

170
Riley Library
Northwest Nazarene College
Nampa, Idaho 83651

Studies in

Christian Essentials

• *Harry E. Jessop, D.D.* •

D. D. = DONATED -- DIGNITY

CHRISTIAN SERVICE TRAINING COURSE •

NOTING THIS MATERIAL MAY BE
PROTECTED BY COPYRIGHT LAW
(TITLE 17 U.S. CODE),

Riley Library

Northwest Nazarene College
Nampa, Idaho 83651

Studies in

Christian Essentials

by

Harry E. Jessop, D.D.

President of Chicago Evangelistic Institute



Northwest Nazarene College
LIBRARY

BEACON HILL PRESS
2923 Troost Avenue, Box 527
Kansas City 10, Missouri

68347

PRINTED IN U.S.A.
FIRST PRINTING, 1945
SECOND PRINTING, 1949



CONTENTS

PART I—GOD

	PAGE
I. Does God Really Exist?.....	7
II. What Sort of God Is He?.....	18
III. Has God Revealed Himself?.....	35

PART II—MAN

IV. What Is Man?.....	37
V. The Problem of Man's Sin.....	45
VI. The Question of Immortality.....	59

PART III—CHRIST

VII. What Think Ye of Christ?.....	64
What God Says About Him.....	65
What Men Have Said About Him.....	73
VIII. What Think Ye of Christ?.....	84
The Formulation of the Creeds Concerning Him... ..	84
IX. The Redeeming Passion.....	88

PART IV—GRACE

X. Saving Grace.....	112
----------------------	-----

PART V—THE CHURCH

XI. The Christian Church.....	121
-------------------------------	-----

PART VI—LAST THINGS

XII. The Last Things.....	129
---------------------------	-----

INTRODUCING THE STUDIES

The volume here presented is a series of lesson studies presenting some of the essential phases of Christian teaching. Its primary purpose is to aid younger students in their early theological work, and with that end in view the range of subjects has been restricted, while their development has also been limited.

Beyond this, however, the hope is cherished that some whose theological work has already taken them farther, may find here, at least in outline, something in the nature of a *thought refresher*, recalling some of the teaching of earlier days.

The studies are divided into convenient lessons with suggestions and test questions at the close of each. It is intended that the student first master the material of the lesson in hand and then, from memory, answer the questions in a notebook he will keep for that purpose.

The *suggestions* at the close of each lesson and the *list of books* suggestions with each section, are intended more especially for those who desire to go farther in their studies. The books mentioned are not all to be taken as necessarily sound in doctrine; they are given simply as a cross section of general reading and are intended for those who, expecting to become leaders in Christian thought must know *what they do not believe* as well as what they believe, and thus be able to give to every man a reason for the hope that is in them.

H. E. J.

PART I—GOD

I. DOES GOD REALLY EXIST?

Numerous Theories

That there is a Supreme Being men in general agree, although there are to be found "fools" with minds so blinded and spiritual natures so perverted as to say in their hearts, "There is no God" (Psalms 14:1). These do so, however, because inwardly they are corrupt, and as the result of their corruption, they have done abominable works.

Yet, among those who assent to some sort of divine existence an amazing variety of views are expressed. It will be well, therefore, for us at the beginning of our study to line up some of the numerous theories which men have evolved and make a concise statement concerning each. We shall name seven:

1. THE ATHEISTIC THEORY

The atheist bluntly and boldly asserts, "There is no God!"

Throughout the centuries the history of atheism has been sporadic. It has entrenched itself here and manifested itself there, then for a season it has gone into hiding, but with all the development of religion, atheism as such has never died, and so long as the human heart is what it is, atheism will live on, for the corrupt heart does not want to acknowledge God. Psalms 10:4.

At certain periods when spirituality is low the cancer comes to the surface, as for instance, in the French Revolution and the Bolshevistic regime in Russia. There are few great cities today without an atheistic society.

Atheism has been classified under four general heads:

a. *Classical Atheism.* This is not of necessity the absolute denial of divine existence, but may have to do with the gods

of a particular nation. The early Christians were sometimes called atheists because of their disavowal of the gods of heathen nations.

b. *Philosophic Atheism.* Not that the various systems to which this term is applied actually deny the existence of a First Cause, but they are atheistic in their trends and tend to unsettle the faith of mankind in the existence of God.

Examples: The Idealism of Fichte; the Ideal Pantheism of Spinoza; the Natural Pantheism of Schelling; and similar forms of thought.

c. *Practical Atheism.* This form of atheism is not so much in the realm of thought but has to do with the life. It does not of necessity declare there is no God, but lives as though He did not exist. Among the masses, such a form of atheism is prevalent today.

d. *Dogmatic Atheism.* Here is atheism in full flower. It is blatant, belligerent, and aggressive. Within recent years there have been determined efforts to revive it, and we shall meet more, but few will honestly endorse it when facing the great realities of life and the fact of death. Atheism has no certainties.

To all this the Christian heart replies, "O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the Lord our maker" (Psalms 95:6).

2. THE AGNOSTIC THEORY

The agnostic is akin to the atheist, but is less dogmatic as to God's nonexistence. He insists that man does not have, nor can he have, any knowledge of God. "God, if such there be," he argues, "is infinite, while man is finite. The finite can never comprehend the infinite; therefore God is unknowable, and consequently unknown."

To this the Christian heart makes the prompt and vigorous reply, "I know him whom I have believed" (II Timothy 1:12 R.V.).

3. THE DEISTIC THEORY

The deist says, "There is a God, but He is to be regarded as being outside His universe. Certainly He created it, but He then withdrew from it, leaving it to a process of self-development.

To this, the Christian heart replies, Our God is not afar off. "The Lord is at hand" (Philippians 4:5).

4. THE POLYTHEISTIC THEORY

Polytheism predicates many gods, each ruling in his own realm.

The liberal theologians declare that this was man's primitive belief, a superstition from which he has slowly evolved. On the contrary, according to the plain teaching of the Scriptures, it is the product of man's fallen condition, and is a relic of a corrupted monotheism. Romans 1:20-23. It has developed under various forms, such as:

a. *Fetichism*. This is probably the lowest type of polytheism, where stones, reptiles and other objects are worshiped under the belief that they are associated with supernatural influences.

b. *Animism*. This may be stated as the belief that inanimate objects and the phenomena of nature are endowed with personal and living souls. The term is also used to denote the worship of the spirits of ancestors or of national heroes.

c. *Sabianism*. Sabianism is that species of idolatry which consists in the worship of the heavenly bodies, the sun, the moon, and the stars. It is the belief in the ruling power of the stars, and underlies all religions having astrology or astronomy for their basis.

To all this, the Christian heart replies, "There is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus" (I Timothy 2:5).

5. THE PANTHEISTIC THEORY

This theory may be summed up in one sentence, namely, God and the universe are one. To the pantheist, God is not

a *person* but an *aggregation*—all things, animate and inanimate form the sum total of God and find consciousness in man.

The pantheist does not profess to find God in any individual person, place, or thing. He does not say, for instance, "This tree is God, this animal is God, this sky is God, this man is God," etc.; but surveying the whole—tree, animal, sky, man and all else in one grand totality—he says, "*This is God.*"

To this the Christian heart replies, "In the beginning, *God created* the heaven and the earth" (Genesis 1:1).

"The living God, which made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein" (Acts 14:15).

6. THE MATERIALISTIC THEORY

The materialistic theory, in its explanation of things, gives priority to matter, contending that material atoms constitute the ultimate and fundamental reality of all things. In a word, materialism denies the existence of everything but matter.

To this, the Christian heart replies, "In the beginning was the Word . . . and the Word was God. All things were made by him" (John 1:1, 3).

7. THE MONOTHEISTIC THEORY

According to this theory, God is Personal and God is One. The monotheistic religions are Judaism, Mohammedanism, and Christianity. Our concern in these studies is with the Christian religion and its idea of God.

SUGGESTIONS FOR THE STUDENT

The theories here stated are fundamental; a knowledge of them is therefore essential for future work. If they are not already well rooted in the memory they should be learned. Material should also be sought in the general reading suggested on page 36, which will supplement what is here given.

TEST QUESTIONS

1. Name the seven theories concerning the divine existence.
2. Take the theories separately, and in your own words give a statement of each.
3. Compare and contrast atheism and agnosticism.
4. Compare and contrast deism and monotheism.
5. Contrast deism and pantheism.

Definitions of God ✓

It would be correct to say that the Bible nowhere in the form of an actual declaration states the fact of the Divine existence—and yet it does more, for throughout the entire Book is to be found the grand assumption that God *is*. The Bible writers do not even pause to prove His existence, but with a certainty born of conscious contact, they boldly declare the God they know.

What can be more majestic than those opening words of the Book of Genesis: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth" (Genesis 1:1)? Or, what is more definite than the language of Paul when stressing the fact of the high priestly intercession of the risen Lord: "For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus" (I Timothy 2:5)?

Strictly speaking, such passages in themselves are not formal declarations; they are to be regarded as links in an argument or part of a general statement, but they do at least take for granted the *fact* of the divine existence, and this could not be without a definite and sufficient reason. Then too, we cannot ignore the constant claim of these speakers as they repeatedly insist that their messages are from God himself. What is all this but an indirect way of saying, "*There is a God*"?

Before plunging into the heart of our study, it will be well for us to settle our definition of God. For our material here it will be necessary to go first to the Bible, and then, from the knowledge there gained, to construct our definition in the realm of theology.

1. OUR BIBLICAL MATERIAL

The Bible is by no means a ready-made theology; it is rather a source book of theological knowledge, the *raw material*, so to speak, on which we must work. Therefore in seeking our definition of God we may expect to find the Sacred Book to be descriptive rather than definitive. It is from its general trend that we must gather our conception, and here

four definite passages will give us descriptive expression. They are as follows:

"God is Spirit" (John 4:24, R.V. Marg.)

"God is light" (I John 1:5)

"God is love" (I John 4:16)

"God is a consuming fire" (Hebrews 12:29)

2. THE THEOLOGICAL CONSTRUCTION

This truth which the Bible in general is found to teach is now taken over by the theologian and stated in concise theological form. Here are some specimen definitions which will assist the student in making his own:

MARTIN LUTHER: "God is an infinite and spiritual essence."

JOHN HOWE: "God is an eternal, uncaused, independent, necessary being, of perfect wisdom, power and goodness, transcendently glorious, the Creator of the universe who preserves it by His providence and governs it according to His laws."

WESTMINSTER CATECHISM: "God is a Spirit, infinite, eternal and unchangeable in His Being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness and truth."

JOHN MILEY: "God is an eternal, personal Being, of absolute knowledge, power and goodness."

W. N. CLARKE: "God is the personal Spirit, in whom all things have their source, support and end."

H. ORTON WILEY: "God is a Spirit, holy in nature and attributes, absolute in reality, infinite in efficiency, perfect in personality, and thereby the ultimate ground, adequate cause, and sufficient reason for all finite existence."

~~X~~ *Nazarene Manual*: "We believe in one eternally existent infinite God, Sovereign of the universe. That He only is God, creative and administrative, holy in nature, attributes, and purpose."

SUGGESTIONS FOR THE STUDENT

After a careful consideration of these definitions, remembering also the numerous theories concerning the divine existence already considered, write in your own words a definition of God which best satisfies you.

TEST QUESTIONS

1. Would it be correct to say that the Bible nowhere formally declares the existence of God?
2. If this is so, what is the attitude of the Bible writers with regard to the divine existence?
3. In what relation to theology may the Bible be said to stand?

Methods by Which We Arrive at Knowledge of God ✓

This idea of God, with its numerous definitions, may, to some of us, tend to become ordinary and even commonplace. It is well, therefore, that we should inquire into its origin and acquaint ourselves with the methods by which men have arrived at this position.

Immediately we find ourselves in the sphere of conflict, discovering that concerning the idea of God, two distinct and contrasting views are held, some insisting that man's knowledge of God is *innate* and comes to him intuitively, while others contend that it is the result of *reasoning processes*. We think it might be safe to state that this knowledge of the divine existence cannot be limited to either one of these, but rather requires both with the addition of a third, namely: Intuition—Reason—Revelation. ✓

1. THE IDEA OF GOD MAY BE SAID TO BE OURS BY INTUITION ✓

That is to say, there is something in man even in his fallen state—call it instinct if you will—which, if allowed to speak, will lead him to the thought of a higher power.

It is not claimed that this intuitive sense is self-interpretative. Only the Holy Spirit can give inward spiritual life, awakening the sense of need within the soul and leading it to God; there is, nevertheless, within man a universal *something*, an innate idea, which despite his depravity, willfulness and sin, has persisted through the ages, telling man that his rela- ✓

✓ tionship is not wholly with the animals—he has capacity for the knowledge of God, yea, for the indwelling God himself.

Dr. A. H. Strong* argues that the idea of the existence of God is a *first truth*, namely, a rational intuition which logically precedes and conditions all observation and reasoning. This intuition is basic to our conception of God.

✓ 2. THIS IDEA OF GOD BECOMES CLEARER BY RECOGNITION

Thoughtful minds have set forth convincing arguments in proof of this, and although admittedly timeworn and to some even threadbare and allegedly outworn, they stand today as the unanswerable apologetic of our holy faith. We shall state four:

Argument 1. Cosmological: The evidences of the existence of an adequate First Cause.

The Cosmological Argument is the reasoning based on the evident fact of cause and effect, inferring an Infinite Being as the only rational cause of the Cosmos. Every effect must have a cause. The world is an *effect*; therefore it must have a cause outside of itself and sufficiently adequate to account for its existence. As *nothing could never produce something* there must exist an eternal Being to account for that which has been produced. The world as we see it gives abundant evidence that everything in it is dependent and mutable, and cannot be self-existent and eternal. The forces of nature are utterly inadequate to produce such a world. The Cosmos is far too vast and complex for us to believe that it is the product of blind force. The wonders of the telescope as seen in the vast sweep of the heavens and the marvels of the microscope as realized increasingly in the earth unite in their testimony to the fact of a First Cause, and that First Cause the Christian calls *God*.

Argument 2. Teleological: The evidence for the divine existence as seen in the presence of order, design, adaptation and rational purpose. By this we mean: (a) the selection of an end to be attained, (b) the choice of suitable means for its attainment, (c) the actual use of those means to accomplish the given end.

* *Systematic Theology*, pp. 52-70.

The Cosmological and Teleological arguments are necessarily complementary the one to the other. The fact of a sufficient First Cause being predicated our next consideration will naturally be the evidences that that First Cause is intelligent in its operation. Soon, however, we are compelled to recognize that the "It" must be dropped and personal pronouns substituted, and with a reverential awe we begin to speak of "Him" and "His."

The works of nature everywhere bear evidence of design: whether the preparation of the earth as the abode of man, the construction of man's physical frame, or the construction of the creatures beneath man and their adaptation for their respective spheres. All nature is vibrant with the testimony to an originating design, and such design of necessity demands the existence of a Designer. Sooner or later this must lead to the recognition of a personal Intelligence and Will; in short it must lead to *God*. See Hebrews 3:4, R.V.

All this, we know, is amazingly old-fashioned indeed, but let him disprove it who can.

< *Argument 3. Ontological:* The argument from the nature of being; based on the idea of God as it exists in the human mind. This is much like the argument from intuition, designed to show that the real objective existence of God is involved in the very idea of such a Being.

St. Augustine argued from the existence of a finite and imperfect human truth and reasoned that perfect truth and reason must exist somewhere by which these lower things can be measured.

Anselm argued that an imaginary or ideal Divine Being, however perfect in conception, cannot answer to the idea of the most perfect. Hence we must admit actual existence.

Descartes said, "I find in me the notion of God which I cannot have formed by my own power, since it involves a higher degree of being than I possess. It must have for its author God himself who stamped it upon my mind, just as an architect impresses his stamp upon his work."

✓ **Argument 4. Anthropological or Moral:** The argument from the nature of man both mental and moral.

Here man is seen as having a sense of responsibility and accountability. He recognizes distinctions between right and wrong. He knows the operation of conscience and is conscious of a sense of duty. He feels a sense of dependence and obligation. The moral world has laws to which he is subject, and all these demand the existence of a Lawgiver. His own mind cannot be responsible for all this. There must be a God.

3. THIS IDEA OF GOD IS CONVEYED TO THE SOUL BY REVELATION

When men's best arguments have been stated, we are compelled to admit that there are those who do not find it easy to believe. There is reason for this, as later we shall see, but for the moment it will be sufficient to say that man's nature Godward has been twisted and warped, so much so that spiritual facts are difficult to comprehend.

"The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (I Corinthians 2:14).

↙ Both atheism and faith have their respective seats, not in the mind, but in the heart. "The fool hath said *in his heart*, There is no God" (Psalms 14:1). "*With the heart* man believeth" (Romans 10:10). "Take heed lest there be in any of you *an evil heart* of unbelief" (Hebrews 3:12). "Having the eyes of *your heart* enlightened, that ye may know" (Ephesians 1:18, R.V.). Speaking about the truth which he claimed to possess, Paul the Apostle declared, "Neither did I receive it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came to me through revelation" (Galatians 1:12, R.V.).

↙ All this, with many other statements, is a united declaration that if man is to acknowledge God as existent and Creator, God must take definite steps to reveal Himself to man. This He has done, and in such a manner that only those wilfully blind can disregard the revelation.

a. He has revealed Himself through the world which He has made. Psalms 19; Romans 1:20. The farthest star and the tiniest flower are His messengers. Hence Lord Tennyson writes:

*Flower in the crannied wall
I pluck you out of the crannies.
I hold you here, root and all in my hand,
Little flower—but if I could understand
What you are root and all, and all in all
I should know what God and man is.*

b. He has revealed Himself through the prophets whom He has sent. "God . . . spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets" (Hebrews 1:1).

c. He has revealed Himself through the Son whom He has given. "God . . . hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son" (Hebrews 1:1, 2).

All the earlier arguments, convincing though they be, would be lacking in their effectiveness but for the fact that the very God of whom they speak is always at work to illuminate the mind of the honest seeker after truth. The Holy Spirit ever stands ready to help. God "is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him" (Hebrews 11:6).

"I do not know the whole of God and many things I dare neither to affirm nor to deny; but what I do know of Him, I find so grounded in my very being, so confronted by all forms of all external being, so comforting to my heart, so fruitful in the life, that I affirm it beyond the possibility of denial."—
JOHN DUNCAN.

SUGGESTIONS FOR THE STUDENT

Make sure that you understand the three "methods" here discussed. Then master each argument for the divine existence and state it in your notebook in your own words. Imagine yourself suddenly confronted by a critical unbeliever; face him and answer him.

TEST QUESTIONS

1. Name the three methods by which we arrive at our knowledge of God.
2. State as fully as possible each of the methods you have named.

II. WHAT SORT OF GOD IS HE?

The Nature of the Godhead

Having satisfied ourselves as to the reality of God, the question immediately arises as to how much knowledge we may gain concerning the Being whose existence we have sought to prove.

That we may fully comprehend Him is of course impossible, for that which comprehends must of necessity be greater than that which is comprehended, hence our limitation. Yet while we may not comprehend the divine essence, it is ours to consider the divine attributes, that is, in so far as God has been pleased to reveal Himself to men.

According to the dictionary definition, an attribute is "that which is considered as belonging to, inherent in, or characteristic of"; hence the attributes of God are the qualities or perfections of His nature.

Attributes must have their ground in essential being. Qualities are neither possible nor thinkable as separate facts, unrelated to anything. In man the body is more than its properties and the mind more than its faculties. So also God is more than His attributes. Reason tells us that there cannot be an attribute without a Being to whom that attribute belongs. The Being and the attributes are inseparable; without them we could not know Him as God. Yet for the purpose of discussion we must make the separation, only so is a classification possible.

By *being* is meant that which has real substantive existence. It is impossible to think of thoughts and feelings unless there is a *self*—something, or better, *someone* who feels and thinks. An attribute, or quality, requires a subject answering in kind to its own distinctive quality. The attributes are not mere *names* for human conceptions of God; they are *qualities* ob-

jectively distinguishable from the divine essence and from each other, and yet belonging to an underlying Personality who necessarily furnishes their ground of unity. The attributes manifest the divine Person and the Person is revealed through the attributes. Apart from the attributes the Person is unknowable and therefore unknown.

There are various methods of determining what attributes belong to the divine Being and these attributes have been variously classified. On the one hand some preclude all necessity of classification by their emphasis on attributes as human conceptions or phases under which we may consider the divine Being, while on the other hand some intricate methods have been devised. It will best serve our present purpose to recognize the oft-used twofold division which sets forth the divine attributes as *natural* and *moral*, and divides them as follows:

1. NATURAL ATTRIBUTES

The natural attributes are seen as those which have to do with the divine existence as an infinite rational Spirit. They are generally set forth as follows:

a. *God is eternal and self-existent.* Some would separate the eternity and self-existence of God recording them as different attributes, but in reality they stand together. He is self-caused, self-sustaining, and therefore eternal, "I AM," "The everlasting God," Exodus 3:14; Genesis 21:33; Isaiah 40:28; Romans 16:26. See also I Timothy 1:17; Revelation 4:8; Deuteronomy 33:27; Psalms 90:2.

He is described by our Lord Jesus as "the Father" who "hath life in himself" (John 5:26).

All other intelligences are created, caused, endowed and sustained by Him. If every other being and every other thing should be instantly dissolved, He would remain forever the same.

b. *God is essentially One.* Being self-existent He is consequently self-sufficient. He has no rival; He needs no ally; and contains all His perfections within Himself. Deuteronomy

4:35, 39; 6:4; II Samuel 7:22; I Kings 8:60; II Kings 19:19; I Chronicles 17:20; Psalms 86:10; Isaiah 43:10; 45:22; Mark 12:29, 32; John 17:3; I Corinthians 8:4; Eph. 4:6; I Timothy 2:5; James 2:19.

c. *God is immutable.* Within His essential nature He knows no change. His attitudes may vary to meet conditions as they change, as for instance Jonah 3:10; but in God himself there can be no change; this is the ground of confidence for His trusting people. Psalms 33:11; 102:27; Isaiah 46:10; 54:10; Malachi 3:6; James 1:7.

d. *God is omnipotent.* Being the one eternal First Cause, He has all power, and there is none to stay His hand. In testimony to this, scripture references are legion; here are a few: Genesis 1:1; 2:1-4; 17:1; 18:14; Exodus 20:11; II Kings 19:15; Nehemiah 9:6; Job 26:7-14; 42:2; Psalms 19:1; 33:6, 9; 104:1-6; 136:1-9; Isaiah 37:16; 40:25, 26; 42:5; Jeremiah 10:12; 32:17, 27; Amos 4:13; Matthew 19:26; Acts 14:15; 17:24; Romans 1:20; I Corinthians 8:6; Colossians 1:16; Revelation 4:11; 19:6.

When we say God is omnipotent and therefore can do anything, we must limit our thinking to the bounds of His goodness and wisdom. God cannot do anything that will harm the weakest of His creatures. He cannot do anything that will interfere with His justice toward all men.

e. *God is omniscient.* All things for all time, past, present and future are known to Him, hence He is able to plan the best for His trusting people without any fear of embarrassment. Further, He knows every thought in the mind of every man. I Kings 8:39; I Chronicles 28:9; Job 31:4; 34:21, 22; Psalms 11:4; 94:9-11; 139:1-6; Proverbs 15:3; Isaiah 40:28; 46:9, 10; Jeremiah 32:19; Daniel 2:20-22; Hebrews 4:13; I John 3:20.

f. *God is omnipresent.* By omnipresence we mean, of course, that God is everywhere and everywhere all the time. There is no place at any time where He is not. Among other scriptures proving this are the following: I Kings 8:27; Job 28:24;

Psalms 33:13, 14; 139:7-12; Jeremiah 23:23, 24; Amos 9:2, 3; Acts 17:27, 28.

While *present* everywhere in the wide and general sense, it is also true that there are *times* and *places* of His manifested presence. There are also modes and degrees in which the manifested presence differs. Consider by contrast the following: "But will God indeed dwell on earth?" (I Kings 8:27). "Into heaven . . . in hell . . . in the uttermost parts of the sea . . ." in each place, definitely yet differently, "Thou art there!" Psalms 139:8, 9.

2. MORAL ATTRIBUTES

The moral attributes have to do with the character of God as a moral Being. They may be stated thus:

a. *God is immaculately holy.* Strictly speaking, this is more than an attribute; holiness is foundational in God, it is His very nature. The word, as applied to Him in the Scriptures, has a twofold indication, having to do first with the fact of His moral purity, as for example, Psalms 145:17; the second having to do with His majestic presence, as in Isaiah 6:3.

Among other scripture passages the following may be regarded as representative: Exodus 15:11; Psalms 99:9; I Peter 1:16; Revelation 4:8.

b. *God is absolutely good.* By *goodness* here, is to be understood that quality which loves to manifest itself in benevolence, mercy and grace. Out of His goodness must, of necessity, proceed a natural beneficence toward all His creation. Exodus 34:6; Numbers 14:18; Psalms 25:7, 8; 119:68; 145:8, 9; Nahum 1:7; Matthew 19:17; I John 4:8.

c. *God is infinitely just.* Holiness and goodness in God can only be fully realized as balanced by righteousness and justice. His nature can admit of no compromise. He cannot do less than right. He must be just to all. Exodus 34:7; Numbers 14:18; Deuteronomy 32:4; Psalms 11:7; 89:14; 97:1, 2; 145:17; Isaiah 28:17; Jeremiah 32:19; Zephaniah 3:5; Acts 17:31; I Peter 1:17.

d. *God is altogether wise.* Numerous scripture passages declare this, among which are: Job 5:8-12; 37:1-24; Psalms 33:8-11; 104:24; Proverbs 3:19, 20; Isaiah 40:12-15; Jeremiah 10:12, 13; Daniel 2:20-22; Romans 11:33; I Corinthians 1:24; Ephesians 1:8; 3:9-11.

