

SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY 2 CLASS NOTES

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SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY II

Class Notes

Robert J. Dunzweiler, Professor

These class notes are primarily intended to anticipate, prepare for, and facilitate class discussion of the areas covered by the course. They are not exhaustive, and should not be treated like published materials. This stipulation should not deter the further use of these notes, however, since a secondary purpose of their preparation is to provide a compendium of doctrinal constructions suitable for use as resource materials for teaching and preaching. Of course, reproduction of any sizable portion of these notes should be made by permission only; and quotations from them should be appropriately credited.

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THE WORKS OF GOD

I. THE DECREES OF GOD

A. Statements of the Doctrine

The *Westminster Confession of Faith*, Chapter III, Article 1. states:

God from all eternity did by the most wise and holy counsel of his own will, freely and unchangeably ordain whatsoever comes to pass; yet so as thereby neither is God the author of sin, nor is violence offered to the will of the creatures, nor is the liberty or contingency of second causes taken away, but rather established.

Charles Hodge, in volume 1, part 1, chapter 9 of his *Systematic Theology* states:

"The decrees of God are his eternal purpose, according to the counsel of his will, whereby for his own glory He hath foreordained whatsoever comes to pass."
Agreeably to this statement: (1) The end or final cause contemplated in all God's decrees, is his own glory. (2) They are all reducible to one eternal purpose. (3) They are free and sovereign, determined by the counsel of his own will. (4) They comprehend all events.

-- Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology* in three volumes.
Reprinted. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1952), p. 535.

Archibald Alexander Hodge, in chapter 10 of his *Outlines of Theology* states:

The decree of God in his eternal, unchangeable, holy, wise, and sovereign purpose, comprehending at once all things that ever were or will be in their causes, conditions, successions, and relations, and determining their certain futurity. The several contents of this one eternal purpose are, because of the limitation of our faculties, necessarily conceived of by us in partial aspects, and in logical relations, and are therefore styled Decrees.

-- Archibald Alexander Hodge, *Outlines of Theology*, revised.
Reprinted. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1957), p. 200.

William G. T. Shedd, in chapter 6 of the section on Theology (Doctrine of God) in volume 1 of his *Dogmatic Theology*, states:

The consideration of the Divine Decrees naturally follows that of the divine attributes, because the decrees regulate the operation of the attributes. God's acts agree with God's determination. Hence the *Westminster Shorter Catechism*, Q. 7, defines the decrees of God to be "his eternal purpose according to the counsel of his own will, whereby he hath foreordained whatsoever comes to pass." God does not act until he has decided to act, and his decision is free and voluntary.

The Divine decree relates only to God's *opera ad extra* or transitive acts. it does not include those immanent activities which

occur within the essence, and result in the three trinitarian distinctions. All this part of the Divine activity is excluded from the Divine decrees, because it is necessary and not optional. God the Father did not decree the eternal generation of the Son, nor did the Father and Son decree the spiration of the Holy Spirit. The triune God could no more decide after the counsel of his own will to be triune, than he could decide in the same manner to be omnipotent, or omniscient. The Divine decree, consequently, comprehends only those events that occur in time. God foreordains, "whatsoever comes to pass" in space and time. That which comes to pass in the eternity of the uncreated essence, forms no part of the contents of God's decree.

William G. T. Shedd, *Dogmatic Theology*, in three volumes.
Reprinted. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, n.d.), pp. 393-394.

B. Scriptural Background to the Doctrine

1. Psalm 33:11 -- The psalmist says that the plan (or purpose or design or scheme) of the Lord stands forever. Here the word $\eta\chi\upsilon$ is used. Verse 10 tells us that at the same time the Lord nullifies the schemes of nations and frustrates the plans of the people.
2. Isaiah 46:10 -- God declares at the beginning of history the events that will come to pass. He can do this because His plan or purpose ($\eta\chi\upsilon$) will be established, and His good pleasure ($\gamma\omicron\upsilon\eta$) will be accomplished.
3. Luke 22:22 -- Our Lord says that His betrayal and death have been decided or appointed or determined ($\acute{o}\rho\iota\zeta\omega$) presumably by God.
4. Acts 2:23 -- Jesus was put to death by the men of Israel at the hands of heathen executioners, but He was delivered up to this death by the determined ($\acute{o}\rho\iota\zeta\omega$) plan ($\beta\omicron\upsilon\lambda\eta$) and foreknowledge of God. The Father predetermined that wicked men would put His Son to death.
5. Acts 4:28 -- Here we are told that Herod, Pontius Pilate, the Gentiles, and the people of Israel did to Jesus whatever God's hand and plan ($\beta\omicron\upsilon\lambda\eta$) predetermined ($\pi\rho\omicron\omicron\rho\omicron\rho\iota\zeta\omega$) to occur. The Father predetermined that wicked men would put His Son to death.
6. Acts 17:26 -- God has appointed the rise and decline of nations, and has determined ($\acute{o}\rho\iota\zeta\omega$) the boundaries of their habitation, including their migrations from one place of habitation to another.
7. Romans 9:23 -- Here God makes ready beforehand ($\pi\rho\omicron\epsilon\tau\omicron\iota\mu\acute{\alpha}\zeta\omega$) those vessels of mercy whom He calls from among both Jews and Gentiles.

8. I Corinthians 2:7 -- Paul speaks God's revealed wisdom (which is concealed from the unregenerate), which wisdom was predetermined (προορίζω) by God before the ages.
9. Ephesians 1:5 -- Before the foundations of the world, God predetermined (προορίζω) us to adoption as His sons, and this was according to the good pleasure (εὐδοκία) of His will (θελήμα).
10. Ephesians 1:9 -- God made known to us His will (θελήμα), which had previously been concealed, which was according to His good pleasure (εὐδοκία) which He intended (προτίθημι) in connection with Christ.
11. Ephesians 1:11 -- We (believers) were predetermined (προορίζω) to be made an inheritance in connection with Christ, according to God's purpose (πρόθεσις), who makes all things work according to the plan (βουλή) of His will (θελήμα). Here it would appear that God makes all persons, objects, actions, and events, whether good or evil, to contribute toward the fulfillment of His plan, part of which is to form an inheritance of a chosen people, redeemed through Christ.
12. Ephesians 2:10 -- God created us anew in Christ Jesus for good works. In addition, He made ready beforehand (προετοιμάζω) that we should walk in good works. He prepared them for us, and us for them.
13. Ephesians 3:11 -- The purpose (πρόθεσις) of God, which has been made in Christ Jesus, determined that the wisdom of God, which had been hidden, should now be revealed, partly through the apostle Paul.
14. II Timothy 1:9 -- God has saved us and called us to Himself, not on the basis or condition of our works, but according to His own purpose (πρόθεσις) and grace, which was granted us before the ages of time.
15. Hebrews 6:17 -- God, in order to assure the heirs of His promise, that they may have confidence in the hope set before them, added to the unchangeable nature of His plan (βουλή) an oath to confirm His word.
16. 1 Peter 1:20 -- Christ was foreknown (προγινώσκω) as the Redeemer, the atoning Lamb, before the foundation of the world. This presupposes a prior determination.
17. Revelation 4:11 -- Because of God's will (θελήμα), all things existed and were created. He called them into being for His purposes.
18. Revelation 13:8 -- Here the book of life is mentioned. This book is employed in the white throne judgment in Revelation 20:12. Those not found written in the book of life are cast into the lake

of fire (20:15). in Revelation 17:8 we find that those whose names are in the book of life had them written there from (or since) the foundation of the world. And here in Revelation 13:8 the book is called the book of life of the slain Lamb; and those who worship the beast are identified as those whose names have not been written in the book of life from (or since) the foundation of the world. This emphasis comports with that found in Ephesians 1:5 and I Timothy 1:9.

C. Development of the Doctrine

1. The decrees are one divine plan or purpose

The Scriptures consistently represent God's plan as being single. Yet the Bible also recognizes various aspects, parts, or phases, of that single plan. Thus, for example, we distinguish between the creative, providential, redemptive, and judgmental aspects of God's single plan and purpose.

2. The decrees are from eternity, yet are most free

The phrase "from eternity" may mean at least three things. It may mean that the decrees are eternal (i.e., that they never had a beginning, and were never formulated or framed). Or it may mean that the decrees were formulated in eternity: (i.e., before physics time began). Or it may mean that the decrees were formulated before the first act of creation (i.e., before the foundation of the world).

A number of theologians appear to lean in the direction of the first meaning, usually because of their view of God's alleged timelessness. However, if one takes the view that the decrees are eternal, and that there was no point in God's self experience when the decrees had their inception or began to be framed, then it would seem to follow that the decrees are in some sense necessary. If the decrees are necessary, then it would seem to follow that those items included in the decrees (i.e., those items that were decreed; e.g., creation and redemption) are also necessary. This means that it was necessary for God to create and to redeem, a conclusion that is rejected by orthodox theology.

If on the other hand the phrase "from eternity" simply means before the first act of creation, then the decrees can be seen to have been formulated most freely by God's own free determination and sovereign good pleasure, rather than out of some necessity Imposed on Him from outside of Himself or from His nature.

3. The decrees are divine *opera ad extra* ("works to the outside")

They are distinguished from the purely immanent works of God (*opera ad intra*) which speak of the dynamic interrelationships of the persons of the Trinity. The *opera ad extra* are works of the triune God which are realized in the works of creation, providence, redemption, and judgment. The decrees pertain to those works of God that bear directly on created reality.

4. The end or final cause of the decrees is God's glory

In Aristotle's classification of causes (formal cause, material cause, efficient cause, final cause), the final cause is the end or goal toward which something moves, the fully developed character of an oak tree (for example) that an acorn will attain, or the purpose for which an artist creates. The final cause is determined at the beginning. Likewise, God's glory is the goal or outcome determined by God at the formulation of His decrees.

5. The decrees are immutable

If God were capricious, or if He were unable to foresee some contingency, or if He were unable to carry out some aspect of His plan, then His decrees would need to be mutable, if He is to achieve His great goal. Since He is constant instead of capricious, omniscient instead of limited in knowledge, and omnipotent instead of limited in power, there is no need of change in His great plan.

6. The decrees embrace whatsoever comes to pass, evil as well as good.

This emphasis agrees with such Scriptures as Ephesians 1:11, Acts 2:23, and Genesis 50:20. In this last Scripture Joseph tells his brothers, "You meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, in order to bring about this present result, to preserve many people alive."

7. The decrees are not addressed to man's obedience. They are concerned, not with what men should do, but with what they will do.

This emphasis calls for certain distinctions in the will of God. When discussing the will of God it is important to distinguish between what is and what ought to be (which in philosophy is called the distinction between the realm of being and the realm of obligation). The former is concerned with what in theology may be called the Determinative Will of God; the latter is concerned with the Preceptive Will of God. The Determinative Will of God includes causative and permissive aspects (what God determines to cause and what He determines to permit); the Preceptive Will of God includes everything addressed to man's obedience, whether expressed in commands (precepts), exhortations, teachings, or examples.

8. The decrees must be distinguished from their execution

The decree to create is not the act of creation. The decree to redeem is not the act of redemption. Thus we distinguish between what may be called the Decretive and the Executive phases of the Determinative Will of God, or the decrees of God as framed before the foundation of the world, and as executed in time space history.

9. The decrees are efficacious

This simply means that what God decreed will most certainly come to pass, that nothing can thwart His sovereign purpose. This thought

is expressed in Isaiah 14:24, 27 -- "The Lord of hosts has sworn saying, 'Surely, just as I have intended so it has happened, and just as I have planned so it will stand, . . . For the Lord of hosts has planned, and who can frustrate It? And as for His stretched out hand, who can turn it back?' "

D. Objections to the Doctrine

Three major objections have been opposed to the doctrine as herein presented:

1. The decrees are destructive of man's free agency.

a. This objection states: "Man is a free agent with the power of rational self-determination. He can reflect upon, and in an intelligent way choose certain ends, and can also determine his action with respect to them. This we know by simple consciousness. But God's decrees predetermine whatever a man will do. Thus the decrees destroy free agency, and with it, human responsibility."

b. This objection may be responded to in the following ways:

- (1) God clearly predicts that human beings will act in certain ways, yet those persons are held responsible for their actions.
- (2) God foreknows as actual everything that comes to pass, yet certainty of futurity is not thereby destructive of free agency.
- (3) God's decrees cannot properly be said to cause everything that comes to pass.

Some events are indeed caused by God; others are simply guaranteed certainty of futurity. This emphasis distinguishes between the causative and the permissive aspects of God's Determinative Will.

In the causative aspect, God determines to cause; in the permissive aspect, He determines to permit. He determines to cause all morally good states or actions in personal beings; He determines to permit all morally evil states or actions in personal beings.

Of course, the difficulty in this distinction is that Aristotle's four classes of causality (formal cause, material cause, efficient cause, final cause) are insufficient to explain the difference between cause and permission as used in this context.

John Calvin, in his treatise, A Defense of the Secret Providence of God, attempted to distinguish between proximate and remote (or ultimate) causes of sinful actions and states. He identified the sinner as the proximate cause and God as the remote cause. But unless remote cause excludes responsibility, this distinction does not seem to be very helpful.

J. Oliver Buswell, Jr. proposed a fifth category of cause (in addition to Aristotle's four) -- "chargeable creditable cause" -- and asserted that God is not the chargeable cause of moral evil, but is the creditable cause of moral good. Of course, this is simply another way of saying that God is in no sense the Author of sin, but is the Author of all good.

In any case, God does not cause everything that comes to pass. He causes some things; He permits other things. And this distinction must be reflected in His decrees. Thus we may say that God determines to cause some things; others He determines to permit.

(4) Christ's acts were all most free; yet by God's decrees it was certain that He would continue to be holy, harmless, and undefiled, would fulfill God's perfect Law, and would go to the cross to accomplish our redemption.

c. In light of these considerations, "free agency" must be defined rather precisely.

A free agent is not one who is free from all influences, external, and internal, but one who, in the midst of external forces and influences, freely acts in harmony with his previous thoughts and judgments, his inclinations and desires, and his character. A free agent is one who is free to determine to act in accordance with his disposition, inclinations, desires, and preferences -- in a word, in accordance with what he or she is.

A free moral agent is one who is free to decide not contrary to, but in accordance with, his or her own moral nature.

This conception ties together human nature, human will, and human actions. Human beings will in accordance with their natures, and act, in accordance with their wills.

d. In this definition free agency is not destroyed by the decrees. If the situation is defined in such a way that God is viewed as having decreed what human beings, acting from themselves, will do, then free agency is preserved, and responsibility with it.

2. The decrees are destructive of all motivation to human exertion.

a. This objection states: "People will naturally say that if all things are bound to happen as God has determined them, they need not concern themselves about the future and need not make any efforts to obtain salvation."

b. This objection may be responded to in the following ways:

(1) Strictly speaking, the decrees are not addressed to human beings as a rule of obedience or action.

(a) The rule of action addressed to mankind's obedience is God's revealed Preceptive Will, found in the Law and in the gospel.

Deuteronomy 29:29 states: "The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our sons forever, that we may observe all the words of this law."

Romans 10:16 states: "However, they did not heed the glad tidings for Isaiah says, 'Lord, who has believed our report?' "

II Thessalonians 1:8 says: "dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus."

(b) The decrees are known through (and therefore following) their realization.

The one exception to this principle involves those aspects of God's Plan which pertain to the future and which He has been pleased to reveal. However, as far as God's decrees respecting salvation, if a human being determines to make no efforts to obtain salvation, he will indeed discover that he is one of the non-elect! The converse is also true.

(2) This objection confuses the decrees with fatalism.

But fatalism is the doctrine that all events come to pass under the operation of a blind necessity. Fate is unintelligent, is indistinguishable from material causation, and embraces no moral ideas or ends.

On the other hand the decrees are framed by a personal God in infinite wisdom, exclude all notion of physical necessity, and make moral ideas and ends controlling in the universe. Nothing could be further from fatalism!

(3) This objection ignores the divinely ordained connection between means and ends.

(a) God has decreed both the end and the means to secure it.

The event is determined in connection with the means. If the end is to be gained, then the means must be employed. If the means fail, then the end will also fail.

Thus God has decreed that harvest will come only as a result of sowing and reaping. If a man refuses to sow and reap, he will have no harvest (and should have no expectations of having one).

God has decreed that physical life will be sustained only as a result of eating food. If a human being refuses to eat, he will die.

God has decreed that answers to prayer will come only as a result of prayer. If a person refuses to pray, he or she will have no answers.

God has decreed that justification before God will come only as a result of the exercise of justifying faith. If a

man refuses to believe, he will, remain under the condemnation and wrath of God.

(b) Once this connection between means and ends is understood, it will be seen that this doctrine does not discourage effort; rather it encourages it.

If a person believes that it is God's all-embracing Plan that success will reward effort, he will be encouraged to exert such effort. Nothing is more conducive to the exertion of effort than the expectation of success; nothing is more conducive to indolence and lethargy than the expectation of failure.

(c) Scripture records exhortations to the diligent use of means in order to gain the ends sought.

Acts 27:22-24, 30-31 -- "And yet now I urge you to keep your courage, for there shall be no loss of life among you, but only of the ship. For this very night an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I serve stood before me, saying, 'Do not be afraid, Paul; you must stand before Caesar; and behold, God has granted you all those who are sailing with you.' And as the sailors were trying to escape from the ship, and had let down the ship's boat into the sea, on the pretense of intending to lay out anchors from the bow, Paul said to the centurion and to the soldiers, 'Unless these men remain in the ship, you yourselves cannot be saved.' "

Philippians 2:12-13 -- "So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure."

Ephesians 2:10 -- "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them."

(d) The following line of reasoning could be employed:

If there is a divinely ordained connection between means and ends;

And if, in order to afford to human beings the greatest conceivable freedom of action, God had ordained no means;

Then how could God, with any degree of assurance of fulfillment, ordain ends, and how could those ends be secured?

Yet Scripture clearly teaches that God has ordained certain ends, and that those ends will be secured;

And if God has ordained a connection between those ends and definite means, then those means must also be ordained, if the ends are to be secured.

Therefore God must have ordained the means as well as the ends.

3. The decrees make God the author of sin

a. This objection states: "If God is viewed as having decreed whatever comes to pass, and if there is sin in the world (as there most certainly is), then God must in some sense be responsible for sin in the world."

b. This objection may be responded to in the following ways:

(1) Responsibility for the real authorship of sin in the world must be fixed in Satan, and in Adam and Eve, not God.

God did not create the devil as such; He made a holy and free angelic spirit who abused his liberty, freely sinned, and thus made himself the devil.

God did not create sinful human beings; he created free moral beings who were themselves the authors of sin in the human race.

(2) In meeting this objection the causative and permissive aspects of God's all embracing Plan must be maintained.

God does not determine to cause evil desires or choices or actions in human beings; he determines to permit them.

He decrees sin in the sense of determining to create, preserve, and restrain those who, in their own self chosen courses, will to do evil. God does not determine to efficiently produce sin; he determines to permit sin. And His decrees guarantee certainty of futurition.

(3) The principle sometimes enunciated to the effect that an agent is responsible for whatever his act renders certain, and that therefore God cannot decree sin because his decree renders the occurrence of sin certain, must be opposed.

Although God judicially abandons some human beings to their sins and gives them up to a reprobate mind, thereby rendering certain their continuance in sin, yet He, is not responsible for their evil deeds; they are.

Although God leaves the fallen angels to themselves, and thereby renders certain their continuance in rebellion, yet He is not responsible for their sin; they are responsible.

Although God leaves the wicked to their destiny in Sheol, and thereby renders certain their continuance in Impenitence, yet He is not responsible for their wickedness; they are responsible.

In all these cases God simply decrees to permit, as certainly future, those sinful actions which men and angels, from themselves, decide to perform.

(4) A distinction must also be drawn in the concept of permission.

God permitted wicked men to crucify our Lord, but He did not give them permission to do so.

Acts 2:23 -- "this man, delivered up by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to death."

God permitted Adam and Eve to fail, but He did not give them permission to do so.

Genesis 2:16,17 -- "And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, 'From any tree of the garden you may eat freely; but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you shall surely die.' "

God permitted Judas Iscariot to betray his Master, but He did not give him permission to do so.

Matthew 26:24 -- "The Son of Man is to go, Just as it is written of Him; but woe to that man through whom the Son of man is betrayed! It would have been good for that man if he had not been born."

He permitted Joseph's brothers to sell Joseph into Egypt, but He did not give them permission to do so.

Genesis 50:20 -- "And as for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good in order to bring about this present result, to preserve many people alive."

Permission in the sense of the permissive aspect of God's decrees is quite distinct from permission in the sense of God condoning or God tacitly approving a sinful action. God permits (decrees) what He does not permit (approve). Such permission does not make God Author of sin, or make Him responsible for causing it. Although He disapproves of sin and hates it, He nevertheless permits it in His universe.

II. CREATION

A. Creation in General

1. Statement of the Doctrine

The Second Helvetic Confession, Chapter 7, states:

This good and almighty God created all things, both visible and invisible, by his eternal Word, and preserves the same also by his eternal Spirit; as David witnesses, saying, 'By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth' (Psa. 33:6); and, as the Scripture says, 'All things that the Lord created were very good' (Gen. 1:31), and made for the use and profit of man.

Now, we say, that all those things do proceed from one beginning; and therefore we detest the Manichees and the Marcionites, who did wickedly imagine two substances and natures, the one of good, the other of evil; and also two beginnings and two gods, one contrary to the other a good and an evil.

The Belgic Confession, Article 12, states:

We believe that the Father, by the Word that is, by His Son created of nothing the heaven, the earth, and all creatures, as it seemed good unto him, giving unto every creature its being, shape, form, and several offices to serve its Creator; that he doth also still uphold and govern them by his eternal providence and infinite power for the service of mankind, to the end that man may serve his God.

The Irish Articles of Religion, section 18, states:

In the beginning of time, when no creature had any being, God, by his word alone, in the space of six days, created all things, and afterwards, by his providence, doth continue, propagate, and order them according to his own will.

The Westminster Confession of Faith, Chapter 4, section 1, states:

It pleased God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, for the manifestation of the glory of his eternal power, wisdom, and goodness, in the beginning, to create or make of nothing the world, and all things therein, whether visible or invisible, in the space of six days, and all very good.

Charles Hodge, in volume 1 of his *Systematic Theology*, states:

The Scriptural doctrine on this subject is expressed in the first words of the Bible: "in the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." The heavens and the earth include all things out of God. Of which things the Scriptures teach that they owe their existence to the will and power of God. The Scriptural doctrine therefore is, (1.) That the universe is not eternal. It

began to be. (2.) It was not formed out of any preexistence or substance; but was created *ex nihilo* (3.) That creation was not necessary. It was free to God to create or not create, to create the universe as it is, or any order and system of things, according to the good pleasure of his will .

But while it has ever been the doctrine of the Church that God created the universe out of nothing by the word of his power, which creation was instantaneous and Immediate, i.e., without the intervention of any second causes; yet it has generally been admitted that this is to be understood only of the original call of matter into existence. Theologians have, therefore, distinguished between a first and second, or Immediate and mediate creation. The one was instantaneous, the other gradual; the one precludes the idea of any preexisting substance, and of cooperation, the other admits and implies both. There is evident ground for this distinction in the Mosaic account of the creation . And the Bible constantly speaks of God as causing the grass to grow, and as being the real author or maker of all that the earth, air, or water produces. There is, therefore, according to the Scriptures, not only an immediate, instantaneous creation *nihilo* by the simple word of God, but a mediate, progressive creation; the power of God working in union with second causes.

-- Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, in three volumes. Volume 1. Reprinted (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1952), pp. 553, 556-557.

Augustus H. Strong, in volume 2 of his *Systematic Theology* states:

By creation we mean that free act of the triune God by which in the beginning for his own glory he made, without the use of preexisting materials, the whole visible and invisible universe.

-- Augustus Hopkins Strong, *Systematic Theology*, in three volumes. Volume 2. (Philadelphia, The Judson Press, 1956), p. 371.

Louis Berkhof, in his *Systematic Theology* states:

Creation in the strict sense of the word may be defined as that free act of God whereby He, according to His sovereign will and for His own glory, in the beginning brought forth the whole visible and invisible universe, without the use of preexistent material, and thus gave it an existence, distinct from His own and yet always dependent on Him.

-- Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* Fourth Revised Edition (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1959), p. 129.

2. Scriptural Background to the doctrine

a. Genesis 1:1-2:4

- 1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.
- 2 And the earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep; and the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters.
- 3 Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light.
- 4 And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness.
- 5 And God called the light day, and the darkness He called night. And there was evening and there was morning, one day.
- 6 Then God said, "Let there be an expanse in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters."
- 7 And God made the expanse, and separated the waters which were below the expanse from the waters which were above the expanse; and it was so.
- 8 And God called the expanse heaven. And there was evening and there was morning, a second day.
- 9 Then God said, "Let the waters below the heavens be gathered into one place, and let the dry land appear"; and it was so.
- 10 And God called the dry land earth, and the gathering of the waters He called seas; and God saw that it was good.
- 11 Then God said, "Let the earth sprout vegetation, plants yielding seed, and fruit trees bearing fruit after their kind, with seed in them, on the earth"; and it was so.
- 12 And the earth brought forth vegetation, plants yielding seed after their kind, and trees bearing fruit, with seed in them, after their kind; and God saw that it was good.
- 13 And there was evening and there was morning, a third day.
- 14 Then God said, "Let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens to separate the day from the night, and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days and years;
- 15 and let them be for lights in the expanse of the heavens to give light on the earth"; and it was so.
- 16 And God made the two great lights, the greater light to govern the day, and the lesser light to govern the night; He made the stars also.
- 17 And God placed them in the expanse of the heavens to give light on the earth,
- 18 and to govern the day and the night, and to separate the light from the darkness; and God saw that it was good.
- 19 And there was evening and there was morning, a fourth day.
- 20 Then God said, "Let the waters teem with swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth in the open expanse of the heavens."
- 21 And God created the great sea monsters, and every living creature that moves, with which the waters swarmed after their kind, and every winged bird after its kind; and God saw that it was good.
- 22 And God blessed them, saying, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth."23 And there was evening and there was morning, a fifth day.
- 24 Then God said, "Let the earth bring forth living creatures after their kind: cattle and creeping things and beasts of the earth after their kind"; and it was so.

- 25 And God made the beasts of the earth after their kind, and the cattle after their kind, and everything that creeps on the ground after its kind; and God saw that it was good.
- 26 Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."
- 27 And God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.
- 28 And God blessed them; and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky, and over every living thing that moves on the earth."
- 29 Then God said, "Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the surface of all the earth, and every tree which has fruit yielding seed; it shall be food for you;
- 30 and to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the sky and to every thing that moves on the earth which has life, I have given every green plant for food"; and it was so.
- 31 And God saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.
- 1 Thus the heavens and the earth were completed, and all their hosts.
- 2 And by the seventh day God completed His work which He had done; and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done.
- 3 Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made.
- 4 This is the account of the heavens and the earth when they were created, in the day that the Lord God made earth and heaven.

b. Nehemiah 9:6 -- "Lord, you have made the heavens, and the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth and all on it, the seas and all in them."

c. Psalm 19:1 -- "The heavens are telling the glory of God; and the sky is declaring the work of His hands."

d. Psalm 124:8 -- "Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth."

e. Psalm 146:5-6 -- "How blessed is he whose help is the God of Jacob, Whose hope is in the Lord his God; Who made the heaven and earth, The sea and all that is in them; Who keeps faith forever;"

f. Isaiah 40:26, 28 -- "Lift up your eyes on high And see who has created these stars,

The One who leads forth their host by numbers,
He calls them all by name;
Because of the greatness of His might and the
strength of His power
Not one of them is missing.
Do you not know? Have you not heard?
The Everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the
ends of the earth
Does not become weary or tired.
His understanding is inscrutable."

- g. Isaiah 42:5 -- "Thus says God the Lord,
Who created the heavens and stretched them out,
Who spread out the earth and its offspring,
Who gives breath to the people of it,
And spirit to those who walk in it,"
- h. Isaiah 45:18 -- "For thus says the Lord, who created the heavens (He is the
God who formed the earth and made it, He established it and did
not create it a waste place, But formed it to be inhabited), I am the
Lord, and there is none else.'
- i. Jeremiah 10:12 -- "It is He who made the earth by His power,
Who established the world by His wisdom;
And by His understanding He has stretched out the heavens."
- j. John 1:1-3, 10 -- "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God,
and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things
came into being by Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that
has come into being . . . He was in the world, and the world was made
through Him, and the world did not know Him."
- k. Acts 17:24-28 -- "The God who made the world and all things in it, since He is
Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands;
neither is He served by human hands, as though He needed anything,
since He Himself gives to all life and breath and all things; and He made
from one, every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth,
having determined their appointed times, and the boundaries of their
habitation, that they should seek God, if perhaps they might grope for Him
and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us; for in Him we live
and move and exist, as even some of you own poets have said, 'For we
also are His offspring.' "
- l. I Corinthians 8:5-6 -- "For even if there are so called gods whether in heaven or
on earth, as indeed there are many gods and many lords, yet for us there
is but one God, the Father, from whom are all things, and we exist for
Him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we exist
through Him.' "
- m. Colossians 1:16-17 -- "For by Him all things were created, both in the
heavens and on the earth, visible and invisible, whether

thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities -- all things have been created by Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together."

- n. Hebrew 11:3 -- "By faith we understand that the worlds (or ages) were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things which are visible."
- o. Revelation 4:11 -- "Worthy art Thou, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for Thou didst create all things, and because of Thy will they existed, and were created."
- p. Revelation 10:5-6 -- "And the angel whom I saw standing on the sea and on the land lifted up his right hand to heaven, and swore by Him who lives forever and ever, who created heaven and the things in it, and the earth and the things in it, and the sea and the things in it, that there shall be delay no longer."

3. Development of the Doctrine

a. Creation is a free act of God

This implies three ideas:

(1) Creation is not a necessary act of God

Creation does not arise out of some necessity in God's nature (e.g., His omnipotence or His love)

In the absolute sense, necessity is only true in the *opera ad intra* (relationships within the godhead). In the conditional sense, necessity is true in the *opera ad extra* (works out of the godhead). This is true because the *opera ad intra* are based upon the divine nature; the *opera ad extra* are conditioned on the divine decrees. Thus creation does not spring from a necessity arising from God's nature, but does spring from a necessity arising from God's decrees.

(2) Creation is not an act out of a need within the godhead that had to be satisfied.

God did not create anything because He needed it. God does not need anything; everything needs Him.

Before creation, God did not need anything; He was perfectly self-sufficient and self-fulfilled. Within the Trinity there is always perfect oneness, perfect fellowship, perfectly sufficient objects of love, and perfect satisfaction.

God did not create other rational beings because He was lonely, or because He felt He needed someone to talk to, or someone to love, or because He had a compulsion to express His omnipotence.

(3) Creation Is an act arising out of God's sovereign good pleasure.

God created all things according to the counsel of His will, out of His good pleasure.

Ephesians 1:11 -- "also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will,"

Revelation 4:11 -- "Worthy art Thou, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for Thou didst create all things, and because of Thy will they existed, and were created."

b. Creation is a temporal act of God

Three ideas are intended by this point:

- (1) By "temporal act" is meant that it is not an eternal act. Creation is not an eternal bringing into being of that which is not the Creator. God said, "Let there come into existence!" and it was so.
- (2) By "temporal act" is meant that it is an act of God which occurs at a point in the sequence of God's own ongoing self-experience. There is a point before He begins to exert power to bring the universe into being, then there is a point after He begins to create.
- (3) By "temporal act" is also meant that it is an act of God which brings into existence the time dimension of the physical universe, with its feature of duration measured by physical movement and change.

c. The triune God is the author of creation

All three Persons are authors of the work, albeit from a different aspect.

- (1) All things are created out of the Father

I Corinthians 8:6 -- "yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom are all things, and we exist for Him;"

- (2) All things are created through the Son

I Corinthians 8:6 -- "and one Lord, Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we exist through Him."

John 1:3 -- "All things came into being through Him δι' αὐτοῦ);"

Colossians 1:16 -- "For by Him (ἐν αὐτῷ) instrumental use) all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities -- all things have been created by Him (δι' αὐτοῦ) and for Him."

(3) All things are created by the agency of the Holy Spirit

Genesis 1:2 -- "And the earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep; and the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters.

Job 26:13 -- "By His Spirit the heavens are made beautiful."

Psalms 104:30 -- "Thou dost send forth Thy Spirit, they (the animals) are created; And thou dost renew the face of the ground."

d. Creation gives to all created beings a distinct, yet dependent, existence.

When God created, He brought into existence something that was not Himself. His creatures are created beings they have an existence distinct from His. His creatures are created beings; they are totally dependent on Him for their existence.

e. The concept of creation may be studied under distinct conceptions, which differ according to the use of primary or secondary efficiency and the employment of or non employment of preexisting materials.

- (1) Creation *ex nihilo* means the bringing into being that which is not God, using neither previously existing materials nor secondary causes. This is the primary sense of creation, in which God creates the original energy of the universe from nothing, or in which He creates spirits from nothing.
- (2) Immediate creation means the bringing into being of that which is not God, using previously existing materials, but not secondary causes. God creates form out of matter (or form in matter).
- (3) Mediate creation means the bringing into being of that which is not God, using both previously existing materials and secondary causes. God creates formed matter through creatures to whom He gives powers and abilities to reproduce His actions and to think His thoughts after Him, and to produce works of genuine sub creativity that reflect His goodness, His truth, and His beauty.

4. Theories that oppose the doctrine of creation

a. Dualism

This view holds to the eternity of God and the eternity of matter, and thus dismisses the idea of a creation without the use of previously existing matter.

But what is the problem with the eternity of matter? One problem is that it makes matter equally ultimate with God (in the ontological sense), in which case matter is self-sustaining. This appears to be contradicted by such Scriptures as Colossians 1:17, where Paul writes: "And He (Christ) is before all things, and by Him all things hold together (or endure)."

Of course, dualism could attempt to avoid the charge that it makes matter equally ultimate with God by arguing that matter can be viewed as being eternally dependent on God. But then we must ask the question, in what sense is matter dependent upon God? Is it dependent on God for its existence? Obviously not, if matter is eternal. Then what does "dependent" mean?

b. Emanationism

This view holds that the universe is of the same substance as God, and is the product of the overflow of the fullness of His being. Proposed by Plotinus, this view destroys the very idea of creation itself, and thereby does away with the Creator-creature distinction.

c. Creation from eternity

This view holds that, since there is no time with God, and since God created the universe with time or into time, therefore His initial act of creation must have occurred in eternity, and must therefore be eternal. Thus creation is an eternal act.

But what is an eternal act? Does it mean that God's initial act of creation has no effect for aeons before the coming into being of the matter energy complex, and then no effect afterwards? Or does it mean that God's initial act of creation is an eternal act of bringing into being the matter energy complex, thus ruling out any real beginning or ending of the universe? How then shall we understand Scriptural revelation, which speaks of a beginning and a consummation?

d. Naturalistic Evolutionism

This view holds to the eternity of matter. It contends that the appearances of the structured universe, of life, and of man are all products of natural forces operating randomly in time. It denies the necessity, the existence, and the meaning of a Creator.

B. Creation of the Unseen Spirit World

1. Statements of the Doctrine

The French Confession of Faith, Article 7, states:

We believe that God, in three co-working persons, by his power, wisdom, and incomprehensible goodness, created all things, not only the heavens and the earth and all that in them is, but also invisible spirits, some of whom have fallen away and gone into perdition, while others have continued in obedience. That the first, being corrupted by evil, are enemies of all good, consequently of the whole Church. The second, having been preserved by the grace of God, are ministers to glorify God's name, and to promote the salvation of His elect.

The Belgic Confession, Article 12, states:

He also created the angels good, to be his messengers and to serve his elect: some of whom are fallen from the excellency, in which God created them, into everlasting perdition; and the others have, by the grace of God, remained steadfast, and continued in their primitive state. The devils and evil spirits are so depraved that they are enemies of God and every good thing to the utmost of their power, as murderers watching to ruin the Church and every member thereof, and by their wicked stratagems to destroy all; and are therefore, by their own wickedness, adjudged to eternal damnation, daily expecting their horrible torments. Therefore, we reject and abhor the error of the Sadducees, who deny the existence of spirits and angels; and also that of the Manichees, who assert that the devils have their origin of themselves, and that they are wicked of their own nature, without having been corrupted.

The Second Helvetic Confession, Chapter 7, states:

Among all the creatures, the angels and men are most excellent. Touching angels, the Holy Scripture says, "Who maketh his angels spirits, his ministers a flaming fire" (Psa. 104:4); also, "Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?" (Heb. 1:14).

And the Lord Jesus himself testifies of the devil, saying, "He that hath been a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar and the father of lies" (John 8:44).

We teach, therefore, that some angels persisted in obedience, and were appointed unto the faithful service of God and men; and that others fell of their own accord, and ran headlong into destruction, and so became enemies to all good, and to all the faithful, etc.

2. Scriptural background to the doctrine

a. The unseen spirit world includes all angelic beings, who are created by God

Psalm 148:1 2, 5 -- "Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord from the heavens; Praise Him In the heights! Praise Him, all His angels; Praise Him, all His hosts! . . . Let them praise the name of the Lord, For He commanded and they were created."

I Kings 22:19 -- "And Micaiah said, 'Therefore, hear the word of the Lord, I saw the Lord sitting on His throne, and all the host of heaven standing by Him on His right and on His left.' "

Psalm 103:20-21 -- "Bless the Lord, you His angels, Mighty in strength, who perform His word, Obeying the voice of His Word! Bless the Lord, all you His hosts, You who serve Him, doing His will."

Colossians 1:16 -- "For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities -- all things have been created by Him and for Him."

b. Angelic beings are spirits (persons), and are incorporeal

Hebrew 1:13-14 -- "But to which of the angels has He ever said, 'Sit at my right hand, until I make mine enemies a footstool for Thy feet'? Are they not all ministering spirits, sent out to render service for the sake of those who will inherit salvation?"

Ephesians 6:12 -- "For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places."

c. Angelic beings are more powerful than human beings, but are finite

II Peter 2:9 11 -- "then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from temptation, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment for the day of judgment, and especially those who indulge the flesh in its corrupt desires and despise authority. Daring, self willed, they do not tremble when they revile angelic majesties, whereas angels who are greater in might and power do not bring a reviling judgment against them before the Lord."

Matthew 24:26 -- "But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone."

I Peter 1:10-12 -- "As to this salvation, the prophets who prophesied of the grace that would come to you made careful search and inquiry, seeking to know what person or time the Spirit of Christ within them was indicating as He predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow. It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves, but you, in these things which now have been announced to you thru those who preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven -- things into which angels long to look."

d. Angelic beings are classified as good and evil

(1) Good angels

(a) Archangels (ἀρχάγγελος)

Jude 9 -- "But Michael the archangel, when he disputed with the devil and argued about the body of Moses, did not dare pronounce against him a railing judgment, but said, 'The Lord rebuke you.'"

Revelation 12:7 -- "And there was war in heaven, Michael and his angels waging war with the dragon. And the dragon and his angels waged war."

Daniel 10:13, 21 -- "But the prince of the kingdom of Persia was withstanding me for twenty one days; then behold, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I had been left there with the kings of Persia However, I will tell you what is inscribed in the writing of truth. Yet there is no one who stands firmly with me against these forces except Michael your prince."

Daniel 8:16 -- "And I heard the voice of a man between the banks of Ulal, and he called out and said, 'Gabriel, give this man an understanding of the vision.' " (Note: although Gabriel is not explicitly called an archangel, yet he appears to be viewed as one)

Daniel 9:21 22 -- "While I was still speaking in prayer, then the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision previously, came to me in my extreme weariness about the time of the evening offering. And he gave me instruction and talked with me, and said, 'O Daniel, I have now come forth to give you insight with understanding.'"

Luke 1:19, 26 -- "And the angel answered and said to him, 'I am Gabriel, who stands in the presence of God; and I have been sent to speak to you, and to bring you this good news. Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city in Galilee, called Nazareth,'"

Revelation 8:2 -- "And I saw the seven angels who stand before God; and seven trumpets were given to them." (perhaps these are also archangels)

(b) Cherubim (כְּרֻבִים)

Genesis 3:24 -- "So He drove the man out; and at the east of the garden of Eden He stationed the cherubim, and the flaming sword which turned every direction, to guard the way to the tree of life."

Exodus 25:18 22 -- "And you shall make two cherubim of gold, make them of hammered work at the two ends of the mercy seat. And make one cherub at one end and one cherub at the other

end; and you shall make the cherubim of one piece with the mercy seat at its two ends. And the cherubim shall have their wings spread upward, covering the mercy seat with their wings and facing one another; the faces of the cherubim are to be turned toward the mercy seat. And you shall put the mercy seat on top of the ark, and in the ark you shall put the testimony which I shall give to you. And there I will meet with you; and from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubim which are upon the ark of the testimony, I will speak to you about all that I will give you in commandment for the sons of Israel."

Psalm 99:1 -- "The Lord reigns, let the peoples tremble; He is enthroned above the cherubim, let the earth shake!" (also Psalm 80:1)

Hebrew 9:3-5 -- "And behind the second veil, there was a tabernacle which is called the Holy of Holies, having a golden altar of incense and the ark of the covenant covered on all sides with gold, in which was a golden jar holding the manna, and Aaron's rod which budded, and the tablets of the covenant. And above it were the cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy seat; but of these things we cannot now speak in detail."

(c) Seraphim (שֶׁרָפִים)

Isaiah 6:1-7

- 1 In the year of King Uzziah's death, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, lofty and exalted, with the train of His robe filling the temple.
- 2 Seraphim stood above Him, each having six wings; with two he covered his face, and two he covered his feet, and with two he flew.
- 3 And one called out to another and said, 'Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord of hosts, The whole earth is full of His glory.'
- 4 And the foundations of the threshold trembled at the voice of him who called out, while the temple was filling with smoke.
- 5 Then I said, 'Woe is me, for I am ruined! Because I am a man of unclean lips, And I live among a people of unclean lips; For my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts.'
- 6 Then one of the seraphim flew to me, with a burning coal in his hand which he had taken from the altar with tongs.
- 7 And he touched my mouth with it and said, 'Behold, this has touched your lips; and your iniquity is taken away, and your sin is forgiven.'

(d) Principalities, powers, thrones, dominions

Ephesians 3:8 10 -- "To me, the very least of all saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unfathomable riches of Christ, and to bring to light what is the administration of the mystery which for ages has been hidden in God, who created all things; in order that the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known through the church to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenly places."

Colossians 1:16 -- "For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities -- all things have been created by Him and for Him."

Ephesians 1:19 21 -- "These are in accordance with the working of the strength of His might which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age, but also in the one to come."

I Peter 3:22 -- "(Jesus Christ) who is at the right hand of God, having gone into heaven, after angels and authorities and powers had been subjected to Him."

(2) Evil angels

(a) Satan

Genesis 3:1 5 -- "Now the serpent was more crafty than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said to the woman, 'Indeed, has God said, 'You shall not eat from any tree of the garden'?' And the woman said to the serpent, 'From the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat; but from the fruit of the tree which is in the middle of the garden, God has said, 'You shall not eat from it or touch it, lest you die.' ' And the serpent said to the woman, 'You surely shall not die! For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.'"

John 8:44 -- "You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature; for he is a liar, and the father of lies."

I John 3:8 -- "the one who practices sin is of the devil; for the devil has sinned from the beginning. The Son of God appeared for this purpose, that He might destroy the works of the devil."

Ephesians 2:1-2 -- "And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience."

Matthew 25:41 -- "Then He will also say to those on His left, 'Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels;'"

Revelation 12:9-10 -- "And the great dragon was thrown down, the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him. And I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, 'Now the salvation, and the power, and the kingdom of our God and the authority of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren has been thrown down, who accuses them before our God day and night.'"

Revelation 20:1-3, 7-10 -- "And I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold of the dragon, the serpent of old, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years, and threw him into the abyss, and shut it and sealed it over him, so that he should not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were completed; after these things he must be released for a short time And when the thousand years are completed, Satan will be released from his prison, and will come out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together for the war; the number of them is like the sand of the seashore. And they came up on the broad plain of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city, and fire came down from heaven and devoured them. And the devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are also; and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever."

(b) The other fallen angels

II Peter 2:4 -- "For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell (ζόφου) and committed them to pits of darkness (ταρταρώσας)

Jude 6 -- "And angels who did not keep their own domain, but abandoned their proper abode, He has kept in eternal bonds under darkness for the judgment of the great day."

(c) Evil spirits, demons

Mark 1:34 -- "And He healed many who were ill with various diseases, and cast out many demons; and He was not permitting the demons to speak, because they knew who He was."

James 2:19 -- "You believe that God is one. You do well; the demons also believe, and shudder."

Matthew 8:31 -- "And the demons began to entreat Him, saying, 'If You are going to cast us out, send us Into the herd of swine.'"

Matthew 12:22 -- "Then there was brought to Him a demon possessed man who was blind and dumb, and He healed him, so that the dumb man spoke and saw."

e. The good angels perform a variety of services for God and His people

Psalms 104:20-21 -- "Bless the Lord, you His angels, Mighty in strength, who perform His word, Obeying the voice of His word! Bless the Lord, all you His hosts, You who serve Him, doing His will."

Hebrews 1:13-14 -- "But to which of the angels has He ever said, 'Sit at My right hand, until I make Thine enemies a footstool for Thy feet'? Are they not all ministering spirits, sent out to render service for the sake of those who will Inherit salvation?"

Psalms 34:7 -- "The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear Him, and rescues them."

Luke 16:22 -- "Now it came about that the poor man died and he was carried away by the angels to Abraham's bosom;"

Luke 15:10 -- "In the same way, I tell you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents."

Matthew 18:10 -- "See that you do not despise one of these little ones, for I say to you, that their angels in heaven continually behold the face of My Father who is in heaven."

Revelation 5:11-12 -- "And I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne and the living creatures and the elders; and the number of them was myriads of myriads, and thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice, 'Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing.'"

f. Satan and the evil angels have power to perform a variety of disservices to God and His people

THE POWER OF SATAN

a. Scriptures which speak of Satan's powers

Genesis 3:1-5 -- "Now the serpent was more crafty than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said to the woman, 'Indeed, has God said, 'You shall not eat from any tree of the garden?' And the woman said to the serpent, 'From the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat; but from the fruit of the tree which is in the middle of the garden, God has said, "You shall not eat from it or touch it, lest you die." ' And the serpent said to the woman, 'You surely shall not die! For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.' "

Satan is very crafty and can deceive even unfallen human beings by getting them to question God and believe and act upon a lie (Note II Corinthians 11:3 -- "But I am afraid, lest as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds should be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ.").

Genesis 3:13 -- "Then the Lord God said to the women, 'What Is this you have done?' And the woman said, 'The serpent deceived me, and I ate.' "

Satan can deceive unfallen human beings.

Genesis 3:15 -- "And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, and you shall bruise him on the heel."

Satan will be able to bruise Christ on the heel, and will do so.

I Chronicles 21:1 -- "Then Satan stood up against Israel and moved David to number Israel."

Satan can Influence a believer (in this case, David) to do sinful things (Note verses 7-8 -- "And God was displeased with this thing, so He struck Israel. And David said to God, 'I have sinned greatly, in that I have done this thing. But now, please take away the iniquity of Thy servant, for I have done very foolishly.' ")

Job 1:6 -- "Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, Satan also came among them."

Satan can come among the sons of God, even at times of worship (Note verse 5 -- "And it came about, when the days of feasting had completed their cycle, that Job would send and consecrate them, rising up early in the morning and offering burnt offerings according to the number of them all; for Job said, 'Perhaps my sons have sinned and cursed God in their hearts.' Thus Job did continually.")

Job 1:7 -- "And the Lord said to Satan, 'From where do you come?' Then Satan answered the Lord and said, 'From roaming about on the earth and walking around on it.' "

Satan can roam where he wishes on earth.

Job 1:11 -- "But put forth Thy hand now and touch all that he has; he will surely curse Thee to Thy face."

Satan can incite God to test a believer, by bringing proximately undeserved ruin upon that believer.

Job 1:12 -- "Then the Lord said to Satan, 'Behold, all that he has is in your power, only do not put forth your hand on him.' So Satan departed from the presence of the Lord.

Satan can be given permission by God to do what he wishes to a believer's possessions, in a testing situation (a situation in which God is testing and proving and purifying and strengthening the faith of His child).

Job 1:14-15 -- "that a messenger came to Job and said, 'The oxen were plowing and the donkeys feeding beside them, and the Sabeans attacked and took them. They also slew the servants with the edge of the sword, and I alone have escaped to tell you.' "

Satan can influence unbelievers to take the possessions (in this case, cattle) of believers by force, and to kill human beings in the process.

Job 1:16 -- "While he was still speaking, another also came and said, 'The fire of God fell from heaven and burned up the sheep and the servants and consumed them; and I alone have escaped to tell you.' "

Satan can bring down fire from the sky (lightning?), and can kill cattle and human beings with it.

Job 1:17 -- "While he was still speaking, another also came and said, 'The Chaldeans formed three bands and made a raid on the camels and took them and slew the servants with the edge of the sword; and I alone have escaped to tell you.' "

Satan can influence unbelievers to take the cattle of believers by force, and to kill human beings in the process.

Job 1:18-19 -- "While he was still speaking, another also came and said, 'Your Sons and your daughters were eating and drinking wine in their oldest brother's house, and behold, a great wind came from across the wilderness and struck the four corners of the house, and it fell on the young people and they died; and I alone have escaped to tell you.' "

Satan can bring great winds to destroy buildings and human beings, even the children of believers.

Job 2:1 -- "Again there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan also came among them to present himself before the Lord."

Satan came among the sons of God, even at times of worship.

Job 2:2 -- "And the Lord said to Satan, 'Where have you come from?' Then Satan answered the Lord and said, 'From roaming about in the earth, and walking around on it.' "

Satan can roam where he wishes on the earth.

Job 2:3 4 -- "And the Lord said to Satan, 'Have you considered My servant Job? For there is no one like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man fearing God and turning away from evil, And he still holds fast his Integrity, although you Incited Me against him, to ruin him without cause.' And Satan answered the Lord and said, 'Skin for skin! Yes, all that a man has he will give for his life.' "

Satan can incite God to test a believer, by allowing Satan to bring proximately undeserved ruin upon that believer.

Job 2:6 -- "So the Lord said to Satan, 'Behold, he is in your power only spare his life.' "
Satan can be given permission by God to do what he wishes to a believer's body (in this case, short of killing him), in a testing situation.

Job 2:7 -- "Then Satan went out from the presence of the Lord, and smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head."
Satan can inflict painful sores upon the body of a believer.

Job, chapters 3, 7, 9, and 40:6-8 -- Satan, by means of destruction of a believer's possessions and infliction of painful sores upon a believer's body, can influence the believer to become despondent and very gloomy; and to despair of life, complain against God, and even condemn God.

Zechariah 3:1 -- "Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to accuse him."
Satan can accuse believers, even when they are standing before the Lord.

Matthew 4:1 -- Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil."
Satan can tempt the Lord Jesus Christ, the sinless God-man, to commit sin.

Matthew 4:3 -- "And the tempter came and said to Him, 'If you are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread.' "
Satan can communicate a temptation in a specific form.

Matthew 4:5 -- "Then the devil took him into the holy city; and he stood him on the pinnacle of the temple."
Satan can take someone to another place in order to tempt him.

Matthew 4:8 -- "Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain, and showed him all the kingdoms of the world, and their glory."
Satan can take someone to another place in order to tempt him, and can cause him to see visions in order to tempt him.

Matthew 4:9 -- "and he said to him, 'All these things will I give you, if you fail down and worship me.' "
Satan can tempt even the Lord Jesus Christ to worship him.

Matthew 12:24 -- "But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, 'This man casts out demons only by Beelzebul the ruler of the demons.'"
Satan has power over the demons, to rule over them.

Mark 4:15 -- "And these are the ones who are beside the road where the word is sown; and when they hear, immediately Satan comes and takes away the word which has been sown in them."
Satan can take away the Word of God from those who have heard it.

Luke 4:6 -- "And the devil said to Him, 'I will give You all this domain and its glory; for it has been handed over to me, and I give it to whomever I wish.' "

Satan presently rules over the kingdoms of the world, and can give their glory to whomever he wishes.

Luke 10:1.7-18 -- "And the seventy returned with joy, saying, 'Lord, even the demons are subject to us in your name.' And He said to them, 'I was watching Satan fall from heaven like lightning.' "

Satan is Impotent before the almighty power of God, and cannot in the face of that power maintain his hold over human beings whom he possesses.

Luke 13:16 -- "And this woman, a daughter of Abraham as she is, whom Satan has bound for eighteen long years, should she not have been released from this bond on the Sabbath day?"

Satan can possess human beings and hold them in bondage and illness for many years (verse 11 -- "And behold, there was a woman who for eighteen years had had a sickness caused by a spirit; and she was bent double, and could not straighten up at all"), but he is impotent before the almighty power of God (verses 12-13).

Luke 22:3 -- "And Satan entered into Judas who was called Iscariot, belonging to the number of the twelve."

Satan can take possession of an unbeliever, and can Influence him to commit heinously evil sins (verses 4-6 -- "And he went away and discussed with the chief priests and officers how he might betray Him to them. And they were delighted, and agreed to give him money. And he consented, and began seeking a good opportunity to betray Him to them apart from the multitude.").

Luke 22:31 32 -- "Simon, Simon, behold Satan has demanded permission to sift you like wheat; but I have prayed for you, that your faith may not fall; and you, when once you have turned again, strengthen your brothers."

Satan can ask God permission to tempt believers, but Jesus Christ Intercedes for them, so that their faith will not fail.

John 8:44 -- "You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature; for he is a liar, and the father of lies."

Satan can influence unbelievers to do what he wishes them to do. He can murder, but he cannot speak the truth, for he is the father of lies.

John 12:31, 16:11 -- "Now judgment is upon this world; now the ruler of this world shall be cast out." . . . "and concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world has been judged."

Satan rules the world, but is judged by Christ's death. His power is limited, and will surely come to an end.

John 13:2 -- "And during supper, the devil having already put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon, to betray Him,"

Satan can Influence an unbeliever to commit heinously evil sins.

John 13:27 -- "And after the morsel, Satan then entered into him. Jesus therefore said to him, 'What you do, do quickly.'"

Satan can take possession of an unbeliever, and can influence him to commit heinously evil sins (verse 21 -- "When Jesus had said this, He became troubled in spirit, and testified, and said, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, that one of you will betray me.'").

Acts 5:3 -- "But Peter said, 'Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit, and to keep back some of the price of the land?' "

Satan can influence a believer (at least a professing believer) to commit sins, even the sin of lying about a gift to God.

Acts 10:38 -- "You know of Jesus of Nazareth, how God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit and with power, and how He went about doing good, and healing all who were oppressed by the devil; for God was with Him."

Satan can oppress human beings with various types of illness, but he is impotent against the almighty power of God.

Acts 26:18 -- "To open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God, in order that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me."

Satan has dominion and power over unbelievers.

Romans 16:20 -- "And the God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet."

I Corinthians 7:5 -- "Stop depriving one another, except by agreement for a time that you may devote yourselves to prayer, and come together again lest Satan tempt you because of your lack of self control."

Satan can tempt married believers who are weak in self control to commit adultery during periods of continence for the purpose of prayer (in connection with fasting).

II Corinthians 2:11 -- "in order that no advantage be taken of us by Satan; for we are not ignorant of his schemes."

Satan can gain an advantage over believers who do not forgive those who repent, and do not reaffirm their love for them.

II Corinthians 4:4 -- "in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving, that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is in the image of God."

Satan ("the god of this world") can blind the minds of unbelievers who hear the gospel.

II Corinthians 11:14 -- "And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light."

Satan can disguise himself as an angel or messenger of light.

II Corinthians 12:7 -- "And because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, for this reason, to keep me from exalting myself, there was given me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to buffet me to keep me from exalting myself."

Satan can buffet believers with thorns in the flesh, by God's permission (God intending it for good, to humble them).

Ephesians 2:2 -- "In which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience."

Satan ("prince of the power of the air") is now working in unbelievers, influencing them toward disobedience.

Ephesians 4:27 -- "And do not give the devil an opportunity."

Satan can be given opportunity to accomplish his purposes by believers who do not control their anger. (verse 26 -- "Be angry, and yet do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger,")

Ephesians 6:11 33 -- "Put on the full armor of God, that you may be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places."

Satan schemes to overthrow and defeat believers by causing them to stumble and fall into sin.

Ephesians 6:16 -- "In addition to all, taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming missiles of the evil one."

Satan ("the evil one") can hurl flaming missiles of doubt and unbelief at believers.

I Thessalonians 2:18 -- "For we wanted to come to you I, Paul, more than once and Satan thwarted us."

Satan can thwart the plans of believers to minister to other believers.

I Thessalonians 3:5 -- "For this reason, when I could endure it no longer, I also sent to find out about your faith, for fear that the tempter might have tempted you, and our labor should be in vain."

Satan ("the tempter") can tempt those who profess to be Christians to depart from the Christian faith and to return to the world.

II Thessalonians 2:9 -- "that is, the one whose coming is in accord with the activity of Satan, with all power and signs and false wonders."

Satan can produce signs and false wonders through the Man of Lawlessness in the end time.

I Timothy 3:7 -- "And he must have a good reputation with those outside the church, so that he may not fall into reproach and the snare of the devil."

Satan can trap bishops (or overseers) who do not have a good reputation among unbelievers.

II Timothy 2:25 26 -- "with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition; if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth, and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, having been held captive by him to do his will."

Satan holds captive unbelievers, and influences them to do his will.

Hebrew 2:14 -- "Since then the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil;"

Satan can put human beings to death, and can therefore hold them in slavery through their fear of death; but he is powerless to hold believers in slavery, because Christ has removed any necessity of the fear of death by bearing our sins on the cross, and by defeating death through His resurrection. Satan can still put believers to death (but only by God's permission), but he cannot kill them forever, or hold them in death for ever.

James 4:7 -- "Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you."

Satan can be resisted and made to flee from believers; not by those who are proud and wish to be friends of the world, but by those who humble themselves before God and who are friends of God.

I Peter 5:8 9 -- "Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls about like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. But resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world."

Satan prowls about and seeks to capture and destroy human beings, but he can be resisted by believers who humble themselves before God, cast all their anxiety upon Him, remain sober and on the alert, and remain firm in their faith.

Jude 9 -- "But Michael the archangel, when he disputed with the devil and argued about the body of Moses did not dare pronounce against him a railing Judgment, but said, 'The Lord rebuke you.' "

Satan can dispute difficult theological questions with archangels.

Revelation 2:10 -- "Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to cast some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life."

Satan can cause believers to be cast into prison to be tested as to their faithfulness, and he can cause them to suffer.

Revelation 12:7 -- "And there was war in heaven, Michael and his angels waging war with the dragon. And the dragon and his angels waged war,"

Satan ("the dragon") and his evil angels are going to wage war with Michael and his good angels in the sky.

Revelation 12:8 9 -- "and they were not strong enough, and there was no longer a place found for them in heaven. And the great dragon was thrown down, the serpent of old who is called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him."

Satan and his angels will be cast out of the sky to the earth. Satan is the deceiver of the whole world of unbelievers.

Revelation 12:10 -- "And I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, 'Now the salvation, and the power, and the kingdom of our God and the authority of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren has been thrown down, who accuses them before our God day and night.' "

Satan accuses believers before God day and night, but the time will come when he will be cast down.

Revelation 13:2 -- "And I saw a beast coming out of the sea, having ten horns and seven heads, and on his horns were ten diadems, and on his heads were blasphemous names."

Satan will give power and dominion and great authority to the beast.

Revelation 13:7 -- "And it was given to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them; and authority over every tribe and people and tongue and nation was given to him."

Satan will give power to the beast to make war with the saints and to physically overcome them; and he will give the beast authority over the whole earth.

Revelation 20:1 3 -- "And I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the abyss and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold of the dragon, the serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years, and threw him into the abyss,, and shut it and sealed it over him, so that he should not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were completed; after these things he must be released for a short time."

Satan will be restrained from deceiving the nations during the Millennial reign of the Lord Jesus Christ upon the earth.

Revelation 20:7 9 -- "And when the thousand years are completed, Satan will be released from his prison, and will come out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together for the war; the number of them is like the sand of the seashore. And they came up on the broad plain of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city, and fire came down from heaven and devoured them."

Satan will be released from restraint after the Millennium, and will deceive the nations, to gather them against the saints and against the city of Jerusalem for the final battle.

Revelation 20:10 -- "And the devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are also; and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever."

Satan will be cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, and will be tormented for ever, with no respite.

b. Summary of scriptural teaching concerning Satan's powers

(1) Satan rules the evil world system (the "world")

The "world" in this sense is not the world which God created and sustains, for God rules in that world. Nor does the "world" in this sense include the Church, for Christ rules in the Church. The "world" in this sense includes every place in which sin holds sway. Wherever sin holds

sway over the hearts of men, the structures of society, the disciplines of knowledge, and the categories of value (ethics, esthetics, politics, religion), there Satan rules.

Since a rule without power would be an empty formality, presumably Satan has power to exert influence toward moral evil in those places where he rules.

- (2) During the present age, Satan can roam wherever he pleases on the earth.
- (3) By God's permission, Satan can bring down fire from the sky and can raise winds to destroy buildings, animals, and human beings. Such fire and winds could doubtless destroy crops as well.
- (4) Satan can inflict various types of disease and illness upon human beings.
- (5) Satan has dominion and power over unbelievers, and can tempt them, can deceive them, can influence them to do his will, and can possess and control them.
- (6) Satan can blind the minds of those unbelievers who hear the gospel, and can take away God's Word from them.
- (7) Satan can tempt and influence believers to do evil things.
- (8) Satan can buffet believers with thorns in the flesh.

The thorn suggests something painful; it could refer to something physical, such as a diseased condition which made Paul's eyesight a painful difficulty, or something non physical, such as a severe temptation which Satan suggested to Paul again and again and again, and which caused Paul spiritual and emotional pain and distress.

- (9) Satan can assault believers with doubt and unbelief.

Since it is the shield of faith that can extinguish the flaming missiles of the evil one, it is probable that these missiles are missiles of doubt and unbelief. They may include other things as well, but faith would certainly seem to imply doubt and unbelief as the kinds of missiles about which Scripture is speaking.

- (10) Satan can accomplish his evil purposes through believers who are not careful in their conduct.
- (11) Satan can hinder believers in their plans to minister the Word of God.
- (12) By God's permission, Satan can cause believers to be cast into prison, to suffer, and to be put to death. Satan influences unbelievers and uses them as his instruments to do these things.
- (13) Satan can accuse believers before God of wrongdoing, and does so day and night.

NOTE: Nowhere in Scripture (and we have examined all 65 references to Satan in the Bible) is there any evidence or even any hint that Satan has the power to bring anything objectively real into existence; i.e., create anything real! He can distort natural processes and forces to destroy physical bodies, and can influence the minds, emotions, and wills of human beings to destroy souls, but there is no evidence that he can create something into existence.

However, having said this, we must hasten to reaffirm the truth that Satan has great and manifold powers for evil, and for destruction!

C. Creation of the Material World

1. What does Scripture mean by "creation"?

Three distinct conceptions of creation should be noted:

- a. *Ex nihilo* creation -- (literally, creation from nothing) -- the bringing into existence of that which did not previously exist, either in substance or in form.
- b. Immediate creation -- (i.e., direct creation) -- the bringing into existence of that which did not previously exist in form, employing previously existing substance, but not secondary causes.
- c. Mediate creation -- (i.e., indirect creation) -- the bringing into existence of that which did not exist in form, employing both previously existing substance and secondary causes.

2. What did God create?

- a. What kinds of things, nonliving and living, did God create?

Scripture tells us that God created all things, including the heavens and the earth, light, the earth's atmosphere, the dry land, the oceans, land plants, fruit trees, the sun, moon, and stars, aquatic animals, birds, terrestrial animals, the Garden of Eden, human beings, and the spirit world.

Scripture does not specify the creation of atoms or subatomic particles, microscopic organisms, sea plants, amphibians, wingless birds, flying insects, disease causing bacteria or viruses or funguses or parasites, galaxies, quasars, or black holes.

The Bible simply tells us that God created all things; and then breaks down the "all things" into general categories of nonliving and living things.

- b. What are the "kinds" or basic categories of living things that God originally created?

The basic categories of living things specified in the original account of creation (Genesis 1:2) include the following:

- (1) seed yielding herbs (Genesis 1:11-12)
- (2) seed containing fruit trees (Genesis 1:11-12)
- (3) aquatic animals (Genesis 1:21)
- (4) winged birds (Genesis 1:21)
- (5) cattle (Genesis 1:24-25)
- (6) creeping land animals (Genesis 1:24-25)

- (7) living animals of the ground (burrowing land animals?) (Genesis 1:24-25)
- (8) human beings (even they are not specifically called a "kind") (Genesis 1:26, 2:7)

(Note the translation of all uses of "kind" and the analysis of the scientific classification level of these "kinds")

**QUICK TRANSLATION OF BIBLICAL PASSAGES IN WHICH
THE BIBLICAL "KIND APPEARS (ALL CASES)**

- Gen. 1:11 -- "And God said, Let the earth cause vegetation to sprout forth; the herb yielding seed, the fruit tree producing fruit whose seed it in it, according to its kind upon the earth. And it was so."
- Gen. 1:12 -- "And the earth produced vegetation, the herb yielding seed according to its kinds and the tree producing fruit whose seed is in it, according to its kinds and God saw that it was good."
- Gen. 1:21 -- "And God created great aquatic animals, and every living being that moves, which the waters multiplied according to their kinds and every winged bird, according to its kinds and God saw that it was good."
- Gen. 1:24 -- "And God said, Let the earth bring forth the living being according to its kind. cattle and creeping animal and living animal of the earth, according to its kind. And it was so."
- Gen. 1:25 -- "And God created the living animal of the earth, according to its kind and the cattle, according to its kind and every creeping animal of the ground, according to its kind and God saw that it was good."
- Gen. 6:20 -- "From the bird, according to its kinds and from the cattle, according to its kind from every creeping animal of the ground according to its kinds; two of each shall enter unto you to preserve alive."
- Gen. 7:14 -- "And every living animal, according to its kind and every cattle, according to its kind and every creeping animal which creeps upon the earth, according to its kinds and every bird, according to its kinds and every winged bird."
- Lev. 11:14 -- "And the vulture, and the kite, according to its kind."
- 11:15 -- "Every raven, according to its kind."
- 11:16 -- "And the owl, and the nighthawk, and the cuckoo, and the hawk, according to its kinds."
- 11:19 -- "And the stork, the heron, according to its kind and the lapwing, and the bat."
- 11:22 -- "These from among them ye shall eat: the locust, according to its kind and the bald locust, according to its kinds and the beetle, according to its kinds and the grasshopper, according to its kinds."
- 11:29 -- "And these are unclean to you among the creeping things which creep upon the earth: the weasel (mole?), and the mouse, and the tortoise, according to its kind."
- Deut. 14:13 -- "And the glade, and the kite, and the vulture, according to its kind."
- 14:14 -- "And every raven, according to its kind."
- 14:15 -- "And the owl, and the nighthawk, and the cuckoo, and the hawk, according to its kinds."
- 14:18 -- "And the stork, and the heron, according to its kind and the lapwing, and the bat."
- Ezek 47:10 -- "And it shall come to pass, that fishermen shall stand upon it, from Engedi even to Eneglaim; they shall be a place to spread out nets; their fish shall be according to its kind as the fish of the great sea, exceedingly many."

ANALYSIS OF THE TAXONOMIC LEVEL (TECHNICAL SENSE) OF THE BIBLICAL "KINDS"

<u>Scripture</u>	<u>Nature of Kind</u>	<u>Taxonomic Level</u>	<u>Scientific Group Name</u>
Gen. 1:11	Fruit trees	Some Orders of a Subclass	Dicotyledoneae (subclass)
Gen. 1:12	Herbs	Some Orders of two Subclasses	Dicotyledoneae and Monocotyledoneae (mostly herbs)
Gen. 1:21	Aquatic animals	Several Phyla; a number of Classes	Aves
Gen. 1:21	Birds	Class	
Gen. 1:24	Terrestrial animals	Several Phyla; a number of Classes	
Gen. 1:24	Cattle	Family	Bovidae
Gen. 1:24	Creeping animals	A number of Classes of different Phyla	
Lev. 11:14	Kite	Family	Elaninae
Lev. 11:15	Raven	Genus	Corvus
Lev. 11:16	Hawk	Family	Accipitrinae (true hawks)
Lev. 11:19	Heron	Family	Ardeidae
Lev. 11:22	Locust	Family	Locustidae
Lev. 11:22	Bald Locust	Species (?)	
Lev. 11:22	Beetle	Order	Coleoptera
Lev. 11:22	Grasshopper	Suborder or Superfamily (includes two families)	Acridiidae and Locustidae (families) (probably former)
Lev. 11:29	Tortise	Order	Chelonia
Deut. 14:13	Vulture	Family	Cathartidae
Ezek. 47:10	Fish	Superclass	Pisces

3. When did God create?

a. The Genesis days of creation

Elsewhere (IBRI Report No. 12) the author of these class notes has analyzed the usage of the word "day" in Scripture, and has opted for the meaning which specifies that the six days of creation in Genesis 1-2 are particular 24 hour periods on which God pronounced his handiwork in one or more specific aspects essentially complete and good, and that these 24 hour periods fall into large aspect periods of creative activity comprising many 24 hour units of time.

Employing this proposal, a diagram of one possible structuring of the creation days and the creative events of Genesis 1 and 2 has been constructed and included in these notes (next page).

b. The age of the universe and of the earth

In view of the above mentioned proposal, the current scientific claim that the universe is some 10-20 billion years old, and that the earth is 4.5 billion years old, poses no problem as far as a correlation of the data from special revelation and the data from general revelation. Such an attempted correlation may be seen at the bottom of the diagram (next page).

4. How did God create?

What things did God create ex nihilo what things did He create immediately, and what things did He create mediate?

The following proposal should be read with one eye on the diagram (next page).

A Proposed Structuring of the Creative Events of Genesis 1-2*

Creative Period	Creation Day	Creative Event	Reference
1 st	Pre-I	(1) EX NIHILO CREATION of primal matter-energy (2) MEDIATE CREATION of the structured universe (3) MEDIATE CREATION of our Milky Way Galaxy	1:1 1:1 1:1
2 nd	Day I	(4) MEDIATE CREATION of our solar system (thus light, and thus day and night)	1:2-5
3 rd	Day II	(5) MEDIATE CREATION of earth's atmosphere, and the subsequent separation of water above the surface of earth from water covering earth's surface	1:6-8
4 th	Day III	(6) MEDIATE CREATION of dry land, by the structuring of earth's surface into lands and seas (7) IMMEDIATE CREATION of land plants begins	1:9-10 1:11-13
5 th	Day IV	(8) MEDIATE CREATION of the appearance of sun, moon, and stars in the sky (as viewed from earth)	1:14-19
6 th	Day V	(9) IMMEDIATE CREATION of aquatic animals and of birds begins	1:20-23
7 th	Day VI	(10) IMMEDIATE CREATION of terrestrial animals begins (11) IMMEDIATE CREATION of the Garden of Eden (12) EX NIHILO CREATION of Man's soul, IMMEDIATE CREATION of Man's body (13) EX NIHILO CREATION of Woman's soul, IMMEDIATE CREATION of Woman's body	1:24-25 2:8 1:26-27 2:7 1:27 2:19-23
---	Day VII	(14) Cessation of IMMEDIATE CREATION; MEDIATE CREATION continues to the present	2:1-3

* Note: This table is from Robert J. Dunzweiler, *Course Syllabus for Evolution and Special Creation*.

D. Creation of Mankind

1. Statements of the Doctrine

The Belgic Confession, Article 14, states:

We believe that God created man out of the dust of the earth, and made and formed him after his own image and likeness, good, righteous, and holy, capable in all things to will agreeably to the will of God.

The Scotch Confession of Faith, Article 2, states:

We confesse and acknowledge this our God to have created man, to wit, our first father Adam to his owin image and similitude, to whome he gave wisdom, lordship, justice, free will, and cleir knowledge of himselfe, sa that in the haul nature of man there cult be noted no imperfectioun.

The Irish Articles of Religion, Article 21, states:

Man being at the beginning created according to the Image of God (which consisted especially in the wisdom of his mind and the true holiness of his free will), had the covenant of the law ingrafted in his heart, whereby God did promise unto him everlasting life upon condition that he performed entire and perfect obedience unto his Commandments, according to that measure of strength wherewith he was endued in his creation, and threatened death unto him if he did not perform the same.

The Westminster Confession of Faith, Chapter 4, Section 2, states:

After God had made all other creatures, he created man, male and female, with reasonable and immortal souls, endued with knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness, after his own image, having the law of God written in their hearts, and power to fulfill it; and yet under a possibility of transgressing, being left to the liberty of their own will, which was subject unto change. Beside this law written in their hearts, they received a command not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil; which while they kept they were happy in their communion with God, and had dominion over the creatures.

2. The distinction between mankind and the animals

a. According to Scripture, there are some similarities between human beings and animals, and some dissimilarities. The similarities may be seen in the common derivation of their bodily material, the common origin of their biological life, and the common result of their creation in terms of becoming living beings. The dissimilarities may be seen in the uniqueness of human beings, both as creatures made in the image of God, and as rulers over all other living things.

These similarities and dissimilarities are noted below.

Biblical Similarities and Dissimilarities between Man and the Animals

Biblical Similarities

A. Derivation of bodily material

1. Animals - Genesis 2:19 -- "And out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the sky."

מִן־הָאָדָמָה יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים וַיַּצֵּר

2. Man - Genesis 2:7 -- "Then the Lord God formed man of dust from the ground."

מִן־הָאָדָמָה עָפָר אֶת־הָאָדָם יְהוָה וַיַּצֵּר

B. Origin of biological life

1. Animals - Genesis 6:17 -- "And behold, I even I am bringing the flood of water upon the earth, to destroy all flesh in which is the breath of life."

Genesis 7:13 15 -- "On the very same day Noah and Shem and Ham and Japheth, the Sons of Noah, and Noah's wife and the three wives of his Sons with them, entered the ark, they and every beast after its kind, and all the cattle after their kind, and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth after its kind, and every bird after Its kind, all sorts of birds. So they went Into the ark to Noah, by twos of all flesh in which was the breath of life."

מִכָּל־הַבֶּשֶׁר אֲשֶׁר־בּוֹ רוּחַ חַיִּים

Genesis 7:21-22 -- "And all flesh that moved on the earth perished, birds and cattle and beasts and every swarming thing that swarms upon the face of the earth, and all mankind; of all that was on the dry land, all in whose nostrils was the breath of the spirit of life, died."

2. man - Genesis 2:7 -- "Then the Lord God . . . breathed Into his nostrils the breath of life."

חַיִּים נְשָׁמָת בָּאֶפְיוֹ וַיִּפַּח

C. Resultant creation as a living being

1. Animals - Genesis 1:20 -- "Then God said, 'Let the waters teem with swarms of living creatures'"

Genesis 1:21 -- "And God created the great sea monsters, and every living creature that moves, with which the waters swarmed after their kind"

הַחַיָּה כָּל־נֶפֶשׁ

Genesis 1:24 -- "Then God said, 'Let the earth bring forth living creatures after their kind: cattle and creeping things and beasts of the earth after their kind'"

תּוֹצְאֹתֶיהָ נֶפֶשׁ הָאָרֶץ

2. Man - Genesis 2:7 -- " . . . and man became a living being."

חַיָּה לְנֶפֶשׁ הָאָדָם וַיְהִי

Biblical Dissimilarities

Genesis 1:26 27 -- "Then God said, 'Let us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.' And God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them."

b. According to the general scientific consensus, human beings are classified as follows:

Kingdom: animalia

Phylum: chordata

Subphylum: vertebrata

Class: mammalia

Subclass: eutheria

Order: primates

Suborder: anthropoidea

Family: hominidae

Genus: Australopithecus

Genus: Homo

Species: Homo habilis

Species: Homo erectus

Species: Homo sapiens

Subspecies: Homo sapiens steinhelmensis

Subspecies: Homo sapiens neanderthalensis

Subspecies: Homo sapiens soloensis

Subspecies: Homo sapiens rhodesiensis

Subspecies: Homo sapiens sapiens

3. The unity of mankind

Scripture teaches that all human beings are descended from one pair of ancestors, and that all races have come from a single source. This includes the Mongoloid, Caucasoid, Congoid, Capoid, and Australoid races.

Genesis 1:26 28 -- *Then God said, 'Let Us make man in Our Image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the

sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.' And God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. And God blessed them; and God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue It; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.' "

Romans 5:12, 19 -- "Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned -- . . . For as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the One the many will be made righteous."

I Corinthians 15:21-22 -- "For since by a man came death, by a man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all shall be made alive."

Acts 17:26 -- "and He made from one, every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined their appointed times, and the boundaries of their habitation,"

4. The antiquity of mankind

a. According to a *prima facie* reading of Genesis 5 and 11, the lists of persons from Adam to Noah and from Noah to Abraham look like enumerations of successive generations, framed in a chronological scheme.

However, an analysis of these lists turns up some curious features. A strict, non-gap reading of the Genesis 5 list shows Lamech dying five years before the Flood of Noah's time, and Methuselah dying in the very year of the Flood. Yet there is no indication in the record of their presence on the earth during the time Noah and his sons were building the ark and Noah was preaching of righteousness to his generation. In addition, a strict non-gap reading of the Genesis 11 list shows Shem (Noah's immediate son) living for 35 years after Abraham's death, which means that Abraham's great great-great-great-great-grandfather outlived him by 35 years! A non-gap reading also shows Salah (next in the list after Arphaxad) living three years after Abraham's death, which means that Abraham's great-great-great-great-great-grandfather outlived him by three years. A non-gap reading also shows Eber (next in the list after Salah) living 64 years after Abraham's death, which means that Abraham's great-great-great-great-grandfather outlived him by 64 years!

(these curiosities may be better grasped with the aid of the charts and diagrams on the following three pages)

b. In connection with the scriptural evidence for the antiquity of mankind, three shorter writings should be mentioned:

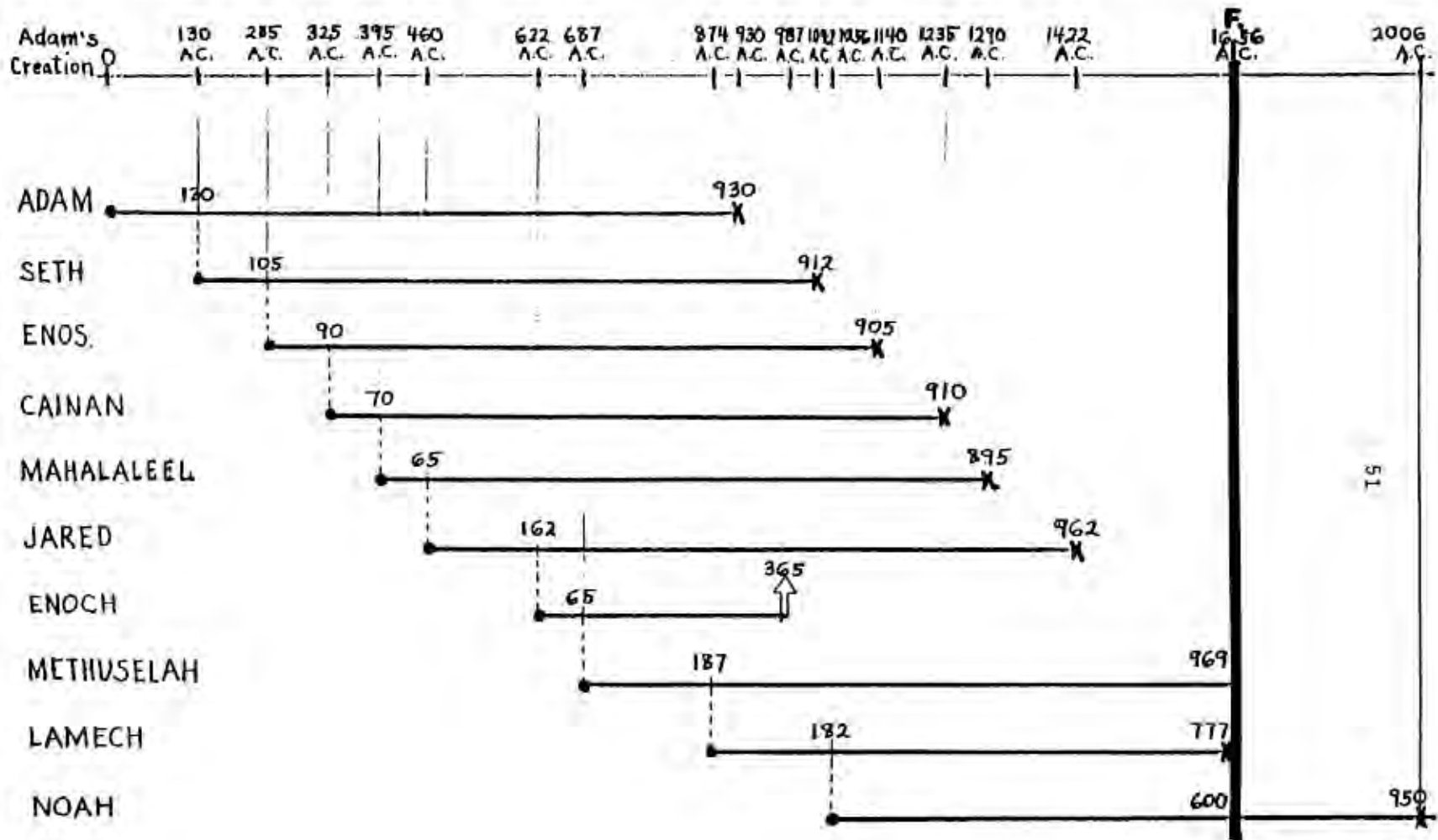
"Primeval Chronology" by William Henry Green (*Bibliotheca Sacra* 1890, reprinted most recently in *Genesis One and the Origin of the Earth* by Robert C. Newman and Herman Eckelmann)

"The Antiquity of Man" by Oswald T. Allis (*The Five Books of Moses*, 1949)

"On the Antiquity and the Unity of the Human Race" by Benjamin B. Warfield (*Princeton Theological Review*, 1911; reprinted in *Biblical and Theological Studies*, 1952)

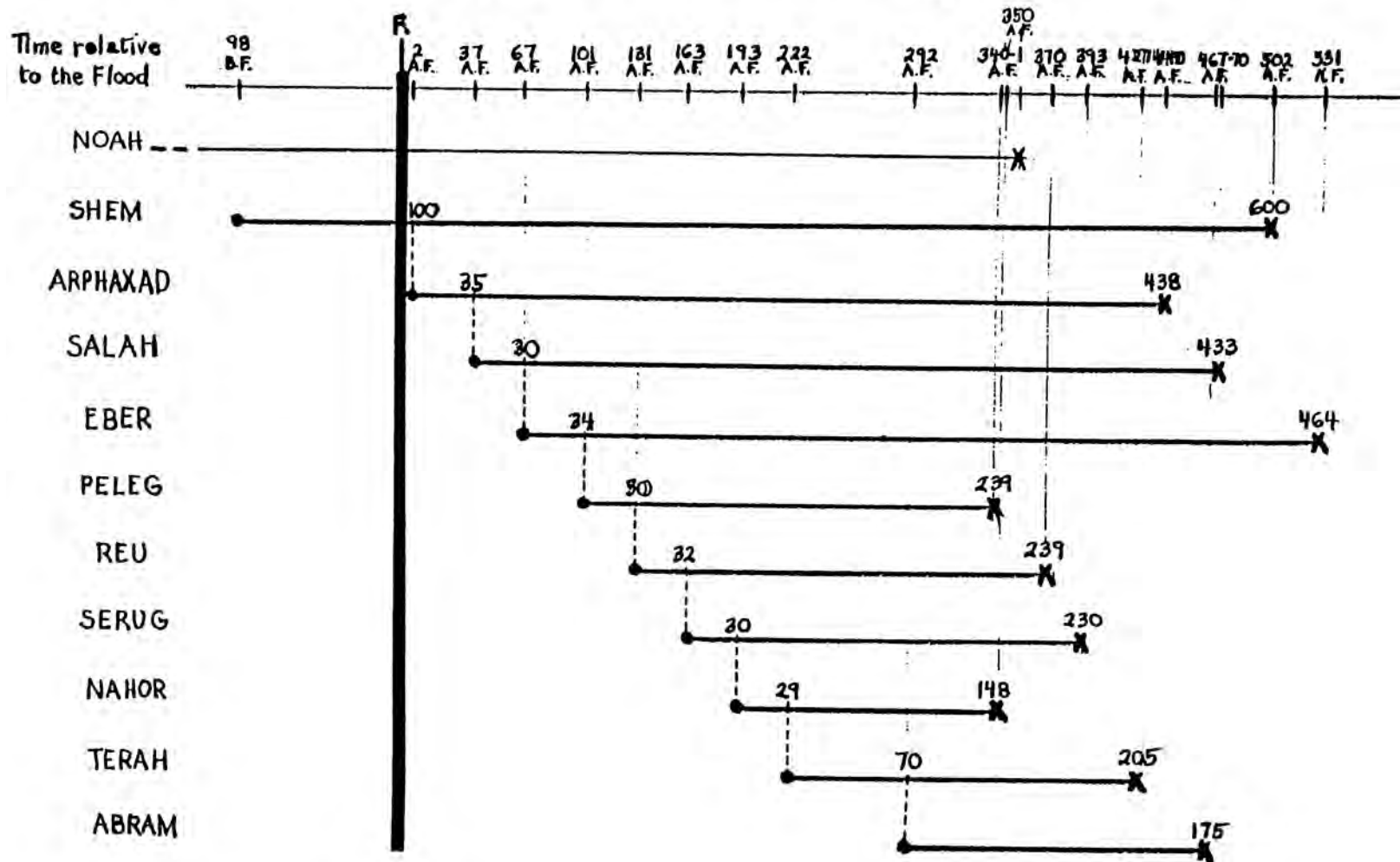
c. According to the proposals made in these writings, the genealogies of Genesis 5 and 11 are not lists of successive generations framed in a chronological scheme, but the records of lines of descent, with no indication of the length of time between individuals in these lines. Thus "son of" means descendant of, and "father of" means ancestor of. There could have been 1,000 years or 10,000 years or 100,000 years between individuals. The question of man's antiquity is therefore a scientific, not a biblical question.

