

THE MYSTERY OF THE TRINITY

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1 MONOTHEISM

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Today we're going to begin a new series of study. We're planning to have six messages with respect to the doctrine of the Trinity. The whole concept of the Trinity is one that is fraught with difficulties and controversy throughout church history. And yet, it has emerged as a touchstone of truth, and a non-negotiable article of Christian orthodoxy. Still, there is so much confusion around this concept that to this day we find people misunderstanding it in very serious ways. Some people really think that the doctrine of the Trinity means that we believe in three gods, which is what is called tritheism, which of course the church has categorically rejected historically. And others have seen it as the church's retreat into contradiction. I had a conversation not too long ago with a man who had his Ph.D. in philosophy, and he objected to Christianity on the grounds that at the heart of the Christian faith was this doctrine of the Trinity that was a manifest contradiction -- saying that God is three and one. And I was surprised at that, because since he was a professor of philosophy, I assumed he'd had at least elementary courses in logic and knew the basic ingredients of the law of non-contradiction, which is defined historically by saying, "A cannot be A and non-A at the same time, and in the same relationship." And when we see our confession of faith in the Trinity, the church confesses that God is one in essence and three in person. God is one in A, and three in B. Now if we said that He is one in essence, and three in essence that would be a contradiction. Or if we said He is one in person, and three in person that also would be a contradiction. But as mysterious as the Trinity may be and as it may be above our capacity to understand in its fullness, the historic formula is not contradictory. But why did the church get into this discussion of Trinity in the first place? And I think what we need to understand initially is that the development of the church's understanding of the nature of God, based upon the Scriptures. And when we look at the Scriptures, we see what we call in theology progressive revelation. Now what we mean by progressive revelation is that as time goes by God unfolds more and more of His historic plan of redemption. He gives more and more content of His self-disclosure by means of revelation. Now this progress in revelation does not mean that what God reveals in the Old Testament, He then contradicts in the New Testament. Progressive revelation is not a corrective, whereby the latest unveiling from God corrects a previous mistaken revelation. No, no, no. What we mean by progressive revelation is that there is a building upon what has been given in the past, and an expanding dimension of content to that revelation. Now, I

mentioned that at the beginning because we don't see on the first page of Scripture a clear manifest teaching of God as being triune in His nature. There are hints of that very early in the Old Testament, but we don't have the extent of information about the Trinitarian character of God, in the Old Testament that we find in the New Testament; and so we have to trace this development throughout redemptive history to see what the Bible is actually saying about these things. Now of course, before we even talk about Trinity, we have to first talk about unity, because Trinity means, tri-unity. And what is behind the concept of unity, is the biblical affirmation of monotheism. And I think most of us are familiar with this term: monotheism. Mono means one, or single. Theism has to do with God. So, the idea is that there is only one God. We hear the Hebrew shema, in the book of Deuteronomy where the call is made, "Hear O Israel: the Lord your God is one." And then comes the great commandment, "Thou shalt love the Lord your God with all of your heart," and so on. But this affirmation of monotheism is a startling dimension of Old Testament faith and religion because of the rarity of such assertions in the ancient world. Most of the cultures of antiquity from which we have historical records, had religions that were not monotheistic in nature. Some have argued that the Egyptians were the first monotheists because of their worship of Ra or Aton of the sun god and so on, but there is a uniqueness found in the particular type of monotheism that is native to Israel and to Old Testament Jewish faith. Now because the roots of monotheism in the Scripture go back basically to the account of creation, that created an enormous controversy in the nineteenth century in the field of religion and philosophy. One of the most dominant philosophers of the nineteenth century was Frederick Hegel. And Hegel developed a philosophy of history. And it's a very complex and speculative philosophy of history that has at its core a concept of historical development or evolution. In the Nineteenth Century we saw thinkers being preoccupied with the concept of evolution, not simply with respect to biology. But this idea became almost a buzzword in the academic world and in the scientific community, and was applied not only to the development of animals or living things, but also to political institutions. There was a social Darwinism that was applied to an understanding of history in terms of models of civilization and sociological models and the like. Well the same ideas were then applied by the followers of Hegel to the development of religious concepts, and at the heart of this was what was called the Religious Historical School. And the Religious Historical School of thought in the Nineteenth Century worked with this assumption: that just as in the case with all other forms of evolution, so religion evolves historically following the same pattern of evolution in the

biological realm and that is the pattern of development from the simple to the complex. And so when this assumption was brought to the Old Testament text, the assumption was this: that all religions develop in a similar pattern, beginning first of all in the simple form of animism. And the term animism comes from the idea that there are living souls in what we would normally understand to be inanimate or unliving objects -- like souls or spirits that inhabit rocks, or souls or personalities that inhabit trees or totem poles, or statues, or so on. And again this was confirmed, of course, by these scholars by examining those outposts of primitive peoples that still survived down to the present day. When you go into the remote corners of the world, and you examine the religion of primitive people you find that there's still a strong element of animism. And so the assumption was that all religions begin with animism, and then they move in an evolutionary way progressively to the next step, or which is the next stage, which is polytheism: many gods. And you've seen the religions of antiquity, such as the Norse religions, the Roman religion, the Greek religion, where they had a god or a goddess for almost every human function: a god of fertility, a god of wisdom, a god of beauty, a god of war and so on. And we're all familiar with that in terms of the mythology of the ancient world. And that is that people believed in a multitude of gods that existed to serve various functions of human life. And then the next stage of religious development after polytheism, is called henotheism. And henotheism is a sort of hybrid between polytheism and monotheism. It's a transitional stage between the species as it were. What henotheism is, is a belief in one god (again the prefix "hen" comes from the Greek word for one, a different word than mono), but the idea here is that there is one god for each people, or for each nation, and he reigns sovereignly over the geographical area of his domain. So that there would be for example a god for the Jewish people who was Yahweh, a god for the Philistines who was Dagon, and a god for the Canaanites who was Baal, and so on. So that each people group or each nation had one god. But, they did not believe there was only one god ultimately. They would recognize the reality of other nation's gods, and many of the times the battles that were fought between nations were seen as battles between the individual gods of the people. And we'll look at this in a moment how people find this in the Old Testament, because you see so many of these conflicts recorded as the God of Israel goes up against the god of Baal, or the god of the Ashtoreth or the god of the Philistines and so on. But that becomes a transitional phase until you reach the full development of monotheism. And now assuming this evolutionary framework, the Nineteenth Century critics challenged the idea that the Bible is consistently monotheistic. There was an ongoing debate as to when

monotheism really began in Israel. Probably the more conservative of these critics would say there were hints of it in Abraham. Many of them said that monotheism didn't begin among the Jews until Moses, and many rejected even the idea that Moses was a monotheist, saying that monotheism didn't begin until the Eighth Century prophets, particularly with the work of Isaiah. And some even more skeptical argued that the monotheism didn't begin until after the exile and was a rather recent development in Jewish religion. And so, orthodox scholarship has had to fight that battle for the last hundred plus years, in trying to demonstrate that the idea of the unity of God, the singleness of God, is rooted in the very beginning of biblical history. You see, for example, in the very first verse of Scripture we read, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." And so in the creation narrative we see the affirmation that the God who is introduced in the first page of the Pentateuch is the God whose domain is the entire creation, not just the limited geographical boundaries of Old Testament Israel, but that He is the God over heaven and earth. Another phrase that is used for God frequently in the Old Testament is the "Most High God." Now, one of the reasons however, that the critics see a lack of monotheism, even in the creation narratives is because in those narratives there is a vacillation between two different names for God. On the one hand God is referred to as Jehovah or Yahweh; on the other hand, the name Elohim is used for God. And that name, Elohim is striking because the "him" on the end is the plural ending of the Hebrew noun, and so one could translate the name Elohim by the English word "gods." Now at the same time there is a further anomaly with that, that name Elohim, that even though it has a plural ending, it appears with a singular verb form. And so the writer's obviously saying something that can't simplistically be interpreted to mean "many gods." But again, the character of this Elohim or this Jehovah, who is revealed to us in the opening chapters of Genesis, is the one who is sovereign over all things. And so I think that you're leaping to conclusions by assuming from the name Elohim that therefore there was this polytheism. It really gets at times absurd. I remember when I was in seminary listening to a professor say that Jewish religion began in animism because of the experience of Abraham, by meeting the angels by the oaks of Mamre. And the professor said, "You see what's going on here, that Abraham is engaged in conversation with these supposed three angels by the oaks." He said, "Really what's going on is Abraham's conversing with the gods in the trees." Hello -- there's not a shred of evidence in the text that Abraham is engaged in any kind of animism. But the charge of animism is also lodged because in the account of the fall, you have the temptation being brought to Adam and Eve by a serpent, who assumes

personal characteristics. He can reason, he can speak, and he can act with volition. And so, this ascription of personal characteristics and traits to a serpent would be seen by some critics as an example of animism. Also the same could be said later on of the experience of Balaam's ass when that donkey speaks there. And they say, "Well see there's the spirit in the donkey, just like there was a spirit in the serpent. And these are the evidences, so to speak, for animism. And then the idea of henotheism is charged because, (as I said) there is so much conflict recorded in the Old Testament between the God of Israel and the god of the other nations. And so, the question remains, was it really monotheism from the beginning? But, as I've said, the creation account asserts that God is the creator over all things, the heaven and earth. When we move fast forward over to Exodus to the account of the giving of the law. The very first commandment received by Moses at Sinai is one that is strongly monotheistic, because God is saying, "Thou shalt have no other gods before Me." Now, some people would say, "That's only henotheistic, because God is saying, you can have other gods, just as long as they don't out rank Me, just as long as you make sure that I'm the head deity, the chief deity. No one can rank ahead of Me. Don't you put anybody before Me." Except that when God is speaking there, "Thou shalt have no other gods before Me..." What he is saying in the "before me" is in my presence. And His presence, of course, is ubiquitous, and it's omnipresence. So what God is saying when He says, "Thou shalt have no other gods in my presence," He's basically saying to worship anything apart from Him, whether you live in Israel or whether you live in Canaan or whether you live in Philistia, you are engaged in an act of idolatry, because there is only one God. And the second commandment reinforces that first commandment with its manifest prohibition of all forms of idolatry. When you get to the prophets you read an almost constant diatribe against the false gods of other religions -- that they are seen as not competing deities, but as useless idols. In fact the prophets characteristically make fun of people who worship trees, who worship statues, who worship those things that they have made with their own hands, and makes fun of people who believe that that block of wood is inhabited by some intelligent being -- that as if that block of wood could hear or as if that block of wood could see. And so they ridicule the whole idea of animism, and the whole idea of polytheism consistently throughout their critique. So I think just in passing that we have to understand that what is firmly established in the religion of Israel and the Old Testament is this concept of monotheism: there is one God. But it's precisely because of this clear teaching of monotheism that the whole question of the Trinity has become so problematic, because by the time we come to the New Testament,

the New Testament church is affirming that God the Father is divine, God the Son is divine, and God the Holy Spirit is divine; yet, the New Testament still strongly maintains the notion of monotheism. So that somehow we have to understand that the distinctions in the Godhead are not essential -- that is -- I don't mean not essential in the sense of not important but that is they are not of the essence. They do not refer to a fragmentation or compartmentalization of the very being of God. The New Testament continues to affirm the oneness of God as we will see in the forthcoming messages I hope. But, you see what the problem is: the whole question of the Trinity is rooted and grounded first of all in the biblical affirmation of monotheism, and so the struggle has been how can we maintain the Old Testament doctrine of monotheism with the clear New Testament affirmation of the triune character of the biblical God. It was Augustine who once said that, "the New (referring to the New Testament) is in the Old concealed; the Old is in the New revealed." And that is our task: to show in this progression of thought and divine revelation, there is an uncompromised unity of thought.

2 THE BIBLICAL WITNESS

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As we continue now with our study of the doctrine of the Trinity, we will recall that in our first session, we looked briefly at the Old Testament concept of monotheism -- that is the affirmation of the oneness of God, and showed that there has been controversy over the period in redemptive history when monotheism was developed. Was it there at the beginning of creation as orthodoxy maintains, or was it a later development? But today we want to look at the connection between the Old Testament and the New Testament. And let me begin first of all by saying that even though we don't have an explicit definition of Trinity, in the Old Testament, nevertheless we do have hints from time to time of Trinity throughout the pages of Old Testament history. One of those important hints is one that we've already looked at from a different angle, namely the plural use for the name of God, Elohim. The critics see the use of that name as a crass form of polytheism. Nevertheless, others have seen in that plural name, particularly as it is accompanied by a singular verb, a sort of cryptic reference to the plural character of God. Now let me tell you a couple of things about that. First of all I don't think it necessarily indicates the Trinity, because it could simply be a literary form similar to what we call the editorial plural, or the editorial "we," when a writer will assume the plural form to communicate a point, where we see the

plural of majesty: where kings, or popes, or people in high office, preface their comments by saying, "We decree, or we declare and so on," and it could be that. But more to the point is a Hebrew literary device called the plural of intensity, and that plural of intensity calls attention to the depth dimension of the very character of God in whom resides all elements of deity and of majesty. And so I would say at the very minimum the name Elohim is compatible with the doctrine of Trinity and may in fact be hinting in that direction. But the word itself doesn't demand that we infer from it the doctrine of the Trinity. One aside, parenthetically for those of you who have some interest in philosophical speculation, and particularly in the division of philosophy dedicated to metaphysics and to questions of being. You may recall that in ancient Greek philosophy one of the central issues that the Greek philosophers were trying to solve was the problem of the so-called, "The one and the many." So much of early Greek philosophy was dedicated to that difficulty. How do we make sense out of so many diverse things that are apart of our experience? Do we live in a universe that ultimately is coherent, or do we live in a universe that is ultimately chaotic? And the assumptions of science, for example, are such that for us to have knowledge, there has to be coherency, there has to be some kind of order to things, or knowledge would be impossible. And so our whole enterprise of scientific investigation presupposes what even Carl Sagan says is cosmos, not chaos. So that means that there must be something that gives unity to all of the diversity that we experience in the world, and in the Greek thought, there was an attempt to find unity and diversity in a coherent way. In fact the very word "universe" comes from the concept of unity and diversity jammed together -- that we live in a place of great diversity that nevertheless has unity; and the Greek philosophers sought (and I would say in vain) to find the source of both unity and diversity. And yet in the Christian faith, and in the Christian worldview, all diversity finds its ultimate unity in God Himself, and it is significant that even in God's own being we find both unity and diversity -- in fact the ultimate ground for unity and diversity. But as I said, that is at best, I think, hinted at in the opening words of the Old Testament and with the concept of the name Elohim. But, in addition to that, also in the creation account we encounter already the Spirit of God, who is active in creation and who is bringing something out of nothing and who is meeting the criteria for deity that is set forth, for example, in the New Testament. And so that is another hint toward the multi-personal character of God early on in that work. And again throughout the Old Testament and in its views of the coming Servant of the Lord and so on, there are other references that indicate the triune character of God. One that I'll just mention in passing,

rather than to get bogged down in this, is the most often quoted Old Testament text in the New Testament -- that is the Old Testament text that is quoted in the New Testament more often than any other text is Psalm 110, which has this very strange beginning to it, when the psalmist says, "O Lord, our Lord, how excellent is Thy name." I'm sorry that's Psalm eight. Psalm 110 says, "The Lord said to my Lord, 'Sit thou at my right hand.'" Now characteristically, when you see the conjunction of the name of God Yahweh, with the form of the title, Adon -- Adonai in the Old Testament, you see the personal name of God, Yahweh, and His chief or supreme title, Adonai, associated with it. As I got confused a moment ago and talked about Psalm eight, where Psalm eight begins what? "O Lord, Our Lord" -- O Yahweh our Adonai -- "how excellent is thy name in all the earth," where there is a clear identification between Adonai and Yahweh; and yet what you have in this startling text of Psalm 110, is that God is having a conversation with David's Lord. "The Lord (Yahweh) said to My Lord (Adonai), sit thou at my right hand." Of course this is where the New Testament picks up on it, and talks about Jesus as being David's son, and David's Lord. And so we see another hint of the multiple dimension of the being of God in this conversation in Psalm 110. It also is the same Psalm that declares that God's son will be a priest forever, an eternal priest after the order Malchizedek. When we come to the New Testament, it's not as though the New Testament repudiates the Old Testament affirmation of monotheism. The concepts of monotheism that are so firmly established in the Old Testament are not only assumed, but repeated over and over again in the New Testament. Let me just give one illustration -- or a couple illustrations of that. Let's look first of all at a famous passage in the book of Acts. In Acts verse seventeen beginning at verse twenty two, when Paul comes to the center of Greek culture in antiquity we read, "Then Paul stood in the midst of the Areopagus (or Mars Hill) and said, "Men of Athens, I perceive that in all things you are very religious, for as I was passing through and considering the objects of your worship, I even found an alter with this inscription: "To the unknown God." Now let me just again give us another little dangling parenthesis if you will. Paul notices -- first of all when he comes to Athens, his spirit is moved within him, he's depressed, because he sees that the city is given to idolatry. Everywhere he turns around he sees false religion. And if he was going to -- the Areopagus was where the temple of Mars was, or of Aries in Athens. He had passed by all the other temples, and he saw this religious activity everywhere. And he noticed, as if the Greeks were afraid that they left one out, they had this alter inscribed, "To the unknown God." Now we'll come back in a moment to what Paul says about that. But let me just pick up on it, as I said, as a

parenthesis for a second. One of the most striking things that I encountered in my graduate work, in the sixties -- that would be 1960, not the 1860s -- was the evidence that was emerging from theological anthropology and sociologists who were examining the religious views of various primitive tribes in the world and finding that despite the outward animism that was prevalent in their culture, that every one of these primitive cultures, if they were probed - with the wise old generation -- they would speak about the god over the other side of the mountain, or the god who was distantly removed from them, who even though he was not center to their daily practice of religion, nevertheless was deeply rooted in their tribal consciousness of a great high god. So rather than these primitive tribes proving the thesis of animism, on the contrary, people like Misures Illeaday and Heinrich Kramer and others, discovered this element of tradition within these animistic tribes of a god who was like the unknown god, that they were not in touch with, but they somehow knew He was there, which of course conforms to Paul's declaration in the first chapter of Romans that the God of all the universe has manifested Himself to everybody, and that everybody gets that message -- that every human being knows the existence of the Most High God, but the sinful character of humanity is to do what? In every case one hundred times out of one hundred, we repress and bury that knowledge and exchange that knowledge that God has given us into idolatry, and that is why we are all held guilty before God. But that's another story. But in the mean time, in this -- back at Acts and Athens, Paul mentions seeing this alter to the unknown God, and he says, "Therefore the one whom you worship in ignorance, or without knowing, or agnostically (a gnosis), Him I proclaim to you. God, who made the world and everything in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands, nor is He worshiped by men's hands, as if He needed anything, since He gives to all life, breath, and all things. And He has made from one blood every nation of men that dwells on the face of the earth, and has determined their preappointed times, and the boundaries of their dwellings so that they should seek for the Lord in the hope that they should grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each of us. For in Him we live and move and have our being, as some of your own poets have said, for we also are His offspring. Therefore since we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the divine nature is like gold or silver or stone, something shaped by art and man's devising. But truly these times of ignorance God overlooked but now commands all men everywhere to repent because He has appointed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained, and He has given assurance of all this by raising Him from the

dead.” So here though, Paul is again affirming clearly, classical Jewish monotheism. One God who has made all things and from whom everything derives. Let’s look at one more text, 1 Corinthians chapter eight, if we could, verse four. Paul’s in a discussion about eating things that have been offered to idols, a practical and pastoral problem that came up in the Corinthian church. He says in chapter eight verse one, “Now concerning things offered to idols, we know that we all have knowledge, and that knowledge puffs up, but love edifies. If anyone thinks that he knows anything, he know nothing yet as he ought to know, but if anyone loves God this one is known by Him. Therefore concerning the eating of things offered to idols, we know that an idol is nothing in the world.” We know that there is no substance there is no meaning, there is no significance, no power, there is no being in any idol. “And there is no other god but One. For even if there are so-called gods whether in heaven or on earth, as there are many “gods” and many “lords,” yet there is one God the Father of whom are all things. We for Him, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, and through whom we live.” And so in the very same sentence that Paul is ascribing clearly deity to Christ, he is at that same moment reaffirming the unity of God and the oneness of God. All right, well why is that the New Testament then speaks of one God, and yet at the same time affirms the deity of the Holy Spirit and the deity of Christ? The reason why the church does that, as I said earlier, is because the Bible does it. And we see it throughout the pages of the New Testament. It would be a separate set of lectures to look at every passage in the New Testament that ascribes deity to Christ and still another separate message to look at every passage that or even selectively passages where deity and personality is ascribed to the Holy Ghost. Let’s just look at a couple of those passages wherein the deity of Christ is so firmly manifested. We see it especially in John’s gospel. And I’ll come to John one in a moment because that is the most significant passage of all. But remember, in the “I ams” of Jesus when He said, “I am the door,” and, “I am the way the truth and the life,” and all that sort of thing. Among those, particularly in John 8 our Lord says, “Before Abraham was, I am.” And throughout the “I ams”, Jesus uses that form of language that was used to translate the essential name of God Yahweh. The formula, “ego eimi”, “I am” is the formula by which the name of God is translated from the Hebrew to the Greek. And several times in John’s gospel, He uses this construction for himself. And we see it perhaps most dramatically with reference to Abraham -- Abraham, who is the patriarch, the father of the faithful, who is so venerated by the contemporary community of Jesus’ day. He said, “You want to use Abraham against me, let me tell you: before Abraham was, I was” -- no -- “before Abraham was, I am,” in which there is

a claim to eternity and a claim to deity. What many people will miss in our day, the first Century contemporaries of Jesus caught rather quickly. The furor of His opponents was launched against Him because the charge was that He being a man, made Himself equal with God. Even the claim to Sonship was considered blasphemous by His contemporaries. And so, all of those texts where Jesus claims to be the Son who was sent by the Father and who was with the Father in heaven and so on, bear witness to this. Also in John's gospel we have the intriguing narrative of the post-resurrection appearance of Jesus when some of the disciples had seen Him, and Thomas was absent. And remember doubting Thomas? He says, "Unless I can see Him with my eyes and put my hand in His side, and my fingers in the nail prints, I'm not going to believe. In the midst of this skepticism, Jesus appears to him and offers His hands and His side. It doesn't say whether Thomas ever did actually probe Him tactically, but what was his response? He falls on his knees and says to Jesus, "My Lord and my God." Now notice in the book of Acts when people are so amazed at Paul and Silas that they fall down and worship them, and they rebuke them immediately. Even when people seen the manifestation of angels and begin to worship the angels, the angels rebuke them that they are not to be worshiped because they are creatures. And here's Jesus accepting the worship of Thomas, without rebuke, and recognizing Thomas' confession as valid, "My Lord and my God." We also see many references in the New Testament to the triune benediction, the triune formula for baptism, that the command of Christ that people are to be baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit and so on. Clearly the most pregnant text of all in the New Testament is that opening verse of the gospel according to Saint John, where we read in John chapter one, "In the beginning was the Word (that is the Logos) and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." In that first sentence you see the mystery of the Trinity because in the first portion of the sentence, the Logos, who was with God from the beginning (He's eternal, but He's distinguished from God) because He's described as being with God. I might add the word that is there is that word that describes "withness" in the closes possible proximity. There are different ways in which the Greek language can be translated by the English word "with," but the word that is used here suggests the closest. It is virtually a face-to-face relationship. But nevertheless there is a distinction made in the first part of the text between the Logos and God. And then in the next breath, what? And the Word -- that was not only with God -- was God. So you see in once sense the Word must be distinguished from God, and in the other sense the Word must be identified with God. That's why this concept of the Logos dominated Christian philosophical and

theological reflection for the first three hundred years of church history. So rich and so important was this concept that John introduces in his gospel. Because he goes on to say about the Logos, He was in the beginning with God; He's not a creature. In fact, "All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. In Him was life. And the life was the light of men," and so on. And so divine characteristics and attributes are ascribed to the eternal Logos in the gospel according to Saint John. And so that's one of the main reasons why the church developed its doctrine of the Trinity.

