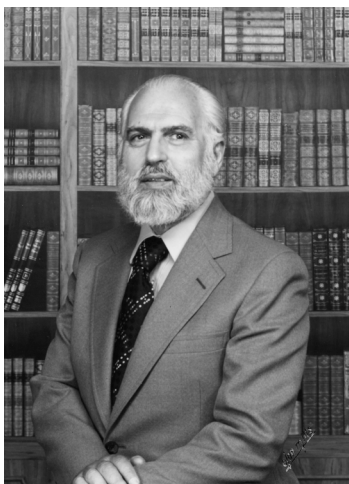


KNOWING THE TRIUNE GOD

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CHURCH

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Rev. R.J. Rushdoony (1916–2001) was a leading theologian, church/state expert, and author of numerous works on the application of Biblical law to society. He started the Chalcedon Foundation in 1965. His Institutes of Biblical Law (1973) began the contemporary theonomy movement which posits the validity of Biblical law as God’s standard of obedience for all. He therefore saw God’s Law as the basis of the modern Christian response to the cultural decline, one he attributed to the church’s false view of God’s Law being opposed to His grace. This broad Christian response he described as “Christian Reconstruction.” He is credited with igniting the modern Christian school and homeschooling

movements in the mid to late twentieth century. He also traveled extensively lecturing and serving as an expert witness in numerous court cases regarding religious liberty. Many ministry and educational efforts that continue today took their philosophical and Biblical roots from his lectures and books.

Learn more about R.J. Rushdoony by visiting:

<https://chalcedon.edu/founder>

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1 THE DOCTRINE OF THE TRIUNE GOD

What we are going to be doing for some time now in our meetings is to go through the basic doctrines of our faith. To embark on a study of systematic theology, and at all times to avoid being abstract because our faith is not an abstract faith - we must make it *relevant*, pertinent to every area of our life. We shall begin with the doctrine of God and deal with it in our two meetings tonight and continue in some of our subsequent meetings.

The doctrine of the triune God is basic to our faith. When we speak of God, we mean the God who has revealed Himself in the Bible. Any other God is a product of man's imagination. Men often talk about God. They posit an idea of god that meets some need of man. God is often mentioned in the philosophy of history, often mentioned in various religions. God is confined in non-Christian religions and non-Christian philosophies to simply an idea of man created in order to supply need. For example, Plato and Aristotle talk about 'God.' But their 'God' is totally inoperative! He is just an idea. Why do they use the idea?

Well, in the philosophy of the Greek, one of the problems in the days of Democritus, Plato, Aristotle, and the others, was infinite regress. For their thinking, a first cause was necessary. Where would you find that first cause? Well, they posited therefore, they created the idea of god who was the first cause and started everything, and from that point on to all practical intent, God was dead. He was just the first cause. He was what philosophers would call, a 'limiting concept.' You made the idea, so you create the idea, and then you don't use it anymore. So, in Greek thought, God had no role, except to provide the first thought.

Well, when modern philosophy began with Descartes, Descartes posited God in order to assure himself of some kind of valid systemology or theory of knowledge. He had to have God as an insurance policy. But again, in that system, God did not count. God had no law; God did nothing except to act as an insurance policy.

Thus, we could go on and analyze the doctrine of God as we see it in non-Christian religion and in non-Christian philosophy. It is in every case the imagination of man, of his need, philosophically and religiously, for some idea that will undergird his own thinking so that God is a mental crutch of man, created to meet an intellectual problem and when they solve that problem, or think they have solved it, they drop that idea. Modern philosophy began with a need for the God idea, and subsequently abandoned it.

Now, in all such thinking, man creates the God idea because he needs God. The reverse is true in our faith. God created man. Man is a creature of God. God created man, not because He needed him, but simply out of His sovereign will. God is the Creator, and as a result, God is uncreated being and all the universe, including man, is created being.

Now I'm going to review some of the things I dealt with, which a few of you heard, last Sunday in Sacramento. The doctrine of the inescapable knowledge of God. Paul deals with this most clearly in Romans 1:17-21. He declares:

“For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith. For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness;”

Literally, who ‘hold down,’ ‘hold back,’ suppress the truth in unrighteousness.

“Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and godhead; so that they are without excuse: Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.”

Now what is Paul saying? He is saying that you don't have to prove God to anyone. All men everywhere inescapably know God. It is *inescapable knowledge*. Every atom in all creation is the handiwork of God and witnesses to God:

“The heavens declare the glory of God and the firmaments show his handiwork, day after day, and night after night showeth knowledge.”

The psalmist goes on to say there is no place where their sound is not heard, where the testimony of God is not told.

In Psalm 139, the Psalmist tells us that he cannot escape from the knowledge of God, it cries out in all of creation, in all of his being:

“If I go to the uttermost parts of the morning, behold, thou art there, if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there.”

One of the greatest, if not the greatest poem in the English language was inspired by that particular Psalm and the experience of the poet. Does anyone know that poem? *The Hound of Heaven*, by Francis Thompson. It’s a difficult poem, but it’s the most powerful poem in the English language. *The Hound of Heaven*, by Francis Thompson.

And it said:

I fled Him, down the nights and down the days;
 I fled Him, down the arches of the years;
 I fled Him, down the labyrinthine ways
 Of my own mind; and in the mist of tears

And he describes how he ran away from God, he tried to find a substitute for God in friendship, in nature, in people. At every place he came face to face with God. Every place he felt himself pursued, as though by a hound, going after him to nail him as a criminal. ‘The inescapable knowledge of God.’ As a result, faith, when Paul says: “The just shall live by faith.” Does not mean mere opinion, mere belief that there is a God. This is why books that tell us, look, here are proof that there is a God, and you should believe in God are nonsense! Man knows that there is a God! So that when Paul says: “The just shall live by faith.” What it means is this; the very word ‘believe’ in the Bible means ‘to rely on,’ ‘to put your weight on.’ The word ‘faith,’ one of the meanings of the words, of one of the words used as faith is to say “amen” to God! Everybody believes in God. The Bible says so. Even: “...the

devils... believe and tremble," James says in James 2:19. When the Bible says believe, it says put your whole weight on the line with God, on His every word. Say amen to Him!

