

Systematic Theology I

(Bibliography)

BTH - 121

International College of Bible Theology

ARE YOU BORN AGAIN?

Knowing in your heart that you are born-again, and followed by a statement of faith are the two prerequisites to studying and getting the most out of your ICBT materials. We at ICBT have developed this material to educate each Believer in the principles of God. Our goal is to provide each Believer with an avenue to enrich their personal lives and bring them closer to God.

Is Jesus your Lord and Savior? If you have not accepted Him as such, you must be aware of what Romans 3:23 tells you.

23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God:

How do you go about it? **You must believe that Jesus is the Son of God.**

I John 5:13 gives an example in which to base your faith.

13 These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.

What if you are just not sure? **Romans 10:9-10 gives you the Scriptural mandate for becoming born-again.**

⁹That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. ¹⁰For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

Take some time to consider this very carefully. Ask Jesus to come into your heart so that you will know the power of His Salvation and make your statement of faith today.

Once you become born-again, it is your responsibility to renew your mind with the Word of God. Romans 12:1-2 tells us that that transformation of the mind can only take place in this temporal world by the Word of God.

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. 2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

The Apostle Paul, giving instructions to his “son” Timothy states in *2 Timothy 2:15*:

15 Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed,

rightly dividing the word of truth.

What happens if we do these things? Ephesians 4:12-13 gives us the answer to this question.

12 For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: 13 Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ:

By studying the Word of God, you will be equipped for service in the Kingdom of God and you will also be ready to take the position in the Body of Christ to which God has appointed you. You will be able to walk in unity with other Believers and you will be a vessel of honor to God that can rightly divide the word of truth.

If you are not saved and you do not know what to say, consider this simple prayer.

Lord, I know that I have need of a Savior. I believe that Jesus died for my sins and the God raised Him from the dead three days later. I ask to be forgiven and for Jesus to come into my heart and be the Lord of my life. I believe now by faith that God has heard my prayer and I am born- again.

If you have prayed this prayer, accept by faith that your sins have been forgiven. It is important that you tell someone of your decision to accept the Lord. Also, it is our recommendation that you should attach yourself to a local church and undergo water baptism.

For those who have prayed this prayer with sincerity of heart, we welcome to eternal life in the Kingdom of God. May the blessings of God overtake you.

May God grant you wisdom, knowledge, and understanding in all of His ways.

ICBT Directors and Staff

THE VISION

As we have been commissioned by the prophet of God, we now set our hand to write the vision of International College of Bible Theology, so that: **"He that runs may read it, the vision having been clearly written and made plain" (Habakkuk 2:2).**

- 1) **UNITY** - To build up the Body of Christ by networking with all churches, as well as with local and international ministries. This networking is to provide experienced leadership ministries to the small, local Church, to encourage unity and fellowship among pastors, church leaders and para-church groups, through active service.
- 2) **GOSPEL** - To go with the lifeline of the Gospel, wherein we desire to educate with love, integrity, and without compromise.
- 3) **ONE CROSS FOR ALL** - To cross cultural, racial, and denominational lines for unity, fellowship, networking, and progress. To have an open door through ICBT to all, of like faith, who desire to join with us in a common goal for the highest good. To proclaim one cross for all cultures, races, denominations, and peoples.
- 4) **GO YE** - To go wherever there is a need; to rich or poor, to majorities and minorities, to large and small churches, to free and incarcerated; to go where many fail to go and to meet the needs before us.
- 5) **THE CALLED** - To make opportunities available, to those called to minister, to expand their horizons through new associations and experiences. To aid new and/or younger ministers in fulfilling God's call on their lives.
- 6) **EDUCATION** - God has charged us with propagating the Gospel through education to whosoever will. This education is offered through certificate programs that teach the basics of Christianity and degree programs for those seeking more in-depth levels in Christian teachings.
- 7) **APPLICATION** - To make available to students the opportunity for education, as well as learning practical application, in traditional and non-traditional settings.
- 8) **DREAM A DREAM** - To cause all persons with which we associate to catch a vision, to dream yet another dream, and to keep their eyes on Jesus, the Author and Finisher of their faith.
- 9) **THE CALL** - To encourage each person (all persons) to move out of his/her (their) comfort zone, to be all he/she (they) can be for Christ and to fulfill the call upon their life (lives) to encourage each one (them) to pursue his/her (their) purpose, to live up to his/her (their) potential, and to produce the fruit of the Spirit.

International College
of
Bible Theology

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

Administrative & Curriculum Office
P.O. Box 339
Norris City, Illinois 62869
Phone: 618-378-3821 - Fax: 618-378-2101

Systematic Theology I

83 pages of Commentary

5 Homework Assignments

5 Quiz Assignments

1 Midterm Exam

1 Final Exam

34 pages of Answer Keys for school sites only (Answer keys are not included in the student's copy of material.)

INSTRUCTIONS: Read the entire Commentary

Do Homework I, which covers pages 8-20 in the Commentary.

Take Quiz 1, which covers materials in Homework I.

Do Homework II, which covers pages 20-44 in the Commentary.

Take Quiz 2, which covers materials in Homework II.

Take Mid-Term Exam, which covers materials in Homework I-II

Do Homework III, which covers pages 44-60 in the Commentary

Take Quiz 3, which covers materials in Homework III.

Do Homework IV, which covers pages 60-69 in the Commentary.

Take Quiz 4, which covers materials in Homework IV.

Do Homework V, which covers pages 69-80 in the Commentary.

Take Quiz 5, which covers Homework V.

Take Final Exam, which covers materials in Homework III-V.

13 weeks in a Trimester: 11 weeks of teaching; and 2 weeks of testing. You will need to cover 7.3 pages per teaching session.

18 weeks in a Semester: 16 weeks of teaching; and 2 weeks of testing. You will need to cover 5 pages per teaching session.

NOTE: The Instructor is encouraged to add his/her personality to the teaching sessions and to add knowledge to the Commentaries. The Instructor had some latitude if they desire to give some outside homework or essays. Before doing so, please check with the administrator of the school.

ALL TERM PAPERS MUST BE COMPLETED AND TURNED IN TO THE INSTRUCTOR BEFORE THE FINAL EXAM. NO GRADES WILL BE GIVEN FOR THE COURSE WITHOUT THE COMPLETION OF THE TERM PAPER.

SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY 1

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I. INTRODUCTION

A. Commentary

The intent of this course in Theology, (the study of God Himself), is to give us a deeper and more intimate understanding of the One True God. It will help us to understand the personage of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, Trinity in unity, yet distinguishable by their specific attributes. This course will help us to understand the volume of God's knowledge because His being, His knowing, and His doing is all there is. His existence extends beyond all that man knows. Through His Word, God shares a portion about Himself with us.

The intent of this course is to help us become more familiar with Almighty God. As we digest the material covered in this Commentary, be sure to receive, not only in order to know more about our Living God, but seek to come into a closer relationship with him (Da.11:32).

Systematic Theology is the spiritual study of the God who, through His overwhelming love, has a desire for a family. His nature of unity, as a result, has brought about all of creation as the perfect environment for the *a'gape* relationship with the children of His family.

It is God who establishes all things. He is the sum total of all rightness, goodness, and love. In him, there is no wrong, imperfection or error. He is ever-present, all-knowing, all-powerful. He is the source, being above all, that has always been and shall eternally exist (Is.44:6; 45:6, 21).

Without theology, the study of God, the Church would be on an unstable course.

If the Bible is the truth that Christianity is based on, then we need a logical study of that truth to prevent heresies from influencing or filtering into our beliefs. The need for theology is also important because truth and experience is related and theology provides answers for our Christian faith.

Until the thirteenth century theology was not considered a science, but Thomas Aquinas, an Early Church father, thought of it as the queen of sciences. He considered it as a derived science because it proceeds from principles revealed by God. It supersedes and is nobler than all the other sciences. While other sciences are based on human reason or natural light, theology is Divinely given and Divinely revealed.

The primary basis of theology comes through the Bible and this must always be. God has revealed Himself in general ways such as through history and in nature. These are secondary sources compared to the Bible. The purpose of theology is

to preserve all that God has for us.

Within these pages we will seek to grasp a deeper understanding of the Lord God Almighty, the Alpha and Omega. God is God and all else exists because of Him.

B. Theology Defined

The word "Theology" has its origin in the Greek language. "Theo" means God and "logy" (from "logos"), means the Word from God that has been written down for us. Theology simply means the study of God as He is revealed by the Author of the Word of God. Through His Word, God has revealed Himself to mankind. Theology is the science of God and His works.

The objective of theology is to gain an understanding of God and His relation to creation, mankind and his condition, along with the redemptive work He has provided. There are five facets to Christian theology: 1) theology is Biblical and the main source is from the Bible, including both Old and New Testaments; 2) it is systematic, meaning it is derived from the entire Bible, rather than an isolated text to develop a doctrine; 3) theology relates to general issues pertaining to culture and learning; 4) theology must be contemporary concerning language, concepts and thoughts or timeless concerning its application; 5) it must be practical, relating to life rather than concepts or beliefs.

Systematically studying God is a scientific approach, whereby the various aspects by which we may view God are organized into an orderly outline. This organized study gives us a better and clearer understanding of whom and what God is. A systematic method of studying God allows for a deeper revelation of the awesomeness of God's being and nature. Man's mind is not simply curious about the things of God, but rather seeks to understand systematically the nature, reason, relationship, function, and order of God's world.

Systematic theology attempts to define or explain the doctrines of God drawn from the entire Bible, though it is closely related to Biblical theology. The term Biblical theology carries several meanings. In the 1940's and 1950's, it was thought of as a movement, but began to die out in the 1960's because of its unbiblical concepts. The term refers to a study of a doctrine taken from a particular portion of the Bible, such as the Book of John or a doctrine derived only from the Old Testament etc. Lastly, it was defined as any theological study that is taken from the Bible. Using the last definition we can see how it would have to be related to Systematic Theology.

Systematic Theology organizes the things of God and opens the door to a more personal relationship with Almighty God. By faith, Systematic Theology proves God,

where as God has made it impossible to prove Himself in any other study, approach, scientific or otherwise. It is through a Systematic Theology that a Believer may formulate spiritual conclusions about the One True Living God. God, who is above all things in knowledge, wisdom, truth, and authority, has created some fixed natural laws which can be proved outside of faith. They are:

1. The regular function of heavenly bodies throughout the universe
2. The absolute laws of nature
3. The Science of Mathematics

Through systematically studying God, a Believer satisfies his innate desire to gather more information, bringing about a closer relationship with the One who is the very source of all things.

Historical theology means a theology that is developed during the history of the Church. It is sometimes used as the way a doctrine is developed over the course of the Church Age and is valuable in understanding our contemporary view. Its relationship to Systematic Theology is valuable in knowing how the social conditions affected the views of the Church.

Other methods of scientifically studying who God is and what He does falls short of reaching the source Himself. They do not require the element of faith in their understanding. Consequently, their quest does not reach into heaven and to its Chief Occupant and Resident. These alternate studies include:

1. Ethics

Seek to identify the moral aspects found in human conduct as measured by and compared to the changing standards adopted by man from his own intellect. The study of ethics does not reach to the source of true morality, God.

2. Psychology

Psychology seeks to explain man's behavior as a result of those things that are prevalent in his physical environment, which influence his mind. Psychology deals with explaining man's behavior and accepting the mind as man's authority in life. There is no credence to spiritual authority in psychology. God is Spirit and man is created in His spiritual image. Thus, the relationship between God and man is a spiritual one. Psychology ignores spirituality and God as the authority.

3. Religion

In a broad sense, the study of Religion includes man's devotion and faith toward whatever he has chosen to adore and worship. The study of Christianity would be similar to this Systematic Theology Course, but any other study of a religion or a belief system would miss the mark, having its focus on another god and not the One True God.

4. Philosophy

Philosophy and theology both have the same objective. They both seek a comprehensive world view in terms of man's reason for existence. However, theology begins with God who is the reason and cause of all things while philosophy begins with anything other than God as the center piece and focal point around which all things have their being. Philosophy focuses on things such as water, air, or fire, or perhaps a thought or idea, or on nature or human life, anything that denies the existence of God or that God reveals Himself to man.

Theology rests upon a solid base while philosophy rests upon the assumptions and speculations of the philosopher. Philosophy has no sound objective basis. Philosophy offers no real theories of origins and no doctrines of providence, sin, salvation, or final consummation which are vital to an adequate world view. Philosophy offers false hope to the unbeliever as theology develops real hope in the Believer. All studies intended to find reasons for life other than theology miss God. None but theology is able to bring a person into a relationship with Jesus Christ (1Co.1:21; 2:6-8).

Philosophy contributes to systematic theology three ways: 1) it supplies the content; 2) it defends or establishes truth; 3) it scrutinizes its concepts and arguments. Christian philosophy is the concepts and beliefs of theology and helps maintain correct doctrine.

C. Theology and Philosophy

Philosophy has had more influence on theology throughout the history of the Church than any other human inquiry or knowledge disciplines. The reason for that is the commonality of study and an overlap of the two fields even though they have taken on five different forms.

Tertullian felt there was no relationship between the two disciplines and went so far as to say they were as different as Athens is from Jerusalem. His approach to philosophy allowed absolutely no contribution to Christian theology. This view

also appeared in the Middle Ages. Martin Luther picked up on this as he rejected Catholic philosophy taught by Thomas Aquinas. Luther said, "Let philosophy remain within her own bounds, as God has appointed, and let us make use of her as a character."

Augustine had a different view altogether. He felt that theology could be elucidated by philosophy but stressed the priority of faith and the acceptance of biblical revelation. Augustine declared that philosophy may help us understand Christian theology and adopted the philosophy of Plato as a means for theology.

Plato's theory of knowledge was that it came from an ideal or pure form. He believed our soul had contact with pure knowledge in the preexistent state that enables us to recognize (rightness, truth etc.) in the present day.

Still another form of philosophy is that theology is sometimes established by it. Thomas Aquinas found this to be the basis of Aristotle's view of the existence of God. He uses this theory to give credibility to theology, thus developing key doctrines based on "accidental metaphysics."

The fourth form says that theology may be judged by philosophy. The problem with this form is that deism came along and would only accept the tenets of religion which could be tested and demonstrated.

The fifth form states that in some cases philosophy can supply content to theology. In this form Georg Hegel views Christianity as an idealistic philosophy. He considered the truths of Christianity as examples of universal truth that would become a dialectical pattern for history to follow. This resulted in a rationalized version of Christianity where everything becomes predictable leaving Christianity to be modified to accommodate philosophy.

There are several twentieth century philosophies that are worthy of mentioning. One of the most distinctively American philosophies that influenced people in the twentieth century is pragmatism. This philosophy emphasizes that there is no absolute truth, but rather the meaning of an idea lies solely in its practical results. It tends to assume that immediate workability is the criterion. This results in short term profitability with the long term profitability exploited.

Another twentieth century philosophy is existentialism which attempts to emphasize the priority of existence over essence. This philosophy has developed four tenets: 1) irrationalism, which says reality cannot be captured within or reduced to intellectual concepts, or to put ideas into a logical system (leaving the meaning of reality as being developed by one's own free choice); 2)

the tenet of individuality which places the individual as unique and important (considering any effort of placing a person in a category such as race, age, male or female as abstract and not reality); 3) freedom, which is the basis for atheism (saying, "I am free and nothing can hinder or decide my destiny, not even God"); 4) subjectivity, the most widely accepted by theologians in the twentieth century; based on two types of truth, objective and subjective. Objective truth is when truth is based on an object, and subjective truth is based on the results or the effects of an object. The bottom line for this tenet is that truth is truth when it becomes truth to the individual.