3 EARLY CONTROVERSIES

<https://youtu.be/DEN45HiNVWc>

We're going to continue now with our study of the Christian concept of the Trinity, and if you'll recall in our last session at the end we looked at the prologue to the gospel according to St. John, and I mentioned to you that his concept of the divine Logos that from all eternity was with God, and yet is God, preoccupied the intellectual investigation and inquiry of the thinking of the Christian church in the first three centuries. That so-called Logos Christology dominated the reflection of the early church, and not all of those reflections ended well. Some of them moved in a direction of what was subsequently called to be heresy and distortions of the biblical view of Christ and forced the church to define her understanding of the Trinity in an official way. Most every Christian community continues to affirm the assertions of the so-called ecumenical councils of church history, the two chief of which were the Council of Nicea in the Fourth Century and the Council of Chalcedon in the Fifth Century. So I want to spend some time today looking at the issues that provoked the controversy that made these councils necessary for the historic Christian church. As I said in the beginning, the first two centuries the reflection focused upon the idea of the eternal Logos, and the constant tension that was always there was, how do we relate the affirmation of the deity of Christ particularly, as well as the Holy Spirit, but particularly the deity of Christ with the biblical concept of monotheism? So that was the tension that forced the development of the Trinity. And so the question was how do we understand the nature of this triune God? And what emerged historically in the Third and Fourth century was the development of what is called monarchianism. Now not everyone is familiar with that term. It is a theological term that has an important role in church history, but we're very familiar with part of the term, and that is the word "monarch." When we think about a monarch we think of a ruler of

a nation that is either a king or a queen. And the idea of monarchy comes from the prefix again “mono,” which means “one,” and the Greek word arche, which means “beginning, chief, or ruler.” And we’ve seen that in other contexts. In fact in the beginning of John’s gospel, where John says, “In the beginning was the Word,” the Greek reads, “En arche,” using this very word -- arche. Also, the word arche, besides meaning “beginning,” can mean “chief or ruler.” And we’ve seen that in other series. We did a series on angels, recently in which we talked about arch-angels, architects, arch-enemies, arch-bishops. All of those terms are qualified by the prefix “arch,” which is borrowed from the same Greek word, which means chief, so that a chief bishop would be an archbishop. A chief angel or ruling angel would be an archangel and so on; it’s the same word. And so, monarchianism was an attempt, historically, to preserve the unity of God, and specifically monotheism, but it sometimes, as I said, veered off course and created several problems. The first great heresy that the church had to deal with, with respect to monarchianism was called “modalistic” -- modalistic monarchianism. Now that is a mouthful, and maybe you’ve never heard of monarchianism before, and now we’re making all the more complicated by giving us this prefix -- qualifying term “modalistic.” What in the world does that mean? Well in the Second Century, the church was threatened by the appearance of a heretical group called Gnostics, and without getting into all that was involved in Gnosticism, the Gnostics had a view of God and view of reality that was on a collision course with Christianity. This was further refined in the development of a philosophy called Neo-Platonism, and particularly through its chief architect, Plotinus. But the idea of modalism is simply this: that all of reality, from angels down to rocks, all of reality manifests a certain particular mode of the being of God. There is an inherent pantheism involved in this. But the idea goes like this: At the top, or in the center of reality, is the one or the core being of God, and from the very being of God there arises eternally and by necessity various emanations that come out from the center. And the analogy would be like the concentric circles that move out from the core if you would drop a pebble in the pond, and you see the ripples moving out from the center in all directions; and you notice that the further you get away from where the pebble drops in the water, the weaker the ripple becomes, until after a while you can’t even discern the motion. Well, this emanation theory is that all of reality is a manifestation of the being of God, so that you have different levels -- spiritual levels, intellectual levels, psychical levels and so on -- and you come down here to pure matter like rocks and so on, that even the rocks are the part of the one. They share in the very being of the one, even though they are a lower level

or a lower mode of the ultimate being. But everything is still apart of the one. Now again the chief leader in the Third Century for this distortion known as modalistic monarchianism, was a man by the name of Sabellius and Sabellius used an illustration to communicate what he was teaching with respect to this idea of modalism His analogy was the analogy of the sun and its rays. I mean this is something that we experience everyday. We make a distinction in our popular language between the sun and sunbeams. You know sometimes we'll look around and we'll see the sun shining through the window, and it seems like you could almost package those sunbeams. And you say, "Well what is that?" and we say, "Well that's sunlight." "Well, where is the sun?" Well, the sun is ninety-three million miles away, but that light that comes to us from the sun is part of the sun; it is the beam that comes from the sun, the light that comes from the sun, and according to Sabellius, these rays partake of the very nature of the sun. There are in fact the same essence as the sun; they're just further removed from the core of the sun. And so Sabellius in explaining this idea of the relationship between God the Father, and God the Son, said that Christ is like a sunbeam. He is an emanation from the Father. He is a lower level than the Father, but He is of the same essence as the Father. He participates in deity, but then so do the rocks. And so he used a word to define the relationship between the Father and the Son, which probably in the whole history of the church was the most controversial single word ever dealt with. And that was the word, homoousios, which is a Greek term, and the word ousios, if you know a little bit of Greek, you'll know that the term ousios is the present participle of the verb "to be." Now let me give you little pop quiz on grammar and language, even if you don't know Greek. What would be the present participle of the verb "to be" in English? Exactly -- being! Being -- and so the idea in the root of this word homoousios that ousios means "being," and the prefix homo means the same. We say things are homogenous and so on, so that homoousios means "the same being or the same substance." Now you're beginning to see part of the reason why the classical formula for the Trinity has that affirmation at the beginning that God is one in essence or one in being, but three in person. And so Sabellius was saying, "I believe that there is a sameness of being between God the Father and God the Son even though God the Son is not equal with God the Father because He is a lower level of being, just as the sunbeam is lower than the center of the sun. I hope we understand that. Now this idea of modalistic monarchianism, meaning that Christ is a mode of being of the Father was condemned in the Third Century as heresy at Antioch, and see if anyone can guess the year. Can anyone in this classroom guess the year that

the Antioch condemned Sabellius and modalistic monarchianism? Try to guess; try to think. It was in the Third Century. Thank you very much, 267. Now I thought you might be wondering why I had that number up on the board. See somebody thought that number represented somebody's bowling score or something like that, but no, that's the year in which Sabellius was condemned. That's important because after Sabellius was condemned and this controversial word, homoousios, was rejected by the church, the church substituted for the term homoousios the term homoi, not Hanoi, homoiousios. Now it has the same root, ousios, but the prefix changes from homo to homoi, and the difference in Greek, is this: it's the difference between "same being" to the word "similar being." And so the church rejected as heresy Sabellius' idea of God the Father and God the Son being the same essence because they were rejecting the modalism in the philosophy behind this language. And so, the church says, "No we don't want to say that they are the same essence, because that'll get us into this pantheism that we want to avoid, and rather," they said, "we have to say that there is a likeness or similarity in the being of Christ and the being of the Father." And so that became the orthodox word for the rest of the Third Century, as the followers of Sabellius were considered heretics. But then after this happened another kind of monarchianism appeared on the scene, and this new form of monarchianism was called dynamic monarchianism. And the difference, or the distinction, between modalistic monarchianism and dynamic monarchianism, is that in dynamic monarchianism this whole scheme of emanations that were found -- or that was found in neo-Platonism or in Gnosticism was rejected, and the dynamic monarchianism was also committed to preserving monotheism while at the same time giving honor and central importance to Christianity of the person of Christ. And the view was propagated by some people who developed in the Antiochan area, and people who included such teachers as Paul of Samosata and others, but it was most popularized by its leading spokesman, whose name was Arius. And Arius is known for being the father of Arianism -- not the A-R-Y version of Adolph Hitler, and the biological heroism of the Nazis, but rather the Arianism that is barrowed from this man's name, Arius, who was the chief spokesperson for dynamic monarchianism. Sometimes his view is called Adoptionist Christology, and it is for this reason: that at the beginning before God creates the universe, the firstborn of creation, the firstborn of God is Christ or the Logos. The first thing that God creates is the Logos, and then the Logos creates everything else. So that the Logos is higher than the angels, higher than human beings and is the one who creates the world. He is the Creator. He pre-dates the world. He has preexistence over the rest of

the universe, but He is not eternal, and because He is not eternal, He is not equal with God. So the Logos is less than God, but greater than man. And it is the Logos that becomes incarnate historically in the person of Jesus. And so now the Logos with human the nature becomes obedient to the Father, becomes one with the Father in terms of the being on the same page, having the same mission, committed to the same goals as the Father. And because of His obedience, he is “adopted” by the Father as the Father’s son, and so it is properly to call Christ the Son of God, but He becomes the Son of God dynamically. There is a change. He was not always the Son of God, but rather His Sonship is something He virtually earns. But even then were talking about the most exalted creature who still is a creature. Now, to defend this view, Arius turned to the word that the church used at Antioch in image of His person. He’s the brightness of His glory borrowing from Hebrews. He’s the firstborn of all creation. He is the begotten Son of God, but he is not God; and he argued from the Greek language, that the language of the New Testament that describes God -- that describes Christ as being begotten, the language of Greek means there “to be, beget, or to happen,” and it carries the implication, particularly biologically of that which has a beginning in time. And anything that has a beginning in time is less than God, because God has no beginning in time. God is not begotten in that sense, because He is eternal. So from that biblical language Arius insisted that the Bible did not teach the full deity of Christ, and this is what provoked, in the final analysis the Council of Nicea: the work of Athanasius and the intrigue that went on between actually three parties, the homoiousion party, the homoousion party and the Athanasian party and so on; and it’s a fascinating study in church history, to see the struggle that the church went through in the beginning of the Fourth Century. But at the council of Nicea that gave to us the Nicene Creed, Arianism was condemned as a heresy. And the Nicene Creed has statements like this: “That Christ was begotten, not made” and the affirmation of the church at Nicea was that Christ is co-substantial and co-eternal with the Father. That is the Church was saying that when the language of begottenness or firstborn is used in Scripture, it has to do with the place of honor, not with biological origin as it was in the Greek language. There are some times that the Greek language does not adequately convey the Hebrew concepts that it is designed to convey in biblical literature. And so the church clearly condemns Arius, and with this condemnation of Arius condemns the term homoiousios. And now the Nicene Creed uses the very word the Church had condemned in 267 as the touchstone of Christian orthodoxy, homoousios. Now why did the church do that? You can say, “Well the church was inconsistent, the church flip-

flopped,” and so on. No. The heresy that threatened the church’s understanding of Christ in the Third Century had been removed. The new threat of Arianism was far greater than the threat that Sabellianism had been. And Arius was trying to hide behind this term *homoi*, using it in a way completely different from how the church intended it at Antioch. And that is what happens with heretics all the time. They’ll take orthodox language and put new meaning into it, to distort the truth of Christianity. So the point that we have to understand is that the church of the Fourth Century saw the threat of Arianism as being so serious to biblical Christianity that she reverted back to a term that she had previously rejected in order to communicate the idea that however we understand Christ and the Spirit, that they are the very essence of God and of deity -- that Christ and the Spirit are *homousios*, of the same substance, being, and essence as the Father. And here we have this idea clearly maintained that God, though three in person is one in essence, one in *ousios*.

4 FIFTH CENTURY HERESIES

<https://youtu.be/cJlenDjSsVA>

As we continue now with our study of the Trinity we’re looking at a historical overview of those crucial developments in church history where the doctrine of Trinity was at stake. And as I’ve mention for the first three hundred years of Christian history, the focal point was on John’s concept of the Logos, or the Word, who becomes flesh and who dwells among us; and we saw the crisis that was provoked in the Third Century by the modalism of Sabellius who was condemned at Antioch in 267 and then the ever greater crisis of the denial of the full deity of Christ by Arius in the early years of the Fourth Century that culminated in the Council of Nicea and the writing of the Nicene Creed in 325. Well, in one respect the Council of Nicea was a watershed moment for the church. It put an end for the most part, at least temporarily to adoptionism, but nevertheless it was not the end of struggles for the church’s understanding of the person of Christ. Now it’s been said that historically there have been four centuries where the church’s understanding of the natures of Christ, the person of Christ, have been most critical. And those four centuries in church history have been the Fourth Century, which we’ve already viewed, the Fifth Century, which we’re about to look at, and then the Nineteenth Century and the Twentieth Century. And I mention that because we are living now in the aftermath of two hundred years of devastating attacks against the church’s orthodox understanding of the person of Christ. That’s why it’s so important in our day that we revisit this whole concept of the Trinity. But as we move beyond

Nicea and the Arian crisis, the church now faces a new crisis, and the new crisis, with respect to Christology, is a crisis where the church has to fight a war on two fronts. I've said before in this series that the tendency in church history is for one heresy, when it is discovered, and in efforts to correct it, the tendency is to fall off the horse on the other side -- to overcorrect. And out of zeal to avoid one heretical view, one goes to extremes in the other direction and errs on that side as well. I remember having a specific course when I was doing my doctoral studies in Holland, where Professor Berkouwer gave a whole year's lectures on the history of heresy. It was an extremely valuable course, because one of the best ways of learning orthodoxy is learning what it isn't. In fact the function that heresy has in church history is that it forces the church to be precise. It forces the church to define her doctrines and to differentiate her truths from the attending falsehoods and corruptions of that truth. So that is one of the side benefits of heresy, one of the few. But in any case, as I said the church now is fighting a battle on two fronts with respect to two distinct heresies. The one is a heresy that is developed by a man named Eutyches. And Eutyches' name is connected with the historical heresy that is called monophysitism, or the monophysite heresy -- I'll write that down: monophysite heresy -- which appears in every generation. The term "monophysite" means literally, mono -- again there's that prefix that we keep encountering which means one -- and the word physite, or physics comes from the Greek physis, which means nature -- one nature. Now, remember the formula that the church has used through the ages to define the Trinity: that God is one in essence or being, or nature, and three in person. Now just the opposite is used with respect to the church's confession of the person of Christ. The person of Christ is confessed to be one person, but with two natures -- a human nature and a divine nature. And now in this problem with Eutyches and the monophysite heresy, is the monophysite heresy taught that Jesus did not have two natures -- one divine nature and a human nature -- but He only had one nature. One person; one nature. One to a customer is what you get here, according to Eutyches. Now his understanding of that single nature of Christ may be described as viewing Jesus as having a single theanthropic nature. Now that word theanthropic is not very common in our normal speech is it? Philanthropic maybe. When we say that there are philanthropic organizations or philanthropic people, what do we mean? The word "anthropic" comes from the Greek anthropos, which means "man or mankind." We study anthropology in the university, which is the study of people, human beings. And philanthropy -- you know what "Philadelphia" means -- "love of the brother," the city of brotherly love; philanthropy is a love for humanity. So when we say that people are

philanthropic, we mean that they care and love human beings. Now we're not talking about philanthropy; we're talking about theanthropy. Now some you may have already guessed the meaning of the prefix of this word thea, because it's a common one that we have in theology; it is the Greek word for God. And so what you have here is a word that is coined that is sort of a mongrelized word where two different words are stuck together or jammed together to create a new word. You have the word for man and the word for God jammed together. So what Eutyches was saying is that in Christ there's only one nature, and it's a theanthropic -- a divinely human -- nature. Or, you could conceive of it the other way around, a humanly divine nature. But it's not like you have two distinct natures, one divine and one human. But you only have one nature, and in fact, what you have in this (and this is what the church realized in the Fifth Century), is that you have a concept of Christ where He is neither God nor man. He is more than man and less than God. You have a kind of deified humanity or a humanized deity. And so the distinction between humanness and deity is obscured and obfuscated in this kind of thinking. Because what is going on here in the monophysite heresy is the two natures of Jesus are being mixed together or confused. As I said at Chalcedon in the middle of the Fifth Century, in 451, the church had to fight not only against Eutyches and his monophysite heresy, but they had to fight this war on two fronts; and the eastern front if you will, was the twin heresy nestorianism, named after its founder, Nestorius. Nestorius basically said that if you have two natures, you have to have two persons. So in Christ we have a divine nature, and a human nature, but we also have a divine person, and a human person co-existing. So what is going here is just the opposite of the monophysite distortion. In the nestorian heresy the two natures of Christ are not merely distinguished but they are in fact, separated. Now I like to teach my seminary students distinctions because theology is about making distinctions. It's the prerogative of the theologian to make fine distinctions; it's been going on for centuries. And I tell them, "One of the most important distinctions you will ever learn to make is the distinction between a distinction and a separation." We say of you that you are a duality (that is a unity in duality) -- that as a human being you are made up of a physical dimension and of a non-physical dimension, which language the Bible describes in terms of body and soul. Now, if I distinguish your body from your soul, I haven't harmed you; but if I separate your body from your soul, I've killed you. So, we need to understand the difference between distinguishing and separating. And this we get into all the time when we're talking about Jesus, where Jesus for example will say that there were things that He didn't know. And historically we say, well, the human nature is not

omniscient. The human nature does not know everything. Now of course the divine nature is omniscient, so that when Jesus speaks of something He doesn't know He's manifesting at that point the limitations of His human nature. Now some people struggle with that. They say, "Now wait a minute!" It's clear that when Jesus sweats, when Jesus is hungry, when Jesus has His side pierced we don't believe that the divine nature is having His side pierced, because the divine nature doesn't have a body. The divine nature doesn't sweat. The divine nature doesn't get hungry. Those are all manifestations of His humanity. So we say here the God-man, who has two natures, a divine nature and a human nature, at times reveals His human side. At other times reveals His divine side, and we are distinguishing the two without separating them. But when the human nature sweats, that human nature is still united to a divine nature that doesn't sweat. That becomes very important when you get to the cross. The human nature dies, but the divine nature doesn't die. Of course now the divine nature is united with a human corpse. The unity is still there, but the change that has taken place, has taken place within the human nature, not the divine nature. That's very important to understand. But in any case, nestorianism not only distinguished but separated the two natures. Now it's over against these twin heresies that the Council of Chalcedon in the Fifth Century in the year church, the terminal Council of Christology is Chalcedon, meaning by that, that the church has never really been able to go beyond the limitations set on our understanding of the person of Christ from what was articulated at the Council of Chalcedon. And frankly I agree with that. It's possible, theoretically, that another council could be held in the Twenty-first Century or in the Twenty-second Century or the Thirtieth Century that might give us new insight that we don't have in the past, but I haven't seen anything in church history that really goes beyond or improves upon the boundaries that are established for our reflection at the Council of Chalcedon. And Chalcedon is famous for several things. First is for the affirmation or confession that Christ is vera Deus, vera homo. Now let me take a second and ask you to think very carefully here. What these twin terms mean is this: that Jesus Christ, in the unity of the two natures, that the person of Christ is truly God and truly man -- that He is as a true divine nature and a true human nature. Now let me tell you how I hear this confessed frequently by people who should know better. In our own culture today, they will say, well what the church confessed at Chalcedon was that Jesus was fully God and fully man. Now you do have a contradiction. If you're saying that the person is completely and totally divine, then you have one nature. You can't have a person who is completely divine and completely human at the same time and in the same relationship. That's absurd. No, it's

not that; it's that He has two natures. One is divine. Now what is meant when people talk -- use the word "complete" or "totally," is where here's where we get subtle. The divine nature is fully divine; it's not just semi-divine, but it is completely divine. The divine nature of Christ possesses all of the attributes of deity, not lacking any of them. And at the same time the human nature of Christ is fully human, not just truly human, but fully human -- fully human in terms of created humanity. It's -- one thing that it lacks from us is there's no original sin. He's like us in all respects except sin, but at that point, He's truly Adamic. He's as human as Adam was in creation. All of the strengths and all of the limitations of humanity are found in the human nature of Jesus. Now the second thing for which Chalcedon is known, and perhaps the most famous thing for which it is known, are the so-called "Four Negatives" -- the Four Negatives of the council. When the council confessed that there is a perfect unity between two natures in Christ -- the divine nature and the human nature -- that they are to be understood in this union between the divine and the human as being in united -- united in such a way as to be without mixture, confusion, division, or separation -- that is, what the church set the boundaries of Christology in the Fifth Century by saying, However we understand the mystery of the incarnation and the person of Christ, and the relationship between the divine nature and the human nature, is you cannot conceive of the human and divine nature as being confused or mixed together, where you end up with a deified human nature or a humanized divine nature. You can't mix them up, which is the heresy of the monophysites. They were guilty of confusing the two natures. Eutyches's idea of one, philanthropic nature, one divinely human nature was a violation of this principle. It confuses the two natures, as the human nature of Jesus suddenly takes on divine qualities. The person has divine qualities, but not the human nature. Now at the same time as the monophysite heresy is rejected by the first two negatives, the next two negatives have Nestorius in their sites -- that they're trying to reject the heresy of nestorianism by saying that the two natures are perfectly united. You can distinguish between them, but you can't divide them; you can't separate them. And so you have to walk that razor's edge between confusion and separation if you're going to have a sound understanding of the person of Christ. And I frankly believe that some of the greatest minds in church history, including two of my all-time favorite theologians, were fundamentally monophysite in their understanding of Christ -- at least they had monophysite elements in their thinking -- and you all want me to tell you which two: Thomas Aquinas and, to your utter astonishment in terms of my heroes, Martin Luther. I have my Lutheran friends and theologians I talk with all the time, and I always refer to them as

“my monophysite friends.” They refer back to me as their nestorian friend, but then I said, “No, no, no, no. I don’t separate the two natures; I just distinguish them.” But that came about through much of the sacramental controversy historically, where they had the concept of the communication -- this goes back to Rome -- the communication of divine attributes to the human nature that makes it possible for the human body of Christ to be at more than one place at the same time because spatial locality, historically and philosophically, is always understood as one of the limitations of humanity. And a human nature cannot be three places at the same time. Now it can be joined to a nature that can be three places at the same time. The divine nature could be in Pittsburgh, Boston, and Washington at the same time, but the argument sacramentally, historically, was over whether the body -- the physical body -- of Jesus, which belongs to His humanity could be three places at the same time, and the answer of those who argued that was, “Oh, He could be made present because He gets the communication of the divine attribute of omnipresence. The divine attribute is communicated to the human nature.” Well it’s one thing for the divine nature to communicate information to the human nature; it’s another thing to communicate attributes because if you communicate a divine attribute to a human nature, you have just now deified it at that point. That’s where the controversies have roared through our church. This thing still goes on today, and when people object to that, they’re accused of nestorianism. Now let me just give you the third element of this council that’s so important, and that is after the Four Negatives (I believe there’s a semicolon -- it may be a semicolon; it may be a colon), the final clause of this says, “Each nature retaining it’s own attributes” -- that is, in the incarnation God doesn’t give up any of His attributes, and nor does humanity give up any of its attributes in the incarnation. That’s why we say the human body of Jesus -- the human nature of Jesus is still subject to geographic limits. But one of the great heresies in the Nineteenth Century was the so-called kenotic heresy that said that in the incarnation deity gave up some of its attributes to be united to this human nature, which is a violation of Chalcedon. By the way, and I have to say this: Just this week I got the second letter from somebody that read my book *Renewing Your Mind*, which is now out in its third title and third edition, the last edition of which was reworked, brought up to date by an editor at the publishing house, and after they did it, they sent it to me; and after they made their changes and asked me to give the final corrections and proofs, which I did hastily, and I missed something that somebody who read it wrote to me and said, “Did you -- I can’t believe that you teach the kenotic heresy because in -- on one of the pages in that book, it has me saying that in the incarnation Jesus laid

aside His divine nature.” When I saw that I almost fainted. I called the president of the publishing house. I said, “This must be my fault; I didn’t catch that,” but I said, “I wouldn’t say that on the worst day of my life!” And I said, “What can we do?” And you know what he did? He pulled every single copy that they had in inventory off the shelves and reprinted it to correct that error, which I thought was a tremendous thing for the publisher to do. But I just got a letter from somebody else the other day who read that same thing from that edition, and I mean, that’s how mistakes are made like that. It’s terrible. But I mean even in our day we have these people running around glibly saying that in the incarnation God no longer retains His divine attributes. Chalcedon -- “truly God, truly man, without confusion, mixture, separation, division -- or division, separation, each nature retaining its own attributes.”

