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## Preface

The goal of this project is to organize and update material from great theologians of the past whose works are in the public domain as well as adding insights from modern scholarship. This includes John Calvin, Charles Hodge, A. A. Hodge, Francis Turretin, John Gill, Thomas Watson, Louis Berkhof, Augustus Strong, James Boyce, and John Dagg.

## Prolegomena

### I. Idea of Theology

#### A. Definition

The word Theology means literally a discourse concerning God, but in analogy with other words, as geology, chronology and biology, it means the science which treats of God.

It naturally concerns itself with such questions as these: Is there a God; can he be known; what is his nature, and character; what are the relations he sustains to the universe, particularly to intelligent beings possessed of spiritual natures, and above all, as most important to us, to men; in what ways has he made himself known; and especially in what aspect does he reveal himself to them as sinners. This is Theology proper.

In connection with this last relation it treats, particularly, of man as a creature of God placed under the government of his moral law. It inquires into his original condition of innocence, and happiness; the manner in which he fell therefrom; and his present state of sinfulness, and condemnation and inability for self-rescue. This is Anthropology.

It is thus led, also, to discuss the nature of the salvation which God has provided as seen in the person and character of Jesus Christ, through whom it has come, and in the works of active and passive obedience, by which he has wrought out reconciliation to God. This is Soteriology.

In like manner, also, does it consider the nature and work of the Holy Spirit, through whom man is led to accept the provisions of God's grace, and to attain through penitence and faith unto a salvation in Christ, which consists in freedom, not from condemnation only, but also from the dominion and defilement of sin, and in attainment of the holiness and happiness of children of the Heavenly Father. This is Pneumatology.

It follows man also beyond the death of the body, and makes known the future state of both the righteous and the wicked, as well before as after the resurrection of the body, together with the final judgement of both these classes, and the heaven and hell which shall be their respective abodes forever. This is Eschatology.

Finally it teaches the great end which God is accomplishing through all his works, in the manifestation to all his creatures of his own glory, as seen in its twofold aspect of mercy and justice in his dealings with this fallen race of man. This is Teleology.

The term "theology" is applied, not only to the science itself, but to any treatise on that science. This is true, not only of a discourse upon the one true God, but even of one upon the many false gods of the heathen. It is also true, though the treatise be not a scientific discussion, but simply an imaginative narrative or poem. Thus "Orpheus and Homer were called theologians among the Greeks, because their poems treated of the nature of the gods." (Charles Hodge Sys. Theol. Vol. 1, p. 19.) Mythology is not less theology because it treats of false gods, and in works of the imagination.

Theology is, also, frequently used for the set of opinions exhibited by a writer, or class of writers, in any one or more productions. Thus we have the theology of Calvin, or of Arminius, or of Baxter, that of the Reformation, Princeton theology, and New England theology. Men also speak of the theology of the Old, or of the New Testament, the theology of the Psalms, of the various Evangelists, especially of John, and Petrine, and Pauline theology.

Theology is defined as a science. It is eminently worthy of that name. It lacks nothing that constitutes a science. It is concerned in the investigation of facts. It inquires into their existence, their relations to each other, their systematic arrangement, the laws which govern them, and the great principles which are the basis of this existence, and these relations.

As in other sciences, there is much that is absolutely known, much beyond this that is little questioned, much that is still matter of speculation, and much as to which there is decided difference of opinion. New facts are constantly developing in this science, as in others, which enable us to verify the facts and principles heretofore accepted, when true, and to modify them when erroneous. New theories present themselves for the better explanation of facts already known, and are tested by these, and by others subsequently discovered, and are received or rejected, according to their ascertained correctness. The knowledge of the past is built upon for progression towards the future.

The discovery of the facts is conducted, as in all other sciences, by study of what the field affords. Geology examines the earth, and derives its facts from the structure of that earth. Astronomy investigates the stars. Theology, likewise, studies the sources of its knowledge. Each science seeks to arrive at the truth. The votaries of each are certain that it is to be found in their fields, either partially, or completely. The perfect attainment of all facts prepares for the exactness of scientific knowledge. The absence of any must make the knowledge incomplete. The proper generalization of all is essential in this, as in all other kinds of science. A full knowledge of all the facts, and a perfect generalization of them, will constitute theology an exact science.

Theology is also as sensitive to the absence of facts as is any other science. The astronomer finds that his calculations, based upon correct theories, are not exactly verified, and at once suspects the presence of some disturbing body as the cause of this variation. So, also, in theology. The omission of a single fact, however small, must affect the whole universe of doctrine. The common mind does not perceive this,

and hence is not prepared to value the discovery of the new fact. But the theologian finds in the new and more exact adjustment, thus made possible, the proof of the truth of his whole system, and therefore prizes it, even sometimes beyond what he ought.

## B. Aim

The aim of theology is the ascertainment of the facts respecting God and the relations between God and the universe, and the exhibition of these facts in their rational unity, as connected parts of a formulated and organic system of truth.

In defining theology as a science, we indicate its aim. Science does not create; it discovers. Theology answers to this description of a science. It discovers facts and relations, but it does not create them. Fisher, *Nature and Method of Revelation*, 141—"Schiller, referring to the ardor of Columbus's faith, says that if the great discoverer had not found a continent, he would have created one. But faith is not creative. Had Columbus not found the land—had there been no real object answering to his belief—his faith would have been a mere fancy." Because theology deals with objective facts, we refuse to define it as "the science of religion"; versus *Am. Theol. Rev.*, 1850:101-126, and Thornwell, *Theology*, 1:139. Both the facts and the relations with which theology has to deal have an existence independent of the subjective mental processes of the theologian.

Science is not only the observing, recording, verifying, and formulating of objective facts; it is also the recognition and explication of the relations between these facts, and the synthesis of both the facts and the rational principles which unite them in a comprehensive, rightly proportioned, and organic system. Scattered bricks and timbers are not a house; severed arms, legs, heads and trunks from a dissecting room are not living men; and facts alone do not constitute science. Science = facts + relations; Whewell, *Hist. Inductive Sciences*, I, *Introd.*, 43—"There may be facts without science, as in the knowledge of the common quarryman; there may be thought without science, as in the early Greek philosophy." A. MacDonald: "The a priori method is related to the a posteriori as the sails to the ballast of the boat: the more philosophy the better, provided there are a sufficient number of facts; otherwise, there is danger of upsetting the craft."