I used an illustration last Sunday morning that I'll repeat. Many years ago when I was on the Indian reservation, I was, about this time of the year perhaps a little later, going up into the mountain with an old Indian. And we had to go across a stream - a river. It was the only way to make the approach to go up that particular area. I looked a little hesitant stepping out in the ice, but he said, when the weather is as cold at night as it has been for some time now, that ice would be thick enough to carry a team of horses and a wagon. Now, I could have said, 'I believe you, but I'm not going to try it.' That would not be faith; belief in the biblical sense. But when I walked out across that ice, put my weight on it, then that was faith in the biblical sense.

The ungodly hold down the truth in unrighteousness. They suppress it! They won't admit it because they don't want to come face to face with God. To believe in the biblical sense, to have faith in the biblical sense, "the just shall live by faith," is to put their life on the line, on the every Word of God.

So we have the inescapable knowledge of God. The God described in the Bible is not one that anyone has to have proven to him, since everything witnesses to him. The heavens *declare*, they *proclaim* the glory of God! And the firmament showeth his handiwork. There is no silencing that witness, though men may try. I've always liked the statement, a very candid one, a surprising one, from the psychoanalyst Theodore Reich who is an associate of Freud. He said:

"I don't know of a psychoanalyst who believes in God, and I don't know of a one who isn't afraid of him."

Now, to continue. Any apologetics, any theology that tries to prove God is denying Him. God is not a fact among facts, God is the creator of all facts. So that we don't begin with something and work up to prove God, we begin with God, and only then can we prove anything. God is the foundation of all thinking, of all proof. You see, faith is not knowing God intellectually and saying, 'Yes, I have decided there really is a God.' No! Then you have turned faith and belief or unbelief into an intellectual matter, and you say it's ignorance. Well the Bible says that unbelief is the wilful turning of one's back on the God we know. It's a sin, not ignorance. Now consider what it does to us politically if we deny Paul, if we say, 'It's ignorance, people don't know God.' We give them the arguments, the intellectual proofs and so on. We changed the whole problem of man from a moral one to an intellectual one. We changed it from a matter of sin to ignorance, and then what's your answer to this problem of ignorance? Why, it's the intellectual - the expert. Every time in history that men have, whether in the churches or out the churches, denied the biblical doctrine of faith, you have the inescapable knowledge of God in every man; whether he's in the jungles of Africa or the jungles of New York city, or in Berkeley.

Every time you turn from that, then the answer is not faith in the sense of living in every Word of God, it's the expert, the man who has the knowledge, because the problem is ignorance. It's Plato's philosopher team, it's Roosevelt's 'brain trust.' It's all in your commissions and your bureaucracy. You have a totalitarian order every time you abandon the doctrine of the inescapable knowledge of God, or man's unbelief, as a moral fact, rather than as an intellectual fact. Then you say the problem is not faith and character, you say it's ignorance and the answer is an intellectual knowledge - it is the expert.

This is why every time we have a problem today in our society we have a commission of experts, intellectuals, who

give us a learned answer to it. You know, we've had, since world war II, one commission after another beginning with the Hoover Commission to deal with the problem of the c. They never solved it. We have one commission after another dealing with violence, we've had all kinds of studies dealing with pornography, all kinds of studies with the problems in the schools, and the breakdown of character. And have they done anything? Why yes, they have; they've given us more and more experts to rule over us! They're *not* going to get rid of them until you say the problem is not ignorance, the answer is not the expert, the problem is sin, and so the answer is Jesus Christ, and men, women, and young people who stand in terms of the faith, who live in terms of the every Word of God, who grow in terms of it, and who can stand on their own, they don't need some philosopher kings in Washington or Sacramento or the U.N. to provide all the answers. You see how practical the biblical doctrine of God and of faith is? It is basic to our everyday life, it's basic to our politics, it's basic to the problems we have today.

Thus, the books that are trying to prove there is a God are tackling the wrong problem. It's not intellectual, it's moral. Dr. Van Til says that man's problem is that he has the Cainitic wish, ¹ like Cain, that there be no God. And so he says: "God is dead." At least we can say of the death of God's schools in the sixties, that they had this honor, they never said: "God is dead," but: "God is dead for us." They never dealt with the question: "Is there a God?" They said for us there is no God. We're going to act as though there is no God, therefore, for us He is dead. They knew they had the inescapable knowledge of God, but they closed their eyes to Him.

You see, man's problem with God is that God is, and that God is God. Man says: "I want to be God." That's the heart of the problem. Genesis 3:5 "Ye shall be as God, knowing good and evil..." deciding for yourself what constitutes good and evil.

So then, man's problem is that God is, and he wants to be God himself.

Now, as we go a step further to deal with God and the doctrine of God, we must say that we cannot define God. To define, a definition, is a limit, it comprehends, it limits. But God is infinite, and God is incomprehensible, and therefore we cannot define God. All we can do, and this is all the creeds try to do, is to describe God in terms of His own revelation of Himself. A definable God is no God at all; in fact, a definable God is often less than man. The Bible tells us, in fact God himself tell us in Scripture, that He cannot be defined. We meet this in Exodus 3:13-15

“And Moses said unto God, Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is his name? what shall I say unto them? And God said unto Moses, I Am That I Am: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I Am hath sent me unto you. And God said moreover unto Moses, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, the Lord God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you: this is my name for ever, and this is my memorial unto all generations.”

Now when Moses said: “What is thy name?” He was asking God to define himself. Because, in ancient times, names were definitions. As I mentioned before on a separate occasion, Abraham was defined by God. He could only get away with his name, we don't know what his name was first, his second name was ‘Abram’ when God called him, and then later God changed it to ‘Abraham.’ He made Abram bear that name by faith. Now it must have been hard for Abraham, because it meant father of many, and then, father of great multitude. Now think of the embarrassment when people met him, and

he had to say what it was, and they said, 'Oh! How many children do you have?' Most of his life he would have had to have said: "None." And they must have snickered behind his back: "The nerve of that man, defining himself as the father of many when he has no children." But God made him bear that name by faith.