5 CONTRADICTION VS. MYSTERY

<https://youtu.be/LV NK9Shzq5A>

The doctrine of the Trinity is not without difficulty, but it is both biblical and logical. Try as we may to fully understand God’s triune nature, there are limits to what we can grasp with our minds. Does that make God’s nature beyond or against reason? Is our doctrine of the Trinity a contradiction? Dr. Sproul examines this as he teaches us the difference in this message entitled “Contradiction ... Transcript As we continue now with our study of the Trinity, we’ve seen now something of the doctrine as it’s found in the Old Testament Scriptures and in the New Testament Scriptures, and how the doctrine developed in terms of church history, and the early centuries of Christian reflection. But we’ve noted along the way that the constant criticism of the Trinity is that it is irrational -- that it involves a contradiction. And you recall earlier that I responded to that by saying, “to call it a contradiction is to misapply the law of non-contradiction to the formula because, the formula for the Trinity teaches that God is one in essence, and three in person.” So that it is one in one thing and three in another. What we would say one in “A,” three in “B,” which does not violate the categories of rational thought or the law of non-contradiction. Nevertheless, people continue persistently to make the charge that the Trinity is irrational. In fact I just got a letter yesterday from somebody making that charge against historic Christianity. And so I want to take a couple of moments today to say why it is, I think, that people make this error in accusing Christianity of being

irrational or contradictory with respect to our doctrine of the Trinity. In other classes I have taken the time to explore three distinct categories that we need to understand and differentiate from one another. And those categories are the contradiction, the paradox, and the mystery. These three words represent three distinct ideas or concepts. But they are so closely related that all three of them are often confused one with the other. A paradox -- the prefix "para" means "along side of" and the root comes from the Greek "dokei," which means "to seem, to think, or to appear." A paradox is something that sounds contradictory, maybe the first time you hear it, but upon further scrutiny the tension is resolved. Jesus, you know, in the New Testament says for us to be free we have to become slaves or servants to Christ. That sounds contradictory, but upon closer examination, we're seeing that Jesus is saying that to be free in one sense you have to be a servant in another sense, and so there is no violation here of the rules of logic. But where we really see the problem and the tension is between the mystery and the contradiction. And here is the reason: in the term "mystery" we refer to mysteries as to things that we as yet do not understand. We believe them to be true, but we don't understand how it is that they are true, or why it is that they are true. We know that there is such a thing as gravity, but the whole essence of gravity remains something of a mystery to us. Even something as basic and fundamental to us as motion, which we notice everyday and build our lives upon, defies an acute analysis of its reality. When one looks at it philosophically, we say that there is a mysterious element to that, as well as to many other things that we experience in our everyday lives. And so a mystery is something that we affirm is true, but we don't understand all the ramifications of it. Now, biblical Christianity certainly has its share of mysteries. We don't understand how God can be infinite in His being, and yet we affirm that He is. There are many truths that God reveals to us about Himself that are beyond our capacity to understand. In fact some of these truths we may never fully understand, even in heaven. As we get new information and new knowledge, things that formerly were mysterious to us, are then unraveled with new insight and new information. And we have seen real progress in knowledge in the history of science, and the history of theology, and other disciplines as we increase our knowledge. But even as we increase our knowledge to the maximum point in human experience, even in heaven we will remain finite creatures, who will not have an ability to have a full comprehension of the nature of God. And so, it shouldn't surprise us given the difference between the character of God and humanness that there would be mysterious elements of truth with respect to God. But again, there is a difference between a mystery and a contradiction. What they have in

common however is this: nobody understands a contradiction, and mysteries are not understood either. And so we can rush to judgment and say, "If I don't understand something, it must be irrational. It must be a contradiction." But that's not the case at all. The reason why contradictions are not understood is because they are inherently unintelligible. Nobody can understand a contradiction because contradictions cannot be understood. I've told this story before: a seminary professor I had, who wrinkled his brow and spoke in hushed terms, and made the announcement in our class, he said, "God is absolutely immutable in His essence, and God is absolutely mutable in His essence." There was a collective sigh by the students. A whewwww, that's deep. I said, "No that's nuts. That's whacky." But if you have enough education, and a position of authority in the academic world, you can make nonsense statements and have people walk away impressed by how profound you are. But that is profoundly nonsensical, to say that God is absolutely mutable, and absolutely immutable at the same time and in the same relationship. All the degrees in the world can't make sense out of that because it's a nonsense statement. Now, no human being has the capacity to understand a contradiction because, as I say, they are inherently unintelligible. And not only God can understand a contradiction. Some people say, "Well, that's the difference between God and man: where our minds are limited by the laws of logic, and God's mind -- God can transcend the laws of logic, and God can understand something as A and non-A at the same time, and in the same relationship. You may think that you are exalting God, by saying that He is so wonderful in His intelligence and so transcendent in His wisdom, that He is able to understand contradictions. No, what've you've done is you've just slandered the deity, because you have said that in the mind of God resides nonsense and chaos, which is not the case. But what we mean is, that there are things that we don't understand that are mysterious to us that God, from His perspective and with His omniscience, His knowledge, can readily understand -- that is for God there is no mystery! There are also no contradictions, because He doesn't think in those categories. But again the point of contact is we cannot understand a mystery, but it may be that at some point, with more information, and a higher perspective that mystery will be unraveled. And again God can understand. God understands gravity, God understands motion, and God understands ultimate reality and being, where we have not been able to penetrate to these things completely. So I hope you understand, that we need to be careful when we say that, "The Trinity is something that I don't understand. I don't know how a person can be one person and have two natures, a divine nature and a human nature. I have no reference point for that in my human experience." And every person

that I've ever met, that person has only had one nature. It's like one to a customer. And yet, when we affirm the dual nature of Christ, we are affirming something that is unique to Him that differs from normal experience of humanity, and so it's mysterious. As we said when we looked at the Council of Chalcedon, we could affirm the negatives that the two natures are without confusion and mixture, division and separation, and so on. But that pretty much limits our understanding by saying what it isn't. We don't know how it really functions in the two natures of Christ. And likewise when we come to the Trinity, we say, because we have to say based on the revelation of Scripture, that there is one sense in which God is one, and another sense in which He is three. And we must be careful to point out that those two senses are not the same. If they were the same then we would have a contradiction unworthy of our faith. But we point to the mystery of the nature of God who is one in essence and three in person. Now a second objection that is raised constantly against the doctrine of the Trinity is linguistic in this degree. The argument is that the Bible, and particularly the New Testament, never uses the term "trinity." And so, the term "trinity" is an extra-Biblical word, imposed upon the text of Scripture, and therefore it involves an intrusion into the Hebraic mind of the Scriptures from outside the biblical framework. It's an invasion of abstract Greek categories into New Testament Christianity. We hear this all the time -- as if the Holy Spirit could not justly ever use the Greek language as a medium of communicating truth, which in fact we know is not the case, since the New Testament was written in the Greek language. And so sometimes today, theologians and philosophers have more trouble with Greek than God does. But in any case, the idea that the term "trinity" doesn't occur in Scriptures has caused some people to raise an eyebrow. But the question is, what does this word mean? Does the concept appear in the Bible? All the word "trinity" does is focus linguistically as a word to capture within it the content of the Scriptures that teach, as we have seen all ready, the unity of God and the tri-personality of God. And so we search for a word that will accurately communicate those two assertions, unity and tri-personality. And we come up with the idea of tri-unity, three in oneness, and we get this word trinity. And so, it really is naive to object that the word itself isn't found in Scripture as long as we can demonstrate that the concept is found in the Scripture, and is taught by the Scripture. Now let me just say something at this point about these theological terms that arise in church history, and why they arise in church history. They arise principally because of the church's commitment to theological precision. John Calvin made the observation in his Institutes that words like "trinity" have arisen in church history because of what he described as the "slippery snakes" that try

to distort the teaching of Scripture by heresy. I mean you have somebody, as we have already seen, like Arius who didn't hesitate to call Jesus the Son of God, who didn't hesitate to give personal devotion and worship to Jesus as the Son of God, who didn't hesitate in saying that Jesus was like God, yet he argued that Jesus was a creature. So that he used the language of the church such as at the Council of Synod -- or the Synod of Antioch in 267, where the term homoiousios was introduced as opposed to homoousios. Arius didn't hesitate to use the language of previous councils, but he filled that language with a different content, and that is what heretics do all the time. And the favorite trick of the heretic is what we call the studied ambiguity -- the studied ambiguity. The studied ambiguity is that means of communication whereby something, a word is used to leave the concept intentionally ambiguous. In the Sixteenth Century, the greatest theological controversy in the history of the church broke out at the time of the Reformation, over the doctrine of justification. And the basic issue was what was the grounds of our justification? Is our justification grounded in a righteousness that inheres within us? Or is it grounded in a righteousness that is achieved apart from us, outside of us, extra nos. That is, is our righteousness from within, or is it from Christ, in terms of His perfect act of righteousness where His righteousness is imputed to us or counted to us? The whole controversy came down to one word: imputation. Where the reformers were saying the only way any person can be justified is to have the righteousness of Jesus Christ transferred to their account. Now, in efforts to resolve the dispute, many people said, "Well let's just write up the -- let's write it this way: that we're justified by Christ. We both agree that we're justified by Christ, so let's hold hands, sing hymns, pray together, and stay together by just having a common formula that we're justified by Christ." And that's ambiguous enough that people who believe you're justified by infusion of the righteousness of Jesus that you cooperate with to become inherently righteous, that you can hold on to that; and you who believe that you're justified by Christ by virtue of the imputation of His righteousness, where these two views of justification are as far from each other as the East is from the West. We can avoid the controversy, we can avoid the dispute, we can maintain Christian unity by using a formula that is intentionally ambiguous, that you can interpret your way, and you can interpret your way. That's what happens with the studied ambiguity, and historically, again, Calvin was right in saying that the studied ambiguity is the hiding place for the heretic. And so, the reason why the church insisted upon this term, historically, was again to stop the mouths of the heretics, to stop the monophysite -- I mean the modalists -- to stop the Dynamic Monarchians, to stop those who were

teaching tritheism (that is that there are three Gods). And also, to stop the mouths of those who were denying the tri-personality of God by insisting on some view of Unitarianism. Therefore we see the church coming down on a concept that in a very real sense, functions as a Shibboleth. Remember what the purpose of the Shibboleth was? The purpose of the Shibboleth was as a password to get by a sentry. When the enemies of Israel were trying to send their undercover agents, spies, into the land, anybody who came in was asked to pronounce the word "Shibboleth," and their neighbors were not able to pronounce that word and so their stumbling with the language gave them away. And so, that's what we say a Shibboleth is. It's a test word to find out if someone is authentic. In Holland, during the period of the occupation, when Holland was under domination of Germany for several years during World War II, they had their Shibboleth. They have a seaport, a sea coast resort town in Holland called -- let's see if I can do it to get past the sentry, because you almost have to have post-nasal drip to be able to speak it. The name of this seacoast was Scheveningen. You hear that sche -- Scheveningen. And the Germans just for the life of them couldn't do it. They could speak Dutch and get by and pass as Dutch under most cases, but if you asked them to say Scheveningen, they stumbled all over themselves just like I am right now. And so, that became a Shibboleth. And that's what the church has had to do. You take words like "inerrancy" when it comes to the Scripture. J.I. Packer once said, "Yes, inerrancy is the Shibboleth." You want to find out real quick where a person stands with respect to their view of sacred Scripture, you don't ask them if they believe in the Scriptures' inspiration. You ask them, "Do you believe in the Scriptures' inerrancy?" because people will choke on that word before they'll affirm it. Now granted, there's never been a confession written, there's never been a formula expressed in all of its precision that dishonest people can't fudge on. Weasel words happen all the time. In my own ordination I remember a fellow who asked me before his ordination exams, he said to me, "Should I go with the resurrection or not?" I said, "What do you mean?" I said, "Do you believe in the resurrection?" He says, "Well of course not." I said, "Well, then that's what you have to say." But, he did not want to be disqualified from ordination so he fudged; he crossed his fingers when he was under examination. That happens all the time, and again the reason why the church has come back to words like "trinity" is to set the standard as precisely as we possibly can, and what drives the church to precision in every generation, has been the assault on the truth of God from the heretics. That's what heresy does. It forces the church to be careful and clear and precise in her confession. Well, in our next session we will look again at this formula: one in essence, three in person and see if we can

at least unravel the theological content of what is meant by those terms that are used.

6 ONE IN ESSENCE, THREE IN PERSON

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In our last session in our study of the Trinity, we looked at the difference between contradictions and mysteries, with specific reference to the formula for the Trinity that has developed in church history. We saw the importance of precision in language that we capture the content of Scripture itself, and in this final lecture, I want to look at some of the terms that are used historically to articulate our confession of the Trinity. Before I do that, let me turn your attention briefly to the very first chapter of the letter to the Hebrews in the New Testament, where we read these words in verse one: “God, who at various times and in various ways, spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets has in these last days spoken to us by His Son.” Here we have Christ referred to again as the Son of God. “Whom he has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world.” He is the agent of creation. “Who being the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down by the right hand of the majesty on high, having become so much better than the angels, as He has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.” Obviously, the Christology that we find in the book of Hebrews is exceedingly high and one of the reasons why the early church was inclined to affirm the deity of Christ. But here we have this interesting concept where the Son of God is seen as the brightness of the Glory of God, which is a reference to His deity, and the express image of His (that is the Father’s) person. And so, I just want us to see here that the Son of God is distinguished from the Father in terms of the idea of personhood. It is the Father’s person who is expressed in the person of the Son. So, even though we have the distinction between Father and Son, we also have here that idea of a personal distinction in the Godhead. Now one of the problems that we have admittedly with the language of our expression of the Trinity is that when the early church used the term “person” to distinguish the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost from each other, the term “person” was used in a somewhat different manner from how the term “person” is used in our culture today. And that’s always a problem with language, because language tends to be dynamic. It changes its little nuances from one generation to the next. In Elizabethan English if you called a girl “cute,” you insulted her because cute meant bowlegged, where today it means something quite

different from that. And that is the way language has a tendency to change over time. It was the church father Tertullian who had a background not only in theology, but also in law, in legal studies and in the legal field, who introduced the Latin term, *persona* in an attempt to express the Logos Christology of the time. There were basically two references to the concept of *persona* in antiquity in the Latin language. It was this, first of all in legal terms, a person's estate or a person's ownings and possessions were part of the *persona* of the individual. And so in that sense the term *persona* had a legal reference point, at least to Tertullian. Also in antiquity, the term *persona* translated into the Latin from the Greek concept of the drama of the period. The way drama was carried out, was that sometimes actors on the stage had multiple roles or multiple parts in the play -- the same actor having more than one part. And when an actor was changing his role during the play, he would put a different mask in front of his face, and he would speak through that mask, because the mask indicated the role that he was playing at the time. You've seen the symbolism of Greek drama where you have the twin masks, one of them frowning, which goes back to the dramatic tragedy, and the other one with a big smile, that represents comedy. Well those masks that were used on stage by actors, who had multiple roles, were called *personae*. I saw that done once in my life many years ago. One of the biggest hit plays on Broadway was a modern version of the Biblical book of Job, and it was entitled simply JB. And Basil Rathbone of Sherlock Holmes fame and sheriff of Nottingham fame, from the old Robin Hood series. Basil Rathbone played both the role of God and the role of Satan, in that Broadway production. In fact when I saw it I was fortunate enough to sit literally front row, center. And Rathbone would stand right at the front end of the stage. He wasn't five feet away from me during the production of that play, and he had these two masks and when he was articulating the role of God he would put one mask in front of his face and speak through it, and when he was articulating the role of Satan he would take the other mask and speak through that. And that was a throw back to antiquity when these masks were used to indicate different roles or different persons. That's why they were called in the plural, *personae*. Now that's the original concept that Tertullian introduced into Church history but as the church developed over the first four or five centuries the concept of person became more specified than that. And the Greek word that was used was the word *hypostasis*, or we call it in English *hypostatic* -- the *hypostatic union*, and the word *hypostasis* also has a certain significance in the Greek language, and it also has a role in modern science for some of you who are inclined to understand how it's used there. But to understand the *hypostatic union* I want us to review a couple of basic

concepts that we have in our language, and in our vocabulary. Specifically, three words that we're all familiar with. But these three words are very important when it comes to understanding the Christian doctrine of the Trinity. Those three words are first of all essence, second of all existence, and third of all, subsistence. Now you've all heard those three words at one time or another in your lifetime. Essence, existence, and subsistence, and to understand the import of these concepts we have to go back a little bit into Greek thinking and Greek philosophy where we've already seen that with respect to the term homoousios, and homoiousios at Nicea, and so on that the term ousios is the present participle of the Greek verb "to be." And so, we would translate that term "ousios" into English by the word "being," or synonyms for the Greek concept "being" would include words like: substance, essence, and the simplest more crude definition of ousias is simply "stuff." And if you go to the ancient philosophers, who sought for ultimate reality, who were involved in the task of what we call metaphysics, or that phusis or physics that goes above and beyond what we perceive in this world. They were looking for ultimate reality, that which does not manifest change. They were looking for the substance or the essence of things. And that was called the ousios, or as I said, the essence or substance. Plato made a very important distinction between being, and becoming. And again, this distinction was rooted in what we call pre-Socratic philosophy, in the philosophers before Socrates. Those of you who have looked at our course on the Consequence of Ideas, which gives us an overview of the history of philosophy, would be familiar with this. I've mentioned that two previous philosophers to Plato were locked in conflict about the role of being and becoming in reality. Parmenides, who was considered the most brilliant pre-Socratic philosopher, about whom almost nothing survives this day, is famous for his statement that he made on one occasion, "Whatever is, IS," because if something is constantly changing, can we ever really say what it is? Because just as soon as you think you've described what it is, it's not that anymore. It's changed. And he's saying, "For anything to be real ultimately, it has to be in a state of being, there has to be a real substance or essence to it; otherwise it would just be a fig Newton of our imaginations. So Plato made this distinction between being and becoming because Parmenides said, "Whatever is, IS" and his counterpart was Heraclitus. Some call him the father of modern existentialism. Heraclitus said, "No, whatever is, is changing." All things are in a state of flux. The only thing that's constant is change itself. He said, "You can't step in the same river twice, because by the time you take your second step the river has moved on. It's not the same river that you stepped in the first time. In fact you're not the same person, because you've changed, if only