President Woodrow Wilson: "'Give us the facts' is the sharp injunction of our age to its historians ... But facts of themselves do not constitute the truth. The truth is abstract, not concrete. It is the just idea, the right revelation, of what things mean. It is evoked only by such arrangements and orderings of facts as suggest meanings." Dove, *Logic of the Christian Faith*, 14—"The pursuit of science is the pursuit of relations." Everett, *Science of Thought*, 3—"Logy" (e. g., in "theology"), from λόγος, = word + reason, expression + thought, fact + idea; cf. John 1:1—"In the beginning was the Word."

As theology deals with objective facts and their relations, so its arrangement of these facts is not optional, but is determined by the nature of the material with which it deals. A true theology thinks over again God's thoughts and brings them into God's order, as the builders of Solomon's temple took the stones already hewn, and put them into the places for which the architect had designed them; Reginald Heber: "No hammer fell, no ponderous axes rung; Like some tall palm, the mystic fabric sprung." Scientific men have no fear that the data of physics will narrow or cramp their intellects; no more should

they fear the objective facts which are the data of theology. We cannot make theology, any more than we can make a law of physical nature. As the natural philosopher is "*Naturæ minister et interpres*," so the theologian is the servant and interpreter of the objective truth of God. On the Idea of Theology as a System, see H. B. Smith, *Faith and Philosophy*, 126-166.

### C. Possibility

The possibility of theology has a threefold ground: 1. In the existence of a God who has relations to the universe; 2. In the capacity of the human mind for knowing God and certain of these relations; and 3. In the provision of means by which God is brought into actual contact with the mind, or in other words, in the provision of a revelation.

#### 1. The existence of a God.

In the existence of a God who has relations to the universe.—It has been objected, indeed, that since God and these relations are objects apprehended only by faith, they are not proper objects of knowledge or subjects for science. We reply:

A. Faith is knowledge, and a higher sort of knowledge.—Physical science also rests upon faith—faith in our own existence, in the existence of a world objective and external to us, and in the existence of other persons than ourselves; faith in our primitive convictions, such as space, time, cause, substance, design, right; faith in the trustworthiness of our faculties and in the testimony of our fellow men. But physical science is not thereby invalidated, because this faith, though unlike sense-perception or logical demonstration, is yet a cognitive act of the reason, and may be defined as certitude with respect to matters in which verification is unattainable.

B. Faith is a knowledge conditioned by holy affection.—The faith which apprehends God's being and working is not opinion or imagination. It is certitude with regard to spiritual realities, upon the testimony of our rational nature and upon the testimony of God. Its only peculiarity as a cognitive act of the reason is that it is conditioned by holy affection. As the science of æsthetics is a product of reason as including a power of recognizing beauty practically inseparable from a love for beauty, and as the science of ethics is a product of reason as including a power of recognizing the morally right practically inseparable from a love for the morally right, so the science of theology is a product of reason, but of reason as including a power of recognizing God which is practically inseparable from a love for God.

C. Faith, therefore, can furnish, and only faith can furnish, fit and sufficient material for a scientific theology.—As an operation of man's higher rational nature, though distinct from ocular vision or from reasoning, faith is not only a kind, but the highest kind, of knowing. It gives us understanding of realities which to sense alone are inaccessible, namely, God's existence, and some at least of the relations between God and his creation.

#### 2. Man's capacity for the knowledge of God

In the capacity of the human mind for knowing God and certain of these relations.—But it has urged that such knowledge is impossible for the following reasons:

A. Because we can know only phenomena. We reply: (a) We know mental as well as physical phenomena. (b) In knowing phenomena, whether mental or physical, we know substance as underlying the phenomena, as manifested through them, and as constituting their ground of unity. (c) Our minds bring to the observation of phenomena not only this knowledge of substance, but also knowledge of time, space, cause, and right, realities which are in no sense phenomenal. Since these objects of knowledge are not phenomenal, the fact that God is not phenomenal cannot prevent us from knowing him.

B. Because we can know only that which bears analogy to our own nature or experience. We reply: (a) It is not essential to knowledge that there be similarity of nature between the knower and the known. We know by difference as well as by likeness. (b) Our past experience, though greatly facilitating new acquisitions, is not the measure of our possible knowledge. Else the first act of knowledge would be inexplicable, and all revelation of higher characters to lower would be precluded, as well as all progress to knowledge which surpasses our present attainments. (c) Even if knowledge depended upon similarity of nature and experience, we might still know God, since we are made in God's image, and there are important analogies between the divine nature and our own.

C. Because we know only that of which we can conceive, in the sense of forming an adequate mental image. We reply: (a) It is true that we know only that of which we can conceive, if by the term "conceive" we mean our distinguishing in thought the object known from all other objects. But, (b) The objection confounds conception with that which is merely its occasional accompaniment and help, namely, the picturing of the object by the imagination. In this sense, conceivability is not a final test of truth. (c) That the formation of a mental image is not essential to conception or knowledge, is plain when we remember that, as a matter of fact, we both conceive and know many things of which we cannot form a mental image of any sort that in the least corresponds to the reality; for example, force, cause, law, space, our own minds. So we may know God, though we cannot form an adequate mental image of him.

D. Because we can know truly only that which we know in whole and not in part. We reply: (a) The objection confounds partial knowledge with the knowledge of a part. We know the mind in part, but we do not know a part of the mind. (b) If the objection were valid, no real knowledge of anything would be possible, since we know no single thing in all its relations. We conclude that, although God is a being not composed of parts, we may yet have a partial knowledge of him, and this knowledge, though not exhaustive, may yet be real, and adequate to the purposes of science.

E. Because all predicates of God are negative, and therefore furnish no real knowledge. We answer: (a) Predicates derived from our consciousness, such as spirit, love, and holiness, are positive. (b) The terms "infinite" and "absolute," moreover, express not merely a negative but a positive idea—the idea, in the former case, of the absence of all limit, the idea that the object thus described goes on and on forever; the idea, in the latter case, of entire self-sufficiency. Since predicates of God, therefore, are not merely negative, the argument mentioned above furnishes no valid reason why we may not know him.

F. Because to know is to limit or define. Hence the Absolute as unlimited, and the Infinite as undefined, cannot be known. We answer: (a) God is absolute, not as existing in no relation, but as existing in no

necessary relation; and (b) God is infinite, not as excluding all coexistence of the finite with himself, but as being the ground of the finite, and so unfettered by it. (c) God is actually limited by the unchangeableness of his own attributes and personal distinctions, as well as by his self-chosen relations to the universe he has created and to humanity in the person of Christ. God is therefore limited and defined in such a sense as to render knowledge of him possible.