Now, names are definitions, so when Moses said: "The people of Israel are going to ask me to define you, what shall I say?" God refused. He told them: "I Am that I AM." I am He who is. I am beyond definition, I am uncreated, absolute being.

Now, the gods of antiquity had names. Their names were definitions. We still use their names to describe certain things, like Venus, or Cupid. They tell us something about a certain aspect of life. Or Mars, and War. 'Martial' you get that from the word 'Mars.' The names were definitions because the gods of the ancient world were limited gods, and a limited 'God' is an impossibility. Their names, moreover, not only said they were limited, but described their usefulness; so if you had a problem with a girl, you went to Venus; if you were interested in battle you went to Mars; if you were going to take a sea voyage you went to Castor and Pollux. So the gods were useful, and their names described their utility. They were *governable* gods. But the God of the Bible is not governable, and He is beyond utility. He governs, He is not governed. He defines all things, He is not definable. All things are what they are because God has so created them, and you have to understand what God intends by them to know their true definition.

"Say that I Am Who I Am, He who is hath sent you." The creator, the definer, not the one who is defined. But then God goes on to say: "I am the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob." He describes what he has done in history, and He does it through all of the Bible, and He says: "You know me through my revelation, you know what you can depend on." So we

have the Bible. It gives us God's description of Himself, not a definition, He's beyond definition. But He tells us something of His nature. We see it in the work of Creation, we see it in the work of Redemption, we see it in His Law, we see it in His Son, we see it in the workings of His Spirit. So that we have a description, and he says:

"This is forever my name, and my memorial to all generations."

So that God says: "I have no name. I am He who is, I am uncreated being. But here's my name, if you want one: my revelation, which is beyond definition. But it is a description of what I have done and what I will do, because I change not, I am the same yesterday, today, and forever." You see, there is no evolution, no change in God.

Moreover, when we speak of God as Christians, we speak of the *triune* God. The living God is the triune God, and this is why the Westminster Larger Catechism declares in the questions and answers 8 and 9

Q. Are there more Gods than one?

A. There is but one only, the living and true God.

Q. How many persons are there in the godhead?

A. There be three persons in the godhead, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, and these three are one true, eternal God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory, although distinguished by their personal properties.

Are there any questions now?

Yes?

[Audience]

[R.J. Rushdoony] I've heard that Francis Schaeffer is popular with the college youth because he comes to them trying to prove God. Is that true? ⁱ

Yes, he does, that's one of his weaknesses. He tends to define God, to deal with it as though it's an intellectual problem, and it's the pride of man...he does like that, that appeals to him, it's flattering to him and then man becomes the judge over God. So it is unfortunate that some very able men are making that approach to college youth today. This is one reason why they are successful, [but] they are not productive, this is why so much evangelism goes on, reaches *millions*, and nothing happens, this is why you can have sixty percent of the country as church members and most of them supposedly born again Christians, and they're not doing as much as one tenth of one percent of the Communists; because they're looking at it from the wrong perspective.

i. Question modified due to unclear audio.

2 THE TRINITY AND SUBORDINATIONISM

Our concern now will be with the doctrine of the Trinity in relationship to the idea of subordinationism. The most common and most absurd of all heresies is subordinationism. The first is the subordination of person in the godhead. What does this mean? When we say 'God,' we must mean - if we are biblical in our thinking - not just God, but God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost. The word God means the triune God, it means, the Trinity. But many people, when they say 'God,' they mean God the Father, and for them God the Son and God the Holy Spirit are somehow lesser. The end result of such thinking has been repeatedly, in the history of the church, the abandonment of the faith. It has led to Marcionite thinking in the very early church.

Marcion associated each member of the Trinity with a particular attribute - we'll come to that in a moment, but for the moment we'll just refer to it. Arianism, which emphasized God and ended up with the death of God and made Christ the Son of God less than God, or Joachimite thinking. Unitarianism, which started as a thoroughly Christian movement, and soon, like any faith that has any element of subordinationism, went outside the Christian focus.

The subordination of person ultimately means that the biblical doctrine of God is abandoned. Then we have the subordination of *attributes*. First, the subordination of persons, second, the subordination of attributes. What does this mean? In the subordinationism of attributes, one of the oldest and most common heresies in the church, one attribute of God is emphasized, it is exalted above all others, and it is the key to God.

Now, I mentioned Marcion. Marcion associated God with law, the Son with love and grace. Therefore, Marcion ended by saying the Old Testament is the God of hate, the God of law, and we have a higher God now, the God of love. So he ended up by dividing Scripture by declaring portions of it to be improper for this dispensation, and by emphasizing one attribute to the exclusion of all others. Joachim of Fiore's thinking is with us to this day and a number of forms, followed a similar line. He said the first age of history was the age of God the Father, the age of law. The second age of history came in which now another attribute of God predominated through God the Son; grace. And he says too we are going to have a third age, the age of the Holy Spirit and love and brotherhood. What did he do? He wrongly divided the godhead. He exalted for each age one attribute above others.

Now these are extreme forms of subordinationism with attributes, but let me deal with the more common forms. For some people when they talk about the triune God, all they talk about is grace, salvation, as though the most is salvation! Salvation is important, His grace is important, but we cannot exalt one aspect of God over others. Others will say, over and over again: "God is love," that's the big thing in God. Others will say it is His sovereignty, or His predestinating power, or His sovereign grace, in fact. But we cannot do this, we cannot take one attribute of God and exalt it above other attributes, because then we are saying there are gradations in God, there

are degrees. But God is perfection! Every aspect of God is equal to every other. Now, there are gradations in my being and in yours. We can say of a man, he's a good thinker, he's clumsy with his hands, and when he sings, he croaks. Because our attributes, these creaturely attributes, will vary! In fact, among us, it's rare that we have more than one attribute in which we excel. There are *gradations* in our beings. In fact, our right hand and our left are unequal in strength. Very often there are differences in our eyes, and one will be a little stronger than the other.