—This marvelous wisdom is manifest in creation, redemption, and in His providential dealings with men. How good it is to feel that under every circumstance, God knows what is best! He never makes a mistake.

*Deep in unfathomable mines
Of never failing skill,
He treasures up His bright designs
And works His sovereign will.*

e. *He is unalterably faithful.* Under all circumstances God is faithful and true. His people have found it so through all generations. I Corinthians 1:9; 10:13; I Thessalonians 5:24; I John 1:9; and *many* other scriptures.

SUGGESTIONS FOR THE STUDENT

Simple though it may seem, make sure you are able to explain what you mean when you speak of an attribute. Be sure of your scripture basis for the attributes. In your wider reading, take up the attributes in their fuller classifications as found in the more advanced theological works.

TEST QUESTIONS

1. All attributes must have their ground in essential being. What do you understand by this?
2. Into what two main divisions do the attributes naturally fall?
3. What is a natural attribute?
4. Name the natural attributes.
5. Explain each natural attribute you have named.
6. What is a moral attribute?
7. Name the moral attributes.
8. Explain each moral attribute you have named.

The Trinity in Unity

The word *trinity* is nowhere to be found in the Bible. This acknowledged fact has become a favorite thrust by the opponents of the doctrine, and quite frequently has been hurled at

the unsophisticated believer with a tone of scornful superiority which would seem to indicate that, such being the case, the death blow to the doctrine had been irrevocably struck and the last possible word had been said.

Yet the proof that a word is *nonbiblical* by no means indicates that the doctrine for which it stands is *unscriptural*. Various terms could be enumerated which have become current coinage within the Church of God, yet whose origin is to be found not in Bible language but rather in biblical suggestiveness; thus they have passed into general usage.

The word *trinity* is a coined expression, adopted during the second century to express with convenient brevity what was believed to be a Bible truth. Its Latin form *trinitas*, derived from the adjective *trinus* means *threefold*, or three in one.

The substance of the doctrine is this: In the entire and undivided unity of the divine nature there is a trinity of substances, co-substantial, co-equal, and co-eternal; the one divine nature existing under the personal distinction of Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Such a conception utterly baffles our understanding. On the surface it appears to be contradictory; it has no human analogy and consequently we have no basis of comparison.

While the subject has its acknowledged difficulties, there is a danger of making and multiplying them, therefore in approaching it we shall be helped if we keep one thing definitely in mind, namely, in our approach to God we must expect to find the inscrutable, both as to His nature and His operations.

The essence and nature of God is wholly beyond human knowledge; all we can ever know is what He has condescended to reveal. If God is infinitely greater than man, there must of necessity be things about Him which man can never comprehend. There are, however, some things concerning Himself which He has revealed; these stand waiting for our reception in His Word.

1. THE TEACHING OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

a. While the Old Testament is staunch in its emphasis on the unity of God, *it declares also a distinct plurality*. This is indicated in the divine names so frequently used. Two names are prominent in the Old Testament when speaking of deity: *Jehovah*—translated LORD and always printed in small capitals, standing for divine unity; and *Elohim*—always translated by the word *God*, standing for divine plurality.

It is also indicated in the evident recognition of more than one Person in the Godhead. While the Bible uniformly speaks of one God and ascribes all divine essence and action to Him, it does it in such a manner as to indicate that more than one Person must be predicated. Take, for example, the following:

1) *The creation story*. "And *Elohim* [plural] said, Let us [plural] make man in *our* [plural] image, and after *our* [plural] likeness" (Genesis 1:26).

2) *The high priestly benediction*. Numbers 6:24-26. Here the threefold use of the name *Jehovah* is held by many to give at least a hint of the triune nature of the Being bearing the singular name.

3) *The phraseology of Messiah's Commission as worded by Isaiah*. "And now *the Lord God*, and *His Spirit*, hath sent me" (Isaiah 48:16).

4) *The prophetic utterance of Zechariah*. Zechariah 12:10. There, *one* Person seems to be promising *another* Person to enable men to look on a *Third* Person.

5) *Then there are passages which speak as plainly of the Son and the Spirit as of the Father*.

a) Concerning the Son: See Psalms 2:7,12; Zechariah 13:7. In the first passage the word *Son* is distinctly used, while in the second a personage is named whom *Jehovah* calls "My Fellow" or "My Equal." This Person is to be smitten by the *sword* which *Jehovah* calls to awaken. In the light of the gospel record such a passage is surely self-interpretative.

b) Concerning the Spirit: See Genesis 1:2; 6:3; Psalms 139:7; Isaiah 40:13; 48:16.

Nor must we overlook that peculiar phenomenon known as "The Theophanies"—the appearance of God to man in human or angelic form. These appearances are found in connection with: Abraham: Genesis 12:7; 17:1; 18:1; 22:11-18; 26:2-4. Hagar: Genesis 16:7-12. Jacob: Genesis 32:24-32; 35:9. Moses: Exodus 3:3-6. Israel as a nation: Exodus 33:2; 23:20-23.

b. *The Old Testament further joins the plurality with the unity so as to predicate a trinity.* In many passages the singular name Jehovah and the plural name Elohim are united with the evident purpose of expressing the dual truth concerning the divine nature, and this double name is usually assumed when addressing mankind. Example: "The LORD God," Genesis 2:4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 15, 16, 18, 19, 21, 22; Deuteronomy 6:3; "The LORD thy God," Exodus 20:2, 5; Deuteronomy 6:5; "The LORD our God," Deuteronomy 6:4; "God the LORD," Isaiah 42:5; "The LORD their God," Hosea 1:7. Here is *unity* joined with *plurality* indicating *trinity*.

There are other outstanding evidences which a more comprehensive work would need to develop but space here will not allow.

2. THE TEACHING OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

As we begin to turn the leaves of the New Testament, it becomes immediately apparent that the revelation which in earlier days was expressed more simply, has now more fully developed and we stand in the full blaze of revealed truth.

The New Testament recognizes three divine Persons, each of whom is regarded as being equally God.

a. *The Father is God.* See John 4:23; 6:27; I Peter 1:2. He is called "God the Father" and is recognized as the rightful object of man's worship.

b. *The Son is God.* See John 1:1-3; 20:28; Romans 9:5; Titus 2:13; Hebrews 1:8; I John 5:20.

1) *Old Testament descriptions of God are applied to Him.* Isaiah 6:1; John 12:41; Psalms 68:18; Ephesians 4:7, 8.

2) *The attributes of God are ascribed to Him.* Life—John 1:4; 14:6. Self-existence—John 5:26; Hebrews 7:16. Immutability—Hebrews 13:8. Truth—John 14:6; Revelation 3:7. Love—I John 3:16. Holiness—Luke 1:35; Heb. 7:26. Eternity—John 1:1; 17:5; Eph. 1:4.

3) *The works of God are accredited to Him.* Creation—John 1:3; I Corinthians 8:6; Colossians 1:16; Hebrews 1:10. Upholding power—Colossians 1:17; Hebrews 1:3. Raising the dead—John 5:27-29. Judging the world—Matthew 25:31-36; John 5:27-29. Remitting sins—Mark 2:5-7; Acts 2:38.

4) *Worship and honor due only to God are received by Him.* John 5:23; 20:28; Acts 7:59; 9:10; I Corinthians 11:24, 25; Philippians 2:9-11; II Timothy 4:18; II Peter 3:18; Hebrews 13:21; Revelation 5:12-14.

5) *Equality with God is expressly claimed for Him.* By Himself—John 5:18. By His apostles—John 1:1; Acts 20:28; Philippians 2:6.

Christian experience corroborates all that is said both by Him and about Him.

X
c. *The Holy Spirit is God.*

1) *The name of God is applied to Him.* Acts 5:3, 4; I Corinthians 3:16; 6:19; 12:6-9.

2) *The attributes of God are ascribed to Him.* Life—Romans 8:2. Truth—John 16:13. Love—Romans 15:30; Holiness—Ephesians 4:30; Romans 1:4. Eternity—Hebrews 9:14. Omnipotence—Psalms 139:7; Omniscience—I Corinthians 12:11.

3) *The works of God are accredited to Him.* Creation—Genesis 1:2. Casting out demons—Matthew 12:28; Convicting of sin—John 16:8. Regeneration—John 3:8. Resurrection—Romans 8:11; I Corinthians 15:45.

4) *Honors due only to God are received by Him.* I Corinthians 3:16.

5) *Association and equality with God are acknowledged concerning Him.* In the baptismal formula. Matthew 28:19. In the apostolic benedictions. II Corinthians 13:14; I Peter 1:2.

These three Persons, though distinct in Personality and office, are essentially and eternally One. This is seen in the baptismal formula. "Baptizing them in the name [singular] of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" [plural] (Matthew 28:19). The singular name indicates an undivided unity. The plurality of Persons indicates a distinction of tri-personality. The union of the Three Persons under the one name indicates a oneness of essence and distinct equality. This is further seen in the apostolic formula of blessing. II Corinthians 13:14. It is also seen in the apostolic salutation. Revelation 1:4, 5. It is seen in the adoration and worship in heaven. Revelation 4:8. Compare Isaiah 6. On the basis of all this, the doctrine of the Trinity has been framed.

SUGGESTIONS FOR THE STUDENT

The Bible predicates a Trinity. One church at least would deny this doctrine. What church is it? State the position of these people as far as you are able to learn it, then marshal your arguments in answer to it.

TEST QUESTIONS

1. The word *trinity* is not to be found in the Bible. Then what is our authority for using it?
2. Show the teaching of the Old Testament concerning the Trinity.
3. Show the teaching of the New Testament concerning the Trinity.

The Doctrinal Outworking

We now take up the conclusions reached in view of these scriptural facts. When we say *conclusions reached*, the fact of hard thinking and possible controversy immediately suggests itself, and that is exactly what we find. Having recognized this truth as revealed in the Scriptures, it then fell to the leaders within the Church to formulate some theory and to work out its implications. The history of this outworking is interesting to trace, both as to its formulated creeds and its outcrop of errors. Like most other doctrinal statements, the necessity for its formulation was literally thrust upon the Church. Tendencies pantheistic, polytheistic and gnostic were increasingly asserting themselves, until it became evident that the only

method of self-preservation was a clear definition. It will help us therefore in our thinking, if we briefly consider, first, some of the errors with regard to the Trinity which the early Church was called to meet, and then, the authorized doctrinal statement which the Church was led to formulate.

1. SOME ERRORS WHICH THE EARLY CHURCH MET

Each of these errors has its own degree of interest, but as all are in one way or another bound up with the question of the deity of Christ, we shall simply name them and touch them lightly, leaving the fuller discussion until we come to the subject of the Person of Christ. In the main we may state the error groups as four.

a. *The error of Tritheism.* This was first advocated by John Ascusnage, a philosopher of Syria. The peculiar emphasis of this group was a denial concerning the unity of the Persons in the Trinity, insisting that the Godhead consisted of Three Beings distinct in essence as well as in Person. In other words, there were three Gods.

b. *The error of Sabellianism.* This phase of teaching takes its name from Sabellius, an African bishop of the third century, and may be briefly stated. In the divine nature there is no distinction of Persons, and the terms: Father, Son, and Spirit represent the divine Being under different aspects or relations; just as a man may be called "father, son and brother by different people and yet continue to be one and the same individual all the time, there being no change except in relationship. These three Persons, as they are otherwise called, are said to be mere developments or revelations to His creatures in time, of what otherwise would be an eternally concealed Godhead. Hence God as related to *creation* is Father; God as related to *redemption* is Son; God as related to *the Church* is the Holy Spirit. The Trinity, thus interpreted by Sabellius is not immanent but economic; a Trinity of forms, modes, manifestations, but not an essential and eternal Trinity, deeply rooted in the divine nature.

c. *The error of Subordinationism.* This group taught—to sum it up in a sentence—a gradation of Persons, the Son being inferior to the Father, and the Spirit inferior to the Son.

d. *The error of Arianism.* This teaching derives its name from Arius, a presbyter of Alexandria, and was condemned by the Council of Nicea (A.D. 325). The teaching may be epitomized as follows: The Godhead consists of One Eternal Person, who, in the beginning, created a super-angelic being, His only begotten Son, by whom also He made the worlds; and that the Holy Ghost was the first and greatest creature which the Son created.

Arianism denies both to the Son and the Holy Spirit all consubstantiality and co-eternity with the Father and consequently all that constitutes peculiar and supreme deity. Christ is said to be *called God* because He is next in rank to God and endowed by God with power to create.

The followers of Arius have differed as to the precise rank and claims of Christ, some holding the worship of Christ to be obligatory, while others, including the later Unitarians have realized the impropriety of such a position insisting that if the Son is to be worshiped, then He must be recognized as God in all the qualities of His being; but if He is not God in the same essence as the Father, then to worship Him is to render to a creature what is due only to the Creator.

2. THE AUTHORIZED DOCTRINAL STATEMENT OF THE CHURCH

At length an agreement of thought was reached and registered, the doctrine of the Trinity being a magnificent attempt to state the facts of revealed truth in such a manner as to avoid these various errors. The difficulty will be immediately apparent as we recognize:

a. *We cannot say that God is Three in the same sense that He is One.* The *threefoldness* is not three Persons who may be viewed as One, but One inseparable unity which is Three. Moreover, this threefoldness has to do with more than offices or qualities; it is inherent in the very constitution of the God-

head, and is as vital to it as thought to the brain, life to the spirit, moisture to the dew.

b. *Neither can we rely upon any human figure to illustrate this.* Numerous illustrations have been used, for example: (a) The "trinity" within our humanity—spirit, soul and body. (b) The fact of light, which, when passed through the prism, divides itself into component rays. (c) The combination in water, snow and ice.

We might go on and multiply these so-called illustrations, but if we would be frank to admit the truth, they are windows that let in very little light. We may as well be honest in our thinking and face up to the matter fairly and squarely. The doctrine of the Trinity has no adequate human illustration, for the simple reason that it has no earthly comparison. We are facing here a revealed truth which is humanly inscrutable and to the unaided mental faculties, however keen, absolutely unintelligible. No one can explain it. Philosophers are utterly baffled by it; but to the spiritually illumined child of God it is a glorious truth, held, not because mentally understood but because divinely revealed.

Thus we come to the ecclesiastical formulation—the doctrine on the ground of the truth revealed.

In what Dr. Charles Augustus Briggs calls "Fundamental Symbolics" there are three great creeds. The word *creed* is derived from the Latin word *credo*, which simply means, "I believe." These creeds officially express the faith of the Church at the time of their making. Since that time numerous waves of thought have come and gone, but those early creeds have stood as bulwarks of the faith, which the thinking of the centuries has not been able to swamp. Notice carefully the development in the expression of the doctrine as we pass from one creed to another.

The Apostles' Creed. The name which this creed bears is not to be regarded as indicating its authorship. Indeed it would be difficult to say how it came to be so captioned, unless it be to indicate that it is to be regarded as containing a state-

ment of what the apostles taught. It is thought to have originated in the second century and to have reached its final form about 700 A.D., and may, in substance at any rate, be regarded as the earliest creed extant.

The creed as we now have it is as follows, and while the phraseology is perhaps a little more concise than in the earlier days, it may be taken to be substantially the same in its doctrinal expression:

I believe

In God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth:

And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord:

Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary: Suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried: He descended into hell: The third day He rose again from the dead:

He ascended into heaven; and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty:

From thence also He shall come to judge the quick and the dead: And I believe in the Holy Ghost: The Holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints: the forgiveness of sins: The resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

It will be seen immediately that in this creed no formal mention of the Trinity is made. The *word* itself is entirely absent, yet the *truth* is there, and in no unmistakable manner the original framers of the creed declared their belief in: (a) "God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth." (b) "Jesus Christ His only Son, our Lord." (c) "The Holy Ghost."

Thus, this earliest of all creeds, which is virtually a simple extension of the New Testament baptismal formula, places together these elements of the Godhead on an apparently equal footing, and appears to attribute personality and deity to all.

The Nicene Creed. This document, originally prepared by the Council of Nicea (A.D. 325), approved by the Council

of Constantinople (A.D. 381), and finally adopted by the Council of Chalcedon (A.D. 451), becomes more definite in its statement concerning the Trinity, although even yet there is no formal use of the actual word. It defines the eternal generation of the Son, "Very God of very God . . . being of one substance with the Father"; and the eternal procession of the Spirit, "Giver of Life, who proceedeth from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified," thus placing the three distinct Persons in one unified position in the Godhead and striking fatal blows at Tritheism, Sabellianism, Subordinationism, and Arianism.

The Nicene Creed reads as follows:

We believe (I believe)

In one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible:

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, begotten of the Father before all worlds, the only begotten (that is, of the substance of the Father), God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made (both in heaven and earth),

Who for us men, and for our salvation came down from heaven and was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary, and was made man;

And was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate and suffered and was buried:

And He rose again on the third day according to the Scriptures, and ascended into heaven:

And sitteth on the right hand of the Father:

And is coming with glory, to judge both the quick and the dead; Whose kingdom shall have no end:

And I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Lord, and Giver of Life, Who proceedeth from the Father and the Son, and with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified, Who spake by the prophets:

And I believe in one Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church:

And I look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come.

Thus we see a distinct expansion so far as clearness of expression is concerned, but the full expression concerning the doctrine was yet to come.

The Athanasian Creed. The title "Athanasian Creed" is not to be regarded as fixing Athanasius for its author but rather as expressing his doctrine, just as the Apostles' Creed is to be regarded as expressing the doctrine of the Apostles. Its origin has about it the air of mystery and several theories have been propounded, but for our present purpose this need not seriously concern us. It is regarded by scholars as a document of the fifth century and decidedly Augustinian. Our purpose for here calling attention to it is the statement concerning the Trinity which by this time had come to be expressed.

The Catholic Faith is this:

That we worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity; Neither confounding the Persons: nor dividing the substance (essence).

For there is the Person of the Father; another of the Son: and another of the Holy Ghost.

But the Godhead of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, is all one: the glory equal, the majesty co-eternal. Such as the Father is, such is the Son: and such is the Holy Ghost.

The Father uncreate (uncreated): The Son uncreate (uncreated); and the Holy Ghost uncreate (uncreated). The Father incomprehensible (unlimited): the Son incomprehensible (unlimited): and the Holy Ghost incomprehensible (unlimited or infinite). The Father eternal: the Son eternal: and the Holy Ghost eternal. And yet they are not three-eternals: but one eternal.

As also there are not three uncreated, nor three incom-

prehensible (infinite): but one uncreated and one incomprehensible (infinite).

So likewise the Father is Almighty: the Son Almighty: and the Holy Ghost Almighty.

And yet they are not three Gods: but one God.

So likewise the Father is Lord: the Son Lord: and the Holy Ghost Lord.

And yet not three Lords: but one Lord.

For like as we are compelled by the Christian verity to acknowledge every Person by Himself to be God and Lord,

So are we forbidden by the Catholic religion to say, There be three God, or three Lords.

The Father is made of none; neither created, nor begotten.

The Son is of the Father alone: not made, nor created; but begotten.

The Holy Ghost is of the Father and of the Son: neither made, nor created, nor begotten, but proceeding.

So there is one Father, not three Fathers: one Son, not three Sons:

One Holy Ghost, not three Holy Ghosts.

And in this Trinity none is afore, or after another: none is greater, or less than another (there is nothing before or after: nothing greater or less).

But the whole three Persons are co-eternal, and co-equal.

So that in all things, as aforesaid: the Unity in Trinity, and the Trinity in Unity, is to be worshipped.

SUGGESTIONS FOR THE STUDENT

The early Church found itself in a perplexing controversy concerning this doctrine. Be sure you are able to name each of the error groups; to explain the points of divergence; and to correct the teaching where wrong.

TEST QUESTIONS

1. What were the circumstances which led to the formulation of the doctrine of the Trinity?
2. What were the difficulties accentuating this problem?
3. How did the Church meet this situation?

III. HAS GOD REVEALED HIMSELF?

The Threefold Manner of Revelation

If there is a God, and that God has related Himself to man, it is reasonable to believe that such a Being should reveal Himself to the human race. This He has done, and that in a threefold manner:

1. GOD HAS REVEALED HIMSELF IN THE THINGS HE HAS MADE FOR MAN

Before bringing him forth from His creative hand, God took intensive pains to prepare for man a suitable habitation. The earth was stored with vast resources; the atmosphere charged with its mighty energies; the sun poured forth its warming rays; the starry hosts glistened in the nightly sky; the dew, the rain, the frost, the snow; summer and winter, seed-time and harvest. Man's sin has brought a curse upon creation which hangs over it like a pall, yet despite all that sin has done, God is revealed to any heart that desires to know about Him through His works. See Genesis 1:1; Psalms 19; Romans 1:20.

2. GOD HAS REVEALED HIMSELF THROUGH A LENGTHY CORRESPONDENCE WITH MAN

"God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets . . ." (Hebrews 1:1). Since the beginning of time, the God who created man has kept a direct contact with at least some portion of the race. Fallen though it be, there have always been hearts within it with which He could communicate; through a long series of prophetic messengers He has sent His word to man.

One of the greatest wonders of the centuries is that of the prophetic soul. Through it, God kept up His intercourse with man and also revealed events to occur centuries ahead, which none but an omniscient Being could communicate.

3. GOD HAS REVEALED HIMSELF BY A PERSONAL VISIT TO MAN
"God . . . hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son" (Hebrews 1:1, 2). "The Word was God . . . and the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us" (John 1:1, 14).

Creation and correspondence at length found their completion in a personal visitation, when Jesus walked among men, God manifest in the flesh.

SUGGESTIONS FOR THE STUDENT

Can you conceive of a God who would create man, and then leave him without a revealed knowledge of His existence? Answer Yes or No, then give reasons for your answer.

TEST QUESTIONS

1. State from memory the three ways in which God has revealed Himself.
2. Take up each of the three statements you have just made, expound and explain.

Reading Suggestions for the Advanced Student

PART I

CLARKE, W. N., *The Christian Doctrine of God*

CLARKE, W. N., *An Outline of Christian Theology*, pp. 63-181

ORR, JAMES, *The Christian View of God and the World*, Lecture III

STRONG, A. H., *Systematic Theology*, pp. 52-110, 243-352

MILEY, JOHN, *Systematic Theology*, pp. 57-231, 257-275

WILEY, H. ORTON, *Christian Theology*, Vol. I, pp. 217-440

BRIGGS, C. A., *Theological Symbolics*

HASTINGS, *Dictionary of the Bible*, Article on God, Article on the Holy Spirit

SCHAFF, PHILIP, *The Creeds of Christendom*

WALKER, JAMES B., *The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit*

International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, Article on God

HASTINGS, *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*

Article on God, Vol. VI

Article on Atheism, Vol. II

Article on Agnosticism, Vol. I

Article on Deism, Vol. IV

Article on Polytheism, Vol. X

Article on Fetishism, Vol. V

Article on Pantheism, Vol. IX

Article on Animism, Vol. I

Article on Unitarianism, Vol. XII

Article on Materialism, Vol. VIII

Article on Monotheism, Vol. VIII

Article on the Trinity, Vol. XII

Article on Tritheism, Vol. XII

Article on Arianism, Vol. I

Article on Creeds, Vol. IV

PART II—MAN

IV. WHAT IS MAN?

The creature called *man* occupies a unique place in the order of creation; above him are the angels and beneath him the beasts. Psalms 8: 4, 5; Hebrews 2: 6, 7.

The bringing of man into being is the result of distinct divine design. Genesis 1:26.

Each new generation faces afresh the problems of origin, vocation, and destiny. No thoughtful individual can pass through life without personal concern over questions such as: What am I? Whence came I? Whither go I? What is the purpose of my presence here?

In this section, which has to do pre-eminently with man, we purpose to take up for consideration the fact of man's existence, the problem of man's sin and the question of man's destiny.

Man—How Created

We shall first take up the question of man's creation. We find ourselves immediately faced with two distinct theories, the one scriptural, the other scientific.

That the scripture record and the findings of science should be felt to clash is of course to be deplored. Innumerable attempts have been made to reconcile them, but not with the happiest results, for in order to secure *harmony*, much in the Bible has been ingeniously explained away, and not infrequently gratuitously *given away* by the Christian scholar.

We need to remember that science is progressive and its findings necessarily tentative, and therefore what is regarded as authoritative today may be declared obsolete tomorrow. The scientist has his place, and within his own realm his *find-*

ings are to be received with due respect, but wherein they are manifestly out of harmony with divine revelation they are to be received with reserve and courteously rejected, the Christian being assured that one day other *findings* will follow which will confirm rather than contradict the Word of God.

1. THE SCIENTIFIC THEORY

The scientific theory of the origin of man may be stated in brief as follows: Man, as we know him, came into being through a process of evolution. He is to be regarded as emerging from the lower forms of life, having behind him a long animal ancestry, and being the crown of an extended process of development.

The wide acceptance of this teaching is due largely to the labors of Charles Darwin, although his particular view of things is no longer generally endorsed.

The theory of evolution may be said to divide itself into two sections:

a. *The theory of Atheistic Evolution.* This, of course, is held only by the rankest materialists, who insist that a First Cause cannot be proved, and that the only reality is matter, which must therefore be eternal and its outworking the product of a blind force. Here, evolution is not only a *method* but also a *cause*.

b. *The theory of Theistic Evolution.* Here a First Cause is predicated. God is held to be the Creator, and the process of evolution is the *method* but not the *cause*. Nevertheless the evolutionary process is insisted upon and man's animal ancestry is maintained.

2. THE SCRIPTURAL THEORY

The scriptural theory of man's creation is simple and plain, namely that man came into being as the result of a direct divine operation.

a. *This is implicitly taught in the Bible itself.* Genesis 1:26, 27; 2:7, 18-25. Between these two seemingly different accounts neither clash nor contradiction need be imagined.