Another philosophy that is popular in this century is analytical philosophy. It carries the idea of clarifying concepts and is language oriented. Often it focuses on illumination and understanding. It addresses questions such as, "What do you mean by that?" or "What kind of statement is that?"

Theology can find a place or make room for philosophy. Erickson says two basic guidelines must be followed that will establish a correct balance without inferring with God's word or true theology: 1) he says by keeping with our fundamental presuppositions, revelation rather than philosophy will supply the content of our theology (we must use the capacity of reasoning given by God to work out the implications of the revealed body of truth); 2) by keeping philosophy as an activity rather than as a body of truth.

The primary use of philosophy should be to: 1) sharpen our understanding; 2) sort out presuppositions behind an idea or a system of thought; 3) trace out the implications of an idea; 4) make us aware of the necessity of testing truth-claims. Whenever we critique a view or an idea that is different from our own, we are being objective and our understanding will be enhanced.

The dangers that threaten the Body of Christ on earth today do not come from the scientific, which ultimately and conclusively leads to knowledge of God, but from the philosophical.

What each individual believes about God is His own theology. The intent of this study course is to discover what God has to say about Himself. The textbook necessary for an effect systematic study of God is the Bible. The Bible is to the theologian what nature is to the natural scientist.

A student studying God must never stray into another doctrinal field. God's enemy, Satan and his host, wait in all the surrounding informational territory with alternate theories designed specifically to steal the truth of God from man. Satan's false theologies arise in these last days to battle with truth through the concepts of atheism, agnosticism, pantheism, and Unitarianism. Christians must be sound and

firm in this theological warfare and always ready to make a defense to every one who asks them to give an account of the hope which he has (1Pe.3:15). Not grounded, the Christian will be "tossed here and there by waves, and carried about by every wind of doctrine" (Ep.4:14). Those who would oppose Christianity are careful to systematically organize their attack strategy, so we must have a sure and consistent defense, an organized systematic theology concerning the One true God.

In order for the study of God to become a powerful weapon bringing victory as promised in God's Word, there must be an understanding within man deeper than mere intellect. Intellectual loyalty to the truth of God is not able to overcome the fiery darts of the enemy. The full effectiveness in the study of God becomes reality when it has reached man's spirit, when it has been received as a shaper and molder of one's faith. A Christian finds fulfillment not by might or power, but by the Spirit of God flowing into the spirit of man by way of the received knowledge, revelation, and understanding of God's truth which is spiritually enlivened, not intellectually. It is truly out of man's heart (spirit) that the issues of life are effectively confronted.

Let the purpose of systematic theology in your life be to know God. Theology's object is the supreme, sovereign, and eternal God, and the knowing Him that life may be enriched for God and His glory (Jn.17:3; Da.11:32).

D. Methods of Theology

The present day theological scene must take into account a number of tendencies that affect the Church.

1. Progressive theological trend

The first thing to consider is progressive theological trend. Augustine's theology, under the influence of Plato, dominated the Church for over 800 years. This was followed by Thomas Aquinas, who supplied the Church with theology until the Reformation. It is interesting to note that he was influenced by a Greek philosopher (Aristotle) as well. These two men lead the Church in the theological arena for about 1,500 years.

The Reformers broke out of this mold and developed a theology independent from the Catholic Church initiated John Calvin. It was enhanced by John Wesley and for the next 250 years there were no other major theological figures. From that time until the mid 20th Century, a number of theologians came forth and influenced the Church. It is worthy to note that each one had a shorter influence than his predecessor.

2. Demise of theological schools

The second thing we see is the demise of great theological schools and the generalization of theologians. Since the 1950's theologians seem to be in clusters or various camps.

3. No theological giants today

We have no theological giants today. Though-out church history we have had men who have stood out because of their views on theology. This was true until the first half of this century, but due to technology and the knowledge explosion, we are experiencing a rapid transfer of information. Theologians today tend to specialize rather than to master the whole of the Bible. This puts in jeopardy Systemic Theology which requires knowledge of all the Scriptures. The result is that we are seeing more Biblical theology addressed than the time spent in mastery.

4. Behavioral sciences influence

There has been an increased influence of behavioral sciences which has brought to the Church the liberation theologies, psychology and sociology. This has had a tremendous impact on the Third World Countries, the Blacks, the feminist, etc.

5. Globalization

As Christianity reaches into third-world nations, more influences from these countries are filtering back into theology. This needs to be heard, because in the past theologians were primary out of the European and Western cultures which dominated the Church.

E. Process of Theology

While theology has been thought of as an art or a science, it still requires a procedure to develop it. Erickson stresses that the process should be: 1) exegesis; 2) biblical theology; 3) systematic theology.

1. Collection of biblical materials

The first step involves gathering all the passages relevant to the doctrine that is being investigated. The procedure begins with an exegesis that includes consulting grammars, dictionaries, etc.

2. Unifying biblical materials

Next is to unify the biblical material gathered. It is necessary to look for unity in doctrine from the various writers and correlate their thoughts. They must harmonize. Before we begin to interpret Scripture, the whole Bible should be taken into account. Even the Old Testament and the New Testament should be approached with unity in mind.

3. Analyze the meaning

The next step is to analyze the meaning of biblical teaching. At this point we must be able to take a group of biblical terms and relate them to a contemporary setting. To do this we first have to understand what it means. When we explain it to others, it must be done in a way or in terms that they can understand.

4. Examine the historical treatment

The fourth step is to examine the historical treatment. This involves understanding the development of a doctrine. We should take into account time periods in history that may be similar to our current conditions and consider how it was treated by former theologians.

5. Consider other cultural perspectives

Next is the consideration of other cultural perspectives, as theology should benefit from globalization.

6. Identify the essence

Now we should identify the essence of the doctrine. This is a matter of separating temporary doctrines or Laws, such as in the Old Testament from the New Testament, and contemporary Christianity. This also involves the separation of a truth expressed to certain people from the culture.

7. Illumination from extra-biblical sources

We cannot ignore the fact that God has introduced to man and only to man both general and special revelation, that is, when that revelation is in harmony with God's Word.

8. Contemporary expression of doctrine

Theology must relate to the people that it is presented to. Without an understanding of the contemporary culture and the people, it would not be possible to adequately convey the timeless truths of the Bible. This requires a careful study of the culture.

9. Development of interpretation

Now we must consider the development of a central interpretive motif. This is important because it lends to the unity of the system and enhances the ability to communicate. When a theologian has a clear motif and understands how to place sub-topics and co-topics in a systematic position, obviously readers can more easily grasp what is being conveyed.

10. Stratification of topics

The last part of the process is the stratification of topics. This involves the arrangement of topics and sub topics by importance, or simply to organize.

F. Theology and Language

The Church is in the business of communication and has always been concerned about its language. Early theologians paid serious attention to the nature and the function of theological language. Early in the 20th Century a new dimension of urgency swept the Church as philosophy, which has always been a partner with theology, began to direct special attention to the analysis.

Moore and Russell were philosophers who began the analysis of theological language. This movement became known as “logical positivism.” They broke this down into two basic group types of cognitive propositions:

1. A priori

This is to use analytic statements, such as, “two plus two equals four.” The symbols two and plus when combined in this fashion, have a meaning of four. These mathematical-type statements are absolutely true, but are uninformative regarding the empirical world.

2. Synthetic statements

In these statements the predicate is not contained within the subject. For

example, the statement “all bachelors are tall.” The word “tall” has nothing to do with bachelors. Therefore this is a synthetic statement. If we were to say, “all bachelors are unmarried,” this would be an analytic statement, because unmarried is contained in the subject.

Statements that can be verified or falsified are considered meaningful by philosophers. On the other hand no matter how impressive a sentence may be, it could be considered meaningless. It has always been the role of the philosophers to examine the actual functions in context of the language. However, it was Wittgenstein who coined the term “language game.” The term referred to the activity of language, such as jokes, prayer, reporting a news event, or cursing. He says the problem with the verifiability principle does not lie in the criterion it sets for the empirical type of sentence, but the problem consists in the failure to recognize other forms of language as meaningful.

William Hordern observed that religious and theological language followed the same pattern as personal language. As a person would reveal himself to another, so it is with God. By revelation He reveals Himself. Hordern says God’s act in history and His words given through the prophets constitute His self-manifestation or revelation. He ascribes God as being a person or a subject, not just a thing or an object.

John Hick acknowledged the verifiability principle, and sought to keep meaningfulness for the language of Christianity and introducing the concept of “eschatological verification.” Currently we do not have verification of these theological propositions, but some day we will. If life after death exists, we will experience it.

Frederick Ferre has concluded that Christianity is cognitive. In other words, the truth status of its tenets is determinable. It does not deal only with natural facts, but rather the reference of theology’s symbols is to metaphysical fact of some kind. The nature of metaphysics is conceptual synthesis. Thus, a metaphysical fact is a concept that plays a key role within that system.

Erickson rejects the narrow criterion of meaningfulness proposed by logical positivism. He maintains knowledge is not only obtained by sensory perception but by theological symbols and direct revelation from God. Where meaning is objectively present in symbols, discernment must be used, because there is no exact scientific method to extract meaning.

John Austin began questioning the long term standing of philosophy which says, “To say something, at least in all cases worth considering, is to state something. He began what is referred to as speech-act theory. His initial concern focused on

per formative utterances which are statements such as wedding vows, making a bet, naming something or making a bequest. Though speech-act theory can be beneficial to us by reminding us of the variety of genres in the Bible, there are differing purposes and elements that are involved in communication and it is in agreement with the evangelical belief of the nature of theology.

G. Postmodernism and Theology

The word “modern” has taken on a new definition in recent years. We normally associate it with the word “contemporary” which has to do with things that are the most current. In this sense modernity would not pass, only the contents would change. However, philosophers are designating a particular period of time to the word modern. To be more specific they are using the year 1789, the fall of the French Bastille, to 1998 and the fall of the Berlin Wall, as the modern period. Many agree this period has numerous qualities that intellectually characterize it. By establishing a definite period of time as modern, it makes it possible to establish a pre-modernity and post-modernity.

1. Pre-modernism

Pre-modernism has been established by belief in the rationality of the universe. Its dualistic nature was thought of as being supernatural or at least extra-natural. Commonly this belief was considered to have a form of religious supernaturalism that went beyond the observable universe, characterizing God as the Creator and the Sustainer of all things. The pre-modern view was teleological. In other words it recognized order and purpose in the universe. Even history was thought of as having a pattern. It was believed that an outside force (God) was moving history toward a goal of His choosing.

2. Modernism

After considering pre-modernism Erickson brings our attention to modernism. Some of the points are the same, but there are significant differences. Modernism maintains the same objective reality of the physical world, but it differs by removing the supernatural or at least the extra-natural basis. The historical patterns and events are explained as social realities omitting the assistance of a transcending God. Therefore, causation is efficient rather than final.

Philosopher Immanuel Kant also contributed much to the modernism view. Kant added two elements to this philosophy. He believed that sense experience, from which knowledge can be extracted, must be included. He

also included the rational and logical structure of the mind which furnishes organization to data. Since God is not experienced in the sensory realm, He cannot be the object of theoretical reason. If God is an object of faith, then practical reason omits God because He cannot be proven.

Modernism seeks an explanation to cover everything. For creation and biology it turned to Darwin. In the field of psychology it looked toward Freud. For the economic and governmental aspects its focus was on Marx.

3. Postmodernism

Finally Erickson considers theology in the post-modern age. By understanding pre-modernism and modernism, one can begin to understand how post-modernism came into being. Post-modernism attempted to eliminate God from traditional doctrines and goes to more liberal extremes than pre-modernism or modernism.

By living in an era where post-modernism exists, we must acknowledge that a shift is taking place from modernity to post-modernity. According to Erickson, this will probably continue to change to possibly a "post-post-modernity period." He points out that as modern medical or modern technology continues to advance so will post-modernity.

In conclusion Erickson says we need to use post-modernity to our advantage though we do not agree with many of its concepts. By considering globalization we need to take into account multiculturalism in our theology. This is not to change what we believe, but to include it in our concepts. Whether it is political correctness or the feminist movement, the same should apply.

H. God Defined

God is the infinite and perfect Spirit in whom all things have their source, support and end.

1. Names of God (Ps.124:8; 9:10; 54:6; 8:1; 20:5; 18:10)

a. Jehovah:

Jehovah is the personal name of Israel's God meaning the "self-existent One" or "the One who causes to be". The verbal definition is "to be". Jehovah is used 6,823 times by God in the Old Testament.

God referred to Himself as "I AM" and testified that there was none other upon whose name He could swear (Ex.3:14; 6:2; 3:13-16). *Jehovah Tsabaoth* is Lord of Hosts (1Sa.1:3; Is.1:9). Jehovah is the provisionary One Who manifests Himself in various ways and is thus titled:

- 1) *Jehovah-Jireh*, provider (Ge.22:14)
- 2) *Jehovah-Rophe*, healer (Ex.15:26)
- 3) *Jehovah-Nissi*, banner (Ex.17:15)
- 4) *Jehovah Shalom*, peace (Jg.6:24)
- 5) *Jehovah Raah*, shepherd (Is.23:1)
- 6) *Jehovah Tsidkenu*, righteousness (Je.23:6)
- 7) *Jehovah Shammah*, present (Ezk.48:35)

b. *El Shaddai*:

"El" designates God and "*Shaddai*" designates Almighty. It is referred to seven times in the Old Testament, A patriarchal term.

c. *Elohim*:

Elohim is the first Scriptural name given to God. It is found 2,570 times. It is defined as a word denoting the power from which creation, governing, and judging comes in a moral universe. *Elohim* designates one who stands in a covenant relationship which is sealed by the oath.

d. *Adonai*:

A word which denotes being plural in its manifestation. It means the God whom many serve. It occurs 350 times in the Old Testament. It carries an understanding of spiritual well-being between God and the servants. We translate it today as the word Lord.

2. The existence of God:

- a. Is intuitive - The evidence of God is apparent to man (Ro.1:19), and there is no excuse (Ro.1:20).

- b. Is assumed by Scripture- The Bible clearly assumes that all men believe in the existence of God (Ge.1:1; Ps.94:9).
- c. Has other arguments- God is Spirit and there are many arguments in spiritual concepts toward God's existence. These arguments are:
 - 1) Cosmological. Everything that exists has a cause (He.3:40).
 - 2) Teleological. There is too much order, system, and arrangement to deny God (Ps.8:3; 19:1; 94:9).
 - 3) Ontological. The idea of God in man proves God's greatness and existence.
 - 4) Moralistic. There is an obligation toward good and not evil. This conscious obligation speaks of God's influence (Ro.1:19-32; 2:14-16).
 - 5) Congruity. The existence of moral, mental, and religious nature coupled with material universal facts hold for God's existence. These arguments individually have limitations in their proof. They point to the creative powers of God, but not to proving God Himself. There is value using them arguing God's case. We may conclude from these arguments that there is a personal, extra-mundane, self-existent, ethical, and self-revealing God. He is incomprehensible (Job 11:7; Is.40:18; Ro.11:3), yet He is knowable (Jn.17:3; 1Jn.5:20).

3. World-Views of God

The non-Christian views about God deny God's very Word that proclaims sufficiency in evidence (Ac.14:17; 17:23-29; Ro.1:18-20). Nevertheless, the world refuses to receive God's knowledge (Ro.1:28).

a. Atheistic:

Practical atheism ignores God, holds that God is nowhere, while dogmatic atheism develops God replacement doctrines; God is a principle and not living. Virtual atheism says there is no God in any

form. Atheists lack any assurance of forgiveness, are cold and empty, have no understanding for fellowship with God. It is an effort to deny what history, Scripture and man's deepest convictions, speaks of a present and loving God.

b. Agnostic:

This view holds that God is not knowable. They hold that observing the creation scientifically is as close to God as one may come.

c. Pantheistic:

This view hold that all finite things (creation) are aspects and parts of God himself, that God is also that which He has created. Pantheism says God is in a rock, in a tree, in a leaf.

d. Polytheistic:

Many of today's world religions are polytheistic which allows for many gods, idols, to be a god. Each may be seen to serve a certain purpose for man.

e. Dualistic:

This view says that there are two natures opposing each other, good and evil, God and Satan, both eternal and equal in causality.

f. Deistic:

This view holds that God is present only in power, not in His nature and being.