G. Because all knowledge is relative to the knowing agent; that is, what we know, we know, not as it is objectively, but only as it is related to our own senses and faculties. In reply: (a) We grant that we can know only that which has relation to our faculties. But this is simply to say that we know only that which we come into mental contact with, that is, we know only what we know. But, (b) We deny that what we come into mental contact with is known by us as other than it is. So far as it is known at all, it is known as it is. In other words, the laws of our knowing are not merely arbitrary and regulative, but correspond to the nature of things. We conclude that, in theology, we are equally warranted in assuming that the laws of our thought are laws of God's thought, and that the results of normally conducted thinking with regard to God correspond to the objective reality.

### **3. God's revelation of himself to man.**

In God's actual revelation of himself and certain of these relations.—As we do not in this place attempt a positive proof of God's existence or of man's capacity for the knowledge of God, so we do not now attempt to prove that God has brought himself into contact with man's mind by revelation. We shall consider the grounds of this belief hereafter. Our aim at present is simply to show that, granting the fact of revelation, a scientific theology is possible. This has been denied upon the following grounds:

A. That revelation, as a making known, is necessarily internal and subjective—either a mode of intelligence, or a quickening of man's cognitive powers—and hence can furnish no objective facts such as constitute the proper material for science.

In reply to this objection, urged mainly by idealists in philosophy, (a) We grant that revelation, to be effective, must be the means of inducing a new mode of intelligence, or in other words, must be understood. We grant that this understanding of divine things is impossible without a quickening of man's cognitive powers. We grant, moreover, that revelation, when originally imparted, was often internal and subjective.

(b) But we deny that external revelation is therefore useless or impossible. Even if religious ideas sprang wholly from within, an external revelation might stir up the dormant powers of the mind. Religious ideas, however, do not spring wholly from within. External revelation can impart them. Man can reveal himself to man by external communications, and, if God has equal power with man, God can reveal himself to man in like manner.

(c) Hence God's revelation may be, and, as we shall hereafter see, it is, in great part, an external revelation in works and words. The universe is a revelation of God; God's works in nature precede God's words in history. We claim, moreover, that, in many cases where truth was originally communicated

internally, the same Spirit who communicated it has brought about an external record of it, so that the internal revelation might be handed down to others than those who first received it.

(d) With this external record we shall also see that there is given under proper conditions a special influence of God's Spirit, so to quicken our cognitive powers that the external record reproduces in our minds the ideas with which the minds of the writers were at first divinely filled.

(e) Internal revelations thus recorded, and external revelations thus interpreted, both furnish objective facts which may serve as proper material for science. Although revelation in its widest sense may include, and as constituting the ground of the possibility of theology does include, both insight and illumination, it may also be used to denote simply a provision of the external means of knowledge, and theology has to do with inward revelations only as they are expressed in, or as they agree with, this objective standard.

B. That many of the truths thus revealed are too indefinite to constitute the material for science, because they belong to the region of the feelings, because they are beyond our full understanding, or because they are destitute of orderly arrangement.

We reply:

(a) Theology has to do with subjective feelings only as they can be defined, and shown to be effects of objective truth upon the mind. They are not more obscure than are the facts of morals or of psychology, and the same objection which would exclude such feelings from theology would make these latter sciences impossible.

(b) Those facts of revelation which are beyond our full understanding may, like the nebular hypothesis in astronomy, the atomic theory in chemistry, or the doctrine of evolution in biology, furnish a principle of union between great classes of other facts otherwise irreconcilable. We may define our concepts of God, and even of the Trinity, at least sufficiently to distinguish them from all other concepts; and whatever difficulty may encumber the putting of them into language only shows the importance of attempting it and the value of even an approximate success.

(c) Even though there were no orderly arrangement of these facts, either in nature or in Scripture, an accurate systematizing of them by the human mind would not therefore be proved impossible, unless a principle were assumed which would show all physical science to be equally impossible. Astronomy and geology are constructed by putting together multitudinous facts which at first sight seem to have no order. So with theology. And yet, although revelation does not present to us a dogmatic system ready-made, a dogmatic system is not only implicitly contained therein, but parts of the system are wrought out in the epistles of the New Testament, as for example in Rom. 5:12-19; 1 Cor. 15:3, 4; 8:6; 1 Tim. 3:16; Heb. 6:1, 2.

#### D. Necessity

The necessity of theology has its grounds:



*(a) In the organizing instinct of the human mind.* This organizing principle is a part of our constitution. The mind cannot endure confusion or apparent contradiction in known facts. The tendency to harmonize and unify its knowledge appears as soon as the mind becomes reflective; just in proportion to its endowments and culture does the impulse to systematize and formulate increase. This is true of all departments of human inquiry, but it is peculiarly true of our knowledge of God. Since the truth with regard to God is the most important of all, theology meets the deepest want of man's rational nature. Theology is a rational necessity. If all existing theological systems were destroyed to-day, new systems would rise to-morrow. So inevitable is the operation of this law, that those who most decry theology show nevertheless that they have made a theology for themselves, and often one sufficiently meagre and blundering. Hostility to theology, where it does not originate in mistaken fears for the corruption of God's truth or in a naturally illogical structure of mind, often proceeds from a license of speculation which cannot brook the restraints of a complete Scriptural system.

*(b) In the relation of systematic truth to the development of character.* Truth thoroughly digested is essential to the growth of Christian character in the individual and in the church. All knowledge of God has its influence upon character, but most of all the knowledge of spiritual facts in their relations. Theology cannot, as has sometimes been objected, deaden the religious affections, since it only draws out from their sources and puts into rational connection with each other the truths which are best adapted to nourish the religious affections. On the other hand, the strongest Christians are those who have the firmest grasp upon the great doctrines of Christianity; the heroic ages of the church are those which have witnessed most consistently to them; the piety that can be injured by the systematic exhibition of them must be weak, or mystical, or mistaken.

*(c) In the importance to the preacher of definite and just views of Christian doctrine.* His chief intellectual qualification must be the power clearly and comprehensively to conceive, and accurately and powerfully to express, the truth. He can be the agent of the Holy Spirit in converting and sanctifying men, only as he can wield "the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God" (Eph. 6:17), or, in other language, only as he can impress truth upon the minds and consciences of his hearers. Nothing more certainly nullifies his efforts than confusion and inconsistency in his statements of doctrine. His object is to replace obscure and erroneous conceptions among his hearers by those which are correct and vivid. He cannot do this without knowing the facts with regard to God in their relations—knowing them, in short, as parts of a system. With this truth he is put in trust. To mutilate it or misrepresent it, is not only sin against the Revealer of it,—it may prove the ruin of men's souls. The best safeguard against such mutilation or misrepresentation, is the diligent study of the several doctrines of the faith in their relations to one another, and especially to the central theme of theology, the person and work of Jesus Christ.