In the one, man is seen as related to the material universe, while in the other he is seen as a responsible moral being. See also Genesis 5:1; 6:9; Psalms 8:4-6; 100:3; Matthew 19:4; Mark 10:6; Acts 17:26; I Corinthians 11:7; Colossians 1:16; Hebrews 11:3.

b. *This is also directly implied in numerous ways outside the Bible.* Here we suggest two: It is implied in the immeasurable gulf which separates man in his lowest condition from his nearest animal neighbors at their best. It is also implied in the fact revealed in scripture and realized in history that man is destined to exercise dominion.

On this question of *origin* the fight does not slacken, and those who dare to take a stand for *the old way of putting things*, as it is condescendingly called, are regarded by the intellectuals as being hopelessly out of date. The last word, however, has not yet been said, and God will see to it that His Word is vindicated, however long we may have to wait for it.

Meanwhile, the attitude of the believing soul should be that of restful confidence with heart and mind open to whatever light may yet break forth from the Word of God, no matter who may question or from whatever quarter criticism may come.

SUGGESTIONS FOR THE STUDENT

If you are reading more widely, become informed on the theories which have been advanced concerning creation and in your notebook state them in your own words.

TEST QUESTIONS

1. In what sense would it be correct to say that the creature called *man* occupies a unique place in the universe?
2. Name the two theories of human origin then carefully state each of them.
3. Having stated the theories, go on to state which of these most appeals to you. Tell why.

Man—How Constituted

The constitution of the race of which we are a part has been a subject of wide discussion.

1. AS TO RACIAL STRUCTURE

The entire race is to be regarded as a unity. The species is one, springing from a common ancestor and belonging to a common stock. For this, numerous arguments have been advanced. We shall name five:

a. *The argument from scripture.* The Scriptures plainly teach that the entire human race has descended from a single pair. Genesis 1:27, 28; 2:7, 22; 3:20; 9:19; Acts 17:26.

This truth is the basis of Paul's doctrine of the organic unity of mankind, in that the entire race is declared to be involved in the consequences of the first transgression and all its members are eligible participants in the redemption of Calvary. Romans 5:19-21; I Corinthians 15:21, 22; Hebrews 2:16.

This truth also becomes the ground for the obligation of one man to another, for racially all men are brothers.

b. *The argument from history.* It is almost generally acknowledged that the *cradle* of the race was central Asia, from whence, by migration, the world has been populated.

c. *The argument from language.* A study of the world's languages is said to point to a common origin of all those most important, while the lesser ones are seen to be co-related.

d. *The argument from psychology.* There are seen to exist in man common characteristics both mental and moral; there are tendencies and capacities, the prevalence of similar traditions, and the universal applicability of philosophy and religion, all indicating an underlying unity in the common stock.

e. *The argument from physiology.* No matter what may be the race, there is an unmistakable identity in skull, bones, teeth, temperature, pulse frequency, and liability to disease; while the blood of the human is said to be distinguishable from that of the animal. Mankind racially is basically one.

2. AS TO INDIVIDUAL STRUCTURE

Having considered the race in general, we come to the individual in particular. That he is a being intellectual, moral

and spiritual, is generally agreed, the personality made up by the combination of intellect, volition, and sensibility in a self-conscious unity, the body being the servant of the personality for the gathering up of sensations and its organs for the expression of life and action.

As a general division man may be said to be a combination of two natures, material and immaterial. Job 14:22; Zechariah 12:1; Matthew 10:28; I Corinthians 6:20; 7:34; II Corinthians 4:16; 5:1; Philippians 1:21-24.

a. *Man is material.* Through his body he is related to the earth. In Greek philosophy there was a tendency to disparage the body. The Gnostics contended that the body was the seat of sin. The Christian idea involves the entire man and therefore of necessity includes that which is physical. Romans 6:12; 8:23; 12:1; I Corinthians 6:19; I Thessalonians 5:23, and other passages.

b. *Man is immaterial.* Through his higher nature he is related to another world. Concerning this immaterial side, two distinct views are advanced.

1) THAT KNOWN AS DICHOTOMY. Literally, being of two parts—body, and soul or spirit.

According to this conception *soul* and *spirit* in man are one and the same element, but viewed in different relations. Viewed in relation to God, as coming from God, adapted to communion with God, and capable of being indwelt by God, it is *spirit*. Viewed as living a constituted life related to the body which it inhabits, it is *soul*.

It is not contended that the lower faculties constitute the *soul* and the higher faculties constitute the *spirit*, but rather that the entire nonbodily part bears one name as inhabiting the body and related to the world, and the other name as kindred to God and capable of fellowship with Him.

2) THAT KNOWN AS TRICHOTOMY. Literally, being of three parts.

According to this conception, man has a tripartite or three-fold nature, spirit, soul, and body, which as component parts or substances are distinct the one from the other. The *spirit*

is declared to be the organ of divine life and of communion with God; the seat of the divine indwelling. The *soul* is seen as the seat of the natural life where dwells the naturally used faculties of the conscious being. It is the intermediary between the body and the spirit, the seat of the personality.

In his appraisal of these two theories the student is not called upon to judge between Fundamentalism and Modernism, for it would seem that men of sound evangelical faith are to be found on either side. In either case, it is not a matter of questioning the Scriptures, but rather of difference of interpretation. The student must therefore seek further information concerning these theories and then personally decide between them.

SUGGESTIONS FOR THE STUDENT

Acquire whatever information may be available on the arguments for our common racial structure, and be prepared to answer the challenge of evolution.

Read further on the subjects of Dichotomy and Trichotomy. Which view most appeals to you? Be ready to state your position and to say why you take that side.

TEST QUESTIONS

1. What is to be said as to the organic unity of the human race?
2. Man may be said to be a combination of two natures. What are they?
3. What do you understand by Dichotomy?
4. What do you understand by Trichotomy?

Man—How Continued

We now come to what may be regarded as the thorniest of all questions concerning man, namely the propagation of the immaterial part. Three views have been propounded, each of which has had its distinguished advocates, and for which scriptural authority has been claimed.

1. THE THEORY OF PRE-EXISTENCE

This theory is designated by Dr. John S. Banks as "a Christianized transmigration." It was held by such thinkers as Plato, Philo, and Origen, each bringing to it his own personal point of view. *Plato* saw in it the apparent explanation of the

possession of ideas obviously not derived from sense, and held that intuitive ideas were things learned in a previous state. *Philo* held that a previous existence alone could account for the soul's imprisonment with the body. *Origen* insisted that only the fact of a previous existence could justify the disparity of conditions under which men enter this world.

More recent advocates of this theory have been Kant, Julius Muller and others, who have taken the position that the inborn depravity of the human will can be explained only by a personal act of self-determination in a previous or timeless state of being.

2. THE THEORY OF CREATIONISM

This theory was held by Aristotle, Jerome, Pelagius, and in more recent times by the majority of Roman Catholic theologians. It regards each human being as immediately created by God, the spirit being joined to the body either at conception, birth, or sometime between the two. It regards only the body as propagated from past generations. Its advocates quote Scripture in support of their teaching, among which are the following passages: Ecclesiastes 12:7; Isaiah 57:16; Zechariah 12:1; Hebrews 12:9.

3. THE THEORY OF TRADUCIANISM

This theory was held by Tertullian, is said to have been favored by Augustine, and is held by most of the Lutheran theologians. It regards the soul, like the body, as derived from the parents, because, it is contended, it best explains inherited qualities and original sin.

The Traducianist teaching is not that the soul is begotten from the soul and the body from the body, but in the wider sense, the whole man is begotten from the whole man. For this, Scripture authority is claimed, and among others the following passages are used: Genesis 2:7; 4:1; 5:3; 46:26; Acts 17:21-26; Hebrews 7:10.

It is contended by the Traducianist that *once and only once* did God breathe into man's nostrils the breath of life, and after

this He rested from His creating work, having created species now capable of increasing and perpetuating through secondary agencies.

Among evangelical Christians the choice seems to lie between the last two theories, that is, if a choice must be made at all. Probably the truth lies somewhere in both, but happily these theories accepted or rejected, do not affect our salvation, concerning which a wayfaring man, though in other matters a fool, need not err.

SUGGESTIONS FOR THE STUDENT

Much has been said and written concerning each of these theories. Read further and become informed. Determine in your own mind the most reasonable view, then state clearly in writing why you believe it.

TEST QUESTIONS

1. Name from memory the three views concerning man's continued existence.
2. Now explain each view you have named as clearly as you are able. Write as though you were explaining to one who had never heard the theory before.

V. THE PROBLEM OF MAN'S SIN

The problem of man's sin, which is only part of the wider problem of evil, is one which all thoughtful minds have had to confront, for whoever sets himself seriously to explain the scheme of existence is compelled to make room for this tragic element.

As Dr. W. N. Clarke points out, sin is essentially a religious term. The moralist speaks of *vice*—that which corrupts and defies the law of being; the law is familiar with *crime*—that which introduces a disturbing element into civic and religious life; theology alone, however, can treat of *sin*—regarding the disposition of the creature as involving a wrong attitude toward God.

The Reality and Nature of Sin

1. SIN IS A FACT WHICH NONE CAN DENY

Humanity's greatest difficulty is its sin. Many problems have perplexed the race, but behind them all is this one black basic evil.

We express no new idea when we say that while in the field of religious thought sin has always been regarded seriously, the Christian emphasis has majored here. Judaism recognized its heinousness, and by legislative enactment and sacrificial system indicated its costliness as a barrier between the soul and God. Christianity, however, has gone farther, regarding the extremest measures as necessary to deal with it, namely the death, and that in the most tragic manner, of God's incarnate Son.

Let it be clearly understood at the beginning that sin is not to be regarded as a calamity for which man is to be pitied, but as an offence for which he is to be blamed. It is not to be looked upon as an unfortunate *disability* to which we are

liable, but as a *deadly disease*, an inborn corruption, with which only divine grace can deal.

As Dr. W. N. Clarke has so clearly pointed out, the Christian revelation uniformly addresses man as a sinful being, represents the entire race as involved in moral evil, and the individual as transgressing the law he ought to obey. Moreover, what is recognized by the Christian revelation is also acknowledged by the common moral judgment of men. The religions of mankind have always recognized human sinfulness; the governments of mankind have always regarded evil as a force to be reckoned with, while literature in general has recognized and portrayed it. What is thus recognized in these various realms may be observed any day, anywhere, by anyone who will use his powers of observation. One need not be a philosopher or a theologian to recognize the fact of sin.

2. SIN HAS BEEN ACCOUNTED FOR BY SOME NOVEL THEORIES

In our inquiry concerning the nature of sin we find numerous definitions and explanations. Some of these are utterly false; others are more subtle, being partially true, while others more clearly define the position. Of these inadequate theories, we shall mention four:

a. *Sin is the great Artist's harmonization of light and shade.* It is essential to the artistic perfection of the universe. What seems to us to be disharmony is only so because it is viewed in itself. It will blend in perfect harmony as one grand whole when we see the Artist's perfect picture.

We cannot believe that such a conception is worthy of a God of love. It does not satisfy the moral demand. The sinner's conscience is a sufficient answer here.

b. *Sin is man's reaction to external forces.* Those who hold this theory represent man as the victim of a hopeless determinism and therefore not morally responsible. He is the creature of environment.

Neither does such an explanation appeal to us. Again the sinner's conscience is the answer.

c. *Sin is the domination of the bodily appetites over man's*

higher nature. It is the maladjustment of the physical to the spiritual.

It would be useless to deny that bodily appetites are frequently the medium of sin, so much so, that the body has often been mistakenly regarded as the seat of sin. A study of Gnosticism will shed light here. That old Gnostic error is becoming increasingly prevalent in modern dress today.

That our physical being is the seat of sin is not true. Our bodily appetites, as such, are no more sinful in us than the appetites of the human Jesus were in Him; they are natural elements in a normal human life. Moral character inheres not in the body of man but in the spirit.

d. *Sin is incidental to the present development of the race.* As such, it must of necessity be regarded as unavoidable in each individual, and therefore in no sense blameworthy. It is a passing phase in the history of man, which will ultimately disappear by reason of his progress, and therefore is his *misfortune* rather than his *fault*.

Again we say, such teaching is not true. The moral judgment of men affirms that sin, pitiable though it may be, is not merely pitiable; it is deserving of blame.

Other theories have been advanced, but we need not discuss them. An author of the last century wrote as follows: "The crimes which fill us with horror, the atrocities which stir us with indignation to the depths, the insolence that crushes man with cold contempt, the ambition that moves through blood to its goal and counts nothing of the hearts it has broken, and many another form of sin familiar to us all, is not something that can be described by pale negatives, but something that is actively and aggressively bad."

Only fools make a mock at sin; and only false physicians treat it lightly. Apart from a miracle, divinely wrought, the sinner is hopelessly and irrecoverably lost.

SUGGESTIONS FOR THE STUDENT

There is much more to be said on this awful fact of sin. Become further informed on the various theories. Be prepared to state them more fully and also to answer them.

TEST QUESTIONS

1. Why would it be true to say that of all the sciences, theology alone can treat of sin?
2. Sin is not to be regarded simply as a calamity. Show why.
3. What would be meant by an *inadequate* theory of sin?
4. State some of these theories.
5. Answer each theory you have stated.

What the Bible Says Concerning Sin

While in our present study we may not do more than briefly sketch the thought, a candid perusal of the Word of God, illuminated by the Holy Ghost, can lead the student to but one conclusion, namely, that man is a fallen creature.

Broadly stated the biblical statement is twofold:

1. THE FACT OF THE FALL

Numerous writers have pointed out that the recognition of the fact of the Fall is not peculiar to Christianity. In one form or another each of the great religions has recognized this awful truth. Yet the doctrine of the Fall has a structural relation to Christianity which it does not have to any other religion.

a. *The fact of a Fall is assumed throughout the Scriptures.* Numerous references are made to man's sinfulness as associated with the Eden incident, among which are four outstanding passages. These may be called Key Scriptures, which the student should carefully consider. Genesis 3; Romans 5:12-21; I Corinthians 15:21, 22; I Timothy 2:13-15. The first of these is the Old Testament background passage which gives the record of the fact, while the other three are New Testament scriptures emphasizing the fact and indicating the wider result.

b. *The record of the Fall has been given a variety of interpretations.* Four of these should be noticed:

1) *The Allegorical view.* According to this theory, Adam represents the rational part of man, Eve the sensual, and the serpent the external excitements to evil.

2) *The Mythical view.* According to this theory the Genesis record is folklore; one of those old stories bound up

with the childhood of the race, but never, of course, intended to be taken with literal seriousness.

3) *The Apocalyptic view.* There are Bible students who refuse to be classed among the former groups, yet who insist that some liberty must be given in interpreting the early Genesis chapters. They admit their divine inspiration, but declare that this is not necessarily a record of fact, but rather a presentation of truth in pictorial and poetical form; this, they insist, is best interpreted in a similar manner to the apocalypics of Daniel and Revelation, the only difference being that while in the case of these other apocalyptic writings the vision is forward, the Genesis apocalypse is backward, and in pictorial form takes off the cover from the past.

4) *The Literal interpretation.* The literal school is, of course, old fashioned, and is regarded by the modern mind as hopelessly out of date. It has, however, some arguments to which it stubbornly holds, and which its critics, ridicule them as they will, find difficult successfully to refute. Here are five:

There is no indication in the Genesis account that it is not intended to be regarded as actual history. The Bible has within its pages numerous styles of presented truth, but it is always served in such a manner as to allow the reader to discern the writers intention. The Genesis narrative is plainly intended as history. Further, this record is part of a historical book. Why then should it not be regarded as being as authentic as anything else in the Book?

Moreover, there are geographical details which may be authenticated. For example—the rivers.

Then too, there are sad results recorded which throughout the ages have been apparent in every generation of the human race.

Finally, and by no means of least importance, our Lord himself and later Scripture writers are content to regard the account as historical, as the following scriptures will show: Matthew 19:4; Mark 10:6; II Corinthians 11:3; I Timothy 2:13-15.

To accept the *old view*, as it is often called, is not by any means to court popularity, but it is at least to believe what God says and to give to His Word a sane and safe interpretation.

Why should an interpretation be considered lacking in intelligence because it is old? Moreover, we are under no obligation to *prove* our position. Being *the old view*, as our critics scornfully admit, it has priority until it is *proved* untrue. That proof has never been given.

2. THE EFFECT OF THE FALL

In dealing with the effect of the Fall, two great facts must be noted.

a. *The effect on those who fell*: The Fall in relation to the first pair. In connection with our first parents, the results of the Fall are not far to seek. *Godward*, it brought alienation, resulting in spiritual and physical death. Genesis 2:17; 3:3; 3:19; 5:5; Romans 5:12. *Selfward*, it brought condemnation and corruption. The inner nature became defiled. Genesis 3:8-11. *Satanward*, it brought enslavement. From that moment onward they had sold themselves to a subtle, cruel, crafty devil who, having brought about their humiliation, would now seek to encompass their destruction.

b. *The effect on those who followed*: the Fall in relation to their posterity. The immediate result of the Eden tragedy is seen manifested in the descendants of the fallen pair. Now, of necessity, they passed on to their offsprings the polluted nature which had become their own. This we now call *inborn depravity*, or *inbred sin*. Genesis 5:3; 6:5; 8:1; Job 14:1-4; 15:14; Proverbs 22:15; Jeremiah 17:9; Matthew 15:19; Mark 7:21-23; John 3:6; Romans 5:19; 8:5-8; Galatians 5:17-21; Ephesians 2:3.

This *depravity* is seen in more detailed fashion as follows: The understanding is darkened: Ephesians 4:18; I Corinthians 2:14. The heart is deceitful and desperately wicked. Jeremiah 17:9, 10. The mind and conscience are defiled. Genesis 6:5; Titus 1:15. The will is enslaved. Romans 7:18. The race is in

bondage to sin, death, and the devil. John 3:31-36; Ephesians 2: 3; Hebrews 2: 14, 15.

SUGGESTIONS FOR THE STUDENT

Concerning the *fact of the Fall*, the four scripture passages here given are basic and must be carefully considered. Ponder them well.

Concerning the *record of the Fall*, more material should be sought on the various interpretations which have been advanced, and some recently written fundamental books should be studied.

The *effect of the Fall* provides a wide field for study. Read further here.

TEST QUESTIONS

1. Is the Bible clear in its teaching on the fact of the fall? If so in what manner?
2. The record of the Fall has been given a variety of interpretations. State these, tell which should be accepted, and why.
3. What may be said to be the effects of the Fall?

Sin in Its Doctrinal Development

Thus far, our way has been comparatively clear, but it is at this point that we begin to find difficulty; for while men may be in general agreement as to what is written, they are frequently found to be bitterly antagonistic as to the interpretation to be placed upon it, and there is no place where this has been more manifest than on the subject of sin.

The facts of sin and redemption were acknowledged by the Church from the beginning; these facts had been plainly stated in written documents left by the apostles themselves. It soon became necessary, however, to interpret these facts, and then the real difficulty began; for in the absence of settled authority numerous opinions were expressed.

These differences of opinion resolved themselves into two main streams of thought which developed side by side, now known as the *Eastern* or Greek view, and the *Western* or Latin view.

Within each of these boundaries, the first four centuries may be regarded as formative years so far as theological thought was concerned. Numerous views were expressed, and of necessity some confusion followed.

1. THE EASTERN OR GREEK VIEW

The line of thought developed in the Greek Church was that of individual freedom. The fact of a defilement and weakness of human nature was accepted but this was not identified with sin, as it was contended that it did not involve guilt.

Corruption or bias as the result of Adam's fall was denied. A propagation of physical corruption was admitted, resulting in general mortality, but attached to it, they argued, there was no guilt.

The will was not regarded as propagated but created in each individual, and as being free and spontaneous in its action. It was regarded as taking the initiative in regeneration, but not having power in itself to complete it, therefore divine aid was considered necessary—God's power co-operating with the human will enabling it to turn from evil to God.

2. THE WESTERN OR LATIN VIEW

In the Latin Church we find a distinctly opposite trend of thought. *Tertullian* held the soul to be matter, and insisted that the soul, like the body, was propagated, and passed from parent to child, therefore must have hereditary taint. He did not regard human corruption, however, as being so complete that no goodness at all resided in the soul, nor did he altogether deny the freedom of the will.

Ambrose went farther. He spoke of a sinful nature—regarding sin as a *state*, or *condition*—and declared that condition to be related to the Fall in which man lost the image of God. He insisted on the unity of the race, teaching that men incurred the guilt of Adam's sin because all men shared in that sin. Dealing with the subject of *the will*, he regarded it as weakened by the Fall, but did not consider it so corrupt that it could not by its own power turn to God.

The development of the doctrine of original sin proceeded systematically in the West—but not in the East—until in the West it had reached its final form in the teaching of *Augustine*.

As the fourth century closed, the Church of the West seethed with contention. Distinct schools of thought became

established and conflicts were waged which were destined to affect all succeeding generations. Pelagius and Augustine fought out their theological battle, and out of this there developed other theories which later we shall note.

a. *Pelagianism*. The incident which raised the storm came through a British monk named Pelagius. He had gone to Rome, but on arrival is said to have been shocked by the prevailing corruption and amazing indifference to ethical standards, even to common morality. These conditions the monk attacked, only to receive the amazing reply that these things were inevitable, our poor human nature being so weak that it could not resist the manifold temptations by which it was surrounded. This, Pelagius withstood, raising such questions as the freedom of the will, the nature of sin, the problem of inherited corruption, and the value of external help to enable men to do the right.

Pelagius is said to have been a man of upright life and sincere purpose, but holding a one-sided view and exaggerated conception of the freedom of the will, he ultimately carried his teachings to much further extremes than at first he seems to have intended. Continued controversy drove him to take extreme positions:

1) *Concerning the human will*. The will, Pelagius declared to be absolutely free, contending that any man, whatever his previous history, was in a position to choose between good and evil. So far as the will is concerned, he declared all men are exactly as Adam was before the Fall, having capacity for good or evil, and choosing right or wrong according to the use they make of their God-given freedom.

2) *Concerning the Fall*. Adam, Pelagius declared, was created mortal, and would have died whether he had sinned or not. Adam's fall injured only himself, and not the rest of the race. Infants, he insisted, are born in the same condition as that in which Adam was before the Fall. Men do not die, he argued, on account of Adam's fall, nor will they rise again through the resurrection of Christ. *Law* enables them to reach heaven no less than the *gospel*.

Pelagianism did not deny the fact of grace, although its teaching here seems to have been ambiguous. It did, however, deny the need of prevenient grace.

b. *Augustinianism*. The teaching of the Augustinian school was the direct antithesis of Pelagianism. It was Augustine's reaction to what he considered the apostasy of Pelagius. His answer was threefold:

1) *Concerning sin: man is totally depraved*. Human nature, declared Augustine, has within itself no capacity for God. Man, of himself, can and will perform nothing but what is bad. By the one act of Adam, sin came into the world and affected his whole posterity; the race, therefore, inherits from him an ingrained moral disease which disturbs and dislocates the whole interior being.

Through the sin of Adam, man is morally dead. Adam's fall was not the fall of *one* merely, but the fall of the entire race. The expression *original sin* was apparently coined by Augustine, and does not seem to have appeared before his day.

Concerning *sin*, Augustine taught three things:

a) *The presence of evil in the human race is due to the fact of heredity*. Its prevalence is not the result of imitation merely, but is due to the fact of an enfeebled and corrupted nature inherited from Adam, which has left man incapable of doing right or of making any movement by himself in the direction of salvation. This corrupted nature has passed from parent to offspring by a natural process of generation.

b) *Original sin is identified with sexual lust*. Man, according to Augustine, is not only sinful through heredity but guilty of sin by birth.

c) *Sin is declared to be the penalty of sin*. In other words, the inability to do right is a punishment for racial wrongdoing.

2) *Concerning the will: it is fettered and bound*. According to Augustine, man in his unfallen state possessed a will perfectly free; but since the Fall he has not been free to choose; he is entirely fettered and governed by sin.

3) *Concerning grace: it is selective and irresistible.* Those who are saved, Augustine taught, are saved by divine grace resulting from divine decree. The number of the *elect* has been fixed by that decree, and can neither be increased nor diminished. These elect souls are preserved by divine power. If they should go into sin they will undoubtedly be punished, but they will certainly be recalled and restored, for "they shall never perish." This irresistible grace, according to Augustine, has three distinguishing aspects which are stated thus:

a) *Prevenient grace.* It is this which gives the first motion toward God and goodness, and constitutes the beginning of salvation.

b) *Operating grace.* It is this which produces in man the will to do right.

c) *Co-operating grace.* It is this which supports the soul in its efforts and struggles, and enables it to perform its desire. Traces of the old nature still remain in the regenerate soul, and there is a life-long conflict between the old nature and the new.

So raged the conflict between Pelagius and Augustine, dividing the Church into two distinct theological camps; but the very fact of their respective extremes soon drove thinking men to ask whether either side had the entire truth, and whether it might not be possible that somewhere between the two sharp points of controversy there was to be found a sane middle line of divinely revealed teaching. This brought to the Church a mediating line of doctrine known as Semi-Pelagianism.

c. *Semi-Pelagianism.* The chief exponent of this teaching was the monk John Cassian, who rigorously opposed the Augustinian denial of free-will on the one hand and the Pelagian depreciation of divine grace on the other.

The efforts of the Semi-Pelagian teachers was to reconcile the two truths of the will of man and the grace of God. They admitted the fact of the Fall and the consequent hereditary taint of the whole race. Man by nature was inclined to evil and

needed to be prevented by divine grace. Moreover, no man was sufficient of himself to complete any good work.