I. The Know-ability of God

God has made it clear throughout the Scriptures that He desires that man come to know Him and that through the knowing and understanding, man will do exploits (Jn.8:32; 17:3; Da.11:32). From the very beginning of man's existence, God, by His action, made it perfectly clear He desired for man to know Him and walk with Him daily in the cool of the garden. Adam and Eve were to eat from, to take in what the Tree of Life offered. The Tree of Life represented the know-ability of God (Ge.2:9). However, since Adam and Eve were innocent, God did not want them to eat of the Tree of Life untested, as they could then have lived forever in a lost state (Ge.3:22-24). Adam and Eve failed the test, thus losing the right to eat of the Tree of Life.

However, we will eat of it in the New Jerusalem (Re.22:2, 14).

God has made His know-ability unique in many ways. Man can know God in fellowship, one to another, by recognizing the presence and attributes of God within each other.

1. Denials:

There are various religious theories that hold that God is too distant, too awesome, too busy, too indescribable, too high, etc., for a knowing relationship with His precious creature, man. Many say that there is clear evidence of God and His magnificent abilities, but that God isn't interested in being personally known.

Even others proclaim that God is dead, perhaps a result of man's rejection, and therefore knowing Him now is impossible. Truly, there are limitations upon the level of comprehension of God, even though a knowing relationship is desired. A knowledge of God's person and His way is indeed possible for mankind; a comprehension of what He is in essence and ultimate being is not possible within the ordinary frame of reference of human life (Jn.17:3; Job 11:7). There are limitations upon the knowledge of God because there are limitations upon human capacity to know.

2. True knowing:

It is important to distinguish between natural man and spiritual man in the realm of knowing God. Knowledge of God begins where the natural mind leaves off. True knowledge of God is acquired by divine revelation as man accepts it by childlike faith (Jn.7:17).

3. Methods of knowing God:

a. General revelation (Ro.1:20)

Some facts about God are evidenced in nature, in creation surrounding us, in history, and in conscience. These are not able alone to lead man to a savior. Observation, conscience, and providence point man toward God:

- 1) By observation of creation or by science (Ps.19:1; Ro.1:20).
- 2) By conscience which bears witness but is not entirely

dependable (Ro.2:15).

- 3) By providence which reveals a good God who rains on the just and unjust. God's spiritual law works for all (Ac.14:15,17).

Creation reveals a mighty God. Conscience reveals a moral God. Providence reveals a good God.

General revelation is limited in the ability to bring personal relationship with Christ (Jn.5:39). General revelation is suppressed and perverted by man hiding the real truth.

The purpose of general revelation is to:

- 1) Provide an initial enticement or invitation to relationship with God (Ro.1;18, 20; 2;15; Ps.19;1).
- 2) To create an invitation and desire to search for the knowledge of God (Ac.17:24-28).

b. Special revelation:

God specifically makes Himself known to man in special ways and acts. They include:

- 1) Theophanies (appearances)

God has chosen occasionally to personally visit a human being.

- a) Abraham (Ge.18:1-22)
- b) Man with drawn sword (Jos.5:13-15)
- c) In the fire and smoke.(Ex.45:34-38)
- d) Jesus Christ - Divinity revealed in the flesh on earth (Jn.14:9). One distinguishable final revelation of God in person in history (Mt.11:27; He.1:1-2; Jn.1:14-18; 14:6).

- 2) Personal experience

The true Believer will spiritually experience a known relationship with God through receiving Jesus Christ in his heart, (Ps.34:8; Ga.4:9; Lk.24:32; IICo.5:17). Enoch walked

with God and was not, that is, he did not die as other men die, but was translated (Ge.5:24).

3) Miracles

A miracle is an unusual supernatural event or work by God which reveals His presence and power in a positive way and as an enhancement to His Word. Miracles:

- a) Accomplish a useful task, such as making wine from water, sending manna from heaven, fire and pillar of smoke to lead, or parting the Red Sea.
- b) Reveal the presence and power of God.
- c) Are opposed greatly by the unbelieving in refutation.
- d) Are clearly recorded in both the Old and New Testament history, a reliable record of events and places.
- e) Are either an intensification of natural law, such as, quails, plagues, rain, or supernatural acts of laws outside of nature, such as, parting of the Red Sea, the virgin birth, or the dead raised).

4) Prophecy

Prophecy is a type of miracle occurring through a yielded vessel which is a sure prediction of things to come. True prophecy comes to pass. True prophecy is toward a future event which is beyond a forecast. True prophecy has one clear meaning, and is specific.

5) Scripture (ITi.2:15)

God actually reveals Himself in a sure way, in His Holy Word. Through a relationship with Scripture, the mind of Christ and of God is known. God's Word is thorough and accurate (Jn.17:17). The Bible speaks for itself in many ways:

- a) By analogy - since it is evident in the perfection and wonder of God's Word that God reveals Himself therein.
- b) That God has a concern for the natural world's continuance, therefore it follows that God has concern for man, the world's occupant and that

He provides redemptive revelation of Himself to man.

- c) By its indestructibility

The Bible has been preserved better and remained current over the centuries more than any other writings in spite of:

- Attempts to destroy its existence
- The prohibition of reading in middle ages
- The denial of Scriptural authority in this modern day.

- d) By its character

One man of God quotes about the Bible, "It is not such a book as man would write if he could or if he would.

"The Bible is unsurpassed in subject matter and volume; in quality and variety of subject; and in realistic treatment of the human condition. It is the only book having 40 authors, having been written over a period of 1500 years in three different languages and in perfect harmony and agreement. The Bible is the only such undertaking successfully completed by a committee of writers."

- e) By its influence in major realms of living:

- Scientific (natural study)
- Cultural
- Social
- Political
- Economic
- Domestic

- f) By answering philosophical questions such as:

- What is truth? (Jn.17:17; 14:6).
- Is man immortal? (Job 14:14; Jn.11:26)
- Why does evil exist? (Is.14:14; Ge.3; 1Co.15:24-28; Ezk.28:11-15).
- What is beautiful and of value? (Php.4:8).
- What is good and right conduct? (Mt.22:37-39)

- g) By being truth in prophecy complete and fulfilled:
 - History's development is predicted (Ep.1:10-11).
 - The Messiah's life and death are predicted (Ps.22:14-18; Is.52:2).

- h) By being a reliable record in:
 - Archeology - Sodom, Gomorrah, Jericho and Dead Sea Scrolls discovered.
 - Prophecy has been fulfilled many times over. An example is the restoration of Israel.
 - The absolute unity of all Biblical teaching.
 - Agreement with historical records.
 - Testimonies of personal experiences reflecting Scripture.
 - By surviving despite attempts at suppression.

- i) The Bible is sufficient in its limited special revelation to man.
 - It contains limited knowledge of God, but what man needs (Ro.11:33d).
 - Secret knowledge belongs only to God.
 - It gives to man what God wants man to know.

J. The Reliability of the Bible

1. The names of God's Word:

a. Scripture or the Scriptures were:

The first designation used in earliest Christianity. Writings were made on papyrus (dried flattened reed) paper and words were inscribed thereon. Scripture means "to write." Scripture also is said to be graphic, ("*graphie*") which means "clearly seen, written" (Jn.10:35; IITi.3:16; IIPe.1:20; Mt.21:42; Mk.14:49; Ro.15:19).

b. The Bible

This designation for God's Book is derived from "*Ta Biblia*" which

means "The Book."

c. The Word of God

Of all the names given to God's Book, The Word of God is the most significant, impressive and complete (De.8:8; Mt.4:4; Mk.7:13; Ro.10:17; ICo.2:17; He.4:12; ITh.2:13). The Word of God means "God breathed." It is the most effect title because it designates the author and connects Him with His integrity, His Word. The Word of God impresses the fact that the Word was breathed from God's very mouth.

2. Genuineness

The Word of God, despite all the criticisms about authenticity over the centuries, clearly and undeniably, testifies to its own authenticity. It was written by those claiming to be the writers and at the time claimed by fact or tradition. Criticism of God's Word comes from man through deception by Satan, and not from God. Clearly God's judgment of His own Word is final, finished, firm, and unchangeable and is confirmed by the precise ticking away of prophetic fulfillment.

a. Response to criticism

Throughout the Testaments, it is written, "The Lord said....". That statement is the truth, but man can chose to deny it. Also, Moses was an example of testifying that he was the writer of portions of the Old Testament (Ex.24:4). Other ancient accounts and histories, like the works of the historian Josephus, confirm Biblical truth.

b. Testaments credibility:

Many parts of both Testaments give credibility to other parts in a harmonious and irrefutable structure of correctness and perfection coming together from forty (40) writers over a fifteen-hundred (1500) year time span, impossible except by Divine authorship. In the entirety of the sixty-six books, there is not one contradiction.

c. Jesus confirmation:

Jesus Christ confirmed many parts of the Old Testament, as He created the New Testament.

d. Christian vs. traditional practices:

Jewish and Christian practices continue throughout the centuries, while other traditions come and go, as a testimony to the truth of the Bible.

e. Supposed lack of harmony:

Critics point to differences in times of events, styles of the same claimed authors, and the supposed lack of harmony of the Gospels. We know simply that times and authors change in style and the Gospels differ simply as God's way of portraying Jesus in the many lights of His wonderful ministry.

3. Credibility:

Credibility is the characteristic of being able to be relied upon. We see evidence of Biblical credibility:

a. Christ's Old Testament authority and appeal:

<u>Subject</u>	<u>O.T.REF.</u>	<u>N.T.REF.</u>
Origin of universe	Ge.1:1	Mk.13:19
Origin of man	Ge.1:27	Mt.19:4,5
Reality of man's fall	Ge.3:1	Jn.8:44
Flood of Noah	Ge.6:8	Lk.17:26-27
History of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob	Ge.11-49	Mt.8:11
Destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah	Ge.19	Lk.17:28-30
Moses and the burning bush	Ex.3:1-6	Mk.12:24-26
Manna in wilderness	Ex.16	Jn.6:32
Tabernacle in wilderness	Ex.25	Lk.6:34
Jonah and the big fish	Jonah 1:7	Mt.12:39-40

- b. Archaeology proves literal times and places of Biblical information:
- c. New Testament credibility:
 - 1) Writer's qualifications - Matthew, John and Peter were actually with Jesus during His ministry. Mark and Luke had close association with eyewitness writers and with human authorities involved with Jesus' ministry. Paul and John received direct revelation from God (Re.1:1; ICo.12:1; Ga.1:17). The Holy Spirit enabled New Testament writers to recall what Christ had to said to them (John 14:26).
 - 2) In the New Testament writings: All New Testament writings were corroborated. There was no human disharmony within the writings. There were two or more witnesses in the agreement of New Testament Scripture (ICo.15:3-4; Ac.17:11). Proof of harmony lies in the absence of contradiction and in the unique way each book compliments the others. The New Testament harmonizes both history and doctrine and offers differing aspects to confirm original truth. Proof also comes from non-Biblical sources such as Josephus, a first century Jewish historian, and Tacitus, a Roman historian from the same era.
 - 3) The inspiration of the Scriptures: Inspiration is evidence for embodiment of divine revelation of truth. Inspiration is the way God spoke through the prophets and others and is the way the Bible receives it's authority. God breathed it and that gives it authority.
 - a) Intuitive or natural theory of inspiration: Inspiration is the superior intuitive of the natural man in moral and religious truths. There is no authority in this theory, for it is based on feelings.
 - b) Mystical or illumination theory of inspiration: It is merely on intensification and elevation of religious perceptions or beliefs. It has no authority. It claims special gifts, and confuses illumination with inspiration.
 - c) Dynamic or partial inspiration theory:

-Limited inerrancy says that inspiration extends only to faith and practice. Human intellect is relied upon. Science and history are not inspired. Objections to this theory are:

--Faith and practice are intertwined with history and science. They cannot be separated.

--The Holy Spirit does not vary in position/operation from realm to realm. He is the same yesterday, today, and forever.

--Scriptures do not separate realms. It says man makes the realms and the Holy Spirit is not included.

- d) Conceptual theory of inspiration: It says inspiration extends to the concepts but not to the actual words. The concept has inspired the writers, then they put their own words down (Mt.5:18; De.18:18-19; Je.1:9).
- e) Neo-Orthodox theory of inspiration: It holds that the Bible is able to have error. It claims the Bible is a human production of a fallible record which contains a witness to divine revelation. It says you have to experience it before its real.
- f) Fallible inspiration theory: This view of inspiration as indicated by the following quote: "My conviction has grown that the New Testament is in a quite special sense inspired. It is not magical, nor is it faultless; human beings wrote it." Ring of Truth (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1967) p.20. What faults were found? None This says since man is fallible, his writings must be also.
- g) Dictation theory of inspiration: Says the writers of the Scriptures were passive instruments in Gods' eyes and use. This theory holds that God absolutely told them everything to write. Though there appears to be some evidence of some

dictation in the Bible, God mostly used the style, character, and personality of the writer in His inspirational process of writing.

- h) Verbal Plenary theory of inspiration: The definition of verbal, plenary inspiration: According to one man of God, inspiration is God's superintendence of the human authors so that, using their own individual personalities, they composed and recorded without error His revelation to man in the words of the original autographs.

God is the Divine source and He is the revelation revealer (II Ti.3:16), the author, while the human is the agent and the truth relayer (II Pe.1:20-21). The Bible, (Jn.17:17) is the result of God and the inspired obedience of the writer. It comes from the Lord through the relayer to the page (Mt.1:22-23), all by the Holy Spirit. Verbal inspiration applies only to the original autographs. Verbal inspiration means that God's superintendence extends to the very words of Scripture (Mt.5:18; Jn.10:34-36; Ga.3:16).

Plenary inspiration means that verbal inerrancy extends to every portion of the Scriptures as defined by the Protestant canon (2Ti.3:16). Verbal Plenary inspiration allows for the obvious differences in personality and literary styles of the various authors of Scripture.

Verbal Plenary inspiration includes God's superintendence in the production of the Scriptures without necessitating His dictation of the Scriptures. In general, this was the viewpoint of the early Church fathers, the medieval theologians, and the reformers. It is the viewpoint of many present day evangelical Christians. For example, the inerrancy of Scripture is the viewpoint of all members of the Evangelical Theological Society.

4. The character of God:

As to the character of God, the Scriptures are a reliable record and reveal a God of truth. This applies to:

- a. The claims of Scripture
- b. The inspiration of Scripture (II Ti.3:16)
- c. They give the men and the method (II Pe.1:20-21)

- d. The quote, "Thus sayeth the Lord," is used and Biblical writers quoted other Scriptures. In Luke 4 Christ quoted Isaiah with great authority
 - e. The confirmation of Christ. Jesus points out time and time again what Scriptures say, such as, "is it not written" (Mt.21:15-16, quoting Ps.8:2)
 - f. The consideration of New Testament inspiration. The New Testament promised the Holy Spirit would be sent. John 14:25
5. The Holy Spirit brings to the writer what is to be written.

Some people have objections to verbal, plenary inspiration. If Christianity is the true faith, then it must logically rest upon infallible authority. The infallibility of the Scriptures, in turn, rests upon the infallible authority of Christ. To reject the inerrancy (the quality of making no mistakes, being infallible), of Scripture is to reject the truthfulness of Christ. Inerrancy is discussed later in this course. There are problems with certain Biblical passages. In Acts 23:5, verbal plenary, does not imply that they are God or know everything. Paul is not all knowing, so verse six (6) is a Word of Knowledge. In I Corinthians 7:12, 25, a writer may not have a direct revelation that is inspired but has an overall view of what God intended.

