John 6:37; 10:15,16; 17:9; Rom. 5:10; John 17:6; Eph. 1:9; 1 John 5:20; Rom. 8:9,14; Psa. 110:1; 1 Cor. 15:25,26; John 3:8; Eph. 1:8)

This office of Mediator between God and man is proper only to Christ, Who is the Prophet, Priest, and King of the Church of God, and may not be either in whole, or any part thereof, transferred from Him to any other. (The Baptist Confession O Faith Of 1689, Chapter 8, Section 9; study 1 Tim. 2:5)

This number and order of offices is essential; for in respect of our ignorance we stand in need of His prophetic office; and in respect of our alienation from God and imperfection of the best of our services, we need His priestly office to reconcile us and present us as acceptable unto God; and in respect of our averseness and utter inability to return to God, and for our rescue and security from our spiritual enemies, we need His kingly office to convince, subdue, draw,

uphold, deliver, and preserve us to His heavenly kingdom. (The Baptist Confession Of Faith Of 1689, Chapter 8, Section 10; study John 1:18; Col. 1:21; Gal. 5:17; John 16:8; Psa. 110:3; Luke 1:74,75)

The Mediatorial Office Of Christ: Prophet

Christ is the revealer of God.

- Christ revealed God in the *theophanies* of the Old Testament.
- Christ revealed God by the inspiration of the prophets.
- Christ revealed God through the Incarnation, with its direct and personal teachings, “*I speak that which I have seen.*”
- Christ revealed God the inspiration of the Apostles and others who wrote the Scriptures.
- Christ sent the Spirit by whom inspiration was given, hence the Catechism says: “By word and spirit.”
- Christ is the completed revelation of God (Rev. 22:18).

The Mediatorial Office of Christ: Priest

What is a priest? Hebrews 5:1. “Every high priest is ordained for men in things pertaining to God that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for men. Hebrews 8:3. As every high priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices therefore it is needful that this one also have something to offer. In the Old Testament the priest offered expiatory sacrifice on the ground of which men’s sins were remitted. He came to God for men, presented sacrifices and interceded for them. He was thus a mediator between God and man. The Old Testament priesthood was a type of Christ’s priesthood.

The priesthood was fulfilled in Christ. there is now no priest in the strict sense of that word. There is no expiatory sacrifice now to be offered. Christ did that once for all. *“The Lord Jesus, by His perfect obedience and sacrifice of Himself which He, through the eternal Spirit, once offered up unto God, fully satisfied the justice of God, procured reconciliation, and purchased an everlasting inheritance in the kingdom of Heaven for all those whom the Father has given to Him. (The Baptist Confession O Faith Of 1689, Chapter 8, Section 5; study Heb. 9:14; 10:14; Rom. 3:25,26; John 17:2; Heb. 9:15)*

Christ did not appoint priests to offer sacrifices but He did appoint teachers and preachers to minister to the Church. The Catholic Church teaches that salvation can be obtained only through the intervention of the priest; because the sacraments are the channels of grace and to be available must be administered by men canonically ordained. Hence they have priests, and call the Lord’s Supper an atoning sacrifice a real expiation of sin, in which Christ’s sacrifice is repeated. The important feature of the priestly office called the Atonement will be considered under a special head. Christ makes intercession at God’s throne for His people. He presents His plea on the ground of His Atonement. To make the Virgin Mary an intercessor between man and Christ is derogatory to Christ and attributes undue prerogatives to a human being.

The Mediatorial Office of Christ: King

- God as Creator was and is sovereign over all His creatures.
- By the Fall man revolted to the kingdom of Satan.
- God re-established His kingdom on earth by a covenant requiring faith in a Redeemer.
- Entrance into this kingdom is by personal acceptance of the covenant.

- The kingdom of Christ has assumed more and more organization over the years under the early patriarchs Abraham, Moses and Christ.
- Christ came as King. The kingdom has been in the world since Eden but the King was not visibly present.
- Submission to the king, to his laws and rule is essential to citizenship in the kingdom.
- The kingdom is eternal, spiritual, both visible and invisible.
- It is a mistake to suppose that the word “kingdom” in the Bible refers only to a future millennial reign or that the kingdom was removed from the world when Christ ascended or that the Church age is to be distinguished from the kingdom age.

Chapter 23

The Atonement

The Importance Of The Doctrine

The Atonement is the central fact of Christianity. Any system of Christian theology that leaves out the Atonement is not true Christianity. The Atonement was the subject of the first promise to man in Genesis 3:15. Christ said, "To this end was I born, and for this purpose came I into the world" (John 18:37). "The Atonement is that on which man's salvation depends. Whoever makes light of the Atonement makes light of his own and the world's salvation." (David Clark)

Terms Defined

To understand the doctrine of the Atonement certain terms must be apprehended with discrimination.

- **Atonement.** The Atonement is not sufficiently defined by calling it at-one-ment. That expresses only one idea in the doctrine which is the feature of reconciliation. The Atonement means far more than that.
- **Guilt.** The word guilt expresses two things; first, blameworthiness, pollution, moral turpitude, criminality; second, liability to punishment or penalty.
- **Expiation.** Expiation means purging out, washing away, covering, making reparation or satisfaction; especially by suffering a penalty such as expiating a crime. Paying the penalty implies the securing of remission. Expiation is a very important word in the doctrine of the Atonement.
- **Propitiation.** Propitiation means to appease or render favorable one who has been offended. Guilt is expiated [covered or taken away] and God propitiated [satisfied].
- **Vicarious.** Vicarious means substitutionary; a vicar is a substitute or one who takes another's place.
- **Reconciliation.** Reconciliation means bringing into harmony or agreement.
- **Imputation.** Imputation means to charge to one's account.
- ◆ Romans 2:26. *"Shall not his uncircumcision be counted for circumcision?"*
- ◆ Romans 4:3. *"Abraham believed God and it was counted to Him for righteousness."*
- ❖ **Special Note.** The sins of the elect were imputed to Christ and His righteousness was imputed to them. Thus, in the Atonement a vicarious sacrifice expiates guilt, propitiates God, and reconciles God and man.

The Two-Fold Work Of The Atonement

- By obedience to the Law and by His suffering and death Christ accomplished the work of the Atonement that the Father had given Him to do.
- By His obedience Christ fulfilled the Law expressed in the Covenant of Works, which Adam failed to keep.

By His sufferings and death Christ paid the penalty due for sin. The Law offered life for obedience and threatened death for disobedience. The precept of the Law as well as the penalty of the Law must be fulfilled. Christ met all the demands of the Law both precept and penalty. Had he failed in either, no Atonement would have been made, and no redemption effected. The reality of the expiatory work is not confined entirely to the physical sufferings and death, or what is called the objective side of the Atonement. The subjective side must have its weight. The physical suffering is not more important than the righteous disposition that led Him to submit to it. The spiritual attitude of Christ toward the work of Atonement has more qualitative value than the physical sufferings and death. We must feel that the Spirit of Christ worked the atoning work quite as much as by His bodily sacrifice or more. A distinction must be made between the usage of the terms subjective and objective in this connection. Christ's physical experiences are called objective, and His spiritual experiences subjective. There was therefore a subjective and an objective side to Christ's work.

The Atonement Expresses both Divine Justice and Love

While there can be no discord between any of God's attributes, some theologians have stressed God's justice to the exclusion of His love, while others have stressed God's love till justice was ruled out. For example, Anselm, the Archbishop of Canterbury (A.D. 1033-1109), taught that since all humans had sinned in and with Adam, God's honor had been offended. Man must do something to satisfy that honor. But what could fallen man ever do? *"No one but one who is God-man can make the satisfaction by which man is saved."* By His voluntary death at Calvary, Christ provided the only way and only acceptable satisfaction. The theologians of the Reformation modified this position to teach that the justice of God, or the requirements of God's Law had to be satisfied. While both forms of the Satisfaction Theory expresses an essential fact, they must be duly coupled with the love of God as the moving cause.

- ◆ John 3:16 *"God so loved the world that He gave His Son."*
- ◆ Romans 5:8 *"God commendeth His love to us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for the ungodly."*
- ❖ ***Special Note.*** The Atonement is the supreme expression of God's love. *"It is the characteristic of love that it longs to impart itself and possess its object. To leave out God's love is to leave out the heart of the Atonement"* (David Clark).

If Anselm neglected the love of God, the advocates of the Moral Influence Theory of the Atonement, such as Abelard, have neglected to emphasize His justice. The temptation comes to repudiate substitution, satisfaction, and expiation as being unnecessary and even undesirable. It has been taught that man is moved by God's love, turns to God in view of His love, and the Atonement is nothing but repentance. The antidote to extremism in any direction is to remember that any view of the Atonement that leaves out of accounts any attribute of God's total nature is partial and to that extent misleading. Holiness is so essential to His nature that God cannot look upon sin with approval; and justice is so essential that sin cannot go unpunished. Love is so essential that holiness could not be perfect without it, and holiness in turn is so necessary to love that love would be capricious and erratic unless guided and controlled by holiness. The Atonement, therefore, is not the expression of one attribute of God's nature, but of all.

The Atonement And The Trinity

The Atonement is equally the expression of all persons of the Godhead. All views that place Father and Son in any degree of opposition, as if the Father had to be placated at the expense of the Son, are misleading and mischievous in their tendency. The Son is equally involved with the Father in the expression of His justice; and the Father is equally involved with the Son in the expression of His love and sacrifice. The Atonement expresses the entire Godhead with all the Divine attributes.

The Main Features Of The Atonement

The Atonement Was Sacrificial

Some say, "*We are not saved by Christ's death, but by His life.*" Unitarians who set up Christ as an example, but deny the efficiency of His death usually say this. Thus salvation comes as the reward of character and works as we pattern our lives after Christ. In contrast the Scriptures stress Christ's death. Christ's sacrifice was more than the sacrifice of a martyr. A man might be a martyr to a good cause, and His example very praiseworthy; but that sacrifice would make no Atonement for sin. The meaning of Christ's death is miles deeper than mere martyrdom. The sacrifices of the Old Testament were types of Christ's sacrifice, and whatever they meant, Christ's death must also mean. As they were sacrifices for sin, so Christ's death was a sacrifice for sin.

- ◆ John 1:29 "*The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.*"
- ◆ 1 Corinthians. 5:7 "*Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us:*"
- ◆ Ephesians 5:3 "*But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints;*"
- ◆ Hebrews 7:27 "*Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this he did once, when he offered up himself.*"

- ◆ Hebrews 9:14 *“How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?”*
- ◆ Hebrews 9:23 *“It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these.”*
- ◆ Hebrews 9:26 *“For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.”*
- ◆ Hebrews 10:12 *“But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God;”*
- ❖ **Special Note.** Many of these texts being specifically addressed to Jewish Christians, could bear no other meaning than this, that Christ was a sacrifice in the same sense as the sacrificial offerings of the Old Testament dispensation.

The Atonement Was Expiatory

In the Atonement, Christ paid the penalty of sin, fulfilled the Law, satisfied justice, and secured remission for sins. Proof is derived from the Old Testament. The sacrificial rites of the Old Testament show how penalty was exacted, and remission and forgiveness declared. Leviticus 4 and 6 describe the sacrificial Atonement for sin.

- ◆ Leviticus 1:4 *“And he shall put his hand upon the head of the burnt offering; and it shall be accepted for him to make Atonement for him. This placing of the hand on the head showed the transfer of the guilt by the one offering the sacrifice.”*
- ◆ Leviticus 4:3-4 *“If the priest that is anointed do sin according to the sin of the people; then let him bring for his sin, which he hath sinned, a young bullock without blemish unto the LORD for a sin offering. And he shall bring the bullock unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation before the LORD; and shall lay his hand upon the bullock’s head, and kill the bullock before the LORD.”*
- ◆ Leviticus 4:13-20 *“And if the whole congregation of Israel sin through ignorance, and the thing be hid from the eyes of the assembly, and they have done somewhat against any of the commandments of the LORD concerning things which should not be done, and are guilty; When the sin, which they have sinned against it, is known, then the congregation shall offer a young bullock for the sin, and bring him before the tabernacle of the congregation. And the elders of the congregation shall lay their hands upon the head of the bullock before the LORD: and the bullock shall be killed before the LORD. And the priest that is anointed shall bring of the bullock’s blood to the tabernacle of the congregation: And the priest shall dip his finger in some of the blood, and sprinkle it seven times before the LORD, even before the veil. And he shall put some of the blood upon the horns of the altar which is before the LORD, that is in the tabernacle of the congregation, and shall pour out all the blood at the bottom of the altar of the burnt offering, which is at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. And*

he shall take all his fat from him, and burn it upon the altar. And he shall do with the bullock as he did with the bullock for a sin offering, so shall he do with this: and the priest shall make Atonement for them, and it shall be forgiven them."

- ◆ *Leviticus 4:22 "When a ruler hath sinned, and done somewhat through ignorance against any of the commandments of the LORD his God concerning things which should not be done, and is guilty;"*
- ◆ *Leviticus 4:26 "And he shall burn all his fat upon the altar, as the fat of the sacrifice of peace offerings: and the priest shall make an Atonement for him as concerning his sin, and it shall be forgiven him."*
- ◆ *Leviticus 4:27 "And if any one of the common people sin through ignorance, while he doeth somewhat against any of the commandments of the LORD concerning things which ought not to be done, and be guilty;"*
- ◆ *Leviticus 4:29 "And he shall lay his hand upon the head of the sin offering, and slay the sin offering in the place of the burnt offering."*
- ◆ *Leviticus 4:31 "And he shall take away all the fat thereof, as the fat is taken away from off the sacrifice of peace offerings; and the priest shall burn it upon the altar for a sweet savor unto the LORD; and the priest shall make an Atonement for him, and it shall be forgiven him."*

All of these passages show that sin is expiated by sacrifice and forgiven. Other passages concerning the Passover shows how all were delivered who were behind the blood. Leviticus 16 gives the rites of the Day of the Atonement. All to point to expiation and removal of sin. The rites on the great Day of Atonement included the sprinkling of blood on the mercy seat, showing how the blood stood between the Law and the sinner. The Law cursed the transgressor, but the blood removed the curse.

- ◆ *Leviticus 16:8-10 "And Aaron shall cast lots upon the two goats; one lot for the LORD, and the other lot for the scapegoat. And Aaron shall bring the goat upon which the Lord's lot fell, and offer him for a sin offering. But the goat, on which the lot fell to be the scapegoat, shall be presented alive before the LORD, to make an Atonement with him, and to let him go for a scapegoat into the wilderness."*
- ◆ *Leviticus 16:21-22 "And Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat, and shall send him away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness: And the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities unto a land not inhabited: and he shall let go the goat in the wilderness."*
- ◆ *Leviticus 17:11 "For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an Atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an Atonement for the soul."*

- ◆ 2 Chronicles 29:23 *"And they brought forth the he goats for the sin offering before the king and the congregation; and they laid their hands upon them:"*
- ◆ 2 Chronicles 29:24 *"And the priests killed them, and they made reconciliation with their blood upon the altar, to make an Atonement for all Israel: for the king commanded that the burnt offering and the sin offering should be made for all Israel."*

The Atonement Was Efficacious

Like the Old Testament sacrifices, the death of Christ was effective. It covered sin.

- ◆ John 1:29 *"The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."*
- ◆ Matthew 26:28 *"For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins."*
- ◆ Romans 5:9 *"Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him."*
- ◆ Hebrews 1:3 *"Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;"*
- ◆ Hebrews 9:13 *"For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh:"*
- ◆ Hebrews 9:14 *"How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?"*
- ◆ Hebrews 9:22 *"And almost all things are by the Law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission."*
- ◆ Hebrews 9:26 *"For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself."*
- ◆ Hebrews 9:28 *"So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation."*
- ◆ Hebrews 10:4 *"For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins."*
- ◆ Hebrews 10:9 *"Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second."*

- ◆ Hebrews 10:10 *"By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all."*
- ◆ Hebrews 10:12 *"But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God;"*
- ◆ Hebrews 10:14 *"For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified."*
- ◆ 1 John 1:7 *"But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."*
- ◆ Revelation 1:5 *"And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood,"*
- ◆ Revelation 7:14 *"And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."*
- ◆ Revelation 7:15 *"Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them."*

The Atonement Was Vicarious

The vicarious feature of the Atonement is so essential that no bloodless, non substitutionary Atonement theory adequately represents the facts or the meaning of the Atonement.

Old Testament Scriptures

There are many passages which describe the laying of hands on the head of the victim thereby teaching the transfer of guilt to the victim and the vicarious nature of the offering.

- ◆ Leviticus 1:4 *"And he shall put his hand upon the head of the burnt offering; and it shall be accepted for him to make Atonement for him."*
- ◆ Leviticus 16:21 *"And Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat, and shall send him away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness:"*
- ❖ **Special Note.** The vicarious nature of the Atonement is indicated when the priest confessed over the head of the scapegoat all the iniquities and transgressions of Israel.
- ◆ Leviticus 16:22 *"And the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities unto a land not inhabited: and he shall let go the goat in the wilderness."* This passage shows the imputation of the guilt of the person presenting the offering. The name by which the victim was called—sin offering or guilt offering—indicated the transfer of the sin or guilt to the offering.

- ◆ Isaiah 53:4 *"Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted."*
- ◆ Isaiah 53:5 *"But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed."*
- ◆ Isaiah 53:11 *"He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities. Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors."*

New Testament Scriptures

- ◆ John 1:29 *"The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."*
- ◆ Matthew 20:28 *"Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many."*
- ◆ Mark 10:45 *"For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many."*
- ◆ 2 Corinthians 5:15 *"And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again."*
- ◆ 2 Corinthians 5:21 *"For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."*
- ◆ Galatians 3:13 *"Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the Law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree:"*
- ◆ 1 Peter 3:18 *"For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit:"*
- ◆ Hebrews. 9:28 *"So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation."*
- ◆ 1 Peter 2:24 *"Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed."*

The Atonement And The Law

The Atonement satisfied the demands of justice of the Law. The Law of God cannot be annulled neither can its demand be lowered. "*How should man be just with God?*" is the cry of the awakened conscience. "*But how shall God be just and justify the ungodly?*" was the question that Divine love set itself to answer. Love says, "*Save the sinner!*" Justice says, "*Exact the penalty!*" Both are attributes of God. How then shall God be just and justify the ungodly? The Atonement of Christ is the answer. "*The Atonement of Jesus Christ satisfies the demands of justice and awakens the cry of Divine love, and as well gives the awakened conscience a sufficient ground of hope.*" (David Clark)

- ◆ Romans 5:9 "*Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.*"
- ◆ Romans 3:25-26 "*Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.*"
- ❖ **Special Note.** Romans Chapters 2-4 argues that all men are sinners, all are condemned by the Law for sin, and yet God effects redemption by Christ. Redemption is received by faith.
- ◆ Romans 7:4 "*Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the Law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God.*"
- ◆ Romans 8:1 "*There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.*"
- ◆ Romans 8:2 "*For the Law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the Law of sin and death.*"
- ◆ Galatians 2:16 "*Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the Law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the Law: for by the works of the Law shall no flesh be justified.*"
- ◆ Galatians 3:13 "*Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the Law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree:*"
- ◆ Galatians 4:4-5 "*But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the Law, To redeem them that were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. Christ is the end of the Law for righteousness to everyone that believeth.*"
- ◆ 2 Corinthians 5:21 "*For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.*"

- ◆ Philippians 3:9 *"And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the Law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith:"*

The ceremony that took place in the Holy of Holies in the Old Testament Tabernacle showed that the blood of the sacrifice met the demands of the Law. Much modern theology demands the remission of sin without Atonement. It makes light of sin and abrogates the Law. The whole teaching of the Bible in the rituals of the Old Testament, and in the teachings of the New Testament shows that a substitute was always present to bear the penalty when sin is forgiven.