Though acknowledging that the first call to salvation sometimes comes to an unwilling soul and is the direct result of prevenient grace, they held that ordinarily grace depends on the working of the individual will, man's will being provided at the outset with seeds of virtue which of themselves tend to bring forth good fruit; the function of grace being to water them; in that sense grace is necessary for their development. This grace is given to all alike in that Christ died for all. Soon therefore a middle party came to be recognized which very clearly declared itself on four great issues: (1) It opposed the teaching of Predestination. (2) It insisted on the moral responsibility of man. (3) It upheld the chastity of marriage. (4) It repudiated the idea of inherited guilt, insisting that while *depravity* may be inherited, guilt can only be applied to an individual act willingly committed.

The scope of our subject will not permit us to trace with any degree of detail the thought of the Middle Ages, except to say that as we approach the Reformation period we find the Augustinian and the Semi-Pelagian views contending for supremacy. The period has been characterized as one of general restlessness and dissatisfaction. Strong undercurrents developed which culminated in the Reformation and its distinctive theology and which ultimately brought into being the two main thought streams recognized by evangelical believers today, the Calvinistic and the Arminian theologies.

d. *Calvinism*. The leaders of the Reformation did not attempt to re-think their theology with regard to the question of sin, but simply restored and embellished the teaching of Augustine. Calvinism therefore may be stated as Augustinianism pushed farther. Its principle tenets are:

1) *The doctrine of total depravity*, i.e., the total ruin of the human race as the result of the Fall. By reason of this, man is wholly deprived of original righteousness and is therefore totally corrupt.

2) *The doctrine of inherited guilt.* Consequent upon their relationship with Adam, men share not only the depravity but also the guilt resulting from the Fall.

3) *The doctrine of Peculiar Redemption.* This may be summarized as follows: From among the corrupt mass of Adam's lost and helpless race, God has selected a limited number, known as the *elect*. It was for these, and these alone, that Jesus died.

To each of these *elect* souls there will come the *effectual call*, with which also will be given *enabling* grace insuring the soul's response.

These divinely favored ones may fall *in* grace, but they can never fall *from* it. Being in possession of eternal life they can never perish, no matter what they do. They are divinely held and therefore must persevere.

e. *Arminianism.* The Reformation school soon divided, the first difficulty coming on the subject of decrees, some insisting that the decrees of election determined that man should fall, thus furnishing the divine opportunity for *Particular Redemption*, while others contended that election came after the Fall.

Then came the new movement headed by James Harmensen, now better known as Arminius, who was then professor of theology in the University of Leyden, Holland. It was the best form of his teaching that was laid hold on by Wesley, and which he made the basic doctrine of the Methodist Church. In it, it is felt that all the essential truth of Augustine's teaching is preserved, while his errors and also the errors of Pelagianism and Semi-Pelagianism are avoided.

Four statements will set forth the general Arminian position with regard to this question:

1) *Man by nature is totally depraved.* When the Arminian says this, however, he does not mean, as one writer has put it: (a) That there is not any good in any man. (b) That all men are equally bad. (c) That every man is as bad as he can be. (d) That every man commits exactly the same sins. (e)

That outside the pale of professed religion there have not been and are not today, men of high moral tone.

What he does mean is: (a) That in this question of sin the entire race is involved. By the very fact of birth connection, every person contracts the evil taint that is common to the race. (b) That in this contraction the whole man is involved. He is corrupted in every faculty of his being and every department of his life.

2) *Yet, since this depravity is involuntary, it does not indicate demerit.* Guilt is only born of actual transgression; therefore, until the involuntary state is endorsed by the voluntary act, demerit does not appear.

3) *Salvation from this condition is not limited to the few, but is free to all.*

4) *While salvation is by grace, it is in co-operation with the human will.* Prevenient grace must first excite the will to action.

SUGGESTIONS FOR THE STUDENT

While we have sought to set forth this doctrinal development as clearly as possible with the limits of the present work, it will be immediately recognized that at best such a statement can be little more than a mere sketch. Follow up the thoughts suggested by a course of wider reading. It will prove to be very worthwhile.

TEST QUESTIONS

1. Into what two main thought streams did the early interpretation of Church truth divide?
2. What is Pelagianism? Define the teaching.
3. What is Augustinianism? Define the teaching.
4. What is Semi-Pelagianism? Define the teaching.
5. What is Calvinism? Define the teaching.
6. What is Arminianism? Define the teaching.

VI. THE QUESTION OF IMMORTALITY

Evidences of Immortality

Man is superior to every other creature in that within him is something which links him with the eternities. That something we have learned to call *immortality*. ". . . He hath set eternity in their heart . . ." (Ecclesiastes 3:11 Amer. St. Ver.).

Some have emphasized the distinction between *immortality* and *endless existence*, arguing that man, once created, was launched out onto an endless existence whether for weal or woe, and must live forever somewhere; whereas *immortality* is a distinct Christian concept to do only with eternal life as found in Christ "who hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel" (II Timothy 1:10).

Others again, have argued that since life and immortality are only brought to light through the gospel, the soul without a saving faith in Christ faces annihilation, and will be punished with eternal destruction from the presence of the Lord.

It is not this distinction of words however with which we are now concerned. We shall here use the word *immortal* in its widest sense, thinking only of man, whether saint or sinner as surviving death and living on through the eternities. The life *qualitative* as distinguished from the life *quantitative* must be discussed elsewhere, our purpose at the moment being to show that man, by the very constitution of his nature, is destined to survive the dissolution of death and to exist somewhere forever.

The doctrine of the immortality of the soul has been argued from numerous viewpoints, chief among which are: instinct, reason, analogy, moral values, and revelation. These we shall take up in their respective order.

1. THE ARGUMENT FROM INSTINCT

When we speak here of instinct we mean the general consciousness of the race; the fact of universal belief; someone has called it cosmic consciousness.

This is also known as the Historical Argument. Beyond a brief statement, little need be said concerning it. It is based upon the instincts and intuitions of the soul. There are passing ideas which we may well disregard, but there are also deep soul instincts which it is always safe to trust; one of these is the insistent feeling that there *must be something* beyond the grave. That there have been, and still are, those who deny this in no way affects the general argument, for it is a proved fact that among all peoples in all ages there has been a belief—often crude, but always seeking to find expression—that somewhere, somehow, the soul must survive after death.

For this general belief there must be, it has been argued, a sufficient reason, which is either an instinctive faith, an intuitive reason, or an inheritance from original revelation.

Perhaps not one of these alone, but all three must account for it. If there is no life hereafter it is not easy to see why man should so persistently anticipate it. Tennyson crystallized this argument into four short lines when he wrote:

*Thou wilt not leave him in the dust;
Thou madest man, he knows not why,
He thinks he was not made to die:
And Thou hast made him: Thou art just.*

2. THE ARGUMENT FROM REASON

According to this argument, the reasonableness of the universe is declared to point in the direction of immortality. There is reason and purpose in the minor operations of nature, one stage always preparing the way for another, whether the growth of the flower, the development of the human body or *wherever else we may look*.

Man is more than physical; he has *intellectual endowments*; it is reasonable therefore to expect that somewhere he will find an opportunity for their fullest development. Then man is *morally constituted*; behind conduct is a sense of obligation and responsibility, conscience making its distinct requirements.

If death ended all, our insistence on the values of personality would be meaningless. Moreover, man's passionate de-

sire for continued existence cannot be without significance, nor that persistent human affection which is declared by an inspired writer to be "strong as death" for "many waters cannot quench it." Song of Solomon 8:6,7.

Finally we have the value of human character. What marvelous lives have been lived, and often at what a cost! They died just when their scholarship, sanity and sanctity would have been the most useful. Through years of labor and suffering the beautiful fruit ripened and then fell. Surely it cannot just lie and rot.

3. THE ARGUMENT FROM ANALOGY

It has now become a scientific commonplace that while the form of things may be altered, nothing is really destroyed. Though fire should reduce them to ashes the very smoke clouds give them existence in another form. Surely it cannot be that the spirit of man, which is far superior to all that is around him, will cease to exist when the body dies.

4. THE ARGUMENT FROM MORAL VALUES

This, often called the *Ethical Argument*, calls attention to the manifest uneven nature of things in the present life, where often "truth is on the scaffold and wrong is on the throne." The great problems for every age have been the twin enigmas of permitted wrong and the suffering of the godly. Job faced them. Every thoughtful mind must face them. If death ends all, then these greatest of all problems have no answer, and life is an enigma too deep to solve.

There is, however, within the deepest nature of man, a moral expectation. At the very center of the universe he finds a Throne, and the Throne is occupied by a just and discriminating God who is to give to every man according to his works. The suffering saint is to be recompensed, while the daring sinner is to reap a harvest of blank despair. If the balance of right and wrong is really to be adjusted, God must complete the present in the future and render to every man exact justice, for the Judge of all the earth *must do right*.

Frances Ridley Havergal seemed to get the key to these things when in her poem *The Moonlight Sonata*, she wrote:

*The ills we see—
The mysteries of sorrow deep and long
The dark enigmas of permitted wrong—
Have all one key;
This strange, sad world is but our Father's School;
All chance and change, His love shall grandly overrule.
How sweet to know
The trials which we cannot comprehend
Each have their own divinely purposed end!
He traineth so
For higher learning, ever onward reaching
For fuller knowledge yet, and His own deeper teaching.
Nor only here
The rich results of all our God doth teach
His scholars, slow at best, until we reach a nobler sphere;
Then, not till then, our training is complete
And the true life begins for which he made us meet.*

5. THE ARGUMENT FROM REVELATION

The Scriptures plainly declare and generally assume the endless existence of man.

Our present thought, as already indicated, is not to distinguish between endless existence in Adam and life and immortality brought to light through the gospel; this of course will be dealt with elsewhere. All that we are seeking to do at the moment is to establish the fact of man's survival of the shock of death and his continued existence somewhere. We shall therefore offer a number of scripture passages, quoting indiscriminately so far as the *character* of the after-life is concerned, thinking only of the *fact* itself.

Genesis 5:24; Hebrews 11:5; Genesis 25:8; 35:29; 37:35; 49:33; Numbers 16:30; 23:10; I Samuel 28:7; II Samuel 12:23; 22:6; Job 14:13; 17:13, 16; 19:25; Psalms 16:10; 49:14, 15; 73:24-26; Ecclesiastes 12:7; Isaiah 14:9-11; 25:8; 66:24; Hosea 13:14; Matthew 5:22; 10:28; 11:22; 17:3; 25:41, 46; Mark 6:11;

9:43; Luke 12:16-20; 16:19-31; 20:27-39; 23:43; John 5:21-29; 14:2; Acts 7:59, 60; 10:42; 17:30-32; Romans 2:1-11; I Corinthians 4:5, 15; II Corinthians 5:1-11; Philippians 1:20-24; 3:10, 11, 20, 21; Colossians 3:4; I Thessalonians 4:13-18; II Timothy 1:10; 4:1; Hebrews 2:14; 9:27; I Peter 4:5, 6; II Peter 2:9; I John 3:2; 4:17; Jude 13-15; Revelation 7:9-17; 20; 21.

SUGGESTIONS FOR THE STUDENT

Within the church today are those who contend for what they call *conditional immortality*. For further study acquaint yourself with the correct form of this teaching, then prepare an intelligent answer to it.

TEST QUESTIONS

1. Name from memory the five arguments here given for the fact of a future life.
2. Give a concise statement of each argument named.
3. Add to these any other thought you may have supporting the idea of a future existence.

Reading Suggestions for the Advanced Student

PART II

- MACHEN, J. GRESHAM, *The Christian View of Man*
ORR, JAMES, *The Christian View of God and the World*, Lectures IV and V
ORR, JAMES, *God's Image in Man*
CLARKE, W. N., *Outline of Christian Theology*, pp. 182-259
STRONG, A. H., *Systematic Theology*, pp. 465-664
CURTIS, O. A., *The Christian Faith*, pp. 7-102
MILEY, JOHN, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. I, pp. 355-533
WILEY, H. ORTON, *Christian Theology*, Vol. II, pp. 7-140
HASTINGS, *Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics*
 Article on Sin, Vol. XI
 Article on Arminianism, Vol. I
 Article on Calvinism, Vol. III
 Article on Pelagianism and Semi-Pelagianism, Vol. IX
 Article on Immortality, Vol. VII
International Standard Bible Encyclopedia
 Article on Anthropology
 Article on Immortality

PART III—CHRIST

VII. WHAT THINK YE OF CHRIST?

The Christian religion centers in a *Person*; that Person is revealed for us in a *Book*; the teaching of the Book concerning the Person is embodied in numerous *creeds*.

The Book is to us the Word of God, and contains all needed teaching for faith and practice in Christian experience. The creeds are venerated by us as the considered thought of men whose work we esteem. Yet neither the creeds nor even the Book is Christianity's central fact. The central fact of the Christian religion is *Christ himself*.

It is recorded of the Hindu Christian mystic, Sundar Singh, that when visiting one of the universities of his country he was asked by a professor of comparative religions, "What did you find in Christianity that we do not have in our own religion?" He replied, "I found Christ." "But," said the professor, pressing the question further, "what *teaching* did you find there that could not have been found in our own religion?" Again the Sadhu quietly replied, "I found Christ."

In our autograph album one of God's choice saints wrote the following lines:

*It is not doctrine; it is not creed;
It is a living Christ we need:
Forms, doctrines, creeds and ritual
Are but emptiness after all;
Christ Jesus is the soul's sincere repose,
These other things are leaves around the Rose.*

The central fact of Christianity is the Rose, the Christ, a living Person from whom all else proceeds.

It is here, however, that the fight really begins. In the days of His flesh, our Lord flung out to His hearers a simple but challenging question: "What think ye of Christ?" That simple

question puzzled them. It has puzzled men in every age. It puzzles men today. They cannot explain Him, yet they cannot leave Him alone. Every new generation finds Him confronting them. They discuss Him; some eulogize Him; others snub Him; but they cannot dismiss Him. There, in the court of human consciousness, He ever stands, the *Inevitable Christ*.

Concerning the Person of Jesus Christ three things are to be considered: (1) What God says about Him. (2) What men have said about Him. (3) The formulation of the creeds concerning Him.

What God Says About Him

1. AS TO HIS DEITY

For our knowledge concerning the Person of Christ we are entirely dependent on the Word of God, for it is in the Scriptures that the Holy Spirit reveals the facts concerning Him.

It will be noted that in the caption of this section we have used the word *deity* rather than *divinity*. We have done so with definite reason and of set purpose. It has become customary with theologians of these modern days to use the word *divinity* in a much lighter sense than our fathers understood it when applied to the person of our Lord, thereby robbing it of its weight in argument concerning Him.

"Jesus Christ is divine," say we. "So is every man," say they. "But Christ is the Son of God," say we. "So are all men sons of God," say they, "it is simply a matter of degree." This claim of universal Sonship we cannot, of course, admit. Yet it becomes necessary to fortify our position regarding the unique Sonship of Jesus by using the strongest possible case, and therefore we do not say merely that Christ was *divine*, much as we feel that this word in itself should meet the case; we are compelled to become more emphatic, and to insist that in a peculiar sense, in equality of position, in nature and power, without any qualification or reservation, Jesus Christ was and is *of the deity*. He stands alone, in solitary dignity and lonely

grandeur; He is the phenomenon of the ages—God manifest in the flesh.

a. *Some general proofs may be suggested.* The arguments which we shall here advance are timeworn and old-fashioned, the subject having been so often thrashed over that new arguments might not be easy to find. The more modern-minded will doubtless smile at our simplicity as we reiterate "such old stuff" as they choose to call it, but it is the best we know.

1) *Divine names are given to Him*

a) He is "*The Son of God.*" This name is used at least forty times, besides which we have frequent synonymous expressions, such as "His Son," "My Son," etc. That this designation carried the thought of deity is seen in John 5:18. Therefore the Jews sought to kill him because he had not only broken the Sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God."

From this and other passages, it is evident that those about Him plainly understood Jesus as claiming a unique divine relationship. See Matthew 27:40, 43; Mark 14:61, 62; John 5:25; 10:36; 11:4.

b) He is "*the only begotten Son.*" This expression occurs five times, namely John 1:14; 1:18; 3:16; 3:18; I John 4:9. It was a favorite expression with John.

c) He is "*the Lord.*" During His earth life men called Him "Lord," but after His resurrection and ascension this became an established designation as is seen both in the Book of Acts and also the epistles.

Not merely is He called "the Lord," but "Lord of all," Acts 10:36, and "the Lord of glory" (I Corinthians 2:8). Paul's writings abound with kindred expressions. Compare here the designations of Jehovah in Psalms 24:8-10.

d) He is "*the First and the Last.*" This title, claimed by Him in His risen capacity, is applied in the Old Testament to Israel's Jehovah. Revelation 1:17; Compare Isaiah 41:4; 44:6.

e) He is "*the Alpha and Omega*" (Revelation 1:8; 22:13).

f) He is "*the Holy One.*" This again is one of the Old Testa-

ment names used of Jehovah. Acts 3:14. Compare Isaiah 12:6; Hosea 11:9.

g) He is "*Emmanuel*." "God with us" (Matthew 1:23).

h) He is "*God*." (Hebrews 1:8).

i) He is "*Our great God*." (Titus 2:14, R.V.).

j) He is "*God blessed for evermore*" (Romans 9:15).

2) *Old Testament descriptions of God are applied to Him.* We shall notice only four examples and these may be extended indefinitely by the student.

a) *Psalms 110:1.* "The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool."

This scripture is quoted three times in the New Testament, and each time it is applied directly to Jesus Christ. First our Lord quotes it and applies it to Himself. Matthew 22:44. Then on the day of Pentecost Peter quotes it, and applies it to Jesus as the risen, glorified Lord. Acts 2:34, 35. Finally, the writer to the Hebrews quotes it, and applies it to Jesus as the Divine son. Hebrews 1:3. From this passage with its New Testament references, it becomes evident that Jesus is the one whom David in the Spirit is said to have called *Lord*.

b) *Isaiah 6:1.* "In the year that King Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple."

John, making reference to Jesus, takes up this very chapter, and concerning it he says: "These things said Esaias when he saw his glory, and spake of him." John 12:41. Can there be any doubt that "the Lord," seen by Isaiah, is the Christ whom we adore?

c) *Isaiah 7:14.* "Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel."

Matthew, recording the birth of Christ, quotes this passage and interprets the name, saying, "Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us" (Matthew 1:23). What is this but another way of stating the fact

recorded in John's great prologue, "The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us" (John 1:14)?

d) *Psalms 68:18*. "Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive; thou hast received gifts for men; yea, for the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell among them."

There can be no question that in this passage the psalmist has reference to *God*. Paul, however, takes this very scripture and unhesitatingly applies it to Jesus, saying, "But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men" (Ephesians 4:7, 8).

Adding to these scriptures, the student should also make the following comparisons: *Psalms 102:24-27* with *Hebrews 1:10-12*; *Isaiah 40:3, 4* with *Luke 1:68, 69, 76*; *Isaiah 60:19* with *Luke 2:32*; *Isaiah 8:13, 14* with *I Peter 2:7, 8*; *Isaiah 40:10, 11*; with *John 10:11*; *Ezekiel 34:11, 12, 18* with *Luke 19:10*.

3) *The names of both Father and Spirit are used as equal with Him*. The student should carefully read such scripture passages as *Matthew 28:19*; *John 5:23; 14:1; 17:3*; *Acts 2:38*; *I Corinthians 1:3; 12:4-6*; *II Corinthians 13:14*; *Ephesians 5:5*; *I Thessalonians 3:11*; *Revelation 20:6; 22:3*.

The striking thing about these passages is the naturalness and obvious lack of embarrassment with which the various scripture writers associate the three names of Father, Son and Holy Spirit. There is no excuse, no apology, not even an explanation. To them, the Godhead is the place to which Jesus naturally belongs and without ceremony they acknowledge Him as being there.

4) *The attributes of God are ascribed to Him*.

a) He is the *source of Life*. *John 1:4; 14:6*.

b) He is *self-existent*. *John 5:26*; *Hebrews 7:16*.

c) He is *eternal*. *Isaiah 9:6*; *Micah 2:5*; *John 1:1; 8:58; 17:5*; *Colossians 1:17*; *Hebrews 13:8*; *I John 1:1*.

d) He is *immutable*. *Hebrews 1:12; 13:8*.

- e) He is *omnipotent*. Matthew 8:16, 26, 27; Luke 4:35, 36, 39, 41; 7:14, 15; 8:54, 55; Ephesians 1:20-23; Hebrews 1:3.
- f) He is *omniscient*. Mark 2:8; Luke 5:4-6, 22; 22:10-12; John 1:48; 6:64; 13:1; 16:30; 21:17; Colossians 2:3; Jude 25; Revelation 2:23.
- g) He is *omnipresent*. Matthew 18:20; 28:20; John 3:13; 14:20; II Corinthians 13:5; Ephesians 1:23.
- h) He is the *embodiment of holiness*. Luke 1:35; Hebrews 7:26.
- i) He is *the manifested truth*. John 14:6; I John 5:20.
- j) He is the *expression of love*. John 3:16.
- 5) *The works of God are accredited to Him.*
- a) He is credited with the act of *creation*. John 1:3; I Corinthians 8:6; Colossians 1:16; Hebrews 1:10.
- b) To Him is attributed the fact of *preservation*. Colossians 1:17; Hebrews 1:3.
- c) He is seen as *raising the dead*. John 5:27-29; 6:39, 44.
- d) He is to *re-fashion the believer's body* at His return. Philippians 3:21.
- e) It is *His prerogative to bestow eternal life*. John 10:28; 17:2.
- 6) *The prerogatives of God are accorded Him.*
- a) He has *authority to forgive sins*. Matthew 1:21; 9:2-6; Mark 2:5-10; Acts 2:38.
- b) He it is who is to *judge the world*. Matthew 25:31-36; John 5:27-29; Acts 17:31; II Timothy 4:1.
- c) He is to exercise universal dominion. Others have striven for it, not hesitating to drench the world in blood to accomplish their purpose, but every contestant for world rule has perished by the sword he has unsheathed. Not so with our Christ, for His right it is to reign. He *must* reign until he has put all enemies under his feet. Isaiah 9:7; Daniel 7:13, 14; John 3:31; I Corinthians 15:25; Hebrews 1:8; Revelation 1:5; 17:14; 19:16.
- 7) *Honor and worship due only to God are received by Him*. Matthew 14:33; 28:9; (contrast here Matthew 4:9, 10;

Acts 10:25, 26; 14:11-18; Revelation 22:8, 9); Luke 24:52; John 5:23; 14:14; 20:28; Acts 7:59; 9:10; I Corinthians 11:24, 25; Philippians 2:9-11; II Timothy 4:8; Hebrews 13:21; Revelation 5:12-14. Could any mere creature place himself or be placed in such a position without the most obvious blasphemy?

8) *Equality with God is expressly claimed for Him.*

a) *By Himself.* John 5:18; 14:9.

b) *By His apostles.* John 1:1; Acts 20:28; Philippians 2:6.

9) *Christian experience corroborates all that is said both by Him and about Him.* Those who know Him in saving power have no doubt whatever that Jesus Christ is God.

b. *Some specific facts may also be stated.* All the evidence thus far presented has convinced us of one great fact, namely that Jesus Christ is God. As God, but now made known to us as man, two further facts are to be recognized.

1) *The fact of His Pre-existence.* As God, He of necessity existed before His appearing in His redemptive capacity as Jesus the Man. This has been indicated inferentially under the previous section, but we must now definitely state the fact.

a) This is clearly seen in the *Old Testament*.

It is manifested in the *Theophanies*. By a theophany, we mean, of course, the manifestation of deity in material shape. Sometimes the appearance was in the form of an *angel*, and sometimes that of a *man*, but always there was about it the suggestion of a *Presence* which was greater than the appearance. This *Presence* is known by such familiar designations as "mine Angel," "the angel of the Lord," "the angel of his presence," and so on.

He appeared to Abraham—Genesis 12:7; 17:1; 18:1; 22:11, 12; Compare John 8:56-58; to Jacob—Genesis 31:11-13; 32:24-32; 35:9-15; to Moses—Exodus 3:1-14; to Joshua—Joshua 5:13-15; to Gideon—Judges 6; to Manoah and his wife—Judges 13. He is seen also in II Kings 19:35; Zechariah 14:1-4; I Chronicles 21:15, 16; Psalms 37:7. .

It is recorded in the *Prophecies*.* See, for instance, Isaiah 9:6, 7; Micah 2:5. The Old Testament abounds with prophecies concerning the Coming One, but in these passages especially

is emphasized the fact of the identity of the One who is to come and from whence He should come. There can be no doubt about the prophet's emphasis. He is to come out of a *past existence*, for He is "the Father of eternity," and has been "from everlasting."

b) This is emphatically stated in the *New Testament*. The New Testament writers see Jesus, not as a Man who became God, but as God who became Man. See such passages as John 1:1-4; 1:30; 3:13; 3:31; 6:33; 6:51; 6:62; 7:29; 8:23; 8:42; 8:58; 10:32-36; 13:3; 14:1-11; 16:27, 28, 30; 17:5, 8; Philip-
pians 2:6; Hebrews 1:3.

2) *The Fact of His Incarnation*. As pre-existent God, He voluntarily became *Man*. Thus we may say that in this act, according to the plain teaching of Scripture, the Jehovah of the Old Testament became the Jesus of the New Testament.

This is clearly anticipated in the Old Testament—as we have seen in such passages as Isaiah 9:6 and Micah 5:2. It is definitely stated in the New Testament—as seen in such passages as Matthew 1:18-25; Luke 1:26-35; John 1:14; Romans 8:3, 4; Galatians 4:4; Philippians 2:5-8; I Timothy 3:16; Hebrews 2:14-16.

In this unique fact of "God manifest in the flesh" we have the miracle of the ages, paralleled only by His atoning death and glorious resurrection, all of which, of course, go to make up that one grand divinely executed scheme which we call redemption.

SUGGESTIONS FOR THE STUDENT

Jesus Christ is God! We firmly believe it, but we must be ready to prove it, and to combat whatever arguments may be brought to the contrary. Be sure that you are ready for this. Read further on the subject.

