

DOGMATICS NOTES VOL. I

Introduction / (Prolegomena)

I. Dogmatics is a branch of theology.

1. Theology is traditionally divided into:

- a) **Biblical Theology:** Exegesis, Isagogics, Hermeneutics
- b) **Historical Theology:** Church History, Symbolics
- c) **Practical Theology:** Homiletics, Catechetics, Pastoral Theology
- d) **Systematic Theology:** Dogmatics, Ethics

2. Dogmatics as we teach it at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary involves all four of the branches of theology. It is taught primarily as topical exegesis with elements of church history, symbolics, and practical theology.

3. Theology proper is a practical attitude, aptitude, or skill of the mind and heart.

- a) **Its aim is to build the spiritual life of the theologian and of the flock he serves.**

Philippians 3:7-11 But whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. ⁸ What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ ⁹ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith. ¹⁰ I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, ¹¹ and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead.

2 Timothy 3:16-17 All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, ¹⁷ so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

ὠφέλιμος πρὸς διδασκαλίαν, πρὸς ἐλεγμόν, πρὸς ἐπανόρθωσιν, πρὸς παιδείαν τὴν ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ, ¹⁷ ἵνα ἄρτιος ᾖ ὁ τοῦ θεοῦ ἄνθρωπος, πρὸς πᾶν ἔργον ἀγαθὸν ἐξηρτισμένος.

2 Corinthians 1:3-4 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, ⁴ who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God.

b) Theology is not just to be learned but to be experienced.

Psalms 34:8 Taste and see that the LORD is good; blessed is the man who takes refuge in him.

c) In the strict sense, theology is an art to be practiced (*habitus practicus*).

1) In general, theology is an aptitude or art.

2 Corinthians 3:5-6 Not that we are competent in ourselves to claim anything for ourselves, but our competence comes from God. ⁶ He has made us competent as ministers of a new covenant—not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

οὐχ ὅτι ἀφ' ἑαυτῶν ἱκανοὶ ἐσμεν λογίσασθαι τι ὡς ἐξ ἑαυτῶν, ἀλλ' ἡ ἱκανότης ἡμῶν ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ, ⁶ ὃς καὶ ἱκάνωσεν ἡμᾶς διακόνους καινῆς διαθήκης

Hebrews 5:13-14 Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness. ¹⁴ But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil.

τῶν διὰ τὴν ἔξιν τὰ αἰσθητήρια γεγυμνασμένα ἐχόντων πρὸς διάκρισιν καλοῦ τε καὶ κακοῦ.

1 Corinthians 4:20 For the kingdom of God is not a matter of talk but of power.

2 Corinthians 2:16 To the one we are the smell of death; to the other, the fragrance of life. And who is equal to such a task?

Hebrews 4:12 For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.

2) Specifically, theology is an aptitude rooted in the new life of faith.

1 Corinthians 12:1-6 Now about spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be ignorant. ² You know that when you were pagans, somehow or other you were influenced and led astray to mute idols. ³ Therefore I tell you that no one who is speaking by the Spirit of God says, “Jesus be cursed,” and no one can say, “Jesus is Lord,” except by the Holy Spirit. ⁴ There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit. ⁵ There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. ⁶ There are different kinds of working, but the same God works all of them in all men.

Galatians 2:20 I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

Philippians 1:21 For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain

3) The theologian is a man of God. (In the Bible the term “theologian” occurs only in the heading added to some manuscripts of Revelation.)

Timothy 6:11 But you, man of God, flee from all this, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness.

2 Timothy 3:15-17 From infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.
¹⁶ All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, ¹⁷ so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

Luther: No man can make a Doctor of Holy Scripture except the Holy Spirit from heaven (*LW* 44:205).

4) The ultimate purpose of theology is the salvation of souls.

1 Timothy 4:16 Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers.

1 Corinthians 9:22 To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some.

James 5:20 Remember this: Whoever turns a sinner from the error of his way will save him from death and cover over a multitude of sins.

Calov: In an absolute sense the ultimate aim of theology is the glory of God. In a relative sense the ultimate aim is the salvation of man. The intermediate aim is both internal, namely, to lead men to faith and salvation, and external, namely, saving faith (*Theo. Pos., de nat. theol.* IX, thes. IV).

d) In a looser sense also the science of theological truths may be called theology.

1) Theology in this sense not only describes the state of a Christian, but is able to produce it.

John 6:63 The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you are spirit and they are life.

Romans 1:16 I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile.

Romans 10:17 Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ.

2) There are two senses of the term “theology”.

Quenstedt: Finally, the term theology is used either 1) οὐσιωδῶς, that is, essentially, absolutely, and in reference to an aptitude, for knowledge which is found in the mind and which is inherent in the soul of man, or in so far as it is an aptitude of the soul; or 2) συμβεβηκóτως, that is, “accidentally,” relatively, or in reference to a system, in so far as it is a doctrine or discipline which is taught and learned or contained in books. The former use of the word is primary; the latter is secondary. For theology is first of all or principally called a theological aptitude. But secondly, and in a less important way, it is a doctrine or a discussion, or even a book or system which presents theology (*Theologia didactico-polemico sive systema theologicum* (TDP), thes. XXIX, p 11).

Calov: The remote genus [the broadest classification] of theology is aptitude (*habitus*) (He 5:14). The nearer genus [narrower classification] is practical aptitude (*habitus practicus*) (Jn 5:34; Ro 15:4; 2 Tm 3:15), because the aim of the theologian and theology is not bare knowledge but an activity, namely, leading men to salvation. Therefore, it is not a theoretical aptitude consisting in pure thought (*Theo. Pos., de nat. theol.* V).

Gerhard: By means of my study of theology, I am able to gather that, as is true in medicine, the best theology is practical doctrine, and, in like manner, I am able to perceive that those who contend that the end of theology is speculation (namely, a number of those among the scholastics) are in no way correct in so thinking. Although, indeed, not only practical application but also believing and hoping are proposed in this heavenly philosophy, that fact, nevertheless, does make that which is said in theology to be less practical or unimportant, for a physician also is occupied with theory of some sorts, yet medicine is not, for that reason, a theoretical discipline, since the theory itself flows from practical concerns.... And if theology is practical doctrine, then the goal of theology will certainly not be bare knowledge and subtle theory, but rather practical. “If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them,” the Savior said to the disciples (John 13:17) (*Sacred Meditations, Dedic.*).

3) **Can the unregenerate be theologians?**

A hypocrite may speak theological truths, or a false teacher may teach what the world would call “theology,” but this is not theology in the proper sense.

Augsburg Confession, VIII, 2: Both the Sacraments and Word are effectual by reason of the institution and commandment of Christ, even if they are administered by evil men.

Musaeus (d. 1681): But this is not properly called theology and differs from that which is properly called theology by as much as a human belief or opinion, formed in the mind from outward motives concerning the truth of divine revelation, differs from God-given faith (*Intro.*, p 191).

Norman Madson: If there be anything from which we should recoil with holy horror it is the thought of having men in our pulpits, *Seelsorgers* at

the sickbed, teachers in our seminaries, officials in positions of trust in our church, who know not the Lord (*Preaching to Preachers*, p 67).

e) The fruit produced by theology is religion.

1) Religion denotes union and communion with God.

Note 1: The etymology of the word “religion” is uncertain: *religare*, “fasten,” “tie,” that is, religion as duty (so Lactantius, Augustine); or *religere*, “collect,” “study,” that is, religion as a discipline or study (so Cicero). (See Pieper, I, 7).

Note 2: Hoenecke and Pieper use the terms “theology,” “dogmatics,” and “religion” differently. Hoenecke uses “theology” of the aptitude and knowledge of every Christian and “dogmatics” for the aptitude and knowledge of the theologian. “Religion” is what theology and dogmatics produce in the Christian. Pieper uses “religion” for the theological knowledge and aptitude of lay people, and “theology” for the theological knowledge and aptitude of theologians. The notes follow Hoenecke’s terminology here.

1 John 1:3 We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ.

2) There is only one true religion, the Christian.

-a) Only the Christian religion establishes complete union with God through faith in Christ Jesus.

John 17:23 I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.

Augustine: You made us, O Lord, for yourself and our heart is restless until it rests in you (*Confessions*, 1:1).

-b) All other attempts at attaining union with God by merit of works or character lead only to a greater separation.

Ephesians 2:11-12 Therefore, remember that formerly you who are Gentiles by birth and called “uncircumcised” by those who call themselves “the circumcision” (that done in the body by the hands of men)—¹²remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world.

Quenstedt: The Christian religion is the way of worshipping the true God prescribed in the Word. By it man, who has been separated from God through sin, is led to God through faith in Christ, who is both God and man, in order that he may be reunited with God and find delight in him eternally. The term “religion” is used either in an improper and incorrect sense, or in a proper sense. In an improper sense it is used for false religion, for example, the heathen,

Mohammedan, or Jewish religion. In its proper sense it signifies the true way of worshiping God. This is either the way he was worshiped in paradise, which took place in the state of perfection and by which man, who had been created in the image of God, was bound to God, or it is the Christian way, which obtains after the Fall, and which is called Christian because we are led to salvation through Christ alone (*TDP*, nota II, III, p 20).

Calov: The sacred rites of the heathen, throughout almost the whole world, were full of cruelty. The mysteries of Ceres and Bacchus abounded in obscenity. How profane and unworthy of God Mohammedanism is, the Koran can testify. The Christian religion requires an absolutely holy worship of God, holy trust in Him, and all that is most worthy of God; and of like nature are the duties towards our neighbor which it enjoins. Mohammedanism was born in war, breathes nothing but war, is propagated by war, while Christianity prohibits every injury, and wishes good to all. Many of the most eminent Greek philosophers praised a sharing of women, and even did not disapprove of sodomy, which was commended by the example of the gods. But the Christian religion teaches that marriage must be held most holy (*Syst.* 1:152ff.).

Vatican II, in opposition to the scriptural doctrine: Those also can attain to everlasting salvation who through no fault of their own do not know the gospel of Christ or His Church, yet sincerely seek God and, moved by grace, strive by their deeds to do His will as it is known to them through the dictates of conscience. Nor does divine Providence deny help necessary for salvation to those who, without blame on their part, have not yet arrived at an explicit knowledge of God, but who strive to live a good life, thanks to His grace (*Documents*, p 35).

3) As synonyms for religion (Greek) we find:

-a) εὐσέβεια (piety, godliness)

1 Timothy 2:2 that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness (εὐσέβεια) and holiness.

1 Timothy 3:16 Beyond all question, the mystery of godliness (εὐσέβεια) is great: He appeared in a body, was vindicated by the Spirit, was seen by angels, was preached among the nations, was believed on in the world, was taken up in glory.

1 Timothy 4:8 For physical training is of some value, but godliness (εὐσέβεια) has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come.

1 Timothy 6:11 But you, man of God, flee from all this, and pursue righteousness, godliness (εὐσέβεια), faith, love, endurance and gentleness.

2 Timothy 3: 5 ...having a form of godliness (εὐσέβεια) but denying its power.

-b) θρησκεία (worship)

Acts 26:5 They have known me for a long time and can testify, if they are willing, that according to the strictest sect of our religion (θρησκεία), I lived as a Pharisee.

Colossians 2:18 Do not let anyone who delights in false humility and the worship (θρησκεία) of angels disqualify you for the prize. Such a person goes into great detail about what he has seen, and his unspiritual mind puffs him up with idle notions.

James 1:26,27 If anyone considers himself religious and yet does not keep a tight rein on his tongue, he deceives himself and his religion (θρησκεία) is worthless. ²⁷ Religion (θρησκεία) that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.

-c) λατρεία (service, form of worship; parallel to λειτουργία)

John 16:2 They will put you out of the synagogue; in fact, a time is coming when anyone who kills you will think he is offering a service (λατρεία) to God.

Romans 9:4 ... the people of Israel. Theirs is the adoption as sons; theirs the divine glory, the covenants, the receiving of the law, the temple worship (λατρεία) and the promises.

Romans 12:1 Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship (λατρεία).

Matthew 4:10 Jesus said to him, "Away from me, Satan! For it is written: 'Worship (προσκυνήσεις) the Lord your God, and serve (λατρεύσεις) him only.'"

-d) δεισιδαιμονία (religion, cult, superstition)

Acts 17:22 Paul then stood up in the meeting of the Areopagus and said: "Men of Athens! I see that in every way you are very religious" (δεισιδαιμονία). NIV

Acts 17:22 Then Paul stood in the midst of Mars' hill, and said, Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious (δεισιδαιμονία). KJV

Acts 25:19 Instead, they had some points of dispute with him about their own religion (δεισιδαιμονία) and about a dead man named Jesus who Paul claimed was alive.

An interesting resource on Greek synonym studies is Trench, *Synonyms of the New Testament*. See pages 172-180.

4) We are dealing with “religion” whenever the relation to God is employed as a motive.

“Honesty is the best policy”—no appeal to religion;
but a promise “to do my duty to God” has the religious element.

In the past it was generally believed that to be religious one had to believe in gods or a god.

Cicero: Religion is worship of the gods.... Each state has its own gods (*Pro Flacco*, 69).

Livy: no fear of God, no oath—no religion (*Ab Urbe Condita*, Liber XXI, 4)

Today, under the influence of humanism many believe that a person can be religious without a god.

4. Dogmatics in the strict sense is an aptitude and readiness.

a) Dogmatics is an aptitude to teach and substantiate the doctrines of Scripture.

1) This aptitude is required of theologians.

1 Timothy 3:2 Now the overseer must be above reproach, the husband of but one wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach (*διδασκτικόν*).

2 Timothy 2:2,24 And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others (*ικανοὶ ἔσονται καὶ ἑτέρους διδάξαι*). ²⁴ And the Lord’s servant must not quarrel; instead, he must be kind to everyone, able to teach (*διδασκτικόν*), not resentful.

2) The Bible states the following truths for teachers and learners.

-a) God gives teachers.

1 Corinthians 12:28 And in the church God has appointed first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then workers of miracles, also those having gifts of healing, those able to help others, those with gifts of administration, and those speaking in different kinds of tongues.

Ephesians 4:11 It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers.

1 Timothy 2:7 And for this purpose I was appointed a herald and an apostle—I am telling the truth, I am not lying—and a teacher of the true faith to the Gentiles.

2 Timothy 1:11 And of this gospel I was appointed a herald and an apostle and a teacher.

-b) God admonishes teachers.

James 3:1 Not many of you should presume to be teachers, my brothers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly.

2 Timothy 4:2,3 Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction. ³ For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear.

Titus 2:2,3,7,10 You must teach what is in accord with sound doctrine. ³Likewise, teach the older women to be reverent in the way they live, not to be slanderers or addicted to much wine, but to teach what is good. ⁷ In everything set them an example by doing what is good. In your teaching show integrity, seriousness... ¹⁰ ... to show that they can be fully trusted, so that in every way they will make the teaching about God our Savior attractive.

1 Timothy 6:3-5 If anyone teaches false doctrines and does not agree to the sound instruction of our Lord Jesus Christ and to godly teaching, ⁴ he is conceited and understands nothing. He has an unhealthy interest in controversies and quarrels about words that result in envy, strife, malicious talk, evil suspicions ⁵ and constant friction between men of corrupt mind, who have been robbed of the truth and who think that godliness is a means to financial gain.

1 Timothy 4:6, 11, 16 If you point these things out to the brothers, you will be a good minister of Christ Jesus, brought up in the truths of the faith and of the good teaching that you have followed. ¹¹ Command and teach these things. ¹⁶ Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers.

-c) God admonishes those taught.

1 Timothy 5:17 The elders who direct the affairs of the church well are worthy of double honor, especially those whose work is preaching and teaching.

Hebrews 13:7,17 Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate

their faith. ¹⁷ Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you.

-d) God warns against false teachers.

2 Peter 2:1 But there were also false prophets among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you. They will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the sovereign Lord who bought them—bringing swift destruction on themselves.

b) Dogmatics is an aptitude to defend the teachings of Scripture against error.

Titus 1:9-14 He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it. ¹⁰For there are many rebellious people, mere talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision group. ¹¹ They must be silenced, because they are ruining whole households by teaching things they ought not to teach—and that for the sake of dishonest gain. ¹² Even one of their own prophets has said, “Cretans are always liars, evil brutes, lazy gluttons.” ¹³ This testimony is true. Therefore, rebuke them sharply, so that they will be sound in the faith ¹⁴ and will pay no attention to Jewish myths or to the commands of those who reject the truth.

1 Timothy 1:3-7 As I urged you when I went into Macedonia, stay there in Ephesus so that you may command certain men not to teach false doctrines any longer ⁴ nor to devote themselves to myths and endless genealogies. These promote controversies rather than God’s work—which is by faith. ⁵ The goal of this command is love, which comes from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith. ⁶ Some have wandered away from these and turned to meaningless talk. ⁷ They want to be teachers of the law, but they do not know what they are talking about or what they so confidently affirm.

c) Dogmatics is an aptitude to suffer for the teachings of Scripture.

Matthew 24:9 Then you will be handed over to be persecuted and put to death, and you will be hated by all nations because of me.

1 Corinthians 1:23 We preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles.

2 Timothy 1:12 That is why I am suffering as I am. Yet I am not ashamed, because I know whom I have believed, and am convinced that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him for that day.

2 Timothy 2:1,3,8,9,12 You then, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. ³ Endure hardship with us like a good soldier of Christ Jesus. ⁸ Remember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead, descended from David. This is my gospel, ⁹ for which I am suffering even to the point of being chained like a criminal. But God’s word is not chained. ¹² If we endure, we will also reign with

him. If we disown him, he will also disown us.

2 Timothy 3:10-13 You, however, know all about my teaching, my way of life, my purpose, faith, patience, love, endurance, ¹¹ persecutions, sufferings—what kinds of things happened to me in Antioch, Iconium and Lystra, the persecutions I endured. Yet the Lord rescued me from all of them. ¹² In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, ¹³ while evil men and impostors will go from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived.

d) Dogmatics is a readiness to confine oneself to and to be content with Scripture alone as the divine authority.

Isaiah 8:19-20 When men tell you to consult mediums and spiritists, who whisper and mutter, should not a people inquire of their God? Why consult the dead on behalf of the living? ²⁰ To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, they have no light of dawn.

Jeremiah 20:7-13 O LORD, you deceived me, and I was deceived; you overpowered me and prevailed. I am ridiculed all day long; everyone mocks me: ⁸Whenever I speak, I cry out proclaiming violence and destruction. So the word of the LORD has brought me insult and reproach all day long. ⁹ But if I say, “I will not mention him or speak any more in his name,” his word is in my heart like a fire, a fire shut up in my bones. I am weary of holding it in; indeed, I cannot. ¹⁰ I hear many whispering, “Terror on every side! Report him! Let’s report him!” All my friends are waiting for me to slip, saying, “Perhaps he will be deceived; then we will prevail over him and take our revenge on him.” ¹¹ But the LORD is with me like a mighty warrior; so my persecutors will stumble and not prevail. They will fail and be thoroughly disgraced; their dishonor will never be forgotten. ¹² O LORD Almighty, you who examine the righteous and probe the heart and mind, let me see your vengeance upon them, for to you I have committed my cause. ¹³ Sing to the LORD! Give praise to the LORD! He rescues the life of the needy from the hands of the wicked.

Luke 16:29 Abraham replied, “They have Moses and the Prophets; let them listen to them.”

5. The term “dogmatics” is taken also in an looser sense, as denoting the sum total of Christian doctrines.

2 Timothy 1:13 What you heard from me, keep as the pattern of sound teaching, with faith and love in Christ Jesus.

Titus 1:9 He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it.

Opponents of the biblical teaching of a *corpus doctrinae*:

Karl Barth (d. 1968): Dogmatics is a science.... I propose that by science we understand an attempt at comprehension and exposition, at investigation and instruction, which is related to a definite object and sphere of activity. No act of man can claim to be more than an attempt, not even science. By describing it as an attempt,

we are simply stating its nature as preliminary and limited (*Dogmatics in Outline*, p 9). Christian dogmatics will always be a thinking, an investigation and exposition which are relative and liable to error (*Ibid.*, p 11).

Ted Peters (ELCA): One can identify the modern theologian as a person who is willing to jump off the island and attempt to swim amid the currents of modern consciousness. He or she is aware of the risks of leaving the dry land of biblical naiveté behind, but hopes that farther out at sea another island of meaning will appear. If none does appear, then perhaps with strong faith one can simply learn to enjoy the unending swim” (*God—the World’s Future, Systematic Theology for a Postmodern Era*, p 5).

Carl Braaten: Dogmatics is one of the traditional disciplines of Christian theology. Its special task is the critical interpretation of the doctrines of the church’s faith in light of our knowledge of Christian origins and the challenge of the contemporary situation.... [Dogmatics] has its own special way of serving, not by repeating the doctrines of the past, but by a critical interpretation of the received doctrines in light of our biblical knowledge and our present engagement with the modern world. This means that dogmatics is done not so much to defend the church as it is, but to criticize it (*Christian Dogmatics*, I, p 5, 7).

Passages that refute such theologians:

John 8:31-32 To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, “If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. ³² Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”

1 Peter 4:11 If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God. If anyone serves, he should do it with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen.

2 Timothy 3:7 ...always learning but never able to acknowledge the truth.

2 Peter 2:19 They promise them freedom, while they themselves are slaves of depravity—for a man is a slave to whatever has mastered him.

II. The source of dogmatics as a corpus of doctrine is Scripture.

1. The substance is taken from Scripture only.

Deuteronomy 4:2 Do not add to what I command you and do not subtract from it, but keep the commands of the LORD your God that I give you.

Deuteronomy 12:32 See that you do all I command you; do not add to it or take away from it.

Revelation 22:18-19 I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds anything to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book. ¹⁹ And if anyone takes words away from this book of prophecy, God will take away from him his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book.

Matthew 23:8 But you are not to be called “Rabbi,” for you have only one Master and you are all brothers.

Opposition to the scriptural view:

Paul Tillich (d. 1965) adds such sources as existential experience, church history, denominational tradition, the history of religion, and culture and says: In dealing with the question of the sources of systematic theology, we must reject the assertion of neo-orthodox biblicism that the Bible is the *only* source (*S.T.*, I, p 34).

Herbert Chilstrom (first bishop of the ELCA): The prescriptive method [of using Scripture] is based on the assumption that Scripture is used to discover final answers to questions. Thus, when confronted with a particularly thorny issue, one could go to Scripture, study carefully every text that addresses the issue and come up with a conclusive response. Scripture as “norm” means Scripture as answer book. I suspect that most of us in the LCA come at these matters from the descriptive method. We see Scripture as no less important. ... But for us “norm” means “guide” rather than “rule.” Having informed ourselves of what Scripture has to say, we go on to ask questions about other ways in which God may be trying to enlighten us (*The Lutheran*, March 21, 1984).

Clark Pinnock: [I] consult a quadrilateral of sources in the attempt to be bi-polar: the Bible, tradition, reason, and experience. To be more precise, I adhere to the rule of Scripture within a trilateral hermeneutic.... I hold the Bible to be the primary norm for theology in the midst of the other sources.... Moving to the second source, tradition is important, because theology ought not to be biblical in an isolated way. Scripture may be *prima*, but it is not *sola* because tradition plays a role in interpretation....Third, reason has a role to play in theology; and helping us say what we want to say. Serious theologians value coherence and intelligibility in their work....Fourth, with respect to experience, theology should be concerned about existential fit and practical adequacy of a theological model to meet the demands of life (*Most Moved Mover*, p 19-23).

2. The manner of presentation must be in harmony with the Scriptures.

a) *Methodus est arbitraria*. The method is not prescribed. Some methods are:

- 1) Loci—dealing with all the passages on a given subject, chapter by chapter**
- 2) Synthetic—chapters arranged from causes to the effects**
Analytic—chapters arranged from effects to causes
- 3) Federal—arranged by various covenants or dispensations:**
 - Covenant of works (before the fall)
 - Covenant of grace (after the fall):
 - Stage of conscience (till Moses)
 - Stage of Law (till Christ)
 - Stage of true grace (till the end)

- 4) **Historical-expository—using Bible history as the framework**
- 5) **The outline of the Augsburg Confession (Regin Prenter, *Creation and Redemption*)**
- 6) **Causal—discussing doctrines in relation to various levels of causation:**
 - Causa efficiens, causa movens (interna, externa)*—the agent that produces the action or change
 - Causa materialis*—the material on which the agent operates
 - subjectum quod*—the subject which acts, e.g., Christ suffers.
 - subjectum quo*—the aspect by which the subject acts, e. g., the nature according to which Christ acts, Christ suffers according to his human nature.
 - objectum: materia*—the underlying corporeal substratum
 - materia circa quam*—material concerning which
 - materia ex qua*—material from which
 - Causa formalis*—the essence which determines what the thing is
 - Causa finalis*—the ultimate purpose
 - Causa instrumentalis*—a secondary instrument or means used to bring about an effect, e.g., faith.

See, Muller, *Dictionary of Latin and Greek Theological Terms*.

b) The content, however, is not arbitrary.

Titus 1:9 He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it.

Titus 2:1 You must teach what is in accord with sound doctrine.

c) Also in the strict sense of the term, dogmatics as an aptitude is dependent on a new birth and has its origin in Scripture.

2 Timothy 3:16,17 All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, ¹⁷ so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

1 Peter 1:23 For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God.

The History of Lutheran Dogmatics

For an overview, read *A Brief Summary of the History of Lutheran Dogmatics* by Geoff Kieta or *The Theology of Post-Reformation Lutheranism I* (p. 27-254) by Robert Preus. Here we simply list the chief dogmaticians of the classical age of Lutheran dogmatic writing who are cited frequently in these notes. Appendices at the end of Hoenecke and Schmid also list these men and their works. A fuller bibliography of the cited works of these men and of English

translations of their works is appended to these notes.

The chief theologian of Lutheranism, was, of course, Martin Luther, but he did not write a complete dogmatics.

Early Lutheran Dogmaticians

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| 1. Melanchthon, Philip 1497–1560 | <i>Loci communes rerum theologicarum seu hypotyposes theologiae</i> , 1521 (English—Baker) |
| 2. Chemnitz, Martin 1522–1586 | <i>Loci theologici</i> , 1586, publ. by Polycarp Leyser 1591 (English—Preus)
<i>Examen concilii tridentini</i> , 1565 (English—Kramer)
<i>De duabus naturis</i> , 1578 (English—Preus)
<i>De coena domini</i> , 1578–1590 (English—Preus)
<i>Compendium theologiae</i> , 1573
<i>De Sacrificis</i> , 1569 (English—Montgomery)
<i>Loci theologici</i> , 1600
<i>Compendium locorum theologicorum</i> , 1610
<i>Anthropologia sacra</i> , 1612
<i>Loci Theologici</i> , 1610–1622 (20 vol.)
<i>Diaskepsis theologica</i> , 1626
<i>Epitome credendorum</i> , 1625
<i>Universae theologiae systema</i> , 1633 (2 vol.)
<i>Breviarium theologiae</i> , 1640
<i>Medullae theologiae</i> , 1645
<i>Hodosophia Christiana sive theologia positiva</i> , 1649
<i>Theologia positiva acroamatica</i>
<i>Systema locorum theologicorum</i> , 1655–1677 (12 vol.)
<i>Introductio in theologiam</i> , 1679
<i>Theologia didactico-polemica sive Systema theologiae</i> , 1685
<i>Compendium theologiae positivae</i> , 1686 (Walther Edition)
<i>Breviculus theologicus</i> , 1688
<i>Examen theologicum acroamaticum universam theologiam theticopolemicum complectens</i> , 1707 |
| 3. Heerbrand, Jakob 1521–1600 | |
| 4. Chytraeus, David 1531–1600 | |
| 5. Hafenreffer, Matthias 1561–1619 | |
| 6. Hutter, Leonhard 1563–1616 | |
| 7. Meisner, Balthasar 1587–1626 | |
| 8. Gerhard, Johann 1582–1637 | |
| 9. Hunnius, Nikolaus 1585–1643 | |
| 10. Brochmand, Jasper 1585–1652 | |
| 11. Hulsemann, Johann 1602–1661 | |
| 12. Friedlieb, Ph. H. 1603–1663 | |
| 13. Dannhauer, Konrad 1603–1666 | |
| 14. Koenig, J. Friedrich 1619–1664 | |
| 15. Calov, Abraham 1612–1686 | |
| 16. Musaeus, Johann 1613–1681 | |
| 17. Quenstedt, Johann Andreas 1617–1688 | |
| 18. Baier, Wilhelm 1647–1695 | |
| 19. Schertzer, Joh. Ad. 1628–1683 | |
| 20. Hollaz, David 1648–1713 | |

After a two-century decline under the influence of Pietism and Rationalism, Lutheran dogmatics was revived by C. F. W. Walther, Adolf Hoenecke, and Franz Pieper in the 19th and 20th centuries.

3. Scripture is the only source of dogmatics.

Zechariah 8:2 This is what the LORD Almighty says (יְהוָה אֱמַר יְהוָה): “I am very jealous for Zion; I am burning with jealousy for her.”

Matthew 4:4 Jesus answered, “It is written (γέγραπται): ‘Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.’”

a) It is a prerogative of Scripture to propose and define articles of faith.

N.B. An article of faith is a truth or doctrine revealed by God in the Holy Scriptures to be received in faith. While every statement of Scripture must be accepted as absolute truth, not every statement is an article of faith. Every article of faith stands in some relation to our salvation, some in direct, some in a more remote relation.

Joshua 23:6 Be very strong; be careful to obey all that is written in the Book of the Law of Moses, without turning aside to the right or to the left.

Isaiah 8:20 To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, they have no light of dawn.

Luke 16:29 Abraham replied, "They have Moses and the Prophets; let them listen to them."

John 20:31 But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

Acts 17:11 Now the Bereans were of more noble character than the Thessalonians, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true.

Acts 26:22 But I have had God's help to this very day, and so I stand here and testify to small and great alike. I am saying nothing beyond what the prophets and Moses said would happen.

1 Corinthians 2:4,13 My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power. ¹³ This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words.

οὐκ ἐν διδακτοῖς ἀνθρωπίνης σοφίας λόγοις ἀλλ' ἐν διδακτοῖς πνεύματος, πνευματικοῖς πνευματικὰ συγκρίνοντες.

Galatians 1:8-9 But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let him be eternally condemned! ⁹ As we have already said, so now I say again, : If anyone is preaching to you a gospel other than what you accepted, let him be eternally condemned.

1 Timothy 6:3-5 If anyone teaches false doctrines and does not agree to the sound instruction of our Lord Jesus Christ and to godly teaching, ⁴ he is conceited and understands nothing. He has an unhealthy interest in controversies and quarrels about words that result in envy, strife, malicious talk, evil suspicions ⁵ and constant friction between men of corrupt mind, who have been robbed of the truth and who think that godliness is a means to financial gain.

2 Timothy 3:14-17 But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, ¹⁵ and how from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. ¹⁶ All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, ¹⁷ so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

1 Peter 4:11 If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God.

Smalcald Articles II, II, 15: For it will not do to frame articles of faith from the works or words of the holy Fathers; otherwise their kind of fare, of garments, of house, etc., would have to become an article of faith, as was done with relics. The rule is: The Word of God shall establish articles of faith, and no one else, not even an angel.

Formula of Concord, Intro., 1-2: We believe, teach, and confess that the sole rule and standard according to which all dogmas together with all teachers should be estimated and judged are the prophetic and apostolic Scriptures of the Old and of the New Testament alone, as it is written Ps. 119, 105: Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path. And St. Paul: Though an angel from heaven preach any other gospel unto you, let him be accursed, Gal. 1, 8.

Other writings, however, of ancient or modern teachers, whatever name they bear, must not be regarded as equal to the Holy Scriptures, but all of them together be subjected to them, and should not be received otherwise or further than as witnesses, which are to show in what manner after the time of the apostles, and at what places, this pure doctrine of the prophets and apostles was preserved.

b) This is so because Scripture is the only Word of God we have.

Calov: The genus of Scripture is the Word of God because not only what God speaks but also what is written by God through the penmen of God is the Word of God, and it is the same Word, which was and is in God, which we call ἐνδιάθετον (immanent in God) and which has been proclaimed or reduced to writing in the Scriptures, which is called προφορικόν (emanent from God, i.e., revealed by him) (*Theol. posit.*, proleg., IV, 169, p 23).

Augustine: In these matters, which are openly stated in the Scriptures, are found all things necessary for faith and life, namely, hope and love. If anyone says anything else concerning Christ, or his church, or anything else which has to do with our faith and life, I do not say, “if we,” but what Paul adds (Ga 1:8–9), “if an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one you received in the Old and New Testament Scriptures, let him be eternally condemned.” Let our writings be set aside and the Book of God come to the center of the stage (*De Doctrina Christiana*, II, 9, v).

Augustine: In the church it is not “I say this, you say this, he says this” that counts but, “Thus says the Lord” (*Contra literas Petiliani*, III, 6, v).

Athanasius: The holy and divinely inspired Scriptures are sufficient for all instruction in the truth (*Conta gentes*, v).

J.P. Meyer: The fact that the Scriptures are the only fountain of doctrine is underscored by the demand of God that every teacher must submit to its judgment without reservation. The Scriptures provide the absolute standard by which all doctrines must be gauged (Ac 26:22; 17:11; Is 8:20; 1 Tm 6:4) (*WLQ*, Jan 1948, p 16).

Opposition to the scriptural view:

Braaten: The ultimate authority of Christian theology is not the biblical canon as such, but the gospel of Jesus Christ to which the Scriptures bear witness—the “canon within the canon” (CD, I, 61). Biblicism holds to an infallible Bible that can be the absolute authority in matters of belief and morals.... Fundamentalist biblicism is rejected by most theologians and is out of favor in most of the seminaries that train clergy for the parish ministry. They reject biblicism not merely because historical science has disclosed errors and contradictions in the biblical writings, but rather because the authority of the Bible is elevated at the expense of the authority of Christ and his gospel (CD, I, 74f).

4. The following sources must be avoided.

a) No individual (or group) may define new articles of faith.

1) The pope claims this authority.

-a) The pope’s claims:

Boniface VIII; *Unam Sanctam* (1302): Moreover, we declare, state, define and pronounce that for every human being subjection to the Roman pontiff is by all means necessary for salvation.

Vatican I (1870): We teach and define this to be a divinely revealed doctrine: the Roman pontiff, when he speaks *ex cathedra* (that is, when functioning in his office as pastor and teacher of all Christians by his supreme apostolic authority, he defines a doctrine concerning faith and morals which is to be held by the whole church) through the divine assistance promised to him in the blessed Peter he possesses that infallibility with which the divine Redeemer wanted his church to be endowed in defining a doctrine concerning faith and morals (Session IV, 4).

Vatican II: All this teaching about the institution, the perpetuity, the force and reason for the sacred primacy of the Roman Pontiff and of his infallible teaching authority, this sacred Synod again proposes to be firmly believed by all the faithful (“The Church,” Chap. III, 18). — The task of authentically interpreting the word of God, whether written or handed on, has been entrusted exclusively to the living teaching office of the Church, whose authority is exercised in the name of Jesus Christ (“Divine Revelation,” Chap. II, 10).

This teaching is affirmed by the 1994 *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, par. 816-818.

-b) Refutation of the pope’s claims:

Matthew 23:8-10 But you are not to be called “Rabbi,” for you have only one Master and you are all brothers. ⁹ And do not call

anyone on earth “father,” for you have one Father, and he is in heaven. ¹⁰ Nor are you to be called ‘teacher,’ for you have one Teacher, the Christ.

Galatians 1:8 But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let him be eternally condemned!

Matthew 18:18-20 I tell you the truth, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. ¹⁹ Again, I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. ²⁰ For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them.

Formula of Concord, Intro., 1: We believe, teach, and confess that the sole rule and standard according to which all dogmas together with all teachers should be estimated and judged are the prophetic and apostolic Scriptures of the Old and of the New Testament alone.

2) Church conventions may not decree new doctrines, but may formulate joint confessions of their faith on the basis of Scripture.

b) Articles of faith may not be derived from other sources in the church.

1) Articles of faith may not be drawn from tradition as Rome and Eastern Orthodoxy do.

Council of Trent (1545-1563): The Synod accepts and venerates all the books both of the Old and New Testament ... and no less with equal feelings of piety and reverence the traditions, both those that pertain to faith and life, as either handed down from Christ by word of mouth or dictated by the Holy Spirit and preserved by continuous succession in the Catholic Church (Sess. IV).

Vatican II (1962-1965): It is not from sacred Scripture alone that the Church draws her certainty about everything which has been revealed. Therefore both sacred tradition and sacred Scripture are to be accepted and venerated with the same sense of devotion and reverence (“Divine Revelation,” Chap. II, par. 9). Sacred tradition and sacred Scripture form one sacred deposit of the word of God, which is committed to the Church (Par. 10).

This teaching is affirmed by the 1994 *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, par. 82.

Note: In Roman Catholicism tradition is tied very closely to the teaching authority of the pope and hierarchy; tradition is relatively objective. In Orthodoxy tradition is more subjective. It is a charismatic activity of the Holy Spirit. The two churches are agreed, however, in rejecting the *sola scriptura*.

Basil (d. 379): Concerning the teachings of the church, we have received some from written sources, while others have been given to us secretly, through apostolic tradition. Both sources have equal force in true religion. No one would deny either source—no one, at any rate, who is even slightly familiar with the ordinance of the Church. If we attacked unwritten customs, claiming them to be of little importance, we would fatally mutilate the Gospel, no matter what our intentions—or rather, we would reduce the Gospel teachings to bare words (*On the Holy Spirit*, 27.66).

Vladimir Lossky: Tradition is not the content of revelation, but the light that reveals it; it is not the word, but the living breath which makes the words heard at the same time as the silence from which it came; it is not the truth, but a communication of the Spirit of truth, outside which the truth cannot be received....The pure notion of tradition can then be defined by saying that it is the life of the Holy Spirit in the church, communicating to each member of the body of Christ the faculty of hearing, of receiving, of knowing the truth in the light which belongs to it, and not according to the light of human reason. This is true gnosis, owed to an action of the divine light ("Tradition and Traditions," in Clendenin, *Eastern Orthodox Theology*, p 133-134).

John Meyendorff: The Orthodox East has never been obsessed with a search for objective, clear, formally definable criteria of truth, such as either the papal authority or the Reformed notion of *sola scriptura* (*Orthodox Church*, p 99-101).

Daniel B. Clendenin: It is the Orthodox view that the Christian faith and experience can in no way be compatible with the notion of 'Sola Scriptura,' and the explicit rejection of all authority except Scripture. The Bible is not a thing-in-itself that can be isolated or separated from the context of the church and tradition...It is precisely this view of the self-sufficiency of Scripture, elevated above the church, that Orthodoxy considers to be what Florovsky calls 'the sin of the Reformation,' the consequences of which are arbitrary, subjective, and individualistic interpretations of the gospel" (*Eastern Orthodox Christianity: A Western Perspective*, p 104, 105).

Passages that oppose this view:

Matthew 15:1-9 Then some Pharisees and teachers of the law came to Jesus from Jerusalem and asked, ²"Why do your disciples break the tradition of the elders? They don't wash their hands before they eat!" ³ Jesus replied, "And why do you break the command of God for the sake of your tradition? ⁴For God said, 'Honor your father and mother' and 'Anyone who curses his father or mother must be put to death.' ⁵But you say that if a man says to his father or mother, 'Whatever help you might otherwise have received from me is a gift devoted to God,' ⁶he is not to 'honor his father' with it. Thus you nullify the word of God for the sake of your tradition. ⁷You hypocrites! Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you: ⁸ 'These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from

me. ⁹ They worship me in vain; their teachings are but rules taught by men.””

2) Nor may new revelations be expected as in Islam, Society of Friends (Quakers), Christian Science, Latter Day Saints, etc.

Quran: This [Quran] is the Scripture whereof there is no doubt, a guidance unto those who ward off evil.... And if you are in doubt concerning that which We reveal unto Our slave [Muhammad], then produce a surah of the like thereof, and call your witness beside Allah if you are truthful. And if you do it not - and you can never do it –then guard yourselves against the Fire prepared for disbelievers, whose fuel is of men and stones (*al-Baqarah* 2:2, 23-24).

George Fox: Not Scriptures but the Spirit; not Christ for us but Christ in us; not steeple houses and bells, not sacraments and dogmas, but the inner light (Meusel, *Kirchliches Handlexikon*, II, 581).

Mary Baker Eddy: As I was only a scribe echoing the harmonies of heaven in divine metaphysics, I cannot be super modest in my estimate of the Christian Science textbook (*Christian Science Journal*, Jan, 1901).

The Book of Mormon: And now I, Mormon, being about to deliver up the record which I have been making into the hands of my son Moroni, behold I have witnessed almost all the destruction of my people, the Nephites. And it is many hundred years after the coming of Christ that I deliver these records into the hands of my son.... I cannot write the hundredth part of the things of my people. But behold, I shall take these plates, which contain these prophesyings and revelations, and put them with the remainder of my record, for they are choice unto me; and I know they will be choice unto my brethren (*Words of Mormon*, 1 1-6).

Joseph Smith: Take away the book of Mormon and the revelations, and where is our religion? We have none (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, p 71).

Doctrines and Covenants: These four volumes of scripture [KJV, Book of Mormon, Pearl of Great Price, and Doctrines and Covenants] are the standards, the measuring rods, the gauges by which all things are judged. Since they are the will, mind, word, and voice of the Lord (68:4).

Karl Barth, et al., who place the continued testimony of the Spirit in the Church on a level with God’s Word in Scripture: The astonishing statement that the Bible is [God’s] word has been called an axiom. But it is such only in its logical form.... It expresses rather the self-evidenced revelation which God gives simultaneously to his Biblical witnesses and to those who accept their witness. It expresses obedience to the *testimonium spiritus sancti internum*, to the spirit of God in which the human spirit of the writer and the reader become one in adoration. (*The Word of God and the Word of Man*, p 244)—Reformed doctrine, in order to be itself at all, needs the free winds wherein the word of God is recognized in Scripture

and Spirit (Ibid., p 247).

Barth regards the Bible not as God's revelation, but as a mere human witness to revelation: "the witness, which as such is not revelation, but only—and this is the limitation—the witness to it" (*CD*, I, 2:243).

Vatican II, "Divine Revelation," Chap. II, 8: This tradition which comes from the apostles develops in the Church with the help of the Holy Spirit.... For, as the centuries succeed one another, the Church constantly moves forward toward the fullness of divine truth until the words of God reach their complete fulfillment in her.

Passages that oppose these views:

Deuteronomy 13:1-5 If a prophet, or one who foretells by dreams, appears among you and announces to you a miraculous sign or wonder, ² and if the sign or wonder of which he has spoken takes place, and he says, "Let us follow other gods" (gods you have not known) "and let us worship them," ³ you must not listen to the words of that prophet or dreamer. The LORD your God is testing you to find out whether you love him with all your heart and with all your soul. ⁴ It is the LORD your God you must follow, and him you must revere. Keep his commands and obey him; serve him and hold fast to him. ⁵ That prophet or dreamer must be put to death, because he preached rebellion against the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt and redeemed you from the land of slavery; he has tried to turn you from the way the LORD your God commanded you to follow. You must purge the evil from among you.

Isaiah 8:20 To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, they have no light of dawn.

Luke 16:29 Abraham replied, "They have Moses and the Prophets; let them listen to them."

John 12:48 There is a judge for the one who rejects me and does not accept my words; that very word which I spoke will condemn him at the last day.

2 Timothy 3:15-17 From infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. ¹⁶ All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, ¹⁷ so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

Hebrews 1:1-2 In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, ² but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe.

Revelation 22:18 I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds anything to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book.

Smalcald Articles III, VIII, 3–6. And in those things which concern the spoken, outward Word, we must firmly hold that God grants His Spirit or grace to no one, except through or with the preceding outward Word, in order that we may thus be protected against the enthusiasts, *i.e.*, spirits who boast that they have the Spirit without and before the Word, and accordingly judge Scripture or the spoken Word, and explain and stretch it at their pleasure, as Muenzer did, and many still do at the present day, who wish to be acute judges between the Spirit and the letter, and yet know not what they say or declare. For indeed the Papacy also is nothing but sheer enthusiasm, by which the Pope boasts that all rights exist in the shrine of his heart, and whatever he decides and commands with [in] his church is spirit and right, even though it is above and contrary to Scripture and the spoken Word. All this is the old devil and old serpent, who also converted Adam and Eve into enthusiasts, and led them from the outward Word of God to spiritualizing and self-conceit, and nevertheless he accomplished this through other outward words. Just as also our enthusiasts at the present day condemn the outward Word, and nevertheless they themselves are not silent, but they fill the world with their pratings and writings, as though, indeed, the Spirit could not come through the writings and spoken word of the apostles, but first through their writings and words he must come. Why then do not they also omit their own sermons and writings, until the Spirit himself come to men, without their writings and before them, as they boast that he has come into them without the preaching of the Scriptures? But of these matters there is not time now to dispute at greater length; we have elsewhere sufficiently urged this subject.

3) Neither natural nor illumined reason is a source or standard of doctrine.

-a) Natural reason is not a fit organ even for receiving the divine truths.

1 Corinthians 1:20,21 Where is the wise man? Where is the scholar? Where is the philosopher of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? ²¹ For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not know him, God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe.

1 Corinthians 2:14 The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned.

Ephesians 4:17,18 So I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking. ¹⁸ They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts.

Colossians 2:8 See to it that no one takes you captive through

hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world rather than on Christ.

Jude 1:10 Yet these men speak abusively against whatever they do not understand; and what things they do understand by instinct, like unreasoning animals—these are the very things that destroy them.

Formula of Concord, T.D., II 9: For, first, although man's reason or natural intellect indeed has still a dim spark of the knowledge that there is a God, as also of the doctrine of the Law, Rom. 1, 19ff, yet it is so ignorant, blind, and perverted that when even the most ingenious and learned men upon earth read or hear the Gospel of the Son of God and the promise of eternal salvation, they cannot from their own powers perceive, apprehend, understand, or believe and regard it as true, but the more diligence and earnestness they employ, wishing to comprehend these spiritual things with their reason, the less they understand or believe, and before they become enlightened and are taught by the Holy Spirit, they regard all this only as foolishness or fictions.

-b) Christian faith is, indeed, a profound experience, and self-inspection will by illumined reason discover divine facts.

-1) Scripture presents self-examination as a valid discipline.

Romans 7:17-23 As it is, it is no longer I myself who do it, but it is sin living in me. ¹⁸ I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. ¹⁹ For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing. ²⁰ Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it. ²¹ So I find this law at work: When I want to do good, evil is right there with me. ²² For in my inner being I delight in God's law; ²³ but I see another law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members.

Romans 8:16 The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children.

2 Corinthians 13:5 Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves. Do you not realize that Christ Jesus is in you—unless, of course, you fail the test?

Galatians 6:4 Each one should test his own actions. Then he can take pride in himself, without comparing himself to somebody else.

1 John 3:14 We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love our brothers. Anyone who does not love

remains in death.

-2) Yet such self-observation is not the basis of sound theology.

1 Corinthians 4:4 My conscience is clear, but that does not make me innocent. It is the Lord who judges me.

1 John 3:19-20 This then is how we know that we belong to the truth, and how we set our hearts at rest in his presence whenever our hearts condemn us. For God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything. NIV

1 John 3:19-20 And by this we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before Him.²⁰ For if our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and knows all things. KJV

2 Corinthians 10:5 casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ

Opposition to the scriptural view:

Tillich—Experience as the inspiring presence of the Spirit is the ultimate source of theology (*S.T.*, I, 51).
So also Schleiermacher, Kierkegaard.

-c) Only deductive or analytical conclusions—not inductive—are legitimate, and even these in a limited sense. Legitimate conclusions are only those

-1) which do not violate the laws of logic

-2) which do not in the slightest contradict what Scripture says

-3) whose premises are drawn from Scripture itself

-4) which are implicit in the Scriptures.