It is said that there are problems in science and history. History and science are not contradictory to the Bible. The Bible is not limited. Science is limited. The correct interpretation of the Scriptures and the established facts of science and history are not contradictory, since God is ultimately the origin of all true knowledge and truth. Not all of the facts concerning certain problem passages are presently available. If they were, it is believed that the supposed error or contradiction would be readily resolved.

There are alleged contradictions with scientific knowledge. Western thinking tries to argue with Eastern. Consider the problems of parabolic language. Eastern thinking mentions of the rising and setting of the sun (Nu.2:3; 34:15). This is a spiritual and not a technical statement. There is the mention of "the four corners of the earth" (Is.11:12). This is a word picture and not intended for a technical explanation.

There are alleged contradictions in historical accounts. For instance, the alleged contradiction between Numbers 25:9 and I Corinthians 10:8: 24,000 were killed or 23,000? There is possibly different points of view over the kills

is the reason for the varying numbers. There is also the alleged contradiction between Matthew 5:1 and Luke 6:17. These were two different events, or the Lord came down to a level spot. History and science are not contradictory, but merely limited in their knowledge of one another and/or the Word of God. Inadequate knowledge is that which separates.

It is said that there are some problems in miracles and prophecy. If God's omnipotence is accepted, then miracles should not be a problem. If God's sovereignty and omniscience are accepted, there should not be a problem with prophecy. God has complete thoughts, man does not.

Some people have problems in the New Testament writers' use of the Old Testament. The problem was in translation from Hebrew to Greek, to English. There is no possibility for word for word translation in all passages.

Some have had problems with the New Testament writers' use of non-Biblical sources. For instance, some writers quoted from the apocrypha (the time between the Old Testament and the New Testament) or false pseudepigraphal books (never accepted as the canon for the New Testament). All truth is God's truth. Just because it is not of the canon does not prove it is not truth. For instance, in Jude 9 there is material related to the assumption of Moses. Jude quoted this book, as it does contain some, but not all, truth. Also, in Jude 14 (I Enoch 1:9) Jude quoted Enoch which is a non-inspired writing.

Some people see problems in New Testament writers' quoting passage of Scripture of questionable authority in content. An example of this is I Corinthians 3:19 (Job 5:13). The answer is that man's wisdom may not have used God's eternal principles. It may have been man's incomplete thoughts.

Problems seem to also arise in morality and religious practices. For example, Sarah gave her handmaiden to her husband. This was not God's choice, but it was acceptable in that culture. The Nuzi tablets give evidence that in the culture of the day handmaiden's had children for the household. Cultural practices recorded were not necessarily according to God's desire. Doubtful man has made many attempts through his own intellect to discredit the authenticity and accuracy of the Bible. He has tried to tamper with the method of God's inspiration through yielded man, by explaining it away. The truth is that God breathed, that is, He inspired every Word of Scripture exactly and perfectly by His Spirit. That revelation and illumination by his Spirit in the reader and to the hearer would accomplish that for which it was sent. The Bible's finality and authenticity proves itself by accurately manifesting itself, day by day, as the truth, the Will and the Testament of the

living God.

6. Inerrancy

The fact is that it is impossible to prove any error in the inspiration of God in providing the Bible. The Scriptures are therefore inerrant, that is, the original writings are without error. The quality of God's inspiration is perfect as He is perfect and His Word given is free from any flaw and constitutes the truth (Jn.17:17).

a. Proof of inerrancy:

The Scripture proves its purity by having the power to override whatever would oppose it. The authority within the Word of God, of God's own doctrines is evident in the passage of time.

b. Extent of inerrancy:

God's Word accurately extends its authority upon all human activity, upon the life of all men. All men are subject to the will of God through the authority established in Scripture. Scripture without error is binding upon man's mind, conscience, will, and heart. The Bible is the infallible Word of the Living God, free from error and absolutely trustworthy (Ps.119:89; Mt.24:35).

7. Authority:

Authority is the ruling power to which all things submit ultimately. Authority is the power which we are to be submitted to. It is the love and rule of God which desires submission toward God's authority. It impacts life and determines its inerrancy therein and thereon.

a. The Bible claims special power (He.4:12).

The Bible claims dividing power as a sword. The Bible will separate man from sin (Ps.119:11) or sin will separate man from the God of the Bible (Is.59:2). The Bible claims reflecting power as a mirror (Ja.1:22-25). In the Bible, we see ourselves as God saw us, as sinners (Ro.3:23), and as God sees us as Believers. The Bible claims cleansing power as water (Ep.5:26). David prayed that God would "wash him from iniquity" and "cleanse him from sin" (Ps.51:2). The Bible claims reproductive power as seed (1Pe.1:18-23). We are children of God because we have been born into the family of God by

the incorruptible seed of God. This is the new birth (Jn.3:1-7).

The Bible claims nourishing power as food (IPe.2:2). The Bible is spiritual food for the soul. No Christian can remain strong in the Lord and not study the Word of God.

b. The Bible commands the Believer to study the Scripture (ITi.2:15).

As you study the Bible, you will discover that it does not just contain the Word of God, it is the Word of God. You must also keep in mind that the Word of God contains the Words of God, as well as the words of Satan, demons, angels, and man—both good and bad. God is truth and cannot lie. Satan "is a liar and the father of it" (Jn.8:44). Man is natural and is therefore limited, and does not always speak the truth (Mt.22:15-46). In this portion of Scripture, we have the Words of Jesus, of the Pharisees, of the Herodians and of the Sadducees. The Pharisees, Herodians, and Sadducees were trying to entangle Jesus in His teachings, that they might accuse Him of breaking God's Law. Their words were spoken with evil intent, revealing the thinking of the natural man, along with the Words of God that came from the lips of Jesus. As we study the Bible, we should ask ourselves these questions:

- 1) Who is speaking: God, demon, angel or man?
- 2) To whom is He speaking: to the nation Israel, to the Gentiles, to the Church, to man in general or to some individual man or being?
- 3) How can this Scripture be applied to my own life to make me a better Christian?

8. Canonicity of the Scriptures:

a. Definition of canonicity:

Canon (Greek word "*kanon*") is a measuring rod or reed. It signifies a standard, or rule and belief in Christ. The canon of the Bible consists of the books considered worthy to be included in the Scriptures and those inspired by God. The canon books exercise Divine authority in Christian life. Fruit was produced from reading these books.

b. Proof of canonicity:

- 1) The Old Testament Books:
 - a) It is possible that all of the books of the Old Testament canon were collected and recognized by Ezra (during the 5th century B.C.).
 - b) Christ used the same Old Testament books as we do, and He recognized them as canonical (Mt.4:4, 7, 10; 5; 18; Lk.24:44; Jn.10:35; 17:17; De.8:3).
 - c) Peter and Paul used the same Old Testament as we do, and they recognized them as canonical (Ac.24:14; IITi.3:16; IIPe.1:21).
 - d) The Synod of Jamnia (A.D. 90), which was a teaching house of rabbis, recognized the Books of Ecclesiastes and Song of Solomon as canonical.
 - e) The Jews never did regard the Apocryphal Books as canonical, since they were never included in the Jewish canon of the Old Testament books. Additional reasons why the Evangelical Christians have not accepted the Apocryphal Books (Apocryphal Books consist of fourteen books that are not considered as Canon of Scripture):
 - They were never part of the Old Testament Hebrew Torah.
 - Reformers rejected the Apocrypha due to inconsistency with Protestant doctrines. Prayers for the dead, and intercession for the Saints, for example, were not considered the Inspired Word.
 - They were not referred to in the New Testament writings.
- 2) The New Testament Books: There were principles for determining the canon of New Testament Books:
 - a) Apostolicity, was it written by an apostle or closely associated with one?
 - b) Spiritual content, was it being used by the Church for edification?
 - c) Doctrinal soundness, did it contain any heresy or disagreement with other canon books?

- d) Usage, was it quoted by the Church fathers, such as John, Paul, Peter?
 - e) Divine inspiration, this was the ultimate test. Did it give evidence of divine inspiration? Did God work through it? All other tests gave way to this one. If a Scripture failed this one, it was never considered canon.
- 3) Formation of the canon of New Testament Books.
- a) The writing and formation was in the period or lifetime of the apostles.
 - b) Authority claimed was that the apostles wrote it under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.
 - c) They were widely used, they blessed the church.
 - d) During the post-apostolic period, after many of the apostles were dead.
 - The council of Carthage in A.D. 397- The 3rd council of Carthage was when the Western Church settled on the final form of the New Testament. No one ever questioned the canon again.
- 4) Observations about canonicity:
- a) The Scriptures were canonical and recognized as such the moment that they were written. We can only trace the history of the recognition of them as canonical.
 - b) Evangelical Christians use different standards than the Roman Catholic Church in determining the canonical books. The Evangelical Christian approach was to use the five (5) principles previously listed. The Roman Catholic approach was to accept as canon the books as they were written. Any book held in high esteem by one or more of the Church fathers, such as the Apocrypha, was accepted by all.
9. Facts about the Bible:
- a. Subjects:
- The subjects of the Bible are God, man, sin, redemption, justification, sanctification. It can be defined in two words, the Grace and the Glory

of God. It can also be defined in one person, Jesus.

b. Christ's quotes:

Christ quoted from twenty-two (22) Old Testament books. Matthew quotes the Old Testament nineteen (19) times, Mark fifteen (15) times, Luke twenty-five (25) times, and John eleven (11) times.

c. Chapters:

There are 1,189 chapters in the Protestant New Testament.

d. Verses:

There are 31,373 verses in the Protestant Bible. The median verse says "Praise the Lord."

e. Words:

There are 775,693 words in the King James Version. The median word is "Yah" meaning Jehovah God.

f. Longest chapter:

The longest chapter is Psalms 119.

g. Shortest chapter:

The shortest chapter is also in Psalms, Psalms 117.

h. The longest book in the Old Testament is the Psalms.

i. The longest book in the New Testament is Luke.

10. The illumination and animation of the Scriptures:

a. Illumination:

The definition of illumination is the work of the Holy Spirit whereby the human mind is enabled to understand Divinely revealed truth given in spoken or written form (Ro.1:21), which is the opposite of illumination (Ep.4:17-19; Co.1:26). It can come through preaching, a prophet, or the Word. Illumination is revelation insight. There is no way to

understand the Word with our mind alone. Illumination is the way we understand God's Word.

- 1) The relation of illumination:
 - a) To the unsaved because sin darkens understanding. The unsaved can understand (Ro.1:20).
 - b) To the saved, the Holy Spirit enlightens the mind of the Believer to understand the Scriptures and give life (ICo.2:15-16; Jn.2:20-27).

b. Animation

- 1) The definition of animation is that it has life, that is, when God says it. Animation is the living, durable quality which inherently lives in the Scriptures, especially as the Holy Spirit uses it to accomplish the divine purpose (c.f. Ep.6:17; Is.55:11). The Scripture has its own power to succeed.
- 2) The proof of animation (Jn.6:63; He.4:12; IPe.1:23). The Word has power, but God is the authority in the Word. The power comes from the authority above it.
- 3) The results of animation is that the Scriptures effectively work (energize) in human lives.
 - a) The Word is precise and sharp as a two-edged sword (He.4:12).
 - b) The Word will work and be effective when received (Ith.2:13).
 - c) The Scriptures communicate a saving and life giving message.
 - d) The value of the Word is for correction, reproof, doctrine, instruction (ITi.3:15-17).
 - e) The Word is Spirit and Life (Jn.6:63).
 - f) The Word brings the new birth to Believer (Ipe.1:23).
 - g) The Word cleanses (Jn.15:3).
 - h) The Scriptures discern (or judge) the inner life of man (He.4:12). The Word is a sword. The Word plus the Spirit illuminates and builds us up (Jude 20). It reprograms the mind.

11. The divisions of the Scriptures are as follows:

a. The literary divisions:

1) The Old Testament (thirty-nine books)

a) The Pentateuch (Law of Moses or Torah).

Genesis	Numbers
Exodus	Deuteronomy
Leviticus	

b) The Books of History

Joshua	II Kings
Judges	I Chronicles
Ruth	II Chronicles
I Samuel	Ezra
II Samuel	Nehemiah
I Kings	Esther

c) The Books of Poetry

Job	Ecclesiastes
Psalms	Song of Solomon
Proverbs	

b. The Jews divided the Old Testament canon as follows:

1) Kethuvim - Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah, I and II Chronicles

2) Megilloth - Song of Solomon, Ruth, Lamentations, Esther, Ecclesiastes.

3) Nevuiim - Prophets, Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, the Twelve (Minor Prophets).

4) The Books of Prophecy (major 5 and minor 12)

a) Major Prophets:

Isaiah	Ezekiel
Jeremiah	Daniel
Lamentations	

b) Minor Prophets:

Hosea	Nahum
Joel	Habakkuk

Amos	Zephaniah
Obadiah	Haggai
Jonah	Zechariah
Micah	Malachi

c. The New Testament (twenty-seven books (27):

1) Gospels, four (4):
Matthew Luke
Mark John

2) Historical Books (1):
Acts of the Apostles

3) Epistles twenty-one (21), in two (2) divisions:

a) Paul's Epistles:
To Churches: Pastoral:
Romans I Timothy
I Corinthians II Timothy
II Corinthians Titus
Galatians Philemon
Ephesians Philippians
Colossians I Thessalonians
II Thessalonians

b) General Epistles:
Hebrews I John
James II John
I Peter III John
II Peter Jude

c) Prophecy:
Revelation

d. The temporal divisions (divisions by time of writing):

1) Old Testament: Moses began writing about 2,000 B.C., probably in the sign language of the Egyptians. Daniel was written in 600 B.C. Ezra in 400 B.C., put the Old Testament together. The Old Testament was originally written in Hebrew and Aramaic.

- 2) New Testament: Earliest was Matthew in 40 A.D., 12 years after Christ's death. All the books of the New Testament were finished by 90 to 99 A.D. The New Testament was written primarily in Greek (*Koinia*, or common).

II. THE NATURE OF GOD (I JOHN 4:8)

There are four definitions of God in the Bible. Since God cannot be totally and accurately defined, our understanding is incomplete. However, they do throw much light upon the nature of God. These definitions are:

- * God is love (I Jn.4:8).

This is the nature of God in His Divine compassion.

- * God is light (I Jn.1:5).

This is the nature of God in His divine character; In Him there is no darkness.

- * God is a consuming fire (He.12:29).

This is the nature of God in His Divine holiness.

- * God is a Spirit (Jn.4:24).

This is the nature of God in His Divine essence.

God is everywhere present, but is not in everything. If God were in everything, man could worship any object and he would be worshiping God. God is a spirit being. The grace of God is nothing less than the unlimited love of God expressed in the gifts of His Son, our Savior. It is the undeserved love of God toward sinners.

A. Essence of God (God's substance)

The Bible reveals God as the only infinite and eternal being, having no beginning and no ending. He is creator and sustainer of all things. He is the Supreme Personal Intelligence and righteous ruler of His universe. He is life and therefore, the only source of life (Jn.5:26).

Man is natural and cannot know God by wisdom alone. "Can'st thou by searching find out God" (Job 11:7)? In the Old Testament He revealed Himself to and through

His prophets? In the New Testament, He reveals Himself through His Son, Jesus Christ (He.1:1-3).