*(d) In the intimate connection between correct doctrine and the safety and aggressive power of the church.* The safety and progress of the church is dependent upon her "holding the pattern of sound words" (2 Tim. 1:13), and serving as "pillar and ground of the truth" (1 Tim. 3:15). Defective understanding of the truth results sooner or later in defects of organization, of operation, and of life. Thorough comprehension of Christian truth as an organized system furnishes, on the other hand, not only an invaluable defense against heresy and immorality, but also an indispensable stimulus and instrument in aggressive labor for the world's conversion.

(e) *In the direct and indirect injunctions of Scripture.* The Scripture urges upon us the thorough and comprehensive study of the truth (John 5:39, marg.,—"Search the Scriptures"), the comparing and harmonizing of its different parts (1 Cor. 2:13—"comparing spiritual things with spiritual"), the gathering of all about the great central fact of revelation (Col. 1:27—"which is Christ in you, the hope of glory"), the preaching of it in its wholeness as well as in its due proportions (2 Tim. 4:2—"Preach the word"). The minister of the Gospel is called "a scribe who hath been made a disciple to the kingdom of heaven" (Mat. 13:52); the "pastors" of the churches are at the same time to be "teachers" (Eph. 4:11); the bishop must be "apt to teach" (1 Tim. 3:2), "handling aright the word of truth" (2 Tim. 2:15), "holding to the faithful word which is according to the teaching, that he may be able both to exhort in the sound doctrine and to convict the gainsayers" (Tit. 1:9).

## E. Limitations

Although theology derives its material from God's two-fold revelation, it does not profess to give an exhaustive knowledge of God and of the relations between God and the universe. After showing what material we have, we must show what material we have not.

Theology has its limitations:

(a) *In the finiteness of the human understanding.* This gives rise to a class of necessary mysteries, or mysteries connected with the infinity and incomprehensibility of the divine nature (Job 11:7; Rom. 11:33).

(b) *In the imperfect state of science, both natural and metaphysical.* This gives rise to a class of accidental mysteries, or mysteries which consist in the apparently irreconcilable nature of truths, which, taken separately, are perfectly comprehensible.

(c) *In the inadequacy of language.* Since language is the medium through which truth is expressed and formulated, the invention of a proper terminology in theology, as in every other science, is a condition and criterion of its progress. The Scriptures recognize a peculiar difficulty in putting spiritual truths into earthly language (1 Cor. 2:13; 2 Cor. 3:6; 12:4).

(d) *In the incompleteness of our knowledge of the Scriptures.* Since it is not the mere letter of the Scriptures that constitutes the truth, the progress of theology is dependent upon hermeneutics, or the interpretation of the word of God.

(e) *In the silence of written revelation.* For our discipline and probation, much is probably hidden from us, which we might even with our present powers comprehend.

(f) *In the lack of spiritual discernment caused by sin.* Since holy affection is a condition of religious knowledge, all moral imperfection in the individual Christian and in the church serves as a hindrance to the working out of a complete theology.

## F. Usefulness

The advantages of studying theology systematically are several.

1. We thus ascertain all that nature and the Scriptures teach on each point.
2. We compare all these teachings one with another and are enabled to define their mutual limitations.
3. We are brought face to face with the fact that our knowledge is bounded by God's Revelation, and are led to acknowledge it as its source.
4. We are consequently warned not to omit any of the truth ascertained from any source, nor to add to it anything not properly embraced therein. A departure from this rule will lead into inevitable error.
5. The harmony, and consistency, which will be found in all God's teachings, from whatever source we may draw them, will become conclusive proof of the divine origin of revelation. This will result, not only from a comparison of what Reason and Nature teach, with the revelations of God's Word, but of each of the several books of the Bible with the others, and especially of the body of the Old Testament as one book, with that of the New Testament as another.
6. We are thus led to value each of the doctrines of the word of God. Each is true. Each has been revealed that it might be believed. We cannot therefore omit any one, because of its forbidding aspect, or its seeming unimportance, or its mysterious nature, or its demand for great personal sacrifice, or its humiliating assertions, or requirements, or the free terms upon which it assures of life and salvation.

## II. Foundation of Theology

### A. Nature

By nature we here mean not only physical facts, or facts with regard to the substances, properties, forces, and laws of the material world, but also spiritual facts, or facts with regard to the intellectual and moral constitution of man, and the orderly arrangement of human society and history.

(a) Natural theology.—The universe is a source of theology. The Scriptures assert that God has revealed himself in nature. There is not only an outward witness to his existence and character in the constitution and government of the universe (Ps. 19; Acts 14:17; Rom. 1:20), but an inward witness to his existence and character in the heart of every man (Rom. 1:17, 18, 19, 20, 32; 2:15). The systematic exhibition of these facts, whether derived from observation, history or science, constitutes natural theology.

(b) Natural theology supplemented.—The Christian revelation is the chief source of theology. The Scriptures plainly declare that the revelation of God in nature does not supply all the knowledge which a sinner needs (Acts 17:23; Eph. 3:9). This revelation is therefore supplemented by another, in which divine attributes and merciful provisions only dimly shadowed forth in nature are made known to men.

This latter revelation consists of a series of supernatural events and communications, the record of which is presented in the Scriptures.

(c) The Scriptures the final standard of appeal.—Science and Scripture throw light upon each other. The same divine Spirit who gave both revelations is still present, enabling the believer to interpret the one by the other and thus progressively to come to the knowledge of the truth. Because of our finiteness and sin, the total record in Scripture of God's past communications is a more trustworthy source of theology than are our conclusions from nature or our private impressions of the teaching of the Spirit. Theology therefore looks to the Scripture itself as its chief source of material and its final standard of appeal.

(d) The theology of Scripture not unnatural.—Though we speak of the systematized truths of nature as constituting natural theology, we are not to infer that Scriptural theology is unnatural. Since the Scriptures have the same author as nature, the same principles are illustrated in the one as in the other. All the doctrines of the Bible have their reason in that same nature of God which constitutes the basis of all material things. Christianity is a supplementary dispensation, not as contradicting, or correcting errors in, natural theology, but as more perfectly revealing the truth. Christianity is indeed the ground-plan upon which the whole creation is built—the original and eternal truth of which natural theology is but a partial expression. Hence the theology of nature and the theology of Scripture are mutually dependent. Natural theology not only prepares the way for, but it receives stimulus and aid from, Scriptural theology. Natural theology may now be a source of truth, which, before the Scriptures came, it could not furnish.