- ◆ Hebrews 9:22 *"And almost all things are by the Law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission." "If penalty were remitted by sovereignty merely, without any judicial ground or reason whatever; if it were inflicted neither upon the sinner nor upon his substitute, this would be the abolition of penalty, not the remission of it" (Dr. William T. Shedd).*

Arminianism And The Atonement

In 1603, a professor of divinity in the University of Leyden charged the Calvinistic doctrine of predestination with making God the author of sin. His name was Jacobus Arminius. After his death (1560-1609), the followers of Arminius living in Holland published a document called "Remonstrance" (1610) opposing the doctrine of sovereign grace.

- I. That God, by an eternal and unchangeable purpose in Jesus Christ his Son, before the foundation of the world was laid, determined to save, out of the human race which had fallen into sin, in Christ, for Christ's sake and through Christ, those who through the grace of the Holy Spirit shall believe on the same his Son and shall through the same grace persevere in this same faith and obedience of faith even to the end; and on the other hand to leave under sin and wrath the contumacious and unbelieving and to condemn them as aliens from Christ according to the word of the Gospel in John 3:36, and other passages of Scripture.
- II. That, accordingly, Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the world, died for all men and for every man, so that he has obtained for all, by his death on the cross, reconciliation and remission of sins; yet so that no one is partaker of this remission except the believers [John 3:16; 1 John 2:2].
- III. That man has not saving grace of himself, nor of the working of his own free-will, inasmuch as in his state of apostasy and sin he can for himself and by himself think nothing that is good--nothing, that is, truly good, such as saving faith is, above all else. But that it is necessary that by God, in Christ and through his Holy Spirit he be born again and renewed in understanding, affections and will and in all his faculties, that he may be able to understand, think, will and perform what is truly good, according to the Word of God [John 15:5].

- IV. That this grace of God is the beginning, the progress and the end of all good; so that even the regenerate man can neither think, will nor effect any good, nor withstand any temptation to evil, without grace precedent (or prevenient), awakening, following and co-operating. So that all good deeds and all movements towards good that can be conveyed in thought must be ascribed to the grace of God in Christ. But with respect to the mode of operation, grace is not irresistible; for it is written of many that they resisted the Holy Spirit [Acts 7 and elsewhere passim].
- V. That those who are grafted into Christ by a true faith, and have thereby been made partakers of his life-giving Spirit, are abundantly endowed with power to strive against Satan, sin, the world and their own flesh, and to win the victory; always, be it understood, with the help of the grace of the Holy Spirit, with Jesus Christ assisting them in all temptations, through his Spirit; stretching out his hand to them and (provided only that they are themselves prepared for the fight, that they entreat his aid and do not fail to help themselves) propping and upholding them so that by no guile or violence of Satan can they be led astray or plucked from Christ's hands [John 10:28]. But for the question whether they are not able through sloth or negligence to forsake the beginning of their life in Christ, to embrace again this present world, to depart from the holy doctrine once delivered to them, to lose their good conscience and to neglect grace--this must be the subject of more exact inquiry in the Holy Scriptures, before we can teach it with full confidence of our mind. These Articles thus set out and delivered the Remonstrants deem agreeable to the word of God, suitable for edification and, on this subject, sufficient for salvation. So that it is not needful, and tends not to edification, to rise higher or to descend lower. (Philipp Schaff, *Creeds of Christendom*, Vol. III)

Summary Of The Remonstrance

- God elects or rejects individuals on the basis of foreseen faith or unbelief.
- Christ died for all men and for every man even though only believers are saved.
- Man is in need of divine grace or he shall never be saved by good deeds.
- The grace of God can be resisted.
- Whether or not those who are saved can fall away again unto everlasting judgment is a subject that needs more study.

Answer. The *historical* Reformed answer to the Remonstrants took place in 1618 by a synod at Dort. The followers of Jacobus Arminius were compelled to leave the national Reformed Church. The initial *biblical* response to the Remonstrants is that Christ's Atonement had an inherent worth that rendered it a complete satisfaction. Christ being a person of infinite worth and dignity made an Atonement of infinite value and therefore sufficient for all time and all men of those who will be the heirs of salvation. "*Wherefore he is able to save them to the uttermost who come unto God by him.*" (Heb. 7:25)

The Atonement Is Propitiatory And Conciliatory

The Atonement of Christ propitiates or satisfies God. It renders Him favorable or gracious so reconciliation is effected between God and man. Individuals can come to God by Christ because He has fully satisfied the justice of the Father (Heb. 9:14; 10:14; Rom. 3:25,26; John 17:2; Heb. 9:15). The question arises whether God is reconciled to man or whether man is the one who is being reconciled to God. *"Does the Atonement effects a change in God toward man?"* Or, *"Does the Atonement effect a change in man toward God?"* The Scriptural teaching bearing on this dramatic distinction is expressed.

- ◆ Romans 5:1 *"Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our LORD Jesus Christ:"*
- ◆ Romans 5:9 *"Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him."*
- ◆ 2 Corinthians 5:18 *"And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation;"*
- ◆ 2 Corinthians 5:19 *"To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation."*
- ◆ 2 Corinthians 5:20 *"Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God."*
- ◆ Colossians 1:21 *"And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled."*

Scripturally, the Atonement primarily affects God's relation to the sinner by satisfying His justice, removing His just displeasure against a sinner, and affording the basis of grace and pardon. Christ's sacrifice was *"to save from wrath"* (Rom. 5:9) and open the way for reconciliation. Ultimately the change affects man; and by the grace of God leads to a subjective change in him by which he by which he is reconciled to God reconciles him to God. This is directly ascribed to the Atonement. In brief, the Atonement expiates sin, propitiates God, and reconciles first God to man, and second man to God.

Summary

- The Atonement was sacrificial
- The Atonement was expiatory
- The Atonement was vicarious
- The Atonement was sufficient
- The Atonement was propitiatory
- The Atonement brought reconciliation

If it is possible for one person to pay the debt of another, or become a substitute for another, it was possible for Christ to pay our debt and to be our Substitute, which is why the Christian sings about *The Old Rugged Cross*.

*In the old rugged cross,
stained with blood so divine,
A wondrous beauty I see;
For 'twas on that old cross
Jesus suffered and died,
To pardon and sanctify me.*

*"Although the price of redemption was not actually paid by Christ till after His incarnation yet the virtue, efficacy, and benefit thereof were communicated to the elect in all ages successively from the beginning of the world, and by those promises, types, and sacrifices wherein He was revealed, and signified to be the seed which would bruise the serpent's head, and the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, being the same yesterday, and today, and forever. (**The Baptist Confession Of Faith Of 1689**, Chapter 8, Section 6; study 1 Cor. 4:10; Heb. 4:2; 1 Pet. 1:10,11; Rev. 13:8; Heb. 13:8)*

Objections to the Atonement

- **Argument.** *"The Atonement represents God as unmerciful, cruel, vindictive, and blood-thirsty if He requires a sacrifice of a life to appease His wrath."*

Answer. It was an act of mercy to mankind to permit a substitute. It was a greater act of mercy that God not only permitted a substitute but that He Himself provided one, and He became that substitute. Since the Law of God could not be annulled nor lowered and sin could not go unpunished, God Himself in the person of His Son submitted to the penalty in order to set man free. That was mercy in superlative. God so loved the world that He gave His Only-begotten Son. No man can deny God's mercy after reading John 3:16.

- **Argument.** *"There is no need of an Atonement."*

Answer. This is a very prevalent objection at the present day. It is said that all that is necessary is for the sinner to repent and for God to forgive Him on the ground of His repentance. This is not God's view of this matter. God has taught us something very different in His Word. From end to end the Bible teaches that salvation is only by a vicarious sacrifice. Christ must go to Calvary.

- ◆ Matthew 26:39 *"And he went a little further, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt."*
- ◆ Mark 8:31 *"And he began to teach them, that the Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders, and of the chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again."*
- ◆ Luke 9:22 *"Saying, The Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be slain, and be raised the third day."*

- ◆ Luke 24:7 "*Saying, The Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again.*"
- ◆ Luke 17:25 "*But first must he suffer many things, and be rejected of this generation.*"
- ◆ John 3:14 "*And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up:*"
- ◆ John 12:34 "*The people answered him, We have heard out of the Law that Christ abideth forever: and how sayest thou, The Son of man must be lifted up? who is this Son of man?"*
- ◆ John 20:9 "*For as yet they knew not the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead.*"
- ◆ Acts 4:12 "*Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.*"
- ◆ Acts 17:3 "*Opening and alleging, that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ.*"
- ◆ Hebrews 3:16 "*For some, when they had heard, did provoke: howbeit not all that came out of Egypt by Moses.*"
- ◆ Hebrews 9:22 "*And almost all things are by the Law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission.*"
- ◆ Hebrews 9:23 "*It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these.*"

Atonement and the Sovereignty Of God

It is God's prerogative to state the conditions on which individuals may be saved. It is the responsibility of those who hear the gospel to accept the conditions as God has laid them down. No one yet wiser than God. Since God has provided a vicarious sacrifice, it is not for anyone to say there is no need of it. That is inexcusable presumption. It is teaching for doctrines the commandments of men and it is wrong. If a person should repent and obey perfectly the Law of the Lord after hearing what its commandments are, that would be but duty. However, even such obedience could not atone for previous acts of transgression before repentance occurred and obedience began. The Law that has been broken and the wrong that has been done still require Atonement for ethical improvement is not sufficient to save the soul.

Moral Reformation is not Enough

God cannot remit sin without Atonement because He has threatened to punish it, and His veracity is at stake. He has declared that the wages of sin is death (Romans. 6:23). "*The day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die*" (Gen. 2:17). In light of this, "*How shall God be just and justify the ungodly?*"

Athanasius (AD 293?-373) answered the concept that the Atonement was not needed in his day. “*Suppose,*” he said, “*that God should merely require repentance in order to salvation. This would not be improper in itself did not conflict with the veracity of God. God cannot be untruthful even for our benefit. Repentance does not satisfy the demands of truth and justice. If the question pertained solely to the corruption of sin, and not to the guilt and ill desert of it, repentance might be sufficient.*”

Athanasius realized that reformation does not satisfy the whole requirement of God’s holiness. The guilt and punishment of sin must be dealt with as well as sin’s perversion. God’s perfect Law and God as a perfect governor cannot ignore either the corruption of sin or its guilt and penalty. In His provision for man’s salvation God has had due regard for every aspect of sin and guilt. To ignore the guilt and deal only with the pollution of sin would compromise the essential attributes of God. Moreover if repentance alone is necessary, the whole incarnation was useless and Christ has come and died without sufficient reason.

Sin cannot be pardoned without Atonement because God is the moral ruler of the universe and cannot sacrifice the interests of moral government. Sin is not merely a private matter. It concerns the government of the world. Private rights may be relinquished but not public welfare nor universal laws. The objection, if true, would lower God’s attribute of righteousness and destroy regard for all Law.

The Majesty and Mercy of God

The Atonement best displays God’s glory and conserves man’s highest good. If God adamantly demanded the punishment of sin and refused any substitute He could not display His mercy. If He excused sin without Atonement He could not display His holiness and justice. If either of these attributes of mercy and justice were obscured in man’s sight, then man would not feel constrained to be better than His God. The Atonement vindicates every attribute of God and reveals His nature to man for His admiration and emulation.

➤ **Argument.** “*It is unjust to punish the innocent for the guilty.*”

Answer. This objection makes an absolute distinction between the offering and the one making the offering. If God had laid the penalty on some innocent being without his consent, that would have been injustice; but if God Himself assumed the penalty it was no injustice to man, and no injustice to him who voluntarily assumed it; but rather the expression of Divine and infinite love.

➤ **Argument.** “*If sin is punished it cannot be forgiven, and if forgiven it cannot be punished.*” This objection is illustrated in this manner: “*If a murderer is pardoned he cannot be hanged, and if hanged he cannot be pardoned.*”

Answer. If a murderer is pardoned the Law is simply set aside and true justice is not exacted. But God’s Law is not set aside. Rather, His justice and mercy are exhibited in the Substitute who bore the penalty at Calvary to secured the remission of sins. Justice and mercy met in a Divine Atonement for sins.

➤ **Argument.** “*Christ could not suffer the penalty of sin without enduring remorse and eternal death.*”

Answer. Christ's infinite dignity and worth gave to His sufferings an infinite value which was full legal equivalent for the sins of a race; and more than sufficient for all the penalty due to the whole race, for all the sufferings of the race would be only finite at most.

Theories of the Atonement

- **The Moral Influence Theory.** This theory, a most unworthy one, denies the expiatory and vicarious nature of Christ's work and assigns its value to the moral effect produced by Christ's teaching, example, and manifestation of self-sacrificing love. According to this theory Christ is not an expiatory sacrifice, not a substitute for man, paid no penalty, and made no satisfaction to justice. But Jesus is a teacher. He is an example, and a manifestation of Divine love. Christ saves not by His death, but by His life. He produces a moral effect thereby on the hearts and minds of men which may be designated the "Moral Influence Theory."
- **The Ransom Theory.** According to this theory Jesus paid a ransom to free us from the bondage of sin. Matthew 20:28 and Mark 10:45 tells us that Christ came *"to give his life a ransom for many."* 1 Timothy 2:6 speaks of Jesus *"who gave himself a ransom for all."*
- **The Legal Theory.** The atonement is described as an act of obedience to the law which had been violated by sinners. A penalty had to be borne in order to rescue the guilty. Jesus paid that penalty. The righteousness of God was vindicated. In specific passages the death of Christ is represented as demanded by God's law and government. (A.H. Strong) Galatians 4:4,5 speaks of Christ being *"born of a woman, born under the law, that he might redeem them that were under the law."* Jesus said in Matthew 3:15 that certain things had to happen for *"thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness."* Jesus fulfilled the righteousness of the law because He did not come *"to destroy the law or the prophets."* (Matt. 5:17) So Jesus *"became obedient even unto death"* (Rom. 5:19) He *"gave himself for our sins"*. (Gal. 1:4) *"Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us; for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree."* (Gal. 3:13 cp. Deut. 21:23) By Christ's legal death, He exhibited God's righteousness in the pardon and restoration of sinners. Romans 3:25,26 speaks of Him *"whom God set forth to be a propitiation, through faith, in his blood, to show his righteousness because of the passing over of the sins done aforetime, in the forbearance of God."* The death of deaths in the death of Christ was *"a death having taken place for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first covenant."* (cf. Heb. 9:15)

From Theory To Truth: Scriptural Satisfaction

"The complete answer to all theories is the exhibition of the true nature of the Atonement as taught in the Scriptures. All theories of the Atonement are efforts in the right direction, to understand and express its meaning; but quite likely any or all of them fall short of a perfect expression. It takes the whole Bible to explain the Atonement. Our widest conceptions may touch only the fringe of its meaning. The Atonement in its height and depth and length and breadth is

beyond our mental and spiritual limitations. Before the cross of Calvary the world has paused, and gazed, and wept, and worshipped, in adoring wonder; and well it may." (David Clark)
Expiation and substitution are the biblical facts of the Atonement, not a theory. The Bible explains:

- for whom the Atonement was made to expiated sin;
- how it made satisfaction to God;
- to what was the satisfaction made;
- and how it affects those who are to be the heirs of salvation.

In summary, the Atonement satisfies the just demands of God the Father. In recognizing this we discern once more the attributes of God: love and justice. And there is a wonderful harmony. *"There is love in His justice and justice in His love. The whole Divine being expresses Himself in the exercise of any attribute as the whole man does in thinking, feeling and volition. The Atonement is a satisfaction to God's love as well as to His justice. "* (David Clark)

***"Jesus loves me, this I know.
For the Bible tells me so."***

Part V

PNEUMATOLOGY

THE PERSON AND WORK of THE HOLY SPIRIT



Chapter 24

THE HOLY SPIRIT

Definition

Pneumatology (*pneuma*, spirit) is the study of the Person and work of God the Holy Spirit. Since the beginning of the New Testament Church many Christians are uninformed about the Spirit reflected by the church at Ephesus. When the Apostle Paul asked about this area of their understanding, he was shocked when the response came: “*We have on so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost*” (Acts 19:2).

The Holy Spirit and Salvation

Of primary concern is the work of the Holy Spirit in the area of salvation as He convicts of sin and calls souls to the Saviour. Because God is gracious any person may be exposed to the **external call** of the gospel, “*Ho every one that thirsteth.*” (Isa. 55:1) “*Come unto me all ye that labor.*” (Matt. 11:28) “*The Spirit and the bride say, ‘Come.’*” (Rev. 22:17) The external call to salvation is universal in that it is addressed to all people indiscriminately. Christ commands that the gospel be preached to every creature with compassion and clarity. “*As ministers of the gospel are messengers between God and man, the first duty devolving upon them is to make a free offer of the grace of God, and the second is to strive with all might that it may not be offered in vain.*” (John Calvin) The gospel proclaims the terms of grace on which God is willing to save sinner. Though the gospel is freely, fully, and universally proclaimed, it is certain that not all people will come to faith. Nevertheless, a universal call is not inconsistent with a personal election, or non-election, because it is the means to the end in one case, and a ground of condemnation in the other. “*The same sun which melts the butter hardens the clay.*”

Why Preach the Gospel?

The personal call to salvation through the external preaching of the gospel is addressed to individuals throughout the Scriptures because the way of Divine deliverance is not made known in any other way. Salvation cannot be fully discerned by the works of nature, by acts of providence, by intuition, or by deductive reasoning. The way of salvation can only be known by a Divine illumination from the Holy Spirit of the Scriptures being applied to the heart. That is the normal ministry of the Spirit. There are special cases to this work of the Spirit and that is in relation to those little ones who die. There is hope to believe that those who die in infancy will be in heaven through the graciousness of a merciful God. “*Elect infants dying in infancy are regenerated and saved by Christ through the Spirit; who worketh when, and where, and how He pleaseth; so also are all other elect persons, who are incapable of being outwardly called by the*

ministry of the Word.” (*The Baptist Confession of Faith of 1689*, Chapter 10, Section 3; study John 3:3, 5, 6; John 3:8).

An Effectual Calling

In contrast to the external call by which many are called to saving faith but few are chosen to receive it (Matt. 20:16), there is an **effectual call** to salvation. This effectual call by the Holy Spirit which comes through the Word. Again, this is the normal means by which men are brought into a saving relation to God.

- ◆ Romans 8:30 “*Whom He did predestinate, them He also called; and whom He called, them He also justified.*”
- ◆ 1 Corinthians 1:9. “*By whom ye were called unto the fellowship of His Son.*”
- ◆ 1 Peter 2:9 “*Who hath called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.*”
- ◆ 1 Peter 5:10 “*Who hath called us into His eternal glory by Christ Jesus.*”

In 1855, Charles Spurgeon told about an unusual experience he had. *“Sometime ago, when I went into the county court to see what they were doing, I heard a man's name called out, and immediately the man said, 'Make way! Make way! They call me!' And up he came. Now, I call the chief of sinners tonight, and let him say, 'Make way! Make way doubts! Make way fears! Make way sins! Christ calls me! And if Christ calls me, that is enough!’”* “*Those whom God hath predestinated unto life; He is pleased in His appointed and accepted time, effectually to call, by His Word and Spirit, out of that state of sin and death in which they are by nature, to grace and salvation by Jesus Christ, enlightening their minds spiritually and savingly to understand the things of God; taking away their heart of stone, and giving unto them a heart of flesh: renewing their wills, and by His almighty power determining them to that which is good, and effectually drawing them to Jesus Christ; yet so as they come most freely, being made willing by His grace.*” (*The Baptist Confession of Faith, 1689*, Chapter 10, Section 1; study Romans 8:30; Romans 11:7; Eph. 1:10,11; 2 Thess. 2:13,14; Eph. 2:1-6; Acts 26:18; Eph. 1:17,18; 36:26; Deut. 30:6; Ezek. 36:27; Eph. 1:19; Psa. 110:3; Song of Sol. 1:4).

An effectual call convicts, convinces, persuades, and enables the soul to close with Christ. The effectual call moves to secure the submission of the soul to God. The effectual call of God is particular, personal, efficacious, irresistible and is extended on the basis of grace. “*This effectual call is of God's free and special grace alone, not from anything at all foreseen in man, nor from any power or agency in the creature, being wholly passive therein, being dead in sins and trespasses, until being quickened and renewed by the Holy Spirit; he is thereby enabled to answer this call, and to embrace the grace offered and conveyed in it, and that by no less power than that which raised up Christ from the dead.*” (*The Baptist Confession of Faith, 1689*, Chapter 10, Section 2; study 2 Tim. 1:9; Eph. 2:8; 1 Cor. 2:14; Eph. 2:5; John 5:25; Eph. 1:19, 20).