TEST QUESTIONS

1. On what source are we dependent for our knowledge concerning the Person of Christ?
2. Distinguish between the use of the words *divinity* and *deity*.
3. State some general proofs of Christ's deity.
4. What two further specific facts should be stated? State and explain each of these.

* This Mysterious Being, sometimes *Man*, sometimes *Angel*, but in reality *God*, is felt by all spiritually-minded students of God's Word to be none other than "*The Word*," who later "was made flesh and dwelt among us" (John 1:14).

2. AS TO HIS HUMANITY

According to the plain teaching of the Scriptures, "God manifest in the flesh" took upon Him a *real* human nature. This is seen from the following facts clearly indicated in the New Testament:

a. *He was born of, and nursed by a human mother.* Matthew 1:18; 2:11; 13:55; Galatians 4:4.

It would not have been impossible for God in human flesh to have appeared without a human birth. The First Adam was not born; he was created. The creation of a Second Adam would have been just as possible, and in Him God could have been seen to dwell. This, however, would not have met the need of redemption. The mystery of godliness is that God was manifest in the flesh—in our flesh—one of us, that He might legitimately represent us.

b. *He was expressly called, and called Himself, "a man" and "the man."* Isaiah 53:3; John 8:40; Acts 2:22; Romans 5:15; I Corinthians 15:21; I Timothy 2:5.

c. *He possessed the essential elements which made Him a man.* He had a human body and rational soul. Matthew 26:12; 27:57-60; Luke 23:46; 24:39; Hebrews 2:14; 4:15; I John 1:1.

d. *He became subject to the same laws as other humans.* These are plainly seen in the Gospel narratives: Growth, Luke 2:52; learning, Luke 2:40, 46; hunger, Matthew 4:2; thirst, John 4:7; 19:28; weariness, Matthew 8:24; John 4:6; emotion, Matthew 9:36; Mark 3:5; 10:21; John 11:33, 35; 12:27; sensitiveness to pain, Hebrews 2:10, 18; 5:8; 13:12; liability to temptation, Matthew 4:1; Mark 1:13; Luke 4:2; Hebrews 2:18; 4:15.

e. *It is evident that his appearance was that of a man, and even suggested nationality.* John 4:9; 20:15; 21:4, 5.

f. *He found it necessary to spend time in prayer.* A review of the life of Jesus as the Son of man will reveal an amazing amount of time spent in intercession. Do we ask why? The

answer can only be this. As a man He realized His need of prayer, and consequently gave Himself to it, praying early, Mark 1:35; late, Matthew 14:23; all night, Luke 6:12; before important events, Luke 6:12, 13; for His friends, Luke 22:32; John 17:9; for his enemies, Luke 23:34; until heaven opened, Luke 3:21; until transfigured, Luke 9:28, 29; when prayer was agony, Luke 22:44; even as He died, Luke 23:46. Why did He pray? His humanity demanded it.

SUGGESTIONS FOR THE STUDENT

In Christ, God became man. In doing so, what did He leave?—and what did He assume? Does the Bible throw any light on these questions? Read further on the Incarnation.

TEST QUESTIONS

1. Name from memory the six arguments for the humanity of Jesus.
2. Take up each argument separately and develop it, giving scripture proof.

What Men Have Said About Him

1. EARLY ATTACKS

At first it may come as a shock to some when they learn of the vicissitudes through which the doctrine of our Lord's deity has passed. Satan is ever the sworn foe of the Christ, and through the ages he has done his utmost to discredit Him.

Beginning *in the days of His flesh*, continuing through the early centuries of the Church's history, and reviving again in these later days, the devil has used every conceivable tactic of subtle attack to encompass our Lord's defeat. Concerning the person of Christ, the first five centuries were a battleground of contending theories. Error after error lifted its head, and attacking each successive error, blow after blow was struck by the champions of truth. These errors may be generally classified in four sections, namely: (1) Those denying the human element in Christ's nature. (2) Those denying the divine element. (3) Those denying the unity of persons embracing both natures. (4) Those denying the distinctions in the Godhead.

a. *The errors denying the human element.* Of those errors denying the human element two are outstanding.

1) *Docetism*—The teaching that Jesus did not possess a human body.

This teaching flourished for about one hundred years (70-170 A.D.). It appeared before the New Testament had reached its completion, and is said to have been the first known heresy in the Christian Church. It is thought by some that the apostolic insistence on the fact that Christ was “born of a woman” and was “partaker of flesh and blood”—for which, see such passages as Galatians 4:4; Romans 1:3; 9:5; Hebrews 2:14—was directed against this error.

The name *Docetism* means, literally, to *seem*, or to *appear*. These heresy teachers, like the Gnostics, whose teaching was a corollary of the Docetic system, denied the reality of Christ’s material body and His human nature, insisting that, though He so appeared, He was never really a man at all, but a Divine Being in disguise. His apparent acceptance of the ordinary laws which govern our lives, such as birth and death, eating and drinking, were mere illusions. Matter, they argued, is evil, while Christ was pure; Christ therefore could not have possessed a human body, but must have been phantasmal.

Needless to say, the teaching of Docetism was a pagan philosophy introduced into the Christian Church; some have thought Simon Magus to have been its sponsor. It has been called “baptized heathenism.”

2) *Apollinarism*—the teaching that Jesus did not possess a human mind.

This error came into the Church through one known as Apollinaris the younger, a scholar, poet, and ardent defender of the faith. His heresy came in his endeavor to combat another. He was fighting Arianism, which we shall later consider, and facing the perplexing question, How could the Divine Logos be joined to a human nature?

In reply he attempted to save the unity of Christ’s Person, but at the expense of His human nature, and consequently denied His real humanity altogether. He was certain that in

the Person of Jesus *God became Man*. He felt also that the whole divine nature could not be joined to the whole nature of a man. Two perfect natures, he argued, must always remain separate persons, for two perfect beings could never become one.

He met the problem by asserting that although Jesus had a body He had no human mind, its place being taken by the Logos.

The mind in man, according to Apollinaris, *was the center of sin*; and must be replaced by the divine. This, it would seem, would make Christ to be neither God nor man, but a perplexing puzzle between the two.

b. *The errors denying the divine element*. Of these errors denying the divine element, we shall discuss three.

1) *Ebionism*—the teaching that Jesus was a man, on whom the Christhood came.

Ebionism is the name given to certain tendencies of thought which finally crystallized into sects within Judaeo-Christian circles in the early centuries of Christianity. The exact meaning of the name seems to be uncertain. Some have suggested that it means "poor," and that possibly the name was given, or taken, because they were a company of oppressed and persecuted souls.

Defining Ebionism, Dr. A. H. Strong says, "Ebionism was simply Judaism within the pale of the Christian Church, and its denial of Christ's Godhead was occasioned by the incompatibility of this doctrine with monotheism."

As a general statement, the Ebionite doctrine of Christ may be put as follows: These errorists regarded Christ merely as a man. They denied the reality of His divine nature and held Him to be merely human, whether naturally or supernaturally conceived. The man Jesus, however, held a peculiar relation to God, in that, from the time of His baptism an immeasured fullness of the Divine Spirit rested upon Him.

Ebionism seems to have divided itself into three sections:

a) *The Nazarenes*. These held to the supernatural birth of Christ, yet did not admit Him to be the divine Son.

b) *The Cerinthian Ebionites*. These denied the supernatural birth of Christ and in its place insisted that the Christhood came at His baptism. That He should be born of the Virgin seemed to them to be a heathenish fable. To them there was no personal union between the divine and human in Christ; and the emanation which descended upon Him at His baptism left Him before His crucifixion.

c) *The Gnostic Ebionism of the Pseudo-Clementines*. In order to destroy the idea of the deity of Christ and save the pure monotheism, so called, of primitive religion, these are said to have given up much of the Old Testament scriptures. God and man were conceived as external to each other; God could not become man; therefore, they insisted, Christ was no more than a prophet or teacher who from the time of his baptism was especially endowed with the Spirit of God.

2) *Arianism*—the teaching that Jesus was a demigod.

The heresy of Arius and those who followed him might be summarized as the dilemma that produced the demigod. Refusing Christ a place within the Godhead and yet being compelled to recognize Him as more than an ordinary man, they attempted to solve their problem by regarding Him as a created being, lower than God but higher than man. They regarded the Logos who was declared to have united himself with the humanity of Jesus as not being possessed of absolute Godhead but as being the first and highest of created beings. Christ was "the Son," but He was not eternal. He was the mediator of creation, but He himself was created before the beginning of time. This Logos took the place of the human soul in the person of Jesus; the Christ therefore, thus formed, was neither man nor God, but a demigod.

The view of Arius has been rightly evaluated as having originated in a misinterpretation of the scriptural accounts of Christ's state of humiliation, and in mistaking the temporary subordination for original and permanent inequality. It might also be said that, seeking to uphold the monotheistic idea he could not see the possibility of three persons in the Godhead.

3) *Adoptionism*—Jesus was a man who became God. This was seemingly an early error, but has also had later manifestations. According to this theory, the Logos existed in Jesus, not as a person but as a quality. The personality of Jesus was human. It was not the Son of God who came down from heaven, but the Son of man who ascended into heaven. By the descent of the Holy Spirit upon Him Jesus was *adopted* as the Son of God, and because of His spiritual merits He was elevated to divine rank. Thus it was not God becoming man, but man becoming God.

c. *Errors denying the unity of the Person embracing two natures.* Again we shall note three.

1) *Nestorianism.* The Nestorian error came as the result of an effort on the part of Nestorius to avoid the danger of Apollinaris. There is something pathetic about these men as they are seeking to pick their way through the maze of erroneous thought, and in seeking to avoid one error, striking another. Apollinaris, seeking to avoid the peril of Arianism, struck the rock in the other extreme, while Nestorius, in his endeavor to avoid the Apollinarian error ran aground elsewhere.

The Nestorians denied the real union between the human and the divine natures in Christ, asserting that in Him were two complete personalities, one distinctly human and the other distinctly divine—the eternal personality of the Logos and the human personality born of Mary. Some say that Nestorius himself never went to this extreme, but his name is always associated with the teaching, and he was removed from his position as bishop of Constantinople on account of it (431 A.D.).

2) *Eutychianism* (U-tik-ianism). Eutyches, an abbot of Constantinople, attacked the error of Nestorius, but in doing so, he evolved another heresy, denying the distinction and co-existence of the two natures and held to a mingling of both into one, which when clearly defined really constituted a third. To the Eutychians there was only one nature in Christ—God became flesh. This mystifying mixture of a humanized Logos,

a deified man, or whatever it really was, was condemned at Chalcedon (451 A.D.).

3) *Monophysitism*. This was a later development of Eutychianism after the Council of Chalcedon.

d. *Errors denying distinctions in the Godhead*. The fourth section of errors concerning the person of Jesus are those which deny any vital distinction at all within the Godhead. Outstanding here, is the teaching of Sabellianism. It is also called Modalist Monarchianism, or Patripassionism, although some distinguish between these two, making Sabellianism a development of one or the other.

As stated in our discussion on the doctrine of the Trinity, the teaching of Sabellius was that in the divine nature there could be no distinction of persons, the terms "Father," "Son," and "Spirit" being intended to represent the divine Being under different aspects or relations; just as a man might be called father, son, brother, uncle, and so forth, by different people, according to their individual relationship, yet all the time he could continue to be one and the same person, there being no change whatever except in relationship.

According to Sabellius, the Son was just an "aspect" of the Godhead.

All this led to the necessity of a formulated statement by an authoritative body, and thus we have in the creed of Chalcedon (451 A.D.), which later we shall consider.

SUGGESTIONS FOR THE STUDENT

At first it will not be easy to remember these errors. First learn the names, so as to be able to recite them from memory; then take them one at a time and master what is said about them. The more advanced student will naturally want to read further on each, and will find valuable information in the larger works concerning them.

TEST QUESTIONS

1. Name the errors denying the human element.
2. Name the errors denying the divine element.
3. Name the errors denying the unity of the Person embracing both natures.
4. Name the errors denying the distinctions in the Godhead.
5. Take up each error, which you are now able to name and write a concise explanation of its teaching.

CHART OF ERRORS

In order that the student might take in the errors at a glance we have prepared the following chart.

Each rectangle represents the Person of Christ as taught by that error. Within the rectangle is a clarifying statement concerning the error.

ERRORS DENYING THE HUMAN ELEMENT

DOCETISM

Did not possess a human body. His seeming humanity was an illusion.

Jesus was wholly divine.

APOLLINARISM

Did not possess a human mind. Its place taken by the Logos.

Jesus neither God nor man.

ERRORS DENYING THE DIVINE ELEMENT

EBIONISM

The Spirit given at baptism as an endowment for his Messianic work.

Jesus was human.

ARIANISM

Lower than God—
Higher than man.
The first of God's creation.

Jesus was a demigod.

ADoptionISM

By the descent of the Holy Spirit upon him he was adopted into the Godhead.

Man who became God.

ERRORS DENYING THE UNITY OF THE PERSON EMBRACING TWO NATURES

NESTORIANISM

Logos	Human
-------	-------

Jesus had two separate natures.

EUTYCHIANISM

A mystifying mixture

Jesus a mingling of two natures which constituted a third.

MONOPHYSITISM

Eutychianism plus

Fusion-Confusion.

ERRORS DENYING DISTINCTIONS IN THE GODHEAD
SABELLIANISM

Father	
God	
Son	Spirit

Modal Manifestations of one Person.

2. LATER ATTACKS

So intense is the hatred of the powers of darkness against the Son of God that their attacks have never been relinquished.

The early decades of the Nineteenth Century saw a revival of Christological criticism, attacking not only the deity of our Lord, but also His humanity. Broadly, these attacks may be divided into two sections, which, for want of a better way of expressing it, we shall call the *Scholastic* and the *Religious*.

a. *The Scholastic attack.* By the term *scholastic* here, we mean to indicate, not the thought of mental superiority but rather of intellectual snobbery; the pitiful piffle that has been handed out from some of our colleges and universities in the name of higher education. Volumes have been written to support their contention—a woeful waste of good paper. Especially among the German element, some daring and blasphemous suggestions have been made.

Jesus has been described as *an ecstatic*; a person of heights and depths of spirit, often passionately impetuous, then again calmly composed. This ecstasy is declared to belong to the unusual psychic phenomena which lies on the borderland between mental health and malady. By another, He has been declared to be *an epileptic*; a great reformer, but a person mentally morbid and worthy of our deep pity and sympathy. By still another He is seen as a paranoic whose intellect was gradually impaired and whose life was characterized by systematic delusions. Then again He is described as a *case of nerves*; a poetic nature, fond of rural surroundings and possessing a romantic and one-sided optimism. His strongly stimulated fancy is said to have ac-

counted for His illusions in the desert, which are to be understood only in the light of excessive nervousness. Other writers have bluntly called Him a *fanatic*.

But then, after all, these things are not surprising. The critical mind must seek to establish some sort of theory; Jesus of Nazareth must be accounted for somehow. He is a perpetual challenge to each succeeding age. They are not prepared to acknowledge His deity yet they cannot leave Him alone. He will not be left alone. There is no adequate explanation for Jesus of Nazareth except one—He is the Son of God.

b. *The Religious attack.* Strange as it may seem, the most subtle attacks on the Person of our Lord have been made under the cover of a professed religious attitude.

1) *Within the Church.* This attack has come within the Church itself. The attitude and teaching of what has come to be known as the higher critical position is now so well known that we shall not pause here to comment, except to say that the Christ of liberal theology is not the Christ of the New Testament. Reduced to the level of an ordinary man—though it is generally admitted he is somewhat better than the rest of us—His pre-existence is repudiated, His supernatural birth is sneered at, His sinless life is questioned; His atoning death is denied, while the idea of His second advent is ridiculed. Yet, in spite of the ever deepening apostasy, there remains a faithful element, determined at all costs to stand by the old truths; these constitute the true Church, the Bride of the Lamb.

2) *Alongside the Church.* There is today what might be termed "a wider Christendom"—a fungus growth claiming Christ as its Leader and Teacher, yet reducing Him to levels which insult Him while professing to honor Him. A study of these errors do not come within the scope of our present subject, therefore a simple statement concerning five of the most aggressive will suffice.

a) *Spiritism.* The name its adherents use is *Spiritualism*, but we are not disposed to honor it with such a designation, believing as we do that its only spiritual element is its demon origin. To Spiritism, Jesus is not divine except as they would

say we are all divine; He was "a medium of a high order," but certainly was not God manifest in the flesh, nor did He ever claim to be. Any identification with the Father was a *oneness of mediumship*. It is only in this sense that He was a *mediator*. He is now an advanced spirit in the sixth sphere—whatever that may mean.

b) *Eddyism*. The name used by its adherents is Christian Science, but since it contradicts the Christian concept it has no right to the name *Christian*, and certainly could not qualify as a *science*. It is rather a dangerous hodge-podge, which, in order to survive has been compelled to mutilate the recognized teachings of the Christian Church, and consequently the teaching of and about its Founder and Lord, Jesus Christ.

To Christian Science, Jesus as material manhood was not Christ. Christ is declared to be a divine ideal. The Virgin Mother conceived this idea of God and gave to her ideal the name Jesus. To accommodate Himself to our immature ideas of spiritual power, Jesus called His body "flesh and bones." His resurrection was the spiritualization of thought material belief yielding to spiritual understanding.

c) *Russellism*. The names by which its adherents know this error are various, among them being "the Watch Tower," "The Millennial Dawn" and "Jehovah's Witnesses."

These errorists have no place for the risen and exalted Lord Jesus. The man Jesus, they say, is dead—forever dead. His existence ended at the cross. It was necessary that he should die and remain dead to all eternity. Just where His body is they do not seem to know, whether it dissolved into gasses, or whether it is being preserved as a memorial. He was a perfect human, but nothing more. Before coming into the world in the body of the Nazarene he is declared to have existed as the arch-angel Michael—a created being.

d) *Besantism*. Its official name is Theosophy. According to this cult, Jesus is one of the several great leaders or *Christs* divinely given to the world, each having his own quota of truth to contribute which is of distinct value as part of one

grand whole which will become the basis of the final world religion. By a series of re-incarnations these great spirits have perfected their egos; thus, Jesus became the Christ.

Within the past few decades numerous cults of this nature have blossomed, each having some distinctive emphasis, yet expressing this general thought. They are of the same brood and are indicative of end-time conditions in the religious world.

e) Mormonism. Mormonism sees Jesus as the Son of Adam-God and Mary. It declares that Jesus was married to the Marys and Martha at Cana of Galilee, whereby He could "see His seed" before being crucified. Joseph Smith, the founder of Mormonism is declared to be a descendant of David by his plural wife Bathsheba, therefore, it is argued, had David not been a polygamist, there would have been no Redeemer.

Thus we trace the slime of the serpent's trail; it is subtle, deceiving, and deadly. The character of our Lord has been attacked from every angle. Satan is His sworn enemy; he cannot leave Him alone.

SUGGESTIONS FOR THE STUDENT

If you are to be an intelligent leader, it is essential that you should know the general teaching of each of these errors. Do not be afraid of them; tackle them manfully; do not allow them to shake your faith. Get your own experience definitely settled before you expose yourself to them, then find out in your general reading just what they teach. Your own spiritual certainty will be a sufficient answer to any subtle insinuation the devil may bring. Know your Bible and be sure of what God has done for you, and you have nothing to fear.

TEST QUESTIONS

1. What do we mean when we speak of scholastic attacks?
2. Name some of the attacks.
3. Answer the attack you have named.
4. Explain the religious attack.
 - a. Within the Church.
 - b. Alongside the Church.
5. Answer where you can the attacks named.

VIII. WHAT THINK YE OF CHRIST? (Continued)

The Formulation of the Creeds Concerning Him

The Christological controversy within the early Church was long and bitter, extending over several centuries, but finding its fiercest conflict in the sixth, seventh, and eighth. During the earlier period this question was not dominant, for with it were involved other issues, such as the doctrine of the Trinity and the personality of the Holy Spirit. The question finally arose as to *how* the union of the divine and human in a single Person could be conceived, and *how* these two distinct aspects of Christ's personality could be thought of as related to each other.

First came the *Docetic* and *Gnostic* controversies in which the reality of Christ's human body was denied. Then followed the *Ebionite* heresy, in which the Godhead of Christ was questioned, but a peculiar relationship to God was accorded Him by reason of the unmeasured fullness of the Spirit which rested upon Him from His baptism onward.

Then came the *Sabellians* with their Modalistic Monarchian doctrine that the Son was not a distinct personality, but, like the Spirit, was an aspect, a mode, "an expression of the one God."

Now followed the *Arians*, with their teaching of Christ as a created being, higher than man, yet lower than God—the Logos uniting himself with the humanity of Jesus and taking the place of the human soul, thus forming neither man nor God, but a demigod.

At last the controversy came into the open, and at Nicaea in Bithynia, A.D. 325, the first Ecumenical Council was held and what became known as the Nicene Creed was framed. This, however, did not end the controversy. For half a century the conflict raged. Five times Athanasius, who had so stoutly op-

posed the Arians, was driven into exile, and men took his place of whom it is declared that in character they were much less worthy.

The Nicene Creed affirmed the oneness of essence of the Son with the Father, but this now raised a further question, namely, how this divine co-eternal Son is related to the humanity in which He appeared on earth. The Apollinarians asserted that while Jesus had a body, the Logos within Him took the place of the human mind. This error was dealt with at the council of Constantinople which reviewed and strengthened the Nicene Creed, finally making it to read as follows:

We believe:

1. In one God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth and of all things visible and invisible;
2. And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, begotten of the Father before all worlds, the only begotten (that is of the substance of the Father) God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made (both in heaven and on earth);
3. Who for us men, and for our salvation came down from heaven, and was incarnated by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary, and was made Man;
4. And was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate and suffered and was buried;
5. And risen again on the third day according to the Scriptures,
6. And ascended into heaven
7. And sitteth on the right hand of the Father
8. And is coming again with glory, to judge both the quick and the dead; Whose kingdom shall have no end;
9. And in the Holy Ghost, the Lord, the Giver of Life, Who proceedeth from the Father, who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified, who spake by the prophets;

10. One holy catholic and apostolic Church:

11. We acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins.

12. We look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come.

Soon the battle raged again, this time the *Nestorians* denying the real union between the divine and the human in Jesus and asserting two distinct personalities. This error was condemned at the Council of Ephesus A.D. 431.

Then came the *Eutychians* teaching that strange intermingling of the two natures in Christ which constituted a third nature, and the controversy led to Chalcedon that fourth great Ecumenical Council where the question of the Person Christ was clearly faced, discussed and defined. The findings of the earlier Councils were reviewed and endorsed and a new creed or symbol framed which read as follows:

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, and 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 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 of 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 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 Hypostasis, 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.

Even yet the controversy continued, *Monophysitism* with its *one nature* theory, and later the Monothelite controversy concerning *the will* in Christ.

Some have not hesitated to speak slightly of these creeds, calling them vain attempts at word spinning, which are now old, musty and outworn. Those who talk in this manner are utterly lacking in appreciation for these great symbols, and the blood, sweat, and tears out of which they have come. Watch these men in their magnificent endeavor to build a defense against the subtle working of error; using every word they could, piling one expression upon another lest there should be left one loophole through which it might find its way in. This age of jazz might do well to listen once again to these men, involved though their wording of things may seem to be, for again in these latter days, as we have already seen, there have arisen these deadly modern errors, each with its own degree of spiritual poison for the unwary soul.

All these attacks, however, whether ancient or modern, have only the more clearly established one great fact, namely, that the Person of Christ is greater than all criticism and all opposition. Today He stands supreme, towering above all else. When men have exhausted their ingenuity and hell has done its worst, He will continue to stand before a gainsaying world as **GOD MANIFEST IN THE FLESH.**

SUGGESTIONS FOR THE STUDENT

If at all possible, do some definite reading on Theological Symbolics. Do not rest satisfied until you are thoroughly acquainted with the historic background of the Creeds. Ponder the Creeds themselves. Were they adequate? Should they now be revised? If not, why not? If so, to what extent? Learn the Creeds so as to be able to recite them.

TEST QUESTIONS

1. What happened at Nicaea?
2. What was the relationship of Athanasius to the Arians?
3. What happened at Constantinople?
4. What happened at Ephesus?
5. Why the need of the Council of Chalcedon?

IX. THE REDEEMING PASSION

The Christian religion has a bleeding heart. In this it differs from others—at its very center stands a *cross*. Its most meaningful word is *sacrifice*, and that sacrifice is eternal in its principle; for although manifest in time it was conceived in eternity, in the very mind of God before the world began. Jesus is the “Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.”

The word *sacrifice*, when written both vertically and horizontally forms a cross, as the following example will show. Central to that cross is the letter “I.” It is not without significance that “I” is also the center of the “*sIn*” and “*SavIour*”; a fact which is at least suggestive. The center of “*sIn*” is the capital “I”—the exaggerated and exalted ego. We have capitalized the letter to indicate the exaggerated fact. The center of “*sacrIifice*” is also the capital “I”—but this time the essential self, giving itself for others. The center of “*SavIour*” is also the capital “I.” It is not His doctrines but Christ *himself* that ensures our salvation. Written both ways, horizontally and vertically, each of the three words form a cross, the central fact being the “I.”

	S	
	A	S
	C	A
	R	V
S	SACR I FICE	SAV I OUR
I N	F	O
	I	U
	C	R
	E	

That central, sacrificial cross, the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, towering *upward* reaches heaven, linking itself to the very throne of God (Revelation 5:6). Striking *downward* it

reaches hell, triumphing over all its powers (Colossians 2:15; Hebrews 2:4). Reaching *outward* it has two all embracing arms, and by these it brings together a sinful race and a holy God from whom the race has been so sadly estranged.

Since God is immaculately holy and man is inherently sinful, it is essential that some common ground be found on which they might be brought together. Calvary supplies that ground.