The terms essence and substance are practically synonymous when used of God. They may be defined as that which underlies all outward manifestation; the reality itself (whether material or immaterial), the substratum of everything; that in which the qualities or attributes stick together. Both of these terms refer to the basic aspect of the nature of God. If there were no essence or substance, there could be no attributes. To speak of God is to speak of an essence or a substance, not of a mere idea or the personification of an idea.

Since there is a difference between the essence and the attributes of God, we are faced with the question of how to distinguish between them. We recognize that perhaps some of the so-called attributes are, strictly speaking, not attributes at all, but different aspects of the Divine substance. Spiritually, self-existence, immensity, and eternity are such.

1. Existence of God (He.11:6)

The Bible nowhere attempts to prove or argue the existence of God. "For he that cometh to God must believe that He is...." (He.11:6). The existence of God was a fact known by the writers of both the Old Testament and the New Testament. "In the beginning, God..." (Ge.1:1). The Bible opens by announcing the sublime fact of God and His existence. There are arguments for the existence of God. However, they are not conclusive but are food for thought. The existence of God is known in the heart of man.

a. Universal belief:

Universal belief in God comes from within man. It is innate in man, and comes from rational intuition.

b. The argument from "cause and effect":

Everything that began owes its' existence to a cause. We have a watch; we must have a watchmaker. We have a building; we must have a builder. We have a creation; we must have a creator. This creation could not have come into existence without an intelligent personal creator any more than the alphabet could produce a book without an author.

c. The argument from anthropology:

Man's moral and intellectual nature agrees with the existence of a moral and intellectual creator.

d. The Bible and the Christ:

The Bible reveals a Christ (the Anointed One and His anointing). It reveals His virgin birth, His sinless life, His vicarious death and His bodily resurrection. This and much more argue for the existence of God.

2. The self-existence of God:

God exists, not by effort or intention, but simply because it is His nature to be (Jn.5:26). The "I AM" (Ex.3:14), who revealed Himself as a personal being, revealed Himself also as a self-existent being. There is some evidence that the name "Jehovah" is a form of the verb "to be." To reveal God as Jehovah is to depict Him as the One "Who causes all things (including Himself), to be."

This is the possible meaning of God's words to Moses: "I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of God Almighty, but by the name Jehovah was I not known to them" (Ex.6:3). In being the living and true God (1Th.1:9), He is the embodiment of the absolute life principle and He is constituted as what He must be if He is to be God.

Scholars speak of the desire of God to identify this quality of self-existence. The term implies that all of the resources of God's existence lie within Himself. It has been defined as equivalent to the expression "in-himself-ness." God exists independently and is free from dependence upon anything outside of Himself. Orthodoxy emphasizes that the self-existence of God is grounded in His nature rather than in His will. Thus, there is objection to the statement of Jerome (340-420 A.D.): "God is the origin of Himself and the cause of His own substance." It would be argued that the Divine self-existence knows absolutely no cause whatsoever, including the will of God as its cause. God is first cause, Himself uncaused, and in this He is different from all other beings.

3. God's personality (1Th.1:9)

a. The Bible reveals God as a personality.

He is called the Living and the True God, one possessing self-

consciousness and self-determination. His personality is shown in what He does, such as:

- 1) God loves (Jn.3:16)
- 2) God hates (Pr.6:16)
- 3) God cares (1pe.5:7)
- 4) God grieves (Ge.6:6)

Only a personality can love, hate, care and grieve; therefore, God must be a living, eternal, personal being.

Because God is Spirit, He is a living God. In being alive, He contrasts with false gods who have no life (Je.10:10; 1Th.1:9; Jn.5:26). Jesus spoke of the living Father (Jn.6:57), who had sent Him. The Believer has been placed in the Church of the living God (1Ti.3:15), and it is the living God that he places his trust in, (1Ti.4:10). According to one account, there are 15 references in each Testament that identify Jehovah as the living God. It is as God (who is Spirit that is alive), that He operates in the realm of the spiritual, the mental, the physical, and the moral.

To be alive is the fundamental mode in which the spirit exists. For spirit to be a spirit, it must possess the power of thought, emotion, self-direction, communication, and that which must be equivalent to action and movement. Spirit is the opposite of death, just as light is the opposite of darkness. Because God is Spirit and as Spirit is necessarily alive, He relates to all other living things. He is the energizing and ordering force that created all. In Christ Jesus, He sustains the universe of living things (Ge.1:27; Ps.3:5; Co.1:16-17).

As living Spirit, God is alive in Himself, not in the derived sense of the creatures of creation (Ac.17:24-25; Ac.14:15). Comments one man of God: "As the living One, Jehovah is contrasted with the gods of the heathen, which can reveal nothing, perform nothing, grant no requests, and send no help."

He is a personal God. In being Spirit, God is that which thinks, feels, wills, and is self-conscious. He is that which in basic essence is personal. In revealing Himself to Moses as "I AM that I AM" (Ex.3:14), He established Himself as a self-conscious, self-determinate, personal being. He relates to the affairs of man on a personal basis (Ps.75:6-7). God manifests intellect (Is.1:18), will (Ro.12:2), and emotion (1Jn.4:8; De.6:15).

The mode in which spirit exists is that of personal being. To know that God is Spirit is to recognize that He is personal. So much of man's relationship to God depends upon this acknowledgment. Only a personal God could be the Believer's heavenly Father. Another theologian writes: "Every valuable thing in religion is based on the conception of God as personal. Repentance, faith, prayer, and confession of sin all point to God as personal. Personal beings are able to relate to a personal God just as living beings relate to a living God. The underlying basis of both aspects of the Divine Being is His essential Spirituality. Nevertheless, the Believer considers his God to be unique and exalted above all other personal beings."

It should be noted that although God is personal, He is not a person in the sense that an individual human is a person. God has much in common with other persons, but He is so much more than a version of exalted human self-consciousness. He rebuked the backslidden Israelites who reduced him to the level of natural man (Ps.50:21). Another theologian speaks of those who so strive to make God human that they see him as "a bearded sage sitting on a golden throne." The word personalism (or the personalist school of thought), identifies an excessively anthropomorphic emphasis in theology (attributing human characteristics or shapes to God), including the approach that makes God's personality the basis of all other Divine attributes.

4. The Spirituality of God

Jesus said: "God is a Spirit" (Jn.4:24), or literally: "God is Spirit." This statement infers that the essential mode of the Divine being is as spirit. Spirit does not modify or qualify that which God is; the term specifically identifies the essence of His being. God is essentially different matter so that He is uncompounded and without parts, and He is not to be located in a physical place. Traditionally, it has been noted that what is true of matter is false of spirit. Because God is Spirit, access to knowledge of God is through the human spirit rather than through the physical senses or through the human mind. Further, because God is Spirit, particular conclusions are derived:

a. God is immaterial and incorporeal:

Because He is the Spirit, God does not exist in a physical body (Ac.17:24-25). Jesus taught: "A Spirit hath not flesh and bones..." (Lk.24:39). The basic being of God is neither physical, material, nor in a body. The Church has long confessed that "There is but one Living and True God, everlasting, without body, parts, or passions." The

second commandment's prohibition against making images of Deity is based upon the fact of the incorporeality of God, and so is the frequent Old Testament denunciation of idolatry.

Scholars might wish that there were more pointed and definite Scriptures that make clear that God is without a body. However, it is a case of comparing Scripture with Scripture. Doctrinally, God is set forth as Spirit. Every inference and intimation is that as Spirit, God does not possess a tangible body. Scriptures credit God with functioning in the manner of being with a body. The correct response for the scholar is to distinguish the doctrinal presentation of God from the personal and practical presentation. The Divine essence needs and possesses no body, but the God of providential concern for mankind surely functions as if He had a body.

There are numerous Scriptural reports of the tangible appearance of the Divine Being. God walked with Adam in the cool of the day (Ge.3:8). Abram enjoyed visitations of the Divine, and so did the other patriarchs. God appeared as the phenomenon of fire in the burning bush (Ex.3:14), and in the pillar of cloud and fire (Ex.13:21). His appearance during the era of the judges was startling (Jg.12:22). Isaiah reported, "In the year that King Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and His train filled the temple" (Is.6:1). Moses and the elders "saw the God of Israel..." (Ex.24:10).

In addition to the Scriptural theophanies (pre-New Testament appearances of God to man), there are also the anthropomorphic expressions. The relationship and functions of God are described under the figure of the members and functions of a human (De.33:27; 2Ch.16:9; Is.59:1). There are also references to God's coming and going (Ge.11:5).

The theologian answers that the theophanous or tangible appearances of deity were indeed events or phenomena that occurred, but what was experienced by human spectators was not the essential being or person of God. Or, they say, if it was God, it was God the second person in a reincarnate appearance. It is certainly within God's power and His prerogatives to appear in any form that He chooses. But a distinction must be made between God's basic essence and existence, and those things that He chooses to do for the sake of mankind. The anthropomorphic expressions are said to be not so much theological as psychological; that is, they are not meant to impart information about the mode of the Divine Being, but

they teach us the nature of His relationship with humans. God thus copes with the human difficulty to think abstractly, and He limits Himself to the vocabulary of conventional human experience. An ancient theologian wrote, "God condescends to us, in order that we may rise to Him."

b. God is invisible.

In contrast with the theophanous and the anthropomorphic expressions, Scripture is quite emphatic in establishing that God, in His essential being, does not have a visible body (Co.1:15; Ro.1:20; Jn.1:18; De.4:15; ITi.1:17; ITi.6:15-16). It is clear that Scripture means to portray that, by all the criteria of tangible visibility, God cannot be seen by man. Thus, since He is essentially Spirit, He is invisible.

The fact that God is physically invisible does not preclude that man cannot enjoy a spiritual apprehension of God. Devout Believers of all ages have enjoyed moving and graphic visions that most certainly communicated God to them. Daniel described Him as the Ancient of Days, "...whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of His head like pure wool: His throne was like the fiery flame and His wheels as burning fire" (Da.7:9). John reported, "Behold, a throne was set in heaven, and One sat on the throne. And He that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone: and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald" (Re.4:2-3).

Man can enjoy a beatific vision of God, and he can perceive that which is symbolic or pictorial in representing God. Scripture describes Moses in the protected refuge in the rock, "And I will take away mine hand, and thou shalt see my back parts: but my face shall not be seen" (Ex.33:23). An alternate rendering of "back parts" is "after glow." Moses is said to have enjoyed a vision of a manifestation, but not a vision of God in His essential person. The Scriptural description of the occasion when Moses and the elders "saw the God of Israel" (Ex.24:10), twice uses the expression: "as it were." Beatific (having the power of making happy or blessed) visions of God are very real to the one experiencing them, but they do not involve the literal functioning of the human sense of physically seeing. Someone has said: "Just as man may, on occasion, see a reflection of himself and so say that he saw himself, yet in another sense, no man ever sees himself, so no man sees more than a reflection of God."

c. God is a person.

The essence of personality is self-consciousness and self-determination (Ex.3:14; Is.45:5; ICo.2:10; Job.23:13; Ro.9:11; Ep.1:9; He.6:17).

d. God's psychological personality includes:

- 1) Intellect (Ge.18:19; Ex.3:7; Ac.15:18).
- 2) Sensibility (Ge.6:6; Ps.103:8; Jn.3:16).
- 3) Volition (Ge.3:15; Ps.115:3; Jn.6:38).

e. God's relational personality includes:

- 1) Speaking (Ge.1:3)
- 2) Seeing (Ge.11:5)
- 3) Hearing (Ps.94:9)
- 4) Grieving (Ge.6:6)
- 5) Repenting (Ge.6:6)
- 6) Anger (De.1:37)
- 7) Jealousy (Ex.20:5)
- 8) Compassion (Ps.111:4)

f. God as Creator:

God is the upholder, ruler, and sustainer (Ac.14:15; Ne.9:6; Ps.75:7; Da.4:32; Ps.104:27-30; Mt.6:26-30).

5. The Immensity of God

God is infinite in relation to space. He is not limited or circumscribed by space; on the contrary, all finite space is dependent upon Him. He is, in fact, above space. Scripture clearly teaches God's immensity (IKi.8:27; 2Ch.2:6; Ps.113:4-6; 139:7; Is.66:1; Je.23:24; Ac.17:24-28). Due to the spirituality of

His nature and our inability to think in spaceless terms, this is a difficult doctrine to apprehend. However, this much is clear; God is both imminent (present throughout the universe), and transcendent. He is everywhere present in essence as well as in knowledge and power. Whenever and wherever it is present, spiritual substance, like the soul, is a complete whole at every point.

6. The Eternity of God

God is also infinite in relation to time. He is without beginning or end, He is free from all succession of time; He is the cause of time. That He is without beginning or end may be inferred from the doctrine of His self-existence; He who exists by reason of His nature rather than His volition, must always have existed and must continue to exist forever. That God is eternal is abundantly taught in Scripture. He is called "...the everlasting God" (Ge.21:33). The Psalmist said, "...from everlasting to everlasting, Thou art God" (Ps.90:2) and, "...Thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end" (Ps.102:27). Isaiah represents God as "the high and exalted One Who lives forever" (Is.57:15). Paul says that God "Who only hath immortality..." (1Ti.6:16; He.1:12)

Time is, as commonly understood, duration measured by succession, but God is free from all succession of time. God, writes one theologian, "has a simultaneous possession of His total duration...the whole of the Divine knowledge and experience is ever before the Divine being, so that there are not parts succeeding parts." Eternity for God is now, one eternal present. He possesses the whole of His existence in one indivisible present. In Scripture this is referred to as "the day of eternity" (2Pe.3:18), and "today" (Ps.2:7; 2Pe.3:8). But one must not suppose that time has no objective reality for God. Rather, He sees the past and the future as vividly as He sees the present. A person may view a procession from the top of a high tower, where he can see the whole procession at one glance, or he may view it from the street corner, where only one part can be seen at a time. God sees the whole as one unit, although He is aware of the sequence in the procession.

God is also the cause of time (He.1:2; 11:3). The reference to God in Isaiah 9:6 may be translated "Father of eternity." Both time and space are among "All things were made by Him" (Jn.1:3). Strong says:

"Yet time and space are not substances; neither are they attributes (quality of substance); they are rather relations of finite existence... With finite existence they come into being; they are not mere regulative conceptions of our minds; they exist objectively, whether we

perceive them or not."

Time will someday merge into eternity (1Co.15:28). One theologian thinks, however, that for the creature, eternity will not be succession-less existence, for every finite mind must think, feel, and act in time.

B. The Attributes of God

1. God's Non moral attributes (God's steadfast perfection):

a. Omnipresent:

Omnipresence means all present or present everywhere at once throughout the universe (1Kg.8:27; Ps.139:7-10; Is.66:1; Ac.7:48; Ro.10:6-8). God is transcendent and not subject to the universe. Omnipresence is comforting and subduing to the Believer. Further, no matter how much he may try, the sinner cannot escape the presence of God (Ps.139:7-10; He.4:13).

b. Omniscience:

God is infinite in knowledge. He knows Himself and all other things from eternity, whether they be actual, or only possible; whether they be past, present, or future. He knows things immediately, simultaneously, exhaustively, and truly (Is.46:10; Ps.147:5; He.4:13; Mt.10:30). The Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit know each other perfectly (Mt.11:27; 1Co.2:11; Ro.8:29). He knows things existing (Ps.147:4; Mt.20:29); in creation, men and all their works (Ps.33:13-15; Pr.5:21), thoughts and hearts (Ps.139:1-4; Pr.15:3), burdens and wants (Ex.3:7; Mt.6:8-32). God knows all things possible (1Sa.23:11; Mt.11:21). God knows the future. He foreknew all things in time (Is.46:9; Da.2:7; Mt.24:25; Ac.15:18). Free actions do not take place because they are foreseen, but they are foreseen because they will take place.