But it is anthropomorphic thinking to attribute to God and His attributes the same kind of gradation! But it has been very commonly done. The Arminians do it, the Calvinists do it. They pick on one attribute to the exclusion of others. Now, very often for homiletical purposes as a corrective we need to stress something because sovereignty is being neglected, or grace is being neglected, or law is being neglected, or righteousness, or holiness is being neglected... but we must be careful at all times to recognize that it destroys the doctrine of the triune God when we subordinate one Person to another, or one attribute to other attributes. Then God ceases to be God.

Moreover, when we subordinate one attribute to another, we imply that there is, first, a gradation of feeling in God, that God is not entirely God in some areas, and we also imply that there is a conflict. I mentioned Marcion and Joachim, and other such thinkers. And you have today in those who believe in faith but not in works, or in grace but not in law, justice and not in forgiveness, or in forgiveness but not in justice. As though there were contradictions in the being of God! "Faith without works is dead." Paul said in Romans:

"Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law."

The Bible doesn't put contradictions between the attributes of God. But today people will emphasize grace as against works, or works against grace, or law against love, and love against law. What they are saying is that there is a warfare inside of God, and that's blasphemy. You cannot do it.

Now, there can be warfare in my being, but there cannot be warfare in the being of God. So every attempt to subordinate one aspect of God to another by both gradation and warfare. It's impossible for any part of God to be less God than any other part. God is totally God in all His being! So that whatever attribute or whichever of the three persons of the godhead we are dealing with, we are dealing with absolute perfection. This is why there can be no gradation. No degrees in God. They are inescapable in man, they are impossible in God. As the Psalmist says in Psalm 50:21, God speaking:

“...thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself...”

There are gradations in my being, and one aspect of my life is subordinate to another. Sometimes I may neglect my work for something else, or neglect my family responsibilities, and so on. That sort of thing is inescapable for me because I'm a sinful and a limited creature, and so there will be gradations and subordinations in my being and my life, and it creates problems! But no such problem can exist in the godhead, no subordination. When you introduce subordinationism to any extent, you begin to destroy the doctrine of God.

There are two ways of looking at the triune God. One is the economical Trinity, that is, the Trinity in its works. Now when you're dealing with the economical Trinity you can say that at times one function, and one is subordinate to another, but it's not a subordination of feelings - thus, God the Father is apparently primary in the work of creation, God the Son is

taking the lead in the work of redemption and atonement, and God the Spirit is taking the lead in the work of sanctification. But this is simply in the *economics* of the Trinity. Hence we talk of this as 'the economical Trinity,' the Trinity and its workings. At a particular point one Person of the Trinity may be present and active in a particular way, and they take the lead. But there's no subordination of being. In the ontological Trinity, God in himself, there is no subordination.

Now the Trinity, without subordination of being or person or attributes, gives us the answer to the one and many problems. I won't go into that, I have a book on the subject, *The One and Many*, but it is the basic problem of all philosophy and of all human thought. Very briefly, what is ultimate? What is basic to life? The unity of things, the oneness of things, or is it the individuality? Now, if you have a false doctrine of God, you may emphasize the oneness, unitarians for example. What happens to unitarians? They become totalitarians. Because if you have subordinationism in the Trinity, you're going to emphasize unity, and you're going to emphasize totalitarianism. Everything has to be under one authority, one power. Every time in history that we have had subordinationism leading to Unitarianism, we have had totalitarianism arise. This is why a person's theology is so important! Most theology today Reformed and Arminianism is subordinationism, and as a result, we see these people who claim to be Bible believers, becoming socialists! Or espousing socialistic doctrines! Why? Because unity, the oneness of things, is all-important to that. On the other hand those who emphasize the particularity alone end up as anarchists! And we have had Christian anarchists. How you think of God, your doctrine of the Trinity, your avoidance of subordinationism, makes all the difference in your doctrine of the church, your doctrine of politics, in your doctrine of everyday life.

For example, to cite very hastily, if you have a false doctrine of the one and the many you will say marriage is more important than the people and therefore never any divorce. Or, you can say that people are more important than marriage, therefore marriage can be dissolved if the people have lost interest. Do you see what happens? But if you have a true doctrine, you emphasize both the unity, the oneness of the marriage, and the individuals in it.

Or, you can say that the church is everything, and the members nothing. I have viewed this in very authoritarian churches. Or you can say the members are everything, and if a member doesn't like a preacher or the church, so much the worse for the preacher or the church. Every man has the right to his own opinion and to go his own way, and that's the kind of anarchy you see in many churches. Or in politics, if you emphasize the oneness, you have totalitarianism. If you emphasize the particularity or individuality, you have anarchism finally.

All of this stems from how men think of God! It makes all the difference. This is why subordinationism or anything that breaks up trinitarianism is so dangerous. Van Til has said with regard to the One and the Many:

"Using the language of the one and many question we contend that in God the one and the many are equally ultimate. Unity in God is no more fundamental than diversity, and diversity in God is no more fundamental than unity. The persons of the Trinity are mutually exhaustive of one another. The Son and the Spirit are ontologically on a par with the Father. It is a well-known fact that all [now, notice ALL] heresies in the history of the church have in some form or other taught subordinationism. Similarly, we believe, all "heresies" in apologetic methodology spring from some form of subordinationism." ⁱ

Now, subordinationism gives us a highly limited religion. It places the stress on one aspect of the faith and one attribute of God. Basically, subordinationism is anti-theistic, anti-God. Why? Our subordinationists are so often very *dedicated* Arminians and *dedicated* Calvinists! Why do I say they are anti-God? Because the basic roots of subordinationism of persons or attributes, and especially of attributes, very openly so, is Greek philosophy.

We're all to some degree infected by it because it's in our atmosphere, in our education, we've been brought up in it. Now what did Greek philosophy believe in? Ideas. abstract universals. So that all things were judged by ideas, so that anyone who holds to the Greek idea will say: "Ah, but we must judge all things by love. I don't feel that the God that I meet with in this book of the Bible or this episode is a loving God, therefore this part we cannot accept." Or, God is righteousness, social justice! Therefore I cannot accept this or that aspect of the Bible because it isn't true to the idea of God. Or God is sovereign or predestination or sovereign grace or what have you and therefore all things judged in terms of it. Do you see what you do? You take an abstract idea, you abstract it from God, and you put it up there above God as it were! And you say: "This is the key." There is no gradation of God, no change, no turning! Every aspect of God is equally God. So when we choose one thing, we have an idea that rules over God, and we judge God and the world in terms of it, so it is us and our idea that predominate. This is why subordinationism leads to so much trouble, to so many heresies, to such pretension. You have people finally in some forms 'knowing the mind of God' as it were because their idea tells them how God is thinking.