by being a few seconds older. And so he said what is most basic to all the reality that we perceive in this world is that whatever else we see, even if it's a rock, it's in a process of change. It's in a process of becoming. But you see Plato is saying that nothing can become something unless it participates in some way in being. Because if it were totally becoming, and this is the way Aristotle said, if it were totally becoming, it would be only potentially something, and something that is pure becoming would be potential anything but actually nothing. And this is why Aristotle as well as Plato argued that for becoming to be meaningful there had to be some prior being. And in being there is no potentiality. God is pure being; he is pure actuality -- no potential in Him. But in any case, when they were discussing the difference between being and becoming, they were speaking here of the difference between essence (which is the being element of something, the substance of it), and if we want to talk about the becoming dimension in philosophical terms, the key word that has been used historically is the second one -- existence. I once gave a lecture at one of our conferences where I publicly denied the existence of God. I said, "I want to emphatically affirm today that God does not exist. In fact if He did exist I would stop believing in him." Now, if anything ever sounded like a nonsense statement it was that. But what I meant by that when I said that, "God does not exist", I said that God is not in a state of becoming, He is in a state of pure being. If He were in a state of existence He would be undergoing mutations. He would be changing. He would not be immutable. He would not be the God that we believe in. Now, when Plato for example was dealing with these concepts there were basically three categories. There was being, becoming, and non-being. And non-being of course is a synonym for nothing. And what is nothing? Well to ask that question is to answer it. Because if I say nothing is something, I'm attributing something about nothing. I'm saying nothing has some content to it. Nothing has some being to it. And if it has some being to it, then it's not nothing -- it's something. So one of the most difficult concepts we have in philosophy to ever deal with is the concept of nothingness, pure nothingness. Try to think about pure nothingness -- you can't do it. I mean Jonathan Edwards defined nothingness as what sleeping rocks dream of. The closest thing that I ever came to a definition of nothingness was when my son was in junior high. He'd come home from school everyday, and I'd say, "What did you do in school today?" He'd say, "Nothing" So I would define nothing as what my son did in school everyday. It's impossible to do nothing. If you're doing, you're doing something. So what Plato was getting at was that human existence, or that realm of becoming exists -- or is -- somewhere between being and non-being. You'll notice I started to say exists and then I

changed it to is. There is no way people who object to the use of Greek categories, in Christian thought. I challenge them to try to speak for two minutes without using some form of the verb “to be.” See how long you can be articulate and communicate anything without falling back on some category of being or existence. It’s absolutely essential to our language, and to all communication. So, in any case, the entomological derivation of the word existence is that it comes from the prefix in Latin *ex* which means “out of”, and the root *systeri*, a verb, which means “to stand.” So literally, “to exist” means to stand out of something. Now that doesn’t mean that if you exist you’re outstanding. Don’t come to that conclusion. What it means is, it is describing a position or a posture, and the idea, if I can try some artwork here is, let’s say this person is a stick figure, and that stick figure has one foot in being and the other foot in non-being. So that he is standing out of being, but he is also standing out of non-being. And so he’s in that position between pure being (he’s not pure being) but at the same time we’re not nothing. We have reality attributed to us. And so, we stand out of being, and we stand out of non-being and so we’re in a state of existence. Now, when the church historically articulated the doctrine of the Trinity, it did not say one in essence, three in existences. It did not say one in essence -- it did say three in person, but what is meant by the personal distinction in the Trinity is not so much three distinct existences, but rather the term that is used is the term “subsistence.” and subsistence is just the Latin equivalent to the Greek concept of hypostasis, because both of them mean basically the same thing linguistically and entomologically. You hear the term subsistence frequently used in our culture and in our language with respect to people who are poverty stricken, who are extremely needy, who are barely surviving, eking out what we call a subsistence level of life, almost like they are lower than existing. Now the reason for that use of the term is again, instead of the prefix *ex* like we have in the word existence, we have the prefix *sub* with the same root, and the prefix *sub* means below or under. And so again if we go to that Greek concept of hypostatic union, hypostasis means in Greek, standing beneath, or standing under. So the two words, hypostasis or hypostatic and subsistence mean linguistically the same thing. And both of them deal with this same root that we find in existence, the root “to stand.” So in this case what the church has said is in God there is one essence, but three subsistences. There are three personae -- that is, who stand under the essence. They are part of the essence. They are all of the same essence, but we are making a distinction that I say before that is not essential. There is not an essential difference in the Father and Son and the Holy Spirit, because all three have the essence of deity. Nevertheless, there are true peculiar attributes

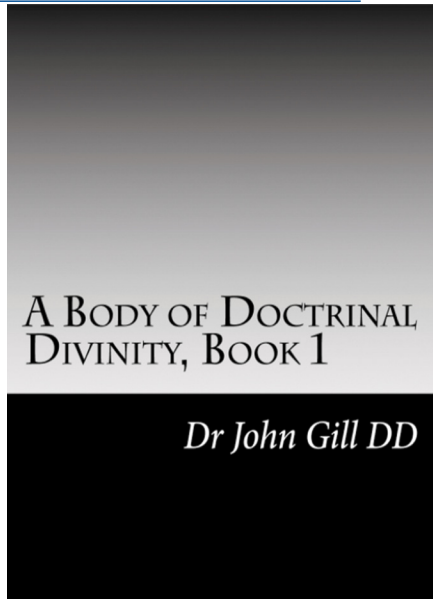
of each of the members of the Godhead that by which we distinguish one from another. We say the Father is God, the Son is God and the Holy Spirit is God, but we don't say that the Father is the Son, and the Son is the Holy Spirit or that the Holy Spirit is the Father. We don't do that, because we make these real distinctions. They are real, but they do not disturb the essence of deity. So that the distinctions within the Godhead are, if you will, sub-distinctions within the essence, sub-points within the singular being of God. One essence, three subsistences. And that is really about as close as we can get to articulating the historic doctrine of the Trinity. There is no essential difference between the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, they are one in essence.

RECOMMENDED READING

All these publications are available as hard copies from the Publisher

FURTHER PUBLICATIONS

A BODY OF DOCTRINAL DIVINITY BOOK 1



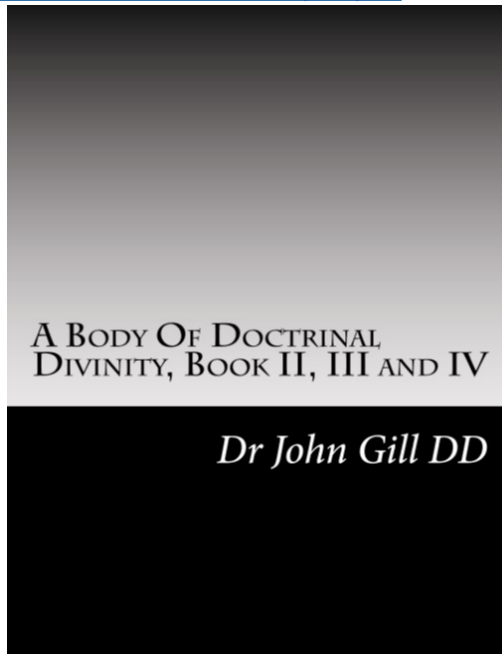
A System of Practical Truths

Authored by Dr John Gill DD, Created by David Clarke Cert. Ed

THIS IS BOOK 1 Treating The Subjects: Of God, His Works, Names, Nature, Perfections And Persons. And Contains: Chapters 1 Of The Being Of God 2 Of The Holy Scriptures 3 Of The Names Of God 4 Of The Nature Of God 5 Of The Attributes Of God In General, And Of His Immutability In Particular. 6 Of The Infinity Of God, 7 Of The Life Of God. 8 Of The Omnipotence Of God. 9 Of The Omniscience Of God. 10 Of The Wisdom Of God. 11 Of The Will Of God And The Sovereignty Of It 12 Of The Love Of God 13 Of The Grace Of God. 14 Of The Mercy Of God. 15 Of The

Long suffering Of God. 16 Of The Goodness Of God. 17 Of The Anger And Wrath Of God. 18 Of The Hatred Of God. 19 Of The Joy Of God. 20 Of The Holiness Of God. 21 Of The Justice Or Righteousness Of God. 22 Of The Veracity Of God. 23 Of The Faithfulness Of God 24 Of The Sufficiency And Perfection Of God. 25 Of The Blessedness Of God. 26 Of The Unity Of God. 27 Of A Plurality In The Godhead, Or, A Trinity Of Persons In The Unity Of The Divine Essence. 28 Of The Personal Relations; Or, Relative Properties, Which Distinguish The Three Divine Persons In The Deity. 29 Of The Distinct Personality, And Deity Of The Father. 30 Of The Distinct Personality, And Deity Of The Son. 31 Of The Distinct Personality, And Deity Of The Holy Spirit.

A BODY OF DOCTRINAL DIVINITY II, III,IV.



A System Of Practical Truths

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The contents of Book II treats the subject of Of The Acts and Works of God Chapter I Of The Internal Acts And Works Of God; And Of His Decrees In General Chapter II Of The Special Decrees Of God, Relating To Rational Creatures, Angels, And Men; And Particularly Of Election. Chapter III Of The Decree Of Rejection, Of Some Angels, And Of Some Men. Chapter IV Of The Eternal Union Of The Elect Of God Unto Him. Chapter V Of Other Eternal And Immanent Acts In God, Particularly Adoption And Justification. Chapter VI Of The Everlasting Council Between The Three

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Of The Part Which The Father Takes In The Covenant. Chapter IX Of The Part The Son Of God, The Second Person, Has Taken In The Covenant. Chapter X Of Christ, As The Covenant Head Of The Elect Chapter XI Of Christ, The Mediator Of The Covenant Chapter XII Of Christ, The Surety Of The Covenant. Of Christ, The Testator Of The Covenant Chapter XIV Of The Concern The Spirit Of God Has In The Covenant Of Grace. Chapter XV Of The Properties Of The Covenant Of Grace Chapter XVI Of The Complacency And Delight God Had In Himself, And The Divine Persons In Each Other, Before Any Creature Was Brought Into Being.

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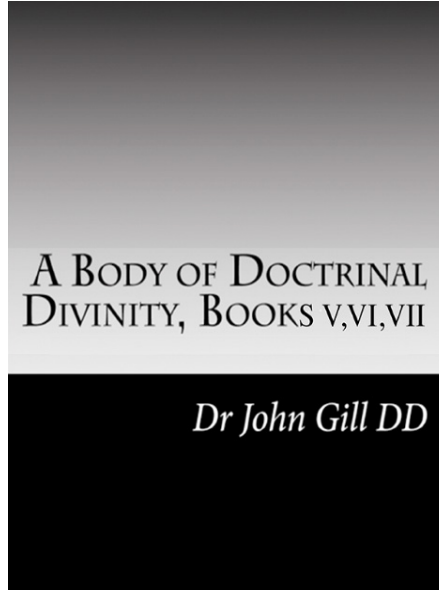
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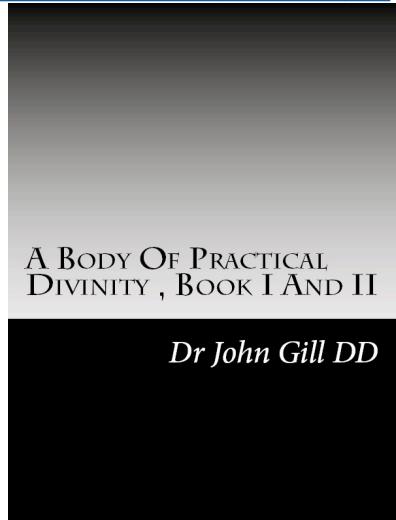
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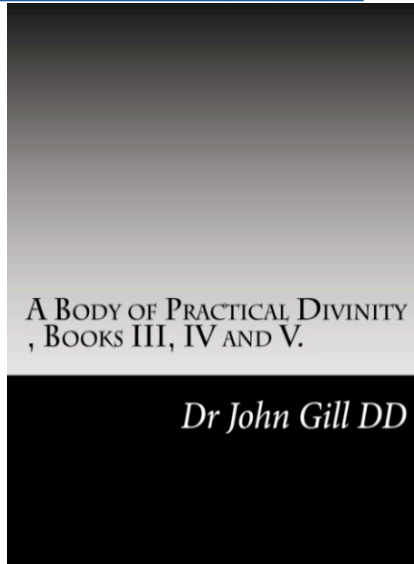


A System of Practical Truths

Authored by Dr John Gill DD, Created by David Clarke Cert.Ed

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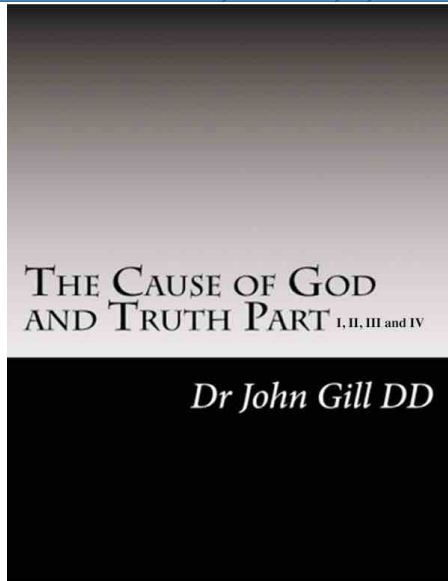
A System of Practical Truths

Authored by Dr John Gill DD, Created by David Clarke Cert.Ed

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THE CAUSE OF GOD AND TRUTH, PART I,II,III and IV.

Authored by Dr John Gill DD, Created by David Clarke CertEd

It should be known by the reader, that the following work was undertaken and begun about the year 1733 or 1734, at which time Dr. Whitby's Discourse on the Five Points was reprinting, judged to be a masterpiece on the subject, in the English tongue, and accounted an unanswerable one; and it was almost in the mouth of every one, as an objection to the Calvinists, Why do not ye answer Dr. Whitby? Induced hereby, I determined to give it another reading, and found myself inclined to answer it, and thought this was a very proper and seasonable time to engage in such a work. In the year 1735, the First Part of this work was published, in which are considered the several passages of Scripture made use of by Dr. Whitby and others in favour of the Universal Scheme, and against the Calvinistic Scheme, in which their arguments and objections are answered, and the several passages set in a just and proper light. These, and what are contained in the following Part in favour of the Particular Scheme, are extracted from Sermons delivered in a Wednesday evening's lecture. The Second Part was published in the year 1736, in which the several passages of Scripture in favour of special and distinguishing grace, and the arguments from them, are vindicated from the exceptions of the Arminian, and particularly from Dr. Whitby, and a reply made to answers and objections to them. The Third Part was published in 1737, and is a confutation of the arguments from reason used by the Arminians, and

particularly by Dr. Whitby, against the above doctrines ; and a vindication of such as proceed on rational accounts in favour of them, in which it appears that they are no more disagreeable to right reason than to divine revelation ; to the latter of which the greatest deference should be paid, though the Rationalists of our age too much neglect it, and have almost quitted it ; but to the law and to the testimony, if they speak not according to this word it is because there is no light in them. In this part of the work is considered the agreement of the sentiments of Mr. Hobbes and the Stoic philosophers with those of the Calvinists, in which the difference between them is observed, and the calumny removed ; to which is added, a Defence of the Objections to the Universal Scheme, taken from the prescience and the providence of God, and the case of the Heathens. The Fourth Part was published in 1738, in which the sense of the ancient writers of the Christian Church, before the times of Austin, is given ; the importance and consequence of which is shown, and that the Arminians have very little reason to triumph on that account. This work was published at a time when the nation was greatly alarmed with the growth of Popery, and several learned gentlemen were employed in preaching against some particular points of it ; but the author of this work was of opinion, that the increase of Popery was greatly owing to the Pelagianism, Arminianism, and other supposed rational schemes men run into, contrary to divine revelation, This was the sense of our fathers in the last century, and therefore joined these and Popery together in their religious grievances they were desirous of having redressed ; and indeed, instead of lopping off the branches of Popery, the axe should be laid to the root of the tree, Arminianism and Pelagianism, the very life and soul of Popery. This new edition, with some alterations and improvements, is now published by request.

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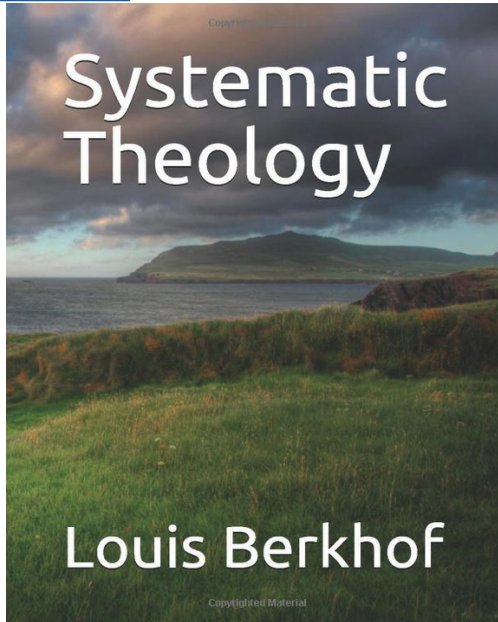
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This work contains: Chapter 1 Of Predestination Chapter 2 Of Redemption Chapter 3 Or Original Sin Chapter 4 Of Efficacious Grace

SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY



This work of Louis Berkhof has been presented to the ministers of Christ Centred Churches Inc., in the Philippines, by David Clarke, the Director of Trojan Horse International and the sole remaining member of Bierton Particular Baptists. You will be aware that Louis Berkhof like other reformed theologians were futurist in their archaeological views. To assist in their studies on this subject we recommend James Stuarts Russell's book, 'The Parousia', along with 'What Happened At 70 A.D.' and 'Final Decade Before The End', by Edward E. Stevens, as listed at the end of this book.

AUTHORS PREFACE

Now that my Systematic Theology is again being reprinted, the Preface can be very brief. It is not necessary to say much about the nature of the work, since it has been before the public for more than fifteen years and has been used extensively. I have every reason to be grateful for its kind reception, for the favourable testimony of many reviewers, and for the fact that the book is now used as a textbook in many Theological Seminaries and Bible

Schools in our country, and that requests were even received from abroad for permission to translate it into other languages. These are blessings which I had not anticipated, and for which I am deeply grateful to God. To Him be all the honour. And if the work may continue to be a blessing in many

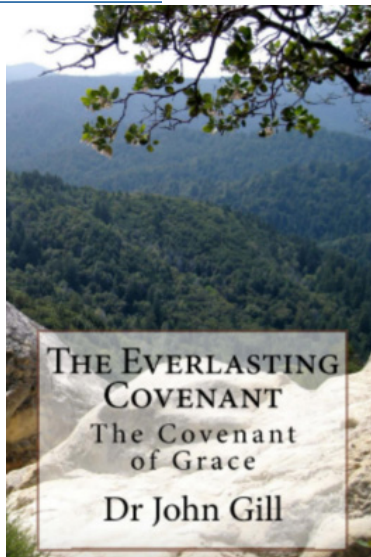
sections of the Church of Jesus Christ, it will but increase my recognition of the abundant grace of God.

L. Berkhof Grand Rapids,
Michigan August 1, 1949.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Louis Berkhof (1873-1957). Berkhof was born in Emmen, Netherlands. He emigrated with his family to Grand Rapids, Michigan in 1882. He graduated from Calvin Theological Seminary in 1900 and accepted the call to be the pastor of the Allendale, Michigan First Christian Reformed Church. In 1902 he went to Princeton University for two years earning a B.D. degree. He then accepted the pastorship of the Oakdale Park Church in Grand Rapids. In 1906 he was appointed to the faculty of Calvin Theological Seminary. He assumed the presidency of the seminary in 1931 and served until retirement in 1944. A talented teacher and hard-working author, among his twenty-two books is Systematic Theology, which has been translated into several languages and used in many conservative colleges and seminaries.

THE EVERLASTING COVENANT



Publisher Preface

The publisher is the only surviving member of the Bierton Particular Baptists and his story of conversion from crime to Christ is told in, 'Bierton Strict and Particular Baptists,' advertised at the end of this book. At his conversion the publisher could hardly read. He educated himself by reading the bible and classical Christian literature and this book, 'The Everlasting Covenant,' by John Gill, extracted from John Gill's, 'A Body of Doctrinal and Practical Divinity,' was one of the writings that

enabled him to understand the doctrines of grace and join the Bierton Particular Baptist Church, in 1976. About the Author Dr. John Gill (23 November 1697 – 14 October 1771) was an English Baptist pastor, biblical scholar, and theologian who held to a firm Calvinistic soteriology. Born in Kettering, Northamptonshire, he attended Kettering Grammar School where he mastered the Latin classics and learned Greek by age 11. He continued self-study in everything from logic to Hebrew, his love for the latter remaining throughout his life. In his biography of John Gill, Augustus Toplady states: “Perhaps, no man, since the days of St. Augustin, has written so largely, in defence of the system of Grace; and, certainly, no man has treated that momentous subject, in all its branches, more closely, judiciously, and successfully”. What was said of Edward the Black Prince, “That he never fought a battle, which he did not win”; what has been remarked of the great Duke of Marlborough, “That he never undertook a siege, which he did not carry”; may be justly accommodated to our great Philosopher and Divine: who, so far as the distinguishing doctrines of the gospel are concerned, never besieged an error, which he did not force from its strong holds; nor ever encountered an adversary, whom he did not baffle and subdue.”

[DR. JOHN GILL'S SERMONS](#)



Volume 1: Sermons And Tracts

Authored by Dr. John Gill D.D.

This is 1 of a 4 volume set.

BISAC: Religion / Christian Theology / Eschatology

This is volume 1 of 4 volumes of Dr John Gills sermons and are reproduced for the benefit of Bierton Particular Baptists Pakistan with a view to promote the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is the view of the publisher that Dr. J Gill is the clearest and most faithful in preaching and teaching the doctrines of grace. We dismiss the charges, that those who do not his writings, and

call him a Hyper-Calvinist and ask you to read or your self and learn from a master in Israel. Bierton Particular Baptists have republished the whole of Dr. Gills Body of Doctrinal and Practical Divinity, The Cause of God And Truth. **Volume 1**

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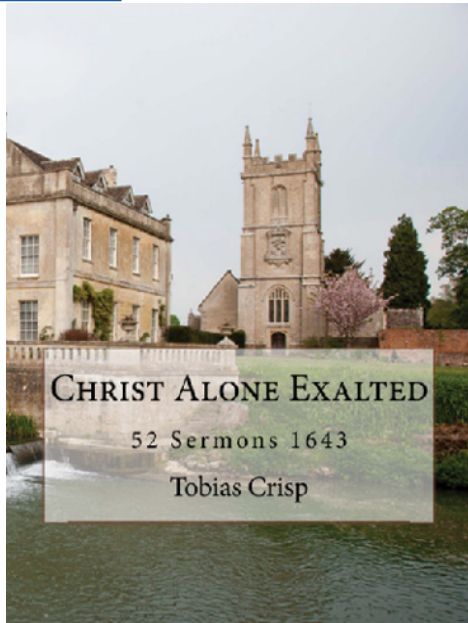
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 - 11 The Form Of Sound Words To Be Held Fast A Charge,
 - 12 The Faithful Minister Of Christ Crowned.