What about those not Effectually Called?

“Others not elected, although they may be called by the ministry of the Word, and may have some common operations of the Spirit, yet not being effectually drawn by the Father, they neither will nor can truly come to Christ, and therefore cannot be saved: must less can men that receive not the Christian religion be saved, be they never so diligent to frame their lives according to the light of nature and the law of that religion they do profess” (**The Baptist Confession of Faith of 1689**, Chapter 10, Section 4; study Matt. 22:14; 13:20,21; Heb. 6:4,5; John 6:44,45,65; 1 John 2:24,25; Acts 4:12; John 4:22; 17:3). Though it seems a harsh thought that some are not to be found among the elect, no person ever need despair who longs to know something of God's grace and glory. "He that mind's God's glory more than his own good, shall quickly find that God will even obscure His own glory to do him good" (Thomas Brooks) The heart that wants to be saved shall be saved for, "when a God of grace is upon a throne of grace, and a poor sinner stands by and begs for grace, and that in the name of a gracious Christ, in and by the help of the Spirit of grace, can it be otherwise but such a sinner must obtain mercy and grace to help in time of need?" (John Bunyan)

Chapter 25

THE GREATNESS of GRACE

Grace Defined

The most common Greek word for grace (*charis*) literally means, "favor." Grace is the kindly disposition toward man in the mind of God. Grace means that God is for us though we are against Him apart from regeneration. Grace is the operation of a holy and divine influence on the rebellious heart changing the heart and life forever.

Grace Distinguished

As grace may be defined so it may be distinguished.

- ◆ **Common Grace.** Common grace is the grace that God shows to all of His creation. The Lord makes the rain to fall on the just and the unjust alike (Matt. 5:45). A greater or lesser measure of common grace is granted to all who hear the gospel indiscriminately.
- ◆ **Prevenient Grace.** Prevenient grace is the operation of the Spirit on the mind that *precedes* and excites its efforts to return to God. Prevenient grace *anticipates* a full disclosure of the gospel to the soul. On the road to Damascus, Saul of Tarsus met the resurrected Christ. Three days later, blinded by his experience, Ananias, "a devout man according to the law," came and stood by him and said to him, "why tarriest thou? Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord." (Acts 22:12,16) Saul arose. He was baptized. His sins were washed away. He called upon the name of the Lord.
- ◆ **Sufficient Grace.** Sufficient grace is that grace which is sufficient to lead to repentance and faith. Some people need much grace to be brought to saving faith for they are gospel hardened by years of sin. And yet, no sinner is too great for the grace of God to convert. There were two thieves crucified with Christ at Calvary and both railed against Him. Later, one repented and cried out, "Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise." (Luke 23:42,43) There was sufficient grace.
- ◆ **Efficacious Grace.** Efficacious grace is that grace which is effectual in producing regeneration and conversion. It involves the idea of active power. Charles Spurgeon tells of how he learned about efficacious grace. "Well can I remember the manner in which I learned the doctrines of grace in a single instance...I can recall the very day and hour when first I received these truths in my own soul--when they were, as John Bunyan says, burnt into my heart as with a hot iron...One week night when I was sitting in the house of God, I was not thinking much about the preacher's sermon, for I did not believe it. The thought struck me, "how did you come to be a Christian?"--I sought the Lord.--But how did you come to seek the Lord?--The truth flashed across my mind in a moment--I should not have sought Him unless there had been some previous influence in my mind to make me seek Him. I prayed, thought I, but then I asked myself, 'how came I to pray?'---I was induced to pray by reading the Scriptures. I did read them; but what led me to do so? - Then, in a moment, I saw that God was at the bottom of it all, and that He was the Author

of my faith; and as the whole doctrine of grace opened up to me, and from that doctrine I have not departed to this day, and I desire to make it my constant confession, 'I ascribe my change wholly to God.'"

- ◆ **Habitual Grace.** Habitual grace is that grace which is manifested by the indwelling ministry of the Spirit in the heart. When Joseph Parker, the great preacher of London was debating one day in a certain community with the enemies of the Church, a man shouted to him, "*What did Christ do for Stephen when he was stoned!*" Dr. Parker immediately answered, "*He gave him grace to pray for those who stoned him.*" And it is true. Like the Saviour, Stephen cried out with his dying breath, "*Lord, lay not this sin to their charge.*" (Acts 7:60)

- ◆ **Cheap Grace.** "*Cheap grace is the preaching of forgiveness without requiring repentance, baptism with church discipline, communion without confession, absolution without personal confession. Cheap grace is grace without discipline, grace without the Cross, grace without Jesus Christ, living and incarnate.*" (Dietrich Bonhoeffer)

- ◆ **Costly Grace.** "*Costly grace is the gospel which must be sought again and again, the gift which must be asked for, the door at which a man can knock. Such grace is costly because it calls us to follow, and it is grace because it calls us to follow Jesus Christ.*" (Dietrich Bonhoeffer)

*Grace brought Christ down from heaven.
Grace stripped Him of His glory.
Grace made the Lord poor and despicable.
Grace made Him bear the burden of sin, sorrow, and shame.*

*Grace was in all Christ's tears.
Grace came bubbling out of His side with blood.
Grace poured forth from His sweet lips.
Grace came out where the whip smote the Saviour,
Where the thorns pricked His brow,
And where the nails and spear pierced His holy side.
Oh! The unsearchable riches of Divine grace.*

~*~

Author Unknown

Chapter 26

CHARACTERISTICS of THE HOLY SPIRIT

The Personality of the Spirit

The Spirit of God is a Person as much as the Father and the Son are Persons. The Divine personality of the Holy Spirit is manifested.

- **The Holy Spirit of God has a Mind**

Romans 8:27 *“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”*

- **The Holy Spirit of God has a Will**

1 Cor. 12:11 *“But all these worketh that one and the self-same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as He will”*

- **The Holy Spirit of God Prohibits**

Acts 16:6,7 *“Now when they had gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia, and were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia, after they were come to Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia: but the Spirit suffered them not.”*

- **The Holy Spirit of God Guides**

Acts 16:10 *“And after he had seen the vision, immediately we endeavored to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach the gospel unto them.”*

The Holy Spirit of God Speaks

Acts 8:29 *“Then the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot.”* (see also Acts 10:19; 13:2; Rev. 2:7,11,17,29; 3:6,13, 22).

- **The Holy Spirit of God has Emotions**

Romans 15:30 *“Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ’s sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me.”*

- **The Holy Spirit of God can be Grieved**

Eph. 4:30 *“And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.”*

Various Ministries of the Holy Spirit

The ministries of the Holy Spirit are distinct.

- **The Holy Spirit Restrains Evil Through Sanctification**

- ◆ 2 Thessalonians 2:13 *“But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth.”*

- **The Holy Spirit Instructs In Righteousness**
 - ◆ John 14:26 *"But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you."*

- **The Holy Spirit Awakens the Sin Saturated Soul to the Need of Salvation as He did with the Philippian Jailer**
 - ◆ Acts 16:29-31 *"Then he called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling and fell down before Paul and Silas, And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house."*

- **The Holy Spirit Convicts of Sin**
 - ◆ Acts 2:37 *"Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?"*

- **The Holy Spirit Convinces the Sinner of the need for a Savior as Festus was Convinced when Paul Preached though He never came to Full Faith in Christ.**
 - ◆ Acts 26:28 *"Then Agrippa said unto Paul, almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian."*

- **The Holy Spirit Persuades the Heart to come to Christ**
 - ◆ Titus 3:5,6 *"Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior."*

- **The Holy Spirit Regenerates The Soul**
 - ◆ John 3:6-8 *"That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit."*

- **The Holy Spirit Sanctifies Each Child of God**
 - ◆ Ephesians 3:14-16 *"For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man."*

In all the various ministries of the Spirit it must be remembered that He is sovereign. *"The Spirit is like the wind. There is mystery, there is power, and we cannot chart the course of the Spirit. He is sovereign to do as He pleases, just as the wind blows where it lists. He did not use the same method or manner with Savonarola and Knox and Luther and Wesley and Moody. Just as there are hurricanes and zephyrs, so the Spirit storms and soothes. He speaks in mighty tornado or gentlest whisper. The Spirit did not work in the Reformation as He did in the Great Awakening. With Whitefield He blew in one fashion, with Moody in another. The great Awakening was not like the Welsh Revival."* (The Wind and the Spirit, by Vance Havner)

Chapter 27

THE WORK OF SALVATION

The Word and Salvation

In the process of salvation the Holy Spirit is pleased to use means to convey the truth to the heart of the sinner. Sometimes the reading of the Word is sufficient. More often the Lord is pleased to use the preaching of the Word as an effectual means of convincing and converting sinners and of building them up in holiness and comfort through faith unto salvation.

In the fourth century AD there was born in Africa a man who would change the world. The natural product of a Christian mother and a pagan father, he tried to find peace in his troubled heart. At first, he tried to find peace in pleasure. He did what he wanted to do morally thereby breaking the holy commandments of God. Next, he tried to find peace in the pagan religion of Manichaeism. Then he tried logic and education. It was all to no avail. His soul was as restless as the sea until one day in a garden he heard the voice of a child at play saying, "*Take and read; take and read.*" An impression was made upon his mind that he should read the Scriptures. And so it was, in the garden of his friend Alypius, that Augustine picked up a Bible, opened it at random to Romans 13:13,14 and read these words: "*Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness [i.e. sexual promiscuity and sensuality], not in strife and envying. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof.*" Peace finally came to Augustine's soul and he said to a friend, "*I have been regenerated.*" That is the way God works.

The Effect of Common Grace

A large part of the Christian community believes that Common Grace is sufficient to enable any sinner to do that which will either merit salvation, or at least secure larger degrees of grace, which, if duly improved upon, will result in salvation. Tragically, this view of Common Grace puts the efficiency of salvation primarily in the hands of man so that it cannot be said that salvation is wholly of the Lord. That will not do. God is a jealous God. He will not share His glory with anyone. He will not share the glory of salvation with man. A flawed view of Common Grace diminishes the need for Christ and robs God of His glory. "*No man is entitled to a feast of forgiveness and a banquet of pardoning mercy who thinks he deserves them. Those who know they don't deserve them are the only one who will ever have them.*" (Bob Jones, Sr.)

***When I stand before Thy throne,
Dressed in beauty not my own;
When I see Thee as Thou art,
Love Thee with unsinning heart,
Then, dear Lord, shall I fully know--
Not till then--how much I owe.***

An alternative view to a system of salvation by good works is to realize that that Common Grace has limitations. Common Grace is only sufficient to convince individuals of sin and of their need of redemption and to render men inexcusable for sin and unbelief. Common Grace is designed to cast all hope upon the crucified Christ.

*Lets not conscience make you linger,
Nor of fitness fondly dream;
All the fitness He requireth,
Is to feel your need of Him.*

- ◆ Romans 1:20 “*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.*”
- ◆ Romans 2:1 “*Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things.*”
- ◆ Acts 14:17 “*Nevertheless he left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness.*”

The Resistance of the Heart to Common Grace

While Common Grace is designed by God to **awaken** and **incite** the sinner to better things it can be resisted. Sin lures unwary souls from the path of righteousness. Though the Holy Spirit warns and entreats, they grieve Him and drive Him away.

- ◆ Acts 7:51 “*Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye.*”
- ◆ 2 Tim. 3:8 “*Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith.*”

Chapter 28

FINDING FAITH IN THE FAMILY of GOD

The Usage of the Word Faith

"Faith is that voluntary change in the mind of the sinner in which he turns to Christ. Being essentially a change of mind, it involves a change of view, a change of feeling, and a change of purpose." (A.H. Strong)

- ◆ **There Is An Objective Faith.** When Objective Faith is manifested, there is an *object* on which faith rests (Christ), and a body of truth (the Bible). "*Faith rest on a person. Faith is that act by which one person, a sinner, commits himself to another person, a Savior.*" (Horace Bushnell) In John 11:25 Jesus said, "*I am the resurrection and the life.*" And the heart says in faith, "*I believe.*"
- ◆ **There is a Subjective Faith.** As there is an Objective Faith so there is a Subject Faith as well which expresses a quality or action of the soul. Subjective Faith is honored in the Scriptures.
 - ◆ Matt. 17:20 "*If ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you.*"
 - ◆ Luke 7:50 "*And He said unto the woman, Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace.*"
 - ◆ Hebrews 11:1 "*Faith is the substance of things hoped for,*"

Faith Defined

The non-Christian might define faith as belief in that for which there is no proof. Such a definition is inadequate. True faith is belief in what is unseen or not apprehended by the senses. Scripturally, faith is "*the substance of things hoped for and evidence of things not seen*" (Heb. 11:1). "*Faith is belief on evidence. The best definition of faith is in the abstract. Faith is assent of the mind and consent of the will. This is true of saving faith. Faith in Jesus Christ is a saving grace whereby we receive and rest upon Him alone for salvation as He is offered to us in the gospel.*" (David Clark)

Faith Distinguished

- ◆ **Historical Faith.** There is a Speculative or Historical Faith that is an intellectual apprehension of faith's moral or spiritual purpose. In Acts 8:13, Simon Magnus was said to believe but he was not saved. James 2:19 teaches that even the devils "*believe*" and tremble. However they are not saved because the faith that does not lay hold of Christ is not a saving faith.
- ◆ **Temporary Faith.** This is a faith that seems to be genuine but is evanescent in character. Good seed sown on the rocky soil illustrates this type of faith.

- ◆ **Saving Faith.** The Bible teaches that there is such a thing as Saving Faith that unites the soul to God and issues forth in salvation. This true Saving Faith has the element of affection as well as belief, and the element of will or purpose combined with both.

The Relation of Faith to Knowledge

No dramatic distinction can be drawn between faith and knowledge. Their spheres overlap. No one can believe in a God of whom he has never heard nor in a proposition that has never been considered. No one can believe in a God of whom there has been no intellectual apprehension. On the other hand there must be faith in the trustworthiness of our senses, our faculties, and the processes of thought before any considerable acquisition of knowledge is possible.

Faith in Relation to Salvation

Faith is the connecting link between the believer and Christ. *“The grace of faith, whereby the elect are enabled to believe to the saving of their souls, is the work of the Spirit of Christ in their hearts, and is ordinarily wrought by the ministry of the Word; by which also, and by the administration of baptism and the Lord’s Supper, prayer, and other means appointed by God, it is increased and strengthened”* (***The Baptist Confession of Faith of 1689***, Chapter 14, Section 1; study 2 Cor. 4:13; Eph. 2:8; Romans 19:14,17; Luke 17:5; 1 Pet. 2:2; Acts 20:32). The Spirit applies the redemption purchased by Christ by working faith in us and thereby uniting us to Christ.

- ◆ Gal. 3:26 *“For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.”*
- ◆ John 1:12 *“But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:”*
- ◆ John 3:16 *“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.”*
- ◆ 1 John 5:12 *“He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.”*
- ◆ Acts 16:3 *“Him would Paul have to go forth with him; and took and circumcised him because of the Jews that were in those quarters: for they knew all that his father was a Greek.”*

Faith is the Instrumental Cause of Justification

One of the great words in Scripture is the word *“justification”* which conveys the basic concept that God graciously pardons and accepts believing sinners into fellowship with Himself (Psa. 32:1-5; 130; Luke 7:47ff; 18:9-14; Acts 10:43; 1 John 1:7-2:2). Justification includes the pardon, remission (forgiveness) of sins and the non-imputation (non charging) of all sins to the account of the guilty. It means to be reconciled to God bringing to an end His enmity (hostility) and wrath (cp. Acts 13:39; Romans 4:6f; 2 Cor. 5:19; Romans 5:9). There is a Divine declaration of being just before God. But there is more. Justification freely bestows the status of righteousness to a person which entitles him to all the blessings and privileges of that position

(Romans 8:14ff; Gal. 4:4ff). The ground of justification is found in the fact that God's law of punishment upon the guilty has been satisfied by the substitutionary death of Jesus Christ. Since Christ kept the Law perfectly (cf. Matt. 3:15) He becomes a pure and innocent sacrifice for the sins of others (Gal. 3:13). The obedience of Christ is imputed or charged to the account of the sinner who believes (Romans 4:2-8; 5:19). *"Christ, by His obedience and death, did fully discharge the debt of all those that are justified; and did, by the sacrifice of Himself in the blood of His cross, undergoing in their stead the penalty due unto them, make a proper, real, and full satisfaction to God's justice in their behalf; yet, inasmuch as He was given by the Father for them, and His obedience and satisfaction accepted in their stead, and both freely, not for anything in them, their justification is only of free grace, that both the exact justice and rich grace of God might be glorified in the justification of sinners."* (**The Baptist Confession of Faith of 1689**, Chapter 11, Section 3; study Heb. 10:14; 1 Pet. 1:18,19; Isa. 53:5,6; Romans 8:32; 2 Cor. 5:21; Romans 3:26; Eph. 1:6,7; 2:7).

It is one of the most glorious truths for all eternity that, *"The righteousness of God"* (or righteousness from God: cp. Phil 3:9) is given as a free gift (Romans 1:17; 3:21f; 5:17 cf. 9:30; 10:3-10) to all who call upon the Savior in faith. *"By this faith a Christian believeth to be true whatsoever is revealed in the Word for the authority of God Himself, and also apprehendeth an excellency therein above all other writings and things in the world, as it bears forth the glory of God in His attributes, the excellency of Christ in His nature and offices, and the power and fullness of the Holy Spirit in His workings and operations; and so is enabled to cast his soul upon the truth thus believed; and also acteth differently upon that which each particular passage thereof containeth; yielding obedience to the commands, trembling at the threatenings, and embracing the promises of God for this life and that which is to come; but the principal acts of saving faith have immediate relation to Christ, accepting, receiving, and resting upon Him alone for justification, sanctification, and eternal life, by virtue of the covenant of grace"* (**The Baptist Confession of Faith of 1689**, Chapter 14, Section 2; study Acts 24:14; Psa. 19:7-10; 119:72; 2 Tim. 1:12; John 15:14; Isa. 66:2; Heb. 11:13; John 1:12; Acts 16:31; Gal. 2:20; Acts 15:11). *"Faith results in peace, assurance, sanctification, and all graces of the Christian life. Faith is an appropriate condition of salvation because an intellectual apprehension and belief of the truth is necessary in order to yield to it and obey it; and a personal trust in God, and purpose toward him is essential to any filial relation."* (David Clark)

- ◆ Romans 5:1 *"Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ"*

"Faith thus receiving and resting on Christ and His righteousness, is the alone instrument of justification; yet it is not alone in the person justified, but is ever accompanied with all other saving graces, and is no dead faith, but worketh by love" (**The Baptist Confession of Faith of 1689**, Chapter 11, Section 2; study Romans 3:28; Gal. 5:6; James 2:17, 22, 26). While a person is justified by grace through faith alone, justification itself is no fortuitous event in the life of an individual for, *"God did from all eternity decree to justify all the elect, and Christ did in the fullness of time die for their sins, and rise again for their justification; nevertheless, they are not justified personally, until the Holy Spirit doth in due time apply Christ unto them."* (**The Baptist Confession of Faith of 1689**, Chapter 11, Section 4; study Gal. 3:8; 1 Pet. 1:2; 1 Tim. 2:6; Romans 4:25; Col. 1:21,22; Tit. 3:4-7;

Chapter 29

A CRISIS OF THE HEART

A Confession of Faith

"Whereas there is none that doth good and sinneth not, and the best of men may, through the power and deceitfulness of their corruption dwelling in them, with the prevalence of temptation, fall into great sins and provocation's; God hath, in the covenant of grace, mercifully provided that believers so sinning and falling be renewed through repentance unto salvation." (The Baptist Confession of Faith of 1689, Chapter 15, Section 2; study Eccl. 7:20; Luke 22:31,32)

Conversion: Defined

Conversion is the turning from sin unto God. Conversion is the human side of that transaction which unites the soul to Christ. Faith, repentance and conversion are human activities. This does not deny that they are supernatural effects. They are both. *"Work out your own salvation in fear and trembling, for it is not ye that work but God that worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure."*

Some biblical authorities say that turning from sin is repentance and turning to God is faith. It is doubtful if such discrimination is valid. Rather the term repentance covers both. What is repentance unto life? Saving repentance is, *"an evangelical grace, whereby a person, being by the Holy Spirit made sensible of the manifold evils of his sin, doth, by faith in Christ, humble himself for it with godly sorrow, detestation of it, and self-abhorrence, praying for pardon and strength of grace, with a purpose and endeavor, by supplies of the Spirit, to walk before God unto all well-pleasing in all things"* (*The Baptist Confession of 1689*, Chapter 15, Section 3; study Zech. 12:10; Acts 11:18; Ezek. 36:21; 2 Cor. 7:11; Psa. 119:6, 128).