## B. Rationalism

Although the Scriptures make known much that is beyond the power of man's unaided reason to discover or fully to comprehend, their teachings, when taken together, in no way contradict a reason conditioned in its activity by a holy affection and enlightened by the Spirit of God. To reason in the large sense, as including the mind's power of cognizing God and moral relations—not in the narrow sense of mere reasoning, or the exercise of the purely logical faculty—the Scriptures continually appeal.

A. The proper office of reason, in this large sense, is: (a) To furnish us with those primary ideas of space, time, cause, substance, design, right, and God, which are the conditions of all subsequent knowledge. (b) To judge with regard to man's need of a special and supernatural revelation. (c) To examine the credentials of communications professing to be, or of documents professing to record, such a revelation. (d) To estimate and reduce to system the facts of revelation, when these have been found properly attested. (e) To deduce from these facts their natural and logical conclusions. Thus reason itself prepares the way for a revelation above reason, and warrants an implicit trust in such revelation when once given.

B. Rationalism, on the other hand, holds reason to be the ultimate source of all religious truth, while Scripture is authoritative only so far as its revelations agree with previous conclusions of reason, or can be rationally demonstrated. Every form of rationalism, therefore, commits at least one of the following errors: (a) That of confounding reason with mere reasoning, or the exercise of the logical intelligence.

(b) That of ignoring the necessity of a holy affection as the condition of all right reason in religious things. (c) That of denying our dependence in our present state of sin upon God's past revelations of himself. (d) That of regarding the unaided reason, even its normal and unbiased state, as capable of discovering, comprehending, and demonstrating all religious truth.

### C. Mysticism

As rationalism recognizes too little as coming from God, so mysticism recognizes too much.

A. True mysticism.—We have seen that there is an illumination of the minds of all believers by the Holy Spirit. The Spirit, however, makes no new revelation of truth, but uses for his instrument the truth already revealed by Christ in nature and in the Scriptures. The illuminating work of the Spirit is therefore an opening of men's minds to understand Christ's previous revelations. As one initiated into the mysteries of Christianity, every true believer may be called a mystic. True mysticism is that higher knowledge and fellowship which the Holy Spirit gives through the use of nature and Scripture as subordinate and principal means.

B. False mysticism.—Mysticism, however, as the term is commonly used, errs in holding to the attainment of religious knowledge by direct communication from God, and by passive absorption of the human activities into the divine. It either partially or wholly loses sight of (a) the outward organs of revelation, nature and the Scriptures; (b) the activity of the human powers in the reception of all religious knowledge; (c) the personality of man, and, by consequence, the personality of God.

### D. Romanism

While the history of doctrine, as showing the progressive apprehension and unfolding by the church of the truth contained in nature and Scripture, is a subordinate source of theology, Protestantism recognizes the Bible as under Christ the primary and final authority.

Romanism, on the other hand, commits the two-fold error (a) Of making the church, and not the Scriptures, the immediate and sufficient source of religious knowledge; and (b) Of making the relation of the individual to Christ depend upon his relation to the church, instead of making his relation to the church depend upon, follow, and express his relation to Christ.

In Roman Catholicism there is a mystical element. The Scriptures are not the complete or final standard of belief and practice. God gives to the world from time to time, through popes and councils, new communications of truth. Cyprian: "He who has not the church for his mother, has not God for his Father." Augustine: "I would not believe the Scripture, unless the authority of the church also influenced me." Francis of Assisi and Ignatius Loyola both represented the truly obedient person as one dead, moving only as moved by his superior; the true Christian has no life of his own, but is the blind instrument of the church. John Henry Newman, *Tracts, Theol. and Eccl.*, 287—"The Christian dogmas were in the church from the time of the apostles,—they were ever in their substance what they are now." But this is demonstrably untrue of the immaculate conception of the Virgin Mary; of the treasury of merits to be distributed in indulgences; of the infallibility of the pope (see Gore, *Incarnation*, 186). In place of the true doctrine, "Ubi Spiritus, ibi ecclesia," Romanism substitutes her maxim, "Ubi ecclesia, ibi

Spiritus.” Luther saw in this the principle of mysticism, when he said: “Papatus est merus entusiasmus.” See Hodge, Syst. Theol., 1:61-69.

In reply to the Romanist argument that the church was before the Bible, and that the same body that gave the truth at the first can make additions to that truth, we say that the unwritten word was before the church and made the church possible. The word of God existed before it was written down, and by that word the first disciples as well as the latest were begotten (1 Pet. 1:23—“begotten again ... through the word of God”). The grain of truth in Roman Catholic doctrine is expressed in 1 Tim. 3:15—“the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth” = the church is God's appointed proclaimer of truth; cf. Phil. 2:16—“holding forth the word of life.” But the church can proclaim the truth, only as it is built upon the truth. So we may say that the American Republic is the pillar and ground of liberty in the world; but this is true only so far as the Republic is built upon the principle of liberty as its foundation. When the Romanist asks: “Where was your church before Luther?” the Protestant may reply: “Where yours is not now—in the word of God. Where was your face before it was washed? Where was the fine flour before the wheat went to the mill?” Lady Jane Grey, three days before her execution, February 12, 1554, said: “I ground my faith on God's word, and not upon the church; for, if the church be a good church, the faith of the church must be tried by God's word, and not God's word by the church, nor yet my faith.”

The Roman church would keep men in perpetual childhood—coming to her for truth instead of going directly to the Bible; “like the foolish mother who keeps her boy pining in the house lest he stub his toe, and would love best to have him remain a babe forever, that she might mother him still.” Martensen, Christian Dogmatics, 30—“Romanism is so busy in building up a system of guarantees, that she forgets the truth of Christ which she would guarantee.” George Herbert: “What wretchedness can give him any room, Whose house is foul while he adores his broom!” It is a semi-parasitic doctrine of safety without intelligence or spirituality. Romanism says: “Man for the machine!” Protestantism: “The machine for man!” Catholicism strangles, Protestantism restores, individuality. Yet the Romanist principle sometimes appears in so-called Protestant churches. The Catechism published by the League of the Holy Cross, in the Anglican Church, contains the following: “It is to the priest only that the child must acknowledge his sins, if he desires that God should forgive him. Do you know why? It is because God, when on earth, gave to his priests and to them alone the power of forgiving sins. Go to the priest, who is the doctor of your soul, and who cures you in the name of God.” But this contradicts John 10:7—where Christ says “I am the door”; and 1 Cor. 3:11—“other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ” = Salvation is attained by immediate access to Christ, and there is no door between the soul and him. See Dorner, Gesch. prot. Theol., 227; Schleiermacher, Glaubenslehre, 1:24; Robinson, in Mad. Av. Lectures, 387; Fisher, Nat. and Method of Revelation, 10; Watkins, Bampton Lect. for 1890:149; Drummond, Nat. Law in Spir. World, 327.