Non-Gap Chronology of the Genesis 5 Genealogy — Adam to Noah



Scale - $\frac{1}{2}$ " = 25 yrs.

Non-Gap Chronology of the Genesis 11 Genealogy — Shem to Abram



GENESIS 5 GENEALOGY AND THE POSSIBILITY OF GAPS

No. in List	Name of Ancestor	Yrs. before becoming Ancestor	Terms expressing Relationship	Yrs. after becoming Ancestor	Total Age	Name of Descendent	Is a Gap Possible?
1	Adam	130	"he became the father of a child"	800	930	Seth	No "he called his name Seth"
2	Seth	105	"he became the father of Enosh"	807	912	Enosh	Yes
3	Enosh	90	"he became the father of Kenan"	815	905	Kenan	Yes
4	Kenan	70	"he became the father of Mahalalel"	840	910	Mahalalel	Yes
5	Mahalalel	65	"he became the father of Jared"	830	895	Jared	Yes
6	Jared	162	"he became the father of Enoch"	800	962	Enoch	Yes
7	Enoch	65	"he became the father of Methuselah"	300	365	Methuselah	Yes
8	Methuselah	187	"he became the father of Lamech"	782	969	Lamech	Yes
9	Lamech	182	"he became the father of a son"	595	777	Noah	No "he called his name Noah"
10	Noah	500	"Noah became the father of Shem, Ham, and Japheth"	450	950	Shem, Ham, Japheth	No Gen. 7:13-"Shem and Ham and Japheth the sons of Noah . . . entered the ark"

III. PROVIDENCE

A. Statements of the Doctrine

The *French Confession of Faith*, Article 8, states:

We believe that he not only created all things, but that he governs and directs them, disposing and ordaining by his sovereign will all that happens in the world; not that he is the author of evil, or that the guilt of it can be imputed to him, as his will is the sovereign and infallible rule of all right and justice; but he hath wonderful means of so making use of devils and sinners that he can turn to good the evil which they do, and of which they are guilty. And thus, confessing that the providence of God orders all things, we humbly bow before the secrets which are hidden to us, without questioning what is above our understanding; but rather making use of what is revealed to us in Holy Scripture for our peace and safety, inasmuch as God, who has all things in subjection to him, watches over us with a Father's care, so that not a hair of our heads shall fall without his will. And yet he restrains the devils and all our enemies, so that they can not harm us without his leave.

The *Belgic Confession*, Article 13, states:

We believe that the same God, after he had created all things, did not forsake them, or give them up to fortune or chance, but that he rules and governs them, according to his holy will, so that nothing happens in this world without his appointment; nevertheless, God neither is the author of, nor can be charged with, the sins which are committed. For his power and goodness are so great and incomprehensible, that he orders and executes his work in the most excellent and just manner even when the devil and wicked men act unjustly. And as to what he doth surpassing human understanding we will not curiously inquire into it further than our capacity will admit of; but with the greatest humility and reverence adore the righteous judgments of God which are hid from us, contenting ourselves that we are disciples of Christ, to learn only those things which he has revealed to us in His Word without transgressing these limits.

This doctrine affords us unspeakable consolation, since we are taught thereby that nothing can befall us by chance, but by the direction of our most gracious and heavenly Father, who watches over us with a paternal care, keeping all creatures so under his power that not a hair of our head (for they are all numbered), nor a sparrow, can fall to the ground, without the will of our Father, in whom we do entirely trust; being persuaded that he so restrains the devil and all our enemies that, without his will and permission, they can not hurt us.

The *Westminster Confession of Faith*, Chapter 5, Sections 1-4, states:

I. God, the great Creator of all things, doth uphold, direct, dispose, and govern all creatures, actions, and things, from the greatest even to the least, by his most wise and holy providence, according to his infallible foreknowledge and the free and immutable

counsel of his own will, to the praise of the glory of his wisdom, power, justice, goodness, and mercy.

II. Although in relation to the foreknowledge and decree of God, the first cause, all things come to pass immutably and infallibly, yet by the same providence he ordereth them to fall out, according to the nature of second causes, either necessarily, freely, or contingently.

III. God, in his ordinary providence, maketh use of means, yet is free to work without, above, and against them, at his pleasure.

IV. The almighty power, unsearchable wisdom, and infinite goodness of God so far manifest themselves in his providence that it extendeth itself even to the first fall, and all other sins of angels and men, and that not by a bare permission, but such as hath joined with it a most wise and powerful bounding, and otherwise ordering and governing of them, in a manifold dispensation, to his own holy ends; yet so as the sinfulness thereof proceedeth only from the creature, and not from God; who, being most holy and righteous, neither is nor can be the author or approver of sin.

The *Westminster Larger Catechism*, Question 18, states:

Q. 18. What are God's works of providence?

A. God's works of providence are his most holy, wise, and powerful preserving and governing all his creatures; ordering them, and all their actions, to his own glory.

Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology* Volume 1, pp. 575, 581 582, states:

God's works of providence are his most holy, wise, and powerful preserving and governing all his creatures and all their actions. Providence, therefore, includes preservation and government. By preservation is meant that all things out of God owe the continuance of their existence, with all their properties and powers, to the will of God . . . Providence includes not only preservation, but government. The latter includes the Ideas of design and control. it supposes an end to be attained, and the disposition and direction of means for its accomplishment. If God governs the universe He has some great end, Including an indefinite number of subordinate ends, towards which it is directed, and He must control the sequence of all events, so as to render certain the accomplishment of all his purposes.

Archibald A. Hodge, in his *Outlines of Theology* pp. 258 259, 262, states:

Providence, from *pro* and *video*, literally means foresight, and then a careful arrangement prepared beforehand for the accomplishment of predetermined ends. Turretin defines this term as in its widest sense including (a) foreknowledge, (b) foreordination, and (c) the efficacious administration of the thing decreed. In the technical theological as well as in the common usage of the word, however, it is restricted to the last sense, namely the execution by God of his eternal decree in time, by means of the second causes he has originated in creation. Foreordination gives the plan and is eternal, all comprehensive, and unchangeable. Creation gives the absolute commencement of things in time. Providence Includes the two great departments (a) of continued Preservation of all things as created,

and (b) of the continued Government of all things thus preserved, so that all the ends for which they were created, are infallibly accomplished.

Preservation is that continued exercise of the divine energy whereby the Creator upholds all his creatures in being, and in the possession of all those Inherent properties and qualities with which he endowed them at their creation, and of those also which they may subsequently have acquired by habit or development. That is, both the being, the attributes of every species, and the form and faculties of every individual are constantly preserved in being by God. .

.. God having from eternity absolutely decreed whatsoever comes to pass, and having in the beginning created all things out of nothing by the word of his power, and continuing subsequently constantly present to every atom of his creation, upholding all things in being and in the possession and exercise of all their properties, he also continually controls and directs the actions of all his creatures thus preserved, so that while he never violates the law of their several natures, he yet infallibly causes all actions and events singular and universal to occur according to the eternal and immutable plan embraced in his decree. There is a design in providence. God has chosen his great end, the manifestation of his own glory, but in order to that end he has chosen Innumerable subordinate ends; these are fixed; and he has appointed all actions and events in their several relations as means to those ends; and he continually so directs the actions of all creatures that all these general and special ends are brought to pass precisely at the time, by the means, and in the mode and under the conditions, which he from eternity proposed.

Louis Berkhof, in his *Systematic Theology*, pp. 166, 170-71, 175, states:

Providence may be defined as that continued exercise of the divine energy whereby the Creator preserves all His creatures, is operative in all that comes to pass in the world, and directs all things to their appointed end. This definition Indicates that there are three elements in providence, namely, preservation (*conservatio, sustentatio*) concurrence or cooperation (*concursus, co-operatio*), and government (*gubernatio*). . . .

Preservation may be defined as that continuous work of God by which He maintains the things which He created, together with the properties and powers with which He endowed them. . . .

Concurrence may be defined as the co operation of the divine power with all subordinate powers, according to the pre established laws of their operation, causing them to act and to act precisely as they do. . . .

The divine government may be defined as that continued activity of God whereby He rules all things teleologically so as to secure the accomplishment of the divine purpose.

Millard J. Erickson, in his *Christian Theology* Volume 1, pp. 387-388, 394 states:

While creation is God's originating work with respect to the universe, providence is his continuing relationship to it. By providence we mean the continuing action of God by which he preserves in existence the creation which he has brought into being, and guides it to his intended purposes for it. . . .

Providence may be thought of as having two aspects. One aspect is God's work of preserving his creation in existence, maintaining and sustaining it; this is generally called preservation or sustenance. The other is God's activity in guiding and directing the course of events to fulfill the purposes which he has in mind. This is termed government or providence proper. Preservation and government should not be thought of as sharply separate acts of God, but as distinguishable aspects of his unitary work.

Preservation is God's maintaining his creation in existence. It involves God's protection of his creation against harm and destruction, and his provision for the needs of the elements or members of the creation. . . .

By the government of God we mean his activity in the universe so that all its events fulfill his plan for it. As such, the governing activity of God of course broadly includes the matter which we have referred to as preservation. Here, however, the emphasis is more fully upon the purposive directing of the whole of reality and the course of history to the ends that God has in mind. It is the actual execution, within time, of his plans devised in eternity.

B. Scriptural Background to the Doctrine

1. Scripture background to Preservation

Deuteronomy 33:12, 26-29 -- "Of Benjamin he said, 'May the beloved of the Lord dwell in security by Him, who shields him all the day, and he dwells between His shoulders.'"

"There is none like the God of Jeshurun, who rides the heavens to your help, and through the skies in His majesty. The eternal God is a dwelling place, and underneath are the everlasting arms; and He drove out the enemy from before you, and said, 'Destroy!' So Israel dwells in security, the fountain of Jacob secluded, in a land of grain and new wine; His heavens also drop down dew. Blessed are you, O Israel; who is like you, a people saved by the Lord, who is the shield of your help, and the sword of your majesty! So your enemies shall cringe before you, and you shall tread upon their high places."

I Samuel 2:9 -- "He keeps the feet of His godly ones,"

Nehemiah 9:6 -- "Thou alone art the Lord.

Thou hast made the heavens,
The heaven of heavens with all their host,
The earth and all that is on it,
The seas and all that is in them.
Thou dost give life to all of them
And the heavenly host bows down before Thee."

Psalm 107:8 9 -- "Let them give thanks for the Lord for his lovingkindness,
And for His wonders to the sons of men!
For He has satisfied the thirsty soul,
And the hungry soul He has filled with what is good."

Psalm 127:1 -- "Unless the Lord builds the house,
They labor in vain who build it;
Unless the Lord guards the city,
The watchman keeps awake in vain."

Psalm 145:14-16 -- "The Lord sustains all who fall,
And raises up all who are bowed down.
The eyes of all look to Thee,
And Thou dost give them their food in due time.
Thou dost open Thy hand,
And dost satisfy the desire of every living thing."

Matthew 10:29 -- "Are not two sparrows sold for a cent? And yet not one of them
will fall to the ground apart from your Father."

Acts 17:28 -- "for in Him we live and move and exist, . . .

Colossians 1:17 -- "And He is before all things, and in Him all things hold
together."

Hebrews 1:3 -- "And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation
of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power."

2. Scriptural background to Concurrence

Genesis 45:4 8 -- "Then Joseph said to his brothers, 'Please come closer to me.'
And they came closer. And he said, 'I am your brother Joseph, whom you
sold into Egypt. And now do not be grieved or angry with yourselves,
because you sold me here; for God sent me before you to preserve life.
For the famine has been in the land these two years, and there are still
five years in which there will be neither plowing nor harvesting. And God
sent me before you to preserve for you a remnant in the earth, and to
keep you alive by a great deliverance. Now, therefore, it was not you who
sent me here, but God; and He has made me a father to Pharaoh and
lord of all his household and ruler over all the land of Egypt.' "

Genesis 50:18 20 -- "Then his brothers also came and fell down before him and
said, 'Behold, we are your servants.' But Joseph said to them, 'Do not be
afraid, for am I in God's place? And as for you, you meant evil against
me, but God meant it to bring about this present result, to preserve many
people alive.'"

Exodus 4:10 12 -- "Then Moses said to the Lord, 'Please, Lord, I have never
been eloquent, neither recently nor in time past, nor

since Thou hast spoken to Thy servant; for I am slow of speech and slow of tongue.' And the Lord said to him, 'Who has made man's mouth? Or who makes him dumb or deaf, or seeing or blind? Is it not I, the Lord? Now then go, and I, even I, will be with your mouth, and teach you what you are to say.' "

- Exodus 5:1-5 -- "And afterward Moses and Aaron came and said to Pharaoh, 'Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, "Let My people go that they may celebrate a feast to Me in the wilderness." ' But Pharaoh said, 'Who is the Lord that I should obey His voice to let Israel go? I do not know the Lord, and besides, I will not let Israel go.' Then they said, 'The God of the Hebrews has met with us. Please, let us go on a three days' Journey Into the wilderness that we may sacrifice to the Lord our God, lest He fall upon us with pestilence or with the sword.' But the king of Egypt said to them, 'Moses and Aaron, why do you draw the people away from their work? Get back to your labors!' Again Pharaoh said, 'Look, the people of the land are now many, and you would have them cease from their labors!.' "
- 7:1-5 -- "Then the Lord said to Moses, 'See, I make you as God to Pharaoh, and your brother Aaron shall be your prophet. You shall speak all that I command you, and your brother Aaron shall speak to Pharaoh that he let the sons of Israel go out of his land. But I will harden Pharaoh's heart that I may multiply My signs and My wonders in the land of Egypt. When Pharaoh will not listen to you, then I will lay My hand on Egypt, and bring out My hosts, My people the sons of Israel, from the land of Egypt by great judgments. And the Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord, when I stretch out My hand on Egypt and bring out the sons of Israel from their midst."
- 7:8-13 -- "Now the Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying, 'When Pharaoh speaks to you, saying, "Work a miracle," then you shall say to Aaron, "Take your staff and throw it down before Pharaoh, that it may become a serpent." ' So Moses and Aaron came to Pharaoh, and thus did just as the Lord had commanded; and Aaron threw his staff down before Pharaoh and his servants, and it became a serpent. Then Pharaoh also called for the wise men and the sorcerers, and they also, the magicians of Egypt, did the same with their secret arts. For each one threw down his staff and they turned Into serpents. But Aaron's staff swallowed up their staffs. Yet Pharaoh's heart was hardened and he did not listen to them as the Lord had said."
- 7:14 17, 20-23 -- "Then the Lord said to Moses, 'Pharaoh's heart is stubborn; he refuses to let the people go. Go to Pharaoh in the morning as he is going out to the water, and station yourself to meet him on the bank of the Nile; and you shall take in your hand the staff that was turned into a serpent. And you will say to him, 'The Lord, the God of the Hebrews, sent me to you, saying, "Let My people go, that they may serve Me in the wilderness." But behold, you have not listened until now. Thus says the Lord, "By this you shall know that I am the Lord: behold, I will strike the water that is in the Nile with the staff that is in my hand, and it shall be turned into blood" ' . . . So Moses and Aaron did even as the Lord had commanded. And he lifted up the

staff and struck the water that was in the Nile, in the sight of Pharaoh and in the sight of his servants, and all the water that was in the Nile was turned to blood. And the fish that were in the Nile died, and the Nile became foul, so that the Egyptians could not drink water from the Nile. And the blood was through all the land of Egypt. But the magicians of Egypt did the same with their secret arts; and Pharaoh's heart was hardened and he did not listen to them as the Lord had said. Then Pharaoh turned and went into his house with no concern even for this."

8:1-2, 6-8, 12-15 -- "Then the Lord said to Moses, 'Go to Pharaoh and say to him, 'Thus says the Lord, 'Let My people go, that they may serve Me.' But if you refuse to let them go, behold, I will smite your whole territory with frogs.' ' . . . So, Aaron stretched out his hand over the waters of Egypt, and the frogs came up and covered the land of Egypt. Then Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron and said, 'Entreat the Lord that He remove the frogs from me and from my people; and I will let the people go, that they may sacrifice to the Lord.' . . . Then Moses and Aaron went out from Pharaoh, and Moses cried to the Lord concerning the frogs which he had inflicted upon Pharaoh. And the Lord did according to the word of Moses, and the frogs died out of the houses, the courts, and the fields. So they piled them in heaps, and the land became foul. But when Pharaoh saw that there was relief, he hardened his heart and did not listen to them as the Lord had said."

8:16-19 -- "Then the Lord said to Moses, 'Say to Aaron, 'Stretch out your staff and strike the dust of the earth, that it may become gnats through all the land of Egypt.' And they did so; and Aaron stretched out his hand with his staff, and struck the dust of the earth, and there were gnats through all the land of Egypt. And the magicians tried with their secret arts to bring forth gnats, but they could not; so there were gnats on man and beast. Then the magicians said to Pharaoh, 'This is the finger of God.' But Pharaoh's heart was hardened and he did not listen to them as the Lord had said."

8:20-32 -- "Now the Lord said to Moses, 'Rise early in the morning and present yourself before Pharaoh, as he comes out to the water, and say to him, 'Thus says the Lord, 'Let my people go, that they may serve me. For if you will not let My people go, behold, I will send swarms of insects on you and on your servants and on your people and into your houses; and the houses of the Egyptians shall be full of swarms of insects, and also the ground on which they dwell.' " But on that day I will set apart the land of Goshen, where My people are living, so that no swarms of insects will be there, in order that you may know that I, the Lord, am in the midst of the land. And I will put a division between My people and your people. Tomorrow this sign will occur.' Then the Lord did so. And there came great swarms of insects into the house of Pharaoh and the houses of his servants and the land was laid waste because of the swarms of insects in all the land of Egypt. And Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron and said, 'Go, sacrifice to your God within the land.' But Moses said, 'It is not right to do so, for we shall sacrifice to the Lord our God what is an abomination to the Egyptians. If we sacrifice what is

an abomination to the Egyptians before their eyes, will they not then stone us? We must go on a three days' journey into the wilderness and sacrifice to the Lord our God as He commands us.' And Pharaoh said, 'I will let you go, that you may sacrifice to the Lord your God in the wilderness; only you shall not go very far away. Make supplication for me.' Then Moses said, 'Behold, I am going out from you, and I shall make supplication to the Lord that the swarms of Insects may depart from Pharaoh, from his servants, and from his people tomorrow; only do not let Pharaoh deal deceitfully again in not letting the people go to sacrifice to the Lord.' So Moses went out from Pharaoh and made supplication to the Lord. And the Lord did as Moses asked, and removed swarms of Insects from Pharaoh, from his servants and from his people; not one remained. But Pharaoh hardened his heart this time also and he did not let the people go."

9:1-7 -- "Then the Lord said to Moses, 'Go to Pharaoh and speak to him, "Thus says the Lord, the God of the Hebrews, 'Let My people go, that they may serve Me.' For if you refuse to let them go, and continue to hold them, behold, the hand of the Lord will come with a severe pestilence on your livestock which are in the field, on the horses, on the donkeys, on the camels, on the herds, and on the flocks. But the Lord will make a distinction between the livestock of Israel and the livestock of Egypt, so that nothing will die of all that belongs to the Sons of Israel.' " And the Lord set a definite time, saying, 'Tomorrow the Lord will do this thing in the land.' So the Lord did this thing on the morrow, and all the livestock of Egypt died; but of the livestock of the sons of Israel, not one died. And Pharaoh sent, and behold, there was not even one of the livestock of Israel dead. But the heart of Pharaoh was hardened and he did not let the people go."

9:8-12 -- "Then the Lord said to Moses and Aaron, 'Take for yourselves handfuls of soot from a kiln, and let Moses throw it toward the sky in the sight of Pharaoh. And it will become fine dust over all the land of Egypt, and will become boils breaking out with sores on man and beast through all the land of Egypt.' So they took soot from a kiln, and stood before Pharaoh; and Moses threw it toward the sky, and it became boils breaking out with sores on man and beast. And the magicians could not stand before Moses because of the boils, for the boils were on the magicians as well as on all the Egyptians. And the Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart and he did not listen to them, just as the Lord had spoken to Moses."

9:13-18, 24-28, 33-35 -- "Then the Lord said to Moses, 'Rise up early in the morning and stand before Pharaoh and say to him, "Thus says the Lord, the God of the Hebrews, 'Let My people go, that they may serve Me. For this time I will send all my plagues on you and your servants and your people, so that you may know that there is no one like He in all the earth. For if by now I had put forth My hand and struck you and your people with pestilence, you would then have been cut off from the earth. But, indeed, for this cause I have allowed you to remain, in order to show you My power, and in order to proclaim My name through all the earth. Still you exalt yourself against My people by not

letting them go. Behold, about this time tomorrow, I will send a very heavy hail, such as has not been seen in Egypt from the day it was founded until now.' . . . So there was hail, and fire flashing continually in the midst of the hail, very severe, such as had not been in all the land of Egypt since it became a nation. And the hail struck all that was in the field through all the land of Egypt, both man and beast; the hail also struck every plant of the field and shattered every tree of the field. Only in the land of Goshen, where the sons of Israel were, there was no hail. Then Pharaoh sent for Moses and Aaron, and said to them, 'I have sinned this time; the Lord is the righteous one, and I and my people are the wicked ones. Make supplication to the Lord, for there has been enough of God's thunder and hail; and I will let you go, and you shall stay no longer.' . . . So Moses went out of the city from Pharaoh, and spread out his hands to the Lord; and the thunder and hail ceased, and rain no longer poured on the earth. But when Pharaoh saw that the rain and the hail and the thunder had ceased, he sinned again and hardened his heart, he and his servants. And Pharaoh's heart was hardened and he did not let the Sons of Israel go, just as the Lord had spoken through Moses."

10:1-13, 16-20 -- "Then the Lord said to Moses, 'Go to Pharaoh, for I have hardened his heart and the heart of his servants, that I may perform these signs of Mine among them, and that you may tell in the hearing of your son, and of your grandson, how I made a mockery of the Egyptians, and how I performed My signs among them; that you may know that I am the Lord.' And Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh and said to him, 'Thus says the Lord, the God of the Hebrews, "How long will you refuse to humble yourself before Me? Let My people go, that they may serve Me. For if you refuse to let My people go, behold, tomorrow I will bring locusts into your territory. And they shall cover the surface of the land, so that no one shall be able to see the land. They shall also eat the rest of what has escaped what is left over from the hail and they shall eat every tree which sprouts for you out of the field. Then your houses shall be filled, and the houses of all your servants and the houses of all the Egyptians, something which neither your fathers nor your grandfathers have seen, from the day that they came upon the earth until this day." ' And he turned and went out from Pharaoh. And Pharaoh's servants said to him, 'How long will this man be a snare to us? Let the men go, that they may serve the Lord their God. Do you not realize that Egypt is destroyed?' So Moses and Aaron were brought back to Pharaoh, and he said to them, 'Go, serve the Lord your God! Who are the ones that are going?' And Moses said, 'We shall go with our young and our old; with our sons and our daughters, with our flocks and our herds we will go, for we must hold a feast to the Lord. Then he said to them, 'Thus may the Lord be with you, if ever I let you and your little ones go! Take heed, for evil is in your mind. Not so! Go now, the men among you, and serve the Lord, for that is what you desire.' So they were driven out from Pharaoh's presence. Then the Lord said to Moses, 'Stretch out your hand over the land of Egypt for the locusts, that they may come up on the land of Egypt, and eat every plant of the land, even all that the hail has left.' So Moses

stretched out his staff over the land of Egypt, and the Lord directed an east wind on the land all that day and all that night; and when it was morning, the east wind brought the locusts. Then Pharaoh hurriedly called for Moses and Aaron, and he said, 'I have sinned against the Lord your God and against you. Now therefore, please forgive my sin only this once, and make supplication to the Lord your God, that He would only remove this death from me.' And he went out from Pharaoh and made supplication to the Lord. So the Lord shifted the wind to a very strong west wind which took up the locusts and drove them into the Red Sea; not one locust was left in all the territory of Egypt. But the Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart and he did not let the sons of Israel go."

10:21 29 -- "Then the Lord said to Moses, 'Stretch out your hand toward the sky, that there may be darkness over the land of Egypt, even a darkness which may be felt.' So Moses stretched out his hand toward the sky, and there was thick darkness in all the land of Egypt for three days. They did not see one another, nor did anyone rise from his place for three days, but all the sons of Israel had light in their dwellings. Then Pharaoh called to Moses, and said, 'Go, serve the Lord; only let your flocks and your herds be detained. Even your little ones may go with you.' But Moses said, 'You must also let us have sacrifices and burnt offerings, that we may sacrifice them to the Lord our God. Therefore, our livestock, too, will go with us; not a hoof will be left behind, for we shall take some of them to serve the Lord our God. And until we arrive there, we ourselves do not know with what we shall serve the Lord.' But the Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart and he was not willing to let them go. Then Pharaoh said to him, 'Get away from me! Beware, do not see my face again, for in the day you see my face you shall die!' And Moses said, 'You are right; I shall never see your face again!' "

11:1, 4-10 -- "Now the Lord said to Moses, 'One more plague I will bring on Pharaoh and on Egypt; after that he will let you go from here. Then he lets you go, he will surely drive you out from here completely . . . And Moses said, 'Thus says the Lord, 'About midnight I am going out into the midst of Egypt, and all the first born in the land of Egypt shall die, from the first born of the Pharaoh who sits on his throne, even to the first born of the slave girl who is behind the millstones; all the first born of the cattle as well. Moreover, there shall be a great cry in all the land of Egypt, such as there has not been before and such as shall never be again. But against any of the sons of Israel a dog shall not even bark, whether against man or beast, that you may understand how the Lord makes a distinction between Egypt and Israel.' And all these your servants will come down to me and bow themselves before me, saying, 'Go out, you and all the people who follow you,' and after that I will go out.' And he went out from Pharaoh in hot anger. Then the Lord said to Moses, 'Pharaoh will not listen to you so that My wonders will be multiplied in the land of Egypt.' And Moses and Aaron performed all these wonders before Pharaoh; yet the Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he did not let the sons of Israel go out of his land."

12:29-33 -- "Now it came about at midnight that the Lord struck all the first born in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh who sat on his throne to the first born of the captive who was in the dungeon, and all the first born of the cattle. And Pharaoh arose in the night, he and all his servants and all the Egyptians; and there was a great cry in Egypt, for there was no home where there was not someone dead. Then he called for Moses and Aaron at night and said, 'Rise up, get out from among my people, both you and the sons of Israel; and go, worship the Lord, as you have said. Take both your flocks and your herds, as you have said, and go, and bless me also.' And the Egyptians urged the people, to send them out of the land in haste, for they said, 'We shall all be dead.'"

14:1-10, 15-18 -- "Now the Lord spoke to Moses, saying 'Tell the sons of Israel to turn back and camp before Pi-hahiroth, between Migdol and the sea; and you shall camp in front of Baal-zephon, opposite it, by the sea. For Pharaoh will say of the sons of Israel, 'They are wandering aimlessly in the land; the wilderness has shut them in.' Thus I will harden Pharaoh's heart and he will chase after them; and I will be honored through Pharaoh and all his army, and the Egyptians will know that I am the Lord.' And they did so. When the king of Egypt was told that the people had fled, Pharaoh and his servants had a change of heart toward the people and they said, 'What is this we have done, that we have let Israel go from serving us?' So he made his chariot ready and took his people with him; and he took six hundred select chariots, and all the other chariots of Egypt with officers over all of them. And the Lord hardened the heart of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and he chased after the sons of Israel as the sons of Israel were going out boldly. Then the Egyptians chased after them with all horses and chariots of Pharaoh, his horsemen and his army, and they overtook them camping by the sea, beside Pi-hahiroth, in front of Baal-zephon. And as Pharaoh drew near, the sons of Israel looked, and behold, the Egyptians were marching after them, and they became very frightened; so the sons of Israel cried out to the Lord Then the Lord said to Moses, 'why are you crying out to Me? Tell the sons of Israel to go forward. And as for you, lift up your staff and stretch out your hand over the sea and divide It, and the sons of Israel shall go through the midst of the sea on dry land. And as for Me, behold, I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians so that they will go in after them and I will be honored through Pharaoh and all his army, through his chariots and his horsemen. Then the Egyptians will know that I am the Lord, when I am honored through Pharaoh, through his chariots and his horsemen.' "

Joshua 11:5-9 -- "So all of these kings having agreed to meet, came and encamped together at the waters of Merom, to fight against Israel. Then the Lord said to Joshua, 'Do not be afraid because of them, for tomorrow at this time I will deliver all of them slain before Israel; you shall hamstring their horses and burn their chariots with fire.' So Joshua and all the people of war with him came upon them suddenly by the waters of Merom, and attacked them. And the Lord delivered them into the hand of

Israel, so that they defeated them, and pursued them as far as Great Sidon and Misrephoth-maim and the valley of Mizpeh to the east; and they struck them until no survivor was left to them. And Joshua did to them as the Lord had told him; he hamstringed their horses, and burned their chariots with fire."

II Samuel 16:5-11 -- "When King David came to Bahurim, behold, there came out from there a man of the family of the house of Saul whose name was Shimei, the son of Gera; he came out cursing continually as he came. And he threw stones at David and at all the servants of King David; and all the people and all the mighty men were at his right hand and at his left. And thus Shimei said when he cursed, 'Get out, get out, you man of bloodshed, and worthless fellow! The Lord has returned upon you all the bloodshed of the house of Saul, in whose place you have reigned; and the Lord has given the kingdom into the hand of your son Absalom. And behold, you are taken in your own evil, for you are a man of bloodshed! Then Abishai the son of Zeruiah said to the king, 'Why should this dead dog curse my lord the king? Let me go over now, and cut off his head.' But the king said, 'What have I to do with you, O sons of Zeruiah? If he curses, and if the Lord has told him, 'Curse David,' then who shall say, 'Why have you done so?' Then David said to Abishai and to all his servants, 'Behold, my son who came out from me seeks my life; how much more now this Benjamite? Let him alone and let him curse, for the Lord has told him.' "

Isaiah 10:5-12, 15 -- "Woe to Assyria, the rod of My anger
And the staff in whose hands Is My Indignation,
I send it against a godless nation
And commission it against the people of My fury
To capture booty and to seize plunder,
And to trample them down like mud in the streets.
Yet it does not so intend
Nor does it plan so in its heart,
But rather it is its purpose to destroy,
And to cut off many nations.
For it says, 'Are not my princes all kings?
Is not Calno like Carchemish,
Or Hamath like Arpad,
Or Samaria like Damascus?
As my hand has reached to the kingdoms of the idols,
Whose graven images were greater than those of Jerusalem and
Samaria,
Shall I not do to Jerusalem and her images
Just as I have done to Samaria and her idols?'
So it will be that when the Lord has completed all His work on Mount
Zion and on Jerusalem, He will say, 'I will punish the fruit of the arrogant
heart of the king of Assyria and the pomp of his haughtiness.'

Is the axe to boast itself over the one who chops with it?
Is the saw to exalt itself over the one who wields it?
That would be like a club wielding those who lift it,
Or like a rod lifting him who is not wood."

Ezra 6:21-22 -- "And the sons of Israel who returned from exile and all those who had separated themselves from the impurity of the nations of the land to join them, to seek the Lord God of Israel, ate the Passover. And they observed the Feast of Unleavened Bread seven days with joy, for the Lord had caused them to rejoice, and had turned the heart of the king of Assyria toward them to encourage them in the work of the house of God, the God of Israel."

Acts 2:23 -- "this Man, delivered up by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to death."

Deuteronomy 8:11-14, 17-18 -- "Beware lest you forget the Lord your God by not keeping His commandments and His ordinances and His statutes which I am commanding you today; lest, when you have eaten and are satisfied, you have built good houses and lived in them, and when your herds and your flocks multiply, and your silver and gold multiply, and all that you have multiplies, then your hearts become proud, and you forget the Lord your God who brought you out from the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery Otherwise, you may say in your heart, 'My power and the strength of my hand made me this wealth.' But you shall remember the Lord your God, for it is He who is giving you power to make wealth, that He may confirm His covenant which He swore to your fathers, as it is this day."

Acts 4:27-28 -- "For truly in this city there were gathered together against Thy holy servant Jesus, whom Thou didst anoint, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, to do whatever Thy hand and Thy purpose predestined to occur."

Philippians 2:12-13 -- "So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure."

3. Scriptural background to Government

Scripture teaches God's providential direction and control in a number of areas, including the following:

a. God's government over the universe in general

Psalms 103:19 -- "The Lord has established His throne in the heavens;
And His sovereignty rules over all."

Daniel 4:34-35 -- "But at the end of that period I, Nebuchadnezzar, raised my eyes toward heaven, and my reason returned to me,

and I blessed the Most High and praised and honored Him who
lives forever;
For His dominion is an everlasting dominion,
And His kingdom endures from generation to generation.
And all the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing,
But He does according to His will in the host of heaven
And among the inhabitants of earth;
And no one can ward off His hand
Or say to Him, 'What hast Thou done?'"

Ephesians 1:11 -- ". . . according to His purpose who works all things after
the counsel of His will"

b. God's government over the physical world

Job 37:5 6, 10 13 -- "God thunders with His voice wondrously,
Doing great things which we cannot comprehend.
For to the snow He says, 'Fall on the earth.'
And to the downpour and the rain, 'Be strong.'"

From the breath of God ice is made,
And the expanse of the waters is frozen.
Also with moisture He loads the thick cloud;
He disperses the cloud of His lightning.
And it changes direction, turning around by His guidance,
That it may do whatever He commands it
On the face of the inhabited earth.
Whether for correction, or for His world,
Or for lovingkindness, He causes it to happen."

Psalms 104:14 -- "He causes the grass to grow for cattle, and vegetation
for the labor of man, so that he may bring forth food from the
earth."

Psalms 134:6 -- "Whatever the Lord pleases, He does, in heaven and in
earth, in the seas and in all deeps."

Matthew 5:45 -- "He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and
sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous."

c. God's government over the animal world

Psalms 104:21, 24 30 -- "The young lions roar after their prey,
And seek their food from God.

O Lord, how many are Thy works!
In wisdom Thou hast made them all;
The earth is full of Thy possessions.
There is the sea, great and broad,
In which are swarms without number,
Animals both small and great.
There the ships move along,
And Leviathan, which Thou hast formed to sport in it.

They all wait for Thee,
To give them their food in due season.
Thou dost give to them, they gather it up;
Thou dost open Thy hand, they are satisfied with good.
Thou dost hide Thy face, they are dismayed;
Thou dost take away their spirit, they expire,
And return to their dust.
Thou dost send forth Thy Spirit, they are created;
And Thou dost renew the face of the ground."

Matthew 6:26 -- "Look at the birds of the air, that they do not sow, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them."

Matthew 10:29 -- "Are not two sparrows sold for a cent? And yet not one of them will fail to the ground apart from your Father."

d. God's government over the affairs of nations

Job 12:23 -- "He makes the nations great, then destroys them;
He enlarges the nations, then leads them away."

Psalms 22:28 -- "For the kingdom is the Lord's,
And He rules over the nations."

Psalms 66:7 -- "He rules by His might forever;
His eyes keep watch on the nations."

Acts 17:26 -- "He made from one every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined their appointed times, and the boundaries of their habitation,"

e. God's government over mankind's lot in life

Psalms 139:16 -- "Thine eyes have seen my unformed substance;
And in Thy book they were all written,
The days that were ordained for me,
When as yet there was not one of them."

I Samuel 16:1 -- "I will send you to Jesse the Bethlehemite, for I have selected a king for Myself among his sons."

Isaiah 45:1-5 -- "Thus says the Lord to Cyrus His anointed,
Whom I have taken by the right hand,
To subdue nations before him
And to loose the loins of kings;
To open doors before him so that gates will not be shut:
I will go before you and make the rough places smooth;
I will shatter the doors of bronze, and cut through their iron bars.
And I will give you the treasures of darkness,
And hidden wealth of secret places,
In order that you may know that it is I,
The Lord, the God of Israel, who calls you by your name.

For the sake of Jacob My servant,
And Israel My chosen one, I
have also called you by your flame;
I have given you a title of honor
Though you have not known Me.
I am the Lord, and there is no other;
Besides Me there is no God. I
will gird you, though you have not known Me;"

Galatians 1:15-16 -- ". . . He who had set me apart, even from my
mother's womb, and called me through His grace, was pleased to
reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the Gentiles,

- f. God's government over the outward successes and failures in human beings' lives

Psalms 75:4-7 -- "I said to the boastful, 'Do not boast,'
And to the wicked, 'Do not lift up the horn;
Do not lift up your horn on high,
Do not speak with insolent pride.'
For not from the east, nor from the west,
Nor from the desert comes exaltation;
But God is the Judge;
He puts down one, and exalts another.

Luke 1:51-55 -- "He has done mighty deeds with His arm;
He has scattered those who were proud
In the thoughts of their heart.
He has brought down rulers from their thrones,
And has exalted those who were humble.
He has filled the hungry with good things;
And has sent away the rich empty handed.
He has given help to Israel His servant,
In remembrance of His mercy,
As He spoke to our fathers,
To Abraham and his offspring forever."

- g. God's government over things considered matters of chance

Proverbs 16:33 -- "The lot is cast into the lap,
But its every decision is from the Lord."

- h. God's government in the protection of the righteous

Psalms 4:8 -- "In peace I will both lie down and sleep,
For Thou alone, O Lord, dost make me to dwell in safety."

Psalms 5:12 -- "For it is Thou who dost bless the righteous man, O Lord,
Thou dost surround him with favor as with a shield."

Psalms 63:8 -- "My soul clings to Thee;
Thy right hand upholds me."

Psalms 121 -- "I will lift my eyes to the mountains;
From whence shall my help come?
My help comes from the Lord,
Who made the heaven and earth.
He will not allow your foot to slip;
He who keeps you will not slumber.
Behold, He who keeps Israel
Will neither slumber nor sleep.
The Lord is your keeper;
The Lord is your shade on your right hand.
The sun will not smite you by day,
Nor the moon by night.
The Lord will protect you from all evil;
He will keep your soul.
The Lord will guard your going out and your coming in
From this time forth and forever."

Job 1:9-10 -- "Then Satan answered the Lord, 'Does Job fear God for nothing?
Hast Thou not made a hedge about him and his house and all that he
has, on every side? . . .'"

Romans 8:28 -- "And we know that God causes all things to work together for
good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His
purpose."

i. God's government in supplying the needs of His people

Genesis 22:8, 14 -- "And Abraham said, 'God will, provide for Himself the
lamb for the burnt offering, my son And Abraham called the
name of that place, The Lord will provide.'"

Deuteronomy 8:2-3 -- "And you shall remember all the way which the Lord your
God has led you in the wilderness these forty years, that He might
humble you, testing you, to know what was in your heart, whether you
would keep His commandments or not. And He humbled you and let you
be hungry, and fed you with manna which you did not know, nor did your
fathers know, that He might make you understand that man does not live
by bread alone, but man lives by everything that proceeds out of the
mouth of the Lord."

Philippians 4:19 -- "And my God will supply all your needs according to His
riches in glory in Christ Jesus."

j. God's government in giving answers to prayer

II Chronicles 33:9-13 -- "Thus Manasseh misled Judah and the inhabitants of
Jerusalem to do more evil than the nations whom the Lord destroyed
before the sons of Israel. And the Lord spoke to Manasseh and his
people, but they paid no attention. Therefore the Lord brought the
commanders of the army of the king of Assyria against them, and they
captured Manasseh with hooks, bound him with bronze chains, and took
him to Babylon. And when he was in distress, he entreated the Lord his
God and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers. When he
prayed to Him, He

was moved by his entreaty and heard his supplication, and brought him again to Jerusalem to his kingdom. Then Manasseh knew that the Lord was God."

Luke 18:6-8 -- "And the Lord said, 'Hear what the unrighteous judge said; now shall not God bring about Justice for His elect, who cry to Him day and night, and will He delay long over them? I tell you that He will bring about justice for them speedily.'"

Matthew 7:7-8 -- "Ask, and it shall be given to you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it shall be opened."

k. God's government in the exposure and punishment of the wicked

Psalms 7:11-13 -- "God is a righteous Judge,
And a God who has indignation every day.
If a man does not repent, He will sharpen His sword;
He has bent His bow and made it ready.
He has also prepared for Himself deadly weapons;
He makes His arrows fiery shafts."

Psalms 11 -- "In the Lord take refuge;
How can you say to my soul, 'Flee as a bird to your mountain;
For, behold, the wicked bend the bow,
They make ready their arrow upon the string,
To shoot in darkness at the upright in heart.
If the foundations are destroyed,
What can the righteous do?'
The Lord is in His holy temple; the Lord's throne is in heaven;
His eyes behold, His eyelids test the sons of men.
The Lord tests the righteous and the wicked,
And the one who loves violence His soul hates.
Upon the wicked He will rain snares;
Fire and brimstone and burning wind will be the portion of their cup.
For the Lord is righteous; He loves righteousness;
The upright will behold His face."

C. Development of the doctrine

1. God's Providence may be defined as His work of preserving and sustaining His creation; of upholding His creatures in the exercise of their powers; and of ruling, directing, and overruling all things according to His purposes and Plan.

God preserves, upholds, and rules all things for His glory.

However, although divine providence includes all three of these aspects, the one we usually intend when we speak of God's

providence is that of ruling, directing, and overruling all things -- in a word, His government.

2. God's Providence is concerned with the execution of His decrees, with the executive phase of His determinative will.

By way of review and clarification, the following is an outline of God's determinative will:

determinative will (whatever God determined would occur)

decretive phase (whatever God foreordained in eternity past)

causative aspect (what God decreed to cause)

permissive aspect (what God decreed to permit)

executive phase (whatever God ordains in time space history)

causative aspect (what God causes)

permissive aspect (what God permits)

In His decrees God formulates His Plan for the history of the universe, of unfallen angels, of human beings, and of fallen angels. In His providence God carries out His Plan and executes it.

3. God's Providence may be classified into ordinary providence and extraordinary providence, but should be distinguished from miracle.

The difference between these three categories lies in the degree of directness of God's involvement, and in the means employed to achieve the results.

In ordinary providence God's involvement is least direct. At creation, God established a system of physical, biological, moral, and spiritual laws intended to facilitate the accomplishment of His purposes, which system He preserves, upholds, and rules according to His good pleasure. The means God employs to achieve the intended results are thus ordinary, natural, usual, and non-interventional.

In extraordinary providence God's involvement is more direct than in ordinary providence, but is not as direct as in miracle. God works with natural and spiritual phenomena, and intervenes in the normal course of the outworking of His system of laws (frequently in response to the interplay of revealed promise and believing prayer), but not in a supernatural or miraculous manner. The means God employs to achieve the intended results are extraordinary, special, uncommon, and interventional, but not supernatural.

In miracle God's Involvement is most direct (of the three degrees of God's involvement in the history of the universe and of mankind.)

4. God's Providence, although it Includes the execution of the divine decrees relative to sin, does not make God responsible for causing sin or any of its terrible results. As Millard Erickson points out, God can act in four ways in relation to sin. He can (a) prevent it, (b) permit it, (c) direct it, (d) limit it. In none of these ways is God in any sense the author of sin.

Perhaps two quotations from John Calvin will be helpful in assessing God's relationship to sin, in both His decrees and His providence.

In Calvin's brief reply to an unnamed person who denounced his treatise on *The Eternal Predestination of God* he says:

John Calvin constantly declares aloud throughout his writings, wherever sin is the subject of discussion, that the name of God is not to be mingled or mentioned with sin, because nothing is consistent with the character of God but rectitude and equity. How foul, then, is the calumny to involve a man . . . in the crime of making God the author of sin!

A bit further on, Calvin says:

God, commanding that which is right, thereby testified what truly pleased Him; nor is there any other counsel concealed in His own mind by which He either loves or wills to accomplish anything whatever that He condemns in man. But He exercises His judgments in a marvelous way, so that, by His surpassing wisdom and equity, He ordains and directs to a good end things that are, in themselves, evil. Nor will Calvin ever concede that God wills that which is evil -- that is, in as far as it is evil -- but His secret and righteous judgments shine forth marvelously in overruling the iniquities of men.

For Instance, by the incestuous deeds of Absalom God punishes the adultery of David. Wherefore, when God commands Adam not to taste the fruit of the 'tree of the knowledge of good and evil,' He thereby tests his obedience. Meanwhile, He foreknew what would take place; and not only foreknew it, but ordained it.

Calvin then quotes Augustine in support:

These are the mighty works of the Lord, exquisitely perfect in every point of His will; and so wisely perfect, that when the angelic and the human natures had sinned -- that is, had each done not what God willed, but what each nature willed, though each nature did that which was contrary to the will of God in one sense -- yet God, by the same will of each nature, accomplished that which He willed righteously, using

as the Supreme Good even evil deeds to the eternal condemnation of those whom He had justly predestinated to everlasting punishment, and to the eternal salvation of those whom He had predestinated unto grace . . . by the very fact of their acting contrary to the will of God, by that very acting the will of God was done through them . . . So that, by an inexplicable manner of operation, that is not done without the will of God which is, in Itself, even contrary to His will, because without His will it could not have been done at all. And yet God willeth not unwillingly, but willingly. For as the God of Goodness, He would not suffer evil to be done at all, unless, as the God of Omnipotence, He could, out of that evil, bring good!

Calvin then adds:

No spot of iniquity is affixed by us on God. All we affirm is quite the reverse. All we maintain, throughout our arguments, is that God rules and overrules all the actions of the world with perfect and Divine rectitude.

In Calvin's treatise, *Defense of the Secret Providence of God* he says:

The . . . difficult question is, whether it is God who works in the hearts of men, directs all their counsels, and turns their wills this way and that, and prevents them from doing anything but that which He hath decreed they should do. We are not here inquiring whether or not God works all the godly and holy affections which are found in the hearts of His people, because that is, beyond all dispute, certain. The great question is, whether He holds also in the hand of His power all the depraved and impious affections of the wicked, and turns them hither and thither, that they might desire to do that which He hath decreed to accomplish by their means? Moses saith that the heart of Pharaoh was hardened by the Lord Himself . . . And Moses positively affirms that the hardening of Pharaoh's heart was the work of God . . . Nor does that passage at all alter the case, where it is said, that "Pharaoh hardened his heart at this time also" (Exod. 8:32), because we do not make it appear that the minds of men are impelled by any outward influence to do violently, nor do we impute to God the cause of their being hardened; as if cruel and hardhearted persons do not act spontaneously from their own malice, and become of themselves excited to obstinacy and presumption! What we maintain is, that when men act perversely, they do so (according to the testimony of the Scripture) by the ordaining purpose of God. . . From all that has been said, we can at once gather how vain and fluctuating is that flimsy defense of the Divine justice which desires to make it appear that the evil things that are done, are so done, not by the will of God, but by His permission only. As far, Indeed, as those evil things which men perpetrate with an evil mind are, in themselves, evil, I willingly confess (as I will immediately

more fully explain) that they by no means please God. But for men to represent God as sitting unconcerned, and merely permitting those things to be done which the Scripture plainly declares to be done, not only by His will, but by His authority, is a mere way of escape from the truth, utterly frivolous and vain. Augustine did, indeed, sometimes give way to this popular method of speaking; but . . . he by no means suffers the permission to be substituted for the act of God. In the Fifth Book of his Discussion of it, written against Julian . . . "He who knoweth His own just judgments, doeth all these things by working in a marvelous and Inexpressible manner, not only in the bodies, but in the hearts of men. He doth not make wills evil, but useth the wills of men already evil as He pleaseth; not can He, of Himself, will anything that is evil." And again, "It is fully evident, from the testimonies of the Scripture, that God works in the hearts of men to Incline their wills whithersoever He pleases, whether it be to confer good according to His mercy, or to inflict evil according to their deserts, and all according to His purpose and decree, which is sometimes manifest and sometimes hidden, but always just! For it ought ever to be deeply fixed in our hearts that there is no iniquity in God.

IV. MIRACLES

A. Statements of the Doctrine

Charles Hodge, in Volume 1, pp. 617-618, of his *Systematic Theology*, states:

According to the Westminster Confession, "God, in ordinary providence making use of means, yet is free to work without, above, or against them at pleasure." In the first place, there are events therefore due to the ordinary operations of second causes, as upheld and guided by God. To this class belong the common processes of nature; the growth of plants and animals, the orderly movements of the heavenly bodies; and the more unusual occurrences; earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, and violent agitations and revolutions in the human societies. In the second place, there are events due to the Influences of the Holy Spirit upon the hearts of men, such as regeneration, sanctification, spiritual illumination, etc. Thirdly, there are events which belong to neither of these classes, and whose distinguishing characteristics are, First, that they take place in the external world, i.e., in the sphere of the observation of the senses; and Secondly, that they are produced or caused by the simple volition of God, without the intervention of any subordinate cause. To this class belongs the original act of creation, in which all cooperation of second causes was Impossible. To the same class belong all events truly miraculous. A miracle, therefore, may be defined to be an event, in the external world, brought about by the immediate efficiency, or simple volition of God.

Archibald A. Hodge, in his *Outlines of Theology* Revised Edition, p. 275, states:

A miracle is (1) an event occurring in the physical world, capable of being discerned and discriminated by the bodily senses of human witnesses, (2) of such a character that it can be rationally referred to no other cause than the immediate volition of God, (3) accompanying a religious teacher, and designed to authenticate his divine commission and the truth of his message.

J. Oliver Buswell, Jr., in Volume 1, p. 176, of his *Systematic Theology of the Christian Religion* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1962), states:

A miracle is (1) an extraordinary event, inexplicable in terms of ordinary natural forces, (2) an event which causes the observers to postulate a super human personal cause, and (3) an event which constitutes evidence (a "sign") of implication much wider than the event itself.

Millard J. Erickson, in Volume 1, pp. 406-408, of his *Christian Theology* writes:

By miracles we mean those special supernatural works of God's providence which are not explicable on the basis of the usual pattern of nature.

One of the Important issues regarding miracles involves their relationship to natural laws or the laws of nature. To some, miracles have been, not an aid to faith, but an obstacle, since they are so contrary to the usual patterns of occurrence as to appear very unlikely or even incredible. Thus, the question of how these events are to be thought of in relationship to natural law is of great importance. There are at least three views of the relationship between miracles and natural laws.

The first conception is that miracles are actually the manifestations of little known or virtually unknown natural laws. If we fully knew and understood nature, we would be able to understand and even predict these events.

A second conception is that miracles break the laws of nature. In the case of the axhead that floated, for example (2 Kings 6:6), this theory suggests that for a brief period of time, in that cubic foot or so of water, the law of gravity was suspended. It simply did not apply. In effect, God turned off the law of gravity until the axhead was retrieved, or he changed the density of the axhead or of the water.

A third conception is the idea that when miracles occur, natural forces are countered by supernatural force. In this view, the laws of nature are not suspended. They continue to operate, supernatural force is introduced, negating the effect of the natural law. In the case of the axhead, for instance, the law of gravity continued to function in the vicinity of the axhead, but the unseen hand of God was underneath it, bearing it up, just as if a human hand were lifting it.

Lewis and Demarest, in Volume 2, p. 104, of their *Integrative Theology* say:

In removing the tragic effects of sin and defeating demonic hordes God may choose to act in supernatural or miraculous ways. A miracle or a supernatural act, (1) is an extraordinary phenomenon transcending natural law, a "mighty act," so extraordinary that it (2) elicits awe as a "wonder" and (3) serves as a "sign" indicating that either God or Satan are acting in extraordinary ways for either good or evil purposes.

Too many definitions of miracles attribute all supernatural events to God. We must challenge that very influential and disastrous presupposition. Many assume that if a person seems to be supernaturally healed the healing must be a miracle of God, and the healer is therefore confirmed as a servant of God. Because such mighty acts may be performed by false Christs, false prophets, and false apostles, the occurrence of a miracle does not guarantee that every wonder worker is of God (Matt. 24:24; 1 John 4:1-3; Rev. 13:13). Only if a miracle worker's character and his concepts of God, Christ, and salvation are sound is he to be regarded truly of God. We need to be alert to counterfeit miracles (2 Thess. 3:9).

B. Biblical Background to the Doctrine

(In the interests of space, the following 107 passages are summarized, not quoted)

Genesis 19:11, 24-26 -- The angels struck the Sodomites at Lot's door with blindness (vs. 11). The Lord turned Lot's wife into a pillar of salt when she looked back at Sodom and Gomorrah, thereby disobeying God's explicit warning.

Exodus 3:2 -- The Lord appeared to Moses in a blazing fire in the midst of a bush; although the bush was burning, it was not consumed.

Exodus 4:2-7 -- God turned Moses' staff into a serpent, and then turned the serpent into a staff again. God made Moses' hand leprous, and then restored his hand to health in a moment.

Exodus 7:10-12 -- God turned Aaron's staff into a serpent, which ate the serpents of the Egyptian sorcerer priests.

Exodus 7-12 -- The Ten Plagues: (1) blood in the Nile and other streams; (2) frogs; (3) gnats (or lice); (4) insects; (5) pestilence on livestock; (6) boils; (7) hail; (8) locusts; (9) thick darkness; (10) death of the first born.

Exodus 13:20-21 -- The pillar of cloud and the pillar of fire, from the Exodus to the Red Sea.

Exodus 14:21-22 -- The parting of the waters of the Red Sea to permit the Israelites to cross; the return of the waters to drown the pursuing Egyptians.

Exodus 15:24-25 -- The Lord showed Moses a tree which made the bitter waters of Marah sweet.

Exodus 16:13-35 -- The Lord provided manna for the Israelites to eat as bread. Each morning there was enough for every Israelite, but on the sixth morning there was twice as much, since there was no manna and no gathering on the sabbath. Yet the extra portion of manna for the sabbath did not decompose the day after it was gathered, as did the manna on the other days of the week.

Exodus 17:5-7 -- The Lord told Moses to strike the rock at Horeb with his staff, and drinking water came out of the rock.

Leviticus 9:24 -- After Aaron's consecration he brought offerings to the Lord, and the Lord consumed the offerings with fire.

Leviticus 10:1-2 -- When Nadab and Abihu offered strange fire and incense to the Lord (which He had not commanded), He consumed these Sons of Aaron with fire.

Numbers 12:10-15 -- The Lord struck Miriam, Moses' sister, with leprosy for seven days, in order that she might learn to respect and obey God's will in His choice of a leader and spokesman.

Numbers 16:41-50 -- The Lord struck down 14,700 Israelites who blamed the deaths of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, on Moses and Aaron, but Moses and Aaron checked the plague.

Numbers 17:1-8 -- The Lord showed His choice of Aaron as His priest by causing only Aaron's rod to produce buds, blossoms, and ripe almonds overnight. The other eleven rods produced nothings

Numbers 21:7-9 -- The Lord healed those Israelites who looked to the bronze serpent that Moses had made, and they did not die of the venom of the fiery serpents.

Numbers 22:28-31 -- The Lord rebuked Balaam through the mouth of Balaam's donkey, by which He spoke words of reprimand and reason in view of Balaam's disobedience.

Joshua 3:14-17 -- The Lord cut off the water far up the river Jordan, so that the river bed drained and became dry, in order that the Israelites might Cross the Jordan opposite Jericho.

Joshua 6:6-21 -- God causes the great wall at Jericho to fall down flat, so that the armed men of Israel could take the city and destroy it.

Joshua 10:12-13 -- God answered Joshua's prayer and caused the sun and moon to delay setting until the Israelites had defeated the Amorites.

Judges 6:21 -- The angel of the Lord brought fire out of a rock to consume Gideon's offering of meat and unleavened bread.

Judges 13:19-20 -- The angel of the Lord ascended into the sky in the flame of the sacrifice of Manoah and his wife.

Judges 15:19 -- The Lord split a hollow place in Lehi, so that Samson could have water to quench his great thirst and renew his strength.

I Samuel 5:1-4 -- The Lord caused the statue of Dagon in Dagon's temple in Ashdod to bow down twice before the ark of God.

I Samuel 6:19 -- The Lord struck with death 50,070 men who had committed sacrilege by curiously and wickedly and irreverently looking into the ark of God.

I Samuel 12:18 -- The Lord answered Samuel's prayer by sending thunder and rain during the wheat harvest to show the wickedness of the Israelites' request for a king.

II Samuel 6:7 -- The Lord struck down Uzzah for his irreverence in laying hold of the ark of God.

I Kings 13:4, 6 -- The Lord caused King Jeroboam's hand to wither immediately, and then restored his hand through the prayer of the prophet from Judah.

I Kings 17:10-16 -- The Lord replenished the flour and oil of the widow of Zarephath during the drought in Israel, according to His word through Elijah's prayer.

I Kings 18:38 -- The Lord caused an all consuming fire to fall upon Elijah's sacrifice upon the altar on Mount Camel, in accordance with Elijah's prayer.

II Kings 1:9-12 -- The Lord caused fire to come down from the sky and to consume two companies of fifty men each who were coming to arrest Elijah.

II Kings 2:8, 14 -- Elijah struck the waters of the Jordan with his cloak, and the waters parted, so that Elijah and Elisha could cross on dry ground.

II Kings 2:11 -- Elijah was caught up Into the sky by a whirlwind, after being separated from Elisha by a fiery chariot drawn by fiery horses.

II Kings 2:19 22 -- Elisha, by the word of the Lord, turned a spring of bad water into one of good water by throwing ordinary salt Into it.

II Kings 3:16 20 -- The Lord provided water for the armies of Israel and Judah in a valley in the wilderness of Edom. He did this without wind or rain.

II Kings 4:1-7 -- Elisha told the widow of a prophet to pour her one jar of oil into all the vessels she could borrow. She filled all the vessels, paid her debt, and lived (with her sons) on the remainder.

II Kings 4:32-36 -- Elisha prayed for the restoration to life of the son of a hospitable Shunnamite woman, and the boy was raised from the dead.

II Kings 4:40-41 -- Elisha had a servant put meal into a pot of poisonous stew, and the stew was purified by poisonous herbs, so that the sons of the prophets were able to eat it without harmful effects.

II Kings 4:42-44 -- Elisha distributed a gift of food given to him to the sons of the prophets (100 men), and they ate and had some left over.

II Kings 5:10-14 -- Elisha told the leper Naaman to wash seven times in the Jordan, and Naaman was cured from his leprosy and restored to health.

II Kings 5:24-27 -- Elisha told his servant, Gehazi, that Naaman's leprosy would cling to Gehazi and his descendants forever. Gehazi immediately became a leper.

II Kings 6:6 -- Elisha threw a stick Into the Jordan and made an iron axe head float.

II Kings 6:19 -- Elisha prayed, and the army of Syria was struck with blindness; later he prayed, and the men of Syria were restored to sight.

II Kings 7:6 7 -- The army of Syria was caused to hear the sound of a great army, and the Syrians fled in haste and left everything.

II Kings 13:20-21 -- When a dead man was hastily thrown into Elisha's grave, the dead man came to life the moment his body touched Elisha's bones.

II Kings 19:35 -- The angel of the Lord struck dead 185,000 men of the Assyrian army that was besieging Jerusalem. They all died in the same night.

II Kings 20:9-11 -- Isaiah prayed, and the Lord brought the shadow on the stairway back ten steps, as a sign that Hezekiah would not die, but be healed.

II Chronicles 7:1 -- At the dedication of the Solomonic temple, fire came down from the sky and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices.

II Chronicles 26:19-21 -- When Uzziah, king of Judah, attempted to perform a priestly function (burn incense), the Lord struck him with leprosy on his forehead.

Daniel 3:19-27 -- The Lord delivered Shadrach, Heshach, and Abednego from the furnace of blazing fire. They were not burned, singed, or smoked!

Daniel 6:16-23 -- The Lord delivered Daniel from a den of fierce lions, by closing their mouths and rendering them harmless.

Jonah 1:17, 2:10 -- Jonah was swallowed by a great fish by God's appointment, and was later vomited by the fish onto dry land by God's appointment.

Luke 1:11 23, 57 59 -- Because of his disbelief, Zacharias was struck dumb by God; later, when he submitted to God, his speech was restored.

John 2:1-11 -- Jesus transformed ordinary water used for ritual purification into 120 180 gallons of fine wine.

John 4:46-54 -- Jesus healed the son of a royal official by speaking the word. Jesus was at Cana, and the boy was at Capernaum, some 16-18 miles away.

Luke 5:1-11 -- Jesus told Peter to let down his nets for a catch. Although he and his men had caught nothing all night, now they caught a great quantity of fish.

Mark 1:23-26 -- Jesus cast an unclean spirit out of a man in the synagogue at Capernaum.

Mark 1:30-31 -- Jesus healed Simon's mother in law of a high fever, and raised her from her sick bed.

Mark 1:40-45 -- Jesus healed a leper by touching the man and speaking the word.

Mark 2:1-12 -- Jesus healed a paralytic, and had him pick up his pallet and walk out of the building.

Mark 3:1-5 -- Jesus healed a man with a withered hand by telling him to stretch it out.

Mark 5:25-34 -- Jesus healed a woman who had suffered from a hemorrhage for 12 years. She merely touched His cloak.

Mark 5:22-24, 35-43 -- Jesus raised the twelve year old daughter of Jairus, a synagogue official, from death. He took her hand and spoke the word.

Matthew 9:27-31 -- Jesus healed two blind men. He touched their eyes.

Matthew 9:32-33 -- Jesus healed a dumb man by casting out an oppressive demon, and the man's speech was restored.

John 5:1-9 -- Jesus healed a man who had been sick and crippled for 38 years. He spoke the word, and the man was Immediately healed.

Matthew 8:5-13 -- Jesus healed a centurion's servant at a distance, simply by speaking the word of authority.

Luke 7:11-17 -- Jesus raised from the dead the son of a widow of Nain. He spoke the word, and the dead man was restored to life.

Mark 4:35-41 -- Jesus stilled the howling wind and raging waves with the word of authority.

Mark 5:1-21 -- Jesus cast a legion of demons out of a wild man in the country of the Gerasenes, and permitted the demons to Inhabit a herd of swine.

Matthew 12:22-23 -- Jesus healed a blind and dumb man by casting a demon out of him. The man's sight and speech were restored.

Mark 6:7, 13 -- Jesus sent out the twelve disciples, and gave them authority to cast out demons and heal many sick people.

Mark 6:35-44 -- Jesus took five loaves and two fish, and multiplied their substance sufficiently to satisfy the appetites of 5,000 people.

Mark 6:47-52 -- Jesus walked on the water of the Sea of Galilee. When he got into the disciples' boat, the contrary wind ceased.

Mark 7:25-30 -- Jesus cast a demon out of a daughter of a Gentile woman, a Syrophenician living in the region of Tyre.

Mark 7:31-37 -- Jesus healed a man who was deaf and had a speech impediment. He put His fingers Into his ears and touched his tongue and spoke the word.

Mark 8:1-10 -- Jesus took seven loaves and a few fish, multiplied them, and fed 4,000 people.

Mark 8:22-26 -- Jesus healed a blind man by laying hands on his eyes.

Mark 9:14-29 -- Jesus healed a mute boy prone to convulsions by casting out the demonic spirit that possessed him.

Mark 9:38-40 -- John told Jesus about a man who was casting out demons in Christ's name, and Jesus told John not to hinder those who did miracles in His name.

John 9:1-7 -- Jesus restored a blind man's sight. He put clay on the man's eyes, and told him to wash at the pool of Siloam.

Luke 10:17 -- The seventy that Jesus sent out came back reporting that they had healed the sick and cast out demons in Christ's name.

Luke 13:11-17 -- Jesus healed a woman who had a sickness that had bent her over double for eighteen years. He cast out a spirit, laid His hands on her, and healed her.

Luke 14:1-4 -- Jesus healed a man sick with dropsy on the sabbath in a leading Pharisee's home. He took hold of the man and healed him.

Luke 17:11-19 -- Jesus healed ten lepers by speaking the word of command. As they obeyed, they were healed.

John 11:43-44 -- Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead with the word of command. With the command, Jesus communicated life so that Lazarus could obey it.

Mark 10:46-52 -- Jesus restored the sight of the blind beggar, Bartimaeus, with the word.

Mark 11:12-14, 20 -- Jesus cursed a fig tree as an object lesson to His disciples. The fig tree withered from the roots up.

Luke 22:50-51 -- Jesus healed the right ear of the high priest's slave, who had been wounded with a sword wielded by Peter.

John 21:1-14 -- Jesus told the seven disciples who had caught nothing all night to cast their net on the right side of the boat. The catch was too great to haul in.

Acts 2:1-11 -- The Holy Spirit filled the disciples, and they spoke in languages foreign to themselves.

Acts 2:43 -- The Lord did many wonders and signs through the apostles.

Acts 3:2-16 -- Peter and John restored a man lame from birth to perfect health, by the authority and power of Jesus' name.

Acts 5:1-11 -- Peter spoke a word of judgment, and Ananias and Sapphira were struck dead by God.

Acts 5:12-16 -- The apostles were doing many signs and wonders, and many people from cities near Jerusalem were being healed.

Acts 5:17-24 -- An angel opened the gates of the prison, let the apostles out, and then locked the gates once more.

Acts 6:8 -- Stephen performed great wonders and signs publicly.

Acts 8:6-13 -- Philip performed signs and great miracles in Samaria.

Acts 8:39-40 -- The Holy Spirit snatched Philip away, after Philip had baptized the Ethiopian eunuch on the desert road to Gaza.

Acts 9:3-18 -- A light from heaven blinded Paul on the road to Damascus. Later, Ananias put hands on Paul, and Paul regained his sight.

Acts 9:33-35 -- Peter healed a man named Aeneas, who had been a paralytic and bedridden for eight years.

Acts 9:36-42 -- Peter spoke a word to Dorcas, and she arose from the dead.

Acts 12:4-17 -- An angel delivered Peter from prison -- his chains fell off, the iron gate opened by itself, and Peter passed out in front of the guards.

Acts 12:21-23 -- An angel punished Herod for his boastful arrogance and presumption by inflicting him with a mortal illness.

Acts 13:6-12 -- Elymas the magician was struck with temporary blindness by Paul for attempting to turn a Proconsul away from the faith.

Acts 14:8-11 -- Paul healed a man lame in his feet from birth.

Acts 16:18 -- Paul cast a spirit of divination out of a slave girl.

Acts 16:23-26 -- A great earthquake shook the foundations of the prison in which Paul and Silas were confined, and all the doors were opened and all the chains unfastened.

Acts 19:11-12 -- God performed great miracles by Paul. Even his handkerchiefs or aprons were employed to cast out demons and heal the sick.

Acts 20:9-12 -- Paul restored to life a young man who had gone to sleep and fallen down from a third story height while Paul was preaching a very long message.

Acts 28:3-6 -- Paul shook off a viper that had fastened on his hand, and suffered no ill effects.

Acts 28:7-9 -- Paul laid his hands on Publius' father and prayed, and the man was healed.

Luke 24:1 7 -- Christ's resurrection from the dead, the greatest of all the miracles!

NOTE: The above list is not intended to be exhaustive or definitive. There are doubtless some miracles that are not listed, and there are some events listed that may be questioned. As a representative selection, however, the collection of texts above is fairly comprehensive.

Analysis and Summary of the Biblical data

Upon analyzing the 107 passages listed above, and attempting to discover some meaningful and functionally useful way to classify the events depicted in them according to their nature, we find that they fall into four categories, as follows:

- (1) Interventionist -- a supernatural intervention into the ordinary course of physical and/or biological states or processes
- (2) Creative -- a supernatural creation of physical substance and/or form or of biological process
- (3) Destructive -- a supernatural destruction of physical substance and/or form or of biological process, usually in the context of punishment for sin
- (4) Remedial -- a supernatural remediation of the physical and/or biological effects of sin

Upon analyzing the number of events that fall into each of these four categories, both in the Old Testament and in the New Testament, we uncover the following results:

<u>CATEGORIES</u>	<u>O.T.</u>	<u>N.T.</u>	<u>TOTALS</u>
Interventionist	18	8	26
Creative	12	3	15
Destructive	27	6	33
Remedial	11	40	51
TOTALS	68	57	125

Reflecting on these totals, we are stimulated to ask the following questions:

- (1) Why are there more than twice as many Interventionist miracles in the Old Testament as in the New?
- (2) Why are there no less than four times as many creative miracles in the Old Testament as in the New?
- (3) Why are there four and one half as many destructive miracles in the Old Testament as in the New?
- (4) Why are there more total miracles in the Old Testament than in the New?

C. Development of the Doctrine

1. Excluded categories of God's activity

Most of the writers on this subject exclude certain categories from their formal definition and treatment of miracle. In the definition proposed in these class notes, the following categories of God's activity are excluded:

- a. Original creation
- b. Ordinary and extraordinary providence, as defined earlier in these Notes
- c. Certain specific modes of special revelation, Including:
 - (1) altered states of consciousness (visions, trances, dreams)
 - (2) audible speech from God
 - (3) prophetic declaration through human Instruments
- d. Inspiration of Scripture
- e. Regeneration
- f. Exorcisms of demons

2. A proposed definition of miracle

- a. Negatively, miracles are not:
 - (1) examples of magic
 - (2) illusory perceptions
 - (3) fideisms produced by strong psychological frames of desire
 - (4) merely highly improbable events
 - (5) merely phenomena that we do not fully understand or cannot completely explain
 - (6) merely marvelous, awe inspiring events
- b. Positively, miracles are:
 - (1) events in the material world that are visible displays of extraordinary divine power, exerted either immediately or mediately
 - (2) signs or pointers that clearly Indicate the place of God's extraordinary activity in the world
 - (3) authentications of God's messengers and attestations of their messages as divinely originated

3. The possibility of counterfeit miracles

Although God is the sovereign Ruler of the universe, there are other, lesser powers at work in the world, some of which attempt to mimic and counterfeit the mighty works of God for their own evil ends. These evil powers attempt to use human beings as instruments of their purpose; and Scripture witnesses to the degree of success that they achieve.

Deuteronomy 13:1-3 -- "If a prophet or a dreamer of dreams arises among you and gives you a sign or a wonder, and the sign or the wonder comes true, concerning which he spoke to you, saying, 'Let us go after other gods (whom you have not known) and let us serve them,' you shall not listen to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams; for the Lord your God is testing you to find out if you love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul."

Matthew 7:22-23 -- "Many will say to Him on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness.' "

Matthew 24:24 -- "For false Christs and false prophets will arise and will show great signs and wonders, so as to mislead, if possible, even the elect."

II Thessalonians 2:8-9 -- "And then that lawless one will be revealed whom the Lord will slay with the breath of His mouth and bring to an end by the appearance of His coming; that is, the one whose coming is in accord with the activity of Satan, with all power and signs and false wonders,"

Revelation 13:11-13 -- "And I saw another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spoke as a dragon. And he exercises all the authority of the first beast in his presence. And he makes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast, whose fatal wound was healed. And he performs great signs, so that he even makes fire come down out of heaven to the earth in the presence of men."

ANTHROPOLOGY

I. THE CONSTITUTIONAL NATURE OF MANKIND

A. Statements of the Doctrine

The *Second Helvetic Confession*, Chapter 7, states:

We say, also, that man doth consist of two, and those diverse substances in one person; of a soul Immortal (as that which being separated from his body doth neither sleep nor die), and a body mortal, which, notwithstanding, at the last judgment shall be raised again from the dead, that from henceforth the whole man may continue forever in life or in death.

Charles Hodge, in volume 2, p.42, of his *Systematic Theology* writes:

The Scriptures teach that God formed the body of man out of the dust of the earth, and breathed into him the breath of life and he became נִפְשָׁחַיָּה, a living soul. According to this account, man consists of two distinct principles, a body and a soul: the one material, the other immaterial; the one corporeal, the other spiritual. It is involved in this statement, first, that the soul of man is a substance; and secondly, that it is a substance distinct from the body. So that in the constitution of man two distinct substances are included.

Augustus Hopkins Strong, in Volume 2, p. 486, of his *Systematic Theology* says:

We conclude that the immaterial part of man, viewed as an individual and conscious life, capable of possessing and animating a physical organism, is called ψυχή; viewed as a rational and moral agent, susceptible of divine influence and indwelling, this same immaterial part is called πνεῦμα. The πνεῦμα, then, is man's nature looking Godward, and capable of receiving and manifesting the πνεῦμα ἅγιον; the ψυχή is man's nature looking earthward, and touching the world of sense. The πνεῦμα is man's higher part, as related to spiritual realities or as capable of such relation; the ψυχή is man's higher part, as related to the body, or as capable of such relation. Man's being is therefore not trichotomous but dichotomous, and his immaterial part, while possessing duality of powers, has unity of substance.

Lewis Sperry Chafer, in Volume 2, pp. 180-181 of his *Systematic Theology*, writes:

Is man a dichotomous being -- two parts, material and Immaterial, with the supposition that soul and spirit are the same -- or is he trichotomous -- body, soul, and spirit? It would be readily conceded by all that, under any consideration, there is not the same breadth of distinction observable between soul and spirit as between soul and body, or spirit and body

Distinction -- far-reaching indeed -- is implied between soul and spirit, yet these terms are used synonymously. Thus the controversy is between those who are impressed with the distinctions and those who are impressed with the similarities. It would be well to recognize that, when so required, the Bible assigns to these two terms a distinctive meaning and that when no specific distinction is in view, the Bible supports both dichotomy and trichotomy. The distinction between soul and spirit is as Incomprehensible as life itself, and the efforts of men to frame definitions must always be unsatisfactory.

P. B. Fitzwater, in his Christian Theology Second Edition, p.309, states:

In I Thessalonians 5:23 we have the classic passage on the constituent elements of man's nature. These elements stand out in clear and bold relief showing that man is made up of spirit, soul, and body. The spirit of man links him with the highest Intelligence and shows that he is susceptible to the quickening of the Holy Spirit. It is by the human spirit that man communes with God. The soul is intermediate between the body and the spirit and seems to be the sphere of the affections, the reason, and the will. When the human personality was vitally united with the material body, man became a living soul.

Millard J. Erickson, in Volume 2, pp.520-522, 524 of his *Christian Theology* writes:

A view rather popular in conservative Protestant circles has been termed the "trichotomist" view. Man is composed of three elements. The first element is the physical body. A physical nature is something man has in common with animals and plants. There is no difference in kind between man's body and that of animals and plants. The difference is one of degree, as man has a more complex physical structure. The second part of man is the soul. This is the psychological element, the basis of reason, of emotion, of social interrelatedness and the like. Animals are thought to have a rudimentary soul. Possession of a soul is what distinguishes man and animals from the plants. While the soul of man is much more involved and capable than that of the animals, their souls are similar in kind. What really distinguishes man from the animals is not that he has a more complex and advanced soul, but that he possesses a third element, namely, a spirit. This religious element enables the human to perceive spiritual matters and respond to spiritual stimuli. It is the seat of the spiritual qualities of the individual, whereas the personality traits reside in the soul.

Probably the most widely held view through most of history of Christian thought has been the view that man is composed of two elements, a material aspect, the body, and an immaterial component, the soul or spirit. Dichotomism was commonly held from the earliest period of Christian thought. Following the Council of Constantinople in 381, however, it grew in popularity to the point that it was virtually the universal belief of the church.

The points of agreement between the trichotomist and the dichotomist views exceed their differences. They both agree that man is complex or compound, that he is made up of separable parts. In contrast are various forms of the view that man is indivisible. Monism insists that man is not to be thought of as in any sense composed of parts or separate entities, but rather as a radical unity. In the monistic understanding, the Bible does not view man as a body, soul, and spirit, but simply as a self. The terms sometimes used to distinguish parts of man are actually to be taken as basically synonymous. Man is never treated in the Bible as a dualistic being.

According to monism, to be human is to be or have a body. The idea that a human can somehow exist apart from a body is unthinkable. Consequently, there is no possibility of post death existence in a disembodied state. Immortality of the soul is quite untenable. Not only, then, is there no possibility of a future life apart from bodily resurrection, but any sort of intermediate state between death and resurrection is ruled out as well.

On page 537, Erickson proposes his model:

The full range of the biblical data can best be accommodated by the view which we will term "conditional unity". According to this view, the normal state of man is as a materialized unitary being. In Scripture man is so addressed and regarded. He is not urged to flee or escape from the body, as if it were somehow inherently evil. This monistic condition can, however, be broken down, and at death it is, so that the immaterial aspect of man lives on even as the material decomposes. At the resurrection, however, there will be a return to a material or bodily condition It is not the immortality of the soul or the resurrection of the body. In keeping with what has been the orthodox tradition within the church, it is both/and.

Lewis and Demarest, in Volume 2, p.160 of their *Integrative Theology* state:

To sum up, the whole person metaphysically is a complex agent, a unity of an inner (spiritual) and outer (physical) being with a multiplicity of capacities for developing excellence and ruling the world (Gen. 1:16, 28) intellectually, morally, emotionally, volitionally, and relationally. In other words, a human person is an accountable agent made up of an interacting dichotomy of spirit and body with a trichotomy of three relationships -- to the earth, others, and God. The truth in dichotomy is in two substances; the truth in trichotomy is in three major relationships. In Scripture the whole inner person relating to God is most frequently designated spirit. The whole inner person relating to oneself, others, and things is most frequently called soul. But the one inner person thinks, feels, wills, and relates, whether "vertically" or "horizontally". Humans in themselves do have great (but not infinite) potential for sharing God's vital fellowship, relationships, and work.

B. Dichotomy

1. Definition of the view

Dichotomy is the view that soul and spirit refer to one and the same nonmaterial entity; and that therefore human beings are two fold beings: nonmaterial and material.

2. Scriptural evidence used to support the view

Dichotomy searches the Scriptures to find substantive differences in the significance of the relevant terms or the functions associated with them, but finds none. Instead, it finds synonymous usage, interchangeability of terms, and lack of distinctness of function associated with their use.

The following Scriptures are quoted to illustrate these findings:

a. "Soul" (נֶפֶשׁ) in the Old Testament

I Samuel 1:15 -- "But Hannah answered and said, 'No, my lord, I am a woman oppressed in spirit; I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but I have poured out my soul before the Lord.' "

I Kings 17:21 22 -- "Then he stretched himself upon the child three times, called to the Lord, and said, 'O Lord my God, I pray Thee, let this child's life return to him. And the Lord heard the voice of Elijah, and the life of the child returned to him and he revived."

Psalms 19:7 -- "The law of the Lord is perfect, restoring the soul;
The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple."

Psalms 35:9 -- "And my soul shall rejoice in the Lord;
It shall exult in His salvation."

Psalms 42:1 2 -- "As the deer pants for the water brooks,
So my soul pants for Thee, O God.
My soul thirsts for God, for the living God;
When shall I come and appear before God?"

Psalms 103:1 -- "Bless the Lord, O my soul
All that is within me, bless His holy name.'

Psalms 119:167 -- "My soul keeps Thy testimonies,
And I love them exceedingly."

b. "Soul" (ψυχή) in the New Testament

Matthew 10:28 -- "And do not fear those who kill the body, but are unable to kill the soul but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.'

Matthew 12:18 -- "Behold, My Servant whom I have chosen; My Beloved in whom My soul is well pleased; I will put My Spirit upon Him, And He shall proclaim justice to the Gentiles."

Luke 1:46-47 -- "And Mary said: 'My soul exalts the Lord, And my spirit (πνεῦμα) has rejoiced in God my Savior."

Acts 2:27 -- "Because Thou wilt not abandon my soul to Hades, Nor allow Thy Holy One to undergo decay."

Acts 14:22 -- "strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in their faith, and saying, 'Through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God.' "

I Peter 2:11 -- "Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers to abstain from fleshly lusts, which wage war against the soul."

Revelation 16:3 -- "And the second angel poured out his bowl into the sea, and it became like that of a dead man; and every living thing in the sea died."

John 12:27 -- "Now My soul has become troubled; and what shall I say, 'Father, save Me from this hour?' But for this purpose I came to this hour" (Note John 13:21 -- "When Jesus had said this, He became troubled in spirit" (πνεῦμα))

Matthew 20:28 -- "Just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many." (Note Matthew 27:50 -- "And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice, and yielded up His spirit" (πνεῦμα))

Matthew 22:37 -- "And He said to him, 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul and with all your mind.'"

c. "Spirit" (πνεῦμα) in the Old Testament

Genesis 41:8 -- "Now it came about in the morning that his spirit was troubled, so he sent and called for all the magicians of Egypt, and all its wise men. And Pharaoh told them his dreams, but there was no one who could interpret them to Pharaoh."

Deuteronomy 2:30 -- "But Sihon king of Heshbon was not willing for us to pass through his land; for the Lord your God hardened his spirit and made his heart obstinate, in order to deliver him into your hand, as he is today."

I Chronicles 5:26 -- "So the God of Israel stirred up the spirit of Pul, king of Assyria, even the spirit of Tiglath-pileser king of Assyria, and he carried them away into exile, namely the Reubenites, the Gadites, and the half tribe of Manasseh, and brought them to Halah, Habor, Hara, and to the river of Gozan, to this day."

Ezra 1:1 -- "Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, in order to fulfill the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah, the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, so that he sent a proclamation throughout all his kingdom,"

Isaiah 65:14 -- "Behold, My servants shall shout joyfully with a glad heart, But you shall cry out with a heavy heart, And you shall wait with a broken spirit."

Ezekiel 13:3 -- "Thus says the Lord God, 'Woe to the foolish prophets who are following their own spirit and have seen nothing.'"

Daniel 2:1 -- "Now in the second year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, Nebuchadnezzar had dreams; and his spirit was troubled and his sleep left him."

Zechariah 12:1 -- "The burden of the word of the Lord concerning Israel. Thus declares the Lord who stretches out the heavens, lays the foundation of the earth, and forms the spirit of man within him."

Malachi 2:16 -- "For I hate divorce, says the Lord, the God of Israel, and him who covers his garment with wrong, says the Lord of hosts. So take heed to your spirit that you do not deal treacherously."

d. "Spirit" (πνεῦμα) in the New Testament

Luke 8:55 -- "And her spirit returned, and she rose up immediately; and He gave orders for something to be given her to eat."

Acts 17:16 -- "Now while Paul was waiting for them at Athens, his spirit was being provoked within him as he was beholding the city full of Idols."

I Corinthians 2:11 -- "For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the spirit of the man, which is in him? Even so the thoughts of God no one knows except the Spirit of God."

II Corinthians 2:13 -- "I had no rest for my spirit not finding Titus my brother; but taking my leave of them, I went on to Macedonia."

II Corinthians 7:1 -- "Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit perfecting holiness in the fear of God."

James 2:26 -- "For just as the body without the spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead."

3. Remarks concerning Dichotomy

An inductive word study of all uses of the Hebrew and Greek words translated "soul" and "spirit" does not sustain the contention that soul and spirit are lower and higher powers of our nonmaterial nature.

Nor does such a study confirm the claim that "soul" refers to our nonmaterial nature as related to the body or to the earth, while "spirit" refers to our nonmaterial nature as related to God or to heaven.