I won't go into it, but you have some forms of the Reformed faith; sublapsarian, infralapsarian, supralapsarian, which can tell you exactly how God was thinking before He created the

world from all eternity. What have they done? They've created an abstract idea that gives them the 'key' to God, so God becomes comprehensible to them, and the mind of God becomes an open book to them, and that's idolatry. God is God, He is the triune God and all His persons equally God and all His attributes equally God. As Van Til has said, to quote him again:

"We may therefore speak of the 'system of truth' contained in Scripture if only we are careful to note that its various doctrines are not to be obtained by way of deduction from some master concept. There is no doubt consonance between the 'doctrine of God,' the 'doctrine of man' and the 'doctrine of Christ' as found in Scripture. But even when conjoined and seen in their fullest harmony, these and other doctrines together do not begin to exhaust the riches of God's revelation to man through Christ and his Spirit." ⁱⁱ

There is no truth nor system of truth that is *over God* or is the key to God. You cannot subordinate God to any idea of truth, or to any aspect of His being. God is God, and therefore, every aspect of God and each person of the Trinity is entirely and totally God.



Are there any questions now?

Yes?

[Audience] I wonder if you could comment on the readiness of the unitarians to embrace and use the political process to further their ends. ⁱⁱⁱ

[R.J. Rushdoony] Yes. The minute Unitarianism began to work, they were responsible for the state control of education and the public school movement. They were also responsible

for 'centralism,' which today we call 'socialism.' Because, you see, for them now salvation was through the state through unity, bringing everything into centralized control.

Now if you go back to some of the first unitarians and read their sermons, you feel, "Oh, these men are good evangelical preachers!" Some of the earlier ones who are not as ready to make an open break with the canon, their preaching seemed very orthodox. There was only a *slight* variation; they had subordinated Christ, they had exalted one attribute of the godhead above others.

Ideas have consequences. When your doctrine of God changes, it's going to have consequences for your ideas of church and of the state of education, of every area of life.

A shift in theology shifted the whole life of this country, our politics today are a product of the teaching of unitarianism, which to some degree has infected all the Christians. You see, I said most people when they say "God" mean "God the Father," not the Triune God. We all have slipped into usage! This is unitarian, it used to be when you said "God" you meant the Trinity.

Yes?

[Audience] What is the distinction between the ontological Trinity and the economical Trinity? ^{iv}

Ontological means God in himself in his own being; uncreated, eternal, infinite, incomprehensible, immutable so it deals with *God in his own being*. But economical means God in His relationship, in His work, in what He does.

3 SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY

Whether you're talking about taxation, or politics, education, or economics, whatever you're talking about will have its foundation; a religious root. Now modern man is trying to conceal that fact, because he's trying to rob you of the foundation of your freedom. Those foundations are theological, they are biblical. As a result, when you disguise the issue, and when you have indifferent Christians who are Sunday-Christians, then it becomes a very simple matter to rob them blind. Because, after all, they do not care about what they have.

A few years ago, I spoke to a very large church which raises over half a million dollars a year for various missionary causes, and one of the things I told them was that while the half a million dollars was very good, it really meant something when they began to minister to people in their own circle. How about the elderly members who are shut in? Those who cannot any longer, because they're old and infirm, take care of their own housekeeping, or drive a car to go shopping. Who's looking out for them? Is the church doing something about it?

Of course that brings us down to the home level, it means you are someone in your family who has a responsibility to your family members. That's where Christians now fail. You have to pay a pastor to do the job, or a missionary. This is why we are so easily undercut. We want religion to talk about, to affirm in abstraction, rather than to apply. But the doctrine of God is a total thing, it has implications for every area of life and thought.

Now, modern philosophy says some very strange things which superficially seem to be insane, but you need to pay attention to what insane people say, after all, we're dominated by them today. Why? Because every man is insane if he thinks he can live in God's world apart from God's Law. And because men are possessed by that kind of insanity, they're wide open to the rule of the insane.

Comte is the father of sociology. When you read the life of Comte, you wonder how could such a fruitcake ever have had the influence that he did? He actually founded a church for the worship of his dead mistress, who was not much to begin with! Or Karl Marx, think of how much he has done with his influence. If you had met him, you would have said: "What a nut." Which he was! He was not only a nut, but he was a man with such a guilt-ridden life because of the many, many things he did that he was literally physically ill continually. One of his problems was that he was continually breaking out with boils from head to foot. He couldn't sit or lie down, his face and body was covered with boils as very few men have been affected. He talked about capitalists and exploiting their workers. A maid, that his wife brought into the marriage, he raped. He had an illegitimate child by her. Everything he ever accused the capitalists of he was himself. He was also a man with a tremendous income. It may surprise you, but several times the annual income of a gentleman in England. But he was always hard up because he

was spending that money on get-rich-quick schemes. He was one of the great suckers of all time for fly-by-night Scots! If somebody was peddling some kind get-rich-quick scheme shares, Karl Marx was number one on their sucker list.

I could go on and cite the men like Nietzsche, Schopenhauer, and de Sade, men who, some of them, spent a part or a good deal of their life in mental institutions. Yet the twenty-first century is marching to their music! And this should not surprise us, because when man lives apart from God, he lives out of his mind. And when man goes to church but says: "I'll pay no attention to God's Law," he is out of his mind. If he thinks that the Lord of the universe would set down His will for us very clearly and bluntly in His book, the Bible, He's going to take very calmly violations of that?