Conversion Involves the Whole Person

- There is the intellectual element for there is a sense of sin.
- There is the emotional element for godly sorrow is involved.
- There is the volitional element for the soul must call upon the name of the Lord.

Repentance and conversion mean more than mere sorrow for sin. There is a sorrow of the world that worketh death. Judas had sorrow but no repentance or conversion. True examples of repentance are Job, David, Peter, the prodigal's son, the penitent thief, and Paul. Each of these individuals experienced not only sorrow for sin, but they turned to God. How much conviction, sorrow, and faith is necessary to conversion? Henry Ward Beecher once said: *"How many knots an hour must the wind blow to take the ship out of the harbor? Will ten knots do it? Yes. Will five knots do it? Yes, five knots will do it. Will one knot do it? Yes, one will do it if that is enough to move the ship."* Lydia came by gentle persuasion of the truth blessed by God, but it required an earthquake to move the Philippian jailer (Acts 16).

A Conversion that does not Change

The best terminology confines conversion to the initial stages of the work, when a new principle becomes dominant in the government of the life. *"New blessings there may be, new steps, degrees of sanctification, fluctuations, falls and restoration, renewed endeavors and victories; but these are phases of a nature already changed by regeneration; and the first experimental change we call conversion."* (David Clark) *"This faith, although it be different in degrees, and may be weak or strong, yet it is in the least degree of it different in the kind or nature of it, as is all other saving grace, from the faith and common grace of temporary believers; and, therefore, though it may be many times assailed and weakened, yet it gets the victory, growing up in many to the attainment of a full assurance through Christ, who is both the author and finisher of our faith"* (***The Baptist Confession of 1689***, Chapter 14, Section 3; study Heb. 5:13,14; Matt. 6:30; Romans 4:19, 20; 2 Pet. 1:1; Eph. 6:16; 1 John 5:4,5; Heb. 6:11,12; Col. 2:2; Heb. 12:2).

The Order of Events in Salvation

What is the order of events in the process of conversion? Does faith precede regeneration, or must a man be regenerated in order to believe? Does a man turn to God to be saved, or does he turn to God because he is saved? The process of conversion is so complex that many theologians prefer to allow some variety in details. What is certain is that logically and chronologically a regenerated life follows, and is the result of, a regenerated nature. Dr. A.H. Strong once offered a simple illustration in an attempt to crystallize the concept. *"A candidate for ordination was once asked which came first: regeneration or conversion. He replied very correctly: 'Regeneration and conversion are like the cannon-ball and the hole—they both go through together.' This is true however only as to their chronological relation. Logically the ball [regeneration] is first and causes the hole [conversion], not the hole first and causes the ball."*

The True Cause of Conversion

In answer to the question, *"What is the efficient cause of a change of heart"* the following replies have been offered.

- The Pelagian says, *"The human will by itself can save the soul."*
- The Arminian says, *"The co-operation of the human and divine wills is what saves the soul."*
- The Roman Catholic says, *"Divine grace is deposited in the sacrament of baptism and saves the soul."*
- The Ritualist says, *"The Spirit of God operating ordinarily through the Word and the sacraments saves the soul."*
- The Scriptures says that, *"The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit."* (John 3:8)

The true cause of conversion whereby a change is produced in the soul of the sinner is the Holy Spirit who imparts life to the one who is dead in trespasses and sin. Ephesians 2:1 *"And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sin."* In conversion, *"The understanding is opened to receive the divine light, the will opened to receive the divine law, and the affections opened to receive the divine love. When the heart is thus opened to Christ, the ear is opened to His word, the lips opened in prayer, the hand opened in charity, and the steps enlarged in all man of gospel obedience."* (Matthew Henry)

The Evidence of Conversion

While salvation is by grace through faith alone (Eph. 2:8,9), the faith which brings salvation is not alone for it is accompanied by good works and a life of holiness. The converted person will *"walk by new rules, towards new ends, from new principles."* (Matthew Henry) Conversion brings a change for all the world to see. *"I'm one of your converts,"* a drunken man slurred at evangelist Sam Jones. *"Yes,"* said the great preacher of the gospel, *"you look like some of my bungling work!"* Only God can save and when He does there is a definite change in the person. The Bible says that, *"if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."* The conversion or change of a soul reflects regeneration.

A Repentance that needs be Repented of

While conversion is a Divine work of the Sovereign God, repentance is part of the ongoing Christian experience. *"As repentance is to be continued through the whole course of our lives, upon the account of the body of death, and the motions thereof, so it is every man's duty to repent of his particular known sins particularly."* (*The Baptist Confession of Faith of 1689*, Chapter 15; Section 4; study Luke 19:8; 1 Tim. 1:13,15)

No Sin too Great for the Grace of God

Such is the provision which God hath made through Christ in the covenant of grace for the preservation of believers unto salvation, that although there is no sin so small but it deserves damnation, yet there is no sin so great that it shall bring damnation on them that repent, which makes the constant preaching of repentance necessary (*The Baptist Confession of Faith of 1689*, Chapter 15; Section 5; study Romans 6:23; Isa. 1:16-18; 55:7)

Never too Late

"Such of the elect as are converted at riper years, having sometimes lived in the state of nature, and therein served divers lusts and pleasures, God in their effectual calling giveth them repentance unto life." (*The Baptist Confession of Faith of 1689*, Chapter 15; Section 1; study Tit. 3:2-5)

Chapter 30

A NEW LIFE BEGINS

What Regeneration is Not

- ❑ **Regeneration is not a Change in the Substance of the Soul.** *"Regeneration is not a physical change. There is no physical seed or germ implanted in man's nature. Regeneration does not add to, or subtract from, the number of man's intellectual, emotional or voluntary faculties. But regeneration is the giving of a new direction or tendency to powers of affection which man possessed before."* (A.H. Strong) Prior to regeneration the heart has the capacity to love, but the love is primarily set on self. In the act of regeneration, the heart is transformed so that love is supremely focused upon God and others (Matt. 6:33). The soul has been "*created [i.e. regenerated] in Christ Jesus for good works*" (Eph. 2:10).
- ❑ **Regeneration is not a New Faculty Added to the Soul.** The new life that God imparts to the soul must not be conceived as a substance imparted or infused. The new life is a new direction and activity in the affections and will. *"There is, indeed a union of the soul with Christ; Christ dwells in the renewed heart; Christ's entrance into the soul is the cause and accompaniment of its regeneration. But this entrance of Christ into the soul is not itself regeneration. We must distinguish the effect from the cause; otherwise we shall be in danger of a pantheistic confounding of our own personality and life with the personality and life of Christ. Christ is indeed our life, in the sense that, after our union with him, our individuality ceases. The effect of union with Christ is rather that our individuality is enlarged and exalted."* (A.H. Strong) Jesus said, *"I am come that they may have life, and they might have it more abundantly."* (John 10:10)
- ❑ **Regeneration is not a Moral Persuasion of Sin, Though that has its Place.** No one will ever be converted who has not caught sight of sin and self and hates it as a principle and the source of all pollution. Nevertheless, no reformation can ever take the place of regeneration.
- ❑ **Regeneration is not the Co-operation of Human Power with Divine Power.** This process is called synergism. Man is not the agency in his regeneration; nor one half of that agency, nor any part of it. He who is dead in trespasses and sin (Eph. 2:1) must be the subject of regeneration. *"A dead man cannot assist in his own resurrection."* (W.G.T. Shedd, *Dogmatic Theology* 2:503).
- ❑ **Regeneration is not Dependent on the Unity of the Human and Divine Minds.** It is God alone who is sovereign in the act of regeneration. It is God alone who can impart life into whomsoever He wills and when he will--even if a person is in the height of open rebellion. In a high handed manner Saul of Tarsus persecuted Christians. He hated the name of Christ until the hour when he was subdued by the Sovereign and began to cry out, *"Who art thou, Lord?"* (Acts 9:5).

What Regeneration Is

- **Regeneration is the Instilling of a Life Principle in the Soul.** Life precedes birth. The initial act of the Spirit is to quicken or make alive the spiritually dead soul, which can then be born again.
 - ◆ John 6:63 *"It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life."*
 - ◆ 1 Peter 1:23 *"Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever."*

Birth is neither the cause nor the beginning of life itself: rather it is the manifestation of a life already existent. There had been a Divine "*quicken*ing" before the child could issue from the womb. In like manner, the Holy Spirit "*quicken*s" or makes alive the soul. He imparts spiritual life to it, before its possessor is "*brought forth*".

- ◆ James 1:18 *"Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures."*
- **Regeneration is First and Foremost the Illumination of the Understanding Concerning Sin and the need for a Savior.**
 - ◆ 2 Corinthians 4:6 *"For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."*
- **Regeneration is the Elevation of the Heart.** *"The first and last and closest trial question to any living creature is, 'What do you like?' God out into the street and ask the first man you meet what his taste is, and, if he answers candidly, you know him, body and soul. What we like determines what we are, and is the sign of what we are; and to teach taste is inevitably to form character."* (John Ruskin) The Bible confirms what the honest heart must admit. Prior to salvation, there is a love for sin. The heart is filled with all unrighteousness (Rom. 1:29). But after God instills a new life principle in the soul, there is an elevation of the heart towards heaven. It is when God creates a clean heart and renews a right spirit in the soul that the desire is present to "*teach transgressors thy ways*" so that sinners are converted. (Psa. 51:13).
- **Regeneration is Absolutely Essential to Salvation.**
 - ◆ John 3:3 "Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

- **Regeneration Is Instantaneous.** There is nothing gradual about regeneration *"although there may be a gradual work of God's providence and Spirit, preparing the change, and a gradual recognition of it after it has taken place."* (A.H. Strong). *"Conviction of sin is an ordinary, if not an invariable, antecedent of regeneration. It results from the contemplation of truth. It is often accompanied by fear, remorse, and cries for mercy. But these desires and fears are not signs of regeneration. They are selfish. They are quite consistent with manifest and dreadful enmity to God. They have a hopeful aspect, simply because they are evidence that the Holy Spirit is striving with the soul. But this work of the Spirit is not yet regeneration; at most, it is preparation for regeneration."* (W.G.T. Shedd, *Dogmatic Theology*, 2:512)
 - ◆ Eph. 2:5 *"Even when we were dead in sins, hath he quickened [lit. made alive] us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)."*

- **Regeneration Is Irresistible.** Man can no more resist the new birth than he can resist his natural birth. God gave us being without the exercise of our power or even our consent being asked in the matter.
 - ◆ Ephesians 2:1 *"And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins;"*
 - ◆ Ephesians 2:8 *"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:"*

Summary Statement on Regeneration

While regeneration does not change the substance of the soul nor add new faculties, it does produce a moral change, in disposition, in character, in the direction of the soul's activities. It brings in a new principle of life dominating and regulating the conduct. In short, regeneration imparts spiritual life.

- ◆ 1 John 5:12 *"He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life."*

Chapter 31

THE JUSTICE OF JUSTIFICATION

A Confession of Faith: The Fact of Justification

“Those whom God effectually calleth, he also freely justifieth, not by infusing righteousness into them, but by pardoning their sins, and by accounting and accepting their persons as righteous; not for anything wrought in them, or done by them, but for Christ’s sake alone; not by imputing faith itself, the act of believing, or any other evangelical obedience to them, as their righteousness; but by imputing Christ’s active obedience unto the whole law, and passive obedience in His death for their whole and sole righteousness, they receiving and resting on Him and His righteousness by faith, which faith they have not of themselves; it is the gift of God.” (*The Baptist Confession of Faith of 1689*, Chapter 11, Section 1; study Rom. 3:24; 8:30; Rom. 4:5-8; Eph. 1:7; 1 Cor. 1:30; Rom. 5:17-19; Phil. 3:8,9; Eph. 2:8-10; John 1:12; Rom. 5:17).

A Definition of Justification

Dr. John H. Gerstner always pointed out in his lectures and sermons the importance of the doctrine of justification. Martin Luther called it that by which *“the church either stands or falls.”* John Calvin said that it was the *“hinge of the Reformation.”* Martyn Lloyd-Jones declared that justification *“is the foundation of our whole position and standing with God.”* So what is justification? Justification is a legal term whereby the person charged with a crime is declared to be without guilt before the bar of justice. In spiritual terms, justification is an external act of God towards the sinner that declares him just and free of legal condemnation before the bar of Divine justice. *“There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.”* (Rom. 8:1) What a glorious thought there is here. There is no condemnation! Justification does not merely mean forgiveness of sin. It means that God declares us to be entirely without guilt; God regards us as if we had never sinned at all. There is no basis for condemnation! Why? Because of Jesus Christ. In the sight of the Law, Christ paid all the penalties that were demanded. His work is charged to the account of the guilty so that in the sight of the law, justice has been served and the soul is free to go clothed in the righteousness of Jesus. A hymn written by the godly Moravian Count Zinzendorf was translated by John Wesley expresses this truth:

*Jesus, Thy robe of righteousness
My beauty is, my glorious dress;
'Midst flaming worlds, in this arrayed,
With joy shall I lift up my head.*

Once more, justification is *“the forensic, legal declaration of God that we are not only forgiven but guiltless, and that as we are clothed with the righteousness of Christ we shall continue in that condition. In other words, we are given a new standing and a new status in the presence of God.”* (Martyn Lloyd-Jones, 1899-1981)

*'Tis finished, all my guilt and pain,
I want no sacrifice beside.
For me, for me, the Lamb was slain,
And I'm forever justified.*

Justification is a sovereign work of divine grace. Anselm, Archbishop of Canterbury (AD 1100) wrote a tract in order to bring comfort to the dying who were concerned because of their sin. "*Question. Doest thou believe that the Lord Jesus died for thee? Answer. I believe it. Question. Doest thou thank him for his passion and death? Answer. I do thank him. Question. Doest thou believe that thou canst not be saved except by his death? Answer. I believe it.*" Once these inquiring questions were responded to, Anselm addressed the dying soul: "*Come then, while life remaineth thee; in his death alone place thy whole trust; in naught else place any trust; to his death commit thyself wholly; with this alone cover thyself wholly; and if the Lord thy God will to judge thee, say, 'Lord, between thy judgment and me I present the death of our Lord Jesus Christ; no otherwise can I contend with thee.'* And if he shall say that thou art a sinner, say thou: '*Lord, I interpose the death of our Lord Jesus Christ between my sins and thee.'* If he say that thou has deserved condemnation, say: '*Lord, I set the death of our Lord Jesus Christ between my evil deserts and thee, and his merits I offer for those which I ought to have and have not.'* If he say that he is wroth [angry] with thee, say: '*Lord, I oppose the death of our Lord Jesus Christ between thy wrath and me.'* And when thou has completed this, say again,: '*Lord, I set the death of our Lord Jesus Christ between thee and me.*'" (quoted by A.H. Strong, *Systematic Theology*)

The Nature of Justification

There are two basic views of the nature of justification. There is the Subjective or Moral View, and the Objective or Forensic (legal) View. The Subjective View conceives of justification as an *internal* change in the realm of the *spiritual* life, while the forensic view considers justification an *external* change in the realm of *legal* relations, or the soul's relation to the law of God.

The Subjective View of Justification

The Subjective View conceives of justification as something that takes place within a person when the guilt of sin is removed by faith in Christ and righteousness is infusion in the soul. Justification continues to take place because of an inherent righteousness or because of what a person is by way of the new nature. "*Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.*" (2 Cor. 5:17).

The Objective (Forensic) View of Justification

Opposed to the Subjective View of justification is the Objective or Forensic View which regards justification as, "*that judicial act of God by which, on account of Christ, to whom the sinner is united by faith, He declares that sinner to be no longer exposed to the penalty of the law, but to be restored to His favor.*" Restated, "*Justification is the reversal of God's attitude toward the sinner, because of the sinner's new relation to Christ. God did condemn; He now acquits. He did repel; He now admits to favor.*" (A.H. Strong) The Forensic View of justification discharges the sinner from the condemnation of the Law. There is a sentence of acquittal for a person right with the law by the substitutionary death of another. The Forensic View of

justification assumes to treat a person as righteous because the demands of the law have been satisfied. The Forensic View of justification is not mere pardon but includes pardon.

Three Terms to Remember

There are three important terms to understand in the meaning of forensic justification: Acquittal, Pardon, and Acceptance. Probably the most important of these term is that of acquittal. The sinner must be acquitted before the bar of Divine justice and for good reason. *"If justification were nothing more than pardon, and salvation dependent on subsequent character and works, then justification would not be a ground of assurance and therefore not a ground of peace, since salvation would still be entirely uncertain and would rest upon a shifting foundation. Acquittal and acceptance are as necessary as pardon for the peace of justification."* (David Clark).

Scriptural Proof of Justification

The Greek word (verb, *dikaioo*) meaning "to justify," in a forensic [judicial or legal] sense is reflected in the following passages.

- ◆ Matt. 11:19 *"The Son of man came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold a man gluttonous, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners. But wisdom is justified of her children."*
- ◆ Matt. 12:37 *"For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned."*
- ◆ Luke 7:29 *"And all the people that heard him, and the publicans, justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John."*
- ◆ Luke 10:29 *"But he, willing to justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbor?"*
- ◆ Luke 16:15 *"And he said unto them, Ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts: for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God."*
- ◆ Acts 13:39 *"And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses."*
- ◆ Romans 3:4 *"God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged."*
- ◆ Romans 3:28 *"Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law."*
- ◆ Galatians 2:16 *"Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified."*

- ◆ James 2:25 "*Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way?*"

Old Testament Passages

The passages of the Old Testament also present the concept of justification in a forensic or legal way.

- ◆ Job 9:20 "*If I justify myself, mine own mouth shall condemn me: if I say, I am perfect, it shall also prove me perverse.*"
- ◆ Job 32:2 "*Then was kindled the wrath of Elihu the son of Barachel the Buzite, of the kindred of Ram: against Job was his wrath kindled, because he justified himself rather than God.*"
- ◆ Isaiah 5:23 "*Which justify the wicked for reward, and take away the righteousness of the righteous from him!*"

In all these passages the word "justify" means, "to pronounce righteous," or, "to acquit." They do not make anyone inherently righteous or holy.

The Ground of Justification

Various positions have been offered as to the ground by which God acquits the sinner.

- **First Position.** Some believe that while faith leads to baptism with its infused grace, the *final* ground of justification is good works.
- **Second Position.** Some believe that faith itself is the ground of justification. The perfect obedience required by the Law is set aside in the gospel for God is pleased to take faith in lieu of it good works; God is willing to honor faith instead of perfect righteousness. "*Faith justifies, because faith includes the whole act of union to Christ as Savior. It is not the nature of any other graces or virtues directly to close with Christ as a mediator, any further than they enter into the construction of justifying faith, and do belong to its nature.*" (Jonathan Edwards, *The Complete Works*, 4:69-73) "*Salvation is not offered to us upon any condition, but freely and for nothing. We are to do nothing for it,--we are only to take it. This taking and receiving is faith.*" (H. B. Smith)
- **Third Position.** Still others define justification to mean pardon, and this pardon to proceed on the ground of the righteousness of Christ. Subsequent acceptance with God, however, is based on evangelical obedience, or obedience of faith.
- **Fourth Position.** Much modern day theology repudiates all expiation (taking away) of guilt by sacrifice, all substitutionary work, and all concepts of any imputation of Christ's righteousness or the transfer of Christ's merits to another. The teaching is set forth that a person is justified or acquitted on the basis of his own righteousness as he is led to live a virtuous life by the example and inspiration of Jesus Christ. The ultimate ground of

acquittal from the penalty and pain of any sin will be the righteousness performed by following Christ.