## F. Revelation

### 1. General Revelation

### 2. Special Revelation

### 3. Reason

Reason is that power in man, which enables him to have mental perceptions, to exercise thought, and reflection, to know facts, to inquire into their mutual relations, and to deduce, logically, the conclusions which may be drawn from them.

Reason may be used either with reference to the natural or supernatural means of knowledge conferred by God.

When we refer to reason as a source of knowledge distinct from revelation, we mean the information attained, by the use of this faculty, in connection only with the natural, as distinguished from the supernatural.

By revelation, we mean the knowledge which God conveys by direct supernatural instruction, pre-eminently that given in the Bible.

Reason involves all the cognitive powers of man, which are the faculties through which the mind attains knowledge. These faculties are not separate, and independent, but are merely the instruments of the mind.

The mind is not itself an original source of knowledge, like the Scriptures, but is merely an instrument by which the man attains knowledge through the exercise of its appropriate faculties. There are no such things as innate ideas. These arise only through the exercise of proper thought and reflection, in connection with some perceived facts.

The means by which the mind attains knowledge in the exercise of its faculties, are five.

1. Consciousness, by which we learn our own existence, and the fact that we think, and are personal beings, possessing personal identity during the term of our natural life.
2. Observation, and experience of the world about us, through the senses.
3. Through intuitive conceptions, by which, upon the suggestion, through some external object, of some principle, we find ourselves at once convinced of its correctness.
4. The dispositions, instincts and tendencies of our natures.
5. The course of events in nature, as tending to good or evil, to what is desirable or disastrous.

It is manifest that the knowledge obtained from these various sources must be abundant to teach man the simple facts upon which rests his duty to God; namely, that there is a God to whom he owes existence, and consequent reverence, service and love, and whose greatness and goodness enforce this obligation; also to show him that that duty has not been discharged, and that he has not the disposition to discharge it; and consequently to render him uneasy in his relations to God, and anxious to appease him, and secure some assurance of his pardon and approval. It has also been thought by many, that

through reason alone man attains the conviction of immortality and of a future state of rewards and punishments.

However abundant may be the information thus conveyed to man, it is nevertheless clear that his knowledge in these directions must still remain very imperfect.

This must have been true of man even in a state of innocence. His finite nature and the finite conditions which surrounded him must still have left him ignorant upon many desirable matters. It is natural, therefore, to believe that, in that condition, he received direct communications from God, which are properly esteemed revelations.

But this imperfection must have been greatly increased by any subsequent fall from innocence. By this the perceptions of right and wrong would be dimmed, the power of conscience to enforce the right would be impaired, the desire to do the right would be diminished, prejudices against the right would be created, and affection for God would be greatly decreased, if not entirely obliterated.

Upon these grounds we may infer the necessity of some further source of knowledge of God, and of his will with respect to man.

We may also argue a priori as to the nature of this revelation.

1. It must come from God, the source of all our other knowledge. No other could give it, and it is fit that no other should do so.
2. It must be suited to our present condition, confirming the truth already known, and teaching what is practically useful to man as a sinner before God.
3. It must be secured from all possibility of error, so that its teachings may be relied on with equal, if not greater, confidence than those of reason.
4. It must come with authority, claiming and proving its claim to be the word of God, who has the right to command, and to punish those who disobey his commands; with authority also, that man may with confidence believe and trust the promises and hopes of pardon and peace it may hold out.
5. That it will be accompanied by difficulties and mysteries is what may be expected, since these are found frequently attending the knowledge derived from reason.

The gift of such a revelation must of course depend absolutely upon the will of God. It is not for man to say, before it is given, whether it certainly will, or will not, be bestowed.

That it is not improbable may be inferred from the fact that God has already made himself known to us in various ways in ourselves and in nature. If we need further revelation we may hope for it.



The only reason to the contrary is that we have sinned against God, and he may have chosen to abandon us to our fate. But this is not so truly understood until revelation has confirmed our conviction of our sinful estate. On the other hand, the favors which God still bestows, and the means of continued knowledge of him which he affords, indicate that he has not yet consigned us to our deserved fate, and that he may have purposes of mercy towards us.

That which renders it highly probable is the expectation seen in man, in the conceptions he has formed of God, as one to be propitiated by sacrifices and approached with prayer.

If the expectations thus formed are to be verified, the important question arises, in what way can God make known to us the new truth he wills to teach.

They manifestly speak unadvisedly who assert that this can in no wise be done.

If he should so choose, he could impress it on each one in like manner as we attain intuitive conceptions. He might reveal it to individuals in dreams and visions, so as to make each one feel and know that the vision is from God. Those through whom he has revealed himself have in some such way attained absolute conviction that God has spoken to and through them, and with God there is neither impossibility nor difficulty in producing like certainty in the mind of each individual of the race.

But as God usually acts through means, so he has revealed himself to a few, and through them to mankind in general.

The only question then is, how can he give evidence to the race at large that the men he has inspired are indeed his messengers? This also might be done in various ways, but he has chosen to do it by attesting their mission by miracles wrought through them.

As to the measure of authority to be ascribed to these miracles, men differ in opinion.

Some teach that any miracle wrought is of itself sufficient attestation of the messenger and of the truth which he teaches. Others, that miracles are only proofs to those who behold them, and dubious proofs even then, and that the true purpose of them is not to set the seal of God's authority, but simply to awaken attention and excite awe, and thus prepare the way for a proper hearing of the divine message. These assert that the revelation comes to us with the authority only of the self-convincing nature of the truth made known.

It is necessary, in this difference of opinions, to seek carefully after the true theory. From no source can we better obtain it than from the revelation itself, the teaching of which will be seen to be fully corroborated otherwise.

The Scripture theory seems to be this, that in any new revelation the prophet of God must present a doctrine perfectly consistent with every past revelation and with the knowledge conveyed by nature, and must, at the same time, confirm by miracles his authority as a teacher from God. Without the miracle the new truth has no evidence that it is not simply the product of human reason or imagination.

The coincidence in doctrine is necessary to protect against pretended miracles and the tricks of unprincipled men. Besides, the new truth can have no higher authority than the old, and therefore cannot supersede it, for the old also has come from God. No truth ever taught by God can be opposed by any new truth from him. What with God is truth is eternal truth. Like himself, it is the same "yesterday, to-day and forever." It may be more abundantly or clearly revealed. We may learn to comprehend it better and to correct our own misapprehensions of it, but whatever God has once given as truth must so remain forever, as changeless as his own life.