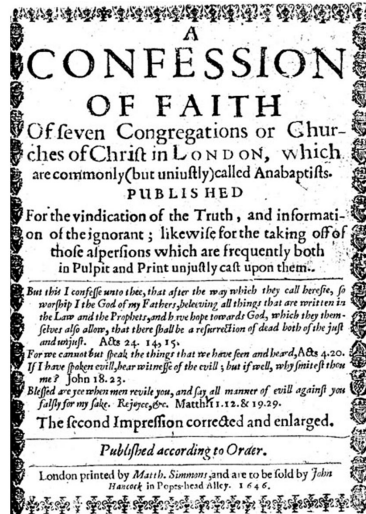
CHRIST ALONE EXALTED

52 Sermons 1643

Authored by Dr Tobias Crisp D.D., From an idea by Bierton Particular Baptists, Created by David Clarke

Tobias Crisp was a preacher of the gospel in England in the 17 century. He was born in 1600 and died in 1643 at which time these sermons were published. He lived at the time when the First London Particular Baptist Confession of 1644 was published and it is clear from these sermons he taught Calvinists truths. He preached the doctrines of grace and was charged with being an Antinomian and provoked opposition from various quarters. Dr. John Gill republished these sermons along with comments, in his defense, showing that Tobias Crisp clearly taught the truths of the Lord Jesus Christ.

THE FIRST LONDON PARTICULAR BAPTISTS 1644-66
CONFESSION



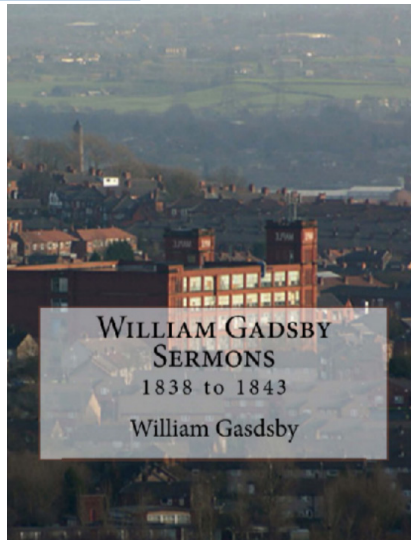
Compiled by David Clarke

1 FIRST LONDON BAPTIST CONFESSION OF FAITH 1644

Subscribed in the Names of seven Churches in London

2 FIRST LONDON BAPTIST CONFESSION 1646, 2nd EDITION

The Second edition is better than the first confession as it is much less legalistic but strong in the teaching of salvation (Soteriology) and predestination. This book included a set of recommended readings relating to Reformed theology

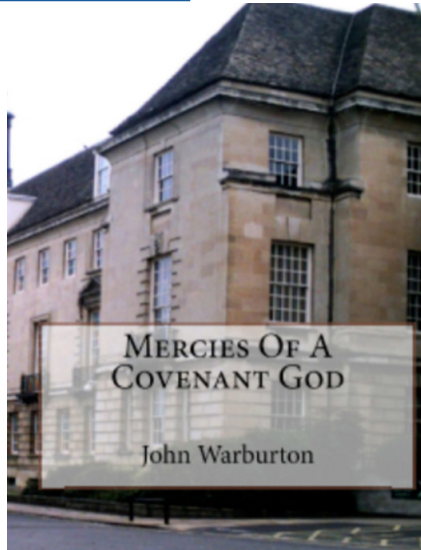


Sermons: 1838 to 1843

Authored by William Gadsby

This volume contains a tribute of high esteem, given by J.C Philpot on the death of William Gadsby, in 1844 and contains series of sermons preached between September 1838 and 14th June 1843. William Gadsby became a Particular Baptist minister in 1798 and went on to preach to many thousands of people. He later published Hymns, in a hymn books still used today by Particular Baptists. He was born in Attleborough, Warwickshire in 1773. He had little or no education. In 1790, he went to see men hanged, and the horrid spectacle had such an effect on his mind that he was never afterward like the same youth. His memoirs tell of the lengths of folly into which he ran prior to this time and were often related by him in his ministry These memoirs were published shortly after his death. William Gadsby preached the distinguishing doctrines of grace that gave all the glory to the Lord Jesus Christ for his salvation.

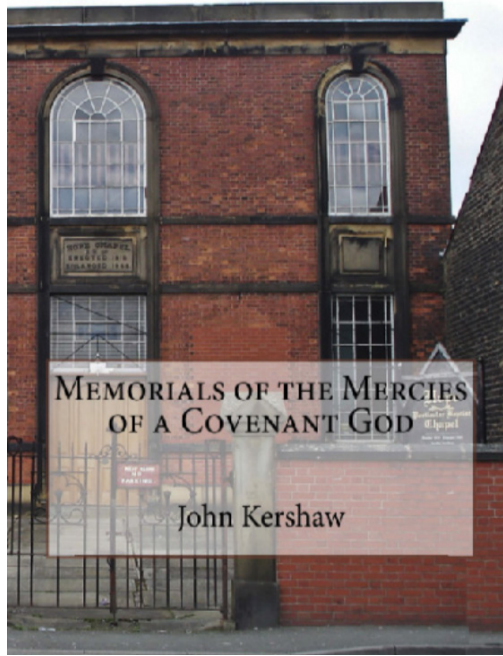
MERCIES OF A COVENANT GOD



Mercies Of A Covenant God

Authored by John Warburton, Created by Bierton Particular Baptists

God be merciful to me a sinner was the cry of John Warburton on discovering and realizing he ruined lost condition before God. He knew and felt the condemnation of God against him. He knew of no way but to mend his ways, repent to find mercy. He could think of no other way to save his soul but by mending his life, doing his duty and pleasing God. This book, "Mercies of a Covent God" tells the life story of John Warburton, of his call by grace, and becoming a Particular Baptists ministry in England. This book is not dry or intellectual Calvinism but experiential Christian experience. Teaching the way of salvation as Gods way, Father, Son and Holy Spirit engaged in covenant to save not to propose salvation but call by grace. Faith alone in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, his atoning blood, and imputed righteousness are clearly taught be blessings of grace. This is recommended read for Preterits as it is important, in order to have a correct understanding of Last things, we must have a correct view of first things, i.e. the beginnings to understand last things. The Soteriology of John Warburton, like all Particular Baptists in the, is Calvinistic, but not textbook Calvinism. It is felt that a correct view of the way of salvation is important to understand eschatology, correctly and not in a dry textbook way. True religion is more than notion, Something must be known and felt. This book also contains short bibliographies of the hymn writers that are quoted in this book



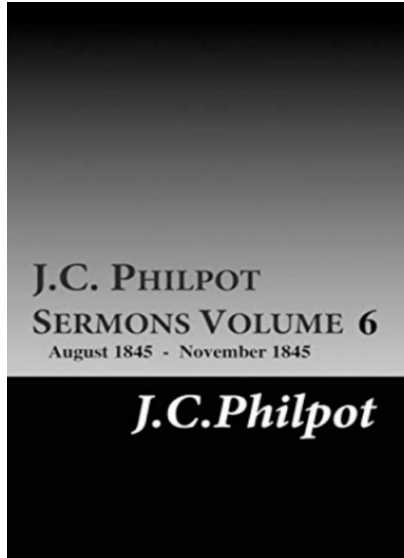
Authored by John Kershaw

ISBN-13: 978-1977848956 (CreateSpace-Assigned) ISBN-10: 1977848958 BISAC: Biography & Autobiography / Personal Memoirs

John Kershaw (1792-1870) was a Particular Baptists pastor for fifty-two years of Hope Chapel, Rochdale. He exercised a powerful ministry among the church, and became an influential preacher across the country. Few ministers remain faithful to a single congregation for an extended period—Kershaw committed himself to the same church he attended as a boy. This autobiography “Memorials of the Mercies of a Covenant God while Traveling through the Wilderness”, is one of the best written of its genre. He preached and taught the doctrines of grace along with his contemporaries William Gadsby, John Warburton, J.C. Philpot. These men were all Calvinists maintaining the bible to be the word of God and giving all the praise and glory to the Lord Jesus Christ for their salvation

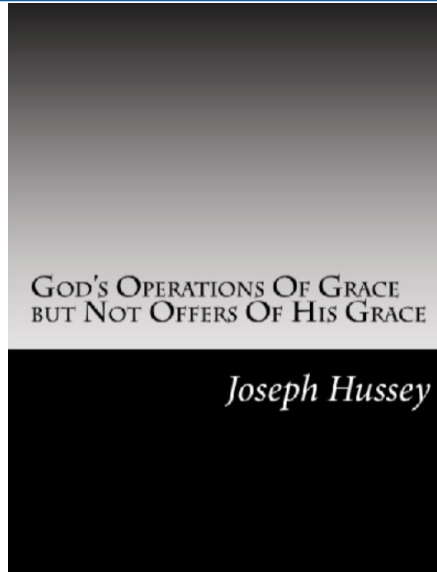
J.C. PHILPOT SERMONS

12 Volumes 1837 to 1866



Example August 1845-November 1845

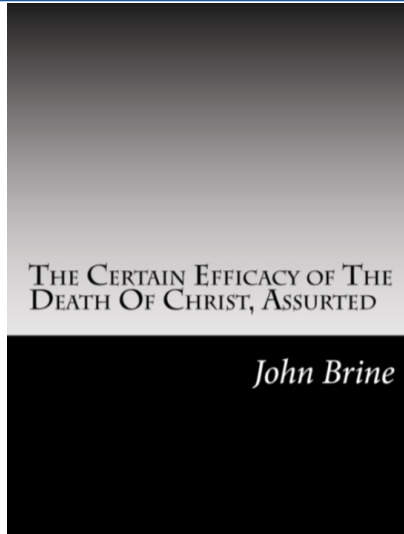
This contains the continuing series of J.C, Philpot sermons, there are 16 in this volume. Sermon 90 Divine Arithmetic 91 Miracles Not Ceased 92 Spiritual Delight, and Confiding Trust 93 Divine Enlargement And Spiritual Obedience 94 The Refuge Of The Oppressed 95 The Anchor within the Veil 96 Divine Husbandry 97 Blessings Imputed, And Mercies Imparted 98 The Promises Inherited through Faith and Patience 99 Blessings Imputed, And Mercies Imparted 100 The Believer's Gain His Loss, The Believer's Loss His Gain 101 The Precious And The Vile 102 The Knowledge Of Good And Evil 103 The Rule Of Christian Union And Communion 104 A Prayer Of The Church 105 The Glory Of Zion Her Sure Defence 106 Called Unto Divine Fellowship



Published 1707

Authored by Joseph Hussey

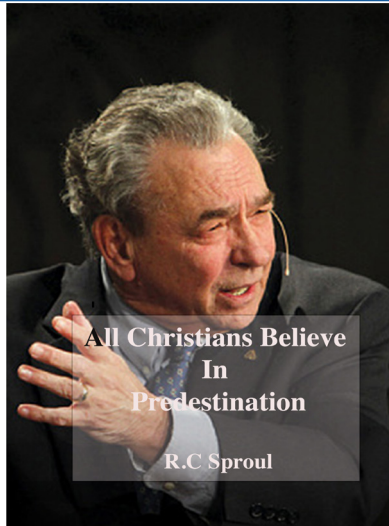
This work of Joseph Hussey treats the subject of preaching the gospel in light of the distinguishing doctors of grace. This is as relevant today as it was in the 18 century as there are those who call themselves Calvinists but are not and advocate “Duty Faith” and “Duty Repentance”, terms that are used to express a belief that it is the duty of all men, every where, to receive and accept the Lord Jesus Christ as their own personal Saviour. There are those historically, such as Richard Baxter and Andrew Fuller, who advocated, “Duty Faith” and ‘Duty Repentance’, in the UK and as a result brought about a great division the among Particular Baptists and Presbyterians and evangelicals. I am not sure about America. This work of Joseph Hussey denies “Duty Faith” and “Duty Repentance” and demonstrates that saving faith is a free grace gift of God, bestowed upon those being effectually called by the Spirit of God, and who are stilled the elect. That is those for who the Lord Jesus died. This book is published to assist Preterits’ studying eschatology and all Calvinists, as it is important to have a correct understanding of the nature of the fall of Man and the corruption of human nature in order to see the glory of free grace.

THE CERTAIN EFFICACY OF THE DEATH OF CHRIST ASSERTED

Authored by John Brine

This work declares the Glory of God in all his Perfections, the Honour of Christ, and the eternal Happiness of his People, all of which are intimately concerned in them. This is treated in four parts: In the First John Brine endeavours to prove the limited Extent of the Death of CHRIST, and the certain Salvation of all those for whom he died. In the Second, the Objections which are usually urged by the Arminians, and others, will be answered. In the Third shall attempt to prove the Impossibility of the Salvation of the Non-Elect, upon the Supposition of no other than a conditional Provision of Salvation being made for them. In the Fourth Part shall attend to what he delivers on the Subjects of the Imputation of original Sin to Men, the Charge of Sin on CHRIST, and the Imputation of his Righteousness to his People. This has been republished by Bierton Particular Baptists to further the cause of God and truth, it opposes Arminianism, Islam, and duty faith.

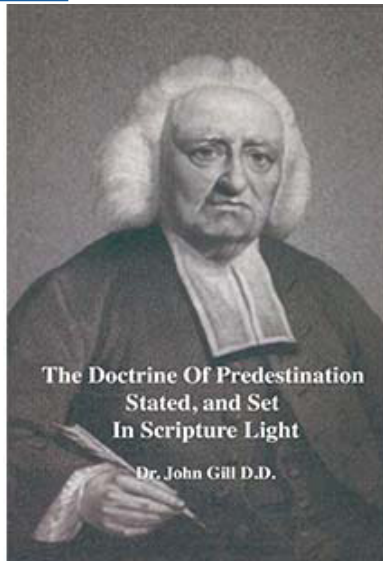
ALL CHRISTIANS BELIEVE IN PREDESTINATION



This lecture is republished for the help of those Christians having difficulties in understanding the bible teaching of Predestination. Further to this study we encourage students to study soteriology and also of eschatology, both of which we can help by referring you to the further publications we recommend and are listed at the end of this book. The lecture is available on Youtube under the title All Christians Believe In Predestination.

THE DOCTRINE OF PREDESTINATION

SET IN SCRIPTURAL LIGHT

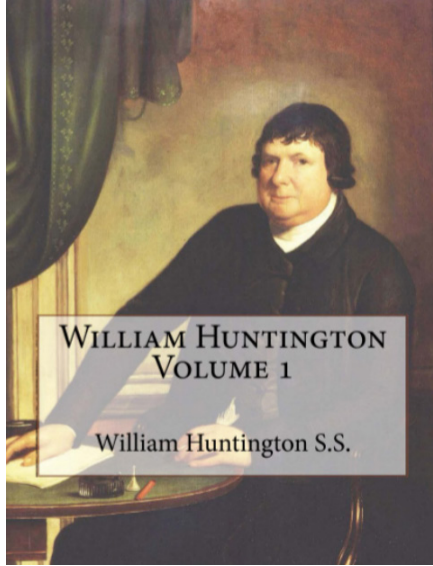


Dr. John Gill

This matter of predestination was set forth by Dr. John Gill against John Wesley who denied the truth of the predestination of some to eternal life by Jesus Christ.

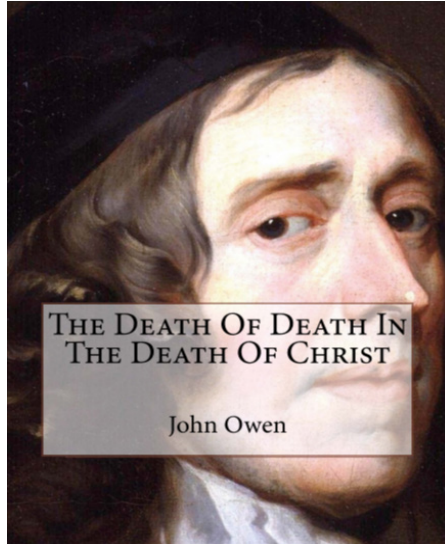
WILLIAM HUNTINGTON VOLUME 1

Of a 20 Volume Set.



Authored by William Huntington S.S.

William Huntington S.S. (2nd February 1745- 1 July 1813) was an English preacher and the man who preached to the Queen of England as well as the Prime Minister, and signed his letters William Huntington, S.S. (Saved Sinner). He taught that the moral law, or the 10 commandments, as published by Moses, was not the rule of life for the believer but rather the gospel, which is the Law Christ. He delighted in talking of the everlasting love of God, blessed redemption, all conquering grace, mysterious providence, the Spirit's work in mens souls and many other good news themes. He was charge with being an Antinomian although his writings and sermons do not bear this out. Huntington was a strict Calvinist who believed some were predestined to eternal life and some were not. He founded or opened chapels throughout England, many of which survive to this day. There are 20 volumes of his works that were published in 1811, this is volume 1 of that series. This volume contains the Kingdom Of Heaven Taken By Prayer and The Spiritual Sea Voyage.

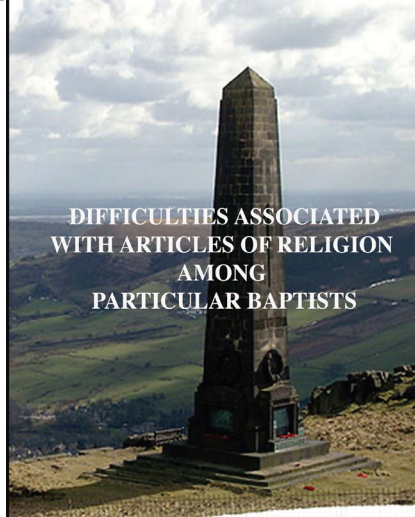


John Owen

The Death of Death in the Death of Christ is a polemical work, designed to show, among other things, that the doctrine of universal redemption is un-scriptural and destructive of the gospel. There are many, therefore, to whom it is not likely to be of interest. Those who see no need for doctrinal exactness and have no time for theological debates which show up divisions between so-called Evangelicals may well regret its reappearance. Some may find the very sound of Owen's thesis so shocking that they will refuse to read his book at all; so passionate a thing is prejudice, and so proud are we of our theological shibboleths. But it is hoped that this reprint will find itself readers of a different spirit. There are signs today of a new upsurge of interest in the theology of the Bible: a new readiness to test traditions, to search the Scriptures and to think through the faith. It is to those who share this readiness that Owen's treatise is offered, in the belief that it will help us in one of the most urgent tasks facing Evangelical Christendom today—the recovery of the gospel.

This last remark may cause some raising of eyebrows, but it seems to be warranted by the facts. There is no doubt that Evangelicalism today is in a state of perplexity and unsettlement. In such matters as the practice of evangelism, the teaching of holiness, the building up of local church life, the pastor's dealing with souls and the exercise of discipline, there is evidence of widespread dissatisfaction with things as they are and of equally widespread uncertainty as to the road ahead. This is a complex phenomenon, to which

many factors have contributed; but, if we go to the root of the matter, we shall find that these perplexities are all ultimately due to our having lost our grip on the biblical gospel. Without realising it, we have during the past century bartered that gospel for a substitute product which, though it looks similar enough in points of detail, is as a whole a decidedly different thing. Hence our troubles; for the substitute product does not answer the ends for which the authentic gospel has in past days proved itself so mighty. The new gospel conspicuously fails to produce deep reverence, deep repentance, deep humility, a spirit of worship, a concern for the church. Why? We would suggest that the reason lies in its own character and content. It fails to make men God-centred in their thoughts and God-fearing in their hearts because this is not primarily what it is trying to do. One way of stating the difference between it and the old gospel is to say that it is too exclusively concerned to be “helpful” to man—to bring peace, comfort, happiness, satisfaction—and too little concerned to glorify God. The old gospel was “helpful,” too—more so, indeed, than is the new—but (so to speak) incidentally, for its first concern was always to give glory to God. It was always and essentially a proclamation of Divine sovereignty in mercy and judgment, a summons to bow down and worship the mighty Lord on whom man depends for all good, both in nature and in grace. Its centre of reference was unambiguously God. But in the new gospel the centre of reference is man. This is just to say that the old gospel was religious in a way that the new gospel is not. Whereas the chief aim of the old was to teach men to worship God, the concern of the new seems limited to making them feel better. The subject of the old gospel was God and His ways with men; the subject of the new is man and the help God gives him. There is a world of difference. The whole perspective and emphasis of gospel preaching has changed.

Among Particular Baptists

By David Clarke

Articles of Religion are important when dealing with matters of the Christian Religion, however problems occur when churches fail to recognize there is a growth in grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ in any believer. When a person first believes in the Lord Jesus Christ they cannot possibly have a comprehensive knowledge of a churches constitution or its articles of religion, before solemnly subscribing to them. The author David Clarke has introduced the Doctrines of Grace to Berton Particular Baptists Pakistan, situated in Rahim Yar Khan, Pakistan and bearing in mind his own experience with articles of religion he has compiled Berton Particular Baptists Pakistan articles of religion from the first Berton Particular Baptists of 1831, of which he is the sole surviving member, the First London Baptist Confession, 2nd edition 1646, and those of Dr John Gill, in order to avoid some of the difficulties encounter by Particular Baptist during the later part of the 19 century and since. This booklet highlights the problem and suggests the Berton Particular Baptists Pakistan is as step in the right direction.

Isaiah 52:8 Thy watchmen shall lift up the voice; with the voice together shall they sing: for they shall see eye to eye, when the LORD shall bring again Zion.