Now, at the dinner table, since my daughter is here with us over Thanksgiving, she was recalling how if any of them pushed me too far by violating my requirements, I would reach for that red paddle on top of the refrigerator and paddle their behinds. Why? Because they were not obeying. Now do you think God could take kindly to our disobedience? It's insanity on the part of man. A wild kind of mindlessness to expect that God will not. And God tells us through the prophets that when men will not obey Him He will give them over to tyrants, and as a supreme insult, women and children will rule over you! And we see that today. A generation where kids to sometimes to an incredible extent dominate their parents. Sometimes you wonder how anyone in their right mind can see a little kid do what they do, defy their parents, and never get whacked. Sometimes it takes a lot of patience not to reach out with a helping hand.

Now what does this lead to? Well let's look at modern philosophy, talking about the insanity of our age. What does modern philosophy tell us? It tells us very literally that there is no law, nor any order to the universe. When I went to the

university at Berkeley in the mid-thirties, they still said there was a *probability*, because as far as we always knew the sun always rose in the East and set in the West, it would do that tomorrow morning. They talked about no natural law, the probability concept. Now they've abolished the probability concept because it still points to God and His order. So that strictly now, you can no longer talk about the sun rising in the East tomorrow morning. That sounds crazy, doesn't it? Well it should. But until you realize that practically all our modern thinking is based on that kind of insanity, you miss the point.

Now, why does it have that fact? Why is it so important to say that there is nothing but brute factuality, blind chance out there, and that no man can predicate any natural law as applying to that universe? Why is it important for them to say that we can never know the truth about anything? That any theory that we have scientifically, in every hypothesis, is just a kind of 'paradigm,' to use the term used by Kuhn, who is one of the most influential thinkers in science today. It's a myth, you don't have to believe it. Evolution is not necessarily true, nothing is true, but we use it as a theory. Fifty or a hundred years from now we may drop it for another kind of theory. None of them have any truth. Why? Because there is no truth, no meaning in the universe; none, absolutely none!

Now, this summer when I was dealing with math in one of our meetings, I pointed out how important it was for the new math to say that man is the creator in math. That there is no necessity for any statement in math. Two plus two could equal whatever you want it to make it equal, you are God. That's the point of the new math. You begin to see the purpose in all this insanity. Man cannot play God unless he denies that there is any meaning apart from himself, any meaning apart from what he creates. In essence what it is to say is that if I say this is a table, then it is a table, not a chair. And if I say this is a tent and not a house, then it is a tent.

Why? Because man being ultimate means man is the *definer*, man is the creator, and everything is exactly as man says it is.

This is why when man denies God, it becomes all-important that man, having denied God and denied His Word, establish another word. Another math, another English, another politics, another economics.

Now, one of the most obvious things today is of course that the Keynesian economics has failed. Even some of the liberals are recognizing this. But what is their answer? We've got to create a new economics. Still another one! Why? Because nowhere can they say, whether it is with regard to economics or politics or anything else, that it is an established order that exists apart from man.

The new education has failed has it not? Were the educators showing humility? On the contrary, they were going to create something else! Sometimes they mislabel it to fool the people. We supposedly have phonics in some of the public schools, but it is not phonics at all, it is another new innovation. Why is that important? Because somehow man's word must be made to succeed, and man's word leads to anarchy every time. You have anarchy in the schools, you have anarchy in economics.

Just this evening at six O'clock when I was listening to the news, the point was made that the dollar had done very badly this week abroad, and as a result anything ordered from Germany was five percent higher, and from Japan ten percent higher. The price of the Toyota is now a little better than five hundred dollars more than it was a year ago, and this also means that many American goods are going to be more expensive, because many American manufacturers use parts that come from abroad. And the dollar is continuing to fall.

But what is their answer? Another word of man, because they will not acknowledge God to be God. And what is keeping

the economy afloat? Faith in man. The economy should have collapsed at the beginning of the seventies; the dollar was in disarray, foreign trade, everything, every country in the world was in trouble, but what was the attitude of people when time and again at the beginning of the sixties they were at the brink of disaster? "Well, the government can't let it happen." Faith in man's word. And so it's that confidence that's keeping it going a little longer, and a little longer, because man wants man's words to work.

So it has to be a man-made order, not the law of God, not the Word of God. So this is the issue of the doctrine of God.

"All things were made by him and without him was not anything made that was made." ¹

As a result you cannot have education, politics, art, the sciences, anything apart from that. I read recently the concern from the federal government over the fact that scientific research is decreasing and innovation is declining, and they feel this will have a major impact. Well of course! But how are they going to remedy it when they have said everything is meaningless? If everything is meaningless in terms of the modern faith except the meaning man creates, then man himself is meaningless. Then we come back to the same philosophy that the world has had: "Let us eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die."

It's that kind of philosophy that preceded the Russian Revolution. If you want to know why the revolution succeeded all over a handful of men, go and read some of the Russian novels that were written just before the revolution. They are very much like the ones that are being written now. The same kind of sexual revolution, the same kind of moral anarchism, the same exaltation of degenerates and perverts. You had the same thing before Hitler! One of the common sayings in

Germany before Hitler when you had that same sexual revolution, when you met someone:

“Let’s go to bed together and see if we like each other.”

There was no God, there were no standards, there was anarchy. The government tried to replace that anarchy with National Socialist order, but it then had anarchy within its own ranks.

Because the principle of anarchy is atheism, so the doctrine of God is basic in every area of life. You see, if we discuss the doctrine of God and the doctrine of the incarnation and the doctrine of the atonement as though they were abstract doctrines, we’re denying the Word of God. What is the atonement? God says that all sin must be paid for, restitution must be made, this is God’s Word. What happens if you don’t seek atonement through the blood of Jesus Christ? Why, then you are either a Sadist or a masochist, you either try to punish yourself to pay for your sins - masochism - or you try to punish someone else for your sins. What’s the difference between the politics of Russia and the United States? The Russians are Sadists, and we’re masochists, and that’s it.

Recently I’ve spoken to the university law school and created a sensation and was canceled out at another law school. Why? Because in the course of my lectures I was dealing with the classical humanist view of man, I cited the fact that when these humanists, first encountered in the early days of exploration cannibalism among the American Indians, and I pointed out that the word cannibal was originally ‘caribal’ from ‘caribbean,’ and the carib indians that they first encountered. They excused the cannibalism because obviously these were children of nature, entirely good, and if they practiced cannibalism it had to be good. I said, that’s the length they went to to justify their belief in man.