In Dichotomy the soul and spirit may be thought of as two aspects of man's nonmaterial nature. When distinctive nuances are intended, perhaps soul refers to man's nonmaterial nature thought of as a person as a being or an individual subsistence; and perhaps spirit refers to man's nonmaterial nature thought of in terms of its essence.

If this is the case, then either word can be used to denote our nonmaterial being. Sometimes these words could be used interchangeably; other times they could be used with an emphasis on the personal quality of man's nonmaterial nature or upon the essential spirituality of man's nature.

These ideas could be synthesized by stating that man is a person whose essence is spirit and that the full expression of a personal spirit in a space-time universe comprised of matter energy is achieved by means of a physical body

4. Objections to the view

Objections to Dichotomy arise from those biblical interpretations or theological inferences used to support Trichotomy. To avoid duplication, these are treated under Trichotomy.

C. Trichotomy

1. Definition of the view

Trichotomy is the view that body and soul and spirit refer to three distinct entities; and that therefore human beings are comprised of three parts, one of which is material and the other two nonmaterial.

2. Scriptural evidence used to support the view

Genesis 2:7 -- "Then the Lord God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living being."

Trichotomists point out that in the phrase "breath of life," the word "life" is really plural, "lives" (חַיִּים), and that this implies the inbreathing of both soul and spirit; thus Trichotomy.

I Corinthians 2:14-15, 3:1 -- "But a natural (Ψυχικός) man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually (πνευματικῶς) appraised. But he who is spiritual (πνευματικῶς) appraises all things, yet he himself is appraised by no man . . . And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual men (πνευματικῶς), but as to men of flesh (σαρκίνοις) as to babes in Christ."

Trichotomists point out the threefold classification of human beings in this passage (Ψυχικός, πνευματικός, σαρκίνο), and conclude that this implies that man is a tripartite being.

I Thessalonians 5:23 -- "Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit (τὸ πνεῦμα) and soul (ἡ ψυχή) and body (τὸ σῶμα) be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Trichotomists consider this the classic text, and wonder that anyone could mistake the plain teaching of Scripture!

I Corinthians 15:44 -- "It is sown a natural body (σῶμα ψυχικόν), it is raised a spiritual body (σῶμα πνευματικόν). If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body."

Trichotomists infer from this contrast between Ψυχικός and πνευματικός an essential distinction between ψυχή and πνεῦμα and infer from this essential distinction a distinction of entity between human soul and human spirit.

Hebrews 4:12 -- "For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of the soul and spirit (διεικνούμενος ἄχρι μερισμοῦ ψυχῆς καὶ πνεύματος), of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart."

Trichotomists point to this text as conclusive. If the word of God pierces so far as to divide between the soul and the spirit, that decides the issue!

3. Remarks concerning Trichotomy

At first glance this view appears to have presented a very strong case. In fact, it would seem difficult to argue against the view, given the strength of the scriptural data!

However, before this view is wholeheartedly espoused, perhaps we should examine the scriptural data a bit more closely.

a. With respect to the use of נִפְּשׁוּ in Genesis 2:7, its translation as "lives" (plural), and the inference that this implies the inbreathing of both soul and spirit, it should be pointed out that the plural form may be translated simply "life," and that the plural

does not necessarily imply two distinct nonmaterial entities in man (in fact, if the plural is pressed, it could refer to three or four such entities!)

b. With respect to the threefold classification of human beings in I Corinthians 2:14-15, 3:1. (ψυχικός, πνευματικός, σαρκίος), it should be pointed out that refers to natural, unregenerate men, and that πνευματικός, and σαρκίος refer to two categories of believers, namely mature spiritual believers and childish fleshly believers (or at least, those who are behaving in this way). However, it is contended by Trichotomists that the use of ψυχικός for the unregenerate and πνευματικός for the spiritual regenerate indicates a clear contrast between the terms, and with this contention it would be difficult to find fault. However, when it is further contended that this contrast provides a basis for the inference that ψυχή and πνεῦμα refer to two distinct nonmaterial entities, thus proving Trichotomy, that is quite another matter!

Of course, it is understandable as to how this idea could have arisen. Some lexicons have contributed to its acceptance.

For example, Joseph Henry Thayer's *Greek English Lexicon of the New Testament* defines ψυχικός as follows:

a. having the nature and characteristics of the ψυχή i.e., of the principle of animal life which men have in common with brutes . . .

b. governed by the ψυχή, i.e., the sensuous nature with its subjection to appetite and passion (as though made up of nothing but ψυχή).

However, Sauer, Arndt, and Gingrich's *Greek English Lexicon of the New Testament* gives us a different definition:

pertaining to the soul or life in our liter. always denoting the life of the natural world and whatever belongs to it, in contrast to the supernatural world, which is characterized by πνεῦμα . . . 1. adj. Ψυχικός ἄνθρωπος an unspiritual man, one who lives on the purely material plane, without being touched by the Spirit of God. I Cor. 2:14. σῶμα ψυχικόν, physical body 15:44. The wisdom that does not come from above is called ἐπίγειος, ψυχική (unspiritual), δαιμονιώδης James 3:15. 2. subst. - a. τὸ ψυχικόν, the physical in contrast with τὸ πνευματικόν, Cor. 15:46. b. Jude in vs. 19 calls the teachers of error ψυχικοί, πνεῦμα μὴ ἔχοντες worldly (lit. 'psychic') men who do not have the Spirit.

Besides referring to all six uses of ψυχικός, Arndt and Gingrich (BAG) give us meanings which arise from usage in context, rather than meanings that arise from inferences from the word ψυχή, together with a considerable amount of theological baggage!

It would appear, then, that the ψυχικός ἄνθρωπος in I Cor. 2:14 refers to the natural man, the unregenerate man; and not to the "soulish" man; and that the inference from ψυχικός to ψυχή (as a distinct, nonmaterial entity) is not warranted.

c. With respect to the threefold classification in I Thess. 5:23, it should be pointed out that there are other places in Scripture where we find lists of aspects of man's nature, and we do not understand the members of these lists to refer to distinct entities constitutive of man's nature.

For example, Matthew 22:37 -- "And He said, to him, 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart (καρδίᾳ), and with all your soul (ψυχῇ), and with all your mind (διανοίᾳ),' -- is not taken as evidence that heart, soul, and mind are three distinct, non-overlapping entities in man's nature.

And in Deuteronomy 6:5, "heart," "soul," and "might" are mentioned; and in Luke 10:27, "heart," "soul," "strength," and "mind" are enumerated. Surely these references are not teaching us about distinct, non-overlapping entities in man, but rather emphasizing the totality of man's being.

I Thess. 5:23 could be understood in the same way, as stressing the totality of being. Paul says, in effect, "Now may the God of peace sanctify you entirely; and may the whole of your being be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."

d. With respect to I Cor. 15:44, the distinction between the natural body and the supernatural body is well founded in the scriptural statements themselves. However, inferring from ψυχικός and πνευματικός to ψυχή and πνεῦμα as distinct entities in man's nature has no more warrant here than it has in I Cor. 2:14-15, 3:1. The same objections obtain.

e. With respect to the seeming division between soul and spirit in Hebrews 4:12, perhaps we can benefit methodologically from what appears to be an impregnable case.

The word translated "division" (μερισμός) is used only twice in the New Testament, here and in Hebrews 2:4. Such usage constitutes a virtual *hapax legomena* ("spoken only once"). In Hebrews 2:4 it refers to the gifts that the Holy Spirit distributes according to His own will.

A similar word, μεριστής, is used only once in the New Testament, in Luke 12:14, where it means one who makes a judgment as to how an inheritance is to be divided.

Another word, μερίς, is used five times in the New Testament (Luke 10:42, Acts 8:21, Acts 16:12, II Cor. 6:15, Col. 1:12), and means a part, portion, or share.

The verb *μερίζω* is used fourteen times in the New Testament. It means "to divide, to distribute." With one exception it is always used of dividing up singular things, such as a kingdom, a city, a house, Satan, an inheritance, Christ, a married man, and spoil. The one exception is in Mark 6:41, where we are told that Christ "divided up the two fish among them all." In this case Jesus doubtless broke each of the two fish into fragments and distributed the fragments to the five thousand. It is very unlikely that He divided between the two fish and gave one fish to one group of disciples and the other fish to another group of disciples! It is instructive to note that *μερίζω* is never used of dividing between two distinct things, while leaving them intact.

Note: Dividing between distinct things while leaving them intact is expressed by the verb *διαμερίζω* used twelve times in the New Testament, and by *διαμερισμός* used once.

However, if Hebrews 4:12 does not mean dividing between the soul and the spirit, then what does it mean?

The sword of the word of God may be understood to be so powerful and sharp as to be able to pierce the soul and spirit. Of course it will be objected that this implies the piercing of two distinct entities. But this objection rests on the (unwarranted) supposition that different words imply distinct entities.

Now it is true that Hebrews 4:12 speaks of the Word of God piercing as far as the division of the joints and marrow, which means that it divides the joints and divides the marrow. This could be used to argue (by way of parallelism) for the soul and spirit being as distinct as are joints and marrow.

However, the verse also speaks of the Word of God piercing to the division of the thoughts and intentions of the heart, and it could be difficult to show the distinctness of thoughts and intentions.

If the terms "heart" and "soul" and "mind" in Matthew 22:37 do not imply the existence of three distinct, nonoverlapping entities in man's nature, then this reference need only be understood as stressing the piercing of the Word of God to the innermost recesses of man's being in its totality, the whole man's nonmaterial nature expressed in the terms "soul and spirit."

4. Objections to this view

a. With respect to the usage of "soul" and "spirit" in Scriptures other than the five mentioned above, it has already been mentioned that an inductive study of these terms finds a number of cases of synonymous usage and interchangeability of terms. If it could be shown that the Scriptures connect certain functions or characteristics with one term but not the other; or if it could be shown that the human spirit has "higher powers" while the soul has "lower powers"; or if it could be shown that the spirit is man's "God consciousness"

while the soul is man's "self consciousness"; or if it could be shown that the spirit is that part of man's being that looks heavenward while the soul is that part of man's being that looks earthward; or if it could be shown that to the spirit belong the powers of reason, conscience, and free will, while to the soul belong the powers of man's imagination, memory, and understanding -- if these terms could be shown to have functional distinctions, then a case could be made for at least two sets of functions in man's nonmaterial being, or perhaps even two nonmaterial entities. It does not appear that on the basis of scriptural usage such a case can be made.

b. Before Trichotomy is espoused or maintained, some pointed questions should be addressed, in connection with the problem of consistency in tracing the body, soul, and spirit through various stages of human existence.

Questions such as the following must be asked and satisfactorily answered:

Which entity (body, soul, spirit) fell?
What was the result of the Fall?
Which entity now sins in the unregenerate?
Which entity is regenerate?
Which entity continues to sin?
What are the results of death as respects these entities?

Answers to these questions are charted on the next page.

QUESTIONS WHICH ELUCIDATE TRICHOTOMOUS VIEWS

VIEW	WHAT ENTITY FELL	RESULT OF FALL	WHAT ENTITY SINS IN THE UNREGENERATE	WHAT ENTITY IS REGENERATED	WHAT ENTITY CONTINUES TO SIN	RESULTS OF DEATH	REMARKS CONCERNING THE VIEW
1	SPIRIT	SPIRIT ANNIHILATED	SOUL	NONE *	SOUL	SOUL GOES TO HADES	NONTRICHOTOMOUS CONFLICTS: GEN. 41:8 UNFALLEN SOUL SINS
2	SPIRIT	SPIRIT ANNIHILATED	SOUL	SPIRIT RE-CREATED	SOUL	SOUL IS ANNIHILATED	NONTRICHOTOMOUS UNFALLEN SOUL SINS CONFLICTS: GEN. 41:8; 1 PET. 1:9
3	SPIRIT	SPIRIT ANNIHILATED	SOUL	SPIRIT RE-CREATED	SOUL	SOUL IS FREED FROM SIN	NONTRICHOTOMOUS UNFALLEN SOUL SINS CONFLICTS: GEN. 41:8; 2 COR. 7:1
4	SPIRIT	SPIRIT DEPRAVED	SPIRIT	NONE *	SPIRIT	SPIRIT AND SOUL GO TO HADES	UNFALLEN SOUL GOES TO HADES!
5	SPIRIT	SPIRIT DEPRAVED	SPIRIT	SPIRIT	SPIRIT	SPIRIT IS ANNIHILATED	NONTRICHOTOMOUS UNFALLEN SOUL
6	SPIRIT	SPIRIT DEPRAVED	SPIRIT	SPIRIT	SPIRIT	SPIRIT IS FREED FROM SIN	UNFALLEN SOUL CONFLICTS: JAMES 1:21
7	SOUL	SOUL DEPRAVED	SOUL	NONE *	SOUL	SOUL AND SPIRIT GO TO HADES	UNFALLEN SPIRIT GOES TO HADES!
8	SOUL	SOUL DEPRAVED	SOUL	SOUL	SOUL	SOUL IS ANNIHILATED	NONTRICHOTOMOUS UNFALLEN SPIRIT CONFLICTS: 2 COR. 7:1; 1 PET. 1:9
9	SOUL	SOUL DEPRAVED	SOUL	SOUL	SOUL	SOUL IS FREED FROM SIN	UNFALLEN SPIRIT CONFLICTS: 2 COR. 7:1
10	SPIRIT & SOUL	SPIRIT & SOUL ANNIHILATED	SOUL	NONE *	SOUL	SOUL GOES TO HADES	NONTRICHOTOMOUS CONFLICTS: GEN. 41:8
11	SPIRIT & SOUL	SPIRIT & SOUL ANNIHILATED	SOUL	SPIRIT RE-CREATED	SOUL	SOUL IS ANNIHILATED	NONTRICHOTOMOUS CONFLICTS: GEN. 41:8; 1 PET. 1:9
12	SPIRIT & SOUL	SPIRIT & SOUL ANNIHILATED	SOUL	SPIRIT RE-CREATED	SOUL	SOUL IS FREED FROM SIN	NONTRICHOTOMOUS CONFLICTS: GEN. 41:8; 2 COR. 7:1
13	SPIRIT & SOUL	SPIRIT & SOUL DEPRAVED	SPIRIT & SOUL	NONE *	SPIRIT & SOUL	SPIRIT AND SOUL GO TO HADES	
14	SPIRIT & SOUL	SPIRIT & SOUL DEPRAVED	SPIRIT & SOUL	SPIRIT	SOUL	SOUL IS ANNIHILATED	NONTRICHOTOMOUS CONFLICTS: 2 COR. 7:1; 1 PET. 1:9
15	SPIRIT & SOUL	SPIRIT & SOUL DEPRAVED	SPIRIT & SOUL	SPIRIT	SPIRIT & SOUL	SPIRIT IS FREED FROM SIN; SOUL IS ANNIHILATED	NONTRICHOTOMOUS CONFLICTS: 1 PET. 1:9
16	SPIRIT & SOUL	SPIRIT & SOUL DEPRAVED	SPIRIT & SOUL	SPIRIT & SOUL	SPIRIT & SOUL	SPIRIT AND SOUL ARE FREED FROM SIN	

* The word "none" in these views (#1, #4, #7, #10, #13) indicates that the person in view is not regenerated; i.e. that this represents a person who remains unregenerate throughout his lifetime.

WHAT DIFFERENCE DOES IT MAKE WHETHER
ONE HOLDS TO A DICHOTOMOUS OR A TRICHOTOMOUS VIEW OF MAN'S NATURE?

1. On the one hand it may make little or no difference; on the other hand it may reflect important differences in exegesis or hermeneutics or theological methodology.

a. For example, it may reflect adoption of the principle that words are points rather than areas of meaning that sometimes overlap the areas of meaning of other words.

b. For example, it may reflect adoption of the principle that different words are always used to intend different meanings, rather than the principle that different words are sometimes used to intend synonymous meanings.

c. For example, it may reflect adoption of the principle that different words always refer to different things, rather than the principle that different words sometimes refer to the same things.

For instance, in the use of names the same person or thing is often referred to by different names. Thus the President of the United States is referred to as the "Chief Executive," the Commander in Chief," the "man in the White House," the "leader of our nation," the "man in the oval office," and "Mr. President." Some of these names merely look at him from different aspects, and some emphasize different functions and/or relationships. Yet they all refer to the same person.

d. For example, it may reflect whether we approach the meanings of words in Scripture via the constructions and convictions of a particular Biblical scholar or a theologian or a theological system, rather than view an inductive study of its uses in context.

2. On the one hand it may make little or no difference; on the other hand it may seriously color our view of human psychology, and through it our understanding of Scripture.

a. For example, if we treat the soul and spirit as a functional unity, there is no problem; but if we treat the soul and spirit as distinct entities that function separately or even independently of each other, some important implications can arise, such that a human being's intellect, emotions, will, and consciousness can each be viewed as functioning on two levels—the carnal or soulish level and the spiritual level—and each human being can be seen to have two psychological centers or two totally distinct "natures." Thus a Christian could be said to think or feel or will with the soul and not the spirit, or with the spirit and not the soul.

b. In the realm of sanctification and the Christian life, for example, the viewing of soul and spirit as separately functioning entities can lead a person to think that he or she can function exclusively in the spirit entity rather than in both entities, and thus attain sinlessness in this

life, or function exclusively in the soul entity rather than in both entities, and thus excuse himself or herself for sinful thoughts or desires or actions by saying, "Oh, that's only the flesh. What else can you expect from it? Besides, I simply count it dead, and live my life in the spirit."

3. On the one hand it may make little or no difference; on the other hand it may seriously affect one's views of the subjective aspects of sin and salvation.

a. For example, if both the soul and spirit of man sinned, fell, died spiritually, became depraved, stand condemned, and need salvation, there is no problem. And if both the soul and spirit of man either perish or are saved, there is no problem. But if the soul of the unsaved person is depraved and sinful and is either punished or annihilated at death, and the spirit of the person is neutral and innocent and is yet preserved and punished, there is a problem.

b. Again, if both the soul and spirit of man sinned, fell, died spiritually, became depraved, stand condemned, and need salvation, there is no problem. And if both the soul and spirit of man either perish or are saved, there is no problem. But if the soul of the saved person is depraved and sinful and is either punished or annihilated at death, and the spirit of that person is holy and sinless and preserved and blessed at death, there is a problem.

II. THE ORIGIN OF THE SOUL SPIRIT IN THE INDIVIDUAL

In the history of Christian doctrine there have been three basic views of the origin of the soul-spirit. They are called the theory of Preexistence, the theory of Creationism, and the theory of Traducianism.

A. The Theory of Preexistence

1. Statement of the theory

Preexistence is the view that the soul-spirits of human beings had a distinct, personal existence in a previous state; that they sinned in that state; and that they are therefore born into the world already sinful. In this view God created all the soul-spirits of mankind *ex nihilo* at one time, and subsequently joins them to their bodies, which He creates mediately (except in the case of Adam and Eve).

2. Arguments put forward in favor of the theory

a. It is argued that this view alone explains how the depravity of the human will can be both inborn and just. Depravity was incurred by a personal act of self-determination in a previous state of existence.

b. It is argued that this view explains intuitive Ideas, fleeting thoughts of life in a previous existence, and the experience of *déjà vu* ("seen before"). These are all understood as reminiscences of things known or learned in a previous state of existence.

c. It is argued that this view best accounts for inborn sins of the spirit, such as pride and enmity to God. These sins do not arise from bodily desires, but from inward inclinations and desires of the spirit. Since these are inborn, they must have originated in a previous state of existence.

d. It is argued that this view explains the disparity of human condition at birth. Some persons are born into low income conditions, some are born into high income conditions; some are born into deplorable social circumstances, some are born into very desirable social circumstances; some are born with high intellectual capabilities and many talents, some are born with low intellectual capabilities and few talents; some are born into morally depraved settings, some are born into morally upright settings. It is argued that the conditions into which human beings are born justly mirror the differences in their conduct in a previous state.

3. Objections to the theory

a. The major objection is that the view is wholly without support from Scripture. There is no revelation to the effect that God created all of the soul-spirits of mankind at one time, or that soul-spirits existed in objective reality prior to the conception of their bodies.

b. It is objected that the view contradicts Paul's teaching that individual sinfulness and death in the human race is connected with Adam's sin, especially as that teaching is found in Romans 5:12-19.

c. It is objected that the view places too much credence in rationalism in philosophy or in physical or parapsychological claims, and consequently builds too heavily on these views and/or claims.

d. It is objected that not only inborn inclinations towards sins of the spirit but also inborn tendencies toward sensual sins must be accounted for by any theory of the origin of the soul-spirit.

B. The Theory of Creationism

1. Statement of the Theory

Creationism is the view that the soul-spirits of human beings are created *ex nihilo* by God, and thus come into existence at the time they are joined to their bodies, which God creates mediate (except in the case of Adam and Eve). The soul-spirit is joined to the body either at conception or at birth, or at some time between these times.

2. Arguments put forward in favor of the theory

a. It is argued that this view is more consistent than other views with such Scriptures as the following:

Genesis 2:7 -- "Then the Lord God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being."

Ecclesiastes 12:7 -- "Then the dust will return to the earth as it was, and the spirit will return to God who gave it."

Isaiah 42:5 -- "Thus says God the Lord,
Who created the heavens and stretched them out,
Who spread out the earth and its offspring,
Who gives breath to the people on it,
And spirit to those who walk in it,"

Zechariah 12:1 -- "Thus declares the Lord who stretches out the heavens, lays the foundation of the earth, and forms the spirit of man within him."

Hebrew 12:9 -- "Furthermore, we had earthly fathers to discipline us, and we respected them; shall we not much rather be subject to the Father of spirits, and live?"

b. It is argued that the view is consistent with the nature of the soul-spirit as non-material and spiritual, and therefore incapable of division.

c. It is argued that the view avoids the pitfalls of Traducianism in Christology, because Creationism does not teach that Christ shared the same numerical non-material essence that sinned in Adam; otherwise Christ would have been a fallen, depraved human being.

3. Objections to this theory

a. It is objected that Creationism makes God the creator of that which is morally evil -- a sinful soul-spirit.

b. It is objected that Creationism views parents as begetting only the body of their child; and thus does not account for mental, emotional, and social likenesses and traits common to parents and children.

c. It is objected that Creationism ignores the fact that God has ceased from *ex nihilo* and immediate creative activity, and is now creating only mediately.

C. The Theory of Traducianism

1. Statement of the theory

Traducianism is the view that the soul-spirits of human beings are mediately created by God through their parents, and thus come into existence at the same time as their bodies, which God creates mediately (except in the case of Adam and Eve). The soul-spirit is already united to the body at conception, since both are created mediately.

2. Arguments put forward in favor of the theory

a. It is argued that the breath of life was breathed into man's nostrils only once, and thenceforth God perpetuated the race by means of ordinary generation. In fact, the record of Scripture does not even indicate that God breathed into Eve's nostrils.

b. It is argued that the work of creation was completed on the sixth day, which could not be true if God is momentarily creating soul-spirits.

c. It is argued that not only physical characteristics, but mental characteristics and family traits are passed on to children, and that these inherited characteristics are best explained by Traducianism.

d. It is argued that the "likeness" in which Adam begot Seth (Genesis 5:3 - "When Adam had lived one hundred and thirty years, he became the father of a son in his own likeness, according to his image, and named him Seth.") must have included more than a mere physical likeness.

e. It is argued that the inheritance of moral and spiritual depravity, which are inherent in the soul-spirit and not the body, is best explained by Traducianism.

f. It is argued that Psalm 51:5 -- "in sin my mother conceived me" can mean only one thing; namely, that David inherited a sinful soul-spirit from his mother.

g. It is argued that Traducianism does not make God the creator of morally evil soul-spirits, as does Creationism.

h. It is argued that if the whole human race was in Adam's loins when he sinned, then all human beings actually and really sinned in him, and are thus responsible for the sin and its results. It is argued that this conception articulates best with Traducianism.

3. Objections to the theory

a. It is objected that Traducianism implies the materiality and divisibility of the soul-spirit, so that portions of the soul-spirits of the parents are communicated to the child via ordinary generation.

b. It is objected that, on this theory, Christ must have taken into union with Himself the sinful human nature of Mary, and thus was Himself sinful!

c. It is objected that Traducianism teaches that God, since His original creative acts, has operated only through secondary causes, and no longer carries on *ex nihilo* or immediate creative activity. This does not allow for creative miracles or for the new creation of regeneration.

A Critical Comparison between Creationism and Traducianism

1. Creationism claims to be more consistent than Traducianism or Preexistence with certain Scriptures. But is it?

Genesis 2:7 (the body is from the earth, the soul-spirit is from God) -- Actually the verse speaks of the inbreathing of biological life, not the creation of the soul-spirit; thus the verse says nothing about the soul-spirit. In addition, it is speaking about the original creation of the first human being, and thus fits with either Creationism or Traducianism.

Ecclesiastes 12:7 (the dust will return to the earth; the spirit will return to God who gave it) -- If this is speaking of the human spirit, then God gives it in both Creationism and Traducianism. The difference is the way He gives it: directly, or indirectly through the parents.

Isaiah 42:5 (the Lord gives breath to the people on the earth, and spirit to those who walk in it.) -- This verse could be used to support either Creationism or Traducianism. The Lord initially gives breath of life to people through their parents, and sustains that breath or life by

His providence. But does He give spirit or life to people directly or indirectly? That is the question!

Zechariah 12:1 -- (the Lord forms the spirit of man within him) -- But does He form the human spirit at or immediately following conception of the body? If the answer is yes, then does He do this via a direct creative act or an indirect creative act through the parents? Again, that is the question.

Hebrews 12:9 (God is the Father of spirits) -- But is He not the creative Father of spirits in both Creationism and Traducianism? In the former He creates spirits directly; in the latter He creates them indirectly.

Thus we see that these Scriptures do not settle the Issue.

2. Creationism claims that Traducianism holds that the soul-spirit has a kind of physical nature which divides to produce offspring, and that a portion of the soul-spirit of each parent is communicated to the child. Creationism argues that the soul-spirit is spiritual, non-material, incorporeal, and therefore indivisible.

The truth of the matter is that we know nothing about the "biology" of the soul-spirit. If at the same moment a human egg and sperm unite to form a new body, the soul-spirits of the parents unite to produce a new soul-spirit, who can argue against it, and on what grounds? We simply don't know what happens at the conception of a new person; and therefore there is no point trying to build a case for either view on ignorance!

3. Creationism claims that Traducianism teaches that God, since His original creative acts, operates only through means or secondary causes, and that this ignores the creative aspects of miracles and regeneration. Of course, if Traducianism holds that the cessation of *ex nihilo* and immediate creation refers only to the original creative acts, and not to subsequent experiences of God's direct creative efficiency (as in miracles and regeneration), then this objection loses its force.

4. Creationism claims that Traducianism runs into severe problems explaining how Christ's human nature came from Mary and yet was sinless. However, this difficulty is a challenge to both views. If (as in Creationism) God directly creates the soul-spirits of all descendants of Adam as sinful, and if the man Christ Jesus was truly a descendant of Adam, then either Christ's human soul-spirit was sinful or God had to prevent Christ from inheriting that sinfulness. If (as in Traducianism) God indirectly creates the soul-spirits of all descendants of Adam, then either Christ's human soul-spirit was sinful or God had to prevent Christ from inheriting that sinfulness. Thus both views need to solve this problem!

At least six solutions have been proposed (actually three, with variations):

a. That Christ's human soul-spirit was cleansed from the sinfulness inherited by all descendants of Adam by means of His supernatural conception in Mary.

b. That Christ's human soul-spirit was prevented from inheriting sinfulness by means of His supernatural conception in Mary.

c. That Christ's human soul-spirit was cleansed from the sinfulness inherited by all descendants of Adam by virtue of the union of His human soul-spirit with His divine nature.

d. That Christ's human soul-spirit was prevented from inheriting sinfulness by virtue of the union of His human soul-spirit with His divine nature.

e. That Christ's human soul-spirit was cleansed from the sinfulness inherited by all descendants of Adam by means of a special intervention on the part of God.

f. That Christ's human soul-spirit was prevented from inheriting sinfulness by means of a special intervention on the part of God.

5. Traducianism claims that Creationism has no explanatory mechanism to account for the mental, emotional, and social likenesses between parents and their children. It is argued that if children derive their soul-spirits through their parents, then such likenesses are explained, but that if children derive their soul-spirits directly from God, then such likenesses have no explanation.

But this is only true in Creationism if, when God creates each soul-spirit directly, He takes no account of the characteristics and traits of the parents. If, on the other hand, He creates the soul-spirit of each child in the likeness of its parents, then this criticism loses some of its force.

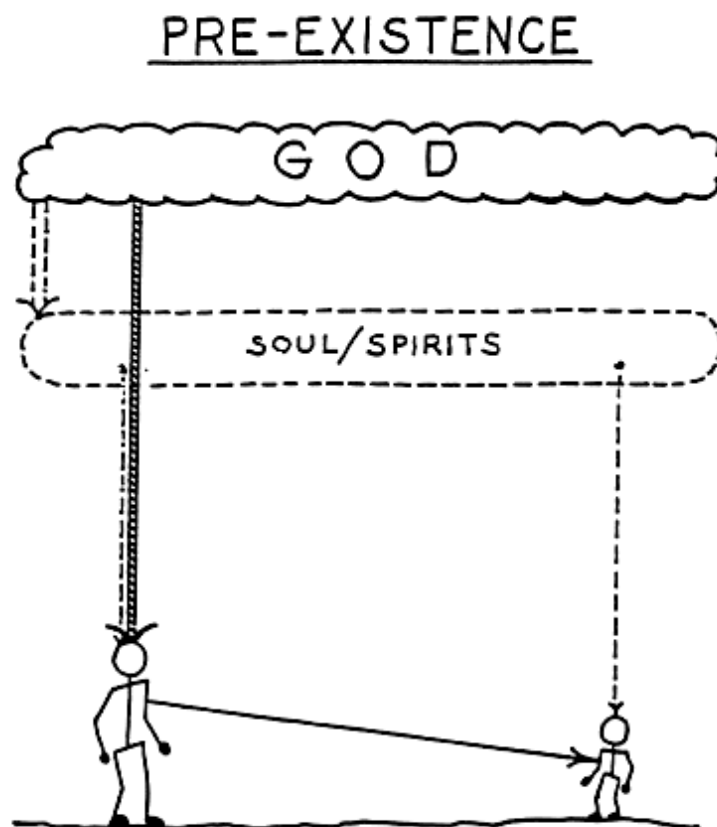
However, Creationism does require an extra act on the part of God, in that He not only creates each soul-spirit directly, but also does so in the likeness of its parents.

This conception, in that it requires an extra act on the part of God, seems at least superficially analogous to the line of thought which adherents of the Dictation mode of the inspiration of Scripture use to explain the great diversity of styles among the human authors of the Bible. That is, if God dictated the Scriptures to human copyists, how can we account for the differences of vocabulary, grammar, thought forms, literary genres, and content that we find among the writers of the Bible? If God is the single author, should we not find a single, uniform style? Dictation proponents claim that the diversity of styles is attributable to God's use of the varied styles of the writers in His dictation, so that the styles appear to be theirs, when in reality they are His. This proposal, by preferring a more complex explanation to a simpler one, fairly cries out for the application of Ockham's razor, sometimes referred to as the law of parsimony or the law of economy. William of Ockham (A.D. 1280-1349) propounded and employed the maxim *Entia non multiplicanda sunt praeter necessitatem* ("entities should not be multiplied beyond necessity"), which means that, in choosing between different possible explanations, one ought to prefer the simpler or less elaborate. If a simple explanation will do, why choose a more complicated one?

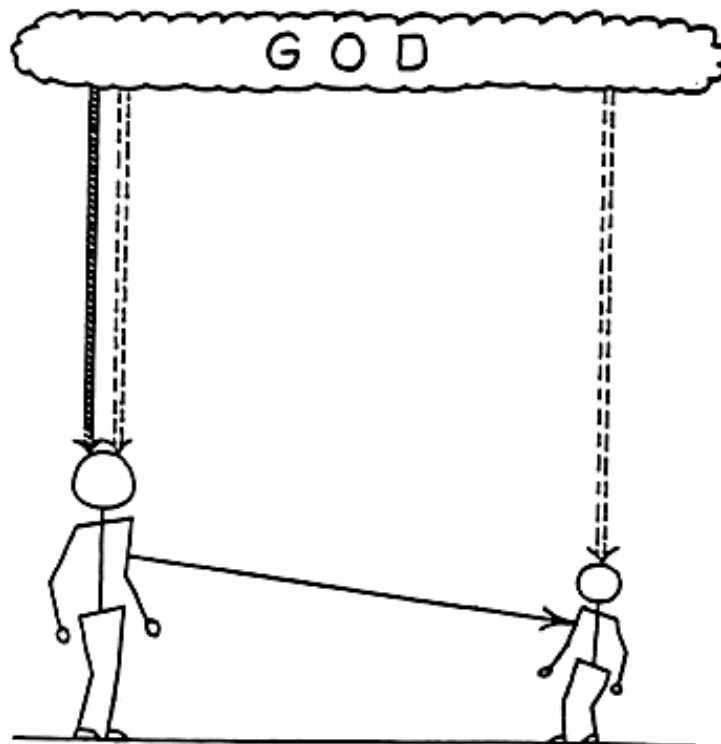
Creationism, by including the additional act of creating each soul-spirit in the likeness of its parents, also seems to prefer a more complex explanation to a simpler one, and thus opens itself to the application of Ockham's razor.

6. Traducianism claims that Creationism makes God the author of that which is morally evil, by creating sinful soul-spirits. Actually, Creationism makes God the immediate creator of morally evil soul-spirits, whereas Traducianism makes God the mediate creator of morally evil soul-spirits. For Traducianists, primary, direct creation of sinfulness seems to make God the author of sin, whereas secondary, indirect creation of sinfulness seems to absolve God from any such alleged authorship. Creationists counter by pointing out that the inheriting of sinfulness (whether through direct or indirect creation) is directly related to the effects of Adam's sin, and is divine punishment justly inflicted on all of Adam's natural descendants.

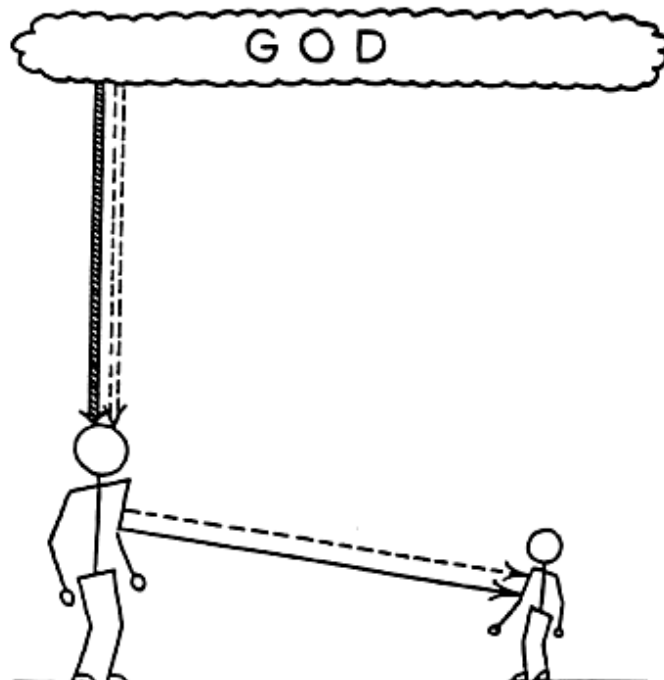
However, there may be a difference between the Creationist and Traducianist views in regard to divine responsibility for human sinfulness. If God directly creates sinful human persons, it seems that He is creating sinfulness and sinful characteristics; whereas if God indirectly creates sinful human persons, it seems that He is merely provisionally sustaining fallen human beings in their ability to propagate their likeness (including their sinfulness). Creationism seems to make God directly responsible for creating sinful persons. Traducianism, on the other hand, seems to absolve God from the charge of responsibility for sinfulness, since He created holy beings (Adam and Eve) who freely chose to disobey Him and thus fall into sinfulness; and although this sinfulness is passed on by virtue of propagation, it is not caused by God or created by Him, but by our first parents. If man, not God, is responsible for human sinfulness and its terrible results, then Traducianism seems to affirm this responsibility and to absolve God from the charge of creating human sinfulness, whereas Creationism does not seem to do so. This would appear to be a serious difference.



CREATIONISM



TRADUCIANISM



III. THE ORIGINAL STATE OF MANKIND

A. The Image of God In Mankind

1. Statements of the doctrine

The French Confession of Faith (AD. 1559), Article 9, states:

We believe that man was created pure and perfect in the image of God, and that by his own guilt he fell from the grace which he received, and is thus alienated from God, the fountain of justice and of all good, so that his nature is totally corrupt. And being blinded in mind, and depraved in heart, he has lost all integrity, and there is no good in him. And although he can still discern good and evil, we say, notwithstanding, that the light he has becomes darkness when he seeks for God, so that he can in nowise approach him by his intelligence and reason. And although he has a will that incites him to do this or that, yet is altogether captive to sin, so that he has no other liberty to do right than that which God gives him.

The Scotch Confession of Faith (A.D. 1560), Article 2, states:

We confesse and acknowledge this our God to have created man, to wit, our first father Adam, to his awin image and similitude, to whome he gave wisdom, lordship, justice, free wil, and cleir knowledge of himselfe, so that in the haill nature of man there could be noted no imperfection.

The Belgic Confession (A.D. 1561), Article 14, states:

We believe that God created man out of the dust of the earth, and made and formed him after his own image and likeness, good, righteous, and holy, capable in all things to will agreeably to the will of God. But being in honor, he understood it not, neither knew his excellency, but willfully subjected himself to sin, and consequently to death and the curse, giving ear to the words of the devil. For the commandment of life, which he had received, he transgressed; and by sin separated himself from God, who was his true life, having corrupted his whole nature, whereby he made himself liable to corporal and spiritual death. And being thus become wicked, perverse, and corrupt in all his ways, he hath lost all his excellent gifts which he had received from God, and only retained a few remains thereof, which, however, are sufficient to leave man without excuse; for all the light which is in us is changed into darkness, as the Scriptures teach us, saying: The light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehendeth it not: where St. John calleth men darkness.

The Heidelberg Catechism (A.D. 1563), Question 6, states:

Q. Did God create man thus wicked and perverse?

A. No; but God created man good, and after his own image -- that is, in righteousness and true holiness; that he might rightly know God his Creator, heartily love him, and live with him in eternal blessedness, to praise and glorify him.

The Irish Articles of Religion (A.D. 1615), Article 21, states:

Man being at the beginning created according to the image of God (which consisted especially in the wisdom of his mind and the true holiness of his free will), had the covenant of the law ingrafted in his heart, whereby God did promise unto him everlasting life upon condition that he performed entire and perfect obedience unto his Commandments, according to that measure of strength wherewith he was endued in his creation, and threatened death unto him if he did not perform the same.

The Westminster Confession of Faith (A.D. 1647), Chapter 4, section 2, states:

After God had made all other creatures, he created man, male and female, with reasonable and immortal souls, endued with knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness, after his own image, having the law of God written in their hearts, and power to fulfill it; and yet under a possibility of transgressing, being left to the liberty of their own will, which was subject to change. Beside this law written in their hearts, they received a command not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil; which while they kept they were happy in their communion with God, and had dominion over the creatures.

2. Scriptural background to the doctrine

a. Scripture tells us that mankind was originally created in the image of God

Genesis 1:26-28 -- "Then God said, 'Let us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.' And God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. And God blessed them; and God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.' "

Genesis 5:1 -- 'This is the book of the generations of Adam. In the day when God created man, He made him in the likeness of God.

b. Scripture tells us that fallen mankind still bears the image of God in some meaningful sense

Genesis 9:6 -- 'Whoever sheds man's blood,
By man his blood shall be shed,
For in the image of God He made them.

James 3:8 9 -- But no one can tame the tongue; it is a restless evil and full of deadly poison. With it we bless our Lord and Father; and with it we curse men, who have been made in the likeness of God.

3. Development of the doctrine

a. The terms "image" and "likeness" in Genesis 1:26 (צֶלֶם, דְּמוּת) indicate that man is, in some sense, like God. However, there is also a vast unlikeness. God is the infinite Creator; man is a finite creature. How can we express the likeness while preserving the unlikeness?

The Westminster Shorter Catechism, question 4, asks "What is God?" and answers in terms of His characteristics, attributes, qualities, and perfections.

If we attempt to state the nature of man in such a way as to retain the Creator creature distinction while asserting mankind's likeness to God, we arrive at something like the following:

God is a Spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable, in His being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth.

Man is a spirit (in union with a physical body), finite, temporal and changeable in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth.

b. Various theologians have distinguished between the natural and the moral aspects of the image. Some have distinguished between the formal and the material aspects, or the structural and the functional aspects, or the broader and the narrower aspects of the image of God.

As originally created, mankind was like God in personal faculties and capabilities. Adam and Eve were rational beings, emotional beings, volitional beings, moral beings, aesthetic beings, social beings, and spiritual beings; with creative and languaging capabilities, and with dominion and responsibility for God's creation. These aspects may be viewed as comprising the image of God in the broader sense, which aspects were affected but not lost at the Fall.

Also as originally created, mankind was like God in moral and spiritual qualities of character. Adam and Eve were upright, holy beings who were in right relationship with God, loved God, and were inclined to obedience to the will of God. These aspects may be viewed as comprising the image of God in the narrower sense, which aspects were lost at the Fall.

Some theologians have suggested that the difference between the broader and narrower senses of the image is that fallen human beings still retain the personal faculties and capabilities with which God created them, but use these faculties and capabilities in sinful ways, i.e., abuse and pervert God's good gifts. This is a helpful insight, provided we realize that the image in the broader sense has also been corrupted by sin.

c. Christ was and is the perfect Image of God, in both the broader and the narrower senses.

John 1:14, 18 -- "And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth No man has seen God at any time; the only begotten God, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him."

John 14:7-9 -- " 'If you had known me, you would have known my Father also; from now on you know Him, and have seen Him.' Philip said to Him, 'Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us.' Jesus said to him, 'Have I been so long with you, and yet you have not come to know Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; how do you say, "Show us the Father?" ' "

II Corinthians 4:3-4 -- "and even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving, that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God."

Colossians 1:15 -- "And He is the image of the invisible God, the first born of all creation."

Hebrews 1:3 -- "And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power."

d. The restoration of believers to the very image and likeness of Christ is the great goal of personal salvation.

This restoration is progressive, involves growth and development, and will be completed at the Second Coming of Christ.

Romans 8:29-30 -- "For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first born among many brethren; and whom He predestined, these He also called; and whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified."

II Corinthians 3:18 -- "But we all, with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same Image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit."

Colossians 3:9-10 -- "Do not lie to one another, since you laid aside the old self with its evil practices, and have put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him."

Ephesians 4:24 -- "and put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth."

I John 3:2 -- 'Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we shall be. We know that, when He appears, we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him just as He is.

B. The Original Condition of Mankind

According to the Scriptures, Adam and Eve were created as mature, perfect, immortal beings, yet capable of falling.

1. Adam and Eve were created as mature.

Our first parents were not created as infants, but as mature, responsible adults. Their faculties and capabilities were developed, but not as a result of a process of development. Thus 'mature' in this context does not mean experienced.

Their created capabilities for thinking, distinguishing, reasoning, remembering, feeling, planning, purposing, deciding, acting, and making moral judgments were mature, but as yet totally without trial of experience.

Their created capabilities for hearing, seeing, tasting, smelling, touching, speaking, and locomotion were mature, but as yet completely devoid of usage.

Their created capabilities for being fruitful in begetting children, having dominion over the earth, and manipulating the various aspects of the rest of the created universe for God's glory and their own good were mature, but as yet untried.

Evidence for their creation as mature may be found in the following scriptural data:

Adam is repeatedly called a man (Genesis 2:7, 8, 15, 16, 18, 22, 23, 24, 25; 3:12)

Eve is repeatedly called a woman (Genesis 2:22, 23; 3:1, 2, 4, 6, 12, 13, 15, 16)

Adam is called Eve's husband (Genesis 3:6, 16)

Eve is called Adam's wife (Genesis 2:25; 3:8, 17, 20)

Adam was made responsible to cultivate and keep the Garden of Eden (Genesis 2:15)

Adam gave names to all of the animals that God brought before him (Genesis 2:19-20)

Adam and Eve were commanded by God to fill the earth with their descendants, to subdue the earth, and to rule over all of its animals (Genesis 1:28)

2. Adam and Eve were created as perfect

By this is meant that their soul-spirits were whole and complete in original righteousness, holiness, and personal knowledge of fellowship with God; that their bodies were whole and complete, both in their integrity as a whole, and in the due proportion of all their parts; that they were perfectly adapted to their environment; and that they were perfectly designed for the goal for which God created them.

Perfection in this context does not mean that at creation Adam and Eve had exhaustive knowledge of anything; nor that they could hear grass growing a mile away, discern the color of a bird's eye at a distance of three miles, or smell the scent of a given flower five miles removed; nor that they had an active speaking vocabulary of five hundred thousand words; nor that they could walk one hundred miles without stopping or resting, run a mile in five seconds, leap tall trees at a single bound, or stay under water for one hour; nor that they could write great poetry, paint great paintings, compose great music, sculpt a great statue, play a violin or a clarinet, design a computer program, or draw up plans for a space rocket.

In addition, perfection in this context does not carry with it the ideas that Adam and Eve looked like us (me?) in size, shape, skin color, eye color, hair color, or attractiveness; that they were expert in modern table etiquette; or that they could not learn new information, new behaviors, new skills, or could not attain to higher levels of excellence.

In Genesis 1:27, 31 we read that Adam and Eve were created in the very image of God, and that what God created was very good.

In Genesis 2:25 we read that Adam and Eve as originally created had nothing to be ashamed of (either outwardly or inwardly).

In Genesis 1:28-30 we read that God spoke with Adam and Eve directly, and gave them instructions for righteous living before Him.

3. Adam and Eve were created as Immortal

Adam and Eve were free from death before the Fall. They were spiritually and physically alive, morally upright, and as yet innocent of all transgression.

Genesis 2:16-17 -- "And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, From any tree of the garden you may eat freely; but from

the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you shall surely die."

Genesis 2:25 -- "And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed."

Genesis 3:9-11 -- "Then the Lord God called to the man, and said to him, 'Where are you?' And he said, 'I heard the sound of Thee in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid myself.' And He said, 'Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?' "

Genesis 3:19 -- "By the sweat of your face
You shall eat bread,
Till you return to the ground,
Because from it you were taken;
For you are dust,
And to dust you shall return.'

Romans 5:12, 17-19 -- "Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned -- . . . For if by the transgression of the one, death reigned through the one . . . So then as through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men . . . For as through one man's disobedience the many were made sinners,"

I Corinthians 15:21-22 -- "For since by a man came death, by a man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all shall be made alive."

4. Adam and Eve were created as capable of falling from their original state.

This assertion Implies at least six inferences:

- a. That their character, as originally created, was not unchangeably inclined toward righteousness.
- b. That Adam and Eve, as originally created, were able to keep from sinning but also able to sin.
- c. That their will, as originally created, was not so bound to their holy nature that they could not will contrary to their nature.
- d. That if Adam and Eve, as originally created, wished to actualize this capability of willing contrary to their nature, they had the power to do so, but the responsibility would be their own.
- e. That since this capability was originally created as part of the probationary test of Adam and Eve's love of, trust in, and obedience to God; and since a successful outcome of the test would have confirmed them in their righteous character; therefore the mere existence of this capability cannot be used to condemn God.

In fact, it should be noted that the existence of a capability for a particular action is an essential precondition for a genuine testing of a human being's response to temptation toward that action, whether the response be positive or negative. Without the capability of a positive response to the temptation (i.e., by yielding to it), Adam and Eve's probationary test would have been no test at all.

Thus the concept of success in resisting the temptation is dependent for its meaning on the real existence of a capability of falling, as well as a capability of not falling.

f. The capability of falling remained purely a neutral power until it was exercised in the crucial character confirming or character-depraving response to the temptation.

Genesis 2:16,17 -- "And the Lord God commanded the man, saying 'From any tree of the garden you may eat freely; but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you shall surely die.'"

Genesis 3:1-13 -- "Now the serpent was more crafty than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said to the woman, 'indeed, has God said, "You shall not eat from any tree of the garden"?' And the woman said to the serpent, 'From the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat; but from the fruit of the tree which is in the middle of the garden, God has said, "You shall not eat from it or touch it, lest you die." ' And the serpent said to the woman, 'You surely shall not die! For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.' When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make one wise, she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate. Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loin coverings. And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden. Then the Lord God called to the man, and said to him, 'Where are you?' And he said, 'I heard the sound of Thee in the garden and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid myself.' And He said, 'Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?' And the man said, 'The woman whom Thou gayest to be with me, she gave me from the tree, and I ate.' Then the Lord God said to the woman, 'What is this you have done?' And the woman said, 'The serpent deceived me, and I ate.' "

Genesis 3:17-19 -- "Then to Adam He said, 'Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and you have eaten from the tree about which I Commanded you, saying, "You shall not eat from it;"

Cursed is the ground because of you;
In toil you shall eat of it

All the days of your life.
Both thorns and thistles it shall grow for you;
And you shall eat the plants of the field;
By the sweat of your face
You shall eat bread,
Till you return to the ground,
Because from it you were taken;
For you are dust,
And to dust you shall return.' "

Genesis 3:22-24 -- "Then the Lord God said, 'Behold, the man has become like one of Us, knowing good and evil; and now, lest he stretch out his hand, and take also from the tree of life, and eat, and live forever- -- therefore the Lord God sent him out from the garden of Eden, to cultivate the ground from which he was taken. So He drove the man out; and at the east of the garden of Eden He stationed the cherubim, and the flaming sword which turned every direction, to guard the way to the tree of life."

Excursus: The problem of the tree of life in the Garden of Eden

in Genesis 2:9 we are told that "the Lord God caused to grow the tree of life also in the midst of the garden." From Genesis 2:16 we learn that Adam and Eve had free access to eat freely of the tree of life. In Genesis 3:22-24 we read the words, "lest he stretch out his hand, and take also from the tree of life and eat, and live forever;" and the words, "So He drove the man out; and at the east of the Garden of Eden He stationed the cherubim, and the flaming sword which turned every direction, to guard the way to the tree of life."

In Revelation 22:1-2 we read: "And he showed me a river of the water of life, clear as crystal, coming from the throne of God and of the Lamb, in the middle of its street. And on either side of the river was the tree of life bearing twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit every month; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations." Revelation 22:14 and 22:19 tell us who will have access to the tree of life in the new heavens and the new earth: "Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life and may enter by the gates into the city and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the tree of life and from the holy city, which were written in this book."

Two quite distinct conceptions of the tree of life have been suggested:

a. one conception is that the tree of life had and will have the God-given power to preserve man's physical constitution in perfect equilibrium; i.e., it had biological life preserving properties. All Adam and Eve had to do was to eat its fruit once each month, and they would have lived forever. If they had cut themselves or bruised themselves or smashed one of their fingers, the leaves of the tree would have healed any wound they suffered.

In this conception, the tree of life is biologically important.

b. Another conception is that the tree of life had a God given symbolic significance related to Adam and Eve's spiritual state; i.e., it had a life-symbolizing character. As long as Adam and Eve were spiritually alive, they had a right to partake of the fruit of the tree of life. Each time they ate of it, they symbolized the fact that they were alive to God. But when they fell from their original condition and died, they were barred from access to the tree of life because they no longer had the right to partake of it. To continue eating of it would have been a lie (spiritually dead people partaking of the tree of life!); and to permit them to continue to eat of it would have been a desecration of all that the tree stood for! Because of the symbolic character of the action of partaking of the fruit of the tree of life in terms of the spiritual state required in the partaker, so that only a spiritually alive partaker would be permitted to eat from a tree symbolizing life, this conception views the tree of life sacramentally rather than biologically.

In this conception, the tree of life is sacramentally important.

In the first conception, the way to the tree of life was barred because of the possibility that fallen man would eat of it and live forever. Does this not mean that the tree of life had biological power to reverse or hold in remission the physical death that Adam and Eve had incurred by their transgression, so that they would never die physically? Did the fruit of this tree have the power to rejuvenate human beings so that their bodies would never grow old and weak and infirm and worn out? When God told Adam and Eve that they would return to the dust, was this conditioned on their eating the fruit of the tree of life?

Before Adam and Eve sinned, when they had access to the tree of life was it the fruit of this tree that kept them in life and health? Was then the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil biologically poisonous, so that Adam and Eve swallowed a lethal dose when they ate the fruit? And was the fruit of the tree of life the only antidote to this poison?

In the second conception, the way to the tree of life was barred because of the possibility that fallen man would eat of it and desecrate it as symbolic of life. But what then does Genesis 3:22 mean when it says, "lest he stretch out his hand, and take also from the tree of life, and eat and live forever"?

If the tree of life symbolized everlasting spiritual (and physical) life; and if Adam and Eve had not sinned and died spiritually (and begun to die physically); then they would have continued to live forever, and it would have been appropriate for them to eat of the tree of life.

Just as the connection between water baptism and cleansing of sins is represented sacramentally in Acts 22:16 ("And now why do you delay? Arise, and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on His name."), as though by the performance of the rite one's sins are washed away, so here the connection between eating the fruit of the

tree of life and living forever is represented sacramentally, as though by partaking of the tree one's life is extended unendingly.

IV. THE COVENANT OF WORKS

A. Statements of the Doctrine

The *Westminster Confession of Faith*, Chapter 7, sections 1 and 2, states:

I. The distance between God and the creature is so great that although reasonable creatures do owe obedience unto him as their Creator, yet they could never have any fruition of him, as their blessedness and reward, but by some voluntary condescension on God's part, which he hath been pleased to express by way of covenant.

II. The first covenant made with man was a covenant of works, wherein life was promised to Adam, and in him to his posterity, upon condition of perfect and personal obedience.

Charles Hodge, in volume 2 of his *Systematic Theology* p. 117, states:

And God entered into covenant with Adam. This statement does not rest upon any express declaration of the Scriptures. It is, however, a concise and correct mode of asserting a plain Scriptural fact, namely, that God made to Adam a promise suspended upon a condition, and attached to disobedience a certain penalty. This is what in Scriptural language is meant by a covenant, and this is all that is meant by the term as here used. Although the word covenant is not used in Genesis and does not elsewhere, in any clear passage, occur in reference to the transaction there recorded, yet inasmuch as the plan of salvation is constantly represented as a New Covenant, new, not merely in antithesis to that made at Sinai, but new in reference to all legal covenants whatever, it is plain that the Bible does represent the arrangement made with Adam as a truly federal transaction. The Scriptures know nothing of any other than two methods of attaining eternal life: the one that which demands perfect obedience, and the other that which demands faith. If the latter is called a covenant, the former is declared to be of the same nature.

Archibald Alexander Hodge, in his *Outlines of Theology* Revised Edition, p. 309, asks:

1. in what different senses is the term covenant used in Scripture?

1st. For a natural ordinance -- Jer. 33:20.

2nd. For an unconditional promise -- Gen. 9:11-12.

3rd. For a conditional promise -- Isa. 1:19-20.

4th. A dispensation or mode of administration -- Heb. 8:6-9.

In the theological phrases "covenant of works", and "covenant of grace", this term is used in the third sense of a promise suspended on conditions.

2. What are the several elements essential to a covenant?

1st. Contracting parties.

2nd. Conditions.

These conditions in a covenant between equals are mutually imposed and mutually

binding, but in a sovereign constitution, imposed by the Creator upon the creature, these "conditions" are better expressed as (1) promises on the part of the Creator suspended upon (2) conditions to be fulfilled by the creature. And (3) an alternative penalty to be inflicted in case the condition fails.

The *Scofield Reference Bible* in footnote 6 on Genesis 1:28, states:

The Edenic covenant, the first of the eight great covenants of Scripture which condition life and salvation, and about which all Scripture crystalized, has seven elements. The man and the woman in Eden were responsible:

(1) To replenish the earth with a new order -- man; (2) to subdue the earth to human uses; (3) to have dominion over the animal creation; (4) to eat herbs and fruits; (5) to till and keep the garden; (6) to abstain from eating of the tree of knowledge of good and evil; (7) the penalty -- death. See, for the other seven covenants: Adamic (Gen. 3:15); Noahic (Gen. 9:1); Abrahamic (Gen. 15:18); Mosaic (Ex. 19:25); Palestinian (Deut. 30:3), Davidic (2 Sam. 7:16); New (Heb. 8:8).

B. Outline of the Covenant

1. The parties to the covenant

The parties are the triune God and Adam (as head and representative of the human race)

A distinction should be made between the results of God's action in creating mankind and the results of His action in establishing a covenant relationship with mankind.

As a creature, Man owed his existence to God, was completely dependent on God, was responsible for complete obedience to both the Law of God written in his heart and all commandments which God gave him, and was the natural father of the whole human race.

As a covenant party to a legal compact, Adam was constituted the representative for the human race, was temporarily placed on probation in regard to the test which would confirm or disconfirm his character, and was given the opportunity to earn, by his own obedience, the blessing of eternal life, both for himself and for all of his natural descendants.

2. The benefit of the covenant

The benefit promised was continuing and unending spiritual and physical life.

This is implied from the penalty threatened upon disobedience: "for in the day that you eat from it you shall surely die." If Adam would refrain from eating of the forbidden tree, not only would he not die, but would be raised above the possibility of sinning and dying. He would be confirmed in his righteous nature.

3. The condition of the covenant

The condition in this conditional covenant was that of implicit and perfect obedience to the revealed will of God, both before and especially during the temptation by Satan.

The command specifying the nature of the required obedience forbade Adam to eat of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. This is called a "positive command" or a command of "positive enactment" because it is not grounded directly in the perfections of the divine nature, nor immediately grounded in the permanent nature and relations of human beings, nor immediately grounded in the changing relations of individuals and communities, but grounded in those sovereign expressions of the will of God which are neither universal nor perpetual, but bind only those to whom God has addressed them, and only so long as He wills.

As a "positive command," it may be viewed by some as arbitrary and without apparent reason. However, the same command may be viewed as an asset, in the sense that Adam's test was therefore one of pure obedience to God's command, without other nuances or overtones.

Louis Berkhof writes: "The great question that had to be settled was, whether man would obey God implicitly or follow the guidance of his own Judgment."

The issue, then, in the condition of the covenant of works, was one of Implicit obedience to God's authority versus human autonomy.

4. The penalty of the covenant

The penalty threatened was death: "In the day you eat from it you shall surely die." (Gen. 1:17)

In the most inclusive sense of death, Adam faced the penalty of spiritual death, physical death, and eternal death.

C. The Present Force of the Covenant

1. There are some theologians who hold that the covenant of works was forever abrogated at Adam's Fall. They argue that:

a. when Adam fell, the promise of the covenant was revoked, and the agreement annulled

b. when Adam fell, he became by nature incapable of rendering the required obedience

c. when Adam fell, he became corrupt, and incapable even by God's grace of rendering the required obedience

d. it would be absurd for God to require of a depraved creature that he live a life of holy and undivided obedience.

2. There are some theologians who hold that the covenant of works was not abrogated at Adam's Fall, and that it is still in force. They argue that:

a. God's claim to the obedience of His creatures is not terminated by the Fall; man always owes God perfect obedience.

b. the curse and punishment of the covenant of works for those who continue in sin is not abrogated; the wages of sin continue to be death

c. the conditional promise of the covenant still holds: a perfect obedience is always required to merit eternal life; God has not withdrawn this promise:

Leviticus 18:5 -- "So you shall keep My statutes and My judgments, by which a man may live if he does them; I am the Lord."

Romans 10:5 -- "For Moses writes that the man who practices the righteousness which is based on law shall live by that righteousness."

Galatians 3:11 12 -- "Now that no one is justified by the law before God is evident; for, 'The righteous man shall live by faith.' However, the Law is not of faith; on the contrary, 'He who practices them shall live by them.' "

d. although the covenant still remains in effect, it is powerless as a practical means to obtain eternal life, since no fallen human being can comply with the condition

What shall we say then? Is the covenant of works presently in force or not?

In one sense, it is realistically not an arrangement into which God presently enters with fallen humanity. Depraved, corrupt human beings are simply unable to fulfill the requirement of perfect obedience for the earning of eternal life.

In another sense, the requirement for the earning of eternal life remains the same. In fact, God entered into a works/grace covenant with His Son (sometimes referred to as the Covenant of Redemption) in order to accomplish redemption for fallen humanity. The Son fulfilled the requirement for the earning of eternal life by His perfect sinless life and perfect sacrificial death; and the Father bestows this benefit on believing sinful human beings out of His love and grace.

Thus on the one hand the Son earns the benefit of eternal life via a works covenant that has the same condition as the original works covenant. On the other hand the Father bestows the gift of eternal life via a grace covenant that has no meritorious condition at all, as far as the believing sinner is concerned.

Thus we can say that, since the Fall, God has not bestowed eternal life on fallen mankind on the basis of works. He does not enter into a covenant of works with depraved, guilty sinners. God made the original covenant of works with unfallen Adam. Adam did not meet the condition and therefore incurred the penalty, both for himself and all of his natural descendants. That covenant of works no longer applies, since all human beings except Christ are fallen. But God has made another covenant of works with Christ. As the second Adam, Christ met the condition, and received the benefit for all those joined to Him by faith.

V. THE NATURE OF SIN

A. Statements of the Doctrine

1. *The French Confession of Faith* (A.D. 1559), Article 9

"We believe that man was created pure and perfect in the image of God, and that by his own guilt he fell from the grace which he received, and is thus alienated from God, the fountain of justice and of all good, so that his nature is totally corrupt. And being blinded in mind, and depraved in heart, he has lost all integrity, and there is no good in him. And although he can still discern good and evil, we say, notwithstanding, that the light he has becomes darkness when he seeks for God, so that he can in nowise approach him by his intelligence and reason. And although he has a will that incites him to do this or that, yet it is altogether captive to sin, so that he has no other liberty to do right than that which God gives him."

2. *The Heidelberg Catechism* (A.D. 1563), Questions 3-10

Question 3. Whence knowest thou thy misery?

Answer. Out of the Law of God.

Question 4. What does the Law of God require of us?

Answer. This Christ teaches us in sum, Matt. 22: Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength. This is the first and great commandment; and the second is like unto it: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. -- On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

Question 5. Canst thou keep all this perfectly?

Answer. No; for I am by nature prone to hate God and my neighbor.

Question 6. Did God create man thus wicked and perverse?

Answer. No; but God created man good, and after his own image that is, in righteousness and true holiness; that he might rightly know God his Creator, heartily love him, and live with him in eternal blessedness, to praise and glorify him.

Question 7. Whence, then, comes this depraved nature of man?

Answer. From the fall and disobedience of our first parents, Adam and Eve, in Paradise, whereby our nature became so corrupt that we are all conceived and born in sin.

Question 8. But are we so far depraved that we are wholly unapt to any good, and prone to all evil?

Answer. Yes; unless we are born again by the Spirit of God.

Question 9. Does not God, then, wrong man by requiring of him in his law that which he can not perform?

Answer. No; for God so made man that he could perform it; but man, through the instigation of the devil, by willful disobedience deprived himself and all his posterity of this power.

Question 10. Will God suffer such disobedience and apostasy to go unpunished?

Answer. By no means; but he is terribly displeased with our inborn as well as actual sins, and will punish them in just judgment in time and eternity, as he has declared: "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them."

3. *The Second Helvetic Confession* (A.D. 1566), Chapter 8

"And we take sin to be that natural corruption of man, derived or spread from our first parents unto us all, through which we, being drowned in evil concupiscence, and clean turned away from God, but prone to all evil, full of all wickedness, distrust, contempt, and hatred of God, can do no good of ourselves -- no, not so much as think any (Matt. 12:34-35).

"And, what is more, even as we do grow in years, so by wicked thoughts, words, and deeds, committed against the law of God, we bring forth corrupt fruits, worthy of an evil tree: in which respect we, through our own desert, being subject to the wrath of God, are in danger of just punishment; so that we had all been cast away from God, had not Christ, the Deliverer, brought us back again.

"We therefore acknowledge that original sin is in all men; we acknowledge that all other sins which spring therefrom are both called and are indeed sins, by what name soever they may be termed, whether mortal or venial, or also that which is called sin against the Holy Spirit, which is never forgiven.

"We also confess that sins are not equal (I John 5:16-17), although they spring from the same fountain of corruption and unbelief, but that some are more grievous than others (Mark 3:28-29); even as the Lord has said, 'It shall be easier for Sodom than for the city that despises the word of the Gospel.' (Matt. 10:15)."

4. *The Canons of the Synod of Dort* (A.D. 1619), Third and Fourth Heads of Doctrine, Articles 1-5

"Article 1. Man was originally formed after the image of God. His understanding was adorned with a true and saving knowledge of his Creator, and of spiritual things; his heart and will were upright, all his affections pure, and the whole Man was holy; but revolting from God by the instigation of the devil, and abusing the freedom of his own will, he forfeited these excellent gifts, and on the contrary entailed on himself blindness of mind, horrible darkness, vanity, and perverseness of judgment; became wicked, rebellious, and obdurate in heart and will, and impure in all his affections.

"Article 2. man after the fall begat children in his own likeness. A corrupt stock produced a corrupt offspring. Hence all the posterity of Adam, Christ only excepted, have derived corruption from their original parent, not by imitation, as the Pelagians of old asserted, but by the propagation of a vicious nature in consequence of the just judgment of God.

"Article 3. Therefore all men are conceived in sin, and are by nature children of wrath, incapable of any saving good, prone to evil, dead in sin, and in bondage thereto; and, without the regenerating grace of the Holy Spirit, they are neither able nor willing to return to God, to reform the depravity of their nature, nor to dispose themselves to reformation.

"Article 4. There remain, however, in man since the fall, the glimmerings of natural light, whereby he retains some knowledge of God, of natural things, and of the difference between good and evil, and discovers some regard for virtue, good order in society, and for maintaining an orderly external deportment. But so far is this light of nature from being sufficient to bring him to a saving knowledge of God, and to true conversion, that he is incapable of using it aright even in things natural and civil. Nay farther, this light, such as it is, man in various ways renders wholly polluted, and holds it back in unrighteousness; by doing which he becomes inexcusable before God.

"Article 5. In the same light are we to consider the law of the decalogue, delivered by God to his peculiar people the Jews, by the hands of Moses. For though it discovers the greatness of sin, and more and more convinces man thereof, yet as it neither points out a remedy nor imparts strength to extricate him from misery, and thus being weak through the flesh, leaves the transgressor under the curse, man can not by this law obtain saving grace."

5. *The Westminster Confession of Faith* (A.D. 1647), Chapter 6

"I. Our first parents, being seduced by the subtilty and temptation of Satan, sinned in eating the forbidden fruit. This their sin God was pleased, according to his wise and holy counsel, to permit, having purposed to order it to his own glory.

"II. By this sin they fell from their original righteousness and communion with God, and so became dead in sin, and wholly defiled in all the faculties and parts of soul and body.

"III. They being the root of all mankind, the guilt of this sin was imputed, and the same death in sin and corrupted nature conveyed to all their posterity descending from them by ordinary generation.

"IV. From this original corruption, whereby we are utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to all evil, do proceed all actual transgressions.

"V. This corruption of nature, during this life, doth remain in those that are regenerated; and although it be through Christ pardoned and mortified, yet both itself and all the motions thereof are truly and properly sin.

"VI. Every sin, both original and actual, being a transgression of the righteous law of God, and contrary thereunto, doth, in its own nature, bring guilt upon the sinner, whereby he is bound over to the wrath of God and curse of the law, and so made subject to death, with all miseries spiritual, temporal, and eternal."

6. *The Westminster Shorter Catechism* (A.D. 1647), Questions 14-19

Question 14. What is sin?

Answer. Sin is any want of conformity unto, or transgression of, the law of God.

Question 15. What was the sin whereby our first parents fell from the estate wherein they were created?

Answer. The sin whereby our first parents fell from the estate wherein they were created, was their eating the forbidden fruit.

Question 16. Did all mankind fall in Adam's first transgression?

Answer. The covenant being made with Adam, not only for himself, but for his posterity, all mankind descending from him by ordinary generation, sinned in him, and fell with him, in his first transgression.

Question 17. Into what estate did the fall bring mankind?

Answer. The fall brought mankind into an estate of sin and misery.

Question 18. Wherein consists the sinfulness of that estate whereinto man fell?

Answer. The sinfulness of that estate whereinto man fell, consists in the guilt of Man's first sin, the want of original righteousness, and the corruption of his whole nature, which is commonly called original sin; together with all actual transgressions which proceed from it.

Questions 19. What is the misery of that estate whereinto man fell?

Answer. All mankind by their fall lost communion with God, are under his wrath and curse, and so made liable to all the miseries in this life, to death itself, and to the pains of hell forever."

B. Meanings of the Term "Sin"

1. In the English language

In *Roget's Thesaurus of English Words and Phrases*, many synonyms for sin are listed under six separate headings.

(1) Under "badness" there are such nouns as rottenness, imperfection, unsoundness, corruption, evil, uncleanness, depravity, wickedness, and guilt.

(2) Under "disobedience" there are such nouns as defiance, disregard, non-compliance, non-observance, violation of the law, infraction, crime, lawlessness, revolt, and rebellion.

(3) Under "wrong" there are such nouns as error, culpability, Immorality, transgression, trespass, and injustice.

(4) Under "wickedness" there are such nouns as unrighteousness, iniquity, sinfulness, lawbreaking, misbehavior, evil-doing, fault, shortcoming, failing, and defect.

(5) Under "guilt" there are such nouns as chargeability, misdeed, offense, and guiltiness.

(6) Under "Impiety" there are such nouns as irreverence, godlessness, profaneness, and reprobation.

In Webster's *New World Dictionary* Third College Edition, the following definition is given for "sin."

1 a) an offense against God, religion, or good morals b) the condition of being guilty of continued offense against God, religion, or good morals

2 an offense against any law, standard, code, etc. (a sin against good taste)

2. In Old Testament Hebrew

In the Old Testament there are at least fourteen Hebrew words which may be translated by the general word "sin." Some of these words have specific nuances of meaning.

(1) ASHAM (אָשָׁם) -- "guilt, guilt offering, trespass offering". Used 45 times in the OT. Example: Isaiah 53:10 -- "But the Lord was pleased to crush Him, putting Him to grief. If He would render Himself as a guilt offering He will see His offspring, He will prolong His days, and the good pleasure of the Lord will prosper in His hand."

(2) ASHEM (אָשֵׁם) -- "guilty". Used 3 times in the OT. Example: Genesis 42:21 -- "Then they said to one another (Joseph's brothers), 'Truly we are guilty concerning our brother, because we saw the distress of his soul when he pleaded with us, yet we would not listen; therefore this distress has come upon us.' "

(3) ASHMAH (אָשְׁמָה) -- "trespass, guilt". Used 19 times in OT. Example: I Chron. 21:2-3 -- "So David said to Joab and to the princes of the people, 'Go, number Israel from Beersheba even to Dan, and bring me word that I may know their number.' And Joab said, 'May the Lord add to His people a hundred times as many as they are! But, my lord the king, are they not all my lord's servants? Why does my lord seek this thing? Why should he be a cause of guilt to Israel?' "

(4) AVEL (עוֹל) -- "perverseness, perversity, unrighteousness, iniquity. Used 21 times in OT. Example: Ezekiel 33:15 "If a wicked man restores a pledge, pays back what he has taken by robbery, walks by the statutes which ensure life without committing iniquity he will surely live; he shall not die."

(5) AVLAH (עוֹלָה) -- "perversity, perverseness". Used 29 times in OT. Example: Isaiah 59:3 -- "For your hands are

defiled with blood, and your fingers with iniquity; your lips have spoken falsehood, your tongue mutters wickedness.

(6) AVON (אָוֹן) -- "iniquity". Uses 232 times in OT. In the A.V. translated 218 times "iniquity", 6 times 'punishment', 4 times "punishment of iniquity", 2 times "faulty", once "sin", and once "mischief". Examples: Psalm 51:2, 5, 9 -- "Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin." "Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity and in sin my mother conceived me." "Hide Thy face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities."

(7) CHET (חֵטִּי) -- "sin, error, failure". Used 34 times in OT. Example: Psalm 103:10 -- "He has not dealt with us according to our sins nor rewarded us according to our iniquities."

(8) CHATAAH (חַטָּאת) -- "sin". Used 8 times in OT. Example: Psalm 32:1 -- "How blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered."

(9) CHATTATH (חַטָּאת) -- "sin, sin offering". Used 292 times in OT. Example: Leviticus 4:3 -- "If the anointed priest sins so as to bring guilt on the people, then let him offer to the Lord a bull without defect as a sin offering for the sin he has committed."

(10) MAAL (מַעַל) -- "trespass". Used 30 times in OT. Example: I Chronicles 10:13 -- "So Saul died for his trespass which he committed against the Lord, because of the word of the Lord which he did not keep; and also because he asked counsel of a medium, making inquiry of It."

(11) PESHA (פֶּשַׁע) -- "trespass, transgression." Used 93 times in OT. Example: Genesis 31:36 -- "Then Jacob became angry and contended with Laban; and Jacob answered and said to Laban, 'What is my transgression? What is my sin, that you have hotly pursued me?' "

(12) RA (רָע) -- "evil, badness". Used 648 times in the OT. Example: Psalm 97:10 -- "Hate evil, you who love the Lord, who preserves the souls of His godly ones. He delivers them from the hand of the wicked."

(13) ROA (רָע) "evil, badness". Used 19 times in OT. Example: Jeremiah 21:12 -- "O house of David, thus says the Lord, 'Administer justice every morning, and deliver the person who has been robbed from the power of his oppressor, that My wrath may not go forth like fire and burn with none to extinguish It, because of the evil of their deeds.' "

3. In New Testament Greek

In the New Testament there are some eleven Greek words which may be translated by the general word "sin". Some of these have specific shades of meaning.

(1) HAMARTIA (ἁμαρτία) -- "the missing of a mark or aim". Used 174 times in NT. Example: Romans 3:20 -- "because by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight; for through the Law comes the knowledge of sin".

(2) HAMARTEMA (ἁμαρτημά) -- "the missing of a mark or aim". Used 4 times in NT. Example: Romans 3:25 -- "whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith. This was to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed."

(3) PARABASIS (παράβασις) -- "the overpassing or transgressing of a line, the breaking of a distinctly recognized commandment." Used 7 times in NT. Example: Romans 4:15 -- "for the Law brings about wrath, but where there is no law, neither is there violation."

(4) PARAKOE (παράκοη) -- "disobedience to a voice". Used 3 times in NT. Example: Hebrews 2:2 -- "For if the word spoken through angels proved unalterable, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense,"

(5) PARAPTOMA (παράπτωμα) -- "a falling where one should have stood upright". Used 23 times in NT. Example: Romans 11:11-12 -- "I say then, they did not stumble so as to fall, did they? May it never be! But by their transgression salvation has come to the Gentiles, to make them jealous. Now if their transgression be riches for the world and their failure be riches for the Gentiles, how much more will their fulfillment be!"

(6) AGNOEMA (αγνοημά) "ignorance of what one ought to have known, with resultant error." Used once in NT. Hebrew 9:7 "but into the second only the high priest enters, once a year, not without taking blood, which he offers for himself and for the sins of the people committed in ignorance."

(7) HETTEMA (ἥττημα) -- "a diminishing of that which should have been rendered in full measure, a failure in duty." Used twice in NT. Example: I Corinthians 6:7 -- "Actually, then, it is already a defeat for you, that you have lawsuits with one another. Why not rather be wronged? Why not rather be defrauded?"

(8) ANOMIA (ἀνομία) -- "lawlessness, contempt of law, nonobservance of a law or laws". Used 14 times in NT. Example: II Thessalonians 2:7 -- "For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only he who now restrains will do so until he is taken out of the way."

(9) PARANOMIA (παράνομία) -- "an acting contrary to law". Used once in NT. II Peter 2:16 -- "but he (Balaam) received a rebuke for his own transgression for a dumb donkey, speaking with a voice of a man, restrained the madness of the prophet."

(10) ASEBEIA (ασέβεια) -- "ungodliness, positive and active opposition to God". Used 6 times in NT. Example: Romans 1:18 "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness."

(11) ADIKIA (αδικία)-- "unrighteousness, injustice". Used 25 times in NT. Example: Romans 1:18 -- "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness."

Note: the classic Old Testament passage on sins of ignorance is found in Leviticus 4. The following verses are noteworthy.

1 Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying,

2 "Speak to the sons of Israel, saying, 'If a person sins unintentionally in any of the things which the Lord has commanded not to be done, and commits any of them:

3 If the anointed priest sins so as to bring guilt on the people, then let him offer to the Lord a bull without defect as a sin offering for the sin he has committed.

13 Now if the whole congregation of Israel commits error, and the matter escapes the notice of the assembly, and they commit any of the things which the Lord has commanded not to be done, and they become guilty;

14 when the sin which they have committed becomes known, then the assembly shall offer a bull of the herd for a sin offering, and bring it before the tent of meeting.

15 Then the elders of the congregation shall lay their hands on the head of the bull before the Lord, and the bull shall be slain before the Lord.

20 He (the anointed priest) shall also do with the bull just as he did with the bull of the sin offering; thus he shall do with it. So the priest shall make atonement for them, and they shall be forgiven.

21 Then he is to bring out the bull to a place outside the camp, and burn it as he burned the first bull; it is the sin offering for the assembly.

22 When a leader sins and unintentionally does any one of all the things which the Lord God has commanded not to be done, and he becomes guilty,

23 if his sin which he has committed is made known to him, he shall bring for his offering a goat, a male without defect.

24 And he shall lay his hand on the head of the male goat, and slay it in the place where they slay the burnt offering before the Lord; it is a sin offering.

25 Then the priest is to take some of the blood of the sin offering with his finger, and put it on the horns of the altar of burnt offering; and the rest of its blood he shall pour out at the base of the altar of burnt offering.

26 And all its fat he shall offer up in smoke on the altar as in the case of the fat of the sacrifice of peace offerings. Thus the priest shall make atonement for him in regard to his sin, and he shall be forgiven.

27 How if anyone of the common people sins unintentionally in doing any of the things which the Lord has commanded not to be done, and becomes guilty,

28 If his sin, which he has committed is made known to him, then he shall bring for his offering a goat, a female without defect, for his sin which he has committed.

29 And he shall lay his hand on the head of the sin offering, and slay the sin offering at the place of the burnt offering.

32 But if he brings a lamb as his offering for a sin offering, he shall bring it, a female without defect.

35 Then he (the anointed priest) shall remove all its fat, just as the fat of the lamb is removed from the sacrifice of the peace offerings, and the priest shall offer them up in smoke on the altar, on the offerings by fire to the Lord. Thus the priest shall make atonement for him in regard to his sin which he has committed, and he shall be forgiven."

In the above passage some significant things are learned:

- (1) It is possible to sin in ignorance i.e., while one is ignorant that what he or she is doing is in fact sin. In verses 2, 22, and 27 we read of persons sinning unintentionally and in verses 14, 23, and 28 we read of a sin becoming known to the person(s) involved.
- (2) Sins of ignorance need not be done intentionally i.e., with deliberate purpose or intention; failure to fulfill the commands of God's law, whether intentional or not, is sin.
- (3) Sins of ignorance make a person legally, objectively guilty, whether or not the person has any feeling of subjective guilt of blameworthiness.
- (4) Sins of ignorance require confession of and identification with sin.
- (5) Sins of Ignorance require a sacrifice for their atonement.
- (6) Sins of ignorance need forgiveness from the Lord.

These considerations raise serious questions about any definition of sin that requires willful disobedience or "voluntary transgression of known law".

C. A Definition of Sin

The *Westminster Larger Catechism* defines sin as "any want of conformity unto, or transgression of, any law of God, given as a rule to the reasonable creature."

We will use as a working definition the following:

Sin is any transgression of, or lack of conformity to, the law of God (which at any given time is the will of God addressed to the obedience of moral beings).

In connection with this definition there are some specifically relevant Scriptures:

I John 3:4 -- "Everyone who practices sin also practices lawlessness; and sin is lawlessness." Sin must always be defined in relation to the Law of God. Sin is rebellion against and transgression of the Law of God.

Romans 3:19-20 -- "Now we know that whatever the Law says, it speaks to those who are under the Law, that every mouth may be closed, and all the world may become accountable to God; because by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight; for through the Law comes the knowledge of sin." The Law of God not only tells us what sin is; it also uncovers the workings of sin in us. Thus the Law makes sin known to us, both cognitively and experientially.

James 2:8 11 -- "If, however, you are fulfilling the royal law, according to the Scripture, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself,' you are doing well. But if you show partiality, you are committing sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors. For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles in one point, he has become guilty of all. For He who said, 'Do not commit adultery,' also said, 'Do not commit murder.' Now if you do not commit adultery, but do commit murder, you have become a transgressor of the Law of God." Partiality, or "respect of faces," is a sin. If we regard the wealthy and disregard the poor we show partiality; thus even lack of conformity to the Law of God is sin (in this case, failure to show love to our poor neighbor). And James reminds us that whether we break one or all of the Ten Commandments, we are guilty of transgressing God's Law and thus have sinned.

James 4:17 -- "Therefore, to one who knows the right thing to do, and does not do it, to him it is sin." In this case, boasting apart from an appropriate submission to the will of God is called sin. From this specific instance James moves to the general principle that if we know what is right and fail to do it, we commit sin. This sets up the distinction between sins of commission and sins of omission. If we do what we know is wrong, that is sin. If we fail to do what we know is right, that is also sin!

D. Distinctions in the Doctrine

Some important distinctions in the doctrine should be made, including the distinctions between sin as a principle and sin as an action, between sin as guilt and sin as corruption, and between sin as original and sin as actual.

1. The distinction between sin as a principle and sin as an action

Our Lord distinguished between what a man is and what he brings forth, between a man's character and his conduct. Yet though He distinguished between these things, He did not separate them. In fact He asserted that there is an organic connection between the two. A man does what he is.

In Matthew 7:15-20 the Lord Jesus made specific application of this general principle by telling his disciples how to tell true from false prophets:

Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves. You will know them by their fruits. Grapes are not gathered from thorn bushes, nor figs from thistles, are they? Even so, every good tree bears good fruit; but the bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot produce bad fruit, nor can a bad tree produce good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. So then, you will know them by their fruits.

Those who are false prophets demonstrate that they are false by what they produce in their own lives and in the lives of those who listen to and follow them; those who are true prophets also demonstrate that fact by what they produce. And in general, good persons produce good actions and evil persons produce evil actions. What a person is known by what he or she does.

Paul puts his finger on what it is in human beings that makes them sinners. He speaks of sin as a principle inherent in human nature, and sin as actions that human beings perform. In Romans 6:12-16 he writes:

Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body that you should obey its lusts, and do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God. For sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under law, but under grace. What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? May it never be! Do you not know that when you present yourselves to someone as slaves for obedience, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin resulting in death, or of obedience resulting in righteousness?

Notice that Paul on the one hand speaks of sin as something that operates in us in such a way as to attempt to get control of us, something that has evil desires ("lusts"), something to which we should not present our bodies, and something that can no longer have mastery over us as believers. On the other hand, he speaks of sin in terms of actions that transgress the Law of God. He asks, "Shall we sin?" The first use of sin refers to the sin that operates in our nature; the second refers to the sin that we commit. Sin is both something in our nature (not as created, but as fallen; thus we speak of a sinful nature) and expressions of that nature.

Both moral evil and moral good are attributed to our nature (what we are) and our actions (what we do); both to states and dispositions and to conscious, deliberate actions.

2. The distinction between sin as guilt and sin as corruption

Guilt refers to man's legal liability to the Law of God: as a sinner he is condemned; i.e., declared to be a transgressor and liable to punishment.

Corruption refers to man's moral character contrasted with the moral character of God: as a sinner he is disposed or bent or inclined toward sin, whereas God is holy and good through and through and wholly inclined toward moral uprightness. Corruption is also referred to as pollution or depravity.

3. The distinction between sin as original and sin as actual

Original sin is that sin in which every human being shares because of his or her relationship to Adam.

Actual sin (or individual and personal sin) is that sin which every human being (except Christ) commits in himself or herself; that sin whose guilt and corruption are uniquely his or her own and not shared.

Question 18 of the Westminster Shorter Catechism asks: "Wherein consists the sinfulness of that estate whereinto man fell?"

Answer: "The sinfulness of that estate whereinto man fell, consists in the guilt of Adam's first sin, the want of original righteousness, and the corruption of his whole nature, which is commonly called original sin; together with all actual transgressions which proceed from it.