Note: A valid deductive conclusion is: God so loved the world; I am part of the world; God loves me. A flawed inductive conclusion is: Jesus told the rich young ruler “Sell everything.” Jesus wants me to sell everything.

5. For Lutheran dogmatics the Book of Concord (1580) constitutes a secondary source of doctrine, not a second source.

Confession is natural for a Christian.

Psalm 116:10 I believed, therefore I spoke, “I am greatly afflicted.”

Psalm 116:10 I believed, therefore have I spoken. I was greatly afflicted. KJV

2 Corinthians 4:13 It is written: “I believed; therefore I have spoken.” With that same

spirit of faith we also believe and therefore speak.

Luke 6:45 A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart brings forth evil. For out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.

Romans 10:10 For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

1 Corinthians 1:10 Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.

Hebrews 4:14 Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession.

1 Peter 3:15 But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear.

a) Scripture is the *principium doctrinae* and *norma normans* (the ruling rule). Our symbolical books are the *norma normata* (the ruled rule).

Formula of Concord, Intro., 1,2, 7, 8: We believe, teach, and confess that the sole rule and standard according to which all dogmas together with all teachers should be estimated and judged are the prophetic and apostolic Scriptures of the Old and of the New Testament alone, as it is written Ps. 119, 105: Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path. And St. Paul: Though an angel from heaven preach any other gospel unto you, let him be accursed, Gal. 1, 8. 2] Other writings, however, of ancient or modern teachers, whatever name they bear, must not be regarded as equal to the Holy Scriptures, but all of them together be subjected to them, and should not be received otherwise or further than as witnesses, which are to show in what manner after the time of the apostles, and at what places, this pure doctrine of the prophets and apostles was preserved. 7] In this way the distinction between the Holy Scriptures of the Old and of the New Testament and all other writings is preserved, and the Holy Scriptures alone remain the only judge, rule, and standard, according to which, as the only test-stone, all dogmas shall and must be discerned and judged, as to whether they are good or evil, right or wrong. 8] But the other symbols and writings cited are not judges, as are the Holy Scriptures, but only a testimony and declaration of the faith, as to how at any time the Holy Scriptures have been understood and explained in the articles in controversy in the Church of God by those then living, and by what arguments the dogmas conflicting with the Holy Scripture were rejected and condemned.

Cf. also S.D., Rule and Norm, 850–852,3–7. Preface to Book of Concord, Trig. p 22.

b) We subscribe to the symbolical books *quia*, not *quatenus* (“because,” not “in so far as” they agree with Scripture).

1) This subscription presupposes a thorough examination of the Confessions and Scripture.

Formula of Concord, T.D., Intro., 5/3: In the third place, since in these last times God, out of special grace, has brought the truth of His Word to light again from the darkness of the Papacy through the faithful service of the precious man of God, Dr. Luther, and since this doctrine has been collected from, and according to, God's Word into the articles and chapters of the Augsburg Confession against the corruptions of the Papacy and also of other sects, we confess also *the First, Unaltered Augsburg Confession* as our symbol for this time, not because it was composed by our theologians, but because it has been taken from God's Word and is founded firmly and well therein, precisely in the form in which it was committed to writing, in the year 1530, and presented to the Emperor Charles V at Augsburg by some Christian Electors, Princes, and Estates of the Roman Empire as a common confession of the reformed churches, whereby our reformed churches are distinguished from the Papists and other repudiated and condemned sects and heresies, after the custom and usage of the early Church, whereby succeeding councils, Christian bishops and teachers appealed to the Nicene Creed, and publicly declared that they embraced it.

Formula of Concord, T.D., Intro., 13/6 As we lay down God's Word, the eternal truth, as the foundation, so we introduce and quote also these writings as a witness of the truth and as the unanimously received correct understanding of our predecessors who have steadfastly held to the pure doctrine.

In opposition to such *quia* subscription:

Carl Braaten: Lutheran churches have stressed the confessional principle more than the Reformed and Radical Protestant branches of the Reformation. Yet the confessional principle has been a constant source of controversy in world Lutheranism, not least in the United States. The right wing appeals to the confessional principle to exclude all new developments in modern theology. Committed to a theology of repristination, it lifts up the *Book of Concord*, sometimes coupled with seventeenth-century scholasticism, as the golden age, the once-for-all model of what theology must be. Here doctrines become laws, creating a climate of doctrinal legalism in the church, snuffing out the freedom which is the church's birthright from the gospel (*Christian Dogmatics*, Vol. 1, p 51).

2) A *quatenus* subscription is really no subscription.

Johann Georg Walch (d. 1775): What must be held concerning a subscription with restriction? ... It must be evident that a formula of this kind, if it is admitted, does not hinder anyone from being able to subscribe to the Koran or the Racovian Catechism. 1) A subscription with restriction (*quatenus*) clearly opposes the very nature of this oath. Whoever takes an oath with restriction really offers no binding oath; in so far as the symbolical books are concerned he promises nothing. 2) A subscription with restriction opposes the purpose of the oath both on the part of the magistrate who demands it as well as the one who is to be obligated by its

binding force. Therefore, whoever takes a conditional oath grants himself a license to desert without fear, as he pleases, the doctrine presented in the Symbols (*Intro.*, II, cap. II, 11).

Note: “Historical” subscription, is a modern form of *quatenus*.

The Confessions oppose *quatenus* subscription:

Formula of Concord, Th.D., XII. 39, 40: These and like articles, one and all, with what pertains to them and follows from them, we reject and condemn as wrong, false, heretical, and contrary to the Word of God, the three Creeds, the Augsburg, Confession and Apology, the Smalcald Articles, and the Catechisms of Luther. Of these articles all godly Christians should and ought to beware, as much as the welfare and salvation of their souls is dear to them.

40] Since now, in the sight of God and of the entire Church of Christ, we wish to testify to those now living and those who shall come after us that this declaration herewith presented concerning all the controverted articles aforementioned and explained, and no other, is our faith, doctrine, and confession, in which we are also willing, by God’s grace, to appear with intrepid hearts before the judgment-seat of Jesus Christ, and give an account of it; and that we will neither privately nor publicly speak or write anything contrary to it, but, by the help of God’s grace, intend to abide thereby: therefore, after mature deliberation, we have, in God’s fear and with the invocation of His name, attached our signatures with our own hands.

3) Our subscription to our symbolical books is restricted to the doctrines contained in them.

-a) It includes

- **formal declarations of faith as well as doctrines mentioned incidentally (as the doctrine of creation is in Formula of Concord I, 3/2, and the inspiration and the inerrancy of Scripture are in Large Catechism, Baptism, par. 57 and Sac. Altar, par. 76.)**
- **doctrines introduced in dogmatical deductions (A.C. XX, 9–10).**
- **the rejection of error (F.C. I , 11/1 etc.; A.C. I, 5).**

-b) All things pertaining to the manner of presentation, as figures of speech, method of deduction, historical, archeological, scientific remarks, use of proof texts, etc., are not included.

- FC, TD, XI: Matthew 22:14 is incorrectly cited as Matthew 20:16.
- SA, II, IV: Luther incorrectly refers to Revelation 10:3 as coming from Revelation 12.
- FC, I 15/5 says “when a magnet is smeared with garlic-juice, its natural power is not thereby removed, but only impeded.” We don’t subscribe to the idea the garlic juice weakens magnets. In

fact, this is part of a statement of Strigel which the confessors are rejecting.

- FC, TD, IV 8 cites Romans 14:23, “Whatever is not of faith is sin,” in support of the teaching that only a Christian motivated by faith can do good works pleasing to God.” The context of Romans 14:23 makes it clear that “faith” in this passage does not refer to saving faith in Christ but to confidence that a specific action is in accord with God’s law.
- In subscribing to the confessions we do not limit ourselves to using their terminology. We don’t usually call our service “the mass.”

See, J. Brug, “Why Bible-Believing Lutherans Subscribe to the Book Of Concord” WLS Essay File.

III. Dogmatics offers a systematic statement of the various articles of faith scattered throughout the Scriptures.

1. Dogmatics is not systematic in the sense that we can reduce the doctrines of Scripture to a strict system.

- a) It does not develop all doctrines from one central truth.**
 - 1) There is a central truth—justification by grace through faith.**
 - 2) But this is not offered for speculative development.**
- b) It does not attempt to harmonize the articles of faith, e.g., universal grace with the decree of election; salvation *sola gratia Dei* with damnation *sola culpa hominis*.**
- c) It does not point out the relation of every article to the central doctrine of Scripture, e.g., time and manner of creation.**
- d) It does not omit any article because its relation to the central doctrine may not be clear, e.g., angels.**
- e) Nor does it invent auxiliary doctrines to bridge any apparent gaps, e.g., using *intuitu fidei* election or natural and malicious resistance as answers to the question, “Why are some saved and not others?”**
- f) It does not distinguish varying theologies in Scripture, such as Johannine, Petrine, or Pauline theology, after the fashion of the historical-critical movement.**

Opposition to the scriptural view:

Emil Brunner (d. 1966): There is a Synoptic, a Pauline, and a Johannine type of doctrine; each differs considerably from the other, and no theological art reduces them to the same common denominator (*Revelation and Reason*, p 129; cf. p 152, 288).

Braaten: Critical attention to what the texts actually say has exploded the notion

that one orthodox dogmatics can be mined out of Scripture. There are different theological tendencies and teachings in the various texts. Ecumenically this has led to the practical conclusion that the traditional demand for a complete consensus of doctrine may be wrongheaded, if even the Scriptures fail to contain such a consensus. (CD, I, p 77)

Clark Pinnock: Among other hermeneutical presuppositions, I accept diversity among the biblical witnesses and recognize the dialogical character of the Bible. Being open to its overall drift, I try to enter into the struggle for the truth that is going on there. The Bible does not speak with a single voice; there is a dialogue among the different voices. The writings contain a long and complex search for the mind of God and in this struggle various points of view compete and interact (*Most Moved Mover*, p 21).

2. Dogmatics is a system in the sense that:

- a) **It gathers all statements of Scripture regarding any one doctrine.**
- b) **It clearly limits the articles of faith over against one another, and defines their relation to one another in so far as Scripture indicates the relation, e.g., justification to sanctification**
- c) **It groups the articles of faith together according to certain view points.**

3. It may point out the varying importance of the several articles of faith regarding their proximity to, or remoteness from, the central truth.

a) **For an example, see Quenstedt's classification:**

1) ***Articuli fundamentales*: Fundamental articles serve as the foundation of faith.**

-a) ***Primarii*: Of primary importance as foundations of faith.**

-1) ***Constitutivi*: Necessary to the essence of saving faith.**

e.g., *omnium fundamentalissimus*: justification.

e.g., sin and guilt, the person of Christ, the work of Christ.

-2) ***Conservativi*: Of greatest importance for preserving faith.**

e.g., election by grace, inspiration.

-b) ***Secundarii*: Of very great importance for faith.**

e.g., sacraments.

2) ***Articuli non fundamentales*: Non-fundamental articles are less critical to faith, but we have no right to dismiss any of them, e.g., Antichrist, angels.**

b) **This difference in importance does not grant any license to dispense with any doctrine.**

1) We may not omit any doctrine or deviate from Scripture.

Deuteronomy 4:2 Do not add to what I command you and do not subtract from it, but keep the commands of the LORD your God that I give you.

Matthew 5:18-19 I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished. ¹⁹ Anyone who breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever practices and teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

Matthew 28:20 ...teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.

Romans 15:4 For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through endurance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.

2 Timothy 1:13 What you heard from me, keep as the pattern of sound teaching, with faith and love in Christ Jesus.

2 Timothy 3:16 All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness.

Titus 1:9 He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it.

Titus 2:1 You must teach what is in accord with sound doctrine.

1 Corinthians 3:10-15 By the grace God has given me, I laid a foundation as an expert builder, and someone else is building on it. But each one should be careful how he builds. ¹¹ For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ. ¹² If any man builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw, ¹³ his work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each man's work. ¹⁴ If what he has built survives, he will receive his reward. ¹⁵ If it is burned up, he will suffer loss; he himself will be saved, but only as one escaping through the flames.

Opposition to the scriptural view:

The ALC's Sandusky Resolution (1938): it is "neither necessary nor possible to agree in all non-fundamental doctrines."

The ALC's Friendly Invitation to the LCMS (1947): "an allowable and wholesome latitude of theological opinion." See Wolf, *Documents of Lutheran Unity*, p 162.

Wayne Grudem: In connection with this idea it is appropriate to ask what the difference is between a “major doctrine” and a “minor doctrine.” Christians often say they want to seek agreement in the church on major doctrines but also to allow for differences on minor doctrines. I have found the following guideline useful:

A major doctrine is one that has a significant impact on our thinking about other doctrines, or that has a significant impact on how we live the Christian life. A minor doctrine is one that has very little impact on how we think about other doctrines, and very little impact on how we live the Christian life.

By this standard doctrines such as the authority of the Bible, the Trinity, the deity of Christ, justification by faith, and many others would rightly be considered major doctrines. People who disagree with the historic evangelical understanding of any of these doctrines will have wide areas of difference with evangelical Christians who affirm these doctrines. By contrast, it seems to me that differences over forms of church government or some details about the Lord’s Supper or the timing of the great tribulation concern minor doctrines. Christians who differ over these things can agree on perhaps every other area of doctrine, can live Christian lives that differ in no important way, and can have genuine fellowship with one another. Of course, we may find doctrines that fall somewhere between “major” and “minor” according to this standard. For example, Christians may differ over the degree of significance that should attach to the doctrine of baptism or the millennium or the extent of the atonement. That is only natural, because many doctrines have *some* influence on other doctrines or on life, but we may differ over whether we think it to be a “significant” influence. (*Systematic Theology*, p 29-30)

Grudem: Before beginning our discussion of baptism we must recognize that there has been historically, and is today, a strong difference of viewpoint among evangelical Christians on this subject. The position advocated in this book is that baptism is not a “major” doctrine that should be the basis of division among genuine Christians, but it is nonetheless a matter of importance for church life, and it is appropriate that we give it full consideration. The position advocated in this chapter is “Baptistic”- namely, that baptism appropriately administered only to those who give a believable profession of faith in Jesus Christ (*Systematic Theology*, p 967).

2) We may not be lax in matters of church fellowship.

Romans 16:17 I urge you, brothers, to watch out for those who cause divisions and put obstacles in your way that are contrary to the teaching you have learned. Keep away from them.

Note: there may be a “felicitous inconsistency” between a person’s public error and his personal faith. The basic question in fellowship matters is one’s attitude toward Scripture. In regard to salvation it is one’s attitude toward Christ.

- 3) **We may not treat doctrines as “open questions” simply because they have not been treated in the Confessions or some people in the church cannot agree concerning them.**

Note: “Open questions” are those questions which may be suggested by Scripture but which are not answered there (e.g., what day were angels created?). Any matter that Scripture does not decide we dare not try to decide ecclesiastically. Cf. Dt 4:2; 12:32; 1 Pe 4:11.

“Adiaphora” are actions or practices which are neither commanded or forbidden by Scripture (examples, drinking wine, baptism by immersion).

“Exegetical questions” are debates about which scriptural doctrine a specific passage refers to.

Iowa Synod (1859): Open Question: a question on which no symbolical decision yet has been made in the Confessional Books of our church and in which, therefore, both views must be allowed to stand side by side in the church (*Quelle und Dokumente*, p 263).

Among such open questions or exegetical discussions the Iowa Synod included church and ministry, Sunday as a sabbath, the Antichrist, and millennialism.

IV. Since the central truth of Scripture and its aim are the salvation of sinners, all articles of faith may be conveniently grouped under the following heads:

- A. The doctrine of God, the author of salvation (*Theology*).
- B. The doctrine of man, the object of salvation (*Anthropology*).
- C. The doctrine of Christ, the mediator of salvation (*Christology*).
- D. The doctrine of the personal appropriation of objective salvation by the sinner (*Soteriology*).
- E. The doctrine of the ultimate consummation of salvation (*Eschatology*).

A. THEOLOGY

In this part of dogmatics we treat of :

- 1. Revelation of God.**
- 2. Essence of God.**
- 3. Attributes of God.**
- 4. Will of God.**
- 5. Holy Trinity.**

1. Revelation of God

- I. God, who plans and executes the salvation of sinners, reveals himself in Scripture.**
 - 1. Scripture nowhere attempts to prove the existence of God.**
 - a) It simply proceeds on the assumption that God is.**

1) He is.

Genesis 1:1 In the beginning God created...

Exodus 3:14 God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: 'I AM has sent me to you.'"

2) He alone is absolutely, without dependence on any other.

Psalm 86:8 Among the gods there is none like you, O Lord; no deeds can compare with yours.

Psalm 95:3 For the LORD is the great God, the great King above all gods.

Isaiah 43:10,11 "You are my witnesses," declares the LORD, "and my servant whom I have chosen, so that you may know and believe me and understand that I am he. Before me no god was formed, nor will there be one after me. ¹¹ I, even I, am the LORD, and apart from me there is no savior."

Jeremiah 10:10 But the LORD is the true God; he is the living God, the eternal King. When he is angry, the earth trembles; the nations cannot endure his wrath.

3) With these statements of Scripture compare these expressions that depersonalize God. τὸ ὄν (ὁ ὢν), τὸ μὴ ὄν, *absolute Sein, der ganz Andere*.

Scotus Erigena (d. 877): And so God does not know what he is because he is not anything. In fact, he is in a certain sense incomprehensible to himself and to every intellect (*De div. nat.*, II, 28).

J. A. L. Wegscheider (d. 1849): An infinite being cannot be understood and known by a finite nature. The concept of such a being will have to be expressed and vaguely represented by an analogical and symbolical kind of knowledge (*Inst. Ed.* VI, p 209).

Karl Barth (d. 1968): He is not a thing among other things, but *the Wholly Other*, the infinite aggregate of all merely relative others (*The Word of God and the Word of Man*, p 74).

Paul Tillich (d. 1965): The religious word for what is called the ground of being is God (*S.T., I*, p 156). God does not exist. He is being—itself beyond essence and existence. Therefore, to argue that God exists is to deny him. (*Ibid*, p 205). It is as atheistic to affirm the existence of God as it is to deny it. God is being-itself, not a being (*Ibid*, p 237).

Maharishi Mahesh Yogi: I am That, Thou art That, All This is That, That alone is, and there is nothing else but That (*The Science of Being and the Art of Living*, p 33).

John Lennon and Paul McCartney: I am he as you are he as you are me and we are all together (Song: "I am The Walrus").

Ernest Holmes—Religious Science cult: God is not a person, God is a Presence personified in us (*The Science of the Mind*, p 308).

b) At times it brings the folly of idolatry into bold relief by using the magnificent deeds of God as a foil to set off the glaring impotence of idols and vice versa.

Psalms 115:3 Our God is in heaven; he does whatever pleases him.

Isaiah 44:6-20 This is what the LORD says— Israel's King and Redeemer, the LORD Almighty: I am the first and I am the last; apart from me there is no God. ⁷Who then is like me? Let him proclaim it. Let him declare and lay out before me what has happened since I established my ancient people, and what is yet to come— yes, let him foretell what will come. ⁸Do not tremble, do not be afraid. Did I not proclaim this and foretell it long ago? You are my witnesses. Is there any God besides me? No, there is no other Rock; I know not one. ⁹All who make idols are nothing, and the things they treasure are worthless. Those who would speak up for them are blind; they are ignorant, to their own shame. ¹⁰Who shapes a god and casts an idol, which can profit him nothing? ¹¹He and his kind will be put to shame; craftsmen are nothing but men. Let them all come together and take their stand; they will be brought down to terror and infamy. ¹²The blacksmith takes a tool and works with it in the coals; he shapes an idol with hammers, he forges it with the might of his arm. He gets hungry and loses his strength; he drinks no water and grows faint. ¹³The carpenter measures with a line and makes an outline with a marker; he roughs it out with chisels and marks it with compasses. He shapes it in the form of man, of man in all his glory, that it may dwell in a shrine. ¹⁴He cut down cedars, or perhaps took a cypress or oak. He let it grow among the trees of the forest, or planted a pine, and the rain made it grow. ¹⁵It is man's fuel for burning; some of it he takes and warms himself, he kindles a fire and bakes bread. But he also fashions a god and worships it; he makes an idol and bows down to it. ¹⁶Half of the wood he burns in the fire; over it he prepares his meal, he roasts his meat and eats his fill. He also warms himself and says, "Ah! I am warm; I see the fire." ¹⁷From the rest he makes a god, his idol; he bows down to it and worships. He prays to it and says, "Save me; you are my god." ¹⁸They know nothing, they understand nothing; their eyes are plastered over so they cannot see, and their minds closed so they cannot understand. ¹⁹No one stops to think, no one has the knowledge or understanding to say, "Half of it I used for fuel; I even baked bread over its coals, I roasted meat and I ate. Shall I make a detestable thing from what is left? Shall I bow down to a block of wood?" ²⁰He feeds on ashes, a deluded heart misleads him; he cannot save himself, or say, "Is not this thing in my right hand a lie?"

Isaiah 45:21 Declare what is to be, present it—let them take counsel together. Who foretold this long ago, who declared it from the distant past? Was it not I, the LORD? And there is no God apart from me, a righteous God and a Savior; there is none but me.

Isaiah 46:5-11 To whom will you compare me or count me equal? To whom will you liken me that we may be compared? ⁶ Some pour out gold from their bags and weigh out silver on the scales; they hire a goldsmith to make it into a god, and they bow down and worship it. ⁷ They lift it to their shoulders and carry it; they set it up in its place, and there it stands. From that spot it cannot move. Though one cries out to it, it does not answer; it cannot save him from his troubles. ⁸ Remember this, fix it in mind, take it to heart, you rebels. ⁹ Remember the former things, those of long ago; I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me. ¹⁰ I make known the end from the beginning, from ancient times, what is still to come. I say: My purpose will stand, and I will do all that I please. ¹¹ From the east I summon a bird of prey; from a far-off land, a man to fulfill my purpose. What I have said, that will I bring about; what I have planned, that will I do. To whom will you compare me or count me equal? To whom will you liken me that we may be compared?

Jeremiah 2:11 Has a nation ever changed its gods? (Yet they are not gods at all.) But my people have exchanged their Glory for worthless idols.

Leviticus 26:1 Do not make idols (עֲלֵלִים = non-entities or “mini-gods”) or set up an image or a sacred stone for yourselves, and do not place a carved stone in your land to bow down before it. I am the LORD your God.

2. Scripture does not reveal God’s whole nature to us.

a) He is a hidden God (*Deus absconditus*).

Isaiah 45:15 Truly you are a God who hides himself, O God and Savior of Israel.

1 Timothy 6:16 [God] who alone is immortal and who lives in unapproachable light, whom no one has seen or can see. To him be honor and might forever. Amen.

Exodus 33:20-23 He said, “You cannot see my face, for no one may see me and live.” ²¹ Then the LORD said, “There is a place near me where you may stand on a rock. ²² When my glory passes by, I will put you in a cleft in the rock and cover you with my hand until I have passed by. ²³ Then I will remove my hand and you will see my back; but my face must not be seen.”

Job 23:8,9 But if I go to the east, he is not there; if I go to the west, I do not find him. ⁹ When he is at work in the north, I do not see him; when he turns to the south, I catch no glimpse of him.

Job 36:26 How great is God—beyond our understanding! The number of his years is past finding out.

Luther: The *Diatribē* [of Erasmus], however, deceives herself in her ignorance by not making any distinction between God preached and God hidden (*Deus absconditus*), that is, between the Word of God and God Himself. God does many things that he does not disclose to us in his word; he also wills many things which he does not disclose himself as willing in his word (*LW* 33:140).

Luther: God also does not manifest himself except through his works and word because the meaning of these is understood in some measure. Whatever else belongs essentially to the Divinity cannot be grasped and understood (*LW* 1:11).

See John Schaller, "The Hidden God," in *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly*, July 1974, p 185-202, also in *Our Great Heritage*, I, p 439-458.

b) Scripture reveals God sufficiently for our salvation.

Matthew 11:25,27 At that time Jesus said, "I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children. ²⁷ All things have been committed to me by my Father. No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him."

John 1:18 No one has ever seen God, but God the One and Only, who is at the Father's side, has made him known.

John 14:6-9 Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. ⁷ If you really knew me, you would know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him." ⁸ Philip said, "Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us." ⁹ Jesus answered: "Don't you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'? ¹⁰ Don't you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you are not just my own. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work. ¹¹ Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or at least believe on the evidence of the miracles themselves."

John 17:3,25,26 Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. ²⁵ Righteous Father, though the world does not know you, I know you, and they know that you have sent me. ²⁶ I have made you known to them, and will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them.

c) Scripture reveals God through Jesus Christ.

Matthew 11:27 All things have been committed to me by my Father. No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

John 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

John 14:6 Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

Ephesians 1:9 And he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ.

d) In heaven we shall see God face to face.

1 Corinthians 13:9,10,12 For we know in part and we prophesy in part, ¹⁰ but when perfection comes, the imperfect disappears. ¹² Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.

1 John 3:2 Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.

3. The revelation of God becomes ours through faith.

a) Revelation of God does not come through speculation.

Matthew 11:25 At that time Jesus said, “I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children.”

1 Corinthians 1:21 For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not know him, God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe.

b) Faith is the receiving organ (ὄργανον ληπτικόν).

Ephesians 3:4-12 In reading this, then, you will be able to understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, ⁵ which was not made known to men in other generations as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to God’s holy apostles and prophets. ⁶ This mystery is that through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus.... ¹⁰ His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms, ¹¹ according to his eternal purpose which he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord. ¹² In him and through faith in him we may approach God with freedom and confidence.

John 16:13-15 But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. ¹⁴ He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you. ¹⁵ All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will take from what is mine and make it known to you.

John 20:29 Then Jesus told him, “Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.”

Colossians 2:18-19 Do not let anyone who delights in false humility and the worship of angels disqualify you for the prize. Such a person goes into great detail about what he has seen, and his unspiritual mind puffs him up with idle notions. ¹⁹ He has lost connection with the Head, from whom the whole body, supported and held together by its ligaments and sinews, grows as God causes it to grow.

c) Such faith is a gift of God.

1 Corinthians 12:3 Therefore I tell you that no one who is speaking by the Spirit of God says, “Jesus be cursed,” and no one can say, “Jesus is Lord,” except by the Holy Spirit.

1 Corinthians 2:9-10,14 However, as it is written: “No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him”—¹⁰but God has revealed it to us by his Spirit. The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God. ¹⁴ The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned.

Colossians 2:13 When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your sinful nature, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins.

d) Faith is created and strengthened by the revelation of God.

Romans 10:17 Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ.

Ephesians 1:13 And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit.

2 Timothy 1:13,14 What you heard from me, keep as the pattern of sound teaching, with faith and love in Christ Jesus. ¹⁴ Guard the good deposit that was entrusted to you—guard it with the help of the Holy Spirit who lives in us.

e) The acceptance of the revelation, which is a subjective experience, should be distinguished from the revelation itself, the truths of Scripture, which are objective.

Opposition to the scriptural view:

Brunner: There is therefore no point in setting the objective fact of revelation over against the subjective act of receiving the revelation, because the revelation actually consists in the meeting of two subjects (*Revelation and Reason*, p 33).

4. Besides the revelation of God in Scripture (*notitia Dei revelata*) there is his manifestation in nature (*notitia Dei naturalis*).

a) God’s work in nature reveals his majesty and goodness.

1) It is seen in the creation of the universe.

Psalm 19:1-3 The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. ² Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they display knowledge. ³ There is no speech or language where their voice is not heard.

Romans 1:18-21 The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness,¹⁹ since what may be known about God (τὸ γνωστὸν τοῦ θεοῦ) is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them.²⁰ For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—(τὰ γὰρ ἀόρατα αὐτοῦ ἢ τε αἰδiosis αὐτοῦ δύναμις καὶ θεϊότης) have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.²¹ For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened.

2) It is seen in the preservation of the universe.

Acts 14:17 Yet he has not left himself without testimony: He has shown kindness by giving you rain from heaven and crops in their seasons; he provides you with plenty of food and fills your hearts with joy.

Acts 17:24-28 The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by hands.²⁵ And he is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything, because he himself gives all men life and breath and everything else.²⁶ From one man he made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live.²⁷ God did this so that men would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from each one of us.²⁸ “For in him we live and move and have our being.” As some of your own poets have said, “We are his offspring” (γένος).

3) Heathen testify to this.

Aristotle (d. 322 BC): Being invisible to every mortal nature, he is seen from his very works (*De Mundo*, cap. VI).

Cicero (d. 43 BC): You do not see God; nevertheless you recognize God from his works (*Tuscul. Disp.* I, 28).

4) Modern theology's claim that God reveals himself in his mighty acts rather than in the inspired words of Scripture is unscriptural.

G. Ernest Wright (d. 1974) We must study the history of the Chosen People in exactly the same way as we do that of any other people, running the risk of destroying the uniqueness of that history. Unless we are willing to run that risk, truth can never be ours.... Faith was communicated, in other words, through the forms of history, and unless history is taken seriously, one cannot comprehend biblical faith which triumphantly affirms the meaning of history....In the biblical sense, there is no such thing as a knowledge of God apart, or somehow separated from, the real events of this human scene and from the special responsibilities he has given us within it....Yet the study of archaeology leads the theologian to a considerable risk. What if one should find out that the biblical events did not occur at all?...Numerous historical problems have arisen...and in

addition there is in the Bible an interpretation of event and of experience which is not subject to historical or archaeological testing (*Biblical Archaeology*, p 27, 17-18).

b) Conscience testifies to the existence of a supreme law-giver and judge.

1) It testifies to the inscribed (natural) law as being of divine origin.

2) It testifies that we are accountable to God for our conduct.

Romans 1:32 Although they know God's righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them.

Romans 2:14,15 Indeed, when Gentiles, who do not have the law, do by nature things required by the law (τὰ τοῦ νόμου), they are a law for themselves, even though they do not have the law, ¹⁵ since they show that the requirements of the law (τὸ ἔργον τοῦ νόμου) are written on their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts now accusing, now even defending them.

c) There are the two forms of the natural knowledge of God.

Quenstedt: The natural knowledge of God is twofold; the one is ἐμφυτος or impressed upon the nature and minds of men in their very origin, innate and implanted, by which man knows God from certain principles born within him through certain fragments and remnants of the divine image, as it were, without any research or operation of the mind; and the other is called ἐπίκτητος or acquired, because it is acquired from inborn principles of nature through a process of reasoning and careful contemplation of created things (*TDP*, I, VI, I, XI, p 253).

Calov: The natural knowledge of God is partly inborn, partly acquired. The former is that by which man knows God naturally by reason of the remnants of the aptitude for wisdom implanted in man's mind when he was created. The latter is that by which from a consideration of creation and the universal government of the world by means of logical reasoning he comes to the conclusion that God is the creator, preserver, and ruler of creation (*Theo. pos.*, I, III, p 48).

d) Through the natural knowledge of God no man can be saved.

1) Revealed knowledge of God is the source of eternal life.

John 17:3 Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.

1 Corinthians 2:9 However, as it is written: "No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him."

2) Natural knowledge will at best lead to a seeking after God or the truth.

-a) Natural knowledge leads man to seek God, but imperfectly.

Acts 17:27 God did this so that men would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him (εἰ ἄρα γε ψηλαφήσειαν αὐτὸν καὶ εὗροιεν), though he is not far from each one of us.

1 Corinthians 2:14 The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned.

Chemnitz: Accurately speaking, the natural knowledge of God is either nothing, or imperfect, or weak. It is nothing, because the whole of philosophy knows nothing about the free promise of the forgiveness of sins.... It is imperfect, because the Gentiles know only bits and pieces of the law, but of the interior acts of worship required by the first table of the law reason knows and believes nothing that is certain.... It is weak, because even though the fact that God exists and that he demands obedience in accord with the distinction between what is morally good and evil is impressed on the minds of men, nevertheless agreement is not only weak but is often driven out by horrendous doubts (*Loci*, I, *de deo*, I, II, p 20).

-b) Natural knowledge convicts man of his damnability.

Romans 1:20 For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.

Romans 2:1 You, therefore, have no excuse, you who pass judgment on someone else, for at whatever point you judge the other, you are condemning yourself, because you who pass judgment do the same things.

Romans 2:12,16 All who sin apart from the law will also perish apart from the law, and all who sin under the law will be judged by the law. ¹⁶This will take place on the day when God will judge men's secrets through Jesus Christ, as my gospel declares.

Quenstedt: For the apostle indicates what, on account of the abuse and neglect of men, incidentally follows from this knowledge, namely, that they are without excuse; and he wishes to convict all Gentiles because they did not glorify God as God, although the knowledge of God (i.e., the fact that he exists) was manifest in them.... For although that natural knowledge is not sufficient for a perfect knowledge of God, nor by itself efficacious for conversion, it is, nevertheless, sufficient to convict men of impiety, namely, that they did not even do that which that knowledge dictated, but rather

abused it (*TDP*, I, VI, III, obs. 5, p 251).

Hollaz: There can be atheists in theory only, not by nature, but by a just withdrawal of God and a blinding by the devil, not through a total eradication of the light of nature in so far as they have it, but through suffocation of it in so far as the use and exercise of it are concerned; not through the whole length of one's life and permanently, but only through a certain passing seizure for a certain length of time. For the law of nature does not permit the fixed and firm opinion that there is no God to inhere in anyone. For although the mind of an ungodly man is drugged as it were in a stupor so that he does not think about God, nevertheless there can be no one in whom conscience does not finally assert itself and at least at the time of death accuse him of having neglected God (*Exam.*, p 194).

-c) Natural knowledge furnishes a point of contact for the Word.

Luther: But if the natural law were not written and given into man's heart by God, one would have to preach for a long time, before the consciences would be stricken. One would have to preach a hundred thousand years to a donkey, a horse, an ox, or a cow, before they would perceive the law although they have ears, eyes, and a heart as man has; they can hear it, but it does not enter into the heart. Why? Where is the defect? The soul is not fashioned and created in such a manner that it can receive such things. But when man is confronted with the Law, he says immediately, Yes, it is so, I cannot deny it. It would not be possible to persuade him of this so easily if it were not previously written in his heart (*St. L.*, III, 1053).

-d) Natural knowledge provides a basis for civic righteousness.

Apology, IV, 22-24: For God wishes those who are gross sinners to be restrained by civil discipline, and to maintain this, He has given laws, letters, doctrine, magistrates, penalties. And this righteousness reason, by its own strength, can, to a certain extent, work, although it is often overcome by natural weakness, and by the devil impelling it to manifest crimes. Now, although we cheerfully assign this righteousness of reason the praises that are due it (for this corrupt nature has no greater good and Aristotle says aright: "Neither the evening star nor the morning star is more beautiful than righteousness," and God also honors it with bodily rewards), yet it ought not to be praised with reproach to Christ.

-e) Natural knowledge can be used by Christians to glorify the Creator.

3) Examples of overestimating the natural knowledge of God:

Clement of Alexandria (d. 220): Many are the ways to salvation (*Strom.*, cap. I).

Maldonatus (d. 1583): Since the natural law has been preserved, as all confess, the Gentiles were able to be saved, and apart from the written law (*L. 3*, p 292).

Bellarmino (d. 1621): Add the fact that the fathers teach that the Gentiles, although they commonly worshiped a number of gods, nevertheless were able by nature to know the one God, just as the philosophers in fact recognized the one God and from that point of view were, so to speak, Christians naturally (*Disp.*, I, *de Christo*, l I, III, 14, p 139).

Karl Rahner (d. 1984): The Christian will not regard the non-Christian as standing outside the pale of salvation simply because he is not a Christian.... The Christian will see the non-Christian as an anonymous Christian who does not really know what he actually is (*The Church after the Council*, p 56–57).

Edward Schillebeeckx: Perhaps it is better not to give the name “Church” to that portion of mankind that is anonymously Christian and in which the Church is anonymously present (*Concilium*, I, 88).

Catechism of the Catholic Church: Those who through no fault of their own, do not know the Gospel of Christ or of his Church, but who nevertheless seek God with a sincere heart, and moved by his grace, try in their actions to do his will as they know it through the dictates of conscience—those too may achieve eternal salvation (Par. 847).

Beware of Universalism (all will be saved), inclusivism and pluralism (there are many ways to salvation).

II. Many attempts have been made by philosophers to prove the existence of God.

1. The ontological argument (an *a priori* argument based on being) (Ex 3:14).

- a) As presented by Anselm of Canterbury (1100) (*Proslogion*):
Our mind harbors the concept of a supreme perfect being: God.
This being must exist, otherwise it would not be perfect.**
- b) As presented by Descartes (1650) (*Cogito, ergo sum*):
The concept of a perfect being cannot have originated in me, an imperfect (limited) being. Hence there must be a God who implanted it.**
- c) To grasp the force of the argument consider this premise: God is a necessary idea.**
 - 1) Necessary ideas are such as inevitably come to consciousness as the mind develops in its reactions to the world in which we live.**
cf the idea of time, space, causality.
 - 2) Necessary ideas must be objectively valid, and the world must actually correspond to them. Otherwise our minds would be so**

constituted that we were compelled to think falsehoods.
Rationality would become irrationality.

- 3) Man's ideas of, e.g., the beautiful, the true, the good imply the existence somewhere of an absolute standard. Such a standard is conceivable only as existing in an absolutely perfect personal being.

d) **The weakness of the argument. Contra: Aquinas, Kant.**

- 1) It is begging the question, arguing in a circle.
- 2) It is an argument from one sphere (thinking) to another (being).
- 3) Existence is not an attribute of a thing (so as to form a part of the concept), but the absolute position of that thing.
- 4) If necessary ideas are absolutely true, then
 - a) What about the validity of axioms of human reason in theology?
cf *Omne corpus verum in loco est.*
Finitum non est capax infiniti.
 - b) What about the fundamental lie of natural reason?
cf the "*opinio legis*," the idea of reward and merit.

2. **The historical argument (based on experience).**

- a) Presented by Cicero (*e consensu gentium*):
A very strong reason which can be adduced for a belief in the existence of gods seems to be this: that there has never been any race so wild, any human being so brutish, as not to be pervaded by some sort of notion of gods (*Tusc. Disp. 13.30*)
- b) Opposition to the scriptural view: Feuerbach, Marx, Freud
 - 1) This is an incomplete induction.
 - 2) The same objections which hold against the ontological argument.
 - 2) People once believed the earth was flat too.

Karl Marx (d. 1883): Man has found in the imaginary reality of heaven where he looked for a superman, only a reflection of his own self....The foundation of irreligious criticism is this: man makes religion; religion does not make man. Religion is indeed the self-consciousness and self-awareness of man who either has not yet attained to himself or has already lost himself (*Selected Writings*, p 63).

John Lennon (d. 1980): Imagine there's no heaven. It's easy if you try.

No hell below us, above us only sky.
 Imagine all the people living for today.
 Imagine there's no countries; it isn't hard to do;
 Nothing to kill or die for, and no religion too.
 Imagine all the people living life in peace.
 You may say I'm a dreamer, but I'm not the only
 one.
 I hope some day you will join us,
 and the world will live as one. (Song "Imagine")

Sigmund Freud (d. 1939): We turn our attention to the psychological origin of religious ideas. These, which are given out as teachings, are not precipitates of experience or end-results of thinking; they are illusions, fulfillments of the oldest strongest and most urgent wishes of mankind. The secret of their strength lies in the strength of those wishes. As we already know, the terrifying impression of helplessness in childhood aroused the need for protection—for protection, through love—which was provided through the father; and the recognition that this helplessness would last throughout life made it necessary to cling to the existence of a father, but this time a more powerful one. Thus the benevolent rule of a divine Providence allays our fear of the dangers of life (*The Future of an Illusion*, p 30).

3. The cosmological argument (based on observation of the world) (He 3:4).

a) Introduced by Plato and Aristotle: *primum movens*, *πρῶτον κινούμενον*

Developed by the church fathers and by Aquinas in the Five Ways (*Summa*, I, 2.3).

- Everything in this world has an adequate cause.
- Nothing causes itself.
- An eternal series of causes is impossible
- Hence we must ultimately reach a prime cause of everything: God.

Aristotle: There is something which always moves that which is moved, and the "prime mover" is itself unmoved (*Metaphysics*, II, ii, 1). It is obvious that there is some first principle, and that the causes of all things are not infinitely many, either in a direct sequence or in kind (IV, viii, 8).

Jacob Carpov (d. 1786): The universe is also able to not exist. The universe is a contingent entity. Since it is contingent, it does not have a reason for its own existence in itself. But a series of causes reaching to infinity is not possible, since this would be absurd—that one thing has its reason for existence in another thing beyond itself, and this thing has its reason for existence in another, and so on and on; and since, nevertheless, nothing exists without reason, therefore, that being which is essentially different from the world and has the reason for its own existence in itself is called the "Being from itself." Therefore that Being in whom is found a sufficient reason for the whole universe is the "Being from itself." And because we call this Being God, the existence of God must be admitted (*Theol. rev.* I, 498).

b) Contra:

1) What is the cause of God's existence? (*Causa sui*?)

2) **Why must the prime cause be personal?**

3) **Is the law of cause and effect absolute?**

An adequate cause for all events is a postulate.

cf Leibniz: *praestablierte Harmonie*.

Stephen Hawking: The idea that space and time may form a closed surface without boundary...has profound implications for the role of God in the affairs of the universe....So long as the universe had a beginning, we could suppose that it had a creator. But if the universe is really completely self-contained, having no boundary or edge, it would have neither beginning nor end: it would simply be. What place then for a creator? (*A Brief History of Time*, p 140).

4. **The teleological argument (observation of the world's goal) (Ps 94:9).**

a) **The physico-theological form. William Paley, *Natural Theology*, 1802. All things unmistakably serve some purpose. Hence there must be a supreme intelligence which arranged nature systematically.**

b) **The historico-theological form. History evidently takes its course according to certain ethical principles. There must, then, be a supreme being which laid down these principles.**

c) **The argument from intelligent design**

Richard Dawkins, Professor of Zoology, Oxford University: The more statistically improbable a thing is, the less can we believe that it just happened by blind chance. Superficially the obvious alternative to chance is an intelligent Designer (*New Scientist*, Vol. 94, April 1982, p 130).

Fred Hoyle, Professor of Astronomy, Cambridge University: Once we see, however, that the probability of life originating at random is so utterly minuscule as to make the random concept absurd, it becomes sensible to think that the favourable properties of physics on which life depends are in every respect deliberate. . . . It is therefore almost inevitable that our own measure of intelligence must reflect in a valid way the higher intelligences to our left, even to the extreme idealized limit of God (*Evolution From Space*, p 148.)

Siegfried Müller-Markus: Nearly all the great physicists of the world reject materialism and many believe in God.... It is as if one cannot but help seeing the footprints of God with one's own eyes in the wonders of the universe and trembling under the breath of God's Spirit (*Wen Sterne Rufen*, p 84).

d) **Contra: David Hume.**

1) **What is the ultimate aim of nature?**

2) **Is suitableness something objective and absolute?**

3) **Note the convictions of Monists and Pantheists.**

cf Spinoza (d. 1677): All final causes are "*humana figmenta et deliria*"

(Hodge, *ST*, I, 227).

5. The moral argument.

- a) **No man (not even the most debased) can rid himself entirely of conscience and the inscribed (natural) law.
Hence there must be a supreme author of this law.**
- b) **Form given to this argument by Imanuel Kant (d. 1804):
The categorical imperative pays no regard to happiness.
But practical reason demands a compensation for obedience and suffering.
Hence there must be a supreme law giver and judge.**
- c) **Contra:**
 - 1) **Not conclusive: *Postulate*.**
 - 2) **Not Christian: *Opinio legis*.**

6. The value of these arguments is limited.

- a) **Not one leads to a true knowledge of God.**
- b) **They are not very persuasive in an age characterized by extremes of empirical experimentation on the one hand and skepticism and emotionalism on the other.**
- c) **They show, however, that belief in God is not irrational.**

Baier: Indeed, it could appear that among Christians it ought to be assumed rather than proved that there is a God. Nevertheless, because we must earnestly contend not only with atheists but also at times with the doubts of our own minds on account of the corruption of our nature, those things which prove the existence of God ought not be neglected (*Comp.*, I, 4, p 116).

Gerhard: It could seem to someone that that question is an idle one in the church since it is known and admitted by all that there is a God, nor is any nation so barbarous that it denies that there is a God and that he is to be worshiped, although it does not know how he is to be worshiped.... But nevertheless one must maintain that τὸ ὄν or the fact that there is a God must be proved:

- 1) To refute those who deny that there is a God....
- 2) To strengthen our faith But this faith must be drawn from the Word of God and strengthened by meditation on it. In grave and serious temptations, Chemnitz says, we are all either Epicureans or Stoics. Therefore the heart must be strengthened by a consideration of the things that are said by philosophers which testify that there is a God and that he carefully administers human affairs.
- 3) To perfect the natural knowledge of God (*Loc.*, III, I, II, IV, 1, p 40).

- d) **The doctrine of God is an article of faith and as such not capable of logical proof.**

Hebrews 11:3 By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God's command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible.

Psalm 14:1 The fool says in his heart, "There is no God."

Johann George Hamann (German pietist, d. 1788): If it is fools who say in their heart, "There is no God," those who try to prove his existence seem to me to be even more foolish (Letter, 1786, in R.G. Smith, *J.G. Hamann*, p 253).

Søren Kierkegaard (d. 1855): If God does not exist, it would be impossible to prove it, and if he does exist, it would be folly to try (*Philosophical Fragments*, p 31).

Joseph Stump (d. 1935): None of these arguments is actually demonstrative or coercive. One who denies that there is a God cannot by means of these arguments be compelled to acknowledge God's existence (In Engelder, *Reason or Revelation*, p 151).

C. F. W. Walther: Only God's Word gives certainty. Whatever is derived from reason can be contested by reason. (Engelder, p 159).

Paul Tillich: The arguments for the existence of God neither are arguments nor are they proof of the existence of God. They are expressions of the *question* of God which is implied in human finitude. This question is their truth; every answer they give is untrue (*ST*, I, p 205).

Tillich re God: There is no evidence for his existence (*ST*, I, p 245).

Dietrich Bonhoeffer (d. 1945): God as a working hypothesis in morals, politics, or science has been surmounted and abolished; and the same thing has happened in philosophy and religion.... For the sake of intellectual honesty, that working hypothesis should be dropped, or as far as possible eliminated (*Letters and Papers from Prison*, p 195ff).

Julian Huxley (d. 1975): The god hypothesis is no longer of any pragmatic value for the interpretation or comprehension of nature, and indeed often stands in the way of better and truer interpretation.... It will soon be as impossible for intelligent, educated man or woman to believe in a god as it is now to believe that the earth is flat, that flies can be spontaneously generated, that disease is a divine punishment, or that death is always due to witchcraft (*Religion Without Revelation*, p 58f, 62).

John A.T. Robinson (d. 1983): God is intellectually superfluous. God is emotionally dispensable. God is morally intolerable (*The New Reformation*, p 107).

e) The God of the Proofs is not the God of the Bible. He is at best a "God of the Gaps," a deistic Demiurge.

John Polkinghorne: The God of the Gaps is dead and with him has died the old-style natural theology of Paley.... No theologian need weep for them, for the God of the Gaps hovering at the periphery of the known world was far from

being someone of who it could be said “all understand that he is God.” He was...a sort of demiurge, a cause among the other competing causes of the world (*Science and Creation*, p 13).

Siegfried Müller-Markus: The most that a rational theology can accomplish is a *hint* at the probable existence of God. A logical proof is not possible (*Wen Sterne Rufen*, p 490).

2. Essence of God

I. God, the author of our salvation, is the infinite, absolute Spirit (Jn 4:24).

1. No adequate definition of the unique and incomprehensible God is possible.

- a) **A definition in the strict sense is a statement of *genus proximum* and *differentia specifica*. God, however, is in a class by himself. Hoenecke’s “definition”—God is infinite unlimited spirit, three persons in one God (II, p 50)— is more description than definition.**

Genesis 1:1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

Exodus 8:10 Moses replied, “It will be as you say, so that you may know there is no one like the LORD our God.”