- **Fifth Position.** The Scriptures indicate that individuals are justified on the ground of the *imputed* righteousness of Christ. God does accept a person as righteous in His sight but only on the basis of the righteousness of Christ imputed or charged to the account of another. Christ expiated guilt; He satisfied the law, both by obedience and suffering and became a worthy Substitute with blemish so that those, being united to him by faith, are able to partake of His death. His death becomes the death of another; His righteousness becomes the righteousness of another; His obedience becomes the obedience of another. God acquits the sinner, not for anything in the soul, not for anything so imperfect as human faith, works, or merit, but for the perfect and all sufficient righteousness of Christ charged to the account of those for whom He died (Matt. 1:21) This view of justification affords a sure ground of acquittal, a valid basis for assurance, peace and joy. Nothing can invalidate a justification based on a perfect righteousness.

The whole system of substitutionary sacrifices in the Old Testament dispensation-- which were types of Christ's atoning death--illustrations the concept of justification being rooted and grounded in an *imputed* righteousness. And there are many passages that speak of Christ as a ransom, as a substitute, as dying in the place of others, as bearing the sins of others, the just for the unjust. Christ was made sin for the elect; He was made a curse for those whom He would save from the penalty, power, and pollution of sin..

- ◆ Isaiah 53:5 *“But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.”*
- ◆ Isaiah 53:11 *“He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities.”*
- ◆ 2 Corinthians 5:21 *“For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.”*
- ◆ Romans 4:6 *“Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works,”*
- ◆ Romans 5:18 *“Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.”*
- ◆ Romans 5:19 *“For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.”*
- ◆ Philippians 3:9 *“And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.”*

- ◆ Colossians 1:14 *“In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins:”*
- ◆ Colossians 1:20 *“And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.”*
- ◆ Colossians 1:22 *In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unproveable in his sight:*

The Cause of Justification

The means, condition, or instrumental cause of justification is faith. Faith is the *instrumental*, not the *efficient* or meritorious cause of justification. Faith is the link, the bond, the nexus, and the attachment between the believer and Christ. Faith is not the ground of justification because the believer’s faith is an imperfect thing; it expiates no guilt, removes no penalty, and is not of the nature of an atonement. But faith unites us to Christ and union with Christ results in justification.

- ◆ Romans 5:1 *“Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:”*
- ◆ Philippians 3:9 *“And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith:”*
- ◆ Romans 3:28 *“Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.”*
- ◆ Romans 3:30 *Seeing it is one God, which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith.*

“The marriage of a poor girl to a wealthy proprietor makes her possessor of his riches despite her former poverty. Yet her acceptance has not purchased wealth. It is hers, not because of what she is or has done, but because of what her husband is and has done. So faith is the condition of justification, only because through it Christ becomes ours, and with him his atonement and righteousness. Salvation comes not because our faith saves us, but because it links us to the Christ who saves; and believing is only there link. There is no more merit in the it than in the beggar’s stretching forth his hand to receive the offered purse, or the drowning man’s grasping the rope that is thrown to him.” (A.H. Strong)

Is Justification by Works?

Though the Pauline epistles set forth in the strongest terms possible that the works of the law does not justify man, concern lingers that James teaches that works justify a soul in the sight of God.

- ◆ James 2:21 “*Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar?*”
- ◆ James 2:24 “*Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only.*”

James does not contradict Paul when he says these things because he is not discussing the nature of justification, but the nature of true saving faith. James is opposing, *anti-nomianism*. He is exposing a spurious faith. He is showing the relation of faith and works. He is showing that souls are justified only by such faith as brings forth good works. A working faith as against a dead faith. All people are justified by faith alone, but not by a faith that is alone. “*While we see good works wrought by me, we see faith wrought in man*” (Augustine). The main problem with depending on good works is that they leave a soul ashamed before God for good works are never enough as Adam and Eve remind us. “*They made themselves aprons of fig-leaves, before God made them coats of skin. Man ever tires to clothe himself in garments of his own righteousness, before he will take the robe of Christ's. But Adam felt himself naked when God visited him, even though he had his fig-leaves on him.*” (C. H. MacIntosh, *Notes On Genesis*)

The Results of Justification

- In the act of justification there is the remission (taking away, removal) of sins. “God acquits the ungodly who believe in Christ, and declares them just. This is not to declare them innocent,—that would be a judgment contrary to truth. It declares that the demands of the law have been satisfied with regard to them, and that they are now free from its condemnation.” (A.H. Strong) “But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is reckoned for righteousness.” (Rom. 4:5)
- In the act of justification there is a restoration of favor with God. Luke 15:22-24 “Bring forth quickly the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet: and bring the fatted calf, and kill it, and let us eat, and make merry: for this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.”
- In the act of justification there is a spiritual renewal. Justification is not the eradication of corruption in the nature of the sinner but it is the changing of one's status before God. The sinner is now called a child of the King Oh, what a great honor that is. And when proclaimed far and wide, it brings hope to the heart. “*Justification by faith has been the central theme of the preaching in every movement of revival and religious awakening within Protestantism from the Reformation to the present day.*” (J. I. Packer)

Objections to Justification by Faith Alone

- **Objection.** *"To pronounce a man just when he is not just is to empty the transaction of all moral value."*

Answer. This accusation proceeds upon the basis that a person must be justified on account of personal holiness, a condition which no one can fulfill. It is Christ who meets the demands of the law and on the ground of **His** righteousness only can a soul be declared just. But the moral values are not wanting, for justification is inseparable from sanctification. *"While Protestant theology distinguishes between what Christ does for us and what He does in us, the two are united and inseparable in fact. The relation of justification to regeneration and sanctification delivers it from any charge of moral emptiness or fictitious procedure. Justification is possible because it is always accompanied by regeneration, and union with Christ and is followed by sanctification."* (David Clark)

- **Objection.** *"A general acquittal from the penalty of the Law is not consistent with remaining and actual sin in the heart and life which demands a penalty be paid for each transgression."*

Answer. Justification is the promise and pledge of ultimate victory over all sin and its eventual eradication. Christ bore the whole penalty of the Law *prospectively* as well as otherwise which means that justification has an *intended* force toward an end not yet reached. The grace of God implanted in the soul, and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit is a guarantee that every believer will one day be free of the remains of human depravity. *"It must be written large that justification and sanctification are inseparable."* (David Clark)

Chapter 32

THE BEAUTY of HOLINESS

Sanctification: A Confession of Faith

"They who are united to Christ, effectually called, and regenerated, having a new heart and a new spirit created in them through the virtue of Christ's death and resurrection, are also further sanctified, really and personally, through the same virtue, by His Word and Spirit dwelling in them; the dominion of the whole body of sin is destroyed, and the several lusts thereof are more and more weakened and mortified, and they more and more quickened and strengthened in all saving graces, to practice of all true holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord. (study Acts 20:32; Romans 6:5,6; John 17:17; Eph. 3:16-19; 1 Thess. 5:21-23; Romans 6:14; Gal. 5:24; Col. 1:11; 2 Cor. 7:1; Heb. 12:14)

"This sanctification is throughout, in the whole man, yet imperfect in this life; There abideth still some remnants of corruption in every part, whence ariseth a continual irreconcilable war; the flesh lusting against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh. (study 1 Thess. 5:23; Romans 7:18,23; Gal. 5:17; 1 Pet. 2:11)

*"In which war, although the remaining corruption for a time may much prevail, yet through the continual supply of strength from the sanctifying Spirit of Christ, the regenerate part overcomes; And so the saints grow in grace, perfecting holiness in the fear of God, pressing after an heavenly, life in evangelical obedience to all the commands which Christ, as Head and King, in His Word, has prescribed to them." (**The Baptist Confession of Faith of 1689**, Chapter 13, Section 3; study Romans 7:23; 6:14; Eph. 4:15,16; 2 Cor. 3:18; 7:1)*

The Definition of Sanctification

The Greek word for sanctification (*hagios*) means "to purify, to consecrate or set apart." Sanctification is the work of God's free grace, whereby the believer is renewed in the whole man after the image of God. The believer is then enabled more and more to die unto sin, and live unto righteousness. Again, "Sanctification is that continuous operation of the Holy Spirit, by which the holy disposition imparted in regeneration is maintained and strengthened." (A. H. Strong)

The Difference between Justification and Sanctification

There are distinct differences between justification and sanctification.

- | | |
|---|--|
| • Justification is an act | Sanctification is a work |
| • Justification is declaratory | Sanctification is experiential |
| • Justification is done for us | Sanctification is done in us |
| • Justification changes our relation to the Law | Sanctification changes our character |
| • Justification is based on the righteousness of Christ | Sanctification is the sequence of of righteousness |

A Vital Connection between Justification and Sanctification

While there are differences between justification and sanctification, there is an essential unity as well. *"You cannot take Christ for justification unless you take Him for sanctification. Think of the sinner coming to Christ saying, 'I do not want to be holy'; 'I do not want to be saved from sin. I would like to be saved in my sins'; 'Do not sanctify me now, but justify me now.' What would the answer be? Could he be accepted by God? You can no more separate justification from sanctification than you can separate the circulation of the blood from the inhalation of the air. Breathing and circulation are two different things, but you cannot have the one without the other; they go together, and they constitute one life. So you have justification and sanctification; they go together, and they constitute one life."* (A.A. Hodge)

Sanctification: A Supernatural Work

The primary agency and means of sanctification is God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. However, the Scriptures and personal acts of responsibility are also involved in the process.

- ◆ John 17:17 *"Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth."*
- ◆ Acts 20:32 *"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."*
- ◆ 2 Timothy 3:15 *"And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus."*
- ◆ James 1:21 *"Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls."*
- ◆ 1 Thessalonians 5:28 *"The very God of peace sanctify you wholly."*
- ◆ Hebrews 13:20 *"Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant,"*
- ◆ Heb. 13:21 *"Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen."*
- ◆ Titus 2:14 *Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.*
- ◆ Ephesians 5:26 *"That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word,"*

An Illustration of Sanctification

The union that exists between Christ and the Christian shows sanctification.

- ◆ John 15:4 *“Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.”*

It has been said that a holy life consists of an unbroken chain of holy moments lived in full harmony with the love of God. At a deeper-life conference in England where Dr. Albert B. Simpson had been asked to speak, the founder of the Christian and Missionary Alliance was preceded by two men who addressed the issue of Christian victory over sin. One argued at length in support of **eradication**--the idea that upon sanctification from the sin principle is removed from the human heart, leaving the individual free from sin. The other defended with equal eloquence the idea of **suppression**--that upon sanctification the Christian is given power to control the sinful nature from eruption. After both men had presented their views, Dr. Simpson rose and suggested in very simple language a third concept: **habitation**--Christ in the believer, the hope of glory (Col. 1:27). Jesus, the Indweller, is our righteousness,. He is made unto us sanctification (1 Cor. 1:30).

All of Grace

What are the outward and ordinary means whereby Christ communicates to us the benefits of redemption? The outward and ordinary means whereby Christ communicates to us the benefits of redemption are His ordinances (baptism and the Lord's Supper), the Word, and prayer. All are made effectual to the elect for salvation resulting in sanctification. If there is no sanctification, there is no salvation. *“Jesus declared that a religion that doesn't change a man on the inside is nothing but religious addiction.”* (Billy Graham) Charles Spurgeon said, *“If there is no visible difference between you and the world, depend upon it, there is no invisible difference either.”*

How is the Word made Effectual to Sanctification?

The Spirit of God makes the reading and preaching of the Word, an effectual means of convincing, converting, and cleansing sinners in order to build them up in comfort and holiness through faith unto salvation. Any Christian neglects these things to the eternal peril of his soul. J. Wilbur Chapman realized this and formulated a standard of conduct. *“The rule which governs my life is this: Anything that dims my vision of Christ, or takes away my taste for Bible study, or cramps my prayer life, or makes Christian work difficult, is wrong for me, and I must, as a Christian, turn from it.”*

Is Man Co-operative in Sanctification?

As salvation is of the Lord, so is sanctification. *“Holiness is not human life brought up to the highest level of development, but Divine life brought down to the lowest level of condescension.”* (Duncan Campbell) Holiness is not the way to Christ; Christ is the way to holiness. But there is this truth: no person is more holy than they want to be.

***I rise to walk in heaven's own light
Above the world and sin,
With heart made pure and garments white,
And Christ enthroned within.***

When the soul does not flirt with sin, there is a co-operation with the Spirit in the process of sanctification. *"Now, I have heard of some professed Christians, wanting to see, they said, the ways of the ungodly, going into low places of amusement, to spy out the land to judge for themselves. Such conduct is dangerous and worse. I must confess, I should feel very much afraid to go into hell, to put my head between the lion's jaws, for the sake of looking down his throat. I should think I was guilty of a gross presumption if I went into the company of the lewd and the profane to see what they were doing."* (C. H. Spurgeon)

The Effect of Sanctification

The effect of sanctification is that it makes individuals holy through holiness comes by growth. It is not instantaneous.

- ◆ John 13:10 "He that is bathed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit [i.e., as a whole]"
- ◆ Romans 6:12 Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey the lusts thereof" Note. *"Sin dwells in a believer, but it reigns in an unbeliever."* (C H. MacIntosh)
- ◆ Ephesians 2:21 *"In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord:"*
- ◆ 1 Peter 2:2 *"As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby:"*
- ◆ 2 Peter 3:18 *"But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen."*

Not only does sanctification make individuals holy, it makes them a witness to the world. *"The serene silent beauty of a holy life is the most powerful influence in the world, next to the might of the Spirit of God."* (C. H. Spurgeon) Francis of Assisi (AD 1182-1226) realized the power of a holy life in the hands of the Lord and prayed.

***Lord, make me an instrument of Thy peace.
Where there is hate, may I bring love;
Where offense, may I bring pardon;
Truth, replacing error;
Faith, where once there was doubt;***

*Hope, for despair;
Light, where was darkness;
Joy to replace sadness.
Make me not to so crave to be loved as to love.
Help me to learn that in giving I may receive;
In forgetting self, I may find life eternal.*

Sanctification is Perfected at Death

There are significant benefits that believers receive from Christ at death. The souls of believers are at their death made perfect in holiness, and do immediately pass into glory; and their bodies, being still united to Christ, do rest in their graves, till the resurrection.

- ◆ Luke 23:43 *“And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise.”*
- ◆ Revelation 21:27 *“And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb’s book of life.”*

Perfectionism

Though the Bible teaches that *“If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us,”* (1 John 1:8), many movements have arisen in Christendom to teach a concept of perfectionism. For example, the name Catharists was given to members of various sects of the Middle Ages, including the Albigenses, who lived an ascetic life in the quest for holiness. Their leaders were known as the Perfect because they were believed to be free from all sins of the flesh and had become the dwelling place of the Holy Spirit. Somewhat surprising is the fact that John Wesley taught the possibility of perfection though resisting the idea of sinlessness. Wesley was able to do this by embracing a definition of sin, which distinguished between a willful violation of God’s known law from mistakes. *“Some deviations and transgressions need atonement; but are not sin. I do not call these sin.”* Of course, if imperfections are not sin then they need no atonement, no confession, and no forgiveness. Reformed theologians have consistently pointed out that the Wesleyan concept of perfect love does not exist in reality for any transgression of God’s law is sin, whether intentional or not. Wesley’s view of an instantaneous sanctification subsequent to justification exalts human ability, minimizes the nature of sin, and lowers the demands of the law.

An Appeal to the Scriptures

Man is imperfect in this life. Is any man able perfectly to keep the commandments of God? The biblical answer is negative.

- ◆ Romans 7:15-25 *15 “For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. 16 If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good. 17 Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. 18 For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. 19 For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. 20 Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that*

do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. 21 I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. 22 For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: 23 But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. 24 O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? 25 I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.”

- ◆ 1 John 1:8 *“If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.”*
- ◆ Galatians 5:17 *“For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.”*
- ◆ Isaiah 64:6 *“But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousness are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.”*
- ◆ Proverbs 20:9 *“Who can say, I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin?”*
- ◆ Psalm 143:2 *“And enter not into judgment with thy servant: for in thy sight shall no man living be justified.”*
- ◆ Psalm 130:3 *“If thou, LORD, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?”*
- ◆ Ecclesiastes 7:20 *“For there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not.”*

The prayer of every man should always be, *“God be merciful to me the sinner.”* The Bible teaches that all unrighteousness is sin. The Fall destroyed man’s ability but not his obligation to do right and be just before God. God’s Law is absolute perfection and there can be no lowering of it.

- ◆ Matthew 5:48 *“Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.”*
- ◆ Mark 12:30 *“And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment.”*
- ◆ Mark 12:31 *“And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.”*

There is none other commandment greater than these. Can a Christian be perfect? No. The Law drives the soul to the Savior. The Law serves as a school master to teach us of our need for the Savior. The practical duty of individuals is not to be discouraged but to strive for holiness for without holiness no man shall see God.

Chapter 33

THE SAFETY OF THE SAINT

A Confession of Faith: The Security of the Believer

“Those whom God hath accepted in the beloved, effectually called and sanctified by His Spirit, and given the precious faith of His elect unto, can neither totally nor finally fall from the state of grace, but shall certainly persevere therein to the end, and be eternally saved, seeing the gifts and callings of God are without repentance, whence He still begets and nourisheth in them faith, repentance, love, joy, hope, and all the graces of the Spirit unto immortality; and though many storms and floods arise and beat against them, yet they shall never be able to take them off that foundation and rock which by faith they are fastened upon; not withstanding, through unbelief and temptations of Satan, the sensible sight of the light, and love of God may for a time be clouded and obscured from, yet He is still the same, and they shall be sure to be kept by the power of God unto salvation, where they shall enjoy their purchased possession, they being engraven upon the palm of His hands, and their names having been written in the book of life from all eternity.” (**The Confession of Faith of 1689**, Chapter 17, Section 1; study John 10:28,29; Phil. 1:6; 2 Tim. 2:19; 1 John 2:19; Psa. 89:31,32; 1 Cor. 11:32; Mal. 3:6).

- ◆ John 10:28 *“And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.”*
- ◆ John 10:29 *“My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father’s hand.”*
- ◆ Romans 11:29 *“For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance.”*
- ◆ Philippians 1:6 *“Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ:”*
- ◆ 1 Peter 1:5 *“Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.”*

The Security of the Believer and Election

The final security of the believer is a necessary supposition from the doctrine of election. None of the elect shall ever be lost. There is Divine certainty that the elect shall be justified and glorified. He who predestinates and calls to salvation will do all that is necessary to bring His sons and daughters to glory. The perseverance of the saints from a human point of view is the preservation of the same from a Divine perspective.

- ◆ Romans 8:30 *“Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.”*

While the Arminian doctrine is vigorously opposed to the concept of eternal security or the final salvation of the saints, the Scriptures do teach that in the Covenant of Grace, the Father has given to the Son a people, not upon foreseen faith, but upon unmerited grace and sovereign choice.

- ◆ John 17:6 *“I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word.”*

Though the believer’s salvation is secure, there is no license to sin. While God will forgive transgressions, He knows how to discipline His own so that it can be said, *“God Doth continue to forgive the sins of those that are justified, and although they can never fall from the state of justification, yet they may, by their sins, fall under God’s fatherly displeasure; and in that condition they have not usually the light of His countenance restored unto them, until they humble themselves, confess their sins, beg pardon, and renew their faith and repentance.”* (**The Confession of Faith of 1689**, Chapter 11, Section 5; study Matt. 6:12; 1 John 1:7,9; John 10:28; Psa. 89:31-33; 32:5; 51; Matt. 26:75)

The Security of the Believer and Christ

The final security of the believer is also implied in the union that each Christian shares with Christ.