The saving work of Christ, by reason of His Calvary atonement comprehends two vital facts: Atonement *for* sin, and salvation *from* sin. Between these facts of *for* and *from* an outstanding distinction exists and an even balance of thought must be kept. The *for* has to do with the sacrifice itself, while the *from* has to do with its results. The distinction must always be recognized between the *fact* of the atonement and the *doctrines* which proceed from it.

1) *Concerning the Fact.* This, whether men receive it or refuse it, will remain unaltered and unalterable for all time and all eternity. Theories concerning it may come and go; ideas and systems may establish themselves then fade away; but the *fact* of the Atonement must forever remain. To it nothing can be added and from it nothing can be subtracted. In its unchanging nature it stands eternally an accomplished deed which no power in earth or hell can either revise or revoke.

2) *Concerning the presentation of the fact.* While the *fact* is unchanging, the *doctrinal expression* explaining the fact has varied according to the peculiar viewpoint of the person by whom it has been presented. Our concern in these studies is to acquaint ourselves with that varied expression, and then, on an intelligent scriptural basis, to become assured of a settled conviction for ourselves. In order to do this, a fourfold consideration will be necessary.

We must first consider the *historical approach*; the world aspect and then the scriptural aspect. We must then view the *historical deed*; some explanation will be needed for the awful fact of Calvary. We must go on to trace the historical develop-

ment. Great minds have given themselves to the consideration of this amazing fact and much contention has arisen over it. We want a clear statement based on the definite teaching of the Word of God. Finally, we must formulate intelligently a theory for ourselves.

The Historical Approach

1. THE WORLD ASPECT

This has been called by some theologians "the *negative* preparation," or the preparation for Christ in the history of the heathen world.

Discussing this, Dr. A. H. Strong raises the question: "Why could not Eve have become the mother of the chosen seed? and why was not the cross set up at the gates of Eden?" To which, of course, he gives the obvious reply: "A preparation was needful." That preparation was twofold in its character: It concerned world trends, and moreover, it concerned a chosen people who must be educated, disciplined and prepared.

As we look at world trends through the successive centuries it becomes immediately evident that in and through them an all-wise Mind and a superintending Providence has been definitely at work. Paul the apostle seems to have recognized that the coming of Jesus was according to divine schedule when he writes, "For when we were yet without strength, *in due time* Christ died for the ungodly" (Romans 5:6). "But when *the fulness of the time* was come, God sent forth his Son" (Galatians 4:4).

"In due time"; in "the fulness of time"! To be more literal, *When the time was fully due*. So literal was this *due time* that when Jesus came, some were sufficiently aware of it to be waiting to receive Him (Luke 2:24-38); although, strangely enough, the religious leaders of that day were so spiritually blind that when questioned about the fact they glibly quoted prophecy to prove it, yet allowed the greatest event in human history to happen on their very doorstep without their awareness of it. (Matthew 2:4-6.)

It would be correct to say that just as we go to the railroad station to meet an arriving traveler knowing when the train is scheduled to come in, so these watching saints knew the divine schedule and expected the Royal Passenger to arrive, and as all the world now knows, *He came*.

This *preparation* is marked from the beginning, and to those whose eyes have been divinely illumined, it soon becomes apparent that even heathenism itself, with its crudities and cruelties is an unsatisfied cry for something consciously needed yet tragically undiscerned.

a. *These preparatory trends are seen in the philosophies and religions of the pagan world.* While it is true that until Christ came the world was without the Sun of Righteousness, it is also true that before His coming there were light rays, faint it is true, but light rays none the less, which by their ineffectiveness pointed to the need of Him.

Socrates, Plato, and others of their kind were not without some rays of light—certainly not salvation light, but nonetheless light of its kind. Confucius, Buddha, Zoroaster and their fraternity taught the highest they knew, and it would be folly to assume that in the teachings of these men the world found no benefit; yet how poor it really was, and the best they had to offer was by its very incompleteness the pointer to something—had we not better say *Someone*—yet to come.

b. *These trends are further seen in the events in the world at large.* Here the trends of preparation became so clear that it would seem that none but those wilfully blind could fail to see them.

1) *The language trend.* By reason of the military conquests of Alexander, the Greek language began to be spoken everywhere; this provided a vehicle for the gospel so that *all might hear* and understand the message.

2) *The social and political trends.* Through the rise of the Roman Empire, social order and political unity began to be established; thus all lands now became accessible.

3) *The religious trend.* By reason of the dispersion of the Jews, synagogues became established everywhere; this now

provided a starting point for preaching for the Christian missionaries of Jewish nationality who came bearing the message of the Cross.

There were many years of bloodshed, then came an era of peace. The way was now prepared in the world at large for the coming of Christ and for the publishing of the gospel message.

SUGGESTIONS FOR THE STUDENT

In order to comprehend intelligently the situation, this world aspect must be understood. Wider reading will pay good dividends here.

TEST QUESTIONS

1. Show why the letter "I" is so suggestive in the words "sin," "sacrifice," and "Saviour."
2. Show the difference between atonement *for* sin and salvation *from* sin.
3. Show the advance preparation for the coming of Christ.

2. THE SCRIPTURAL ASPECT

While in the world of pagan thought men were groping, and in the world at large events military, political, and religious were getting the world ready for Messiah's appearing, a Book was also in course of preparation, written in widely differing parts by various authors; not as the product of mental genius but wrought out through the spiritual education of a selected people, and recorded by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost.

The subject of Redemption is the grand, central theme of the Bible. In the Old Testament it is foreshadowed, while in the New Testament it is set forth as accomplished. Throughout the entire Book there is a perpetual bloodstream, beginning with the blood of slaughtered beasts and culminating in outpoured lifestream of a crucified Messiah. Even when exalted to the throne of God the Lamb is seen as "having been newly slain," (Revelation 5:6 literal translation.) while across the whole is indelibly written:

"Without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sins."

Concerning Redemption as seen in the Old Testament the teaching may be stated as twofold in its method:

a. *It is seen in type and symbol.* The first declaration and symbolic action concerning atonement came from *Jehovah himself.* Genesis 3:15, 21.

There can be no doubt that the covering of the fallen pair was at the cost of the shedding of blood; thus we find the seed germs of this great doctrine of blood atonement at the very outset of the Sacred Book.

The idea of access to God through blood shedding is seen in the worship of the patriarchs. Beginning with *Abel*, we find God approached through the offering of the firstling of the flock. Genesis 4:4. Passing on to *Noah*, we find him building an altar as the first act on leaving the ark. Genesis 8:20. The fact of the altar is familiar in the life of *Abraham*. Genesis 12:7, 8; 13:4, 18; 22:9. *Jacob had his altar*. Genesis 35:1, 3, 7. *Moses* approached God in this manner. Exodus 17:15. *Job* knew the value of sacrifice. Job 1:5.

Turn where you will in the Old Testament scriptures, this outstanding fact is seen: wherever there is a soul in contact with God the altar is not far to seek. This thought is intensified in the sacrifices under *the ceremonial law*. For an intelligent understanding here, a study should be made of the Book of Leviticus with its offerings and feasts, compared with the epistle to the Hebrews.

b. *It is further developed in the great prophetic utterances.* These are far more numerous than we can here record. Somewhere we have seen it stated that the Old Testament contains three hundred and thirty-three specific and striking pictures of the death of Christ. Among many other scripture references the following are good samples: Psalms 22; Isaiah 53; Daniel 9:26; Zechariah 13: 1, 6, 7. These should be carefully read and other similar passages sought.

SUGGESTIONS FOR THE STUDENT

The following thought will repay careful consideration: Were the Old Testament and its times an essential background for the fact of Christ's Calvary redemption? If so, why? If not, why not?

TEST QUESTIONS

1. The subject of redemption is the grand central theme of the Bible. Discuss this.
2. Show redemption as seen in the Old Testament in type and symbol.
3. Show redemption as set forth in prophetic utterance.

The Historical Fact

As we turn to the pages of the New Testament the central figure is the human form of the Son of God. There the Word is made flesh and is seen to dwell among men. His life is unique and His death amazing. These are interpreted for us by those who knew and followed Him.

As to His life, little need be said about it. Upon it, in audible tones, the Father pronounced His pleasure, while with it, His bitterest enemies could find no fault. It was this flawless life that gave itself up to death, so that by reason of His dying men might live.

In considering this historical fact two main thoughts are to be noted, namely, Christ's own emphasis concerning His Calvary death, and further, the emphasis of those who knew Him.

1. THE EMPHASIS OF OUR LORD HIMSELF

It has been noted by Bible scholars that during the early part of His ministry our Lord was strangely silent about the great purpose for which He came. As has so often been pointed out, our first New Testament portraiture, Matthew's Gospel, naturally divides itself with this simple expression: "From that time." It occurs twice, the first time having to do with *service* and the second with *suffering*. "*From that time* Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent" (Matthew 4:17). "*From that time* forth began Jesus to shew unto His disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer" (Matthew 16:21). See also Mark 8:31.

From that second period onward, the cross is never far from view, as a glance at the remaining chapters will show. In conversation with His disciples at the foot of the Transfiguration Mount, He exclaimed, "Likewise shall also *the Son of Man suffer*" (Matthew 16:21). See also Mark 9:12. "While they abode in Galilee" He again foretold His death, saying, "The Son of Man shall be betrayed into the hands of men: and *they shall kill him*" (Matthew 17:22, 23). See also Mark 9:31. While going up to Jerusalem, He took His disciples apart and said, "Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of Man

shall be betrayed and they shall condemn him to death" (Matthew 20:17-19). See also Luke 18:31-34. Addressing His disciples after the request had been made by the wife of Zebedee for a place of prominence for her sons, Jesus said, "The Son of Man came to give his life a ransom" (Matthew 20:28). While partaking with His disciples of that Last Supper, He said, concerning the cup which He gave them to drink, "This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins" (Matthew 26:28). Addressing the Pharisees, He said, "I lay down my life for the sheep. . . . I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself" (John 10:15-18). Hanging upon the cross He cried, "It is finished," then bowing His head, "He sent away his spirit" (John 19:30—literal translation).

Here then are eight definite statements from which, when placed together, we may gather three thoughts.

a. *In the consciousness of Jesus, there was no doubt about both the fact and nature of His approaching death.* It is very evident that the cross did not surprise Him. With a definite tread He marched toward it, knowing full well what His enemies, energized by the powers of darkness, would ultimately do.

b. *In His approach to that death, there is no doubt as to His personal freedom in facing it.* In the fullest sense His life was not taken from Him. He gave it, and with the same freedom He took it again.

This could not be said of any other. Many have willingly placed themselves in jeopardy and allowed their lives to be taken, but no one, other than He, has had either power of authority to *dismiss his spirit* at will. Our Lord Jesus first assumed this life, then laid it down, then took it again, each time at His own will and pleasure.

c. *In so freely giving His life, a distinct purpose is declared:* (1) His death was for the benefit of others. "For many." Matthew 20:28; 26:28. The *many* here are evidently the *whosoever* of John 3:16. (2) That benefit is described as: "A ran-

som." Matthew 20:28. "For the remission of sins." Matthew 26:28.

2. THE EMPHASIS OF THOSE WHO KNEW HIM

The angels knew Him—and before His advent in Bethlehem's manger, brought to Joseph this redemption message: "Thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21).

John the Baptist knew Him—and proclaimed His identity and atoning purpose to the assembled crowds. "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29).

The apostles knew Him—and after His death, resurrection and ascension, had time for mature reflection upon these facts. Without hesitation they made their appraisal and declared their conviction.

Paul, although not among the first disciple band, met Him in His risen capacity—and under the teaching of the Holy Spirit learned the great facts of redemption truth. Quickly he saw in the Calvary tragedy the fulfillment of all his Jewish hopes, and with amazing spiritual insight, related the one to the other.

Among other scripture passages the following are apostolic statements concerning the redemption fact: Acts 4:10-12; 5:30, 31; 20:28; Romans 3:25, 26; 5:6-11; 6:1-10; 8:3, 32; I Corinthians 1:22-24; 6:20; 15:3; II Corinthians 5:14, 15, 18, 21; Galatians 1:4; 2:20; 3:1, 13, 14; 4:4, 5; 6:14; Ephesians 1:7; 2:13-16; 5:2; 5:25-27; Philippians 2:8; Colossians 1:20-22; 2:14, 15; I Timothy 2:5, 6; II Timothy 1:9, 10; Titus 2:14; Hebrews 1:3; 2:9-17; 9:12-14, 24-28; 10:10, 12, 14, 19; 13:12; I Peter 1:11, 18, 19, 20; 2:24; 3:18; I John 1:7-9; 2:2; 3:16; 4:9, 10; Revelation 1:5; 5:6, 9, 12; 13:8.

a. *In these scriptures various descriptive terms are employed.*

1) *Atonement.* This word, while so familiar in our evangelical phraseology, is more particularly an Old Testament expression, and is found in the New Testament only once. Rom-

ans 5:11. Even there the Revised Version has changed the rendering, replacing it with the word *reconciliation*, which, as we shall see, is found several times elsewhere. The root idea in the Hebrew is literally "to cover." See Exodus 30:10; Psalms 32:1.

By way of explanation, it has been common among Bible teachers to split up the word into *At-one-ment*, indicating the thought of two estranged parties brought together and made one by the interposition of a third. The death of Jesus does that.

2) *Reconciliation*. This is a familiar New Testament word; it is found in Romans 5:10; 11:15; I Corinthians 7:11; II Corinthians 5:11-21. It is concerned with those who are *enemies*, and consequently under the displeasure. The reconciliation is made by the death of God's Son; acceptance into divine favor and assurance of salvation is on this ground alone.

3) *Propitiation*. See Romans 3:25; I John 2:2; 4:10. This same word is also translated *merciful*, Luke 18:13; *mercy seat*, Hebrews 9:5. To be propitious is to be disposed to favor or to forgive. To propitiate is to conciliate or appease. The propitiation is the act of appeasing and conciliating. Here Christ is seen as providing in the fact of His death, a meeting place between man and God.

4) *Redemption*. The thought suggested here is to *buy back*; to ransom or liberate from slavery, captivity, or death by the payment of a price. The word *ransom* is also used. Those redeemed are declared to have been *sold* under sin, Galatians 3:10. They are *redeemed* or *ransomed* by the price of blood. Galatians 3:13; I Timothy 2:6; Titus 2:14; I Peter 1:18.

5) *Substitution*. This is not an actual Bible word, yet it is a scriptural idea, the thought content being there; the word has been coined within the Church to express the Bible idea. See such passages as Isaiah 53:5-12; Romans 5:6-8; I Peter 2:24; 3:18.

b. *From these scriptures four outstanding facts may be clearly summarized.*

1) *The central fact of Redemption is the death of Christ.* His birth, life, example and teaching were all contributory to it, but *the fact central to all else* is His atoning death as crucified Redeemer.

2) *That death is distinctive* in its characteristics. It is voluntary: He died of His own volition and choice. It is expiatory: He died as a propitiation for sin. It is vicarious: He died as the substitutionary sacrifice in the place of others.

3) *The beneficiaries* of this Redemptive death are variously but definitely described. It is for "the world"; for "many"; for "that which is lost"; for "the Church."

4) *The results* of this Redemption are clearly stated. Sin is seen to be dealt with in all its aspects, and implications.

SUGGESTIONS FOR THE STUDENT .

The conception of the cross in the thinking of Jesus as suggested in the Gospel narratives will form a theme well worth the student's careful thought.

TEST QUESTIONS

1. Name the Central Figure of the New Testament.
2. Show our Lord's own emphasis concerning His death.
3. What was the emphasis concerning the death of Jesus in the testimonies of those who knew Him?

The Historical Development

As we take up this section of our study we shall do well to remember that it is not our *view* of the Atonement, however correct it may be, that saves us. We are saved only through our acceptance of, and faith in, the atoning *fact*.

It is impossible, however, for any soul to think deeply upon this great theme without soon forming some mental concept as to the *how* of Redemption.

The doctrine of Christ's atoning work is far from being a ready-made garment fitted upon the Church. Around it many wordy battles have been fought, as we shall discover as we continue our study.

We shall consider this from a four-fold angle. First, the Atonement in the Patristic Writings. Second, the Atonement in the pre-Reformation period. Third, the Atonement in the

Reformation theology. Finally, the Atonement in post-Reformation teaching. These we shall take up in their respective order.

1. THE PATRISTIC WRITINGS

By the *Patristic Writings*, we mean, of course, the writings of the early Fathers of the Church.

In our approach to this section we find an immediate difficulty in the fact that these men do not seem to have made the same serious attempt to construct *theories* of the atonement as is to be found at a later period.

Viewing the death of Christ as the fulfillment of prophecy, especially such portions as the fifty-third chapter of the prophecy of Isaiah, and realizing the tremendous liberation resulting from faith in Christ as based upon the truth discovered therein, some broad and general statements were made, which when more carefully considered by later thinkers could not honestly be retained without some modification. Doubtless various reasons could be assigned for this; chief among them might be their close proximity to the fact, and the personal cost of embracing it.

Those early days, however, were not without their definite formulation of atonement teaching, which has become known as the *Ransom theory*. Its origin is uncertain, there being no agreement as to the time when, the place where, or the person by whom it was formulated. Some have credited it to *Irenaeus* in the second century. It is said to have had a strong representative in *Origen* in the third century. *Augustine* taught it in the fourth and fifth centuries. During the latter part of the fourth century there were three men who have become known in history as constituting what was known as the Capadocian School of Theology, namely Gregory Nazianzuz, Gregory of Nyssa, and Basil. The second of these is said to have been the outstanding theologian of the three; he is also declared to have strongly advocated this theory, so much so that some have not hesitated to call it "the Gregorian doctrine." In various forms it seems to have held its ground until the challenge of Anselm in the eleventh century, and even in the twelfth century it was championed by Bernard of Clairvaux.

a. *The Ransom theory* seems to have been expressed in a number of forms.

1) *The first form of the theory.* This has come down to us as a sort of spiritualization of the old principles of the rights of war, according to which those conquered in battle become the slaves of the conqueror. Satan conquered man, say these teachers, thus becoming the rightful owner of both Adam and his posterity. During the period of the later Roman Empire this portraiture would be perfectly intelligible to slaves and owners alike.

That He might deliver man from captivity, Christ is seen as offering Himself as a ransom to Satan. This ransom, Satan is said to have accepted and to have renounced his right to his captives. Christ however, tricked Satan, broke the bonds of death, and came out, having made His death a sort of bait by which Satan was trapped. Even in the twelfth century, Peter Lombard, one of the most famous among the schoolmen, is quoted as saying, "What did the Redeemer do to our captor? He held out to him His cross as a mouse trap; in it He set as a bait His own blood." To us, such a statement is ridiculous and crude in the extreme, yet these men in sincerity of heart seemed to revel in the thought of it. Some, however, began to see the dawning of clearer light.

2) *The second form of the theory.* With more careful thought some of the crudities of this doctrine began to disappear. Its second statement does not see the death of Christ as a ransom paid to Satan, but rather sees *Christ as the conqueror of Satan*. Satan conquered and enslaved mankind through the fall of the first man; God in Christ became man and, as the last Adam, conquered man's conqueror and procured freedom for the race.

3) *The third form of the theory.* A slight difference is here seen in the statement that the right and power of Satan over man is found in the fact of sin. Christ became man and Satan brought about His death. In doing this he overreached himself and by the very act executed the deed which provided a ransom for the race.

Thus, in its varying forms, the Ransom theory prevailed in the church for a thousand years, and not without some apparent scriptural basis, as the following passages will show: Romans 3:19; 7:14; Galatians 3:10 with Matthew 20:28; Galatians 3:13; I Timothy 2:6; Titus 2:14; I Peter 1:18, 19.

There are some points of emphasis, however, which do not seem to have been clarified. It is true that men were Satan's captives and under his dominion. There is no doubt that Christ gave Himself a ransom, and because of that ransom price men may go free. It does not follow, however, that the ransom was paid by Christ to *Satan*, or that Satan held any just claims over the souls of men. The Scriptures rather teach: (a) Man, by reason of his transgression, in yielding to Satan has become subject to the penalty of divine law. (b) Satan, in his malice, is permitted by God to inflict that penalty. (c) Christ, by His righteous life and Calvary death has satisfied the law which man has broken, and this He has done, not for Himself, but for His people; therefore, all who are truly His share in the ransom results.

SUGGESTIONS FOR THE STUDENT

This period of Church history and doctrinal development will provide the student with basic ideas of which he will do well to take the fullest advantage. Make sure that you clearly understand the thought trends thus far.

TEST QUESTIONS

1. What do we mean when we speak of the Patristic writings?
2. The early Fathers do not seem to have made any serious attempt to construct theories of the Atonement. Are there any reasons to be suggested?
3. Trace the three forms of the Ransom theory.
4. What outstanding names are associated with this theory?

2. THE PRE-REFORMATION PERIOD

After ten long centuries we find evidences of a change of expression concerning this vital theme of Atonement. In the eleventh century Anselm was born, and this event was followed, forty-six years later, by the birth of Abelard. Both these men felt the necessity of a re-statement of the doctrine of Atonement, and each, from his own respective angle, formulated his

view. These views are best evaluated, not as finished products for us today, but as chronological helps in the formulation of a settled doctrine of the Atonement which will be clear in its thought and comprehensive in its content.

a. *The Satisfaction Theory*—Atonement in terms of the law court. This theory, first advocated by Anselm, has been called by some *The Commercial Theory*. Attacking the earlier theory with its thought of *ransom*, Anselm insisted that the answer to the difficulty there met was to be found, not in the devil, but in *the nature of God*. His theory, in brief may be stated thus:

God is majestic, righteous, and holy. It is against Him that man has sinned; and for this violation of the divine honor, justice demands an adequate redress. Man's rebellion against God is an infinite sin. Justice demands an infinite penalty. That justice *must* be satisfied—and the demanded satisfaction is not to be regarded as a vindictive passion but as a righteous requirement which, of necessity, a just and holy God must make. The blow must fall somewhere, either on *the condemned sinner* or on *an acceptable substitute*.

Man, however, cannot meet this obligation. He is finite and the demand is infinite. Moreover, he is sinful, and while each man finds it impossible to meet his obligation and atone for his own sin, the race in general cannot find an acceptable substitute worthy to stand in the place of the rest.

God cannot and must not surrender His honor by granting gratuitous forgiveness; it follows therefore that a compensatory service must be rendered by a Mediator, and that Mediator He must provide. For this reason "the Word was made flesh." "Christ died for our sins." Because He was divine, His death outweighed all that was owed by reason of human sin, and so the divine justice was satisfied. Christ offered to the Father something we could not pay; justice could not be satisfied with less—and could not demand more.

Thus we have the thought of *God* satisfying *God* through the instrumentality of the creature who owed the debt: God

the Father, the embodiment of justice, inflexibly demanding payment of the penalty which the sin of Adam had incurred; for the whole race had sinned in him; God the Son, the incarnation of love, voluntarily paying the debt which justice demanded. And so Anselm wove his theory, insisting that "God owed nothing to the devil except punishment . . . what was due from man was owed to God, not to the devil." The price was infinite—but *God paid it*. Did Anselm have any scriptural ground for such a theory? See such passages as Isaiah 53: 5-12; Romans 5: 6-8; I Peter 2: 24; 3: 18.

b. *The Moral Influence Theory*—Atonement in terms of philosophic thought. Refusing the Ransom theory, and not satisfied with Anselm's theory of satisfaction, Abelard began to work out ideas of his own. Abelard might be designated the rationalistic theologian of his day. Anselm had located the need for the Atonement in the *nature of God*, but Abelard finds it in the *nature of man*. Rejecting the idea of expiation or satisfaction of justice by vicarious suffering, he attributed the efficacy of Christ's work to the *moral effect* produced on the hearts of men by His character, His life and teaching, and the fact and manner of His death.

Christ is seen as dying on the cross as an exhibition of divine love and grace which is to draw the souls of men away from the desire of sinning. He brings men to salvation and effects their reconciliation to God by kindling within their cold hearts a responsive love. He took man's nature so that by His example even unto death, He might draw us to Himself.

More concisely stated, the main points of Abelard's theory may be set forth as follows: (1) In the nature of God there can be no such thing as vindictive justice. (2) The one great principle determining His provisions for human redemption is His unchanging benevolence. (3) The sole object of the life and death of Jesus was to show God's willingness to forgive the sinner and to subdue his rebellious heart by producing a moral effect upon his nature.

SUGGESTIONS FOR THE STUDENT

The two theories here stated have been only briefly sketched. Seek further information concerning Anselm and Abelard and their respective teachings. Be able to state each theory and to discuss it. How far is it true? Where, if any, is the error? Did Abelard have scriptural grounds for his new emphasis? Is it possible that he was stressing a hitherto neglected side of redemption truth? Yet may it not be that within this beautiful thought of the love of God as so ably expressed by his scholarly mind, there is the seed of error which later will grow, bringing trouble within the Church? Does the Socinianism of the sixteenth century and the Unitarianism of later years seem to supply this answer?

TEST QUESTIONS

1. What two atonement theories characterized the pre-Reformation period?
2. What two men are closely associated with those theories?
3. State as clearly and concisely as possible each of the two theories.
4. What is your opinion of these theories?

3. THE REFORMATION THEOLOGY

a. *The Protestant Penal Theory.* Abelard's doctrine of the moral influence of the Cross was far from satisfactory to the Reformers. Added to this was the iniquitous Roman system of multiplied penances and sale of pardons which had stung these men into a desperate radicalism. To them, salvation being divinely wrought must be free; and being free, must be offered without thought of merit to the most undeserving.

The recognized leader of the Reformation was the monk Martin Luther, but its outstanding theologian was John Calvin. He it is to whom we must look for the Reformation emphasis of the Atonement. It would not be correct, however, to say that Calvin gave us a theory. He has been described as "less an original thinker than an organizer of existing teaching."