Exodus 15:11 Who among the gods is like you, O LORD? Who is like you—majestic in holiness, awesome in glory, working wonders?

2 Samuel 7:22 How great you are, O Sovereign LORD! There is no one like you, and there is no God but you, as we have heard with our own ears.

Psalms 89:6 For who in the skies above can compare with the LORD? Who is like the LORD among the heavenly beings?

Isaiah 40:18,25 “To whom, then, will you compare God? What image will you compare him to? ²⁵ To whom will you compare me? Or who is my equal?” says the Holy One.

b) It is not on the order of a definition proper when Scripture calls God:

1) Life (himself uncreated—the author of life).

John 5:26 For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son to have life in himself.

John 1:3-4 Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. ⁴ In him was life, and that life was the light of men.

1 John 5:20 We know also that the Son of God has come and has given

us understanding, so that we may know him who is true. And we are in him who is true—even in his Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life.

Numbers 14:21 Nevertheless, as surely as I live and as surely as the glory of the LORD fills the whole earth...

Joshua 3:10 This is how you will know that the living God is among you and that he will certainly drive out before you the Canaanites, Hittites, Hivites, Perizzites, Girgashites, Amorites and Jebusites.

Psalms 42:2 My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When can I go and meet with God?

Psalms 84:2.2 My soul yearns, even faints, for the courts of the LORD; my heart and my flesh cry out for the living God.

Opposition to the scriptural view:

Tillich: Life is the process in which potential being becomes actual being.... But in God there is no distinction between potentiality and actuality. Therefore, we cannot speak of God as living in the proper or non-symbolical sense of the word "life." We must speak of God as living in symbolic terms.... God lives in so far as He is the ground of life (*S.T.*, I:241f).

2) Light (source of wisdom and happiness).

1 John 1:4,5 We write this to make our joy complete. ⁵ This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all.

John 1:5 The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it.

John 1:4,5 In him was life, and that life was the light of men. ⁵ The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it.

Psalms 27:1 The LORD is my light and my salvation— whom shall I fear? The LORD is the stronghold of my life— of whom shall I be afraid?

Psalms 36:9 For with you is the fountain of life; in your light we see light.

Micah 7:8 Do not gloat over me, my enemy! Though I have fallen, I will rise. Though I sit in darkness, the LORD will be my light.

3) Love.

1 John 4:8,16 Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. ¹⁶ And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in him. .

c) **A description of God may be given.**

1) **Indeed, this is not an exhaustive description.**

Job 11:7 Can you fathom the mysteries of God? Can you probe the limits of the Almighty?

Job 36:26 How great is God—beyond our understanding! The number of his years is past finding out.

Job 37:23 The Almighty is beyond our reach and exalted in power; in his justice and great righteousness, he does not oppress.

1 Corinthians 2:11,16 For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the man's spirit within him? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. ¹⁶ "For who has known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct him?" But we have the mind of Christ.

1 Timothy 6:16 [God] who alone is immortal and who lives in unapproachable light, whom no one has seen or can see. To him be honor and might forever. Amen.

2) **Yet a certain knowledge of God's essence is possible and necessary.**

For salvation

Jeremiah 31:34 "No longer will a man teach his neighbor, or a man his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest," declares the LORD. "For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more."

John 17:3 Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.

For service

Deuteronomy 6:13 Fear the LORD your God, serve him only and take your oaths in his name.

Deuteronomy 10:20 Fear the LORD your God and serve him. Hold fast to him and take your oaths in his name.

Joshua 24:14 Now fear the LORD and serve him with all faithfulness. Throw away the gods your forefathers worshiped beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the LORD.

Matthew 4:10 Jesus said to him, "Away from me, Satan! For it is written: 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.'"

John 4:22 You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews.

Romans 10:14 How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them?

2. Much may be learned about God's essence from his names.

a) יהוה reveals him as the absolute Being (also the short form יה).

A personal being, not a force; sufficient to himself; dependent on nothing; supreme; infinite; eternal; immutable; faithful; author of all things.

Exodus 3:13-15 Moses said to God, "Suppose I go to the Israelites and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' Then what shall I tell them?" ¹⁴ God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM (אֶהְיֶה אֲשֶׁר אֶהְיֶה). This is what you are to say to the Israelites: 'I AM has sent me to you.'" ¹⁵ God also said to Moses, "Say to the Israelites, 'The LORD, the God of your fathers—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob—has sent me to you.' This is my name forever, the name by which I am to be remembered from generation to generation."

John 8:58 "I tell you the truth," Jesus answered, "before Abraham was born, I am!"

Exodus 6:2-3 God also said to Moses, "I am the LORD. ³ I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob as God Almighty, but by my name the LORD I did not make myself known to them.

Compare Genesis 14:22 But Abram said to the king of Sodom, "I have raised my hand to *the LORD*, God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth, and have taken an oath

Genesis 15:7 He also said to him, "I am *the LORD*, who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans to give you this land to take possession of it."

Exodus 6:7 I will take you as my own people, and I will be your God. Then you will know that I am the LORD your God, who brought you out from under the yoke of the Egyptians.

Exodus 14:4 And I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and he will pursue them. But I will gain glory for myself through Pharaoh and all his army, and the Egyptians will know that I am the LORD.

Exodus 33:19 And the LORD said, "I will cause all my goodness to pass in front of you, and I will proclaim my name, the LORD, in your presence. I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.

Exodus 34:5-7 Then the LORD came down in the cloud and stood there with him and proclaimed his name, the LORD. ⁶ And he passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, "The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness: ⁷ maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children and

their children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation.”

וַיִּקְרָא יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ אֶרֶץ אֲפִים וְרַב־חֶסֶד
וְאֶמֶת: נִצַּר חֶסֶד לְאֵלִים נִשָּׂא עֹז וְפָשַׁע וְחִטָּאָה וְנִקְהָ לֹא
יִנְקָה פֶקֶד עֹז אֲבוֹת עַל־בָּנִים וְעַל־בָּנֵי בָנִים עַל־שְׁלֹשִׁים וְעַל־
רַבָּעִים:

Isaiah 41:4 Who has done this and carried it through, calling forth the generations from the beginning? I, the LORD—with the first of them and with the last—I am he.

Isaiah 44:6 This is what the LORD says— Israel’s King and Redeemer, the LORD Almighty: I am the first and I am the last; apart from me there is no God.

Isaiah 48:12 Listen to me, O Jacob, Israel, whom I have called: I am he; I am the first and I am the last.

Revelation 1:4,8,17 John, To the seven churches in the province of Asia: Grace and peace to you from him who is, and who was, and who is to come, and from the seven spirits before his throne. ⁸ “I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God, “who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty.” ¹⁷ When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. Then he placed his right hand on me and said: “Do not be afraid. I am the First and the Last.”

Revelation 22:13 I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End.

Psalms 90:1,2 Lord, you have been our dwelling place throughout all generations. ² Before the mountains were born or you brought forth the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God.

Hebrews 13:8 Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.

b) אֶדְנִי designates God as the absolute Master. Note the artificial lengthening of the vowel in the suffix. אֶדְנִי has become of proper name in which the suffix has lost its force, as in the name Madonna.

Genesis 18:3,27 He said, “If I have found favor in your eyes, my lord (אֶדְנִי), do not pass your servant by.” ²⁷ Then Abraham spoke up again: “Now that I have been so bold as to speak to the Lord (אֶדְנִי), though I am nothing but dust and ashes.”

1 Kings 3:10 The Lord was pleased that Solomon had asked for this.

Job 28:28 And he said to man, “The fear of the Lord—that is wisdom, and to shun evil is understanding.”

Isaiah 8:5,7 The LORD spoke to me again: ⁷ the Lord is about to bring against them the mighty floodwaters of the River— the king of Assyria with all his

pomp. It will overflow all its channels, run over all its banks.

Ezekiel 13:9 My hand will be against the prophets who see false visions and utter lying divinations. They will not belong to the council of my people or be listed in the records of the house of Israel, nor will they enter the land of Israel. Then you will know that I am the Sovereign LORD (אֲדֹנָי יְהוָה)

c) **אֱלֹהִים (pl. of אֱלֹהֶיךָ) seems to indicate majesty and power.**

1) **Examples of the singular אֱלֹהֶיךָ (This form appears especially in Job and other poetry and in Aramaic).**

Job 12:6 The tents of marauders are undisturbed, and those who provoke God are secure— those who carry their god in their hands.

Job 21:19 It is said, “God stores up a man’s punishment for his sons.” Let him repay the man himself, so that he will know it!

Job 27:10 Will he find delight in the Almighty? Will he call upon God at all times?

Psalms 50:22 Consider this, you who forget God, or I will tear you to pieces, with none to rescue.

Isaiah 44:8 Do not tremble, do not be afraid. Did I not proclaim this and foretell it long ago? You are my witnesses. Is there any God besides me? No, there is no other Rock; I know not one.

2) **The form אֱלֹהִים is a *pluralis magnitudinis*. This use of the plural for the one true God is unique to biblical Hebrew. אֱלֹהִים can also be used as a true plural referring to heathen gods.**

Genesis 1:1 In the beginning God (אֱלֹהִים) created the heavens and the earth.

Jeremiah 46:25 The LORD Almighty, the God of Israel (אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל) says: “I am about to bring punishment on Amon god of Thebes, on Pharaoh, on Egypt and her gods (אֱלֹהֵיהָ) and her kings, and on those who rely on Pharaoh.

Deuteronomy 32:39 See now that I myself am He! There is no god (אֱלֹהִים) besides me. I put to death and I bring to life, I have wounded and I will heal, and no one can deliver out of my hand.

Exodus 18:11 Now I know that the LORD is greater than all other gods, for he did this to those who had treated Israel arrogantly.

3) **Metaphorical application of אֱלֹהִים to rulers.**

Exodus 22:8,28 But if the thief is not found, the owner of the house must appear before the judges (הַאֲלֹהִים) to determine whether he has laid his hands on the other man's property. ²⁸ "Do not blaspheme God [*or* do not revile the judges] or curse the ruler of your people.

Psalm 82:6 I said, "You are 'gods'; you are all sons of the Most High."

Psalm 138:1 I will praise you, O LORD, with all my heart; before the "gods" I will sing your praise.

Psalm 8:5 You made him a little lower than the *heavenly beings*.

d) אֱלֹהִים occurs most frequently coupled with an adjective or genitive. Also in Job and other poetry and as the name of chief god of the Canaanites.

1) אֱלֹהִים God, god.

Job 5:8 "But if it were I, I would appeal to God; I would lay my cause before him.

Hosea 11:9 I will not carry out my fierce anger, nor will I turn and devastate Ephraim. For I am God, and not man—the Holy One among you. I will not come in wrath.

Ezekiel 28:2 Son of man, say to the ruler of Tyre, "This is what the Sovereign LORD says: 'In the pride of your heart you say, "I am a god; I sit on the throne of a god in the heart of the seas." But you are a man and not a god, though you think you are as wise as a god.'"

2) אֱלֹהִים the living God.

Joshua 3:10 This is how you will know that the living God is among you and that he will certainly drive out before you the Canaanites, Hittites, Hivites, Perizzites, Girgashites, Amorites and Jebusites.

Psalm 42:2/3 My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When can I go and meet with God?

Psalm 84:2/3 My soul yearns, even faints, for the courts of the LORD; my heart and my flesh cry out for the living God.

3) אֱלֹהִים God Most High, especially in older texts and poetry. אֱלֹהִים can also appear alone.

Genesis 14:18-20, 22 Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine. He was priest of God Most High, ¹⁹ and he blessed Abram, saying, "Blessed be Abram by God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth.

²⁰ And blessed be God Most High, who delivered your enemies into your

hand.” Then Abram gave him a tenth of everything. ²² But Abram said to the king of Sodom, “I have raised my hand to the LORD, God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth, and have taken an oath.

Psalm 78: 35 They remembered that God was their Rock, that God Most High was their Redeemer.

Psalm 7:17/18 I will give thanks to the LORD because of his righteousness and will sing praise to the name of the LORD Most High.

Numbers 24:16 The oracle of one who hears the words of God, who has knowledge from the Most High, who sees a vision from the Almighty, who falls prostrate, and whose eyes are opened:

Psalm 9:2/3 I will be glad and rejoice in you; I will sing praise to your name, O Most High.

Psalm 21:7/8 For the king trusts in the LORD; through the unfailing love of the Most High he will not be shaken.

4) אֱלֹהִים translated “God Almighty” but meaning is unknown, perhaps אֱלֹהִים, who is sufficient; especially in older texts and poetry. אֱלֹהִים can also occur alone.

Genesis 17:1 When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to him and said, “I am God Almighty; walk before me and be blameless.”

Genesis 28:3 May God Almighty bless you and make you fruitful and increase your numbers until you become a community of peoples.

Genesis 35:11 And God said to him, “I am God Almighty; be fruitful and increase in number. A nation and a community of nations will come from you, and kings will come from your body.”

Exodus 6:3 I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob as God Almighty, but by my name the LORD I did not make myself known to them.

Ezekiel 10:5 The sound of the wings of the cherubim could be heard as far away as the outer court, like the voice of God Almighty when he speaks.

Genesis 49:25 Because of your father’s God, who helps you, because of the Almighty, who blesses you with blessings of the heavens above, blessings of the deep that lies below, blessings of the breast and womb.

Numbers 24:4 The oracle of one who hears the words of God, who sees a vision from the Almighty, who falls prostrate, and whose eyes are opened...

Psalm 91:1 He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty.

Isaiah 13:6 Wail, for the day of the LORD is near; it will come like destruction from the Almighty.

Note: In the NIV the translation “Almighty” is used for both **שׁדַּי** and **יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת**. **יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת** means “LORD of armies.” The King James rendering was “LORD of hosts.” The term may refer to regular armies, the angel armies of heaven, and to the armies of stars in the heavens. If God rules all of these, he rules everything.

5) **אֵל עוֹלָם** eternal God.

Genesis 21:33 Abraham planted a tamarisk tree in Beersheba, and there he called upon the name of the LORD, the Eternal God.

Isaiah 40:28 Do you not know? Have you not heard? The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He will not grow tired or weary, and his understanding no one can fathom.

Jeremiah 10:10 But the LORD is the true God; he is the living God, the eternal King. When he is angry, the earth trembles; the nations cannot endure his wrath.

Daniel 12:7 The man clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, lifted his right hand and his left hand toward heaven, and I heard him swear by him who lives forever, saying, “It will be for a time, times and half a time. When the power of the holy people has been finally broken, all these things will be completed.”

6) **אֵל אֱלִים** God of gods.

Daniel 11:36 The king will do as he pleases. He will exalt and magnify himself above every god and will say unheard-of things against the God of gods. He will be successful until the time of wrath is completed, for what has been determined must take place.

7) **מָרָא שְׁמַיָּא-אֱלֵהּ שְׁמַיָּא** God of heaven, Lord of heaven (Aramaic).

Daniel 2:44 In the time of those kings, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed, nor will it be left to another people. It will crush all those kingdoms and bring them to an end, but it will itself endure forever.

Daniel 5:23 Instead, you have set yourself up against the Lord of heaven. You had the goblets from his temple brought to you, and you and your nobles, your wives and your concubines drank wine from them. You praised the gods of silver and gold, of bronze, iron, wood and stone, which cannot see or hear or understand. But you did not honor the God who holds

in his hand your life and all your ways.

- 8) **This list is not exhaustive. Other terms include:** אֱלֹהִים קַנָּא—jealous God (Ex 20:5) and אֱלֹהִים גִּבּוֹר—mighty God (Is 9:5).

3. **God in his essence is the absolutely Independent Being (*independentia et aseitas Dei*).**

- a) **This is not to be understood in the positive sense of a continuous self-production out of non-existence (*Causa sui*).**

Luthardt spoke of God's "*Ewige Geburt*" (*Glaubenslehre*, p 126).

Note: "Eternal generation" is an appropriate term of the Son, but not of the Father.

Gerhard: God is Being itself who exists unlimited in every way. God is a pure and most simple essence. In God to be and to will and to know is one and the same thing (Hoenecke II, p 48).

Calov: God is distinguished from other beings not simply through being but through his being actually in the highest sense (Hoenecke II, p 48).

- b) **It is to be understood in the negative sense of not being called into existence by any outside cause.**

Exodus 3:14 God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: 'I AM has sent me to you.'"

Isaiah 41:4 Who has done this and carried it through, calling forth the generations from the beginning? I, the LORD—with the first of them and with the last—I am he.

Acts 17:25 And he is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything, because he himself gives all men life and breath and everything else.

John 1:4 In him was life, and that life was the light of men.

John 5:26 For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son to have life in himself.

Colossians 1:16,17 For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. ¹⁷ He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.

Quenstedt: God's existence has its source in his very self, not in a positive sense, through a positive influence, as if he brought himself out of non-existence into existence, but in a negative sense, through the negation of an influence from some one else, because namely, he was not produced by some other entity (*TDP*, I, VIII, I, XVI, p 287).

Luther: [God] has his essence from no one, nor has he beginning or end, but exists from eternity in and of himself, so that of his essence it cannot be said that he “was” or “became,” for he never had a beginning, and he cannot begin to become; he has never ended and cannot cease to exist, but of him it must ever be said, “He is” or “He exists,” that is, Jehovah (*St. L.*, XX, 2058).

4. God in his essence is infinite (*infinitas Dei*).

a) That is to say: “The essence and perfections of God have no limits” (Hollaz).

Job 11:7 Can you fathom the mysteries of God? Can you probe the limits of the Almighty?

Psalms 145:3 Great is the LORD and most worthy of praise; his greatness no one can fathom.

1 Kings 8:27 But will God really dwell on earth? The heavens, even the highest heaven, cannot contain you. How much less this temple I have built!

Isaiah 66:1 This is what the LORD says: “Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool. Where is the house you will build for me? Where will my resting place be?

Quenstedt: God is infinite not by reason of quantitative extension, since he is independent of all quantitateness, but by reason of his essence and perfection, Ps 145:3. Of his greatness there is no end (*TDP*, I, VIII, II, II, p 284).

b) Infinity is implied in independence. A thing limited by another is to that degree dependent.

c) Infinity includes independence:

1) Independence from time.

Isaiah 57:15 For this is what the high and lofty One says— he who lives forever (שֶׁכֶּן עַד), whose name is holy: “I live in a high and holy place, but also with him who is contrite and lowly in spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly and to revive the heart of the contrite.”

Revelation 4:9 The living creatures give glory, honor and thanks to him who sits on the throne and who lives for ever and ever.

Revelation 11:15 The seventh angel sounded his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, which said: “The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he will reign for ever and ever.”

2) Independence from space.

Psalms 139:7-12 Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? ⁸ If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed

in the depths, you are there. ⁹ If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, ¹⁰ even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast. ¹¹ If I say, "Surely the darkness will hide me and the light become night around me," ¹² even the darkness will not be dark to you; the night will shine like the day, for darkness is as light to you.

Gerhard: By infinity is meant that God can be limited in respect neither to time, nor to place, nor to anything else but that he by his own nature and essence, actually, without any qualification, of himself and absolutely is infinite (*Loci*, III, CLXII, p 117).

3) Independence from all laws:

-a) From laws of nature: (i.e., cause and effect) cf. miracles.

Isaiah 38:7-8 "This is the LORD's sign to you that the LORD will do what he has promised: ⁸ 'I will make the shadow cast by the sun go back the ten steps it has gone down on the stairway of Ahaz.'" So the sunlight went back the ten steps it had gone down.

-b) From rules of human logic: Consider Christology; the Trinity; conversion and non-conversion; election, etc. This is not to say that God is illogical, but his logic is beyond ours.

Isaiah 55:8-9 "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways," declares the LORD. ⁹ "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts."

-c) From outside standards of morality The moral law is God's will, not a standard outside of God to which he must conform, but nothing he wills is immoral.

Matthew 12:8 For the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath.

d) The infinity of God is not disturbed or annulled by the creation of finite things. He gave up nothing from himself. Nothing was added to him.

Genesis 1:1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

Acts 17:28 "For in him we live and move and have our being." As some of your own poets have said, "We are his offspring."

5. God is one regarding essence and number (*unitas Dei*).

a) God's oneness is stated in various ways.

Deuteronomy 4:35 You were shown these things so that you might know that the LORD is God; besides him there is no other.

Deuteronomy 6:4 Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one.

Isaiah 41:4 Who has done this and carried it through, calling forth the generations from the beginning? I, the LORD—with the first of them and with the last—I am he.

Isaiah 43:10 “You are my witnesses,” declares the LORD, “and my servant whom I have chosen, so that you may know and believe me and understand that I am he. Before me no god was formed, nor will there be one after me.”

1 Corinthians 8:4 So then, about eating food sacrificed to idols: We know that an idol is nothing at all in the world and that there is no God but one.

Galatians 3:20 A mediator, however, does not represent just one party; but God is one.

Ephesians 4:3-6 Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. ⁴ There is one body and one Spirit— just as you were called to one hope when you were called— ⁵ one Lord, one faith, one baptism; ⁶ one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

Gerhard: God, however, is one in the highest sense. For, in order that something be one in the highest degree, it must be a being in the highest degree and indivisible in the highest degree. God, however, is Being itself, who exists unlimited in all ways. Also, neither actually nor potentially can he be divided. Therefore God is one in the highest sense and degree (*Loci*, I, III, VI, 43, p 106).

Quenstedt: The unity of God is that attribute according to which he is not only undivided in essence but simply and absolutely indivisible and incapable of sharing what he is by any multiplication of himself.... This excludes completely any division or sharing of the divine essence with more individuals of the same type (*TDP*, II, VIII, X, p 285).

b) From the essential unity follows the simplicity of God (*simplicitas Dei*).

Gerhard: The divine essence is most simple, without any composition, admixture, and division, and therefore without any accidents [non-essential attributes] (*Loci*, III, II, 129, p 99).

Calov: From the unity of God follows the simplicity of God, according to which God is devoid of all real composition (*Systema*, II, V, p 284).

c) Opposed to numerical unity is *polytheism*. This is not a lower stage of development on the way to monotheism, but a degeneration.

Romans 1:21-23 For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. ²² Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools ²³ and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles.

Acts 14:15 Men, why are you doing this? We too are only men, human like you. We are bringing you good news, telling you to turn from these worthless things to the living God, who made heaven and earth and sea and everything in them.

- d) **Opposed to the unity of God is *dualism*, which is the assumption of the eternal co-existence with God of an evil principle in opposition to him. (Gnosticism and Zoroastrianism).**

Zoroaster (6th century BC?): The two primeval Spirits who are twins were revealed [to me] in sleep. Their ways of thinking, speaking, and behaving are two: the good and the evil. And between these two [ways] the wise men have rightly chosen, and not the foolish ones. And when these two Spirits met, they established at the origin life and non-life and that at the end the worst existence will be for the followers of Falsehood and for the follower of Truth the Best Thinking (the *Gathas*, Y. 30.3-4).

- e) **Opposed to the essential unity of God is *monism* in every form.**

- 1) ***Pantheism* assumes that God unfolds himself in the world, which in turn is absorbed by the Godhead.**

Scotus Erigena (d. 877): Nature is 1. An uncreated creating being (which is God); 2. A created creating being (which are the productive ideas in God); 3. A non-creating created being (which is matter as such); 4. A being neither created nor creating (which is God as the final aim of the whole process).

Servetus (d. 1553): In a stone God is a stone, in the trunk of a tree he is a tree trunk, and so on in other things (*Epis. VI ad Calvinum*).

- 2) ***Materialism* denies any God outside of multiple matter.**

Lucretius (d. 55 BC?): Nothing from nothing ever yet was born.
Fear holds dominion over mortality
Only because, seeing in land and sky
So much the cause of which they do not know,
Men think Divinities are working there.
Meantime, when once we know from nothing still
Nothing can be created, we shall divine
More clearly what we seek: those elements
From which alone all things created are,
And how accomplished by no tool of Gods
(*The Nature of Things*, Bk 1).

- f) **Evolution of religion maintains that the idea of God is a human construct which progresses from *animism* to *polytheism*, to *henotheism* (*monolatry*), to *monotheism*, to *atheism* (or in the view of some *pantheism*).**

6. **God is personality (*spiritualitas Dei*).**

a) **He is a spirit who relates to his creation in a personal way.**

John 4:24 God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth.

Genesis 1:29 Then God said, "I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food."

Genesis 3:15 And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.

Matthew 6:26 Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they?

Matthew 10:29 Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from the will of your Father.

b) **Opposed to spirituality is *anthropomorphism* and *anthropopathism*.**

1) **This is ascribing to God real human form or affections. When Scripture speaks of God anthropomorphically or anthropopathically, this is plainly figurative.**

Isaiah 66:1 This is what the LORD says: "Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool. Where is the house you will build for me? Where will my resting place be?"

Psalms 34:15 The eyes of the LORD are on the righteous and his ears are attentive to their cry.

Psalms 94:9 Does he who implanted the ear not hear? Does he who formed the eye not see?

1 Samuel 15:11,29 "I am grieved (נִחַמְתִּי) that I have made Saul king, because he has turned away from me and has not carried out my instructions." ²⁹ "He who is the Glory of Israel does not lie or change his mind (יִנָּחֵם); for he is not a man, that he should change his mind."

Exodus 20:5 I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me.

Deuteronomy 32:27 I dreaded the taunt of the enemy, lest the adversary misunderstand and say, "Our hand has triumphed; the LORD has not done all this."

Psalms 78:65 Then the Lord awoke as from sleep, as a man wakes from the stupor of wine.

Genesis 8:1 But God remembered Noah.

- 2) **We apply these terms to God not equivocally, not univocally, but analogically, that is, there is enough similarity between the trait in God and in us to allow a comparison to be made, but the trait in God is not exactly the same as it is in us.**

7. It must be remembered that Scripture offers this description of God's nature, not in a vein of theoretical speculation, but with a practical reference to our salvation.

Exodus 3:15 God also said to Moses, "Say to the Israelites, 'The LORD, the God of your fathers—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob—has sent me to you.' This is my name forever, the name by which I am to be remembered from generation to generation."

Deuteronomy 6:4-9 Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. ⁵ Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. ⁶ These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. ⁷ Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. ⁸ Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. ⁹ Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.

Psalms 145:3-7 Great is the LORD and most worthy of praise; his greatness no one can fathom. ⁴ One generation will commend your works to another; they will tell of your mighty acts. ⁵ They will speak of the glorious splendor of your majesty, and I will meditate on your wonderful works. ⁶ They will tell of the power of your awesome works, and I will proclaim your great deeds. ⁷ They will celebrate your abundant goodness and joyfully sing of your righteousness.

Isaiah 44:6-8 This is what the LORD says— Israel's King and Redeemer, the LORD Almighty: I am the first and I am the last; apart from me there is no God. ⁷ Who then is like me? Let him proclaim it. Let him declare and lay out before me what has happened since I established my ancient people, and what is yet to come— yes, let him foretell what will come. ⁸ Do not tremble, do not be afraid. Did I not proclaim this and foretell it long ago? You are my witnesses. Is there any God besides me? No, there is no other Rock; I know not one.

John 4:24 God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth.

Acts 17:25 He is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything, because he himself gives all men life and breath and everything else.

3. Attributes of God

I. God's many attributes are to us different manifestations of his saving love.

1. God is love.

a) He not only has love or loves;

John 3:16 For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

Ephesians 2:4-5 But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, ⁵made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved.

1 John 4:19 We love because he first loved us.

b) He identifies himself with love.

1 John 4:8,16 Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. ¹⁶And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in him.

Matthew 9:13 But go and learn what this means: “I desire mercy, not sacrifice.” For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners.

c) His love manifests itself supremely in the sacrifice of his Son for our salvation.

John 3:16 For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

Romans 5:8 But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Galatians 1:4 [Christ] gave himself for our sins to rescue us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father.

Galatians 2:20 I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

2. He uses his other attributes in the interest of his love.

a) Note the eloquent description of human love in 1 Corinthians 13.

1 Corinthians 13:4,13 Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. ¹³ And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.

b) This love is merely a response to and a reflection of God’s love.

1 John 4:7,11,12,16,19 Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. ¹¹ Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. ¹² No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us. ¹⁶ And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in him. ¹⁹ We love because he

first loved us.

c) The Bible describes God's love.

Song of Solomon 2:4 He has taken me to the banquet hall, and his banner over me is love.

John 3:16 For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

Romans 8:35-39 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? ³⁶ As it is written: "For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered." ³⁷ No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. ³⁸ For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, ³⁹ neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

1 John 4:9,10 This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. ¹⁰ This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.

d) It is due to this love of God in Christ that the world still continues.

Matthew 24:14 And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.

1 Timothy 2:6 [Christ] gave himself as a ransom for all men—the testimony given in its proper time.

2 Peter 3:9 The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.

II. The attributes of God, which really are not distinct from his essence nor from one another, may conveniently be divided into: *Immanent and Transitive*.

1. The philosophical axiom, "A thing is equal to the sum of its attributes," does not apply to God.

a) In a man we commonly distinguish essence and character:
body—but different states of health;
soul: intellect, emotion, volition—but different degrees in different persons.

b) In philosophy we consider the substance of a thing as the bearer of the attributes.

2. God, being absolutely one in essence as well as in number, cannot be conceived as so constituted. He is *impartibilis, ohne Stücke* (A.C. I, 3).

a) There is no real difference between his essence and his attributes.

Quenstedt: The divine attributes do not denote anything superadded to the divine essence, but are only inadequate concepts of an infinitely perfect essence. The divine essence is like an incomprehensible Ocean of all the infinite attributes which the human intellect is not able to exhaust in a single and simple concept, and therefore by means of various concepts, sip by sip as it were, it draws something out of that infinity (*TDP*, I, VIII, II, II, IV, p 297).

Augustine: We may understand God, if we are able, and as much as we are able, as being good without quality, great without quantity, a creator though he lacks nothing, present but in no location, ... in his wholeness everywhere, yet without place... That God is invisible essence beyond the understanding of every creature ... containing all creation within himself like a mathematical point; God is a creating essence, ruling without labor, holding all things together without being burdened (*Trinity*, V, I, 1).

Thomas: His essence is his being. In God to know and to be, to will and to be is one and the same thing (See *S.T.* I, Q. 3, Art. 4).

b) There is no objective difference between his various attributes.

1) Thomasius (d. 1875) claimed an objective difference between

- a) Transitive attributes (omnipotence, omniscience)**
- b) Basic essence (existence, consciousness, will) together with**
- c) Immanent attributes (eternity, independence).**

2) He does so in the interest of his false Christology (*kenosis* = emptying).

3. The attributes are not mere names, as though having nothing in the Godhead corresponding to them.

William of Occam (d. 1349) said the whole distinction is only in the terms (nominalism).

a) Scripture speaks of God's attributes, accommodating itself to our limitations.

1 Corinthians 13:9-12 For we know in part and we prophesy in part,¹⁰ but when perfection comes, the imperfect disappears.¹¹ When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put childish ways behind me.¹² Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.

Quenstedt: If the attributes differ from one another only in the mind, those words "wise," "just," "merciful," when spoken about God, will be synonyms, just as among us "sword" and "saber" are synonyms. But this is absurd. Sword

and saber are distinguished by an active thinking process, the divine attributes by a receptive thinking process, which has a basis in fact (*TDP. f.s. II, X, p 303*).

Hollaz: The divine attributes are distinguished from the divine essence and from one another not only in name, nor in reality, but formally, according to our way of thinking about them, not without a definite basis for this distinction (*Exam., I, I, q23, p 263*).

Hollaz: The attributes of God are called perfections because they most perfectly declare God's essence (*Exam., I, I, 234*).

b) The attributes show us the same God, only always in a different relation. Thus in the same act, for example, in a rain storm, God may appear as possessing:

1) Power.

Job 36:22,27 God is exalted in his power. Who is a teacher like him?
²⁷He draws up the drops of water, which distill as rain to the streams.

2) Understanding.

Job 28:23,26,27 God understands the way to [wisdom] and he alone knows where it dwells. ²⁶ When he made a decree for the rain and a path for the thunderstorm, ²⁷ then he looked at wisdom.

3) Goodness.

Acts 14:17 Yet he has not left himself without testimony: He has shown kindness by giving you rain from heaven and crops in their seasons; he provides you with plenty of food and fills your hearts with joy.

4) The dogmaticians comment on this point.

Quenstedt: The divine attributes are the divine essence itself represented to us by means of several inadequate concepts. Thus the infinity of God is the divine essence itself apprehended as lacking all boundaries and limitations. Omnipotence is the divine essence itself apprehended as having no obstacles when he does something. ... One must distinguish between an objective concept, which is the conceived object itself, and a formal concept, which is a quality produced by our mind, representing the thing known by means of an idea or a picture impressed on the mind. ... The essential divine attributes are distinguished, neither from the divine essence nor from one another in reality or because of their nature, as things clearly different or as two or more parts of one and the same thing, or in any other way, but only in our thinking (*TDP, I, VIII, II, qu III, VII, p 300*).

Gerhard: The divine attributes considered in and by themselves are really and most simply one with the divine essence (*Loci, III, II, CIV, p 84*).

Calov: If the essence and attributes were distinguished in reality, they would not be predicated in the abstract about God, who is called truth, life, love in the abstract (*Systema*, II, IV, p 222).

4. Since the attributes of God are not really distinct and independent qualities, no classification can be fully satisfactory.

Some suggested classifications are:

a) Baier (d. 1695):

1) Two classes:

-a) Negative: Those which either by virtue of the terms or of their meaning denote a certain negation or an elimination of any of those imperfections which are found in creatures; e.g., immutability, infinity, omnipresence, etc.; unity, simplicity, eternity, etc.

-b) Positive: Those which are conceived with reference to perfections which we perceive in the creatures, and by means of them, although in a more eminent degree; e.g., knowledge, holiness, power, life, wisdom, will, justice, truth, goodness, mercy, love, grace, slowness to anger, patience.

2) Yet: Are the first pure negations?

Do the second contain no negation?

Note: this classification is followed by Pieper.

b) Gerhard (d. 1632):

1) Two classes.

-a) Incommunicabilia (proprietas proprie Deo ascripta). e.g. Independentia, aeternitas, etc.

-b) Communicabilia (proprietas improprie sive anthropomorphice Deo ascripta). e.g. Intellectus, voluntas, iustitia, etc.

2) Yet

-a) Scripture, indeed, contains the doctrine of the image of God in man.

-b) Is it proper to make man the starting point for a classification of divine attributes?

c) Calov (d. 1686) has four classes.

1) Of being (*entis*): *perfectio, unitas, veritas, bonitas*.

- 2) Of infinity: *immensitas, aeternitas*.
 - 3) Of spirituality (personality): *immortalitas, vita; intellectus, voluntas*.
 - 4) Of working (*operativa*): *omnipraesentia, omniscientia, iustitia*, etc.
- d) Franck (d. 1894):
- 1) Two classes.
 - a) God's absolute being in relation to the world.
e.g., infinity, eternity, etc.
 - b) God's personal being in relation to the world.
e.g., omnipotence, holiness, etc.
 - 2) Yet: Are God's essence and personality really distinct?
- e) Luthardt (d. 1902):
- 1) Two classes.
 - a) Metaphysical, attributes of being.
 - b) Moral, attributes of personality.
 - 2) Is not, e.g., God's omnipotence a holy omnipotence?
- f) Philippi (d 1882):
- 1) Three classes.
 - a) Absolute substance. e.g., eternity, omnipresence, etc.
 - b) Absolute subject. e.g., omnipotence, omniscience, etc.
 - c) Absolute love. e.g., wisdom, justice, goodness, etc.
 - 2) Again: Can person and substance be really distinguished in God?
—And is not c already contained in b?
- g) Singmaster (d. 1926):
- 1) Four classes.
 - a) Attributes of personality, e.g., spirituality, life, unity.

-b) Attributes of absoluteness, e.g., self-existence, eternity, immutability, infinity (omnipresence, omniscience, omnipotence, wisdom).

-c) Attributes of holiness.

- 1) Definition: infinite moral perfection
- 2) Several aspects: righteousness, justice, purity, majesty.
- 3) Divine standard.

-d) Attributes of love.

- 1) Its nature.
- 2) Its manifestation.
- 3) Its form: complacency, benevolence, grace.

2) Logically unsatisfactory. *Principium dividendi*?

h) Erickson (contemporary Evangelical)

1) Two classes.

-a) moral attributes which in a human context would relate to righteousness.

-b) natural attributes which are the non-moral superlatives of God.

2) Two classes.

-a) attributes of goodness.

-b) attributes of greatness.

Note: The inconsistencies and problems apparent in all these systems show the futility of trying to pigeon-hole God's attributes.

5. The division into *Immanent* and *Transitive* is convenient.

a) It considers God as he relates to the world.

1) Without any relation to the world (immanent attributes).

2) In his relation to the world (transitive attributes).

Note: The latter group must not be considered as beginning with the creation of the world.

Quenstedt: And so immensity differs from omnipresence. The former is an absolute attribute, the latter a relative one ... since it implies not only a nearness of the divine essence, or a presence of God with his creatures, but also a certain activity or an active control. The former is eternal, the latter is not at all eternal, but it began with the creatures (*TDP*, VIII, I, XXIX, p 288).

Caution: This would imply a change in God's attributes.

b) Synonyms:

1) **The Immanent are also called:** *Intransitive, Quiescent, or Absolute.*

2) **The Transitive are called:** *Operative, or Relative.*

c) Quenstedt describes this distinction.

Quenstedt: There are two classes of attributes: some describe the divine essence absolutely and in itself without reference to any activity, and they are called immanent, *ἀνενέργητα*, or quiescent, which, namely, are not directed toward some actions, such as immensity, eternity, spirituality, etc. Others describe the divine essence relatively, with respect to an activity, and they are called *ἐνεργητικά* or active and extending themselves to the outside of the divine essence, or those which are recognized to be directed toward definite activities, as are power, knowledge, righteousness (*TDP*, VIII, II, IV, p 285).

d) Even this classification used in our notes is not without problems.

Robert Preus: And so we do the best we can. But actually a simple listing of attributes as Calov does in his *Apodixis* would have probably been preferable to the arrangement which finally won out; for there are some real flaws in it. What are these shortcomings? First is the intrinsic difficulty of the project which makes any rigid classification a severe hardship to follow consistently. For example, certain attributes such as God's presence must be discussed twice, first as an absolute attribute (immensity) and then as an operative attribute (presence)....Second, it is highly questionable whether one should ever speak of *ἀνενέργητα* in the living God.... A third shortcoming we notice is the serious lack of balance in many presentations of the divine attributes (*TPRL*, II, p 62-64).

III. The immanent attributes of God are: Immutability, Eternity, Love, and Perfection.

1. Immutability (*immutabilitas Dei*).

a) God's essence with all its perfections for ever remains the same, undergoing neither decrease nor increase.

Psalms 102:25-27 In the beginning you laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands. ²⁶ They will perish, but you remain; they will all wear out like a garment. Like clothing you will change them and they will be discarded. ²⁷ But you remain the same, and your years will never end.

Romans 1:23 [They] exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles.

James 1:17 Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.

1 Timothy 1:17 Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory for ever and ever. Amen.

1 Timothy 6:16 [God] who alone is immortal and who lives in unapproachable light, whom no one has seen or can see. To him be honor and might forever. Amen.

Quenstedt: Immutability is the perpetual identity of the divine essence and of all its attributes, negating altogether all change, both physical and moral (*TDP*, s.1, th.20, f. 414).

Baier: Immutability consists in this that God is subject to no mutation, neither according to his essence (by reason of which God is immortal and incorruptible), nor according to his properties, nor according to his position, nor according to his will or purpose (*Comp.*, II, p 19).

b) The decrees of God in every respect (volitional, intellectual, emotional) are not subject to revision.

Numbers 23:19 God is not a man, that he should lie, nor a son of man, that he should change his mind. Does he speak and then not act? Does he promise and not fulfill?

1 Samuel 15:29 He who is the Glory of Israel does not lie or change his mind; for he is not a man, that he should change his mind.

Psalms 33:11 But the plans of the LORD stand firm forever, the purposes of his heart through all generations.

Proverbs 19:21 Many are the plans in a man's heart, but it is the LORD's purpose that prevails.

Malachi 3:6 I the LORD do not change. So you, O descendants of Jacob, are not destroyed.

Romans 3:3 What if some did not have faith? Will their lack of faith nullify God's faithfulness?

Romans 11:29 For God's gifts and his call are irrevocable.

2 Timothy 2:13 If we are faithless, he will remain faithful, for he cannot disown himself.

1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

c) Some raise objections to God's immutability.

1) "Scripture frequently states that God repented" (נחם).

-a) Statement of the fact:

Genesis 6:6 The LORD was *grieved* that he had made man on the earth, and his heart was filled with pain. NIV

Genesis 6:6 And it *repented* the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. KJV

1 Samuel 15:11 “I am *grieved* that I have made Saul king, because he has turned away from me and has not carried out my instructions.” Samuel was troubled, and he cried out to the LORD all that night. NIV

1 Samuel 15:11 It *repenteth* me that I have set up Saul to be king: for he is turned back from following me, and hath not performed my commandments. And it grieved Samuel; and he cried unto the LORD all night. KJV

-b) Response to the objection:

-1) In repentance we must distinguish between the affection of grief and the change of conduct.

Gerhard: For he changes his actions but his will itself remains unchanged (*Loci*, III, II, CLV, p 114).

Pieper: God remains immutable, but there is mutability in the object of His affection (*CD*, I, p 441).

-2) In God even this change of conduct is only apparent.

Acts 15:18 Known to the Lord for ages is his work. (NIV alt)

-3) Passages speaking of God’s repentance must be understood anthropopathically.

2) Objection: “Creation implies a change in God.”

-a) Statement of the fact Genesis 1:1, etc.

-b) Response to the objection:

-1) This was a change in the world, which was called from a state of non-existence into existence.

Romans 4:17 God, who gives life to the dead and *calls into being that which does not exist* (καλοῦντος τὰ μὴ ὄντα ὡς ὄντα). NASB
Romans 4:17 God who gives life to the dead and *calls things that are not as though they were*. NIV

Psalms 102:11,12,26,27 My days are like the evening shadow; I wither away like grass. ¹² But you, O LORD, sit enthroned forever; your renown endures through all generations. ²⁶ They will perish, but you remain; they will all wear out like a garment. Like clothing you will change them and they will be

discarded.²⁷ But you remain the same, and your years will never end.

-2) By creating space and time and causality and dealing with men according to these forms, God does not himself become subject to them.

3) Objection: “Suffering implies a change in God.”

-a) The claim:

Jürgen Moltmann: The Council of Nicea rightly declared, in opposition to Arius, that God was not so changeable as his creature. This is not an absolute statement about God, but a comparative statement. God is not subject to compulsion by what is not divine. This does not mean that God is not free to change himself or to be changed by something else. We cannot deduce from the relative statement of Nicea that God is unchangeable that he is absolutely unchangeable (“The Crucified God” in *New Questions on God*, 1972, p 31).

Clark Pinnock: Given our experience of such evils as the Holocaust and Cambodia, how can one say that God rules over and controls history? What divine purpose can be detected in death camps and killing fields? History itself seems to call the sovereignty of God into question and to require us to rethink it....God does not rule everything according to blueprint. The present situation involves a struggle between the forces of good and the forces of evil. Though much neglected by theology, spiritual warfare is a reality. God is not now in control—we anticipate complete victory over evil only in the future. This orientation to the future allows us to clarify a point about open sovereignty. Up to a point and in certain areas, we can resist God's will. But the coming of the Lord tells us that not everything can be thwarted by human freedom. The Lord will come; what we do may affect its timing but not its reality. It is something God intends to do and will certainly do. What we decide may affect when but not whether God does it. The apostle says that we both hasten and delay the return of Christ (2 Pet. 3:9,12). If the parousia appears slow in coming, this is because God wants more sinners to repent that God's house may be full. God delays the coming to give them more time to respond to divine grace (“God's Sovereignty in Today's World,” *Theology Today*; Apr 1996, p 15-21).

-b) Response to the objection:

Passages speaking of God's suffering must be understood anthropopathically. Christ's suffering was by the person according to his human nature. Moltmann's view is in effect Patripassionism.

4) Objections of process theology:

Alfred Whitehead (d. 1947): It is as true to say that God creates the

World, as that the World creates God. . . . Neither God, nor the World, reaches static completion. Both are in the grip of the ultimate metaphysical ground, the creative advance into novelty. Either of them, God and the World, is the instrument of novelty for the other (*Process and Reality*, p 528-529).

Ted Peters: God's relationship to the world is internal to the divine life. God's relation to the world in redemption and consummation is not merely external, not merely an add-on to a God whose being is intact. God is not a simple monad existing somewhere in eternal isolation who occasionally turns on a celestial television news show to observe what is happening on earth. Rather, God's involvement in the course of world affairs is so intimate that the character of divinity itself is shaped by it (*God—The World's Future*, p 112-113).

5) Objection: "Many prophecies were never fulfilled."

-a) Statement of the fact:

Isaiah 38:1,5 In those days Hezekiah became mortally ill. And Isaiah the prophet the son of Amoz came to him and said to him, "Thus says the Lord, 'Set your house in order, for you shall die and not live.'" ⁵ Go and say to Hezekiah, "Thus says the Lord, the God of your father David, 'I have heard your prayer, I have seen your tears; behold, I will add fifteen years to your life.'"

Jonah 3:4,10 Then Jonah began to go through the city one day's walk; and he cried out and said, "Yet forty days and Nineveh will be overthrown." ¹⁰ When God saw their deeds, that they turned from their wicked way, then God relented concerning the calamity which He had declared He would bring upon them. And he did not do it.

-b) Response to the objection:

-1) These were conditional prophecies, with the condition expressed or implied.

Jeremiah 18:7-10 If at any time I announce that a nation or kingdom is to be uprooted, torn down and destroyed, ⁸ and if that nation I warned repents of its evil, then I will relent and not inflict on it the disaster I had planned. ⁹ And if at another time I announce that a nation or kingdom is to be built up and planted, ¹⁰ and if it does evil in my sight and does not obey me, then I will reconsider the good I had intended to do for it.

2 Kings 20:3 "Remember, O LORD, how I have walked before you faithfully and with wholehearted devotion and have done what is good in your eyes." And Hezekiah wept bitterly.

Jonah 3:5 Then the people of Nineveh believed in God; and they called a fast and put on sackcloth from the greatest to the least of them.

Matthew 12:41 “The men of Nineveh shall stand up with this generation at the judgment, and shall condemn it because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and behold, something greater than Jonah is here.

-2) In other cases, the prophecies were fulfilled in stages, not all at once, for example, Matthew 24—70 AD and the Last Day; Daniel 11—Antiochus and Anti-Christ; Ezekiel 26—destruction of Tyre by Nebuchadnezzar and Alexander.

6) Objection: “Scripture sometimes speaks of a change in God’s attitude toward a man.”

-a) Statement of the fact:

Job 30:21 You turn on me ruthlessly; with the might of your hand you attack me.

-b) Response: This is not objectively a change in God, but subjectively a change in the man’s mind (conception, feeling, etc.) or a change in God’s course of action as a time of grace comes to an end.

7) Objection: “Does not a strict immutability annul the free personality of God? Compare the Greek and Roman Fate, to which also the gods were subject.”

**Response: God is subject to no outside coercion.
In perfect independence he decrees his own immutability.**

Exodus 3:14 God said to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: ‘I AM has sent me to you.’”

2. Eternity (*aeternitas Dei*).

a) God in his essence, his will, and his actions is independent of any succession of events.

Psalms 90:2,4 Before the mountains were born or you brought forth the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God. ⁴ For a thousand years in your sight are like a day that has just gone by, or like a watch in the night.

Isaiah 57:15 For this is what the high and lofty One says— he who lives forever, whose name is holy: “I live in a high and holy place, but also with him who is contrite and lowly in spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly and to revive the heart of the contrite.”

Daniel 4:3 How great are his signs, how mighty his wonders! His kingdom is an eternal kingdom; his dominion endures from generation to generation.