Though God sincerely seeks to promote the happiness of His creatures and to perfect the saints in holiness, neither of these is the highest possible end. The end is His own glory. All of God's works in creation and preservation, of providence and redemption, have the glorification of God as purpose (Ps.19:1-6; Pr.3:19; Neh.9:6; Re.4:11; Ps.33:10; Da.4:35; Ep.1:11; 1Co.2:7; Ep.3:10).

c. Omnipotence:

God is all powerful and able to do whatever He wills. His will is limited only by His nature. The only things God cannot do are those things contrary to or against His nature. For instance, God cannot:

- 1) Look with favor on iniquity (He.1:13).
- 2) Deny Himself (II Ti.2:13).
- 3) Lie (Ti.1:2; He.6:18).
- 4) Tempt man to sin (Ja.1:13).
- 5) Do anything that is absurd or self-contradictory, such as to make a material spirit or a square circle or a right wrong. God cannot contradict His own spiritual laws.

God's omnipotence does not demand that all His power be exercised. He has power over His own power. God is free to exercise His power or not to. His omnipotence includes the power of self-limitation. God chooses to limit His power by giving a free will or choice to His rational creature. No one is saved by force, but by invitation. In God all things are possible (Job.42:2; Mt.19:26; Lk.1:37; Mk.9:23; Mk.10:27), and nothing is too difficult for Him (Je.32:17). He indeed reigns in omnipotence (Re.19:6). God's absolute power works directly without a secondary cause or function. Creation, miracles, immediate revelation, inspiration and regeneration are manifestations of God's absolute power. Works of providence are illustrations of ordinate power.

God urges the Believer to trust in His creative, preserving and providential power (Is.45:11-13; 46:4; Je.32:16-44; Ac.4:24-31). Omnipotence is a source of comfort and hope to the Believer, but to the unbeliever it is ever a warning and source of fear (I Pe.4:17; II Pe.3:10; Re.19:15). Demons shudder for fear of God (Ja.2:19; Mt.8:29). A day is coming when every knee will bow at the name of Jesus (Php.2:10).

d. Immutability:

God is absolutely unchangeable in His perfection, in His essence,

attributes, consciousness, and will. Change is for better or worse, but God is absolute perfection; therefore, He cannot change into better, nor will He change for worse. Changing for better insinuates imperfection, which He is not. He is exalted above all possibility of change. He is already the most Holy, most Wise, most Merciful, and the Highest Truth. His plan does not propose change in Himself. God is One and He does not change. Any change in God's attributes would make Him less than God, less wise, less holy, less God. In God there is no variation (Ja.1:17). He does not change (Ps.102:26; Mal.3:6; He.1:12; Ro.4:20; Ps.33:11; Is.46:10; IKg.8:56; IICo.1:20; Ps.103:17; Ge.18:25; Is.28:17). God is active and enters into relationship with changing men. In these relationships it is necessary for an unchangeable God to change in His dealings with changing men in order to remain unchangeable in His character and purposes. God's immutability consists in His always doing right.

e. Eternal:

In the beginning, God already was. He was and is and evermore shall be God. God is infinite. He is the Alpha and Omega (first and last letter in the Greek alphabet). He is eternally before and eternally after all existence (IJn.1:1-2; Re.1:8).

f. Wisdom:

As a Divine attribute, wisdom is that which leads God to order all things for the achievement of His purposes, and the final ultimate good of believing mankind. On occasion, God's wisdom is simply a fact to be noted in Scripture (Job.36:5; Job.12:13). Frequently, however, the fact of God's wisdom is related to an invitation to worship Him (Ro.16:27; ITi.1:17; Da.2:20; Ro.11:33). God's wisdom is not a mere acquired characteristic, but an essential attribute of His Divine essence.

God's achievements are wrought in the light of His wisdom (Pr.3:19). Typically, the Old Testament illustrates God's wisdom in created nature; the New Testament illustrates His wisdom in the provision of salvation through Jesus Christ (Ro.11:38; Ep.1:7-8). God always manifests His wisdom according to His moral perspectives, for He acts always to choose the best goals only. A theologian has observed, "God's wisdom is not, and never was, pledged to keep a fallen world happy, or to make ungodliness comfortable." Another theologian once said, "The wisdom of God appears in the co-

operation of infinite knowledge and love." It is a striking characteristic of Divine wisdom that in some way God is able to achieve the good of the whole, without sacrificing the well-being of the individual. God deals with humanity, and yet He patiently and personally deals with each individual human. One of the ultimate objectives of God's wisdom is mankind's glorification (Ico.2:7).

2. God's moral attributes (God's marvelous being and doing):

a. Holiness:

God is absolutely separate from and exalted above all of His creatures. He is equally separate from all moral evil and sin. Holiness denotes the perfection of God in all that He is and in all of His existence. Holiness is determined separation from all aspects of sinfulness (Hab.1:13; Pr.15:9). Holiness is a manifestation of purity, of being before purity, of willing or doing. God's will is the expression of His nature, which is holy. Holiness occupies the foremost rank among the attributes of God. It was especially taught by God in the Old Testament (Le.11:44f; Jos.24:19; ISa.6:20; Is.22:3; 40:25; Ex.19:12-25; 26:33). The New Testament emphasizes God's holiness (Jn.17:11; He.12:10; IPe.1:15; Re.4:8; 15:4).

Holiness is the regulative principle of love, power, and God's Will and it establishes God's throne. Because of God's holiness:

- 1) There is a chasm between God and the sinner (Is.59:1f; Hab.1:13).
- 2) Man must approach God through the merit of a mediator (Ro.5:6-8; Ep.2:1-9; Ipe.3:18).
- 3) Requires an approach with reverence and awe (He.12:28), and a proper view of our sinful self (Ps.66:18; IJn.1:5-7; Job.40:3-5; Is.6:5-8).

b. Righteousness and justice

These are God's treatment by His holiness to His creature (IICh.12:6; Ezra.9:15; Ne.9:33; Da.9:14; Jn.17:25; IITi.4:8). Righteousness and justice are the foundation of His throne (Ps.89:14; 97:2). God's justice is remunerative, exchanges an eternal value and is based on love and not merit. God cannot make a law, establish a penalty, and then

break His Word when the laws are disobeyed. Justice demands punishment but accepts the vicarious sacrifice of Christ (Is.53:6; Mk.10:45; Ro.5:8; Ps.129:1f; IJn.1:9; Re.16:5-7). The chief purpose of punishment is the maintenance of justice (He.6:10; ITi.5:20). Righteousness is an encouragement to the Believer in knowing God judges righteously (Ac.17:31; Jn.17:24; ICo.1:30; IICo.5:21; Pr.19:17; He.6:10; Re.19:8). God delights in exercising righteousness and justice (Je.9:24; Ps.97:2).

c. Goodness:

The goodness of God includes all the qualities in the concept of an ideal and perfect personage. It includes God's holiness, righteousness, truth, love, benevolence, mercy and grace. None is good except God alone (Mk.10:18). Man, through Jesus Christ, can receive into his heart the manifestation of God's moral nature, to become a representation of God's nature. Only God is good and He is the source of all good that is manifested in man. Man cannot be the source of goodness because he isn't God. We see God's goodness in:

- 1) The love of God: God's love is that perfection of the Divine nature by which God is eternally moved to communicate Himself. It is voluntary affection, grounded in truth and holiness, and it is exercised by free choice. True love necessarily involves feeling as a part of the expression. God grieves over sin and therefore, also, loves His people (Is.63:9f; Ep.4:30). God's love is *a'gape*, different from all forms of human love (Ro.8:38-39).
- 2) The benevolence of God: This benevolence causes Him to deal bountifully, tenderly, and kindly with all His creatures. The benevolence of God is manifested in His concern for the welfare of the creature and is suited to the creature's needs and capacities (Job.38:41; Ps.104:21; 145:15; Mt.6:26). His benevolence is not restricted to Believers, (Mt.5:45; Ac.14:17).
- 3) The mercy of God: God's mercy is His goodness shown toward those who are in misery or distress. Mercy is a gift. Compassion, pity, and loving-kindness are facets of God's mercy. It is a necessary quality in God as an all-perfect being, but the exercise of it, in given cases, is

optional. To deny the freeness of mercy is to annihilate it; if it is a matter of debt, then it is no longer mercy. There is no obligation in it. God is "rich in mercy" (Ep.2:4), and "...is full of compassion and is merciful" (Ja.5:11), and is great in mercy (IPe.1:3). Mercy is God withholding discipline that is deserved by man (Ga.6:16; ITi.1:2; IITi.1:2; IIJn.3; Jude 2). Mercy respects man in his misery and pitiful state. Mercy for man has been made freely available and it endures forever (Ps.13:5; 100:5).

- 4) The grace of God: The grace of God is His goodness manifested toward the undeserving. Grace respects man in his guilt (Ep.1:6; 2:7; 1:7; IPe.4:10; 5:12). To God, grace is also optional (like mercy). He may or may not show grace to a guilty sinner. The key is man's receptivity, his willingness to repent, which causes God's grace to flow into man's life. The grace of God is manifested toward the natural man in His forbearance and longsuffering delay of the punishment of sin (IPe.3:20; IIPe.3:9-15; He.6:7; IJn.2:2; Hos.8:12; Jn.16:8-11; Mt.5:13). Without God's grace, mankind would no longer exist and Scripture would be of no value. Grace is God's guarantee that He will fulfill all His plan and promises to His saints.

d. Truth (God is truth)

His knowledge, declarations, and representations eternally conform to reality. The truth of God is not only the foundation of all religion, but also, of all knowledge. Truth is immutable and indestructible. Ultimate truth or reality is God. God shares a portion of His truth with man in His revelations of Himself in nature, consciousness, and Scripture which are true and trustworthy (Ps.31:5; He.6:17). God's faithfulness leads Him to fulfill all His promises. His truth, whether expressed in words or implied in the Word of God, are given to us (De.7:9; Is.25:1; IITi.2:13; He.11:11; ICo.1:9; 10:13; ITh.5:24; IITh.3:3; Jos.21:45). God's truth has been, is, and evermore shall be, perfectly unimpeached. From Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever (Ro.11:33, 36). God has spoken truth (Jn.17:17; He.6:18).

e. Faithfulness

God declares that His doings and promises and those things to which He commits, indeed will come to pass. His integrity is absolute. He is perfectly faithful. Faithfulness is an aspect of God's truth but is also a vital attribute of God independent in God's volition. It includes reliability, (irrefutable, continuous) loyalty, love, and loving fidelity. God can be unquestionably counted upon to do what His intentions clearly indicate (De.7:9; Ps.36:5; 119:90; ICo.1:9; ITh.3:3; IKg.8:56; IJn.1:9; ITh.5:24).

All of God's attributes work together to insure His faithfulness. The absolute promises of God are always fulfilled. They are a warning against human scheming and evasiveness that God's will only prevails. To the Believer, God's faithfulness provides confidence and assurance about life, particularly in the hour of trial. God's conditional promises depend upon those to whom they are extended. If man fails to fulfill his part, God's hand is free and He may not act as originally proposed.

f. Wrath

God occasionally is disposed to direct his overwhelming love toward the enemy of love and that manifestation appears as the wrath of God. Thus the love of God appears as deep and intense anger and indignation. It is always judicially administered in moral righteousness. It is a violent, adverse reaction to evil and the determined effort to disrupt God's will.

God allows His wrath to be inflicted upon those whose have personally and purposely chosen rebellion. God is slow to wrath (Ps.103:8). The Believer need have no fear of Divine wrath (ITh.1:10). God abhors sin, and He is committed to take frightful vengeance upon it. When He is confronted with rejection and moral rebellion, He is a consuming fire (He.12:29; Nah.1:2; 1:6; Ro.2:5,6; 12:19; Re.16:19; Jn.3:19; Ep.2:3).

All that Almighty God is, and does, morally has been made possible to man through Jesus Christ. It came about because of God's desire for living relationship with man.

C. The Unity and Trinity of God

1. Unity

God clearly reveals Himself and the diversity of His being and nature and essence as being uniquely combined as the unified, One True God and there is no other. God is monotheistic, one only. He is very clear that there is no other God, neither multi nor poly nor dualistic theism. God does not share nor divide His throne (De.6:4; 4:35,39 ; Ex.20:3; IKg.8:60; Is.44:6; 46:9; Mk.12:29; Jn.17:3; Ro.3:30; Ep.4:6). The Bible doctrine of the unity of God avoids the error of Unitarianism (which rejects the trinity of God), and polytheism (claiming God is multiple or many gods). Unitarianism sees God as a single unity, so that Jesus Christ cannot be the Divine Son, and the Holy Spirit cannot be a Divine Person. This belief results because it concludes that since God is one, He can only be one thing and therefore becomes a rigid unit. This view limits God. Polytheism typically reduces man's view of God to trivial and earthly capabilities (Ro.1:23). Polytheism denies all that Scripture clearly teaches about the one true God. God's unity means that the Divine nature of His oneness is undivided and indivisible (Is.45:5; Mk.12:29-32). He is uniquely one (Ex.15:11; Zec.14:9; De.6:4; Mk.12:29). God does not consist of parts and as such, He is indivisible. God is Spirit and not susceptible to division. The unity of God allows for the existence of personal distinctions in the Divine Nature. Unity does imply that the three persons of the Trinity are not separate essences within the Divine essence. The misunderstanding of the unity of God has given rise to error in Christian sects and cults who do not accept Scriptural doctrine of God, clearly demonstrating the work of three persons (distinctions of personality), unified in one essence which is God. Each Person or distinction may be observable, yet neither functions without the total essence of all three. God is a united One.

2. Trinity of God

The trinity of God is a truth of revelation. It means that there are three eternal distinctions manifested in the one Divine essence that is God. The distinctions are the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. They are three Persons in their distinct doing and make up the tri-personality in God's oneness. We worship the one God in trinity and we distinguish among the persons, but we do not divide the substance of God they constitute.

The three persons are co-equal and co-eternal each with the others. They are co-substantial and unified in the purposes and endeavor of God (Mt.3:16).

By the trinity of God we mean His tri-personal existence as Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit; three distinct Persons in one God.

a. The Father is God

The Father is recognized as God, (1Pe.1:2), and is all the fullness of the Godhead invisible (Jn.1:18).

b. The Son is God

The Son is recognized as God (He.1:8) and is all the fullness of the God-head manifested in the flesh (Jn.1:14).

c. The Holy Spirit is God

The Holy Spirit is recognized as God (Ac.5:3-4), and is all the fullness of the Godhead acting upon man, convicting him of sin (Jn.16:7-11), and guiding the Believer into all truth (Jn.16:12-15).

d. Trinity implied

The doctrine of the trinity is not explicit in the Old Testament, but rather implied, "And God said, Let us make man" (Ge.1:26).

e. Trinity revealed

The doctrine of the trinity is revealed in the New Testament (Mt.3:16-17). We have Christ being baptized in water, the Father speaking from heaven, and the Holy Spirit descending as a dove. We are to baptize in the name (not names), of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Mt.28:19).

f. Creation implies trinity

The creation implies the doctrine of the trinity. In creation, we have space, matter, and time in one creation. In space, we have length, breadth, and height in one space, In matter, we have energy, motion and phenomena in one substance. In time, we have past, present, and future in one time. In man, we are a spirit, we have a soul, and we live in a body as one man (1Th.5:23).

g. One God, three parts

In the trinity, we have Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit in one God.

h. More Scriptural intimations of the trinity:

- 1) More than one Lord acts concurrently (Ge.19:24; Zec.2:10-11).
- 2) All three persons may act concurrently (Is.63:9-10; Is.48:16; Hag.2:5-7; Lk.3:21-22; Jn.14:16-26).
- 3) God the Father begot a Son (Ps.2:7).
- 4) The Angel of the Lord is distinct from God the Lord. Hagar was visited by the Angel of the Lord (Ge.16:13).
- 5) The Angel of the Lord called unto Abraham (Ge.22:16).
- 6) God the Lord anoints Messiah the King (Ps.45:7 literal translations).
- 7) Man shows hostility both to the Lord God and to the Messiah (Ps.2:2).
- 8) Literal renderings may use plural forms (Ecc.12:1; Ps.149:2).
- 9) *Elohim*, the common name for Deity, is plural. This word, in plural, form occurs approximately 2,570 times in the Old Testament. On occasion, it is used with a plural verb (Ge.20:13; Ge.35:7).
- 10) Plural pronouns may be used for Deity (Ge.1:26; Ge.3:22; Ge.11:7; Is.6:8).
- 11) Combinations stand out in Scripture. The priestly benediction is threefold (Nu.6:24-27). The word "holy" is repeated three (3) times in Isaiah 6:3 and Revelation 4:8. The threefold repetition of holy is technically known as the "*trisanctus*" or "*trisagion*."