Contents Introduction Articles of Religion Important Authors Testimony Berton Particular Baptist Church A Difficulty Over Articles Of Religion Written From Experience Berton Particular Baptists History 1 First

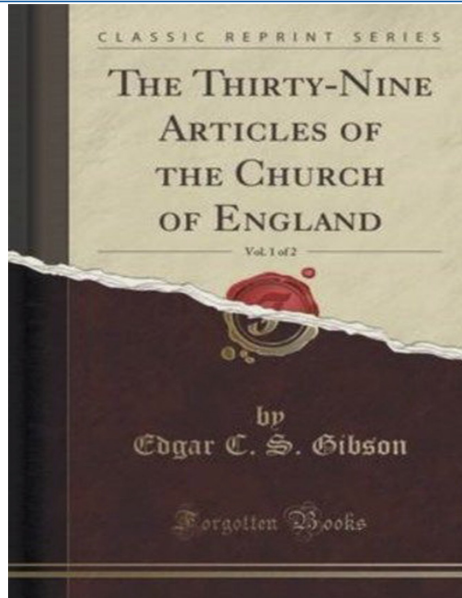
London Particular Baptists Confession 1646, 2nd Edition The Development of Articles Of Religion Act of Toleration 14 Additions That Are Wrong 2 London Baptist Confession 1689 1

Notes on The London Baptists Confession 1689 3 Berton Particular Baptists Articles of Religion, 1831 Difficulties Over Articles of Religion Notes on Berton Particular Baptists 1831 4 The Gospel Standard Articles of Religion 1878 Observations of the Gospel Standard

Articles of religion Letter to Mr Role's of Luton Added Articles

My comments Article 32 The Difficulties Of these Articles Proved Serious Doctrinal Errors Held Recommendation for Serious Minded 5 Berton Particular Baptists Pakistan 2016 6 Appendix 60 Gospel Standard 31 Articles

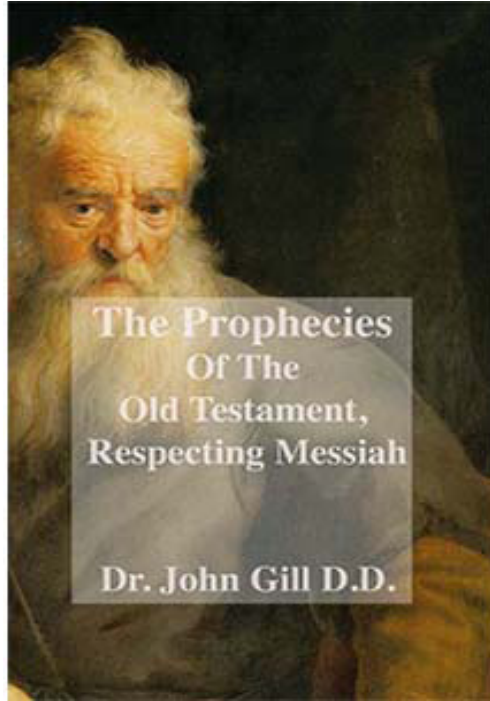
[THE 39 ARTICLES OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND](#)



Introduction

The 39 Articles of the Church Of England are a set of doctrines outlined by that church denomination in the year 1562 and revised several times with the final revision occurring in 1571. These articles were also referred to as “The Thirty-nine Articles of Religion”. These articles were created to address various theological and doctrinal controversies that developed in Christendom during the period of time known as the English Reformation. Most of the issues addressed by the 39 Articles pertained to the differences between the Roman Catholic Church and the Church of England which King Henry the 8th formed, after he was excommunicated from the Catholic Church.

PROPHECIES OF THE OLD TESTAMENT RESPECTING THE MESSIAH



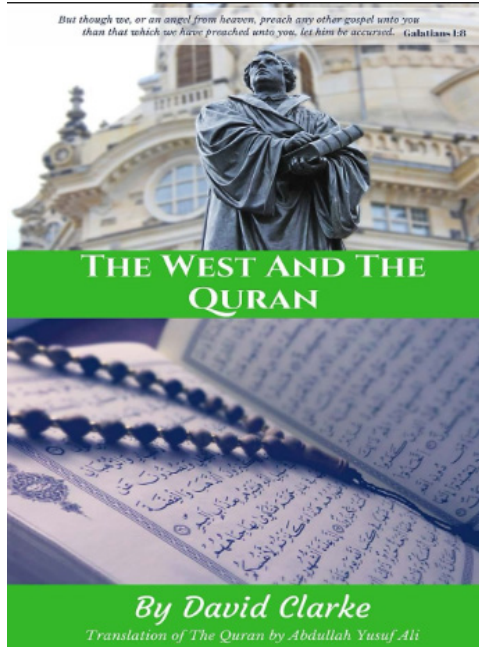
Dr. John Gill

CHAPTER 1 The Introduction; with a particular consideration of that first prophecy, respecting the MESSIAH, recorded in Genesis 3:15. CHAPTER 2 Showing that the Messiah was promised to Abraham, and what advantages the nations of the world were to receive by him. CHAPTER 3 Concerning the Time of the Messiah's Coming CHAPTER 4 Showing the Lineage and Descent of the MESSIAH. CHAPTER 5 Concerning the miraculous Conception and Birth of the MESSIAH. CHAPTER 6 Concerning the place of the MESSIAH'S Birth. CHAPTER 7 Showing the several Circumstances which were to attend or follow upon the MESSIAH'S Birth, according to the prophets; and how the; were punctually fulfilled in JESUS.

CHAPTER 8 Concerning the Prophetic office of the MESSIAH; wherein is proved, that he is the prophet spoken of in Deuteronomy 8:15 also inquiry is made, who was to be his fore-runner; what was his prophetic work; and where he was to perform his office. CHAPTER 9 Concerning the remarkable occurrence of the MESSIAH'S riding to Jerusalem upon an ass, wherein the prophecy in Zechariah 9:9. Is particularly considered. CHAPTER 10 Concerning the sufferings of the Messiah; wherein Psalm and Isaiah 53 are particularly considered: as also the several circumstances which were to attend these sufferings. CHAPTER 11 Concerning the Resurrection of the

MESSIAH from the dead. CHAPTER 12 Concerning the Ascension of the MESSIAH to Heaven, his session at God's right hand, and second coming to judgment. CHAPTER 13 Concerning the magnificent and august names and titles of the MESSIAH in the Old Testament Chapter. 14 Prophecies Concerning the second coming of Christ. The publisher introduces a fulfilled view of prophecy.

THE WEST AND THE QURAN



Translation of The Quran

Authored by David Clarke, Authored with Abdullah Yusuf Ali

This Publication treats the subject of the Quran and the reason for presenting this is due to a rise in Islamic terrorism which has caused great concern to many in the West. So with the current massive influx of Muslim's migrating from the various parts of the world into Europe, Great Britain and the USA, it seems reasonable to discover the roots of Islam in order to deal with the problems that have occurred. Our Politicians seem clueless on how to deal with this enemy and when they are questioned they appear to know relatively little about Muhammad and his teaching. One of our greatest Prime-ministers in Britain William Gladstone declared the Quran an "Accursed book" and once held a copy of Muhammad's Quran up in Parliament, declaring: "So long as there is this book there will be no peace in the world". Winston Churchill was one of the greatest leaders of the 20th

Century, who served as Prime Minister of the United Kingdom during World War II and again from 1951 to 1955. As an officer of the British Army in 1897 and 1898, he fought against a Pashtun tribe in the north west frontier of British India and also at the Battle of Omdurman in Sudan. In both of those conflicts, he had eye-opening encounters with Muslims. These incidents allowed his keen powers of observation and always-fluid pen to weigh in on the subject of Islamic society. While these words were written when he was only 25-years-old (in 1899), they serve as a prophetic warning to Western civilisation today. "How dreadful are the curses which Mohammedanism (Islam) lays on its votaries! Besides the fanatical frenzy, which is as dangerous in a man as hydrophobia in a dog, there is this fearful fatalistic apathy." Churchill apparently witnessed the same phenomenon in several places he visited. "The effects are apparent in many countries: improvident habits, slovenly systems of agriculture, sluggish methods of commerce and insecurity of property exist wherever the followers of the Prophet rule or live." He saw the temporal and the eternal tainted by their belief system. "A degraded sensualism deprives this life of its grace and refinement, the next of its dignity and sanctity," he wrote. The second-class status of women also grated at the young officer. "The fact that in Mohammedan law every woman must belong to some man as his absolute property, either as a child, a wife, or a concubine, must delay the final extinction of slavery until the faith of Islam has ceased to be a great power among men," he noted. "Individual Muslims may show splendid qualities, but the influence of the religion paralyses the social development of those who follow it. No stronger retrograde force exists in the world." Well before the birth of modern Israel, its terror tactics and drive for world domination were felt. "Far from being moribund, Mohammedanism is a militant and proselytising faith. It has already spread throughout Central Africa, raising fearless warriors at every step, and were it not that Christianity is sheltered in the strong arms of science, the science against which it (Islam) has vainly struggled, the civilisation of modern Europe might fall, as fell the civilisation of ancient Rome." With the influx of Muslim people from the various parts of the continent along with their culture all of which is shaped by the teachings of Muhammad in the Quran. Some objections and Observations are as follows: Islam means submission Islam does not mean peace Multiculturalism is a failure. Islam denies the natural rights of women An Objection Halal Meat An Objection To Shariah Law Objects to Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) An objection to Jihad which seeks over throw Western culture through education, Social activity, political activation and Law. For this reason, this publication is made available for education purposes. With this prayer that God may grant us all

wisdom as to how we may respond to the rise and threat of Islam.

LET CHRISTIAN MEN BE MEN

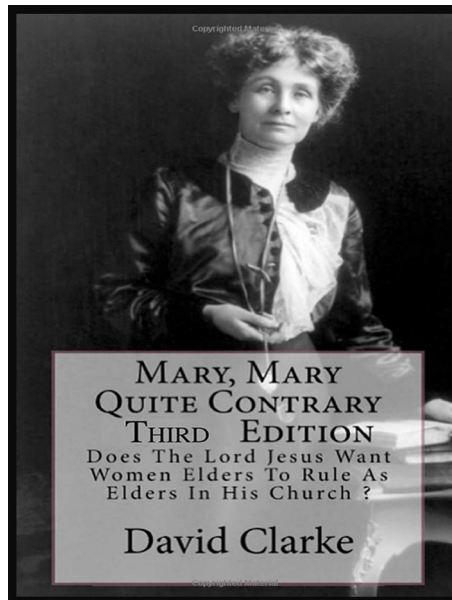


David Clarke

Let Christian Men Be Men was originally published in The Bierton Crisis and is the personal story of David Clarke a member of the Bierton Strict and Particular Baptist church. He was also the church secretary and minister sent by the church to preach the gospel in 1982. The Bierton Church was formed in 1832 and was a Gospel Standard cause who's rules of membership are such that only the church can terminate ones membership. This tells of a crisis that took place in the church in 1984, which led to some members withdrawing support. David, the author, was one of the members who withdrew but the church did not terminate his membership as they wished him return. This story tells in detail about those errors in doctrine and practices that had crept into the Bierton church and of the lengths taken to put matters right. David maintained and taught Particular Redemption and that the gospel was the rule of life for the believer and not the law of Moses as some church members maintained. This story tells of the closure of the Bierton chapel when David was on mission work in the Philippines in December 2002 and when the remaining church members died. It tells how David was encouraged by the church overseer to return to Bierton and re-open the chapel. On David's return to the UK he learned a newly unelected set of trustees had take over the responsibility for the chapel and were seeking to sell it. The story tells how he was refused permission to re open or use the

chapel and they sold it as a domestic dwelling, in 2006. These trustees held doctrinal views that opposed the Bierton church and they denied David's continued membership of the church in order to lay claim too and sell the chapel, using the money from the sale of the chapel for their own purposes. David hopes that his testimony will promote the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, as set out in the doctrines of grace, especially Particular Redemption and the rule of life for the believer being the gospel of Christ, the royal law of liberty, and not the law of Moses as some reformed Calvinists teach, will be realized by the reader. His desire is that any who are called to preach the gospel should examine their own standing and ensure that they can derive from scripture the doctrines and practices they teach and advance and that they can derived the truths they teach from scripture alone and not from the traditions of men or their opinions however well they may be thought of.

MARY, MARY QUITE CONTRARY



Second Edition: Does The Lord Jesus Want Women To Rule As Elders In His Church ??

Authored by Mr David Clarke Cert E

ISBN-13: 978-1514206812 (CreateSpace-Assigned)

ISBN-10: 1514206811

BISAC: Religion / Christian Theology / General

When treating the subject of women elders in the church we are not dealing with the affairs of a secular society and so it has nothing to do with women's rights, equality of sex or race in the world. This matter only relates to men and women in a Christian church. It is about the rules of the house of God, which is the church of the living God and rules for those who are members of the body of Christ and members of an heavenly county.

The Suffragettes Emmeline Pankhurst (1858 -1928) was a Suffragette and worked very hard to bring equal rights for women to vote as men. In the year of her death all women over 21 gained the right to vote. The Suffragette movement brought about many changes for the better in a secular society but not so for women seeking to follow Christian principles. One of her famous quotes was, "Trust in God She shall provide". Terms which do not reflect Christian beliefs. We know God will provide and He is not a she. In the USA and the UK, women's political rights were brought into general political consciousness by the suffragettes and since then there have been legal rights granted to the Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender groups, same sex marriages, along with the development of the feminist movement and the appointment of persons from the LBGT community to responsible positions in the Church of England. All of this has caused conflict in the Christian community due to differences beliefs of right and wrong. This book seeks to show what the bible has to say about the role of women in the church and family. Since these rules are taught by the Apostles of Christ they are the word of God to us and we should obey. The secular world may differ and turn from the narrow path taught in scripture but we should follow the word of God, this is our wisdom.

The Bucks Herald Second Edition

Not Weekly Sales: 23,342
THURSDAY FEBRUARY 11, 1971 price 6d 32 pages

**CONVERTED
ON LSD
TRIP**

David Clarke who had a three-year career of undetected crime, experienced a "Christian conversion" whilst suffering from the effects of LSD, he told Aylesbury magistrates, on Tuesday. After wrestling with his conscience for a year, he confessed to 24 crimes, and gave information leading to the recovery of over £1000 worth of stolen property. In court

was enjoying himself. "I used to sell drugs to young people, and indulge in permissive sex" he declared.

Seeking Truth

"Religion to me was rubbish, and for any people who could not stand on their own feet," he said.

result of taking the drug, and went on "I warn any young person who hears my testimony, "The effects of LSD are so bad, and I warn you to stay clear". While in this condition he said he, "Called on the name of Jesus" and his torment went from him.

Voice Of Christ

"Jesus Christ spoke to me as clearly as I speak here today saying, "David, I am with you", he said. "What you have been going through is nothing compared to what hell is like" Mr Murray, of Manser Crescent Woodrow said he was habitually sceptical of sudden conversions, and preferred to put them to the test of time. The time, which had elapsed, since Clarke's profession of faith had convinced him that this young man would now be salt and light to society. "He is in truth, a new man, and had experienced what Christ called a second birth". Murray said Clarke now put himself out to be of assistance, read the bible intensely, always carried a New Testament, attended a wide circle of churches and would spend hours in discussion on spiritual things.

Difficulty

Clarke's difficulty during the months spent deciding how to make amends for his past had been the problem of accusing himself, without interfering on others.

Continued inside



David Could these boys do any real wrong? - Michael

he pleaded guilty to charges of "Within my heart I was searching for truth, and a meaning to life". He had good prospects of getting £200000 worth of property, a house, two cars, and an electric arc welder, two other TV sets, two compressors, and a road trailer. Clarke (21) of Finmore Crescent said that his reputation in the town had been that of a man who

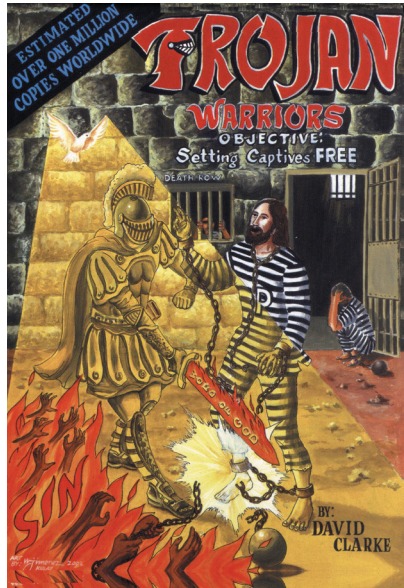
stealing a £300 colour television set from an old peoples home, a £200000 worth of property, a house, two cars, and an electric arc welder, two other TV sets, two compressors, and a road trailer. Clarke (21) of Finmore Crescent said that his reputation in the town had been that of a man who

He had good prospects of getting on in life he went on but "I was not satisfied with what I had, I was greedy, selfish and boastful". Clarke had been using pop pills and marijuana since he was 16, he told the court, but it was after taking LSD that he experienced what he described as, "a major thing in my life". He described the "torment" he suffered, as a

By David Clarke (Author) 3rd Edition Paperback – 3 Jun. 2020

This third edition of, 'Converted on LSD Trip', is written to bring attention to the reality of the work of the Lord Jesus Christ, in changing the lives of David Clarke, whilst on a bad trip on LSD, on 16th January 1970, and the life of his brother Michael Clarke, some 30 years later, when a prisoner, in the Philippines, and making them evangelist workers seeking to teach the gospel of Christ to men. It is intended to use this book as a tool for evangelism in order to encourage others in the work of preaching the gospel of Christ to men. This is also intended to draw attention to the work of Jesus Christ now in Baguio City, Philippines, by William O. Poloc a former inmate of New Bilibid Prison. It is believed and stressed that it is important to teach the traditional Christian doctrines of grace, to combat the error of modern-day Godliness, unbelief, homosexuality, feminism, Islam and of the importance of teaching the Deity of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the infallibility of the word of God

TROJAN WARRIORS



Setting Captives Free

Authored by Mr David Clarke Cert Ed, Authored by Mr Michael J Clarke

Trojan Warriors is a true story of two brothers, Michael and David Clarke, who are brought up in Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire, England. They became criminals in the 60's and were sent to prison for malicious wounding and carrying a fire arm without a license, in 1967. They both turned from their lives of crimes in remarkable ways but some 25 years apart, and then they worked together helping other prison inmates, on their own roads of reformation. David the younger brother became a Christian, after a bad experience on LSD, in 1970, and then went on to educate himself and then on to Higher Education. He became a baptist minister and taught electronics for over 20 years, in colleges of Higher and Further Education. Michael however remained untouched and continued his flamboyant life style ending up serving a 16 year prison sentence, in the Philippines, in 1996, where he died of tuberculosis in 2005. When David heard the news of his brothers arrest on an ITN television news bulletin he felt compelled to wrote their story. And then when he heard of his own brothers conversion from crime to Christ, after serving 5 year of his sentence, he published their story in his book, "Converted on LS Trip", and directed a mission of help to the Philippines to assist his brother. This book tells the story of this mission. They then worked together with many former notorious criminals, who

were inmates in New Bilibid Prison, who too had become Christians and turned their lives around. This help was to train them to become preachers of the gospel of Jesus Christ. This book contains the 66 testimonies of some of these men who convicted former criminals, incarcerated in New Bilibid Prison. They are the, “Trojan Warriors”, who had turned their lives around and from crime to Christ. Twenty two of these testimonies are men who are on Death Row scheduled to be executed by lethal injection. Revelation 12 verse 11: And they overcame him by the blood of the lamb and the word of their testimony and they loved not their lives unto the death.

CALLED FROM DARKNESS INTO HIS MARVELLOUS LIGHT



William Ola Poloc, was called from nature's darkness into God's marvellous light, into the kingdom of the Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ

marvellous light, into the kingdom of the Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ. This was whilst he was a prisoner, in New Bilibid Prison, in the Philippines and serving a 14 year prison sentence.

After his conversion, from crime to Christ, he set too to educate

himself, with the aid of other inmates, who had become Christians, and began teaching the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ to men.

On his release from prisons, in August 2002, he returned to his own City in Baguio. Philippines, and was commissioned by Christian mission organisation from the United Kingdom, to preach and teach the gospel to inmates in Baguio City and Benguet Provincial Jails.

William and his wife, who too had become Christian, worked together in gospel ministry and for these past 20 years have established many Christ Centred Churches throughout the Philippines. The book tells this story and relates how many others have been blessed the see the Lord Jesus Christ glorified and introduced to men the ministry of William Ola Poloc.

[LET CHRISTIAN MEN BE MEN, 2nd EDITION](#)

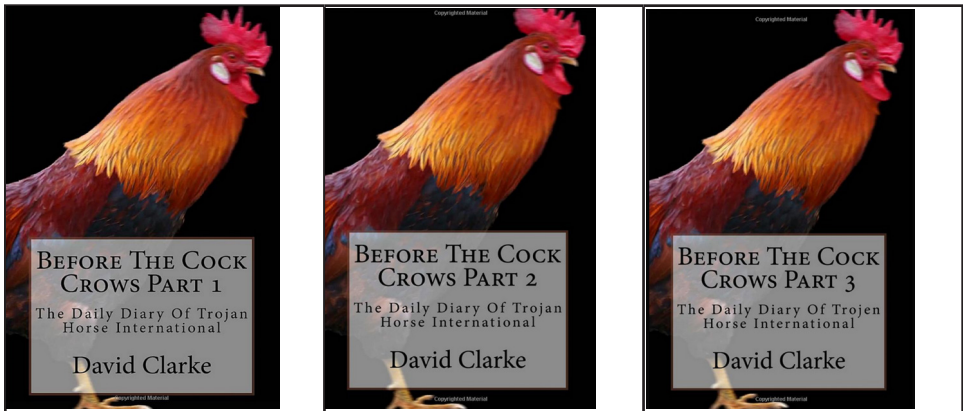


David Clarke

David Clarke tells of his Secession from the Bierton Strict and Particular Baptist Church, in 1984 over matters of conscience. This Church was formed in 1831 and was a Calvinist Protestant dissenting society and became a Gospel Standard cause in 1981. Sadly the church fell into serious doctrinal error teaching general redemption this was just one of the reasons for his

secession. David was called by the Lord and sent by the church the gospel in 1982. When acting as the secretary he had to deal with a range of serious issues that arose within the church. This book deals with all those doctrinal and practical issues that arose and how he responded to them. He deals with the reasons for his secession and clearly spells out the distinguishing doctrines of grace treating the subjects of Particular Redemption, Gospel preaching the false notion of Duty Faith and Duty Repentance, the role of women in the church, Articles of Religion, and the relationship of the believer to the Law of Moses. He maintains the gospel is the believer's rule of life for the believer and not the law of Moses. That there are no such things as holy tables and the chapel building is not the house of God. David remains the sole member of the Church after all its former members died and that the church did not terminate his membership after his secession. David continues his mission work and calling, published a range of Christian books and has been engaged in gospel ministry in Pakistan and the Philippines.