This answer may be analyzed as follows:

(1) The components of original sin are:

(a) negatively -- lack of original righteousness

(b) positively --

guilt

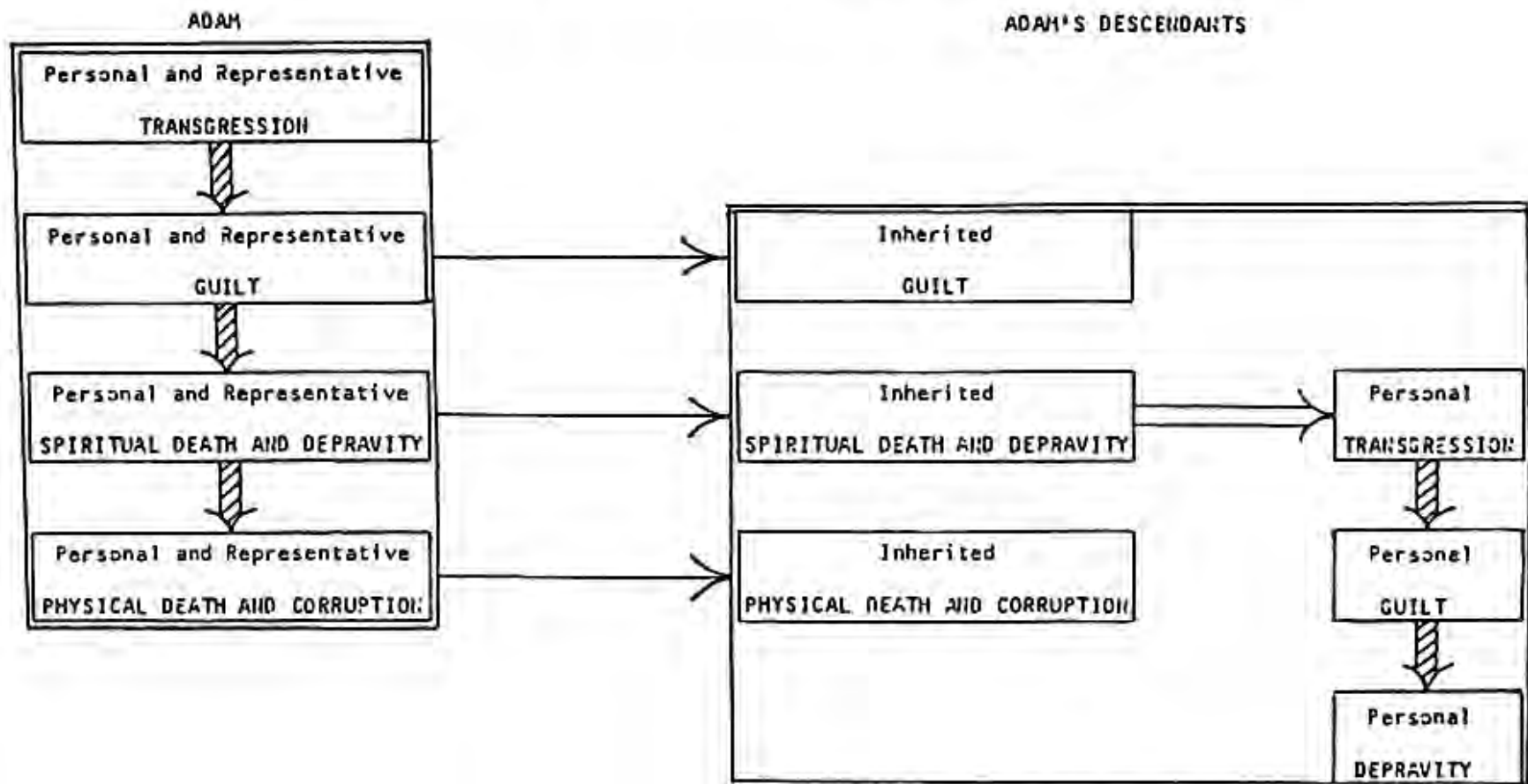
corruption

(2) original sin refers both to Adam and to all who have descended from him by ordinary generation

(3) Original sin is the root of all actual (individual and personal) transgressions

These relationships may perhaps be seen more clearly by means of a chart.

ORIGINAL AND ACTUAL SIN IN ADAM AND HIS DESCENDANTS



E. Exclusions from the Doctrine

A number of attempts to define sin have included erroneous ideas and concepts. Some attempts to cut to the heart of sin and to define its essence have either included some aspects that should be excluded or excluded some aspects that should be included. Some of these erroneous attempts to define sin or its essence include the following.

1. Sin is not a physical substance or quality

Sin is not some sort of 'stuff' or a thing that exists in itself. It is not something in the blood or in the genes. It is not something physical or chemical or biological that stains the physical heart or makes it a different color.

If sin were a physical substance, then certain implications could be drawn:

(1) The fallen angels and Satan, who have no physical substance, would be sinless.

(2) The disembodied spirits/souls of the wicked dead, languishing in Hades, would be sinless.

(3) To destroy or weaken the physical body would be to destroy and weaken sin; and physical death would then bring deliverance from sin for all mankind.

2. Sin is not an unavoidable consequence of limitation or finiteness

This view, proposed by Gottfried Wilhelm Leibnitz (A.D. 1646-1716) states that creatures are finite and limited, and that sin is an unavoidable consequence of this limitation.

It virtually makes God the Author of sin, since He created the creature as finite, with all of his limitations. The creature's sin thus becomes unavoidable. The view makes sin a misfortune and destroys moral responsibility.

3. Sin is not an illusion resulting from man's inadequate knowledge

This view, proposed by Benedict (Baruch) Spinoza (A.D. 1632-1671) places the cause of our sin consciousness in our failure to see things from the correct viewpoint. If we had God's viewpoint, sin would be nonexistent.

But according to Scripture, sin is not nonexistent for God. Because of sin, God's wrath rests on the disobedient. Jesus Christ came into the world and went to the cross to deliver us from our sins. In addition, the more we learn of and know God, the greater (not lesser) our sin-consciousness becomes!

4. Sin is not necessary antagonism

This view holds that all of life involves action and reaction. There can be no rest without fatigue, no life without death, no light without darkness, no good without evil. Sin is the necessary condition of the existence of virtue.

This view makes evil a good, destroys moral consciousness, makes all the denunciations of the Bible against sin meaningless, and virtually makes God the Author of evil in order that good may come.

5. Sin is not merely self love arising from the natural development of the appetites before the development of reason

This view holds that before the reason has opportunity to develop sufficiently to counterbalance them, the appetites develop to such a degree that they take the stronger hold upon the will, resulting in the will's gratification of the appetites rather than of the will. This gratification is sin, and becomes habitual. The habitual nature of self gratification explains the universality of sin.

This view makes sin an unfortunate necessity, a result of an arrangement that God Himself has made.

6. The essence of sin cannot simply be reduced to selfishness or self-will

a. Selfishness has sometimes been called the essence of sin. In this context, selfishness must be defined not merely as self love (which has a proper place), but as the undue preference of our own happiness, advantage, welfare, or comfort to that of another.

Sometimes in extreme circumstances parents violate the Law of God to benefit their children; e.g., by stealing food to keep their children alive, or by stating something contrary to fact to protect their children from danger. Such violation may be sin, but it is not an instance of selfishness! If it be objected that this is only an indirect way of benefitting the parents and is thus selfish, then all good acts become selfish, since good acts always benefit the doer in some way. In the case of these parents, the question must be, "What is the motive?" if it is the happiness, advantage, welfare, or comfort of their children, then the action, even though it may be sin, is not selfish.

Therefore not all sins are selfish or arise from selfishness; and thus the essence of sin cannot be said to be selfishness.

b. Self-will has sometimes been called the essence of sin. But what is self will? Is it merely the self-willing or choosing to act, or deciding to do something? If we ourselves will to do the will of God, surely this is not sinful! If self-will or self-determination in opposition to the will of God is called the essence of sin (including in self-will not only the external actions, but also the internal inclinations and desires), then we are merely defining sin as transgression of the Law of God, rather than giving its essence!

Thus self will is inadequate as an Identification of the essence of sin.

VI. THE ORIGIN OF SIN AND THE FALL OF MANKIND

A. The Origin of Sin

1. The Origin of Sin In the Angelic World

a. Satan and the fallen angels appear to have originated sin in the angelic world

John 8:44 -- "You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature; for he is a liar, and the father of lies."

I John 3:8 -- "the one who practices sin is of the devil; for the devil has sinned from the beginning."

b. Basically, the sin of Satan and the fallen angels seems to have been pride -- the desire to be like God in power and authority

I Timothy 3:6 -- ". . . and not a new convert, lest he become conceited and fall into the condemnation incurred by the devil."

Jude 6 -- "And angels who did not keep their own domain, but abandoned their proper abode, He has kept in eternal bonds under darkness for the judgment of the great day."

II Peter 2:4 -- "For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to pits of darkness, reserved for judgment;"

c. Since Satan was already a sinner before he tempted Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, we can say that Satan and the fallen angels originated sin in the universe.

2. The Origin of Sin in the Human Race

Adam originated sin in the human race at his Fall. William G. T. Shedd speaks to this point with force and clarity.

This kind of rebellious, disobedient desire required to be originated by Adam himself, as something not previously existing in his submissive heart and obedient will. God had not implanted any such wrong desire as this. This proud and selfish lust for a false and forbidden knowledge had to be started by Adam himself, as something entirely new and aboriginal. It was not a primary God-created desire of the finite will, but a secondary self-originated one. It was not the product of the creative act, but of a voluntary self-determination The sinful self-determination of Adam's will was both the cause of the first sin and the first sin itself. Sin is self-caused, . . .

(*Dogmatic Theology* Vol.2, pp 155-157)

In Romans 5:12 Paul asserts: "through one man sin entered into the world."

B. The Fall of Mankind

1. The Nature of the Fall

The Fall event may be analyzed into components or stages:

a. First, we have a man and a woman inclined toward God and holiness, with everything their hearts could need or properly desire, and walking in communion with God.

Genesis 1:27 28; 2:8 9, 15 16, 18, 21 22 -- 'And God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. And God blessed them; and God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.' And the Lord God planted a garden toward the east, in Eden; and there He placed the man whom He had formed. And out of the ground the Lord God caused to grow every tree that is pleasing to the sight and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil . . . Then the Lord God took the man and put him into the garden of Eden to cultivate it and keep it. And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, 'From any tree of the garden you may eat freely;'. Then the Lord God said, 'It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make him a helper suitable for him.' . . So the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; then He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh at that place. And the Lord God fashioned into a woman the rib which He had taken from the man, and brought her to the man."

b. Second, we have a simple probation, a test involving a simple command in the form of a prohibition, with regard to a specific object (the tree of the knowledge of good and evil), and an announced penalty for disobedience.

Genesis 2:16 17 -- "And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, 'From any tree of the garden you may eat freely; but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you shall surely die.' "

c. Third, we have a tempter, Satan (that old Serpent!) presenting the forbidden thing as a temptation, an enticement to evil.

- (1) It was an enticement to have what God had forbidden
- (2) It was an enticement to know what God had not revealed
- (3) It was an enticement to be what God had not intended them to be

Genesis 3:1 5 -- "Now the serpent was more crafty than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said to the women, 'Indeed, has God said, "You shall not eat from any tree of the garden?" ' And the woman said to the Serpent, 'From the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat; but from the fruit of the tree which is in the middle of the garden, God has said, "You shall not eat from it or touch It, lest you die." ' And the Serpent said to the woman, 'You surely shall not die! For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.' "

d. Fourth, we have a response in the heart of the woman (self-initiated) to the external object of temptation, then an act of her will, and then the resultant external act of disobedience.

Genesis 3:6 -- "When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make one wise, she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate."

Note: The fact that this tree was "good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes" should not be made part of the evil enticement of the temptation (except in terms of Satan's perversion of a good thing), because in Genesis 2:9 we read: "And out of the ground the Lord God caused to grow every tree that is pleasing to the sight and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil." If God created the trees of the Garden to be pleasing to the eye and good for food, then these characteristics were not evil in themselves.

e. Fifth, we have the participation of Adam in this disobedience, following the same course -- inclination in the heart, self-determination, and external action.

Genesis 3:6 -- "and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate."

f. Sixth, we have the immediate results of their sin:

- (1) spiritual death and moral depravity, as shown by their defiled conscience
- (2) the inception of the process of physical death, as shown by the statement that Adam (and Eve) would return to the dust of the ground
- (3) curses on the ground, on Satan, on Eve (in childbearing), and on Adam (in hard labor on the soil)

Genesis 3:7 19 -- Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loin coverings. And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the

day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden. Then the Lord God called to the man, and said to him, 'Where are you?' And he said, 'I heard the sound of Thee in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid myself.' And He said, 'Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?' And the man said, 'The woman whom Thou gavest to be with me, she gave me from the tree, and I ate.' Then the Lord God said to the woman, 'What is this you have done?' And the woman said, 'The Serpent deceived me, and I ate.' And the Lord God said to the Serpent, 'Because you have done this, cursed are you more than all cattle, and more than every beast of the field; on your belly shall you go, and dust shall you eat all the days of your life; and I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, and you shall bruise him on the heel.' To the woman He said, 'I will greatly multiply your pain in childbirth; in pain you shall bring forth children; yet your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you.' Then to Adam He said, 'Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree about which I commanded you, saying, 'You shall not eat from it'; cursed is the ground because of you; in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life. Both thorns and thistles it shall grow for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, because from it you were taken. For you are dust, and to dust you shall return.' "

g. Seventh, we have Adam and Eve driven out of the Garden of Eden, as a symbol of their loss of communion with God and all of its attendant blessings.

Genesis 3:22-24 -- "Then the Lord God said, 'Behold, the man has become like one of Us, knowing good and evil; and now, lest he stretch out his hand, and take also from the tree of life, and eat, and live forever' - therefore the Lord God sent him out from the garden of Eden, to cultivate the ground from which he was taken. So He drove the man out; and at the east of the garden of Eden He stationed the cherubim, and the flaming sword which turned every direction, to guard the way to the tree of life."

2. Problems connected with the Fall

a. How could a holy being fall?

If Adam was created positively holy and disposed toward God; and if human beings will in accordance with their nature and disposition, then how could Adam will to sin?

It is apparent that Adam had the power of contrary choice; i.e., the power to will contrary to the disposition and bent of his holy character.

What, then, made Adam sin? The problem with this question is its statement! Nothing made him sin! in fact, if anything made him sin, then his act was not a free act of self-determined choice.

The inclination against God that led to his external act of disobedience was originated *ex nihilo* by Adam himself. The efficient cause of Adam's sin was Adam! No one made him sin.

b. How could a Just God Justly permit mankind to be tempted?

What was the purpose of the test? To confirm Adam's character in holiness and righteousness. Since Adam had the power of contrary choice and was inclined toward God, he could be confirmed in this inclination only by a deliberate choice in the presence of the possibility of an opposite choice. Adam had to choose whether or not he would be confirmed in holiness and live for the glory of God.

In addition, Adam had the power to resist the temptation. He could have chosen to obey God rather than listen to Satan. The temptation in itself had no power to cause Adam to sin.

Thus God was perfectly just in permitting Satan to tempt Adam, both in view of the purpose of the test and Adam's power to resist the temptation.

It is interesting to note that in this situation God was testing Adam at the same time that Satan was tempting him.

c. How could so great a penalty be attached to so slight a command?

The significance of the command was not slight. This may be seen:

(1) by God's solemn warning not to disobey

(2) by the announced penalty attached to disobedience

(3) by the terrible results, both immediate and subsequent, of that disobedience

The substance of the command was slight. This shows:

(1) the simplicity of the test that God placed before Adam and Eve

(2) the ease with which our first parents could have obeyed the command

(3) by contrast, the heinousness of disobedience, in the light of all of God's goodness to them in the Garden

VII. THE RESULTS OF THE FALL

A. Immediate Results of the Fall, to Adam and Eve

By their sin our first parents suffered:

1. Spiritual death

Spiritual death in the case of Adam and Eve meant a judicial cessation of those (spiritual) life-giving influences of the Holy Spirit graciously bestowed on Adam and Eve at their creation, resulting in the extinction of spiritual life and the consequent corruption and depravity of their moral nature.

2. The loss of original righteousness

3. The loss of communion with God

4. Guilt and condemnation

5. The incurring of God's wrath and curse

6. Bondage to Satan

7. Physical death

Physical death in the case of Adam and Eve meant a judicial cessation of those (physical) life-giving influences of the Holy Spirit graciously bestowed on Adam and Eve at their creation, resulting in a weakening of bodily powers, the gaining of a susceptibility to disease, a decaying of the physical organism, and the ultimate dissolution of the union of the soul/spirit and the body, with the consequent extinction of physical life.

B. Long range Results of the Fall, to Adam's Posterity

As a result of the Fall, all of Adam's posterity come into the world spiritually dead, lacking original righteousness, cut off from communion with God, guilty and condemned, under God's wrath and curse, in bondage to Satan, and physically dying.

Two areas of this great loss need expansion and explanation: the imputation of Adam's guilt and the impartation of Adam's corruption.

1. The imputation of Adam's guilt to his descendants

In Scripture, "to impute*" means to mentally charge something negative against a person, or to mentally credit something positive to a person. Thus in Psalm 32:2 the person whose sins are not charged against him is called blessed; and in Romans 4:6 the man to whom God credits righteousness apart from works is called blessed.

In II Corinthians 5:19 Paul says that "God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them." And in II Corinthians 5:21 Paul says that God made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him." God did not make Christ sinful in nature or deed, but charged our sin against His Son, in order that He might credit His righteousness to us. This is imputation.

The classic passage on the imputation of Adam's guilt is Romans 5:12-19. In the NASB the passage reads as follows:

(12) Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned --

(13) for until the Law sin was in the world; but sin is not Imputed when there is no law.

(14) Nevertheless death reigned from Adam until Moses, even over those who had not sinned in the likeness of the offense of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come.

(15) But the free gift is not like the transgression. For if by the transgression of the one the many died, much more did the grace of God and gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abound to many.

(16) And the gift is not like that which came through the one who sinned; for on the one hand the judgment arose from one transgression resulting in condemnation, but on the other hand the free gift arose from many transgressions resulting in justification.

(17) For if by the transgression of the one, death reigned through the one, much more those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.

(18) So then as through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men, even so through one act of righteousness there resulted justification of life to all men.

(19) For as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the One the many will be made righteous.

Let us look carefully at this passage, verse by verse, making comments as we go. We will use a very literal translation (made by the professor).

12 -- "Therefore even as by one man sin entered the world, and because of sin, death; and in this way death passed over to all men, in that all sinned -- "

"One man" appears to refer to Adam.

Sin and death entered space-time history at Adam's original transgression of God's commandment.

"Death" could refer to physical death or spiritual death or both.

All men sinned; this bears some relationship to death having passed over to all men.

If this is taken to mean that all men die because they individually and personally sin, this raises the question as to why some infants die, even before they are born. This presents problems for the interpretation that says that the death passing over means that, as God assigned death for Adam's sin, so He also assigned death for all men's sins, somewhat in the following manner:

One man sinned (Individually) -- -- -- > result: death

All men sin (Individually) -- -- -- -- -- > result: death

If in some sense all sinned when Adam sinned, then the two concepts that "death entered the world" and "death passed over to all men" can be seen as a single event that occurred at the Fall.

13 "For until (the) Law sin was in (the) world; but sin is not charged to one's account when there is not law.

The text says that sin was in the world until the Law; therefore "Law" cannot refer to the commandments God gave to Adam before the Fall, because before the Fall there was no sin in the world.

The "Law" cannot refer to the Law of God written on the heart of Adam and Eve, because that Law was implanted in their hearts at their creation, before there was sin in the world.

"Law" must refer to some expression of the will of God addressed to man's obedience that God revealed following the Fall. It probably refers to the Law of God given through Moses, the Mosaic Law.

Therefore the text is saying that, from the Fall to the giving of the Law through Moses, there was sin in the world.

As a general principle, sin is not charged or imputed when there is no law. Without law there can be no transgression charged against a person and therefore no guilt. This "charging to one's account" is a commercial term used in a legal context; thus the guilt of sin is referred to.

This verse could mean that, from the Fall to the time of Moses, sin (in terms of the sinfulness of human nature and in terms of sinful acts) was in the world, but that sin in terms of guilt was not charged to men's accounts, simply because there was no Law to pronounce them guilty.

The verse could also be taken to include two distinct sections: one a statement of fact (from the Fall to Moses, sin was in the world); the other an objection, hypothetically posed ("but sin is not charged to one's account when there is no law"). This understanding raises the problem of how sin could be ¹ⁿ. (either guilt, or depravity, or sinful acts) without Law to define it.

14 -- "But death ruled from Adam until Moses, even upon those who did not sin after the likeness of the disobedience of Adam, who is (the) type of the coming one."

This brings us back to the question: Do all men die because they individually sin?

However, if sin is not charged to one's account when there is not law, then how could it be the case from Adam to Moses that all men sinned individually and therefore died? This is, how could death rule during that time if death comes by individual sins and sin was not charged during that time?

To complicate the matter, those persons who sinned during that time did not sin in the same way that Adam sinned. Although they sinned in many ways, they did not transgress God's command not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. (In the nature of the case, this was no longer possible). Since the penalty attached to disobedience to God's command not to eat of the forbidden tree was death, presumably this penalty fell only upon the ones who disobeyed God's commandment. Yet death fell upon all men from Adam to Moses, even though they did not eat of the forbidden tree.

This raises the question: How could sin be in the world and death rule when there was no Law to condemn sin and prescribe death as its penalty?

Although it is possible to see that from Adam to Moses there could be corruption in the world (and there was) and that there could be sinful actions in the world (and there were), it is difficult to see how there could be guilt in the world without Law to condemn sin, unless that guilt was imputed to human beings, not because of their individual sins, but because of their corporate involvement with Adam's sin. If Adam's sin was imputed to them and they became guilty of that sin, then it is possible to see how there could be sin in the form of guilt in the world even before the Mosaic Law, and how death could rule from Adam to Moses. Then it is possible to see how both sin and death passed over to all men, through the imputation of Adam's guilt and the impartation of Adam's death.

Before the Mosaic Law, there was no objective codification of the Law of God on the basis of which human beings could have the verdict of guilty and the sentence of death pronounced upon them. There was no Law which said, "You are guilty and you must die!"

After the Mosaic Law was given, then it can readily be seen that there was a Law that said, "You are guilty and you must die!" But before the Mosaic Law there was no Law that prescribed the penalty of death. Why then did human beings from Adam to Moses die?

The text says that death ruled over those who lived during the time from Adam to Moses. All human beings were marked by death even before they committed any act of sin! How could this be so?

The answer appears to be that, just as human beings did not incur the penalty of death for their own personal acts of sin, so they did not incur guilt for their individual acts of sin alone. Rather, they were born guilty and born dead!

In this segment of the passage, then, Paul attempts to disabuse his readers of the interpretation of verse 12 that would say that just as Adam sinned (transgressed the Law of God) and incurred death, so all human beings individually sin (transgress the Law of God) and incur death. He does this by pointing out that men from Adam to Moses died, but not because they broke a Law of God that prescribed death as its penalty. Rather, in some sense they sinned when Adam sinned, and died when Adam died; and thus guilt and death passed over to Adam's descendants. In the next few verses Paul attempts to make this connection clearer and more explicit.

Adam is called the type or figure of the coming one. Does this mean that Adam is in some sense like the coming one? And in what sense? Is he like the coming one in his character, his actions, his significance (in terms of who or what he represents), or the results of his actions? And who is the "coming one"?

15 -- "but not as the transgression, so also the gift. For if by the transgression of one the many died, much more the grace of God and the gift by grace, that of the one man, Jesus Christ, overflowed to the many.'

Up to this point we have been reading about Adam, sin, death, and Law; now a radical shift is made. Now we read of gift, grace, and Christ. Perhaps Christ is the "coming one", to whom Adam has some likeness in terms of type or figure.

There appears to be both comparison and contrast, similarity and dissimilarity, likeness and unlikeness between the transgression and the gift. The likeness may lie in the fact that in both cases (Adam's and Christ's) a works covenant was involved; the unlikeness may lie in the fact that, in Adam's case the outcome was transgression and death, whereas in Christ's case the outcome was obedience and life.

On the other hand the likeness may lie in the involvement of human beings in Adam's transgression through imputation of guilt, and the involvement of human beings in Christ's obedience through imputation of righteousness; the unlikeness may lie in the fact that the imputation of guilt is, by representation, earned and deserved, whereas the imputation of righteousness is a gift and undeserved.

It appears from this verse that the many died as a result of the transgression of the one; i.e., that human beings died as a result of Adam's sin, not as a result of their own individual sins.

It also appears that the representative principle -- Adam and those he represents, Christ and those He represents -- is at least preliminarily established from this verse.

16 -- "And the gift is not as by one who sinned. For on the one hand the Judgment is of one (transgression) unto condemnation, and on the other hand the gift is of many transgressions unto Justification.

Here again, unlikeness is stressed in the very midst of the parallel: a gift is unearned, whereas condemnation by one man's transgression (the sin of Adam) is earned.

The condemnation of human beings arises out of one man's transgression; the Justification of human beings arises out of many persons' transgressions. What does Paul mean by this?

John Murray, in his excellent commentary, *The Epistle to the Romans* states:

It is clear that the judgment of condemnation proceeded from the one trespass the latter is the ground of the former. But may we say that the free gift of justification proceeds from the many trespasses and is grounded upon them? The parallel underlying the contrast requires a certain identity of operation. It would scarcely be feasible, however, to insist that the free gift is grounded upon the many trespasses. What then is the similarity of relation? It can be stated thus. What the judgment unto condemnation took into account was simply the one trespass; the sentence needed only the one trespass to give it validity and sanction; In fact, the one trespass demanded nothing less than the condemnation of all. But the free gift unto justification is of such a character that it must take the many trespasses in to its reckoning; it could not be the free gift of justification unless it blotted out the many trespasses. Consequently, the free gift is conditioned as to its nature and effect by the many trespasses just as the judgment was conditioned as to its nature and effect by the one trespass alone. In this way we can perceive the identity which the apostle has in view and we can see how the magnitude of grace is exhibited by the manifold trespasses with which grace reckons.

John Murray. *The Epistle to the Romans* vol. 1.
Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1959. p. 196.

The gift flowing from God's grace interrupts the natural sequence of guilt, depravity, and sinful actions flowing from the relationship of human beings to Adam, and justifies (declares righteous) those guilty, depraved, sinning persons who are the recipients of that gift.

17 -- "For if by the transgression of the one, death ruled through the one, much more those receiving the overflow of grace and the gift of righteousness shall rule in life through the one, Jesus Christ.

Here again stress is placed upon death ruling by the transgression of one man (Adam), not by the transgressions of many human beings.

Life is said to rule through one man (Jesus Christ) by the bestowal of the grace of God and the gift of grace, righteousness. It would appear that an order is established here, which is:

grace → gift of righteousness → life

18 -- "consequently therefore as by one transgression (there came) unto all men condemnation, thus also by one righteous deed (there came) unto all men justification of life."

Here the argument is made even clearer. By Adam's one act of transgression, condemnation (guilt and its penalty, death) came to all men; whereas by Christ's righteousness, justification of life came to all men.

But here we strike a problem. The text seems to say that, as all human beings are condemned, so all human beings are justified. Must the use of "all men" be qualified in meaning in either or both instances? The text says that condemnation came to all men; this is not qualified in the passage. The text also says that justification came to all men; but this is qualified in verse 17. There we read that only those who are justified receive the overflow of grace and the gift of righteousness. Since not all men receive the gift, then not all are justified. This preserves the emphasis of the passage on the similarities and contrasts between those who are represented by Adam and those who are represented by Christ. And here in verse 18 the parallel is clearly stated, and the representation is fully developed.

19 -- "For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of one the many shall be made righteous."

Here the argument of the parallel is drawn even tighter: by the disobedience of Adam, his descendants were made guilty sinners; by the obedience of Christ, His spiritual children are made justified saints.

Adam may now be seen as the type of Christ, the "coming one". As the antitype (the one who fulfills the type), Christ did what Adam failed to do: He obeyed God's Law, did God's will, and earned for His spiritual children the gifts of righteousness, justification, and life, which God in turn bestows on them by His grace.

Analysis of Theories of Imputation

- a. The Pelagian Theory (named after Pelagius, who lived A.D. 360-431)
 - (1) Beliefs of the view
 - (a) Adam's sin affected only himself as far as guilt is concerned.

(b) A man is responsible only for what he is fully able to do; thus ability conditions responsibility.

(c) Human beings have full natural ability to obey God perfectly.

(d) Each human being is created innocent.

(e) There is no such thing as a sinful nature, there are only sinful actions.

(f) Adam's sin is merely a bad example to his posterity.

(g) The statement in Romans 5:12b -- "death passed over to all men, in that all sinned" -- means that as Adam died because he sinned, so in like manner human beings die because they sin.

(2) critique of the view

(a) The Pelagian view connects the condemnation and death of the many with the transgression of the many. But verses 15, 16, 17, 18, and 19 connect the condemnation and death of the many with the transgression of the one.

(b) The Pelagian view breaks the parallelism between the sin of one, resulting in condemnation and death to many, and the righteousness of one, resulting in justification and life to many.

(c) The Pelagian view offers no explanation for the fact of the universality of sin. Why do all men sin? That is, if human beings are created innocent, do not have a sinful nature, and have full natural ability to obey God perfectly, why do all sin?

(d) The Pelagian view states that each human being dies because of his or her own individual acts of sin. What about infants who die before they are born? Do they die because of their individual acts of sin?

b. The Arminian Theory (named after Jacobus Arminius, who lived A.D. 1560- 1609)

(1) Beliefs of the view

(a) Human beings are born destitute of original righteousness and depraved.

(b) Human depravity is certainly sinfulness, but it does not involve guilt or punishment.

(c) Thus human beings are not guilty as a result of Adam's sin.

(d) Only when human beings voluntarily appropriate their Inborn evil tendencies are they guilty.

(e) Because human beings are born depraved, God as a matter of justice bestows on each person prevenient or preparatory grace. Prevenient grace takes persons who are inclined toward sin and disinclined toward God and gives them the ability to make a favorable response to the gospel. Prevenient grace does not guarantee the hearing of the gospel, does not in itself incline persons favorably toward Christ, and does not predetermine the outcome of hearing the gospel, but it does enable persons who are spiritually sick and in need of God's saving grace to respond to repentance and faith when the gospel is presented to them.

(f) Every human being is fully able to obey God, by cooperating with the Holy Spirit.

(g) The statement in Romans 5:12b -- "death passed over to all men, in that all sinned" -- means that all human beings personally consent to their inborn depravity by committing sinful acts, and that all human beings suffer the consequences of Adam's sin.

(2) Critique of the view

(a) The Arminian view connects the condemnation and punishment of the many with the transgression of the many. But verses 17, 18, and 19 connect the judgment, condemnation, and death of the many with the transgression of the one.

(b) The Arminian view, in attempting to emphasize human responsibility, breaks the parallelism between Adam and Christ developed in this passage. Instead of the parallel: as Adam's sin results in condemnation and punishment to many so Christ's righteousness results in justification and life to many; the Arminian view proposes: as each individual's sin results in condemnation and punishment to himself so Christ's righteousness results in justification and life to many.

(c) The Arminian view holds that God as a matter of justice bestows prevenient grace on each fallen sinner, which grace gives each one the ability to make a favorable response to the gospel. The underlying idea here seems to be that, since each person comes into the world a sinner, but not by his own choice, God's justice requires that each sinner be given a sufficient opportunity to be delivered from his sinfulness through the gospel.

However, this attempt to relieve God of the potential charge of injustice does not go far enough, since in this view God does not see to it that each individual has the opportunity to hear the gospel. Both a universal ability to respond to the gospel and a universal proclamation of the

gospel are needed if all human beings are to have equal opportunity to be saved.

(d) The Arminian view distinguishes between having and appropriating inborn evil tendencies. Only by knowingly and voluntarily yielding to evil tendencies is guilt and punishment incurred. But what about sins of omission and sins of ignorance? Are they properly sin, and do they involve guilt? If so, then it appears that guilt can be incurred even apart from conscious, willful acts of sin, in which case the definition of sin as "voluntary transgression of known law" is too narrow to include all of the biblical data.

- c. The Theory of Mediate Imputation (Moise Amyraut, A.D. 1596-1664; Joshua de la Place, A.D. 1596-1655, both professors in the School of Saumur in western France)

(1) Beliefs of the view

(a) All human beings are born physically and morally depraved.

(b) The body is depraved, but the soul is created holy; thus the soul becomes depraved by being united to the body.

(c) This depravity is the source of all actual sin, and is itself sin.

(d) Human beings do not become guilty by virtue of the imputation of Adam's guilt, but by virtue of the impartation of Adam's depravity. They are guilty of Adam's sin on the basis of shared depravity. Thus they are not corrupt because they are guilty, but guilty because they are corrupt.

(e) The statement in Romans 5:12b -- "death passed over to all men, in that all sinned" -- means that all human beings suffer the consequences of Adam's sin, and that all human beings have sinned by having a sinful nature.

(2) Critique of the view

(a) The Mediate Imputation view connects condemnation (which means "a declaration of guilt", just as justification means "a declaration of righteousness") with the innate depravity of each person. Each person is guilty because he or she is depraved. But verses 16 and 18 connect condemnation with the offense of one man, Adam; thus each human being is guilty as a result of Adam's transgression.

(b) The Mediate imputation view breaks the parallelism between Adam and Christ. Instead of the parallel: as Adam's sin results in the condemnation and punishment to many, so Christ's righteousness results in justification and life to many; the Mediate imputation view proposes: as each

individual's depravity incurs condemnation for himself, so Christ's righteousness results in justification and life to many.

(c) The Mediate imputation view represents depravity and guilt as our misfortune but not as our fault. in a striking way, human responsibility is removed from the picture!

- d. The Theory of Natural Headship (also called the Realistic Theory or the Augustinian Theory) (Aurelius Augustine, A.D. 354-430)

(1) Beliefs of the view

(a) The human race was an organic unity in Adam. Augustine viewed the individual as part of the whole. Adam was the entire race and possessed the whole human nature.

(b) The entire race sinned in Adam, and thus the whole human nature became guilty, corrupt, and liable to death.

(c) Individual human beings are particular manifestations of the universal human nature.

(d) Individual human beings are guilty of Adam's sin because they really and actually sinned in Adam, being in his loins. The principle employed in Hebrew 7:9-10 is applied to the descendants of Adam. Hebrews 7:9-10 states: "And, so to speak, through Abraham even Levi, who received tithes, paid tithes, for he was still in the loins of his father when Melchizedek met him. Since we were in Adam's loins when he sinned, his sin is properly our own. Augustine wrote: "As all men have sinned in Adam, they are Justly subject to the condemnation of God on account of this hereditary sin and the guilt thereof."

(e) The statement in Romans 5:12b -- "death passed over to all men, in that all sinned" -- means that all sinned in Adam, their natural head, and thus all incurred the consequences of Adam's sin.

(2) Critique of the view (critiques of this view and the following view are found together, after presentation of the beliefs of that following view)

- e. The Theory of Federal Headship (also called the Representative Theory) (John Cocceius, A.D. 1603-1669; Herman Witsius, A.D. 1626-1708)

(1) Beliefs of the view

(a) When God entered into the covenant of works with Adam, He made him the representative of the whole human race.

(b) Since Adam was truly the representative of the race, God Imputed the guilt of Adam's sin to the whole race, imparted the depravity of Adam to all of his natural descendants, and condemned the whole race to death.

(c) Individual human beings are guilty of Adam's sin because they really and actually sinned in Adam, their true representative.

(d) The statement in Romans 5:12b -- "death passed over to all men, in that all sinned" -- means that all sinned in Adam, their true representative and head, and thus all incurred the consequences of Adam's sin.

(2) Critique of this view (as follows)

Critique of the theories of Natural Headship and Federal Headship

(1) In the passage (Romans 5:12-19) Adam and Christ and those connected with them are shown to be contrasting parallels. Death is spoken of as the result of the sin of all men in verse 12, and as the result of the sin of one man in verses 15-19. The connection between these two assertions must be some kind of a solidarity, so that the sin is at once the sin of the "one" and the sin of "all."

(2) The nature of this solidarity may be interpreted naturally or representatively. But the crux of the difference is not that one view holds to community of nature and natural headship, and other does not. Both views hold that human nature became corrupt in Adam and that this human nature which became corrupt in Adam is transmitted to his posterity by natural generation! The question is whether human nature was numerically and specifically one in Adam or whether Adam was the appointed head and representative of the whole race.

(3) Both theories must ask how individual members of the race can bear the guilt of a sin in which they did not as individuals personally and individually participate. Even the Natural Headship Theory must admit that the individual members of the race did not personally and individually participate in the sin of the human nature as it existed in its unity in Adam. The individual sin of a human being is as far removed from the sin of generic humanity as it is from the sin of a representative head.

(4) The Natural Headship theory contains a difference between the kind of union that exists between Adam and his posterity and the kind of union that exists between Christ and those who are His. The first union is natural, the second is spiritual. The Federal Headship Theory argues that the sustained emphasis on the parallel between Adam and Christ seems to argue for an Identity in the way the unions operate. Adam sinned and we are condemned; Christ obeyed and we are Justified. To argue that we were in Adam

naturally but in Christ spiritually seems to break the structure of the parallelism. It appears to preserve the parallelism if we say that we were in Adam representatively and in Christ representatively.

(5) The Natural Headship Theory claims that the Federal Headship Theory, in claiming that God imputes Adam's guilt to his descendants on the basis of representation, makes God unjust, since in the Federal view Adam's descendants were not really and actually present in Adam when he fell. Adherents of the Realistic Theory claim that imputation by representation is a gratuitous imputation, lacking a basis in reality, and that the Federal Headship Theory's claim that this imputation is unique in history does not help.

The Federal Headship Theory responds by pointing out that there is no injustice in this imputation, since Adam's descendants were really and actually present in Adam, since he was their true, proper, and perfect representative at the Fall. Adherents of the Representative Theory point out that the Natural Headship Theory, in claiming that God Imputes only the guilt of Adam's first sin to his descendants and not that of subsequent sins, also contains a unique feature, but do not see this as involving any injustice.

(6) The Federal Headship Theory maintains the same pattern of relationship between Adam and his posterity as exists between Christ and His people -- one of vicarious representation. Just as Adam's guilt was charged to all those represented by him, so Christ's righteousness is credited to all those represented by Him.

Must we choose between the Realistic (Natural Headship) and the Representative (Federal Headship) views?

Is it possible to see a dimension of the scriptural truth in each of these views? Is it possible to espouse both rather than choose one? Could Adam be viewed as both our natural and our representative head? Is there a sense in which we were really in Adam's loins when he fell, so that when he sinned we also sinned? Is there also a sense in which we were genuinely represented by Adam when he fell, so that when he sinned we also sinned? If both senses are true, do we need to choose between the two views? Or can we espouse the facets of both and see them as complementary? Such a combination view has much to commend it and appears very attractive!

2. The impartation of Adam's corruption (depravity) to his descendants
 - a. Statements of the doctrine

The French Confession of Faith (A.D. 1559), articles 9-11, states:

IX. We believe that man was created pure and perfect in the Image of God, and that by his own guilt he fell from the grace which he received, and is thus alienated from God, the fountain of

Justice and of all good, so that his nature is totally corrupt. And being blinded in mind, and depraved in heart, he has lost all integrity, and there is no good in him. And although he can still discern good and evil, we say, notwithstanding, that the light he has becomes darkness when he seeks for God, so that he can in nowise approach him by his intelligence and reason. And although he has a will that incites him to do this or that, yet it is altogether captive to sin, so that he has no other liberty to do right than that which God gives him.

X. We believe that all the posterity of Adam is in bondage to original sin, which is an hereditary evil, and not an imitation merely, as was declared by the Pelagians, whom we detest in their errors. And we consider that it is not necessary to inquire how sin was conveyed from one man to another, for what God had given Adam was not for him alone, but for all his posterity; and thus in his person we have been deprived of all good things, and have fallen with him into a state of sin and misery.

XI. we believe, also, that this evil is truly sin, sufficient for the condemnation of the whole human race, even of little children in the mother's womb, and that God considers it as such; even after baptism it is still of the nature of sin, but the condemnation of it is abolished for the children of God, out of his mere free grace and love. And further, that it is a perversity always producing fruits of malice and of rebellion, so that the most holy men, although they resist it, are still stained with many weaknesses and imperfections while they are in this life.

The Heidelberg Catechism (A.D. 1563), questions 3-8, asks:

Question 3. Whence knowest thou thy misery?

Answer. Out of the Law of God.

Question 4. What does the Law of God require of us?

Answer. This Christ teaches us in sum, Matt. 22: Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength. This is the first and great commandment; and the second is like unto it: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. -- On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

Question 5. Canst thou keep all this perfectly?

Answer. No; for I am by nature prone to hate God and my neighbor.

Question 6. Did God create man thus wicked and perverse?

Answer. No; but God created man good, and after his own Image -- that is, in righteousness and true holiness; that he might rightly know God his Creator, heartily love him, and live with him in eternal blessedness, to praise and glorify him.

Question 7. Whence, then, comes this depraved nature of man?

Answer. From the fall and disobedience of our first parents, Adam and Eve, in Paradise, whereby our nature became so corrupt that we are all conceived and born in sin.

Question 8. But are we so far depraved that we are wholly unapt to any good, and prone to all evil?

Answer. Yes; unless we are born again by the Spirit of God.

The Second Helvetic confession (A.D. 1566), Chapter 8, states:

Man was from the beginning created of God after the image of God, in righteousness and true holiness, good and upright; but by the instigation of the serpent and his own fault, falling from the goodness and uprightness, he became subject to sin, death, and diverse calamities; and such a one as he became by his fall, such are all his offspring, even subject to sin, death, and sundry calamities.

And ye take sin to be that natural corruption of man, derived or spread from our first parents unto us all, through which we, being drowned in evil concupiscence, and clean turned away from God, but prone to all evil, full of all wickedness, distrust, contempt, and hatred of God, can do no good of ourselves -- no, not so much as think any (Matt. 12:34, 35).

And, what is more, even as we do grow in years, so by wicked thoughts, words, and deeds, committed against the law of God, we bring forth corrupt fruits, worthy of an evil tree; in which respect we, through our own desert, being subject to the wrath of God are in danger of just punishment; so that we had all been cast away from God, had not Christ, the Deliverer, brought us back again.

By death, therefore, we understand not only bodily death, which is once to be suffered of us all for our sins, but also everlasting punishments due to our corruption and to our sins. For the Apostle says, 'We were dead in trespasses and sins, and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others; but God, who is rich in mercy, even when we were dead in sins, quickened us together with Christ' (Eph. 2:1 5). Again, "as by one many sin entered into the world, and by sin, death, and so death passed upon all men, forasmuch as all men have sinned," etc. (Rom. 5:12)

We therefore acknowledge that original sin is in all men; we acknowledge that all other sins which spring therefrom are both called and are indeed sins, by what name soever they may be termed, whether mortal or venial, or also that which is called sin against the Holy Spirit, which is never forgiven.

The Westminster Confession of Faith (A.D. 1647), Chapter 6, states:

I. Our first parents, being seduced by the subtilty and temptation of Satan, sinned in eating the forbidden fruit. This their sin God was pleased, according to his wise and holy counsel, to permit, having purposed to order it to his own glory.

II. By this sin they fell from their original righteousness and communion with God, and so became dead in sin, and wholly defiled in all the faculties and parts of soul and body.

III. They being the root of all mankind, the guilt of this sin was Imputed, and the same death in sin and corrupted nature conveyed to all their posterity descending from them by ordinary generation.

IV. From this original corruption, whereby we are utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to all evil, do proceed all actual transgressions.

V. This corruption of nature, during this life, doth remain in those that are regenerated; and although it be through Christ pardoned and mortified, yet both itself and all the motions thereof are truly and properly sin.

VI. Every sin, both original and actual, being a transgression of the righteous law of God, contrary thereunto, doth, in its own nature, bring guilt upon the sinner, whereby he is bound over to the wrath of God and curse of the law, and so made subject to death, with all miseries spiritual, temporal, and eternal.

b. Scriptural background to the doctrine

Genesis 6:5 -- "Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually."

Genesis 8:21 -- "And the Lord smelled the soothing aroma; and the Lord said to Himself, 'I will never again curse the ground on account of man, for the intent of man's heart is evil from his youth; and I will never again destroy every living thing, as I have done.' "

Psalms 141:1-3 -- "The fool has said in his heart, 'There is no God.' They are corrupt, they have committed abominable deeds; There is no one who does good. The Lord has looked down from heaven upon the sons of men, To see if there are any who understand, Who seek after God. They have all turned aside; together they have become corrupt; There is no one who does good, not even one."

Psalms 51:5 -- "Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, And in sin my mother conceived me."

Psalms 58:3 -- "The wicked are estranged from the womb; Those who speak lies go astray from birth."

Jeremiah 17:9 -- "The heart is more deceitful than all else And is desperately sick; Who can understand It?"

Ezekiel 11:19-20 -- "And I shall give them one heart, and shall put a new spirit within them. And I shall take the heart of stone out of their flesh and give them a heart of flesh, that they may walk in My statutes and keep My ordinances, and do them. Then they will be My people, and I shall be their God.

Mark 7:20-23 -- "And He was saying, 'That which proceeds out of the man, that is what defiles the man. For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed the evil thoughts, fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries, deeds of coveting and wickedness, as well, as deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride and foolishness. All these evil things proceed from within and defile the man.' "

John 3:5 7 -- "Jesus answered, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you, "You must be born again." ' "

Romans 3:9-18 -- what then? Are we better than they? Not at all; for we have already charged that both Jews and Greeks are all under sin; as it is written,
'There is none righteous, not even one;
There is none who understands,
There is none who seeks for God;
All have turned aside, together they have become useless;
There is none who does good,
There is not even one.'
'Their throat is an open grave,
With their tongues they keep deceiving,'
'The poison of asps is under their lips;'
'Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness;'
'Their feet are swift to shed blood,
Destruction and misery are in their paths,
And the path of peace have they not known.'
'There is no fear of God before their eyes.' "

Romans 7:18, 23 -- "For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh; . . . But I see a different law in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind, and making me a prisoner of the law of sin which is in my members."

Romans 8:5 8 -- "For those who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who are according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For the mind on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace, because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able to do so; and those who are in the flesh cannot please God."

Galatians 5:19-21 -- "Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you just as I have forewarned you that those who practice such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God."

Ephesians 2:1-3 -- "And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest."

Ephesians 4:17-19 -- "This I say therefore, and affirm together with the Lord, that you walk no longer just as the Gentiles also walk, in the futility of their mind, being darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart; and they, having become callous, have given themselves over to sensuality, for the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness."

Colossians 2:13 -- "And when you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions."

James 1:13-15 -- "Let no one say when he is tempted, 'I am being tempted by God'; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone. But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust. Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death."

c. Development of the doctrine

(1) What depravity is not,

(a) Depravity is not a corruption of the essence of the soul-spirit

An essential quality is one which is part of the essence of a thing. An accidental quality is an additional quality, one which is not part of the essence of a thing, one which can be gained or lost without changing the essence of a thing.

The essence of a thing is its intrinsic fundamental nature, described in terms of the indispensable qualities that make it what it is.

The essence of mankind refers to those characteristics which are essential to human beings as human beings, without which they would cease to be human.

Depravity is not an essential quality of humanity, but an accidental quality. Depraved mankind is still human; sinful human beings are still human beings.

(b) Depravity is not a •stuff or substance infused into the soul-spirit

It does not have an objective existence of its own, as something physically real. It is not a foreign substance in the blood or in the genes or in the physical heart. It is not a deadly virus or bacillus that courses through all arteries, veins, and capillaries of the human body, debilitating our physical well being as it goes. It does not have a color; and cannot be weighed and measured, analyzed for its atomic structure, or located on the periodic table of elements. It is not a "stuff" that God infused into the soul-spirit of Adam or the soul-spirits of Adam's descendants.

(c) Depravity is not merely a privation or loss of good

Augustine, in his polemic against the Manichaeans, not only denied that sin was a substance; he also appears to have asserted that sin was merely a privation of good (*privatio boni*).

However, original corruption is not merely a negative concept; it is also positive. It is not merely the absence of original righteousness; it is also the presence of a constitutional disposition or bent or inclination or tendency toward sin.

(2) What depravity is.

(a) It is truly of the nature of sin

(b) It flows from our first parents as the originators of our race

(c) It consists in the loss of original righteousness and consequent moral depravity of our nature, including and manifesting itself in an aversion to all spiritual good and to God, and an inclination to all evil.

(d) It affects the whole person, all the faculties and capabilities of human personality (total, holistic, or pervasive depravity)

(e) It renders the soul-spirit spiritually dead, so that the natural or unregenerate person is entirely unable of himself or herself to do any spiritual good in the sight of God (total inability)

- (f) It is the fountain of all other sins
 - (g) It is in its nature distinguished from acts of sin
 - (h) It retains its character as sin even in the regenerate
- (3) The meaning of 'total depravity'

Louis Berkhof, in his *Systematic Theology*, Fourth Revised Edition, pp. 246-247, states:

Negatively, it does not imply: (1) that every man is as thoroughly depraved as he can possibly become; (2) that the sinner has no innate knowledge of the will of God, nor a conscience that discriminates between good and evil; (3) that sinful man does not often admire virtuous character and actions in others, or is incapable of disinterested affections and actions in his relations with his fellow men; nor (4) that every unregenerate man will, in virtue of his inherent sinfulness, indulge in every form of sin; it often happens that one form excludes the other.

Positively, it does indicate: (1) that the inherent corruption extends to every part of man's nature, to all the faculties and powers of both soul and body; and (2) that there is no spiritual good, that is, good in relation to God, in the sinner at all, but only perversion.

Augustus Hopkins Strong, in Volume 2 of his *Systematic Theology* pp. 637-639, states:

By total depravity of universal humanity we mean:

A. Negatively, -- not that every sinner is: (a) destitute of conscience, -- for the existence of strong impulses to right, and of remorse for wrongdoing, show that conscience is often keen (John 8:9 -- "And they, when they heard it, went out one by one, beginning from the eldest, even unto the last."); (b) devoid of all qualities pleasing to men, and useful when judged by a human standard, -- for the existence of such qualities is recognized by Christ (Mark 10:21 -- "And Jesus looking upon him loved him."); (c) prone to every form of sin, -- for certain forms of sin exclude certain others (Matthew 23:23 -- "Ye tithe mint and anise and cummin, and have left undone the weightier matters of the law, justice and mercy and faith: but these ye ought to have done, and not to have left the other undone"; Romans 2:14 -- "When Gentiles that have not the law do by nature the things of the law, these, not having the law, are the law unto themselves; in that they show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness therewith."); (d) intense as he can be in his selfishness and opposition to God, -- for he

becomes worse every day (Genesis 15:16 -- 'the iniquity of the Amorite is not yet full'; II Timothy 3:13 -- "evil men and impostors shall wax worse and worse.")

B. Positively, -- that every sinner is: (a) totally destitute of that love to God which constitutes the fundamental and all inclusive demand of the law (John 5:42 "But I know you, that ye have not the love of God in yourselves."); (b) chargeable with elevating some lower affection or desire above regard for God and his law (II Timothy 3:4 -- "lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God."); (c) supremely determined, in his whole inward and outward life, by a preference of self to God (II Timothy 3:2 -- "lovers of self"); (d) possessed of an aversion to God which, though sometimes latent, becomes active enmity, so soon as God's will comes into manifest conflict with his own (Romans 8:7 -- "the mind of the flesh is enmity against God"); (e) disordered and corrupted in every faculty, through this substitution of selfishness for supreme affection toward God (Ephesians 4:18 -- "darkened in their understanding hardening of their heart"; Titus 1:15 -- "both their mind and their conscience are defiled"; II Corinthians 7:1 "defilement of flesh and spirit"; Hebrews 3:21 -- "an evil heart of unbelief"); (f) credited with no thought, emotion, or act of which divine holiness can fully approve (Romans 3:9 -- "they are all under sin"; Romans 7:18 -- "in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing."); (g) subject to a law of constant progress in depravity, which he has no recuperative energy to enable him successfully to resist (Romans 7:18 "to will is present with me, but to do that which is good is not."; Romans 7:23 -- "law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity under the law of sin which is in my members.").

Lewis and Demarest, in volume 2 of their *Integrative Theology* p. 211, state:

Depravity is Holistic

The fleshly desires of the human heart affect every human capacity of the whole person. . . Our sins have corrupted all our personal capacities and relationships. The taint of idolatrous passions affects us holistically. The mind is not exempt, as some rationalists imagine. The conscience is not exempt, as some moralists think. The emotions are not exempt, as some romanticists might wish. And the will is not exempt from the taint of sin, as some activists might hope. . . .

"Holistic depravity" conveys better than "total depravity" the fact that all our abilities and our best achievements are tainted by evil without implying that we are all as bad as we could possibly be. No capacity of our unrenewed nature escapes the taint of our sinful hearts.

Anthony Hoekema, in his book *Created in God's Image* p. 150, states:

What I prefer to call pervasive depravity has been traditionally known in Reformed theology as "total depravity" -- a term that has often been misunderstood. Negatively, the concept does not mean: (1) that every human being is as thoroughly depraved as he or she can possibly become; (2) that unregenerate people do not have a conscience by means of which they can distinguish between good and evil; (3) that unregenerate people will invariably indulge in every conceivable form of sin; or (4) that unregenerate people are unable to perform certain actions that are good and helpful in the sight of others. Since to many people "total depravity" suggests these misunderstandings, I prefer "pervasive depravity."

Pervasive depravity then, means that (1) the corruption of original sin extends to every aspect of human nature; to one's reason and will as well as to one's appetites and impulses; and (2) there is not present in man by nature love to God as the motivating principle of his life.

What then is the meaning of "total" in total depravity (or holistic or pervasive depravity)?

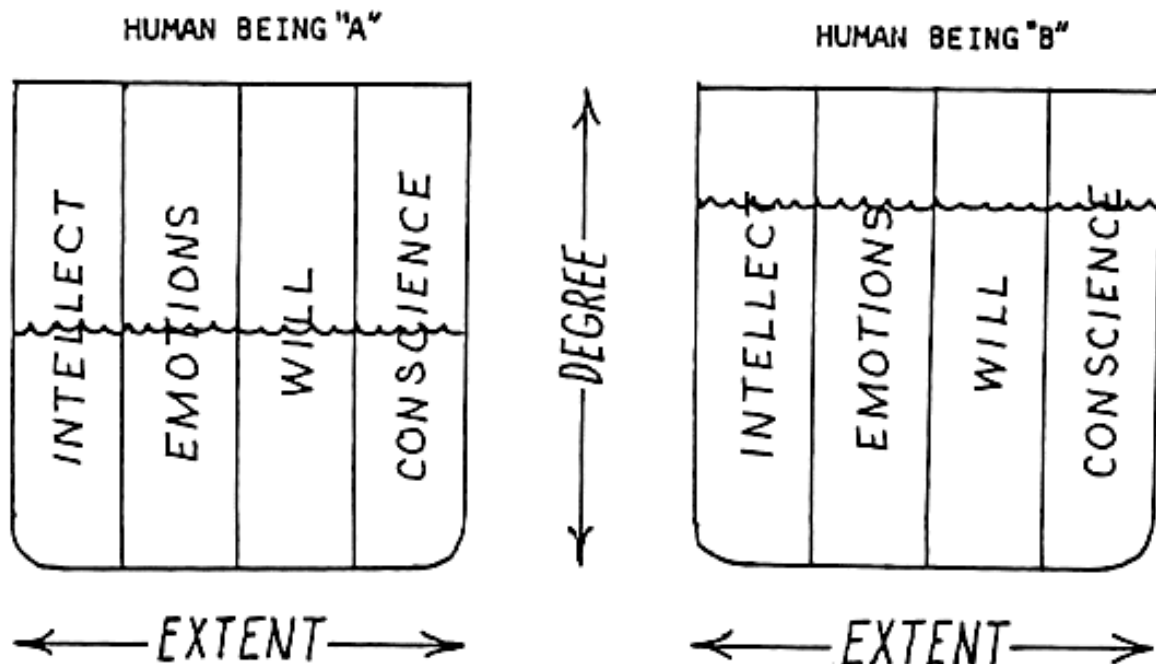
- (a) It means that all of a person's faculties and powers are corrupted by sin (thus depravity is total in extent)
- (b) It does not mean that any person is as corrupt as he or she can be in any or all of his or her faculties or powers (thus depravity is not total, but only partial, in degree)
- (c) It means that human beings are born totally depraved in extent but not in degree.
- (d) It includes the Idea that it is possible for a person to become more corrupt or (temporarily) less corrupt in degree than he or she has been.
- (e) It implies that although all human beings are equally depraved in extent they may be unequally depraved in degree

Some sinners may be more sinful in degree than others; some may be less sinful in degree than others. Though all are equally sinners, some may be more depraved than others.

Some may be more cruel than others, more hateful, more malicious, more lascivious, more adulterous, more dishonest, more untruthful, more spiteful, more slanderous, more greedy, or more dissatisfied with their possessions or their lot in life than others.

(f) it suggests the possibility that at birth, infants, who are born equally depraved in extent, may be born unequally depraved in degree.

Perhaps these two aspects of depravity -- extent and degree -- can be symbolized by two glass beakers, which are compartmentalized by permeable membranes into four vertical sections, and which contain unequal amounts of liquid. Let the beakers represent two human beings; the four vertical sections the faculties of intellect, emotions, will, and conscience; and the unequal amounts of liquid, depravity. Then we have the following model:



In this model, human being "A" is just as depraved, just as sinful as human being "B" in extent. Depravity extends to every faculty and power of their nature.

But human being "B" is more depraved, more sinful, than human being "A" in degree. Depravity has thus far progressed only to a certain (differing) degree in each of them.

C. Practical Questions about Sin, for Discussion

1. If sin is any transgression of, or lack of conformity to, the Law of God; and if the Law of God is the will of God that is addressed to the obedience of moral beings during the present age; then what is the will of God for today?

- a. Does it include the Ten Commandments?
- b. Does it include other parts of the Old Testament?
- c. Does it include Christ's commands and teachings and example as recorded in the Gospels?

d. Does it include the Golden Rule of Matthew 7:12, or the Two Great Commandments of Matthew 22:37-39?

e. Does it include those Old Testament commands, exhortations, teachings, and examples that are restated in the New Testament?

f. Does it include only those commands, exhortations, teachings, and examples found in those portions of the New Testament related to the present dispensation (the period of time from Pentecost until Christ's Return)?

2. Is temptation sinful? If not, when does temptation become sin?

a. James 1:13-15 -- "Let no one say when he is tempted, 'I am being tempted by God'; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone. But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust. Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death."

The Idea here seems to be that each person is drawn by his/her own sinful desire (not by God) to the object of temptation, to commit adultery with that object. At the moment he/she commits adultery with that object, sin is conceived. Lust thus gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full grown and complete, gives birth to death (i.e., a lifetime of sin ultimately leads to eternal death).

b. The component steps in an instance of temptation may be traced, with the help of the "Elements of Temptation Sequence," traced on a separate page.

TESTING AND TEMPTING

LET NO MAN SAY	WHEN HE IS TESTED WITH PHYSICAL CALAMITY	"I AM BEING TESTED WITH PHYSICAL CALAMITY BY GOD"	FOR GOD CANNOT	BE TESTED WITH PHYSICAL CALAMITY	NEITHER DOES HE	TEST ANY MAN WITH PHYSICAL CALAMITY
	WHEN HE IS ENTICED WITH MORAL EVIL	"I AM BEING ENTICED WITH MORAL EVIL BY GOD"		BE ENTICED WITH MORAL EVIL		ENTICE ANY MAN WITH MORAL EVIL

JAMES 1:13

ELEMENTS OF TEMPTATION SEQUENCE

1. A set of normal physiological and/or psychological needs and/or appetites.
2. An ability to be attracted to an object capable of attracting a normal need or appetite.
3. An object capable of attracting a normal need or appetite.
4. An emotion of attraction toward an attracting object.
5. An active desire to satisfy a normal need or appetite by means of a attracting object.
6. An establishing of a desire as a settled disposition In favor of the satisfaction of a normal need or appetite by means of an attracting object.
7. An opportunity to implement a nettled disposition in favor of the satisfaction of a normal need or appetite by means of an attracting object.
8. A movement of volition (an act of will) committing one to a course of action, in an attempt to satisfy a normal need or appetite by means of an attracting object.
9. An action which attempts to satisfy a normal need or appetite by means of an attracting object.

Suppose, now, that we add one additional element:

A prohibition (imposed by some authority) of the satisfaction of a normal need or appetite by means of an attracting object.

If we insert this additional element between any two consecutive numbers In the temptation sequence listed above, where does sin enter the picture? At what point does temptation become sin?

3. Are some sins more sinful than others?
 - a. In themselves?
 - b. In their effect on God?
 - c. In their effect on other human beings?
 - d. In their effect on the sinner himself/herself?

4. Is there a genuine difference between big sins and little sins?
 - a. Are some sins unforgivable?
 - b. Do some sins kill spiritual life in us, so that we lose our salvation?
 - c. Do some sins destroy communion, while other sins only disturb it slightly?
 - d. Do some sins destroy our lives, so that we are never again the same?
 - e. Do some sins destroy our testimony?
 - f. Do some sins destroy forever our fitness for service to Christ, or is full restoration to fellowship and service possible?
5. Can a believer live without sinning for a day? For a week? A month? A year? The rest of his/her life? Does a believer ever get beyond the need for confession of sins, God's forgiveness, and cleansing?
6. If all believers sin daily, then what does the apostle John mean in his first epistle (I John 3:9) when he says that No one born of God practices sin, because His seed abides in him; and he cannot sin because he is born of God?"
7. Are only sins that are confessed forgiven, or are all sins (whether confessed or unconfessed) forgiven through Christ's sacrificial death?
8. Are only our past sins forgiven when we Initially trust in the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior, or are past, present, and future sins forgiven at that moment?
9. What is the unpardonable sin? Why can't it be forgiven?

10. Which are worse: sins of the flesh or sins of the spirit?

Which is worse: getting drunk or despising a person simply because of his/her race, color, or ethnic or national background?

Which is worse: stealing or losing one's temper?

Which is worse: lusting or murmuring against God?

Which is worse: hitting someone or hating someone?

11. Are some sins excusable; or, if not excusable, at least understandable?

a. What about a physically and psychologically abused and battered wife or daughter who finally strikes back and seriously injures or kills her abusive husband or father? is this excusable or at least understandable?

b. What about a son who has been verbally abused by his mother for a long, long time and remained silent under the abuse, and who finally lashes out angrily in verbal or even physical reaction? is this excusable or at least understandable?

c. What about a husband/wife who has been arbitrarily denied conjugal rights for a long time, and then becomes infatuated and perhaps even sexually involved with a sympathetic co-worker? is this excusable or at least understandable?

d. What about an employee who is undeservedly blamed for a superior's bad judgment or poor decision, and feels like doing something to get even? is this excusable or at least understandable?

e. What about an employee who believes he or she has been cheated by an employer out of a promised raise or overtime pay or bonus, and so quietly takes merchandise equivalent to the lost pay and keeps it. is this excusable or at least understandable?

12. Are some actions or attitudes that are winked at by the Christian community in general just as bad as some that are frowned upon?
 - a. Is polluting one's mind with pornography just as bad as polluting one's lungs with cigarettes?
 - b. Is gluttony just as bad as overindulgence in the use of alcoholic beverages?
 - c. Is watching sexually exploitative television just as bad as going to see a sexually exploitative movie?
 - d. Is wearing daringly revealing swimwear just as bad as wearing daringly Immodest street clothes?
 - e. Is an unforgiving attitude toward a fellow believer just as bad as the open use of profanity?
13. Should not our inner thought life match our outward profession? if we profess subjection to Christ as Lord outwardly, should not our secret thought life be brought into subjection to Christ's lordship?

OBJECTIVE SOTERIOLOGY

I. THE PLAN OF SALVATION

The term "Plan of Salvation" has sometimes been identified with a particular scheme of soteriology, such as the Calvinistic or Arminian scheme. At other times the term has been identified with a particular ordering of the soteriological decrees of God, such as the Supralapsarian or infralapsarian order, and has then been viewed as equivalent to "Order of Decrees". Accordingly, we shall examine the concerns suggested by both uses of the term.

A. Schemes of Soteriology Compared and Contrasted

In his concise work, *The Plan of Salvation* Benjamin B. Warfield, an outstanding proponent of Calvinist theology, briefly surveys the varying views of the Plan of Salvation that have been held by those large groups who have claimed the name of Christian. The deepest cleft separating persons who call themselves Christians is that which divides between those that hold Naturalistic views and those that hold Supernaturalistic views. The issue here is: Do human beings save themselves, or does God save them? The deepest difference among Supernaturalists is that which separates the Sacerdotalists and the Evangelicals. The issue here concerns the immediacy of the saving operations of God: Does God save men only through the medium of instrumentalities established for the purpose (chiefly the Church and the Sacraments)? or does He save them by immediate operations of His grace upon their souls? Under the category "Sacerdotalists" Warfield places the Roman Catholic Church, the Greek Orthodox Church, and the Anglican Church. Under the heading "Evangelicals" he places all of the churches called Protestant, including both Reformed and Lutheran, both Calvinistic and Arminian branches.

Yet there are important differences between the Evangelicals. The chief difference is that which distinguishes between the Universalists and the Particularists. The issue lies in the question of whether all the activities of God looking to salvation are directed indiscriminately to all men, yet some men only are saved; or whether what God does, looking to salvation, is both directed toward, and issues in, the salvation of some men only. The precise issue, in Warfield's words, is just whether the grace of God simply presents a general opportunity to all men to be saved; or whether it actually saves some men. Among those who hold to a universalistic Plan of Salvation, Warfield classes evangelical Lutheranism and evangelical Arminianism. This leaves us with those who hold to Particularism. However, even they have their differences. Some Particularists, desirous of preserving a universal, albeit hypothetical reference to the Atonement to all men, have been known as Hypothetical Redemptionists (or Amyraldianists), and are called by Warfield "Inconsistent Particularists." The remainder (of course) he calls "Consistent Particularists." Thus among those who claim the name of Christian, men must be either Naturalists or Supernaturalists; Supernaturalists, either Sacerdotalists or Evangelicals; Evangelicals, either Universalists or Particularists; and Particularists must be particularistic with respect to only some or with respect to all, of God's

saving operations. Those who are particularist with respect to all, of God's saving operations are, in the historical sense, Calvinists (see below).

OUTLINE OF BENJAMIN B. WARFIELD'S SURVEY OF VIEWS OF THE PLAN OF SALVATION HELD BY THOSE CLAIMING TO BE CHRISTIAN

I. Naturalists (those who believe that man saves himself)

II. Supernaturalists (those who believe that man is saved by God)

A. Sacerdotalists (those who believe that God communicates saving grace to the soul indirectly through human priests (*sacerdos* = priest) or mediators, and by means of sacraments)

In this category Warfield includes the Roman Catholic Church, the Eastern Orthodox Churches, and the Anglican Church.

B. Evangelicals (those who believe that God communicates saving grace to the soul directly without human priests or mediators, and without the use of sacraments)

In this category Warfield includes the Protestant Churches.

1. Universalists (those who believe that God's saving activities are designed to save all men)

In this category Warfield includes the Evangelical Lutherans and the Evangelical Arminians.

2. Particularists (those who believe that God's saving activities are designed to save some men)

a. Inconsistent Particularists (those who believe that the Atonement was designed to save all men, even though God's other saving activities were designed to save some men)

In this category Warfield includes the Amyraldianists or Hypothetical Redemptionists.

b. Consistent Particularists (those who believe that the Atonement [as well as God's other saving activities] was designed to save some men)

In this category Warfield includes the Calvinists.

The Calvinist formulation of the Plan of Salvation has so often been identified with what are called "the five points of Calvinism", that it would seem to be helpful at this point to consider the historical occasion which gave rise to the concept of the "five points". Although many may

feel that they understand this occasion rather thoroughly, yet perhaps a brief review will serve not only for recall, but also for the recognition of some points not familiar or not fully understood by all.

James Arminius, or Jacobus Van Harmen (1560-1609), was educated, with the help of his Dutch patrons, in the universities of Utrecht, Marburg, Leyden, Geneva, and Basel. Upon his return to Amsterdam in 1588 he was appointed preacher in the Reformed Church. Soon, however, doubts concerning his loyalty to the principles of Calvinism grew into a storm of grave contentions, which was alleviated only by his appointment in 1602 to a professorship of divinity in the University of Leyden. At Leyden he soon came into conflict with his colleague, Francis Gomarus, a staunch Calvinist. However, Arminius was permitted to teach his views until a large number of his supporters, feeling their strength, boldly applied to the States of Holland, asking them to convene a general synod for the purpose of revising the Belgic Confession -- the religious constitution of Holland. Before anything further was done, Arminius died.

However, instead of the issue dying down, it spread throughout the country. In 1610, one year after the death of Arminius, his followers presented a petition to the States of Holland and West Friesland, called a "remonstrance", which means an objection or a protest. The Remonstrance contained five articles, which may be summarized as follows:

Article I -- God, from eternity, has determined to save, out of the fallen race of men, those who shall believe on Jesus Christ and persevere in faith and obedience to the end; and to leave the unbelieving to their sin and condemnation.

Article II -- Jesus Christ died for all men and has obtained forgiveness of sins for all men, but only those who believe actually enjoy this forgiveness of sins.

Article III -- Man cannot of himself do anything truly good (such as believe savingly on Christ), and therefore must be regenerated in order to be able to exercise saving faith.

Article IV -- All good which even the regenerate man does must be ascribed to the grace of God in Christ. But this grace, whether in its beginning or its continuance, is resistible.

Article V -- Those who have true faith, who have become partakers of the Holy Spirit, have full power to overcome and to persevere, but whether or not they are capable of losing grace must be more particularly determined out of Holy Scripture.

Upon further analysis, we discover that the Remonstrance makes the following assertions:

1. A man must be given the grace of God in order to become regenerate.
2. A man must be regenerated in order to be able to believe.
3. A man must believe in order to enjoy the benefits of Christ's death, the forgiveness of sins.
4. A man must believe and must persevere in faith and obedience in order to be one of the elect.
5. But the grace of God, whether in its beginning (regeneration) or its continuance (perseverance), is resistible.

On examining these assertions, we note two rather striking implications:

1. Only the grace of God can regenerate a man; a man cannot regenerate himself. But he can resist the grace of regeneration.
2. Only the grace of God can enable a man to persevere; a man cannot persevere of himself. But he can resist the grace of perseverance.

This leads us to draw the following conclusion from the overriding thrust of the five articles of the Remonstrance: A man's eternal election, his regeneration, his exercise of saving faith, the forgiveness of his sins through the Atonement of Christ, and his perseverance all depend upon his resistance or nonresistance to the grace of God. He can accept the grace of God and be saved (if he perseveres), or he can resist the grace of God and be lost. Whether or not the grace of God saves him is wholly up to the man. This, in brief, appears to be the content and the force of the Remonstrance.

Unable over a period of several years to bring about a reconciliation between the two camps, the States General called for a national synod of the Church of the Netherlands, to assemble at Dordt (Dordrecht), Holland. In addition, an invitation to send delegates was extended to the Reformed Churches of several other countries. In November of 1618 a total of 74 Dutch delegates were joined by 28 official delegates from Germany, the Palatinate, Switzerland, and England. These men met together almost daily for over five months. After hearing representatives of the Remonstrant Party, the delegates proceeded to endorse the Belgic Confession and the Heidelberg Catechism, and to reject the five articles of the Remonstrance. Having done this, they proceeded to take a number of actions, which were incorporated into that document called The Canons of the Synod of Dordt. The Articles of Faith included in these Canons were drawn up in five chapters, which since that time have been referred to as "the five points of Calvinism." However, the original headings of the five chapters were as follows:

- First Head of Doctrine: Of Divine Predestination
- Second Head of Doctrine: Of the Death of Christ, and the Redemption of Men Thereby
- Third and Fourth Heads of Doctrine: Of the Corruption of Man, his Conversion to God, and the Manner Thereof
- Fifth Head of Doctrine: Of the Perseverance of the Saints

Nevertheless, somewhere, sometime, someone took the section dealing with the corruption of man, placed it at the head of the other sections, and constructed a memory device by giving each one of the five emphases a descriptive name. The result was the TULIP: Total Depravity, Unconditional Election, Limited Atonement, Irresistible Grace, and Perseverance of the Saints. It should be noted that this construction was not intended to be merely a memory device, but rather a logical ordering of the five doctrines which form the outline of the Calvinistic Plan of Salvation.

Among the most Important Reformed or Calvinistic creedal standards the Belgic Confession (1561), the Thirty-Nine Articles of the Church of England (1563), the Heidelberg Catechism (1563), the Second Helvetic Confession (1566), and the Canons of the Synod of Dordt (1619) -- the Westminster Confession (1647) is regarded by many to be the most famous, not only because it has (at least until recently) constituted the doctrinal standard of all Presbyterian Churches of English and Scotch derivation, but also because it has formed the basis of a number of subsequent creedal statements, including the Cambridge Platform (1648), the Savoy Declaration (1658), the Boston Confession (1680), the London Confession (1688), the Saybrook Platform (1708), and the Philadelphia Confession of Faith (1742). Thus the Westminster Confession has been influential among Congregationalists and Baptists, as well as among Presbyterians, in its distinctive Calvinistic teaching.

The five aspects of the Plan of Salvation dealt with in the Canons of the Synod of Dordt, and outlined in the TULIP scheme, are specially set forth in the Westminster Confession of Faith. They may be located as follows:

Chapter III, Sections V and VI -- God's unconditional election of some men to everlasting life, together with all the means thereunto

Chapter VI, Section II -- Man's deadness in sin, and total depravity

Chapter VIII, Sections V and VIII -- Christ's atonement for the elect, and its effectual application to them

Chapter X, Sections I and II -- God's effectual calling by His Word and Spirit, of the elect to faith in Christ

Chapter XVII, Sections I and II -- The assured perseverance of the elect to the completion of their salvation by God's grace

The Plan of Salvation comprehended in these five aspects is simple enough. If all men are dead in sin, totally depraved, unable to please God, unable to understand the things of God, and spiritually dead then God's election of some from among them to everlasting life cannot be on the basis of foreseen faith, obedience, or perseverance, but only of His gracious love. If God chose some men only to everlasting salvation, together with all the means thereunto, then Christ's coming into the world to make an atonement for sins was particularly designed to accomplish the salvation of those very men whom God had chosen, and not to accomplish the salvation of those men whom God had not chosen to salvation. Again, if those whom God predestined to everlasting life are, in their natural state, spiritually dead, then in order to effectually apply to them the Redemption wrought in Christ, God, by His Spirit and Word, must efficiently produce in their hearts the graces of regeneration, faith,

repentance, and obedience. And if God has, from among undeserving, unworthy sinners, chosen before the foundation of the world some to life, and if Christ has particularly accomplished their redemption, and if the Holy Spirit has begun to powerfully apply that redemption to them, then we are assured that God's preservation of His elect to the completion of their salvation is as certain as is the fulfillment of all of the other aspects of His eternal plan and purpose.

Comparing, then, the Arminian and the Calvinist view of God's Plan of Salvation, as set forth in the Arminian Remonstrance and in the Westminster Confession of Faith, we notice the following similarities and dissimilarities:

In Regard to Fallen Man's Spiritual and Moral State:

The Arminian Remonstrance and the Westminster Confession both hold to man's spiritual deadness and his total depravity.

In Regard to God's Eternal Election to Salvation:

The Arminian Remonstrance teaches an election conditioned upon a foreseen response to the grace of God in terms of faith and repentance. The Westminster Confession teaches an election unconditioned by man's foreseen response, but grounded wholly in God's gracious gift of particular love.

In Regard to Christ's Atonement:

The Arminian Remonstrance teaches a universal design, but a particular application of the Atonement. Both teach a universal value of the Atonement. Thus the statement "The Atonement is sufficient for all, but efficient only for the elect" is in accord with both the Arminian Remonstrance and the Westminster Confession.

In Regard to the Application of Christ's Redemption:

The Arminian Remonstrance teaches that the grace of God in regeneration is necessary for saving faith, but that a man may will to resist this grace. The Westminster Confession teaches that the grace of God in regeneration is necessary for saving faith, but that this grace actually secures the willingness of a man, so that he comes most freely, being made willing by God's grace.

In Regard to the Perseverance of the Saints:

The Arminian Remonstrance teaches that the possibility of falling utterly from grace needs further study. But it also asserts that grace, in its continuance as well as its beginning, is resistible. Thus the assurance of perseverance is dependent upon a man's continued nonresistance to God's grace. The Westminster Confession teaches that, by God's preservation, a true believer in Jesus Christ will most certainly persevere to the completion of his salvation.

These then are the similarities and differences between the schemes set forth by the Arminian Remonstrance and the Westminster Confession of Faith. Of course, it should be pointed out that these doctrines are not the only ones in the Westminster Confession related to the doctrine of salvation. There are chapters dealing with the Covenant of Grace, with Free Will, with justification, with Adoption, with Sanctification, with Saving Faith, with Repentance unto Life, with Good Works, and with the Assurance of Grace and Salvation, together with others which are somewhat related.

B. The "Five Points" in Modern Evangelical Theology

The past forty years have seen the appearance of two works of systematic theology which have aptly illustrated the status of the "five points" in evangelical theology today. These works are Henry C. Thiessen's introductory Lectures in Systematic Theology (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1951), and .7. O. Buswell, Jr.'s A systematic Theology of the Christian Religion (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1962, 63).

1. Thiessen's View on the Five Points

Thiessen's view is found scattered throughout his *Introductory Lectures*, and must therefore be defined and supported piecemeal from his book. His view is as follows:

a. Conditional Election

" . . . By election we mean that sovereign act of God in grace whereby he chose in Christ Jesus for salvation all those whom He foreknew would accept Him Although we are nowhere told what it is in the foreknowledge of God that determines His choice, the repeated teaching of Scripture that man is responsible for accepting or rejecting salvation necessitates our postulating that it is man's reaction to the revelation God has made of Himself that is the basis of His election in His foreknowledge He perceives what each one will do with this restored ability (prevenient grace), and elects men to salvation in harmony with His knowledge of their choice of Him." (pp. 344 345)

"In the minds of some people, election is a choice that God makes for which we can see no reason and which we can hardly harmonize with His justice. ye are asked to accept the theory of "unconditional election" as true but unexplainable in spite of the fact that the persistent demand of the heart is for a theory of election that does commend itself to our sense of justice and that harmonizes the teaching of Scripture concerning the sovereignty of God and the responsibility of man." (italics by the professor)

b. Total Depravity

"By depravity we mean man's want of original righteousness and of holy affections toward God, and also the corruption of his moral nature and his bias toward evil.

" . . . The Scriptures speak of human nature as wholly depraved. From the negative standpoint, it does not mean that every sinner is devoid of all qualities pleasing to men; that he commits, or is prone to every form of sin; that he is as bitterly opposed to God as it is possible for him to be. . . .

"From the positive standpoint, it does mean that every sinner is totally destitute of that love to God which is the fundamental requirement of the law. . . ; that he is supremely given to a preference of himself to God. . . ; that he has an aversion to God which on occasion becomes active enmity to Him. . . ; that his every faculty is disordered and corrupted . . . ; that he has no thought, feeling, or deed of which God can fully approve . . . ; and that he has entered upon a line of constant progress in depravity, from which he can in no wise turn away in his own strength. . . .

"Depravity has produced a total spiritual inability in the sinner in the sense that he cannot by his own volition change his character and life so as to make them conformable to the law of God, not change his fundamental preference of self and sin to supreme love to God, yet he has a certain amount of freedom left. He can, for instance, choose not to sin against the Holy Spirit, decide to commit the lesser sin rather than the greater, resist certain forms of temptation altogether, do certain outwardly good acts, though with Improper and unspiritual motives, and even seek God from entirely selfish motives." (pp. 267-268)

Having affirmed his belief in total depravity in this strong statement, Thiessen mitigates it by the doctrine of prevenient grace. He states:

"With the fall, the creature lost the ability not to sin It is now free only in the sense that it is able to do as its fallen nature suggests We, therefore, ask, How can he help living in sin? How can he ever choose contrary to his evil nature?

"(b) Prevenient grace. The upshot of the matter is that God must take the initiative if man is to be saved Common grace is not sufficient for salvation, yet it reveals the goodness of God to all sinful creatures. This is true, but why stop there? We believe that the common grace of God also restores to the sinner the ability to make a favorable response to God. in other words, we hold that God, in His grace, makes it possible for all men to be saved. . . .

"But we should note exactly what this means and what it does not mean. it does not mean that prevenient grace enables a man to change the permanent bent of his will in the direction of God; nor that he can quit all sin and make himself acceptable to God. it does mean that he can make an initial response to God, as a result of which God can give him repentance and faith. He can say: 'Turn thou me, and I shall be turned.' . . . if he say this much, then he has had a measure of freedom restored to him; then he can in some measure act contrary to his fallen nature; and then he becomes doubly responsible, even in his present helpless state. And if he will say this much, then God will turn him, grant him repentance. . . and faith." (pp. 155-156)

"May we repeat: Since mankind is hopelessly dead in trespasses and sins and can do nothing to obtain salvation, God graciously restores to all men sufficient ability to make a choice in the matter of submission to Him. This is the salvation -- bringing grace of God that has appeared to all men." (pp. 344-345)

c. Universal Atonement

"1. Christ died for the Elect. The Scriptures teach that Christ died primarily for the elect He died for the elect, not only in the sense of making salvation possible for them, but also in the sense of actually saving them when they believe on Christ.

"2. Christ died for the whole world. The Scriptures also teach that Christ died for the whole world Although Christ died for all in the sense of reconciling God to the world, not all are saved, because their actual salvation is conditioned on their being reconciled to God." (pp. 329-330)

d. Resistible Grace

"The Doctrine of Vocation. This is the doctrine of God's call. The grace of God is magnified, not only in the provision of salvation, but also in the offer of salvation to the undeserving. We may define God's call as that act of grace by which He invites men to accept by faith the salvation provided by Christ. Strong distinguishes between God's general or external call to all men, and His special efficacious call to the elect But if our conception of election is correct, there is no just ground for such a distinction.

"1. The Persons Called. The Scriptures indicate that salvation is offered to all we dare not distinguish between a general call to all and a special call to the elect. Nor need we decide whether God's general call is sincere and His special call is irresistible. God does not mock men. If He offers salvation to all, then He also desires to save all, and to extend the same help to all who choose Him. Man's will is the only obstacle to the salvation of anyone. God does not give one man the will to do good and leave the other without all help in this respect.

"2. The Object of The Call. . . The things to which He calls men are repentance. . . and faith. . . . May we repeat: God does not call upon anyone to do anything he cannot do or for which He is not anxious to give man help in doing." (pp. 349-350)

e. Perseverance of the Saints

"The Scriptures teach that all who are by faith united to Christ, who have been justified by God's grace and regenerated by His Spirit, will never totally or finally fall away from the state of grace, but certainly persevere therein to the end. This does not mean that every one who professes to be saved is eternally saved. Nor even does it mean that every one who manifests certain gifts in Christian service is necessarily eternally saved. The doctrine of eternal security is applicable only to those who have had a vital experience of salvation. Concerning such it affirms that they shall 'never totally nor finally fall away from the state of grace.' This is not equivalent to saying that they shall never backslide, never fall into sin, and never fall to show forth the praises of Him Who has called them out of darkness into His marvelous light. It merely means that they will never totally fall away from the state of grace into which they have been brought, nor fall to return from backsliding in the end." (p. 385)

A comparison of Thiessen's view on the "five points" with that of the Arminian Remonstrance elicits the following observations:

Both hold to total depravity. Thiessen, seeing that no man who is totally depraved will believe on Jesus Christ, posits prevenient grace for all man.

Both hold to an election to salvation conditioned upon foreseen faith in Christ. The Arminian Remonstrance adds the foreseen perseverance in faith and obedience to the end.

Both hold to an atonement which is universal in its potential applicability, but particular in its actual accomplishment.

Both hold to a resistible saving grace. Thiessen holds to an irresistible prevenient grace.

Both hold that the regenerate have full power to persevere to the end; the Arminian Remonstrance is undecided whether or not regenerate persons can lose saving grace, whereas Thiessen is certain that they cannot.

Thiessen's view of the "five points" is similar in many respects to that of the Arminian Remonstrance. At the same time Thiessen's view is that of a very large proportion of contemporary evangelicals, and of "popular evangelical Christianity" in general.