### **1. The Scriptural authority for this theory is conclusive.**

Moses announced the law, which shows the miracle alone not to be conclusive. See Deut. 13:1, 2, 3. "If there arise in the midst of thee a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and he give thee a sign or a wonder, and the sign or the wonder come to pass, whereof he spake unto thee, saying, let us go after other gods which thou hast not known, and let us serve them; thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or unto that dreamer of dreams: for the Lord your God proveth you to know whether ye love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul." This passage shows that even a miracle, wrought by one teaching doctrine not in accordance with that already received, should not tempt to belief in the divine authority of him who should work it.

The Apostle Paul gives similar instruction to the Galatians, Gal. 1:8: "Though we, or an angel from heaven, should preach unto you any gospel other than that which we preached unto you, let him be anathema." Whatever might be the accredited authority of the messenger, his teachings were not to be received.

Yet, with all this, the Scriptures do not disparage the miracle. The miracles of Mosaic times are constantly referred to as indubitably marking it as divine. Nicodemus recognized the high position assigned to miracles by the Jews, John 3:2: "No man can do these signs that thou doest, except God be with him." Christ himself says, John 10:25: "The works that I do in my Father's name, these bear witness of me."

This theory of the Scriptures is not necessarily based upon the idea that real miracles can be wrought otherwise than by divine power. Still the language sometimes used is liable to this construction. And much depends upon the definition of a miracle. If a miracle be a suspension of the fixed laws which God has established for the world, that suspension can only occur through his special permission. Taking this as the true meaning of the word, we can understand why such stress is laid in the Scriptures upon the Mosaic miracles and those of Christ, since many of them are such as nothing but divine power could accomplish. But the word miracle in the Scriptures has not this restricted meaning, but is applied likewise to any marked supernatural event. Because men are apt to put these upon a level with the miracles which God alone can work, they are warned not to follow after what is thus supernaturally done, if it be accompanied by such teaching as is contrary to truth already received.

See the apparent reality of such miracles in connection with the magicians of Egypt, Ex. 7:11; Chap. 8:7, and compare with it the conviction expressed by the magicians, Ex. 8:19, when they failed to produce lice from the dust, "This is the finger of God." Notice also what Christ says, Mark 13:22: "For there shall

arise false Christs and false prophets, and shall shew signs and wonders, that they may lead astray, if possible, the elect." See also Rev. 16:13, 14: "And I saw coming out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet, three unclean spirits, as it were frogs, for they are spirits of devils, working signs; which go forth unto the kings of the whole world, to gather them together unto the war of the great day of God the Almighty."

It is because of this liability to be deceived, that the Scriptures require the miracle and the concurrent doctrine as both essential to the reception of a new revelation.

## **2. This theory alone concurs with the course to which nature necessarily impels us.**

To the extent that we are fully convinced of the truth of a doctrine, no subsequent revelation could change our belief. It is true that this does not apply when we have doubts; but when our knowledge is fixed, we cannot be moved. No amount of miracle could convince a Christian that the nature of God is otherwise than pure and holy, or that he delights in worship not of the heart, or that he is not infinite in justice and holiness, in goodness, mercy and truth, or that he will pardon sin without due satisfaction to his law.

## **3. This theory accords with the progressive character of divine revelation.**

The earliest revelation came to those who had heretofore been guided only by reason. This was true even down to the beginnings of the Old Testament Scriptures, and, in that economy, only preparation was made for the future glory of the New Testament revelation. Hence the truths taught were, for the most part, only those which come within the compass of discovery by reason, or acceptance by it upon due suggestion, namely,—the existence of one God, the fact of creation, the law of moral obligation to God and man, the punishment of sinners, the duty of repentance, the pardoning mercy of God, and the law of sacrifices, with substitution and satisfaction.

The new economy goes further in its clear instructions: it teaches the vicarious atonement of Christ, involving representation in him and also in Adam, the doctrine of the Trinity in the Godhead, the mysterious union in the person of Christ, and many other truths heretofore only very indistinctly revealed.

These could not have been presented to those only taught heretofore by reason. But the revelation which stood between foreshadowed them in different ways. From it alone originally they would not have been discovered. But now that they are made known, that former revelation is seen to concur with the new statements, and the conformity of the clearly expressed doctrines to the mere outlines of them in the past sustains the fact that they have a common author, and that the divine revealer is the same. It is like the presence in animals of the same genus in earlier days of germs which find their development in species which come later.

## **4. This accords with our means of judging what course of action infinite wisdom would have devised.**

The conviction we have of past truth renders it impossible that we should throw it aside. We must, therefore, still hold it fast. That conviction has come from God, and we can have no higher evidence.

Yet, other statements and doctrines very probably or even certainly true, may be taught by men, as revealed to them, when they are either self-deceived, or attempting to deceive others. Hence, we must have the attesting miracle.

On the other hand, we are liable to be deceived as to what is supernatural, and especially, in the supernatural, as to what is within the limits of created power. Hence, we may be misled by the craft of men, or by the superhuman power of wicked spirits. Therefore, no doctrine must be accepted contrary to a truth already received.

A revelation, such as we have described, having been given and proved, another question arises: what is the relation which reason bears towards it?

We may lay down the following facts:

1. That reason is the first revelation, and is consequently presupposed in any other.
2. That the facts of reason cannot be denied by any subsequent revelation. No truth can destroy other truth.

A limitation must, however, be put on the province of reason. The doctrines of which it may judge, are those only which come within its sphere. Upon the presentation of a new doctrine reason may decide whether it agrees with former knowledge. If agreeable thereto, it must be accepted, if opposed, it must be rejected. But, if it be above reason, it must stand or fall with the rest of the revelation. God may, in his mercy, refrain from trying faith by a revelation of supernatural doctrine, but, if he reveals it, it must be no barrier to the reception of that doctrine itself, or of the revelation which accompanies it. In an able article in the Southern Presbyterian Review, Vol. I, pp. 1–34, on "Reason and Revelation," Dr. Thornwell puts this limitation upon reason, that it is sole arbiter within its own bounds, but no judge beyond them. He thinks that in this way only can it be applied as a test of doctrine. The theory is undoubtedly correct. It fails only in not recognizing the precise manner in which Scripture brings it in as an arbiter, not as the judge of truth as disconnected from the past, but as related to the various times and forms in which God has taught it. Reason should judge a new revelation, not by the truths taught by reason alone, but also by those which have been made known in any previous revelation.

The office of reason with respect to revelation, is therefore seen to be:

1. To examine the evidence of the miracles upon which it rests.
2. To compare its doctrines with the teaching of the past, and recognize their correspondence with or opposition to that teaching.
3. To adopt or reject the revelation according to the evidence afforded that it is God's truth.