- 12) All three (3) persons perform the functions of Deity (I Pe.1:2; Lk.24:49; Ac.10:38).
- 13) All three (3) Persons exercise Divine prerogatives:
 - a) Each receives worship (Jn.4:23; Jn.9:38; He.10:29).
 - b) Each commands the Believer (Jn.14:31; Jn.15:12; Ac.13:2).
- 14) The three Persons relate personally to one another (Mt.17:5; Jn.3:35; Jn.16:14).
- 15) Familiar formulas include all three persons:
 - a) The baptismal formula (Mt.28:19).
 - b) Apostolic salutations (Re.1:4-5). (However, we note that most New Testament salutations mention only two of the Godhead).
 - c) The apostolic benediction (2Co.13:14).
- 16) More than our Lord: The doctrine of the Trinity thus gives scope for the respective offices of the Divine persons; Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. God is Father in the relation which He sustains to His Son. God is Son in having been begotten of the Father. God is Spirit in the sense that He is the all pervasive, life-giving, Divine being that shares with creation. The Father alone has fatherhood, the Son alone is begotten or generated, and the Spirit alone proceeds from both. The Father is the first Person since His name appears first, but this does not imply that He existed first. The Son's role is that of fulfiller or executor. The Spirit's role is that of Him who transmits or applies. The three persons are equal in every respect, but they happen to function as first, second and third Persons.
- 17) The relationship of the triune Godhead existed in eternity before the creation of the finite universe. Neither the incarnation of the Son nor the procession of the Spirit in any way changed, added to, or subtracted from this relationship. The Divine nature involves three eternal consciousness and three eternal wills. Although the fact of the tri-personality of God was not revealed

until New Testament times, it was eternal in duration (Jn.1:1-2). From all eternity, the loving Father enjoyed an association within the Trinity with the Son and the Spirit (Jn.17:5). Only an eternal Trinity accommodates the eternal God of Scripture; Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

i. General statements and allusions:

- 1) Several times the three persons of the Trinity are shown together and seemingly are on par with one another:
 - a) At the baptism of Jesus, the Spirit descended on Him and voice from God out of heaven identified Jesus as His beloved Son (Mt.3:16).
 - b) Jesus prayed that the Father would send another Comforter (Jn.14:16).
 - c) The disciples were told to baptize in the name (singular) of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit (Mt.28:19).
 - d) The three persons of the Trinity are associated together in their work (1Co.12:4-6; Ep.1:3-14; 1Pe.1:2; 3:18; Re.1:4).
 - e) In addition, the apostolic benediction unites the three together (2Co.13:14).
- 2) The Father is recognized as God. A brief scanning of the New Testament reveals numerous times that the Father is identified as God (Jn.6:27; Ro.1:7; Ga.1:1).
- 3) The Son is recognized as God. The doctrine of the Deity of Christ is crucial to the Christian faith (Mt.16:15; 22:42). Surely Jesus Christ is the greatest of all men, but He is infinitely more than mere man. It can be demonstrated that He is God in several ways:
 - a) The Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins (Mt.9:6).
 - b) He had authority to interpret the Sabbath Law (Mt.12:8).
 - c) He had authority to execute judgment (Jn.5:27).
 - d) It is as the Son of Man that He gives His life a ransom for many (Mt.20:28).
 - e) He will send His angels to gather out the tares (Mt.13:41).

- f) He will sit upon the throne of His glory (Mt.19:28; 25:31).
 - g) He will come again (Mt.24:44; 26:64). When Jesus declared He was the Son of Man spoken of by Daniel, Who was to come in great power, the high priest accused Him of blasphemy (Mt.26:63; Da.7:13).
- 4) Son of God: The full title is never applied by Jesus to Himself in the Synoptic Gospels, but in John, He once uses it of Himself (Jn.10:36). It is, however, applied to Him by others, and He accepts it in such a way as to assert His claims to it. Though the term is also applied to the angels (Job.2:1), Adam (Lk.3:38), the Hebrew nation (Ex.4:22; Hos.11:1), the King of Israel (2Sa.7:14), and all saints (Ga.4:6; Jn.5:18; 10:33, 36), Jesus' claim to Divine Son-ship is clearly intended to denote Deity.
- 5) The Holy Spirit is recognized as God. The Holy Spirit is God, and is equal to the Father and the Son. Don't ever speak of Him as "it," or refer to Him as "an influence." He is God the Holy Spirit, and is set forth in the Bible as being distinct from the Father and the Son. In the Genesis account of creation, He is seen actively engaged in the work of creation, along with the Father and the Son. In the Old Testament, He came upon men to empower them for service; but when they were disobedient, He departed from them (Jg.16:20). When David sinned against the Lord, he prayed, "Take not Thine Holy Spirit from me" (Ps.51:11). In the New Testament, after Pentecost, we see the Holy Spirit indwelling the Believer, never to leave him, filling and empowering him for service. The study of the Person and work of the Holy Spirit is of utmost importance. A Scriptural understanding of God the Holy Spirit will make us better Christians and servants of God.
- 6) He is a person. Before it can be demonstrated that the Holy Spirit is God, it must first be established that He is a person, not a mere influence or Divine power. This is done along the following lines:

- a) Personal pronouns are used of Him. Though the Greek term for spirit is neuter, Jesus in John 14:26 and 16:13, used the masculine demonstrative pronoun "He" of the Holy Spirit.
- b) He is called Helper (Comforter). This designation is applied both to the Holy Spirit (Jn.14:16-26; 15:26; 16:7), and Christ (Jn.14:16; 1Jn.2:1). Since it expressed personality when applied to Christ, it must do so also when applied to the Spirit.
- c) Personal characteristics are ascribed to Him. He has the three essential elements of personality:
 - Intellect (1Co.2:11)
 - Sensibilities (Ro.8:27; 15:30)
 - Will (1Co.12:11)

7) The Holy Spirit as Deity.

In dealing with Ananias, Peter revealed the Deity of the Holy Spirit when he said, "Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Spirit? Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God." In this Scripture it is very clear that the Holy Spirit is God, and that He is co-equal and coexistent with the Father and the Son.

- a) He is everywhere present in the universe (Ps.139:7-10).
- b) He has all power (Lk.1:35).
- c) He has all knowledge (1Co.2:10-11).
- d) He is eternal (He.9:14).
- e) His Deity is revealed in that His name is coupled in equality with the name of the Father and the Son.
- f) Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit (Lk.1:35).
- g) Jesus was anointed by the Holy Spirit (Ac.10:38).
- h) Jesus was led by the Holy Spirit (Mt.4:1).
- i) Jesus was crucified in the power of the Holy Spirit (He.9:14).
- j) Jesus was raised from the dead by the power of the Holy Spirit (Ro.8:11).
- k) Jesus gave commandment to the apostles and the Church through the Holy Spirit (Ac.1:2).

- l) If Jesus needed to depend solely upon the Holy Spirit during His life and ministry here on the earth, can we expect to accomplish the work assigned to us without reliance upon Holy Spirit?

8) The emblems of the Holy Spirit (Lk.3:16).

It is often difficult to impart truth by the use of words. Frequently they reveal only a half-truth, leaving the other half hidden. The writers of the Bible used certain emblems when unfolding the mysteries of the Holy Spirit, because they illustrate more about Him than volumes can contain. These emblems are:

- a) Fire: Fire speaks of His consuming, purifying power in the life of the Believer (Ac.2:3; Is.6:1-7).
- b) Wind: Wind speaks of the hidden depth in His mighty regenerating power (Jn.3:8).
- c) Water: Water speaks of His power to fill the Believer to over-flowing with spiritual life (Jn.7:37-39).
- d) Seal: The seal speaks of His ownership of the Believer; it is a finished, eternal transaction (Ep.1:13).
- e) Oil: Oil speaks of His power to anoint for service (Ac.10:38).
- f) Dove: The dove speaks of His gentle, tender, peaceful nature (Mark 1:10). We make known "...the peace of God, which passeth all understanding..." (Php.4:7) only when we fully surrender to God.

9) Sins against the Holy Spirit (Mt.12:31,32).

This is a solemn study, because the Holy Spirit is God and can be sinned against by both the Believer and the unbeliever.

May He help us search our heart as we consider:

- a) The sin of blaspheming the Holy Spirit (Mk.3:29)
- b) The sin of resisting the Holy Spirit (Ac.7:51).
- c) The sin of grieving the Holy Spirit (Ep.4:30-32).
- d) The sin of quenching the Holy Spirit (1Th.5:19).
- e) The sin of lying to the Holy Spirit (Ac.5:1-11).

10) The work of the Holy Spirit (Jn.16:7).

In instructing His disciples regarding the coming of the Holy Spirit, Jesus said, "...If I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send Him unto you. And when He is come, He will...":

- a) Convict men of the sin of unbelief (Jn.16:9)
- b) Convict men of the righteousness of God (Jn.16:10; Ro.10:3-4).
- c) Convict men that the power of Satan has been broken (Jn.16:11).
- d) Regenerate the Believer (Jn.3:5; Ti.3:5).
- e) Indwell the Believer (Ico.6:19-20).
- f) Seal the Believer (Ep.1:13-14).
- g) Baptize the Believer (Ac.1:5; Ico.12:13).
- h) Infill the Believer (Ep.5:18).
- i) Empower the Believer (Ac.1:8).
- j) Lead the Believer (Ga.5:16-18).
- k) Administer spiritual gifts to the Believer (Ico.12:1-11).

11) The Holy Spirit came on the Day of Pentecost, to remain with the Church until it is complete and presented to the Lord Jesus at His coming. Just as Jesus Christ finished the work He came to do in the flesh, so the Holy Spirit will finish the work He came to do in the Church.

j. The fruit of the Holy Spirit (Ga.5:22).

Only as we live in love can we fulfill the will of God in our lives. The Believer must become love-inspired, love-mastered, and love-driven (II Co.5:14). Without the fruit of the Spirit, we are just a religious noise (I Co.13:1). The fruit of the Spirit is:

- 1) Love, which is manifested in:
 - a) Joy, which is love's strength.
 - b) Peace, which is love's security.
 - c) Long-suffering, which is love's patience.
 - d) Gentleness, which is love's conduct.
 - e) Goodness, which is love's character.
 - f) Faith, which is love's confidence.

- g) Meekness, which is love's humility.
 - h) Temperance, which is love's victory.
- 2) A Holy Spirit controlled man needs no law to cause him to live a righteous life. The secret of a Spirit-controlled life is found in Romans 12:1, 20. When we put all on the altar, the Holy Spirit will fill our hearts with the love of God (Ro.5:5).

D. The Decrees of God

If God works all things after the counsel of his will (Ep.1:11), it is proper that after a discussion of the Person of God, the works of God should be set forth. Before this can be done, however, an analysis of the decrees of God must be made.

1. A definition of decrees:

The decrees of God may be defined as God's eternal purpose (all things are embraced in God's chief purpose), based on His most wise and holy counsel, whereby He freely and unchangeably, for His own glory, ordained all that comes to pass. Thus, we see that:

a. Decrees are God's eternal purpose.

God does not make plans or alter them as human history develops. He made them in eternity and His immutability makes them firm (Ps.33:1; Ja.1:17).

b. Decrees are based on His wise and holy counsel.

He is omniscient and cannot purpose anything that is wrong (Is.48:11).

c. Decrees originate in God's freedom.

He is not obligated to purpose anything additionally in what He has already chosen to purpose (Ps.135:6; Ep.1:11).

d. His omnipotence is able to do all that He desires (Da.4:35).

God has the power to do all He has decided to do, and His Will will be fulfilled completely in His own time frame. His desire will be fulfilled, the praise of His glory.

- e. A decrees' chief purpose is the glory of God.

Decrees are not aimed at the happiness of the creature or at perfecting of the saints, but the ultimate glorification of Him who is absolutely perfect (Nu.14:21; Is.6:3).

- f. He decrees by His power.

God has and uses His power to effect decrees, to bring about His purpose, either directly or by permission through those called into His purpose (Ro.8:28; Mt.18:7; Ac.2:23).

- g. Decrees embrace all that comes to pass; past, present, and future (Is.46:10).

With infinite power and wisdom God has, from all eternity past, decided, chosen and determined the course of all events without exception, for all eternity to come.

2. Proof of decrees

That the events in the universe are neither a surprise nor a disappointment to God, nor the result of His caprice or arbitrary will, but the outworking of a definite purpose and plan of God, is the teaching of Scripture (Is.14:24,26).

He made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His kind intention which He purposed in Christ (Ep.1:9-11).

The decrees are sometimes represented as one decree: "...according to the purpose of Him..." To the Divine mind, they are in reality but one great, all-inclusive purpose. Thus, we can speak of a universe, rather than a multi-universe.

3. The purpose of God's decrees:

He did not leave Himself without witness (Ac.14:17). God richly supplies man with all things to enjoy (ITi.6:17). God does not seek to promote the happiness of man, but our happiness is a secondary end. God created man to be holy (Le.11:44; IPe.1:16; Ro.7:12). Christ died that He might sanctify the people (Ep.5:25, 27; Jn.3:5; IPe.1:2). But even this is not God's highest aim and purpose. Rather, God's highest aim is the glorification of Himself. Creation glorifies Him (Ps.19:1; Is.48:11; Ro.9:23; Ep.1:6; 1:12, 14; 2:8-10;

Re.4:11). The end of all things is the glory of God.

4. The content of God's decrees:

a. In the material and physical realm:

- 1) God decreed to create the universe and man (Ge.1:26; Ps.33:6-11; Pr.8:22-31; Is.45:18).
- 2) God decreed to establish the earth (Ps.119:90).
- 3) God decreed to establish the seasons (Ge.8:22).
- 4) God decreed to never again destroy man by a flood (Ge.9:8-17).
- 5) God decreed the length of human life (Job.14:5).
- 6) God decreed the manner of our existence in this life (Jn.21:19; ICo.15:51; IITi.4:6-8).
- 7) God decreed all other events in the material and physical realm, as part of God's plan and purpose (Ps.104:3, 14:23; 107: 25,29; Is.14:26).

b. In the moral and spiritual realm, God decreed:

- 1) To create man
- 2) To permit man's fall
- 3) To provide in Christ redemption sufficient for all
- 4) To elect man to Salvation
- 5) To send the Spirit of God to secure the acceptance of redemption by the elect

This order of decrees is in harmony with Scripture and allows for election and unlimited atonement (redeeming and reconciliatory effect of Christ's incarnation, suffering, death, and resurrection) (ITi.2:6; 4:10; Ti.2:11; IIPe.2:1; IJn.2:2; Jn.17:9; 20,24; Ac.13:48; Ro.8:29; Ep.1:4; IPe.1:1).

c. In understanding sin and Salvation:

God determined to permit sin, not to author it (Ja.1:13; Ac.14:16; 17:30). God determined to overrule sin for the good. This determination is linked to the permitting of sin, (Ge.50:20; Ps.33:10). An example is when Nebuchadnezzar made an attempt to destroy three Hebrew children and God overruled (Da.3:19-30; Je.44:4; Amos.5:21; Re.2:6).