- ◆ Romans 8:1 *“There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.”*
- ◆ Romans 8:35 *“Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?”*

The Security of The Believer And The Atonement

The final security of the believer is implied in the Atonement. It was at Calvary that Christ purchased His own for time and for eternity.

- ◆ Matthew 20:28 *“Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.”*

The Security of the Believer and the Will

“This perseverance of the saints depends not upon their own free will, but upon the immutability of the decree of election, flowing from the free and unchangeable love of God the Father, upon the efficacy of the merit and intercession of Jesus Christ and the union with Him, the oath of God, the abiding of His Spirit, and the seed of God within them, and the nature of the Covenant of Grace; from all which ariseth also the certainty and infallibility thereof.” (**The Baptist Confession of 1689**, Chapter 17, Section 2; study Romans 8:30; 9:11, 16; Romans 5:9,10; John 14:19; Heb. 6:17,18; 1 John 3:9; Jer. 32:40).

The Security of the Believer Brings Peace

"Although temporary believers, and other unregenerate men, may vainly deceive themselves with false hopes and carnal presumptions of being in the favor of God and [in a] state of salvation, which hope of theirs shall perish; yet such as truly believe in the Lord Jesus, and love Him in sincerity, endeavoring to walk in all good conscience before Him, may in this life be certainly assured that they are in the state of grace, and may rejoice in the hope of the glory of God, which shall never make them ashamed." (The Baptist Confession of Faith of 1689, Chapter 18, Section 1; study Job 8:13,14; Matt. 7:22,23; 1 John 2:3; 3:14,18,19,21,24; 5:13; Romans 5:2,5)

The Security of the Believer Produces Humility

"This certainty is not a bare conjectural and probable persuasion grounded upon a fallible hope, but an infallible assurance of faith founded on the blood and righteousness of Christ revealed in the Gospel; and also upon the inward evidence of those graces of the Spirit unto which promises made, and on the testimony of the Spirit of adoption, witnessing with our spirits that we are the children of God; and, as a fruit thereof, keeping heart both humble and holy." (The Baptist Confession of Faith of 1689, Chapter 18, Section 2; study Heb. 6:11,19; Heb. 6:17,18; 2 Pet. 1:4,5,10,11; Romans 8:15,16; 1 John 3:1-3)

The Security of the Believer Provides no License to Sin

"This infallible assurance doth not so belong to the essence of faith, but that a true believer may wait long, and conflict with many difficulties before he be partaker of it; yet, being enabled by the Spirit to know the things which are freely given to him of God, he may, without extraordinary revelation, in the right use of means, attain thereunto: and therefore it is the duty of every one to give all diligence to make his calling and election sure, that thereby his heart may be enlarged in peace and joy in the Holy Spirit, in love and thankfulness to God, and in strength and cheerfulness in the duties of obedience, the proper fruits of this assurance; --so far is it from inclining men to looseness." (The Baptist Confession of Faith of 1689, Chapter 18, Section 3; study Isa. 50:10; Psa. 88; Psa. 77:1-12; 1 John 4:13; Heb. 6:11,12; Romans 5:1,2,5; 14:17; Psa. 119:32; Romans 6:1,2; Tit. 2:11,12,14)

Confidence in Salvation may be Shaken by Sin

"True believers may have the assurance of their salvation divers ways shaken, diminished, or intermitted; as by negligence in preserving it, or by their falling into some special sin which woundeth the conscience and grieves the Spirit; by some sudden or vehement temptation, by God's withdrawing the light of His countenance, and suffering even such as fear Him to walk in darkness and to have no light, yet, are they never destitute of the seed of God and life of faith, that love of Christ and the brethren, that sincerity of heart and conscience of duty out of which, by the operation of the Spirit, this assurance may in due time be revived, and by the which, in the meantime, they preserved from utter despair." (The Baptist Confession of Faith of 1689, Chapter 18, Section 4; Song. 5:2,3,6; Psa. 51:8,12,14; Psa. 116:11; 77:7,8; 31:22; Psa. 30:7; 1 John 3:9; Luke 23:32; Psa. 42:5,11; Lam. 3:26-31)

Objections to Eternal Security

Those who oppose the final perseverance of the saints appeal to selected Scriptures.

- ◆ Ezekiel 18:25 “*Yet ye say, The way of the Lord is not equal. Hear now, O house of Israel; Is not my way equal? are not your ways unequal?*”
- ◆ Matthew 13:20 “*But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it;*”
- ◆ Matthew 13:21 “*Yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended.*”
- ◆ Hebrews 6:4 “*For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, 5 And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, 6 If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.*”
- ◆ 1 Corinthians 9:27 “*But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.*”

Answer to Objections

Some of these statements may refer to those not regenerated. Some are hypothetical warnings to prevent backsliding or to show the dreadful guilt and danger of neglecting truth and common grace. Even the regenerate may backslide for a time, without being lost. It is possible for the believer to sin, but not to the point that salvation is forfeited. “*And though they may, through the temptation of Satan and of the world, the prevalence of corruption remaining in them, and the neglect of means of their preservation, fall into grievous sins, and for a time continue therein, whereby they incur God’s displeasure and grieve His Holy Spirit, come to have their graces and comforts impaired, have their hearts hardened, and their consciences wounded, hurt and scandalize others, and bring temporal judgments upon themselves, yet they shall renew their repentance and be preserved through faith in Christ Jesus to the end.*” (*The Baptist Confession of 1689*, Chapter 17, Section 3; study Matt. 26:70,72, 74; Isa. 64:5,9; Eph. 4:30; Psa. 2:10,12; Psa. 32:3,4; 2 Sam. 11:14; Luke 22:32,61,62).

The Adoption of the Believer

Adoption is a specific act of our merciful God which is distinct from calling, regeneration, and justification. The Greek term (*huiothesia*) occurs five times in the New Testament.

- ◆ Romans 8:15 “*For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.*”

- ◆ Romans 8:23 *"And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body."*
- ◆ Romans 9:4 *"Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenant, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises."*
- ◆ Galatians 4:5 *"To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons."*
- ◆ Ephesians 1:5 *"Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will."*

Adoption is that gracious act by which individuals are made children of God with specific authority and rights being bestowed (John 1:12). When the heart understands the concept of biblical adoption it can only say in astonishment, *"Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us that we should be called children of God."* And we are called the children of God (1 John 3:1 cf. Eph. 1:5). The Spirit of adoption is the Holy Spirit (Rom. 8:15; Gal. 4:6). The act of adoption is necessary in order to establish filial (family) status. By regeneration, individuals are made members of the kingdom of God (John 3:3,5) but by adoption, they are made members of His family (Gal. 4:5-6) with the privilege of crying out, *"Abba, Father"*. There is glory for all who are part of the family of God (Rom. 8:19). Each will be conformed to the image of God's own Son as the firstborn among many brethren (Rom. 8:29). (*Baker's Dictionary of Theology*, "Adoption," John Murray) What a joy it is to know that, *"All those that are justified, God vouchsafed, in and for the sake of his only Son Jesus Christ, to make partakers of the grace of adoption, by which they are taken into the number, and enjoy the liberties and privileges of children of God, have His name put upon them, receive the Spirit of adoption, have access to the throne of grace with boldness, and are enabled to cry, 'Abba, Father!', are pitied, protected, provided for, and chastened by Him as by a Father, yet they are never cast off, but sealed to the day of redemption, and inherit the promises as heirs of everlasting salvation."* (***The Baptist Confession of Faith of 1689***, Chapter 12; study Eph. 1:5; Gal. 4:4,5; John 1:12; Romans 8:17; 2 Cor. 6:18; Rev. 3:12; Romans 8:15; Gal. 4:6; Eph. 2:18; Psa. 103:13; Prov. 14:26; 1 Pet. 5:7; Heb. 12:6; Isa. 54:8,9; Lam. 3:31; Eph. 4:30; Heb. 1:14; 6:12)

Chapter 34

BAPTISM AND THE LORD'S SUPPER

The Ordinances: Definition

What is an ordinance? A holy ordinance is an official rite instituted by Christ; wherein, by reasonable physical signs, Christ and the benefits of the new covenant are represented, sealed, and applied to believers.

The Number of Ordinances

The Roman Catholics prefer speak of seven *sacraments*:

- baptism
- Lord's Supper
- confirmation
- ordination
- marriage
- penance (including absolution)
- and extreme unction.

Protestant theology maintains that there are two ordinances to be observed: baptism and the Lord's Supper. These two practices were given a significant place in the spiritual life of the early church (Acts 2:41-42; 20:7,11; 10:47). *"Baptism and the Lord's supper are ordinances of positive and sovereign institution, appointed by the Lord Jesus, the only law giver, to be continued in His church to the end of the world. These holy appointments are to be administered by those only who are qualified and thereunto called, according to the commission of Christ."* (*The Baptist Confession of 1689*, Chapter 28; Section 1, 2; study Matt. 28:19, 20; 1 Cor. 11:26; 1 Cor. 1).

The Effectiveness of the Ordinances

- ***The Roman Catholic View.*** *In Catholic theology, the seven sacraments contain a special form of Divine grace. When properly administered by an authorized priest they convey the grace inherent in them. In particular, baptism is efficacious unto salvation.*

*Concerning the Lord's Supper, the Roman Catholic view: embraces the doctrine of Transubstantiation. According to Catholic dogma the physical elements of the Lord's Supper are literally changed or transformed: the unleavened bread becomes flesh, and the wine becomes blood. **Christ is crucified afresh!** True, the elements maintain the appearance of bread and wine, but the senses are not qualified to judge spiritual realities. Moreover, since the whole of Christ is in every atom in the elements, the bread, even by itself conveys both flesh and blood. The soul is inseparable from the body, and the divinity from the soul so that partaking of the body is partaking of Christ. Because of the seriousness of the ceremony, the priest alone should handle the elements. For many years only the bread was given to the communicantes.*

In distinct contrast, *The Baptist Confession of Faith* vigorously denies that Christ is crucified afresh in the Lord's Supper. "Worthy receivers, outwardly partaking of the visible elements in this ordinance, do then also inwardly by faith, really and indeed, yet not carnally and corporally, but spiritually receive, and feed upon Christ crucified, and all the benefits of His death; the body and blood of Christ being then not corporally or carnally, but spiritually presented to the faith of believers in that ordinance, as the elements themselves are to their outward sense." (Chapter 30, Section 7; study (1 Cor. 10:6; 11:23-26))

The Baptist Confession of Faith would agree with the Catholic dogma that the elements of the Lord's Supper should be handled with respect and dignity by duly appointed ministers. "The Lord Jesus hath, in this ordinance, appointed His ministers to pray, and bless the elements of bread and wine, and thereby set them apart from a common to an holy use, and to take and break the bread; to take the cup, and they communicating also themselves, to give both to the communicants." (Chapter 30, Section 3; study 1 Cor. 11:23-26 etc.) However, the **Baptist Confession** is adamant that both elements of the Lord's Supper be given to the communicate in a spirit of solemn simplicity and not worshipped. "The denial of the cup to the people, worshipping the elements, the lifting them up or carrying them about for adoration, and reserving them for any pretended religious use, are all contrary to the nature of this ordinance, and to the institution of Christ."

- ❑ **The Lutheran View.** According to Lutheran theology, faith on the part of the recipient is a necessity in receiving or administering baptism and the Lord's Supper. Baptism is efficacious if not resisted. Infants are incapable of resisting, so baptism is efficacious to them but, in years to come, salvation may be forfeited by neglect, unbelief, or bad conduct in the after life.

In the matter of Communion, Lutheran theology teaches the doctrine of Consubstantiation, which declares that Christ's glorified humanity, is in, with, and under the bread and wine, in the Lord's Supper. In the act of communion, the Consubstantiation is local, temporary, and confined to the sacramental occasion. Afterwards the elements are common bread and wine once more and do not need to be preserved or treated in any special manner. The glorified body of Christ partakes of the infinity and omnipresence of His divine nature, so everywhere present and inexhaustible. The body and blood of Christ may thus be received by the believer and unbeliever alike but is of benefit only to the former.

- ❑ **The Baptist View.** Baptist theology has consistently held that the elements are simply bread and wine and nothing more literal. "The outward elements in this ordinance, duly set apart to the use ordained by Christ, have such relation to Him crucified, as that truly, although in terms used figuratively, they are sometimes called by the names of the things they represent, to wit, the body and blood of Christ, albeit, in substance and nature, they still remain truly and only bread and wine, as they were before." (*The Baptist Confession of 1689*, Chapter 30, Section 5; study 1 Cor. 11:27; 1 Cor. 11:26-28).

Though the elements used in the Lord's Supper are always literal, they do convey great spiritual truths for they represent the body and blood of Christ in a symbolical way. The presence of Christ in the sacrament is not in the elements but in the heart of the believer. Partaking of the bread and wine signifies spiritual participation in the benefits of Christ's death or atonement. There should be no thought of any transubstantiation or consubstantiation. The Baptist heritage is stated very plainly on this point. *"That doctrine which maintains a change of the substance of bread and wine, into the substance of Christ's body and blood, commonly called transubstantiation, by consecration of a priest, or by any other way, is repugnant not to Scripture alone, but even to common sense and reason, overthroweth the nature of the ordinance, and hath been, and is, the cause of manifold superstitions, yea, of gross idolatries."* (*The Baptist Confession of Faith of 1689*, Chapter 30, Section 6; study Acts 3:21; Luke 24:6, 39; 1 Cor. 11:24,25).

- **The Presbyterian faith agrees.** *"To eat of the feast is to partake of the sacrifice, and so to be His guests to whom the sacrifice was offered, and this in token of friendship with him. Thus to partake of the Lord's table is to profess ourselves His guests and covenant people. This is the very purpose and intention of this symbolic eating and drinking; it is holding communion with God, and partaking of those privileges, and professing ourselves under those obligations, which result from the death and sacrifice of Christ; and this in conjunction with all true Christians, with whom we have communion also in this ordinance."* (Matthew Henry)

The ordinances, when properly administered are symbols of truth, or of the facts of redemption. They are signs and seals of a covenant. The ordinances are channels of grace. The efficacy is not in them, nor in the administration, but through them as the Spirit conveys grace to them who exercise true faith.

The ordinances are memorials, like the rainbow in the sky after the Flood, or the pile of stones on the bank of the Jordan. The elements in the Lord's supper are badges of men's profession. *The Baptist Confession of Faith* agrees with this view. *"In this ordinance Christ is not offered up to His Father, nor any real sacrifice made at all for remission of sin of the quick or dead, but only a memorial of that one offering up of Himself by Himself upon the Cross, once for all; and a spiritual oblation of all possible praise unto God for the same. So that the popish sacrifice of the mass, as they call it, is most abominable, injurious to Christ's own only sacrifice the alone propitiation for all the sins of the elect."* (Chapter 30, Section 2; study Heb. 9:25, 26, 28; 1 Cor. 11:24; Matt. 26:26, 27)

Because Christ does not want the Church to forget the great work He accomplished at Calvary, believers are encouraged to go often to the Cross and remember *"The supper of the Lord Jesus was instituted by Him the same night wherein He was betrayed, to be observed in His churches, unto the end of the world, for the perpetual remembrance, and shewing forth the of Himself in His death, confirmation of the faith of believers in all the benefits thereof, their spiritual nourishment, and growth in*

Him, their further engagement in, and to all duties which they owe to Him; and to be a bond and pledge of their communion with Him, and with each other.” (The Confession of Faith of 1689, Chapter 30, Section 1; study 1 Cor. 11:23-26; 10:16,17,21).

*Before the Cross in awe I stood,
Beholding brow and pierced hand;
For me it was He bled and died,
No other price for sin beside,
Could pay the price for me.*

*His precious blood, there flowing red,
Was love's best gift most freely shed;
No one but He the price could pay,
On save from death and point the way
For sinners, you and me.*

Conclusion

The ordinances become effectual means to salvation, not by any virtue in them, nor in him that doth administer them, but only by the blessing of Christ and the working of His Spirit in them by that faith receive them. All faiths and positions do unite in affirming that the Lord's Supper in particular is to be received with great reverence. *“All ignorant and ungodly persons, as they are unfit to enjoy communion with Christ, so are they unworthy of the Lord's table, and cannot, without great sin against Him, while they remain such, partake of these holy mysteries, or be admitted thereunto; yea, whosoever shall receive unworthily, are guilty of the body and blood of the Lord, eating and drinking judgment to themselves.” (The Baptist Confession of Faith of 1689, Chapter 30, Section 31; study 2 Cor. 6:14,15; 1 Cor. 11:29; Matt. 7:6).*

Concerning Baptism

A formal definition of baptism might include the concepts that baptism is an ordinance wherein the washing with water, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, signifies and seals the engrafting of a soul into Christ, and the partaking of the benefits of the covenant of grace and our pledge to be the Lord's.

The Mode of Baptism

Much discussion has been offered over the proper mode of baptism as to whether or not the subjects should be sprinkled or immersed. The classical usage of the word *“baptizo”* often expresses immersion but not always. The word is used about 90 times in the New Testament and therefore has a New Testament usage.

To Dip? Or, To Immerse?

Those who favor dipping as the proper mode of baptism appeal to various passages to support their position relying on the use of the term.

- ◆ Luke 16:24 *“And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.”*

- ◆ John 13:26 “*Jesus answered, He it is, to whom I shall give a sop, when I have dipped it. And when he had dipped the sop, he gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon.*”
- ◆ Mark 7:4 “*And when they come from the market, except they wash, they eat not. And many other things there be, which they have received to hold, as the washing of cups, and pots, brazen vessels, and of tables.*”

However, there are other passages where dipping is doubtful and some form of immersion is more probable. “*The outward element to be used in this ordinance is water, wherein the party to be baptized, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Immersion, or dipping of the person in water, is necessary to the due administration of this ordinance.*” (***The Baptist Confession of Faith of 1689***, Chapter 29, Section 3,4; study Matt. 28:19,20; Acts 8:38; Matt. 3:16; John 3:23). In the act of immersion, baptism speaks of going completely under the waters of judgment and death, and rising to newness of life in Christ. Baptism is an unconditional commitment to the living Christ.

- ◆ *Matthew 3:16 "And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him:"*
- ◆ *Acts 8:38 "And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. 39 And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing."*
- ◆ *Matthew 3:11 "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire:"*
- ◆ *Romans 6:4 "Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."*
- ◆ *Colossians 2:12 "Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead."*

The Proper Subjects of Baptism

To whom is baptism to be administered? Many believe that baptism is not to be administered to any that are out of the visible church, till they confess their faith in Christ, and obedience to Him. “*Those who do actually profess repentance towards God, faith in, and obedience to, our Lord Jesus Christ, are the only proper subjects of this ordinance.*” (***The Confession of Faith of 1689***, Chapter 29, Section 2; study Mark 16:16; Acts 8:36,37; 2:41; 8:12; 18:8).

Part VI

ESCHATOLOGY: THE STUDY OF THE FUTURE



Chapter 35

THE IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL

Definition of Eschatology

Eschatology is the study of the future in general and the study of last things in particular. The Bible teaches that the grave is not the end of life. There is more to come. There is life beyond the grave for there is a heaven and there is a hell. And there is also the promise of a new heaven and a new earth for all who love Christ (2 Pet. 3:12,13) "*Because human history is moving towards great and final events of cosmic proportions, individuals would do well to consider the question of the immortality of the soul.*" (David Clark)

Denials of Immortality

- **Atheism.** Periodically in history there is an movement to reconsider the belief that the soul is not immortal. However, since the dawn of civilization the heart has longed for life beyond the grave revealed in the ancient civilization's great preparations for life after death. The mighty pyramids and the artifacts of old preserved in burial chambers of past cultures testifies to the belief in immortality. People long for a meaning to life. The heart rises up to protest the words found in Shakespeare's MacBeth,

*Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage,
And then is heard no more; it is a tale
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
Signifying nothing.*

Atheism, as a philosophical system has never had a wide following though its followers have made the argument for Materialism.

- **Materialism.** In materialistic philosophy all attributes of mind are conceived of as properties of matter. There is no immaterial substance, there is no spirit. All exhibitions of thought and feelings are only functions of matter due to its chemical structure and the arrangements of atoms. When the body dissolves, all spiritual functions of thought, consciousness, and feeling cease to be. For this reason alone materialistic philosophy has proved destructive of religion and morality not to mention hope or meaning to life.