Daniel 7:14,27 He was given authority, glory, and sovereign power; all peoples, nations and men of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed.²⁷ Then the sovereignty, power and greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be handed over to the saints, the people of the Most High. His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and all rulers will worship and obey him.

Hebrews 1:12 You will roll them up like a robe; like a garment they will be changed. But you remain the same, and your years will never end.

2 Peter 3:8 But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day.

Baier: God's eternity, absolutely so called (for it is not taken here in the sense of a very long time), signifies the permanent existence or duration of God without beginning and end and without any progression and change (*Compendium*, II, p 27).

b) God views all in a never changing absolute present, to which there is no transition from a past, from which there is no transition to a future.

Psalms 2:7 I will proclaim the decree of the LORD: He said to me, "You are my Son; *today* I have become your Father.

Quenstedt: That the present, or the "now" (τὸ νῦν) is not, properly speaking, time, but the beginning of the future and the end of the past, with all of which eternity coexists ... a perpetual now, and that fixed, not in flux (*TDP*, I, VIII, XVII, p 287).

Calov: *Praesentia interminabilis* (*Apodixis, Not. Dei rev.*, IX, p 71).

c) God's eternity is opposed by process theology.

Peters: With classical theists, Christians also say God is eternal. . . . What can eternity mean today? In our own modern and postmodern context, we cannot intelligibly conceive of timelessness ontologically as a static state of being with no succession of events. For us in the modern world, the dynamic of events constitutes reality. An eternal state of existence without the succession of events would constitute eternal death, not the eternal life (*God—the World's Future*, p 94-95).

N. P. Wolterstorff: I hold that God is everlasting rather than eternal. I hold that God is not outside time but that God exists at every time and that there is temporal succession and flow in God's own life (in Pinnock, *Most Moved Mover*, p 97).

d) The decrees of God and their execution are not to be considered as separated in time. Both are one.

Revelation 13:8 All inhabitants of the earth will worship the beast—all whose names have not been written in the book of life belonging to the Lamb that was slain from the creation of the world.

Acts 15:16- 18 After this I will return and rebuild David's fallen tent. Its ruins I will rebuild, and I will restore it, ¹⁷ that the remnant of men may seek the Lord, and all the Gentiles who bear my name," says the Lord, who does these things' ¹⁸ that have been known for ages.

Genesis 1:3,9,11 And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. ⁹ And God said, "Let the water under the sky be gathered to one place, and let dry ground appear." And it was so. ¹¹ Then God said, "Let the land produce vegetation: seed-bearing plants and trees on the land that bear fruit with seed in it, according to their various kinds." And it was so.

Psalms 33:9,11 For he spoke, and it came to be; he commanded, and it stood firm. ¹¹ But the plans of the LORD stand firm forever, the purposes of his heart through all generations.

3. Immanent Love (amor Dei internus, amor absolutus).

a) God's essence is described as love.

1 John 4:8,16 Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. ¹⁶ And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in him.

b) It may be said that God desires and enjoys companionship with himself; that there is a reciprocal giving and taking within God (John 13-17).

John 17:21-26 ...that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. ²² I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one: ²³ I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me. ²⁴ Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world. ²⁵ Righteous Father, though the world does not know you, I know you, and they know that you have sent me. ²⁶ I have made you known to them, and will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them.

John 15:9-10 As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. ¹⁰ If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father's commands and remain in his love.

Acts 17:25 And he is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything, because he himself gives all men life and breath and everything else.

c) It has been objected that self-love is immoral.

1) Gerhard addresses the objection.

Since God is the highest good, therefore he loves himself as the highest good. In man the love of oneself is wicked and damnable because man is not the highest good, but he ought to seek the highest good in God and to cling to him alone. God, however, loves himself, yet not in so far as he is himself but in as much as he is the highest good. For if there were any other greater and more excellent good, then he would love that, not himself, as for instance “*Theologia Germanica*” treats of this matter at length (*Loci*, III, II, CCXXIII, p 167).

2) Is love of self in itself immoral? It becomes so when indulged to excess (selfishness).

Mark 12:31 The second is this: “Love your neighbor as yourself.” There is no commandment greater than these.

1 Corinthians 10:24 Nobody should seek his own good, but the good of others.

Note: Though Scripture does not condemn all self-love, it does not promote a specific theory of self-esteem as some contemporary counselors do. See *WLQ*, Fall 1995, p 294-295. In the Bible “love” is not mainly esteeming someone, but doing the right thing for that person.

d) The immanent love of God naturally stands in close relation to the Trinity.

1) The Father loves the Son as the express Image of his person.

Hebrews 1:3 The Son is the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word.

Matthew 3:17 And a voice from heaven said, “This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased.”

Matthew 17: 5 While he was still speaking, a bright cloud enveloped them, and a voice from the cloud said, “This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased. Listen to him!”

John 3:35 The Father loves the Son and has placed everything in his hands.

John 5:20 For the Father loves the Son and shows him all he does. Yes, to your amazement he will show him even greater things than these.

John 17:24, 26 Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world. ²⁶ I have made you known to them, and will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them.

2) The Son loves the Father.

John 14:31 The world must learn that I love the Father and that I do exactly what my Father has commanded me.

3) The Spirit, proceeding from both, is the Spirit of love.

Galatians 5:22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness.

4) On the entire point:

Gerhard: In the deity the Father loves the Son as his own substantial image (Mt 3:17; 17:5; Jn 3:35; 5:20; 17:24). The Son loves the Father since he was born of his heart from eternity (Jn 14:31). The Holy Spirit, who proceeds from both, is the essential love of the Father and of the Son (*Loci*, III, II, CCXXIII, p 167).

4. Perfection, Goodness (*bonitas Dei*).

a) God in his essence as well as in his will is free from any defect.

Matthew 19:17 “Why do you ask me about what is good?” Jesus replied. “There is only One who is good. If you want to enter life, obey the commandments.”

Luke 18:19 “Why do you call me good?” Jesus answered. “No one is good—except God alone.”

Psalms 25:8 Good and upright is the LORD; therefore he instructs sinners in his ways.

Calov: The goodness of God is that attribute according to which God is essentially good, yes, indeed he is the highest good (*Theol. pos.*, CLXXXII, p 67).

Gerhard: Because nothing is lacking to him, because he stands in need of nothing else outside of himself, because he is in want neither of counsel, nor of aid, nor of wisdom, nor of power in acting, nor is he dependent on someone else either in respect to his existence or to his activity (*Loci*, loc II CCXCI, p 210).

b) The perfection of God may be taken in two senses.

1) A metaphysical sense (*bonitas essentialis, metaphysica*).

Acts 17:25 And he is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything, because he himself gives all men life and breath and everything else.

Job 22:2 Can a man be of benefit to God? Can even a wise man benefit him?

Psalm 50:12 If I were hungry I would not tell you, for the world is mine, and all that is in it.

Isaiah 40:13,14 Who has understood the mind of the LORD, or instructed him as his counselor? ¹⁴ Whom did the LORD consult to enlighten him, and who taught him the right way? Who was it that taught him knowledge or showed him the path of understanding?

2) A moral sense (*bonitas intrinseca*).

-a) The dogmaticians compare these two senses.

Gerhard: God is not only good in himself, but he also radiates and communicates his goodness outside himself, which, in view of this communication, is called benevolence (*benignitas*) (*Loci*, II, CCXVI, p 164).

J. C. Cotta: When the goodness of God is under discussion, his essential and metaphysical goodness ought to be distinguished from his moral goodness, as it is called. By God's essential goodness is meant his very perfection in so far as, namely, in God one may find all those things which belong to a most perfect Being, Lk 18:19. But by moral goodness the zeal or inclination of the supreme Godhead to confer any and all good things on his creatures is denoted. And this goodness which takes the misery of creatures into consideration we are accustomed otherwise to call the mercy of God (*miser cordia*) (Notes in Gerhard *Loci*, I, II, CCVIII, p 159).

-b) Moral goodness is closely related to God's holiness and love.

Calov: To that extent, Calov says quite correctly concerning the "goodness according to which God is essentially good, yes, indeed, the highest good, that it is closely related to holiness, according to which he is essentially holy, yes, he is holiness itself" (*Theo. pos.*, CLXXXII, p 67).

c) From the perfection of God follow his majesty and bliss.

1) Majesty, Glory.

Acts 7:32 "I am the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob." Moses trembled with fear and did not dare to look.

Deuteronomy 7:21 Do not be terrified by them, for the LORD your God, who is among you, is a great and awesome God.

Psalm 7:17 I will give thanks to the LORD because of his righteousness and will sing praise to the name of the LORD Most High.

Psalm 18:13 The LORD thundered from heaven; the voice of the Most High resounded.

Psalm 115:3 Our God is in heaven; he does whatever pleases him.

Isaiah 2:10,19,22 Go into the rocks, hide in the ground from dread of the LORD and the splendor of his majesty! ¹⁹ Men will flee to caves in the rocks and to holes in the ground from dread of the LORD and the splendor of his majesty, when he rises to shake the earth. ²¹ They will flee to caverns in the rocks and to the overhanging crags from dread of the LORD and the splendor of his majesty, when he rises to shake the earth.

Ezekiel 1:25-28 Then there came a voice from above the expanse over their heads as they stood with lowered wings. ²⁶ Above the expanse over their heads was what looked like a throne of sapphire, and high above on the throne was a figure like that of a man. ²⁷ I saw that from what appeared to be his waist up he looked like glowing metal, as if full of fire, and that from there down he looked like fire; and brilliant light surrounded him. ²⁸ Like the appearance of a rainbow in the clouds on a rainy day, so was the radiance around him. This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the LORD.

Matthew 6:13 For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen. KJV

Calov: A consequence of the divine perfection is majesty, because he is so perfect that God truly is great (*Theol. pos.*, CLXXIX, p 60).

2) Serene bliss (*beatitudo*).

1 Timothy 1:11 ... the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which he entrusted to me.

1 Timothy 6:15 ...which God will bring about in his own time—God, the blessed and only Ruler, the King of kings and Lord of lords

Calov: Another consequence is blessedness by which he is most blessed, nay rather blessedness itself (*Theol. pos.*, CLXXIX).

Gerhard: When, therefore, God is called blessed, it means 1) that he abounds in all good things; 2) that he is free from all evil things; 3) that he is immutably blessed; 4) that essentially and by his own nature he is blessed, yes, is blessedness itself (if blessedness were an accident, it could, of course, be lost); 5) that by himself and through himself he is blessed; moreover, he does not have blessedness as something given him by someone else; 6) that God through his intellect fully recognizes and through his will loves his own perfection and blessedness and quietly and peacefully finds pleasure in it; from this pleasure arises joy, by which God delights in himself as the highest good above all his good works, beyond which none can be called or considered good; 7) that he is self-sufficient, having received no outward good, and lacking nothing good (*Loci*, II, CCCVI, p 206).

d) The question has been asked:

- 1) **Does God decree the good because it is good? Thus Aquinas.
Or: Is the good good because God decreed it? Thus Duns Scotus.**
- 2) **Neither explanation is adequate by itself.
God is not subject to any idea of Good over and above himself.
God, who is, is perfection. God is not arbitrary and would not
declare anything to be good unless it really was good.**

**IV. The transitive attributes of God are:
Omnipresence, an attribute of essence;
Omniscience and Wisdom, attributes of knowledge;
Love, Holiness, Justice, and Omnipotence, attributes of will.**

1. Omnipresence (*omnipraesentia Dei*).

a) Note three kinds of presence:

- 1) ***Circumspectiva, circumscriptiva* (a body occupies place and space);**
- 2) ***Definitiva* (spirits like angels are in a place but fill no physical space);**
- 3) ***Impletiva, repletiva* (God fills everything, but he is not confined by place or space).**

b) Closely related to omnipresence are certain other attributes.

- 1) **They are spirituality, illocality, immensity (immeasurability), immateriality (*incorporeitas*), invisibility.**

Romans 1:20 For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.

Colossians 1:15 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation.

1 Timothy 1:17 Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory for ever and ever. Amen.

- 2) **These attributes are not identical with omnipresence, which is more than a mere independence from space.**

-a) Omnipresence is an active presence.

Amos 9:2-4 Though they dig down to the depths of the grave, from there my hand will take them. Though they climb up to the heavens, from there I will bring them down. ³ Though they hide

themselves on the top of Carmel, there I will hunt them down and seize them. Though they hide from me at the bottom of the sea, there I will command the serpent to bite them. ⁴ Though they are driven into exile by their enemies, there I will command the sword to slay them. I will fix my eyes upon them for evil and not for good.

Acts 7:48,49 However, the Most High does not live in houses made by men. As the prophet says: ⁴⁹ “Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool. What kind of house will you build for me? says the Lord. Or where will my resting place be?”

-b) Quenstedt uses a faulty expression in this connection.

Quenstedt: And so immensity differs from omnipresence. The former is an absolute attribute, the latter a relative one ... since it implies not only a nearness of the divine essence, or a presence with his creatures, but also a certain activity or an active control. The former is eternal, the latter is not, but it *began* [?] with the creatures (*TDP*, VIII, I, XXIX, p 288).

c) God essentially and operatively penetrates each and every thing in the universe.

Psalms 139:7-10 Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? ⁸ If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there. ⁹ If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, ¹⁰ even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast.

Jeremiah 23:23,24 “Am I only a God nearby,” declares the LORD, “and not a God far away? ²⁴ Can anyone hide in secret places so that I cannot see him?” declares the LORD. “Do not I fill heaven and earth?” declares the LORD.

Acts 17:27,28 God did this so that men would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from each one of us. ²⁸ “For in him we live and move and have our being.” As some of your own poets have said, “We are his offspring.”

Decisio Saxonica (1624): Two things are required for a full definition of the presence of God: First, the being there of the infinite and immeasurable God; secondly, the activity of God who is present (quoted in Preus, *Theology of Post Reformation Lutheranism*, II, p85 fn 77).

d) God’s omnipresence is a spiritual omnipresence.

1) It must not be conceived as a corporeal expansion or local extension (ubiquity).

John 4:24 God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth.

2) God is not locally circumscribed or inclosed, not even by the universe.

2 Chronicles 2:6 But who is able to build a temple for him, since the heavens, even the highest heavens, cannot contain him? Who then am I to build a temple for him, except as a place to burn sacrifices before him?

2 Chronicles 6:18 But will God really dwell on earth with men? The heavens, even the highest heavens, cannot contain you. How much less this temple I have built!

Gerhard: It is an illocal presence, which cannot be divided into parts, incomprehensible to our reason, efficacious and operative, which contains in itself all things like the tiniest point (*Loci*, III, II, CLXXII, p 122).

Luther: But this is not the way we speak. We say that God is no such extended, long, broad, thick, high, deep being. He is a supernatural, inscrutable being who exists at the same time in every little seed, whole and entire, and yet also in all and above all and outside all created things. There is no need to enclose him here. For a body is much, much too wide for the Godhead; it could contain many thousand Godheads. On the other hand, it is also far, far too narrow to contain one Godhead. Nothing is so small but God is still smaller, nothing so large but God is still larger, nothing is so short but God is still shorter, nothing so long but God is still longer, nothing is so broad but God is still broader, nothing so narrow but God is still narrower, and so on. He is an inexpressible being, above and beyond all that can be described or imagined (*LW* 37:228).

3) God with his whole majesty is operatively present at every point in the universe (*adessentia*, συνουσία—*indistantia*, ἀδιασπασία), yet only once in the entire universe.

Jeremiah 23:23,24 “Am I only a God nearby,” declares the LORD, “and not a God far away? ²⁴ Can anyone hide in secret places so that I cannot see him?” declares the LORD. “Do not I fill heaven and earth?” declares the LORD.

Gerhard: Because God is everywhere present not by reason of a multiplication of his essence, for he is something wholly whole (ὅλως ὅλον τι), an entity of the highest simplicity, and hence wherever he is, he is in his entirety; neither through a division of his essence ... nor through an extension ... nor by an intermingling (*Loci*, III, II, CLXXII, p 122-123).

4) It is beyond our conception how a pure spirit can be operative on matter without some organ.

Cicero: An open and simple mind, joined to nothing by which it is able to perceive, seems to escape the power and conception of our intellect (*De Natura Deorum*, I, XI).

Tertullian uses some awkward expressions: Everything that is, is a

corporeal being of its own kind. Nothing is incorporeal except that which does not exist.... Who will deny that God is a corporeal being, although God is a spirit? For a spirit is a corporeal being of its own kind in its own likeness.

Omne quod est, corpus est sui generis, nihil est incorporale, nisi quod non est.—Quis negabit, Deum corpus esse, etsi Deus spiritus est? Spiritus enim corpus sui generis in sua effigie (De Carne Christi, cap. XI).

Clark Pinnock: Most people, I suspect, think that God chooses to be associated with a body, while being himself formless. That may be so, but it is also possible that God has a body in some way we cannot imagine and, therefore, that it is natural for God to seek out forms of embodiment. I do not feel obligated to assume that God is a purely spiritual being when his self-revelation does not suggest it (*Most Moved Mover*, p 34).

- e) **From *omnipraesentia generalis* may be distinguished:**
***Praesentia specialis*: By grace in the church—with glory in heaven.**
***Unio Mystica*: our bodies are the temple of God.**

Isaiah 57:15 For this is what the high and lofty One says— he who lives forever, whose name is holy: “I live in a high and holy place, but also with him who is contrite and lowly in spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly and to revive the heart of the contrite.”

Psalm 16:11 You have made known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand.

Matthew 25:34 “Then the King will say to those on his right, “Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world.”

1 Thessalonians 4:17 After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever.

John 14:23 Jesus replied, “If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him.”

1 Corinthians 3:16 Don’t you know that you yourselves are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit lives in you?

2 Corinthians 6:16 What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols? For we are the temple of the living God. As God has said: “I will live with them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people.”

Formula of Concord, T.D., III, 65/6. [We reject] that not God dwells in the believers, but only the gifts of God.

Meisner (d. 1626): This very intimate union according to which believers are implanted in Christ as in their Head is not the same thing as God’s immensity or His nearness to all creatures or his general presence; nor is it merely a gracious

operation. What is it then? I cannot define it, but I firmly believe it. It is Christ's dwelling in us so that we become one body with him. It is a personal relationship and tie and union, and nothing in this life can be considered more dear and sweet, nothing more full of comfort (Preus, *TPRL*, Vol. II, 92; original in Quenstedt, *Systema*, P III, C.10, S.2, Obj 3).

f) Opposed to omnipresence are the following errors.

1) *Pantheism* substitutes for the operative presence of God his identity with the universe.

Servetus (d. 1553): In a stone God truly and properly is a stone, in the trunk of a tree he is a tree trunk, and similarly in other things (*Epis VI ad Calvinum*).

2) *Deism*, denying the essential presence of God, ascribes to him a presence of knowledge, will, and operation only.

Jacob Carpov (d. 1786), quoting the deist view: "It cannot happen that God in his entirety is present with any and every being" (*Theol. rev.*, p 764).

Konrad Vorst (d. 1622): Nowhere do we read a written statement that God is an essence simply immeasurable and actually present in its entirety in all places; on the contrary, not a few passages occur here and there which seem to have the contrary sense. From this it is already evident that the immensity or ubiquity of the divine essence can not be conclusively proved from the Scriptures.... It is, to be sure, true that God works all in all; nevertheless, it does not follow that God is in an immediate way there present with his essence wherever he works, since he can work through secondary causes, whether physical or supernatural, just as any king through his ministers. Essentially he resides in that highest of heavens as on a throne or in a palace, but in such a way that with his power he is active also on earth according to his operative might. It seems to be a strange paradox that God is so lacking in quantity that the whole God should be essentially present in any and every thing no matter how small. Clearly, as far as place and local presence are concerned there seems to be no doubt at all that they can be truly and properly ascribed to God (*De Deo et attributis divinis*, p 233).

Lutheran opposition to deism:

Luther: The Scriptures teach us, however, that the right hand of God is not a specific place in which a body must or may be, such as on a golden throne, but is the almighty power of God, which at one and the same time can be nowhere and yet must be everywhere. It cannot be at any one place, I say. For if it were at some specific place, it would have to be there in a circumscribed and determinate manner, as everything which is at one place must be at that place determinately and measurably, so that it cannot meanwhile be at any other place. But the power of God cannot be so determined and measured, for it is uncircumscribed and immeasurable, beyond and above all that is or may be.

On the other hand, it must be essentially present at all places, even in the tiniest tree leaf. The reason is this: It is God who creates, effects, and preserves all things through his almighty power and right hand, as our Creed confesses. For he dispatches no officials or angels when he creates or preserves something but all this is the work of his divine power itself. If he is to create or preserve it, however, he must be present and must make and preserve his creation both in its innermost and outermost aspects. Therefore, indeed, he himself must be present in every single creature in its innermost and outermost being, on all sides, through and through, below and above, before and behind, so that nothing can be more truly present and within all creatures than God himself with his power. For it is he who makes the skin and it is he who makes the bones; it is he who makes the hair on the skin, and it is he who makes the marrow in the bones; it is he who makes every bit of the hair, it is he who makes every bit of the marrow. Indeed, he must make everything, both the parts and the whole. Surely, then, his hand which makes all this must be present; that cannot be lacking (*LW 37:57ff*).

Gerhard: This immensity and essential omnipresence of God is to be understood in this way: That God is present in all things, not only with his power and efficacy, nor only by his sight and knowledge, but also with his whole and individual essence, for he is immeasurable and infinite not only in his power and knowledge but also in his essence (*Loci*, III, CLXXII, p 122).

2. Omniscience (*scientia, intelligentia, omniscientia Dei*).

a) Scripture describes God's omniscience.

1) **Statement: God in one undivided comprehensive act knows (sees, understands) all things:**

- intuitively (without the necessity of laborious study)
- completely (without omission) and
- perfectly (without error).

1 Samuel 2:3 Do not keep talking so proudly or let your mouth speak such arrogance, for the LORD is a God who knows, and by him deeds are weighed.

Psalms 147:5 Great is our Lord and mighty in power; his understanding has no limit.

Proverbs 15:3 The eyes of the LORD are everywhere, keeping watch on the wicked and the good.

Hebrews 4:13 Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account.

1 John 3:19, 20 This then is how we know that we belong to the truth, and how we set our hearts at rest in his presence whenever our hearts condemn us. For God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything.

NIV

1 John 3:19,20 And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him. For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things. KJV

Psalms 19:12 Who can discern his errors? Forgive my hidden faults.

Calov: The knowledge of God must be considered to be truly immeasurable and infinite. By virtue of it God from eternity with one act of intuition knows all things which from our point of view are present, past or future (*Apodixis*, 12, p 77).

Calov: The omniscience of God is that by which God knows all things which have been, are, and will be, as well as those which can be and can not be. As far as the way of knowing is concerned, God sees and knows all things with an infinite and immutable knowledge, not only in time, but from eternity; not little by little or successively, but with one simple and timeless act of knowing (*Theol. pos.*, par 196).

2) Caution: God's knowledge of things must not be considered as receptive (i.e. passive).

b) *Docendi causa* the knowledge of God may be distinguished according to its object.

1) God knows himself (*scientia necessaria, naturalis*).

-a) Statement of the fact:

John 1:18 No one has ever seen God, but God the One and Only, who is at the Father's side, has made him known.

1 Corinthians 2:10, 11 But God has revealed it to us by his Spirit. The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God. ¹¹ For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the man's spirit within him? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God.

-b) Since God is the infinite author of all things, his knowledge of himself really includes every possible knowledge.

Calov: The natural knowledge of God is that by which he knows himself and all possibilities (*Systema*, II, p 497).

2) God knows the creatures, which he himself made, and their ways (*scientia libera*).

Exodus 3:19 But I know that the king of Egypt will not let you go unless a mighty hand compels him.

Exodus 4:14 Then the LORD's anger burned against Moses and he said, "What about your brother, Aaron the Levite? I know he can speak

well. He is already on his way to meet you, and his heart will be glad when he sees you.”

Job 28:24 For he views the ends of the earth and sees everything under the heavens.

Job 38:4,33, 37 Where were you when I laid the earth’s foundation? Tell me, if you understand. ³³ Do you know the laws of the heavens? Can you set up God’s dominion over the earth? ³⁷ Who has the wisdom to count the clouds? Who can tip over the water jars of the heavens?

Job 39:1-2 Do you know when the mountain goats give birth? Do you watch when the doe bears her fawn? ² Do you count the months till they bear? Do you know the time they give birth?

Acts 15:17-18 ...that the remnant of men may seek the Lord, and all the Gentiles who bear my name, says the Lord, who does these things that have been known for ages.

3) God knows all events that might take place: the conditional, the possible; also their limitations: the impossible (*scientia media*).

This is called “middle knowledge,” because it lies between *scientia necessaria*, which must be, and *scientia libera* which comes about by free choice. It is also called *futuribilium*; *hypotethica*; *de futuro conditionato*.

-a) Statement of the fact:

1 Samuel 23:10-13 David said, “O LORD, God of Israel, your servant has heard definitely that Saul plans to come to Keilah and destroy the town on account of me. ¹¹ Will the citizens of Keilah surrender me to him? Will Saul come down, as your servant has heard? O LORD, God of Israel, tell your servant.” And the LORD said, “He will.” ¹² Again David asked, “Will the citizens of Keilah surrender me and my men to Saul?” And the LORD said, “They will.” ¹³ So David and his men, about six hundred in number, left Keilah and kept moving from place to place. When Saul was told that David had escaped from Keilah, he did not go there.

1 Chronicles 21:9-14 The LORD said to Gad, David’s seer, ¹⁰ “Go and tell David, ‘This is what the LORD says: I am giving you three options. Choose one of them for me to carry out against you.’” ¹¹ So Gad went to David and said to him, “This is what the LORD says: ‘Take your choice: ¹² three years of famine, three months of being swept away before your enemies, with their swords overtaking you, or three days of the sword of the LORD—days of plague in the land, with the angel of the LORD ravaging every part of Israel.’ Now then, decide how I should answer the one who sent me.” ¹³ David said to Gad, “I am in deep distress. Let me fall into the hands of the LORD, for his mercy is very great; but do not let me fall into the hands of men.” ¹⁴ So the LORD sent a plague on Israel, and seventy thousand men of Israel fell dead.

2 Samuel 24:13 So Gad went to David and said to him, “Shall there come upon you three years* of famine in your land? Or three months of fleeing from your enemies while they pursue you? Or three days of plague in your land? Now then, think it over and decide how I should answer the one who sent me.” * The Hebrew says seven years.

Compare 2 Samuel 21:1,9 During the reign of David, there was a famine for three successive years; so David sought the face of the LORD. The LORD said, “It is on account of Saul and his blood-stained house; it is because he put the Gibeonites to death.”⁹ He handed them over to the Gibeonites, who killed and exposed them on a hill before the LORD. All seven of them fell together; they were put to death during the first days of the harvest, just as the barley harvest was beginning.

Jeremiah 38:17-23 Then Jeremiah said to Zedekiah, “This is what the LORD God Almighty, the God of Israel, says: ‘If you surrender to the officers of the king of Babylon, your life will be spared and this city will not be burned down; you and your family will live.’¹⁸ But if you will not surrender to the officers of the king of Babylon, this city will be handed over to the Babylonians and they will burn it down; you yourself will not escape from their hands.’”¹⁹ King Zedekiah said to Jeremiah, “I am afraid of the Jews who have gone over to the Babylonians, for the Babylonians may hand me over to them and they will mistreat me.”²⁰ “They will not hand you over,” Jeremiah replied. “Obey the LORD by doing what I tell you. Then it will go well with you, and your life will be spared.”²¹ But if you refuse to surrender, this is what the LORD has revealed to me: ²² All the women left in the palace of the king of Judah will be brought out to the officials of the king of Babylon. Those women will say to you: “‘They misled you and overcame you— those trusted friends of yours. Your feet are sunk in the mud; your friends have deserted you.’”²³ “All your wives and children will be brought out to the Babylonians. You yourself will not escape from their hands but will be captured by the king of Babylon; and this city will be burned down.”

Matthew 11:21,23 Woe to you, Korazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! If the miracles that were performed in you had been performed in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes.²³ And you, Capernaum, will you be lifted up to the skies? No, you will go down to the depths. If the miracles that were performed in you had been performed in Sodom, it would have remained to this day.

Jeremiah 13:23 Can the Ethiopian change his skin or the leopard its spots? Neither can you do good who are accustomed to doing evil.

Ezekiel 14:14,16,18,20 Even if these three men—Noah, Daniel and Job—were in it, they could save only themselves by their righteousness, declares the Sovereign LORD.¹⁶ as surely as I live, declares the Sovereign LORD, even if these three men were in it,

they could not save their own sons or daughters. They alone would be saved, but the land would be desolate. ¹⁸ as surely as I live, declares the Sovereign LORD, even if these three men were in it, they could not save their own sons or daughters. They alone would be saved. ²⁰ as surely as I live, declares the Sovereign LORD, even if Noah, Daniel and Job were in it, they could save neither son nor daughter. They would save only themselves by their righteousness.

-b) Misapplication of *scientia media* may lead to synergism:

Jesuits—*scientia media* of human actions leads to God's decrees.

See: Catholic controversy between the Jesuits, who held to the teaching of Fonseca and Molina who favored *scientia media*, and the Dominicans (Thomists), who opposed it. Popes Sixtus V (1588), Clement VIII (d. 1605), and Paul V (1611) ended the controversy by banning discussion, though the special tribunal convened by Clement had wanted to condemn Molina.

-c) A denial of *scientia media* leads to determinism or absolute predestination: Calvinists— God's decrees lead to *scientia*.

Richard Muller: Contingent events are known to God as belonging to the realm of his permissive willing and providential concurrence (*concursum*, q.v.). Against this view, in the attempt to create an area of radically free willing and moral responsibility beyond the control of the divine will, the Jesuit theologians Pedro de Fonseca and Luis Molina proposed a category of middle knowledge, or *scientia media*. The *scientia media* underlies their synergistic theory of salvation and was adopted in the seventeenth century by the Arminians for the same purpose. Middle knowledge is a conditioned and consequent knowledge of future contingents by which God knows of an event because of its occurrence. In other words, it is a knowledge eternally in God consequent on, and causally independent of, events in time. Such events are outside of the divine willing. The effect of such a doctrine upon soteriology is to allow an area of human choice, prior to the effective operation of divine grace, the results of which condition the divine activity or operation *ad extra* God can elect individuals on the basis of his foreknowledge of their freely willed acceptance of the promises given in Christ, and this election will be grounded upon no antecedent willing or operation of God. The acts *ad extra* of the divine will and the *scientia libera* or *scientia voluntaria* will rest, then, in certain instances on a foreknowledge of future contingents which is consequent on and conditioned by the contingents themselves. Both the Lutheran and the Reformed orthodox reject the idea—the Reformed with vehemence. At very best, the *scientia media* limits divine control to the circumstances surrounding an event and provides a certain knowledge of events that lie outside of divine control; at worst it hypothesizes an uncertain knowledge of contingents on the part of God. In either case it limits the sovereignty of grace in the work of salvation (*Dictionary*, p 275).

-d) The correct teaching upholds both God's foreknowledge and man's responsibility.

c) According to the mode of knowledge God's omniscience may be described as:

1) Intuitive (*scientia intuitiva*): not dependent on information.

John 2:25 He did not need man's testimony about man, for he knew what was in a man.

Hebrews 4:13 Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account.

Proverbs 15:3 The eyes of the LORD are everywhere, keeping watch on the wicked and the good.

2) Comprehensive (*scientia simultanea*): not acquired successively.

Isaiah 40:13 Who has understood the mind of the LORD, or instructed him as his counselor?

Isaiah 46:9-10 Remember the former things, those of long ago; I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me. ¹⁰ I make known the end from the beginning, from ancient times, what is still to come. I say: My purpose will stand, and I will do all that I please.

3) Clear and distinct (*scientia distinctissima*).

Psalms 139:1-4,11,12 O LORD, you have searched me and you know me. ²You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar. ³You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways. ⁴Before a word is on my tongue you know it completely, O LORD. ¹¹If I say, "Surely the darkness will hide me and the light become night around me," ¹²even the darkness will not be dark to you; the night will shine like the day, for darkness is as light to you.

Jeremiah 23:24 "Can anyone hide in secret places so that I cannot see him?" declares the LORD. "Do not I fill heaven and earth?" declares the LORD.

Matthew 6:4 ...so that your giving may be in secret. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

Matthew 10:30 And even the very hairs of your head are all numbered.

Revelation 20:12 And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books.

4) **Correct and exact (*scientia verissima*).**

1 Samuel 16:7 But the LORD said to Samuel, “Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The LORD does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.”

1 Kings 8:39 Then hear from heaven, your dwelling place. Forgive and act; deal with each man according to all he does, since you know his heart (for you alone know the hearts of all men).

1 Chronicles 28:9 And you, my son Solomon, acknowledge the God of your father, and serve him with wholehearted devotion and with a willing mind, for the LORD searches every heart and understands every motive behind the thoughts. If you seek him, he will be found by you; but if you forsake him, he will reject you forever.

Job 13:9 Would it turn out well if he examined you? Could you deceive him as you might deceive men?

Psalms 90:8 You have set our iniquities before you, our secret sins in the light of your presence.

Isaiah 29:15 Woe to those who go to great depths to hide their plans from the LORD, who do their work in darkness and think, “Who sees us? Who will know?”

Jeremiah 17:10 I the LORD search the heart and examine the mind, to reward a man according to his conduct, according to what his deeds deserve.

1 Corinthians 4:4,5 My conscience is clear, but that does not make me innocent. It is the Lord who judges me. ⁵ Therefore judge nothing before the appointed time; wait till the Lord comes. He will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will expose the motives of men’s hearts. At that time each will receive his praise from God.

Pieper: The old dogmatists put it thus: “God discerns objects not by means of comprehensible characteristics (*per species intelligibiles*), but in their very nature and being. Man looks at things (*adspicit*), God sees through them (*perspicet*) (CD, I, p 448).

d) **God’s knowledge covers present, past, and future alike.**

1) **Knowledge of the past (*reminiscentia*).**

Psalms 10:11, 14 He says to himself, “God has forgotten; he covers his face and never sees.” ¹⁴ But you, O God, do see trouble and grief; you consider it to take it in hand. The victim commits himself to you; you are the helper of the fatherless.

Amos 8:7 The LORD has sworn by the Pride of Jacob: “I will never

forget anything they have done.”

Matthew 25:35-36,42-43 For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, ³⁶ I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me. ⁴² For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, ⁴³ I was a stranger and you did not invite me in, I needed clothes and you did not clothe me, I was sick and in prison and you did not look after me.

Revelation 20:12 And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books.

2) Knowledge of the present (*visio*).

2 Chronicles 16:9 For the eyes of the LORD range throughout the earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him. You have done a foolish thing, and from now on you will be at war.

Job 10:14 If I sinned, you would be watching me and would not let my offense go unpunished.

Psalms 11:4 The LORD is in his holy temple; the LORD is on his heavenly throne. He observes the sons of men; his eyes examine them.

Psalms 33:13-15 From heaven the LORD looks down and sees all mankind; ¹⁴ from his dwelling place he watches all who live on earth— ¹⁵ he who forms the hearts of all, who considers everything they do.

Jeremiah 32:19 Great are your purposes and mighty are your deeds. Your eyes are open to all the ways of men; you reward everyone according to his conduct and as his deeds deserve.

3) Knowledge of the future (*praescientia*).

Psalms 139:16 Your eyes saw my unformed body. All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.

Isaiah 41:22,23,26 Bring in your idols to tell us what is going to happen. Tell us what the former things were, so that we may consider them and know their final outcome. Or declare to us the things to come. ²³ Tell us what the future holds, so we may know that you are gods. Do something, whether good or bad, so that we will be dismayed and filled with fear. ²⁶ Who told of this from the beginning, so we could know, or beforehand, so we could say, “He was right”? No one told of this, no one foretold it, no one heard any words from you.

Isaiah 42:9 See, the former things have taken place, and new things I declare; before they spring into being I announce them to you.

Matthew 17:24-27 After Jesus and his disciples arrived in Capernaum, the collectors of the two-drachma tax came to Peter and asked, “Doesn’t your teacher pay the temple tax?”²⁵ “Yes, he does,” he replied. When Peter came into the house, Jesus was the first to speak. “What do you think, Simon?” he asked. “From whom do the kings of the earth collect duty and taxes—from their own sons or from others?”²⁶ “From others,” Peter answered. “Then the sons are exempt,” Jesus said to him.²⁷ “But so that we may not offend them, go to the lake and throw out your line. Take the first fish you catch; open its mouth and you will find a four-drachma coin. Take it and give it to them for my tax and yours.”

Mark 11:2-6 “Go to the village ahead of you, and just as you enter it, you will find a colt tied there, which no one has ever ridden. Untie it and bring it here.³ If anyone asks you, ‘Why are you doing this?’ tell him, ‘The Lord needs it and will send it back here shortly.’”⁴ They went and found a colt outside in the street, tied at a doorway. As they untied it,⁵ some people standing there asked, “What are you doing, untying that colt?”⁶ They answered as Jesus had told them to, and the people let them go.

John 6:64 “Yet there are some of you who do not believe.” For Jesus had known from the beginning which of them did not believe and who would betray him.

John 13:19 I am telling you now before it happens, so that when it does happen you will believe that I am He. Parallel John 14:29.

John 16:4 I have told you this, so that when the time comes you will remember that I warned you. I did not tell you this at first because I was with you.

4) This is anthropomorphically speaking, since in the eternal God there is no succession of time.

Augustine: What is foreknowledge except a knowledge of future events? What, however, is future in the sight of God, who transcends all concepts of time? For if he has the events themselves in the scope of his knowledge, they are not future as far as he is concerned but present; and by this very fact it can no longer be called foreknowledge but only knowledge (*De divers. quaest. ad Simplic., II*).

Gerhard: The fact that foreknowledge is ascribed to God occurs with respect to our point of view; for in his sight all those things are present which for us are still future (*Exeges. I. II. Par 243*).

J. Ad. Osiander (d. 1697): Foreknowledge is not said with respect to God, but in respect to things. Just as in God knowledge after the fact has no place, although he knows what happened in the past, so, accurately speaking, foreknowledge cannot be attributed to God under a knowledge of things that are still future in time (*Colleg. Theol. I, p 290*).

e) **In spite of all division and classification the knowledge of God remains beyond comprehension.**

Psalm 40:5 Many, O LORD my God, are the wonders you have done. The things you planned for us no one can recount to you; were I to speak and tell of them, they would be too many to declare.

Psalm 139:6 Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too lofty for me to attain.

Isaiah 55:8,9 “For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,” declares the LORD. ⁹ “As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.”

Romans 11:34 Who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been his counselor?

f) **Men have always been troubled by a seeming collision between God’s absolute omniscience (*praescientia*) and man’s personal responsibility for his own conduct.**

1) **Attempted solutions which limit God’s omniscience include “free will theism” and “openness theism.”**

F. Socinius (d. 1604): God knows *omnia quae sua natura scibilia sunt*. God knows all things which by their very nature are knowable.... No rational proof, no testimony from Scripture can be brought from which the conclusion is clearly drawn that before they happen God knows the evils that are dependent on the decisions of men before they happen (*Praelect. theol.*, VIII, p 264).

Richard Rothe (d. 1867): God has made a plan for the world, but only in a broad, general outline, because God knows in advance only the significant, important free decisions of man, but not those in every unimportant matter. The things which result from the latter God gets to know about only after they have happened and then fits them into his plan for the world (*Ethik*, I, 42, p 123).

Clark Pinnock: The open view differs from the classical Arminians’, however, in its understanding of certain divine attributes. Wesley and Arminius, for example, held to the traditional definitions of unchangeability, eternity, and omniscience, which openness theists think jeopardize genuinely real divine/ human relationships. ... According to openness theism, for example, the future is partly settled and partly unsettled, partly determined and partly undetermined, and, therefore, partly unknown even to God, and it holds that God himself has a temporal aspect (*Most Moved Mover*, p 13). No being, not even God, can know in advance precisely what free agents will do, even though he may predict it with great accuracy. My assumption is, and the Bible seems to share it, that exhaustive foreknowledge would not be possible in a world with real freedom (*Most Moved Mover*, p 100)

Contra: Limiting omniscience is denying it.

Exodus 3:19 But I know that the king of Egypt will not let you go unless a mighty hand compels him.

Matthew 26:21, 34 And while they were eating, he said, "I tell you the truth, one of you will betray me." ³⁴ "I tell you the truth," Jesus answered, "this very night, before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times."

Formula of Concord, T.D., XI, 6. The foreknowledge of God (*praescientia*) foresees and foreknows also that which is evil; however, not in such a manner as though it were God's gracious will that it should happen; but all that the perverse, wicked will of the devil and of men wills and desires to undertake and do, God sees and knows before; and his *praescientia*, that is, foreknowledge, observes its order also in wicked acts or works, inasmuch as a limit and measure is fixed by God to the evil which God does not will, how far it should go, and how long it should last, when and how he will hinder and punish it; for all of this God the Lord so overrules that it must redound to the glory of the divine name and to the salvation of his elect, and the godless, on that account, must be put to confusion.

Formula of Concord, XI, 3/2. For the foreknowledge of God is nothing else than that God knows all things before they happen, as it is written Dan. 2, 28: There is a God in heaven that reveals secrets and makes known to the king Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the latter days.

2) Calvinism's attempted solution undercuts man's responsibility.

Calvin seeks to solve the difficulty with his theory of God's absolute decree: God foresees the things which are future for no other reason than that he has decreed that they should happen.

Opposing this view are these facts:

-a) This makes God the author of evil.

-b) Man's decisions and actions become sham.

3) It must be noted that this is not a real problem.

-a) Scripture does not indicate that God is troubled by any discrepancy.

-b) Nor does faith feel constrained by the foreknowledge of God.

It rejoices both:

-1) In the liberty God grants, and

-2) In his unerring knowledge, in which it trusts.

4) The tension can be relieved.

-a) A clear distinction between knowledge and will, certainty and necessity is helpful.

Gerhard: We must distinguish between a *necessitas consequentis* (necessity of the consequent or the specific event), which is also called absolute, preceding, or simple necessity and which arises out of a necessary connection between cause and effect and an intrinsic connection of terms, and a *necessitas consequentiae* (necessity of the consequence or the result), which is called hypothetical, following, concomitant, conditional, or suppositional necessity and which arises from an act of existence from the very position of the effect, because everything that is, from the very fact that it is, must necessarily be. According to this latter kind of necessity with respect to divine foreknowledge those things are necessary which take place from causes that act contingently and freely, and this necessity does not take away freedom but rather presupposes it (*Loci*, I, II, CCLV, p 183 or III, II, CCLV, p 354; H2 p 113).

Muller: 1) *necessitas consequentis*: necessity of the consequent, - i.e., the necessity of something that cannot be other than what it is, which is to say, a simple or absolute necessity. A necessity of the consequent arises out of the connection of necessary causes with the effects that must follow from them.

2) *necessitas consequentiae*: necessity of the consequences; i.e., not an absolute necessity (*necessitas absoluta*, q.v.), but a necessity brought about or conditioned by a previous contingent act or event so that the necessity itself arises out of contingent circumstance; thus, conditional necessity. *Necessitas consequentiae* is also called *necessitas ex suppositione*, necessity on account of supposition, or *necessitas ex hypothesis* necessity on account of hypothesis, or hypothetical necessity, and sometimes *necessitas ex hypothesi dispositionis*, or necessity on account of a hypothesis of disposition. Each of these latter terms indicates a necessity that arises out of a set of circumstances or out of a disposition or capacity hypothetically rather than absolutely or necessarily conceived; i.e., the conditions that create the necessity are themselves a matter of contingency and are therefore only hypothetically or suppositionally the ground or reason for a necessity. The *necessitas consequentiae* occurs continually in the finite order and, unlike *necessitas absoluta*, is applicable to God in terms of his *potentia ordinata* (q.v.), or ordained power. There is no necessity that God decree what he decrees; but, granting the divine decree, God is bound to his own plan and promises. Therefore, the fulfillment of the divine plan and the divine promises is necessary, but by a *necessitas consequentiae* (*Dictionary*, p 200).

-b) As little as our memory of a fact necessitates that fact, so little does God's foreknowledge.

Augustine: Just as you by your memory do not compel those things to

have been done which happened in the past, so God by his foreknowledge does not compel those things to be done which are future (*De divers. quaest. ad Simplic.*, II [?]. See *City Of God*, Book XIV, Chapter 28 on the topic).

-c) God's foreknowledge includes a knowledge of our free decisions.

Augustine: He is the Cause of all causes, although not of all choices (*City of God*, V, 8). But it does not follow that, though there is for God a certain order of all causes, there must therefore be nothing depending on the free exercise of our own wills, for our wills themselves are included in that order of causes which is certain to God, and is embraced by his foreknowledge, for human wills are also causes of human actions; and he who foreknew all the causes of things would certainly among those causes not have been ignorant of our wills....For, as he is the creator of all natures, so also is he the giver of all powers, though not of all choices (*voluntatum*); for wicked choices are not from him, being contrary to nature, which is from him.... How then does a succession of causes, which is certain in the sight of God who has foreknowledge, have this result that nothing happens in our will [i.e., that nothing is dependent on our decisions], although our decisions have an important place in the very order of causes (*City of God*, V, 9).

Formula of Concord, XI, Ep. 4/3 This foreknowledge extends alike over the godly and the wicked, but it is not the cause of evil, neither of sin, namely, of doing what is wrong, which originally arises from the devil and the wicked, perverse will of man, nor of their ruin, for which they themselves are responsible; but it only regulates it, and fixes a limit to it, how far it should progress and how long it should last, and all this to the end that it should serve his elect for their salvation, notwithstanding that it is evil in itself.

Note: Theoretically, any decision of a man might be, or might have been, different.—Practically, a fact is a fact. The theoretical consideration that it might have been different is of no practical consequence.

-d) Only anthropomorphically speaking may a foreknowledge be ascribed to God, with whom in reality there is an absolute present.

3. Wisdom (*sapientia Dei*).

a) God is wise.

1) Statement of the fact:

Job 12:13 To God belong wisdom and power; counsel and understanding are his.

Isaiah 40:13 Who has understood the mind of the LORD, or instructed him as his counselor? Quoted as Romans 11:34 Who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been his counselor?”

Romans 16:27 To the only wise God be glory forever through Jesus Christ! Amen.

2) In wisdom God designs beneficial outcomes.

Proverbs 8:12,19 I, wisdom, dwell together with prudence; I possess knowledge and discretion. ¹⁹ My fruit is better than fine gold; what I yield surpasses choice silver.

2 Timothy 3:15 From infancy you have know the holy Scriptures which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.

Cf. 1 Corinthians 1 and 2.

3) In wisdom he devises and applies adequate means to attain his end.

Proverbs 16:20 Whoever gives heed to instruction prospers, and blessed is he who trusts in the LORD.

Ecclesiastes 8:5 Whoever obeys his command will come to no harm, and the wise heart will know the proper time and procedure.

James 3:17 But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere.

4) We find synonyms and antonyms of wisdom.

-a) Synonyms: discretion, understanding, knowledge, insight, ability.

Proverbs 1:1-5 The proverbs of Solomon son of David, king of Israel: ²for attaining wisdom and discipline; for understanding words of insight; ³for acquiring a disciplined and prudent life, doing what is right and just and fair; ⁴for giving prudence to the simple, knowledge and discretion to the young— ⁵let the wise listen and add to their learning, and let the discerning get guidance.

לְדַעַת חֵכְמָה וּמוֹסֵר לְהַבִּין אִמְרֵי בִינָה: ³ לְקַחַת מוֹסֵר הַשְׂכָּל צֶדֶק
וּמִשְׁפָּט וּמִיִּשְׁרִים: ⁴ לְתַת לַפְתָּאִים עֲרָמָה לְנֹעַר דַּעַת וּמִזְמָה:
יִשְׁמַע חָכָם וְיִוֹסֵף לָקַח וְנָבוֹן תַּחְבֵּלוֹת יִקְנֶה: ⁵

Exodus 35:31 He has filled him with the Spirit of God, with skill, ability, and knowledge in all kinds of crafts.