2. Buswell's View on the Five Points

Buswell's view may be found primarily in his two volume work, *A Systematic Theology of the Christian Religion*. His view is as follows:

a. Total inability

"It remains at this point to indicate that, according to the Scriptures, and according to Christian experience as well, the natural man in his fallen condition is totally unable in the slightest degree to contribute to, or cooperate in his own regeneration. . . .

". . . . The point now under consideration is the fact that, apart from the supernatural work of the Holy Spirit, fallen humanity is wholly incapable of turning toward the grace of God. 'it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God who showeth mercy.' (Romans 9:16) if this were not the case, the redeemed would be capable of at least some degree of boasting in their saved condition in eternity. The redeemed could say, 'I am saved because there was in me at least enough goodness to turn to God and lay hold upon His grace.' The creditable cause of salvation would then be in the sinner, and not in the Saviour." (pp. 138-139)

b. Unconditional Election

"The doctrine of unconditional election follows necessarily from the doctrine of total inability. If man is totally unable to contribute in the slightest degree toward his own salvation, it follows that salvation is wholly from the grace of God, and not conditioned upon any virtue, foreseen or otherwise, in fallen humanity. . . .

"One of the most subtle errors, giving glory to man rather than to God, is the notion that God's decree of election is based upon foreknown faith. Some speak as though God had looked down through the ages and observed those who would be good enough to believe in His Son, and had then elected to save them on the basis of their faith. . . .

"Unconditional election, then, bases our salvation wholly upon the grace of God. As the saying goes, 'If anyone is saved, God does all the saving.' " (pp. 139 141)

c. Particular Atonement

"There is no question among those who adhere to the Calvinistic System of doctrine as to the fact that the atonement of Christ is universal in three respects: (1) it is sufficient for all. it is absolutely infinite in its value and thus in its potentiality (2) The atonement is applicable to all (3) The atonement is offered to all.

"on these three points of the universality of the atonement, there is no essential difference between the evangelical Arminian and the true Calvinist. There is a fourth point also in which there is agreement between the evangelical Arminian and the true Calvinist, and this point has to do with the particularity of the atonement. (4) The atonement is particular in its ultimate results. Evangelical Arminians agree with Calvinists that many, perhaps a majority of those who reach adulthood, are not saved, but are eternally lost. (5) it is the fifth point in which there is a sharp difference between those who hold to the Calvinistic system of doctrine on the one hand and both Arminian and Amyraldians on the other. it is held that the atonement is particular in its design and intention There is a special sense in which Christ is the Mediator for His elect, and not for all Within the decrees of God, the atonement was intended to accomplish precisely what it does accomplish. it accomplishes the salvation of the elect of God; it furnishes the ethical and legal ground for common grace. . . ; and it renders the lost ethically and logically inexcusable." (pp. 141-143)

d. Infallible Grace

"The doctrine of infallible grace is analytically implied in what has been said of the doctrines of unconditional election and particular atonement. If God has elected to save a people, and has provided for the certainty of their salvation, it follows that He will infallibly accomplish that salvation.

"Perhaps the phrase 'irresistible grace', by which this doctrine is often designated, psychologically inclines the mind to a horizon entirely too limited. Of course, it is true that men resist the grace of God. it is also true that some men resist the grace of God for a time, but eventually manifest 'those better things which accompany salvation' (Hebrews 6:9).

"The plan of salvation is not symmetrical. Those who are lost are lost 'because' they have resisted the grace of God in Christ (John 3:18). Those who are saved are saved because God saves them, and for no other reason (Romans 9:16). it is better to call this doctrine 'infallible grace'. The word 'Irresistible' seems to put the emphasis upon the finite concept of resistance, whereas the word 'infallible' places the emphasis where it belongs, within the eternal decrees of God, and the ultimate eventualities of His redemptive program. God will infallibly save His elect." (pp. 144-145)

e. Perseverance of the Saints

"Here again we have a necessary implication of what has previously been said. If God has unconditionally elected to save a people, and if He has provided atonement which makes their salvation certain, it follows by inevitable logic that those whom God has elected to eternal salvation will go on to eternal salvation. in other words, a denial of the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints is a denial of the sovereign grace of God in unconditional election." (p. 145)

Buswell's view of the "five points" is exactly the same as that of the Articles of Faith of the Canons of the Synod of Dordt and that of the Westminster Confession. Buswell's view is therefore that of evangelical Reformed Theology.

C. Order of the Soteriological Decrees

1. Statement of the Views

Several orders of the decrees of God viewed especially in relation to soteriology have been proposed in the history of Christian Theology. We shall consider four such views.

a. Supralapsarianism

- (1) The decree to predestinate (election and preterition)
- (2) The decree to create fallible men
- (3) The decree to foreordain the Fall
- (4) The decree to accomplish redemption for the elect, through Christ
- (5) The decree to apply Christ's redemption for the elect, and to condemn the nonelect for their sin

b. Infralapsarianism

- (1) The decree to create fallible men
- (2) The decree to foreordain the Fall
- (3) The decree to predestinate (election and preterition)
- (4) The decree to accomplish redemption for the elect, through Christ
- (5) The decree to apply Christ's redemption to the elect, and to condemn the nonelect for their sin

c. Amyraldianism

- (1) The decree to create fallible men
- (2) The decree to foreordain the Fall
- (3) The decree to make redemption possible for all, through Christ
- (4) The decree to predestinate (election and preterition)
- (5) The decree to apply Christ's redemption to the elect, and to condemn the nonelect for their sin

d. Sublapsarianism

- (1) The decree to create fallible men
- (2) The decree to permit the Fall
- (3) The decree to provide redemption for all mankind, through Christ
- (4) The decree to establish the human condition upon whose fulfillment redemption would be applied
- (5) The decree to predestinate (election and preterition)
- (6) The decree to apply Christ's redemption to the elect, and to condemn the nonelect for their sin

2. Analysis and Critique of These Views

a. Supralapsarianism

(1) Analysis

This view holds that God's first decree is the election to salvation of one class of men, and the reprobation to perdition of a second class of men, both classes viewed as creatable and fallible (*creabilis et labilis* in the mind of God (i.e. as possibilities, certain to be created and to fall, but not yet decreed to be created and to fall).

The thrust here is that if God decides to create men, He will create them in two classes the elect and the reprobate. God's second decree is actually to create these two classes of men; and His third decree is to permit both classes to fall. His fourth decree, then, is to accomplish the redemption of the elect through Christ; and His fifth decree is to justify and give eternal life to the elect through application of Christ's redemption, and to condemn and leave in their sins the nonelect.

Supralapsarianism builds on the rational principle that in planning, the mind first chooses a goal and then decides how to attain it. Accordingly, the view depicts God as first choosing an ultimate end (His glory), and then choosing the means to that end (electing some men to salvation and reprobating others [as a sovereign act] to His glory, creating these men to His glory, permitting them to fall to His [eventual] glory, accomplishing redemption through Christ for the elect [as a manifestation of His love, grace, and righteousness] and condemning the nonelect [as a manifestation of His wrath and justice] to His glory).

(2) Critique

Supralapsarianism, in making all of the means contribute toward the end of God's glory, is said to be the most logical and unified of all the views of the order of the decrees. It is also said to be the view which most adequately magnifies the sovereignty of God in His relations with His creatures. These claims must be evaluated.

To begin with, this view unifies God's purposes by making all others subordinate to the purpose of magnifying His glorious sovereignty in the eternal salvation of some, and the eternal perdition of other rational creatures. However, in doing so it elevates the glory of God's sovereignty above the glory of God's grace and justice. In fact, God's creation, His permission of sin, and the manifestations of His grace and justice, become subordinate means to the end of magnifying the end of God's glorious sovereignty.

However, if God's glory be understood as the magnificence, the brightness, the splendor, the superabundant excellence of all of God's attributes; and if God's sovereignty be understood as God's absolute right and power and freedom to manifest His glorious divine attributes and prerogatives and will in whatever way He may choose; then perhaps God's creation, His permission of sin, and the manifestations of His grace and justice do not need to be viewed as subordinate to God's sovereignty; perhaps God's creation, His permission of sin, and the manifestations of His grace and justice may be seen equally to be sovereign expressions of God's glorious attributes. Then, instead of viewing God's decrees as initiating in God's sovereignty and culminating in God's glory, we can see all of God's purpose and every aspect (decree) of it as expressive of God's sovereignty and God's glory!

With respect to the claim that the supralapsarian view is the most logical of all the views, the following must be said.

If God decrees the salvation or perdition of men considered as certain to be created but not yet decreed to be created, the question must be asked, How is the certainty of their creation established? That is, if these men are simply possibilities in the mind of God, how can their creation be considered as certainly future unless God decrees their creation? The same question must be asked concerning men considered as certain to fall, but not yet decreed to be permitted to fall: How is the certainty of their fall established? If their fall is simply a possibility in the mind of God, how can it be considered as certainly future unless God decrees to permit that fall?

If unspecified decrees of creation and permission of the fall lurk secretly in the background of (prior to) the predestinating decree, then this is no longer a supra (before) lapsarian (the fall) view, but an infra (after) lapsarian view!

If supralapsarians object to this line of reasoning, and assert that these predestined men are not merely possibilities in God's mind, but are certain possibilities, i.e., are certain in terms of reality or being, but are yet in potentiality rather than in actuality then the following questions and observations are in order. First of all, the distinction between potentiality and actuality is a valid one. That which is in potentiality is something which is certain to happen, but has not yet happened; that is, it is certain to pass from potentiality to actuality, but has not yet passed into actuality. If the predestinating decree is understood as decreeing the salvation of some and the perdition of other potentially created and potentially fallen men, then we are speaking of God's decreeing that which pertains to reality, to that which is certain to be, to actual existence, albeit in potentiality rather than actuality. (it may be seen that in this context potentiality and actuality are two states of actual, real existence.) in such a case, the predestinating decree has real men as its object.

However, if the predestinating decree has real persons as its object (i.e., God decrees the salvation and perdition of real persons who are yet in potentiality, but who will most certainly pass into actuality), then the question must be raised, How do real persons (whether potentially real or actually real) get to be real? How is the certainty of their existence established? Obviously, if God does not establish the certainty of their existence, they will never exist, but must always remain in the realm of pure possibility. And the only way in which their existence can become certain, is if God purposes (decrees) it.

This brings us full circle. If God is going to predestinate real people (potentially real people who have not yet come into existence), then He must make a prior decree to bring those people into existence at some future time. And further, If God is going to predestinate people who are certain to fall, then He must make a prior decree to permit the fall at some future time. That is, in order to purpose to do something to a real person, you must be sure that you have a real person (that is, you must first be sure that you are talking about a real person before you can talk about doing something to him). And, if you are going to purpose to do something to a person in a certain condition (for example, try to cure a person who is sick), you must be sure that you have a person in that certain condition (that is, you must first be sure that you are talking about a sick person before you can talk about attempting to cure him).

Again, we must ask, How can God purpose something concerning a real person unless He has previously purposed to create such a person? And how can God purpose something concerning a fallen person unless He has previously purposed to permit such a person to fall? The answer to both these questions is that He cannot. The principle that underlies this answer is foundational to every field of thought: Of a non-ens nothing beyond its nonexistence can be predicated. To put this principle another way: it is not rationally possible to affirm or deny any attribute to that which lacks objective or subjective existence.

This brings us back to the concept of man as *creabilis et labilis*. If this expression is taken to mean "certain to be created and to fall", then the supralapsarian is caught in a dilemma: either these men exist in the divine idea as actually created and fallen, or possibly created and fallen (even if all the possibilities are narrowed down to one in each case). If they exist in the divine idea as actually created and fallen, then God can decree the salvation of some and the perdition of other actual persons. However, if this is the case, then the question of how they got to be actually created and fallen in the divine idea must be faced; and prior determinations on God's part to create men and permit their fall must be admitted, in which case the view becomes infralapsarian in fact.

If on the other hand these men exist in the divine idea as possibly created and fallen (and it will not do to insist upon the certainty of this possibility; the only way in which to make certainty out of possibility is for God to make it certain; the only way in which to guarantee certainty of futurity is for God to decree something actually to come to pass) -- if these men exist in the divine idea as possibly created and fallen, then God can decree the salvation of some and the perdition of other possible persons only. in order for these "possible persons" to pass out of the shadowy realm of subjective possibility (in which they exist in the divine mind as mere possibilities) into the clear light of subjective potentiality (in which they exist in the divine mind as real persons in potentiality), God must decide (decree) to bring these "possible persons" into being (decree to create them) and must decide (decree) to permit them to fall into sin (decree to permit the fall). Then, and then only, can He decree the actual salvation of some actual persons and the actual perdition of other actual persons. But if the supralapsarian wishes to continue to speak of persons as possibly created and possibly fallen, and at the same time wishes to speak about the predestination of two definite classes of real persons, then he must somehow bridge the gap between possibility and reality. The only way in which possibly created persons can become really created persons is for God to decree their real creation; and the only way in which possibly fallen persons can become really fallen persons is for God to decree to permit their real fall. If the supralapsarian admits the prior necessity of the decrees to create and permit the fall in order to be able to speak of the predestination of two definite classes of real persons, then he gives up his assertion that the decree of predestination must precede the fall, and joins the ranks of the infralapsarians.

Thus the supralapsarian view is caught on the horns of a serious dilemma.

However, there are certain other considerations which should be noted. The supralapsarian view holds that God first decrees the salvation of some men and the perdition of others. However, unless salvation can be related to an actual fall into sin (not merely a possible fall), it is difficult to relate this decree to the scriptural conception of salvation from sin and its results. The same problem arises with the concept of perdition, which in scripture is constantly connected directly with sin and its fruits. If the entrance of sin into the world is not yet decreed, how is it possible to speak meaningfully of salvation or perdition unless these classes of persons are predestined to heaven or to hell purely on the basis of God's selection, without regard to sin? in such a case, both those elected to salvation and those reprobated to perdition would be selected without regard to their deserts; neither class would deserve their eternal destiny, for both would be predestined gratuitously. Those elected to heaven would not deserve it, since it would not be a selection by grace but a sovereign expression of God's choice. On the other hand, those reprobated to hell would not deserve it either, since it would not be a condemnation based on God's justice but once again a sovereign expression of God's choice.

Four other problems in the supralapsarian view should be briefly mentioned. The first of these has to do with the scriptural representations of the proximate end, to which the elect are chosen. The Scriptures say that the elect are chosen to holiness and to the sprinkling of the blood of Christ (Eph. 1:4; 1. Pet. 1:2). This presupposes the sinfulness of the elect and their need of cleansing from the defilement and guilt of sin. The electing decree appears, therefore, to view the elect as fallen; that is, to assume the decree to permit the fall as prior.

The second problem has to do with the placement of the Redeemer in this scheme. If He is connected with election in the very first decree (that is, if the elect are "chosen in Him before the foundation of the world" [Eph. 1:41]), then the persons elected must be viewed as already sinful and in need of redemption. This assumes the decree to permit the fall as prior to the electing decree. But the view then becomes infralapsarian. If on the other hand the Redeemer appears in the decree following the fall, then the purpose of God to save some men and the purpose of God to provide a Redeemer for them are separated by other purposes (viz., the purpose to create and the purpose to permit the fall), then the unity of the scheme seems to be greatly compromised. in fact, the provision of a Redeemer for God's elect then seems almost to be an afterthought.

The third problem has to do with the claim made by supralapsarianism that God, even in the decree to create and permit the fall, had His eye fixed on His elect individually and personally, so that there was not a single moment in the divine purpose when they did not stand in a special relation to God as his beloved ones. This claim sounds at once so warm and comforting and so evangelical (i.e., it seems to make the soul dependent for its salvation directly on God alone, with no intermediaries), that it tends to make the hearers say,

"Amen!" in an emotional response, the meanwhile forgetting the necessity of bringing the critical faculty to bear upon this view (as upon every view). The problem with this comforting claim may be stated by asking the question: How can elect individuals stand in a special relation to God as His beloved ones (i.e., as objects of His special, gracious love) if God has not yet decided (decreed) to create them (bring them into being)? If He has not yet decreed to create them, then they are yet nonentities. Are these nonentities the objects of God's special, selective, gracious love? Are these nonexistent beings (non-existent in God's purpose, not in objective reality) His beloved ones? And how can these nonentities (we cannot even speak of them as human beings until we know that God has decreed to create human beings) stand in a special saving relationship to God? Once again this points up the impossibility of speaking of God's electing some definite men to salvation without presupposing God's creation of those men and His permission of their fall.

The fourth problem has to do with the relationship of the decrees respecting the creation and the fall to the predestinating decree. Supralapsarianism appears to make the decrees of creation and the fall subordinate to the predestinating decree, as means to the accomplishment of that end. As a result, creation appears to lose any independent significance as a mighty manifestation of God's glory, and appears to become merely a means to the end of securing God's glory in the eternal salvation of the elect and the eternal perdition of the nonelect. Also as a result the fall appears to lose independent significance as a genuine element of disturbance of creation, and appears to become merely an element of progress toward the end of securing God's glory in the eternal salvation of the elect and the eternal perdition of the nonelect. And if sin is a necessary element of progress then the question of God's justice in condemning the nonelect to eternal perdition must be faced -- not justice defined in terms of God's sovereignty, in terms of which God can theoretically be said always to act justly in whatever He does, but justice in terms of His attribute of justice as that attribute is defined in Scripture, where -- for example -- God is said to be just and righteous who tries the hearts and minds of the wicked and the righteous (Ps. 7:9); where He warns men not to kill the innocent or the righteous, for He will not acquit the guilty (Exod. 23:7); where God says that both he who justifies the wicked and he who condemns the righteous is an abomination to the Lord (Prov. 17:15); where we are told that if we confess our sins, God is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:9); and where Christ is said to have been publicly displayed as a propitiation (a satisfaction of God's justice) through His blood, in order that God might demonstrate His righteousness both at that time and in view of His passing over sins in past times, in order that God might at the same time be just and the one who declares righteous the one who does not seek to fulfill the Law in himself but simply receives by faith the perfect righteousness of Christ (Rom. 3:25-26). This conception of God's justice is quite different from one which says, "Since God is totally sovereign, whatever He does is right simply because He does it" (i.e., by definition!). This conception of God's justice says, "Since God is completely righteous, whatever He does is right because He always acts in accordance with His nature" (this does not allow

God's justice to mean "anything God does;" but asserts that if God acted contrary to His nature, He would be unjust and unrighteous; since He always acts in perfect accordance with His perfect attribute of righteousness, He is both just and righteous).

The question is, Can God be just if He condemns the nonelect to eternal perdition on no ground related to justice but purely on the ground of His sovereignty in term of the principle, "Whatever God does is right?"

AN ATTEMPT TO REMOVE THE LOGICAL PROBLEM FROM SUPRALAPSARIANISM, or
IS THIS ANY WAY TO GET SUPRALAPSARIANS OFF THE HOOK?

What about the following scenario of the order of God's decrees:

- (1) Predestination of possible mankind, in two classes: the elect to favor, the nonelect to disfavor
- (2) Creation of actual mankind (Adam and Eve and their natural descendants) in one of the two predestinated classes
- (3) Foreordination of the fall of actual mankind
- (4) Appointment of Christ to accomplish redemption from the fall for the elect
- (5) Determination to apply Christ's redemption from the fall to the elect, and to condemn the nonelect for their sin

Putting this scenario in terms that facilitate analysis results in the following:

- (1) God decided that, if He were to decide to create mankind, He would create mankind in two classes, elect and nonelect, and would show favor to the elect and disfavor to the nonelect
- (2) God decided to create mankind in the two above-mentioned classes
- (3) God decided to permit the fall of mankind
- (4) God decided to send Christ to expiate the guilt and penalty of the elect and to earn righteousness and eternal life for them
- (5) God decided to apply Christ's salvation to the elect by His Word and Spirit, and to condemn the nonelect to eternal destruction for their sin

Have we solved the logical problem of having predestinate creatable and fallible man? That is, have we gotten around the problem of God's predestinating human beings whom He has not yet decided to create or to permit to fall? is the predestination of possible mankind a meaningful concept? And would a predestination of possible human beings to general favor or disfavor be what our supralapsarian friend had in mind?

b. Infralapsarianism

(1) Analysis of the view

The infralapsarian (*infra* = after; *lapsis* = the lapse from original righteousness = the fall) scheme appeals more directly to Scripture for its support. It points to those statements of Scripture in which the objects of election appear to be already in a state of sin; appear as being in close union with Christ in the decree of election itself, and appear as objects of God's mercy and grace. These Scriptures include the following:

Romans 8:29-30 "For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first born among many brethren; and whom He predestined, these He also called; and whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified."

This Scripture is understood as teaching that those whom God elected to salvation were predestined to be called out of sin and of conformity to the world, to be declared righteous instead of being condemned for their sin, and to be made wholly after the Image of the sinless, holy Son of God. Thus God's election is of fallen, sinful creatures.

Romans 9:15-16 "For He says to Moses, 'I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion.' So then it does not depend on the man who wills or the man who runs, but on God who has mercy."

This Scripture is taken to teach that the persons to whom God reveals himself and upon whom He deigns to have mercy and compassion (cf. Exod. 33:18-19) are those whom He elects and chooses sovereignly, without dependence on their will to do good works. The concept of mercy is understood to presuppose the pitiful condition of fallen man.

Ephesians 1:4, 7 "just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him. . ."

"In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace,"

This Scripture is understood to teach that the elect were viewed as elect in Christ, i.e., as in union with Him; and that the elect were elected to holiness and forgiveness of sins through the gracious redemption purchased by Christ's blood. This kind of election is understood to presuppose the decree concerning man's fall.

2 Timothy 1:9 "who (God) has saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity."

This Scripture is understood to teach that God's election in eternity past was an election arising from God's grace (which is taken to mean God's unmerited favor toward the undeserving; i.e., sinful and fallen) and an election made in union with Jesus Christ viewed as Savior and Redeemer in the Covenant of Grace. Both of these associations are taken to presuppose the fall in God's eternal plan and purpose.

In addition to these (and other) specific Scriptures, the infralapsarian view claims that its scheme of the order of the decrees as formed reflects the order of the decrees as executed. Accordingly, just as infralapsarians see the creation of man and his fall in biblical history and see God begin to select a godly seed from among the race of fallen mankind (and to pass by the rest), and see God sending His own Son to accomplish a perfection redemption for His own elect, and see the sovereign and powerful and gracious working of God's Spirit applying the benefits of Christ's atonement to His sheep, and see God's wrath pronounced upon the rest of sinful humanity -- just as infralapsarians see this sequence of events in the unfolding purpose of God in revelation history, so they see the order of decrees in the eternal counsel of God.

in addition, the infralapsarian view claims that its scheme of the order of the decrees reflects also the internal logical relationships of the various aspects of God's plan of salvation, as those relationships are structured in Scripture. Accordingly, just as infralapsarians see that logically, man had to be created before he could fall (i.e., a nonentity simply cannot fall!); and logically, man had to be fallen before he could be elected to salvation by grace (otherwise what can salvation from sin and its concomitants mean?); and logically, if some (not all) from among the fallen race were elected to salvation, then Christ came to accomplish the salvation of those particular persons; and logically, if Christ accomplished the salvation of those particular persons, then the Holy Spirit will most certainly (and sovereignly) apply that dearly purchased salvation to those very persons whom God elected and for whom Christ died; and logically, the nonelect had to be passed by with respect to salvation from their sin in order to be justly condemned for their sin. Thus the infralapsarian claims that the logical interdependency of the aspects of God's plan of salvation reflects the order of the decrees of God.

(2) Critique of the view

Infralapsarianism claims that it is the more logical of the two major Reformed views. If the supralapsarian is correct in his claim that in human experience what is last in execution is always first in intention; and that if God's final purpose was to glorify himself in the salvation of the elect and the perdition of the nonelect, and therefore it must have been the deliberate purpose of God from the beginning, and must have included all subsequent decrees as means to that end; then to that extent supralapsarianism is logical in its general movement of thought. However, when supralapsarianism is examined in the specific logical interrelationships of the various aspects of God's purpose, it turns out to bristle with logical

problems, the chief of which concern God's electing to salvation and reprobating to perdition not actual men certainly decreed by God, but only possibly created men and only possibly fallen men.

Does infralapsarianism stand up under the same kind of logical analysis? Can it be said to be more logical, more in accord with the laws of true thought than supralapsarianism? It would appear, from the preceding analysis, that this claim can be sustained.

However, what about the unity of God's eternal purposes? Has something been sacrificed by a logical ordering of the decrees of God? Louis Berkhof suggests some particulars in which this view appears to have problems in the direction of maintaining unity in the decrees. He says:

The infralapsarian position does not do justice to the unity of the divine decree, but represents the different members of it too much as disconnected parts. First God decrees to create the world for the glory of His name, which means among other things also that He determined that His rational creatures should live according to the divine law implanted in their hearts and should praise their Maker. Then He decreed to permit the fall, whereby sin enters the world. This seems to be a frustration of the original plan, or at least an important modification of it, since God no more decrees to glorify Himself by the voluntary obedience of all His rational creatures. Finally, there follow the decrees of election and reprobation, which mean only a partial execution of the original plan.

-- *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1959), p.124

Berkhof's point is well made. If God's first decree is the creation of fallible men (men able to fall), and His second decree is a foreordination of the fall, and His third decree is the election of some fallen men to eternal salvation and the passing by of other fallen men; then it would seem that God has one purpose at one time and another purpose at another time. That is, there does not seem to be one end in mind, but various ends at various points in the development of God's eternal counsel. Supralapsarianism appears to have overcome this problem of unity by seeing all the decrees as subordinated to the predestinating decree, and framed to secure its fulfillment. However, by doing this, supralapsarianism has entangled itself hopelessly in the problem of a lack of inner consistency among the decrees.

If the glory of God be identified as His final purpose, then the possibility arises that God can be seen as decreeing all of these decrees to His glory, not by decreeing creation toward one end, the fall toward another (seemingly contrary) end, and predestination toward yet another end, but by simultaneously decreeing all the parts of His purpose as a unified plan, with all aspects contributing to His glory, and all of His attributes and prerogatives and powers being expressed in the varied aspects and facets of His eternal decrees, to the manifestation of His eternal glory!

In such a scheme God's glory would be clearly manifested in the expression of power and wisdom manifested in the handiwork of His creation; God's glory would be manifested in the expression of divine

justice and holiness and wrath and mercy shown in His condemnation of man at the fall; God's glory would be manifested in the expression of His sovereign grace and justice in electing some fallen men to salvation and passing by the remainder; God's glory would be manifested in the expression of His love and grace and mercy and justice in sending His dear Son to accomplish redemption for His elect; God's glory would be manifested in the expression of His love and grace and mercy and righteousness and power in applying redemption to His elect by His Word and Spirit; and God's glory would be manifested in the expression of His righteous indignation and wrath and justice in condemning the nonelect to eternal perdition for their sin. in this way God's glory would be secured, but not by the fulfillment of one aspect of God's purpose only (predestination) or by the expression of one attribute of God's nature only (sovereignty), but by the contribution of all aspects of God's eternal purpose seen as a unified plan, and the expression of many attributes and powers and prerogatives of God's nature and being. Perhaps Berkhof's pointed criticism of infralapsarianism could be mitigated or even overcome by this conception of the relationship of the final end (God's glory) to the means (the various aspects of God's decrees).

One further word should be added. infralapsarianism and supralapsarianism as divergent conceptions of the order of the decrees emerged during the Reformation. However, the Reformed Churches in their official confessional standards have always adopted the infralapsarian position without condemning the supralapsarian view. Berkhof finds an element of truth in each, and counsels tolerance.

c. Amyraldianism

(1) Analysis of the view

Amyraldianism is a view named after Moise (or Moses) Amyraut (A.D. 1596-1664), a French Protestant theologian who taught in the Theological School at Saumur, France. The view places its central emphasis upon the universality of the atonement, and places the decree respecting predestination after the decree respecting the atonement. Because of this emphasis and order, it is sometimes referred to as the Post-Redemptionist scheme. it is also referred to as Hypothetical Redemptionism, because of its view that the atonement does not have an absolute, but a hypothetical reference to all men, in the sense that all men are redeemed by Christ if they believe on Him; and it is also referred to as Hypothetical Universalism, because of its view that the atonement of Christ was intended to make salvation hypothetically possible for all men.

Amyraut held that the motive which moved God to redeem man was benevolence or general, indiscriminate love to all men. Out of this general love He sent His Son to die for all men, and thus to make salvation possible for all who will believe on the provided redeemer. However, foreseeing that no man will believe on the provided redeemer (because of moral depravity and moral inability), God elects some men, upon whom He determines to bestow His special, efficacious grace, and in whom He purposes to work saving faith; and He passes by the rest, to leave them in their sins.

(2) Critique of the view

This view introduces an element of strong conflict into the relationship of the redemptive decree and the elective decree in God's eternal plan. In the redemptive decree God's general, indiscriminate love for all men moved Him to send His Son as the redeemer of all men. But in the elective decree God's special, discriminate love for some men moved Him to elect those men to receive the benefits of Christ's redemption, including the benefits of sins forgiven and eternal life. Thus there are included in God's eternal purpose two conflicting subpurposes. At one point God purposes to redeem all men by Christ's redemption; at another point God purposes to redeem some men only by Christ's redemption. The difference between these two subpurposes may be shown by the following considerations. At first God, out of His great love for His creature man, established an Impossible arrangement, by providing a redemption through a redeemer which could be received by faith alone, the meanwhile disregarding the fact that no man would or could exercise saving faith, the net result of which is that no man would be saved. God, now seeing that such an arrangement would be totally ineffectual, decided instead to elect certain men to salvation, and to apply Christ's redemption to them by effectually quickening them and granting to them the gift of faith. This scheme thus posits conflicts in the mind and plan of God. First He loves men indiscriminately, then He loves men discriminately; first He is moved by general love, then He is moved by special love; first He intends to redeem all men, then He intends to redeem some men only; first He disregards man's total inability to believe, then he takes into account man's total inability to believe; first He does not seem to see that on one will be saved by a hypothetically universal redemption, then He does seem to see the problem, and takes steps to resolve it. This tends to make God look like a planner who has much enthusiasm, but very little foresight, very poor judgment, and a very spasmodic and jerky planning style. In addition to introducing an element of conflict in the mind of God between the redemptive and the elective decrees, Amyraldianism introduces a second element of conflict: God is said to purpose what He does not intend to effect. Charles Hodge puts this problem very nicely. He says:

"It cannot . . . be supposed that God intends what is never accomplished; that He purposes what He does not intend to effect; that He adopts means for an end which is never to be attained. This cannot be affirmed of any rational being who has the wisdom and power to secure the execution of his purposes. Much less can it be said of Him whose power and wisdom are infinite. If all men are not saved, God never purposed their salvation, and never devised and put into operation means designed to accomplish that end. We must assume that the result is the interpretation of the purposes of God. If He foreordains whatsoever comes to pass, then events correspond to his purpose; and it is against reason and Scripture to suppose that there is any contradiction or want of correspondence between what He intended and what actually occurs. The theory, therefore, which assumes that God purposed the salvation of all men, and sent his Son to die as a means to

accomplish that end, and then seeing, or foreseeing that such end could not or would not be attained, elected a part of the race to be the subjects of efficacious grace, cannot be admitted as Scriptural."

Systematic Theology Volume Two (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1952), p. 323.

d. Sublapsarianism

(1) Analysis of the view

Although William G. T. Shedd, in his *Dogmatic Theology* interchanges infra- and sub-lapsarianism (Volume One, p. 441), nevertheless Henry C. Thiessen, having outlined the supralapsarian order and the infralapsarian order of the decrees, then gives his outline of the decrees, and calls it sublapsarian. He says, "We believe that the decrees are in this order: 1. the decree to create; 2. the decree to permit the fall; 3. the decree to provide salvation for all; and 4. the decree to apply that salvation to some, to those who believe." (*Introductory Lectures in Systematic Theology* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1951], p. 344.)

A. A. Hodge, in his Outlines of Theology, asks the question, "What is the Arminian theory as to the order of the decrees relating to the human race?" (in the context he discusses the "supra-lapsarian theory", the "Infra-lapsarian view", and the "French scheme of Amyraut", as well.) His answer to this question concerning the "Arminian theory" coincides with the sub lapsarian scheme as given by Thiessen. A. A. Hodge states this order as follows:

"1st. The decree to create men. 2d. Man, as a moral agent, being fallible, and his will being essentially contingent, and his sin therefore being Impreventible, God, foreseeing that man would certainly fall into the condemnation and pollution of sin, decreed to provide a free salvation through Christ for all men, and to provide sufficient means for the effectual application of that salvation to the case of all. 3d. He decreed absolutely that all believers in Christ should be saved, and all unbelievers reprobated for their sins. 4th. Foreseeing that certain individuals would repent and believe, and that certain other individuals would continue impenitent to the last, God from eternity elected to eternal life those whose faith he foresaw, on the condition of their faith, and reprobated those whom he foresaw would continue Impenitent on the condition of that impenitence."

-- *Outlines of Theology* (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, reprint of 1957), P. 231.

The observation that Thiessen's sublapsarianism and A. A. Hodge's outline of the "Arminian theory" coincide, raises the question whether this agreement is to be regarded as an accidental coincidence or as indicating that Arminianism holds to a sublapsarian order of the decrees. it therefore appears in order to check James Arminius'

writings to see if he holds to some order; and if so, what it is. In Volume One of *The Writings of Arminius* he affirms such an order of the decrees.

Having assumed the decree to create and the decree to permit the fall, Arminius turns to the decrees that pertain to salvation. He states:

"I. The FIRST absolute decree of God concerning the salvation of sinful man [Note: man is conceived of as created and fallen] is that by which he decreed to appoint his Son, Jesus Christ, for a Mediator, Redeemer, Savior, Priest and King, who might destroy sin by his own death, might by his obedience obtain the salvation which had been lost, and might communicate it by his own virtue.

"II. The SECOND precise and absolute decree of God, is that in which he decreed to receive into favor those who repent and believe and, in Christ, for HIS sake and through HIM, to effect the salvation of such penitents and believers as persevered to the end; but to leave in sin, and under wrath, all impenitent persons and unbelievers and to damn them as aliens from Christ.

"III. the THIRD divine decree is that by which God decreed to administer in a sufficient and efficacious manner the MEANS which were necessary for repentance and faith and to have such administration instituted (1.) according to the Divine Wisdom by which God knows what is proper and becoming both to his mercy and his severity, and (2), according to Divine Justice, by which He is prepared to adopt whatever his wisdom may prescribe and put it in execution.

IV. to these succeeds the FOURTH decree, by which God decreed to save and damn certain particular persons. This decree has its foundation in the foreknowledge of God, by which he knew from all eternity those individuals who would, through his preventing grace, believe, and, through his subsequent grace would persevere, according to the before described administration of those means which are suitable and proper for conversion and faith; and by which foreknowledge, he likewise knew those who would not believe and persevere."

The Writings of James Arminius in three volumes (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1956), Volume one, pp. 247-248.

Accordingly, Arminius first sees God providing salvation for all through a Redeemer; then sees God establishing the condition upon whose fulfillment that salvation will be applied, and upon whose nonfulfillment damnation will be applied; then sees God establishing the means of securing fulfillment of the condition of salvation; and then sees God, by foreknowledge of human responses, electing to salvation those who exercise the means and fulfill the condition of salvation, and reprobating to damnation those who fail to exercise those means and fail to fulfill that condition. This scheme and order agrees with both Thiessen's order and A. A. Hodge's outline.

These outlines of the order of the decrees place the redemptive decree before the electing decree. in that respect the sublapsarian order agrees with the Amyraldian order, and differs from both the

supra- and infra-lapsarian orders. in addition, sublapsarianism begins with a universal reference of the redemptive decree, and ends with a particular reference of that decree. in this respect also, sublapsarianism agrees with Amyraldianism, and differs from supra- and infra-lapsarianism. Still further, sublapsarianism makes fulfillment of the ultimate condition for the application of redemption to rest upon fallen men, and must therefore insert the establishing of that condition by God between the redemptive decree and the electing decree. In this respect sublapsarianism differs from all three of the other orders of the decrees which we have been discussing. Still further, sublapsarianism makes necessary some mitigation of the effects of the fall, especially as those effects pertain to the understanding and the will of fallen men, in terms of some form of preparatory or assisting grace sufficient to enable an unregenerate man to respond favorably to the gospel; and must therefore insert the provision for the bestowal of such grace between the establishing of the condition for the application of redemption and the electing decree. That is, God having established repentance and faith as the condition of salvation, He must then enable fallen men to initially respond to that condition. Then those who are foreseen to fulfill that condition may be elected. in this respect also, sublapsarianism differs from all of the other views we have been discussing. And still further, sublapsarianism makes the electing decree dependent upon fallen men's foreseen favorable response to the gospel. in this respect sublapsarianism stands alone among these other views of the order of the decrees.

(2) Critique of the view

First of all, there is in this view a tension between a universal intention of redemption, and a particular application of redemption. This tension is relieved by seeing God as respecting the freedom of man's will, so that the reason that God's original intention is not fully realized is not because of some conflict or difficulty in Him, but in man's resistance to His grace. Thus the blameworthiness for a partial failure of God's intention is placed upon sinful men.

With this in mind, the view places a heavy emphasis upon fallen men's response to God's call through the gospel as determinative of the outworking and success of God's plan of salvation. in principle all men are free to reject the gospel and perish, in which case God would be unable to do anything about it (unless He introduced an alternative plan which would not depend upon human response). However, what could happen in principle does not happen in experience, and so God's plan is seen as workable and at least partially successful. in this heavy emphasis upon the decisive nature of man's response, the reason why God can expect to realize some success through His electing decree is that His attribute of omniscience enables Him to foresee the free, uncoerced response which fallen men will make to the gospel, thereby enabling Him to elect them to salvation.

In itself, the concept that God can foreknow completely free actions (that is, actions which are not the result of any efficiency exerted by Him in a particular direction) is sound: God foreknew the perfectly free action of Adam and Eve in their fall from original righteousness. Thus the concept is not in itself the problem.

The difficulty comes when the electing decree is made to depend upon foreknowledge of an action made by fallen men whose entire being is enslaved to and under the constant bondage of sin, and who are at enmity with God. If eternal election is based upon foreknowledge of what unregenerate, spiritually blind, spiritually dead men will do with the gospel, then no one in this whole world can be elected!

Of course, sublapsarianism brings to this problem the mitigating force of prevenient grace, which enables unregenerate, spiritually blind, spiritually dead men to make a very small, very tentative, very initial, very imperfect, but nevertheless very crucial favorable response to the gospel. As a result, God, foreseeing this response, can Himself respond by electing these men to salvation. The one problem with this whole concept of prevenient grace is that it does not rest upon any explicit scriptural basis, either small or broad. Those who advocate it realize this problem, but assert that it is a necessary implication of God's justice, or a "persistent demand of the heart", or that which "commends itself to our sense of justice", or "a necessary postulate" to reconcile the scriptural teaching concerning the sovereignty of God and the responsibility of man. Thus Thiessen writes:

Although we are nowhere told what it is in the foreknowledge of God that determines His choice (!), the repeated teaching of Scripture that man is responsible for accepting or rejecting salvation necessitates our postulating that it is man's reaction to the revelation God has made of Himself that is the basis of His election. May we repeat: Since mankind is hopelessly dead in trespasses and sins and can do nothing to obtain salvation, God graciously restores to all men sufficient ability to make a choice in the matter of submission to Him. This is the salvation bringing grace of God that has appeared to all men. in His foreknowledge He perceives what each one will do with this restored ability, and elects men to salvation in harmony with His knowledge of their choice of Him."

-- *Introductory Lectures* pp. 344-345.

Another problem in this view may be seen in the following consideration. The electing decree is based upon divine foreknowledge of human responses to the gospel. Those who in time elect for God, God in eternity past elects to salvation. However, in this construct divine election, usually understood as a choice of persons, has changed its meaning. Election in this view does not mean that God decides who the elect will be; it means that God decides what the elect are destined to become. Not WHO, but WHAT. in this sense of the term, God chooses no one; men choose themselves. Just as the chargeable cause of the fall of man is not God, but man, so the creditable cause of the salvation of man is not God, but man! Man lost himself; man saves himself! That is, the ultimate reason why a man is saved is because he chooses to be saved!

The advocates of this view often attempt to soften and meliorate the force of this description with fair words and euphonious phrases which sound very God honoring and God exalting (and no doubt they intend them to honor and exalt God!). But to speak of "God's sovereign grace", and to mean by this that God is sovereign over everything in the universe except man's will, and that God graciously bestows salvation upon those who wish to have it, see a travesty of the historical meaning of the expression. And to assert that "God takes the initiative in salvation," and that "salvation is God's work from start to finish," and to mean by this that God is the one who takes the first step by providing a salvation for man and offering a salvation to man, but that as far as that salvation's actually saving anyone, man must take the first step before God can do anything to save him, once again uses expressions which historically have stressed conceptions quite different! Behind these fair words lie the centrality, the decisiveness, the crucial nature of man's choice; and this must be seen for what it is. Although any thought of merit in man's choice to be saved is explicitly excluded by this view, nevertheless the fact remains that the ultimate reason and the only reason a man is saved is because he decides to be, he chooses to be, he responds favorably. There may be proximate causes and reasons and considerations which move him and influence him and persuade him, but the ultimate cause of his choice lies, not in God but in the free will of the man himself. This point should be pondered by the friends of the sublapsarian view.

II. Predestination

A. Statements of the Doctrine

I. in the Westminster Standards

"III. By the decree of God, for the manifestation of His glory, some men and angels are predestinated unto everlasting life; and others foreordained to everlasting death.

"IV. These angels and men, thus predestinated, and foreordained, are particularly and unchangeably designed, and their number so certain and definite, that it cannot be either increased or diminished.

"V. Those of mankind that are predestinated unto life, God, before the foundation of the world was laid, according to His eternal and Immutable purpose, and the secret counsel and good pleasure of His will, hath chosen, in Christ, unto everlasting glory, out of His mere free grace and love, without any foresight of faith, or good works, or perseverance in either of them, or any other thing in the creature, as conditions, or causes moving Him thereunto; and all to the praise of His glorious grace.

"VI. As God hath appointed the elect unto glory, so hath He, by the eternal and most free purpose of His will, foreordained all the means thereunto. Wherefore, they who are elected being fallen in Adam, are redeemed by Christ, are effectually called unto faith in Christ by His Spirit working in due season, are justified, adopted, sanctified, and kept by His power, through faith, unto salvation. Neither are any other redeemed by Christ, effectually called, justified, adopted, sanctified, and saved, but the elect only.

"VII. The rest of mankind God was pleased, according to the unsearchable counsel of His own will, whereby He extendeth or withholdeth mercy, as He pleaseth, for the glory of His sovereign power over His creatures, to pass by; and to ordain them to dishonour and wrath for their sin, to the praise of His glorious justice.

"VIII. The doctrine of this high mystery of predestination is to be handled with special prudence and care, that men, attending the will of God revealed in His Word, and yielding obedience thereunto, may, from the certainty of their effectual vocation, be assured of their eternal election. So shall this doctrine afford matter of praise, reverence, and admiration of God; and of humility, diligence, and abundant consolation to all that sincerely obey the Gospel."

-- *Westminster Confession of Faith*, Chapter III

"Q. 13. What hath God especially decreed concerning angels and men?

"A. God, by an eternal and Immutable decree, out of his mere love, for the praise of his glorious grace, to be manifested in due time, hath elected some angels to glory; and in Christ, hath chosen some men to eternal life, and the means thereof: and also, according to his sovereign power, and the unsearchable counsel of his own will (whereby he extendeth or withholdeth favour as he pleaseth), hath passed by and foreordained the rest to dishonour and wrath, to be for their sin inflicted, to the praise of the glory of his justice."

-- *The Larger Catechism*, Question 13

2. In the writings of Lewis Sperry Chafer (Dr. Chafer was President and Professor of Systematic Theology at Dallas Theology Seminary)

"The term predestination signifies a predetermining of destiny. . . .

"Outside the predetermined destiny which belongs to Israel and the nations who 'inherit the earth', the doctrine of predestination falls into two divisions, namely, (1) election and (2) retribution. . . . Election and retribution are counterparts of each other. There can be no election of some that does not imply the rejection of others.

"a. ELECTION. The election which is set forth in the Scriptures, apart from the elect nation Israel -- not now under consideration -- , is that favor of God, notably a full and free salvation, which is accorded to some, but not to all. Of some it is said that they are 'chosen in the Lord' (Rom. 16:1.3); 'chosen . . . to salvation' (2 Thess. 2:13); 'chosen . . . in him before the foundation of the world' (Eph. 1:4); predestined to the 'adoption of children' (Eph. 1:5); 'to be conformed to the image of his Son' (Rom. 8:29); 'elect according to the foreknowledge of God' (1. Pet. 1:2); and 'vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory' (Rom. 9:23). The term election should not be construed to mean only a general divine purpose to provide salvation for all men. It refers to an express divine purpose to confer salvation on some, but not all. Nor should the term imply that God will bless those who believe. it rather specifies those who will believe. Some, but not all, are written in the Lamb's book of life. Evasion of the plain words of Scripture secures nothing in the understanding of this most solemn subject. Whatever may be the case of the nonelect, it is written of the saved that He 'hath saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began' (2 Tim. 1:9); 'according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love' (Eph. 1:4).

"There is no mere arbitrary caprice in divine election, for God in this, as in all He does, is governed by infinite wisdom, holiness, and love. As the ground of His election, He foresaw no difference in character of one over another. His choice is not based on anticipated worthiness. Election is an act of grace apart from works. Neither faith nor good works is the cause of divine election. They are rather the fruit of election. Men are not first holy and then chosen; but are first chosen and then holy. it was that they might be holy that they were chosen. The destiny of Isaac's sons was determined before they had done anything good or bad, that the fact of sovereign election might stand without complication (Rom. 9:11-13). The fact that a supposed conditional election is the belief of the majority is due, doubtless, to the reluctance on the part of man to admit that no merit resides in his natural self.

". . . . The doctrine of election is a cardinal teaching of the Scriptures. Doubtless, it is attended with difficulties which are a burden upon all systems of theology alike. However, no word of God may be altered or neglected. No little help is gained when it is remembered that revelation and not reason is the guide to faith. when the former has spoken, the latter is appointed to listen and acquiesce.

"b. RETRIBUTION. There is that in the purpose of God which is styled retribution. As an act of God, the term means that some are rejected whom He does not elect. The word predestination has been preferred by some as being less severe. Surely, no thoughtful believer would choose to employ terms in relation to the doom of the lost which are unnecessarily strong. The theme is one of surpassing solemnity and it is no evidence of compassion when men purposely express themselves respecting the future estate of the unregenerate in harsh and unfeeling terms. It is a theme which should ever bring one to tears. It is intended by the choice of the word preterition to imply that God assumes no active attitude toward the nonelect other than to pass them by, leaving them under the just condemnation which their lost estate deserves. Thus it is supposed that, to some extent, God is relieved of responsibility if it is predicated of Him that He peremits rather than reprobates the nonelect. Such distinctions are more a delusion of words than a discrimination of facts. Apart from this awful theme and, under any circumstances more congenial, such a labored selection of words would hardly be suffered. It is impossible actively to choose some from a company and not, at the same time and by the same process, actively to reject the remainder. Yet a real distinction exists in the divine way of dealing with one class as compared with the other. New and wholly undeserved blessings are extended to the elect, while the nonelect reap only the just recompense of their lost estate. God does for one class what He does not do for the other, but both aggregations pass before His mind and become objects of His determination. Exceedingly painful expressions are used in the Scriptures to describe the divine decision regarding the nonelect. They are 'not written' in the book of life (Rev. 13:8); they are 'vessels of wrath fitted to destruction' (Rom. 9:22); they were 'before . . . ordained to this condemnation' (Jude 4); they 'stumble at the void, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed' (1 Pet. 2:8). God is said to love some less than others (Mal. 1:2, 3). Some are called the 'election', some are called 'the rest' (Rom. 11:7). A dispassionate reading of Romans, Chapters nine and eleven, will result in the assurance that, whatever men may believe or disbelieve regarding the matter, the Word of God is bold in declaring that some are appointed to blessing and others are to experience condemnation."

-- Systematic Theology in eight volumes (Dallas: Dallas Seminary Press, 1947), Volume 1, pp. 244-247

3. In the writings of Edgar Young Mullins (Dr. Mullins was President and Professor of Theology in The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky)

"We can best discuss the sovereignty of God in the salvation of individuals by asking and answering a series of questions. The first question will deal with the crucial point of difference between opposing theories of election.

"1. Does God choose men to salvation because of their good works or because he foresees they will believe when the gospel is preached to them? Beyond doubt God foresees their faith. Beyond doubt faith is a condition of salvation. The question is whether it is also the ground of salvation. The Scriptures answer this question in the negative. The gospel is efficacious with some and not efficacious with others because God's grace is operative in the one case beyond the degree of its action in the other.

"2. The second question concerns the human will and choice: Does God's election coerce man's will, or does it leave it free? The answer is emphatically that the will of man is not coerced, but is left free. In his free act of accepting Christ and his salvation man is self-determined. He would not have made the choice if left to himself without the aid of God's grace. But when he chooses, it is his own free act. God's grace is not 'irresistible' as a physical force is irresistible. Grace does not act as a physical force. It is a moral and spiritual and personal power.

"3. A third question about God's sovereignty is this: Can we reconcile the sovereignty of God and human freedom in his electing grace? The answer is in the negative We are conscious of freedom as an ultimate fact of experience. We are driven to God's sovereignty as an ultimate necessity of thought. One has expressed it thus: 'I am fated; that is false. I am free: that is false. I am fated and free: that is true.' . . .

"4. A fourth question is: Can we assign any reasons why God should adopt the method of election in saving men? God is limited in two ways in his dealings with men. First, he is limited by human freedom. He made us free. He will not coerce man in his choices. If he did so he would destroy our freedom. We would cease to be persons and become things. God's problem is to save men and at the same time to leave them free. This is the greatest and most difficult of all problems Human agents of redemption, persuasion, argument, entreaty, prayer, personal influence—in a word, moral and spiritual forces are the only kind available for the end in view. God is limited by man's freedom.

"Again, God is limited in his method by human sin. Sin enslaved men. They are endowed with moral freedom, but their wills have a bias which inevitably leads to the rejection of the gospel except when aided by God's grace in Christ. It is not a question merely of ability, but of inevitability. Man inevitably chooses evil. The carnal mind is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.

"Now combine these two thoughts. If man is free, and if he will inevitably reject the gospel unaided by divine grace, what will be the outcome? No one would be saved. But if God interposes, it can only be some form of election. But in adopting the method of election he must work in a moral, spiritual, and personal way on man, the moral, spiritual, and personal being. He must reduce his own action to the minimum lest he compel the will We conclude, then, that God is limited by human freedom and sin to the method of election, and that in executing his purpose he must, by reason of these limitations, work gradually and through human agents.

"5. A fifth question is: Would it not be fairer and more just if God left men to accept or reject when the gospel is preached to them, without any previous choice on his part?

The reply is that if the final outcome is the salvation of some and the loss of others, any other system would be ultimately traceable to God's sovereignty and election. Assume that equal grace is given to all. Some are receptive, and some hostile to it. The receptive are saved, the hostile lost. Then God's sovereignty and election operated to provide efficaciously for the receptive only. He did not give grace to overcome hostility. He elected thus the receptive and only the receptive. Assume again that with equal grace to all, some respond and believe because they are better morally, or less stubborn in will, or more believing, or for any other conceivable reason. Clearly if these are saved and the others lost, it is because God elected to offer a gospel adapted to reach one class and not adapted to reach the other class. As we remarked at the outset, the fundamental truth is that of Genesis 1:1, 'In the beginning God.' If it be assumed that God could save all, but refuses to do so, then any scheme whatever carries with it the idea of an election based on God's sovereignty. Our own view, as we have just stated it, holds that under the moral and spiritual conditions involved in man's sin and freedom, God could not save all. God's choice becomes effective through special grace based not at all on human merit, and on no principle of partiality or arbitrary selection. He chooses rather on a principle which makes possible a rapid movement toward his all embracing purpose for the human race. No instance of individual election can be fully understood when viewed out of relation to the universal plan and purpose.

"6. A sixth question: is God seeking to save as few or as many as possible? Men have sometimes conceived of election as if it were a plan to save as few as possible. The whole tenor of the Bible is in the other direction. Here we must speak with caution. But there are many indications that God is seeking to save men as rapidly as the situation admits in view of sin and freedom and the necessity for respecting human freedom.

"7. A seventh question: Can we discover any principle which has guided in the electing love of God? In reply two or three things are perfectly clear. First, men are not chosen because of merits of any kind on their part Secondly, it is also clear that men are chosen for service in God's kingdom in the third place, we may infer that God's election pursues the course which will yield the largest results in the shortest time. . . ."

-- *The Christian Religion in its Doctrinal Expression*
(Valley Forge: The Judson Press, 1917), pp. 343 253.

(Note: If the reader is still somewhat uncertain as to E. Y. Mullins' view on the basis of God's election, perhaps the following paragraph found two pages later will be helpful.)

"It is also objected that election involves insincerity in the offer of salvation to all. The reply is that there is absolutely no barrier to the salvation of any, save their own will. Christ died for all. God is willing to receive all who will come. God knows that some will not accept. indeed, he knows that all will refuse unless by his special grace some are led to believe. But invitation and persuasion and appeal and man's free response are the only means

available in a moral and spiritual order. Grace can only operate thus. If angels were sent to capture the elect and bring them in by force, this would not be a method in harmony with grace. it would leave the will unmoved and character unchanged. The choicest element in man's spiritual life to God's sight is his own free act in choosing God and returning to him. The gospel invitation makes the choice possible. No other method is conceivable by which it could be so well done." (page 354)

4. In the booklet *Predestination* by James Moffat of Glasgow

"First of all, let us ask two straightforward, unambiguous questions, and give equally straightforward, unambiguous answers, answers which will have the added advantage of being undeniably scriptural, for human logic may be controvertible, but plain Scripture statements cannot be denied. Our questions shall be sweeping, providing no loopholes for escape, allowing for no equivocation.

"Question 1. 'DOES GOD WILL ANYONE TO BE LOST?'

"The answer is 'NO', an emphatic NO, printed in black ink, heavily underlined. Now for Scriptural corroboration of this categorical answer --

"2 Pet. 3:9, 'The Lord is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.' See how definite, how widespread, how sweeping the will of God is against men perishing. it does not read either on the line or under the line 'The Lord is not willing that many should perish.' Not, 'not many', but 'not any'.

"Question 2. This second question is the reverse of the first, in order to complete the truth and safeguard it. 'DOES GOD WILL ALL MEN TO BE SAVED?'

"The answer is 'YES!' an affirmative as strong, as emphatic and as truly scriptural as its companion negative. And here it is so plain that it can neither be twisted or doubted.

"1 Tim. 2:4 'God our Saviour, Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.'

"These two questions and answers prove two very simple facts, but out of them spring other two very profound facts which are inescapable and which resolve the perplexities of a somewhat perplexing truth.

"First -- in relation to the first question and its answer the fact that God 'willeth not', does not make or compel man to 'will not'. The fact that God does not will men to perish does not supply them with any protective virtue or invulnerable value. Neither does it give to men infallibility not make it impossible for them to die. it does not make man himself 'not willing' that he should perish; does not assure men against loss, nor secure them from destruction. Liberty is still theirs to move in any direction to take the broad or the narrow road the way of life or the way of death. God clears Himself from all responsibility for man's destruction, and man's perdition is not fatalistic. For, 'the Lord is not willing that any should perish.' Note then this point -- God's unwillingness does not make you unwilling.

"Secondly -- in relation to the second question and answer -- the fact that God will all men to be saved does not make men will themselves to be saved; it puts them under no instinctive or hereditary compulsion; does not rob them of free agency, nor relieve them of responsibility.

"Note carefully: -- The fact that God wills all men to be saved does not make them safe. This fact itself takes every bit of fatalism out of the Gospel. God, willing that all men should be saved, gives them no security. It certainly gives them privilege but imparts no priority of privilege among men, but rather makes them all equal in possibility of eternal life, imposing upon them full responsibility for their own safety, making them masters of their fate. God will have all men to be saved, but, remember, this does not make men safe. . . .

"Predestination, as a belief, has different definitions according to the different views -- extreme or limited -- of the different groups who hold them. Creeds have been built up round their different notions. There are two outstanding views, which may be stated as follows:

1. God predestinates some to be saved and some to be lost. This fixes the destiny of all at the time of the predestinating process, which occurred in eternity past.
2. God predestinates only some to be saved, and those who are or will be lost have not been predestinated to be so, the loss being only resultant, not intentional.

"Another definition connects predestination with conformity to Christ as its object, and does not attach it fatalistically to salvation as an objective. This aspect can be stated thus:

3. Predestination is the determination of God to make men like Christ because they believe in Him, and not to make men believe in Him because they are meant to be like Him. . . .

"When we consider the kindred truths of God's election and predestination we find they both depend upon foreknowledge. Notice --

1. 'Elect according to the foreknowledge of God' (1 Pet. 1:2).
2. 'Whom He did foreknow He also did predestinate (Rom. 8:29).

"If we will but 'think on these things' we will see the truth to be simple, sublime and satisfactory. Observe --

1. Not 'Foreknown according to the election of God.'
2. Not 'Whom He did predestinate them also He did foreknow.'

"We can thus see that God's foreknowledge is the simple, sublime and satisfactory explanation to faith of God's predestinating purpose. How this fact resolves all perplexities! How this revelation simplifies all things! Removes all queries and doubts. Casts down vain imaginations and religious vanity and intolerance.

"Foreknowledge is FIRST!

"First in priority.

"First in principle.

"Not 'Whom He did predestinate them also He did foreknow,' this would have broken our hearts; but 'Whom he did foreknow them also He did predestinate.' This enlightens our spiritual understanding and makes us realize the wisdom and the warrant of God in saving men by faith. . . .

"Predestination, then, in these mentions and associations, is not such a misgiving fatalistic word after all, for it is His determination to place us in full privilege of sonship, and finally in this circle of sonship stamp the family likeness and perpetuate the image of His Son.

"Definitions

1. Foreknowledge -- The ordinary process of God's prescience. The simple foreknowing of God. not the deliberate intention or determination to know but the attributional necessity of God's omniscience which preknows all things.

2. Election -- The choice of God in accepting in Christ those whom He hath foreknown in Christ not making or causing them to believe, because He hath chosen them; but causing Himself to choose because they believe.

3. Predestination -- The determination of God to do something for them whom He hath foreknown and chosen IN CHRIST.

"The knowledge of those who would accept Christ could not be shut out of the omniscience and omnipresence of God: and knowing them beforehand He determined beforehand to do something for them. This was His purpose, and putting that purpose into practice was His predestination. . . .

-- Predestination (New York: Loizeaux Brothers, inc., n.d.), pp. 1-4, 6, 10-13.

5. In the writings of Jerome Zanchius

"The term election, that so very frequently occurs in Scripture, is there taken in a fourfold sense, and most commonly signifies (1) 'That eternal, sovereign, unconditional, particular and immutable act of God where He selected some from among all mankind and of every nation under heaven to be redeemed and everlastingly saved by Christ.'

"(2) it sometimes and more rarely signifies 'that gracious and almighty act of the Divine Spirit, whereby God actually and visibly separates His elect from the world by effectual calling.' . . . Of this our Lord makes mention: 'Because I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you' (John 15:19) Where it should seem the choice spoken of does not refer so much to God's eternal, immanent act of election as His open manifest one, whereby He powerfully and efficaciously called the disciples forth from the world of the unconverted, and quickened them from above in conversion.

"(3) By election is sometimes meant, 'God's taking a whole nation, community or body of men into external covenant with Himself by giving them the advantage of revelation, or His written word, as the rule of their belief and practice, when other nations are without it.' In this sense the whole body of the Jewish nation was indiscriminately called elect, because that 'unto them were committed the oracles of God.' (Deut. 7:6) Now all that are thus elected are not therefore necessarily saved, but many of them may be, and are, reprobates, as those of whom our Lord says (Matt. 13:20), that they 'hear the word, and anon with joy receive it,' etc.

"(4) And, lastly, election sometimes signifies 'the temporary designation of some person or persons to the filling up some particular station in the visible church or office in civil life.' so Judas was chosen to the apostleship (John 6:70), and Saul to be king of Israel (1 Sam. 10:24). . . .

"On the contrary, reprobation denotes either (1) God's eternal preterition of some men, when He chose others to glory, and His predestination of them to fill up the measure of their iniquities and then to receive the just punishment of their crimes, even 'destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power.' This is the primary, most obvious and most frequent sense in which the word is used. it may likewise signify (2) God's forbearing to call by His grace those whom He hath thus ordained to condemnation, but this is only a temporary preterition, and a consequence of that which was from eternity. (3) And, lastly, the word may be taken in another sense as denoting God's refusal to grant to some nations the light of the Gospel revelation. This may be considered as a kind of national reprobation, which yet does not imply that every individual person who lives in such a country must therefore unavoidably perish for ever, any more than that every individual who lives in a land called Christian is therefore in a state of salvation. There are, no doubt, elect persons among the former as well as reprobate ones among the latter. . . .

"When foreknowledge is ascribed to God, the word imports (1) that general prescience whereby He knew from all eternity both what He Himself would do, and what His creatures, in consequence of His efficacious and permissive decree, should do likewise. The Divine foreknowledge, considered in this view, is absolutely universal; it extends to all beings that did, do, or ever shall exist, and to all actions that ever have been, that are or shall be done, whether good or evil, natural, civil or moral. (2) The word often denotes that special prescience which has for its objects His own elect, and them alone, whom He is in a peculiar sense said to know and foreknow (Psa. 1:6; John 10:27; 2 Tim 2:19; Rom. 8:29, 1 Peter 1:2), and this knowledge is connected with, or rather the same with love, favour and approbation.

"We come now to consider the meaning of the word predestination, and how it is taken in Scripture. The verb predestinate is of Latin original, and signifies, in that tongue, to deliberate beforehand with one's self how one shall act; and in consequence of such deliberation to constitute, foreordain and predetermine where, when, how, and by whom anything shall be done, and to what end it shall be done.

"But, that we may more justly apprehend the import of this word, and the ideas intended to be conveyed by it, it may be proper to observe that the term predestination, theologically taken, admits of a fourfold definition, and may be considered as (1) 'that eternal, most wise and immutable decree of God, whereby He did from before all time determine and ordain to create, dispose of and direct to some particular end every person and thing to which He has given, or is yet to give, being, and to make the whole creation subservient to and declarative of His own glory.' Of this decree actual providence is the execution. (2) Predestination may be considered as relating generally to mankind, and them only; and in this view we define it to be 'the everlasting, sovereign and invariable purpose of God, whereby He did determine within Himself to create Adam in His own image and likeness, and then to permit his fall; and to suffer him thereby to plunge himself and his whole posterity' (inasmuch as they all sinned in him, not only virtually, but also federally and representatively) 'into the dreadful abyss of sin, misery, and death.'

(3) Consider predestination as relating to the elect only, and it is 'that eternal, unconditional, particular and irreversible act of the Divine will whereby, in matchless love and adorable sovereignty, God determined with Himself to deliver a certain number of Adam's degenerate offspring out of that sinful and miserable estate into which, by his primitive transgression, they were to fall,' and in which sad condition they were equally involved, with those who were not chosen; but, being pitched upon and singled out by God the Father to be vessels of grace and salvation (not for anything in them that could recommend them to His favour or entitle them to His notice, but merely because He would show Himself gracious to them), they were, in time, actually redeemed by Christ, are effectually called by His Spirit, justified, adopted, sanctified, and preserved safe to His heavenly kingdom. The supreme end of this decree is the manifestation of His own infinitely glorious and amiably tremendous perfections; the inferior or subordinate end is the happiness and salvation of them who are thus freely elected. (4) Predestination, as it regards the reprobate, is 'that eternal, most holy, sovereign and Immutable act of God's will, whereby He hath determined to leave some men to perish in their sins, and to be justly punished for them.'

-- "The Doctrine of Absolute Predestination" in
Absolute Predestination (Grand Rapids: Sovereign
Grace Publishers, 1971), pp. 44-50.

B. Development of the Doctrine

Question 7 of the *Westminster Shorter Catechism* asks, "What are the decrees of God?" and answers, "The decrees of God are his eternal purpose, according to the counsel of his will, whereby, for his own glory, he hath foreordained whatsoever comes to pass."

in this statement God is spoken of as foreordaining all things. Foreordination refers to God's decrees concerning all things. God foreordains to cause some things; others He foreordains to permit.

Predestination has to do with that aspect of God's foreordination that pertains to salvation, and includes election (His predestination of those fallen men upon whom He determines to bestow His favor and grace) and reprobation (His predestination of those fallen men whom He determines to pass by and justly condemn for their sins).

Accordingly, the following may serve as an outline of these concepts:

Foreordination (God's purpose as respects all events)

Predestination (God's purpose as respects salvation)

1. Election

2. Reprobation

a. Preterition

b. Precondemnation

1. Election

a. Definition

(1) According to Louis Berkhof, Election is "that eternal act of God whereby He, in His sovereign good pleasure, and on account of no foreseen merit in them, chooses a certain number of men to be the recipients of special grace and of eternal salvation."

-- *Systematic Theology* Fourth Edition (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1959), p. 114.

(2) According to Abraham Booth, God, "having determined to create man and to leave him to the freedom of his own will, foreseeing he would certainly fall; of his free distinguishing love, chose a certain number out of the apostate race of Adam, and ordained them to a participation of grace here, and to the enjoyment of glory hereafter. in the execution of which purpose, by means every way becoming himself, he determined to glorify all his infinite excellencies. Such is that immanent act of God which is commonly called election, . . ."

-- *The Reign of Grace* (Swengel, PA: Bible Truth Depot, n.d.) p. 55.

b. Scriptures pertinent to the doctrine

(1) Romans 8:28-30

"And we are knowing that for those who are loving God, for those who are called according to (His) purpose (πρόθεσιν), all things are working together for good. For whom He foreknew (προέγνω), He also predetermined (προώρισεν) to share the likeness (συμμόρφους) of the image of His Son, in order that He

may be the first born among many brothers. And whom He predetermined (προώρισεν), these He also called (ἐκάλεσεν) And whom He called, these He also justified, and whom He justified, these He also glorified (ἐδόξασεν)."

DIAGRAMS OF POSSIBLE SCENARIA OF ROMANS 8:29-30

Symbols Identifying Classes of Human Beings

Circles represent classes of human beings; all members of a given class fall within the circle that represents that class.

Letters identify the human beings in a given class, as follows:

F = whom He foreknew

P = whom He predestinated

C = whom He called

J =whom He justified

G = whom He glorified

Assumptions

1. Since infants and severely retarded persons incapable of grasping the rational content of saving faith are not in view in Paul's line of thought, they are not included in these diagrams.
2. The efficacious call assumes as logically prior the outward call of the gospel.

DIAGRAM Ii (understands foreknowledge as prior knowledge of fellowship, and calling as the efficacious call)

DIAGRAMS

DIAGRAM #1 (understands foreknowledge as prior knowledge of fellowship, and calling as the efficacious call)



Problems: none

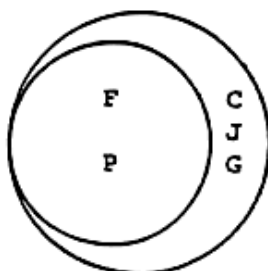
DIAGRAM #2 (understands foreknowledge as prior cognitive knowledge of a person's favorable response to the gospel, and calling as the efficacious call)



Problems:

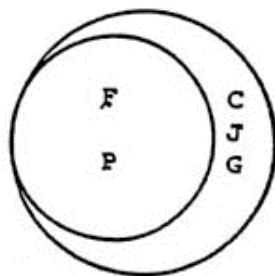
- (1) Knowledge of a person's favorable response to the gospel must be implied in the text
- (2) If predestination is conditioned on foreseen favorable human response to the gospel, then how can the call be efficacious, i.e., not conditioned on favorable human response, but actually securing it. There appears to be a contradiction here.

DIAGRAM #3 (understands foreknowledge as prior knowledge of fellowship, and calling as the outward call of the gospel)



Problem: All those outwardly called by the gospel are justified, which is contrary to both Scripture and experience.

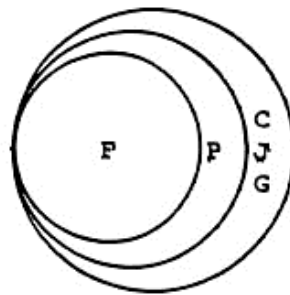
DIAGRAM #4 (understands foreknowledge as prior cognitive knowledge of a person's favorable response to the gospel, and calling as the outward call of the gospel)



Problems:

- (1) Knowledge of a person's favorable response to the gospel must be implied in the text.
- (2) All those outwardly called by the gospel are justified, which is contrary to both Scripture and experience.

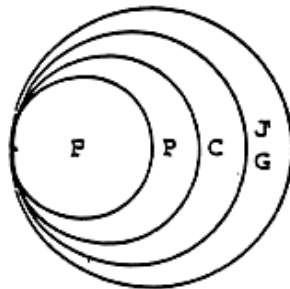
DIAGRAM #5 (understands foreknowledge as prior cognitive knowledge of a person's favorable response to the gospel, and calling as the outward call of the gospel)



Problems:

- (1) Knowledge of a person's favorable response to the gospel must be implied in the text.
- (2) Some persons are predestinated in spite of their unfavorable response to the gospel.
- (3) All those outwardly called by the gospel are justified, which is contrary to both Scripture and experience.

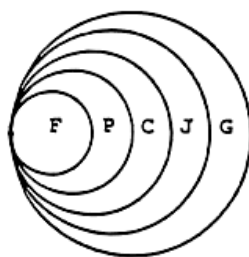
DIAGRAM #6 (understands foreknowledge as prior cognitive knowledge of a person's favorable response to the gospel, and calling as the outward call of the gospel)



Problems:

- (1) Knowledge of a person's favorable response to the gospel must be implied in the text.
- (2) Some persons are predestinated in spite of their unfavorable response to the gospel.
- (3) All those outwardly called by the gospel are justified, which is contrary to both Scripture and experience.
- (4) Some persons are justified who do not hear the gospel.

DIAGRAM #7 (understands foreknowledge as prior cognitive knowledge of a person's favorable response to the gospel, and calling as the outward call of the gospel)



Problems:

- (1) Knowledge of a person's favorable response to the gospel must be implied in the text.
- (2) Some persons are predestinated in spite of their unfavorable response to the gospel.
- (3) All those outwardly called by the gospel are justified, which is contrary to both Scripture and experience.
- (4) Some persons are justified who do not hear the gospel.
- (5) Some persons are glorified who are not justified.

(2) Romans 9:1-29

- 1 I am telling the truth in Christ, I am not lying, my conscience bearing me witness in the Holy Spirit,
- 2 that I have great sorrow and unceasing grief in my heart.
- 3 For I could wish that I myself were accursed, separated from Christ for the sake of my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh,
- 4 who are Israelites, to whom belongs the adoption as sons and the glory and the covenants and the giving of the Law and the temple service and the promises,
- 5 whose are the fathers, and from whom is the Christ according to the flesh, who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen.
- 6 But it is not as though the word of God has failed. For they are not all Israel who are descended from Israel;
- 7 neither are they all children because they are Abraham's descendants, but: "Through Isaac your descendants will be named."
- 8 That is, it is not the children of the flesh who are children of God, but the children of the promise are regarded as descendants.
- 9 For this is a word of promise: "At this time I will come, and Sarah shall have a son."
- 10 And not only this, but there was Rebekah also, when she had conceived twins by one man, our father Isaac;
- 11 for though the twins were not yet born, and had not done anything good or bad, in order that God's purpose according to His choice might stand, not because of works, but because of Him who calls,
- 12 it was said to her, "The older will serve the younger."
- 13 Just as it is written, "Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated."
- 14 What shall we say then? There is no injustice with God, is there? May it never be!
- 15 For He says to Hoses, "I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion."

- 16 So then it does not depend on man who wills or the man who runs, but God who has mercy.
- 17 For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, "For this very purpose I raised you up, to demonstrate My power in you, and that My name might be proclaimed throughout the whole earth."
- 18 So then He has mercy on whom He desires, and He hardens whom He desires.
- 19 You will say to me then, " Why does He still find fault? For who resists His will?
- 20 On the contrary, who are you, O man, who answers back to God? The thing molded will not say to the molder, "Why did you make me like this," will it?
- 21 Or does not the potter have a right over the clay, to make from the same lump one vessel for honorable use, and another for common use?
- 22 What if God, although willing to demonstrate His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction?
- 23 And He did so in order the He might make known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy, which He prepared beforehand for glory,
- 24 even us, whom He also called, not from among Jews only, but also from among Gentiles.
- 25 As He says also in Hosea, "I will call those who were not My people, 'My people', And her who was not beloved, 'Beloved'."
- 26 "And it shall be that in the place where it was said to them, 'You are not My people,' There they shall be called sons of the living God."
- 27 And Isaiah cries out concerning Israel, "Though the number of the sons of Israel be as the sand of the sea, it is the remnant that will be saved;
- 28 For the Lord will execute His word upon the earth, thoroughly and quickly."
- 29 And just as Isaiah foretold, "Except the Lord of Sabaoth had left to us a posterity, We would have become as Sodom, and would have resembled Gomorrah."

Analysis of the Passage.

Theme: it is God's sovereign choice, either to show mercy or to harden

Examples of God's exercise of His sovereign choice:

- (1) God chose Abraham, and showed mercy to him
- (2) God chose Isaac rather than Ishmael, and showed mercy to him (vss. 7, 9)
- (3) God chose Jacob rather than Esau, and showed mercy to him (vss. 10-13)
- (4) God chose Moses and the nation of Israel, rather than Pharaoh and the nation of Egypt; and He showed mercy to Moses and Israel, but hardened Pharaoh and Egypt (vss. 15-18)

- (5) God chose the godly remnant of Israel, those who were true Israelites, who were both physical and spiritual descendants of Jacob, and showed mercy to them (vas. 6, 8, 27-29)
- (6) God chose individual Jews and Gentiles, and shows mercy to them by calling them to Himself and destining them for glory (vss. 14, 19-26)

Thrust of the passage:

- (1) Paul distinguishes between three classes of Abraham's descendants: physical descendants, physical descendants of promise, and physical descendants of promise who are also spiritual descendants. Each succeeding class is smaller than the previous one.
 - (2) Paul argues that not all physical descendants are descendants of promise. For example, not all of Abraham's physical children are inheritors of the Abrahamic covenant of promise. Isaac is, but Ishmael is not. Not all of Isaac's physical children are inheritors of the Abrahamic covenant of promise. Jacob is, but Esau is not. The difference lies in God's sovereign choice. He chooses Isaac; He chooses Jacob.
 - (3) Paul further argues that not all of the physical descendants of Jacob/Israel were also spiritual descendants, even though they were all descendants of the Abrahamic covenant of promise ratified with Jacob/Israel. He says, "they are not all Israel who are descended from Israel." This points to the fact that within the nation of Israel there was always a godly remnant according to God's sovereign and gracious choice.
 - (4) Paul wants us to understand that God's choice of nations or individuals for His mercy is based on His purpose (verse 11), and His desire (verse 18), and His will (verse 19); not on man's works (verse 11), or on man's will (verse 16), or on man's efforts (verse 16).
 - (5) Believing Jews and Gentiles today are vessels of God's mercy, whom He sovereignly chose for mercy, prepared beforehand for glory, and calls by His word and Spirit (verses 23-24).
- (3) Romans 11:1-7
- 1 I say then, God has not rejected His people, has He? May it never be! For I too am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin.
 - 2 God has not rejected His people whom He foreknew. Or do you not know what the Scripture says in the passage about Elijah, how he pleads with God against Israel?
 - 3 "Lord, they have killed Thy prophets, they have torn down Thine altars, and I alone am left, and they are seeking my life."

- 4 But what is the divine response to him? "I have kept for Myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal."
- 5 in the same way then, there has also come to be at the present time a remnant according to God's gracious choice.
- 6 But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works, otherwise grace is no longer grace.
- 7 What then? That which Israel is seeking for, it has not obtained, but those who were chosen obtained it, and the rest were hardened;"

Analysis of the Passage

(1) Paul asserts that God has not rejected His people Israel, and as evidence of that assertion he points to himself and says, 'God has not rejected me.' How shall we understand this? is Paul speaking of the nation of Israel as a whole or of the whole nation of (individual) Israelites? is he speaking of a temporary rejection or a final rejection?

HAS GOD REJECTED HIS PEOPLE?

Meanings of God's People?	Temporary Rejection?	Permanent Rejection?
The nation of Israel as a whole?	YES	NO
The whole nation of Israelites?	NO	NO

(2) Paul distinguishes between the nation of Israel as a whole and godly individuals within the nation. Just as God graciously chose the nation to be the special recipient of His national favor, so He graciously chose the remnant of godly individuals to be the special recipients of His individual favor.

(3) Paul makes a comparison and says that just as there was a godly remnant of Israelites in the days of Elijah, so there is a godly remnant of Israelites at the present time. And just as the remnant in Elijah's day was according to God's gracious choice, so it is today. Those Israelites who are seeking to establish righteousness by their own efforts have not obtained it, but those who were graciously chosen by God have obtained it.

(4) Ephesians 1:3-14

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly (places) in Christ, even as He chose (ἐξελέξατο) us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and faultless before Him in love, having predetermined (προορίσας) us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Him, according to the good pleasure (εὐδοκίαν) of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace,

which He bestowed on us freely (ἐχαρίωσεν) in the beloved, in whom we are having the redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of trespasses, according to the riches of His grace, which He provided in abundance for us in all wisdom and insight, having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He intended (προέθετο) in Him, to an administration of the fullness of times, the summing up of all things in Christ, the things in heavens and the things upon the earth, in Him, in whom also we were made an inheritance (ἐκληρώθημεν), having been predetermined (προορισθέντες) according to (His) purpose (πρόθεσιν), the one who makes all things work according to the plan (βουλὴν) of His will (θελήματος), to the end that we, the first to hope in Christ, should be to the praise of His glory, in whom you also, having heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, in whom also having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the pledge of our inheritance, unto the redemption of the possession, to the praise of His glory."

(5) 2 Thess. 2:13-14

"But we are obligated to give thanks to God at all times for you, brothers beloved by the Lord, because God chose (εἰλατο) (1 aor. mid. fr. αἰρέω) you first fruits unto salvation by sanctifying of the spirit and belief of the truth, unto which He called you through our gospel, unto the gaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ."

(6) 2 Timothy 1:8-10

"Do not therefore be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner; undergo your share of suffering for the gospel according to the power of God, who saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works but according to (His) own purpose (πρόθεσιν) and grace, which was given (δοθεῖσαν) (1 aor. pass part. acc. sing. fern., fr. δίδωμι) us in Christ Jesus before ages of times (πρὸ χρόνων αἰωνίων), but has now been revealed by the appearance of our Savior Christ Jesus, who destroyed death and brought to light life and immortality through the gospel."

(7) 1 Peter 1:1-2

"Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ to the resident aliens of the diaspora of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, elect ones (ἐκλεκτοῖς) according to foreknowledge (πρόγνωσιν) of God the Father, by sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ. Grace and peace be multiplied to you."

(8) Various Scriptures which speak of the names of believers recorded in the Book of Life:

- (a) Luke 10:20 -- "However, do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are in subjection to you, but rejoice that your names have been inscribed (ἐγγέγραπται [pert. ind. pass fr. ἐγγράφω]) in the heavens."

- (b) Phil. 4:3 -- "Indeed, I ask you also, loyal comrade, assist those (women) who have labored with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names (are) in the book of life."
- (c) Rev. 3:5 -- "The one who overcomes in this way shall be clothed in white garments, and I will positively not (οὐ μὴ) remove his name from the book of life, and I will confess his name before my Father and before His angels."

Note: H. E. Dana and Julius R. Mantey, in their *Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament* (New York: Macmillan, 1950), pp. 266-267, state: p 41 "In the WH. text the combination οὐ μὴ occurs ninety six times. With the light that the papyri have thrown upon this doubling of the negatives we can now say unreservedly that the negatives were doubled for the purpose of stating denials or prohibitions emphatically. . . . people used the doubling of negatives for making categorical and emphatic denials"

- (d) Rev. 13:8 -- "And all those who are dwelling upon the earth will worship him (the beast), (every one) whose name has not been written (γέγραπται [perf. md. pass.]) from the foundation (καταβολῆς) of the world in the book of life of the slaughtered lamb (τοῦ ἀρνίου τοῦ ἐσφαγμένου [perf. pass. part. fr. σφάζω]).
Note: it is also possible to translate, "whose name has not been written in the book of life of the lamb, the one having been slaughtered from the foundation of the world."
- (e) Rev. 17:8 -- "The beast which you saw was and is not, and is about to ascend from the abyss, and to depart unto destruction. And those who dwell upon the earth will be filled with wonder, whose name has not been written (γέγραπται) upon the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they see the beast, because he was and is not and will come."
- (f) Rev. 20:15 -- "And if anyone was not found having been written (γεγραμμένος [perf. pass. part. γράφω]) in the book of life, he was cast into the lake of fire."
- (g) Rev. 21:27 -- "And there shall definitely not enter into it (the holy city) anything unclean, or those practicing idolatry or falsehood; only those having been written (γεγραμμένοι) [perf. pass. part. fr. γράφω]) in the book of life of the lamb."
- (h) Note: Rev. 22:19 does not speak of the book of life, but the tree of life, and warns that "if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his part from the tree of life and out of the holy city, those having been written in this book."

c. Principles derived from these Scriptures

(1) Election is a choice, made by God before the foundation of the world and in close connection with Christ, of some fallen human beings, called the elect.

(2) Predestination (of the elect) is a predetermination, made by God before the foundation of the world, that those fallen human beings whom He chose would be conformed to Christ's Image, and would receive all antecedent and subsequent concomitant blessings.

(3) Both election and predestination arose out of God's gracious love and favor, which He freely bestowed upon those fallen human beings thus elected and predestinated.

(4) God's choice and predetermination of certain fallen human beings was according to His sovereign purpose and good pleasure, not according to their foreseen good works, nor according to anything good or evil which God foresaw they would do.

(5) God's choice and predetermination are made effectual in time by the means which He appointed, including the incarnation, atonement, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ; the preaching and hearing of the gospel of truth; calling, regeneration, faith, justification, adoption, sealing by the Spirit, progressive sanctification, obedience of life, and glorification.

d. Various views relating foreknowledge to election

View #1 -- Foreknowledge (of cognition) of favorable response to the gospel as the basis of election.

This view holds that, by simple prescience, God foreknew which persons would make a favorable response to the external call of the gospel, and that on the basis of this foreknowledge He elected and predestinated these persons to salvation. Two problems arise in connection with this view:

[1] The problem of depravity

Critics of this view point to many scriptural expressions regarding the spiritual condition of fallen man, and ask, "How can God foresee anything but an unfavorable response from one whose understanding is darkened, who does not accept the things of the Spirit of God and cannot understand them, who is turned to his own way, whose will is in bondage to sin, who does not seek after God, whose every faculty is depraved, who is dead in trespasses and sins, who is spiritually dead, who is hostile toward God, and who cannot please God?"

[2] The problem of a precise definition of and a scriptural basis for prevenient grace

Proponents of this view usually admit the force of the problem of depravity, but urge in favor of its modification the factor of prevenient

grace. This grace, which does not in itself save, makes it possible, when a man comes in contact with the gospel call, to respond favorably. In order to do this, however, the effects of depravity must somehow be sufficiently overcome to place a man in a neutral stance *vis a vis* the gospel. But what does this actually imply? Does it mean that his understanding is momentarily quickened, that his will is briefly turned from his own way, that the shackles of his bondslavery to sin are momentarily loosened, that he is given enough spiritual life for a brief movement, however slight and faltering, toward God, that his hostility to God is temporarily suspended, and that he can do one small thing to please God? Any proposal of prevenient grace must face and attempt to give meaningful answers to questions such as these. In other words, one who posits some kind of modification of nature or force of depravity must become specific, in terms of the human faculties or powers particularly affected by such modification.

The other aspect of this problem concerns the seeming absence of a scriptural basis for prevenient grace, except in terms of implications which some have drawn from their constructions of certain biblical doctrines. All introduction or postulation of "our sense of justice", or of "our sense of fairness", or of "the demand of the human heart" as a basis for this doctrine must be analyzed and evaluated in the light of God's revelation. The question must be, "How are justice and fairness and the needs of the human heart defined in the Scriptures?" Having ascertained the answers, we must bring our conceptions and convictions into line with those definitions, not the other way around!