[BEFORE THE COCK CROWS PART 1, 2 AND 3.](#)



[PART 1](#)

By David Clarke

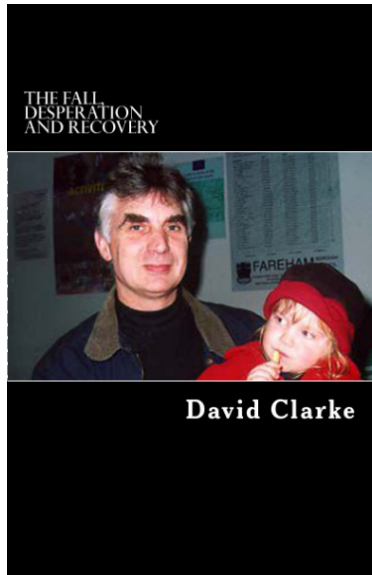
[PART 2](#)

[PART 3](#)

David Clarke the Director of Trojan Horse International CM encountered remarkable opposition from various quarters in New Bilibid Prison, Muntinlupa City Philippines between October 2002 and July 2003. Most of those who opposed the mission were men from among Asia's most notorious criminals in the National Penitentiaries, which is situated on the Reservation at Muntinlupa City, 1770, Philippines. If one were to judge the success of the mission by that amount of opposition that it experienced, then the mission was a remarkable success. Newton stated that to every force there is an equal but opposite one to oppose it and like Newton,

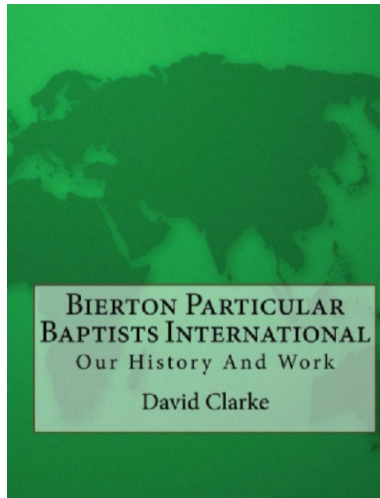
David suggests that to every proactive work there is and equal but opposite reaction and so if this reaction were to be the measure of success, then the mission was remarkably successful. It also serves to demonstrate that God always triumphs. That God saves, not by might, but by His Spirit. That God puts to fight thousands of his enemies and empowers the one's and two's, that trust in Him in order to show that Salvation is truly of the Lord. This prison comprises of three Compounds and penal farms housing over 23,550 inmates, which are all under the control of the Department of Justice (DOJ) and the Bureau of Corrections. (BUCOR). The Chaplaincy, headed by Msgr. Helley Barrido, is responsible for all religious groups and voluntary work done within the Prison. "Death Row" is in the Maximum Security Compound where over 1200 men are housed and they are all under the sentence of death. Some are doubly confirmed and due to be put to death by lethal injection. Trojan Horse International C.M. was established in the early part of 2001 and composed of a team of two from England, David Clarke and Gordon John Smith. The mission was set up as a Christian ministry, seeking to bring assistance to Michael John Clarke, David's older brother, and many inmates at the Prison. This was where Michael had been incarcerated, for a crime he did not commit, and was serving a prison sentence of 16 years. He had been baptized as a Christian. In an old 45-gallon US Oil drum, on the 16th September 2000 in the Maximum Compound. Michael, like his brother David, had been converted from crime to Christ whilst suffering the bitter effects of this form of injustice in the Philippines. However Michael's conversion was some thirty years after David who had been brought up in Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire and had been converted from crime to Christ, at the age of 20 years old, on the 16th January 1970.

THE FALL, DESPERATION AND RECOVERY



By Mr David Clarke

David encountered great conflicts of conscience whilst at the Bierton Strict and Particular Baptists Church and seceded over matters of conscience. For two years he wondered what the future held for him and wondered about the direction that he should go. This led him to severe depression thinking that God had rejected him and then to a desperate state of mind resulting in him turning away from God and to open sin. This is the continuing story of David life as told in his book , “Converted on LSD Trip”, and relates the journey that led to his fall, the desperation, recovery and restoration to faith in Christ . He tells of the good news he received of his brother Michael and his conversion from crime to Christ, that took place 5 years into a 16 year prison sentence, in the Philippines. This was 30 years after David ‘s own conversion from crime to Christ, which was the moving factor behind publishing his book, “Converted on LSD Trip.” David believes this book will be very useful for people of all ages who wish to see the hand of God at work and in particular for those learning the Christian faith.



Our History And Work

Authored by David Clarke

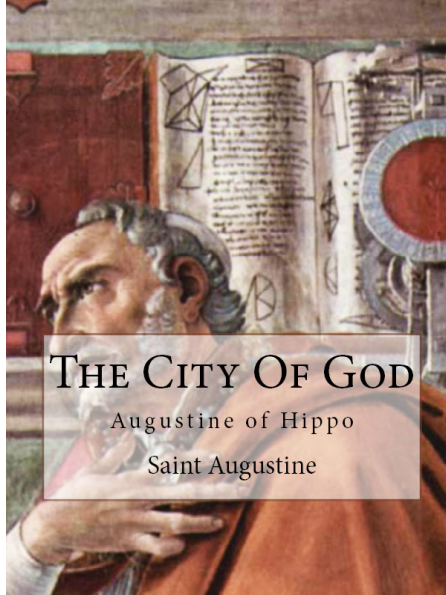
Bierton Particular Baptists were founded in England in 1831 and has now extended to Pakistan. The chapel belonging to Bierton Particular Baptists was closed for worship in December 2002 and David Clarke, the sole remaining member of the Bierton church, commissioned and appointed Anil Anwar and Anwar Shahid John as over seers, of Bierton Particular Baptist church, in Pakistan, in 2016. This book contains the articles of religion for Bierton Particular Baptists and the Bierton Particular Baptist College. Bierton Particular Baptists were a Gospel Standard listed cause 1981.

Bierton Particular Baptists Pakistan is the first in Pakistan and founded by David Clarke. Mr Clarke is the sole surviving member of Bierton Particular Baptist, founded in 1831, in England, and was a Gospel Standard Cause. This book tells of the formation of Bierton Particular Baptist Pakistan 2016 along with the formation of a Minister Bible college. David Clarke appointed minister Anil Anwar and Anwar Shahid John of Rahim Yar Khan, as overseers work and the articles of religion and doctrinal foundation are those to the Bierton Particular Baptists 1831.

In these we express our belief in the sovereignty of God in creation and redemption and hold to Calvinistic soteriology. We also encourage those interested to investigate Covenant Eschatology, as a means of clearing up some of the many strange views held by some that teach end times theology. This magazine has been published to help Christians encourage and educate

each other, in a way free from censorship. We encourage feedback and wish our readers to contribute further articles for publication. We believe the Lord Jesus Christ is the eternal son of the living God who alone is the saviour of mankind whether **Muslim Gentile or Jew**.

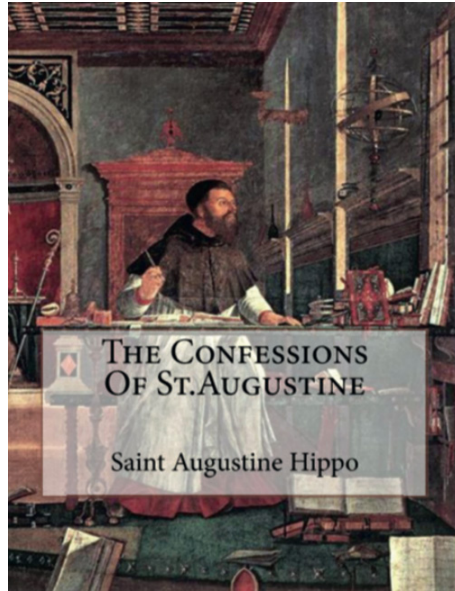
[THE CITY OF GOD](#)



Augustin Of Hippo

The City of God, is a book of Christian philosophy written in Latin by Augustine of Hippo in the early 5th century AD. The book was in response to allegations that Christianity brought about the decline of Rome and is considered one of Augustine's most important works. The City of God is a cornerstone of Western thought, expounding on many profound questions of theology, such as the suffering of the righteous, the existence of evil, the conflict between free will and divine omniscience, and the doctrine of original sin. Augustine is recognized as a saint in the Catholic Church, the Eastern Christian Church, and the Anglican Communion and as a preeminent Doctor of the Church. Many Protestants, especially Calvinists and Lutherans, consider him to be one of the theological fathers of the Protestant Reformation due to his teachings on salvation and divine grace. Lutherans, and Martin Luther in particular, have held Augustine in preeminence (after the Bible and St. Paul). Luther himself was a member of the Order of the Augustinian Eremites (1505–1521).

THE CONFESSIONS OF ST. AUGUSTINE



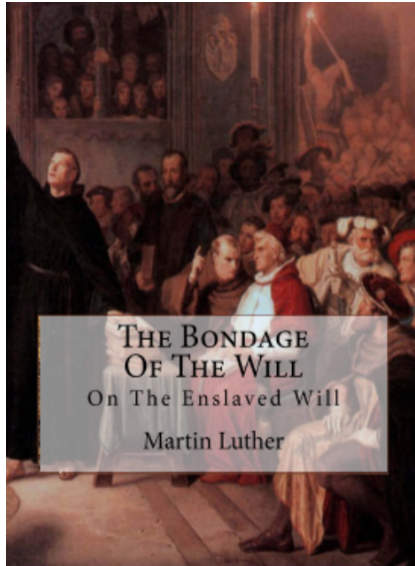
Augustine Of Hippo

This is an autobiography, a work, consisting of 13 books, by Saint Augustine of Hippo, written in Latin between AD 397 and 400. The work outlines Saint Augustine's sinful youth and his conversion to Christianity. Its original title was *Confessions in Thirteen Books*, and it was composed to be read out loud with each book being a complete unit. *Confessions* is generally considered one of Augustine's most important texts. It is widely seen as the first Western autobiography ever written, and was an influential model for Christian writers throughout the Middle Ages. Professor Henry Chadwick wrote that *Confessions* will "always rank among the great masterpieces of western literature". Written after the legalization of Christianity, *Confessions* dated from an era where martyrdom was no longer a threat to most Christians as was the case two centuries earlier. Instead, a Christian's struggles were usually internal. *Confessions* was written between AD 397–398, suggesting self-justification as a possible motivation for the work. With the words "I wish to act in truth, making my confession both in my heart before you and in this book before the many who will read it" in Book X Chapter 1 Augustine both confesses his sins and glorifies God through humility in His grace, the two meanings that define "confessions," in order to reconcile his imperfections not only to his critics but also to God.

Pelagius, a British monk, took exception to Augustines prayer "Grant

what Thou commandest, and command what Thou dost desire.” Pelagius recoiled in horror at the idea that a divine gift (grace) is necessary to perform what God commands. For Pelagius and his followers responsibility always implies ability. If man has the moral responsibility to obey the law of God, he must also have the moral ability to do it. Augustine took up the cause of God clearly demonstrating the fall of man and the inability of man to do good and defended the truth of original sin.

THE BONDAGE OF THE WILL

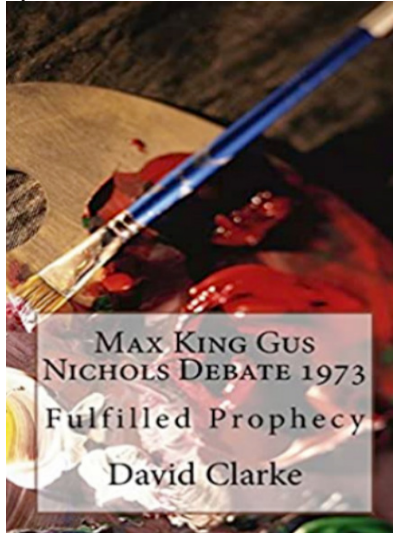


On The Enslaved Will Authored by Martin Luther DD

This work of Martin Luther is very relevant today as so many who profess a knowledge of God in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ are unable to discern the error of so-called Free Will. So for any who find a problem with Calvinism and Arminianism it is important they grasp the issues discussed in this book. This was first published in 1525 and was Luther's reply to Desiderius Erasmus on Free Will, which had appeared in 1524 and was his first public attack on Luther. The issue raised by Erasmus was human beings, after the fall of Man are free to choose good or evil. The debate between Luther and Erasmus is one of the earliest of the Reformation over the issue of free will and predestination.

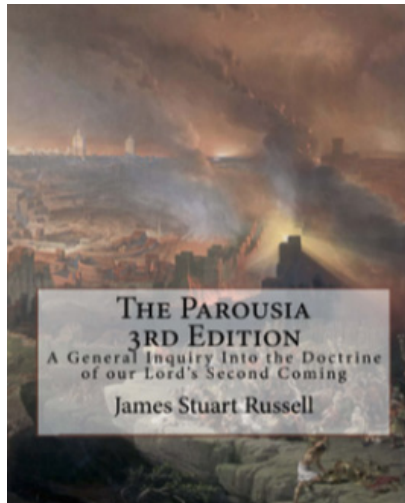
MAX KING GUS NICHOLS DEBATE 1973

Fulfilled Prophecy Paperback – 27 Nov. 2016



By David Clarke

The following debate was conducted on 17th to 20th July 1973 between Max R. King and Gus Nichols. This reading is by David Clarke, on 5th September 2016 and is available on our Youtube Channel as, 'Max King Gus Nichols Debate 1973'. 1 International Background To The Debate At the time of this debate, in 1973, the reader based in England, had been introduced to Dr John Gill by his Body of Doctrinal and Practical Divinity and also the Cause of God and Truth, both book he had been obtained from publishers in America. David had been converted to Christianity after a bad trip on LSD, On the 16th January, 1970, and turned his back on his criminal past, to follow Christ. He had been virtually illiterate until that time but learned to read by reading the bible and classical Christian literature. Well meaning Christian friend gave him books to read on the end of the world such as The Late Great Planet Earth and Clarence Larkin's, Dispensational Truth, all futurist views on the second coming of Christ. It was when he discovered that the Doctrines of Grace were those truths taught in the bible that he joined the Bierton Strict and Particular



James Stuart Russell

James Stuart Russell's, 'High Praise For The Parousia', is an excellent work that looks at the New Testament teaching of the second coming of Jesus Christ, and the book of Revelation tells of those events leading up to and including his coming. Luke 23, verse 28. But Jesus turning into them said. 'Daughters of Jerusalem weep not for me, but weep for your selves and for your children. 29. For behold, the days are coming, in the which they shall say blessed are the barren and the wombs that never bare, and the paps which never gave suck. 20 Then shall they begin to say to the mountains fall on us and to the hills cover us. 30. For if they do these things in the green tree what shall be done in the dry? The book of Revelation is a prophecy that Jesus gave to the Apostle John before the Neuronc persecution in 66 .A.D. He was told to write and inform the seven churches in Asia about those things that were shortly about to come to pass in his day. It relates to those things leading up to the destruction of Jerusalem and immediately afterwards. It told of the judgment God, styled the Day of Vengeance, on the city called Babylon for her sins and breach of the first Covenant. This Babylon was the city of Jerusalem who's people and leaders had rejected the Lord Jesus Christ and turned their back on the Mosaic covenant. The day of vengeance was day when the cup of God's wrath that was poured out on her who was called Mystery Babylon, The Mother of Harlots and this was to bring an end of rule of the Mosaic Law, bringing it to its fulfillment as Jesus had said I come not to destroy the law but to furl the Law and to bring in the New Covenant order called the law of Christ. It is impossible to understand

the book of Revelation if one takes for granted that the date of its writing was after the fall and destruction by Titus, in 70 A.D. Most scholars assume the book was written about 96 A.D. 16 years after the event and so it has become impossible for them to establish a correct interpretation of the book.

Ed Stevens

FOREWORD BY EDWARD E. STEVENS

The word “Parousia” (**par-oo-see-ah**) is not a household word, but students of end time prophecy know it is a reference to the Second Coming of Christ. It comes from two Greek words (“**para**” beside, and “**ousia**” state of being) and literally means “to be beside” (present with someone). It came to be a more specific reference to important people coming for an extended (but not long-term) visit to one of their subject territories (a “visitation”). It can refer either to the initial arrival or the afterward presence. It is used in the New Testament almost exclusively of Christ’s Second Coming.

Russell examines every significant New Testament text about Christ’s return, to see when it would occur and what it would be like. Since he believed the Second Coming occurred in the first century at the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70, his view is labeled “Preterist.”

The word “Preterist” is another prophetic term with which many are unfamiliar. According to Webster’s Unabridged Dictionary, a Preterist is “a theologian who believes the prophecies of the Apocalypse have already been fulfilled.” A Preterist is the opposite of a Futurist. Futurists teach that the three major end time events (parousia, resurrection, judgment) are still future in fulfillment, whereas Preterists teach these events have already been fulfilled. Some may wonder what difference it makes?

Everything crucial to Christianity is at risk. The Deity of Christ, the integrity of the apostles and prophets, and the inspiration of the New Testament is at stake. How so?

Jesus and the NT writers repeatedly make time- restricted predictions about His return and the other end time events. They do not merely suggest that Christ’s Parousia might occur in their lifetime, they unequivocally affirm it.

Liberals, skeptics, and Jewish/Islamic critics use those “time statements” to discredit Jesus and the New Testament. Inspired men cannot make mistakes. Since Jesus and the NT writers predicted Christ’s return to occur in their lifetime, and it supposedly didn’t happen, they assume Jesus and the NT writers were mistaken.

Indeed, if we cannot trust their prophetic utterances, we cannot trust

anything else they say. Christianity is totally discredited if those predictions failed to materialize exactly as they prophesied.

You might wonder what these “time texts” are? Matthew 16:27-28 is a good example. This book deals with every one of them. They were not mistaken when they predicted Christ’s return in their lifetime. It really occurred, at AD 70.

Theologians who study end time prophecy consider Russell’s book a classic defense of the Preterist view. It is this book, more than any other during the past 125 years, which has moved so many toward Preterism.

Many in the Reformed faith (e.g., R. C. Sproul, Sr., David Chilton, Gary DeMar, Ken Gentry, Gary North, Jim Jordan, et al) credit Russell’s book as having a significant impact on their eschatological views. R. C. Sproul, Sr. says he looks favorably at Preterism because it is the only view of prophecy which effectively counters the liberal-skeptic-critic attack. He has written much to recommend Russell’s book and encourage the spread of Preterism, even though he does not go as far as Russell does. In his Foreword to the 1999 Baker Books reprint of *The Parousia* (pp. ix-x), Sproul says:

Russell’s work is valuable chiefly for his analysis of the time-frame references of New Testament prophecy and his understanding of the main reference to the parousia. ...Russell’s book has forced me to take the events surrounding the destruction of Jerusalem far more seriously than before, to open my eyes to the radical significance of this event in redemptive history. It vindicates the apostolic hope and prediction of our Lord’s close-at hand coming in judgment.... I can never read the New Testament again the same way I read it before reading *The Parousia*.

Until this book appeared in 1878, Preterism had little systemization. This book began that process, and remains one of the most consistent and comprehensive explanations of Preterism available. The Preterist view flourished in Germany and Britain. But America, still recovering from civil war, took little notice. In global terms, its impact is still marginal, but it has seen significant growth in the past ten years, and the Internet is one of the big factors stimulating that. What the Gutenberg printing press did for the Protestant reformation, the Internet did for the Preterist reformation.

The Internet is the perfect place to publish helpful material like this. One of the first books to be posted on Preterist websites was Russell’s *Parousia*. Even though the electronic version has had many readers in the short five years it has been available, it has not diminished demand for printed copies. This book is destined to remain a Preterist classic.

Russell did a remarkable job of interpretation compared to previous centuries. He pointed the way in a number of areas that we are only just

now beginning to develop further. He devoted over 170 pages to the book of Revelation. One of his best statements is there. He uses the “time” statements in the first three verses of Revelation to show how crucial the date of writing is to the interpretation of the book:

It may truly be said that the key has all the while hung by the door, plainly visible to every one who had eyes to see; yet men have tried to pick the lock, or force the door, or climb up some other way, rather than avail themselves of so simple and ready a way of admission as to use the key made and provided for them. (Parousia, p. 367)

Russell leaves no excuses for Futurism. His survey of all the “Parousia” (second coming) references is a tour de force in Preterist exegesis. This book was the first wave of what has become a whole storm of books defending the AD 70 fulfillment of end time prophecy.

Futurists and Partial Preterists for too long have hidden behind the excuse of wanting explicit “time indicators” before assigning a text to AD 70. Russell and modern Preterists have exhaustively shown that all NT end time texts have first century “audience relevance” written all over them, which functions as an implicit time indicator. The New Testament was not written to us originally. We are reading someone else’s mail. The primary task of a Bible interpreter is to discover what the original author intended to communicate to his original audience, not just to ask what it “could” mean to us today.

THREE DIFFICULT TEXTS SIMPLIFIED

There are three scriptures which most partial preterists think are yet to be fulfilled: Acts 1:11, 1 Cor. 15:20-57, and 1 Thess. 4:13-18. Russell shows that an AD 70 fulfillment is the most consistent interpretation of these texts. However, he does not deal very much with Acts 1:11. As a result, many Futurists and Partial Preterists have used this text to teach another major return of Christ still in the future. Modern Preterists have now shown that these three texts contain implicit time indicators and contextual clues which connect them inseparably to the Parousia and final consummation in AD 70. For a fuller explanation of these three texts from a Preterist perspective, see the three books written by this author (Stevens Response To Gentry, Questions 5 About The Afterlife, and Expectations Demand A Rapture).

https://www.preteristarchive.com/Hyper/2002_stevens_rapture.html

In those books, we deal especially with the typological imagery of Christ’s ascension into the cloud- filled heavenly Holy of Holies to present His own blood to make final atonement, and His “second appearance” back out of the heavenly temple to announce atonement to His anxiously waiting saints. The Acts 1:11 reference to the return of Christ is easy to apply to

AD 70 when we realize it is speaking of the reverse of the visible ascent of Christ in Theophany form. His descent would follow the same Theophany pattern as His ascent, meaning that it would be visible like His departure. He ascended visibly with clouds and angels in the presence of a few disciples, and the two angels (Acts 1:10-11) promised that He would descend visibly “in like manner” in that same Theophany pattern to only those disciples whom He wished to see it. Both the going away and the return were “cloud comings” (Theophanies) accompanied by angels. He left the same way He would return (in clouds with the angels) to appear to his anxiously waiting disciples (“How long, O Lord?” and “O, our Lord, come!”). They expected His return before all of that generation died. Some of them were promised to remain alive until His return, and that they would literally “see” it before they all died (Matt. 16:27-28 and John 21:22f).