Proverbs 16:21 The wise in heart are called discerning, and pleasant words promote instruction.

Daniel 1:4 ...young men without any physical defect, handsome, showing aptitude for every kind of learning, well informed, quick to understand, and qualified to serve in the king's palace. He was to teach them the language and literature of the Babylonians.

-b) Antonyms: foolishness, folly.

Psalm 38:5 My wounds fester and are loathsome because of my sinful folly.

Proverbs 12:23 A prudent man keeps his knowledge to himself, but the heart of fools blurts out folly.

Proverbs 13:16 Every prudent man acts out of knowledge, but a fool exposes his folly.

Proverbs 14:24 The wealth of the wise is their crown, but the folly of fools yields folly.

b) Three spheres of activity for the wisdom of God may be distinguished.

1) Creation and government of the world (1st Article)

Creation

Psalm 104:24 How many are your works, O LORD! In wisdom you made them all; the earth is full of your creatures.

Psalm 136:5 ...who by his understanding made the heavens.

Proverbs 3:19,20 By wisdom the LORD laid the earth's foundations, by understanding he set the heavens in place; ²⁰by his knowledge the deeps were divided, and the clouds let drop the dew.

Jeremiah 10:12 But God made the earth by his power; he founded the world by his wisdom and stretched out the heavens by his understanding.

Jeremiah 51:15 He made the earth by his power; he founded the world by his wisdom and stretched out the heavens by his understanding.

Proverbs 8:22-31 The LORD brought me forth as the first of his works, before his deeds of old; ²³I was appointed from eternity, from the beginning, before the world began. ²⁴When there were no oceans, I was given birth, when there were no springs abounding with water; ²⁵before the mountains were settled in place, before the hills, I was given birth, ²⁶before he made the earth or its fields or any of the dust of the world. ²⁷I was there when he set the heavens in place, when he marked out the horizon on the face of the deep, ²⁸when he established the clouds above and fixed securely the fountains of the deep, ²⁹when he gave the sea its boundary so the waters would not overstep his command, and when he

marked out the foundations of the earth. ³⁰ Then I was the craftsman at his side. I was filled with delight day after day, rejoicing always in his presence, ³¹ rejoicing in his whole world and delighting in mankind.

Job 28:20, 23-27 “Where then does wisdom come from? Where does understanding dwell? ²³ God understands the way to it and he alone knows where it dwells, ²⁴ for he views the ends of the earth and sees everything under the heavens. ²⁵ When he established the force of the wind and measured out the waters, ²⁶ when he made a decree for the rain and a path for the thunderstorm, ²⁷ then he looked at wisdom and appraised it; he confirmed it and tested it.

Providence

Job 12:13-25 “To God belong wisdom and power; counsel and understanding are his. ¹⁴ What he tears down cannot be rebuilt; the man he imprisons cannot be released. ¹⁵ If he holds back the waters, there is drought; if he lets them loose, they devastate the land. ¹⁶ To him belong strength and victory; both deceived and deceiver are his. ¹⁷ He leads counselors away stripped and makes fools of judges. ¹⁸ He takes off the shackles put on by kings and ties a loincloth around their waist. ¹⁹ He leads priests away stripped and overthrows men long established. ²⁰ He silences the lips of trusted advisers and takes away the discernment of elders. ²¹ He pours contempt on nobles and disarms the mighty. ²² He reveals the deep things of darkness and brings deep shadows into the light. ²³ He makes nations great, and destroys them; he enlarges nations, and disperses them. ²⁴ He deprives the leaders of the earth of their reason; he sends them wandering through a trackless waste. ²⁵ They grope in darkness with no light; he makes them stagger like drunkards.

Isaiah 28:23-29 Listen and hear my voice; pay attention and hear what I say. ²⁴ When a farmer plows for planting, does he plow continually? Does he keep on breaking up and harrowing the soil? ²⁵ When he has leveled the surface, does he not sow caraway and scatter cummin? Does he not plant wheat in its place, barley in its plot, and spelt in its field? ²⁶ His God instructs him and teaches him the right way. ²⁷ Caraway is not threshed with a sledge, nor is a cartwheel rolled over cummin; caraway is beaten out with a rod, and cummin with a stick. ²⁸ Grain must be ground to make bread; so one does not go on threshing it forever. Though he drives the wheels of his threshing cart over it, his horses do not grind it. ²⁹ All this also comes from the LORD Almighty, wonderful in counsel and magnificent in wisdom.

Daniel 2:20-23 Praise be to the name of God for ever and ever; wisdom and power are his. ²¹ He changes times and seasons; he sets up kings and deposes them. He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to the discerning. ²² He reveals deep and hidden things; he knows what lies in darkness, and light dwells with him. ²³ I thank and praise you, O God of my fathers: You have given me wisdom and power, you have made known to me what we asked of you, you have made known to us the dream of the king.

Acts 17:26,27 From one man he made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live. ²⁷ God did this so that men would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from each one of us.

Genesis 50:20 You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives.

Job 5:12,13 He thwarts the plans of the crafty, so that their hands achieve no success. ¹³ He catches the wise in their craftiness, and the schemes of the wily are swept away.

Isaiah 8:10 Devise your strategy, but it will be thwarted; propose your plan, but it will not stand, for God is with us.

Isaiah 29:14 Therefore once more I will astound these people with wonder upon wonder; the wisdom of the wise will perish, the intelligence of the intelligent will vanish.

Romans 8:28 And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.

2) Salvation (2nd Article)

Luke 7:33-35 John the Baptist came neither eating bread nor drinking wine, and you say, "He has a demon." ³⁴ The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and you say, "Here is a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and "sinners." ³⁵ But wisdom is proved right by all her children.

1 Corinthians 2:6-9 We do, however, speak a message of wisdom among the mature, but not the wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing. ⁷ No, we speak of God's secret wisdom, a wisdom that has been hidden and that God destined for our glory before time began. ⁸ None of the rulers of this age understood it, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. ⁹ However, as it is written: "No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him.

Ephesians 1:7-9 In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace ⁸ that he lavished on us with all wisdom and understanding. ⁹ And he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ.

Ephesians 3:10-11 His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms, ¹¹ according to his eternal purpose which he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord. .

Romans 11:33-36 Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond

tracing out! ³⁴“Who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been his counselor?” ³⁵“Who has ever given to God, that God should repay him?” ³⁶ For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be the glory forever! Amen.

3) Sanctification (3rd Article) cf Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon= Wisdom Literature

Proverbs 2:6 For the LORD gives wisdom, and from his mouth come knowledge and understanding.

Proverbs 15:33 The fear of the LORD teaches a man wisdom, and humility comes before honor.

c) Scripture describes the depth of God’s wisdom.

1) God’s wisdom is unsearchable.

Job 28:12-15 But where can wisdom be found? Where does understanding dwell? ¹³ Man does not comprehend its worth; it cannot be found in the land of the living. ¹⁴ The deep says, “It is not in me”; the sea says, “It is not with me.” ¹⁵ It cannot be bought with the finest gold, nor can its price be weighed in silver.

Job 28: 20-23 Where then does wisdom come from? Where does understanding dwell? ²¹ It is hidden from the eyes of every living thing, concealed even from the birds of the air. ²² Destruction and Death say, “Only a rumor of it has reached our ears.” ²³ God understands the way to it and he alone knows where it dwells.

Psalms 92:5 How great are your works, O LORD, how profound your thoughts!

Isaiah 40:13 Who has understood the mind of the LORD, or instructed him as his counselor?

Isaiah 55:8-9 For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,” declares the LORD. ⁹ “As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.

1 Corinthians 1:25 For the foolishness of God is wiser than man’s wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than man’s strength.

Colossians 2:3 In [Christ] are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

2) Only such men as have learned their wisdom from God begin to appreciate God’s wisdom.

Job 28:28 And he said to man, “The fear of the Lord—that is wisdom, and to shun evil is understanding.”

Psalm 51:6 Surely you desire truth in the inner parts; you teach me wisdom in the inmost place.

Psalm 111:10 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; all who follow his precepts have good understanding. To him belongs eternal praise.

Ecclesiastes 2:26 To the man who pleases him, God gives wisdom, knowledge and happiness, but to the sinner he gives the task of gathering and storing up wealth to hand it over to the one who pleases God. This too is meaningless, a chasing after the wind.

Daniel 2:21 He changes times and seasons; he sets up kings and deposes them. He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to the discerning.

1 Corinthians 2:14,15 The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned.¹⁵ The spiritual man makes judgments about all things, but he himself is not subject to any man's judgment.

Matthew 11:25-26 At that time Jesus said, "I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children."²⁶ Yes, Father, for this was your good pleasure."

d) A problem which has always baffled human intelligence is: how to harmonize the presence of sin and evil in the world with the wisdom of God (theodicy).

Milton That to the height of this great argument,
I may assert eternal Providence,
And justify the ways of God to man (*Paradise Lost*).

The Alleged Problem: If God is good and wise, he can't be powerful.
If God is powerful, he can't be good and wise.

1) Wrong solutions have been proposed.

**-a) *Atheism* cuts the knot by denying the existence of God,
See also so-called "Christian atheism"**

Tillich: It is as atheistic to affirm the existence of God as it is to deny it (*S.T.*, I, 237).

Bonhoeffer observes: Man has learnt to deal with himself in all questions of importance without recourse to the "working hypothesis" called "God." (*Letters and Papers*, p 168). "God" as a working hypothesis, as a stop-gap for our embarrassments, has become superfluous. (*Ibid.*, p 201). If our final judgment must be that the western form of Christianity, too, was only a preliminary stage to

a complete absence of religion, what kind of situation emerges for us, for the Church?... Are there religionless Christians?... What is a religionless Christianity? (*Ibid.*, p 140).

-b) *Dualism* assumes the eternal co-existence of evil with God. Zoroastrianism (Parsees), Manichaeism.

Zoroaster (6th century BC?) taught that from the one god Ahura Mazda two eternal spirits emanated, the good spirit Spenta Mainyu and the bad spirit Angra Mainyu or Ahriman: When these two spirits came together in the beginning, they established Life and Not-Life, and that at the last the Worst Existence shall be to the followers of the Lie, but the Best Thought to him that follows Right (*Yasna*: 30: 3,4).

An Nadim (Moslem historian, 11th century): Mani says he was the Paraclete, whom Jesus of blessed memory previously announced. Mani took elements of his doctrine from the religion of the Magi and Christianity....Mani put at the beginning of the world two eternal principles. Of these, one is Light, the other Darkness (*Catalogue*, quoted in Ayer, *Source Book*, p 254-255).

-c) *Fatalism* (determinism in every form) makes God responsible for all evil.

Presbyterian: It must be admitted frankly that Calvinists do not claim to have solved completely the problem of evil in its relation to an omnipotent God.... According to Calvinism, God's eternal purpose included the permission of evil acts, in order that God's whole nature might be manifested, and that his righteousness, justice and love might all be fully revealed in his dealings with sinful man. The ultimate responsibility for the permission of the evil acts rests with God, though the immediate responsibility rests upon the created beings who chose to sin. God does not do the evil himself, but he does permit it for his own inscrutable purposes.... Suppose we say that God has foreknowledge of the evil act, but does not include it in his plan and purpose?... If he foreknew the evil act and nevertheless created the man, how can it be denied that he included the evil act in his plan?... Calvinism teaches that God not only knew what he was doing when he created man, but that he had a purpose, even in permitting sin.... Calvinism affirms both terms (man's freedom and God's foreordination), but holds that the only freedom which man has is to act in accordance with his nature (Jan. 17, 1929).

-d) *Pessimism* holds this world to be the worst conceivable. If pessimists still believe in the existence of God, they deny his wisdom.

- Arthur Schopenhauer (d. 1860) *The World as Will and Idea*, Karl Robert Eduard Von Hartmann (d. 1906) *Philosophy of the Unconscious*; Friedrich Nietzsche (d. 1900) *Beyond Good and Evil*; Albert Camus (d. 1960) *The Myth of Sisyphus*, Jean-Paul Sartre (d. 1981) *Nausea, Being and Nothingness*.
- Greek tragedy, modern art and drama, "theater of the absurd,"

- existentialism, post-modernism
- the Christian under trial (Job, Ecclesiastes, Psalm 73).

Ecclesiastes 1:1-3 The words of the Teacher, son of David, king in Jerusalem: ²“Meaningless! Meaningless!” says the Teacher. “Utterly meaningless! Everything is meaningless.” ³What does man gain from all his labor at which he toils under the sun?

Sophocles: Not to be born is best of all. But if you are, then hurry hence, for after that there is no better blessing (*Oedipus at Colonus, Third Episode*).

Camus: You have already grasped that Sisyphus is the absurd hero. He is, as much through his passions as through his torture. His scorn of the gods, his hatred of death, and his passion for life won him that unspeakable penalty in which the whole being is exerted toward accomplishing nothing. This is the price that must be paid for the passions of this earth.... If this myth is tragic, that is because its hero is conscious. Where would his torture be, indeed, if at every step the hope of succeeding upheld him? The workman of today works everyday in his life at the same tasks, and his fate is no less absurd. But it is tragic only at the rare moments when it becomes conscious. Sisyphus, proletarian of the gods, powerless and rebellious, knows the whole extent of his wretched condition: it is what he thinks of during his descent. The lucidity that was to constitute his torture at the same time crowns his victory. There is no fate that can not be surmounted by scorn (*Myth of Sisyphus*).

Sartre: The existentialist, on the contrary, thinks it is very distressing that God does not exist, because all possibility of finding values in a heaven of ideas disappears with him; there can no longer be an a priori Good, since there is no infinite and perfect consciousness to think it. Nowhere is it written that the Good exists, that we must be honest, that we must not lie, because the fact is that we are on a plane where there are only men. Dostoevsky said, “If God did not exist, everything would be possible.” That is the very starting point of existentialism. Indeed, everything is permissible if God does not exist, and as a result man is forlorn, because neither within him nor without does he find anything to cling to. ... Man is condemned to be free (*Existentialism and Human Emotions*, p 22-23).

-e) Optimism proceeds on the assumption that this world is the best conceivable (because of God’s wisdom, love, and power) and minimizes sin and evil, considering them as mere imperfections.

- Leibniz (d 1716), *Theodicee*
- Christian Science. Religious Science. Unity School of Christianity.

Mary Baker Eddy (d. 1910): Here is found the cardinal point of Christian Science, that matter and evil (including all inharmony, sin, disease, death) are unreal (*Miscellaneous Writings*, p 27).

Note: Theoretically sin may be described as something negative, 1 Jn 3:4 (*in abstracto*)—practically it is something positive, positive enmity against God, Ro 8:7 (*in concreto*).

- f) **Nikolai Berdyaev (d. 1948) posits a *pre-cosmic freedom* to which even God is subject (*Destiny of Man*).
Contra: this denies the independence and infinity of God.**

1 Corinthians 1:19,20 For it is written: “I will destroy the wisdom of the wise; the intelligence of the intelligent I will frustrate.”²⁰
Where is the wise man? Where is the scholar? Where is the philosopher of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?”

2) People propose inadequate solutions.

- a) **They appeal to God’s dignity.**

- 1) **God might have prevented the fall:
If he had created man without a free will.
If he had by force restrained the will of the first man from sinning.
If he had precluded the temptation.**
- 2) **But each of these possibilities would have been unworthy of God.**
- 3) **Contra: Who are we to say what is worthy of God? Why would it be unworthy of God to do then what he will do in heaven?**

- b) **They lay the blame on man.**

- 1) **God, creating man in His own image, endowed him with free self-determination.**
- 2) **Thereby he caused only the remote possibility of sinning (by man’s abuse of this freedom).**
- 3) **Contra: This is evading the issue.**

- c) **They point to human limitations.**

- 1) **We must abandon the question
Because we cannot completely and correctly survey the course of the world’s history,
And we cannot fathom the bearing of every detail on the whole.**

-2) Contra: This ignores that the problem has to do with the origin of evil.

3) Scripture shows the correct attitude.

-a) Scripture declares both:

-1) That God is wise, and

-2) That sin originated in opposition to his will.

John 8:44 You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desire. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.

Romans 5:12 Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned.

2 Corinthians 11:3 But I am afraid that just as Eve was deceived by the serpent's cunning, your minds may somehow be led astray from your sincere and pure devotion to Christ.

1 John 3:8 He who does what is sinful is of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work.

James 1:13-14 When tempted, no one should say, "God is tempting me." For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; ¹⁴ but each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed.

-b) Scripture declares:

-1) That the fullness of God's wisdom appears in his plan of salvation.

-2) That thus also sin and evil must serve his praise and glory.

Psalms 76:10 Surely your wrath against men brings you praise, and the survivors of your wrath are restrained. *Alternate:* surely the wrath of men brings you praise.

Romans 11:11,32,33 Again I ask: Did they stumble so as to fall beyond recovery? Not at all! Rather, because of their transgression, salvation has come to the Gentiles to make Israel envious.

³² For God has bound all men over to disobedience so that he may have mercy on them all. ³³ Oh, the depth of the riches of

the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out!

Galatians 3:22 But the Scripture declares that the whole world is a prisoner of sin, so that what was promised, being given through faith in Jesus Christ, might be given to those who believe.

-3) The best answer is found in Christ.

Romans 8:32 He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?

4. Love (amor Dei transitivus).

a) God longs for, and delights in, union and communion with his creatures in order to promote their happiness.

1) The Bible describes the nature of Christian love.

1 Corinthians 13:4-8, 13 If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. ² If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. ³ If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing. ⁴ Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. ⁵ It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. ⁶ Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. ⁷ It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. ⁸ Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away. ⁹ For we know in part and we prophesy in part, ¹⁰ but when perfection comes, the imperfect disappears. ¹¹ When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put childish ways behind me. ¹² Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known. ¹³ And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.

Galatians 5:6 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision has any value. The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love.

Ephesians 6:23 Peace to the brothers, and love with faith from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Colossians 3:14 And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

1 Thessalonians 3:6 But Timothy has just now come to us from you and has brought good news about your faith and love. He has told us that you always have pleasant memories of us and that you long to see us, just as we also long to see you.

2) The Bible describes God's love.

Deuteronomy 7:7-8 The LORD did not set his affection on you and choose you because you were more numerous than other peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples.⁸ But it was because the LORD loved you and kept the oath he swore to your forefathers that he brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you from the land of slavery, from the power of Pharaoh king of Egypt.

Jeremiah 31:3 The LORD appeared to us in the past, saying: "I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with loving-kindness."

John 3:16 For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

1 John 4:16 And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in him.

Quenstedt: The love of God is that whereby he on his part pleasantly joins himself with a lovable object [i.e., one that has been made lovable by God's grace] (*TDP*, I, XXX, p 291).

3) God is not dependent on his creatures for his own happiness. This would annul his perfection.

See Angelus Silesius (real name—Johann Scheffler, a pantheistic Lutheran who returned to Rome, d. 1677). His hymns in *Lutheran Hymnal* are #356, 397, 399, 421; in *CW* 453, 476.

Ich bin als Gott so gross, er ist als ich so klein:
Er kann nicht über mir, ich unter ihm nicht sein.
Ich weiss, dass ohne mich Gott nicht ein Nu kann leben;
Werd ich zu nicht, er muss von Not den Geist aufgeben.

I am as great as God; As small as I is he;
Above me he can't be, Nor lower I than he.
Without me God, I know, Cannot a moment be;
If I should come to naught, He has to die like me.

b) The love of God may be classified according to its objects.

1) Love toward creation in general (*amor universalis*; *amor complacentiae*).

Psalm 104:10-18,27,28,31 He makes springs pour water into the ravines; it flows between the mountains.¹¹ They give water to all the beasts of the field; the wild donkeys quench their thirst.¹² The birds of the air nest by

the waters; they sing among the branches. ¹³ He waters the mountains from his upper chambers; the earth is satisfied by the fruit of his work. ¹⁴ He makes grass grow for the cattle, and plants for man to cultivate— bringing forth food from the earth: ¹⁵ wine that gladdens the heart of man, oil to make his face shine, and bread that sustains his heart. ¹⁶ The trees of the LORD are well watered, the cedars of Lebanon that he planted. ¹⁷ There the birds make their nests; the stork has its home in the pine trees. ¹⁸ The high mountains belong to the wild goats; the crags are a refuge for the coney. ²⁷ These all look to you to give them their food at the proper time. ²⁸ When you give it to them, they gather it up; when you open your hand, they are satisfied with good things. ³¹ May the glory of the LORD endure forever; may the LORD rejoice in his works.

Psalm 136:1-9,25,26 Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good. His love endures forever. ² Give thanks to the God of gods. His love endures forever. ³ Give thanks to the Lord of lords: His love endures forever. ⁴ to him who alone does great wonders, His love endures forever. ⁵ who by his understanding made the heavens, His love endures forever. ⁶ who spread out the earth upon the waters, His love endures forever. ⁷ who made the great lights— His love endures forever. ⁸ the sun to govern the day, His love endures forever. ⁹ the moon and stars to govern the night; His love endures forever. ²⁵ and who gives food to every creature. His love endures forever. ²⁶ Give thanks to the God of heaven. His love endures forever.

Psalm 147:9 He provides food for the cattle and for the young ravens when they call.

Matthew 6:26-30 Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? ²⁷ Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life? ²⁸ And why do you worry about clothes? See how the lilies of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. ²⁹ Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. ³⁰ If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?

2) **Love towards mankind as crown and head of creation (*amor particularis, specialis; amor benevolentiae*).**

Matthew 5:43-48 You have heard that it was said, “Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.” ⁴⁴ But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, ⁴⁵ that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. ⁴⁶ If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? ⁴⁷ And if you greet only your brothers, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? ⁴⁸ Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

Mark 2:27 Then he said to them, “The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath.”

Acts 14:17 Yet he has not left himself without testimony: He has shown kindness by giving you rain from heaven and crops in their seasons; he provides you with plenty of food and fills your hearts with joy.

John 3:16 For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

Romans 5:8 But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Ephesians 2:4,5 But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, ⁵ made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved.

1 Thessalonians 5:9 For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.

1 John 4:9-11 This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. ¹⁰ This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. ¹¹ Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.

3) Love toward the Christians (*amor specialissimus; amor amicitiae*).

Deuteronomy 33:3 Surely it is you who love the people; all the holy ones are in your hand. At your feet they all bow down, and from you receive instruction.

Psalms 147:11 The LORD delights in those who fear him, who put their hope in his unfailing love.

Psalms 149:4 For the LORD takes delight in his people; he crowns the humble with salvation.

Isaiah 43:1 But now, this is what the LORD says—he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: “Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine.”

Isaiah 49:15,16 Can a mother forget the baby at her breast and have no compassion on the child she has borne? Though she may forget, I will not forget you! ¹⁶ See, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands; your walls are ever before me.

Jeremiah 31:20,33 Is not Ephraim my dear son, the child in whom I delight? Though I often speak against him, I still remember him. Therefore my heart yearns for him; I have great compassion for him,” declares the LORD. ³³ “This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time,” declares the LORD. “I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people.”

Hosea 2:19,20 I will betroth you to me forever; I will betroth you in righteousness and justice, in love and compassion. ²⁰ I will betroth you in faithfulness, and you will acknowledge the LORD.

Matthew 7:11 If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!

John 13:1 It was just before the Passover Feast. Jesus knew that the time had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he now showed them the full extent of his love.

John 14:21,23 “Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me. He who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love him and show myself to him.” ²³ Jesus replied, “If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him.”

Romans 5:8,9 But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. ⁹ Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God’s wrath through him!

1 John 3:1 How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him.

2 Corinthians 6:18 “I will be a Father to you, and you will be my sons and daughters,” says the Lord Almighty.

1 Corinthians 6:19 Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own.

Quenstedt: With the love of pleasure God loves all created things, or rather his own goodness which he has shared with them. With the love of benevolence he loves men in particular, for whose sake he sent his Son into the flesh and delivered him into death—in one word it is termed philanthropy. With the love of friendship, however, he attends upon believers and those who have been received into his grace (*TDP*, I, XXX, p 291).

c) According to the various ways in which God’s love manifests itself under different circumstances Scripture uses various words for love.

- 1) Love, affection, ἀγάπη, אַהֲבָה, amor. This is a deep emotion of affection without regard to the worthiness or unworthiness of the object of one’s love. (This meaning is not inherent in the**

word *ἀγάπη*, but derives from the biblical description of God's love.)

On the part of God:

Jeremiah 31:3 The LORD appeared to us in the past, saying: "I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with loving-kindness."

John 3:16 For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

1 John 3:1 How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him.

1 John 4:8,9 Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. ⁹This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him.

On the part of man:

1 John 4:17-21 In this way, love is made complete among us so that we will have confidence on the day of judgment, because in this world we are like him. ¹⁸There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love. ¹⁹We love because he first loved us. ²⁰If anyone says, "I love God," yet hates his brother, he is a liar. For anyone who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen. ²¹And he has given us this command: Whoever loves God must also love his brother.

1 Samuel 18:3 And Jonathan made a covenant with David because he loved him as himself.

2) Love, attachment, *φιλία*, *φιλέω*. This is the love of friendship.

John 16:27 No, the Father himself loves you because you have loved me and have believed that I came from God.

John 21:15-17 When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon son of John, do you truly love me (*ἀγαπᾷς*) more than these?" "Yes, Lord," he said, "you know that I love you (*φιλῶ*)." Jesus said, "Feed my lambs." ¹⁶ Again Jesus said, "Simon son of John, do you truly love me (*ἀγαπᾷς*)?" He answered, "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you (*φιλῶ*)." Jesus said, "Take care of my sheep." ¹⁷ The third time he said to him, "Simon son of John, do you love me (*φιλεῖς*)?" Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, "Do you love me (*φιλεῖς*)?" He said, "Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you (*φιλῶ*)." Jesus said, "Feed my sheep."

3) Goodness, χρηστότης, τὸ χρηστόν, בּוֹנִי, *bonitas, benignitas*.

-a) This is love in general.

Psalm 31:19 (20) How great is your goodness, which you have stored up for those who fear you, which you bestow in the sight of men on those who take refuge in you.

Romans 2:4 Or do you show contempt for the riches of his kindness, tolerance and patience (χρηστότητος ἀνοχῆς μακροθυμίας), not realizing that God's kindness leads you toward repentance?

Romans 11:22 Consider therefore the kindness and sternness of God: sternness to those who fell, but kindness to you, provided that you continue in his kindness. Otherwise, you also will be cut off.

Ephesians 2:7 in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus.

Titus 3:4 ...when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared...

-b) In particular it refers to God's clemency, his willingness to cancel punishment.

Psalm 25:7 Remember not the sins of my youth and my rebellious ways; according to your love remember me, for you are good, O LORD.

Psalm 145:7-9 They will celebrate your abundant goodness and joyfully sing of your righteousness. ⁸ The LORD is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and rich in love. ⁹ The LORD is good to all; he has compassion on all he has made.

-c) It is also ascribed to men (*benignitas, suavitas*).

2 Corinthians 6:6 in purity, understanding, patience and kindness; in the Holy Spirit and in sincere love (ἐν ἀγνότητι, ἐν γνώσει, ἐν μακροθυμίᾳ, ἐν χρηστότητι, ἐν πνεύματι ἀγίῳ, ἐν ἀγάπῃ ἀνυποκρίτῳ).

Galatians 5:22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness (ἀγάπη χαρὰ εἰρήνη, μακροθυμία χρηστότης ἀγαθωσύνη, πίστις).

Colossians 3:12 Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience (σπλάγχνα οἰκτιρμοῦ χρηστότητα ταπεινοφροσύνην πραῢτητα μακροθυμίαν).

4) Kindness, *φιλανθρωπία*, *humanitas*. This is God's general love towards mankind.

Titus 3:3-5 At one time we too were foolish, disobedient, deceived and enslaved by all kinds of passions and pleasures. We lived in malice and envy, being hated and hating one another. ⁴ But when the kindness and love (*χρηστότης φιλανθρωπία*) of God our Savior appeared, ⁵ he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit.

Acts 27:3 The next day we landed at Sidon; and Julius, in kindness to Paul, allowed him to go to his friends so they might provide for his needs.

Acts 28:2 The islanders showed us unusual kindness. They built a fire and welcomed us all because it was raining and cold.

5) Mercy, compassion, *ἔλεος οἰκτιρμός σπλάγχνα ὁπῆ*, *misericordia*. This is love moved by mankind's misery.

ἔλεος

Luke 1:54,72 He has helped his servant Israel, remembering to be merciful, ⁷²...to show mercy to our fathers and to remember his holy covenant.

Ephesians 2:4 But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy...

Titus 3:5 He saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit.

Hebrews 4:16 Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

Matthew 9:13 But go and learn what this means: "I desire mercy, not sacrifice." For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners.

Matthew 12:7 If you had known what these words mean, "I desire mercy, not sacrifice," you would not have condemned the innocent.

Matthew 23:23 Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You give a tenth of your spices—mint, dill and cummin. But you have neglected the more important matters of the law—justice, mercy and faithfulness. You should have practiced the latter, without neglecting the former.

οἰκτιρμός

Romans 12:1 Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship.

2 Corinthians 1:3 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort.

Hebrews 10:28 Anyone who rejected the law of Moses died without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses.

σπλάγχνα

Luke 1:78 ...because of the tender mercy of our God, by which the rising sun will come to us from heaven.

Philippians 2:1 If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion... (σπλάγχνα καὶ οἰκτιρμοί)

Colossians 3:12 Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience (σπλάγχνα οἰκτιρμοῦ χρηστότητα ταπεινοφροσύνην πραῢτητα μακροθυμίαν).

James 5:11 As you know, we consider blessed those who have persevered. You have heard of Job's perseverance and have seen what the Lord finally brought about. The Lord is full of compassion and mercy (πολύσπλαγχνος καὶ οἰκτίρμων).

מִחֶנֶךְ

Deuteronomy 30:3 Then the LORD your God will restore your fortunes and have compassion on you and gather you again from all the nations where he scattered you.

2 Samuel 24:14 David said to Gad, "I am in deep distress. Let us fall into the hands of the LORD, for his mercy is great; but do not let me fall into the hands of men."

Nehemiah 9:27 So you handed them over to their enemies, who oppressed them. But when they were oppressed they cried out to you. From heaven you heard them, and in your great compassion you gave them deliverers, who rescued them from the hand of their enemies.

Psalms 77:8,9 (9,10) Has his unfailing love (יְדֹוּת) vanished forever? Has his promise (בְּרִית) failed for all time? ⁹ Has God forgotten to be merciful (חַסְדֹּו)? Has he in anger withheld his compassion (רַחֲמָיו)?"

Isaiah 49:13 Shout for joy, O heavens; rejoice, O earth; burst into song, O mountains! For the LORD comforts his people and will have compassion on his afflicted ones.

Jeremiah 12:15 But after I uproot them, I will again have compassion and will bring each of them back to his own inheritance and his own country.

Proverbs 12:10 A righteous man cares for the needs of his animal, but the kindest acts of the wicked are cruel.

6) חַסֵּד, covenanted love, promised love, steadfast love; mercy.

Note: The NIV interprets חַסֵּד as a term for covenant love. Often it simply translates “love.” The King James, more correctly, follows the Septuagint in understanding it as a term for mercy. In frequency and use, though not in meaning, חַסֵּד is the functional equivalent of χάρις, that is, חַסֵּד is the chief word for God’s saving love in the OT as χάρις is in the NT. חַסֵּד may imply God’s faithfulness to his word, but when the author wants to stress such faithfulness, the word אֱמֻנָה is usually added. חַסֵּד and אֱמֻנָה are very common word pair in the Old Testament, serving as a hendiadys of sorts. On חַסֵּד see Paul Peters, “The Old Testament Covenant Word *Chesed*,” *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly*, Vol. 50-3 to Vol. 51-4, 1953-1954.

Psalms 89:1,2: I will sing of the LORD’s great love forever; with my mouth I will make your faithfulness known through all generations. ² I will declare that your love stands firm forever, that you established your faithfulness in heaven itself.

Psalms 103:10,11 He does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities. ¹¹For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him.

Note: When חַסֵּד means “disgrace,” it is probably a homonym unrelated to mercy (cf. Lv 20:17; Pr 14:34).

7) Grace, χάρις, חַנּוּן, gratia. This is God’s unearned love in its efforts to save man from sin and its effects.

Acts 15:11 No! We believe it is through the grace of our Lord Jesus that we are saved, just as they are.

Romans 3:24 [All] are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.

Romans 5:15 But the gift is not like the trespass. For if the many died by the trespass of the one man, how much more did God’s grace and the gift that came by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, overflow to the many!

Romans 11:6 And if by grace, then it is no longer by works; if it were, grace would no longer be grace.

Ephesians 1:6,7 ...to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves.⁷ In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace.

Ephesians 2:8,9 For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—⁹ not by works, so that no one can boast.

Proverbs 14:21 He who despises his neighbor sins, but blessed is he who is kind to the needy.

Proverbs 14:31 He who oppresses the poor shows contempt for their Maker, but whoever is kind to the needy honors God.

8) Forbearance, longsuffering, ἀνοχή, μακροθυμία, מְסִיחָה, תְּשׁוּבָה, *longanimitas, patientia, sustentatio*. This is God's love as it postpones punishment and extends the time of grace. (Once: God of ὑπομονή, Ro 15:5 coll. 4)

Romans 2:4 Or do you show contempt for the riches of his kindness, tolerance and patience, not realizing that God's kindness leads you toward repentance (τοῦ πλούτου τῆς χρηστότητος αὐτοῦ καὶ τῆς ἀνοχῆς καὶ τῆς μακροθυμίας).

Romans 3:25,26 God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood. He did this to demonstrate his justice, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished—²⁶ he did it to demonstrate his justice at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus.

Romans 9:22 What if God, choosing to show his wrath and make his power known, bore with great patience the objects of his wrath—prepared for destruction?

2 Peter 3:9 The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.

Romans 15:4,5 For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through endurance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope. ⁵ May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you a spirit of unity among yourselves as you follow Christ Jesus.

Exodus 34:6,7 And he passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, "The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, ⁷ maintaining love to thousands, and

forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children and their children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation.”

Numbers 14:18 The LORD is slow to anger, abounding in love and forgiving sin and rebellion. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation.

Nehemiah 9:16–21 But they, our forefathers, became arrogant and stiff-necked, and did not obey your commands. ¹⁷ They refused to listen and failed to remember the miracles you performed among them. They became stiff-necked and in their rebellion appointed a leader in order to return to their slavery. But you are a forgiving God, gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love. Therefore you did not desert them, ¹⁸ even when they cast for themselves an image of a calf and said, ‘This is your god, who brought you up out of Egypt,’ or when they committed awful blasphemies.

¹⁹ “Because of your great compassion you did not abandon them in the desert. By day the pillar of cloud did not cease to guide them on their path, nor the pillar of fire by night to shine on the way they were to take. ²⁰ You gave your good Spirit to instruct them. You did not withhold your manna from their mouths, and you gave them water for their thirst. ²¹ For forty years you sustained them in the desert; they lacked nothing, their clothes did not wear out nor did their feet become swollen.

Psalms 86:14-16 The arrogant are attacking me, O God; a band of ruthless men seeks my life— men without regard for you. ¹⁵ But you, O Lord, are a compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness. ¹⁶ Turn to me and have mercy on me; grant your strength to your servant and save the son of your maidservant.

Psalms 103:8 The LORD is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love.

Psalms 145:8 The LORD is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and rich in love.

Jonah 4:2 He prayed to the LORD, “O LORD, is this not what I said when I was still at home? That is why I was so quick to flee to Tarshish. I knew that you are a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abounding in love, a God who relents from sending calamity.”

d) God’s love is a holy love, not incompatible with the sternest justice.

Psalms 97:10 Let those who love the LORD hate evil, for he guards the lives of his faithful ones and delivers them from the hand of the wicked.

Amos 5:15 Hate evil, love good; maintain justice in the courts. Perhaps the LORD God Almighty will have mercy on the remnant of Joseph.

Ro 12:9; 17,19 Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. ¹⁷ Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody. ¹⁹ Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord.

Tertullian: Goodness, unless it is governed by justice in order that it may be just, will not be goodness, if it is unjust. For nothing which is unjust is good; everything which is just, however, is good (*Adv. Marc.*, Lib. II, Cap. II).

5. Holiness *ἁγιος*, *ἁγιος* (*sanctitas Dei*).

a) God in sublime awesomeness loves the ethically good and hates the evil.

1) Such is the holiness demanded of men.

-a) Separation from the vile (both cultic and ethical).

Exodus 22:31 You are to be my holy people. So do not eat the meat of an animal torn by wild beasts; throw it to the dogs.

2 Corinthians 7:1 Since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God.

Ephesians 1:4 For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight.

Ephesians 5:27 ...and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless.

1 Thessalonians 3:13 May he strengthen your hearts so that you will be blameless and holy in the presence of our God and Father when our Lord Jesus comes with all his holy ones.

1 Thessalonians 4:7 For God did not call us to be impure, but to live a holy life.

2 Timothy 2:21 If a man cleanses himself from the latter, he will be an instrument for noble purposes, made holy, useful to the Master and prepared to do any good work.

-b) Love of good, hatred of the evil.

Amos 5:14,15 Seek good, not evil, that you may live. Then the LORD God Almighty will be with you, just as you say he is. ¹⁵ Hate evil, love good; maintain justice in the courts. Perhaps the LORD God Almighty will have mercy on the remnant of Joseph.

Romans 12:9 Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good.

2) **Man's holiness is to be patterned after God's.**

Leviticus 11:44,45 I am the LORD your God; consecrate yourselves and be holy, because I am holy. Do not make yourselves unclean by any creature that moves about on the ground. ⁴⁵ I am the LORD who brought you up out of Egypt to be your God; therefore be holy, because I am holy.

Leviticus 19:2 Speak to the entire assembly of Israel and say to them: "Be holy because I, the LORD your God, am holy."

Leviticus 20:26 You are to be holy to me because I, the LORD, am holy, and I have set you apart from the nations to be my own.

1 Peter 1:15,16 But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; ¹⁶ for it is written: "Be holy, because I am holy."

3) **God is holy and sublime.**

Isaiah 6:1-8 In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord seated on a throne, high and exalted, and the train of his robe filled the temple. ² Above him were seraphs, each with six wings: With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying. ³ And they were calling to one another: "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory." ⁴ At the sound of their voices the doorposts and thresholds shook and the temple was filled with smoke. ⁵ "Woe to me!" I cried. "I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the LORD Almighty." ⁶ Then one of the seraphs flew to me with a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with tongs from the altar. ⁷ With it he touched my mouth and said, "See, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for." ⁸ Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?" And I said, "Here am I. Send me!"

Compare: John 12:41 Isaiah said this because he saw Jesus' glory and spoke about him.

Exodus 15:11 "Who among the gods is like you, O LORD? Who is like you— majestic in holiness, awesome in glory, working wonders?"

Joshua 24:19 Joshua said to the people, "You are not able to serve the LORD. He is a holy God; he is a jealous God. He will not forgive your rebellion and your sins."

Psalms 99:9 Exalt the LORD our God and worship at his holy mountain, for the LORD our God is holy.

Revelation 15:4 Who will not fear you, O Lord, and bring glory to your name? For you alone are holy. All nations will come and worship before you, for your righteous acts have been revealed."

Quenstedt: The holiness of God is the highest purity in God, a purity free from every spot and blemish whatsoever; demanding from his creatures the

cleanness and purity which they owe; or it is that purity by which God is pure, clean and holy in the highest degree, and is the author of all purity and holiness in his creatures (*TDP*, I, XXXIV, p 292).

b) God's holiness is a transitive attribute.

1) God's holiness destroys unholy things.

Psalm 5:4-6 You are not a God who takes pleasure in evil; with you the wicked cannot dwell. ⁵ The arrogant cannot stand in your presence; you hate all who do wrong. ⁶ You destroy those who tell lies; bloodthirsty and deceitful men the LORD abhors.

Psalm 7:11,12 God is a righteous judge, a God who expresses his wrath every day. ¹² If he does not relent, he will sharpen his sword; he will bend and string his bow.

Psalm 11:5 The LORD examines the righteous, but the wicked and those who love violence his soul hates.

Psalm 45:7 You love righteousness and hate wickedness; therefore God, your God, has set you above your companions by anointing you with the oil of joy.

Isaiah 10:17 The Light of Israel will become a fire, their Holy One a flame; in a single day it will burn and consume his thorns and his briers.

Ezekiel 38:16-23 In days to come, O Gog, I will bring you against my land, so that the nations may know me when I show myself holy through you before their eyes. ¹⁷ This is what the Sovereign LORD says: Are you not the one I spoke of in former days by my servants the prophets of Israel? At that time they prophesied for years that I would bring you against them. ¹⁸ This is what will happen in that day: When Gog attacks the land of Israel, my hot anger will be aroused, declares the Sovereign LORD. ¹⁹ In my zeal and fiery wrath I declare that at that time there shall be a great earthquake in the land of Israel. ²⁰ The fish of the sea, the birds of the air, the beasts of the field, every creature that moves along the ground, and all the people on the face of the earth will tremble at my presence. The mountains will be overturned, the cliffs will crumble and every wall will fall to the ground. ²¹ I will summon a sword against Gog on all my mountains, declares the Sovereign LORD. Every man's sword will be against his brother. ²² I will execute judgment upon him with plague and bloodshed; I will pour down torrents of rain, hailstones and burning sulfur on him and on his troops and on the many nations with him. ²³ And so I will show my greatness and my holiness, and I will make myself known in the sight of many nations. Then they will know that I am the LORD.

Ezekiel 39:7 I will make known my holy name among my people Israel. I will no longer let my holy name be profaned, and the nations will know that I the LORD am the Holy One in Israel.

Psalm 139:21-22 Do I not hate those who hate you, O LORD, and abhor

those who rise up against you? ²² I have nothing but hatred for them; I count them my enemies.

2) According to his holiness God cleanses us from our sin.

Ephesians 5:26,27 ...to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, ²⁷ and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless.

Hebrews 9:13,14 The blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkled on those who are ceremonially unclean sanctify them so that they are outwardly clean. ¹⁴ How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God!

Numbers 19:2-10 This is a requirement of the law that the LORD has commanded: Tell the Israelites to bring you a red heifer without defect or blemish and that has never been under a yoke. ³ Give it to Eleazar the priest; it is to be taken outside the camp and slaughtered in his presence. ⁴ Then Eleazar the priest is to take some of its blood on his finger and sprinkle it seven times toward the front of the Tent of Meeting. ⁵ While he watches, the heifer is to be burned—its hide, flesh, blood and offal. ⁶ The priest is to take some cedar wood, hyssop and scarlet wool and throw them onto the burning heifer. ⁷ After that, the priest must wash his clothes and bathe himself with water. He may then come into the camp, but he will be ceremonially unclean till evening. ⁸ The man who burns it must also wash his clothes and bathe with water, and he too will be unclean till evening. ⁹ A man who is clean shall gather up the ashes of the heifer and put them in a ceremonially clean place outside the camp. They shall be kept by the Israelite community for use in the water of cleansing; it is for purification from sin. ¹⁰ The man who gathers up the ashes of the heifer must also wash his clothes, and he too will be unclean till evening. This will be a lasting ordinance both for the Israelites and for the aliens living among them.

Leviticus 22:32 Do not profane my holy name. I must be acknowledged as holy by the Israelites. I am the LORD, who makes you holy

Deuteronomy 28:9 The LORD will establish you as his holy people, as he promised you on oath, if you keep the commands of the LORD your God and walk in his ways.

Psalms 98:1-3 Sing to the LORD a new song, for he has done marvelous things; his right hand and his holy arm have worked salvation for him. ² The LORD has made his salvation known and revealed his righteousness to the nations. ³ He has remembered his love and his faithfulness to the house of Israel; all the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.

Psalms 111:9 He provided redemption for his people; he ordained his covenant forever— holy and awesome is his name.

Isaiah 6:5-7 “Woe to me!” I cried. “I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the LORD Almighty.”⁶ Then one of the seraphs flew to me with a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with tongs from the altar.⁷ With it he touched my mouth and said, “See, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for.”

Isaiah 52:10 The LORD will lay bare his holy arm in the sight of all the nations, and all the ends of the earth will see the salvation of our God.

Ezekiel 36:21-38 I had concern for my holy name, which the house of Israel profaned among the nations where they had gone.²² Therefore say to the house of Israel, “This is what the Sovereign LORD says: It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I am going to do these things, but for the sake of my holy name, which you have profaned among the nations where you have gone.²³ I will show the holiness of my great name, which has been profaned among the nations, the name you have profaned among them. Then the nations will know that I am the LORD, declares the Sovereign LORD, when I show myself holy through you before their eyes.²⁴ For I will take you out of the nations; I will gather you from all the countries and bring you back into your own land.²⁵ I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols.²⁶ I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh.²⁷ And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws.²⁸ You will live in the land I gave your forefathers; you will be my people, and I will be your God.²⁹ I will save you from all your uncleanness. I will call for the grain and make it plentiful and will not bring famine upon you.³⁰ I will increase the fruit of the trees and the crops of the field, so that you will no longer suffer disgrace among the nations because of famine.³¹ Then you will remember your evil ways and wicked deeds, and you will loathe yourselves for your sins and detestable practices.³² I want you to know that I am not doing this for your sake, declares the Sovereign LORD. Be ashamed and disgraced for your conduct, O house of Israel!³³ This is what the Sovereign LORD says: On the day I cleanse you from all your sins, I will resettle your towns, and the ruins will be rebuilt.³⁴ The desolate land will be cultivated instead of lying desolate in the sight of all who pass through it.³⁵ They will say, ‘This land that was laid waste has become like the garden of Eden; the cities that were lying in ruins, desolate and destroyed, are now fortified and inhabited.’³⁶ Then the nations around you that remain will know that I the LORD have rebuilt what was destroyed and have replanted what was desolate. I the LORD have spoken, and I will do it.³⁷ This is what the Sovereign LORD says: Once again I will yield to the plea of the house of Israel and do this for them: I will make their people as numerous as sheep,³⁸ as numerous as the flocks for offerings at Jerusalem during her appointed feasts. So will the ruined cities be filled with flocks of people. Then they will know that I am the LORD.”

Ezekiel 37:28 Then the nations will know that I the LORD make Israel holy, when my sanctuary is among them forever.

3) God's holiness may in a certain sense be distinguished as *iustitia interna* from his justice, *iustitia externa*.

J. F. Buddeus (d. 1729): When God is thought of as loving himself with a most pure love so that at the same time he is considered as removed, isolated, separated from all imperfection, that love is called holiness (*Inst. theol. dog.*, II, 46, p 263).

c) For us the law of God is the standard of holiness.

1) Since God is the *Summum Bonum*, he is under no law or idea of good.

Baier: God, who does not have the law as something he has received from a higher being, is a law unto himself (*Compendium*, I, I, XIII, p 137).

This is implied in his perfection.

Baier: We speak of holiness and it implies correctness of the divine will, by which he wishes everything that is correct and right, in a way which conforms to his eternal law (*Compendium*, I, I, XIII, p 136).

2) For us whatever God commands in his law is good; what he forbids is evil.

Romans 7:12 So then, the law is holy, and the commandment is holy, righteous and good.

2 Peter 2:21 It would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than to have known it and then to turn their backs on the sacred command that was passed on to them.

Deuteronomy 4:2 Do not add to what I command you and do not subtract from it, but keep the commands of the LORD your God that I give you.

3) For us whatever God did not forbid is not in itself evil, what he did not command is not good.

Matthew 15:9 They worship me in vain; their teachings are but rules taught by men.

Micah 6:8 He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.

d) As a special manifestation of God's holiness Scripture emphasizes his truthfulness.

1) Truthfulness is ascribed to God. Whatever God speaks is truth.

2 Samuel 7:28 O Sovereign LORD, you are God! Your words are trustworthy, and you have promised these good things to your servant.

Psalms 33:4 For the word of the LORD is right and true; he is faithful in all he does.