Reaching back into the Church's past, he contacted Anselm for Atonement teaching, then going back still further, he laid hold of Augustine for the doctrine of Divine Sovereignty. Both of these he restored and embellished. We say *embellished*, because it would seem that in his desire to be emphatic, his emphasis, especially in the Augustinian doctrine, became extreme.

While however, the basis of Calvin's atonement teaching was Anselm's Satisfaction Theory, the nature of that satisfac-

tion was now differently presented. Both theories agree in presenting the work of Christ as one of *vicarious obedience*. Anselm, however, had no thought of *vicarious punishment*. His only alternatives were whether man should suffer endless punishment, or whether he should render, in Christ, some deed of satisfaction.

With Anselm, the thought stressed was that of God's insulted honor which demanded an adequate redress, but the emphasis of Calvin was that of the wrath of a just and righteous Judge who, although He loves men, so hates their sin that He can only extend forgiveness as the claims of moral law are fully satisfied. This satisfaction must be either the punishment of the sinner or the equal punishment of his substitute. In other words, the sinner must die for his transgression, being banished to eternal hell, or else Christ, who was elected to stand in man's place, must receive *the exact parallel* of his merited punishment, including the wrath of God, the pains of death, and the woes of hell.

With Calvin also was revived the question as to the *extent of the Atonement*. For *whom* did Jesus die? What ground, exactly, did His sufferings cover? Hence what we now know as the Calvinistic doctrine of *Particular Redemption*, expressed in the teaching of Predestination and the Final Perseverance of the Saints.

SUGGESTIONS FOR THE STUDENT

If the student is to be well-equipped it will be necessary to seek first hand information on the teaching of Calvin, and to make a personal evaluation of what he taught. Just what did he teach? How far was he right? Where did he go wrong? The student should be prepared to state these things and to discuss them. *Calvin's Institutes* should be studied, then *Watson's Institutes* and *Fletcher's Checks to Antinomianism* should be taken up as a balancing factor.

TEST QUESTIONS

1. What were the relative positions of Luther and Calvin in regard to the Reformation?
2. In what way was Calvin's teaching related to that of Anselm?
3. Show why the Reformers rejected the teaching of Abelard.
4. How did Calvin relate himself to Augustine?

4. THE POST REFORMATION TEACHING

While Calvinism was seeking to establish itself, another figure appeared in the theological arena in the person of Jacob Arminius, also known as Jacob Harmensen (1560-1609). He was professor at the University of Leyden in Holland, and was a younger contemporary of Hugo Grotius, or Hing Van Groot (1583-1645) a Dutch jurist.

The extravagances of Calvinism, especially with regard to the doctrine of predestination, had created a distinct reaction, and, led by Arminius, a new party appeared now known to history as *the Remonstrants*. What Calvin was to the Reformation, Grotius became to the Remonstrance.

a. *The Governmental Theory*—Atonement in terms of moral government. In his theory of Atonement, Grotius saw the difficulty to be met as lying in *the constitution of the universe*. God, he argued, is a moral Ruler, and sin is both an act and a state of rebellion against all the interests of His government, which, at all costs, He must protect. In the cross of Christ, therefore, He shows both His hatred of sin and His love for the sinner, thus making it possible to maintain justice while offering pardon. The theory is a sort of middle position between the viewpoint of Abelard and that of Anselm. Grotius was a jurist, and his theory was naturally stated from the legalistic point of view. It is sometimes called "*the Legalistic Theory*."

One writer has summarized the doctrinal position of those early days after this fashion: Among jurists it has been customary to acknowledge three theories of punishment, namely the *retributive*, the *reformatory*, and the *deterrent*. Of these in theology, Anselm is regarded as representing the first, Abelard the second, and Grotius the third.

The main elements of the teaching of Grotius have been stated somewhat as follows:

1) *God is a Moral Governor*. To regard Him merely as an offended party, a creditor, or even a master, would not be sufficient.

Anselm saw God as an offended party whose honor must

be vindicated. *Calvin* saw Him as an inexorable avenger who must punish men for their infraction of His law. *Grotius* differed from both these, conceiving God as the Supreme Moral Ruler who must maintain the dignity and authority of government.

2) *As Moral Governor He must act with a view to the best interests of those under His authority.* The purpose of punishment is the prevention of crime, the preservation of order and the best interests of the community. A *creditor* may remit a debt at his pleasure; a *master* may punish as he sees fit; but a *ruler* may not act according to his feelings, he must consider all the interests of his realm.

3) *As a good governor, God must therefore deal with sin.* He cannot allow it to be committed with impunity. He cannot pardon the sins of men without some adequate expression of His displeasure and His determination to punish them.

That was the design of the sufferings and death of Christ. God punished sin in Him as our example. This example was all the more impressive because of the dignity of Christ's person. Therefore, in view of His death, God can now, consistently with the best interests of His government, remit the penalty of the law in the case of a penitent believing soul.

Christ's death is the equivalent of our punishment in the sense that by it the dignity of God's moral government is as effectively proclaimed and vindicated as it would have been by our actual punishment. It is the authority of the divine government asserted and displayed.

The punishment need not be imposed because of personal demerit in the sufferer; He may suffer vicariously.

The essence of the Atonement therefore is this: The sufferings of Christ is an exhibition of God's displeasure against sin. Sin deserves to be punished and the impenitent cannot escape the penalty due to their offenses. The cross is God's symbol of His hatred of sin and the sufferings of Jesus are a *penal example* whereby God testified of His own hatred of it to deter and deliver us from it.

b. *The Wesleyan Emphasis:* Grotius popularized by Wesley.

About fifty years after the death of Grotius, John Wesley was born, and it has been in him that the Arminian doctrine has found its most popular exponent. In his numerous writings, comprising mainly his *Sermons*, *Journal*, *Letters*, and *Notes on the New Testament*, valuable material is to be found.

It would hardly be correct, however, to say that anywhere Wesley formally states his doctrine of the Atonement. He writes on Arminianism in general, and does not hesitate to identify himself with the Arminian doctrine. It is plain, however, that in matters of general theology he regards himself as *receiving* rather than *introducing* a system of doctrine, his special emphasis being the witness of the Spirit within the believer and the second work of grace.

Wesley did not write a formal theology. Adam Clarke, his younger contemporary, has left us a comparatively small volume entitled *Christian Theology*, but even this was not written by him in its present form; the material having been selected from his various writings and published in 1860. Next in order would be Watson's *Theological Institutes*, written by Richard Watson and published in 1823. Both these books echo Wesley's thought and are distinctly Arminian. Watson, whose work is of a far more extended nature than Clarke's, not only states the Arminian soteriological position but quite frequently strengthens his emphasis by naming Grotius as his authority.

The teaching of Wesley as reflected by his own writings, with those of his contemporaries and his early followers, is summarized in this simple statement:

On the great question relative to the personal character of Christ, which has divided the Christian world into Trinitarians and Unitarians, we have uniformly maintained what is called Orthodox ground. We are not Sabellians, holding a mere nominal Trinity, nor are we Arians, giving Christ a high character and talking well of the atonement, but denying his godship. Neither are we Socinians, or Humanitarians, but we strictly adhere to the ancient doctrine of the Trinity, attributing to Christ personality and all the attributes of the godhead,

mysteriously blended with those of manhood, and to the Holy Spirit the attributes that belong to the Father. And we do this not because we see the philosophy of such a Trinity in the divine unity, but because the Scriptures attribute the proper titles, attributes, and works of God, to the Son and the Spirit, as well as to the Father. . . . We are therefore, prepared to recognize the mission of Christ in its proper character. Man, having sinned and incurred the penalty of the law, must have been cut off, but for the institution of an atonement, by which God could be just, and yet the justifier of the ungodly. One object of Christ's mission was, therefore, to suffer in man's stead, that he might magnify the law, and make it honorable, by so far enduring its penalty as to preserve the race, and assure man that the law is not to be broken with impunity. Another object was, to endow him with grace and strength to overcome his propensities, and obey God, and finally to bring him to everlasting life in heaven.

To have pardoned him without the formality of such an atonement would not justly have represented God's abhorrence of sin, or his regard for his law. Nor would it have impressed men with suitable notions of the divine government, of their own obligations to avoid sin, or the danger of committing it. Hence, we consider our lives, our privileges, our hopes, and our enjoyments, among the benefits of the atonement, and look to God through Christ for all that we desire.—*Compendium of Methodism.*

c. *What is our belief today?* Since Wesley's day there have been many changes. Numerous attempts have been made at doctrinal restatement and there have not been lacking those who in the name of Christian scholarship have sought to discredit what they have scornfully termed the *outworn theories of a slaughter house religion*. Men and devils have combined their scholarly ability and hellish ingenuity to get rid of the Calvary death of Jesus as a sacrifice for sin; but as long as the

Bible stands and human sin calls for a remedy, there can be no other interpretation of the Calvary incident than the cross as "the power of God, and the wisdom of God" (I Corinthians 1:24).

When all men's words have been spun, and all their theories evolved, the atoning work of Christ will be found to be far more comprehensive than any human explanation of it.

Do they designate it an act of self-sacrifice giving to man a perfect example of obedience unto death? We heartily agree, knowing that it is written: "Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that we should follow his steps" (I Peter 2:21). Do they see in it a manifestation of God's love for a needy world? We have no fault to find, for it is written: "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son" (John 3:16). Do they comprehend it as a ransom price to liberate the captive soul? We raise no objection, for our Lord himself declared: "The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many" (Matthew 20:28). Do they claim that in offering Himself to God He satisfied the demand of divine justice? We stand in awe with them beside the Cross as there we read: "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins" (I John 4:10). Do they insist that by His dying Jesus exercised upon men that great principle of redemptive love, and by it sought to melt their hearts? We rejoice with them as we repeat, "The love of Christ constraineth us" (II Corinthians 5:14).

But when they began to emphasize one phase only and with modernistic subtilty use it to the discounting of these other great and glorious aspects of Redemption truth we stand bolt upright and rebel. We adhere to the simple statement which our Manual sets forth and on it rest for our eternal salvation:

We believe that Jesus Christ, by His sufferings, by the shedding of His own blood, and by His meritorious death on the cross, made a full atonement for all human sin, and that this atonement is the only ground of salvation,

and that it is sufficient for every individual of Adam's race.

SUGGESTIONS FOR THE STUDENT

Make a clear distinction in your own thinking between the teachings of Calvin and of Grotius. If possible, gather sufficient material to enable you to present and discuss this intelligently.

TEST QUESTIONS

1. Who was Arminius?
2. What was it that created the reaction led by Arminius?
3. What new party came into being as the result of this?
4. State the Governmental theory.
5. How did Wesley relate himself to Grotius?

Reading Suggestions for the Advanced Student

PART III

- MACKINTOSH, H. R., *The Doctrine of the Person of Christ*
FRANKS, ROBERT S., *A History of the Doctrine of the Work of Christ*
LEWIS, EDWIN, *The Christian Manifesto*, pp. 144-195
MACHEN, J. GRESHAM, *The Virgin Birth of Christ*
ORR, JAMES, *The Christian View of God and the World*, Lectures VI to VIII
CLARKE, W. N., *An Outline of Christian Theology*, pp. 260-368
STRONG, A. H., *Systematic Theology*, pp. 665-776
MILEY, JOHN, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. I, pp. 232-256
CURTIS, O. A., *The Christian Faith*, pp. 211-253
FAULKNER, J. A., *Lecture. The History of the Doctrine of the Divinity of Christ*

WILEY, H. ORTON, *Christian Theology*, Vol. I, pp. 143-300

JONES, RUFUS M., *The Church's Debt to Heretics*

International Standard Bible Encyclopedia

Article on the Person of Christ

Article on the Atonement

HASTINGS, *Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels*

Article on:

- | | |
|--------------------------|------------------------|
| The Attributes of Christ | Messiah |
| The Authority of Christ | Names and Titles |
| The Character of Christ | Propitiation |
| The Death of Christ | Redemption |
| The Divinity of Christ | Resurrection of Christ |
| Incarnation | Sinlessness of Jesus |
| Kenosis | The Virgin Birth |
| Mental Characteristics | |

HASTINGS, *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*

Article on:

- | | |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Jesus Christ, Vol. VII | Ebionism, Vol. V |
| Expiation and Atonement, Vol. V | Arianism, Vol. I |
| Docetism, Vol. IV | Adoptianism, Vol. I |
| Gnosticism, Vol. VI | Nestorianism, Vol. IX |
| Monarchianism, Vol. VIII | Monophysitism, Vol. VIII |
| Apollinarism, Vol. I | |

PART IV—GRACE

X. SAVING GRACE

The Two Works of Grace

Since man by nature is irrevocably lost, his only hope of regaining divine favor is through some approach being made from the Godward side. This approach has been made, first by the Father in Old Testament days through patriarchs, the lawgiver and prophets; then by the incarnation and redemption work of the Son; and finally through the present ministry of the Holy Spirit. It is through the agency of this Third Divine Person that man's lost condition is revealed and God's saving grace is made known.

The saving grace of God is manifested to the needy soul in two distinct and definite crisis works which by common consent among us are designated the first and second works of grace, one having to do with the *salvation of the sinner* and the other with the *entire sanctification of the believer*. These two crises are comprehensive in their scope, each embracing four great aspects of Christian experience. In each case these four are preceded by distinct prerequisites and sealed by divinely declared results.

The terms used denoting these aspects are sometimes perplexing to the beginner, and should be clearly comprehended as to their individual meaning and their mutual relationship.

1. THE FIRST WORK OF GRACE

This divinely wrought operation whereby the sinner becomes a new creature in Christ Jesus (II Corinthians 5:17) is based upon the *fact* of Christ's atoning work, and has distinctive preliminaries and results which we shall name:

a. *The preliminaries*. This saving work is of necessity preceded by three things, namely: a divinely wrought work upon

the sinner convicting and convincing him of sin. By this means repentance is induced, and the soul is driven to a position of faith.

1) *The Spirit's work of conviction.* This conviction Mr. Wesley describes in what he says are "the words of another" whom he does not name but heartily endorses: "When men feel in themselves the heavy burden of sin, see damnation to be the reward of it, and behold with the eye of their mind the horror of hell, they tremble, they quake, and are inwardly touched with sorrowfulness of heart, and cannot but accuse themselves, and open their grief unto Almighty God, and call unto him for mercy. This being done seriously, their mind is so occupied, partly with sorrow and heaviness, partly with an earnest desire to be delivered from this danger of hell and damnation, that all desire of meat and drink is laid apart, and loathsomeness [or loathing] of all worldly things and pleasure cometh in place, so that nothing then liketh them more than to weep, to lament, to mourn, and both with words and behavior of body to show themselves weary of life."

Convicting the world of sin is declared by our Lord to be one of the essential offices of the Holy Spirit (John 16: 8-11), and is seen in operation wherever the Spirit has liberty to work. Acts 2: 37.

2) *The sinner's work of repentance.* A divinely wrought conviction, wisely heeded, will lead the soul to a real repentance—a godly sorrow for sin producing renunciation, and, where necessary, restitution. True repentance is always productive of definite fruits. In it is involved the making right of known wrongs. John 3: 2, 8; Acts 2: 38. In it are included many things which some are apt to ignore, but to which the soul must surely attend if a satisfactory experience is to be reached. Old debts must be acknowledged and as soon as possible must be discharged. Old grudges must be cleared up, and where necessary, apologies must be made. No professed repentance is complete without the bringing forth of this *fruit*. Matthew 3: 8; Luke 19: 1-10.

*Repentance is to leave
The things I did before
And show o'er sin I truly grieve
By doing them no more.*

Psalms 51: 3; Isaiah 55: 7; Matthew 4: 17; Mark 6: 12; Acts 17: 30, and many other passages.

3) *The solid ground of faith.* All this will now become the basis for the exercise of saving faith. Those old time believers, who really did things for God, called these early things *preliminaries*; the getting onto *believing ground*; and the faith which they exercised consequently was not of a mere intellectual sort, it was a spiritual affirmation producing results, having not only the *assent of the mind* but also the *consent of the heart*.

Wesley expresses it: Saving faith is "a sure trust and confidence which a man hath in God that by the merits of Christ his sins are forgiven, and he is reconciled to the favor of God."

It is upon such a foundation that the believing heart firmly stands, and its believing never fails. John 1: 12; 3: 16; 5: 24; Ephesians 2: 8.

b. *The aspects.* This salvation, received by faith, has four great aspects which may be stated as follows: *

1) *The Sovereign aspect*—God's act of *forgiveness*. Here God is seen in His sovereign relationship, manward, dealing with man as a rebel. The rebellion has been broken and the rebel is suing for mercy. This is granted on Calvary ground, and a free pardon is bestowed. Isaiah 55: 7; Ephesians 4: 32.

2) *The Judicial aspect*—the fact of *Justification*. While *forgiveness* has to do with the sinner as a rebel, *justification* has to do with the sinner and his sin in its legal relationships. The word carries us into the Court of Divine Justice in which men as sinners are arraigned; and while all stand guilty and con-

* We have here followed in outline the trend of our earlier work, *Foundations of Doctrine in Scripture and Experience*, a student's handbook on the subject of Holiness, which see for further study.

demned before God, there are some against whom no charges are continued; these are honorably discharged although they have been proved guilty and have freely confessed to all the charges laid against them.

What then is the secret here? The following scriptures will supply the answer: Acts 13:38, 39; Romans 1:17; 3:19-31; 5:1; 8:33, 34; I Corinthians 6:11; Galatians 2:16; 3:11, 24.

On the basis of these and other scriptures, the doctrine may be stated thus: Justification is that judicial act by which God, on account of a new faith relationship with Jesus Christ, declares the sinner to be no longer exposed to the penalty of the law which he has broken, but restored to divine favor. It is a distinct reversal of the divine attitude for Jesus' sake, bringing the sinner into harmony with the law of God, thereby securing peace.

Justification has been stated as being fivefold in its aspect: Its *spring* is grace (Romans 3:24); its *principle* is faith (Romans 5:1; Galatians 3:24-26); its *ground* is "His blood" (Romans 5:9); its *guarantee* is His resurrection (Romans 4:25); its *outcome* is good works (James 2:21-26).

3) The *Parental* aspect—the work of *Regeneration*. Thus far we have dealt only with divine *acts* on the sinner's behalf, these having to do with his *standing* before God. These *acts*, however, are not wrought alone, but are complementary to a divine operation wrought within the soul itself by which the believer is "begotten again," "born again," "quickenened," made to "pass from death unto life." John 1:13; 3:1-8; 5:24; Ephesians 2:1; Titus 3:5; I Peter 1:3, 23; I John 3:14; 5:4, 13.

In this work of regeneration God imparts His own life to the soul previously dead, producing thereby a new creation.

The characteristics of the new birth are set forth in John's first epistle as sevenfold: A righteous life (2:19); victory over sin (3:9); brotherly love (3:14); a compassionate spirit (3:17); a recognition of the Lordship of Jesus (5:1); victory over the world (5:4); the Spirit's inward witness (5:10). So is everyone that is born of the Spirit.

4) The *Family* aspect—the position of *Adoption*. The thought behind this doctrine of adoption is the putting of a *stranger* in the place of a *son*. Its relation to regeneration differs from that of justification, although like justification it has its legal idea. In the case of *justification* the confessed criminal is treated as though he were righteous, whereas in the fact of *adoption* the stranger is treated as a son. This is the privilege of the second birth; it is the heritage of saving grace.

In this doctrine of *adoption* we have a spiritual counterpart of what was frequently happening among men in Bible times. Mordecai adopted Esther as his own daughter, and the daughter of Pharaoh adopted Moses as her son. (Esther 2:7; Exodus 2:10).

At the period in which the New Testament was penned, this business of *adopting* was familiar among both Romans and Greeks; and Paul, ever on the lookout for current illustrations of the gospel he preached, seized upon this fact as illustrative of that act of grace whereby the soul, pardoned, justified and twice-born becomes a recognized member of the divine family, being made an heir of God by faith.

The term *adoption* is found five times in the Pauline epistles, but nowhere else in the entire range of scripture. It is a revelation given distinctly to Paul, although with him the other writers concur. Romans 8:15, 23; 9:4; Galatians 4:5; Ephesians 1:5. See also John 1:12; I John 3:1.

Here, then, under this fourfold aspect, we have this magnificent *first work* of divine grace. The four phases are not to be understood as happening separately but as the bestowal of the one grand whole in that moment when God by His wonderful grace speaks the word that brings the benighted soul out of darkness into His marvelous light. In that moment the repentant sinner is *pardoned* abundantly (Isaiah 55:7); he is *justified* freely (Romans 3:24); he is *born* from above (John 3:3); he is *adopted* into the family of God (Romans 8:15).

c. *The result*. The result of such a glorious work is a definite inward witness producing a confident assurance. This has become known as *the witness of the Spirit*.

It is reasonable to expect that since God has been pleased to do so much in this great business of saving man, He will make it known to the consciousness when the work has been accomplished: This He promises to do, as the following passages will show: Romans 8:16; Galatians 4:6.

2. THE SECOND WORK OF GRACE

The second work of grace has its preliminaries, its fourfold aspect and its results.

a. *The preliminaries.* The preliminaries to the second work may be stated as threefold:

1) *The Spirit's work of conviction.* As a sinner the conviction came for sin committed, now the work of the Holy Spirit goes deeper, convicting the soul of its sinful nature, a virus that has been inherited. Numerous expressions are used to denote it, among which are the following: Iniquity—Psalms 51:5; Isaiah 6:7; sin—Psalms 51:5; Isaiah 6:7; Romans 6 at least seventeen times.

These two words, *iniquity* and *sin*, are singular in contrast to the plural words, *iniquities* and *sins*.

Filthiness, Ezekiel 36:5; bent to backsliding, Hosea 11:7; the stony heart, Ezekiel 36:26; our old man, the old man, Romans 6:6; Ephesians 4:22; Colossians 3:9; the body of sin, Romans 6:6; the body of the sins of the flesh, Colossians 2:11; sin that dwelleth in me, Romans 7:17; the law of sin and death, Romans 8:2; the carnal mind, Romans 8:7; the flesh, Romans 8:8, 9, 12, 13; Galatians 5:17; filthiness, II Corinthians 7:1; unrighteousness, I John 1:9.

"And this infection of nature doth remain, yea in them that are regenerate." Church of England Article IX.

"We believe that original sin, or depravity . . . continues to exist with the new life of the regenerate." *Manual, Church of the Nazarene.*

It is the work of the Holy Spirit to reveal this indwelling corruption to the human heart.

2) *The believer's work of repentance.* As the sinner repented, confessed his sins, and believed on Christ for pardon, the believer must now repent and make confession of his sinful nature, seek for cleansing, Psalms 51; Isaiah 6. See also *Wesley's Sermons* "On Sin in Believers" and "On the Repentance of Believers."

3) *The solid ground of consecration and faith.* It is now the believer's privilege to make a complete consecration and trust God to complete the work. Romans 12:1, 2; I Thessalonians 5:23, 24.

b. *The aspects.* As with the first experience, so the second may be stated as fourfold.*

1) *The negative aspect—The work of purification.* This is the groundwork of everything else. Before the glories of divine grace can be fully revealed in the nature, carnality must be removed. Psalms 51:7, 9; Isaiah 6:5-7; Ezekiel 36:25; Matthew 3:11; Acts 15:8, 9; Romans 6:6; II Corinthians 7:1; Ephesians 5:25-27; I Thessalonians 4:3-8; 5:23, 24; Titus 2:11-14.

"What is entire sanctification? The state of being entirely cleansed from sin."—*Methodist Catechism.*

"Original sin, or depravity . . . continues to exist with the new life of regeneration until eradicated by the baptism with the Holy Spirit."—*Manual Church of the Nazarene.*

2) *The positive aspect—The Fact of the indwelling God.* This inwardness of spiritual experience may require some elucidation. With some, there has been a tendency to a mistaken emphasis, not infrequently the expression being heard: "In justification the Holy Spirit is *with* us, but in sanctification the Holy Spirit is *in* us." Then, usually follows the quotation, "For he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you" (John 14:17).

Dispensationally this was true but experientially for the believer today it is not true. Every child of God, because born from above, has the Holy Spirit within him. "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his" (Romans 8:9).

* Again we follow in outline the trend of our earlier work, *Foundations of Doctrine in Scripture and Experience*, which see for further study.

The emphasis is not whether or not the Spirit is there, but rather in what office and capacity He is present. Until the sin-destroying work has taken place the Holy Spirit is hindered, but nevertheless He is there if there is any spiritual life at all.

"But can Christ be in the same heart where sin is?" asks Wesley. "Undoubtedly He can," he replies, answering his own question. "Christ cannot reign where sin reigns; neither will He dwell where it is allowed. But He is and dwells in the heart of every believer fighting against all sin, although he be not yet purified according to the purification of the sanctuary."—Sermon "On Sin in Believers."

In the experience of entire sanctification, however, the divine indwelling is unhindered, for in the wholly sanctified heart, since indwelling sin has been completely destroyed, the Holy Spirit has full control. John 14:11, 17, 26; 15:26, 27; 16:7-15.

3) *The Ethical aspect—Our manward obligations.* The experience of full salvation has an ethical as well as an emotional aspect. Failure to realize this has brought disaster into many lives. The person who says, "*Christ liveth in me,*" must also say, "*Others shall see Christ through me.*" Hence Paul, again and again, after stating some glorious spiritual truth begins to recount some of the most matter-of-fact obligations. The two always exist side by side. Romans 12; Ephesians 3:1—4:3; 4:17-32.

4) *The Progressive aspect—The development in the life of God.* Life suggests the possibility of growth; and once the soul is freed from its carnal hindrances growth is natural and free. Psalms 1:3; 72:7; 79:12, 13; Proverbs 12:12; Hosea 14:5-9; John 15:1-16; Acts 9:22; I Corinthians 13:11; 14:20; II Corinthians 9:10; Ephesians 3:14-21; 4:11-16; Colossians 1:9-11; 2:19; I Thessalonians 3:12; 4:10; II Thessalonians 1:3; Hebrews 5:14; I Peter 2:2; II Peter 1:5-8; 3:17, 18.