1) God determined to save man from sin.

The process involves God's initiative in Salvation, man's responsibility to choose the way out of his helpless state, and God's wise and holy counsel. Man lost his ability not to sin in the fall (Ge.6:5; Job.14:14; Ro.3:10-18; 8:5-8). He thus became free to do as his fallen nature suggests. God then responded with grace which restores the sinner's ability to make a favorable response to God (Ro.2:4; Ti.2:11). God exhorts sinners:

- a) To turn to Himself (Pr.1:23; Is.31:6; Ezk.14:6; 18:32; Joel.2:13; Mt.18:3; Ac.3:19).
- b) To repent (IKg.8:47; Mt.3:2; Lk.13:3-5; Ac.43:10; Php.1:29; Ijn.3:23).

2) God determined to reward His servants and punish the disobedient.

In His goodness, God decreed to save some and to reward those who serve Him (Is.62:11; Mt.6:4; ICo.3:8; ITi.5:18). Because of God's holiness and justice, He decreed to punish the wicked and disobedient:

- a) To Satan and his hosts (Ge.3:15; Mt.25:41; Ro.16:20; Re.20:1-10).
- b) To men (Ps.37:20; Ez.18:4; Nahum.1:3). This punishment is:
 - Now (Nu.16:26; Ps.11:6; 37:28; Is.5:20)
 - On Judgment Day (Ps.9:17; Is.3:11; Mt.13:49; IITh.1:8; Re.20:11-15).

d. In the social and political realm:

1) The family and human government:

- a) Marriage and family relationships are decreed (Ge.2:18; Mt.19:3-9; II Sa.12:1-15; He.13:4; Ge.1:27; Ps.127:3-5; De.24:5; Jn.19:27).
- 2) The call and mission of Israel, the chosen and limited line (Ge.12:1-3; 25:23; 27:27-29; Ex.19:4-6).
 - a) The founding and mission of the Church.
- 3) From eternity the Church was determined and became manifested through Christ's work (Mt.16:18; 9:14-17; Ep.3:12-13; 2:11-15).
- 4) The final triumph of God. All the kingdoms of the world are given to Christ (Ps.2:6-9; Da.7:13; Lk.1:31-33; Re.11:15-17).

E. God's Universal Revelation

There is no way that man, a finite being, could possibly know God, an Infinite Being, without God revealing Himself to man. Theologians classify revelation in two ways: 1) general revelation in which God communicates Himself to everyone at all times and everywhere; 2) special revelation which is God's particular communication and manifestation of Himself to particular individuals.

1. General revelation is through nature, history and the inner man.

The Scripture says, *"The heavens are telling the glory of God"* (Ps.19: 1). Paul reminds us that *"Ever since the creation of the world his invisible nature, namely, his eternal power and deity, has been clearly perceived in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse"* (Ro.1: 20).

Natural theology is the revelation of God through nature or natural creation. Many point to the teleological argument as the acts of God, but controversy has developed over this issue. Critics point out that many acts of nature are not so good, such as tornadoes, earthquakes, hurricanes, etc. These are thus seen as providing a distorted view of God. They also point out that Darwinism appeals to many and the theory of organic evolution may distort the view of God.

General revelation comes through history also. God is always involved in the destiny of nations, charting their courses and controlling the outcome of wars (Job 12:23; Ps.47: 7-8; 66: 7; Is.10: 5-13; Da.2: 21; Ac.17: 26). We have seen this with Israel and the surrounding nations, right up through

modern history. Many soldiers and generals in combat have witnessed the supernatural intervention of God which determined the outcome of battles.

Of course God's highest form of earthly creation is man, where God not only participates in the physical and mental structure, but in man's moral and spiritual aspects. Paul indicates that the Law is written on the hearts of persons who do not have any special revelation of His Law (Ro.2: 11-16). This Law in his heart is not given to excuse man from sin by doing good and living a moral life, but to reveal man's sin, causing him to seek God and ultimately find Christ as Savior. It is similar to the Law of Moses which pointed out sin in the Old Testament but could not save man from sin. Even in Old Testament times, salvation was by faith and not strictly by the Law.

There are six implications unique to general revelation.

- a. All persons have knowledge of God. They may not be conscious of it or it may be suppressed, but it exists and it will cause them to recognize truth.
- b. By examining general revelation we will have a greater understanding of special revelation. This will help us understand in greater detail the greatness of God and the image of God in people.
- c. God is not condemning those who have never heard the Gospel in the formal sense. He has provided everyone with an opportunity to seek truth.
- d. General revelation explains why there are so many religions. They have a basis in truth, but have gone astray because they have suppressed that truth.
- e. Biblical revelation is not distinct from what is known of the natural realm.
- f. Humans are not their own accomplishment. Truth is from God and it is His truth. He has structured the entire universe with it.

F. God's Special Revelation

The second classification of revelation is called special revelation. It involves God's particular communications and manifestations of Himself to particular persons at particular times. God manifests Himself to certain individuals at definite times and places, allowing them to enter into a redemptive relationship with Him, or by communicating with man on truths of the Word that may deal with other areas of life. The first instance is necessary because man lost his relationship with God at the fall in the Garden. Special revelation is primarily relational, however knowing God through general revelation is still available and necessary to know and understand Him.

The style of special revelation is personal and is seen in a number of ways. God's name alone indicates this- "I AM WHO I AM" [or] "I WILL BE WHO I WILL BE". His covenants with Noah, Abraham and the nation of Israel reveal God as being personal. Many testimonies also reveal man having a personal relationship with God. Even Paul's life shows us an acquaintance with God when he says, *"I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death"* (Ph.3: 10). Even the Scripture itself is personal in nature.

The anthropic character of special revelation (use of human languages common at the time), reveals God as transcendent and outside our sensory experience. Koinonia Greek at one time was thought of as a divinely created language because it was different than classical Greek, but this is not so. It was the common language of the day, used by ordinary people. Revelation is also anthropic because it comes in forms that are part of ordinary, everyday human experience. For instance, God frequently uses dreams to reveal Himself. He appears to many Muslims in this day as an ordinary human being (in visions and dreams). Even Jesus was an ordinary person who had no visible distinctiveness.

God has made himself known by a whole series of events that is emphasized in the Bible. The most important event to Israel, which is still celebrated by the Jews, is the deliverance from Egypt through the series of plagues culminating in the Passover and the crossing of the Red Sea. These historical acts of God, as described in the Scriptures, are revelations of His nature.

The most unique event of all time for all people in which God revealed Himself is the Incarnation. Jesus' life and speech was a special revelation of God. Hebrews 1:1-2 indicates that God had spoken through the prophets, but now He has spoken through and in His Son. When Jesus spoke, it was not His own Words but He only spoke the Words of the Father. He also demonstrated the Father's

attributes, bringing acts and the Word together.

It is note worthy to mention that the Scripture, as revelation, is progressive. However, care needs to be taken when using this term, because the term also represents the idea of gradual evolutionary development. Revelation of the A.D. era was built on revelation from the B.C. era. For example, Jesus elevated the teaching of the Law by expanding and internalizing them. He often began his instructions by saying, “*You have heard...But I say to you.*” The revelation of God is always progressive and moves to a more complete form. Through special revelation humanity is able to grasp Him in a personal way and understand something about Him.

G. Preserving Revelation

We often say the Bible is the inspired Word of God, but what is meant by the “inspiration of the Scripture?” According to Erickson, it is the supernatural influence of the Holy Spirit on the Scripture writers which rendered their writings an accurate record of the revelation or which resulted in what they wrote actually being the Word of God.

The difference between inspiration and revelation is that inspiration relates more to the relaying of truth while revelation is the communication of truth from God to humans. This revelation was necessary to maintain the accuracy of what was recorded, as well as to preserve it in writing. While revelation and inspiration are usually thought of together, not all revelation is inspiration. We find numerous words of unbelievers recorded in the Scripture (such as the words of Judas or when Peter denied Jesus), yet the Holy Spirit wanted them included. On the other hand not all inspiration is revelation. This can happen in two ways: 1) not all the inspirations were recorded and included in the Scripture by the Holy Spirit; 2) there were times when the writers had inspiration, but without revelation they could not understand what they were writing. When Daniel (Daniel 12) inquired from God about his revelation (dream), he was told to seal up the Book until the end. In other words it was not the time for the dream to be revealed.

There are two methods of formulating a theory of inspiration. The first emphasizes what the biblical writers say about the Bible and the view it revealed in the way they use it. The second examines what the Bible is like, analyzing the ways in which the writers report events comparing parallel accounts. The method used for constructing the doctrine of inspiration must be the same method used for constructing other biblical doctrines.

The Bible declares itself to be inspired. The New Testament authors have regarded the Scriptures (Old Testament) as inspired. “*Above all, you must*

understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. "For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit" (2Pe.1: 20). Paul also expressed the same; "All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correction and training in righteousness" (2Ti.3: 16). The word "all" includes every portion. Even Peter said in Acts 1:16, "Brothers, the Scripture had to be fulfilled which the Holy Spirit spoke long ago through the mouth of David..." David was considered God's mouthpiece and the same thought was carried on through the writers.

Though inspiration was not permanent or continuous in the lives of the prophets and the apostles, it was in full operation while they were writing the Scripture. Their lives were not perfect and they made many mistakes, but it did not interfere or diminish the quality of the inspired Word of God. Because the Scripture is inspired, we can have confidence that it is truly Divine revelation. It can be used as a guide that we can rely on. We are encouraged to intensively read and study it, not for our knowledge, but to know the One who is behind it.

III. THE WORK'S OF GOD

A. Creation

1. The aspects of creation:

a. Immediate creation

Immediate creation is that free act of the triune God (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit), acting in unity and concert, in the beginning and for the sole purpose of glorifying God. It was accomplished without the use of preexisting materials or by any secondary causes. It was immediate and simultaneous, the whole visible and invisible universe.

It was a free act of God and involved the equality of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. It was an immediate act which had immediate results and was all embracing in its scope, including all material and immaterial existences (Ge.1:1).

b. Mediate creation

This is a creative process by God which does not originate but instead directly shapes, adapts, combines, or transforms existing material. God may even use secondary causes in this mediate creation process. This form of creation is a gradual one and is not immediate.

Mediate creation applies to existing materials.

2. There is some scientific proof of creation.

However, science has yet to prove how all things became. The ultimate answers to the act of creation cannot be found in scientific knowledge simply because the answer is a spiritually revealed one which lies outside the domain of science. The solution to the issue of origins must come from Scripture and be accepted by faith (He.11:3). Scripture declares the how and why of natural and spiritual existence.

3. Biblical proof of creation

The Bible gives the original creation of heaven and earth (Is.40:26; 45:18); God's creation of all men (Ps.102:18; 139:13-16; Is.43:1; 7:54; Ez.21:30); God's creation of heaven and earth and all things (Is.45:12; Ac.17:24; Ro.11:36; Ep.3:9; Re.4:11). They are created by His Spirit (Ps.104:30); by His Son (Jn.1:3; Co.1:16); by His Word (Ps.148:5).

4. The purpose of creation is:

a. For God's own glory.

The first and foremost purpose of creation was for God's glory to be manifested in the earth (Ps.8:1; 19:1; Is.40:5; Ez. 1:28; Lk.2:9; Ac.7:2; ICo.4:6).

b. For God to receive glory.

The second purpose in the order of creation was that God would receive glory (ICh.16:29; Ps.29:1; Je.13:16; Ro.15:6; ICo.6:20; IPe.4:16). The universe is God's handiwork, and it is intended to display His glory. We are to enhance, reflect, and declare His glory (ICo.10:31).

B. Sovereignty, the Governor and Government Universal

Having shown that all things have their origin in the decrees or purposes of God, and that God has created the whole material and immaterial universe, we now consider the question of the government of the universe.

God, as creator of all things visible and invisible, and the owner of all, has an absolute right to rule over all (Mt.20:15; Ro.9:20). He exercises this authority in the universe (Ep.1:11). A man of God wrote: "If God be a Spirit, and therefore a person,

infinite, eternal, and immutable in His being and perfection, the creator and preserver of the universe, He is, of right, its absolute sovereign. This sovereignty of God is the ground of peace and confidence to all His people. They rejoice that the Lord God Omnipotent reigns; that neither necessity, nor chance, nor the folly of man, nor the malice of Satan controls the sequence of events and all their issues."

Scripture abundantly teaches that God is absolutely sovereign in the universe (ICh.29:11; Ps.115:3; Is.45:9 Ez.18:4; Da.4:35; Mt.20:15; Ro.9:14-21; 11:36; Ep.1:11; Re.4:11). God is sovereign both in the preservation and in providence over His creation.

1. Preservation

By preservation we mean that God sovereignly, by a continuous agency, maintains in existence all the things which He has made, together with all their properties and powers. This definition implies that preservation is to be distinguished from the act of creation, for only that which is already in existence can be preserved; that the objective creation is not self-existent and self-sustaining; that preservation is not merely a refraining from destroying that which has been created, but a continuous agency of God by means of which He maintains in existence that which He has created.

Christ is the mediating agent in preservation, as He was in creation itself (Neh.9:6; Co.1:17; He.1:3; Ps.36:6; 104:29; 66:9; Ac.17:28; Pr.2:8; Ps.37:28; Jn.10:28).

2. Providence

The word providence means foreseeing. From this basic idea has developed the meaning of "providing for the future." In theology the word has received a more specialized meaning. In theology, providence means that continuous activity of God whereby He makes all the events of the physical, mental, and moral realms work out His purpose. This purpose is nothing short of the original design of God in creation. To be sure, evil has entered the universe, but it is not allowed to thwart God's original, benevolent, wise and holy purpose. God is sovereign over:

- a. The physical universe (Job.9:5-6; 37:6-10; 38:22-33; ISa.7:10; Ps.148:8; 147:18; 147:16; Ac.14:17; Mt.5:45).
- b. The plant and animal creation (Job.12:10; Mt.6:26; Jon.4:6; 1:7; Mt.6:28-30; Ps.104:21,27; 147:9; Mt.17:27).

- c. The nations of the earth (Ps.22:28; 66:7; 75:7; Job.12:23; Da.2:37-39; 4:25; Ac.17:26; Is.7:20; 10:5-15; 45:1-4; Ro.13:1).
- d. All areas of man's life (Ps.4:8; 5:12; 11:6; 19:13; 37:23; 63:8; 75:7; 121.3; 139:16; Je.1:5; 10:23; ISa.16:1; Ga.1:15; Is.45:5; Est.4:14; 6:1; Mt.5:45; 6:13,25-32; 10:29; Ac.14:17; De.32:49; Pr.21:1; 16:1,33; IPe.5:7; Ro.1:24-28; 11:32; IITh.2:11; ICo.10:13).
- e. Our relationship to Him in prayer.

Some hold that prayer can have no real effect upon God, since He has already decreed just what He will do in every instance. But that is an extreme position. "You do not have because you do not ask" (Ja.4:2), must not be ignored. God does some things only in answer to prayer; He does some other things without anyone's praying; and He does some other things contrary to the prayers made. In His omniscience He has taken all these things into account, and in His providence He sovereignly works them out in accordance with His own purpose and plan. If we do not pray for the things that we might get by prayer, we do not get them. If He wants some things done for which no one prays, He will do them without anyone's praying. If we pray for things contrary to His will, He refuses to grant them. Thus, there is a perfect harmony between His purpose and providence, and man's freedom.

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CHRISTIANS ARE CO-LABORERS

"Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase. Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labor. For we are laborers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building. According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ."

I Corinthians 3:5-11