Psalms 146:6 ...the Maker of heaven and earth, the sea, and everything in them— the LORD, who remains faithful forever.

Isaiah 25:1 O LORD, you are my God; I will exalt you and praise your name, for in perfect faithfulness you have done marvelous things, things planned long ago.

John 3:33 The man who has accepted it has certified that God is truthful.

John 7:28 Then Jesus, still teaching in the temple courts, cried out, “Yes, you know me, and you know where I am from. I am not here on my own, but he who sent me is true. You do not know him.”

Romans 3:4 Not at all! Let God be true, and every man a liar. As it is written: “So that you may be proved right when you speak and prevail when you judge.”

Titus 1:2 ...a faith and knowledge resting on the hope of eternal life, which God, who does not lie, promised before the beginning of time.

Hebrews 6:18 God did this so that, by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled to take hold of the hope offered to us may be greatly encouraged.

Revelation 3:14 To the angel of the church in Laodicea write: These are the words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the ruler of God’s creation.

Revelation 19:9 Then the angel said to me, “Write: ‘Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb!’” And he added, “These are the true words of God.”

2) Truthfulness is closely related to holiness.

Psalms 19: 9 The fear of the LORD is pure, enduring forever. The ordinances of the LORD are sure and altogether righteous.

Psalms 89:35 Once for all, I have sworn by my holiness— and I will not lie to David.

Psalms 105:42 For he remembered his holy promise given to his servant Abraham.

Amos 4:2 The Sovereign LORD has sworn by his holiness: “The time will surely come when you will be taken away with hooks, the last of you with fishhooks.”

Revelation 3:7 To the angel of the church in Philadelphia write: These are the words of him who is holy and true, who holds the key of David. What he opens no one can shut, and what he shuts no one can open.

Revelation 6:10 They called out in a loud voice, “How long, Sovereign Lord, holy and true, until you judge the inhabitants of the earth and avenge our blood?”

Revelation 15:3 [They] sang the song of Moses the servant of God and the song of the Lamb: “Great and marvelous are your deeds, Lord God Almighty. Just and true are your ways, King of the ages.”

3) Truthfulness is also closely related to:

-a) God’s immutability. Immutability of decree presupposes and implies truthfulness.

Genesis 22:16 I swear by myself, declares the LORD, that because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son...

Jeremiah 51:14 The LORD Almighty has sworn by himself: I will surely fill you with men, as with a swarm of locusts, and they will shout in triumph over you.

Ezekiel 12:25 But I the LORD will speak what I will, and it shall be fulfilled without delay. For in your days, you rebellious house, I will fulfill whatever I say, declares the Sovereign LORD.

Hebrews 6:17,18 Because God wanted to make the unchanging nature of his purpose very clear to the heirs of what was promised, he confirmed it with an oath. ¹⁸ God did this so that, by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled to take hold of the hope offered to us may be greatly encouraged.

-b) God’s love. Love naturally leads to truthfulness. The greatest truth God has revealed is his saving love.

Genesis 24:27 Praise be to the LORD, the God of my master Abraham, who has not abandoned his kindness and faithfulness to my master..

Psalms 25:10 All the ways of the LORD are loving and faithful for those who keep the demands of his covenant.

Psalms 31:5 Into your hands I commit my spirit; redeem me, O LORD, the God of truth.

Psalm 36:5 Your love, O LORD, reaches to the heavens, your faithfulness to the skies.

Psalm 40:10,11 I do not hide your righteousness in my heart; I speak of your faithfulness and salvation. I do not conceal your love and your truth from the great assembly. ¹¹ Do not withhold your mercy from me, O LORD; may your love and your truth always protect me.

Psalm 43:3 Send forth your light and your truth, let them guide me; let them bring me to your holy mountain, to the place where you dwell.

Psalm 89:1,2,14,24,33,49 I will sing of the LORD's great love forever; with my mouth I will make your faithfulness known through all generations. ² I will declare that your love stands firm forever, that you established your faithfulness in heaven itself. ¹⁴ Righteousness and justice are the foundation of your throne; love and faithfulness go before you. ²⁴ My faithful love will be with him, and through my name his horn will be exalted. ³³ but I will not take my love from him, nor will I ever betray my faithfulness. ⁴⁹ O Lord, where is your former great love, which in your faithfulness you swore to David?

Psalm 100:5 For the LORD is good and his love endures forever; his faithfulness continues through all generations.

John 1:17 For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.

6. Justice and righteousness (*iustitia Dei*).

- a) **God's righteousness is proclaimed as law: *iustitia legalis* or *iustitia activa*. God adequately rewards the good he demands and punishes the evil.**

1) **Righteousness is ascribed to God in many passages.**

Exodus 9:27 Then Pharaoh summoned Moses and Aaron. "This time I have sinned," he said to them. "The LORD is in the right, and I and my people are in the wrong."

Deuteronomy 32:4 He is the Rock, his works are perfect, and all his ways are just. A faithful God who does no wrong, upright and just is he.

Ezra 9:15 O LORD, God of Israel, you are righteous! We are left this day as a remnant. Here we are before you in our guilt, though because of it not one of us can stand in your presence.

Nehemiah 9:33 In all that has happened to us, you have been just; you have acted faithfully, while we did wrong.

Job 8:3 Does God pervert justice? Does the Almighty pervert what is right?

Psalm 11:7 For the LORD is righteous, he loves justice; upright men will see his face.

Psalm 48:10 Like your name, O God, your praise reaches to the ends of the earth; your right hand is filled with righteousness.

Psalm 97:2 Clouds and thick darkness surround him; righteousness and justice are the foundation of his throne.

Daniel 9:7 Lord, you are righteous, but this day we are covered with shame—the men of Judah and people of Jerusalem and all Israel, both near and far, in all the countries where you have scattered us because of our unfaithfulness to you.

Zephaniah 3:5 The LORD within her is righteous; he does no wrong. Morning by morning he dispenses his justice, and every new day he does not fail, yet the unrighteous know no shame.

2) Righteousness is closely related to holiness (*iustitia interna and externa*). Righteousness is applied holiness.

Psalm 145:17 The LORD is righteous in all his ways and loving toward all he has made.

Isaiah 5:16 But the LORD Almighty will be exalted by his justice, and the holy God will show himself holy by his righteousness.

3) God's justice is legislative or directive. God is the law-giver.

Exodus 15:26 He said, "If you listen carefully to the voice of the LORD your God and do what is right in his eyes, if you pay attention to his commands and keep all his decrees, I will not bring on you any of the diseases I brought on the Egyptians, for I am the LORD, who heals you."

Deuteronomy 4:8 And what other nation is so great as to have such righteous decrees and laws as this body of laws I am setting before you today?

Deuteronomy 6:1-3 These are the commands, decrees and laws (הַמִּצְוֹת הַחֻקִּים וְהַמִּשְׁפָּטִים) the LORD your God directed me to teach you to observe in the land that you are crossing the Jordan to possess, ² so that you, your children and their children after them may fear the LORD your God as long as you live by keeping all his decrees and commands that I give you, and so that you may enjoy long life. ³ Hear, O Israel, and be careful to obey so that it may go well with you and that you may increase greatly in a land flowing with milk and honey, just as the LORD, the God of your fathers, promised you.

Deuteronomy 7:9-11 Know therefore that the LORD your God is God;

he is the faithful God, keeping his covenant of love to a thousand generations of those who love him and keep his commands. ¹⁰ But those who hate him he will repay to their face by destruction; he will not be slow to repay to their face those who hate him. ¹¹ Therefore, take care to follow the commands, decrees and laws I give you today.

Nehemiah 9:13 You came down on Mount Sinai; you spoke to them from heaven. You gave them regulations and laws that are just and right, and decrees and commands that are good.

Psalms 119:137,138,142 Righteous are you, O LORD, and your laws are right. ¹³⁸ The statutes you have laid down are righteous; they are fully trustworthy. ¹⁴² Your righteousness is everlasting and your law is true.

4) God's righteousness is described as retributive or judicial (*executiva*, i.e., *remunerativa*; *punitiva*, *vindicativa*, *ultrix*). God is the judge.

-a) Scripture describes God's judicial righteousness.

Genesis 18:25 Far be it from you to do such a thing—to kill the righteous with the wicked, treating the righteous and the wicked alike. Far be it from you! Will not the Judge of all the earth do right?"

Psalms 7:9 O righteous God, who searches minds and hearts, bring to an end the violence of the wicked and make the righteous secure.

Psalms 51:3-4 For I know my transgressions, and my sin is always before me. ⁴ Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight, so that you are proved right when you speak and justified when you judge.

Jeremiah 11:20 But, O LORD Almighty, you who judge righteously and test the heart and mind, let me see your vengeance upon them, for to you I have committed my cause.

Ezekiel 18:25 Yet you say, "The way of the Lord is not just." Hear, O house of Israel: Is my way unjust? Is it not your ways that are unjust?

Romans 2:5-13 But because of your stubbornness and your unrepentant heart, you are storing up wrath against yourself for the day of God's wrath, when his righteous judgment will be revealed. ⁶ God "will give to each person according to what he has done." ⁷ To those who by persistence in doing good seek glory, honor and immortality, he will give eternal life. ⁸ But for those who are self-seeking and who reject the truth and follow evil, there will be wrath and anger. ⁹ There will be trouble and distress for every human being who does evil: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile; ¹⁰ but glory, honor and peace for everyone who does good: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile. ¹¹ For God does not show favoritism. ¹² All who sin apart from the law will also perish apart from the law, and all who sin

under the law will be judged by the law. ¹³ For it is not those who hear the law who are righteous in God's sight, but it is those who obey the law who will be declared righteous.

2 Thessalonians 1:5-10 All this is evidence that God's judgment is right, and as a result you will be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you are suffering. ⁶ God is just: He will pay back trouble to those who trouble you ⁷ and give relief to you who are troubled, and to us as well. This will happen when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in blazing fire with his powerful angels. ⁸ He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. ⁹ They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the majesty of his power ¹⁰ on the day he comes to be glorified in his holy people and to be marveled at among all those who have believed. This includes you, because you believed our testimony to you.

2 Timothy 4:8 Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day—and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing.

Revelation 16:5-7 Then I heard the angel in charge of the waters say: "You are just in these judgments, you who are and who were, the Holy One, because you have so judged; ⁶ for they have shed the blood of your saints and prophets, and you have given them blood to drink as they deserve." ⁷ And I heard the altar respond: "Yes, Lord God Almighty, true and just are your judgments."

2 Peter 2:13 They will be paid back with harm for the harm they have done. Their idea of pleasure is to carouse in broad daylight. They are blots and blemishes, reveling in their pleasures while they feast with you.

Calov: The righteousness of God is that by which the righteous God is a rewarder of the good and a punisher of the evil (*Systema*, II, p 565).

Quenstedt: The righteousness of God is the highest and immutable rectitude of the divine will, demanding from the rational creature what is right and just (*TDP*, I, VIII, XXXV, p 292).

-b) God's justice is reflected in the justice of human rulers and judges (to some extent also in the laws of nature). See Romans 13.

2 Samuel 23:3 The God of Israel spoke, the Rock of Israel said to me: When one rules over men in righteousness, when he rules in the fear of God...

2 Chronicles 19:6,7 He told them, "Consider carefully what you

do, because you are not judging for man but for the LORD, who is with you whenever you give a verdict. ⁷ Now let the fear of the LORD be upon you. Judge carefully, for with the LORD our God there is no injustice or partiality or bribery.”

Proverbs 16:10-12 The lips of a king speak as an oracle, and his mouth should not betray justice. ¹¹ Honest scales and balances are from the LORD; all the weights in the bag are of his making. ¹² Kings detest wrongdoing, for a throne is established through righteousness.

Proverbs 29:4 By justice a king gives a country stability, but one who is greedy for bribes tears it down.

Gerhard: Toward his creatures he is just, first of all, dispositively [i.e., in the way he governs and controls all things], in so far as he arranges all his actions, all his *opera ad extra* [i.e., his activities outside the Godhead, his actions toward his creatures] according to the norm of fairness and justice and is the most just governor and ruler of the whole universe; and secondly, he is just distributively [i.e., in the way he distributes things to his creatures], in so far as he repays each creature according to his deeds (*Loci*, II, II, CCXXIX, 5, p 171).

Gerhard: Although both from the naturally implanted distinction between what is just and what is unjust as well as from the punishments accompanying the more serious offenses human reason recognizes in some measure that God is just, which is attested by the statements of the Gentiles concerning the righteousness of God; nevertheless that recognition is imperfect and weak (*Loci*, III, II, CCXXXIII, p 174).

5) God’s righteousness is not annulled by cases of apparent injustice.

-a) The problem is stated.

Psalms 73:1-15 Surely God is good to Israel, to those who are pure in heart. ² But as for me, my feet had almost slipped; I had nearly lost my foothold. ³ For I envied the arrogant when I saw the prosperity of the wicked. ⁴ They have no struggles; their bodies are healthy and strong. ⁵ They are free from the burdens common to man; they are not plagued by human ills. ⁶ Therefore pride is their necklace; they clothe themselves with violence. ⁷ From their callous hearts comes iniquity; the evil conceits of their minds know no limits. ⁸ They scoff, and speak with malice; in their arrogance they threaten oppression. ⁹ Their mouths lay claim to heaven, and their tongues take possession of the earth. ¹⁰ Therefore their people turn to them and drink up waters in abundance. ¹¹ They say, “How can God know? Does the Most High have knowledge?” ¹² This is what the wicked are like— always carefree, they increase in wealth. ¹³ Surely in vain have I kept my heart pure; in vain have I washed my hands in innocence. ¹⁴ All day

long I have been plagued; I have been punished every morning. ¹⁵ If I had said, “I will speak thus,” I would have betrayed your children.

Job 12:6 The tents of marauders are undisturbed, and those who provoke God are secure— those who carry their god in their hands.

Job 21:7 Why do the wicked live on, growing old and increasing in power?

Ecclesiastes 7:15 In this meaningless life of mine I have seen both of these: a righteous man perishing in his righteousness, and a wicked man living long in his wickedness.

Jeremiah 12:1-4 You are always righteous, O LORD, when I bring a case before you. Yet I would speak with you about your justice: Why does the way of the wicked prosper? Why do all the faithless live at ease? ² You have planted them, and they have taken root; they grow and bear fruit. You are always on their lips but far from their hearts. ³ Yet you know me, O LORD; you see me and test my thoughts about you. Drag them off like sheep to be butchered! Set them apart for the day of slaughter! ⁴ How long will the land lie parched and the grass in every field be withered? Because those who live in it are wicked, the animals and birds have perished. Moreover, the people are saying, “He will not see what happens to us.”

Ezekiel 18:25 Yet you say, “The way of the Lord is not just.” Hear, O house of Israel: Is my way unjust? Is it not your ways that are unjust?

Cf. also the argument of Habakkuk and God’s responses

-b) The problem is solved.

Psalms 73:16-28 When I tried to understand all this, it was oppressive to me ¹⁷ till I entered the sanctuary of God; then I understood their final destiny. ¹⁸ Surely you place them on slippery ground; you cast them down to ruin. ¹⁹ How suddenly are they destroyed, completely swept away by terrors! ²⁰ As a dream when one awakes, so when you arise, O Lord, you will despise them as fantasies. ²¹ When my heart was grieved and my spirit embittered, ²² I was senseless and ignorant; I was a brute beast before you. ²³ Yet I am always with you; you hold me by my right hand. ²⁴ You guide me with your counsel, and afterward you will take me into glory. ²⁵ Whom have I in heaven but you? And earth has nothing I desire besides you. ²⁶ My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever. ²⁷ Those who are far from you will perish; you destroy all who are unfaithful to you. ²⁸ But as for me, it is good to be near God. I have made the Sovereign LORD my refuge; I will tell of all your deeds.

Ezekiel 18:26-32 If a righteous man turns from his righteousness and commits sin, he will die for it; because of the sin he has

committed he will die. ²⁷ But if a wicked man turns away from the wickedness he has committed and does what is just and right, he will save his life. ²⁸ Because he considers all the offenses he has committed and turns away from them, he will surely live; he will not die. ²⁹ Yet the house of Israel says, “The way of the Lord is not just.” Are my ways unjust, O house of Israel? Is it not your ways that are unjust? ³⁰ “Therefore, O house of Israel, I will judge you, each one according to his ways, declares the Sovereign LORD. Repent! Turn away from all your offenses; then sin will not be your downfall. ³¹ Rid yourselves of all the offenses you have committed, and get a new heart and a new spirit. Why will you die, O house of Israel? ³² For I take no pleasure in the death of anyone, declares the Sovereign LORD. Repent and live!

Romans 9:22 What if God, choosing to show his wrath and make his power known, bore with great patience the objects of his wrath—prepared for destruction?

2 Peter 3:9 The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.

6) The punishments which the justice of God inflicts may be natural or imposed.

-a) Some appear to be the natural result of the sin committed (*poenae naturales*) e.g., sexually transmitted diseases, the effects of substance abuse, a violent death, etc.

Romans 1:24, 27 Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another. ²⁷ Men committed indecent acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty of their perversion.

Matthew 26:52 “Put your sword back in its place,” Jesus said to him, “for all who draw the sword will die by the sword.

Galatians 6:7-8 Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. ⁸ The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life.

-b) Some have been imposed directly by God, without a natural cause-and-effect relationship between the sin and the punishment (*poenae positivae*).

e.g., The judgment on Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1-11), smiting of Herod (Acts 12), etc.

-c) We must beware of judging that a specific tragedy is a result of a specific sin, as Job’s friends did.

Luke 13:1-5 Now there were some present at that time who told Jesus about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mixed with their sacrifices. ² Jesus answered, “Do you think that these Galileans were worse sinners than all the other Galileans because they suffered this way? ³ I tell you, no! But unless you repent, you too will all perish. ⁴ Or those eighteen who died when the tower in Siloam fell on them—do you think they were more guilty than all the others living in Jerusalem? ⁵ I tell you, no! But unless you repent, you too will all perish.”

John 9:1-3 As he went along, he saw a man blind from birth. ² His disciples asked him, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” ³ “Neither this man nor his parents sinned,” said Jesus, “but this happened so that the work of God might be displayed in his life.

b) People have found difficulty in harmonizing God’s love with his punitive righteousness.

- 1) Since all attributes are in reality the same, presenting God as viewed in different relations, any contradiction can be only apparent.**
- 2) Sin is enmity against God, an attempted negation of him. God cannot love himself as *Summum Bonum* and at the same time desire his own annihilation or destruction of his blessings.**
- 3) Consider the nature of Christian love, which is patterned after God’s love.**

Matthew 5:44-48 But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, ⁴⁵ that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. ⁴⁶ If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? ⁴⁷ And if you greet only your brothers, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? ⁴⁸ Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

Luke 6:36 Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.

-a) Christian love is described as holy love, which opposes evil.

Romans 12:9 Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good.

1 Thessalonians 5:21,22 Test everything. Hold on to the good. ²² Avoid every kind of evil.

1 Peter 2:11 Dear friends, I urge you, as aliens and strangers in the world, to abstain from sinful desires, which war against your soul.

-b) Christian love does not prevent them from praying for the destruction of confirmed representatives of sin and evil (imprecatory psalms and prayers).

-1) Examples of prayers against evil doers:

Psalm 58:1,2, 6-11 Do you rulers indeed speak justly? Do you judge uprightly among men? ² No, in your heart you devise injustice, and your hands mete out violence on the earth. ⁶ Break the teeth in their mouths, O God; tear out, O LORD, the fangs of the lions! ⁷ Let them vanish like water that flows away; when they draw the bow, let their arrows be blunted. ⁸ Like a slug melting away as it moves along, like a stillborn child, may they not see the sun. ⁹ Before your pots can feel the heat of the thorns— whether they be green or dry—the wicked will be swept away. ¹⁰ The righteous will be glad when they are avenged, when they bathe their feet in the blood of the wicked. ¹¹ Then men will say, “Surely the righteous still are rewarded; surely there is a God who judges the earth.”

Psalm 59:5,13 O LORD God Almighty, the God of Israel, rouse yourself to punish all the nations; show no mercy to wicked traitors. ¹³ consume them in wrath, consume them till they are no more. Then it will be known to the ends of the earth that God rules over Jacob.

Psalm 79:6-7 Pour out your wrath on the nations that do not acknowledge you, on the kingdoms that do not call on your name; ⁷ for they have devoured Jacob and destroyed his homeland.

Psalm 83: 13-18 Make them like tumbleweed, O my God, like chaff before the wind. ¹⁴ As fire consumes the forest or a flame sets the mountains ablaze, ¹⁵ so pursue them with your tempest and terrify them with your storm. ¹⁶ Cover their faces with shame so that men will seek your name, O LORD. ¹⁷ May they ever be ashamed and dismayed; may they perish in disgrace. ¹⁸ Let them know that you, whose name is the LORD— that you alone are the Most High over all the earth.

Psalm 137:7-9 Remember, O LORD, what the Edomites did on the day Jerusalem fell. “Tear it down,” they cried, “tear it down to its foundations!” ⁸ O Daughter of Babylon, doomed to destruction, happy is he who repays you for what you have done to us— ⁹ he who seizes your infants and dashes them against the rocks.

Jeremiah 12:3 Yet you know me, O LORD; you see me and test my thoughts about you. Drag them off like sheep to be butchered! Set them apart for the day of slaughter!

-2) That such prayers are not “a lower standard of morality in the OT” is evident from these passages:

Luke 10:10-16 But when you enter a town and are not welcomed, go into its streets and say, ¹¹ “Even the dust of your town that sticks to our feet we wipe off against you. Yet be sure of this: The kingdom of God is near.” ¹² I tell you, it will be more bearable on that day for Sodom than for that town. ¹³ Woe to you, Korazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the miracles that were performed in you had been performed in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago, sitting in sackcloth and ashes. ¹⁴ But it will be more bearable for Tyre and Sidon at the judgment than for you. ¹⁵ And you, Capernaum, will you be lifted up to the skies? No, you will go down to the depths. ¹⁶ He who listens to you listens to me; he who rejects you rejects me; but he who rejects me rejects him who sent me.

Galatians 1:8,9 But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let him be eternally condemned! ⁹ As we have already said, so now I say again: If anybody is preaching to you a gospel other than what you accepted, let him be eternally condemned!

2 Thessalonians 1:6-10 God is just: He will pay back trouble to those who trouble you ⁷ and give relief to you who are troubled, and to us as well. This will happen when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in blazing fire with his powerful angels. ⁸ He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. ⁹ They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the majesty of his power ¹⁰ on the day he comes to be glorified in his holy people and to be marveled at among all those who have believed. This includes you, because you believed our testimony to you.

Revelation 6:10 They called out in a loud voice, “How long, Sovereign Lord, holy and true, until you judge the inhabitants of the earth and avenge our blood?”

Luther: All who pray, curse. For instance, when I say, “Hallowed be your name,” I curse Erasmus and all who hold views contrary to the Word (“Table Talk,” *WLS* #3518; *SL* 22, 526, 25).

Luther: I cannot pray without cursing at the same time. If I say, “Hallowed be your name,” I must thereby say: “May the names of the papists and all who blaspheme your name be accursed, condemned, and dishonored.” If I say, “Your kingdom come,” I must thereby say, “May the papacy, together with all kingdoms on earth that are opposed to your kingdom, be accursed condemned and destroyed.” If I say, “Your will be done,” I must thereby say, “May the plans and plots of the papists and of

all who strive against your will be accursed, condemned, dishonored, and brought to naught.” Truly, thus my lips and heart pray day in, day out and all who believe in Christ are praying this way with me (“Against the Assassin at Dresden,” WLS #3519; SL 16, 1718).

A. Pieper: It is entirely correct that the beholders are described as gazing with satisfaction upon the decaying and burning carcasses. They are God’s judgments, and they are meant to serve the salvation of his own. And as God himself, in spite of all his gracious compassion, carries out his judgments with divine benevolence, so also the believers view them with satisfaction. The Christian gives his Yes and Amen to the unimaginably horrible torments of hell, because God has so ordered them and has himself revealed them, although human nature revolts against the thought of eternal torment. And so Isaiah closes his book. To this day it is offensive to the Jews, as it is to all the unbelievers, including the unbelieving exegetes. They avenge themselves on Isaiah by scoffing and blaspheming, as they do upon all the Gospel. But it is the Lord himself who summed up the Gospel in the familiar words: “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned,” Mark 16:16. Isaiah preaches nothing else, and it remains God’s truth till the Day of Judgment (*Isaiah II*, p 706).

Siegbert Becker (d. 1984): There are many who conclude from the Sermon on the Mount that vengeance is not compatible with Christianity. Yet here the saints rejoice over God’s vengeance and praise him for it. It is true that in the Sermon on the Mount as well as in the Garden of Gethsemane, where he told Peter to sheathe his sword, the Savior forbids his church to use force as a weapon against the force used by her enemies. Paul also says that the weapons of our warfare are not carnal (2 Co 10:4) and that we are not to avenge ourselves (Ro 12:19). But this does not in any way imply that vengeance is wrong. Rather, when God through the apostle forbids Christians to avenge themselves, he also promises that he will repay. The exaction of vengeance is a right that belongs to him (Ro 12:19). On earth God begins to carry out vengeance through those whom he ordains to act as his agents in this matter, namely, the secular authorities (Ro 13:1-4). On the day of judgment he will carry it out directly and finally balance all the books. Therefore vengeance exacted by God for the persecution and murder of his Christians is recognized as something perfectly just and right. For this the church can also rightly rejoice and properly thank and praise the Lord and sing her alleluias (*Revelation: The Distant Triumph Song*, p 282).

- c) **God’s justice and righteousness is proclaimed as gospel.**
It is represented as the source of our salvation (*iustitia evangelica* or *iustitia passiva*).

1) Also God's punitive justice is the hope of the oppressed.

Psalm 82:3 Defend the cause of the weak and fatherless; maintain the rights of the poor and oppressed.

Psalm 103:6 The LORD works righteousness and justice for all the oppressed.

Psalm 129:4 But the LORD is righteous; he has cut me free from the cords of the wicked.

Zephaniah 3:8 “Therefore wait for me,” declares the LORD, “for the day I will stand up to testify. I have decided to assemble the nations, to gather the kingdoms and to pour out my wrath on them— all my fierce anger. The whole world will be consumed by the fire of my jealous anger. ⁹Then will I purify the lips of the peoples, that all of them may call on the name of the LORD and serve him shoulder to shoulder.”

2) God's justice as faithfulness to himself and faithfulness to his promises is the sure foundation of our redemption and justification (Christ's righteousness is imputed to us).

Romans 1:16,17 I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile. ¹⁷ For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: “The righteous will live by faith.”

Romans 3:21-26 But now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. ²² This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference, ²³ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, ²⁴ and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood. ²⁵ He did this to demonstrate his justice, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished— ²⁶ he did it to demonstrate his justice at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus.

Psalm 22:31 They will proclaim his righteousness to a people yet unborn—
for he has done it.

Psalm 24:5 He will receive blessing from the LORD and vindication from God his Savior.

Psalm 31:1 In you, O LORD, I have taken refuge; let me never be put to shame; deliver me in your righteousness.

Psalm 40:9-11 I proclaim righteousness in the great assembly; I do not seal my lips, as you know, O LORD. ¹⁰ I do not hide your righteousness in

my heart; I speak of your faithfulness and salvation. I do not conceal your love and your truth from the great assembly. ¹¹ Do not withhold your mercy from me, O LORD; may your love and your truth always protect me.

Psalms 85:10 Love and faithfulness meet together; righteousness and peace kiss each other.

Psalms 89:13-18 Your arm is endued with power; your hand is strong, your right hand exalted. ¹⁴ Righteousness and justice are the foundation of your throne; love and faithfulness go before you. ¹⁵ Blessed are those who have learned to acclaim you, who walk in the light of your presence, O LORD. ¹⁶ They rejoice in your name all day long; they exult in your righteousness. ¹⁷ For you are their glory and strength, and by your favor you exalt our horn. ¹⁸ Indeed, our shield belongs to the LORD, our king to the Holy One of Israel.

Psalms 116:5 The LORD is gracious and righteous; our God is full of compassion.

Isaiah 1:27 Zion will be redeemed with justice, her penitent ones with righteousness.

Isaiah 41:10 So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.

Isaiah 42:21 It pleased the LORD for the sake of his righteousness to make his law great and glorious.

Isaiah 45:21,23-25 Declare what is to be, present it— let them take counsel together. Who foretold this long ago, who declared it from the distant past? Was it not I, the LORD? And there is no God apart from me, a righteous God and a Savior; there is none but me.

Isaiah 51:5,6,8 My righteousness draws near speedily, my salvation is on the way, and my arm will bring justice to the nations. The islands will look to me and wait in hope for my arm. ⁶ Lift up your eyes to the heavens, look at the earth beneath; the heavens will vanish like smoke, the earth will wear out like a garment and its inhabitants die like flies. But my salvation will last forever, my righteousness will never fail. ⁸ For the moth will eat them up like a garment; the worm will devour them like wool. But my righteousness will last forever, my salvation through all generations.

Isaiah 59:16 He saw that there was no one, he was appalled that there was no one to intervene; so his own arm worked salvation for him, and his own righteousness sustained him.

Jeremiah 23:6 In his days Judah will be saved and Israel will live in safety. This is the name by which *he* will be called: The LORD Our Righteousness.

Jeremiah 33:16 In those days Judah will be saved and Jerusalem will live in safety. This is the name by which *it* will be called: The LORD Our Righteousness.

Romans 10:4 Christ is the end of the law so that there may be righteousness for everyone who believes.

1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

1 John 2:29 If you know that he is righteous, you know that everyone who does what is right has been born of him.

Revelation 15:3,4 [They] sang the song of Moses the servant of God and the song of the Lamb: "Great and marvelous are your deeds, Lord God Almighty. Just and true are your ways, King of the ages. ⁴ Who will not fear you, O Lord, and bring glory to your name? For you alone are holy. All nations will come and worship before you, for your righteous acts have been revealed."

7. Omnipotence (*omnipotentia Dei*).

a) God in unlimited power can do whatever does not conflict with his perfections. In other words: he can do whatsoever he pleases (Ps 115:3).

1) God is powerful.

1 Chronicles 29:12 Wealth and honor come from you; you are the ruler of all things. In your hands are strength and power to exalt and give strength to all.

2 Chronicles 25:8 Even if you go and fight courageously in battle, God will overthrow you before the enemy, for God has the power to help or to overthrow.

Job 26:12 By his power he churned up the sea; by his wisdom he cut Rahab to pieces.

Psalm 62:11-12 One thing God has spoken, two things have I heard: that you, O God, are strong, ¹² and that you, O Lord, are loving. Surely you will reward each person according to what he has done.

Psalm 65:6 [You] formed the mountains by your power, having armed yourself with strength.

2) His ability exceeds human ability.

Zechariah 8:6 This is what the LORD Almighty says: "It may seem marvelous to the remnant of this people at that time, but will it seem marvelous to me?" declares the LORD Almighty.

Matthew 19:26 Jesus looked at them and said, “With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.”

Luke 18:27 Jesus replied, “What is impossible with men is possible with God.”

3) His ability surpasses human conception.

Ephesians 3:20 Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us...

Psalm 93:4 Mightier than the thunder of the great waters, mightier than the breakers of the sea— the LORD on high is mighty.

Nahum 1:3 The LORD is slow to anger and great in power; the LORD will not leave the guilty unpunished. His way is in the whirlwind and the storm, and clouds are the dust of his feet.

Luke 3:8 Produce fruit in keeping with repentance. And do not begin to say to yourselves, “We have Abraham as our father.” For I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham.

4) His ability is unbounded.

Genesis 18:14 Is anything too hard for the LORD? I will return to you at the appointed time next year and Sarah will have a son.

Job 42:2 I know that you can do all things; no plan of yours can be thwarted.

Psalm 33:9 For he spoke, and it came to be; he commanded, and it stood firm.

Psalm 115:3 Our God is in heaven; he does whatever pleases him.

Psalm 135:6 The LORD does whatever pleases him, in the heavens and on the earth, in the seas and all their depths.

Isaiah 43:13 Yes, and from ancient days I am he. No one can deliver out of my hand. When I act, who can reverse it?

Jeremiah 32:17 Ah, Sovereign LORD, you have made the heavens and the earth by your great power and outstretched arm. Nothing is too hard for you.

Mark 14: 36 “Abba, Father,” he said, “everything is possible for you. Take this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will.”

Luke 1:37 For nothing is impossible with God.

Brochmand: When I attribute omnipotence to God, I am ascribing so great a power to him that he is able to do by far more than any creature can

comprehend, to such a degree that whatever he wishes to do he is able to do without labor and effort even though all creatures were to oppose him (*Systema*, I, III, I, III, p 105).

Gerhard: God's power is infinite: 1) in itself and by itself or by its very nature, just as God himself is infinite, whose essential characteristic it is that he is called infinite; 2) with reference to its objects, which not only have already been produced in great variety and countless numbers but also could be made even infinitely different by him, if that should please his wisdom; 3) by reason of his way of doing things, because God never does anything so intensively and effectively that he could not do it in a more intensive and effective way (*Loci*, III, II, CXCVII, p 153, note).

5) God is called παντοκράτωρ. (This is the Septuagint equivalent of יהוה צבאות Its main use in the New Testament is in the doxologies of Revelation.)

2 Corinthians 6:18 I will be a Father to you, and you will be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty.

Revelation 1:8 "I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, "who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty."

Revelation 4:8 Each of the four living creatures had six wings and was covered with eyes all around, even under his wings. Day and night they never stop saying: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come."

Revelation 11:17 We give thanks to you, Lord God Almighty, the One who is and who was, because you have taken your great power and have begun to reign.

Revelation 15:3 [They] sang the song of Moses the servant of God and the song of the Lamb: "Great and marvelous are your deeds, Lord God Almighty. Just and true are your ways, King of the ages."

Revelation 16:7 And I heard the altar respond: "Yes, Lord God Almighty, true and just are your judgments."

Revelation 19:6 Then I heard what sounded like a great multitude, like the roar of rushing waters and like loud peals of thunder, shouting: "Hallelujah! For our Lord God Almighty reigns."

Revelation 21: 22 I did not see a temple in the city, because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple.

Revelation 16:14 They are spirits of demons performing miraculous signs, and they go out to the kings of the whole world, to gather them for the battle on the great day of God Almighty.

Revelation 19:15 Out of his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations. "He will rule them with an iron scepter." He treads

the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty.

b) God, naturally, will not do anything that would conflict with his perfections.

1) Philosophers state an apparent difficulty.

Pliny (d. 79) denies that God is omnipotent because of the fact that he cannot die or lie or make undone what has been done (*Hist. natur.*, II, VII).

2) Scripture answers the objection.

2 Timothy 2:13 If we are faithless, he will remain faithful, for he cannot disown himself.

Hebrews 6:18 God did this so that, by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled to take hold of the hope offered to us may be greatly encouraged.

Hollaz: (Omnipotence is) a divine attribute by which God is able to do everything which can be done and which does not imply any imperfection in God (*Exam.*, I, I, 48, p 301).

Schertzer (d. 1683): [Those arguments] are sophistries by which the definition of a thing is annulled. For if God would lie, would die, would sin, he would not be God (since God in his essence is by definition truth, life, holiness); if a creature would have infinite perfection, it would not be a creature; if the past would not have passed, it would not be the past; if tomorrow would exist today, it would not be today (*System. th.*, p 55).

3) The power of God is not properly to be conceived as an instrument of his will.

-a) Gerhard summarizes the issue.

Gerhard: From the simplicity of the divine essence it is manifest that in reality power is not distinguished from will; but the question is whether it may be distinguished logically. Durandus and others affirm this.... But it is more correctly maintained that not even logically is power distinguished from will in God, 1) because Holy Scripture sets the will of God before us as the cause of all things (Ps 115:3; 148:5; Is 46:10); 2) it is in the nature of an imperfection that in a creature endowed with intellect its power to execute its decisions is distinguished from its will, but all imperfection must be removed from God (*Loci*, III, II, CXVIII, p 153).

-b) God's will must not be presented as depending on his knowledge.

See Abelard's argument: God can only do that which he foreknew and decreed from eternity he would at some time do. But only those things which he at some time does did he foreknow and decree that

he would do (Hoenecke II, p 155).

-c) God's power operates as *Ordinata* or *Absoluta*.

-1) *Ordinata*. God's power may operate according to certain laws laid down by himself.

Genesis 1:12,14-18 The land produced vegetation: plants bearing seed according to their kinds and trees bearing fruit with seed in it according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good.¹⁴ And God said, "Let there be lights in the expanse of the sky to separate the day from the night, and let them serve as signs to mark seasons and days and years,¹⁵ and let them be lights in the expanse of the sky to give light on the earth." And it was so.¹⁶ God made two great lights—the greater light to govern the day and the lesser light to govern the night. He also made the stars.¹⁷ God set them in the expanse of the sky to give light on the earth,¹⁸ to govern the day and the night, and to separate light from darkness. And God saw that it was good.

Genesis 8:22 As long as the earth endures, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night will never cease.

Luke 21:26 Men will faint from terror, apprehensive of what is coming on the world, for the heavenly bodies [literally: powers of the heavens] will be shaken.

Matthew 5:44-46 But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,⁴⁵ that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.

Cf. also Psalm 104.

-2) *Absoluta*. God's power may operate contrary to the ordinary laws.

Exodus 14:22 The Israelites went through the sea on dry ground, with a wall of water on their right and on their left.

2 Kings 6:6 The man of God asked, "Where did it fall?" When he showed him the place, Elisha cut a stick and threw it there, and made the iron float.

Isaiah 38:8 "I will make the shadow cast by the sun go back the ten steps it has gone down on the stairway of Ahaz." So the sunlight went back the ten steps it had gone down.

Daniel 3:27 The satraps, prefects, governors and royal advisers crowded around them. They saw that the fire had not harmed their bodies, nor was a hair of their heads singed; their

robes were not scorched, and there was no smell of fire on them.

Matthew 1:25 But he had no union with her until she gave birth to a son. And he gave him the name Jesus.

John 11:43 When he had said this, Jesus called in a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!"

Duns Scotus (d. 1308): If God therefore has the power to act according to those right laws previously established by him, one says he is acting according to his ordered power. In view of the fact, however, that he can do much that does not conform to those previously firmly established laws ... his power is called absolute. ... Just as he can act in a different way, so he can also declare a different law to be right. For if it were established by God, it would be right; for a law is right only in so far as it is accepted by the divine will. The absolute power of God can save Judas; the ordered power could save the sinner who dies in mortal sin and never actually is saved. If God would establish other laws according to which everything should take place, then everything would appear to be ordered (i.e., proceeding according to God's established order) (in Rinn und Jüngst, *Dogmengeschichtliches Lesebuch*, p 297).

4. Will of God

I. God's will is his essence as he is inclined to bring about whatever according to his wisdom is good and to prevent whatever is evil.

1. "Will" may be distinguished as:

a) The ability to wish, that is, the faculty of the Triune God to purpose and to decree.

Ephesians 1:5,11 He predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will (κατὰ τὴν εὐδοκίαν τοῦ θελήματος αὐτοῦ). ¹¹ In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will (κατὰ τὴν βουλὴν τοῦ θελήματος αὐτοῦ) .

b) An act of this faculty, a volition (will, purpose, counsel, pleasure, etc.), that is, an act of wishing.

1 Samuel 2:25 "If a man sins against another man, God may mediate for him; but if a man sins against the LORD, who will intercede for him?" His sons, however, did not listen to their father's rebuke, for it was the LORD's will to put them to death.

Psalms 115:3 Our God is in heaven; he does whatever pleases him.

Daniel 4:32 You will be driven away from people and will live with the wild animals; you will eat grass like cattle. Seven times will pass by for you until you acknowledge that the Most High is sovereign over the kingdoms of men and gives them to anyone he wishes.

Romans 1:10 I pray that now at last by God's will the way may be opened for me to come to you.

Romans 9:19 One of you will say to me: "Then why does God still blame us? For who resists his will?"

1 Corinthians 1:1 Paul, called to be an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God

Galatians 1:4 [Christ] gave himself for our sins to rescue us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father.

Ephesians 1:9 And he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ.

Ephesians 3:11 [God acted] according to his eternal purpose (κατὰ πρόθεσιν τῶν αἰώνων) which he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord.

1 Peter 4:19 So then, those who suffer according to God's will should commit themselves to their faithful Creator and continue to do good.

c) The content of a volition (metonymy), i.e., a wish.

John 6:39-40 And this is the will of him who sent me, that I shall lose none of all that he has given me, but raise them up at the last day. ⁴⁰ For my Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.

1 Thessalonians 4:3 It is God's will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality.

Psalms 40:8 I desire to do your will, O my God; your law is within my heart.

Psalms 103:21 Praise the LORD, all his heavenly hosts, you his servants who do his will.

Matthew 6:10 Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Matthew 7:21 Not everyone who says to me, "Lord, Lord," will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.

Matthew 12:50 For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother.

Romans 12:2 Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be

transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

2. The following truths must be borne in mind.

a) Since God is absolutely One:

- 1) His intellect and will are essentially one; they are not independent faculties of God's mind.**
- 2) To distinguish intellect and will is legitimate. It is due to our imperfect mode of conceiving God. Anthropomorphically speaking we may say that God's will is moved by certain considerations, e.g., of human conduct, of wisdom, of mercy, of holiness, etc.**

b) Since God is infinite, absolute Spirit:

- 1) Will is not the basic essence of God.**
See The Scholastics who taught that God created himself by his will. Thomasius, in the interest of his kenosis, held that since will is the core of God, God could shed all his attributes except will without ceasing to be God..
- 2) Nor is will a mere faculty added to the divine essence.**
- 3) Will is the divine essence conceived from this particular angle.**

II. The will of God is absolutely free.

1. This follows from God's independence.

a) To God's will must be ascribed absolute spontaneity.

Calov: The principal attribute of God's will is the freedom with which God wills all things outside himself, not from any necessity of his nature (not because his nature requires it), but freely, so that he is able also not to will the same things (*Systema*, II, p 455).

Gerhard: God is an essence acting most freely. Just as intellect is attributed to God, so also will, which is the ability to act freely and (which is) the governing principle of actions (*Loci*, III, II, CCLXV, p 198).

b) Though no external cause is required to set the will of God in motion, yet, anthropomorphically, we may speak of *causae moventes*.

- 1) *Causae internae*: love, compassion, wrath, grief, etc.**

Ephesians 2:4-5 But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ.

Genesis 6:5-7 The LORD saw how great man's wickedness on the earth had become, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time. ⁶ The LORD was grieved that he had made man on the earth, and his heart was filled with pain. ⁷ So the LORD said, "I will wipe mankind, whom I have created, from the face of the earth—men and animals, and creatures that move along the ground, and birds of the air—for I am grieved that I have made them."

2) *Causae externae*: human conduct, man's condition of misery, etc.

Psalms 31:7 I will be glad and rejoice in your love, for you saw my affliction and knew the anguish of my soul.

Deuteronomy 9:5 It is not because of your righteousness or your integrity that you are going in to take possession of their land; but on account of the wickedness of these nations, the LORD your God will drive them out before you, to accomplish what he swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

c) But God's will is not compulsive, nor can it be manipulated like human will.

2. The independence of God's will is demonstrated by the fact that God deals with us on the basis of mercy which is not motivated by anything in us.

Ephesians 1:9 And he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ.

Exodus 33:19 And the LORD said, "I will cause all my goodness to pass in front of you, and I will proclaim my name, the LORD, in your presence. I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion."

Romans 9:15,18 For he says to Moses, "I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion." ¹⁸ Therefore God has mercy on whom he wants to have mercy, and he hardens whom he wants to harden.

Romans 11:5,6 So too, at the present time there is a remnant chosen by grace. ⁶ And if by grace, then it is no longer by works; if it were, grace would no longer be grace.

Titus 3:5 He saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy.

3. This freedom assumes different forms according to the nature of the object, the very nature given to the object by the will of God.

a) With reference to irrational creatures God's will is practically identical with his omnipotence.

Psalms 33:6,9 By the word of the LORD were the heavens made, their starry host by the breath of his mouth. ⁹ For he spoke, and it came to be; he commanded, and it stood firm.

Psalms 135:6 The LORD does whatever pleases him, in the heavens and on the earth, in the seas and all their depths.

Matthew 10:29 Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from the will of your Father.

Romans 8:19-21 The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed. ²⁰For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope ²¹that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God.

b) With reference to man's spiritual life God's will is reflected in his commands and promises.

1) It is the will of God to treat man as a personal being with moral responsibility.

Genesis 1:26,27 Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground." ²⁷ So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

Genesis 2:16,17 And the LORD God commanded the man, "You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; ¹⁷ but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die."

Genesis 3:22 And the LORD God said, "The man has now become like one of us, knowing good and evil. He must not be allowed to reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat, and live forever."

Deuteronomy 31:19,21 Now write down for yourselves this song and teach it to the Israelites and have them sing it, so that it may be a witness for me against them. ²¹ And when many disasters and difficulties come upon them, this song will testify against them, because it will not be forgotten by their descendants. I know what they are disposed to do, even before I bring them into the land I promised them on oath.

Isaiah 65:2 All day long I have held out my hands to an obstinate people, who walk in ways not good, pursuing their own imaginations.

Jeremiah 31:3 The LORD appeared to us in the past, saying: "I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with loving-kindness."

Matthew 23:37 O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing.

1 Corinthians 1:21 For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not know him, God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe.

2) Whatever good is found in man (e.g., conversion, faith, love) is due to God.

-a) It is produced entirely by a free creative act of God.

Philippians 2:13 For it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose.

-b) No credit is due to man.

John 15:5 I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.

Romans 9:16 It does not, therefore, depend on man's desire or effort, but on God's mercy.

1 Corinthians 12:3 Therefore I tell you that no one who is speaking by the Spirit of God says, "Jesus be cursed," and no one can say, "Jesus is Lord," except by the Holy Spirit.

Ephesians 2:8-10 For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—⁹ not by works, so that no one can boast. ¹⁰ For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

-c) God, however, does not produce the good in man by an act of "irresistible grace", that is, by coercion.

Matthew 23:37 O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing.

Acts 7:51 You stiff-necked people, with uncircumcised hearts and ears! You are just like your fathers: You always resist the Holy Spirit!

Hebrews 3:15 As has just been said: "Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion."

Note. This seeming contradiction in the Scripture's doctrine of conversion cannot be solved by human reason.

3) Sin is disobedience to God's will, an abuse of the God-given liberty.

-a) Sin is man's own work.

Romans 5:12 Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned...

-b) Man now is no longer free, yet he is responsible for his sin.

-1) He is no more free.

Proverbs 5:22 The evil deeds of a wicked man ensnare him; the cords of his sin hold him fast.

John 8:34 Jesus replied, "I tell you the truth, everyone who sins is a slave to sin."

Romans 6:16 Don't you know that when you offer yourselves to someone to obey him as slaves, you are slaves to the one whom you obey—whether you are slaves to sin, which leads to death, or to obedience, which leads to righteousness?

Romans 7:23 But I see another law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members.

2 Peter 2:19 They promise them freedom, while they themselves are slaves of depravity—for a man is a slave to whatever has mastered him.

Romans 8:8 Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot please God.

-2) Yet he is responsible for his sin.

Romans 2:12 All who sin apart from the law will also perish apart from the law, and all who sin under the law will be judged by the law.

Romans 6:23 For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

4) Regarding the physical life of man, including also the natural soul life (ψυχή) in the three spheres of intellect, volition, and emotion, God's will is expressed in the laws of nature.

-a) Man's life is subject to the laws of nature.

Genesis 2:7 The LORD God formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being (נִפְשׁ חַיָּה).

Genesis 8:22 As long as the earth endures, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night will never cease.

Psalms 104:14 He makes grass grow for the cattle, and plants for man to cultivate— bringing forth food from the earth.