View #2 -- Foreknowledge (of fellowship) of elect fallen men as the basis of predestination

This view holds that, by a knowledge of love, favor, and personal choice, God foreknew those persons whom He had chosen, and that on the basis of this foreknowledge He predestinated these persons to salvation. Two problems arise in connection with this view:

[1] The problem of a special use of the word "foreknow"

Critics of this view point to the five uses of προγινώσκω and two uses of προγνώσις in the New Testament and ask for a clear case of "prior personal knowledge of choice or favor" as the meaning of any of these uses, instead of a simple "prior knowledge of cognition of facts" as the meaning in all of them.

It is to be admitted that simple knowledge of cognition appears to be intended in the uses of προγινώσκω in Acts 26:5 ("since they [the Jews] have known about me for a long time previously, if they are willing to testify, that I lived as a Pharisee according to the strictest sect of our religion"); 1 Peter 1:20 ("For He [Christ] was foreknown before the foundation of the world, but has appeared in these last times for the sake of you"); and 2 Peter 3:17 ("You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, be on your guard lest, being carried away by the error of unprincipled men, you fall from your own steadfastness"); and in the use of προγνώσις in Acts 2:23 ("this man [Jesus], delivered up by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put him to death"). And, of course, in the two Scriptures which relate election or predestination and foreknowledge --

Romans 8:29 ("For whom He foreknew, He also predestined. . ."); and 1 Peter 1:1 2 (" . . . who are chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father . . .") -- the exact meaning of foreknowledge is the point at issue. However, in Romans 11:2, we seem to have a different kind of use. Paul says, "God has not rejected His people whom He foreknew." This is said in response to the question in verse 1 "I say then, God has not rejected His people, has He? May it never be! For I too am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. God has not rejected His people whom He foreknew." This reference to God's knowing His people before recalls the statement made in Amos 3:2 "Only you [Israel] have I known (יָדָעַתִּי) of all the peoples of the earth." There is obviously something other than simple knowledge of cognition intended in this statement, for God knows all the other peoples of the world equally well in that sense. What, then, can it mean?

This brings into play the distinction between knowledge of personal acquaintance and factual knowledge, between knowledge of fellowship and cognitive knowledge, between knowledge of love or favor based upon choice and knowledge of simple apprehension of mental or physical objects. The difference may be seen in two ways of knowing persons: one may know many facts about a person, but may not personally know that person. Even if one has met that person, one may not feel able to claim that he personally knows that person (enjoys a personal relationship with him).

The Scriptures employ this distinction often. The Hebrew word יָדָעַתִּי and the Greek words γινώσκω and οἶδα are used in a number of instances in the sense of personal knowledge of fellowship, love, or favor. The following Scriptures will serve to illustrate this point.

Judges 2:10 -- "And all that generation also were gathered to their fathers; and there arose another generation after them who did not know (יָדָעַתִּי) the Lord, nor yet the work which He had done for Israel."

Jeremiah 31:34 -- "And they shall not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, 'Know (יָדָעַתִּי) the Lord,' for they shall all know (יָדָעַתִּי) me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, declares the Lord, for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more."

Matthew 7:23 -- "And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew (γινώσκω) you; depart from me, you who practice lawlessness.' "

John 7:26-29 -- "And look, he is speaking publicly, and they are saying nothing to him. The rulers do not really know (γινώσκω) that this is the Christ, do they? However we know (οἶδα) where this man is from; but whenever the Christ may come, no one knows (γινώσκω) where he is from.' Jesus therefore cried out in the temple, teaching and saying, 'You both know (οἶδα) me, and know (οἶδα) where I am from; and I have not come of myself, but He who sent me is true, whom you do not know (οἶδα). I know (οἶδα) Him; because I am from Him, and He sent me.' "

John 8:14, 18-19 -- "Jesus answered and said to them, 'Even if I bear witness of myself, my witness is true; for I know (οἶδα) where I came from, and where I am going; but you do not know (οἶδα) where I came from, or where I am going.' . . . 'I am He who bears witness of myself, and the Father who sent me bears witness of me.' And so they were saying to Him, 'Where is your father?' Jesus answered, 'You know (οἶδα) neither me, nor my Father; if you knew (οἶδα) me, you would know (οἶδα) my Father also.' "

John 8:54 55 -- "Jesus answered, 'If I glorify myself, my glory is nothing; it is my Father who glorifies me, of whom you say, "He is our

God;" and you have not come to know (γινώσκω) Him, but I know (οἶδα) Him; and if I say that I do not know (οἶδα) Him, I shall be a liar like you, but I do know (οἶδα) Him, and keep His word.' "

John 17:3 -- "And this is eternal life, that they may know (γινώσκω) Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent."

Galatians 4:9 -- "But now that you have come to know (γινώσκω) God, or rather to be known (γινώσκω) by God, how is it that you turn back again to the weak and worthless elemental things, to which you desire to be enslaved all over again?"

Titus 1:16 -- "They profess to know (οἶδα) God, but by their deeds they deny Him, being detestable and disobedient, and worthless for any good deed."

Hebrews 8:11 -- "And they shall not teach every one his fellow-citizen, and every one his brother, saying, 'Know (γινώσκω) the Lord,' For all shall know (οἶδα) me, From the least to the greatest of them."

1 John 3:1 -- "See how great a love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called children of God; and such we are. For this reason the world does not know (γινώσκω) us, because it did not know (γινώσκω) Him."

1 John 4:6-8 -- "We are from God; he who knows (γινώσκω) God listens to us; he who is not from God does not listen to us. By this we know (γινώσκω) the spirit of truth and the spirit of error. Beloved, let us love one another, for, love is from God; and every one who loves is born of God and, knows (γινώσκω) God. The one who does not love does not know (γινώσκω) God, for God is love."

Note: On the distinction between γινώσκω and οἶδα, much has been written. Thayer admits that certain Scriptures "seem to indicate that, sometimes, at least, γινώσκω and οἶδα are nearly interchangeable," but still wishes to retain some distinction. Arndt and Gingrich do not address themselves to the issue. Kittel's *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* states that οἶδα "can also be synonymous γινώσκω; in the abs. use in the koine it is hard to establish any distinction of meaning One must thus beware of pressing the distinctive senses. Thus in Mk. 4:13 ["You do not know (οἶδα) this parable, and how will you know (γινώσκω) all parables"], one can hardly demonstrate any difference, and it is hard to see any distinction in nuance as between Mt. 7:2 ("I never knew (γινώσκω) you") (cf. Lk. 13:27) ("I do not know (οἶδα) where you are from"] and Mt. 25:12 VI do not know (οἶδα) you"]." Kittel also refers to Moulton and Milligan as holding the same view, and to Cremer, who does not. Of course, they only proper way to establish distinction of meaning is by inductive study of each usage of both words. If a distinction can be discovered there, then we have a basis on which to claim and employ it.

This brief study of some of those uses of γινώσκω, and οἶδα in which knowledge of personal relationship is meant (there are a number of such uses) may serve as background for the understanding of this view. Romans 8:29 is understood in this view to mean that those whom God foreknew (προγινώσκω), in the sense of personal fellowship arising from God's loving choice, He also predetermined (προώρισεν) to share the likeness of the Image of His Son. Just as γινώσκω is used in the same sense of knowledge of personal relationship, so it is contended that προγινώσκω is used here in the sense of foreknowledge of personal

relationship. Thus in this view three steps may be distinguished: (1) God decided to bestow His love upon certain fallen men; (2) God foreknew those particular men with the knowledge of personal relationship; (3) God predetermined what He would do for and to those particular men whom He thus foreknew.

However, a difficulty seems to arise in connection with 1 Peter 1:1-2, where Peter writes to those who are "elect ones (ἐκλεκτοῖς), according to foreknowledge (πρόγνωσιν) of God the Father. . ." Here foreknowledge appears to precede election. But how does this order comport with this view's understanding of Romans 8:29? Perhaps Peter is saying that those upon whom God had decided to bestow His love (thereby foreknowing them), He chose to salvation (thereby electing them). This verse would then not conflict with Romans 8:29 if the following order of steps were adopted:

- (1) God decided to bestow His love upon certain fallen men (assumed in both verses in this view's understanding of foreknowledge in this special usage).
- (2) God thus foreknew those particular men with the knowledge of personal relationship (both verses).
- (3) God elected these very men to salvation (1 Peter 1:1-2).
- (4) God predetermined what He would do for and to these men thus foreknown and elected (Romans 8:29).

(2) A second problem that arises upon the adoption of View #2 is that of God's knowing persons who did not as yet exist. That is, we have clear scriptural evidence for the idea of God's knowing existing persons with the knowledge of personal relationship. But these persons were all living at the time God is said to have known them. Against View #2 it is objected that God cannot bestow special love upon or be personally related to as yet nonexistent persons. (How can you love someone who doesn't exist?)

In reply to this objection it is urged that Romans 9:11-13 seems to say that such a thing is possible. Before Jacob and Esau were born, God chose Jacob as Abraham's spiritual descendant. This choice (made before Jacob existed) is described in this passage in terms of God's bestowing His love upon Jacob, as follows: "for though the twins were not yet born, and had not done anything good or bad, in order that God's purpose according to His choice might stand, not because of works, but because of Him who calls, it was said to her [Rebekah], 'The older will serve the younger.' Just as it is written, 'Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated.' " in addition to this passage, Jer. 1:5 and 31:3 are urged. Jer. 1:5 states, "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I have appointed you a prophet to the nations." Jer. 31:3 states, "The Lord appeared to me from afar, saying, 'I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore I have drawn you with lovingkindness.' " To the proponents of this view, these verses (and some other considerations) answer the objection that God cannot know or bestow special love upon persons who only potentially exist.

View #3 -- Foreknowledge (of cognition) of elect fallen men as the basis of predestination.

This view sees foreknowledge in the sense of factual knowledge as coming between God's election of some fallen men to salvation and God's predetermining of them to conformity to Christ. Because God has elected some men, He knows who they are; and these He predestines to become like Christ.

This construct would comport with Rom. 8:29, but appears to have difficulty with 1 Pet. 1:1-2. Rom. 8:29 states, "whom He foreknew, He also predetermined to share the likeness of the Image of His Son." However, as we have previously noted, 1 Pet. 1:1-2 speaks of "elect ones, according to foreknowledge of God the Father." Here foreknowledge appears to be prior to election, instead of consequent upon it. This is seemingly an insuperable difficulty!

View #4 -- Foreknowledge (of personal relationship) of fallen men as the basis of election; foreknowledge (of cognition) of elect fallen men as the basis of predestination. Although at this point the weary scholar may be tempted to apply Occam's razor, yet this view should at least be given a brief perusal.

The view adopts the following order of steps: (see following page)

- (1) God determined to bestow His love upon certain fallen men.
- (2) God foreknew these men with the knowledge of personal relationship.
- (3) God elected these men to salvation.
- (4) God foreknew (factually) that these men were elect ones.
- (5) God predetermined what He would do for and to these men thus foreknown (in both senses) and elected.

This view is a proposal calculated to "fit" all the Biblical data. As such it may be guilty of "multiplying entitles." However, it is really no different from View #2, with the exception that it makes explicit what was already implicit between steps (3) and (4) of View #2. And it has the additional advantages of taking into account both uses of "know" in Scripture, and of comporting with both Rom. 8:29 and 1 Pet. 1:1-2. It is to be admitted that it is the most complicated of these views (a distinct disadvantage when attempting to explain these things to the average Christian); but it certainly avoids the difficulties of View #3, and is perhaps slightly more sweeping in its explanatory power than View #2. And it certainly avoids the problem of overcoming the effects of depravity and the lack of scriptural basis for prevenient grace found in View #1. (Perhaps it was wise, after all, not to have applied Occam's razor too hurriedly!)

BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL CONTEXTUALIZATION OF ROMANS 8:29-30

← ETERNITY PAST →						
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
God decides to create the universe	God decides to permit the Fall of mankind	God decides to give His special love to some fallen individuals	God foreknows (knowledge of fellowship) these individuals	God elects these individuals to be saved from their sin through Christ	God foreknows (knowledge of fact) these individuals as elect	God predestines these individuals to all of the benefits of Christ's Atonement
← TIME-SPACE HISTORY →						
← PAST →	←←←←	PRESENT		→→→→	← FUTURE →	
(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	
Christ accomplishes Atonement to save these individuals	The external call of the gospel comes to these individuals (along with may others)	The internal call of the Holy Spirit comes to these individuals	Saving faith in Christ is exercised by these individuals	Union with Christ, regeneration, justification, adoption as sons, sanctification are received by these individuals	Complete deliverance from sin, complete conformity to Christ, reception of the inheritance, glorification are received by these individuals	

2. Reprobation

a. Definition

(1) According to Louis Berkhof, "Reprobation may be defined as that eternal decree of God whereby He has determined to pass some men by with the operations of His special grace, and to punish them for their sins, to the manifestation of His justice.'

-- *Systematic Theology* Fourth Edition (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1959), p. 116.

(2) According to A. A. Hodge, "Reprobation is the aspect which God's eternal decree presents in its relation to that portion of the human race which shall be finally condemned for their sins.

"It is, 1st, negative, inasmuch as it consists in passing over these, and refusing to elect them to life; and, 2nd, positive, inasmuch as they are condemned to eternal misery.

"In respect to its negative element, reprobation is simply sovereign, since those passed over were no worse than those elected, and the simple reason both for the choosing and for the passing over was the sovereign good pleasure of God.

"In respect to its positive element, reprobation is not sovereign, but simply judicial, because God inflicts misery in any case only as the righteous punishment of sin."

-- *Outlines of Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1957), p. 222.

b. Scriptures pertinent to the doctrine

(1) Romans 9:18, 21-22

"So then He has mercy on whom He desires, and He hardens whom He desires."

"Or does not the potter have a right over the clay, to make from the same lump one vessel for honorable use, and another for common use?

"What if God, although willing to demonstrate His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much patience vessels of wrath having been prepared (κατηρτισμένα -- perf. pass. part. fr. καταρτίζω) for destruction?"

(2) Romans 11:7-10

"What then? That which Israel is seeking for, it has not obtained, but the elect (ἡ ἐκλογὴ) have obtained (it). And the rest were hardened (ἐπωρώθησαν) -- 1st aor. ind. pass. fr. πωρόω) even as it is written, 'God gave them a spirit of stupor, Eyes to see not And ears to hear not Until the present day.' And David says, 'Let their table become a snare and a trap And a stumbling block and a retribution to them. Let their eyes be darkened to see not And their back bowed down in everything.' "

(3) 1 Peter 2:7-8

'This precious value, then, is for you who believe; but for those who do not believe, 'The Stone which the builders rejected This became the very corner stone,' and, 'A stone of stumbling and a rock of offense.'

They stumble, refusing belief in the word, unto which also they were appointed (ἐπέθησαν -- 1st aor. ind. pass. fr. τίθημι."

(4) Jude 4

"For certain persons have crept in unnoticed, those who were long beforehand designated (οἱ πάλαι προγεγραμμένοι -- perf. pass. part. fr. προγράφω) for this condemnation, ungodly persons who turn the grace of our God into licentiousness and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ."

(5) Rev. 17:8, 20:15

"The beast which you saw was and is not, and is about to ascend from the abyss, and to depart to destruction. And those who dwell upon the earth will be filled with wonder, whose name has not been written (γέγραπται) upon the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they see the beast, because he was and is not and will come."

"And if anyone was not found having been written (γεγραμμένος) in the book of life, he was cast into the lake of fire."

c. Principles derived from these Scriptures

(1) Preterition is a determination, made by God before the foundation of the world, to pass by some fallen human beings, called "the rest".

(2) Precondemnation (of "the rest", or nonelect) is a designation, made by God before the foundation of the world, of those fallen human beings whom He passed by to condemnation and destruction for their sins.

(3) Preterition arose out of God's sovereign will, which He exercised in the nonelection of those fallen human beings thus passed by.

(4) Precondemnation arose out of God's wrath, which He manifested in view of the sins of those fallen human beings whom He did not choose to salvation.

(5) God's preterition of certain fallen human beings was according to His sovereign purpose, not according to their foreseen evil works, nor according to anything good or evil which God foresaw they would do.

(6) God's precondemnation of certain fallen human beings was according to His justice, in view of their foreseen sins.

(7) God's preterition and precondemnation are executed, in time, by the means which God appointed, which appointment includes suppression and perversion of external and internal general revelation, stumbling at and disobedience to the Word of special revelation (in the case of those human beings to whom that Word comes), a spirit of spiritual drowsiness, darkening and blindness of the eyes of the spirit and mind, hardening of the heart and will against God and His revelation, and final destruction.

d. Reprobation and its relation to man's deserts and his responsibility for sinfulness

(1) Preterition and fallen man's deserts

It is quite clear that God did not pass by some fallen human beings because they were sinners since all human beings were sinners. Both those whom He elected to salvation and those whom He passed by were sinners. Thus preterition cannot be based upon sin.

If election is unconditional, grounded in the sovereign good pleasure of God, then preterition must also be unconditional, grounded in God's sovereign will.

Sometimes it is contended that if some human beings are chosen to salvation, then all human beings deserve to be chosen; and that if some human beings are passed by, then all human beings deserve to be passed by. Now it should frankly be admitted that all fallen, sinful human beings do deserve to be passed by, and condemned for their sins. However, it is with the former condition that issue must be taken. it should frankly be asserted that, if some human beings are chosen to salvation, it does not follow that all human beings deserve to be chosen. in fact, no fallen human being deserves to be chosen! If fallen, sinful man were to get his just deserts, he would be punished for his sins!

If God, wishing to show His mercy and the exceeding kindness of His grace, chose some from among the whole race of undeserving sinners, then the rest did not, by virtue of that choice, deserve to be chosen also. God's choice of some undeserving sinners still leaves the others undeserving. In fact, it still leaves the chosen ones undeserving! God's choice of unworthy, undeserving sinners is not only an instance of God's sovereignty; it is a manifestation of His grace!

Some people say that if God is going to choose anyone, He should choose everyone; and if He is not going to choose everyone, then He should choose no ones This, they say, is the only way in which God can be fair in His dealings with man.

However, this is not a question of fairness, or justice, or even-handed dealing, or what is equitable. Neither elect sinners nor nonelect sinners deserve anything but wrath and punishment. If God chooses to select some sinners and save them, it is not a question of what is fair it is a manifestation of pure grace! And if God chooses to pass by some sinners and condemn them, it is certainly fair of Him to give them exactly what they deserve. And his justice is evenhanded and equitable! it certainly may not seem fair of Him to save some sinners, and that should be admitted. it is not fair not to give those sinners exactly what they deserve! And yet God is not fair, for He gives them exactly what they do not deserve! instead of wrath He grants them grace; instead of eternal death He gives them eternal life instead of hell (which all sinners deserve), He gives them heaven (which no sinners deserve)!

Some persons have felt strongly that since God's general love in terms of benevolence appears to be bestowed upon all human beings equally (i.e., He causes His sun to shine and His rain to fall upon the just and the unjust alike), therefore his special love in terms of

salvation must also be bestowed upon all human beings equally; and that the only reason why not all human beings experience that special love is that some human beings receive it, and others do not. It would seem very difficult in this conception to avoid the implication that those who receive God's special love deserve in some sense to be saved, and that those who do not receive it deserve to be lost. That is, those who receive God's special love in this view do not really feel that they merit forgiveness of sins or a righteous standing before God or eternal life, or that anyone is really worthy of salvation. They simply feel that if any persons in the world deserve to be saved, it is those who accept God's salvation; and that if any persons in the world deserve to be lost, it is those who refuse it. Once again we must agree that if any persons in the world deserve to be lost, it is those persons who refuse God's gift of salvation.

And yet the fact that they refuse God's salvation is not the basic reason why they deserve to be lost. The basic reason is that they are fallen sinners, lacking original righteousness and possessed of the guilt and depravity of sin. Their refusal of God's salvation is simply one symptom, one expression of their sinfulness, which aggravates their guilt and assists the development of their depravity. They deserve to be lost before they ever hear the gospel or have opportunity to refuse it!

However, at the same time we must also assert that, apart from God's decree of gracious election, together with its powerful application by means of the mighty, life giving, heart-opening work of regeneration by the Spirit of God, all human beings would express their sinfulness in their refusal of God's salvation from sin! And thus all human beings would be lost, and all human beings would deserve to be lost!

Once we are past the question of fairness, we are still left with the question, "Why did God choose to bestow His special grace and love on some persons only, and not on all?" There does not appear to be any answer to this question in Scripture. However, in at least two places we are provided with examples of the kinds of responses which we ought to develop to this problem. The first is found in Matt. 11:25-26:

At that time Jesus answered and said, 'I praise Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that Thou didst hide these things from the wise and intelligent and didst reveal them to babes. Yes, Father for thus it was pleasing in Thy sight.' "

The second example is found in Rom. 11:33-36:

"Oh the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways! For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who became His counsellor? Or who has first given to Him that it might be paid back to Him again? For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen."

(2) Precondemnation and fallen man's responsibility for his sinfulness -- the problem of relating these truths raises two questions:

(a) On what basis does God precondemn some fallen men?

In the supralapsarian view (except for one extreme form), the infralapsarian view, the Amyraldian view, and the sublapsarian view of the decrees of God, the answer to this question is that God precondemns men on the basis of their sin. However, this answer is not sufficiently precise. More specific answers to this question could include the following:

[1] God precondemns men on the basis of their foreseen rejection of Christ as He is revealed in Scripture and presented in the gospel.

Support for this view is found in such Scriptures as John 3:18 and 3:36.

John 3:18 -- "He who believes in Him [Christ] is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God."

John 3:36 -- "He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him."

[2] God precondemns men on the basis of their foreseen sinful attitudes, thoughts, words, and actions.

Support for this view is found in such Scriptures as Matt. 12:37, Rom. 3:5-8, and 2 Cor. 3:7-9.

Matt. 12:37 -- "For by your words you shall be justified, and by your words you shall be condemned."

Rom. 3:5-8 -- "But if our unrighteousness demonstrates the righteousness of God, what shall we say? The God who inflicts wrath is not unrighteous, is He? (I am speaking in human terms.) May it never be! For otherwise how will God judge the world? But if through my lie the truth of God abounded to His glory, why am I also still being judged a sinner? And why not say (as we are slanderously reported and as some affirm that we say), 'Let us do evil that good may come?' Their condemnation is just."

2 Cor. 3:7-9 -- "But if the ministry of death, in letters engraved on stones, came with glory, so that the sons of Israel could not look intently at the face of Moses because of the glory of his face, fading as it was, how shall the ministry of the Spirit fall to be even more with glory? For if the ministry of condemnation has glory, much more does the ministry of righteousness abound in glory."

[3] God precondemns men on the basis of their foreseen suppression, distortion, and perversion of the truth of general revelation.

Support for this view is found in such Scriptures as Rom. 1:18-20 -
- "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse."

[4] God pecondemns men on the basis of their foreseen natural depravity.

Support for this view is found in such Scriptures as Ephesians 2:1-3 -- 'And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.'

[5] God precondemns men on the basis of their foreseen involvement in the results of the fall, which results are visited upon all fallen men.

Support for this view is found in such Scriptures as Ps. 51:5 and Rom. 5:17-19.

Ps. 51:5 -- "Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, And in sin my mother conceived me."

Rom. 5:17-19 -- "For if by the transgression of the one, death reigned through the one, much more those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the one, Jesus Christ. So then as through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men; even so through one act of righteousness there resulted in justification of life to all men. For as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the one the many will be made righteous."

[6] God precondemns men on the basis of their foreseen involvement in the fall and all of its results.

Support for this view is found in Rom. 5:12-19 and in the theological construction of this passage made by both the Federal Headship (Representative) View and the Nature Headship (Realistic) View of the imputation of Adam's sin. (For detailed analysis of the passage and comparison of these views, see the appropriate pages earlier in these Class Notes)

Rom. 5:12-19 -- "Therefore even as by one man sin entered the world, and because of sin, death; and in this way death passed over to all men, in that all sinned. For until (the) Law sin was in (the) world; but sin is not charged to one's account when there is not law. But death ruled from Adam until Moses, even upon those who did not sin after the likeness of the disobedience of Adam, who is (the) type of the coming one. But not as the transgression, so also the gift. For if by the transgression of one the many died, much more the grace of God and the gift of grace, that of the one man Jesus Christ, overflowed to the many. And the gift is not as by one who sinned. For on the one hand the judgment is of one (transgression) unto condemnation, and on the other hand the gift is of many transgressions unto justification. For if by the transgression of the one, death ruled through the one, much more those receiving the overflow of grace and the gift of righteousness shall rule in life through the one, Jesus Christ. consequently therefore as by one righteous deed (there came) unto

all men condemnation, thus also by one righteous deed (there came) unto all men justification of life. For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of one the many shall be made righteous."

This view stresses in this passage the truths taught in verse 12 that in some sense all sinned when one sinned; and that the entrance of death into the world and the passing over of death to all men are one event, which occurred at the fall. Both the Natural Headship View and the Federal Headship View hold that the entire race sinned in Adam (who was either its natural head or its federal representative or both), and that thus the whole race became guilty, corrupt, and condemned to death.

[7] God precondemns men on the basis of their predetermined sinfulness and lost condition

Support for this view is found in such Scriptures as Rom. 9:20-22 - "On the contrary, who are you, O man, who answers back to God? The thing molded will not say to the molder, 'Why did you make me like this,' will it? Or does not the potter have a right over the clay, to make from the same lump one vessel for honorable use, and another for common use? What if God, although willing to demonstrate His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction?"

(b) The second question raised by the problem of relating the truths of precondemnation and fallen man's responsibility for his sinfulness is this: How can fallen man's responsibility for his sinfulness be fixed and maintained, so that God's precondemnation may be seen to be a decree arising out of His justice?

This question of human responsibility is highly complex. First of all the term itself must be carefully defined. The statement "he is responsible" may mean (at least):

1. "he is the one in whom authority resides"
2. "he is the one who is accountable"; i.e., able to be called to account for an action, an event, or a state of affairs, whether he or someone under his authority did it or brought it about.
3. "he is obligated to do it or not to do it"
4. "he can be depended upon"
5. "he did it"
6. "he is the chargeable/creditable cause of an action, an event, or a state of affairs"

Human responsibility for sinfulness, in this discussion, is used in the sense of the sixth meaning. The question is, How can fallen man's chargeableness (or blameworthiness) for his sinfulness be fixed and maintained? To assist us in answering this question, let us relate the discussion to the various bases for precondemnation mentioned above.

[1] Can man's responsibility for his sinfulness (and thus his precondemnation) be fixed on the basis of man's foreseen rejection of Christ?

The major difficulty with this solution is that not all men have the gospel presented to them, nor have all men come into contact with the revelation of Christ in Scripture. If the nonelect were precondemned on this basis, how then could those who have never heard of Christ be precondemned? it is of course possible from this consideration to move directly to a position in which all those who have never heard the gospel are included among the elect (which would have curious implications for missions or for evangelism in general); or to move more indirectly to a position which includes the following steps: (1) prevenient grace is bestowed upon all men; (2) God knows which men would accept Christ if given the opportunity; (3) God makes certain that all who would accept Christ are given opportunity to hear the gospel; (4) God precondemns those whom He foreknows will reject the gospel and those whom He foreknows would reject it if they were presented with it. In the latter position responsibility (blameworthiness) for fallen man's rejection of Christ would certainly seem to be fixed; but the problem of depravity and the problem of a precise definition of, and scriptural basis for, prevenient grace still remain to be resolved.

[2] Can man's responsibility for his sinfulness (and thus his precondemnation) be fixed on the basis of man's foreseen attitudes, thoughts, words, and actions?

The major question in this view is this: How do man's attitudes, thoughts, words, and actions relate to human depravity? is there a vital connection which cannot be ignored in any attempt to fix responsibility?

In Matt. 7:17-18 Jesus says, "Even so every good tree bears good fruit; but the rotten tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot produce bad fruit, nor a rotten tree produce good fruit." And in Luke 6:43-45 He says, "For there is no good tree which produces bad fruit; nor on the other hand, a bad tree which produces good fruit. For each tree is known by its own fruit. For men do not gather figs from thorns, nor do they pick grapes from a briar bush. The good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth what is good; and the evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth what is evil; for his mouth speaks from that which fills his heart."

Now it is to be affirmed that fallen men are responsible for their sinful attitudes, thoughts, words, and actions. Responsibility in that sense is not affected by the abovementioned connection. The issue here is that of the connection between what a man does and what a man is, between human conduct and human character, between man's sinful actions and man's sinful nature. And the resolution of this issue is simply that a man does what he is. That is, men act, not contrary to, but in accordance with, their nature.

If therefore, when a fallen man acts, he acts in accordance with his sinful nature, and thus produces sinful actions; then the question of fixing responsibility has only been partially answered when we say that fallen men are responsible for their sinful attitudes, thoughts, words, and actions. Blameworthiness for their precondemnation must have a broader and more ultimate basis.

[3] Can man's responsibility for his sinfulness (and thus his precondemnation) be fixed on the basis of man's suppression, distortion, and perversion of the truth of general revelation?

There is no question whatever that fallen man is blameworthy and inexcusable and culpable for what he does with the truth of God's works of creation and providence, and the truths of the attributes of God which are constantly being revealed by means of the visible things which He has made. The major problem with making this response to general revelation the basis of precondemnation in order to fix man's responsibility appears to lie in the connection between man's sinful response and the noetic effects of sin. For when man perceives the made things, he perceives them with a sin darkened mind, and by means of spiritually dead spiritual eyes. And he suppresses, distorts, and perverts the truth in unrighteousness.

Of course, this points us back to something more ultimate than man's response to general revelation. As a result the question of fixing responsibility has once again only been partially answered when we say that fallen men are responsible for their sinful response to general revelation. Blameworthiness for their precondemnation must have a broader, more ultimate basis.

[4] Can man's responsibility for his sinfulness (and thus his precondemnation) be fixed on the basis of man's natural depravity?

Since the proposed solutions in numbers [1], [2], and [3] have all led back to the problem of depravity, this proposal seems naturally to follow. If rejection of the gospel is seen as one expression of depravity, if sinful actions arise out of a sinful nature, and if man's sinful response to general revelation is informed by the noetic effects of depravity, then the depravity of man's nature would seem the prime candidate for the locus of responsibility.

The problem, of course, is how to fix responsibility for the depravity itself. If man is born a depraved sinner (in fact, conceived in depravity), then how can he be responsible for being a sinner (unless he is in some sense responsible for being born)? That is, if responsibility for man's sinfulness lies in his being depraved, then the prior question of responsibility for his becoming depraved must be faced (and responsibly [1!] answered).

Once again we seem to be pressed toward a more ultimate basis for the fixing of responsibility for man's sinfulness and precondemnation.

[5] Can man's responsibility for his sinfulness (and thus his precondemnation) be fixed on the basis of man's involvement in the results of the fall?

It is to be admitted that all men descending from Adam by ordinary general are involved in the results of the fall. All men are characterized by spiritual death (including the depravity and corruption of all of the faculties and powers of the moral and spiritual nature), loss of original righteousness, loss of communion with God, bondage to Satan, physical death, guilt and condemnation, and the incurring of God's wrath and curse.

The problem, however, is to fix responsibility for all of these results. Simply to say that man is involved in them is not to resolve the problem. Once again, if responsibility for man's sinfulness lies in his being involved in the results of sin, the prior question of responsibility for his becoming involved must be answered. Again we are pressed to a more ultimate basis for the fixing of man's responsibility for his sinfulness and precondemnation.

[6] Can man's responsibility for his sinfulness (and thus his precondemnation) be fixed on the basis of man's predetermined sinfulness and lost condition?

This proposed solution states (in an extreme supralapsarian framework) that God predetermined that He would elect some possibly creatable, possibly fallible possible men, and would sovereignly and graciously bestow upon them eternal salvation; and that He would pass by some possibly creatable, possibly fallible possible men, and would sovereignly and justly condemn them to eternal damnation, in such a way as to make them responsible for their sinfulness and condemnation. However, in this extreme view God did not fix reprobate man's responsibility for his sinfulness on the basis of his foreseen fall (in fact, reprobation is not framed in view of anything which God foresees man will do or not do); rather, man's responsibility is fixed by God's determination that reprobate man shall be held responsible for his sinfulness. Thus the order in this extreme view is as follows: (1) God determines to condemn the nonelect and hold them justly responsible; (2) God determines to create man; (3) God determines to bring about man's fall and consequent sinfulness.

This "solution" to the problem of fixing man's responsibility for his sinfulness appears to be a nonsolution, an attempt to bury the problem in the inaccessible reaches of the incomprehensibility of God's eternal purpose. As such, it makes justices mean "whatever God chooses to make it mean" (which in one sense is true, since divine justice must surely be defined by God, not by man); instead of "that settled attribute of God revealed in Scripture by which God imposes righteous laws and impartially executes them, and by which he righteously distributes rewards and punishments." The former definition divorces the concept of justice from Scripture and makes it equivalent to sovereignty; the latter definition derives its concept of justice from the ways in which Scripture portrays God acting when He is said to be just, or acting justly or righteously.

it should of course be recognized that a large number of supralapsarians would abhor this "solution" to the problem of fixing man's responsibility for his sinfulness and condemnation, and would stress the idea that precondemnation is an act of God's justice in the sense that it takes account of sin. Thus they would place preterition before the decree to create, and would place precondemnation after the decree to permit the fall (as in the order of supralapsarianism in these class notes).

in any case this "solution" has not given us the answer to the problem of fixing man's responsibility for his sinfulness and condemnation; and therefore we must press on!

[7] can man's responsibility for his sinfulness (and thus his precondemnation) be fixed on the basis of man's involvement in the fall, together with all of its results?

This view stresses the truths taught in Rom. 5:12-19, and especially those focused in verse 12. Rom. 5:12 states, "Therefore even as by one man sin entered the world, and because of sin, death; and in this way death passed over to all men, in that all sinned. This view sees in this verse two important and relevant truths: first, that in some sense all sinned when one sinned; and second, that the entrance of death into the world and the passing over of death to all men are one event, which occurred at the fall.

Upon studying the whole passage (translation earlier in these Class Notes) we discover that Paul draws a parallel between one man (Adam) and many men in respect of sin, and one man (Christ) and many men in respect of righteousness. We also discover that by the transgression of one man:

- (a) all men/many men died
- (b) all men were condemned
- (c) many men were made sinners
- (d) all men sinned

It is this last point that is crucial to this proposed solution to the problem of fixing man's responsibility for his sinfulness and precondemnation. Two views in systematic theology stress the concept that the entire race sinned in Adam, and thus became guilty, corrupt, and condemned to death. The Federal Headship or Representative View holds that Adam was the federal head and representative of the whole human race, and that when he sinned, all men sinned in him as their representative. Thus all men sinned (in Adam), all men were condemned (in Adam), and all men died (in Adam). The Natural Headship or Realistic View holds that Adam was the natural head of the whole human race, and that the whole human race was really in his loins; and that when he sinned, all men sinned in him, their natural head. Thus all men sinned (in Adam), all men were condemned (in Adam), and all men died (in Adam).

Both these views attempt to provide a theological construct which adequately "fits" the exegetical data and satisfactorily synthesizes the theological components of the passage. To a certain degree both views succeed. And both views assist us in establishing a solid basis for fixing man's responsibility for his sinfulness and precondemnation. Both views provide ground for saying:

EACH SINNER IS RESPONSIBLE FOR HIS OWN
SINFULNESS AND CONDEMNATION!

Neither view is able to explain exactly how, as Paul says, when Adam sinned, all men sinned. Neither view claims that Adam's descendants are consciously aware of having distinct subsistence in Adam, or consciously aware of personally transgressing God's commandment concerning the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Nevertheless, whichever of these views we adopt, we can say -- and say with conviction -- in a meaningful and very important sense, when Adam sinned, I sinned. When Adam was condemned, I was condemned. When Adam died, I died.

But we can say more. We can say, "If Adam was responsible for his willful, deliberate, self-initiated revolt against God, and for his shameful, lawless transgression of God's holy and good commandment, then I am also responsible for that revolt against God and that transgression of God's law." in fact, we can say, "With Adam, I revolted; with Adam, I transgressed!

The Implications of this solidarity, this personal involvement in the fall, must now be drawn. If I sinned when Adam sinned, then together with Adam I am guilty of the fall! I am culpable! I am blameworthy! And if it was Adam's sin that plunged the entire human race into spiritual and physical depravity and corruption and sickness and death, then it was also my sin that brought these disastrous effects upon all mankind. And if I am blameworthy for the fall, I am also blameworthy for its effects! I am responsible! And what is worse, I am not partially responsible in the sense that I had a very tiny part in bringing about all of these terrible effects. No, I am completely responsible in the sense that these terrible effects are the result of one transgression; and when Adam committed that one transgression, I also committed it! The only sense in which I can speak of being partially responsible is in the sense that I, together with all other men, sinned when Adam sinned.

If this proposed solution to the problem of finding a basis for the fixing of man's responsibility for his sinfulness and condemnation is adopted, what are the implications?

First, of all, a resolution of the difficulties of the other proposed solutions is provided. The rejection of Christ as He is revealed in Scripture and presented in the gospel, man's sinful attitudes, thoughts, words, and actions, and man's suppression, distortion, and perversion of the truth of general revelation, are all accounted for on the basis of man's natural depravity. In turn, man's natural depravity is accounted for in terms of his involvement in the results of the fall. And in turn, man's involvement in the results of the fall is accounted for in terms of his involvement in the fall itself.

Second, as a result of the first implication, man's responsibility is maintained up and down the whole line. Because man's responsibility for his sinfulness is established (fixed) by his involvement in the fall itself, his responsibility can be maintained for the results of the fall, his own personal guilt and depravity, his suppression, distortion, and perversion of general revelation, his sinful attitudes, thoughts, words, and actions, and his rejection of Christ and His gospel.

Third, since the basis for fixing man's responsibility for his sinfulness has been established, the basis for God's precondemnation of the nonelect is also established. God can justly precondemn the nonelect for their sin, because they are responsible for their sin. They are not unfortunate, undeserving victims of an unjust punishment which has gratuitously been foisted upon them by an arbitrary despot; rather, they are criminals who have been justly indicted, tried, and found guilty of revolting against their Creator and King, of deliberately transgressing against His holy commandment, and of willfully throwing away original righteousness, communion with Him,

spiritual life, physical life, and unending bliss. As a result they are deserving of their resultant guilt and depravity, and of God's condemnation and wrath.

Fourth, once the basis for God's precondemnation is established in man's involvement in the fall, then condemnation for various aspects of the effects of the fall can be maintained up and down the whole line. The Scriptures previously quoted, which speak of condemnation in various contexts, can now be related to the original basis of condemnation. Because condemnation for the fall is grounded in each man's responsibility for the fall, condemnation for the effects of the fall can also be grounded in each man's responsibility for those effects. Putting it another way, because responsibility for original sin has been established, responsibility for actual sin can be maintained.

Fifth no man on the day of judgment will be able to truthfully say that he has been unjustly condemned, or that he is not deserving of God's wrath and punishment. No man will be able to truthfully say, 'it's terribly unjust! Adam committed that misdemeanor, that tiny peccadillo, and I get it in the neck! He picked that one little apple off a tree, and I have to suffer an eternal hell for that? Does that seem fair?' No man will be able to truthfully say, "All right, so it was more than just picking an apple. So it was an act of deliberate revolt against God, and a stupid throwing away of paradise. But what does that have to do with me? I didn't do it!" It may be said that on that day when every knee is forced to bow and every tongue is forced to confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, that every tongue will also be forced to admit that its owner was involved in Adam's transgression, did sin when he sinned, and is responsible for his own sinfulness. And it may be that on that day of revelation of the righteous judgment of God, every tongue will be forced to confess,

"TRUE AND RIGHTEOUS ARE HIS JUDGMENTS"

ON WHAT BASIS DOES GOD PRECONDEMN SINFUL HUMAN BEINGS?

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	
God's precondemnation of the non-elect arising from His wrath and according to His justice	Man's predetermined sinfulness and lostness	Man's involvement in the Fall and its results	Man's involvement in the results of the Fall	Man's natural depravity	Man's suppression and perversion of General Revelation	Man's sinful attitudes and actions	Man's rejection of Christ	God's condem- nation of sinners arising from His wrath

HOW CAN HUMAN RESPONSIBILITY FOR SINFULNESS BE FIXED?

C. Objections to the Doctrine

The following list of objections has been compiled from many sources. Although it does not include all possible objections, it does include those which have actually been made.

1. "This doctrine represents God as a respecter of persons'

The objector quotes such Scriptures as Rom. 2:1 -- "For there is no respect of persons with God" -- and infers from it the principle that God does not discriminate or show partiality in His dealings with men. Since the doctrine of predestination portrays God as discriminating between elect and nonelect men, and showing partiality in His bestowal of salvation upon the elect, it violates a scriptural principle, and is therefore contrary to Scripture, according to the objector.

The problem, of course, is in the meaning assigned to the term "respect of persons". To resolve the problem it is necessary to study the term's usage in Scripture (especially in the AV).

a. In the Old Testament the term is used in the following Scriptures:

(1) Lev. 19:15 -- "Ye shall do no unrighteousness in judgment: thou shalt not respect the person of the poor, nor honour the person of the mighty: but in righteousness shalt thou judge thy neighbour."

(2) Deut. 1:17 -- "Ye shall not respect persons in judgment; but ye shall hear the small as well as the great; you shall not be afraid of the face of man; for the judgment is God's: and the cause that is too hard for you, bring it unto me, and I will hear it."

(3) Deut. 16:19 -- "Thou shalt not wrest judgment; thou shalt not respect persons neither take a gift: for a gift doth blind the eyes of the wise, and pervert the words of the righteous."

(4) 2 Sam. 14:14 -- "For we must needs die, and are as water spilt on the ground, which cannot be gathered up again; neither doth God respect any person yet doth he devise means, that his banished be not expelled from him."

(5) 2 Chron. 19:5-7 -- "And he (Jehoshaphat, king of Judah) set judges in the land throughout all the fenced cities of Judah, city by city, And said to the judges, Take heed what ye do: for ye Judge not for man, but for the Lord, who is with you in the judgment. Wherefore now let the fear of the Lord be upon you; take heed and do it: for there is no iniquity with the Lord our God, nor respect of persons nor taking of gifts."

(6) Prov. 24:23 -- "These things also belong to the wise. it is not good to have respect of persons in judgment."

(7) Prov. 28:21 -- "To have respect of persons is not good; for for a piece of bread that man will transgress."

(8) Lam. 4:16 -- "The anger of the Lord hath divided them; he will no more regard them: they respected not the persons of the priests, they favoured not the elders."

In five of these eight references (Lev. 19:15; Deut. 1:17; 16:19, 2 Chron. 19:5 7; Prov. 24:23), the context is clearly one of judgment. Human judges are warned not to allow their judgments to be influenced or perverted by factors extraneous to the issues of truth or falsehood, guilt or innocence, equity or inequity. Whether the persons being Judged are poor or rich, whether they are small or great, whether they offer a gift (bribe?) or not, the Judges should not look upon these external distinctions and Judge accordingly (and thus unjustly). In one of these references the judges are said to be judging for the Lord, which would seem to imply that they should not judge unjustly because God does not judge unjustly (that is, He does not respect persons in His judgment). In two of the references (2 Sam. 14:14; Lam. 4:16), the word "respect" seems to be used in the sense of "looking up to another" or "considering worthy of high regard or esteem". In 2 Sam. 14:14 God is said not to "look up to" any human being; and in Lam. 4:16 the persons spoken of are said to have (wickedly) withheld from the priests of Israel the esteem and high regard which was due them. And in Prov. 28:21 the man who respects persons is said to be ready to transgress God's law in exchange for a piece of bread. This could refer to a man who has given up his own personal integrity, and is ready to lie about or to bear false witness for or against another for any consideration which will accrue to his own personal advantage. This would be respecting persons in the sense of pronouncing false judgments about other persons on the basis of factors extraneous to the issues of truth and falsehood.

b. In the New Testament the term is used in the following Scriptures:

(1) Acts 10:34-35 -- "Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respector of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him."

Apart from the question of Cornelius' status as a "proselyte of the gate" (cf. Lenski on Acts 10:2); and apart from the question of whether Cornelius was a true believer in God or not before Peter brought him the gospel; this text appears to be emphasizing the principle that God does not "accept the face" of a Jew merely because he is a Jew, or "reject the face" of a Gentile just because he is a Gentile. In every nation those who fear Him and work righteousness are acceptable (δεκτὸς). The point appears to be that the distinction between Jew and Gentile (which is valid in other contexts) is a factor which is extraneous to the issue whether or not a man fears God and works righteousness.

(2) Rom. 2:11 -- "For there is no respect of persons with God."

In verses 5-10 Paul speaks of the day of God's righteous Judgment, in which God will render to every man according to his deeds. To those who obey the truth and do good works, He will render glory, honor, peace, and eternal life; to those who disobey the truth and do evil works, He will render indignation, wrath, tribulation, and anguish. And whether a man is a Jew or a Gentile is an extraneous factor which will not influence God's Judgment in either direction!

(3) Eph. 6:9 -- "And ye masters, do the same things unto them (your servants), forbearing threatening: knowing that your Master also is in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with him."

The thrust here appears to be fairly straightforward. Christian masters are warned not to treat their servants in a manner that is displeasing to God, for when God judges the deeds of men, the fact that masters occupied a superordinate social and economic level in this life will be completely extraneous to the issue of whether their earthly deeds were righteous or unrighteous. The fact that a man was a master will not in itself influence God's judgment one iota.

(4) Col. 3:25 -- "But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons."

In verses 22-24 we discover that servants are being addressed in this passage. Here servants are exhorted to do their work as unto the Lord, and are warned not to serve their masters in a manner that is displeasing to God. Their status as servants does not give them a license to do wrong. When God judges the deeds of men, the fact that servants occupied a subordinate social and economic level in this life will be completely extraneous to the issue of whether their earthly deeds were righteous or unrighteous. The fact that a man was a servant will not in itself influence God's judgment one bit.

(5) James 2:1-4, 8-9 -- "My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect to persons. For if there come unto your assembly a man with a gold ring, in goodly apparel, and there come in also a poor man in raiment; And yet you have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing, and say unto him, Sit thou here in a good place; and say to the poor, Stand thou there, or sit here under my footstool: Are ye not then partial in yourselves, and art become judges of evil thoughts?" . . . "If ye fulfill the royal law according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well; But if ye have respect to persons ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors."

To begin with, verse 1 is very difficult to translate. One need only check the AV, the Douay Version, the Confraternity Version, the New Jerusalem Bible, The New American Bible, Goodspeed, the RSV, the NEB, the Williams Translation, the NASB, the NIV, and a number of commentators to discover the truth of this judgment! However, translating the present imperative as most grammarians advise, we can make a reasonably good attempt. James tells his readers, "My brothers, stop holding the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ of glory in connection with respect of persons!" The thrust seems to be that faith in Christ and respect of persons do not harmonize, and therefore these brethren should not try to hold both faith and this attitude which is condemned throughout Scriptural as sinful.

The Illustration in verses 2-3 beautifully illustrates the principle of the evil of making judgments about persons on the basis of extraneous considerations. James says that people who do this become like judges who allow evil considerations to pervert their judgment.

in verses 8-9 James adds an idea. Those who love their neighbors as themselves (according to the royal law) do well. But those who discriminate among their neighbors on the basis of such extraneous considerations as to whether those persons are rich or poor, and then love

those neighbors who are rich, and despise those who are poor, are guilty of respecting persons, and are transgressors of the law. The principle here seems to be that we ought not to obey the law which commands men to love their neighbors as themselves because we find something lovable in those neighbors, but because we owe obedience to God and because we love Him and desire to please Him. Whether our neighbors are lovable, worthy of our love, or able to benefit us, are factors which are extraneous to the issue of obedience.

(6) 1 Pet. 1:17 -- "And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear:" in the surrounding verses Peter urges his readers to holiness of life, both in retrospect of Christ's great redemption and in prospect of His glorious revelation. Once again, in verse 17 the context is that of judging, and God is said to judge each man, not according to external factors, but according to the moral quality and value of his own works. The thrust again seems to be that God will look, not upon a man's appearance, his race, his nationality, his cultural background, his economic or social status, his organizational standing, nor any other extraneous factors, but only at the quality of his works.

Now we must return to the objection (finally!). The doctrine of predestination is said to violate the scriptural principle that God is not a respecter of persons, because the doctrine portrays God as discriminating between elect and nonelect men, both in their selection and in their treatment.

In these fourteen scriptural instances of the concept "respect of persons", what have we discovered? in most of the cases the context is one of making judgments (either formally or informally). in these cases the person judging (whether God or man) of necessity discriminates. The issues appears to be whether the person judging, judges according to the appropriate basis or according to some extraneous factor(s). in the few cases in which the context is not that of judgment, the meaning of the term "respect of persons" is quite different from that intended in the objection.

Now we must ask, Does predestination portray God as respecting persons? Do unconditional election and preterition portray God as choosing some men and passing by others on the basis of any factor(s) extraneous to His sovereign good pleasure? in fact, do they portray God as electing or passing by on the basis of anything at all in man?

What about precondemnation? Does it portray God as a respecter of persons? Does precondemnation portray God as precondemning the nonelect on the basis of any factor(s) extraneous to their sins?

If the answers to these questions are negative, then the objection appears to fall to the ground.

2. "This doctrine destroys the love of God, and limits His mercy."

in effect, this objection states that since God loves all men, and since His mercy is everlasting, then He cannot consistently elect some to salvation and reprobate others to perdition.

It is true that God does have genuine and universal affection for fallen men as His creatures. He delights in the work of His hands. It is also true that God sincerely bestows His benevolence upon all men, causing His sun to shine and filling their hearts with gladness. It is also true that God desires that all men should repent and be saved, even though He does not gratify all of His desires.

Of course, if God is trying to save every member of Adam's fallen race and does not succeed, then His power (spiritual or persuasive) appears to be limited. If on the other hand God is not trying to save every member of Adam's race, then His mercy and love appear to be limited. Sometimes this dilemma has been used to distinguish the major opposing points of view on this doctrine. It is said that Calvinists limit God's mercy and love and exalt God's power and sovereignty; whereas Arminians limit God's power and exalt God's mercy and love. Upon closer analysis of this clever statement, we discover that by limiting God's power, Arminians actually exalt man's autonomy and wrest man's will from the clutching bondage and overwhelming power of his depravity. Also upon closer analysis of this statement we discover that Calvinists do not really limit either the quality or the quantity of God's mercy and love; rather they view God as selectively bestowing his special love upon certain individuals, thereby limiting the application of His mercy and love.

Such Scriptures as Psalm 103:11, 17-18 are cited in this connection:

"For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him."

"But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children; To such as keep his covenant, and to those that remember his commandments to do them."

3. "This doctrine is inconsistent with the justice of God."

In effect, this objection builds upon the concept that in all of His dealings with men, God is fair and equable and evenhanded; that even though He may seem to distribute blessings and cursings, rewards and punishments unequally at times, this is only so because of the various kinds of responses, righteous and unrighteous, which men make to His word and will; i.e., on the basis of strict justice.

However, this objection actually goes beyond what the objectors intend. For if the application of salvation is made on the basis of strict justice, those who deserve to be saved are saved, and those who deserve to be lost are lost. That is strict justice. Of course, the objectors quickly assert that the application of salvation is not an exercise of justice but of grace on God's part. If this is the case, then the concept of justice applies, not to the elect, but to those who are lost. If the objectors restrict the concept of justice to those who are lost (since they realize that those who are saved do not deserve to be saved), then this doctrine of predestination holds no inconsistencies with the doctrine of God's justice. As far as the preterition aspect of reprobation is concerned, this is not a violation of God's justice, since the reprobate do not deserve to be saved (it would only be inconsistent with God's justice if they deserved to be saved and God [unjustly] refused to save them; or if they did not deserve to be lost and God [unjustly] passed them by for salvation.) And as far as the precondemnation aspect of reprobation is concerned, this is certainly not a violation of God's justice, since the reprobate are justly condemned on the basis of their sins.

If all men are undeserving, have no claim upon God; and if God is obligated to save no one; then God's choosing of certain fallen individuals unto salvation is not a matter of God's justice, but of His grace!

4. "This doctrine represents God as acting arbitrarily and without reason."

This objection includes two ideas. In the first place, God is said to act arbitrarily in electing some men and in passing by others. Arbitrariness is sometimes associated with decisions made on the spur of the moment, on the basis of a whim, or on no basis whatever. "Reasonless" decisions are spoken of as arbitrary. Arbitrariness is also at times associated with persons considered tyrannical, despotic, or totally inconsiderate of any possibly relevant factors.

Jerome Zanchius, speaking to this second sense of the word, states:

"Nor is the decree of reprobation a tyrannical one. it is, indeed, strictly sovereign; but lawful sovereignty and lawless tyranny are as really distinct and different as any two opposites can be. He is a tyrant, in the common acceptation of that word, who (a) either usurps the sovereign authority and arrogates to himself a dominion to which he has no right, or (b) who, being originally a lawful prince, abuses his power and governs contrary to law. But who dares to lay either of these accusations to the Divine charge?"

-- *Absolute Predestination* (Grand Rapids: Sovereign Grace Publishers, 1971), p. 80.

With respect to the first sense of the term "arbitrariness", we must ask whether God predestines on the basis of whim, or on no basis whatever. Does this doctrine teach that God elects men to salvation haphazardly, without rhyme or reason, or without any thought at all? It does not seem that God's process of selecting certain individuals on whom to bestow His gracious love is adequately or accurately described in such a caricature. Rather, it would seem more appropriate to view God's selection as arising out of inclinations and dispositions the basis of which remain hidden in the heart and mind of God; i.e., unrevealed in Scripture.

In the second idea included in this objection, God is said to act without reason. To this it must be replied that there is certainly no reason in man on the basis of which He elects or passes by (unless, of course, God is a respecter of persons); but this does not mean that God does not have reasons for His gracious, selective choice of some fallen, undeserving, unworthy men unto salvation. If everywhere in Scripture God is portrayed as acting always in accordance with good reasons (or, stated in terms of the popular maxim, God never does anything without a good reason), and always in a way that (sooner or later) makes good sense; and if God is portrayed as reasoning in accordance with sound principles of inference, and in a way that appears (sooner or later) to be sensible and sound; then by analogy it would seem highly probable that He had good reasons for His election of some and passing by of others. Assuming that He did have good reasons, we discover that He simply has not chosen to reveal them to us. Of course, at the same time we realize that there are a number of things the reasons for which God has not chosen to reveal. Perhaps one day in glory He will reveal them to us, when our entirely quickened, entirely enlightened, entirely sanctified hearts and minds will be more able and more ready to receive them!

5. "This doctrine predetermines that men shall sin, and it therefore makes God the author of sin."

In reply to this objection Christopher Ness, in the year 1700, wrote:

" 'Tis a fallacy: as if the decree of nonelection was the procuring cause of man's damnation. Sin is the cause of damnation, but reprobation is not the cause of sin. . . .

"it is a false hypothesis to suppose that God, in the decree of reprobation, doth by as effectual means intend to bring men to damnation as in the decree of election to bring others to salvation: for salvation is a favour not due to any, so God may absolutely give or deny it; but damnation is a punishment, so hath relation to a fault. Means to salvation is the gift of free grace, but damnation comes of man's own voluntary sin, and is the fruit or wages thereof (Rom. 6:23). it is God that fitteth Peter for salvation; but Judas fits himself for damnation.

"Should God constrain the creature to sin, and then damn him for it, He delighteth in the destruction of His creature, contrary to Ezek. 13:23 and 23:11. God did not thrust Adam into his sin, as, after he had willingly sinned, He thrust him out of Paradise. Man's punishment is from God as a judge; but man's destruction is from himself as a sinner. Let it be repeated, and again repeated, that man's sin came freely come himself."

-- *An Antidote Against Arminianism* (reprinted, Suengel, PA: Bible Truth Depot, 1946), pp. 44-45.

It should of course be remembered that the same kind of objection has been made against the general doctrine of God's decrees as inclusive of all things. If God's decrees embrace whatever comes to pass, evil as well as good, then the doctrine of predestination, being a specific aspect of the decrees in general, can be expected to be liable to some of the same objection.

However, some of those who voice this objection have a legitimate concern to preserve God from the charge of unrighteousness. They should be told that those aspects of the decrees of God which pertain to sin do not contain any causality of sin, nor do they exercise efficient power to bring about sin, nor do they produce any divine necessity for human sin. These permissive decrees merely render certain future those acts of sin which men, in accordance with their own natures, dispositions, inclinations, preferences, and choices, freely determine to perform. Man's self determining will, not the permissive decree of God, is the chargeable cause of his sinful action. Men are responsible for their sins, even though God has purposed to permit them.

In addition to this distinction between what God determines to cause and what He determines to permit, perhaps a few Scriptures will help the objector. Acts 2:23 speaks of the Father having determined that wicked men would put His Son to death. Acts 4:28 speaks of the Father predetermining the death of His Son by the wicked hands of Herod, Pontius Pilate, the Gentiles, and the people of Israel. In both these instances God predetermined to permit men to commit the horrendous sin of killing the Lord of glory, but He did not thereby become the Author of sin!

6. "This doctrine destroys free will, and teaches a fatalism in human history and human destiny."

This objection is reminiscent of the views of James Moffat of Glasgow, as excerpted earlier in these Class Notes. Four times he represents the Reformed doctrine of predestination as "fatalistic" or as a "fatalism". But what is "fatalism"?

Charles Hodge, in his discussion of the Decrees of God, draws an important series of distinctions between fatalism and foreordination. He states:

"It is objected, in the fourth place, that the doctrine of decrees amounts to the heathen doctrine of fate. There is only one point of agreement between these doctrines. They both assume absolute certainty in the sequence of all events. They differ, however, not only as to the ground of that certainty, the nature of the influence by which it is secured, and the ends therein contemplated, but also in their natural effects on the reason and conscience of men.

"The word Fatalism has been applied to different systems, some of which admit, while others deny or ignore the existence of a supreme intelligence. But in common usage it designates the doctrine that all events come to pass under the operation of a blind necessity. This system differs from the Scriptural doctrine of foreordination, (1.) In that it excludes the idea of final causes. There is no end to which all things tend, and for the accomplishment of which they exist. According to the Scriptural doctrine, all things are ordained and controlled to accomplish the highest conceivable or possible good. (2.) In that according to Fatalism the sequence of events is determined by an unintelligent concatenation of causes and effects. According to the doctrine of decrees, that sequence is determined by infinite wisdom and goodness. (3.) Fatalism admits of no distinction between necessary and free causes. The acts of rational agents are as much determined by a necessity out of themselves as the operations of nature. According to the Scriptures, the freedom and responsibility of man are fully preserved. The two systems differ, therefore, as much as a machine differs from a man; or as the actions of infinite intelligence, power, and love differ from the law of gravitation. (4.) The one system, therefore, leads to the denial of all moral distinctions, and to stolid insensibility or despair. The other to a sedulous regard to the will of an infinitely wise and good ruler, all whose acts are determined by a sufficient reason; and to filial confidence and submission."

-- *Systematic Theology* Vol. I (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1952 [reprint of 1871 edition]), pp. 548-549.

But what about the charge that this doctrine destroys free will?

This charge raises an obvious prior question: what does the objector mean by the term "free will"? This question is of such enormous scope that in this context we must limit our response. A few quotations may serve to concentrate our thinking, however. Charles Hodge, for example, makes some important distinctions between "free will" and free agency in

Volume II of his *Systematic Theology* He writes: "We maintain that the man is free; but we deny that the will is free in the sense of being independent of reason, conscience, and feeling. In other words, a man cannot be independent of himself, or of any one of his faculties independent of all the rest." (p. 291) He also states, "Free agency is the power to decide according to our character; ability is the power to change our character by a volition. The former, the Bible and consciousness affirm belongs to man in every condition of his being; the latter, the Bible and consciousness teach with equal explicitness does not belong to fallen man." (pp. 293-294) Again he says, "When we say that an agent is self determined, we say two things. (1.) That he is the author or efficient cause of his own act. (2.) That the grounds of reasons of his determination are within himself. He is determined by what constitutes him at the moment a particular individual, his feelings, principles, character, dispositions; and not by any *ab extra* or coercive influence." (p. 295)

And A. A. Hodge, in his *Outlines of Theology* adds a few helpful thoughts to these distinctions. He writes: "The term 'will' is often used to express the mere faculty of volition, whereby the soul chooses, or refuses, or determines to act, and the exercise of that faculty. it is also used in a wider sense. . . to include the faculty of volition, together with all of the spontaneous states of the soul, . . . the dispositions, affections, desires, which determine a man in the exercise of his free power of volition A man in willing is perfectly free, i.e., he always exercises volition according to the prevailing disposition or desire of his will at the time." (p. 282)

To return to the objection: how does the doctrine of predestination destroy free will? Two major points must be made. First, it should be recognized that since the fall no human being (except Jesus) has been free of guilt or of depravity. And, since men are bound to depravity and corruption, all of their faculties have been permeated by sin. This means that whenever men choose or decide or intend or purpose or desire or determine to do something, sin will to some degree enter in. The net result of all of this is that men's wills are not free from their own depraved natures. What they determine to do will inevitably reflect what they are. So in one sense freedom of the will means freedom to commit sinful acts. And how does this relate to predestination? As far as election is concerned, God's gracious selection of some to salvation obviously cannot be based upon their foreseen free decision to turn to God and choose Christ. Left to their own free choice, none would seek after or choose God! Thus the doctrine of unconditional election comports perfectly with the scriptural doctrine of the freedom of man's will.

The second point that should be made is this: free will must be distinguished from free agency. Each man is free to will as he pleases. Volitions are determined only by the character of the agent willing. Thus the unregenerate man, viewed psychologically is a free moral agent when he sins, because he wills as on the whole he desires; but the same man viewed theologically is a moral bonds slave when he sins, because his will is bound to the evil dispositions and desires of his own heart. And how does this relate to predestination? Apart from God's gift of grace, the nonelect freely choose to continue in their sin. As free moral agents, they choose not to seek after God. Presented with the warnings, commands, invitations, and promises of Scripture, they exercise their prerogative and choose to disregard the call of God!

Charles Haddon Spurgeon, in his sermon *Election* assists us to put this objection into proper perspective. He writes:

"But there are some who say, 'it is hard for God to choose some and leave others.' Now, I will ask you one question. is there any one of you here this morning who wishes to be holy, who wishes to be regenerate, to leave off sin and walk in holiness? 'Yes, there is,' says some one, 'I do.' Then God has elected you. But another says, 'No: I don't want to be holy; I don't want to give up my lusts and my vices.' Why should you grumble, then, that God has not elected you to it? For if you were elected you would not like it, according to your own confession. If God, this morning, had chosen you to holiness, you say you would not care for it.

"Do you not acknowledge that you prefer drunkenness to sobriety, dishonesty to honesty? You love this world's pleasures better than religion; then why should you grumble that God has not chosen you to religion? If you love religion, he chosen you to it. If you desire it, he has chosen you to it. If you do not, what right have you to say that God ought to have given you what you do not wish for?

". . . According to your own confession, many of you do not want religion, do not want a new heart and a right spirit, do not want the forgiveness of sins, do not want sanctification, you do not want to be elected to these things: then why should you grumble? You count these things but as husks, and why should you complain of God who has given them to those whom he has chosen?

"If you believe them to be good, and desire them, they are there for thee. God gives liberally to all those who desire; and first of all, he makes them desire, otherwise they never would. If you love these things, he has elected you to them, and you may have them; but if you do not, who are you that you should find fault with God, when it is your own desperate will that keeps you from loving these things -- your own simple self that makes you hate them? . . .

" 'Ah, but,' say some, 'I thought it meant that God elected some to heaven and some to hell.' That is a very different matter from the gospel doctrine. He has elected men to holiness and to righteousness, and through that to heaven. You must not say that he has elected them simply to heaven, and others only to hell. He has elected you to holiness, if you love holiness. If any of you love to be saved by Jesus Christ, Jesus Christ elected you to be saved. If any of you desire to have salvation, you are elected to have it, if you desire it sincerely and earnestly. But, if you don't desire it, why on earth should you be so preposterously foolish as to grumble because God gives that which you do not like to other people?"

-- *Election* (Swengel, PA: Bible Truth Depot, n.d.), pp. 15-17.

7. "This doctrine discourages the lost from exerting efforts for their salvation."

Augustus Hopkins Strong (Volume III, pp. 788-789) replies to this that "Since it is a secret decree, it cannot hinder or discourage such effort. On the other hand, it is a ground of encouragement, and so a stimulus to

effort; for, without election, it is certain that all would be lost (Cf. Acts 18:10). While it humbles the sinner, so that he is willing to cry for mercy, it encourages him also by showing him that some will be saved, and (since election and faith are inseparably connected) that he will be saved, if he will only believe . . . Hence the question for the sinner is not, 'Am I one of the elect?' but rather 'What shall I do to be saved?' "

Charles Haddon Spurgeon, in his sermon *Election* says to the ungodly in his audience:

"I say, take courage, take hope, O thou sinner, that there is election! So far from dispiriting and discouraging thee, it is a very hopeful and joyous thing that there is an election. What if I told thee perhaps none can be saved, none are ordained to eternal life, wouldst thou not tremble, and fold thy hands in hopelessness, and say, 'Then how can I be saved, since none are elect?' But, I say, there is a multitude elect, beyond all counting a host that no mortal can number. Therefore, take heart, thou poor sinner! Cast away thy despondency -- mayst not thou be elect as well as any other? for there is a host innumerable chosen. There is joy and comfort for thee?

"Then, not only take heart, but go and try the Master. Remember, if you were not elect, you would lose nothing by it. What did the four lepers say? 'Let us fall unto the host of the Syrians, for if we stay here, we must die, and if we go to them we can but die.' O sinner! come to the throne of electing mercy. Thou mayest die where thou art. Go to God; and, even supposing he should spurn thee, suppose his uplifted hand should drive thee away -- a thing impossible -- yet thou wilt not lose anything; thou wilt not be more damned for that.

"Besides, supposing thou be damned, thou wouldst have the satisfaction at least of being able to lift up thine eyes in hell, and say, 'God, I asked mercy of thee, and thou wouldst not grant it; I sought it, but thou didst refuse it.' That thou never shalt say, O sinner! If thou goest to him, and asketh him, thou shalt receive; for he never has spurned one yet! Is not that hope for you? What though there is an allotted number, yet it is true that all who seek belong to that number. Go thou and seek; and if thou shouldst be the first one to go to hell, tell the devils that thou didst perish thus -- tell the demons that thou art a castaway, after having come as a guilty sinner to Jesus. I tell thee it would disgrace the Eternal -- with reverence to his name -- and he would not allow such a thing. He is jealous of his honor, and he would not allow a sinner to say that.

"But, ah, poor soul! . . . Let your hope rest on the cross of Christ. Think not on election, but on Christ Jesus. Rest on Jesus -- Jesus first, midst, and without end."

(*Election* pp. 29-31)

Actually, this objection could be turned back upon the objector. Instead of predestination's discouraging the lost from exerting efforts for their salvation, it could be said that a failure to emphasize God's sovereign love and grace and God's sovereign wrath and justice actually encourages the lost in the direction of negligence. Loraine Boettner, in his book *The Reformed Doctrine of Predestination* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1954), p. 261, states:

"Probably there is not a careless sinner in the world who does not believe in his perfect ability to turn to God at any time he pleases; and because of this belief he puts off repentance, fully intending to come at some more convenient time. Just in proportion as his belief in his own ability increases, his carelessness increases, and he is lulled to sleep on the awful brink of eternal ruin. Only when he is brought to feel his entire helplessness and dependence upon sovereign grace does he seek help where alone it is to be found."

8. "This doctrine eliminates the necessity of means."

This objection is based upon the fallacious idea that ends in God's eternal purpose are determined without reference to the means ordained for the attainment of those ends. Sometimes this idea is expressed in some such words as the following: "If predestination is so, then what is the sense of my believing? If I am predestined to be saved, I will be saved anyway; if not, then I cannot do anything about it. Therefore I refuse to do anything.

Loraine Boettner (*Reformed Doctrine of Predestination* pp. 254-255) asks, "Do those who make this objection allow their (supposed) belief in the Divine sovereignty to determine their conduct in temporal affairs? Do they decline food when hungry, or medicine when sick; because God has appointed the time and manner of their death? Do they neglect the recognized means of acquiring wealth or distinction because God gives riches and honor to whom He pleases? When in matters outside of religion one recognizes God's sovereignty, yet works in the exercise of conscious freedom, is it not sinful and foolish to offer as an excuse for neglecting his spiritual and eternal welfare the contention that he is not free and responsible? Does not his conscience testify that the only reason why he is not a follower of Jesus Christ is that he has never been willing to follow Him?"

A. H. Strong tells of a farmer who, having heard a sermon on God's decrees, took the breakneck road instead of the safe one to his home, and broke his wagon in consequence. By the end of the journey he concluded that he at any rate had been predestinated to be a fool, and that he had most certainly made his calling and election sure!

It is true that some may have presented predestination in such a way as to cause men to think of the doctrine as teaching that if nothing but the creative power of God can enable us to repent and believe, then all we can do is wait passively until God exerts that power.

Jerome Zanchius (in *Absolute Predestination* pp. 86-88) states:

"Notwithstanding God's predestination is most certain and unalterable, so that no elect person can perish nor any reprobate be saved, yet it does not follow from thence that all precepts, reproofs, and exhortations on the part of God, or prayers on the part of man, are useless, vain and insignificant .

". . . Christ Himself and His apostles, who all taught and insisted upon the article of predestination, and yet took every opportunity of preaching to sinners and enforced their ministry with proper rebukes, invitations, and exhortations as occasion

required. Though they showed unanswerably that salvation is the free gift of God and lies entirely at His sovereign disposal, that men can of themselves do nothing spiritually good, and that it is God who of His own pleasure works in them both to will and to do, yet they did not neglect to address their auditors as beings possessed of reason and conscience, nor omitted to remind them of their duties to such; but showed them their sin and danger by nature, and laid before them the appointed way and method of salvation as exhibited in the Gospel.

"Our Saviour Himself expressly, and *in terminis* assures us that no man can come to Him except the Father draw him, and yet He says, 'Come unto Me, all ye that labour,' etc. . So then, all these being means whereby the elect are frequently enlightened into the knowledge of Christ, and by which they are, after they have believed through grace, built up in Him, and are means of their perseverance in grace to the end; these are so far from being vain and insignificant that they are highly useful and necessary, and answer many valuable and important ends, without in the least shaking the doctrine of predestination in particular or the analogy of faith in general. Thus St. Augustine: 'We must preach, we must reprove, we must pray, because they to whom grace is given will hear and act accordingly, though they to whom grace is not given will do neither.' "

This objection that the doctrine of predestination eliminates the necessity of means does not credit God with even the intelligence of an ordinary human being. No human being would seriously purpose to do a certain thing without then deciding upon the means by which to achieve that thing. The man who makes the statement -- "I am a Calvinist! If it is the will of God that I should live, then I need not concern myself about eating, for I shall live whether I eat or not." -- is not a representative of Calvinism, but a plain fool! God has ordained eating as a means to the end, of sustaining physical life.

Thus the preaching of the gospel, and the exercising of faith and repentance, are means to the end of the application of Christ's redemption. If a man says, "If I am of the elect, I shall be saved whether I believe and repent or not," he will certainly not be saved, and will most certainly prove himself not to be of the elect, since God has purposed to save His elect by the means which He has ordained.

Edwin H. Palmer, in his booklet The Five Points of Calvinism attempts to illustrate this point. He says:

"The story is told of a man who did not believe in predestination for reasons similar to the arguments above. He lived a notorious and wicked life because he figured that if he were elected, he would be saved; and if not, he would be lost regardless of his actions and faith. Then one night the man became critically ill. His temperature was up and death seemed near. He called for a doctor to help him. But the doctor replied, 'Ah, but if your number is up, it makes no difference whether I give you medicine or not. It won't help. If you are foreordained to die, why should I give you help? And if not, then you will get well anyway. So what's the use?' But the sick man knew that if he did not get the medicine he would surely die, whereas if he had it, the chances were good that he would live.

So he pressed the doctor again for the medicine. Then he came to realize that the same is true of salvation. If he was to be saved, he had to believe; and if he did not, he would be lost. He could not sit back and say, 'It doesn't matter whether I believe or not if I'm predestined.' For if a man does not take hold of the means, he will not have the end. God's plan includes means as well as ends. If I am one of God's elect, he decreed that I would be saved, not on account of my faith, yet through my faith. Therefore I must believe."

-- *The Five Points of Calvinism* (Grand Rapids: Moelker Printing Company, 1954), p. 32.

9. "This doctrine calls the indiscriminate preaching of the gospel into question, and thus destroys the spirit of evangelism and missions."

This objection raises at least three important questions: (a) What is the need of preaching to the elect? (b) What is the use of preaching to the nonelect? (c) How can the preaching of the gospel to the nonelect be sincere? Let us take up these questions in order.

- a. What is the need of preaching to the elect?

Once again we come back to the relation of God-ordained means to God-ordained ends. Chapter III, Section VI of the *Westminster Confession of Faith* puts it in the following manner:

"As God hath appointed the elect unto glory, so hath he, by the eternal and most free purpose of his will, foreordained all the means thereunto. Wherefore they who are elected, being fallen in Adam, are redeemed by Christ, are effectually called unto faith in Christ by his Spirit working in due season; are justified, adopted, sanctified, and kept by his power through faith unto salvation."

The answer to this question, of course, is that God determined that Christ's accomplished redemption should be applied to the elect by means of preaching. "Whom He predetermined these He also called." (Rom. 8:30) And, since God has determined to apply Christ's redemption by means of preaching, we have need of following that plan. In fact, any man who, in the doctrine of the application of the benefits of Christ's atonement, does not take into account the necessity of the communication of the gospel, is not a Calvinist!

- b. What is the use of preaching to the nonelect?

Once again it must be stressed that God has not revealed in advance the identities of the elect, and therefore we must preach the gospel indiscriminately, i.e., to all men. In fact, Christ has commanded us to go into all the world and to preach the gospel to every creature.

This preaching should convince men:

- (1) of their creatureliness, their sinfulness, and their need of redemption.

- (2) of the perfect redemption wrought by Christ through His incarnation, atonement, and resurrection.
- (3) of the truth of the gospel of salvation by grace through faith in Christ.
- (4) of their duty to accept the offers and to live in obedience to the commands of the gospel.
- (5) that their impenitence and unbelief are due to themselves, to their own evil hearts; and that they voluntarily prefer the world to the salvation and service of Christ.

Since we do not know who is elect, we must preach the gospel to all men, and trust God for the results. The story is told of the celebrated English evangelist Rowland Hill, who was criticized for preaching election and yet exhorting sinners to repent. He was told that he should preach only to the elect, since only they would receive any benefit from his declaration of the saving efficacy of Christ's atonement. He replied that if his critic would kindly take a piece of chalk and place a clearly recognizable mark on all of the elect in his audience, he would be happy to preach only to them!

of course, it is possible that God has a purpose in the hearing of the gospel by the nonelect: it may be that their condemnation, having been determined by God before the foundation of the world on the basis of their involvement in the fall, may be aggravated by their rejection of the gospel of Christ, in the sense of which Paul speaks in 2 Cor. 2:15-16 -- "For we are a fragrance of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing; to the one an aroma from death to death, to the other an aroma from life to life."

c. How can the preaching of the gospel to the nonelect be sincere

The word "Insincerity" is defined as "hypocrisy, dishonesty of mind, dissimulation, lack of genuineness." If an impression is intentionally communicated that is contrary to the truth, that is insincerity.

If, in the context of the teaching of the Scriptures as a whole, the gospel message were to communicate the impression that all men will respond favorably to the gospel, or the impression that all men have the desire to respond favorably, or the impression that all men have the basic inclination to respond favorably, or the impression that all men have the ability to understand the gospel truly, then perhaps the offer of the gospel could be characterized as insincere. But does the gospel, contextually understood communicate any of these Impressions?

Sometimes this objection has been pressed to the point that it has posed serious problems for other doctrines. One example of this concerns the doctrine of foreknowledge. Let us construct an illustration.

It may be asked, "Could you sincerely offer to a dying man a miracle drug that would save his life if you had absolute knowledge that he would refuse that drug?"

If you say, "Yes, I could sincerely offer it to him, because there could be a chance, however slight, that he might change his mind and take it."

However, in the ground rules of the illustration, we have already stated that you have absolute knowledge that he will, refuse it. There is no chance that he will receive it!

Now knowing this, could you sincerely offer this miracle drug to this dying man? Could you urge, cajole, press, persuade, incite, encourage, exhort, invite, nag, goad, admonish, induce, convince, coax, browbeat, or bully him to take the lifesaving medicine, and do all of this sincerely, knowing that there is no possibility that he will accept it? What would be the point? Why would you even make the effort, except perhaps as a gesture of your good will in offering it, or perhaps as a mute but eloquent demonstration of his stubbornness and unreasonableness in refusing it?

In somewhat the same vein it is urged by some that offering the gospel to those whom God has passed by is insincere. They admit that God knows beforehand who will despise and reject the gospel; yet they themselves believe that they are under divine orders to preach to all men, and they do not feel that they act insincerely in doing so.

If it is insincere to offer a miracle drug to a dying man who you absolutely know will refuse it, is it also insincere of God to offer the saving gospel to perishing men who He absolutely foreknows will refuse it?

"Sincerity in extending an invitation does not involve an obligation to give a disposition to accept it." (Shedd.)

The invitation extended to all men may be seen as sincere for at least four reasons:

- (1) The call is simply to repent and believe, and is a revelation of a duty binding upon all men to whom the gospel is preached.
- (2) The general call of the gospel is the means ordained by God to gather in His chosen people.
- (3) It serves to show the unreasonable wickedness and perverseness of those who deliberately reject it.
- (4) All who actually do come in repentance and simple faith are actually saved, and received into the family of God.

"When the Gospel is presented to mankind in general," writes Loraine Boettner, "nothing but a sinful unwillingness on the part of some prevents their accepting and enjoying it. No stumbling block is put in their way. All that the call, contains is true; it is adapted to the conditions of all men and freely offered if they will repent and believe. No outside influence constrains them to reject it. The elect accept; the nonelect may accept if they will, and nothing but their own nature determines them to do otherwise."

-- *The Reformed Doctrine of Predestination*
(Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1954), p. 284.

Let it be stressed and emphasized and heavily underscored:

GOD SINCERELY OFFERS SALVATION TO ALL WHO WILL RECEIVE IT!

10. "This doctrine inspires pride in those who think themselves elect."

But what is meant by this objection? Does the objector mean that the doctrine of predestination logically inspires pride (i.e., that pride is a human response which flows inevitably from the logical Implications of the doctrine)? Or does he mean that the doctrine has historically inspired the emotion or attitude of pride in those who hold to the doctrine? Let us take each of these possibilities of construction and respond to it.

First, does the doctrine of an unconditional election logically inspire pride in those who think themselves elect? It should immediately be recognized that according to the doctrine itself there is nothing found in or done by the elect on the basis of which God has chosen them. So there can be no basis for pride in them on this account.

Jerome Zanchius has a most helpful statement to this effect. He says:

"By the preaching of predestination man is duly humbled and God alone is exalted; human pride is levelled, and the Divine glory shines untarnished because unrivalled. This the sacred writers positively declare. Let St. Paul be spokesman for the rest, 'Having predestinated us -- to the praise of the glory of His grace.' (Eph. 1:5-6). But how is it possible for us to render unto God the praises due to the glory of His grace without laying this threefold foundation?

"(1) That whosoever are or shall be saved are saved by His alone grace in Christ in consequence of His eternal purpose passed before they had done any one good thing.

"(2) That what good thing soever is begun to be wrought in our souls (whether it be Illumination of the understanding, rectitude of will, or purity of affections) was begun altogether of God alone, by whose invincible agency grace is at first conferred, afterwards maintained, and finally crowned.

"(3) That the work of internal salvation (the sweet and certain prelude to eternal glory) was not only begun in us of His mere grace alone, but that its continuance, its progress and increase are no less free and totally unmerited than its first original donation. Grace alone makes the elect gracious, grace alone keeps them gracious, and the same grace alone will render them everlastingly glorious in the heaven of heavens.'

"When God does, by the omnipotent exertion of His Spirit, effectually call any of mankind in time to the actual knowledge of Himself in Christ; when He, likewise, goes on to sanctify the sinners He has called, making them to excel in all good works, and to persevere in the love and resemblance of God to their lives' end, the observing part of the unawakened world may be apt to conclude that these converted persons might receive such measures of grace from God because of some previous qualifications, good dispositions, or pious desires and internal preparations, discovered in them by the all seeing eye, which, if true, would indeed transfer the praise from the Creator and consign it to the creature. But the doctrine of predestination absolute, free, unconditional predestination here steps in and gives God His own. it lays the axe to the root of human boasting, and cuts down (for which reason the natural man hates it) every legal, every independent, every self righteous Imagination that would exalt itself against the grace of God and the glory of Christ. it tells

us that God hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in His Son, 'according as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world,' in order to our being afterwards made 'holy and blameless before Him in love' (Eph. 1).

"Of course, whatever truly and spiritually good thing is found in any person, it is the especial gift and work of God, given and wrought in consequence of eternal unmerited election to grace and glory. Whence the greatest saint cannot triumph over the most abandoned sinner, but is led to refer the entire praise of his salvation, both from sin and hell, to the mere goodwill and sovereign purpose of God, who hath graciously made him to differ from that world which lieth in wickedness."

-- *Absolute Predestination* (Grand Rapids: Sovereign Grace Publishers, 1971), pp. 104 106.

Second, has the doctrine of an unconditional election historically inspired pride in those who hold to the doctrine? Historically, have those who have believed themselves chosen of God manifested, been characterized by, or secretly cherished pride that God chose them and not others; or pride that God elected them to salvation and passed by the rest?

Now it should be recognized that one who believes himself chosen by God to salvation from before the foundation of the world may be expected to have some kind of emotional response. On the one hand, he may experience gratefulness, thankfulness, delight, happiness, appreciation, and great happiness. On the other hand, he may experience a secret glee, an inward smugness, a personal gloating, a private delectation that God has made him the special object of his favor, that God has picked him out of the mass of fallen humanity, that God has chosen to bestow upon him His special love. The former kinds of responses would probably be approved of by most Christians; whereas the latter kinds would probably be strongly disapproved of by most Christians.

As far as the history of corporate bodies who have held to unconditional election is concerned, the author of this syllabus is not aware of any studies which have shown a greater tendency toward or prevalence of pride (spiritual or unspiritual) among these bodies than among other bodies not sharing this theological orientation, but emphasizing other doctrinal distinctives or clusters of distinctives. Of course, those fellowships or loose associations of believers that tend to de-emphasize or neglect the importance of doctrine can take pride in the fact that they manifest no tendencies whatever toward pride in any doctrinal distinctive(s)!

As far as the history of individual believers who have held to unconditional election is concerned, there have doubtless been those who have experienced the latter kinds of emotional responses mentioned above glee, smugness, gloating, and delectation. Whenever and wherever such responses appear, they should be recognized for what they are -- for they are as much as any other which still clings to them from their old life, and as much a remnant of their old nature as any other.

One who believes that God has sovereignly and graciously chosen him to eternal salvation from before the foundation of the world needs constantly to remember the horrible pit from which he has been dug and the miry clay up from which he has been brought; he needs constantly to remind himself that it is of God's grace that he is in Christ Jesus; he needs constantly

to recognize his daily failures to do all for the glory of God, his many transgressions of and frequent want of conformity to the law of God, and his consequent momentary need of confession, forgiveness, and cleansing from sin by the blood of Christ; he needs constantly to realize that, although he frequently falls, he is not utterly cast down, for the Lord upholds him with His hand; and he needs constantly to reflect upon the fact that since it is God who saves sinners, from the beginning of their salvation to its completion, all the glory and honor and praise belongs to Him. There is simply no room for pride, boasting, conceit, self-admiration, vain glory, haughtiness, or arrogance in the doctrine of a gracious, unconditional, God determined election!

11. "This doctrine makes men careless in their living, by representing men's salvation as independent of their own obedience."

This objection may be responded to on exegetical and theological grounds.

On exegetical grounds, we recall that the Scriptures do not so represent the doctrine.

Rom. 8:30 -- "And whom He predetermined, these He also called. And whom He called, these He also justified, and whom He justified, these He also glorified."

Eph. 1:4 -- "even as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and faultless before Him in love."

1 Pet. 1:2 -- "elect ones according to foreknowledge of God the Father, by sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ."