Even some partial preterists (e.g. Kenneth Gentry in his book, *Before Jerusalem Fell*) have agreed that Rev. 1:7 (which mentions a “cloud coming” or Theophany which “every eye would see”) was fulfilled in AD 70. Since most expositors connect Rev. 1:7 with Acts 1:11, it seems reasonable to assign both Rev. 1:7 and Acts 1:11 to the visible Theophany that was seen by the Jewish people just before the war in AD 66. Notice what R. C. Sproul, Sr. said about the angelic appearances in the sky in AD 66 and its connection to Rev. 1:7 – “...theop Old Testament prophets, when speaking of a real historical visitation of God in judgment upon cities and nations, used exactly this kind of language in a metaphorical way to describe that coming of divine judgment.... As some 19th century scholars...Jonathan Edwards...B. B. Warfield and others have suggested, what Jesus is talking about here on the Mount of Olives [Matt. 24:3] ...is the end of the Jewish age. And that the coming that he’s talking about, and that he’s warning these contemporaries about over and over again... that was coming on that generation...was the judgment of God that was coming on Jerusalem and the temple in the year 70 AD.... Was Jesus visible? Did “every eye see him” [Rev. 1:7] and all of that? No. Although, one of the weirdest passages you ever read in ancient history is the paragraph that is found in Josephus [Wars, Bk 6, Ch 5, Sect. 3]. I quote it in my book [The Last Days According to Jesus, p. 124]... After talking about some remarkable, astonishing celestial events that some people had reported, he said, “Besides these a few days after that feast, on the one-and-twentieth day of the month Artemisius ...before the setting of the sun, chariots and troops of soldiers in their armor were seen running about among the clouds....” ...The overwhelming testimony of the contemporaries (and he was there as an eyewitness) was that people did see something in the clouds. And what is it they saw? They saw chariots. Is that the first time the

chariot throne of God is seen in the clouds over Palestine? What took Elijah to heaven? What were the whirling merkabahs [chariots] Ezekiel beheld? Was not the basic symbol in the Old Testament of the movable judgment throne of God, his chariots of fire? And here we have the testimony of many, many people saying they saw these chariots running about the clouds right before the end of Jerusalem. ...It lends credence to the further application of Jesus' predictions of what would come in this judgment of the nation of Israel and of the city of Jerusalem..." [R. C. Sproul, Sr. "Last Days Madness" speech, 1999 Ligonier Ministries National Conference in Orlando. Bracketed material inserted by the author of this Foreword.]

Eusebius (Ecclesiastical History, Bk 3, Ch 8, Section 5) quotes this same material from Josephus, and Tacitus (Histories, Book 5, "About The Jews") alludes to the same events. Sproul's comments stimulate several thoughts. If Rev. 1:7 was fulfilled by the appearance of angels and chariots in the sky at AD 66, and if Acts 1:11 is speaking of the same judgment coming (or cloud coming, Theophany) of Christ, then what text teaches a still future visible coming of Christ? If the angelic armies literally seen in the clouds at AD 66 were the fulfillment of "every eye shall see Him" (Rev. 1:7) as Sproul has allowed as a possibility, then it was also the fulfillment of Acts 1:11! In Matt 16:27-28, which R. C. Sproul, Sr. affirms is AD 70, it states that some of those disciples would not taste death until they saw Christ return. It therefore seems logical that the visible coming of Christ at AD 66-70 which is mentioned in Matt. 16:27-28 must be the same coming dealt with in both Rev. 1:7 and Acts 1:11.

The commander of the angelic hosts (Christ) was present with His angelic armies on that occasion (AD 66), just like Rev. 19:11-21 pictures for us. This was the visible return of Christ with His angels to judge His enemies and reward His saints, as both Rev. 1:7 and Acts 1:11 had predicted. Matt. 24:29-31 and Luke 21:25-28 also indicated there would be visible "signs" accompanying the return of Christ with His angels to raise the dead out of Hades, perform the judgment, and reward His faithful saints. This fulfills the "in like manner" terms of the Acts 1:11 text. Both Rev. 1:7 and Acts 1:11 fit the Matt. 16:27-28 "visibility" pattern.

It is also clear from the similarities between 1 Cor. 15 and 1 Thess. 4 that these two "parousia" texts are speaking of the same AD 70 return of Christ. Since both texts state that the resurrection will occur in connection with the "parousia" (1 Cor. 15:23; 1 Thess. 4:15-17), and since the NT does not distinguish between two different parousia's separated by thousands of years, and since this parousia is said to occur in the lifetime of some who would "live and remain" until it occurred (1 Cor. 15:51; 1 Thess. 4:15), then

it is clear that these two texts were fulfilled in AD 70. This forces some adjustment in our concepts about the nature of fulfillment once we get the time of fulfillment straightened out. All three of these difficult second coming texts have been explained from a consistent AD 70 fulfillment. This leaves partial preterists nowhere to hide. We can thank Russell for pointing the way toward this approach to these three texts.

A LITERAL RAPTURE

Another area in which Russell greatly served the interests of future generations was the rapture. Four other scholars within a generation of Russell also taught the idea of a literal rapture in AD 70 (Milton S. Terry, E. Hampden-Cook, Richard Weymouth, and William S. Urmy). There are minor differences in the way each of these men described it, but all agreed there was a removal of some true Christians in connection with the return of Christ in AD 70. Modern advocates of a literal AD 70 rapture (such as Garrett Brown, Walt Hibbard, Arthur Melanson, Ian Harding, Ed Stevens, and others) go further to assert that all true Christians (and nothing but true Christians) alive at the time of the destruction of Jerusalem were “snatched away” to be with Christ in the spiritual realm. Russell suggested that only some Christians were caught up – a “partial rapture” with the sleepers or unwatchful Christians left on earth. But it seems from Jesus’ sharp criticism of that group in Matthew 25 (and in the book of Revelation) that the sleepers or unwatchful were not true Christians. The tribulation and apostasy eliminated the insincere. By the time of the rapture the only watchful, awake, and “worthy ones” were the true Christians. There would have been few (if any) pretenders and “mere professing Christians.” So in either view, the group of saints actually raptured is basically the same, whether we see it as only the watchful Christians, or as true Christians only.

The arguments we all use to establish the necessity of a literal rapture in AD 70 are exactly the same. The strongest arguments are the Biblical “expectation statements.” Scripture alone is our standard, not scripture plus history, tradition or anything else. The only authoritative material that we can use to make any final decisions about what did or did not occur in AD 70 is the Bible. If it says the Parousia was going to occur in AD 70, that should be enough. We shouldn’t have to be convinced by history or any external arguments. If the text of scripture says something is going to occur within a certain time frame, then we are bound to believe it, regardless of whether we can find external historical or traditional support for it, and regardless of whether our credulity is stretched to the breaking point. The same thing happened in the field of archaeology in regard to the Hittites and Darius the Mede. The Bible was the only evidence we had for the

existence of these people for a long time, yet that did not make advocates of sola scriptura doubt the veracity of the Bible. So for sincere believers, the question boils down to this: What did the NT writers believe, teach, and expect to see, hear, and experience at the Parousia? Did they expect to experience the Parousia in any conscious way? Did they expect to “know” it had occurred afterwards? Or did they expect it to happen totally in the invisible realm without being consciously aware of it in any way? It is these Biblical “expectation statements” that also need to be examined, not just the “time statements.”

We Preterists have pressed Futurists with the “time statements,” and rightly so, because they are “sola scriptura” arguments. They are Biblical statements that need to be dealt with. So are the “expectation statements.” What the “time statements” do for Preterism in general, the “expectation statements” do for the rapture view in particular. The time statements nail down the “time” of the parousia and its related events, while the expectation statements reveal the content and “nature” of those events in the experience of the Church.

Just because the Parousia may not have been validated historically in the way some might have preferred, it never stopped us from seeing it as a fulfilled “fact.” The “time statements” forced us to believe that it must have occurred, regardless of a lack of historical confirmation. Even if we are unable to find external historical proof for a literal rapture in AD 70, it does not invalidate the Bible’s affirmation of it. Our concern is simply, “What does Scripture actually teach?”

Rapture advocates have been accused of teaching a rapture based only on external historical “arguments from silence.” Not so! Scripture is the driving force. The expectation statements are Biblical arguments, just like the time statements. The time statements help establish the time of fulfillment, while the expectation statements help determine the nature of fulfillment. As you study the following list of Biblical passages, find the answers to these two questions: (1) What does Jesus say is actually going to be seen and experienced by His saints at the Parousia? (2) What do the NT writers and pre-70 Christians indicate that they were expecting to actually see and experience at the Parousia? (Matt. 16:27-28; 19:28; 24:31; John 14:2-3; 1 Cor. 15:51-54; 2 Cor. 5:1-4; Phil. 3:20-21; 1 Thess. 4:15-17; 2 Thess. 1:6-10; 2:1; and 1 Jn. 3:2). These texts show clearly what the first century Church expected to experience at the Parousia.

Paul said that when Christ would come to cast His enemies “away from His presence” and gather His saints (2 Thess. 1:6-2:1), that the saints would “marvel at Him” in His presence and in the presence of all who have

believed, and Christ would be glorified by their collective presence with Him “on that day.” That doesn’t sound like a very silent occasion to me. Did they fail to “recognize the time of His visitation” and remain silent (as if it had not occurred). They should have been celebrating and proclaiming the fulfillment of His Parousia (if they were still around). There is a strange silence here, at the very time when we would have expected anything but silence, when they said they would be marveling at Christ in His presence. Their silence does not match their expectations, unless they were doing those things in the heavenly realm (no longer on the earthly scene).

If all living Christians remained on earth after AD 70, why didn’t some of those who saw these incredible events in AD 70 say something about it? Why the silence, if they were still around? Russell and the other four scholars mentioned above proposed the literal rapture to explain that silence. Silence is not a significant argument all by itself. But as Sherlock Holmes would agree in the case of the dog that didn’t bark when a supposed outsider broke in, sometimes silence is significant, especially when the circumstances would force us to expect otherwise. Expectations demand our attention even in the case of silence, if the Bible clearly teaches us to expect something other than silence. And it does.

For more in depth studies of the rapture at the parousia in AD 66-70, see this author’s book entitled, *Expectations Demand A Rapture*, and the excellent series of articles written by Ian Harding.

THE MILLENNIUM

Russell was uncomfortable with any view of the Millennium which ended at AD 70 (p. 514). He considered such a short duration of the millennium (40 years or less) to be “so violent and unnatural that we cannot hesitate to reject it” (p. 514). He suggested the millennium only began at AD 70 with a limited “first” resurrection and judgment (of the righteous only), and is still ongoing in history and moving toward a yet future final resurrection and judgment of the rest of the dead (the wicked only – p. 518). It seemed to him that the Millennium was “introduced parenthetically” as an exception to the AD 70 time limits of the rest of the book (p. 514).

He noted that some people (such as myself) consider the idea of a Millennium after AD 70 as challenging the imminent time indicators throughout the book of Revelation. We would prefer a 40-year millennium (AD 30-70) which stays within those time limits.

Russell places a flashback to AD 70 at the end of the Millennium (Rev. 20:10), so that the white throne judgment in Rev. 20:11ff takes place in AD 70. Preterists who take the 40-year approach cannot disallow his flashback, since we insert one at the beginning of the millennium.

Russell's millennium interpretation deserves careful consideration. He acknowledged his understanding of it might not be perfect, and held out the hope that succeeding generations "will soon correct what is proved to be erroneous, and confirm what is shown to be right." (p. 535)

In conclusion, I have to repeat how impressed I am with Russell's exegetical work here. Many thousands of Bible students all over the world have been, and will continue to be, blessed by this book. We send this reprint forth with strong encouragement to seriously and objectively consider everything he has to say, and to "search the Scriptures daily to see whether these things are so." (Acts 17:11)

Edward E. Stevens

Bradford, Pennsylvania July, 2003.

Don Preston

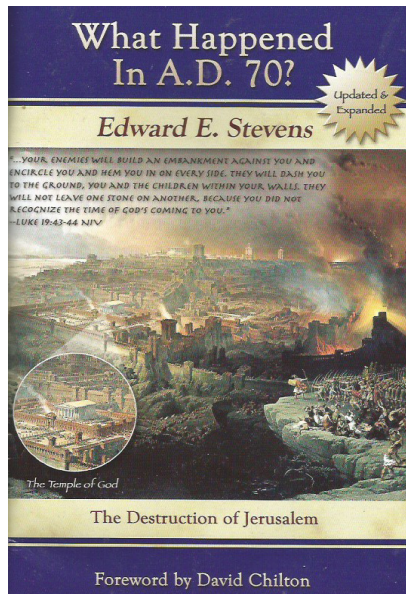
Editors Comment: We don't agree with Don Preston's view of the death of Adam but he is right in this article

A reformation – indeed – a revolution of sorts is taking place in modern evangelical Christianity. And while many who are joining in and helping promote this movement are not even aware of it, the book you hold in your hand has contributed greatly to initiating this new reformation. This "new" movement is sometimes called full preterism, (Also, and preferably by this writer, Covenant Eschatology). It is the belief that all Bible prophecy is fulfilled. The famous evangelist Charles H. Spurgeon was deeply impressed with the scholarly, solid research in the book, although he did not accept the "final" conclusions reached by Russell. In modern times, this work has, and continues to impress those who read it. The reason is simple, the New Testament is emphatic and unambiguous in positing Christ's coming and the end of the age for the first century generation. To say this has troubled both scholars and laymen alike is an understatement of massive proportions. This book first appeared in 1878 (anonymously), and again in 1887 with author attribution. The book was well known in scholarly circles primarily and attracted a good bit of attention, both positive and negative. The public, however, seemed almost unaware of the stunning conclusions and the research supporting those conclusions, until or unless they read of Russell's work in the footnotes of the commentaries. Scholars have recognized and grappled with this imminence element, that is the stated nearness of the day of the Lord, seldom finding satisfactory answers. Scholars such as David Strauss accused Jesus of failure. Later, Bultmann said that every school boy knows that Jesus predicted his coming and the

end of the world for his generation, and every school boy knows it did not happen. C.S. Lewis also could not resolve the apparent failed eschatology. Bertrand Russell rejected Christianity due to the failed eschatology - as he perceived it - of Jesus and the Bible writers. As a result of these “skeptical” authors, modern Bible scholarship has followed in their path and Bible commentaries today almost casually assert the failure of the Bible writers - and Jesus - in their eschatological predictions. This is where Russell’s work is of such importance. While Russell was not totally consistent with his own arguments and conclusions, nonetheless, his work is of tremendous importance and laid the groundwork for the modern revolution known as the preterist movement. Russell systematically addressed virtually every New Testament prediction of the eschaton. With incisive clarity and logical acumen, he sweeps aside the almost trite objections to the objective nature of the Biblical language of imminence. With excellent linguistic analysis, solid hermeneutic and powerful exegetical skills, Russell shows that there is no way to deny that Jesus and his followers not only believed in a first century, end of the age parousia, but, they taught it as divine truth claiming the inspiration of the Holy Spirit as their authority. Russell not only fully established the undeniable reality of the first century imminence of “the end,” he powerfully and carefully shares with the reader that “the end” that Jesus and the N.T. Writers were anticipating was not the end of the time space continuum (end of the world). It was in fact, the end of the Old Covenant Age of Israel that arrived with the cataclysmic destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple in AD 70. Russell properly shows how the traditional church has so badly missed the incredible significance of the end of that Old Covenant Age. Russell’s work is a stunning rejection – and corrective -- of what the “Orthodox” historical “Creedal” church has and continues to affirm. The reader may well find themselves wondering how the “divines” missed it so badly! Further, the reader will discover that Russell’s main arguments are an effective, valid and true assessment of Biblical eschatology. And make no mistake, eschatology matters.

Don K. Preston.

WHAT HAPPENED IN A.D. 70



Edward E. Stevens

This book introduces a view of Bible prophecy which many have found extremely helpful in their Bible study. It explains the end time riddles which have always bothered students of Bible prophecy. It is a **consistent view** which makes the book of Revelation much easier to understand. It establishes when the New Testament canon of scripture was completed, demolishes the liberal attack on the inspiration of the New Testament, and is more **conservative** on most other issues than traditional views. And there is **no compromise** of any essential Biblical doctrine of the Christian faith.

The key to understand any passage of scripture has always been a good grasp of the historical setting in which it was originally written (**audience relevance**). Two thousand years from now our history, culture, politics and language will have changed dramatically. Imagine someone then having to learn the ancient language of “American English” to read our USA newspapers! If they saw one of our political cartoons with a donkey and elephant, what would they think? How would they go about understanding it? Not only would they have to study the language, but also our culture, history, politics and economics. The same applies to Bible study. If we are really going to understand what all the “donkeys and elephants” (beasts, harlots, dragons, etc.) Symbolize in the book of Revelation, we will have to seriously and carefully study the language, history, culture and politics of

the First Century. Of course, the truths essential for salvation are couched in simple language that everyone can grasp. But there are numerous scriptures in the Bible which are “hard to understand” (cf. 2 Pet 3:16), and Bible prophecy is one of those things which must be approached with much more focus on the original historical art cultural context (audience relevance)

One of the main purposes of this book is to provide a closer look at the historical framework behind the New Testament. Many have found it helpful to lay aside (at least temporarily) the legion of speculative opinions about the book of Revelation, and look at a more historical alternative, which is that **the book of Revelation was written to the first century church and had primary relevance to them.** It warned of events that were about to happen in their lifetime, and prepared them for the tribulation and other events associated with the End of the Jewish Age. Atheists, skeptics, Jew, Muslims, and liberal critics of the bible use the supposed failure of those end times events to occur in the First Century to undermine the integrity of Christ and the inspired NT writings.

Non-Christian Jews laugh at this supposed non-occurrence, and use it as evidence that Jesus is not the Messiah. Their forefathers in the flesh rejected Jesus in His first coming because He did not fulfill the Old Testament prophecies in the materialistic and nationalistic way that they were expecting, even though Jesus told them that His Kingdom was not of this world, and that it would be within them instead. Yet it seems that many futurists today are expecting that same kind of materialistic and nationalistic kingdom to arrive at a future return of Christ. Are they making the same mistake about the Second Coming that the Jews made about His first coming? Jesus repeatedly said His Kingdom is “not of this world” and that it would “not come with observation.” It is a spiritual entity, and it has arrived. We live in it. Both futurist Christians and non-Christian Jews need to realize this. Christians are finally beginning to seek alternatives to the fatally flawed **futurist** interpretation. This book introduces the Preterist view.

“Preterist” simply means past in fulfillment. It means that Christ has already fulfilled His promise to return and consummate redemption in Himself and His ongoing spiritual kingdom (the church). We should be like the noble-minded Bereans and “search the scriptures daily to see whether these things are true” You might want to have your Bible open alongside as you read.

Edward E. Stevens

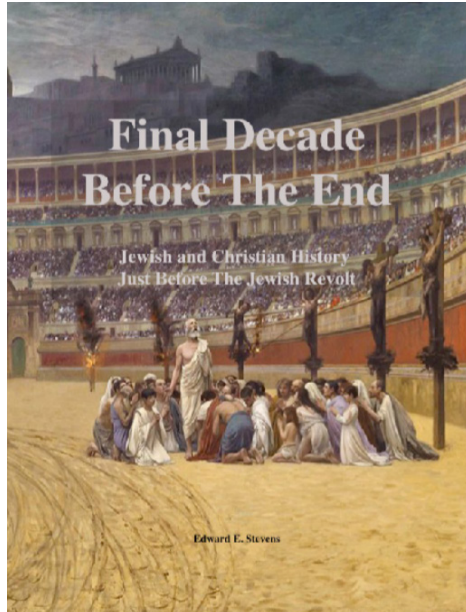
INTERNATIONAL PRETERIST ASSOCIATION

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Bradford, Pennsylvania

April 17,2010

FINAL DECADE BEFORE THE END



Edward E. Stevens

Ever since the booklet, **What Happened In AD 70?** Was published in 1980, there have been constant requests for more detailed information about the Destruction of Jerusalem and the Jewish, Roman, and Christian history associated with it. Over the years since then I have studied Josephus, Yosippon, Hegesippus, Tacitus, Suetonius, Eusebius, the Talmud, Midrash, Zohar, Pseudepigrapha, Church Fathers, Apocrypha, Dead Sea Scrolls and other Jewish/Christian writings, trying to determine exactly what happened, when it happened, and the effect it had upon the Church. Then in 2002, after I began to promote J. S. Russell's view of a literal rapture, the demand for historical documentation of the fulfillment of all eschatological events dramatically increased. That forced me to dig much deeper. So in 2007 I put together a 21-page chronology of first century events. Two years later in 2009, we published a more substantial 73-page manuscript entitled, *First Century Events in Chronological Order*. That helped fill the void, but it did not go far enough. It only increased the appetite for a more detailed and documented historical reconstruction of first century events. The book of Acts does not give a lot of details about the other Roman and Jewish events that were happening while Paul was on his various missionary journeys. For those events, we have to go to the other contemporary Jewish and Roman historians such as Josephus and Tacitus. The closer we get to AD 70, the

more important all of those Jewish and Roman events become. They form an important backdrop behind the Christian events, and show how all the predictions made by Jesus were literally fulfilled. Every High Priest and Zealot leader that we encounter from AD 52 onwards are directly connected with the events of the Last Days. Things are heating up, not only for the Christians, but also for the Jews and the Romans. Paul on his missionary journeys was clearly following a plan which was providentially arranged for him by Christ: (1) to plant new churches among all nations and not just Jews, (2) appoint elders and deacons in every church (Acts 14:23; 1 Cor. 4:17), (3) write inspired epistles to guide them, (4) instruct his fellow workers to “teach these things to faithful men who would be able to teach others also” (2 Tim. 2:2), and (5) establish the Gentiles in the Church and make them one united body with the Jews (Eph 4). Everywhere Paul went, he followed this pattern. We see this clearly as we study the historical narrative in Acts and Paul’s other epistles that were written during this time. These are essential patterns that the apostles evidently bound upon both Gentile and Jewish Christians, and which were intended to be the pattern for all future generations of the eternal Church (Eph 3:21; 2Tim 2:2).

We begin our study by looking at the most likely dates for Matthew (AD 31-38) and Mark (AD 38- 44), and then proceed to the first three epistles of Paul (Galatians, 1 & 2 Thessalonians), which were written on his second missionary journey (AD 51-53). Including these five books in our study allows us to date all twenty-seven books of our New Testament, and show how the NT canon was formed and completed before the outbreak of the Jewish War in AD 66. The study of New Testament canonization in itself is a good reason for reading this work, without even looking at the historical fulfillment of all of the end time prophecies that we document here. After looking at the dates for those first five books, we then move on into the third missionary journey of Apostle Paul which began in AD 54. It was during this final dozen years (from AD 54 until AD 66) when the birth pangs and signs of the end started increasing in both intensity and frequency, along with a quickening pace of NT books being written. We show how 19 of our 27 NT books (70 percent) were written during those last five years just before the Neronic persecution (AD 60-64). The Great Commission was finished, and the rest of the end time events predicted in the Olivet Discourse were fulfilled during that time of “tribulation” upon the church and the “days of vengeance” upon the unbelieving Jews (Luke 21:22).

Edward E. Stevens

INTERNATIONAL PRETERIST ASSOCIATION

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