Ecclesiastes 3:1-8 There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under heaven: ² a time to be born and a time to die, a time to plant and a time to uproot, ³ a time to kill and a time to heal, a time to tear down and a time to build, ⁴ a time to weep and a time to laugh, a time to mourn and a time to dance, ⁵ a time to scatter stones and a time to gather them, a time to embrace and a time to refrain, ⁶ a time to search and a time to give up, a time to keep and a time to throw away, ⁷ a time to tear and a time to mend, a time to be silent and a time to speak, ⁸ a time to love and a time to hate, a time for war and a time for peace.

Matthew 6:32 For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them.

-b) Ordinarily, God does not suspend these laws even when people misuse them for doing evil.

Matthew 5:45 Your Father in heaven...causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.

-c) Thus God upholds the natural forces used in the act, but sinners are responsible for the immoral misuse of them.

-1) God cooperates in producing a sinful act *quoad materiam*.

-2) *Quoad formam* man is responsible.

Note: *Materia*: the act as such, physical and mental, e.g., the shooter aims, the gun shoots.

Forma: motive, purpose, etc., the robber shoots the bank teller.

J. Schaller: This is only an apparent solution; it does not solve a thing. It merely emphasizes the scriptural truth that man is personally responsible for the sinful character of his actions. All we can do is express the truth of that fact, without solving the logical difficulty which that fact brings with it . . . For now [God] has chosen not to give us an insight into this particular mystery of his way of doing things” (*Our Great Heritage*, I, p 450).

Amos 3:6 When a trumpet sounds in a city, do not the people tremble? When disaster comes to a city, has not the LORD caused it?

Psalm 5:4 You are not a God who takes pleasure in evil; with

you the wicked cannot dwell.

Psalm 50:21 These things you have done and I kept silent; you thought I was altogether like you. But I will rebuke you and accuse you to your face.

James 1:13 When tempted, no one should say, “God is tempting me.” For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone.

4. Does not God’s will neutralize human freedom?

a) God’s will certainly accomplishes its purpose under all circumstances.

Psalm 33:11 But the plans of the LORD stand firm forever, the purposes of his heart through all generations.

Proverbs 19:21 Many are the plans in a man’s heart, but it is the LORD’s purpose that prevails.

Isaiah 14:27 For the LORD Almighty has purposed, and who can thwart him? His hand is stretched out, and who can turn it back?

Isaiah 46:10 I make known the end from the beginning, from ancient times, what is still to come. I say: My purpose will stand, and I will do all that I please.

Jeremiah 4:28 Therefore the earth will mourn and the heavens above grow dark, because I have spoken and will not relent, I have decided and will not turn back.

Daniel 4:35 All the peoples of the earth are regarded as nothing. He does as he pleases with the powers of heaven and the peoples of the earth. No one can hold back his hand or say to him: “What have you done?”

b) God knows the evil actions of man in advance.

1) He makes allowance for them in his plans.

Deuteronomy 31:16, 19-21 And the LORD said to Moses: “You are going to rest with your fathers, and these people will soon prostitute themselves to the foreign gods of the land they are entering. They will forsake me and break the covenant I made with them. ¹⁹ Now write down for yourselves this song and teach it to the Israelites and have them sing it, so that it may be a witness for me against them. ²⁰ When I have brought them into the land flowing with milk and honey, the land I promised on oath to their forefathers, and when they eat their fill and thrive, they will turn to other gods and worship them, rejecting me and breaking my covenant. ²¹ And when many disasters and difficulties come upon them, this song will testify against them, because it will not be forgotten by their descendants. I know what they are disposed to do, even before I bring them into the land I promised them on oath.”

Luke 22:31-34 “Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift you as wheat. ³² But I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers.” ³³ But he replied, “Lord, I am ready to go with you to prison and to death.” ³⁴ Jesus answered, “I tell you, Peter, before the rooster crows today, you will deny three times that you know me.”

2) He turns the evil actions to serve his purposes.

Genesis 50:20 You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives.

Isaiah 10:5-7,12-15 Woe to the Assyrian, the rod of my anger, in whose hand is the club of my wrath! ⁶ I send him against a godless nation, I dispatch him against a people who anger me, to seize loot and snatch plunder, and to trample them down like mud in the streets. ⁷ But this is not what he intends, this is not what he has in mind; his purpose is to destroy, to put an end to many nations. ¹² When the Lord has finished all his work against Mount Zion and Jerusalem, he will say, “I will punish the king of Assyria for the willful pride of his heart and the haughty look in his eyes. ¹³ For he says: ‘By the strength of my hand I have done this, and by my wisdom, because I have understanding. I removed the boundaries of nations, I plundered their treasures; like a mighty one I subdued their kings. ¹⁴ As one reaches into a nest, so my hand reached for the wealth of the nations; as men gather abandoned eggs, so I gathered all the countries; not one flapped a wing, or opened its mouth to chirp.’ ¹⁵ Does the ax raise itself above him who swings it, or the saw boast against him who uses it? As if a rod were to wield him who lifts it up, or a club brandish him who is not wood!”

3) He curbs the evil actions or frustrates them altogether.

Genesis 11:8 So the LORD scattered them from there over all the earth, and they stopped building the city.

Job 5:12 He thwarts the plans of the crafty, so that their hands achieve no success.

Psalms 33:10 The LORD foils the plans of the nations; he thwarts the purposes of the peoples.

Isaiah 41:11 All who rage against you will surely be ashamed and disgraced; those who oppose you will be as nothing and perish.

Isaiah 44:25 [The LORD] who foils the signs of false prophets and makes fools of diviners, who overthrows the learning of the wise and turns it into nonsense.

Jeremiah 20:11 But the LORD is with me like a mighty warrior; so my persecutors will stumble and not prevail. They will fail and be thoroughly disgraced; their dishonor will never be forgotten.

4) He provokes the hardened.

Psalm 105:25 [The Egyptians] whose hearts he turned to hate his people, to conspire against his servants.

c) God also shapes the purposes of man.

Psalm 33:15 [God] who forms the hearts of all, who considers everything they do...

Proverbs 21:1 The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD; he directs it like a watercourse wherever he pleases.

d) Yet in all this God deals with man as a being who bears moral responsibility for his choices.

Deuteronomy 11:26 See, I am setting before you today a blessing and a curse.

Deuteronomy 30:19 This day I call heaven and earth as witnesses against you that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life, so that you and your children may live.

2 Samuel 15:31-34 Now David had been told, "Ahithophel is among the conspirators with Absalom." So David prayed, "O LORD, turn Ahithophel's counsel into foolishness."³² When David arrived at the summit, where people used to worship God, Hushai the Arkite was there to meet him, his robe torn and dust on his head.³³ David said to him, "If you go with me, you will be a burden to me."³⁴ But if you return to the city and say to Absalom, 'I will be your servant, O king; I was your father's servant in the past, but now I will be your servant,' then you can help me by frustrating Ahithophel's advice."

Compare 2 Samuel 17:14 Absalom and all the men of Israel said, "The advice of Hushai the Arkite is better than that of Ahithophel." For the LORD had determined to frustrate the good advice of Ahithophel in order to bring disaster on Absalom.

1 Kings 22:20 And the LORD said, "Who will entice Ahab into attacking Ramoth Gilead and going to his death there?" One suggested this, and another that.

Jeremiah 20:7 O LORD, you deceived me, and I was deceived; you overpowered me and prevailed. I am ridiculed all day long; everyone mocks me.

Gerhard: Some things God wills absolutely, others conditionally. Those things which God wills absolutely, necessarily occur, but those which he wills conditionally do not take place unless the condition is fulfilled. God's will, therefore, does not preclude in man the freedom of choice (*liberum arbitrium*, *libertas arbitrii*) in external matters, because it does not exclude but includes the subsidiary causes, among which is the freedom of choice. Nor does it predetermine the human will in any one direction by a certain physical necessity, but it allows it that freedom which is naturally implanted in it. Nor does it bring a certain antecedent and a priori necessity to bear on its choice of action, but by a general cooperation toward producing the result it grants and

preserves the power to act (*Loci*, III, II, CCLXXXII, p 206).

Augsburg Confession, XVIII, 1-4 Of free will they teach that man's will has some liberty to choose civil righteousness and to work things subject to reason. But it has no power, without the Holy Spirit, to work the righteousness of God, that is, spiritual righteousness; since the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, 1 Cor. 2, 14; but this righteousness is worked in the heart when the Holy Spirit is received through the Word.

Apology, XVIII, 70-72 Nor, indeed, do we deny liberty to the human will. The human will has liberty in the choice of works and things which reason comprehends by itself. It can to a certain extent render civil righteousness or the righteousness of works; it can speak of God, offer to God a certain service by an outward work, obey magistrates, parents; in the choice of an outward work it can restrain the hands from murder, from adultery, from theft. Since there is left in human nature reason and judgment concerning objects subjected to the senses, choice between these things, the liberty and power to render civil righteousness, are also left. For Scripture calls this the righteousness of the flesh which the carnal nature, *i.e.*, reason, renders by itself, without the Holy Spirit. Although the power of concupiscence is such that men more frequently obey evil dispositions than sound judgment. And the devil, who is efficacious in the godless, as Paul says, Eph. 2, 2, does not cease to incite this feeble nature to various offenses. These are the reasons why even civil righteousness is rare among men, as we see that not even the philosophers themselves, who seem to have aspired after this righteousness, attained it.

Formula of Concord, T.D., II, 74, We reject ... the folly of the Stoics and Manicheans who asserted that everything that happens must so happen, *et hominem coactum omnia facere*, that is, that man does everything from coercion, and that even in outward works the will of man has no freedom or ability to render to a certain extent external righteousness and respectable deportment, and to avoid external sins and vices, or that the will of man is coerced to external wicked deeds, in chastity, robbery, murder, etc.

III. Dogmaticians have divided the will of God in various ways for sake of discussion. These distinctions have very limited usefulness, since in reality God has one undivided will.

1. Voluntas Naturalis et Libera

- a) ***Naturalis (necessaria)*: God's will which is determined by his nature as the *Summum Bonum*. This will cannot be otherwise; God must be God.**
- b) ***Libera*: God's will regarding his creatures could be other than it is. It could even have been the very opposite. God did not have to make man or save him.**

Matthew 20:15 Don't I have the right to do what I want with my own money? Or are you envious because I am generous?

Romans 9:20,21 But who are you, O man, to talk back to God? "Shall what is

formed say to him who formed it, ‘Why did you make me like this?’”²¹ Does not the potter have the right to make out of the same lump of clay some pottery for noble purposes and some for common use?

Gerhard: God wills some things from the necessity of his nature (because his nature requires it), others he wills freely. From the necessity of his nature he wills those things which he wills concerning himself, influenced by nothing outside or inside himself; in this way he wills himself, his own goodness and glory. He freely wills those things which he wills concerning his creatures according to the good pleasure of his will. These he was able both to will and not to will. He wills them, however, without any necessity except that which is presupposed, which is the fact of his own immutability (*Loci*, III, II, CCLXXVI, p 203).

Aquinas: Although God immutably wills all things which he wills, nevertheless from an objective point of view he wills the very variability and mutability of things (In *Our Great Heritage*, I, p 527).

2. **Voluntas Libera may be Efficax or Inefficax**

a) ***Efficax, Invictam*: the irresistible call to judgment.**

b) ***Inefficax*: the resistible call of the gospel.**

Note: It would be better not to call this will ineffective. It is the permissive will of God that lets people resist the gospel. The gospel is never without power. In that sense, it is never ineffective.

Augustine: He calls that the effective or invincible and most omnipotent will of God by which he has decided to reward those who do well and to punish sinners. This will, he says, is always carried out. He calls ineffective that will by which he wills that all lead a good life and that no one sins (In Gerhard, *Loci*, III, II, CCLXX-II, p 206).

c) **A really ineffective will of God would be a contradiction in itself. (Men do evil by an abuse of their God-willed freedom.)**

3. **Voluntas (efficax) Absoluta et Conditionata**

a) ***Absoluta*: takes effect without any response of the will of the object.**

Isaiah 46:10 I make known the end from the beginning, from ancient times, what is still to come. I say: My purpose will stand, and I will do all that I please.

Romans 9:19 One of you will say to me: “Then why does God still blame us? For who resists his will?”

b) ***Conditionata*: depends on a response of another will.**

Deuteronomy 28:1,2,15,58-62 If you fully obey the LORD your God and carefully follow all his commands I give you today, the LORD your God will set you high above all the nations on earth.² All these blessings will come upon you and accompany you if you obey the LORD your God:¹⁵ However, if you do not

obey the LORD your God and do not carefully follow all his commands and decrees I am giving you today, all these curses will come upon you and overtake you: ⁵⁸ If you do not carefully follow all the words of this law, which are written in this book, and do not revere this glorious and awesome name—the LORD your God—⁵⁹ the LORD will send fearful plagues on you and your descendants, harsh and prolonged disasters, and severe and lingering illnesses. ⁶⁰ He will bring upon you all the diseases of Egypt that you dreaded, and they will cling to you. ⁶¹ The LORD will also bring on you every kind of sickness and disaster not recorded in this Book of the Law, until you are destroyed. ⁶² You who were as numerous as the stars in the sky will be left but few in number, because you did not obey the LORD your God.

Matthew 23:37 O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing.

Acts 7:51 You stiff-necked people, with uncircumcised hearts and ears! You are just like your fathers: You always resist the Holy Spirit!

- c) **Yet we cannot say salvation is conditioned on anything we do. Faith, which is a necessary condition for salvation, is worked in us by God.**

4. **Voluntas Ordinata et Absoluta**

- a) ***Ordinata, mediata*: God usually works through established means.**

1) **In the physical realm: the laws of nature.**

2) **In the spiritual realm: the means of grace.**

- b) ***Absoluta, extraordinata, immediata, miraculosa*: In the physical realm God sometimes works outside these means (miracles).**

Joshua 10:13 So the sun stood still, and the moon stopped, till the nation avenged itself on its enemies, as it is written in the Book of Jashar. The sun stopped in the middle of the sky and delayed going down about a full day.

5. **Voluntas Antecedens et Consequens**

- a) ***Antecedens*: God wants all men to be saved and sends a Savior for all. This is not based on anything God sees in man.**
- b) ***Consequens*: God wills to condemn the persistent unbeliever. This is a consequence of man's sin.**

Gerhard: The antecedent will is that by which God, as our most gracious Father, wills all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. The consequent will is that by which God, as the most just judge, wills that those who are impenitent and unbelieving to the end be damned (*Loci*, III, II, CCLXXI, p 202).

- c) **Some Lutheran dogmaticians reject this distinction, since there is no before and after for God, and since it was often used in a Pelagian or Synergistic sense. Some, however, see it as having a value versus Calvinism.**

Gerhard: In the eternal and most simple will of God there is no succession nor distinction of the acts of the will (*Loci*, III, II, CCLXXXIII, p 206).

Hoenecke: This whole distinction between *voluntas antecedens et consequens* is completely worthless since a) it doesn't do anything to clarify certain difficult points of dogmatics, and b) it contradicts the right conception of the essence and will of God (*Dogmatik*, II, p 130).

Pieper: The distinction between the antecedent and consequent will has been misused in the interest of synergism since Chrysostom's days. But we must maintain this distinction because it is Scriptural and because Calvinism denies it by ascribing to God in his relation to lost mankind two independent and contradictory wills (*Dogmatics*, I, p 454).

6. **Voluntas Arcana et Revelata**

- a) ***Arcana*: much about God's management of our life and the world remains unexplained.**

Job 5:9 He performs wonders that cannot be fathomed, miracles that cannot be counted.

Job 11:7-33 Can you fathom the mysteries of God? Can you probe the limits of the Almighty?

Job 37:23 The Almighty is beyond our reach and exalted in power; in his justice and great righteousness, he does not oppress.

Proverbs 25:2 It is the glory of God to conceal a matter; to search out a matter is the glory of kings.

Ecclesiastes 3:11 He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the hearts of men; yet they cannot fathom what God has done from beginning to end.

Ecclesiastes 8:17 Then I saw all that God has done. No one can comprehend what goes on under the sun. Despite all his efforts to search it out, man cannot discover its meaning. Even if a wise man claims he knows, he cannot really comprehend it.

- b) ***Revelata*: his plan of salvation is clearly revealed.**

Psalms 103:7 He made known his ways to Moses, his deeds to the people of Israel.

Psalms 147:19 He has revealed his word to Jacob, his laws and decrees to Israel.

John 15:15 I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you.

Romans 16:25-26 Now to him who is able to establish you by my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery hidden for long ages past, but now revealed and made known through the prophetic writings by the command of the eternal God, so that all nations might believe and obey him.

1 Corinthians 2:9,10 However, as it is written: "No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him"—¹⁰ but God has revealed it to us by his Spirit. The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God.

Ephesians 1:9 And he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ.

Colossians 1:26 ...the mystery that has been kept hidden for ages and generations, but is now disclosed to the saints

c) The distinction must be rejected if made in the Calvinistic sense:

- 1) *Arcana*: by a secret decree God has ordained certain men to salvation, others to eternal damnation;**
- 2) *Revelata*: but his revealed will speaks of universal grace.**

Gerhard: We most emphatically deny, yes, we pronounce that very assumption to be impious and blasphemous, that in those things which concern the matter of salvation a certain secret will which not only differs from the one revealed in the Word but is even contrary to the same must be supposed to exist (*Loci*, III, II, CCLXIX, p 201).

7. Voluntas Signi and Beneplaciti

a) Calvinists identify:

- 1) *Voluntas beneplaciti* with *voluntas arcana***
- 2) *Voluntas signi* with *voluntas revelata*
This makes the revealed will a mere *signum*, i.e., a sham.**

**b) *Signi*, the thing God indicates that he wishes for:
God acts as if he wants all men to be saved.**

**c) *Beneplaciti*, the thing God really wants:
God wants only the elect to be saved.**

Muller: The *voluntas decreti vel beneplaciti*, the will of the decree or of the

(divine) good pleasure, is the ultimate, effective, and absolutely unsearchable will of God which underlies the revealed will of God. It may therefore also be called the *voluntas arcana*, or hidden will, and the *voluntas decernens*, or decisive, deciding will of God. Lutheran orthodoxy use the term with reference to the work of salvation only in the sense that human beings cannot know the ultimate reason in the mind and will of God for the gracious salvation of some rather than others. The Reformed, by contrast, argue a hidden will of God to bestow special saving grace irresistibly upon the elect, a *voluntas decreti sive beneplaciti arcana*, more ultimate than the revealed will of God to offer salvation to all by means of a universal grace. This distinction is denied by the Lutherans as endangering the universal grace (*Dictionary*, p 331-332).

8. Voluntas Efficiens, Approbans, and Permittens

- a) ***Efficiens***: The will of God as source of all life and activity.
- b) ***Approbans***: The will of God with reference to the good deeds of man.
- c) ***Permittens***: This is the way God wills sin. He permits it. He does not approve. ***Permissio***: *Non actio, sed suspensio actionis*.

Calov: Furthermore, although God permits sin willingly, not unwillingly, (*volens, non invitus*) nevertheless, his will and permission are concerned with different objects; for his will is with reference to permission, but permission is with reference to sin (*Systema*, II, p 455).

- d) **The purpose of this distinction is clear:**
 - 1) **To harmonize the presence of evil with the will of God.**
 - 2) **Yet:**
 - a) **God's attitude must never be conceived as passive.**
 - b) **Therefore, also *permissio* is a kind of active will.**

9. Voluntas Legalis and Evangelica

- a) **Legalis.**

Exodus 20, Deuteronomy 5—the moral law as expressed in the Decalogue.

- b) **Evangelica.**

Ezekiel 33:11 Say to them, “As surely as I live, declares the Sovereign LORD, I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that they turn from their ways and live. Turn! Turn from your evil ways! Why will you die, O house of Israel?”

John 3:16 For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

1 Timothy 2:4 [God, our Savior] who wants all men to be saved and to come

to a knowledge of the truth.

- c) **This is a valid distinction, but it does not cover everything.**

5. Holy Trinity

- I. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are one God. Three distinct persons in the one divine essence, being, or nature are one God.**

- 1. God has one essence, being, substance, *essentia*, *substantia*, φύσις, οὐσία**

- a) Essence and nature in this connection are concrete nouns.**

- 1) They do not signify that which makes a thing what it is, its character or quality.**

- 2) They signify a substance, a real entity, a thing in itself.**

Chemnitz: The church, therefore, by the term “essence” understands not a universal term, as the philosophers speak of the human essence, but the divine essence which actually exists, which is communicable and common to the three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and is in each one in its entirety (*Loci, de tribus personis*, II, quarto, p 39).

Gerhard: The essence of men is a universal term (i.e., an abstraction) which does not in itself have an actual existence but is arrived at only by a thinking process and is grasped by the mind. The essence of the Godhead, however, is not something abstract (i.e., existing only in the mind), like a genus or species, but it actually exists, although it is communicable (*Loci*, III, III, II, XLIX, p 239).

Baier: By the term “essence” or οὐσία is understood the divine nature itself, as it is in itself in an absolute way, and which together with its attributes is most simply one and unique (*Comp.*, I, I, XXXIII, p 119).

Gerhard: The word οὐσία when used with reference to God signifies the numerically one and indivisible essence common to the three Persons of the Deity, which is not partially in the three Persons in such a way that a part of it is in the Father, a part in the Son, and a part in the Holy Spirit, but because of its infinity and immateriality it is in its entirety in the Father, in its entirety in the Son, and in its entirety in the Holy Spirit (*Loci*, III, III, II, XLVIII, p 238).

- b) Scripture uses the word “essence,” οὐσία, but only in the sense of “property,” not in the theological sense.**

Luke 15:12 The younger one said to his father, “Father, give me my share of the estate” (τῆς οὐσίας). So he divided his property (τὸν βίον) between them. (οὐσία = βίος)

c) The word “nature,” φύσις is a synonym of essence.

1) It denotes natural character.

-a) Nature in general.

Romans 1:26 Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural (παρὰ φύσιν) ones.

Romans 2:14,27 Indeed, when Gentiles, who do not have the law, do *by nature* things required by the law, they are a law for themselves, even though they do not have the law. ²⁷ The one who is not circumcised *physically* and yet obeys the law will condemn you who, even though you have the written code and circumcision, are a lawbreaker.

Romans 11:21,24 For if God did not spare the *natural* branches, he will not spare you either. After all, if you were cut out of an olive tree that is wild by nature (κατὰ φύσιν), and contrary to nature (παρὰ φύσιν) were grafted into a cultivated olive tree, how much more readily will these, the *natural* branches, be grafted into their own olive tree!

1 Corinthians 11:14 Does not the very *nature* of things teach you that if a man has long hair, it is a disgrace to him.

Galatians 2:15 We who are Jews *by birth* and not “Gentile sinners”...

Galatians 4:8 Formerly, when you did not know God, you were slaves to those who *by nature* are not gods.

Ephesians 2:3 All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were *by nature* objects of wrath.

James 1:23 Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like a man who looks at his [*natural*] face in a mirror

-b) God’s nature.

2 Peter 1:4 Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine *nature* (φύσις) and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.

2) It is used metonymically (abstract for concrete).

James 3:7 All *kinds* (φύσις) of animals, birds, reptiles and creatures of the sea are being tamed and have been tamed by man.

2. God is three persons (person, *persona*, ὑπόστασις, πρόσωπον).

a) A person is *quod proprie subsistit*, that is, it has self-consciousness and self-determination.

Augsburg Confession I, 2-4 There is one Divine Essence which is called and which is God: eternal, without body, without parts, of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness, the Maker and Preserver of all things, visible and invisible; and yet there are three Persons, of the same essence and power, who also are co-eternal, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. And the term “person” they use as the Fathers have used it, to signify, not a part or quality in another, but that which subsists of itself (*quod proprie subsistit*).

Chemnitz: Peter, Paul, John are three persons, to whom one human nature is common, but they differ very much as to 1) substance, 2) time, 3) will, 4) power, 5) action.... But in the Trinity the Persons are not distinguished in the way one angel is from another, one man from another man, nor do they differ in respect to time, will, power, action, but in the Persons of the Trinity there is co-eternity, one will, one power, one action (*Loci*, III, III, II, XLIX, p 239).

b) The Greek word ὑπόστασις (*suppositum, fundamentum*) is not used in the meaning of “person” in the New Testament It means “confidence.” In one case it is used in a theological sense, “essence,” “being.”

2 Corinthians 9:4 For if any Macedonians come with me and find you unprepared, we—not to say anything about you—would be ashamed of having been so *confident*.

2 Corinthians 11:17 In this self-*confident* boasting I am not talking as the Lord would, but as a fool.

Hebrews 3:14 We have come to share in Christ if we hold firmly till the end the *confidence* we had at first.

Hebrews 11:1 Now faith is *being sure* of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.

Hebrews 1:3 The Son is the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of his *being*, sustaining all things by his powerful word.

Note: Here ὑπόστασις means essence or nature, not person. The meaning of *hypostasis* here is the opposite of later church usage. On the *hypostasis/persona* problem see Muller, *Dictionary of Latin and Greek Theological Terms*, p 223-227.

The main difficulties were that the Latins were using *substantia* for the oneness of God, and the Greeks were using its literal equivalent ὑπόστασις for the three-ness of God.

c) The word πρόσωπον (*facies, vultus*) is not used in the theological sense in the Bible. In the New Testament it has a range of meanings:

1) Face.

Matthew 6:16-17 When you fast, do not look somber as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their *faces* to show men they are fasting. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full. ¹⁷ But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face,

Matthew 17:2,6 There he was transfigured before them. His *face* shone like the sun, and his clothes became as white as the light. ⁶ When the disciples heard this, they fell *facedown* to the ground, terrified.

2) Adverbially, it means: before, on, in the presence of, etc. This equals the Hebrew לְפָנַי

Malachi 3:1 “See, I will send my messenger, who will prepare the way before me [before my face]. Then suddenly the Lord you are seeking will come to his temple; the messenger of the covenant, whom you desire, will come,” says the LORD Almighty.

Matthew 11:10 This is the one about whom it is written: “I will send my messenger ahead of you [before your face], who will prepare your way before you.”

Luke 2:31 ...which you have prepared in the *sight* of all people

Acts 3:13,20 The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of our fathers, has glorified his servant Jesus. You handed him over to be killed, and you disowned him *before* Pilate, though he had decided to let him go.

Acts 5:41 The apostles left the [face of] Sanhedrin, rejoicing because they had been counted worthy of suffering disgrace for the Name.

2 Corinthians 2:10 If you forgive anyone, I also forgive him. And what I have forgiven—if there was anything to forgive—I have forgiven *in the sight* of Christ for your sake,

3) It is used metonymically: person (*pars pro toto*).

2 Corinthians 1:11 Then many [faces] will give thanks on our behalf for the gracious favor granted us in answer to the prayers of many.

2 Corinthians 4:6 For God, who said, “Let light shine out of darkness,” made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the *face* of Christ.

Colossians 2:1 I want you to know how much I am struggling for you and for those at Laodicea, and for all who have not met *me personally* [my face in the flesh].

4) It is used as an intensive pronoun.

Luke 9:51,53 As the time approached for him to be taken up to heaven, Jesus *resolutely set out* [set his face] for Jerusalem.⁵³ but the people there did not welcome him, because he was heading for Jerusalem.

Revelation 20:11 Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. Earth and sky fled from his *presence*, and there was no place for them.

5) It is applied to inanimate things.

Luke 12:56 Hypocrites! You know how to interpret the *appearance* of the earth and the sky. How is it that you don't know how to interpret this present time?

Luke 21:35 For it will come upon all those who live on the *face* of the whole earth.

Acts 17:26 From one man he made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole [face of the] earth; and he determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live.

6) It means “person” with reference to social, financial, political, etc. standing.

Luke 20:21 So the spies questioned him: “Teacher, we know that you speak and teach what is right, and that you do not *show partiality* but teach the way of God in accordance with the truth.” □ □ □ [receive the face = λαμβάνειν πρόσωπον]

Galatians 2:6 As for those who seemed to be important—whatever they were makes no difference to me; God does not *judge by external appearance*—those men added nothing to my message.

Jude 16 These men are grumblers and faultfinders; they follow their own evil desires; they boast about themselves and *flatter others* [admire the face] for their own advantage.

7) See also προσωπολημπτέω and its derivatives.

Acts 10:34 Then Peter began to speak: “I now realize how true it is that God does not *show favoritism*.”

Romans 2:11 For God does not *show favoritism*.

James 2:1, 9 My brothers, as believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ, don't *show favoritism*.⁹ But if you *show favoritism*, you sin and are convicted by the law as lawbreakers.

3. The doctrine of the Holy Trinity is to be found in both the Old Testament and the New Testament

a) In the New Testament we find various kinds of evidence.

1) We find direct enumerations of the three persons.

Matthew 28:19,20 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.

2 Corinthians 13:14 May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

1 John 5:7 For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one. KJV [There is virtually no support for the inclusion of this reading in the Greek text.]

2) We find reference to the three persons.

Matthew 3:16,17 As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting on him.¹⁷ And a voice from heaven said, “This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased.”

Luke 1:35 The angel answered, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God.”

John 14:16 And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever.

John 15:26 When the Counselor comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father, he will testify about me.

Acts 10:38 God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him.

1 Corinthians 12:3-6 Therefore I tell you that no one who is speaking by the Spirit of God says, “Jesus be cursed,” and no one can say, “Jesus is Lord,” except by the Holy Spirit.⁴ There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit.⁵ There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord.⁶ There are different kinds of working, but the same God works all of them in all men.

Ephesians 2:18 For through [Christ] we both have access to the Father by one Spirit.

Ephesians 4:4-6 There is one body and one Spirit— just as you were called to one hope when you were called—⁵ one Lord, one faith, one baptism;⁶ one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

1 Peter 1:2 [You] who have been chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through the sanctifying work of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and sprinkling by his blood.

b) In the Old Testament we find various kinds of evidence.

1) We find references to three persons.

Isaiah 11:2 The Spirit of the LORD will rest on him— the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the Spirit of counsel and of power, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD.

Isaiah 42:1 Here is my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen one in whom I delight; I will put my Spirit on him and he will bring justice to the nations.

Isaiah 61:1 The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me, because the LORD has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners.

Isaiah 63:9,10,14 In all their distress he too was distressed, and the angel of his presence (מַלְאֲכֵי פָנָיו) saved them. In his love and mercy he redeemed them; he lifted them up and carried them all the days of old.¹⁰ Yet they rebelled and grieved his Holy Spirit (אֶת־רוּחַ קְדֹשׁוֹ). So he turned and became their enemy and he himself fought against them.¹⁴ Like cattle that go down to the plain, they were given rest by the Spirit of the LORD. This is how you guided your people to make for yourself a glorious name.

Compare Genesis 1:1-3 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.² Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.³ And God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light.

John 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

2 Samuel 23:2 The Spirit of the LORD spoke through me; his word was on my tongue.

Psalms 33:6 By the word of the LORD (בְּדִבְרֵי יְהוָה) were the heavens made, their starry host by the breath of his mouth (בְּרוּחַ פִּי).

Quenstedt: He already refers to Gn 1:2,3 where mention is made of God speaking, of the Word, etc., and to Ps 33:6 where David designates the Father by the name Jehovah, which in this place is taken in a personal sense and is expressly distinguished from the Word and the Spirit of his mouth (*TDP*, I, I, IX, XIV, IV, p 323).

2) We find reference to two persons.

-a) Father and Son.

Genesis 19:24; Then the LORD rained down burning sulfur on Sodom and Gomorrah—from the LORD out of the heavens.

Psalm 2:2,7 The kings of the earth take their stand and the rulers gather together against the LORD and against his Anointed One. ⁷ I will proclaim the decree of the LORD: He said to me, “You are my Son; today I have become your Father.”

Psalm 45:6,7 Your throne, O God, will last for ever and ever; a scepter of justice will be the scepter of your kingdom. ⁷ You love righteousness and hate wickedness; therefore God, your God, has set you above your companions by anointing you with the oil of joy.

Psalm 110:1 The LORD says to my Lord: “Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet.”

Jeremiah 23:5-6 “The days are coming,” declares the LORD, “when I will raise up to David a righteous Branch, a King who will reign wisely and do what is just and right in the land. ⁶ In his days Judah will be saved and Israel will live in safety. This is the name by which he will be called: The LORD Our Righteousness.”

Hosea 1:7 Yet I will show love to the house of Judah; and I will save them—not by bow, sword or battle, or by horses and horsemen, but by the LORD their God.

Micah 5:2 But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times.

-b) Son and Spirit.

Zechariah 12:10 And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and supplication. They will look on me, the one they have pierced, and they will mourn for him as one mourns for an only child, and grieve bitterly for him as one grieves for a firstborn son.

-c) Lord (God) and Spirit.

Numbers 11:25,29 Then the LORD came down in the cloud and spoke with him, and he took of the Spirit that was on him and put the Spirit on the seventy elders. When the Spirit rested on them, they prophesied, but they did not do so again. ²⁹ But Moses replied, “Are you jealous for my sake? I wish that all the LORD’s people were prophets and that the LORD would put his Spirit on them!”

Numbers 24:2 When Balaam looked out and saw Israel encamped tribe by tribe, the Spirit of God came upon him.

1 Samuel 10:6 The Spirit of the LORD will come upon you in power, and you will prophesy with them; and you will be changed into a different person.

Job 33:4 The Spirit of God (רוח-אל) has made me; the breath of the Almighty (נְשֵׁמַת שֶׁדַי) gives me life.

Psalms 51:11 Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me.

Isaiah 44:1-3 But now listen, O Jacob, my servant, Israel, whom I have chosen. ² This is what the LORD says— he who made you, who formed you in the womb, and who will help you: Do not be afraid, O Jacob, my servant, Jeshurun, whom I have chosen. ³ For I will pour water on the thirsty land, and streams on the dry ground; I will pour out my Spirit on your offspring, and my blessing on your descendants.

Joel 2:28 And afterward, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions.

Note: The Jews understood there was a plurality of persons. See Edersheim, *Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, p 79-86.

Matthew 22:43,44; He said to them, “How is it then that David, speaking by the Spirit, calls him ‘Lord’? For he says, ⁴⁴ ‘The Lord said to my Lord: Sit at my right hand until I put your enemies under your feet.’”

John 1:33 I would not have known him, except that the one who sent me to baptize with water told me, “The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and remain is he who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.”

John 5:18 For this reason the Jews tried all the harder to kill him; not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God.

Acts 2:16-17 No, this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: ¹⁷ “In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams.”

c) It will be noticed that the Old Testament references are less definite than those of the New Testament.

Gerhard: 1.) We do not say that there is the same clarity and obviousness in the testimonies about the Trinity in the Old and New Testament, because a clearer revelation of this mystery was reserved for the New Testament. 2.) Nor do we

mean that in a dispute against a stubborn opponent one should begin with the more obscure statements of the Old Testament. But we assert merely that for supporting the doctrine of the Trinity certain testimonies can and should be brought from the Old Testament, since God from the beginning always revealed himself in such a way that the church at all times so recognized, invoked, and worshiped him—because in one undivided Essence there are three distinct persons (*Exeges.* 1, III, 20; Baier II, 47).

4. Other passages which refer to God in the plural must be viewed in the light of the above passages.

a) Plural Pronouns (free-standing pronouns or those included in the verb form) refer to the one God.

Genesis 1:26 Then God said, “Let *us* make man in *our* image, in *our* likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.”

Genesis 3:22 And the LORD God said, “The man has now become like one of *us*, knowing good and evil. He must not be allowed to reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat, and live forever.”

Genesis 11:7 Come, let *us* go down and confuse their language so they will not understand each other.

Isaiah 6:8 Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, “Whom shall *I* send? And who will go for *us*?” And I said, “Here am I. Send me!”

b) The common Hebrew word for the one God is a plural form, אֱלֹהִים. This use of the plural as the regular term for God is unique to biblical Hebrew.

1) As a rule, when אֱלֹהִים is a name of the one God, the verb is singular, also the adjective.

The plural form אֱלֹהִים is usually described as a plural of majesty. It is not intended as a true plural when used of the true God. This is seen in the fact that the noun *'elohim* is consistently used with singular verb forms and with adjectives and pronouns in the singular (*TWBOT*, I, p 93).

2) For examples of plural forms with the name of the true God see the Hebrew text of:

Genesis 20:13; 35:7; Joshua 24:19; 1 Samuel 17:26; 2 Samuel 7:23; Psalm 58:11.

c) Three-fold repetitions refer to the one God.

Numbers 6:23-27; Tell Aaron and his sons, “This is how you are to bless the Israelites. Say to them: ²⁴ ‘The LORD bless you and keep you; ²⁵ the LORD make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you; ²⁶ the LORD turn his face

toward you and give you peace.’²⁷ So they will put my name on the Israelites, and I will bless them.”

Isaiah 6:3 And they were calling to one another: “Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory.”

5. The references to the special Angel of the Lord (Angel of God, Angel of the Covenant, Angel of his Presence) are an indication of the Trinity.

a) In the New Testament “angel of the Lord” denotes a created angel.

Matthew 1:20,24 But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, “Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit.”²⁴ When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife.

Matthew 2:13 When they had gone, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. “Get up,” he said, “take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you, for Herod is going to search for the child to kill him.”

Luke 1:11,19 Then an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing at the right side of the altar of incense.¹⁹ The angel answered, “I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God, and I have been sent to speak to you and to tell you this good news.”

Luke 2:9,10 An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified.¹⁰ But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people.”

Acts 8:26 Now an angel of the Lord said to Philip, “Go south to the road—the desert road—that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza.”

Acts 10:3 One day at about three in the afternoon he had a vision. He distinctly saw an angel of God, who came to him and said, “Cornelius!”

Acts 12:7 Suddenly an angel of the Lord appeared and a light shone in the cell. He struck Peter on the side and woke him up. “Quick, get up!” he said, and the chains fell off Peter’s wrists.

b) In the Old Testament during the time of the prophets “angel of the Lord” also denotes a created angel or a human messenger.

2 Samuel 24:16 When the angel stretched out his hand to destroy Jerusalem, the LORD was grieved because of the calamity and said to the angel who was afflicting the people, “Enough! Withdraw your hand.” The angel of the LORD was then at the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite.

1 Kings 19:5,7 Then he lay down under the tree and fell asleep. All at once an angel touched him and said, “Get up and eat.”⁷ The angel of the LORD came back a second time and touched him and said, “Get up and eat, for the journey is

too much for you.”

2 Kings 19:35 That night the angel of the LORD went out and put to death a hundred and eighty-five thousand men in the Assyrian camp. When the people got up the next morning—there were all the dead bodies!

Psalms 34:7/8 The angel of the LORD encamps around those who fear him, and he delivers them. [?]

Psalms 35:5 May they be like chaff before the wind, with the angel of the LORD driving them away.

Haggai 1:13 Then Haggai, *the LORD’s messenger*, gave this message of the LORD to the people: “I am with you,” declares the LORD.

Malachi 2:7 “For the lips of a priest ought to preserve knowledge, and from his mouth men should seek instruction—because he is *the messenger of the LORD Almighty*.

c) Before the time of the prophets (and at its close) “Angel of the Lord” (מַלְאָךְ יְהוָה) often denotes the Son of God.

Genesis 16:9,10,13 Then the angel of the LORD told her, “Go back to your mistress and submit to her.”¹⁰ The angel added, “I will so increase your descendants that they will be too numerous to count.”¹³ She gave this name to the LORD who spoke to her: “You are the God who sees me,” for she said, “I have now seen the One who sees me.”

Genesis 21:17,18 God heard the boy crying, and the angel of God called to Hagar from heaven and said to her, “What is the matter, Hagar? Do not be afraid; God has heard the boy crying as he lies there.”¹⁸ Lift the boy up and take him by the hand, for I will make him into a great nation.”

Genesis 22:11,12,15-18 But the angel of the LORD called out to him from heaven, “Abraham! Abraham!” “Here I am,” he replied.¹² “Do not lay a hand on the boy,” he said. “Do not do anything to him. Now I know that you fear God, because you have not withheld from me your son, your only son.”¹⁵ The angel of the LORD called to Abraham from heaven a second time¹⁶ and said, “I swear by myself, declares the LORD, that because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son,¹⁷ I will surely bless you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the seashore. Your descendants will take possession of the cities of their enemies,¹⁸ and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed, because you have obeyed me.”

Exodus 3:2-6 There the angel of the LORD appeared to him in flames of fire from within a bush. Moses saw that though the bush was on fire it did not burn up.³ So Moses thought, “I will go over and see this strange sight—why the bush does not burn up.”⁴ When the LORD saw that he had gone over to look, God called to him from within the bush, “Moses! Moses!” And Moses said, “Here I am.”⁵ “Do not come any closer,” God said. “Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground.”⁶ Then he said, “I am the God of your

father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob.” At this, Moses hid his face, because he was afraid to look at God.

Judges 6:11-24 The angel of the LORD came and sat down under the oak in Ophrah that belonged to Joash the Abiezrite, where his son Gideon was threshing wheat in a winepress to keep it from the Midianites. ¹² When the angel of the LORD appeared to Gideon, he said, “The LORD is with you, mighty warrior.” ¹³ “But sir,” Gideon replied, “if the LORD is with us, why has all this happened to us? Where are all his wonders that our fathers told us about when they said, ‘Did not the LORD bring us up out of Egypt?’ But now the LORD has abandoned us and put us into the hand of Midian.” ¹⁴ The LORD turned to him and said, “Go in the strength you have and save Israel out of Midian’s hand. Am I not sending you?” ¹⁵ “But Lord,” Gideon asked, “how can I save Israel? My clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my family.” ¹⁶ The LORD answered, “I will be with you, and you will strike down all the Midianites together.” ¹⁷ Gideon replied, “If now I have found favor in your eyes, give me a sign that it is really you talking to me.” ¹⁸ Please do not go away until I come back and bring my offering and set it before you.” And the LORD said, “I will wait until you return.” ¹⁹ Gideon went in, prepared a young goat, and from an ephah of flour he made bread without yeast. Putting the meat in a basket and its broth in a pot, he brought them out and offered them to him under the oak. ²⁰ The angel of God said to him, “Take the meat and the unleavened bread, place them on this rock, and pour out the broth.” And Gideon did so. ²¹ With the tip of the staff that was in his hand, the angel of the LORD touched the meat and the unleavened bread. Fire flared from the rock, consuming the meat and the bread. And the angel of the LORD disappeared. ²² When Gideon realized that it was the angel of the LORD, he exclaimed, “Ah, Sovereign LORD! I have seen the angel of the LORD face to face!” ²³ But the LORD said to him, “Peace! Do not be afraid. You are not going to die.”

Judges 13:3-23 The angel of the LORD appeared to her and said, “You are sterile and childless, but you are going to conceive and have a son. ⁴ Now see to it that you drink no wine or other fermented drink and that you do not eat anything unclean, ⁵ because you will conceive and give birth to a son. No razor may be used on his head, because the boy is to be a Nazirite, set apart to God from birth, and he will begin the deliverance of Israel from the hands of the Philistines.” ⁶ Then the woman went to her husband and told him, “A man of God came to me. He looked like an angel of God, very awesome. I didn’t ask him where he came from, and he didn’t tell me his name. ⁷ But he said to me, ‘You will conceive and give birth to a son. Now then, drink no wine or other fermented drink and do not eat anything unclean, because the boy will be a Nazirite of God from birth until the day of his death.’” ⁸ Then Manoah prayed to the LORD: “O Lord, I beg you, let the man of God you sent to us come again to teach us how to bring up the boy who is to be born.” ⁹ God heard Manoah, and the angel of God came again to the woman while she was out in the field; but her husband Manoah was not with her. ¹⁰ The woman hurried to tell her husband, “He’s here! The man who appeared to me the other day!” ¹¹ Manoah got up and followed his wife. When he came to the man, he said, “Are you the one who talked to my wife?” “I am,” he said. ¹² So Manoah asked him, “When your words are fulfilled, what is to be the rule for the boy’s life and work?” ¹³ The angel of the LORD answered, “Your wife must do all that I have told her. ¹⁴ She must not eat anything that comes from the grapevine, nor drink any wine or

other fermented drink nor eat anything unclean. She must do everything I have commanded her.”¹⁵ Manoah said to the angel of the LORD, “We would like you to stay until we prepare a young goat for you.”¹⁶ The angel of the LORD replied, “Even though you detain me, I will not eat any of your food. But if you prepare a burnt offering, offer it to the LORD.” (Manoah did not realize that it was the angel of the LORD.)¹⁷ Then Manoah inquired of the angel of the LORD, “What is your name, so that we may honor you when your word comes true?”¹⁸ He replied, “Why do you ask my name? It is beyond understanding.” [or Wonderful]¹⁹ Then Manoah took a young goat, together with the grain offering, and sacrificed it on a rock to the LORD. And the LORD did an amazing thing while Manoah and his wife watched:²⁰ As the flame blazed up from the altar toward heaven, the angel of the LORD ascended in the flame. Seeing this, Manoah and his wife fell with their faces to the ground.²¹ When the angel of the LORD did not show himself again to Manoah and his wife, Manoah realized that it was the angel of the LORD.²² “We are doomed to die!” he said to his wife. “We have seen God!”²³ But his wife answered, “If the LORD had meant to kill us, he would not have accepted a burnt offering and grain offering from our hands, nor shown us all these things or now told us this.”

Zechariah 3:1-4 Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the LORD, and Satan standing at his right side to accuse him.² The LORD said to Satan, “The LORD rebuke you, Satan! The LORD, who has chosen Jerusalem, rebuke you! Is not this man a burning stick snatched from the fire?”³ Now Joshua was dressed in filthy clothes as he stood before the angel.⁴ The angel said to those who were standing before him, “Take off his filthy clothes.” Then he said to Joshua, “See, I have taken away your sin, and I will put rich garments on you.”

Genesis 28:12-15 He saw a stairway resting on the earth, with its top reaching to heaven, and the angels of God were ascending and descending on it.¹³ There above it stood the LORD, and he said: “I am the LORD, the God of your father Abraham and the God of Isaac. I will give you and your descendants the land on which you are lying.¹⁴ Your descendants will be like the dust of the earth, and you will spread out to the west and to the east, to the north and to the south. All peoples on earth will be blessed through you and your offspring.¹⁵ I am with you and will watch over you wherever you go, and I will bring you back to this land. I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you.”

Genesis 31:11,13 The angel of God said to me in the dream, “Jacob.” I answered, “Here I am.”¹³ “I am the God of Bethel, where you anointed a pillar and where you made a vow to me. Now leave this land at once and go back to your native land.”

Exodus 13:21 By day the LORD went ahead of them in a pillar of cloud to guide them on their way and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, so that they could travel by day or night.

Compare Exodus 14:19 Then the angel of God, who had been traveling in front of Israel’s army, withdrew and went behind them. The pillar of cloud also moved from in front and stood behind them.

Isaiah 63:9 In all their distress he too was distressed, and the angel of his

presence saved them. In his love and mercy he redeemed them; he lifted them up and carried them all the days of old.

Joshua 5:13–6:2 Now when Joshua was near Jericho, he looked up and saw a man standing in front of him with a drawn sword in his hand. Joshua went up to him and asked, “Are you for us or for our enemies?” ¹⁴ “Neither,” he replied, “but as commander of the army of the LORD I have now come.” Then Joshua fell facedown to the ground in reverence, and asked him, “What message does my Lord have for his servant?” ¹⁵ The commander of the LORD’s army replied, “Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy.” And Joshua did so. ^{6:1} Now Jericho was tightly shut up because of the Israelites. No one went out and no one came in. ² Then the LORD said to Joshua, “See, I have delivered Jericho into your hands, along with its king and its fighting men”.

d) The special Angel of the Lord is clearly distinguished from a created angel.

Exodus 33:2-3, 12-17 “I will send an angel before you and drive out the Canaanites, Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites. ³ Go up to the land flowing with milk and honey. But I will not go with you, because you are a stiff-necked people and I might destroy you on the way.” ¹² Moses said to the LORD, “You have been telling me, ‘Lead these people,’ but you have not let me know whom you will send with me. You have said, ‘I know you by name and you have found favor with me.’” ¹³ If you are pleased with me, teach me your ways so I may know you and continue to find favor with you. Remember that this nation is your people.” ¹⁴ The LORD replied, “My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest.” ¹⁵ Then Moses said to him, “If your Presence does not go with us, do not send us up from here. ¹⁶ How will anyone know that you are pleased with me and with your people unless you go with us? What else will distinguish me and your people from all the other people on the face of the earth?” ¹⁷ And the LORD said to Moses, “I will do the very thing you have asked, because I am pleased with you and I know you by name.”