On theological grounds, we recall the sentiments of the Canons of the Synod of Dort (A.D. 1619), in Articles XI and XVII of the Third and Fourth Heads of Doctrine:

"Art. XI. But when God accomplishes his good pleasure in the elect, or works in them true conversion, he not only causes the gospel to be externally preached to them, and powerfully illuminates their minds by his Holy Spirit, that they may rightly understand and discern the things of the Spirit of God, but by the efficacy of the same regenerating Spirit he pervades the inmost recesses of the man; he opens the closed and softens the hardened hearts, and circumcises that which was uncircumcised; infuses new qualities into the will, which, though heretofore dead, he quickens; from being evil, disobedient, and refractory, he renders it good, obedient, and pliable; actuates and strengthens it, that, like a good tree, it may bring forth the fruits of good actions."

"Art. XVII. As the almighty operation of God, whereby he prolongs and supports this our natural life, does not exclude, but requires the use of means, by which God of his infinite mercy and goodness hath chosen to exert his influence; so also the before-mentioned supernatural operation of God, by which we are regenerated, in nowise excludes or subverts the regeneration and food of the soul. Wherefore as the Apostles, and the teachers who succeeded them, piously instructed the people concerning this grace of God, to his glory and the abasement of all pride, and in the meantime, however, neglected not to keep them by the sacred precepts of the gospel, in the exercise of the Word, the sacraments and disciplines; so, even to this day, be it far from

either instructors or instructed to presume to tempt God in the Church by separating what he of his good pleasure hath most intimately joined together. For grace is conferred by means of admonitions; and the more readily we perform our duty, the more eminent usually is this blessing of God working in us, and the more directly is his work advanced; to whom alone all the glory, both of means and their saving fruit and efficacy, is forever due. Amen.

-- *The Creeds of Christendom* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1966), Volume III, pp. 590, 592.

Those who make this objection should realize that their opposition to this doctrine as "representing men's salvation as independent of their own obedience" could be understood to mean that they believe that human works are (or are a part of) the foreseen basis of man's salvation. Of course, what is usually meant by this objection is that the doctrine of unconditional election seems to them to teach that the salvation of the elect is certain no matter what kind of lives they live.

Not only does this objection (once again) disregard the means which God has ordained (including regeneration and its outworking); it also introduces a rather dangerous principle. The dangerous aspect of this objection is that it can also be levelled against certain other doctrines -- including Justification and Assurance of Salvation. The real heart of the objection lies in the principle that certainly of one's salvation leads inevitably to licentiousness, lawlessness, and the assumption of liberty to indulge any and every form of immorality. The fear is that if man is certain of his salvation, then he can live as he pleases!

Not only was this principle rejected at the time of the Reformation; and not only is it rejected throughout Scripture (Rom. 6-8 is a classic example); but it appears that the principle is false in human experience! (which admittedly is not a particularly surprising or exciting piece of intelligence, seeing that we have just noted that it is rejected throughout Scripture). Nevertheless, it is a fact worth mentioning. Horatius Bonar says that assurance of a perfect, complete, right standing with God is nothing less than "the root and soil of holiness."

12. "This doctrine destroys the possibility of personal assurance of salvation."

This objection reflects a concern evinced by a great many believers. As such, it calls for special treatment.

To begin with, this objection is anticipated in several creedal statements. For example, in Chapter III of the *Westminster Confession* the statement is made that "the doctrine of this high mystery of predestination is to be handled with special prudence and care, that men, attending the will of God revealed in His Word, and yielding obedience thereunto, may, from the certainty of their effectual vocation be assured of their eternal election. So shall this doctrine afford matter of praise, reverence, and admiration of God; and of humility, diligence, and abundant consolation to all that sincerely obey the Gospel."

In *The Irish Articles of Religion* (A.D. 1615) the following is found:

"The godlike consideration of predestination and our election in Christ is full of sweet, pleasant, and unspeakable comfort to godly persons, and such as feel in themselves the working of the

spirit of Christ, mortifying the works of the flesh and their earthly members, and drawing up their minds to high and heavenly things: as well because it doth greatly confirm and establish their faith of eternal salvation, to be enjoyed through Christ, as because it doth fervently kindle their love towards God; and, on the contrary side, for curious and carnal persons lacking the spirit of Christ to have continually before their eyes the sentence of God's predestination is very dangerous."

In Articles XII and XVI of *The Canons of the Synod of Dort* (A.D. 1619) the following assertions are made:

"Art. XII. The elect, in due time, though in various degrees and indifferent measures, attain the assurance of this their eternal and unchangeable election, not by inquisitively prying into the secret and deep things of God, but by observing in themselves, with a spiritual joy and holy pleasure, the infallible fruits of election pointed out in the Word of God; such as a true faith in Christ, filial fear, a godly sorrow for sin, a hungering and thirsting after righteousness, etc."

"Art. XVI. Those who do not yet experience a lively faith in Christ, an assured confidence of soul, peace of conscience, an earnest endeavor after filial obedience, and glorying in God through Christ, efficaciously wrought in them, and do nevertheless persist in the use of the means which God hath appointed for working these graces in us, ought not to be alarmed at the mention of reprobation, nor to rank themselves among the reprobate, but diligently to persevere in the use of means, and with ardent desires devoutly and humbly to wait for a season of richer grace. Much less cause have they to be terrified by the doctrine of reprobation, who, though they seriously desire to be turned to God, to please him only, and to be delivered from the body of death, can not yet reach that measure of holiness and faith to which they aspire; since a merciful God has promised that he will not quench the smoking flax, nor break the bruised reed. But this doctrine is justly terrible to those who, regardless of God and of the Saviour Jesus Christ, have wholly given themselves up to the cares of the world and the pleasures of the flesh, so long as they are not seriously converted to God."

The New Hampshire Baptist Confession of 1833, in Article IX "Of God's Purpose of Grace" -- states:

"We believe that Election is the eternal purpose of God, according to which he graciously regenerates, sanctifies, and saves sinners; that being perfectly consistent with the free agency of man, it comprehends all the means in connection with the end; that it is a most glorious display of God's sovereign goodness, being infinitely free, wise, holy, and unchangeable; that it utterly excludes boasting, and promotes humility, love, prayer, praise, trust in God, and active imitation of his free mercy; that it encourages the use of means in the highest degree; that it may be ascertained by its effects in all who truly believe the gospel; that it is the foundation of Christian assurance; and that to ascertain it with regard to ourselves demands and deserves the utmost diligence."

And the *Second Helvetic Confession* (A.D. 1566) states the judgment of its framer (Henry Bullinger of Zurich) rather strongly on this point:

"We therefore condemn those who seek elsewhere than in Christ whether they be chosen from all eternity, and what God has decreed of them before all beginning. For men must hear the Gospel preached, and believe it. If thou believest, and art in Christ, thou mayest undoubtedly hold that thou art elected. For the Father has revealed unto us in Christ his eternal sentence of predestination, as we even now showed out of the apostle, in 2 Tim. 1:9-10. This is therefore above all to be taught and well weighed, what great love of the Father toward us in Christ is revealed. We must hear what the Lord does daily preach unto us in his Gospel: how he calls and says, 'Come unto me all ye that labor and are burdened, and I will refresh you' (Matt. 11:28); and, 'God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life' (John 3:16); also, 'It is not the will of your Father in heaven that any of these little ones should perish' (Matt. 18:14).

"Let Christ, therefore, be our looking glass, in whom we may behold our predestination. We shall have a most evident and sure testimony that we are written in the Book of Life if we communicate with Christ, and he be ours, and we be his, by a true faith"

in addition to these confessional statements, a number of individuals have spoken to this objection. One such is John Calvin. In his *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (Book Three, Chap. 21, Sec. 7), he writes,

"In regard to the elect, we regard calling as evidence of election, and justification as another symbol of its manifestation, until it is fully accomplished by the attainment of glory."

However, Calvin's major emphasis on the relationship between election and calling is found in Book Three, Chapter 24. In Section 3 of this chapter he states,

"Others, . . . make election dependent on faith, as if it were doubtful and ineffectual till confirmed by faith. There can be no doubt, indeed, that in regard to us it is so confirmed.¹ Moreover, we have already seen, that the secret counsel of God, which lay concealed, is thus brought to light, by this nothing more being understood than that which was unknown is proved, and as it were sealed. . . ."

In section 4 of this same chapter Calvin says,

"Therefore, as those are in error who make the power of election dependent on the faith by which we perceive that we are elected, so we shall follow the best order, If in seeking the certainty of our election, we cleave to those posterior signs which are sure attestations to it.² Among the temptations with which Satan assaults believers, none is greater or more perilous, than when disquieting them with doubts as to their election, he at the same time stimulates them with a depraved desire of inquiring after it out of the proper way. By inquiring out of the proper way, I mean when puny man endeavors to penetrate to the hidden recesses of the

divine wisdom, and goes back even to the remotest eternity, in order that he may understand what final determination God had made with regard to him. in this way he plunges headlong into an Immense abyss, involves himself in numberless inextricable snares, and buries himself in the thickest darkness. For it is right that the stupidity of the human mind should be punished with fearful destruction, whenever it attempts to rise in its own strength to the height of divine wisdom. And this temptation is the more fatal, that it is the temptation to which of all others almost all of us are most prone. For there is scarcely a mind in which the thought does not sometimes rise, Whence your salvation but from the election of God? But what proof have you of your election? When once this thought takes possession of any individual, it keeps him perpetually miserable, subjects him to dire torment, or throws him into a state of complete stupor. I cannot wish a stronger proof of the depraved ideas, which men of this description form of predestination, than experience itself furnishes, since the mind cannot be infected by a more pestilential error than that which disturbs the conscience, and deprives it of peace and tranquillity in regard to God. Therefore, as we dread shipwreck, we must avoid this rock, which is fatal to every one who strikes upon it. And though the discussion of predestination is regarded as a perilous sea, yet in sailing over it the navigation is calm and safe, nay, pleasant, provided we do not voluntarily court danger. For as a fatal abyss engulfs those who, to be assured of their election, pry into the eternal counsel of God without the word, yet those who investigate it rightly, and in the order in which it is exhibited in the word, reap from it rich fruits of consolation. Let our method of inquiry then be, to begin with the calling of God and to end with it. . . ."

And in Section 5 Calvin says,

"But if we are elected in him, we cannot find the certainty of our election in ourselves; and not even in God the Father, if we look at him apart from the Son. Christ, then, is the mirror in which we ought, and in which, without deception, we may contemplate our election. For since it is into his body that the Father has decreed to ingraft those whom from eternity he wished to be his, that he may regard as sons all whom he acknowledges to be his members, if we are in communion with Christ, we have proof sufficiently clear and strong that we are written in the Book of Life."

in these quotations from the Associated Publishers and Authors, inc. edition of the institutes (Grand Rapids, 1970), numbered footnotes to Sections 3 and 4 of Chapter 24 were indicated. These footnotes (by an unidentified author) are sufficiently brief and relevant to warrant quotation.

Footnote 1 (to Section 3) states:

"Here is an important distinction between the objective fact of election and our subjective knowledge of it. Election as an objective fact always precedes faith, whereas our subjective knowledge and assurance of election always follows faith."

Footnote 2 (to section 4) states:

"here again the power or efficacy of our election is independent of and precedes our faith, whereas the perception and subjective certainty of our election is dependent upon and follows our faith in God's promises especially those promises related to Christ and to our effectual calling (as developed in sections 5 and 6)."

(Note: These annotations may be found on page 819 of the abovementioned work, under the misleading heading "Index to Footnotes." They should not be looked for at the bottom of the page on which the appropriate footnote numbers appear.)

Another individual who has directed his focus upon this objection is Jerome Zanchius. in his work *Absolute Predestination* he writes:

"The elect may, through the grace of God, attain to the knowledge and assurance of their predestination to life, and they ought to seek after it. The Christian may, for instance, argue thus: 'As many as were ordained to eternal life, believed'; through mercy I believe, therefore, I am ordained to eternal life. 'He that believeth shall be saved'; I believe, therefore, I am in a saved state. 'Whom He did predestinate, He called, justified and glorified'; I have reason to trust that He bath called and justified ME; therefore I can assuredly look backward on my eternal predestination, and forward to my certain glorification. (pp. 67-68)

"Predestination should be publicly taught and insisted upon, in order to confirm and strengthen true believers in the certainty and confidence of their salvation. For when regenerate persons are told, and are enabled to believe, that the glorification of the elect is so assuredly fixed in God's eternal purpose that it is impossible for any of them to perish, and when the regenerate are led to consider themselves as actually belonging to this elect body of Christ, what can establish, strengthen, and settle their faith like this? Nor is such a faith presumptuous, for every converted man may and ought to conclude himself elected, since God the Spirit renews those only who were chosen by God the Father and redeemed by God the Son. This is a 'hope which maketh not ashamed,' nor can possibly issue in disappointment if entertained by those into whose hearts the love of God is poured forth by the Holy Ghost given unto them (Rom. 5:5)." (pp. 106 107)

However, Zanchius does not stop with these excellent words concerning the assurance of the believer's personal election, but he extends the Implications of the doctrine in a direction often neglected but much needed. He writes:

"The true believer ought not only to be thoroughly established in the point of his own election, but should likewise believe the election of all his other fellow believers and brethren in Christ. Now, as there are most evident and indubitable marks of election laid down in Scripture, a child of God, by examining himself whether those marks are found on him, may arrive at a sober and well grounded certainty of his own particular interest in that unspeakable privilege; and by the same rule whereby he judges of himself he may likewise (but with caution) judge of others. If I see the external fruits and criteria of election on this or that man, I may reasonably, in a judgment of charity, conclude such an one to be an elect person. So St. Paul, beholding the gracious fruits which appeared in the believing Thessalonians, gathered from thence that they were elected of God (1. Thess. 1:4 5), and

knew also the election of the Christian Ephesians (Eph. 1:4-5), as Peter also did that of the members of the churches in Pontus, Galatia, etc (I Peter 1:2). it is true, indeed, that all conclusions of this nature are not now infallible, but our Judgments are liable to mistake, and God only, whose is the book of life, and who is the Searcher of hearts, can absolutely know them that are His (2 Tim. 2:19); yet we may, without a presumptuous intrusion into things not seen, arrive at a moral certainty in this matter. And I cannot see how Christian love can be cultivated, how we can call one another brethren in the Lord, or how believers can hold religious fellowship and communion with each other, unless they have some solid and visible reason to conclude that they are loved with the same everlasting love, were redeemed by the same Saviour, are partakers of like grace, and shall reign in the same glory.

"But here let me suggest one very necessary caution, viz., that though we may, at least very probably, infer the election of some persons from the marks and appearances of grace which may be discoverable in them, yet we can never judge any man whatever to be a reprobate. That there are reprobate persons is very evident from Scripture (as we shall presently show), but who they are is known alone to Him, who alone can tell who and what men are not written in the Lamb's book of life. I grant that there are some particular persons mentioned in the Divine Word of whose reprobation no doubt can be made, such as Esau and Judas; but now the canon of Scripture is completed, we dare not, we must not pronounce any man living to be non elect, be he at present ever so wicked. The vilest sinner may, for aught we can tell, appertain to the election of grace, and be one day wrought upon by the Spirit of God. This we know, that those who die in unbelief and are finally unsanctified cannot be saved, because God in His Word tells us so, and has represented these as marks of reprobation; but to say that such and such individuals, whom perhaps, we now see dead in sins, shall never be converted to Christ, would be a most presumptuous assertion, as well as an inexcusable breach of charity which hopeth all things." (pp. 68-69)

Thus the doctrine of election, instead of hindering assurance, can be used to enhance and promote it! One who believes himself to have been justified by grace through faith in Christ and His redemption may read Rom. 8:29-30, and say to himself: "In this passage those whom God has justified are the very same ones whom He called ('whom He called, them He also justified'). And those whom God called (in a special, saving sense, since He justified them), are the very same ones whom He predestinated ('whom He predestinated, them He also called')." Thus if a person believes himself to be in that group who have been justified (by savingly trusting to Christ), he must also believe himself to be in that group who, before the foundation of the world, God predestinated to be conformed to the image of His Son, and to final glorification.

What marvelous simplicity and yet fullness of comfort! The only persons who savingly come to Christ and are justified by faith are those who were elected to come, believe, and be saved. And the only way to know whether I am elected is to come to Christ, to believe on Him, to receive Him, and to receive His Word to me as authoritative. As someone put it so

long ago, it is as though I were to come to a great gate with a sign over it saying, "Whosoever believeth in Him shall not perish"; and I were to pass through the gate, turn around, and notice that on that side of the sign now facing me the words were emblazoned, "You were chosen in Him before the foundation of the world." This is the way assurance of my eternal election is obtained, and it is the only way! I simply cannot have any assurance until I actually come. Then I can, by means of my effectual calling, be assured of my eternal election

13. "This doctrine does not comport with certain Scriptures."

Our consideration of this objection is fraught with enormous possibility for polemic (which, according to *Webster's Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary*, means "an aggressive attack on or refutation of the opinions or principles of another; the art or practice of disputation or controversy"), and especially in two areas: (1) the hermeneutic which each of us has adopted and actually employs in practice; and (2) the many preconceptions which each of us has developed over a period of time and with which we now approach these texts. In view of this possibility, perhaps two guiding principles should be enunciated at the outset of our consideration. The first of these may be stated as follows: It is not necessary that all possible interpretations of a text comport with the doctrine as it has been presented; it is only necessary that one possible interpretation do so. Of course, this principle should immediately be qualified by the assertion that the proposed interpretation must have the characteristics of self consistency (it must not contradict itself), relevance (it must pertain to and fruitfully interact with the text, and must not miss the "point"), and integrity (it must retain the integrity of the individual Scripture and the integrity of Scripture as a whole; it must take into serious consideration the exegetical, historical, and theological components and contexts of the text, considered as one part of that system of God's truth which is truly but not exhaustively revealed in the Scriptures).

The second of these two guiding principles may be stated as follows: In our considerations of the varied possibilities of meaning of a text, we ought to attempt to follow one another to the roots of our varied understandings; and having found the grounds upon which we stand, agree to disagree with one another, in the confident expectation that the truth is fully able to carry itself, and will prevail, if not immediately, then perhaps a little later, but surely in the end! This does not preclude fruitful discussion and reasoning; it merely commends a type of approach and atmosphere within which such reasoning can be edifying, and not destructive of present communion and future opportunity for further interaction. This principle underlies much of what we do in our theological work: the goal which we set before us is not so much agreement as understanding. This is not a principle which bristles with risk and is prolifically fruitful of theological indecisiveness; rather it encourages the doing of one's own exegesis and thinking, and the forming of one's own convictions. The risk is minimized by the confidence that what is being presented in our classes is eminently reasonable. The concern that students will not become sufficiently decisive in their theological views is usually dissipated after they have begun their own ministries, have had time for their convictions to settle and be further clarified, and to grow and develop (sometimes they even grow to become as

dogmatic as some of those ministers who have preceded them, who are concerned over their lack of decisiveness!)

a. 1 Timothy 2:4

"Who (God our Saviour) will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth."

The nature of the objection arising from this text is in the objector's belief that God desires the salvation of all men, but that some incorrigible men refuse to come to the knowledge of the truth and therefore are not saved. This view claims that it beautifully upholds the twin doctrines of human sovereignty and human responsibility! it makes man's will sovereign and wholly determinative of the application of Christ's redemption with respect to himself, and thereby makes man and man alone responsible for his own condemnation if he does not come to the truth (and, incidentally, also makes man and man alone responsible for his own salvation, if he does come to the truth). This understanding of the text obviously does not comport with the view of predestination presented in this syllabus.

The problem lies in the word "will" in the phrase "will have all men to be saved." it can mean (among other ideas) "decrees", "commands", "purposes", "determines", "decides", "exercises His prerogative", "exerts His power", "permits", "wishes", and "desires". Which meaning is intended in this verse? One proposal which comports with the doctrine is that, just as there are some things which God hates but nevertheless for His own reasons chooses not to prevent (such as the Fall of all human beings), so there are some things which God desires but for His own reasons chooses not to cause to happen (such as the salvation for all men). (The author of the syllabus speaks of this as the "Desiderative Will of God" (the word "desiderative" means "entertaining or expressing a longing for or a wish to have or attain"), which is a coined term to express this aspect of God's will.) The force of this proposal as related to this text is that God on the whole desires and prefers the salvation of all man, but has not decreed that all men shall be saved, and has not elected all men to salvation. God on the whole desires and prefers all men to come to the knowledge of the truth, but for His own reasons He does not efficiently cause the truth of the gospel to be brought to all men, or effectively overcome the indisposition and unwillingness of all men to turn from their own way and to come to the foot of the cross in saving faith and repentance. Of course, if all (unsaved) men turn to their own way (Isa. 53:6), if no (natural) men can know the truth (1 Cor. 2:14), and if no (unrighteous) men understand or seek after God (Rom. 3:11), then God must exert efficiency to overcome their indisposition and unwillingness to come, if any men are to be saved. God simply has not determined that all men come to the knowledge of the truth (although He desires that all men turn from their wicked ways, come, and be saved).

b. 2 Peter 3:9

"The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."

This verse is similar to 1 Tim. 2:4 in the nature of the objection concerned. The objector believes that God does not purpose that any man

should perish in hell, but rather purposes that all men should repent of that which condemns them to hell, namely their sins; but that some incorrigible men refuse to repent, and therefore leave God with no other option than to condemn them to hell. Once again the difference between those who do repent and those who do not lies in man's sovereign, inviolable will.

Again, the problem lies in the word "willing". And once again, the proposed interpretation which comports with the doctrine is that which arises from the concept of God's Desiderative Will. The force of the proposal is that God on the whole does not desire that any men should perish in hell, but for His own (good) reasons has not elected all men to salvation from hell. Again, God on the whole desires that all men come to repentance, but for His own good reasons e does not efficiently cause all men to repent of their sins of unbelief and unrighteousness, but only some. And once again, if God did not efficiently cause these men to repent, none would repent, since not merely some but all men are incorrigibly wicked. God simply has not determined that all men shall repent (although He desires that all men turn from their wicked ways, come to Christ, and be saved from eternal destruction).

An accompanying Scripture may be used to illustrate this concept of God's Desiderative Will. Ezek. 18:23 says, "Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die? saith the Lord God: and not that he should return from his ways, and live?" Here is a case of God's not desiring, not taking pleasure in the death of the wicked. Yet He condemns the wicked to death for his wickedness. He ordains the death of the wicked even though He does not desire it. On the other hand, He would prefer, would much rather desire, that the wicked turn from his wickedness and live. Yet He does not ordain that the wicked turn from his wicked ways. And so although He desires that the wicked turn from his way and live, He does not ordain it. This is the concept of the Desiderative Will of God.

In a nutshell, there are some things which God desires, but which for His own reasons He does not efficiently cause; there are other things which God does not desire, but which for His own reasons He efficaciously permits. The Desiderative Will of God should be distinguished from the Causative Will of God, under which God efficiently causes all good; the Permissive Will of God, under which God efficaciously permits all evil; and the Preceptive Will of God, under which God, by means of laws, commands, exhortations, teachings, and examples, addresses His desires for man to man's obedience. Sometimes the term Decretive Will of God is used; it includes both the Causative Will of God and the Permissive Will of God, and simply stresses the fact that God's decrees include both causative and permissive aspects.

The term Desiderative Will of God thus simply attempts to express the tension between God's desires (positive and negative) and God's decrees. God simply has not chosen to gratify all of His desires by means of His causative decrees.

c. I John 2:2

"And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world."

The objector to the doctrine of unconditional election understands this Scripture to be saying that Christ's atonement was intended by God to be a sufficient satisfaction for the sins of every individual in the

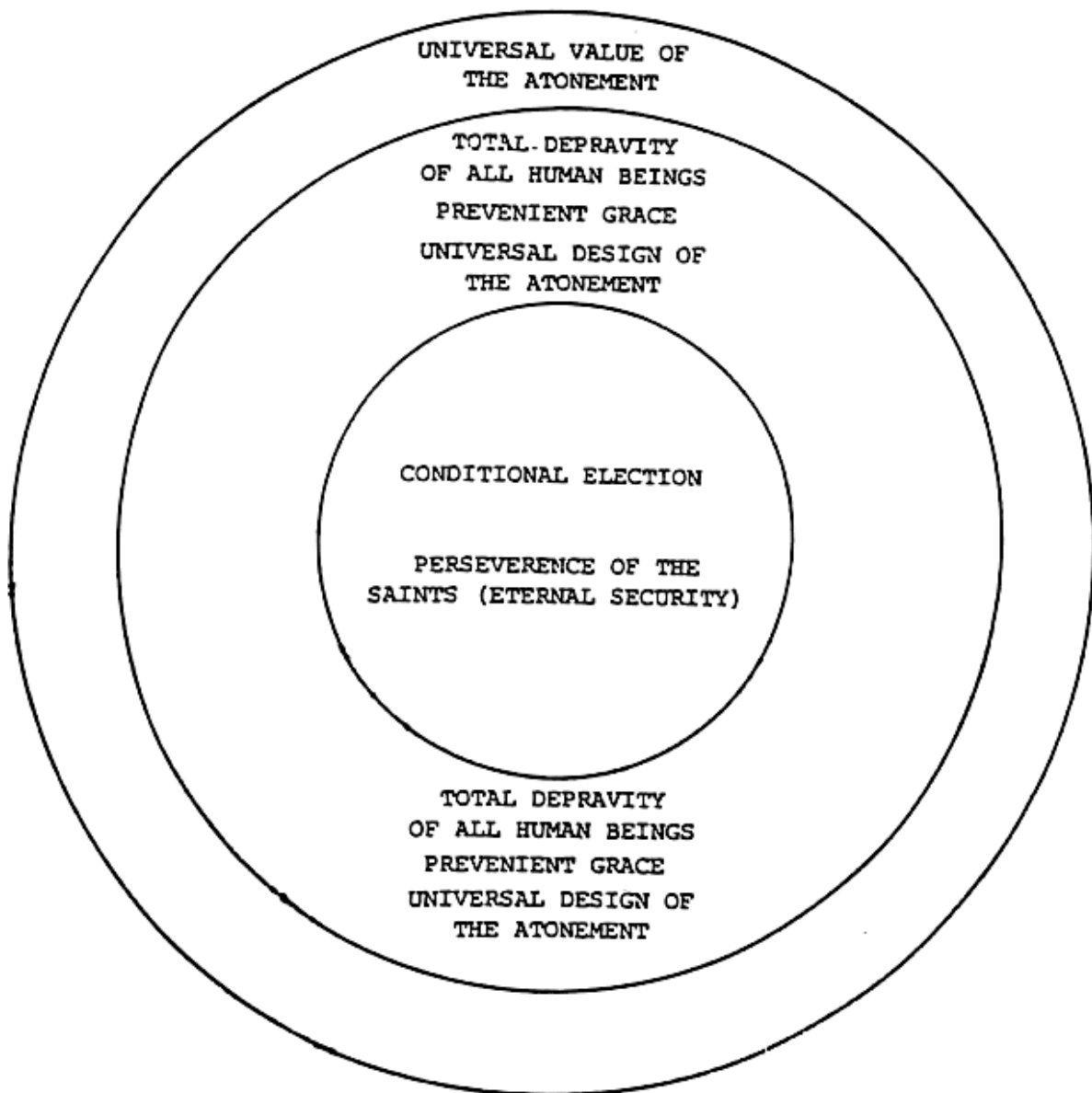
world; and the only reason it does not fully satisfy God's justice for the sins of every man in the world is that all men do not of their own free will, receive the benefits of Christ's atonement by receiving the Savior freely offered to them in the gospel. The objector infers that his understanding of this text does not comport with the doctrine of an unconditional election, since the unconditional character of the election conflicts both with the idea of free will and the idea of an atonement intended for all men without discrimination.

There have been a number of interesting interpretations of this text by those who do hold to an unconditional election. Some have suggested that the epistle is written for a Jewish audience; thus John is asserting that Christ is the propitiation not for the sins of Jews only, but also for the sins of Gentiles. Others have suggested that the "world" spoken of is the world viewed collectively, not distributively, and that John is stating that Christ's atonement is the propitiation for the sins of mankind collectively. As such, Christ's death saved the world. Still others have suggested that the "world" spoken of is a reference to the elect, the members of Christ's Church, who are found scattered here and there throughout the inhabited earth; i.e., the "world" of the elect. Still others have pointed to the fact that the word "sins" is not actually found in the last part of the verse (it must be inserted as part of an ellipsis to get it into the text); and that therefore the text is really saying that Christ is the satisfaction, not only for the sins of the elect, but also for the curse which came through sin under which the world presently groans. Thus Christ's atonement is the basis for the reconciliation of the whole world physically, as well as for the reconciliation of individuals spiritually, so that eschatologically the entire world will be saved (the new world and those righteous persons who dwell in it).

An alternative proposal which also comports with the doctrine of an unconditional election is that, in its value Christ's atonement is a sufficient satisfaction (propitiation) for the sins of the whole world, both collectively and distributively ("not for ours only" John and those believers' to whom John was writing); in its design Christ's atonement is an accomplished satisfaction (propitiation) for the sins of all the elect (not only those elect persons in Asia Minor in the first century to whom John was writing this epistle, but those elect persons everywhere in all time periods).

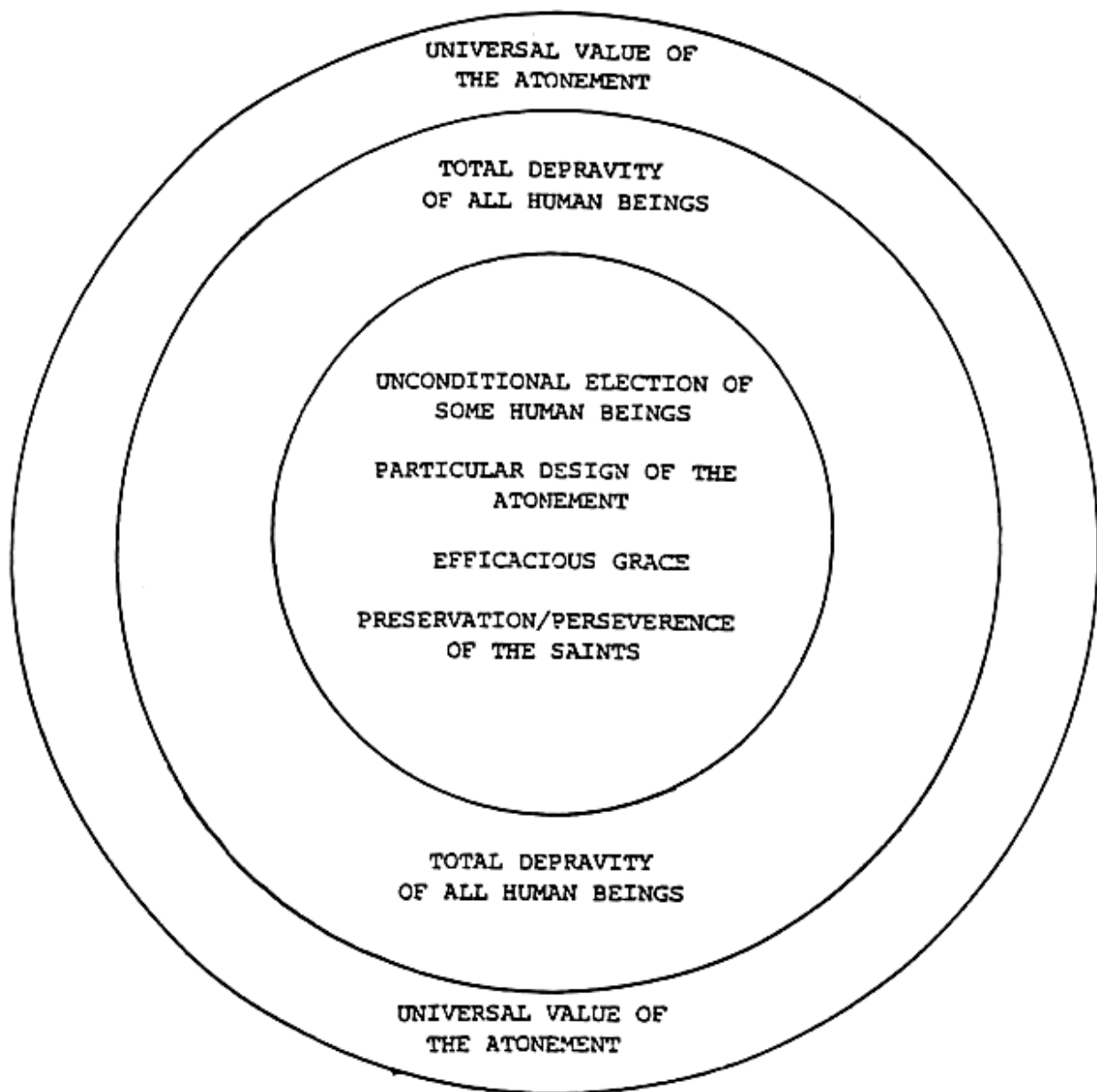
As applied to this text, this proposal would understand John to be asserting that Christ's atonement is of such great value that it is a sufficient satisfaction for the sins of the whole world, and not for those of a small group only. It would then not be speaking of the design of the atonement, in terms of its relationship to God's purpose in election, but only of its value in terms of the worth of the Person who makes the atonement infinitely satisfying. Along with this conception, it should also be remembered that if the atonement is viewed as a penal satisfaction instead of a commercial satisfaction (the penalty required for sin is death, whether for one person or for one trillion persons; instead of a measured amount of suffering for a specific number of sins of a certain number of persons), then this emphasis upon the value of Christ's atonement would also "fit" with other aspects of the system of doctrine.

CONTEMPORARY POPULAR SCHEME OF THE PLAN OF SALVATION



Note: The statement, "The Atonement is sufficient for all; efficient for the elect," means that the Atonement is sufficient for all in its value, and efficient for the elect in its design and application.

ONE VERSION OF THE TULIP SCHEME



Note: The statement, "The Atonement is sufficient for all; efficient for the elect," means that the Atonement is sufficient for all in its value, and efficient for the elect in its design and application.

d. Hebrews 2:9

"But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man."

The objector believes that this Scripture teaches that God's grace has been bestowed upon all men, in that Christ has experienced death in behalf of every man, with the result that salvation is now freely available to all men; and that this teaching conflicts with the doctrine of an unconditional election, which seems logically to imply man's total inability and an atonement particularly designed to accomplish the salvation of the elect.

The crucial question would seem to be this: is there a sense in which, in some way, every man benefits from Christ's death?

Now it is obvious that there is a sense in which only some men benefit from Christ's death. Scripture clearly teaches that only those who are savingly united to Christ share in the saving benefits of His Redemption. However, is there a sense in which Christ's death is itself a manifestation of the grace of God ("that he by the grace of God should taste death"), and at the same time is the basis upon which God can manifest both His common grace and His special grace ("should taste death for every man")?

If by God's grace Christ tasted death for every man, and every man benefits in some way from His death, then presumably He intended that every man should benefit in some way from His death. But the real question is this: Did Christ intend that every man should benefit from His death in way only; namely, by being saved? Did Christ by His death purchase other, nonsaving benefits for all men? Did He intend that every man should benefit from His death by these other benefits? And did He also intend that some men should benefit from His death by being saved?

But what are some of these nonsaving benefits which are common to all men by means of Christ's death? A few of them may be mentioned: (1) the execution of the sentence of death upon the sinner is deferred; (2) sin in the lives of individuals and in society is restrained; (3) some sense of and appreciation for the true, the good, and the beautiful are retained by human beings; (4) some enablement to perform civil righteousness and outwardly good works is retained by human beings; (5) a multitude of natural protections and blessings and good gifts from God are received by human beings every day. All of these benefits are in some sense dependent upon Christ's death; all of these benefits were intended by Christ by means of His death; therefore Christ by God's grace indeed tasted death for every man.

This Scripture, then, may be seen to have both a universal and a particular reference. He tasted death so that He might bestow the blessings of common grace upon all men; He also tasted death so that He might bestow the blessings of special (saving) grace upon those whom He had chosen before the foundation of the world.

e. II Peter 2:1

"false teachers . . . even denying the Master that bought them."

There is a sense in which Christ by His atoning death paid the price to buy out of slavery to sin and its results all mankind. Many benefits come to fallen mankind in general by virtue of Christ's saving work. These benefits place obligations on all men, in addition to the obligations human beings incur by virtue of their creation.

Professing believers have an even greater obligation, because they realize that they belong to Christ, by reason of both creation and redemption. This places heavy obligations on them to follow the truth and to live lives of self denial and holiness.

The teachers mentioned in this verse were no doubt professing believers. They had publicly acknowledged that Christ had bought them with His own blood, and that they were not their own. Yet by denying the truth and living lives that were shameful, greedy, corrupt, lustful, and depraved, they showed that they were false teachers, contradicted their profession, and denied the lordship of the One who they professed had bought them.

f. Titus 2:11

"For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men."

This text tells us that the saving grace of God has appeared (and we know this grace has come through the atoning work of Christ). The text also tells us that God's saving grace has appeared to all human beings to whom it has been sent.

The "all men" could mean "all human beings of all times and places." But the saving grace of God has not appeared to all men in this sense, nor has the gospel of God's saving grace in Christ appeared to all men. The general or common grace of God reaches all human beings, but not God's saving grace.

The "all men" could mean "all human beings in the Roman world at the time Paul wrote Titus." This would mean that the gospel of God's grace in Christ had reached to all parts of the Roman world by the time Paul was nearing the end of his life. This would fit nicely with Colossians 1:23. But this would still exclude the inhabitants of North, Central, and South America, central and southern Africa, most of Asia, and the South Pacific.

The "all men" could mean "all believers", to whom the saving grace of God has appeared, in the sense that it has come to them and reached them and actually brought salvation to them. This would fit well with the flow of the context, in which Paul speaks of all age groups, whether older or younger (verses 2 and 6); both genders, whether men or women (verses 2 and 3); and all social classes, whether slaves or masters (verse 9).

Verse 11 would then be saying, "For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all categories of believers -- those of all age groups, genders, and social classes, teaching us (believers) to say 'No' to ungodliness," etc.

g. Romans 5:18

"even so through one act of righteousness there resulted justification of life to all men."

This could be understood to be speaking either of potential justification for all men or actual justification for those men who believe (justification by faith, as in Romans 5:1). However, since the flow of thought in 5:12-19 speaks of actual justification, just as it speaks of actual condemnation, the latter understanding prevails. The verses that bracket verse 18 help us to understand the "all men" as speaking of all those who "receive the gift of righteousness" (verse 17), and of "the many who will be made righteous." Only these human beings receive "justification of life" (verse 18).

If the "all men" of verse 18 is pressed beyond its context in verses 17 and 19, then it could be understood to mean that through Christ's one act of righteousness all men are declared righteous (universalism). The only way to avoid universal salvation (which is denied elsewhere in Scripture) would then be to understand verse 18 to be speaking of the universal potential for justification that results from Christ's atonement. But this would not fit with the context, which speaks of actual justification, through receiving God's abundant provision of grace and the gift of righteousness (verse 17).

h. Revelation 22:17

"And the Spirit and the bride say, 'Come'. And let the one who hears say, 'Come'. And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who wishes take the water of life without cost."

In this passage (as in all other invitation passages) it is asserted by opponents of the Reformed view of predestination that an invitation implies that the hearer is able to respond, and that therefore sinners must have full ability (either native or restored) to make a favorable response to the gospel.

The Reformed view holds that in one sense, sinners do have the ability to respond favorably, and in another sense do not have the ability to respond favorably. On the one hand, sinners have all the faculties and capabilities necessary to respond favorably to the gospel; on the other hand, they do not have the inclination or disposition to do so. They don't want to turn from their own way and go God's way. They cherish the freedom to choose their own life style too much to let someone else (even God) decide how they shall live. Their disinclination to respond to God's invitation arises totally from themselves, not from God. All who wish to come to God in God's way may do so!

i. John 6:37b

"and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out."

This is an assurance that all who come to Christ will be received by Him. It implies nothing about the natural man's ability to come to Christ by a sheer act of will whenever he chooses.

In addition, verse 37a should be included as context for this assurance. Jesus said, "All that the Father gives me will come to me." This tells us two things: (1) that there is a class of persons whom the Father gives to the Son; and (2) that this class of persons will actually come to the Son (presumably for salvation). Then verse 37b adds a third idea, namely (3) that no one in this class of persons whom the Father gives to the Son and who actually come to the Son will be cast out (presumably from the realm of salvation).

Thus, instead of emphasizing man's ability to come to Christ, the verse actually emphasizes God's grace in casting out no one that He brings to the Son.

j. John 12:32

"And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to Myself."

The context (verses 31-33) should be noted. There we read of the world being judged and Satan being driven out; and we learn that Christ is going to die by hanging or crucifixion (He will be "lifted up from the earth"). And we learn that if He is lifted up, he "will draw all men to Himself."

This statement of drawing all men to Christ is usually taken to mean that the proclamation of Christ's atoning death exerts an attracting influence on all who hear the gospel, and that all who hear the gospel either yield to this influence or resist it. In this interpretation the "all men" is limited to "all men who hear the gospel."

But suppose the "all men" were not limited. Suppose through His humiliation and death, Christ has been exalted to be King of kings and Lord of lords, so that all men will be drawn to Him and bow the knee to Him, either in loving, voluntary submission or in resentful, involuntary submission (as in Philippians 2:5-11). Then by His death on the cross He would indeed powerfully draw all men to Himself! This suggestion could be particularly cogent, since the word translated "draw" also means "to drag".

k. John 3:16

"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life."

The term "world" as used here is troublesome. It could mean the whole created world, but since the second part of the verse focuses on human beings instead of rocks and oceans and plants and animals, it would seem that "world" in the first part of the verse has special reference to human beings.

In addition, there is no explicit distinction made between the general love that God has for all of His creation (which includes mankind) and the special love that He has for those who are savingly related to Him through His Son. Yet this distinction underlies the two halves of the verse.

The verse teaches that God loved the human race so much, that He sent His Son into the world to live a perfect sinless life and die a perfect sacrificial death, so that those human beings who would trust savingly in Christ would be saved and receive eternal life.

Thus the movement of thought is from God's general love for all mankind, to His gracious and loving provision of a Savior whose atonement is sufficient for all mankind, to His gracious and loving application of that atonement to all human beings who trust in that Savior.

This, then, is a promise that anyone who trusts savingly in Christ will receive eternal life. It does not address the question of whether all human beings will trust in Christ or whether any sinful human beings in their natural state are inclined to trust in Christ; it simply tells us what happens to those human beings who trust in God's beloved Son. And this promise is open to all who will receive it!

I. Since many of the Scriptures which are quoted in opposition to the doctrine contain universalistic terms, perhaps a primer of interpretive principles for the proper understanding of such terms is in order.

Principles for Interpreting Universalistic Terms

(such as "all", "every", "everyone", "no", "none", "no one", "world", and "earth.")

First determine from context the class being spoken of 'all' what or 'all' of whom?

- Example: 1 Cor. 15:22 -- "For as in Adam all die; even so in Christ shall all be made alive."
- Example: Acts 3:9 -- "And all, the people saw him walking and praising God."
- Example: Acts 4:21 -- "So when they had further threatened them, they let them go, finding nothing how they might punish them, because of the people: for all men glorified God for that which was done."

Second, determine from the context whether there is any indication or suggestion that hyperbole is being employed for emphasis or to express a subjective impression on the part of the speaker/writer.

- Example: Acts 21:28 "Crying out, Men of Israel, help: This is the man, that teacheth all men everywhere against the people, and the law, and this place: and further brought Greeks also into the temple, and hath polluted this holy place."
- Example: Acts 19:27 "So that not only this our craft is in danger to be set at nought; but also that the temple of the great goddess Diana should be despised, and her magnificence should be destroyed, whom all Asia and the world worshippeth."

Third determine from usage in context whether the class being spoken of is itself limited in some way.

(for example, is the class "men" being spoken of as human beings generically, or as human beings of male gender; or is the class "world" being spoken of as the entire visible and invisible universe, or as the physical earth, or as the known world, or as the inhabited earth, or as the Roman world, or as the Jewish world, or as the Christian world, or as mankind generally, or as the evil world system with its evil structures and evil desires?)

- Example: Luke 21:17 -- "And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake."
- Example: Luke 2:1 -- "And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed."
- Example: Genesis 41:57 -- "And all countries came into Egypt to Joseph for to buy corn; because that the famine was so sore in all lands."
- Example: Acts 2:5 -- "And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven."
- Example: 1 John 5:19 -- "And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness."
- Example: 1 John 2:15-17 -- "Love not the world neither the things that are in the world. if any man love the world the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever."
- Example: John 3:16 -- "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

Fourth, determine from usage in context whether the term is used to emphasize an enlargement from a smaller to a larger class, or from some members of a class to all members of the class.

Example: Acts 2:17 -- "And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams."

Fifth, determine from usage in context whether the term is used collectively or distributively.

(collectively would mean that at least one representative member of every subclass of the class is being spoken of, or one representative member from a proportion of subclasses sufficient to represent the whole class; distributively would mean that all members of every subclass of the class are being spoken of.)

Example: Acts 22:15 -- "For thou (Paul) shalt be his witness unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard."

Example: Mark 1:5 -- "And there went out unto him (John the Baptist) all the land of Judaea and they of Jerusalem, and were all baptized of him in the river of Jordan, confessing their sins."

Example: Romans 1:8 -- "First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world."

Example: Acts 26:4 -- "My manner of life from my youth, which was at the first among mine own nation at Jerusalem, know all the Jews."

- g. In connection with some problems of reconciling all Scriptures with the position herein presented, it should frankly be recognized that every position which is taken concerning so controversial an issue can be expected to have some problems which have not yet been resolved. However, problems do not in themselves constitute grounds for rejecting a view. The bases upon which the view rests must be examined to see whether they are sound. If one goes back and reexamines the scriptural grounds for the doctrine of predestination, he will be enabled to see that, given strong grounds for a doctrine, one need not view unresolved problems as barriers to belief in a doctrine, but as challenges which need further work. Often it has happened that Scriptures which have appeared to be major obstacles have been resolved with further light, additional time, and renewed reflection. Once again, it should be recalled that every view has some problems; and that the grounds for and not the exceptions to a view are the solid basis upon which faith can safely rest.

III. The Covenant of Grace

A. Statement of the Doctrine

1. In the *Westminster Confession of Faith*, Chapter VII

Of God's Covenant with Man

I. The distance between God and the creature is so great, that although reasonable creatures do owe obedience unto Him as their Creator, yet they could never have any fruition of Him as their blessedness and reward, but by some voluntary condescension on God's part, which He hath been pleased to express by way of covenant.

II. The first covenant made with man was a covenant of works, wherein life was promised to Adam; and in him to his posterity, upon condition of perfect and personal obedience.

III. Man, by his fall, having made himself incapable of life by that covenant, the Lord was pleased to make a second, commonly called the covenant of grace; wherein He freely offereth unto sinners life and salvation by Jesus Christ; requiring of them faith in Him, that they may be saved, and promising to give unto all those that are ordained unto eternal life His Holy Spirit, to make them willing, and able to believe.

IV. This covenant of grace is frequently set forth in Scripture by the name of a testament, in reference to the death of Jesus Christ the Testator, and to the everlasting inheritance, with all things belonging to it, therein bequeathed.

V. This covenant was differently administered in the time of the law, and in the time of the gospel: under the law, it was administered by promises, prophecies, sacrifices, circumcision, the paschal lamb, and other types and ordinances delivered to the people of the Jews, all foreshadowing Christ to come; which were for that time, sufficient and efficacious, through the operation of the Spirit, to instruct and build up the elect in faith in the promised Messiah, by whom they had full remission of sins, and eternal salvation; and is called the Old Testament.

VI. Under the gospel, when Christ, the substance, was exhibited, the ordinances in which this covenant is dispensed are the preaching of the Word, and the administration of the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper: which, though fewer in number, and administered with more simplicity, and less outward glory, yet, in them, it is held forth in more fulness, evidence and spiritual efficacy, to all nations, both Jews and Gentiles; and is called the New Testament. There are not therefore two covenants of grace, differing in substance, but one and the same, under various dispensations.

2. By Archibald Alexander Hodge

The analysis of a covenant always gives the following elements: (a) its parties; (b) its promise; (c) its conditions; (d) its penalty.

The Calvinistic view, therefore, is, that God having determined to save the elect out of the mass of the race fallen in Adam, appointed his Son to become incarnate in our nature; and as the Christ, or God-man Mediator,

he appointed him to be the second Adam and representative head of redeemed humanity; and as such entered into a covenant with him and with his seed in him. In this covenant the Mediator assumes in behalf of his elect seed the broken conditions of the old covenant of works precisely as Adam left them. Adam had failed to obey, and therefore forfeited life; he had sinned, and therefore incurred the endless penalty of death. Christ therefore suffered the penalty, and extinguished in behalf of all whom he represented the claims of the old covenant; and at the same time he rendered a perfect vicarious obedience, which was the very condition upon which eternal life had been originally offered. All this Christ does as a principal party with God to the covenant, in acting as the representative of his own people.

Subsequently, in the administration and gracious application of this covenant, Christ the Mediator offers the blessings secured by it to all men on the condition of faith; -- that is, he bids all men to lay hold of these blessings by the instrumentality of faith, and he promises that if they do so they shall certainly enjoy them; and he, as the mediatorial Surety of his people, insures for them that their faith and obedience shall not fail.

-- *The Confession of Faith* (London: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1958 [reprinted]), pp. 122, 125-126.

The Covenant of Grace

It is evident. -- 1st. That as God is an infinite, eternal, and Immutable intelligence he must have formed, from the beginning, an all-comprehensive and unchangeable Plan of all his works in time, including Creation, Providence, and Redemption.

2d. A Plan formed by and intended to be executed in its several reciprocal distributed parts by Three Persons, as Sender and Sent, as Principal and Mediator, as Executor and Applier, must necessarily possess all the essential attributes of an eternal Covenant between those Persons.

3d. Since God in all departments of his moral government treats man as an intelligent, voluntary, and responsible moral agent, it follows that the execution of the eternal Plan of Redemption must be in its general character ethical and not magical, must proceed by the revelation of truth, and the influence of motives, and must be voluntarily appropriated by the subject as an offered grace, and obeyed as an enjoined duty upon pain of reprobation. Hence its application must possess all the essential attributes of a Covenant in time between God and his people.

-- *Outlines of Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1957 (reprinted), p. 367.

3. By Louis Berkhof

Berkhof distinguishes between the Covenant of Redemption and the Covenant of Grace. He states:

The covenant of redemption may be defined as the agreement between the Father, giving the Son as Head and Redeemer of the elect, and the Son, voluntarily taking the place of those whom the Father had given Him.

The covenant of grace may be defined as that gracious agreement between the offended God and the offending but elect sinner, in which God promises salvation through faith in Christ, and the sinner accepts this believingly, promising a life of faith and obedience.

The following points indicate the relation in which this covenant [the covenant of redemption] stands to the covenant of grace;

1. The counsel of redemption is the eternal prototype of the historical covenant of grace. This accounts for the fact that many combine the two into a single covenant. The former is eternal, that is, from eternity, and the latter, temporal in the sense that it is realized in time. The former is a compact between the Father and the son as the Surety and Head of the elect, while the latter is a compact between the triune God and the elect sinner in the Surety.

2. The counsel of redemption is the firm and eternal foundation of the covenant of grace. If there had been no eternal counsel of peace between the Father and the Son, there could have been no agreement between the triune God and sinful men. The counsel of redemption makes the covenant of grace possible.

3. The counsel of redemption consequently also gives efficacy to the covenant of grace, for in it the means are provided for the establishment and execution of the latter. It is only by faith that the sinner can obtain the blessings of the covenant, and in the counsel of redemption the way of faith is opened. The holy Spirit, who produces faith in the sinner, was promised to Christ by the Father, and the acceptance of the way of life through faith was guaranteed by Christ.

-- *Systematic Theology*, Fourth Revised Edition
(Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1959), pp. 270-271, 277.

B. Development of the Doctrine

1. Scriptures pertinent to the doctrine

Isaiah 42:6-7 (spoken to the Lord's Servant [verse 11]) -- "I am the Lord, I have called you in righteousness, I will also hold you by the hand and watch over you, And I will appoint you as a covenant to the people, As a light to the nations, To open blind eyes, To bring out prisoners from the dungeon, And those who dwell in darkness from the prison."

Here the Father makes an agreement with His Son, to bestow certain benefits upon the nations of mankind.

Isaiah 53:10-12 -- "But the Lord was pleased to crush Him, putting Him to grief; if He would render Himself as a guilt offering, He will see His offspring, He will prolong His days, And the good pleasure of the Lord will prosper in his hand. As a result of the anguish of His soul, He will see it and be satisfied; By His knowledge the Righteous One, My Servant, will justify the many, As He will bear their iniquities. Therefore, I will allot Him a portion with the great,

And He will divide the booty with the strong; Because He poured out Himself to death, And was numbered with the transgressors; Yet He himself bore the sin of many, And interceded for the transgressors."

Here the Son satisfies the condition of the Father, by bearing the iniquities of and justifying His people. The Son is rewarded for fulfilling this condition.

Matthew 5:17-18 -- "Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish, but to fulfill. For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass away from the Law, until all is accomplished."

Here the Son fulfills the Law and the Prophets as part of the condition.

John 6:38-40 -- "For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of Him that sent me. And this is the will of Him who sent me, that of all that He has given me I lose nothing, but raise it up on the last day. For this is the will of my Father, that every one who beholds the Son, and believes in Him, may have eternal life; and I myself will raise him up on the last day."

Here the Son comes to fulfill the condition of obedience to the Father, so that the benefits may be applied to those for whom the Son fulfills the condition.

John 10:14-18 -- "I am the good shepherd; and I know my own, and my own know me, even as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep. And I have other sheep, which are not of this fold; I must bring them also, and they shall hear my voice; and they shall become one flock with one Shepherd. For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life that I may take it again. No man takes it away from me, but I lay it down on my own initiative. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This commandment I received from the Father."

Here the Son satisfies the condition on behalf of His people, so that they may receive the promised benefits.

John 17:4-8 -- "I glorified Thee on the earth, having accomplished the work which Thou hast given me to do. And now, glorify Thou me together with Thyself, Father, with the glory which I ever had with Thee before the world. Thine they were, and Thou gayest them to me, and they have kept Thy word. Now they have come to know that everything Thou hast given me is from Thee; for the words which Thou gayest me I have given to them; and they received them, and truly understood that I came forth from Thee, and they believed that Thou didst send me."

Here the Son is spoken of as having fulfilled the condition set for Him by the Father, and as having received the reward of a people upon whom to bestow the benefits of His obedience.

2 Cor. 5:21 -- "He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him."

Here the Son satisfies the condition of the Father, by allowing the guilt of His people to be placed upon Himself, in order that His people may receive the benefits promised by the Father.

Gal. 4:4-5 -- "But when the fulness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, in order that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons."

Here the son, according to a predetermined plan, comes at a specific time in history, to fulfill the condition, so that the benefits may accrue to His people.

Phil. 2:5-11 -- "Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bondservant, and being made in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedience to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore also God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those who are in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

Here the Son fulfilled all of the aspects of the condition, and was rewarded for His obedience.

2 Tim. 1:8-10 -- "Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, or of me His prisoner; but join with me in suffering for the gospel according to the power of God; who has saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity, but now has been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, who abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel."

Here the Son fulfilled the condition which had been determined from eternity, by coming to earth and accomplishing redemption, so that the promised benefits could be applied to those who had been chosen to receive them.

Heb. 10:7-10 -- "Then I said, 'Behold, I have come (in the roll of the book it is written of me) to do Thy will, O God.' After saying above, 'Sacrifices and offerings and whole burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin Thou hast not desired, nor hast Thou taken pleasure in them' (which are offered according to the Law), then He said, 'Behold I have come to do Thy will.' He takes away the first in order to establish the second. By this will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all."

Here the Son fulfills the conditions of obedience and the offering of Himself as a sacrifice to the Father, in order that the promised benefit might be bestowed upon His people.

1 John 4:9-10 -- "By this the love of God was manifested among us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him. In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins."

Here we are told that the Father sent the Son to fulfill the condition of satisfaction for the sins of His people, so that they might receive the promised benefit of life.

Note: There are three additional Scriptures which could be mentioned in connection with the covenant of grace, but which do not appear to be speaking of the covenant of grace in general, but rather of the New Testament dispensation of that covenant. They are all found in the book of Hebrews.

Hebrews 8:6 -- "But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, by as much as He is also the mediator of a better covenant, which has been enacted on better promises."

Hebrews 9:15 -- "And for this reason He is the mediator of a new covenant, in order that since a death has taken place for the redemption of the transgressions that were committed under the first covenant, those who have been called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance."

Hebrews 12:24 -- "and to Jesus the mediator of a new covenant and to the sprinkled blood, which speaks better than the blood of Abel."

2. Principles derived from these Scriptures

a. Scripture reveals an agreement between the Father and the Son, involving the establishment of certain conditions to be fulfilled, and benefits to be bestowed upon fulfillment of those conditions. This agreement, which pertains to the salvation of a people chosen before the foundation of the world, may properly be called a covenant. Since it pertains to persons viewed as fallen, it may properly be called a covenant of grace.

b. The conditions of the covenant, as respects the Son, include a humiliating incarnation; a life of perfect obedience to the perfect Law of God; a death of perfect satisfaction to the penalty of the broken Law of God; and a powerful resurrection, to demonstrate His complete vindication from sin and victory over death.

There are no conditions of the covenant as respects the chosen people of the Son. Although a believing reception of the Son and of His perfect fulfillment of the conditions of the covenant on their behalf is sometimes spoken of as a "condition", that sense of the word is quite distinct from its meaning in the covenant of grace. Since both the ability and the disposition to exercise faith in Christ are themselves gifts of God's grace, therefore faith cannot be viewed as a condition of the covenant. Since faith is one of the benefits of the covenant, it cannot be made a condition of it.

in another sense, however, faith may be called a condition, but not in the sense of a requirement that must be fulfilled in order for the covenant to go into effect. If by "condition" is meant that, in the application of salvation, faith is logically prior to justification (we are justified by faith), and therefore that faith is a condition of justification, then that is another matter entirely. in such a case, faith is not an accomplishment of one of the conditions of the covenant (which, if it were, would make faith a work, would mix imperfect human effort with

Christ's perfect work as a fulfillment of the covenant conditions, and would thus destroy the grace character of the covenant); rather, faith is an exercise of one of the benefits of the covenant (which still permits faith to be spoken of as a condition which must be fulfilled before other benefits of the covenant can be applied).

Now it may be seen that various aspects of the conditions of the covenant may also be "conditioned" upon other aspects. Christ's incarnation is a condition which must be fulfilled before He can live a life of perfect obedience. And Christ's death is a condition of His resurrection. To put it another way, Christ must die before He can rise from the dead; He must live before He can die; and He must become incarnate before He can live on this earth as a man.

Just as various aspects of the conditions are conditioned upon other aspects, so various aspects of the benefits of the covenant are conditioned upon other aspects. The effects of depravity upon the intellect and will must be countered before there can be true faith; and there must be true faith before there can be justification; and there must be justification before there can be progressive sanctification. The first item in each of these pairs is a condition of the second.

This brings us (finally) to some definitions which can help to distinguish the difference between these two uses of the word "condition".

In one sense, "condition" means whatever must be done in order to fulfill the requirements of the covenant agreement, so that the covenant benefits will go into effect.

In another sense, "condition" means that which must occur before something else can occur, in terms either of the conditions or of the benefits of the covenant.

And now we can also see that the application of the benefits of the covenant is conditioned upon the fulfillment of its conditions.

3. Definitions of the doctrine

According to the *American College Dictionary* a contract is "an agreement between two or more parties for the doing or not doing of some definite thing," and a covenant is "an agreement between two or more persons to do or refrain from doing some act; a compact; a contract." in this usage, the terms appear to be interchangeable.

By definition, a covenant is a contractual agreement among two or more parties in which the contracting parties agree upon the conditions to be fulfilled, the benefits promised upon fulfillment, and the penalties promised upon nonfulfillment.

We have previously discussed the covenant of works, in which the leading feature was the condition of obedience to God's will by Adam in the Garden of Eden. We have also noted Adam's failure to comply with this condition, and the exacting of the penalty upon him and all of his posterity. Now we are asking the question: Does Scripture also reveal a covenant in which the leading feature is not an abandonment of all conditions, but rather a gracious fulfillment of the condition of

obedience to God's will by one of the parties in behalf of the others? if so, we may properly call such a covenant a covenant of grace, whether or not Scripture specifically employs that term.

However, in Reformed Theology the covenant of grace does not pertain to the Son of God and elect sinners in the same manner. The covenant of grace as pertains to the Son is an agreement between equals, and specifies contractual conditions to be fulfilled and contractual benefits to be paid upon fulfillment of the contractual conditions. Thus the covenant of redemption (the covenant of grace as pertains to the Son) may properly be called a contract or compact. The covenant of grace as pertains to elect sinners, on the other hand, is a gracious arrangement between unequals (the triune God and those sinners He has graciously chosen), and specifies no contractual conditions to be fulfilled by them, but only gracious benefits paid for by God Himself and bestowed upon them as God opens their hearts and inclines their wills to receive them. Thus it appears that the covenant of grace as pertains to elect sinners cannot properly be called a contract. Perhaps "sovereign arrangement" would be better.

The following definition would thus appear to be more accurate than some that have been proposed in the past:

The covenant of grace is a sovereign arrangement in which God establishes and fulfills the conditions of salvation, and enables elect sinners to receive it.

IV. THE PERSON OF CHRIST

A. Statements of the Doctrine

1. In the *Apostles' Creed* (recension of A.D. 700)

I believe

- I. In God the Father, Almighty, Maker of Heaven and Earth
- II. (1) And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord
(2) Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary
(3) Suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried; He descended into hell
(4) The third day He rose again from the dead
(5) He ascended into heaven
(6) And sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty
(7) From thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

I believe

- III. (1) In the Holy Ghost
(2) The Holy Catholic Church, the communion of Saints
(3) The forgiveness of sins
(4) The resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

2. In the *Nicene Creed* (A.D. 325)

We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of all things seen and unseen;

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, begotten of the Father; unique, that is, of the substance of the Father, God of God, Light of Light, true God of true God; begotten, not made; of one substance with the Father, by Whom all things were made, those that are in Heaven and those that are on earth, Who for us men and for our salvation, came down and was incarnate and was made man; He suffered and rose again the third day, ascended into Heaven, and is coming to Judge the living and the dead;

And in the Holy Spirit.

But those who are saying, "There was a time when He was not," and "Before He was begotten He was not," and "He came into being out of non-being," or are saying that His essence or substance is different, or created, or altered, or changed, the holy, universal, and apostolic Church accurses.

3. In the *Chalcedonian Creed* (A.D. 451)

Following the holy fathers, we teach with one voice that the Son (of God) and our Lord Jesus Christ is to be confessed as one and the same (Person), that He is perfect in Godhead and perfect in manhood, very God and very man, of a reasonable soul and (human) body consisting, consubstantial with the Father as touching His Godhead, and consubstantial with us as touching His manhood; made in all things like unto us, sin only excepted; begotten of His Father before the worlds according to His Godhead; but in these last days for us men and for our salvation born (into the world) of the Virgin Mary, the mother God, according to His manhood. This one and the same Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son (of God) must be confessed to be in two natures, unconfusedly, immutably, indivisibly, inseparably* (united), and

that without the distinction of natures being taken away by such union, but rather the peculiar property of each nature being preserved and being united in one Person and subsistence, not separated or divided into two persons, but one and the same Son and only begotten, God the Word, our Lord Jesus Christ, as the Prophets of old time have spoken concerning Him, and as the Lord Jesus Christ hath taught us, and as the Creed of the Fathers hath delivered to us.

These things, therefore, having been expressed by us with the greatest accuracy and attention, the holy Ecumenical Synod defines that no one shall be suffered to bring forward a different faith, nor to write, nor to put together, nor to excogitate, nor to teach it to others. But such as dare either to put together another faith, or to bring forward or to teach or to deliver a different Creed, to such as wish to be converted to the knowledge of the truth from the Gentiles, or Jews or any heresy whatever, if they be bishops or clerics, let them be deposed, the bishops from the episcopate, and the clerics from the clergy; but if they be monks or laics, let them be anathematized.

* These four famous words, which attempt to preserve the distinction of natures in the one Person, are (in the Greek) ἀσυγχυτως, ἀτρέπτως, ἀδιαιρετως, ἀχωριστως; and (in the Latin) *inconfuse*, *immutabiliter*, *indivise*, *inseperabiliter* (the Chalcedonian Creed was composed in Greek and then translated into Latin). The elements, "without confusion, without change," were directed against Eutychianism; and the elements, "without division, without separation, were directed against Nestorianism (two major heresies of that day).

4. In the *Athanasian Creed* (fifth century A.D.)

1. Whosoever will be saved: before all things it is necessary that he hold the catholic faith [*catholicam fidem*]:

2. Which faith except every one do keep whole and undefiled: without doubt he shall perish everlastingly.

3. And the catholic faith is this: that we worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity [*Trinitatem in Unitate*];

4. Neither confounding the Persons [*personas*] nor dividing the substance [*substantiam*].

5. For there is one Person of the Father: another of the Son: and another of the Holy Spirit.

6. But the Godhead [*divinitas*] of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, is all one: the glory equal, the majesty coeternal.

7. Such as the Father is: such is the Son: and such is the Holy Spirit.

8. The Father uncreated [*increatus*] the Son uncreated: and the Holy Spirit uncreated.

9. The Father unlimited [*immensus*] the Son unlimited: and the Holy Spirit unlimited.

10. The Father eternal: the Son eternal: and the Holy Spirit eternal.

11. And yet they are not three eternals: but one eternal [*unus aeternus*]

12. As also there are not three uncreated: not three unlimiteds, but one uncreated: and one unlimited.

13. So likewise the Father is omnipotent [*omnipotens*] the Son omnipotent: and the Holy Spirit omnipotent.

14. And yet they are not three omnipotents: but one omnipotent.

15. So the Father is God [*deus*]: the Son is God: and the Holy Spirit is God.

16. And yet they are not three Gods: but one God.

17. so likewise the Father is Lord [*dominus*]: the Son Lord: and the Holy Spirit Lord.
18. And yet not three Lords: but one Lord.
19. For like as we are compelled by the Christian verity: to acknowledge every Person by himself to be God and Lord:
20. So are we forbidden by the catholic religion [*catholica religione*]: to say, There are three Gods, or three Lords.
21. The Father is made [*factus*] of none: neither created [*creatus*] nor begotten [*genitus*].
22. The Son is of the Father alone: not made, nor created: but begotten.
23. The Holy Spirit is of the Father and the Son: neither made, not created, nor begotten: but proceeding [*procedans*].
24. So there is one Father, not three Fathers: one Son, not three Sons: one Holy Spirit, not three Holy Spirits.
25. And in this Trinity there is nothing before or after [*nihil prius, aut posterius*]: nothing greater or lesser [*nihil majus, aut minus*].
26. But the whole three Persons are coeternal [*coaeternae*] and coequal [*coaequales*].
27. So that in all things, as aforesaid: the Unity in Trinity, and the Trinity in Unity, is to be worshipped.
28. He therefore that will be saved, let him thus think of the Trinity.
29. Furthermore it is necessary to everlasting salvation: that he also believe faithfully the incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ.
30. For the right Faith is, that we believe and confess: that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is God and man:
31. God, of the substance [*substantia*] of the Father; begotten before the worlds [*ante secula genitus*]: and man, of the substance [*substantia*] of his mother, born in the world.
32. Perfect God: and perfect man, of a reasonable soul [*ex anima rationali*] and human flesh [*humana carne*] subsisting [*subsistens*]
33. Equal to the Father, as touching his Godhead [*divinitatem*] and less than [*minor*] the Father as touching his manhood.
34. Who although He is God and man; yet he is not two, but one Christ.
35. One; not by conversion [*conversione*] of the Godhead into flesh: but by assumption [*assumptione*] of the mankind into God.
36. One altogether; not by confusion [*confusione*] of substance: but by unity [*unitate*] of Person.
37. For as the reasonable soul and flesh is one man: so God and man is one Christ;
38. Who suffered for our salvation: descended into Hades [*infernus*] rose again the third day from the dead.
39. He ascended into heaven, he sitteth on the right hand of God the Father almighty.
40. From thence he shall come to judge the living and the dead.
41. At whose coming all men shall rise again with their bodies;
42. And shall give account for their own works.
43. And they that have done good shall go into life everlasting: and they that have done evil, into everlasting fire.
44. This is the catholic faith: which except a man believe faithfully and firmly, he can not be saved.

5. In the *Formula of Concord* (A.D. 1576), Article VIII, sections X-XII

X. On the same ground, also, we believe, teach, and confess that the Son of Man is really, that is, truly and in very deed, according to his human nature, exalted to the right hand of the omnipotent majesty and power of God, since that man was assumed into God when he was conceived by the Holy Ghost in the womb of his mother, and his humanity was then personally united with the Son of God Most High.

XI. And that majesty, in virtue of the personal union, Christ has always had, but in the state of his humiliation he divested himself of it, for which cause he truly grew in age, wisdom, and favor with God and men. Wherefore he did not always make use of that majesty, but as often as seemed good to him, until after the resurrection, he fully and forever laid aside the form of a servant, but not the human nature, and was established in the plenary use, manifestation, and revelation of the divine majesty, and in the manner entered into his glory (Phil. 2:6ff). Therefore now not only as God, but also as man, he knows all things, can do all things, is present to all creatures, has under his feet and in his hand all things which are in heaven, in the earth, and under the earth. That this is so, Christ himself bears witness, saying (Matt. 28:18; John 13:3): "All power in heaven and in earth is given unto me." And Paul saith (Ephesians 4:10): "He ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things." This his power, being every where present, he can exercise, nor is anything to him either impossible or unknown.

XII. Hence also, and indeed most easily, can he, being present, impart his true body and his blood in the Holy Supper. Now this is not done according to the mode and attribute of human nature, but according to the mode and attribute of the right hand of God, as Luther, according to the analogy of our Christian faith, as contained in the Catechism, is wont to speak. And this presence of Christ in the Holy Supper is neither physical or earthly, nor Capernaïtic; nevertheless it is most true and indeed substantial. For so read the words of the testament of Christ: "This is my body," etc.

By this our faith, doctrine, and confession, the person of Christ is not severed, as of old Nestorius severed it. For he denied a true communication of the *idiomata* of attributes of both natures in Christ, and in this way separated the person of Christ: which thing Dr. Luther has perspicuously set forth in his book on the Councils. Not by this godly doctrine of ours are the two natures in Christ and their attributes confounded, or mingled into one essence (as Eutyches erroneously taught), nor is the human nature in the person of Christ denied or abolished, nor the one nature changed into the other; but Christ is and abides to all eternity true God and man in one undivided person. Next to the mystery of the Trinity this is the chiefest mystery, as the Apostle bear witness (I Tim. 3:16); on which alone all our consolation, life, and salvation depend.

6. In *The Second Helvetic Confession* (A.D. 1566), Chapter XI

Moreover, we believe and teach that the Son of God, or Lord Jesus Christ, was from all eternity predestinated and foreordained of the Father to be the Saviour of the World. And we believe that he was begotten, not only then, when he took flesh of the Virgin Mary, nor yet a little before the foundations of the world were laid; but before all eternity, and that of the Father after an unspeakable manner. For Isaiah says (53:8), "Who can tell his generation?" And Micah says (5:2), "Whose egress hath been from everlasting." And John says (1:1), "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God," etc.

Therefore the Son is coequal and consubstantial with the Father, as touching his divinity: true God, not by name only, or by adoption, or by special favor, but in substance and nature (Phil 2:6). Even as the apostle says elsewhere, "This is the true God, and life everlasting." (I John 5:20)

Paul also says, "He hath made his Son the heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; the same is the brightness of his glory and the express image of his person, bearing up all things by his mighty word." (Heb. 1:2-3) Likewise, in the Gospel, the Lord himself says, "Father, glorify thou me with thyself, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was:" (John 17:5) also elsewhere it is written in the Gospel, "the Jews sought how to kill. Jesus, because he said that God was his Father, making himself equal with God." (John 5:18)

We therefore do abhor the blasphemous doctrine of Arius, and all the Arians, uttered against the Son of God; and especially the blasphemies of Michael Servetus, the Spaniard, and of his complices, which Satan through them has, as it were, drawn out of hell, and most boldly and Impiously spread abroad throughout the whole world against the Son of God.

We also teach and believe that the eternal Son of the eternal God was made the Son of man, of the seed of Abraham and David (Matt. 1:25); not by the means of any man, as Ebion affirmed, but that he was most purely conceived by the Holy Spirit, and born of Mary, who was always a virgin, even as the history of the Gospel does declare. And Paul says, "He took not on him the nature of angels, but of the seed of Abraham." (He. 2:16) And John the apostle says, "He that believeth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is not of God." (I John 4:3) The flesh of Christ, therefore, was neither flesh in show only, nor yet flesh brought from heaven, as Valentinus and Marcion dreamed.

Moreover, our Lord Jesus Christ had not a soul without sense and reason, as Apollinaris thought; nor flesh with a soul, as Eunomius did teach; but a soul with its reason, and flesh with its senses, by which senses he felt true griefs in the time of his passion, even as he himself witnessed when he said, "My soul is heavy even to death" (Matt. 26:38); and, "My soul is troubled," etc. (John 12:27).

We acknowledge, therefore, that there be in one and the same Jesus Christ our Lord two natures the divine and the human nature; and we say that these two are so conjoined or united that they are not swallowed up, confounded, or mingled together; but rather united or joined together in one person (the properties of each nature being safe and remaining still), so that we do worship one Christ our Lord, and not two. I say one, true God and man, as touching his divine nature, of the same substance with us, and "in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." (Heb. 4:15)

As, therefore, we detest the heresy of Nestorius, which makes two Christs of one and dissolves the union of the person, so do we abominate the madness of Eutyches and of the Monothelites and Monophysites, who overthrow the propriety of the human nature.

Therefore we do not teach that the divine nature in Christ did suffer, or that Christ, according to his human nature, is yet in the world, and so in every place. For we do neither think nor teach that the body of Christ ceased to be a true body after his glorifying, or that it was deified and so deified that it put off its properties, as touching body and soul, and became altogether a divine nature and began to be one substance alone; therefore we do not allow or receive the unwitty subtleties, and the intricate, obscure, and inconstant disputations of Schwenkfeldt, and such other vain janglers, about this matter; neither are we Schwenkfeldians.

7. In the Belgic Confession (A.D. 1561), Articles XVIII-XIX

Article XVIII -- We confess, therefore, that God did fulfill the promise which he made to the fathers by the mouth of his holy prophets when he sent into the world, at the time appointed by him, his own only begotten and

eternal Son, "who took upon him the form of a servant, and became like unto men," really assuming the true human nature, with all its infirmities, sin excepted, being conceived in the womb of the blessed Virgin Mary, by the power of the Holy Ghost, without the means of man; and did not only assume human nature as to the body, but also a true human soul, that he might be a real man. For since the soul was lost as well as the body, it was necessary that he should take both upon him, to save both. Therefore we confess (in opposition to the heresy of the Anabaptists, who deny that Christ assumed human flesh of his mother) that Christ is become "a partaker of the flesh and blood of the children"; that he is a "fruit of the loins of David" after the flesh; "made of the seed of David according to the flesh"; a "fruit of the womb" of the Virgin Mary; "made of a woman"; a "branch" of David; a shoot of "the root of Jesse; sprung from the tribe of Judah; descended from the Jews according to the flesh: of the seed of Abraham, since he took upon him the seed of Abraham, and became like unto his brethren in all things, sin excepted;" so that in truth he is our Immanuel that is to say, "God with us".

Article XIX -- We believe that by this conception the person of the Son is inseparably united and connected with the human nature; so that there are not two Sons of God, nor two persons, but two natures united in one single person; yet each nature retains its own distinct properties. As then the divine nature hath always remained uncreated, without beginning of days or end of life, filling heaven and earth, so also hath the human nature not lost its properties, but remained a creature, having beginning of days, being a finite nature, and retaining all the properties of a real body. And though he hath by his resurrection given immortality to the same, nevertheless he hath not changed the reality of his human nature; forasmuch as our salvation and resurrection also depend on the reality of his body. But these two natures are so closely united in one person, that they were not separated even by his death. Therefore that which he, when dying, commended into the hands of his Father, was real human spirit, departing from his body. But in the mean time the divine nature remained united with the human, even when he lay in the grave; and the Godhead did not cease to be in him, any more than it did when he was an infant, though it did not so clearly manifest itself for a while.

Wherefore we confess that he is very God and very Man very God by his power to conquer death, and very man that he might die for us according to the infirmity of his flesh.

8. In the *Westminster Confession of Faith* (A.D. 1647), Chapter VIII

II. The Son of God, the second person in the Trinity, being very and eternal God, of one substance, and equal with the Father, did, when the fulness of time was come, take upon him man's nature, with all the essential properties and common infirmities thereof, yet without sin: being conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost in the womb of the virgin Mary, of her substance. So that two whole, perfect, and distinct natures, the Godhead and the manhood, were inseparably joined together in one person, without conversion, composition, or confusion. Which person is very God and very man, yet one Christ, the only mediator between God and man.

9. In the *Orthodox Creed* of the General Baptists of England (A.D. 1678), Articles IV-VII

Article IV -- Of the Divine Nature or Godhead of Christ

We confess and believe, that the Son of God, or the eternal word, is very and true God, having his personal subsistence of the father alone, and yet for ever of himself as God; and of the father as the son, the eternal son of an eternal father; not later in beginning. There was never any time when he was not, not less in dignity, not other in substance, begotten without diminution of his father that begat, of one nature and substance with the father; begotten of the father, while the father communicated wholly to the son, which he retained wholly in himself, because both were infinite, without inequality of nature, without division of essence, neither made, nor created, nor adopted, but begotten before all time; not a metaphorical, or subordinate God; not a God by office, but a God by nature, coequal, coessential, and coeternal, with the father and the holy ghost.

Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, before Abraham was, I am. Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and for ever, David therefore calleth him Lord, how is he then his son?

Article V -- Of the Second Person of the Holy Trinity Taking our Flesh

We believe that the only begotten son of God, the second person in the sacred Trinity, took to himself a true, real, and fleshly body, and reasonable soul, being conceived in the fullness of time, by the holy ghost, and born of the virgin Mary, and became very and true man like unto us in all things, even in our infirmities, sin only excepted, as appeareth by his conception, birth, life, and death. He was of a woman, and by the power of the holy ghost, in a supernatural and miraculous manner, was formed of the only seed, or substance of the virgin Mary, in which respect he hath the name of the son of man, and is the true son of David the fruit of the virgin's womb, to that end he might die for Adam.

Article VI -- Of the Union of the Two Natures in Christ

We believe the person of the son of God, being a person from all eternity existing, did assume the most pure nature of man, wanting all personal existing of its own, into the unity of his person, or Godhead, and made it his own; the properties of each nature being preserved, and this inseparable and indissolvable union of both natures, and was made by the holy ghost, sanctifying our nature in the virgin's womb, without change of either nature, or mixture of both, and of two natures is one Christ, God man, or Immanuel, God with us. Which mystery exceeds the conception of men, and is the wonder of angels, one only mediator, Jesus Christ, the son of God.

Article VII -- Of the Communication of Properties

We believe that the two natures in Christ, continue still distinct in substance, properties, and actions, and remain one and the same Christ. For the properties of the Godhead, cannot agree to the properties of the manhood, nor the properties of the manhood, to the properties of the Godhead; for as the Godhead or divine nature cannot thirst, or be hungry, no more can the manhood be in all, or many places at once. Therefore, we believe, the Godhead was neither turned nor transfused into the manhood, nor the manhood into the Godhead, but both, the divine nature keepeth entire all his essential properties to its self, so that the humanity is neither omnipotent, omniscient, nor omnipresent. And the human also keepeth his properties, tho' often that which is proper to the one nature, is spoken of the person denominated from the other, which must be understood by the figure synecdoche, viz., a part being taken for the whole, by reason of the union of both natures into one person.

"Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us."

B. Development of the Doctrine

Every systematic presentation of the doctrine of the Person of Christ must concern itself with (at least) four major issues:

(1) Was Jesus Christ truly divine? Was Christ truly God? Did Jesus have a divine nature? This is the question of the true deity of Christ.

(2) Was Jesus Christ truly human? Was Jesus truly man? Did Christ have a human nature? This is the question of the true humanity of Christ.

(3) Was there a genuine personal union of the divine and the human natures in Jesus Christ? Were the two natures really united in the one Person? This is the question of the hypostatic union of the two natures in Christ.

(4) Was Jesus Christ, although both truly God and truly man, nevertheless one Person? Did the two natures constitute one Person, the God man? This is the question of the unipersonality of Christ.

We will take up these four issues in the order listed above.

1. The Deity of Christ (Note: spelled "de-ity", "di-ety"!))

a. Meaning of the term

The true deity of Christ, expressed in the creeds by the words "very God", is the first element of the doctrine of the Person of Christ. What does "true deity" mean?

The term "true deity" includes (at least) the following five ideas:

- (1) that Jesus has the nature of God, with all of the divine attributes.
- (2) that Jesus possesses all of the rights and powers of deity
- (3) that Jesus existed as the Second Person of the Trinity before the incarnation, from eternity past
- (4) that Jesus is equal to the Father and to the Spirit in wisdom, power, glory, etc.
- (5) that Jesus performed divine works

b. Scriptures pertinent to the doctrine

Matt. 8:26 27 -- "And He said to them, 'Why are you timid, you men of little faith?' Then He arose, and rebuked the winds and the sea; and it became perfectly calm. And the men marveled, saying, 'What kind of a man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey Him?' "

(Note: The disciples had cause to marvel. In Psalm 107:28-29 we discover that it is the Lord who has power to do what Jesus did: "Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble, And He brought them out of their distresses. He caused the storm to be still, So that the waves of the sea were hushed.")

This scripture speaks to us of Christ's omnipotence.

Mark 2:8 -- "And immediately Jesus, perceiving in His spirit that they were reasoning that way within themselves, said to them, 'why are you reasoning about these things in your hearts?' "

(Note: 2 Chron. 6:30 tells us: "then hear Thou from heaven Thy dwelling place, and forgive, and render to each according to all his ways, whose heart Thou knowest for Thou alone does know the hearts of the sons of men.")

This scripture speaks to us of Christ's omniscience

John 2:24-25 -- "But Jesus, on His part, was not entrusting Himself to them, for He knew all men, and because He did not need any one to bear witness concerning man for He Himself knew what was in man."

(Note: Jer. 17:9-10 tells us who alone knows what is in man: The heart is more deceitful than all else And is desperately sick; Who can understand it? 'I the Lord search the heart, I test the mind, Even to give to each man according to his ways, According to the results of his deeds.' ")

This scripture speaks to us of Christ's omniscience

John 16:30 -- "Now we [Christ's disciples] know that you [Jesus] know all things, and have no need for anyone to question you; by this we believe that you came from God."

This Scripture speaks to us of Christ's omniscience

Colossians 2:3 -- "In whom [Christ] are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge."

Again, this scripture speaks to us of Christ's omniscience

Matt. 18:2 -- "For where two or three have gathered together in my name, there I [Christ] am in their midst."

This scripture speaks to us of Christ's omnipresence, manifested in blessing and power.

2 Cor. 13:5 -- "Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves! Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you -- unless indeed you fail the test."

This scripture speaks to us of Christ's omnipresence manifested relationally.

John 8:57-58 -- "The Jews therefore said to Him, 'You are not yet fifty years old, and have you seen Abraham?' Jesus said to them, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I am.' "

(Note: in Exodus 3:14, God tells Moses His Name: "And God said to Moses, 'I am who I am'; and He said, 'Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, I am has sent me to you.' ")

This scripture speaks to us of Christ's eternal self-existence.

Micah 5:2 -- "But as for you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, Too little to be among the clans of Judah, From you one will go forth for me to be ruler in Israel, His goings forth are from long ago, From the days of eternity."

This scripture speaks to us of Christ's eternity.

Heb. 1:10-12 -- "Speaking of the Son, God says: 'Thou, Lord, in the beginning didst lay the foundation of the earth, And the heavens are the work of thy hands; They will perish, but thou remainest; And they all will become old as a garment, And as a mantle thou wilt roll them up; As a garment they will also be changed. But thou art the same, And thy years will not come to an end.' "

This scripture also speaks to us of Christ's eternity as well as His activity in creation.

Colossians 2:9 -- "For in Him [Christ] all the fulness of Deity dwells in bodily form."

This scripture speaks to us of Christ's full deity

John 1:3 -- "all things came into being through Him [the Word who became flesh]; and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being."

This scripture speaks to us of Christ's activity in creation.