The cleansed heart makes possible unhindered growth.

c. *The result.* Here again, as with the first work of grace, a definite inward witness is realized. The Holy Spirit bears

witness to His own work, while the work itself is its own witness. To be clean and not to know it would be strange indeed. Hebrews 10:14, 15.

SUGGESTIONS FOR THE STUDENT

Doctrine without spiritual life and experience is dangerous. Make sure that you know experientially these great spiritual facts which you accept mentally.

Then read further. Do not be content to know simply what one writer says or what one school of thought teaches. Know what you do not believe as well as what you affirm.

TEST QUESTIONS

1. What is saving grace, and how is it manifested?
2. Discuss the first work of grace, its preliminaries and results.
3. Discuss the second work of grace, its preliminaries and results.

Reading Suggestions for the Advanced Student

PART IV

WILEY, H. ORTON, *Christian Theology*, Vol. II, pp. 303-516; Vol. III, pp. 7-100

MILEY, JOHN, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. II, pp. 242-384

POPE, WILLIAM BART, *A Compendium of Christian Theology*, Vol. II, pp. 320-451; Vol. III, pp. 1-258

CLARKE, W. N., *An Outline of Christian Theology*, pp. 369-427

HODGE, CHARLES, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. III, pp. 3-258

HODGE, A. A., *Outlines of Theology*, pp. 456-541

FINNEY, C. G., *Lectures on Systematic Theology*, pp. 282-481

HILLS, A. M., *Fundamental Christian Theology*, Vol. II, pp. 165-265; Abridged, pp. 389-489

CURTIS, OLIN A., *The Christian Faith*, pp. 337-393

RALSTON, T. N., *Elements of Divinity*, pp. 329-472

Numerous Bible encyclopedic articles on the subjects discussed.

PART V—THE CHURCH

XI. THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH

The word *ecclesia* which, in our English Bible is translated *church*, was by no means a new word when for the first time it was employed by our Lord to denote the society which He declared Himself about to build (Matthew 16:18); for, although to His people it now for the first time became Christian in content, it could never become entirely separated in general thinking from its pre-Christian associations, both Jewish and Greek. In fact it is these background associations which give us the present thought content of the word.

Throughout the Greek world it had indicated a regular assembly of citizens in a free state, called out by a herald for the discussion of public business, and suggested a self-governing, democratic society.

To the *Jew* it stood for the community of Israel, especially in the religious aspects, as the people of God, and suggested the theocratic society whose members are the recognized subjects of the heavenly King. Acts 7:38.

Thus, the word came into Christian history with direct associations for both Greek and Jew. It indicated a *Society of the Free*, yet whose members must ever be conscious that their freedom springs only from obedience to Him whom they call their Lord and King.

The Church as we know it today has two distinct aspects: *Godward*, it is an organism; *manward* it is an organization. In the outworking of the divine plan, both these aspects have their distinctive place, as the development of our study will show.

The Church as a Divinely Created Organism

The word *church* is used in the Gospels only twice, and in both instances we find it on the lips of our Lord himself. The two passages are Matthew 16:18; 18:17. As we pass to the

Book of Acts and then to the Pauline epistles the word becomes more frequent, and is employed in a threefold sense:

1. THE CHURCH IS SEEN AS A LOCAL BODY

That is, a company of Christians in a particular place or district, such as: The Church at Jerusalem, Acts 5:11; 8:1. The Church at Antioch, Acts 13:1; 15:22. The Church at Caesarea, Acts 18:22. See also I Thessalonians 1:1; I Corinthians 1:2; 16:19; II Corinthians 1:2; Romans 16:5; Colossians 4:15; Philemon 2.

2. THE CHURCH IS ALSO SEEN AS A UNIVERSAL BODY

The thought here is that of the sum total of all the local churches. Acts 9:31, R.V.; I Corinthians 10:32; 12:28.

3. THE CHURCH IS FURTHER SEEN AS A SPIRITUAL COMPANY

Ephesians 1:22; 3:9-11; Colossians 1:18, 24. It is this third aspect with which we must first deal, and in doing so, three thoughts will concern us:

a. *As to her origin.* The Church is a living organism whose origin is divine. It is not the scheme of even the holiest of men; it is the direct creation of an Almighty God. Its conception had been in the mind of God from all eternity. Before the world began He saw the Church standing in her entirety redeemed, called, cleansed, glorified; yet He knew every soul of which it would be composed.

b. *As to her present position.* That position is directly opposite to the general conception of the present day.

1) *She stands before the world as a separated people.* John 17:6-19; II Corinthians 6:14-18. That separation is the direct work of the Holy Spirit, ratified by the believing soul.

2) *She stands before the world as a witnessing people.* Acts 1:8; Philippians 2:14-16. In the world she is to exert her influence for God and represent her Lord.

3) *She stands before the world as a waiting people.* She does not pretend to belong here; she is registered elsewhere. Philippians 3:20; I Thessalonians 1:9, 10.

c. *As to her destiny.* The Church is as immortal as her Lord. She is to be His Companion throughout the eternities; hence she now awaits three grand events: Translation: I Thessalonians 4:16, 17; Manifestation: Colossians 3:1-3; Millennial Reign: Revelation 20:4-6.

Concerning this Church, the Apostle Paul uses three great figures. It is set forth as: (a) A holy temple—for divine habitation. Ephesians 2:19-22. Also I Peter 2:5. (b) A living body—of which Christ is the Head. Ephesians 1:22, 23; I Corinthians 12:23. (c) A chosen bride—for whom Christ died. His purpose was that He might redeem, purify and possess. Ephesians 5:25-27; Revelation 19:6-9.

Concerning these figures, this fact needs to be plainly emphasized: All three figures, the Temple, the Body, and the Bride indicate the same people, but in three distinctly differing relationships. We make this emphasis here because of the mixed thinking so often expressed concerning them.

The *body* we are told by some, is the Jewish people, while the *bride* is the Church. Others have argued for two separate companies within the Church, one being the *body* and the other the *bride*. Some in a vague way accept the words as synonyms yet cannot explain why.

The problem clears itself as soon as we recognize the thought context in which these figures are used.

In the *body* figure, the Church is seen in its *present* aspect, *worldward*. It will be noted that whenever the *body* figure is in view, the aspect is *immediate* and the tense *present*. Here the Church is seen as the spiritual instrument through which Christ, by the Holy Spirit, is now contacting the world. "The Church which is his body" (Ephesians 1:23). "Now ye are the body of Christ" (I Corinthians 12:27). See also Ephesians 4; I Corinthians 12.

In the *bride* figure—the Church is seen in its *prospective* aspect *Christward*. The Church's best days are ahead. The *bride* is yet to be "made ready." Revelation 19:7. She awaits the hour of her *rapture* and of her *presentation*. I Thessalonians 4: 13-18; Ephesians 5: 27.

In the *building* figure—the Church is seen in its *progressive* aspect, *heavenward*. Throughout this entire dispensation it is "*being built together*," and therefore groweth into a holy temple in the Lord. Ephesians 2: 21. As such, it is ever complete in its measure, but still incomplete as to its final structure.

SUGGESTIONS FOR THE STUDENT

Get the two aspects concerning the Church clearly in mind. Be sure you understand the distinction between *organism* and *organization*.

TEST QUESTIONS

1. Discuss the meaning of the word *church*.
2. Show the word as used in the Gospels.
3. Show the threefold sense in which the word is used in the Acts and in the Epistles.
4. What of the Church's origin?
5. Show the Church's present position.
6. Show the Church's destiny.

The Church as a Humanly Planned Organization

While it is fundamentally true that the Church is not a human organization, it must also be remembered that the God who brought it into being, did so in an intelligent manner, so much so that its preparation, inauguration, organization, and continuation are all clearly traceable in the Word of God and in the history which follows.

I. THE PREPARATION

Although in the mind of God before the foundation of the world, historically the Church had no existence before the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. Ephesians 1: 3-6; 3: 1-10. By way of preparation, however, much is recorded:

a. *In the Old Testament.* All Jewish history is seen as heading toward this end.

b. *In the New Testament.* In the Gospel narratives distinct foundation work is seen, Jesus and His disciples preparing the way for other days yet to come.

The earth-life of Jesus is declared by Luke to have been simply a *beginning*. Acts 1:1, 2. It was *in that beginning* that the foundations were laid for the centuries to follow in the Christian Church. Matthew 16:18.

2. THE INAUGURATION

The Day of Pentecost was the Church's birthday. Acts 2. That *day* placed the newly established Christian community under the jurisdiction of the Holy Ghost.

3. THE ORGANIZATION

Here, four considerations present themselves:

a. *As to formation.* What is a church? A scriptural definition would seem to be as follows: A church is a company of believing souls, separated from the world, with Christ in the midst. Matthew 16:16-18; 18:20; Revelation 1:10-20.

b. *As to membership.* What are the requisite conditions for membership in the Christian Church? There can be no doubt whatsoever that the basic condition is this, and this alone: *a saving faith in Jesus Christ.*

Each evangelical branch of the Church has taken upon itself to interpret as how deep a saving faith really goes and how that saving faith should be expressed, hence the numerous *Manuals, Articles of Faith, Rules and Regulations*, and so forth.

c. *As to leadership.* What are the offices within the Church? These may be stated under three heads, namely, general, local, occasional.

1) *General.* "And he [the Risen Lord, the Church's Divine Head] gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting

of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ" (Ephesians 4:11, 12.)

"And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that" (I Corinthians 12:28).

It will be noted that each of these offices is by divine appointment; moreover, in them there is a distinct divine gradation. It is seldom that more than one is combined in the same person, hence it is written: "But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will" (I Corinthians 12:11).

2) *Local*. The more local offices are those of the *elder*, the *deacon*, and the *bishop*; as the following scriptures will show: Acts 11:30; 14:23; 15:4, 6, 22, 23; 16:4; 20:17; 21:18; I Timothy 5:17, 19; Titus 1:5; James 5:14; I Peter 5:1; II John 1; III John 1; Philippians 1:1; I Timothy 3:1, 2; Titus 1:7; I Timothy 3:8-13.

3) *Occasional*. Those which we style occasional are the *gifts* within the Church as recorded in I Corinthians 12-14.

d. *As to ordinances*. The two generally recognized ordinances within the Church are Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

Matthew 3:13-17; John 4:1, 2; Matthew 28:19, 20; Acts 2:41; 8:12, 26-39; 9:18; 10:44-48; 16:33; 19:1-5; Romans 6:1-7; Colossians 2:12; I Peter 3:21; Matthew 26:26-29; Mark 14:22-25; Luke 22:17-20; I Corinthians 11:23-34.

4. THE CONTINUATION

The detailed events in the history of the Church are for church history itself to record. It is on the assumption that the general trend is already familiar that we now proceed.

a. *The Church has a spiritual authority*. Matthew 16:19; 18:18; John 20:23. It is only as the Church's spiritual power has weakened that temporal power has been claimed.

b. *The Church has a divinely prescribed activity*. While as a heavenly people she is to be separate, waiting for her appearing Lord, until the time of His appearing she is located

in this present world. Her task is that of witness bearing. She is described by her Lord as *light and salt*. Matthew 5:13-16.

c. *The Church has direct antagonisms.* We have used the word *antagonisms*, having in mind the widest interpretation of that expression.

1) *She has met, and still meets, antagonisms without.* The true Church has always been in an unfriendly world.

She has outlived prejudice. The pagans among whom Christians lived utterly failed to understand them. A number of things seem to have contributed to this: (1) *Their sacraments*—These, their enemies charged were the scenes of dark and secret practices. (2) *Their sunrise services*—Not able to understand their so frequent meeting together, their enemies soon suggested immoral behavior. (3) *Their simplicity*—Not able to understand the absence of images, with which they were so familiar, and the denial of all the gods which they were accustomed to worship, the pagans charged the Christians with atheism.

She has withstood persecution. Here general church history will supply all needed information.

She has survived persistent competition. For her place in the world there have been other contesting systems; among them: Judaism; Mohammedanism; the Mystery religions; anti-Christian propaganda; the modern cults.

2) *She has found, and still finds, antagonisms within.* This brings us to a consideration of the *heresies* which have arisen within the Church itself. They may be divided into three sections which here we can only name: the early heresies; the medieval heresies; the later heresies. These must be developed by the student himself.

SUGGESTIONS FOR THE STUDENT

Speaking of the Church's activity, what is to be her attitude toward such questions as:

- a. The masses of society?
- b. Other religions?
- c. The heathen world.

Northwest Nazarene College

LIBRARY

How far is the Church responsible for converting the world?
The fact of the Church's antagonisms presents rich material for study.
The reading suggestions will cover the student's needs here.

TEST QUESTIONS

1. What do you understand by the idea of the Church as a planned organization?
2. What is recorded by way of preparation—and where?
3. Where do we place the time of the Church's inauguration?
4. Discuss the Church's organization.
5. What is to be said as to leadership?
6. What of the Church's continuation?

Reading Suggestions for the Advanced Student

PART V

The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia

Articles, The Church: Church Government

HASTINGS, *Dictionary of the Apostolic Church*

Article: The Church

ALLEN, A. G. V., *Christian Institutions*

FISHER, GEORGE P., *History of Christian Doctrine*

BRIGGS, CHARLES A., *Theological Symbolics*

ORR, JAMES, *The Progress of Dogma*

HODGES, GEORGE, *The Early Church*

NIVEN, W. D., *The Conflicts of the Early Church*

RICHARDSON, CYRIL C., *The Church Through the Centuries*

MACGREGOR, G. H. C., *Jew and Greek Tutors unto Christ*

JONES, RUFUS M., *The Church's Debt to Heretics*

MILEY, J., *Systematic Theology*, Vol. II, pp. 385-422

STRONG, A. H., *Systematic Theology*, pp. 887-980

HASTINGS, *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*

Article: The Church

PART VI—LAST THINGS

XII. THE LAST THINGS

Death and its aftermath are subjects to which the human mind repeatedly turns. The very mystery enshrouding them becomes their somber attraction. Concerning them no living person has any firsthand personal information. The most we know about them comes from observation and revelation. We have seen people die; and while we have watched their facial expressions and listened to their parting words, no one has ever been able to penetrate the consciousness of a dying person when actually leaving this world, nor to follow the spirit into the world beyond.

The future is known only by revelation. Since no one among us has ever been beyond the veil of death we have no contemporary testimony concerning the nature of that experience.

Numerous theories have been propounded, each proponent claiming to base his ideas on revelation divinely given. Others there are who will frankly say they accept no revelation but what they advance is the product of their own thought. When listening to those claiming Bible authority we must learn to distinguish between what has actually been revealed and the manner in which men interpret that revelation. Much has been declared with a tone of authority which would evidently seek to stamp it as final, and with accompanying anathemas and denunciations upon any who would dare question it, which, although frequently based upon *collected verses* from the Word of God, does not have the backing of a sane and sound exegesis.

The subject before us is of vital importance. We must take care, therefore, not to bolster up a theory, however attractive,

merely for its own sake. Clear thinking, sane interpretation, and sound judgment are essential. It will therefore be necessary carefully to examine whatever theories are presented to us, and candidly to evaluate them, receiving only what may be definitely proved as being broad based on the clear statements of the inspired Word, interpreted by the best Christian scholarship in the light of the clear setting of each passage.

The Fact of Death

The *fact* of universal death needs no proof. Not only is it plainly declared that "*it is appointed unto men once to die,*" but human experience has endorsed it. Here and there fanatical souls have been found who have made extravagant claims concerning their hold on life, but only to their own confusion; for in every case they have necessarily gone the way of all flesh.

Two notable exceptions are recorded for us in the Scriptures, namely Enoch and Elijah who were taken up to heaven without dying, and concerning each of these a special purpose is indicated; but in no case, either in Bible history or otherwise, is there any record of any man however good who remained on earth without dying.

The *reason* for death involves more controversy, and concerning it very different views are held.

The older theologians have insisted that death is upon the human race as *the penalty of sin*, whereas some more modern writers contend that physical death is not and never was meant to be a curse or punishment for sin. Death was known in the world, say they, long before man made his appearance, and man simply inherited a similar life cycle to that of his animal ancestors.

It is useless to argue with these modern philosophers, since neither they nor we were present in those early days of the world's history, neither they nor we have firsthand knowledge. We have, however, a firsthand report, a divine revelation with a clear but simple statement of fact, telling us *how* death came, and *why*. Genesis 3; Romans 5:12; I Corinthians 15:21.

There are minds to which such scriptural statements mean nothing but a basis for argument; but to those of us who seriously affirm the divine inspiration and consequent inerrancy of the Sacred Word, they are final authority. Death came through sin.

SUGGESTIONS FOR THE STUDENT

Since very different views are held on the reason for physical death, the student will do well to read further, and if possible, become clearly informed on both sides of the teaching.

TEST QUESTIONS

1. What is our final authority for the insistence on the fact of life after death?
2. What two exceptions has God already made, where men have left the earth without dying?
3. What two theories are propounded concerning the reason for physical death? State each theory. Name the one which appeals to you. Then answer the other theory.

The Survival after Death

In our study on the subject of Man, we closed with a section captioned: "The Question of Man's Destiny." There, we saw that man's superiority above every other creature was in the fact that within him was something which linked him with the eternities. That something we have chosen to call immortality.

There, however, we did not concern ourselves with any distinctions about the afterlife, but simply insisted on the fact that by the very constitution of his nature, man is destined to survive the dissolution which we call death, and somewhere to exist forever. We now take up the thought of that survival, inquiring as to *how?* and *where?*

I. THE INTERMEDIATE STATE

On the subject of the soul's immediate condition after death, there has been much difference of opinion and no little confusion of thought. Some have taught that this state is a further probation; others regard it as a period of purgation; others again have contended for a period of unconscious soul sleep; while

some seem to have the hazy idea that immediately on leaving the body the soul passes to its reward either in heaven or hell.

The general orthodox position seems to us still to be satisfactory, and we can see no reason to change or modify our thought. It may be stated as follows: According to the plain teaching of the Word of God, the fact of death is simply a dissolving of the present ties between the body and the spirit whether of the righteous or the wicked. Passing into a temporary accomodatory condition, called by many the *Intermediate State*, the spiritual part of man is without a body until the time of the resurrection. That state is of necessity for the redeemed a time of felicity and joy, and for the unrepentant a time of suffering, although this is but the ante-chamber to a fuller participation in either case.

a. *Of the wicked dead it is indicated* that they are "in prison," whatever that may mean. I Peter 3:19. They are "in hell," being "in torments." Luke 16:23. Here attention should be called to the fact that the word translated *hell* is the Greek word *hades*, which seems to convey the idea of a *place of waiting*, the *torment* endured being primarily that of a haunting memory which has become an inward *flame*, whereas in other passages which later we shall contact, we find the word *gehenna*, also translated *hell*, but definitely indicating a place of suffering.

They are "reserve (d) unto the day of judgment to be punished" (II Peter 2:9).

b. *Of the godly dead it is declared* that their spirits go "to God." Ecclesiastes 12:7; Hebrews 12:23. That they are "with Christ" and "in Paradise." Luke 23:42, 43; II Corinthians 5:1-8; Philippians 1:23. That their condition is one of conscious blessedness. Matthew 22:32; Luke 16:22; 23:43; John 11:26; I Thessalonians 5:10; Philippians 1:23; Revelation 14:13. That they are not yet wholly satisfied. Revelation 6:9-11.

Thus it would seem that while distinctly separate, neither the godly nor the wicked have yet entered into their final abodes, one awaiting the judgment seat of Christ and the other the judgment of the Great White Throne.

SUGGESTIONS FOR THE STUDENT

The question of the afterlife is, at its best, shrouded in mystery. All we know is what an all-wise God has seen fit to reveal. It is useless to speculate; yet it is becoming for the obedient soul to inquire. The basis of our inquiry is to be the Word of God.

TEST QUESTIONS

1. What would you consider to be the chief argument for an intermediate state?
2. If there is an intermediate state, what is the condition of the wicked there?
3. Also what is to be said of the godly dead?

The Resurrections; the Judgments; the Millennial Day

When we speak of the resurrections we mean that manifestation of divine power in bringing back from the grave the physical body. When we use the plural it is to indicate our belief that, according to the plain teaching of the Scriptures, the great resurrection fact will be worked out in distinctive phases.

It has been customary among some of our post millennialist brethren to talk about the *general resurrection* and the *general judgment*; this we deem to be fallacious, believing it to be the teaching of the Scriptures that the dead will be raised in their respective groups, and that with each resurrection group will be associated its own special judgment. These may be stated at follows:

I. THE RESURRECTION OF THE CRUCIFIED CHRIST—sealing God's judgment on sin and Satan

The fact of Calvary's uplifted cross was both a *tragedy* and a *triumph*. In His weakest moment, in the very act of dying the Son of God did something which none of the mighty deeds of His lifetime could ever approach. He *bore our sins*. I Peter 2:24; 3:18. He took *our sinful nature* to the cross. Romans 6:6; II Corinthians 5:21. He dealt the death blow at Satan and all the hellish powers. John 12:31; Colossians 2:14, 15. All this was verified and sealed by the resurrection. Romans 1:4.

The Gospels and epistles describe our Lord as bringing back from the tomb the actual body which had been crucified

and buried. Matthew 28; Mark 16; Luke 24; John 20-21; Acts 1: 1-3; 2: 22-36. Notice especially here verse 31. "Neither his flesh did see corruption." The resurrection of Jesus concerned the actual body that went into the grave.

2. THE RESURRECTION OF THE GODLY DEAD, THE RAPTURE OF THE LIVING SAINTS AND THE JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST

This is the next great event to which the Church now looks. It is to take place at the appearing of our returning Lord as He comes into the air to catch away His own who are still alive and to call from the graves those who have died in Christ. John 14: 1-3; I Corinthians 15; Philippians 3: 11, 20; I Thessalonians 1: 10; 4: 13-18; Hebrews 11: 35; Revelation 20: 4-6 Romans 14: 10; I Corinthians 3: 11-15.

As the New Testament is carefully studied it becomes evident that these men with whom Christ founded and began to build His Church understood the resurrection as being distinctly physical and having to do first of all with His own people; immediately to be followed by the event designated by Paul the *Judgment Seat of Christ*.

At this Judgment Seat the believer's works are to be tried, awards are to be made, and a place in the Millennial Kingdom is to be assigned. All this will have to do exclusively with His own people, the Church, and will be separated from the resurrection of the ungodly dead by a period of a thousand years.

It is during that thousand years, known to Bible students as the *Millennium* that Christ, having come to earth with His saints now clothed in shining glory, will destroy antagonistic forces, judge the nations, then set up His throne and reign. Matthew 13: 36-43; Matthew 25: 31-46; II Thessalonians 1: 7-10; 2: 1-12.

During all this period of millennial glory the ungodly dead are to remain in their graves, to be awakened to judgment when the Kingdom reign shall cease.

3. THE RESURRECTION OF THE UNGODLY DEAD AND THE JUDGMENT OF THE GREAT WHITE THRONE

“But the rest of the dead lived not again, until the thousand years were finished” (Revelation 20:5). Here again we have a literal, bodily resurrection, followed by an amazing judgment scene before the Great White Throne. Revelation 20:11-15. What an assembly! Every unrepentant sinner who has ever lived, whether notoriously wicked or proudly self-righteous, standing before God in the bodies in which they so arrogantly sinned, and one by one faced with life’s record, by it condemned and consigned to a never ending hell. This is the second death.

Here then are the resurrections: (a) The resurrection of Jesus Christ—who became the Firstfruits of a glorious harvest yet to follow. (b) The resurrection of the sleeping saints, whom death will not be able to hold when Jesus descends from heaven with a shout to claim His own. (c) The resurrection of the ungodly dead, who for a thousand years after the first resurrection will remain forgotten in their graves.

Here too are the Judgments: (a) the Judgment on sin and Satan, (b) the Judgment Seat of Christ, (c) the Judgment of the living nations, (d) the Judgment of the Great White Throne.

All this will help us to evaluate correctly the numerous errors around us, such as: (a) *Soul sleep*—the teaching that the spirits of both righteous and wicked sleep, between the moment of death and the day of the resurrection. The figure of *sleep*, used concerning death, has to do with the body, not with the soul. (b) *Purgatorial purification*—the teaching that sins committed in this life after baptism are expiated by suffering in the life beyond the grave. From the teaching of the Scriptures, it is evident that the sufferings of the ungodly are the workings of remorse, and provide no remedy for past transgression, whereas the godly, being with Christ, are beyond suffering of any kind. Therefore, the teaching of purgatorial purification is entirely unscriptural. (c) *Annihilation*—the teaching that the wicked will be eternally destroyed. According to the plain teaching of the scriptures, the torment of the wicked

is to be eternal. There can be no annihilation of a human soul. *Universalism*—the teaching that because of the love of God and the Calvary sacrifice of Jesus Christ, every soul—and some say, even the devil himself—must ultimately be saved.

Such teaching is plainly contrary to the Word of God.

SUGGESTIONS FOR THE STUDENT

In these studies, at most we have done no more than touch the high spots. Make these a basis for further investigation. Wide reading and careful thought will be profitable here.

TEST QUESTIONS

1. Some have talked about the *general resurrection* and the *general judgment*. Discuss these expressions.
2. Show what the Bible teaches about resurrection.
3. Show what the Bible teaches about judgment.
4. Relate the various phases of resurrection to the various judgments.

Reading Suggestions for the Advanced Student

PART VI

- CLARKE, W. N., *Outline of Christian Theology*, pp. 428-482
STRONG, A. H., *Systematic Theology*, pp. 89-1056
MILEY, JOHN, *Systematic Theology*, pp. 423-475
RALSTON, T. N., *Elements of Divinity*, pp. 473-543
WILEY, H. ORTON, *Christian Theology*, Vol. III, pp. 211-393
Numerous Encyclopedic articles.