- **Pantheism** also denies the immortality of the soul. The only immortality pantheism will acknowledge is the endurance of the human race. Pantheism teaches that at death, all individuality loses itself in The Reservoir of Being out of which it arose. There is no personal existence after death. For this reason, Pantheism, like Materialism, is an adversary of moral conduct in the universe despite any objection to the contrary..

The Evidence for Immortality

One of the strongest arguments for immortality is the Analogical Argument which offers evidence from comparison. The restoration of the earth after winter, the germination of the hidden seed, the reproductive cycle of nature forms a basis for belief in the immortality of the soul. *"Our Lord has written the promise of the Resurrection not in books alone, but in every leaf in springtime"* (Martin Luther). Another argument for immortality is the realization that life is too short to be the end of all things. Virtue should someday be rewarded and sin should be punished. Since justice is not fully manifested in time, there is a moral necessity of additional life. From the beginning of recorded history, mankind has universally believed in immortality. Such a long-standing belief should not be easily dismissed.

*Tell me not in mournful numbers,
"Life is but an empty dream!"
For the soul is dead that slumbers,
And things are not what they seem.*

*Life is real! Life is earnest!
And the grave is not its goal;
"Dust thou art, to dust returnest,"
Was not spoken of the soul.*

Revealed Religion: Old Testament

The ancient Hebrews had a much clearer view of immortality than the nations about them reflected in the fact that the Old Testament speaks of the dead being gathered to their fathers. The sacred record reveals the appearance of Samuel to Saul, and David's hope of seeing his child (Psalms 16:11; 17:15; 48:14; 73:24-28; Isa. 26:19; Dan. 12:2).

Revealed Religion: New Testament

The New Testament has many passages revealing the immortality of the soul some of which may be noted. The Parable of Dives (the rich man) and Lazarus in Luke 16:19-31 is one of the more familiar ones.

- ◆ Luke 23:42,43. *"And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in paradise."*
- ◆ John 3:16. *" 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 14:2,3. *"In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go to prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."*
- ◆ 2 Cor. 5:8. *"We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be Absent from the body and to be present with the Lord."*

What about Conditional Immortality?

Conditional immortality is the belief that immortality is conditioned on regeneration which means that there is no immortality apart from spiritual life. In other words, there is a heaven but there is no hell. But is it true? The biblical response is, "No." Jesus taught that in the resurrection there would a body suited for eternal life **and** a body suited for eternal judgment (cp. John 5:28, 29).

Chapter 36

THE STATE OF THE SOUL AFTER DEATH

A Confession of Faith

“The bodies of men after death return to dust, and see corruption; but their souls, which neither die nor sleep, having an immortal subsistence, immediately return to God who gave them. The souls of the righteous being then made perfect in holiness, are received into paradise, where they are with Christ, and behold the face of God in light and glory, waiting for the full redemption of their bodies; and the souls of the wicked are cast into hell; where they remain in torment and utter darkness, reserved to the judgment of the great day; besides these two places, for souls separated from their bodies, the Scripture acknowledgeth none.” (**The Baptist Confession Of Faith Of 1689**, Chapter 31 Section 1; study Gen. 3:19; Acts 13:36; Eccl. 12:7; Luke 23:43; 2 Cor. 5:1,6,8; Phil. 1:23; Heb. 12:23; Jude 1:6,7; 1 Pet. 3:9; Luke 16:23,24).

What Happens at Death?

What happens at death? Materialism says that the soul ceases to exist. Pantheism and Christian Science teach that the soul returns to the pool of being from which it arose. Jehovah Witnesses say that the soul sleeps until the resurrection. Catholic theology teaches that the soul goes to an intermediate place such as purgatory--which is really a hell for Christians prior to heaven. The Bible teaches that the soul enters that sphere of existence to receive either eternal reward or punishment (Lk. 16:19-31; 2 Cor. 5:8; Lk. 23:43; 2 Cor. 12:4; Rev. 2:7; 22:1,2).

What happens at death? The soul of the saint ceases to suffer. *“In his suffering he was asking me to make him well. I could not.”* (Autobiography, 1924) What President Calvin Coolidge could not do for his sixteen year old son, God can. He can make the pain cease. There is peace. During the Korean War one Christmas eve, a young Marine lay dying on Heartbreak Ridge. The chaplain climbed up the slope and stooped over the Marine and whispered, *“May I help you, son?”* *“No, it's all right,”* was the answer. The chaplain marveled at the young soldier's complacency in such an hour; then, glancing down, the chaplain noticed a New Testament clutched in the Marine's hand. And the reason for the young man's tranquility was found on the page where his finger was resting: *“My peace I give unto you.”*

What happens at death? The soul of the sinner never ceases to suffer. Dr. J. Gresham Machen (d. 1937) warned his generation by saying plainly, *“Many people think that the paymaster can be cheated, that after a life of sin we can present ourselves hopefully at the cashier's window and be paid in some different coin from that which we have earned.”*

The Benefit of Death

Because there is hope for the resurrection of the body, the sting of death is taken out for the believer. The Christian faith teaches that death itself has a benefit for those who are saved by the blood of Christ in that the soul of every believer is made perfect in holiness at death. While the soul of the saint is graduated into glory, rests in the grave until the resurrection morning. And what a morning that will be.

The story is told of how Winston Churchill had planned his funeral which took place in St. Paul's Cathedral. He included many of the great hymns of the church and used the beauty of the Anglican liturgy. At his direction, a bugler, positioned high in the dome of St. Paul's, intoned, after the benediction, the sound of "Taps" the universal signal that say the day is over. But then came the most dramatic moment for, still according to Churchill's instruction, as soon as "Taps" was finished, another bugler, placed on the other side of the great dome, played the notes of "Reveille"--"*It's time to get up. It's time to get up. It's time to get up in the morning!*" That was Churchill's testimony. At the end of history, the last note will not be "Taps"; it will be "Resurrection" It will be "Reveille." It will be time to get up in the morning!

Chapter 37

THE RESURRECTION OF THE BODY

*And when I'm to die
'Receive me,' I'll cry;
For Jesus hath loved me,
I cannot tell why:*

*But this I can find
We two are so joined
He'll not be in glory and leave me behind.*

~*~

Rowland Hill

A Confession of Faith

"At the last day, such of the saints as are found alive shall not sleep, but be changed; and all the dead shall be raised up with the selfsame bodies, and none other; although with different qualities, which shall be united again to their souls for ever. (The Baptist Confession Of Faith Of 1689, Chapter 31, Section 2; study 1 Cor. 15:51; 1 Thess. 4:17; Job 19:26,27; 1 Cor. 15:42,43).

There is to be a Bodily Resurrection

The Sadducees denied the immortality of the soul and therefore logically denied the resurrection of the body. In Mark 12:26 Christ challenged the thinking of the Sadducees by stating that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob still lived. If their souls were immortal, perhaps their bodies would one day also be resurrected. Jesus said there would be a resurrection (John 5:28). Now, only that can be resurrected that has been buried. The word implies a previous burial. This cannot be said of the soul. Moreover, Christ's resurrection was bodily, therefore all others must be the same. Many passages speak of a bodily resurrection (Dan. 1:2; Isa. 26:19; Rom. 8:12; 1 Cor. 15:42-44. John 5:28; 6:39,40).

Is Belief in the Resurrection of the Body Realistic?

The biblical answer is, "Yes." God is not irrational. Consider this truth. It takes both body and soul to constitute the complete personality of man as he was originally created. Therefore, Christ's redemption had to involve both body and soul, and it did. The good news of the gospel is that though the Fall of mankind in the person of Adam in the Garden of Eden involved man's body and soul, redemption will not stop short of the entire restoration of all that was lost.

The Resurrection is Miraculous

While the hope of the resurrection of the body involves faith in the miraculous, the resurrection no more incredible than the initial birth of a baby. *"It is no more strange that the human body should exist a second time than that it should exist the first time. That a full-formed human body should be produced from a microscopic cell is as difficult to believe as that a spiritual resurrection body should be produced out of the natural earthly body. The marvels of embryology are, a priori, as incredible as those of the resurrection. The difference between the body that is laid in the grave, and the body that is raised from the grave is not so great as the difference between the minute embryonic ovum, and the human form divine. If the generation of the body, were, up to this time, as rare an event as the resurrection of the body it might be denied with equal plausibility. However, "Why should it be thought a thing incredible that GOD should raise the dead?"* Dr. William G.T. Shedd, *Dogmatic Theology*.

The Resurrection of Christ: Its Certainty

"The stone was rolled away from the door, not to permit Christ to come out, but to enable the disciples to go in." (Peter Marshall) The resurrection of Christ is one of the best attested facts in Christian belief. Proof of the resurrection of Christ becomes the assurance of the resurrection of all those united to him. *But every man in His own order: Christ the first fruits; afterward they that are Christ's at His coming.*" (1 Cor.15:23). Concerning the resurrection of Christ, consider the following.

- The gospel narratives are written in a open and truthful manner.
- The apostles firmly believed in the resurrection and gave their lives proclaiming it. Paul said that if Christ had not risen then they were false witnesses. That was the only choice. They were either saying what they knew to be true, or what they knew to be false.
- The apostles knew how to distinguish between a vision and a real appearance; their belief cannot be attributed to a vision.
- The apostles did not expect the resurrection. Their belief cannot be traced back to any pre-conceived opinion.
- The empty tomb was doubtless one reason why so many were convinced at Pentecost that the gospel they heard proclaimed should be embraced. If the body had been in the tomb the Jews could have produced it after the third day or even as late as Pentecost and silenced forever the claims of the apostles that Christ had risen. That the tomb was empty after the third day is evident. So what are the possible ways that the body could have been removed?
 - The body of Christ could have been taken by His friends.
Problem. They were too emotionally weak and scattered to boldly steal away his body. They would have had to use force against Roman soldiers which they would never have done.
 - The body of Christ could have been taken by His enemies.
Problem. They were too busy guarding the tomb trying to make sure that the body should remain within that cold sepulcher.

- The demons of darkness could have done something with the body of Christ. **Problem.** Satan above all creatures wanted to make sure that the body of Jesus was kept in the tomb to prove that Christ was really dead.
- God the Father could have restored His Son to life.
Solution. And that is the only explanation!

What About The Empty Tomb?

Men have sought to account for the empty tomb in a variety of ways.

- ***The resurrection is simply a fantastic lie.***
Response. That is inconsistent with the character of the apostles and of Christ. It is inconsistent with the lives of their testimony. Men do not endure persecution and death to maintain and perpetuate a falsehood.
- ***Jesus only swooned on the Cross and was not really dead.***
Response. There are great difficulties to this view. How could such a wounded and weak man roll away the great stone, walk several miles to Emmaus and back and appear well and healthy immediately after such an experience? Besides His enemies and the other soldiers made sure He was dead and it is not likely they were deceived.
- ***The resurrection is a legend that grew up about Christ's memory as years passed.***
Response. The resurrection was preached immediately, before any legend had time to grow. The gospels and epistles were written soon after the crucifixion and are practically contemporaneous accounts. No legend grew up around the name of John the Baptist; therefore the first century was not such a myth-making age.
- ***The resurrection can be attributed to visions which the disciples mistook for facts.***
Response. The disciples were always careful to distinguish between visions and objective events. Besides groups of men do not all have visions at the same moment of time; any more than they all dream the same thing at the same time. The eleven disciples frequently saw Christ, and He was seen by above five hundred at once. The vision theory may be disposed. "*Now is Christ risen from the dead and become the more first fruits of them that slept. And if Christ be not risen then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain.*" Few doctrines are more precious to the human heart than the doctrine of the resurrection. Philip Schaff was right. "*Before one can reason the [bodily] resurrection of Christ out of history, we must reason the apostles and Christianity itself out of history.*"

The Joy of the Resurrection: The Blessings of Belief

- ***Belief in the resurrection brings the joy of continued existence in body and spirit.*** It supports the doctrine of immortality, and he who loves life will crave its continuance. No normal man desires annihilation but turns from the thought of it. It is unnatural to the human spirit. The doctrine of the resurrection fits into an innate love of existence. God is to be praised for the hope of a resurrection.
- ***The doctrine of resurrection provides comfort.*** “It is a doctrine too good not to be true. Who can bend over the open casket and look for the last time into the face that he loved, or look into the open grave as the form is lowered to its resting place and not prize the resurrection above all the gold of the world? From the gloom and grief of bereavement the stricken heart turns away to another day “when the morn those angels faces smile, which we have loved long since and lost awhile.” Who can measure the value of that of which unbelief would rob us? How dark this world, and how bitter our fate if the doctrines of the gospel be not true!” (David Clark)

Three Voices

The Voice of Atheism

*I was not, and I was conceived;
I lived, and did a little work;
I am not, and I grieve not.*

The Voice of Pantheism

*O drop of spray cast from the Infinite,
I hung an instant there, and threw my ray
To make the rainbow. A microcosm I,
Reflecting all. Then back I fell again:
And tho' I perished not, I was no more.*

The Voice of A Christian

*God willed: I was. What He had
planned I wrought,
That done, He called, and now I dwell
with Him.*

Author Unknown

The Identify of the Resurrection

“The bodies of the unjust shall, by the power of Christ, be raised to dishonor, the bodies of the just, by His Spirit, unto honor, and be made conformable to His own glorious body.” (***The Baptist Confession Of Faith Of 1689***, Chapter 31, Section 3; study Acts 24:15; John 5:28, 29; Phil. 3:21).

It is the Same Body that Dies

Christ’s resurrected body was the same body that was crucified at Calvary. This fact was proved to Thomas in the upper room when Jesus invited Thomas to touch His side and feel the prints on His hands. With Christ as the true pattern, Paul teaches that the same body that is sown will also be raised once more (1 Cor. 15:42). In the resurrection, each person will be recognized for who they are. *“The resurrection body is an identical body. An identical body is one that is recognized by the person himself, and by others. “No more than this is required in order for bodily identity. A living man recognizes his present body as the same body that he had ten years ago; yet the material particles are not the same identically.”* Also, *“That the spiritual body is recognized is proved by: Moses and Elijah were recognized by Christ and pointed out to the disciples.* (Dr. William G. T. Shedd, *Dogmatic Theology*). To the people of His day, Jesus spoke of the future and said in Luke 13:28, *“There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out.”* This shows alone that souls will be recognized in a life beyond the grave.

Chapter 38

A PLACE FOR PROPHECY

Promises of Prophecy to Keep

Before Christ's first advent many things prophesied were associated with His birth alone.

➤ Jesus would be born of a woman	Gen. 3:15	cp.	Gal. 4:4
➤ Jesus would be of the seed of Abraham	Gen. 12:3	cp.	Matt. 1:1
➤ Jesus would be of the seed of Isaac	Gen. 17:19	cp.	Lk. 3:34
➤ Jesus would be of the seed of Jacob	Num. 24:17	cp.	Matt. 1:2
➤ Jesus would come from the tribe of Judah	Gen. 49:10	cp.	Lk. 3:33
➤ Jesus would be heir to the throne of David	Isa. 9:7	cp.	Lk. 1:32,33
➤ Jesus would be born in Bethlehem	Mic. 5:2	cp.	Lk. 2:4-7
➤ Jesus would be born after 490 years	Dan. 9:25	cp.	Lk. 2:1,2
➤ Jesus would be born of a virgin	Isa. 7:14	cp.	Lk. 1:26-31
➤ Jesus would flee to Egypt	Hos. 11:1	cp.	Matt. 2:14,15
➤ Jesus would be preceded by a forerunner	Mal. 3:1	cp.	Lk. 7:24,27
➤ Jesus would be the Son of God	Psa. 2:7	cp.	Matt. 3:17

The Difficulty of Prophecy

Despite the precise predictions associated with Christ, no-one prior to the Lord's advent interpreted the prophecies correctly! The reason was simple. People had been led to believe in other things. They had been led to believe in a Warrior-King- Saviour instead of a Sovereign-Suffering-Savior. The people of Palestine ultimately wanted a political redeemer. The irony is that Jesus, *"did come as a Redeemer, yet not to break the Roman yoke with armies. He did come as a king, but not the kind of a king they expected. He did come as a priest, but the only priest that ever lived who was both priest and victim at the same time. He did establish a kingdom, but his kingdom was not of this world. It was foretold that Elias should come. He did come, but in a way that no one could anticipate. It was foretold that Christ should sit on the throne of David; but that has proved to be no earthly throne. He is to subdue all nations, not by the sword; but by truth and love. From these things we are not to expect to find prophecy like history."* (Reference unknown)

Before Jesus Comes

Turning to the New Testament, the voice of prophecy can be heard again. Specific things must happen before Jesus comes the second time for all who believe (Heb. 9:28).

- The gospel has to be preached to all nations (Matt. 24:14; Mark 13:10; Matt. 28:19-20).
- Many souls have to be converted (Rom. 11:23-26; 11:11; Rom. 11:31; Matt. 23:39; Acts 3:19-21).
- Peter had to die (John 21:18-19).
- The Holy Spirit had to come (John 14:16-18).

- John had to live to be an old man (John 21:22-24).

Characteristics of Christ's Second Coming

- The coming of Christ will be personal (Acts 1:11; 1 Thess. 4:16; Heb. 9:28; Phil. 3:20).
- The coming of Christ will be visible (Matt. 24:27, 30; Rev. 1:7; 1 John 3:2).

Events That Will Accompany the Second Coming of Christ

- The Man Of Sin (an Anti-Christ) will be destroyed (2 Thess. 2:1-3 cp. 1 John 2:18).
- The dead will be resurrected (Dan. 12:2; John 5:28-29 28; Rev. 20:12-13; 1 Thes 4:16; Matt. 25:31; 2 Thess. 1:7-10).
- The present world system will come to an end (Matt. 13:39-43, 13:49; 2 Pet. 3:10; 2 Pet. 3:12; John 12:48; John 11:24; John 6:39, 40; John 6:44).

Three Views of the Future

A Summary Of Pre-Millennialism. It is the "*blessed hope*" of the historical Pre-millennialist that Christ will come a second time *before* the millennium (i.e., thousand-year reign from Jerusalem on the throne of David). This view was embraced from AD 150 till about 250, afterward which it gradually died out. Beginning in the nineteenth century, the concept of a pre-millennial return of Christ has been revived. Modern Pre-millennialist understand the term "kingdom" to mean the "millennium kingdom," which is said to be in the future. A summary view of Pre-millennialism may be set forth.

- Two thousand years ago, Christ came and offered Himself and the kingdom to national Israel.
- Because the offer of Christ was refused, the kingdom was withdrawn from the world when Jesus ascended into heaven after His resurrection. The future was postponed so that a "Church Age" might be interjected into the time-line of human history.
- There is now no kingdom of Christ in the world and will not be till the Lord comes to reign personally and visibly on earth. "*No kingdom without a King!*" has been a popular slogan.
- The present "dispensation" in which we live is not the "Kingdom Age" but the "Church Age."
- The Church Age will end in a great state of apostasy and judgment.
- During the Church Age, the gospel will not succeed in changing the world for Christ. Therefore, the saints will "raptured" or removed from the earth which will then be judged for seven years.
- Ironically, once the Holy Spirit is removed, there will be many souls won to Christ during the seven years of "Great Tribulation."