Heb. 1:3 -- "And He [the Son] is the radiance of His [God's] glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power"

This scripture speaks to us of Christ's activity in the preservation of all things.

Mark 2:5-11 -- "And Jesus seeing their faith said to the paralytic, 'My son, your sins are forgiven.' But there were some of the scribes sitting there and reasoning in their hearts, 'Why does this man speak that way? He is blaspheming; who can forgive sins but God alone?' And immediately Jesus, perceiving in His spirit that they were reasoning that way within themselves, said to them, 'Why are you reasoning about these things in your hearts? Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, "Your sins are forgiven;" or to say, "arise, and take up your pallet and walk?" But in order that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins,' He said to the paralytic, 'I say to you, rise, take up your pallet and go home.' "

This scripture speaks to us of Christ's authority to forgive sins.

Luke 7:48 -- [Jesus addresses an unnamed woman who was known throughout the city as a sinner, but who came in faith, weeping, to Jesus' feet] "And He said to her, 'Your sins have been forgiven.' "

This scripture speaks to us of Christ's authority to forgive sins.

John 6:39-40 -- "and this is the will of Him who sent me, that of all that He has given me I lost nothing, but raise it up on the last day. For this is the will of my Father, that every one who beholds the Son, and believes in Him, may have eternal life; and I myself will raise him up on the last day."

this scripture speaks to us of Christ's power to raise the dead.

John 11:25 -- "Jesus said to her (Martha), 'I am the resurrection, and the life; he who believes in me shall live even if he dies.' "

This scripture speaks to us of Christ's power to raise the dead.

2 Cor. 13:14 -- "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all."

Matt. 28:19 -- "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit."

1 Cor. 12:4-6 -- "Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are varieties of ministries, and the same Lord. And there are varieties of effects, but the same God who works all things in all persons."

Romans 1:7 -- "to all who are beloved of God in Rome, called as saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ."

James 1:1 -- "James, a bondservant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes who are dispersed abroad, greetings."

John 14:23 -- "Jesus answered and said to him, 'If anyone loves me, he will keep my word; and my Father will love him, and we will come to him, and make our abode with him.' "

John 14:1 -- "Let not your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in me."

(Note: This should be compared with Jer. 17:5-7 -- "Thus says the Lord, 'Cursed is the man who trusts in mankind And makes flesh his strength, And whose heart turns away from the Lord. For he will be like a bush in the desert And will not see when prosperity comes, But will live in stony wastes in the wilderness, A land of salt without inhabitant. Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord. And whose trust is the Lord.'")

These scriptures speak to us of Christ's equality with the Father and the Spirit.

2 Cor. 8:9 -- "For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich."

This scripture speaks to us of Christ's preexistence in a state of glory.

John 3:13 -- "And no one has ascended into heaven, but He who descended from heaven, even the Son of Man."

This scripture speaks to us of Christ's preexistence in heaven.

John 17:5, 18, 23-24 -- "And now, glorify Thou me together with Thyself, Father, with the glory which I ever had with Thee before the world was."

"As Thou didst send me into the world, I also have sent them into the world."

"I in them, and Thou in me, that they may be perfected in unity, that the world may know that Thou didst send me, and didst love them, even as Thou didst love me. Father, I desire that they also whom Thou hast given me, be with me where I am, in order that they may behold my glory, which Thou hast given me, for Thou didst love me before the foundation of the world."

These scriptures speak to us of Christ's preexistence in glory with the Father before the world began to be.

John 1:1, 2 -- "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God."

This scripture speaks to us of Christ's preexistence with the Father and of His nature as divine.

Luke 22:70 -- "And they all said, 'Are you the Son of God, then?' And He said to them, 'Yes, I am.'"

This scripture speaks to us of Christ's identification by the divine name, "Son of God". This name is given to Christ some 40 times.

John 5:18 -- "For this cause therefore the Jews were seeking all the more to kill Him, because He not only was breaking the Sabbath, but also was calling God His own Father, making Himself equal with God."

This scripture speaks to us of Christ's Identification as the Son of God, which the Jews during Christ's earthly days understood as equivalent to calling himself God.

John 1:18 -- "No man has seen God at any time; the only begotten God, who is the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him."

This scripture speaks to us of Christ's identity as God and of the greatest possible intimacy, the closest possible union between Christ and the Father ("who is in the bosom of the Father").

Revelation 1:11 -- "And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as a dead man. And He laid His right hand upon me, saying, 'Do not be afraid; I am the first and the last' "

(Note: In Isaiah 44:6 we read: "Thus says the Lord, the King of Israel And his Redeemer, the Lord of hosts: 'I am the first and I am the last, And there is no God besides me.' "

This scripture speaks to us of Christ's identification as the Lord God.

Heb. 1:8 -- "But of the Son He [God] says, 'Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever, And the righteous scepter is the scepter of His kingdom.'"

This scripture speaks to us of Christ's Identity as God.

Titus 2:13 -- "looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus;"

This scripture speaks to us of Christ's Identity as God.

2 Peter 1:1 -- "Simon Peter, a bond servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who have received a faith of the same kind as ours, by the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ"

This scripture speaks to us of Christ's identity as God.

In addition to these scriptures, there are numbers of references which speak of worship in connection with Christ. These are significant, in view of the warnings to worship only the Lord. Also there are a few references which speak of the propriety of worshipping Christ. These references follow:

Warnings to Worship Only the Lord

Exodus 20:2 5
Matthew 4:10
Revelation 19:10
Revelation 22:8-9
Acts 10:25-26

Instances of Christ being Worshipped

Matthew 2:2, 8, 11
Matthew 8:2
Matthew 9:18
Matthew 14:33
Matthew 15:25
Matthew 28:9
Matthew 28:17

The Propriety of Worshipping Christ

Revelation 5:13
1 Corinthians 1:2
Hebrews 1:6

c. Principles derived from these Scriptures

(1) Jesus Christ is revealed as having the nature of God, as possessing divine attributes, and as being God. He is spoken of as omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent, eternal, and self-existent.

(2) Jesus Christ is revealed as possessing the rights and powers of deity. He has the right to receive worship, and the power to forgive sins and to raise the dead.

(3) Jesus Christ is revealed as having existed before the incarnation, from eternity past, with the Father.

(4) Jesus Christ is revealed as being equal to the Father and the Spirit in respect of His divine nature, attributes, rights, powers, and glory.

(5) Jesus Christ is revealed as having performed divine works. He was active in creation, is active in preservation, and is most certainly active in redemption.

2. The Humanity of Christ

a. Meaning of the term

The true humanity of Christ, expressed in the creeds by the words "very man," is the second element of the doctrine of the Person of Christ. what does "true humanity" mean?

The term "true humanity" includes (at least) four ideas:

(1) that Jesus has the nature of humanity, with all of the human faculties and powers

(2) that Jesus has both a true human body and a true human soul-spirit

(3) that Jesus is subject to all the limitations of created, finite humanity

(4) but not that Jesus was guilty of sin, or corrupted by sin, or ever committed an act of sin

b. Scriptures pertinent to the doctrine

Matt. 1:1 -- "The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham."

This scripture speaks to us of Christ's human lineage. He is a descendant of Abraham, through David.

Romans 1:3 -- "concerning His Son, who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh"

This scripture explicitly declares that Christ is David's physical descendant not merely his legal or spiritual descendant or heir.

Galatians 4:4 -- "But when the fulness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law."

This scripture speaks to us of Christ's conception in and birth from a human mother.

Matt. 1:18 21, 24-25 -- "Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows. When His mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit, and Joseph her husband, being a righteous man, and not wanting to disgrace her, desired to put her away secretly. But when he had considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, 'Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife; for that which has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. And she will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for it is He who will save His people from their sins.' "

"and Joseph arose from his sleep, and did as the angel of the Lord commanded him, and took her as his wife; and kept her a virgin until she gave birth to a Son; and he called His name Jesus."

These scriptures speak to us of the Holy Spirit's supernatural impregnation and fertilization of an egg from Mary who was yet a virgin; and of the natural development of that embryo through all the normal stages of fetal growth until the time of Jesus' birth.

Luke 1:41-42 -- "And it came about that when Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. And she cried out with a loud voice, and said, 'Blessed among women are you, and blessed is the fruit of your womb!' "

This scripture speaks to us of Jesus as a fetus in the womb of Mary.

Matt. 1:16 -- "and to Jacob was born Joseph the husband of Mary, by whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ."

This scripture speaks to us of Jesus' human birth by Mary.

Luke 2:4 7 -- "And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the city of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family of David; in order to register, along with Mary, who was engaged to him, and was with child. And it came about that while they were there, the days were completed for her to give birth. And she gave birth to her first born son; and she wrapped Him in cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn."

This scripture speaks to us of Christ's normal development in the womb of Mary, of His attainment of a sufficient level of fetal development to be born, and of His normal birth.

Luke 2:21 -- "And when eight days were completed before His circumcision, His name was then called Jesus, the name given by the angel before He was conceived in the womb."

This scripture speaks to us of Jesus' circumcision as an eight-day-old infant.

Luke 2:22, 27-29 -- "And when the days for their purification according to the law of Moses were completed, they brought Him up to Jerusalem to present Him to the Lord . . . And he [Simeon] came in the Spirit into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to carry out for Him the custom of the Law, then he took Him into his arms, and blessed God, and said, 'Now, Lord, Thou dost let Thy bondservant depart, in peace, according to Thy word'"

This scripture speaks to us of Jesus as an infant of 40 days (see Leviticus 12), and as being held in the arms of His parents and of Simeon.

Luke 2:41-43 -- "And His parents used to go to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of the Passover. And when He became twelve, they went up there according to the custom of the Feast; and as they were returning, after spending the full number of days, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem. And His parents were unaware of it."

This scripture speaks to us of Jesus as a boy of twelve.

Luke 3:23 -- "And when He began His ministry, Jesus Himself was about thirty years of age, being supposedly the son of Joseph, the son of Eli,"

This scripture speaks to us of Jesus as being about thirty years old. Of course, we understand this to speak of his human age, counted from the year of His birth.

John 4:6 -- "And Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied from His journey, was sitting thus by the well. it was about the sixth hour."

This scripture speaks to us of Jesus' physical weariness.

Matt. 8:24 -- "And behold, there arose a great storm in the sea, so that the boat was covered with the waves, but He Himself was asleep."

This scripture speaks to us (in context) of Jesus' extreme weariness and of His deep sleep in the midst of a storm.

Matt. 4:2 -- "And after He had fasted forty days and forty nights, He then became hungry."

This scripture speaks to us of Christ's physical appetite and need for food.

John 19:28-30 -- "After this, Jesus, knowing that all things had already been accomplished, in order that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said, 'I am thirsty.' A jar full of sour wine was standing there; so they put a sponge full of the sour wine upon a branch of hyssop, and brought it up to His mouth. When Jesus therefore had received the sour wine, He said, 'it is finished!' And He bowed His head, and gave up His spirit."

This scripture speaks to us of Christ's genuine thirst nearing the end of His crucifixion; and of His mention of this, both as an expression of need, and as a fulfillment of Old Testament predictive prophecy.

Luke 23:33 -- "And when they came to the place called The Skull, there they crucified Him and the criminals, one on the right and other on the left."

This scripture speaks to us of Christ's pain and sufferings through crucifixion.

Luke 23:46 -- "And Jesus, crying out with a loud voice, said, 'Father, into Thy hands I commit my spirit.' And having said this, He breathed His last."

This scripture speaks to us of Christ's physical death on the cross.

John 19:32-34 -- "The soldiers therefore came, and broke the legs of the first man, and of the other man who was crucified with Him; but coming to Jesus, when they saw that He was already dead, they did not break His legs; but one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately there came out blood and water."

This scripture speaks to us of Christ's genuine physical death on the cross.

1 John 1:1 -- "What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we beheld and our hands handled, concerning the Word of Life -- "

This scripture speaks to us of the genuineness of Christ's physical body, which was able to be seen and handled.

John 18:22-23 -- "And when He had said this, one of the officers standing by gave Jesus a blow, saying, 'is that the way you answer the high priest?' Jesus answered him, 'If I have spoken wrongly, bear witness of the wrong; but if rightly, why do you strike me?' "

This scripture speaks to us of the substantial nature of Christ's physical body, which could be struck.

Luke 24:36-39 -- "And while they were telling these things, He Himself stood in their midst. But they were startled and frightened and thought that they were seeing a spirit. And He said to them, 'Why are you troubled, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself; touch me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have.' "

This scripture speaks to us of the substantial nature of Christ's post-resurrection body which was still His flesh-and-bones human body, yet transformed.

Luke 24:41-43 -- "And while they still could not believe it for joy and were marveling, He said to them, 'Have you anything here to eat?' And they gave Him a piece of a broiled fish; and He took it and ate it in their sight.'

This scripture speaks to us of the substantial nature of Christ's post-resurrection body.

Hebrews 2:14 -- "Since then the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil"

This scripture speaks to us of Christ's partaking of flesh and blood; that is, of sharing human nature along with the children of God.

Matt. 26:38; Luke 23:46 -- "Then He said to them, 'My soul is deeply grieved, to the point of death; remain here and keep watch with me.'

"And Jesus, crying out with a loud voice, said, 'Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit.' And having said this, He breathed His last."

These scriptures speak to us of Christ's having a human soul-spirit.

Luke 2:40, 52 -- "And the child [Jesus] continued to grow and become strong, increasing in wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him."

"And Jesus kept increasing in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men."

These scriptures speak of the continuous development of Jesus' mental abilities, as well as the development of His physical body.

John 11:33, 35, 38 -- "When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her, also weeping, He was deeply moved in spirit, and was troubled."

"Jesus wept."

"Jesus therefore again being deeply moved within, came to the tomb. Now it was a cave, and a stone was lying against it."

These scriptures speak to us of Christ's capability for, and actual exercise of, very deep human emotions.

Heb. 2:10 -- "For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things, and through whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to perfect the author of their salvation through sufferings."

This scripture speaks to us of Christ in His genuine sufferings as the completer of our salvation.

Heb. 5:7-9 -- "In the days of His flesh, when He offered up both prayers and supplications with loud crying and tears to Him who was able

to save Him from death, and who was heard because of His piety; although He was a Son, He learned obedience from the things which He suffered; and having been made perfect, He became to all those who obey Him the source of eternal salvation."

This scripture speaks to us of Christ's exercise of genuine human emotions, His ability to experience death, and His ability experientially to learn obedience, thereby completing the conditions of salvation for His own people.

Luke 22:44 -- "And being in agony He was praying very fervently; and His sweat became like drops of blood, falling down upon the ground."

This scripture speaks to us of Christ's genuine and very deep human emotions.

Mark 13:32 -- "But of that day or hour [of the coming of the Son of Man] no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone."

This scripture (on the crucial point of which there is absolutely no textual question!) speaks to us of Christ's genuine Ignorance of the time of an event which is to take place in the Eschaton (the end time). Since Christ in respect of His deity "knows all things" (John 16:30), we must understand this to refer to genuine human ignorance i.e., ignorance of factual information not available to Him as a human being. it would seem to be a sound inference to say that there are probably other things which He, in respect of His humanity, did not know. in this sense "ignorance" does not imply "lack of mental ability" or "wilful stupidity", but simply lack of knowledge of a fact or facts.

Heb. 2:18 -- "For since He Himself was tempted in that which He has suffered, He is able to come to the aid of those who are tempted."

This scripture speaks to us of Christ's suffering and temptation in connection with suffering, the word translated "tempted" (TC1pu.i could mean "put to the test" or simply "tested", instead of "enticed to evil" or "solicited to commit sin."

Heb. 4:15 -- "For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin."

This scripture speaks to us of Christ's temptations in all respects as we are tempted, yet with one dissimilar respect: He was without sin in connection with sin, the word translated "tempted" (πειράζω) could mean "enticed to evil" or "solicited to commit sin" instead of "put to the test" or "tested".

A number of scriptures call Christ a man, or the Son of Man, including the following:

John 8:40 -- "But as it is, you are seeking to kill me, a man who has told you the truth, which I heard from God; this Abraham did not do."

John 1:30 -- "This is He on behalf of whom I said, 'After me comes a man who has a higher rank than I, for He existed before me.' "

Acts 2:22 -- 'Men of Israel, listen to these words: Jesus the Nazarene, a man attested to you by God with miracles and wonders and signs which God performed through Him in your midst, just as you yourselves know --"

1 Cor. 15:21-22 -- "For since by a man came death, by a man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all shall be made alive."

Acts 17:31 -- "because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead."

These few instances in which Christ is called a man could be augmented by many more.

Luke 1:35 -- And the angel answered and said to her, 'The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason the holy offspring shall be called the Son of God.'

This scripture speaks to us of Christ as holy. This could mean "set apart" or "consecrated" to God, but as the product of the Holy Spirit's conception, Christ is more probably being spoken of as "pure", "sinless", "without sin".

Heb. 4:15 -- "For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin."

This scripture speaks to us of Christ's sinlessness. Although Christ was enticed to commit sin again and again, yet He never committed sin. He is without sin.

Heb 9:14 -- "how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?"

This scripture speaks to us of Christ's moral spotlessness and purity as the Lamb of God without spot or blemish.

John 8:46 -- "Which one of you convicts me of sin? If I speak truth, why do you not believe me?"

This scripture speaks to us of Christ's moral blamelessness. No man could find sin in His holy character and conduct.

2 Cor. 5:21 -- "He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him."

This scripture speaks to us of Christ's complete freedom from the experiential knowledge of personal depravity and the experiential knowledge of personal acquiescence in sinful thoughts words and actions. At the same time it speaks to us of the Father's imputation of our guilt to His Son, in order that His righteousness might be Imputed to us. Thus, although Christ had experiential knowledge of the guilt of sin (our guilt), He had no experiential knowledge of depravity or of its outworking in Himself. Of course, it should be added that He did have experiential knowledge of personal rejection of sinful thoughts, words, and actions.

1 Peter 2:21-23 -- "For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps, who committed no sin, nor was any deceit found in His mouth; and while being reviled, He did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting Himself to Him who Judges righteously."

This scripture speaks to us of Christ's perfect life of sinlessness and holy obedience.

1 John 3:3, 5 -- "And every one who has this hope fixed on Him [Christ] purifies himself, just as He is pure . . . and you know that he appeared to order to take away sins; and in Him there is no sin."

These scriptures speak to us of Christ's moral purity and perfect sinlessness.

c. Principles derived from these scriptures

(1) Jesus Christ is revealed as having the nature of humanity, as possessing human faculties and powers, and as being a man.

(2) Jesus Christ is revealed as having a human flesh and blood body, which was supernaturally conceived of Mary's substance, was born, developed, matured, and experienced fatigue, hunger, thirst, physical well being, pain, suffering, and death.

(3) Jesus Christ is revealed as having a human soul-spirit, which was created by God (either directly or indirectly), was finite, developed mentally and socially, and experienced strong emotions, the attitude of obedience, various kinds of temptations, sufferings, and death.

(4) Jesus Christ is revealed as being subject to the limitations common to finite human beings. During His earthly ministry, in respect of His human nature, He was not omnipresent, but present only somewhere, and had to move to get from one location to another. With respect to His human nature, He was not omniscient, but was limited in His knowledge to what a man can know by the ordinary use of (uncorrupted) human faculties and/or what a man can know by Special Revelation (uncorruptedly understood). With respect to His human nature He was not omnipotent, but was limited in power to what a human being is able to do in his own strength, or in the strength of the Holy Spirit.

(5) Jesus Christ is revealed as being completely free from depravity; holy, spotless, without moral blemish; as free from personal guilt (even when our guilt was imputed to Him); and as having never committed a sin, whether in thought, desire, intent, purpose, volition, word, or action.

3. The Union of the Two Natures in One Person

- a. In the Scriptures the incarnate Son is presented as one divine Person, who took into union with Himself a human nature and became the God-man.

(1) The one person, the Lord Jesus Christ, is both fully divine and fully human; thus there is a union of natures.

(2) This union is a personal union; i.e., a union which constitutes one person.

(a) This union is not to be understood as a mere indwelling of the Word in flesh, an indwelling of the Second Person of the Trinity in a human being.

(b) This union is not to be understood as a mere moral or sympathetic union of the Son of God with a human being, in the sense that they thought alike, felt alike, and willed to do the will of God in like content and manner.

(c) The personality of this union resided in the divine nature before the incarnation, but resided in both natures following the incarnation, the appropriate form of statement here is that the Son of God, a divine Person from all eternity, took into union with himself a human nature not a human person. By taking into union with himself a human nature, He became a divine-human person.

This 'becoming human' in the incarnational sense is not like putting on new clothing, or like taking on a new behavioral role, or similar to the entering of a spirit into a body; rather it is an actual becoming. The Son of God actually became what He was not before the incarnation. It is not that He 'put on' some human characteristics so as to appear like us in certain respects; He actually became human, without ceasing to be divine. The Son of God became the God-man! The Word became flesh!

At this point we must pause and attempt to relate this conception of 'becoming' to the Son of God's attribute of immutability, and to such scriptures as Hebrews 13:8 -- "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today, yes and forever."

On the one hand we must affirm that the Son of God, as God, has always been what He is and what He ever will be. As God there is no becoming in His essence, or His nature, or His attributes; there is only being. Another way of stating this is that there is no potential in God's nature that is not fully actualized. There are no attributes which are not fully developed. God's attributes are perfect and complete. He is infinite, eternal, and unchangeable in all of His perfections. As such, God's being is not in process of becoming (contrary to Process Theology).

However, this is not to deny that God is living, dynamic, active; or to deny that God thinks thoughts, or feels emotions, or purposes to do certain things, or puts forth efficiency to produce effects. Nor does the concept of the changelessness of God's being deny the distinction between the infinite potential of God's power

(what He can do) and the actual expressions of that power (what He does do). That is to say, the assertion that there are some things in the purpose and plan of God which He has not yet done but will do (e.g., created the new heavens and the new earth) does not conflict with the doctrine of immutability, since in this case a distinction is made between the infinite, unchanging perfection of God's attributes, and the ongoing, unfolding, changing expression of those attributes in actions.

These considerations bring us to the threshold of the problem in the "becoming" aspect of the incarnation. And here we must once again make the distinction between God's nature and God's experience, as well as the distinction between the physics concept of time (duration measured by physical change) and time in God's self experience (a unidirectional continuum of experience, including before and after relationships in sequential order). The Son of God, viewed not as static but as dynamic, experienced the "before" of His preincarnate state of glory, and then experienced the "after" of His incarnate state of humiliation. But more than this: the Son of God, who was a divine Person from all eternity, became what He had never been before -- a real human being. Although the former change (from glory to humiliation) may be spoken of as "a mere change in outward circumstances" (although this interpretation may be challenged as inadequate to the implications of Phil. 2:7), the latter change involves the Person of the Son of God. He (the Person!) became (began to be what He was not before) man!

But what does this do to the Son of God's immutability? The answer to this question is that the Son of God changed and yet did not change. He changed by becoming man; He did not change by remaining God. That is, this is a change, not by subtraction of His divine attributes, but by addition of human attributes. Thus, in one sense the Son of God was immutable in His incarnation in that He was fully God; and in another sense the Son of God changed in His incarnation by taking into union with His Person a true human nature.

And what do these considerations do to Heb. 13:8 -- "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, and today, yes and forever?" They enable us to see that this scripture does not deny the change from the Son of God's preincarnate state of glory to His incarnate state of humiliation, or from His incarnate state of humiliation to His incarnate state of exaltation; nor does this scripture deny the change from the single nature quality of the Person of God preceding the incarnation to the dual nature quality of the Person of the Son of God following the incarnation. However, admitting these changes (as we must), we are left with the question of the meaning of this scripture.

It would seem that the difficulty in the verse is with the "yesterday". Does this refer to eternity past or to the recent historical past? Lenski opts for the latter. He says:

Jesus Christ, yesterday and today the same, and for the eons, i.e., for eternity. Jesus Christ, changeless, Immutable! Here there is the person and the office. "Yesterday" = when he was

first preached to the readers by Paul and then by Peter. He has not changed. "Today" he sits at God's right hand as he did yesterday, our great High Priest (4:14); so he does to all eternity. Jesus Christ is the sum and substance of the Word of God that was spoken to the readers by those departed leaders, He upon whom alone they rested their faith, which the readers are ever to imitate. "Yesterday" should not be carried back to eternity although Rev. 13:8 is true. The writer is not speaking abstractly; his "yesterday" is historical because it follows verse seven as it does. Jesus Christ cannot be anything but "the same" in regard to all that this letter has said of him"

-- *The interpretation of The Epistle to the Hebrews and The Epistle of James* (Columbus, Ohio: The Wartburg Press, 1946), p. 477.

On the other hand, J. Barmby, in The Pulpit Commentary, believes that this verse implies the former -- that the "yesterday" refers to eternity past. He writes:

Ver. 8 . . . its drift is that, though successive generations pass away, Jesus Christ remains the same -- the Saviour of the living as well as of the departed, and the Saviour of all to the end of time. it may be here observed that, though his eternal Deity is not distinctly expressed -- for "yesterday" does not of necessity reach back to past eternity -- yet the sentence can hardly be taken as not implying it. For his unchangeableness is contrasted with the changing generations of men, as is that of Jehovah in the Old Testament (e.g., in Ps. 90:2-4), and surely such language would not have been used of any but a Divine Being.

-- *The Pulpit Commentary. Hebrews* (London: Funk and Wagnalls Company, 1909), p. 394.

And thus we have the two views fairly presented, and the dilemma fairly set up. If one wishes to view Heb. 13:8 as referring to the God-man, then the "yesterday" must refer to the recent historical past. On the other hand, if one wishes to view the "yesterday" as referring to eternity past, then Heb. 13:8 must refer to the Son of God as divine only. One cannot say that Christ was the God man from eternity past, nor is it very significant to say that Christ was divine from the recent historical past. it is significant to say that Christ was the God-man from the recent historical past, or to say that Christ has been divine (and thus Immutable with respect to His divine nature) from eternity past. But one cannot make Heb. 13:8 deny the change in state or in Person brought about by the incarnation.

(d) Although there are a number of scriptural instances in which the Son of God says "you" to the Father (thus manifesting distinction of personal Identities), yet there is no instance in which the human nature in Christ says "you" to the divine nature in Christ.

The one Person, the God man, says "I", "me", "my", with respect to either or both natures; and is spoken of as "He", "His", "Him"; i.e., as one Person who is both human and divine. These features may be seen in many scriptures; a few of these will suffice:

John 11:41-42 -- "And so they removed the stone. And Jesus raised His eyes, and said, 'Father, I thank Thee that Thou hearest me. And I knew that Thou hearest me always; but because of the people standing around I said it, that they may believe that Thou didst send me.'"

John 17:1 -- "These things Jesus spoke; and lifting up His eyes to heaven, He said, 'Father, the hour has come; glorify Thy Son, that the Son may glorify Thee.' "

Luke 22:41-42 -- "And He withdrew from them about a stone's throw, and He knelt down and began to pray, saying, 'Father, if Thou art willing, remove the cup from me; yet not my will, but Thine be done.' "

John 14:1 -- "Let not your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in me."

Luke 9:28 29, 35 -- "And some eight days after these sayings, it came about that He took along Peter and John and James, and went up to the mountain to pray. And while He was praying, the appearance of His face became different, and His clothing became white and gleaming . . . And a voice came out of the cloud, saying, 'This is My Son, My Chosen One; listen to Him!' "

(3) The two natures are united, but not mingled or changed

(a) This assertion is supported, first of all, by the Creator-creature distinction. Deity and humanity are as distinct as are Creator and creature. This may be more explicitly seen in a series of contrasts:

The Creator is independent; the creature is dependent.

The Creator is infinite; the creature is finite.

The Creator is eternal; the creature is temporal.

The Creator is unchangeable; the creature is changeable.

The Creator is omniscient; the creature is limited in knowledge.

The Creator is omnipotent; the creature is limited in power.

The Creator is omnipresent; the creature is present in only one location.

(b) This assertion is supported, secondly, by the contrasts between the biblical assertions concerning God and those concerning the Lord Jesus Christ, speaking in respect of His humanity.

God is not a man; Jesus Christ was a man.

God is incorporeal; Jesus Christ had flesh and bones.

God does not grow; Jesus Christ grew.

God's years have no beginning; Jesus Christ was a certain age.

God is not present in only one locality; Jesus Christ was present in only one locality.

God does not increase in knowledge; Jesus Christ increased in knowledge.

God does not learn obedience; Jesus Christ learned obedience.

God is under no authority above Him; Jesus Christ was under the authority of God and His parents

God is not able to be tempted to evil; Jesus Christ was able to be tempted to evil, and was tempted to evil.

God cannot suffer physical pain; Jesus Christ suffered physical pain.

God cannot grow weary; Jesus Christ grew weary.

God does not become hungry; Jesus Christ became hungry.

God does not sleep; Jesus Christ slept.

God cannot die; Jesus Christ died.

- (4) There is no transfer of the attributes of one nature to the other nature

The assertion that the divine nature became humanized, or that the human nature became divinized, is totally without scriptural warrant. There is simply no evidence to support it.

- b. There are important results which derive from this union

- (1) As a result of the hypostatic union, there is a communion of attributes

By the term "communion of attributes" we deliberately and pointedly avoid the concept of *communicatio idiomatum* ("communication of properties") alleged by a number of theologians, as both imprecise and misleading. Even so eminent a theologian as Louis Berkhof, having employed the term, hastens to state: "We must be careful not to understand the term to mean that anything peculiar to the divine nature was communicated to the human nature, or vice versa." But this is exactly what the term "*communicatio idiomatum*" means! However, what Berkhof means by the concept is clearly expressed in his own words: "This means that the properties of both, the human and divine natures, are now the properties of the person, and are therefore ascribed to the person." But in this statement, there is no communication but a communion of the properties peculiar to each nature in the one Person. For this reason it would seem best to drop the term "*communicatio idiomatum*", and to employ in its place the term "communion of attributes."

By this term it is not meant that one nature participates in the attributes of the other nature, but that one Person participates or shares in the attributes of both natures. Thus we may speak of the one Person, Jesus Christ, as being both omniscient and ignorant at the same time, or as being both equal with God and less than God at the same time.

- (2) As a result of the hypostatic union, the natures must be distinguished, but may not be separated.

When we speak of certain of Christ's actions, it is important to speak of them in respect of one or the other nature. For example, we should say: "With respect to His divine nature, Jesus Christ was everywhere at the very time that, with respect to His human nature, He was in the womb of the virgin Mary." Or we should say: "With respect to His human nature, Jesus Christ was about 30 years old when He began His public ministry; but with respect to His

divine nature, He was eternally old before Abraham came into existence."

At the same time it is important to remember that the actions of Christ may not be spoken of as being the actions of one nature, rather than the actions of the one Person. The natures may not be separated. That is, we must not speak of the actions of one nature as though the nature were a person. Thus if we absolutize the statement, "The human nature of Christ died on the cross," and exclude the statement, "The one Person, the God-man, died on the cross as a man, or with respect to His human nature," then we utter heresy, since we separate the natures. On the other hand, if we affirm both of the above statements and wish merely to distinguish the two natures and preserve the Creator creature distinction, then the statement, "The human nature of Christ died on the cross," is not heretical but can be misleading unless it is immediately clarified and qualified.

- (3) As a result of the hypostatic union, all of the acts of Christ, whether spoken of in respect of one or the other nature, are the acts of His Person

Whatever acts are performed in respect of either nature are performed by the Person. When we say that Christ forgave the sins of the paralytic lowered through the roof, it is not proper to say that it was the divine nature alone that extended forgiveness (even though God alone can forgive sins); it was the God-man in respect of His divine nature, who forgave the man's sins. In like manner, it is improper to say that the human nature of Christ alone arose from the grave; rather we must say that the Person, the Lord Jesus Christ, arose from the grave with respect to His human nature. All of the acts of Christ are the acts of the one Person. Accordingly, we must say that the one Person, the Lord Jesus Christ, was ignorant of the day of His return with respect to His human nature, and the same time fully aware of the time of His return with respect to His divine nature.

- (4) As a result of the hypostatic union, Christ is the true Mediator between God and man.

As a righteous man, without guilt of sin, He could take our guilt and its penalty, death, upon Himself; as a holy man, with no corruption of sin, He could perfectly obey the Law of God for us and could be the perfect sacrifice to atone for our sins.

As true God, He is a Person of infinite value and dignity. Although the death of Christ was a finite death, nonetheless it was the death of a Person of infinite value. His death was the death of none other than the Second Person of the Trinity (in respect of His human nature). Thus His death has value for any conceivable number of persons.

If Christ had been God only, He could not have taken our guilt, fulfilled our obligations to divine justice, and died in our behalf and stead. If Christ had been a perfect man only, His obedience and blood would have been sufficient to atone for one other human being,

but no more. Thus it was necessary for the Redeemer to be both God and man -- the God man!

Note: This is precisely Anselm of Canterbury's emphasis in his *Cur deus homo* ("Why God Became Man" -- published in 1098).

- (5) As a result of the hypostatic union, Christ can sympathize with His people in a way in which He was not able prior to the incarnation

Hebrews 4:15 states, "For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin."

And Hebrews 2:18 states, "For since He Himself was tempted in that which He has suffered, He is able to come to the aid of those who are tempted."

The reason assigned for Christ's ability to sympathize with our weaknesses and His ability to come to our aid is that He was tempted in all things as we are. Because of the incarnation, the Son of God has experienced what He knew only cognitively prior to the incarnation. Because of the incarnation, the Son of God has experienced what it is to be weak and tired and sleepy and hungry; what it is to suffer physical and emotional and spiritual pain and anguish; what it is to learn obedience to human parents; what it is to agonize over the will of God for one's life; and what it is to be sorely tempted, to struggle with temptations, to withstand temptations, and to get the victory over them. Because of the incarnation the Son of God knows, not simply cognitively, but experientially what we are going through; and He feels deeply with us in all of these circumstances.

4. Christ's temptability and intemptability, peccability and impeccability

a. Defining of the question

(1) Negatively

- (a) The question is not whether Christ had a sinful nature
- (b) The question is not whether Christ actually sinned
- (c) The question is not whether Christ could have sinned with respect to His divine nature
- (d) The question is not whether Christ could have sinned with respect to the Plan and Purpose of God

(2) Positively

- (a) The question is whether Christ had the genuine ability to be tempted, with respect to His human nature
- (b) The question is whether Christ had the genuine ability to sin, with respect to His human nature, irrespective of His divine nature and God's Plan and Purpose

- (3) With respect to the twin questions whether Christ had a sinful nature and whether He actually sinned, the following should be mentioned:
- (a) Adam and Eve before the Fall were fully human, yet their natures were not sinful.
 - (b) Karl Barth felt that Christ had to have a sinful nature if He was going to be able to identify with mankind (i.e., mankind as it is presently constituted, in all of its fallenness and sin), if He was genuinely to be one with fallen humanity, and if He was to be both the reprobate man for all men and the elect man for all men. Nevertheless Barth insisted that Christ never committed sin.
 - (c) When the angel told Mary that she was going to bear Jesus, he said, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason the holy thing begotten shall be called the Son of God." (Luke 1:35)
 - (d) In Hebrews 7:26 Christ is characterized as "holy, innocent, undefiled".
 - (e) In John 8:46 Jesus asked His hearers, "Which of you convicts me of sin?" And none of them was able to point to even one transgression of the Law of God, or one instance of lack of conformity to it.
 - (f) In Matthew 7:17-18 Jesus said, "Every good tree bears good fruit; but the bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot produce bad fruit, nor can a bad tree produce good fruit." In applying this agricultural and moral principle to Jesus, we can say that it would have been impossible for Him to have a sinful nature and yet live a holy life. Jesus' actions were holy because His character was holy. We cannot separate His character from His actions and say that He had a sinful nature but did not commit sin.

b. Development of an answer

- (1) Christ's temptability or intemptability (His ability or inability to be tempted)
- (a) Toward an understanding of temptation in general

[1] Scriptures relevant to temptation in general

Genesis 2:8-9; 2:16-17; 3:22 -- "And the Lord God planted a garden toward the east, in Eden; and there He placed the man whom He had formed. and out of the ground the Lord God caused to grow every tree that is pleasing to the sight and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil."

"And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, 'From any tree of the garden you may eat freely; but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you shall surely die.' "

"Now the serpent was more crafty than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said to the woman, 'indeed, has God said, 'You shall not eat from any tree of the garden?' And the woman said to the serpent, 'From the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat; but from the fruit of the tree which is in the middle of the garden, God has

said, 'You shall not eat from it or touch it, lest you die.' And the serpent said to the woman, 'You surely shall not die! For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.' When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make one wise, she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate. Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths."

"Then the Lord God said, 'Behold, the man has become like one of us, knowing good and evil; and now, lest he stretch out his hand, and take also from the tree of life, and eat, and live forever -- ' "

Matthew 6:13 -- "And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil."

Luke 8:13 -- "And those on the rocky soil are those who, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no firm root; they believe for a while, and in time of temptation fall away."

Luke 22:40, 46 -- "And when He arrived at the place, He said to them, 'Pray that you may not enter into temptation.' . . . 'Why are you sleeping? Rise and pray that you may not enter into temptation.'

I Corinthians 10:13 -- "No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, that you may be able to endure it."

Galatians 6:1 -- "Brethren, even if a man is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; each one looking to yourself, lest you too be tempted."

I Thessalonians 3:5 -- "For this reason, when I could endure it no longer, I also sent to find out about your faith, for fear that the tempter might have tempted you, and our labor should be in vain."

I Timothy 6:9 -- "But those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction."

James 1:2 -- "Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various temptations."

James 1:12-14 -- "Blessed is a man who perseveres under trial; for once he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life, which the Lord has promised to those who love Him. Let no one say when he is tempted, 'I am being tempted by God;' for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone. But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust."

I Peter 1:6-7 -- "In this you greatly rejoice, even though now, for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various temptations, that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ"

II Peter 2:7-9 -- "and if He rescued righteous Lot, oppressed by the sensual conduct of unprincipled men (for by what he saw and heard that righteous man, while living among them, felt his righteous soul tormented day after day with their lawless deeds), then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from temptation, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment for the day of judgment."

Revelation 3:10 -- "Because you have kept the word of My perseverance, I also will keep you from the hour of testing, that hour which is about to come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell upon the earth."

[2] The distinction between testing and tempting

In the New Testament the same word PEIRAZO (πειράζω) is used for both testing and tempting. What is the difference?

One set of ideas in the word includes the meanings "examine", "assay", "prove", "make trial of", "scrutinize", "test".

Another set of ideas in the word includes the meanings "tempt", "seduce", "solicit", "entice to do evil".

The first set of meanings focuses on the testing of character. Peter uses an illustration from the assaying of gold to illustrate the testing of faith (in I Peter 1:6-7). An assayer scrutinizes and examines and tests gold ore to see if it is genuine and to determine how rich or poor it is. Peter says that his readers have been distressed by various tests of their faith, but reminds them that these tests will not only show their faith to be genuine, but will strengthen and purify it so that it will result in praise and honor and glory when Christ is revealed from heaven.

James 1:2 appears to fall into this same category of usage. He exhorts his readers to count it all joy when they encounter various kinds of tests, because they know that the testing of their faith develops perseverance, and perseverance must finish its work so that they may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.

The second set of meanings focuses on enticement to moral evil. Paul, in I Thessalonians 3:5, is concerned that those who have professed Christ may have been enticed by the tempter to fall away from their profession. In I Timothy 6:9 Paul states that people who want to get rich fall into enticement to evil and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction. In Matthew 6:13 our Lord exhorts his disciples to pray to God that they will not be led into enticement to evil. In Luke 22:40, 46 Jesus urges his disciples to pray that they will not fall into enticement to evil. In Galatians 6:12 Paul exhorts, "If someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be enticed to evil."

In I Corinthians 10:13, having enumerated the many enticements into which the Israelites in the wilderness fell, and having urged the believers at Corinth to be careful lest they also fall, Paul gives them God's own assurance that "No enticement to evil has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be enticed to evil beyond what you can bear. But when you are enticed to evil, He will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it." And in II Peter 2:7-9, Peter compares the way He rescued righteous Lot from the enticements to evil all around him in Sodom, and the way He rescues godly persons from enticements to evil in the present time.

There are a few instances in which both meanings (test and entice to moral evil) appear in the same context. It may be said that in these cases enticements to evil test character.

In the classic case of Job we find Satan enticing Job to moral evil, and God testing the character of His righteous servant. Thus Satan tempts while God tests! God is sure that Job will prove that he is righteous by getting the victory over Satan's enticements and schemes. And Job assays out to be genuine gold!

In verse 12 of the classic passage on temptation (James 1:12-15), James says that the man who perseveres under trial is blessed, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love Him. This can be related to verses 2-4 of the same chapter, in which James urges his readers to count it pure joy whenever they face trials of many kinds, because they know that the testing of their faith develops perseverance, which in turn leads toward maturity and completeness.

But in verses 13 and 14 of chapter 1, James is speaking of enticement to moral evil. He writes: "When tempted, no one should say, 'God is tempting me.' For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; but each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed. Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full grown, gives birth to death."

Thus testing of character is not the same as enticement to moral evil. God tests character, but does not entice to moral evil. Satan and his angels entice to moral evil! God may test the character of His saints by allowing Satan to entice them to moral evil, but God never entices to moral evil and always provides a way out so that His beloved ones may be able to stand up under such enticement. Testing of character reveals the quality of the thing or person scrutinized. Enticement to moral evil, when yielded to with evil desire, leads to sin and death.

(b) Toward an understanding of Christ's temptations

[1] Scriptures relevant to Christ's temptations

Luke 4:1-13 (parallel: Matthew 4:1-11) -- "And Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led about by the Spirit in the wilderness for forty days, being tempted by the devil. And He ate nothing during those days; and when they had ended, He became hungry. And the devil said to Him, 'If you are the Son of God, tell this stone to become

bread.' And Jesus answered him, 'it is written, "Man shall not live on bread alone." ' and he led Him up and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. And the devil said to Him, 'I will give you all this domain and its glory; for it has been handed over to me, and I give it to whomever I wish. Therefore if you worship before me, it shall all be yours.' And Jesus answered and said to him, 'it is written, "You shall worship the Lord your God and serve Him only." ' And he led Him to Jerusalem and had Him stand on the pinnacle of the temple, and said to Him, 'If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here; for it is written, "He will give His angels charge concerning you to guard you." and, "On their hands they will bear you up, Lest you strike your foot against a stone." ' And Jesus answered and said to him, 'it is said, "you shall not put the Lord your God to the test." ' And when the devil had finished every temptation, he departed from Him until an opportune time."

Mark 1:13 -- "And He was in the wilderness forty days being tempted by Satan; and He was with the wild beasts, and the angels were ministering to Him."

Matthew 26:36-44 -- "Then Jesus came with them to a place called Gethsemane, and said to His disciples, 'sit here while I go over there and pray.' And he took with Him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be grieved and distressed. Then He said to them, 'My soul is deeply grieved, to the point of death; remain here and keep watch with Me.' and He went a little beyond them and fell on His face and prayed, saying, 'My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; yet not as I will, but as Thou wilt.' And He came to the disciples and found them sleeping, and said to Peter, 'So, you men could not keep watch with Me for one hour? Keep watching and praying, that you may not enter into temptation; the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.' He went away again a second time and prayed, saying, 'My Father, if this cannot pass away unless I drink it, Thy will be done.' Again He came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were heavy. And He left them again, and went away and prayed a third time, saying the same thing once more."

John 18:10-11 -- "Simon Peter therefore having a sword, drew it, and struck the high priest's slave, and cut off his right ear; and the slave's name was Malchus. Jesus therefore said to Peter, 'Put the sword into the sheath; the cup which the Father has given me, shall I not drink it?' "

Hebrews 2:18 -- 'For since He Himself was tempted in that which He has suffered, He is able to come to the aid of those who are tempted.'

Hebrews 4:15 -- "for we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin."

b. Answer to the question: Did Christ have the genuine ability to be tempted, with respect to His human nature?

Was Christ tested by God? Were His faith and devotion to God tried and proved to be genuine? Was the quality of His character put to the test?

The answer to this question is found in the gospel accounts of His earthly life and ministry, and of His passion and death. These accounts tell us that Christ was tested throughout His life. Out of the white hot crucible of God's refining furnace, He was assayed to be 100% pure gold, without impurities of any kind; and out of the winnowing shovel of God's threshing floor, He dropped as pure grain, without a bit of chaff!

Was Christ enticed and solicited to moral evil by Satan? Were occasions of sin placed before Him by the Devil throughout His earthly life? Perhaps a table of the relevant questions would be helpful.

RELEVANT QUESTIONS	WITH RESPECT TO GOD'S PLAN AND PURPOSE	WITH RESPECT TO HIS DIVINE NATURE ALONE	WITH RESPECT TO HIS HUMAN NATURE ALONE	AS THE ONE PERSON, THE GOD-MAN
Was Christ able to be tested?	YES	YES	YES	YES
Did Christ have normal human needs and appetites?	YES	(not applicable)	YES	YES
Was Christ able to be attracted to objects capable of meeting normal human needs and appetites?	YES	(not applicable)	YES	YES
Was Christ inwardly inclined toward sin? (did He have a sinful nature)	NO	(not applicable)	NO	NO
Did Christ have sinful desires?	NO	NO	NO	NO
Was Christ able to be enticed to sin?	YES	NO	YES	YES
Did Christ really struggle with His temptations?	YES	NO	YES	YES
Was Christ able to commit sin?	NO	NO	YES	NO
Did Christ commit sin?	NO	NO	NO	NO

- (2) Christ's Peccability or Impeccability (ability or inability to sin)
- (a) The practical relevance of the issue

Was Christ able to sin (*posse peccare*) or was He not able to sin (*non posse peccare*) That is, did He have the ability to sin?

Was Christ not able to sin (*non posse peccare*) or was He able not to sin (*posse non peccare*) That is, was He unable to sin or able to keep from sinning?

If Christ was totally, absolutely unable to sin (*non posse peccare*) then were His temptations genuine?

Consider the following:

- [1] If a person is blind, can he or she be enticed to look at a pornographic picture?
- [2] If a security guard at the Pentagon has absolutely no access to military secrets, can he be enticed by an agent of a foreign power to sell such secrets?
- [3] If a person has a very strong dislike of a particular food (e.g., Brussels sprouts, or bitter chocolate, or buttermilk, or liver), can he or she be enticed to eat or drink that food?
- [4] If a person has gone to a smorgasbord restaurant and eaten so much that he or she is bursting and can't even look at another item of food, can he or she be enticed to eat yet another plateful of salads or hors d'oeuvres or meats or vegetables or desserts?

If in an absolute sense Christ was unable to sin, then when we are severely enticed to sin, how can Christ's victories over temptation be an example to us? And what then does scriptures mean when it says that "He was tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin?"

- (b) Answer to the question: Did Christ have the genuine ability to sin with respect to His human nature only?

- [1] Note that we are not asking whether Christ had the ability to sin (*posse peccare*) with respect to His divine nature. He did not. God cannot be enticed to evil nor can He sin. Nor are we asking whether He had the ability to sin with respect to God's Plan and Purpose. He did not. It was certain that the Plan formulated by the Trinity before the foundation of the world would be executed and that the godhead's Purpose regarding redemption would be fulfilled. We are asking whether Christ had the ability to sin with respect to His human nature only.
- [2] The answer to the question, Did Christ have the genuine ability to sin with respect to His human nature only, would seem to be yes. That is, if the temptations were to be genuine, and if they involved real struggle (and not merely the appearance of

genuineness and struggle), then it would seem that in some sense Christ had to have the ability to sin. If our focus must be on Christ's human nature, then we can say that Christ, with respect to His human nature, had the ability to sin (*posse peccare*) and the ability to keep from sinning (*posse non peccare*).

- [3] Did Christ, with respect to His Person as the God man, have the ability to sin? To this we must answer no. And this is so because of the dynamics of the two natures in the one Person.

William G. T. Shedd, in chapter 5 of the section on Christology in volume two of his *Dogmatic Theology* offers a very helpful discussion of this issue. Relevant excerpts include the following:

The last Adam differs from the first Adam, by reason of his impeccability. He was characterized not only by the *posse non peccare*, but the *non posse peccare*. He was not only able to overcome temptation, but he was unable to be overcome by it. . . .

Christ's person is constituted of two natures: one divine, and the other human. The divine nature is both intemptable, and impeccable. . . . The human nature, on the contrary, is both temptable and peccable. When these two natures are united in one theanthropic person, as they are in the incarnation, the divine determines and controls the human, not the human the divine.

Consequently, what might be done by the human nature if alone and by itself, cannot be done by it in this union with omnipotent holiness. . . . human nature, whether in a God-man or a mere man, is a temptable and fallible nature. . . . When, therefore, it is asked if the person named Jesus Christ, and constituted of two natures, was peccable, the answer must be in the negative. Consequently, Christ while having a peccable human nature in his constitution, was an Impeccable person. . . .

But it may be asked, if the properties of either nature may be attributed to the person of the God man, why may not both peccability and Impeccability be attributed to the person of the God-man. We say that Jesus Christ is both finite and infinite, passible and impassible, impotent and omnipotent, ignorant and omniscient, why may we not also say that he is both peccable and impeccable? . . .

Because in this latter instance, the divine nature cannot innocently and righteously leave the human nature to its own finiteness without any support from the divine, as it can in the other instances.

If, therefore, the Logos . . . should permit the humanity to yield to it and commit sin, he would be implicated in the apostasy and sin. The guilt would not be confined to the human nature. it would attach to the whole theanthropic person. . . .

in reference, therefore, to such a characteristic as the divine nature may not desert the human nature and leave it to itself. in reference to all other characteristics, it may. The divine nature may leave the human nature alone, so that there shall be ignorance of the day of judgment, so that there shall be physical weakness and pain, so that there shall be mental limitation and sorrow, so that there shall be desertion by God and the pangs of death. There is no sin or guilt in any of these. . . .

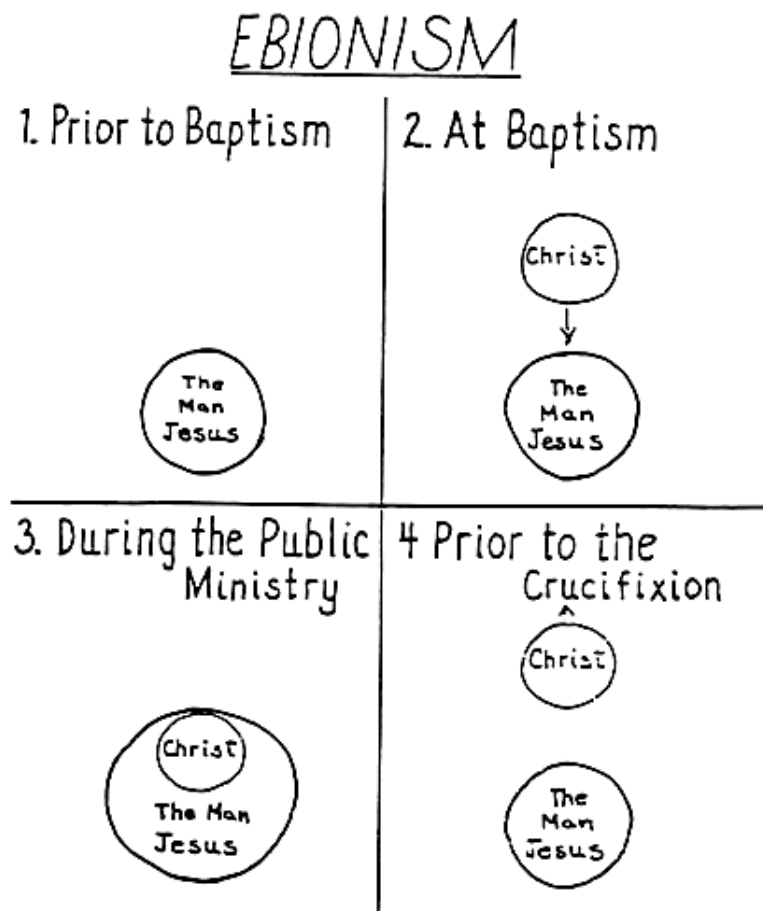
Consequently, all the innocent defects and limitations of the finite may be attributed to Jesus Christ, but not its culpable defects and limitations. The God-man may be weak, or sorrowful, or hungry, or weary; he may be crucified, dead, and buried; but he may not be sinful and guilty.

-- William G. T. Shedd, *Dogmatic Theology* Volume Two (reprinted by Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, n.d.) pp. 332-335.

C. Aberrations from the Doctrine

1. The Ebionites

This Jewish sect of Christianity flourished in the second century. Its adherents refused to recognize Paul's apostleship (they regarded him as an apostate from the Law), and demanded that all Christians should submit to circumcision. They held that Jesus was the natural son of Joseph and Mary, and that he so completely fulfilled the Law that God chose him to be the Messiah. However, Jesus did not become the Christ until the Holy Spirit descended upon him at his baptism. Thus the Divine Spirit abiding in the man Jesus constitutes the divinity of Jesus Christ.



2. The Elkesaites

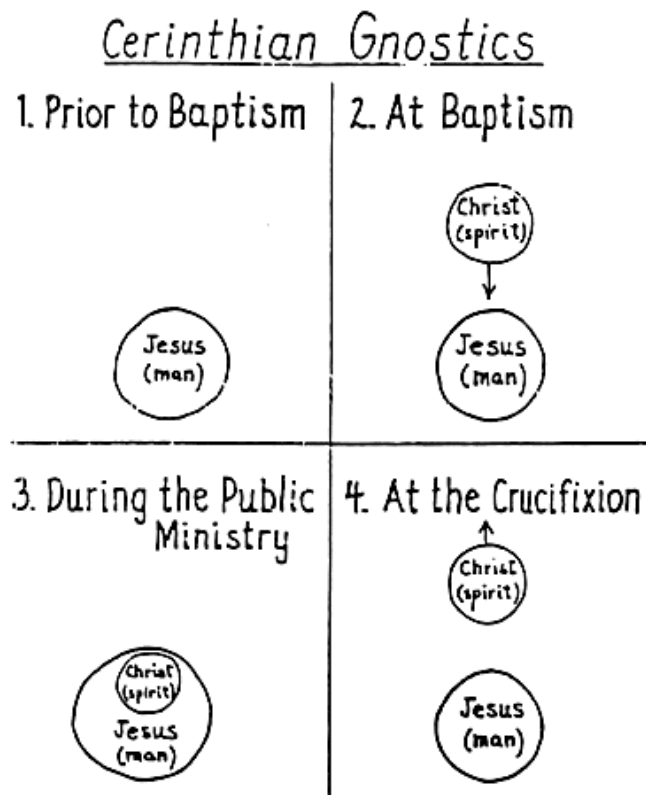
This Jewish sect of Christianity also flourished in the second century. Its adherents were theosophic Jews who also rejected Christ's virgin birth, and who observed circumcision, the sabbath, repeated ceremonial washings, and a strict asceticism. They also practiced magic and astrology, and held secret doctrines respecting the observance of the Law. They rejected the deity of Christ, and spoke of him as a higher spirit or an angel, perhaps even the highest archangel. It may well be that the Epistles to the Colossians and Timothy refer to this heresy.

3. The Gnostics

Gnosticism was a syncretistic mixture of Jewish elements, Christian doctrines, and pagan speculative thought. it was the great heresy of the second century. Some of its proponents include Simon Magnus, Cerdo, Cerinthus, Basilides, Bardaisan, Saturninus, Valentinus, and Marcion.

Gnosticism came in many varieties, but there appear to be some ideas held in common. Gnostics held that God is spiritual, good, exalted, all-perfect, and light; the head of the spiritual world of light. This God is not the god of the Old Testament, for he was the creator god, an evil demiurge. Gnostics held that matter is relatively unreal, shadowy, evil; the visible world and human flesh are evil. Salvation is for some Christians only; viz., those who are able to receive the GNOSIS, which is the true spiritual enlightenment, the secret teaching imparted by the apostles to their immediate disciples, who in turn passed it on to other "spiritual" men. Their chief apostle was Paul, many of whose teachings they felt supported Gnosticism (e.g., his contrast between flesh as evil and spirit as good).

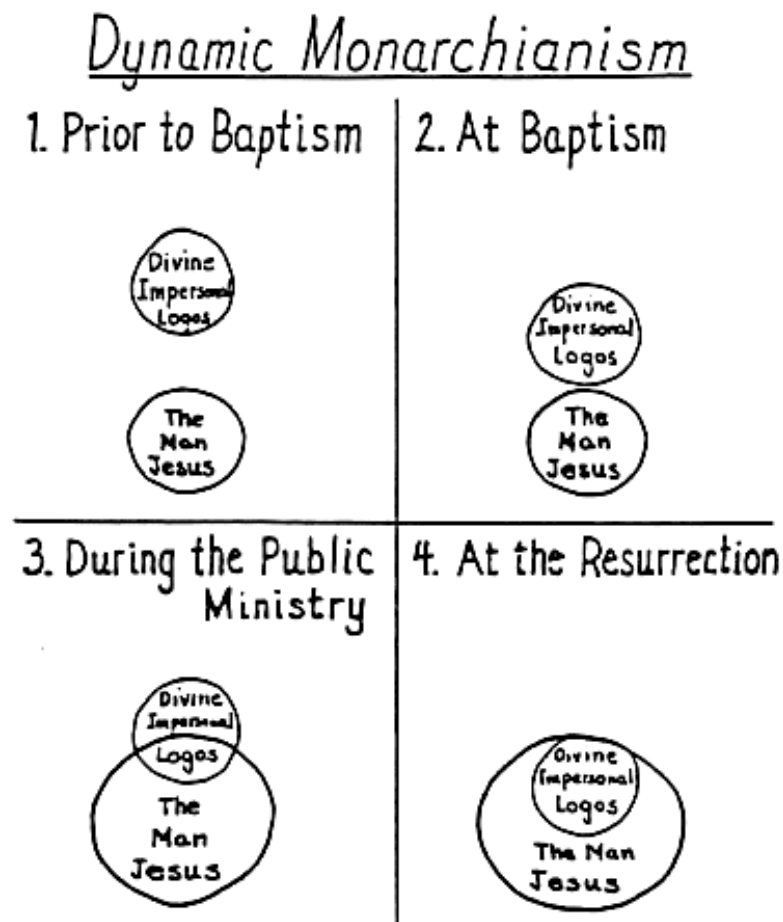
The Gnostics held varying views concerning the Person of Christ, although all of them denied that Christ had a true incarnation, death, or resurrection. Some of them affirmed and others denied that Christ was a person. Some of them (the Docetae) taught that Christ's human body was not real, but simply appeared real. Some taught that Christ's human body was real, but was not a material body. And some (Cerinthians) taught that Christ entered Jesus (the natural child of Joseph and Mary) at baptism and left him at the crucifixion.



4. The Dynamic Monarchians

Whereas the outstanding heresy of the second century was Gnosticism, the outstanding heresy of the third century was Monarchianism. Its concern was to preserve the unity of the Monarch of the universe, God; and the Logos doctrine of the Fathers of the second century seemed to endanger that unity. The Logos conceived of as a distinct divine Person appeared to deny monotheism.

In the west, Theodotus of Byzantium and Artemon of Syria propounded this view, and in the east Paul of Samosata further developed the view (he was excommunicated for it by a synod in A.D. 269). These men held that the Logos is not a divine Person, but is the impersonal divine reason; and that this Logos came upon the man Jesus at his baptism, constituting him the Christ. The Logos penetrated the humanity of Jesus progressively, as it did that of no other man. As a result, the man Jesus was gradually deified. Although he cannot be regarded as God in the strict sense of the word, nevertheless he is worthy of divine honor.



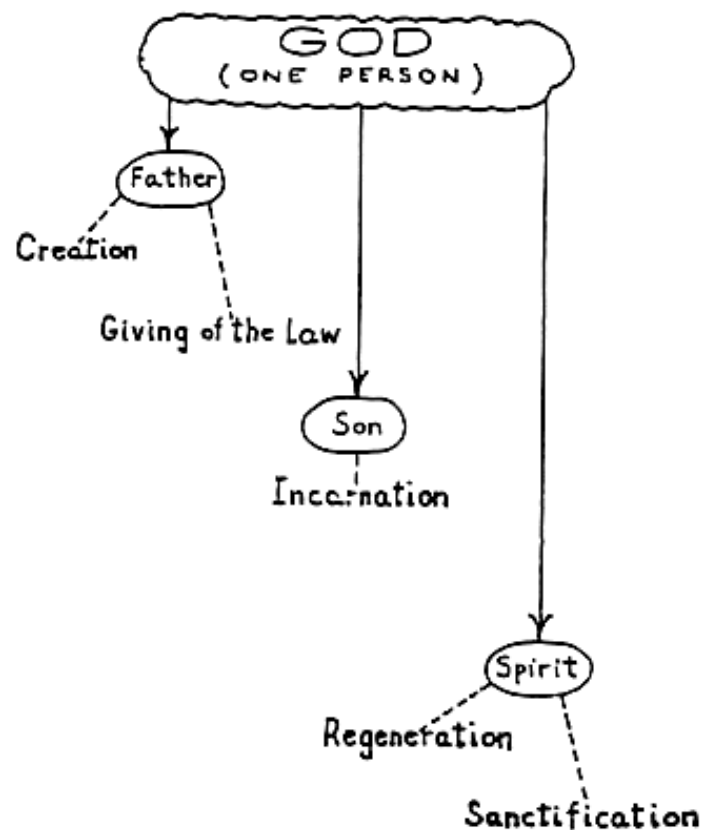
5. The Modalistic Monarchians

The second form of Monarchianism is called Modalistic Monarchianism. It was also concerned to preserve the unity of God, and once again the Logos doctrine seemed to endanger that unity, as well as to endanger the deity of Christ. For if the personal nature of the Logos were preserved, and monotheism maintained, then it would seem that the Logos would need to be considered a person who was subordinate to the Father, which would then deny Christ's deity.

Noetus of Smyrna, and Praxeas propounded the solution that Christ and the Father are one and the same divine Person (Tertullian wrote a strong reply to Praxeas). Sabellius held that the Father, the Son, and the Spirit are one divine Person who manifests Himself in different modes according to circumstances. Thus God revealed himself as Father in creation and in the giving of the Law, as Son in the incarnation, and as Spirit in regeneration and sanctification.

In the west this view was also known as Patripassianism, since it held that the Father had become incarnate and had suffered in Christ. In the east it was also known as Sabellianism, after its most famous representative.

Modalistic Monarchianism



6. The Arians

Arius (A.D. 280-336) was a presbyter (elder) of the Church at Alexandria in Egypt, and a pupil of Lucian of Antioch (who carried on the legacy of Paul of Samosata). Arius, noting that Origen made the son of God essentially subordinate to the Father, asserted that the Son of God must either be God or be a creature, and that there was no third entity (*tertium quid*). Favoring God's unity, he declared that the Son was not divine in any sense, but was "a creation from nonbeing (κτίσμα ἐξ οὐκ ὄντων) and that "there was once when he was not" (ἦν πότε ὅτε οὐκ ἦν). Thus Arius viewed the Son as the first and very highest of all creatures, who was also the Word, the Logos. In the incarnation the Son entered a human body, and took the place of the human spirit. By this construction, Arius denied both the true deity and the true humanity of Christ. However, Arius did say that, in view of Christ's final glory, he may be called God, even though he is not.



7. The Apollinarians

Apollinaris was bishop of Laodicea in Syria, and died about A.D. 390. He held to a trichotomous view of man's nature; and believed that the soul was the seat of animal life, and the spirit the seat of a rational, moral, and spiritual life. He held that in man the spirit (πνεῦμα) is the seat of sin. For Apollinaris, this meant that if Christ had a human spirit, He would have been sinful. Therefore, in place of the human spirit, Christ must have had the Logos; and thus Christ was comprised of divine Logos, human soul, and human body. In this manner Apollinaris preserved the deity and the sinlessness of Christ.

Unfortunately, in this formulation Apollinaris lost the true humanity of Christ. His critics pointed out that if Christ had no human spirit, then humanly speaking He was on the same level as the beasts of the field, i.e., without reason, morality, or spiritual faculties. They also pointed out that if this were so, Christ could not be our perfect Redeemer, since only a God-man could die a death of infinite value.

APOLLINARIANISM



MAN



CHRIST

8. The Nestorians

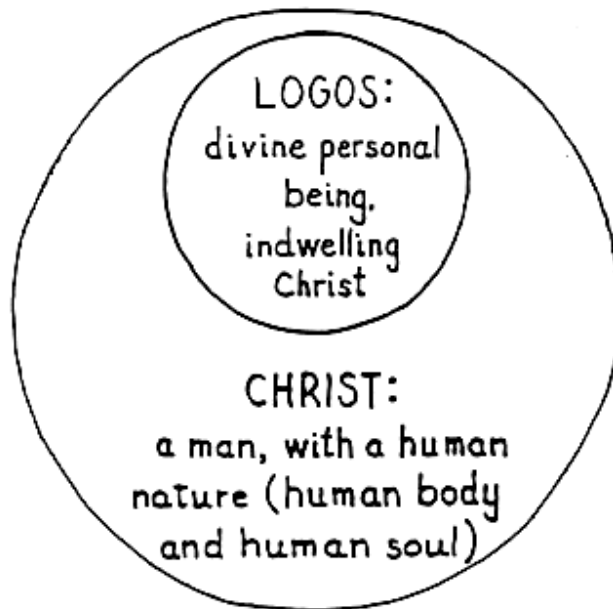
Nestorius was a presbyter (elder) of the Church of Antioch who became bishop of the Church of Constantinople in A.D. 428. He was influenced by Theodore of Mopsuestia, who held to the complete humanity of Christ, and stressed the reality of Christ's struggles with temptation and His complete victory over it. Theodore felt that in order to reserve Christ's true humanity, the Logos must be viewed as indwelling the man Jesus. However, the union between the Logos and the man was so close that the two could be spoken of as one person, in the way a man and his wife are said to be one flesh.

Nestorius held to the true deity and the true humanity of the God-man, but said that Christ was a man, and not God. He held that the Logos was fully divine, and Christ was fully human. When Mary brought forth Jesus, she did not bring forth the God-man, but a man who bore the Logos. Nestorius vigorously rejected the concept that Mary was the "Mother of God" or the "God bearer" (θεοτόκος). Christ, not Mary was God-bearer!

To his critics, this formulation appeared to reject the personal union of the two natures in one Person, and seemed to make it a moral and sympathetic union. Christ was to be worshipped, not because He was God, but because God was in Him. This appeared to yield a Logos Christ who not only had two distinct natures, but also was two distinct persons!

Recently some attempts have been undertaken to rehabilitate Nestorius by those who have argued that he did not really hold this view, or that he did not draw such a conclusion from his tenets. Be that as it may, any view which affirms both the true deity and the true humanity of Christ, but denies (or virtually denies) the personal union of the these two natures in such a way as to yield two distinct persons, is called Nestorian.

NESTORIAN VIEW



9. The Eutychians

Eutyches was an elderly abbot of a monastery in Constantinople when he came to prominence in A.D. 448. He reacted sharply to the Nestorian formula of "two natures = two persons", and maintained that the human nature of Christ, through union with the divine nature, was so assimilated by the divine that every thing of Christ's humanity, including His body, became divine. At his examination before a local synod he said, "I confess that our Lord was of two natures before the union, but after the union one nature." in this manner Eutyches sought to preserve the unipersonality of Christ, contra Nestorius. In doing so, however, he destroyed Christ's humanity.

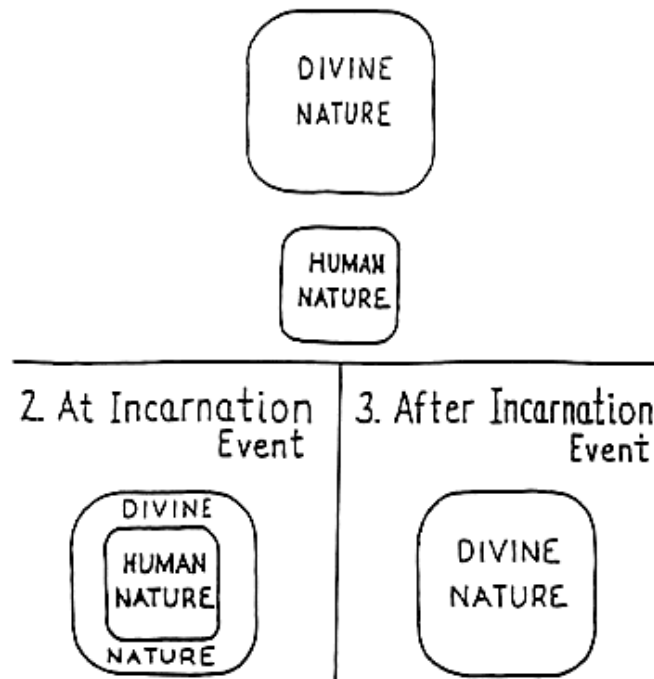
Cyril of Alexandria, the foremost opponent of Nestorianism, held to the true deity of Christ, the true humanity of Christ, and the personal union of the two natures in one Person. However, he appears to have located the unity of Christ's Person in the communication of the divine attributes of the Logos to the human nature, resulting from the union of the two natures. Thus Cyril appears to have leaned heavily in the direction of Eutychianism.

Eutyches was condemned for his views by a local synod in Constantinople in 448; restored by a local synod in Ephesus in 449; and finally condemned by the ecumenical synod of Chalcedon in 451.

Following Chalcedon, a number of controversies developed, some of which grew out of Eutychianism. The Monophysite ("one nature") controversy raged until the Council of Constantinople in A.D. 680, and Monophysitism has come down to the present in the Coptic, Abyssinian, and Armenian churches. Out of this controversy came the Monothelite ("one will") controversy, which also terminated with the Sixth Ecumenical Council in A.D. 680.

EUTYCHIANISM

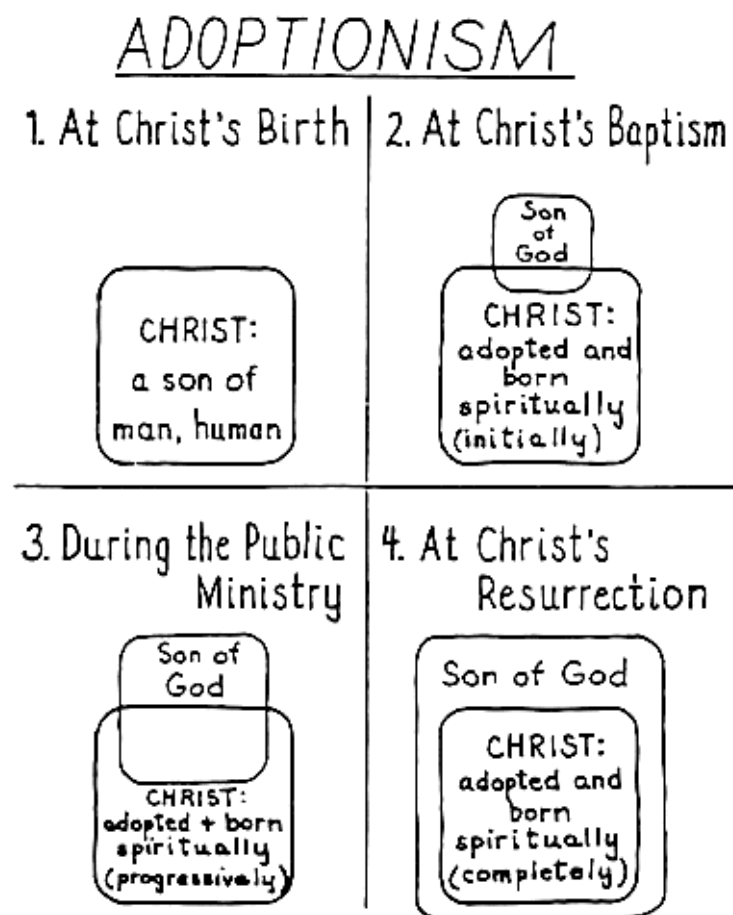
1. Before Incarnation Event



10. The Adoptionists

In the seventh and eighth centuries a view arose which claimed that Christ, as to His divine nature, was the only begotten Son of God in the natural sense; whereas Christ, as to His human nature, was a Son of God by adoption. This view occasioned what is referred to as the Adoptionist Controversy. Its champion was Felix, bishop of Urgella, Spain. He held that Christ, as the second person of the Trinity, was the "only begotten of the Father without adoption"; but that the Son of God assumed, or adopted, the Son of man, who is thus adopted and called God. Felix attempted to preserve the unity of Christ's person by viewing the Son of man as taken up into the unity of the person of the Son of God from the moment of conception. Followers of Felix distinguished between a natural birth of Christ at Bethlehem, and a spiritual birth which began at His baptism and was consummated at His resurrection. This spiritual birth made Christ, as to His human nature, the adopted Son of God. These followers of Felix pointed to the fact that believers are sons of God by adoption and are called "brethren" of Christ, and that therefore Christ must also be the Son of God by adoption. They also drew a distinction between two modes of sonship in Christ from the distinction of His two natures; and they emphasized those scriptures which refer to Christ as being lesser than the Father.

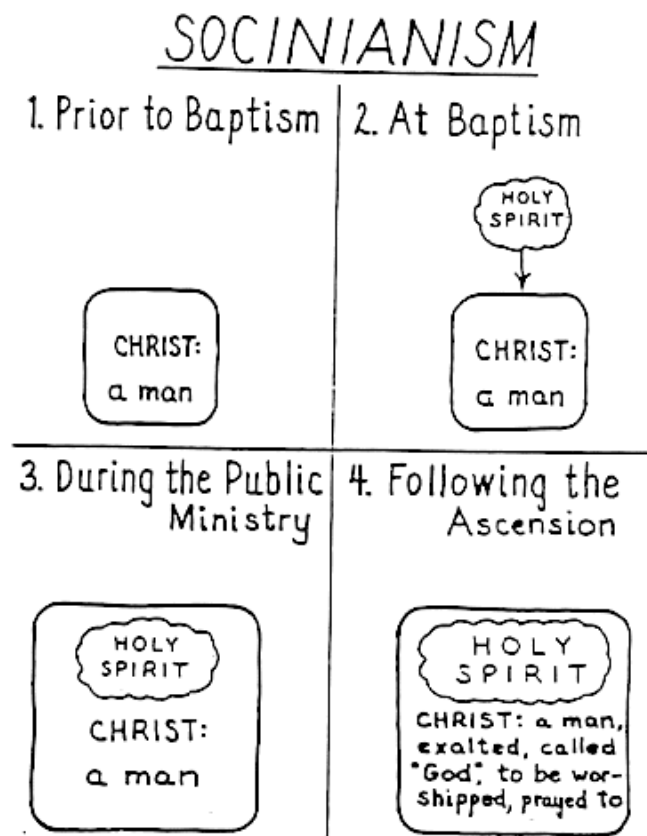
Critics of adoptionism claimed that the concept of a dual sonship framed in this manner would logically lead to a dual personality in Christ, thus Nestorianism. Accordingly, the view was condemned at Regensburg in A.D. 794, at Frankfurt in A.D. 794, and at Aachen in A.D. 799.



11. The Socinians

Lelio Sozzini (*Laelius Socinus*), A.D. 1525-1562, and his nephew Fausto Sozzini (*Faustus Socinus*), A.D. 1539-1604, of Siena, Italy, championed a view of Christ which held that He was a man who was baptized with the Holy Spirit, lived a unique life of exemplary obedience, and was filled with divine wisdom. He was rewarded with a resurrection; and following His ascension was exalted to a kind of delegated divinity, so that He is now to be called God, prayed to, and worshipped.

The theology of the Socinians has come down to the present day (in a modified expression) in the form of Unitarianism.



12. The View of Schleiermacher

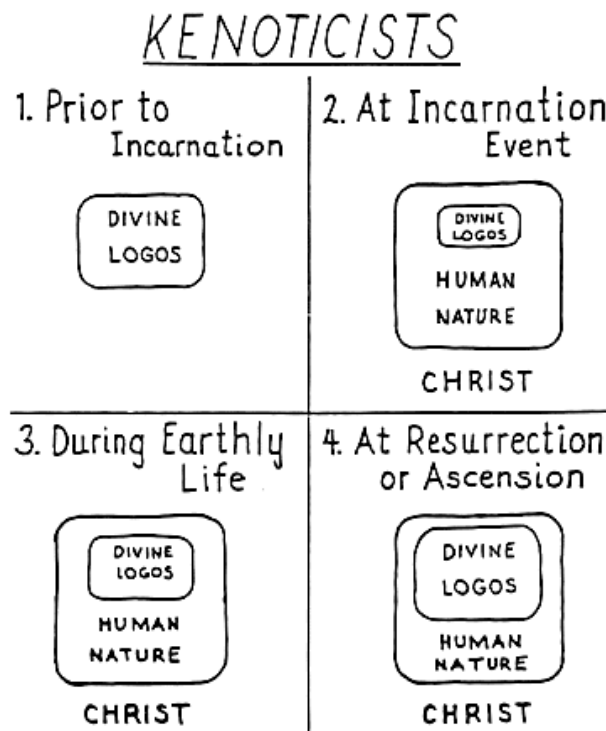
Friedrich Daniel Ernst Schleiermacher (A.D. 1768-1834) held the highest conception of Jesus as a man. Although Jesus was not virgin born, nevertheless God constituted His Person by a creative act, elevating His human nature to the plane of ideal (human) perfection. Thus there was no hereditary depravity in Him, or any sinful tendencies. He was the second Adam, the new spiritual head of the race, the perfectly religious man, the fountain of all religion. He enjoyed a special presence of God in Him, a supreme God-consciousness, a perfect and unbroken sense of union with the divine. He lived a life of perfect obedience and sinless perfection. He is capable of animating and sustaining the higher life of all mankind; and through a living faith in Him all men may become (as He was) perfectly religious.

13. The Kenoticists

in nineteenth century Germany a number of theologians espoused a view of Christ's person which was built upon ideas which they derived from Phil 2:7 and II Cor. 8:9. They felt that the available Christological formulas did not do justice to the reality and integrity of Christ's humanity, or to the overwhelming greatness of Christ's humiliation in becoming poor for our sakes. Accordingly, they translated KENOO (κενόω) in Phil 2:7 to mean emptied, and took this to imply that the divine Logos at the incarnation emptied or divested himself of all or some of His divine attributes, and thus became man by reducing himself (either wholly or partly) to the dimensions of a man.

G. Thomasius, J. H. A. Ebrard, W. F. Gess, and H. L. Martensen in Europe, and Henry Ward Beecher in the United States, were the chief spokesmen for this view. Thomasius held that the divine Logos, while retaining His divine self-consciousness, yet laid aside His relative attributes (omnipotence, omnipresence, omniscience) to take to himself a true human nature. Martensen held that the divine Logos assumed two centers of existence, one eternal, the other temporal; that these two centers were separate; that the human Logos knew nothing of the divine Logos; and that the human Logos took into union with himself a true human nature. Gess held that the divine Logos emptied himself of all of his attributes, and became the human soul in Christ. Ebrard held that the divine Logos kept His attributes, but only in a form appropriate to human existence, and that this Logos became the human soul in Christ.

All of these men held that the Logos who had been reduced or emptied at the incarnation increased in wisdom and power until He once again became fully God, either at His resurrection or His ascension.

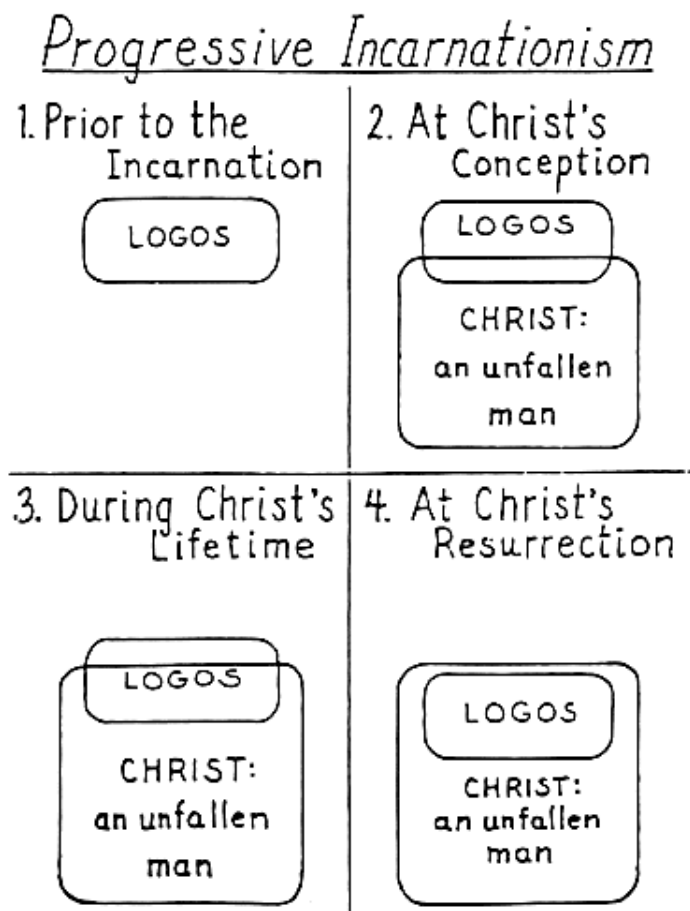


14. The Progressive or Gradual Incarnationists

Isaac August Dorner (A.D. 1809-1884) is regarded as the main representative of the Mediating School in the doctrine of the Person of Christ in Germany (the Mediating School stood between the rationalists, represented by Heinrich Eberhard Gottlob Paulus, and those who held to confessional orthodoxy, represented by Ernst Wilhelm Hengstenberg).

Dorner held that the Logos is the precreation divine principle which had a need to express itself in creation and revelation, and (in view of sin) in redemption. Christ was a man, but not a fallen man. His was a new humanity, in which receptivity for the divine developed and gradually increased throughout his lifetime. The Logos principle joined himself to Christ initially at His conception, and then gradually throughout His lifetime, reaching completion at His resurrection. Thus the incarnation was not an act, but a gradual process; and the measure of incarnation was determined by the degree of receptivity of the human nature of Christ for the divine.

Thus the Logos-Christ was the God-man from His conception, but only in a partial sense; He gradually became the God-man in ever increasing degrees throughout His lifetime; and became the God-man in the complete sense at His resurrection. Of course, this view appeared to be almost Nestorian, except for the question whether the Logos principle was a divine Person in Its/His own right.



15. The View of Albrecht Ritschl

The most important theologian and historian of the early church in the latter half of the nineteenth century was Albrecht Ritschl (A.D. 1822-1889). Ritschl was greatly influenced by Kant and by Schleiermacher. Kant taught him that knowledge of things in themselves was unattainable; Schleiermacher taught him that religious consciousness was the source of faith. Yet he felt that Schleiermacher's emphasis upon religious consciousness was too individual-oriented; the proper norm of faith is the religious consciousness of the Christian community. Applied to Christology, these concepts meant that metaphysical thinking about Christ was meaningless to the religious experience of the first disciples; such questions as whether Christ was preexistent, had two natures, or was one Person of a Trinity, had no meaning for the experience of the early church, and therefore no significance for faith.

Ritschl held that Christ was a man, a revelation of what God is in love, the pattern of what man may be, the bearer of God's moral authority over men, and the Founder of the kingdom of God. In view of His teachings, example, and influence (by which He redeems man), and in view of His work and service, He is worthy to be called God.

Ritschl strongly influenced Wilhelm Herrmann (A.D. 1846-1922), a professor of theology at Marburg, and Adolf von Harnack (A.D. 1851-1930), an outstanding church historian at Berlin.

INSERT COVER FIGURE

Note: These notes are to be used in conjunction with the course.
They should not be regarded or used as published materials.
However, they may be quoted and used for study and presentation
purposes, provided credit is given.

ERRATA AND NOTES

Typography of Hebrew: Best use Lucida Grande (rather than ariel) and 1.5 line spacing (paragraph)

Note: For Greek/Hebrew words, <...> denotes the actual word used in the text. The Notes typically use the root of the word, denoted by (...).

p51-53 INSERT TABLES

p100 TABLE

131ff add hebrew/greek words

רַעַ

רַעַ

פֶּשַׁע

מַעַל

חַטָּאת

חַטָּאה

חַטָּא

עוֹן

עוֹלָה

עוֹלָ

אַשְׁמָה

אַשְׁמָ

אַשְׁמָ

227 root σφάττω => root σφάζω

229 accent change → προγνώσις (acts 2:23)

296 item 38: *inferos* => *infernus*

297 "mode land attltute" => mode and attribute also "is is is" => is

331 added missing text "And some (Cerinthians) taught that Christ entered Jesus (the natural child of Joseph and Mary) at baptism and left him at the crucifixion."