Compare Isaiah 63:9 In all their distress he too was distressed, and the angel of his presence saved them. In his love and mercy he redeemed them; he lifted them up and carried them all the days of old.

Malachi 3:19 “See, I will send my messenger, who will prepare the way before me. Then suddenly the Lord you are seeking will come to his temple; the messenger of the covenant, whom you desire, will come,” says the LORD Almighty.

Heinrich Vogel (d 1982): The unity of Scripture would be broken if the central point of Old Testament revelation was a created angel, while that of the New Testament is the incarnation of the God-man. The Angel of the LORD is obviously one of the persons of the Trinity, for in several of these passages He is identified as God, He performs divine acts, receives divine worship, and displays divine attributes. He is not God the Father, who is the person of the Trinity who sends the Angel of the LORD. There are then two remaining possibilities. He is either the second person of the Trinity, the Son of God, or the third person, the Holy Spirit. The latter possibility is virtually excluded by the fact that there are many rather direct references in the Old Testament to the

Holy Ghost, the third person of the Trinity, and that these references are easily recognizable as they designate Him simply as the Spirit of God (“The Angel of the Lord,” 1976 essay, p 6. Also *WLQ* 1976, p 105-118).

6. The deity of the Son is attested by various witnesses.

a) Messianic prophecies.

Isaiah 9:6 For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. פְּלֵא יוֹעֵץ אֵל גִּבּוֹר אֲבִיעַד שֶׁר־שָׁלוֹם

Micah 5:2 But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times. מוֹצֵאֲתָיו מִקֶּדֶם מִיָּמֵי עוֹלָם

b) John the Baptist.

John 1:27,30,34 He is the one who comes after me, the thongs of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. ³⁰ This is the one I meant when I said, “A man who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.” ³⁴ I have seen and I testify that this is the Son of God.

c) Angels.

Luke 1:35 The angel answered, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God.”

Luke 2:10-14 But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. ¹¹ Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. ¹² This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.” ¹³ Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, ¹⁴ “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests.”

d) Demons.

Matthew 8:29 “What do you want with us, Son of God?” they shouted. “Have you come here to torture us before the appointed time?”

Mark 1:24 What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are—the Holy One of God!

Mark 3:11 Whenever the evil spirits saw him, they fell down before him and cried out, “You are the Son of God.”

Luke 4:41 Moreover, demons came out of many people, shouting, “You are the Son of God!” But he rebuked them and would not allow them to speak, because they knew he was the Christ.

e) Particularly by the Father.

Matthew 3:17 And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased."

Matthew 17:5 While he was still speaking, a bright cloud enveloped them, and a voice from the cloud said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased. Listen to him!"

John 12:28 "Father, glorify your name!" Then a voice came from heaven, "I have glorified it, and will glorify it again."

John 5:32,37 There is another who testifies in my favor, and I know that his testimony about me is valid.³⁷ And the Father who sent me has himself testified concerning me. You have never heard his voice nor seen his form.

John 8:18 I am one who testifies for myself; my other witness is the Father, who sent me.

Hebrews 1:5 For to which of the angels did God ever say, "You are my Son; today I have become your Father"? Or again, "I will be his Father, and he will be my Son"?

1 John 5:9 We accept man's testimony, but God's testimony is greater because it is the testimony of God, which he has given about his Son.

f) By Jesus himself:

1) Jesus claims to be the Father's Son.

Matthew 11:27 All things have been committed to me by my Father. No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

Mark 14:61,62 But Jesus remained silent and gave no answer. Again the high priest asked him, "Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed One?"⁶² "I am," said Jesus. "And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven."

John 3:16 For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

John 4:25-26 The woman said, "I know that Messiah (called Christ) is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us."²⁶ Then Jesus declared, "I who speak to you am he."

John 5:17,18 Jesus said to them, "My Father is always at his work to this very day, and I, too, am working."¹⁸ For this reason the Jews tried all the harder to kill him; not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own Father (*πατέρα ἰδιον*), making himself equal with God.

John 9:35-38 Jesus heard that they had thrown him out, and when he found him, he said, “Do you believe in the Son of Man?” ³⁶ “Who is he, sir?” the man asked. “Tell me so that I may believe in him.” ³⁷ Jesus said, “You have now seen him; in fact, he is the one speaking with you.” ³⁸ Then the man said, “Lord, I believe,” and he worshiped him.

John 10:30 I and the Father are one.

John 14:9-11 Jesus answered: “Don’t you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? ¹⁰ Don’t you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you are not just my own. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work. ¹¹ Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or at least believe on the evidence of the miracles themselves.”

John 17:21 That all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me.

2) Jesus possesses divine attributes.

Eternal

John 8:58 “I tell you the truth,” Jesus answered, “before Abraham was born, I am!”

John 17:5 And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began.

Revelation 1:8,17,18 “I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God, “who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty.” ¹⁷ When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. Then he placed his right hand on me and said: “Do not be afraid. I am the First and the Last. ¹⁸ I am the Living One; I was dead, and behold I am alive for ever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and Hades.”

Powerful

Matthew 28:18 Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.”

Present everywhere

Matthew 18:20 For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them.

Matthew 28:20 And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.

Giving life

John 5:26 For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son to have life in himself.

John 10:18 No one takes [my life] from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again. This command I received from my Father.

John 14:6 Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

3) Jesus performs divine works.

Miracles

John 10:37,38 Do not believe me unless I do what my Father does. ³⁸ But if I do it, even though you do not believe me, believe the miracles, that you may know and understand that the Father is in me, and I in the Father.

John 14:11 Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or at least believe on the evidence of the miracles themselves.

John 15:24 If I had not done among them what no one else did, they would not be guilty of sin. But now they have seen these miracles, and yet they have hated both me and my Father.

Resurrection and Judgment

John 5:21,22 For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so the Son gives life to whom he is pleased to give it. ²² Moreover, the Father judges no one, but has entrusted all judgment to the Son.

John 6:39,40 And this is the will of him who sent me, that I shall lose none of all that he has given me, but raise them up at the last day. ⁴⁰ For my Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.

John 11:25 Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies."

John 8:12 When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."

John 12:46 I have come into the world as a light, so that no one who believes in me should stay in darkness.

4) Jesus receives divine honor.

John 5:23 That all may honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father, who sent him.

g) By the apostles, who ascribe to Christ:

1) Divine names (ὀνοματικῶς).

Matthew 14:33 Then those who were in the boat worshiped him, saying, “Truly you are the Son of God.”

Matthew 16:16 Simon Peter answered, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”

John 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

John 1:14 The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

John 1:18 No one has ever seen God, but God the One and Only, who is at the Father’s side, has made him known. μονογενῆς θεὸς ὁ ὢν εἰς τὸν κόλπον τοῦ πατρὸς

John 1:49 Then Nathanael declared, “Rabbi, you are the Son of God; you are the King of Israel.”

John 6:69 We believe and know that you are the Holy One of God.

John 20:28 Thomas said to him, “My Lord and my God!”

Acts 20:28 Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood.

Romans 9:5 Theirs are the patriarchs, and from them is traced the human ancestry of Christ, who is God over all, forever praised! Amen.

Titus 2:13 We wait for the blessed hope—the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ.

1 John 5:20 We know also that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, so that we may know him who is true. And we are in him who is true—even in his Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life.

Colossians 2:9 For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form. πᾶν τὸ πλήρωμα τῆς θεότητος σωματικῶς

2) Divine attributes (ἰδιωματικῶς).

Eternity

John 1:1,2 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²He was with God in the beginning.

Colossians 1:17 He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.

Hebrews 13:8 Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.

Omniscience

John 2:25 He did not need man's testimony about man, for he knew what was in a man.

John 21:17 The third time he said to him, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, "Do you love me?" He said, "Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Feed my sheep."

Omnipotence

1 Peter 3:22 [Christ] has gone into heaven and is at God's right hand—with angels, authorities and powers in submission to him.

3) Divine works (ἐνεργειῶς).

Creation

John 1:3 Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.

Colossians 1:16 For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him.

Providence

1 Corinthians 8:6 Yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom all things came and for whom we live; and there is but one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things came and through whom we live.

Hebrews 1:3 The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven.

Revelation 11:15 The seventh angel sounded his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, which said: "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he will reign for ever and ever."

Resurrection

Philippians 3:21 [Christ] by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.

Judgment

Acts 10:42 He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one whom God appointed as judge of the living and the dead.

Romans 2:16 This will take place on the day when God will judge men's secrets through Jesus Christ, as my gospel declares.

2 Corinthians 5:10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.

4) Divine honor (λατρευτικῶς).

Acts 5:31 God exalted him to his own right hand as Prince and Savior that he might give repentance and forgiveness of sins to Israel.

Acts 7:55-56 But Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, looked up to heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God.⁵⁶ "Look," he said, "I see heaven open and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God."

Ephesians 1:20 ...his mighty strength, which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms.

Philippians 2:9-11 Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name,¹⁰ that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,¹¹ and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Hebrews 1:6 And again, when God brings his firstborn into the world, he says, "Let all God's angels worship him."

Revelation 5:11-14 Then I looked and heard the voice of many angels, numbering thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand. They encircled the throne and the living creatures and the elders.¹² In a loud voice they sang: "Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise!"¹³ Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all that is in them, singing: "To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and honor and glory and power, for ever and ever!"¹⁴ The four living creatures said, "Amen," and the elders fell down and worshiped.

John Hick: For if Jesus was literally God incarnate, the second person of the holy Trinity living a human life, so that the Christian religion was

founded by God-on-earth in person, it is then very hard to escape the traditional view that all mankind must be converted to the Christian faith (*God Has Many Names*, p 19).

7. Regarding the Holy Spirit, Scripture predicates personality and divinity.

a) Personality—he is not an abstract power or influence emanating from God.

1) He is coordinated with the Father and Son, who are persons.

Matthew 28:19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

2 Corinthians 13:14 May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

Matthew 12:31,32 And so I tell you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven.
³²Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but anyone who speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come.

John 14:16, 26 And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever— ²⁶ But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.

John 15:26 “When the *Counselor* comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father, he will testify about me.

Compare 1 John 2:1 My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have *one who speaks* to the Father in our defense—Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. [Christ also is Paraclete.]

2) Personal activities are ascribed to him.

Romans 8:27 He who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God’s will.

1 Corinthians 12:11 All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he gives them to each one, just as he determines.

Matthew 1:18 This is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit.

Matthew 4:1 Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil.

Luke 4:18 The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed.

Matthew 10:20 For it will not be you speaking, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you.

Luke 12:12 For the Holy Spirit will teach you at that time what you should say.

John 14:26 But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.

John 15:26 When the Counselor comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father, he will testify about me.

John 16:7,8, 13 But I tell you the truth: It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. ⁸ When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment: ¹³ But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come.

Acts 8:29 The Spirit told Philip, "Go to that chariot and stay near it."

Acts 20:28 Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood.

Romans 8:26 In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express.

1 Corinthians 2:10 But God has revealed it to us by his Spirit. The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God.

1 Corinthians 3:16 Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit lives in you?

1 John 5:6 This is the one who came by water and blood—Jesus Christ. He did not come by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit who testifies, because the Spirit is the truth.

Revelation 2:7 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, I will give the right to eat from the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.

Romans 15:30 I urge you, brothers, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to join me in my struggle by praying to God for me.

Isaiah 63:10 Yet they rebelled and grieved his Holy Spirit. So he turned and became their enemy and he himself fought against them.

Acts 5:3 Then Peter said, “Ananias, how is it that Satan has so filled your heart that you have lied to the Holy Spirit and have kept for yourself some of the money you received for the land?”

Acts 7:51 You stiff-necked people, with uncircumcised hearts and ears! You are just like your fathers: You always resist the Holy Spirit!

Ephesians 4:30 And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.

b) Scripture predicates divinity of the Spirit by ascribing to him:

1) Divine names.

2 Samuel 23:2,3 The Spirit of the LORD spoke through me; his word was on my tongue. ³ The God of Israel spoke, the Rock of Israel said to me: “When one rules over men in righteousness, when he rules in the fear of God...”

Acts 5:3-4 Then Peter said, “Ananias, how is it that Satan has so filled your heart that you have lied to the Holy Spirit and have kept for yourself some of the money you received for the land? ⁴ Didn’t it belong to you before it was sold? And after it was sold, wasn’t the money at your disposal? What made you think of doing such a thing? You have not lied to men but to God.”

Acts 28:25 They disagreed among themselves and began to leave after Paul had made this final statement: “The *Holy Spirit* spoke the truth to your forefathers when he said through Isaiah the prophet: Compare Isaiah 6:8 Then I heard *the voice of the Lord* saying, “Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?” And I said, “Here am I. Send me!”

1 Corinthians 3:16 Don’t you know that you yourselves are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit lives in you?

2) Divine attributes.

Psalms 139:7 Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence?

1 Corinthians 2:10-11 God has revealed it to us by his Spirit. The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God. ¹¹ For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the man’s spirit within him? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God.

Hebrews 9:14 How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our

consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God!

3) **Divine works.**

-a) Creation.

Genesis 1:2 Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.

Job 33:4 The Spirit of God has made me; the breath of the Almighty gives me life.

Psalm 104:30 When you send your Spirit, they are created, and you renew the face of the earth.

Psalm 33:6 By the word of the LORD were the heavens made, their starry host by the breath of his mouth. [?]

-b) Redemption.

Matthew 3:16 As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting on him.

Matthew 4:1 Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil.

Luke 1:35 The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God."

Luke 4:18 The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed.

Hebrews 9:14 How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit [?] offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God!

1 Peter 3:18 For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive by the Spirit. [or in spirit?]

1 Timothy 3:16 Beyond all question, the mystery of godliness is great: He appeared *in a body* [?], was vindicated *by the Spirit* [?], was seen by angels, was preached among the nations, was believed on in the world, was taken up in glory.

Compare 2 Corinthians 13:4 For to be sure, he was crucified *in weakness*, yet he lives *by God's power*. Likewise, we are weak in him, yet by God's power we will live with him to serve you.

-c) Directing God's ministers.

Nehemiah 9:30 For many years you were patient with them. By your Spirit you admonished them through your prophets. Yet they paid no attention, so you handed them over to the neighboring peoples.

Zechariah 7:12 They made their hearts as hard as flint and would not listen to the law or to the words that the LORD Almighty had sent by his Spirit through the earlier prophets. So the LORD Almighty was very angry.

Matthew 10:20 For it will not be you speaking, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you.

John 15:26-27 When the Counselor comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father, he will testify about me. ²⁷ And you also must testify, for you have been with me from the beginning.

John 20:22-23 And with that he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. ²³ If you forgive anyone his sins, they are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven."

Acts 2:4 All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.

Acts 13:2-4 While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." ³ So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off. ⁴ The two of them, sent on their way by the Holy Spirit, went down to Seleucia and sailed from there to Cyprus.

Acts 20:28 Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood.

1 Peter 1:11-12 [The prophets were] trying to find out the time and circumstances to which the Spirit of Christ in them was pointing when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow. ¹² It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves but you, when they spoke of the things that have now been told you by those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven. Even angels long to look into these things.

-d) Administration of the church.

John 3:5 Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit."

Acts 15:28 It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us not to burden you with anything beyond the following requirements.

1 Corinthians 3:16 Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit lives in you?

1 Corinthians 12:1-11 Now about spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be ignorant. ² You know that when you were pagans, somehow or other you were influenced and led astray to mute idols. ³ Therefore I tell you that no one who is speaking by the Spirit of God says, "Jesus be cursed," and no one can say, "Jesus is Lord," except by the Holy Spirit. ⁴ There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit. ⁵ There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. ⁶ There are different kinds of working, but the same God works all of them in all men. ⁷ Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. ⁸ To one there is given through the Spirit the message of wisdom, to another the message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, ⁹ to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, ¹⁰ to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues. ¹¹ All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he gives them to each one, just as he determines.

Ephesians 2:22 And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.

Ephesians 4:3,4 Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. ⁴ There is one body and one Spirit— just as you were called to one hope when you were called.

4) Divine honor. It coordinates him with the Father and the Son.

c) Some make attacks on the Holy Spirit.

1) Contemporary attacks on the Holy Spirit usually deny that he is a distinct person. The Spirit is regarded as an impersonal force or influence emanating from God.

Jenson: "Spirit" was the term provided by the whole biblical theology for what comes of such a meeting between God and a special human being of his (*CD*, I, p 93).

2) Macedonius and the pneumatomachoi, condemned by Constantinople (381), saw the Holy Spirit as a created ministering spirit, differing from the angels only in degree. This was, in effect, an application of Arianism to the Spirit.

II. The relation of the three persons in the one Godhead: they are the same in essence but distinct in subsistence. Their relationship is one of mutual permeation and in-existence.

1. The three persons are the same in essence (*aequalitas, consubstantialitis, ὁμοούσιος, αὐτοούσιος*, not *ὁμοιούσιος*).

a) The essential equality consists in this that the three persons have but one essence (*unitas essentiae*).

Deuteronomy 6:4; Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one.

1 Corinthians 8:4 So then, about eating food sacrificed to idols: We know that an idol is nothing at all in the world and that there is no God but one.

Galatians 3:20 A mediator, however, does not represent just one party; but God is one.

1 Timothy 2:5 For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.

b) Each person has the whole essence of God undivided.

Colossians 2:9 For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form.

c) Therefore all divine attributes are equally ascribed to each one of the three persons.

2. The three persons are clearly distinguished as being really distinct and subsisting individually (*distinctio, pluralitas*).

a) This is a plurality of persons (*pluralitas hypostatica, personalis, personarum*).

1) Some passages speak of a relationship of the three persons.

John 14:16,17,23,26,28 And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever—¹⁷ the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. ²³ Jesus replied, “If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him.” ²⁶ But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you. ²⁸ You heard me say, “I am going away and I am coming back to you.” If you loved me, you would be glad that I am going to the Father, for the Father is greater than I.

John 16:15 All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will take from what is mine and make it known to you.

2) Some passages speak of a relationship between two of the persons.

-a) Father and Son.

John 5:23,32,37 ...that all may honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father, who sent him. ³² There is another who testifies in my favor, and I know that his testimony about me is valid. ³⁷ And the Father who sent me has himself testified concerning me. You have never heard his voice nor seen his form.

John 8:49, 54 "I am not possessed by a demon," said Jesus, "but I honor my Father and you dishonor me." ⁵⁴ Jesus replied, "If I glorify myself, my glory means nothing. My Father, whom you claim as your God, is the one who glorifies me."

John 12:26 Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am, my servant also will be. My Father will honor the one who serves me.

John 14:13 And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father.

Hebrews 1:5,6 For to which of the angels did God ever say, "You are my Son; today I have become your Father"? Or again, "I will be his Father, and he will be my Son"? ⁶ And again, when God brings his firstborn into the world, he says, "Let all God's angels worship him."

-b) Son and Spirit.

Luke 24:49 I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high.

John 16:7, 14 But I tell you the truth: It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. ¹⁴ He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you.

Acts 2:33 Exalted to the right hand of God, he has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear.

3) We must avoid false conceptions of the plurality.

-a) The plurality is not *pluralitas accidentalis* (the three persons are not merely names for divine attributes) (dynamic monarchians, Gnostics, mystics).

Hafenreffer: The plurality in the unity of the Godhead is personal or a plurality of persons; for the essence of the Deity is indeed one, but there are several persons. And so in the mystery of the Godhead there

is indeed one person and another, but not one thing and another. For one person is that of the Father, another that of the Son, another that of the Holy Spirit, but there is not one essence and another essence, but only the one essence of all the persons (*Loci*, p 48; Schmid, p 98).

Kabbalism: In the teaching of the Kabbalah we thus have to do with one God, who on the one hand has an impersonal aspect, beyond all comprehension, which resides in itself and is unknowable (*En Sof*), but who on the other hand has a personal aspect, in which he reveals his hidden being (the *sephiroth*). The ten sephiroth, the revealed aspects or lights of the hidden deity are often regarded as the faces of God directed toward the world (Laenen, *Jewish Mysticism*, p 51). Note: Among the *sephiroth* are Wisdom, Intelligences, Mercy, and Majesty.

-b) The plurality is not *pluralitas modalis* (three persons are not simply names for modes of divine operation) (modalistic monarchians).

Quenstedt: A person in God is distinguished in one way from the divine essence, in another way from another person; from the former not in reality, but in thought with a basis in reality; but from the latter in actual reality, although in trying to understand this every function of the human mind comes to a halt (*TDP*, I, 414, note 9; Schmid, p 100).

Ted Peters: There are not three personalities in God, although we certainly might speak of a personality of God. The one God is fully present and active in each and all modes of being and action; yet God is not distinguishable except in one or another of these modes of being and action. One or another of the faces is required to identify the one God" (*God the World's Future*, p 104).

-c) The plurality is not *pluralitas multiplicativa* (the three persons are not parts of the divine essence).

Quenstedt: The true and real distinction of the divine persons does not imply a division or multiplication of the divine essence. For God is not divided into three persons, but the three persons, distinct from one another, share without division that one in number, undivided, and infinite essence in such a way that each person has the same essence without any multiplication or division of it. For in this mystery there is one and another as far as the persons are concerned, but not one and another as far as the essence is concerned (*alius atque alius ὑποστατικῶς, non aliud et aliud οὐσιωδῶς*). And so those three actually distinct persons are and remain identical in essence (*δυνούσιοι*) (*TDP*, s. 1 th 20, f 469).

Gerhard: We speak of God as triune (*trinum*), but we are prohibited by the Christian religion from speaking of him as threefold

(*triplicem*) (III, 254; Schmid, p 96). (But cf. German hymn #609: *O heilige Dreifaltigkeit*).

b) Each person has its own manner of subsistence, its own personal characteristics (*notae internae*).

1) These are represented in Scripture as acts (*actus personales, opera ad intra*).

-a) Regarding the Father we find two *opera ad intra*.

-1) *Generare, begetting*.

Psalm 2:7 I will proclaim the decree of the LORD: He said to me, “You are my Son; today I have become your Father” (אֲנִי־אֵלֹהִים).

Acts 13:33 He has fulfilled for us, their children, by raising up Jesus. As it is written in the second Psalm: You are my Son; today I have become your Father.

Hebrews 1:5 For to which of the angels did God ever say, “You are my Son; today I have become your Father”? Or again, “I will be his Father, and he will be my Son”?

John 1:18 No one has ever seen God, but God the One and Only (μονογενὴς θεός), who is at the Father’s side, has made him known.

1 John 5:18 We know that anyone born of God (ὁ γεγεννημένος ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ) does not continue to sin; the one who was born of God (ὁ γεννηθεὶς ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ) keeps him safe, and the evil one cannot harm him.

John 5:18 For this reason the Jews tried all the harder to kill him; not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God.

Romans 8:32 He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?

Quenstedt: This generation of the Son does not take place by derivation or transfusion, nor by an action which begins or ends, but takes place by way of an unceasing emanation, to which nothing similar can be found in the realm of nature. For God the Father has from eternity begotten and ever begets and will never cease to beget his Son. For if the generation of the Son would have an end, it would also have a beginning, and thus would not be eternal. And nevertheless this generation cannot on this account be called imperfect or progressive, for the act of

generation in the Father and the Son is considered perfect in respect to the action, perpetual in respect to the activity (*TDP*, c. 9, s 1, th 28, f 473; Baier, II 67).

-2) *Spirare*, breathing out. Note: there is no direct scriptural statement of this term as an eternal relationship.

Matthew 10:20 For it will not be you speaking, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you.

John 15:26 When the Counselor comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father, he will testify about me.

Compare John 20:22 And with that he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit."

Hollaz: Spiration is understood not as something external, such as the breathing of Christ on his disciples was, but as something internal and immanent, since it takes place within the bosom of the Deity; not as something transitory and evanescent, as is the breathing of men, but eternal and permanent, because the Holy Spirit proceeds from eternity;... not an accidental but an essential spiration (*Examen*, p 337; Schmid, p 106).

Note. The "sending" in Jn 14:16,26, does not indicate an *opus ad intra* but refers to an act of the Father in his dispensation of grace

-b) Regarding the Son we find one: *spirare*, breathing out.

Romans 8:9 You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ.

Galatians 4:6 Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, "Abba, Father."

Philippians 1:19 For I know that through your prayers and the help given by the Spirit of Jesus Christ, what has happened to me will turn out for my deliverance.

John 16:14, 15: [The Spirit] will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and by making it known to you. ¹⁵ All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will take from what is mine and make it known to you.

Luke 24:49 I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high.

John 15:26 When the Counselor comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father, he will testify about me.

John 16:7 But I tell you the truth: It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you.

Acts 2:33 Exalted to the right hand of God, he has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear.

Note. This act is ascribed to the Son in conjunction with the Father: they are *unum agens*. *Nicene Creed 7*: “*Filioque*”—the Western insertion of this word into the Creed was in opposition to Arianism. Church politics clouded the issue, but the Eastern rejection of the *filioque* became a subtle form of subordinationism.

Basil the Great (d. 379): The way of knowing God goes from the one Spirit, through the one Son, to the one Father, and, inversely, essential goodness, natural sanctity, and royal dignity flow *from* the Father, *through* the only Begotten, to the Spirit (*Treatise on the Holy Spirit*, 32.153B).

Vladimir Lossky: It is easy to conceive the difficulties which the distinction between hypostatic existence of the Holy Spirit and eternal manifestation of the divine nature presented to the theologically rude and uneducated minds of Western Christendom of the Carolingian period. It may well be supposed that it was the truth of the eternal manifestation which the first filioquist formulas in Spain and elsewhere before the ninth century were intended to manifest.... Reconciliation will be possible and *filioque* will no longer be an *impedimentum dirimens* at that moment that the West, which has been frozen for so long in dogmatic isolation, ceases to consider Byzantine theology as an absurd innovation and recognizes that it only expressed the truths of tradition, which can be found in less explicit form in the Fathers of the first centuries of the church. Then it will be recognized that what may seem absurd for a theology in which a faith seeks understanding is not so absurd for an understanding open to the full reception of revelation—open to the acquisition of the sense of the Scriptures, whose sacred words long ago were foolishness to the Greek philosophers. The Greeks have ceased to be Greeks in becoming sons of the church. That is why they have been able to give to the Christian faith its imperishable armory. May the Latins in their turn cease to be solely Latins in their theology! Then together we shall confess our catholic faith in the Holy Trinity, who lives and reigns in the eternal light of his glory (*In the Image and Likeness of God*, p 96).

ELCA-Orthodox Dialogue: Orthodox very warmly agree with the Lutherans that the *Filioque* does not belong to the normative Creed as recognized by the Council of Constantinople of AD 879/880,

which was accepted unanimously by both the East and West. At the same time Orthodox do not regard the teaching that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Son as well as the Father to be one which they can accept. This teaching is opposed to the monarchy of the Father and to the equality of the Spirit to the Father and the Son as a hypostasis or person distinct from both, as expressed by the original Creed. On the other hand, Orthodox may accept the teaching of the “double procession” of the Spirit from the Father and the Son in the patristic sense that the Spirit is sent from the Father through/and the Son in the mystery of our salvation in Christ. The relation of the Son to the Spirit in the context of salvation (*oikonomia*) is not the same with their relation in the eternal Trinity (*theologia*).

-c) Regarding the Spirit we find one: *procedere*, proceeding, also called spiration.

John 15:26 When the Counselor comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father, he will testify about me.

Ὅταν ἔλθῃ ὁ παράκλητος ὃν ἐγὼ πέμψω ὑμῖν παρὰ τοῦ πατρὸς, τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς ἀληθείας ὃ παρὰ τοῦ πατρὸς ἐκπορεύεται

Matthew 3:16 As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting on him.

Matthew 12:28 But if I drive out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.

Romans 8:11,14 And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit, who lives in you.

¹⁴Those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.

1 Corinthians 2:11,12 For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the man's spirit within him? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. ¹² We have not received the spirit of the world but the Spirit who is from God, that we may understand what God has freely given us.

1 Corinthians 3:16 Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit lives in you?

Hollaz: Passive spiration or the procession of the Holy Spirit from the Father and the Son, i.e., the eternal origin of the Holy Spirit, by which he is brought forth within the bosom of the Deity by the Father and the Son as the common breath of both by a communication of the essence which is one and the same in number (*Examen*, 337).

2) The “*actus personales*” may be expressed as attributes (participles).

-a) The Father is

-1) ἀγέννητος, non-genitus, non-generatur; non-spiratus.

-2) Generans; spirans.

-b) The Son is

-1) γέννητος; spirans; □ μονογενής, πρωτότοκος, □ begotten.

John 1:14,18 The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth. ¹⁸ No one has ever seen God, but God the One and Only, who is at the Father's side, has made him known.

John 3:16, 18 For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. ¹⁸ Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son.

Colossians 1:15 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation.

1 John 4:9 This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him.

-2) Non-spiratus, not breathed out

-c) The Spirit is

-1) Non-generans; non-generatus, not begotten.

-2) Spiratus, πνευστός; procedens, breathed, proceeding.

3) The *opera ad intra* are also expressed as abstract nouns.

-a) ἀγεννησία, generatio activa, paternitas, spiratio activa.

-b) γεννησία, generatio passiva, filiatio, spiratio activa.

-c) ἐκπόρευσις, processio, emissio, spiratio passiva.

Hollaz: : It is called passive spiration not in a physical sense, as if it implied a passive power or imperfection, but in a grammatical sense, because the Holy Spirit is not said to breathe forth but to be breathed forth. Nor are the active and passive spiration two spirations, but it is one and the same spiration, which with reference to the breathing and producing principle is called active spiration, with reference to the

final product is called passive. In other respects it is the purest emanation of the Holy Spirit from the Father and the Son (*Examen*, 337).

- d) **Dogmatic axiom: What “being begotten” is, what “proceeding” actually is, I confess I do not know.**
- c) **The peculiarity (character *hypostaticus*) of each person appears in its particular relation to the world (*notae externae, opera ad extra*).**
 - 1) **Various elements of the divine work are ascribed especially to one person.**
 - a) **To the Father the work of creation.**
 - b) **To the Son the work of redemption.**
 - c) **To the Spirit the work of sanctification.**
 - 2) **A certain order of the persons is to be observed.**
 - a) ***Opera ad intra sunt divisa*. Operations within the Trinity are divided. They are not shared by all three persons.**

Quenstedt: Divine actions pertaining to the inner relation of the persons in the Trinity are personal, which are directed toward God himself in such a way that, nevertheless, they do not recognize as the originator of the action the divine essence, inasmuch as this is common to all three persons, but insofar as it is determined by certain characteristics and personal peculiarities. Consequently, these personal activities pertaining to the inner relation are divided, i.e., they are not common to the three persons but peculiar to only one person or two persons. The activities in relation to the outside world are undivided or common (*TDP*, I, p 414).

- b) ***Opera ad extra sunt indivisa aut communia*. Operations outside the Trinity are undivided and shared by the three persons.**

Creation and Preservation

John 1:3,10 Through [Christ] all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. ¹⁰ He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him.

Colossians 1:17 He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.

Hebrews 1:3 The Son is the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful

word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven.

Job 33:4 The Spirit of God has made me; the breath of the Almighty gives me life.

Psalm 104:30 When you send your Spirit, they are created, and you renew the face of the earth.

Sanctification

John 17:17 Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth.

Compare Ephesians 5:26 [Christ makes] her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word.

Hebrews 2:11 Both the one who makes men holy and those who are made holy are of the same family. So Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers.

Gerhard: The activities in relation to the outside world are undivided or common (*Loci*, I, IV, VI, XXXVI, p 199).

-c) Yet *servato ordine et discrimine personarum*, the order and distinction of persons is preserved.

-1) The order is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Matthew 28:19 ...baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit

John 5:19 Jesus gave them this answer: "I tell you the truth, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does."

John 16:13-15 But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. ¹⁴ He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you. ¹⁵ All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will take from what is mine and make it known to you.

Note. In 2 Cor 13:14, Jesus is named in first place as the Mediator.

-2) This is not an order of rank, but of relation.

Quenstedt: From the real difference of the persons arises their order, both in their (personal) subsistence and in their activity. Nevertheless, a distinction must be made between 1) an order of

nature, 2) an order of time, 3) an order of rank, and 4) an order of origin and relation. Among the persons of the Godhead there is no order of nature (essence), because they are *ὁμοούσιοι* (identical in substance), of the same nature and essence; nor is there an order of time, since they are *ὁμαιοῦντες* co-eternal; nor of rank, since they are *ἰσότιμοι* (equal in glory), of the same honor; but there is among them an order of origin and relation, since the Father is from no one, the Son is from the Father, and the Holy Spirit is from both (*TDP*, I, IX, I, XVII, p 327).

3) Hollaz provides a brief summary of the relationship of 1st, 2nd, and 3rd persons:

Hollaz: God the Father is the first person of the Deity, neither begotten nor proceeding, but from eternity begetting the Son, his own substantial image, and with the Son breathing forth the Holy Spirit; creating, preserving, and governing all things, sending the Son as the Redeemer and the Holy Spirit as the Sanctifier of the human race.

The Son is the second person of the Deity, begotten of the Father from eternity, of the same essence and majesty with the Father, who with the Father from eternity breathes forth the Holy Spirit and in the fullness of time assumed a human nature into his own person in order that he might redeem and save the human race.

The Holy Spirit is the third person of the Deity, of the same essence with the Father and the Son, who from eternity proceeds from the Father and the Son and is sent by both to sanctify the hearts of men who are to be saved (*Examen*, 301, 305, 329).

3. The relation of the three persons in the Godhead is one of mutual permeation and in-existence (*περιχώρησις, immanentia, inexistencia mutua, immeatio, circumincessio*).

a) There is a mutual permeation.

John 10:38 But if I do it, even though you do not believe me, believe the miracles, that you may know and understand that the Father is in me, and I in the Father.

John 14:10,11,20 Don't you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you are not just my own. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work. ¹¹ Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or at least believe on the evidence of the miracles themselves. ²⁰ On that day you will realize that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you.

John 17:21 That all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me.

John 10:30 I and the Father are one.

Colossians 2:9,10 For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily

form,¹⁰ and you have been given fullness in Christ, who is the head over every power and authority.

John 17:11,22 I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name—the name you gave me—so that they may be one as we are one.²² I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one:

b) About this in-existence we may say the following:

- 1) It is beyond conception.**
- 2) It must not be considered as:**
 - a) Mere intellectual penetration.**
 - b) Mere harmony of purpose.**
 - c) A perpetual process or a development. God is immutable.**

Quenstedt above on “*generatio*.”

4. Two insoluble problems confront us.

a) Personality.

- 1) The essence of God is spirit and as such is personal.**
- 2) What then is the relation of the personal Godhead to the three persons in God?**
- 3) What about the joint action of Father and Son in sending forth the Spirit?**

b) Incarnation.

- 1) The Godhead is absolutely and indivisibly one.**
- 2) If that is the case, then when one person assumed a human nature, did not also the other two?**

III. The antitheses to the doctrine of Holy Trinity are of three types:

The unity of essence is overemphasized.

The trinity of persons is overemphasized.

The mutual relation of the persons is misrepresented.

1. Some deny the Trinity (*Unitarianism*).

- a) *Dynamic Monarchianism, Adoptionism* (Paul of Samosata, Theodotus the Fuller, Theodotus the Moneychanger, Artemon). Jesus was not God, but became divine through the infusion of divine power.**

Hippolytus: A certain Theodotus...forcibly appropriating his idea of Christ from the Gnostics and from Cerinthus and Ebion, alleges that he appeared somewhat as follows: the Jesus was a man, born of a virgin, according to the counsel of the Father, and that after he had lived in a way common to all men and had become pre-eminently religious, he afterward at his baptism in Jordan received Christ, who came from above and descended upon him. Therefore miraculous powers did not operate within him prior to the manifestation of the Spirit which descended and proclaimed him as the Christ. But some are disposed to think that this man never was God, even at the descent of the Spirit; whereas others maintain that he was made God after the resurrection from the dead (*Refut.* VII, 35, 36).

b) *Modalistic Monarchianism, Patripassianism (Sabellius, Oneness Sabellian Pentecostals). Christ is divine, but not a distinct person.*

Epiphanius of Constantia (Salamis) (d. 403): Their doctrine is that Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, are one and the same being, in the sense that three names are attached to one substance (*hypostasis*). It is just like the body, soul, and spirit in a human being. The body is as it were the Father; the soul is the Son; while the Spirit is to the Godhead as his spirit is to a human being. Or it is like the sun, being one substance, but having three manifestations: light, heat, and orb itself (*Panarion*, lxii, 1).

The Bible certainly speaks of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, but not as three distinct persons....The titles of Father, Son, and Spirit describe God's multiple roles and works.... Father refers to God in family relationship to humanity; Son refers to God in flesh; Spirit refers to God in activity. For example, one man can have three significant relationships or functions—such as administrator, teacher, and counselor—and yet be one person in every sense of the word (*Meet the United Pentecostal Church International*, p 60-61).

c) *Arianism. “There was a time when he was not.”*

Arius: But what we say and think we have both taught and continue to teach: that the Son is not unbegotten, nor part of the unbegotten in any way; nor is he derived from any substance; but that by his own will and counsel he existed before time and ages, fully God, only-begotten, unchangeable. And before he was begotten or created or appointed or established, he did not exist; for he was not unbegotten. We are persecuted because we say, “the Son has a beginning, but God is without beginning” (Letter to Eusebius of Nicomedia, in Theodoret, *Ecc. Hist.*, l. v. 1-4).

d) *Jehovah’s Witnesses. Jesus is Michael. He existed in pre-human spiritual form, human form, and then again in spiritual form.*

Sincere persons who want to know the true God and serve him find it a bit difficult to love and worship a complicated, freakish-looking, three-headed God (*Let God Be True*, p 102).

e) *Judaism. The oneness of God.*

“I am the first” for I have no father, and “I am the last” because I have no son, and “besides me there is no God” for I have no brother (*Exodus Rabbah* 29:5).

f) Islam. God has no associates.

Say he is God, One. God the everlasting Refuge, who has not begotten and has not been begotten and equal to him is not any one (*Quran*, 112).

People of the Book, do not transgress the bounds of your religion. Speak nothing but the truth about God. The Messiah, Jesus son of Mary, was no more than God’s apostle and His Word which He cast to Mary; a spirit from him. So believe in god and His apostles and do not say: “Three” Forbear, and it shall be better for you. God is but one God. God forbid that He should have a son! (*Quran*: 4:171)

g) Deism. One creator, many names.

Albert Pike: Masonry...around whose altars the Christian, the Hebrew, the Moslem, the Brahman, the followers of Confucius and Zoroaster can assemble as brethren and unite in prayer to the one God who is above *all* the Baalim (*Morals and Dogma*, p 226).

h) Liberalism. Trinitarian language without a Trinity.

Jenson: The trinitarian name did not fall from heaven. It was made up by believers for the God with whom we have found ourselves involved. “Father” was Jesus’ peculiar address to the particular transcendence over against whom he lived. Just as by this address he qualified himself as “Son” and in the memory of the primal church his acclamation as Son was the beginning of faith. “Spirit” was the term provided by the whole biblical theology for what comes of such a meeting between God and a special human being of his. It is involvement in this structure of Jesus’ own event--prayer to the “Father” with the “Son” in the power of and for “the Spirit”—that is faith’s knowledge of God. Thus, “Father, Son, and Spirit” summarize faith’s apprehension of God. ...But in the event so summarizable “Father, Son, and Spirit” came together also simply as a name for the one therein apprehended, and apparently did so before all analysis of its suitability (*CD*, I, p 93).

“Father, Son and Spirit” is a slogan for the temporal structure of the church’s apprehension of God and for the proper logic of its proclamation and liturgy (*I*, 99).

Instead of interpreting Christ’s deity as a separate entity that always was—and proceeding analogously with the Spirit—we should interpret it as a final outcome, and just so as eternal, just so as the bracket around all beginnings and endings. Jesus’ historical life was a sending by the Father, the filial relationship between this man and the transcendence to whom he turned temporally occurred. ... Truly the Trinity is simply the Father and the man Jesus and their Spirit as the Spirit of the believing community (*I*, 155).

Paul Jewett: We have already addressed the question of the analogical character of theological language, including the language used in the trinitarian name:

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit....Since this is so, feminine figures could as well be used without altering the substance of our thought about God....Nonetheless, to speak of God as a mother who discloses herself to us in a daughter, though it is a hypothetical way of speaking, is not a heretical way of speaking. Given the realities of salvation history, we grant that it is a way of speaking with no prospects of being other than hypothetical (*God, Creation, and Revelation*, p 323-325).

2. Some deny the Unity.

- a) Tritheism (Philoponus, 500; Roscellinus, rejected at Soissons, 1092; some Anabaptists).**
- b) Tetratheism (Damianus, 601 or 605, Alexandria).**
- c) Mormonism, Nation of Islam (Black Muslims): bodily gods.**

Brigham Young: How many Gods there are, I do not know. But there never was a time when there were not Gods and worlds, and when men were not passing through the same ordeals we are passing through. That course is from all eternity, and it is and will be to all eternity (*Journal of Discourses*, 7, 333).

Bruce McConkie: The Mormon doctrine of the Trinity is spoken of as follows: "Though each God; in the Godhead is a personage, separate and distinct from each of the others, yet they are 'one God'...meaning that they are united as one in the attributes of perfection. For instance, each has the fullness of truth, knowledge, charity, power, justice, judgment, mercy, and faith. Accordingly they all think, act, speak, and are alike in all things; and yet they are three separate and distinct entities. Each occupies space and is and can be in but one place at one time, but each has power and influence that is everywhere present. The oneness of the Gods [note the plural] is the same unity that should exist among the saints (John 17; 3 Ne. 28:10-11) (*Mormon Doctrine*, p 319)

Joseph Smith: God himself was once as we are now, and is an exalted man (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, p 345).

Encyclopedia of Mormonism: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints teaches that every person experiences a series of "births." All were born as spirit children of God in a premortal life (Vol 1, "Agency").

Elijah Muhammed: Allah is all of us. But we have a Supreme One....He is Allah, The One over us all; The Most Supreme One.... Every righteous person is a god. We are all God (*The Final Call*, June 20, 2000, p 19).

3. Subordinationism. This is in substance a form of Unitarianism.

4. Opposed to such errors is the Athanasian Creed, Triglotta, p 31.

IV. Many futile attempts have been made to construct the trinitarian doctrine in a speculative way, or at least to make it more palatable to human reason.

1. Analogies taken from nature.

- a) **Physical.**
 - 1) **Root, stem, branches= tree.**
 - 2) **Spring, container, overflow= well.**
 - 3) **Form, odor, medicinal power= flower (Luther).**
 - 4) **Substance of the orb, light, heat= sun.**
 - 5) **Steam, water, ice=H₂O.**
 - b) **Mathematical. Three sides: triangle.**
 - c) **Musical. Three tones: chord**
2. **Analogies from psychology.**
- a) **Psychology proper.**
 - 1) *Memoria, intellectus, voluntas* (Augustine).
 - 2) *Mens, notitia eius, amor* (Augustine).
 - 3) **Subject of love, object of love, love itself.**
 - b) **God (Father) perceiving himself produces his own image (Son), and both are united in mutual love (Spirit) (Melanchthon).**
 - c) **The hidden God (Father) reveals himself (Son), both of these persons being united in the Spirit (Leibniz).**
3. **All of these analogies lead to a modalistic conception of the Trinity or to parts in God.**

Hafenreffer: Can not this plurality of the unity nevertheless be illustrated at least to some extent by certain analogies or very crude sketches? Nothing can be found in the whole universe of things which expresses the mystery of the Deity who is to be worshiped. For God, the Creator, transcends his creatures by immeasurable degrees of difference.... In all these analogies, however, there are by far greater differences than similarities: for there is nothing in heaven or on earth which can reflect the nature of the infinite God, nor is there any word or concept which can express so great a mystery adequately (*Loci*, 44, 47).

Gerhard: a) The analogies only illustrate, they do not prove. b) There is more dissimilarity in them than similarity. c) They are sought a posteriori, not a priori (after the truth has been learned, not before). They are not the parents of understanding but the offspring. They do not lead to understanding, but they are adduced to represent what has been understood. d) One must use them soberly and cautiously. e) They cannot be used against an opponent; they can only delight a believer (*Loci*, III, III, XXVIII, p 224).

V. **The triune God is the author of our salvation.**

1. Scripture nowhere offers a theory of the Trinity.

a) It emphasizes both the unity and the plurality.

1) Unity.

Deuteronomy 6:4 Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one.

2) Plurality.

Matthew 28:19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

b) But Scripture nowhere even remotely hints at the mathematical puzzle which such trinity in an absolute unity presents. An absolute unity precludes plurality, but in the Trinity each distinct person possesses the whole Godhead undivided.

c) It cannot, then, be our task or aim to solve the problem.

1) Our attitude must be that of a disciple.

Psalms 131:1 My heart is not proud, O Lord, my eyes are not haughty; I do not concern myself with great matters or thing too wonderful for me.

Proverbs 8:34 Blessed is the man who listens to me, watching daily at my doors, waiting at my doorway.

Deuteronomy 4:2 Do not add to what I command you and do not subtract from it, but keep the commands of the LORD your God that I give you.

2) We must remember that even our terms essence, person, Trinity, and so on are inadequate.

Isaiah 40:18,25 “To whom, then, will you compare God? What image will you compare him to? ²⁵To whom will you compare me? Or who is my equal?” says the Holy One.

Isaiah 46:5 To whom will you compare me or count me equal? To whom will you liken me that we may be compared?

1 Timothy 6:16 Who alone is immortal and who lives in unapproachable light, whom no one has seen or can see. To him be honor and might forever. Amen.

3) The justification for using such inadequate terms: since Scripture proclaims God’s oneness and his threeness, we dare not ignore them.

Augustine: In short, human speech labors under a great inadequacy. Nevertheless, we speak of three persons, not because that adequately expresses the truth, but so as not to pass over the matter in complete silence. For the ineffable grandeur of the subject cannot be explained by this term (*De trinitate*, 5).

Chemnitz: First of all this offends many, also in ancient times, that the church in speaking about the article of the Trinity was not content with that simple propriety which the Son of God himself used in revealing the doctrine of God and which the Holy Spirit followed in the writings of the prophets and apostles, but introduced into the church foreign terms from the impious schools of the heathen. For there is no doubt whatsoever that those words were generally used in the schools of the philosophers. And with great malice the orthodox Fathers were harassed by the heretics with this specious pretext that, namely, the church ought not to think otherwise about that inaccessible light of the Deity than the Deity itself, coming forth from the hidden seat of its majesty, revealed about itself.... Therefore the church would have preferred to use that simplicity of speech, so that, just as it believes, so also it speaks, that there is one God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. But controversies arose with heretics, who were attacking partly the unity of God, partly the Trinity, but so slyly that when they confessed that there is one God, they understood it in such a way that, although there are more gods, nevertheless they are called one just as the heart of the believers is called one (Ac 4:32).... Because, therefore, the heretics were speaking the same language with the church, and nevertheless had a different opinion, and through ambiguous terminology, as Gregory of Nazianz says, secretly spread poison among the inexperienced who suspected nothing evil when they heard those heretics speak with the same words which the church used, the church men tried to find words in Scripture with which they might draw out from their ambush the hiding heretics so that they would not be able to deceive the incautious with ambiguous terms (*Loci, de tribus personis*, p 36).

2. Scripture comforts our hearts with the assurance that the Triune God is interested in one thing: our salvation.

a) This is the theme of Scripture from Genesis to Revelation.

Genesis 2:4—4:26. Revelation 1.
The Apostles' Creed.

b) This is predicated of each Person individually.

1) Father.

John 3:16 God so loved the world.

2) Son.

Luke 19:10 For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost.

3) Spirit.

John 14:26 But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.