4. To interpret its contents, according to the best light which learning affords.

G. Faith

### III. Material of Theology

A. Scripture

*1. Inspiration*

*2. Proofs*

*3. Attributes*

*4. Canon*

*5. Rule of Faith*

B. Science

C. Philosophy

D. Tradition

### IV. Method of Theology

A. Requisites

B. Divisions

Regarded as a science, theology may be classified in various forms.

1. According to the method of revelation, into natural and supernatural theology.

Natural theology embraces what man may attain by the study of God in Nature. This extends not only to what is beheld of him in the Heavens and the Earth, but also in the intellectual and spiritual nature of man himself.

Supernatural theology is that derived from such special information as God has given by what we commonly call Revelation.

2. According to the purpose which it contemplates, into Systematic Theology, also called Didactic, or Dogmatic; Polemic or Controversial Theology; and Practical or Experimental Theology.
3. According to the main religious idea associated with it, as Pantheistic Theology; Deistic Theology; Rationalistic Theology, &c.
4. According to the name of its founder, or the race in which it originated, or flourishes, as Christian Theology; Judaistic Theology; Mohammedan Theology, &c.
5. According to the sources from which it is derived, into Biblical Theology; Christian Dogmatic Theology; and Ecclesiastical Dogmatics.

Biblical Theology consists in the facts of the Bible, harmonized by scriptural comparison, generalized by scriptural theories, crystalized into scriptural doctrines, and so systematized as to show the system of truth taught, to the full extent that it is a system, and no farther. As in Botany, one gathers all the plants of the world, and arranges them without attempting to introduce new plants, even to fill up manifest gaps, so Biblical Theology, duly presented, shows scriptural truth in all the perfection, and in all the imperfection with which God has given it.

True Biblical Theology should recognize the inspired source whence come its teachings. But, as now technically used, Biblical Theology refers to the statement and development of doctrine by the various Biblical writers, or in other words to the development of Jewish religious thought without assuming or denying the inspiration of the Bible.

Christian Dogmatics is not confined, as is Biblical, to the facts and theories and statements of doctrine expressly and formally set forth in the Scriptures. It comprises in addition such philosophical explanations as seem necessary to make a complete and harmonious system. These additions are not necessarily non-scriptural, for they are often the embodiment of the very essence of Bible truth, though not of its formal utterances. They may be as much a part of Scripture as the theory of gravitation is of the revelation of nature. They should never be so far unscriptural as not to be either probable inferences from the Word of God or natural explanations of its statements. The more perfectly they accord with that word, and the greater the proportion of its facts which they explain, the more clearly do they establish their own truth, and the more forcibly do they demand universal acceptance. Failure to explain all difficulties or to harmonize all facts does not deprive them of confidence, but only teaches the need of further investigation. Direct opposition, however, to any one scriptural truth is enough to prove the existence of error in any Christian Dogmatic statement.

Ecclesiastical Dogmatics consists of authoritative statements of doctrine put forth by some body of Christians claiming to be a church of Christ. These are to be found in creeds, symbols, decrees, apologies and resolutions. They may also appear in the form of authoritative discussions of the creed or system of doctrine of any church.

It thus appears that a perfect system of theology will combine all of these classes. It must be based upon Biblical Dogmatics which shall have so collected and systematized all the teachings of a full revelation as to be concurrent with the facts and doctrines of Christian Dogmatics.

The Ecclesiastical Dogmatics will have gone no farther than fully authorized by the Word of God, and therefore will concur with Biblical Dogmatics, while the fulness of revelation will have left to Christian Dogmatics no speculative questions; but in all its discussions it will have been able to attain unto full knowledge of the facts, and ascertainment of all the doctrines.

But this concurrence can only be when Theology has been reduced to an exact science. This can never be looked for in this life.

The causes of doctrinal variation will therefore be apparent.

If men came to the study of Biblical Theology with minds entirely unprejudiced, capable of examining its truths with the same mental powers, and with the same amount of study, all would agree as to its facts and doctrines. But this cannot be done. Mental capacities vary. All men have their prejudices. All have not equal time for study, and all use not equally the time that they have. Thus variety is certain even in studying Biblical Theology.

The same causes increase this in Christian Dogmatics, because here the human element enters more largely than in Biblical Theology; while reverence for antiquity, opposition to change, and the influence of the learned of the past and the present, prevent the alteration of Ecclesiastical creeds which embody Ecclesiastical Dogmatics, and thus lead men constantly to continuance in error, and refusal to accept truth.

### C. Order

### D. Attitude

These facts show with what spirit we should study Theology:

1. With reverence for truth, and especially for the truth taught in the Word of God.
2. With earnest prayer for Divine help.
3. With careful searching of heart against prejudice.
4. With timidity, as to the reception and propagation of new doctrine.
5. But with a spirit willing and anxious to examine, and to accept whatever we may be convinced is true.

6. With teachable humility, which, knowing that God has not taught us in his word all the truth that exists, not even all the truth on many a single point, accepts with implicit faith all that he has taught, and awaits his own time for that more full revelation which shall remove all our present perplexities.

## V. History of Theology

### A. Non-Christian

The term "theology" is especially applicable to learned and scientific works upon God, or the gods. Of these, many are to be found connected with Heathenism. Such are the Vedas, the most ancient of the sacred books of the Hindoos. Such is the Zendavesta of the ancient Persians. The Edda, which sets forth the Scandinavian mythology, consists of poetic songs, and also of dialogues on the origin of the gods, on the creation of the world, and other like topics. [See Gardner's Faiths of the World, Vol. 1, p. 795.]

The most valuable discussions among the heathen, however, are to be found in the works of the Greek philosophers, the greater part of which, when not directly upon the nature of the gods, involved questions as to the origin of the world, and the presence therein of a divine controlling Spirit, as well as upon the nature of the soul, and its duties, and its immortality. Of their works many have come down to us in fragments only, while a large portion of what they taught is found only in the records and reports made by others: but there are also many complete works which profess to have been written by the authors of these speculations.

Confessedly the most important of these Greek writings are Xenophon's Memorabilia of Socrates, and the works of Plato, and Aristotle. But from the beginning of Grecian philosophy in Thales and Pythagoras to its culmination in Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle, was not quite two hundred years, while its whole history covers a period of six centuries and a half before, and five centuries after the coming of Christ. No human mind can estimate the value of these contributions, nor the influence they have exerted even over those possessed of the Christian Revelation.

The Latin writers also produced several works of a theological character, pre-eminent among which is that of Cicero "Concerning the nature of the Gods."

### B. Early Church

#### C. East

#### D. West

#### E. Roman Catholic

#### F. Lutheran

#### G. Reformed