Well, all hell broke loose. The other law school canceled me out for what I said about the Indians. First they denied it was true, but finally some of them had to admit it was, but: "How dare anyone criticize the Indians when we are such horrible people?! Nobody in history has been equal to the American people and the evil they've perpetrated." And I said, you're masochistic! And that didn't set well with them, you know.

And that's why, when we come to the subject of atonement, you'll be dealing with the reality of world politics. And as we deal with the doctrine of God, we'll be dealing with everything, because man is not what Aristotle said, 'a political animal,' or what others have said, a rational animal. He is a religious creature made in the image of God, and everything in him requires a theological end. And if God is not his god, then he will make something else his god, but he will move in religious categories, in biblical categories. This is why there is no other answer except that of our faith. This is why it is so great a sin for people as Christians not to recognize the far-reaching worldwide implications of their faith! We're never going to understand these problems apart from these theological premises.

I spoke of Russia as sadistic and the United States as masochistic. Sadists and masochists are all sadomasochistic, which means there can be flip-flops in their position. This has happened in history, but they can never be free from the burden of guilt apart from Jesus Christ. And as long as men are burdened with guilt, their politics will be what I have called in my book *The Politics Of Guilt and Pity*. An ungodly guilt, and a godless pity. They'll feel guilty for the wrong things and they'll have pity on the wrong things. As the Bible says:

"..the tender mercies of the wicked are cruel." ii

So, systematic theology is extremely basic to an understanding of the world. But there's very little systematic theology in our day. In fact, in almost every seminary in the country if they still have it in the curriculum, they don't teach it. Why? Because they don't believe, they say, that there is such a thing as 'systematic theology,' which means they don't believe there is a sovereign God such as the Bible talks about, whose Word is law. If there's no sovereign God, there's no system, there's no law-order in the universe that you can systematize, that you can understand. So what we're talking about is systematic theology, the belief that although we can never know God exhaustively, (we would have to have the mind of God to know Him exhaustively) we can know it truly. And we can never know the universe exhaustively, but we can know it truly because I know that there is consistency between one part of the universe and another part. What is true here is true in Africa. That what is true on this planet is true on another; that God made everything, so there is a consistency, a system.

This means that if I am going to understand any area of life, any subject, I've got to understand God and His Word. And if I don't begin there I'll never get anywhere. This is a fundamental principle of our faith, you see.

"I believe (as Anselm said) in order that I may understand."

When we *begin* with that faith, then we understand all things. Or as John says in his first letter:

"We have an unction from the holy one and we know all things." ⁱⁱⁱ

Now, we don't know all things exhaustively, but we know all things in principle when we know God. And we begin to apply that fact, then, every area of life and thought.

This is why in this series, 'systematic theology,' will be talking about the doctrines of our faith. But at the same time there is not a subject under the sun that we will not cover, because when you talk about God, you are of necessity thinking about everything.

Are there any questions, now?

Yes?

[Audience] I heard a pastor say that a child should learn the attributes of God before he learns about Jesus.

[R.J. Rushdoony] No. He needs to learn everything at once, you see you don't divide it that way. To learn about the attributes of God is also learn about Jesus, because "He has declared Him." The Bible says, "He who has seen me has seen the Father." So you can't approach God except through Christ, but you can't stop with Christ, you see the Father and the Spirit through him.

When you say "God" and you don't mean *the Trinity*, you're guilty of incorrect theological thinking. God is God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, but too often evangelicals today when they say "God" mean the Father, so the Spirit and the Son are not really quite God, and that's not biblical thinking.

4 THE DOCTRINE OF THE ASEITY OF GOD

Let us pray.

Almighty God, our heavenly Father, we thank thee that thou hast spoken the written Word and thy revealed Word, thine only begotten Son, have been given to us that we might know thee as Lord and Savior. Bless us now as we give ourselves to the study of the things that are of thee. That we might seek to know thee, to magnify thee, and to glorify thee, to serve thee with all our heart, mind, and being, to know that thou art God. Bless us to this purpose we beseech thee, in Jesus' name, amen.

In our first session this evening we shall deal with the doctrine of the aseity of God. The word 'aseity' means 'self-being.' It means that God is God, that He is not derived from anything else, nor is there anything apart from him in terms of which he can be judged. There is no idea, for example, of

'the good' or of 'justice' apart from God whereby God can be judged.

"All things were made by him and without him was not anything made that was made." ¹

So that all creation is the handiwork of God, all things visible and invisible are his creation.

Now, as we study the doctrine of the aseity of God, we need to recognize that too often theologians have been implicit unitarians or subordinationists when they talk about God. The reason for this is that when they say 'God,' they mean the Father. But when we say God, if we are truly biblical, then we must mean God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost. God is three persons and one God. Now Calvin made emphatic the fact that God is three persons without any subordination, so that we cannot speak of the Son or the Spirit being inferior to the Father or any the less God than the Father. He held to the 'autotheotēs.' Each person of the godhead is God; self-derived. In other words, he held to the aseity of each person of the godhead.