- Finally, the Christ will come to earth and destroy the Anti-Christ. He will establish a kingdom which will last for a thousand years at the end of which there will be a general revolt against His rule of righteousness.
- Christ's coming is "imminent," which means that He may come any day, since there are no predictive events which must precede this from happening (Heb. 10:37; Rev. 22:7; Matt. 24:42; 25:13; Rev. 16:15).
- When Christ comes at this time He does not come down to earth, but remains in the upper sphere in the air (1 Thess. 4:16). *Only* the godly dead or those who have died in the Lord will rise. That is, the Church Age saints will ascend to meet in the air [i.e., be raptured] for a period of seven years.
- This coming is called the "coming *for* His saint," (1 Thess. 4:15,16).
- Following the Rapture, for seven years the world will be evangelized (Matt. 24:14) despite a great period of universal tribulation [i.e., the Great Tribulation, Matt. 24:21,22].
- Many Jews will be converted (Rom. 11:26).
- Anti-Christ or the man of sin will be revealed (2 Thess. 2:8-10).
- At the end of the tribulation period, Christ will come again *with* the Church Age saints to reign on earth for a thousand years [The Millennial]. This is called "the revelation" or "the day of the Lord."
- At this coming Christ will judge the living nations (Matt. 25:31-46) which will usher in the millennial kingdom.
- At the end of the thousand years Satan is loosed.
- The world goes from bad to worse as Satan's hosts war against the saints till fire comes down to destroy them.
- In a last great battle, Satan is cast into the pit.
- The resurrection and judgment of the wicked follow this victory of Christ.

Objections To Pre-millennialism.

Those who question Pre-millennialism have serious concerns, not the least of which is that the Pre-millennial Dispensational System teaches three(3) comings of Christ!

- | | |
|-----------------|---|
| ➤ First Advent | The Virgin Birth |
| ➤ Second Advent | The Rapture [<i>parousia</i>] |
| ➤ Third Advent | Seven Years Later (the Second Advent Proper?) |

The Bible says that Christ will return the *second* time for all who believe (Heb. 9:28) and that He will return in the same manner in which He went away (Acts 1). The attempt to preserve the unity of the idea of a second coming by speaking of the "Rapture" and the "Second Advent Proper" as two "aspects" or "phases" of that one momentous event cannot be logically or linguistically defended. Seven years separate these two "*phases*" which means the system really does teach three comings of Christ.

- In 2 Thessalonians 2:1,2,8 the terms "*parousia*" and "*day of the Lord*" are used interchangeably.

Many passages from the Old Testament are quoted by Pre-millennialist as referring to still future events. However, the New Testament indicates that the Old Testament passages refer to the First Advent or to the progress of the church in the world. Specific examples establish this point:

- John the Baptist and Elijah (Mal. 4:5,6 cp. Matt. 11:14).
 - The New Covenant to Israel (study Jer. 33 cp. Heb 8).
 - The Church can claim to be the true heirs of Abraham (study Rom. 9:7,8 cp. 3:29)
- There is no scriptural evidence or proof that the kingdom was withdrawn from the world when Christ ascended.
 - A dramatic distinction between the Church Age and the Kingdom Age does not appear to have Scriptural foundation. The Kingdom of God is in the world at the present time.
 - The key Pre-millennial Rapture passage does not clearly state that the saints will return to heaven and then return to earth seven years later (1 Thess. 4:16). Rather, the whole passage is on a descending Christ in triumph.
 - In Matthew 24:21, Christ mentions a time of tribulation which refers to the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. What Jesus said would happen, John saw would happen and history records it did happen.
 - The Pre-millennial position is not to be found in the Apostles Creed or any creed of Christendom. How has the Church not understood so much of the Bible for so long?
 - The Pre-millennial method of interpretation is questionable when it stresses literalism and makes dramatic distinctions where none exist.
 - Pre-millennialism suggests different ways of salvation for the Old and New Testament saints. The historic faith declares that, "*The justification of believers under the Old Testament was, in all these respects, one and the same with the justification of believers under the New Testament.*" (*The Baptist Confession Of Faith Of 1689*, Chapter 11, Section 6; study Gal. 3:9; Rom. 4:22-24)

- Pre-millennialism sets forth multiple resurrections and separates the resurrection of the just from the un-just (cp. John 6:39, 40). Note: It is often said that *ek nekron* e.g. (Acts 4:2), expresses an "out-resurrection from the dead," implying that some are raised "up and out" from others who are left behind. However, the argument will not withstand careful examination (study Dan. 12:2; John 5:28-29; Acts 24:15).

A Summary Of Post-Millennialism

It is the "blessed hope" of the Post-millennialist that the return of Christ will *follow* the millennium, which will be at the close of the present gospel dispensation. A summary of Post-millennialism include the following points.

- Christ will come at the *end* of the world [i.e., this age] (Matt. 12: 32; 13:1ff; Mark 13:30).
- When Christ comes the second time there will be a general resurrection of both of the just and unjust (John 5:28-29; Matt. 10:32-33; 7:21- 23;16:27; 25:16-30 ; 25:31-46 ; Acts 17:13; Rom. 2:5-16; 2 Cor. 5:9-11; 2 Thes. 1:6-10 ; 2 Tim. 4:1 0).
- When Christ returns there will be a general judgment of the just and the unjust with the eternal destiny of each decided by the Lord Himself. This will take place on "*the last day*" (Matt. 25:31; John 6:39, 40, 44; 11:24; 12:48).
- When Christ comes like "*a thief in the night*", the world will be consumed by fire (2 Peter 3:10-12).
- The return of Christ is *not* imminent (Matt. 25:1-13; 25:14-30; Luke 19:11-27) for prior to the Lord's return, disciples will be made of *all* nations (Matt. 28:19). In addition, four of the parables in Matthew 13 indicate that the kingdom will come to pass by a processes of growth and growth requires time (cp. Rom. 11:25). When the expectation of a soon coming of Christ created undue concerns in the Thessalonian church, Paul wrote his second epistle to correct that mistake. "*Be not soon shaken in mind or troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us that the day of the Lord is at hand, or "is close"*" (Bishop Lightfoot). The apostle gives some reasons why the Second Advent was not to be regarded by them as imminent. Paul teaching was intended to challenge the mistake of some of the early disciples that Christ's Second Advent was to be expected soon. The idea persisted in some sections of the early church until the First Ecumenical Council decided that such was not the meaning of Christ's teaching. After that the early Chiliasm (millennialism) was not widely embraced.
- The kingdom of God [heaven] is in the world at a present time (Dan. 2:44; 7:23-27; Matt. 6:33 ; 13:38; 18:4; 21:31; 21:43; Mark 12:34; Luke 6:20; 10:9,11; 12:32; 16:16; John 3:3; Rom. 14:17; Col. 1:13). If Christ is now King of kings and Lord of lords, and He is, then there must be a kingdom over which He rules.

A Summary of A-Millennialism (Realized Millennialism)

It is the *"blessed hope"* of the Amillennialist that the present age best defines and describes the current rule and reign of the resurrected and glorified Christ. For this reason, the term, *"Amillennial"* is not the best word to use in defining itself for the "a" negative and indicates *"no"* millennial. A better term would be *"Fulfilled"* or *"Realized"* Millennial. There is a millennial reign of Christ. Christ literally reigns today, from heaven over the affairs of men. One day He shall return, literally, to earth at the Second Advent. and establish His eternal kingdom on a new earth with a new heaven. The A-Millennial position argues for the following points.

- There is no program of the ages revealed to man.
- Christ will return in visible form but no one knows the time or preliminary events.
- The coming of Christ will consummate all earthly history.
- Beyond the fact of His coming the Bible does not go into details leading up to it or following it.
- The saints will suffer until Christ returns (2 Tim. 3:12).
- Those who have persecuted the saints will be punished (2 Thes 1:7).
- Corruption shall continue on earth until Christ comes (Matt. 13:30; 2 Tim. 3:13; Luke 17:30).
- Though the Church waits for the Lord to return the second time, it recognizes that the sovereign reign of Christ is a present reality as per Revelation 5:10.
- ❖ ***Special Note:*** The Revised Version of Revelation 5:10 reads: *"And madest them a kingdom and priests and they reign (present tense) on the earth."*
- The messianic reign shall be upon the throne of David (Jer. 23:5 cp. Luke 1:32).
- There shall be no end to the present Messianic reign (Isa. 9:7 **cp.** Luke 1:33).
- The reign of the Messiah was to begin at Jerusalem (Jer. 3:17; Zech. 14:16).
- All who reign with Christ (Rev. 1:5) will be bodily resurrected (1 Cor. 15:23; 1 Thes 4:16; Rev. 20:4-5).
- When Christ returns there will be a new heaven and earth (2 Pet. 3:13).
- When Christ returns He will come with all His saints (1 Thes. 3:13; 1 Thes. 4:14; Jude 1:14). Angels will attend the Second Advent, the bodies that sleep will be raised up from the grave and the disembodied spirits will be brought from their intermediate state to be reunited with the resurrected bodies.

- When Christ comes there will be a time of judgment (Matt. 25:31; 2 Cor 5:10; Matt. 25:34).

*"The end of God's appointing this day is for the manifestation of the glory of His mercy, in the eternal salvation of the elect; and of His justice, in the eternal damnation of the reprobate, who are wicked and disobedient: for then shall the righteous go into everlasting life, and receive that fullness of joy and glory with everlasting reward, in the presence of the Lord; but the wicked, who know not God, and obey not the gospel of Jesus Christ, shall be cast into everlasting torments, and punished with everlasting destruction, from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power. (**The Baptist Confession of Faith of 1689**, Chapter 32, Section 2; study Rom. 9:22,23; Matt. 25:21,34; 2 Tim. 4:8; Matt. 25:46; Mark 9:48; 2 Thess. 1:7-10).*

The Second Coming of Christ is Historical

Another view of the Second Coming is that Christ has already come and is now here in His spiritual presence in the world. The time of His coming was at the destruction of Jerusalem. The text which seems to speak of His coming at that time, lend themselves to this view. Also Matthew 28:20, "*Lo I am with you always even unto the end of the world.*" Thus the Christian has the comfort and help of Christ's constant presence. This view is not largely held, but is maintained by some.

Chapter 39

FUTURE PUNISHMENT

A Confession of Faith

"God hath appointed a day wherein He will judge the world in righteousness by Jesus Christ; to whom all power and judgment is given of the Father; in which day, not only the apostate angels shall be judged, but likewise all persons that have lived upon the earth shall appear before the tribunal of Christ, to give an account of their thoughts, words, and deeds, and to receive according to what they have done in the body, whether good or evil." (**The Baptist Confession Of Faith Of 1689**, Chapter 32, Section 1; study Acts 17:31; John 5:22, 27; 1 Cor. 6:3; Jude 1:6; 2 Cor. 5:10; Eccl. 12:14; Matt. 12:36; Rom. 14:10,12; Matt. 25:32ff).

Universalism

The concept that one day all people shall be saved including Judas Iscariot is refuted by the Scriptures.

- ◆ Rom. 6:23 *"For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."*
- ◆ Luke 16:19 *"There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day:"*
- ◆ John 3:36 *"He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him."*

The Punishment of the Wicked

Restorationism. This view proceeds on the ground that reformation is the only purpose of punishment. The premise is false and so is the conclusion. Punishment is for warning, for vindication of moral government and justice, not for reconciliation or restoration apart from repentance. Nevertheless, the Restorationists appeal to a variety of scripture (Rom. 5:18; 2 Pet. 3:9; Acts 3:21; 1 Cor. 15:25; Eph. 1:9-10; Phil. 2:10-11). The Biblical response to the Restorationists is found in other passages (Luke 16:26; Mark 9:46).

Annihilation. This position is based on the view that death means non-existence, and that to destroy means to annihilate. But the premise is wrong. The Bible teaches the ever-dying nature of the soul. The story is told that on one occasion the infamous atheist Robert G. Ingersoll was lecturing against the idea of hell. He declared that he would prove conclusively that hell was a wild dream of scheming theologians who invented it in order to terrify credulous people. As he was beginning his lecture, a half-drunken man arose in the audience and shouted, *"Make it strong, Bob. There's a lot of us poor fellows depending on you. If you are wrong, we are all lost. So be sure to prove it clear and plain."* Jesus said, *"If the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch."* (Matt. 15:14)

Endless Punishment. The Doctrine of Endless Punishment is not a pleasant truth to declare. It is not a welcomed truth even within the Christian church. And yet, it is the plain teaching of Jesus Christ and the Scriptures.

- ◆ Matt. 25:46 *"And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal. The same word qualifies the punishment that also qualifies the life of the righteous."*
- ◆ Mark 9:43 *"And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: 44 Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. 45 And if thy foot offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet to be cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: 46 Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. 47 And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire: 48 Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched."*
- ◆ 2 Thes. 1:9 *"Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power."*

Objections to the Doctrine of Endless Punishment

- **Argument.** *"The punishment does not fit the crime. It is not just to inflict endless penalty for temporary sinning."*
Response. Endless punishment is the penalty for *endless* sinning. How long will sin endure? Then so long must punishment continue.
- **Argument.** *"God is not so cruel as to torment souls forever."*
Response. Sin inflicts its own penalty. Sin's punishment is sin's effect; but sin's effect in character becomes the cause of further effect, and thus every act becomes an eternal cause. God in mercy has provided a way to escape endless punishment through Jesus Christ the Lord. If a person rejects the offer of the gospel then there is no one to blame except self.

*Oh, why am I here in this place of unrest
When others have entered the land of the blest?
God's way of salvation was preached unto me;
I heard it and heard it, again and again.*

- **Argument.** *"There will be a second probation."* [Second Probation means a second chance or opportunity to accept the offer of salvation between death and the resurrection, especially for those whose opportunities were lacking in this life.] The following passages from the New Testament are appealed to in support of the concept for a second chance.

- ◆ Luke 19:10 *"For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost".*
- ◆ 1 Timothy 2: 4 *"Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. 5 For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; 6 Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time."*
- ◆ 1 John 2:2 *"And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world."*
- ◆ Matthew 12:32 *"And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come."* The inference is that other sins MAY be forgiven in the world to come"
- ◆ 1 Peter 3:19-20 *19 "By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison; 20 Which sometime were disobedient, when once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water."*

Response. These texts are taken out of context in order to prove more than they really state. Something more explicit than this must be assigned as a Scriptural proof of the doctrine of Second Probation, *"As Christ would have us to be certainly persuaded that there shall be a day of judgment, both to deter all men from sin, and for the greater consolation of the godly in their adversity, so will He have the day unknown to men, that they may shake off all carnal security, and be always watchful, because they know not at what hour the Lord will come, and may ever be prepared to say, Come Lord Jesus; come quickly. Amen."* (*The Baptist Confession Of Faith Of 1689*, Chapter 32, Section 3; study 2 Cor. 5:10,11; 2 Thess. 1:5-7; Mark 13:35-37; Luke 12:35-40).

*Why did I not listen and turn from my sin
And open my heart and let Jesus come in?
For vain earthly pleasures my soul did I sell--
The way I had chosen has brought me to hell.*

- **Argument.** *"Christ raised certain ones from the dead such as the young man of Nain, showing that the time of grace does not expire at death."*
Response. The case of the youth of Nain and similar examples are entirely exceptional and may be ruled out of the argument.

*I wish I were dreaming, but ah, it is true,
The way to be saved I had heard and I knew;
My time on earth, oh, so quickly flew by,
How little I thought of the day I would die.*

- **Argument.** *"If man's destiny is settled at death, then all that die without hearing the gospel are under an absolute decree of reprobation. This is not fair. They should be given a second chance."*

Response. God is under no obligation to save anyone. That He should condescend to save some is a manifestation of His grace. That all others are assigned to eternal punishment is a manifestation of His justice.

*When God's Holy Spirit was pleading with me,
I hardened my heart and I turned from His plea.
The way that was sinful, the path that was wide,
I chose and I walked till the time that I died.*

*Eternally now, I must dwell in this place.
If I from my memory could but erase
The thoughts of my past which are haunting me so.
Oh, where is a refuge to which I can go?*

*This torture and suffering, how long can I stand?
For Satan and demons this only was planned.
God's refuge is Jesus, the One that I spurned;
He offered salvation, but from Him I turned.*

Chapter 40

OUR ETERNAL HOME

Heaven is a Real Place for Real People

The final state of the righteous is spoken of in various ways in the Scripture.

- **Heaven is a place of eternal life.** Matthew 25:46 *"And these shall go away into eternal punishment: but the righteous into eternal life."*
- **Heaven is a place of glory.** 2 Corinthians 4:17 *"For our light affliction, which is for the moment, worketh for us more and more exceedingly an eternal weight of glory."*
- **Heaven is a place of rest.** Hebrews 4:9 *"There remaineth therefore a rest for the people of God."* Revelation 14:13 *"And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them."*
- **Heaven is a place of knowledge.** 1 Corinthians 13:8-10 *"Love never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall be done away; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall be done away."*
- **Heaven is a place of holiness.** Revelation 21:27 *"and there shall in no wise enter into it any thing unclean, or he that maketh an abomination and a lie: but only they that are written in the Lamb's book of life."*
- **Heaven is a place of service.** Revelation 22:3 *"and his servants shall serve him."*
- **Heaven is a place of worship.** Revelation 19:1,2 *"After these things I heard as it were a great voice of a great multitude in heaven, saying, Hallelujah; Salvation, and glory, and power, belong to our God; for true and righteous are his judgments."*
- **Heaven is a place of sweet society.** Hebrews 12:23 *"to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven."*
- **Heaven is a place of communion with God.** Revelation 21:3 *"And I heard a great voice out of the throne saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he shall dwell with them, and they shall be his peoples, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God."*

General Facts About Heaven

1. Heaven is the dwelling place of God. *"Look down from heaven, and behold from the habitation of thy holiness and of thy glory."* (Isa. 63:15) *"And hear thou in heaven thy dwelling place: and when thou hearest, forgive."* (1 Kin. 8:30)
2. Heaven is described in different ways in the Bible.

- **Heaven is called a Garden.** *"To day shalt thou be with me in paradise (lit. Garden of the Kings,(Luke 23:43)*

Heaven is called The Kingdom Of Christ And Of God *"For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God." (Eph. 5:5)*

- **Heaven is called the Father's house.** Jesus said, *"In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you." (John 14:2)*
- **Heaven is called a country.** *"But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city." (Heb. 11:16)*
- **Heaven is spoken of as a Paradise.** *"I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such an one caught up to the third heaven. How that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter." (2 Cor. 12:2,4)*

3. The wicked are excluded from heaven. *"Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." (Gal. 5:21) "For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God." (Eph. 5:5) "For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie" (Rev. 22:15)*

*There is a land of pure delight,
Where saints immortal reign;
Infinite day excludes the night,
And pleasures banish pain.*

~*~

Robert McCheyne

A Red Cross attendant found a dying soldier on the battlefield during World War I. He was beyond all human hope yet his mouth was moving as he tried to speak. Tenderly, carefully, the attendant cradled the dying man's head in his arms and spoke in his ear, *"What is it? What are you trying to say?"* And the dying man, with a peaceful smile on his face whispered, *"The roll-call of heaven is being called and I am waiting to hear my name."*

- ◆ 2 Corinthians 5:1 *"For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."*

Heaven is a State of Conscious Existence

- ◆ Hebrews 12:14 *"Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord:"*
- ◆ Revelation 21:27 *"And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life."*

How Might we Get to Heaven?

The Bible teaches that there is only one Door to heaven and that is Jesus Christ.

- ◆ John 10:9 *"I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture."*

The Blessedness of the Saved in Heaven

Robert Hall suffered much physical pain in life. *"My chief conception of heaven is rest," he said to Wilberforce one day. And the great English statesman replied, "Mine, is love--love to God and to every bright inhabitant of that glorious place."*

- Heaven is a place where nature is perfected. There is no sin nature in heaven (Rev. Rev. 22:14-16).
- Heaven is the dwelling place of the Son (John 3:13; 6:38; 20:17; Acts 3:21; Heb. 9:24; 1 Thess. 1:10)
- Heaven is the dwelling place of the redeemed (John 14:2,3; 2 Cor. 5:1; Heb. 11:10).
- Heaven is a place where there are a thousand things that the eye hath nor seen nor the ear has heard.
- Heaven is the hope and longing of the Christian. C.S. Lewis said, *"If nothing in this world satisfies me, perhaps it is because I was made for another world."*

A Glimpse of Glory

"And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I hear a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful." (Rev. 21:1-5; read all of Revelation 21 and 22)

*Oh that home of the soul,
in my visions and dreams,
Its bright jasper walls I can see;
Till I fancy but thinly the veil intervenes,
Between that fair city and me.*

- ◆ Psalm 16:11 *"Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fullness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for nevermore."*
- ◆ Revelation 7:16-17 *"16 They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. 17 For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."*