Warfield has said of Calvin's doctrine:

"In his assertion of the *αὐτοθεότης* [autotheotēs] of the Son Calvin, then, was so far from supposing that he was enunciating a novelty that he was able to quote the Nicene Fathers themselves as asserting it "in so many words." And yet in his assertion of it he marks an epoch in the history of the doctrine of the Trinity. Not that men had not before believed in the self-existence of the Son as He is God: but that the current modes of stating the doctrine of the Trinity left a door open for the entrance of defective modes of conceiving the deity of the Son, to close which there was needed some such sharp assertion of His absolute deity as

was supplied by the assertion of His αὐτοθεότης [autotheotēs].”²

In other words, it had become a very commonplace and a very easy habit to deny the Trinity implicitly by speaking of the Father alone as God. This is a problem that again confronts us, so that it leads to an implicit unitarianism. It begins to wipe out the significance of the doctrine of the Trinity. Van Til has written, again:

“We speak of God as a person; yet we speak also of three persons in the Godhead. As we say that each of the attributes of God is to be identified with the being of God, while yet we are justified in making a distinction between them, so we say that each of the persons of the Trinity is exhaustive of divinity itself, while yet there is a genuine distinction between the persons. Unity and plurality are equally ultimate in the Godhead. The persons of the Godhead are mutually exhaustive of one another, and therefore of the essence of the Godhead. God is a one-consciousness being, and yet he is also a tri-conscious being.”³

Now what’s the practical import of all this? We can begin to understand by turning to the comments of a Jesuit theologian, Father Edmund J Fortman. Fortman, as he discusses doctrine of the triune God in his book of that name, comments on Tillich and speaks of Paul Tillich implicit sabellianism.⁴ Now this is curious. Why did he treat Tillich’s view with such respect? After all, to call him an ‘implicit sabellian’ is ridiculous! He has to be called an unbeliever. Tillich said of the doctrine of God that God is neither person nor non-personal. He neither has being nor nonbeing. So we can either say, God exists, or he does not exist.

Moreover, in his personal life, Tillich believed in principle in total sexual freedom and the right to practice adultery! He

was radically contemptuous of biblical law and of biblical morality. And yet he is called a theologian. Not only Fortman but everyone currently treats his ideas with respect. To talk about Tillich as an example of Christian theology is like discussing Cain and Judas as models of discipleship in obedience. It's ridiculous.

But why is it done? We need to probe that question. Well, why did Tillich become a theologian? What is the appeal to men like Tillich who are totally against the faith? Why do they come within the church and develop their thinking? Why is it important for these men to be theologians? Some of the most radical statements of unbelief and hostility to the Christian faith today come from within the ranks of the church; in particular from men who are 'theologians' in various schools. What shall we say of this?

Why did Tillich in particular use the language of theology and its form? His concern was really with anthropology, with the doctrine of man, not with the doctrine of God. Let us look, first of all, at a report of a sermon by Tillich, in 1965, at the Stanford university memorial chapel. According to the Palo Alto Times:

"Dr. Paul Tillich, an internationally known theologian, told worshippers Sunday at Stanford University Memorial Church that the ultimate hope of mankind should be for 'participation in the eternal.'

However, explained the University of Chicago professor, "This does not mean hope for immortality.'

"This is a foolish hope, for no finite being can genuinely hope for eternal life.'

Dr. Tillich, guest in residence through Tuesday at the Stern Hall dormitory, offered these ideas in a sermon 'The Right to Hope' to an

estimated 1,000 people attending standing-room only services in the spacious church

Dr. Tillich cautioned that 'Christians should never forget that throughout the Old Testament, hope was never for eternal life, but for this life.'

'The old belief in the unity of all human races, now that they have diverged so far, has become a genuine hope for their reunion,' he said. Man now controls this world to a high degree and he can 'actualize all given to him to limitless possibilities,' he said.

'But does this answer the hope of generations past?':

Dr. Tillich suggested that the hope of such progress is justified only if such progress has a higher meaning and aim: The participation in the eternal. 'Such participation,' he concluded, 'is given to those who are in unity with the universe: All are in us and we are in them.'⁵

Now first of all Tillich's goal is the unity of man. And in this unity he hopes that man will have a conquest of time and a participation in the eternal, that man in history will rule as God. Of course this is not the goal of Scripture, but of the builders of the tower of Babel. Those men at least were more honest than Tillich. Then, second, Tillich reduces God to impotence. And yet he opens up to man limitless possibilities! He sees man's hope and goal as precisely the realization of limitless possibilities. Tillich, therefore sees man as having no more than this life - there is no eternal life - but that man will participate in the eternal by being totally a one-world, one mankind of order, and by ruling as God.

Now Tillich rightfully sees religion as 'ultimate concern.' But for him, ultimate concern is man, not God. Man's problem, he says, is to be infinitely concerned. In fact, he says in another place in his book *The New Being*:

"The one thing needed—this is the first and in some sense the last answer I can give—is to be concerned ultimately, unconditionally, infinitely." ⁶

In other words, man must take his mind off God and be totally concerned with himself and with man. He says, we belong to the eternal order because every man has the infinite within him, and continuing:

"Our despair itself, our inability to escape ourselves in life and in death, witnesses to our infinity." ⁷

So, no matter what man does, whether he fails or not, it's all proof. Everything that Tillich sees in man proves to him that man has infinite possibilities, that he can be God, and is in some sense God. He belongs in two orders; the infinite and the temporal. Now this is not scriptural. In terms of Scripture man is in the totality of his being, a creature, the creature of God. There is nothing infinite or eternal in man, man was created in his totality by God. Tillich's man is 'Greek,' not Christian, and he hopes that man will gain limitless possibilities by finding and realizing the unity of the human race. His god is totally inoperable, totally impotent.

Then next, Tillich retains the *form* of biblical theology and its facade, in order to provide him with a limiting concept for his philosophy. In other words, all his problems he can put on the Word of God without giving the Word of God any meaning, in order to give man a stage for operation without liabilities. The more sophisticated the unbelief in our day, the more it will disguise itself in terms of theology. This is why the *centers* of atheism in the world are not in Moscow, or in Peking, they are in many of our seminaries, many of our theologians. Without God, man can explain nothing, without God, everything collapses, there is no meaning, no order, nothing. And so the most brilliant atheists of our time retain the form of

theology in order to provide a stage for man, where he will have insurance, as it were, in the name of God, so that he can take over and become his own God.

Of course, this to a degree is what Arminianism does, in a much more limited way. The Arminian at least believes there is a God, but God provides him with fire insurance or life insurance so that he can then act. What these new theologians like Tillich do is to press this to the limit. The form of theology is retained without life, without content, in order to give man a fully free stage without the problems of atheism. With all of this they are determined to play God.

Now let's turn to an evangelical scholar who claims to be more or less Reformed. This is Robert L. Reymond in a book he has written recently, and which was reviewed by Countess who also claims to be Reformed. We're going into some difficult matters, but very important ones, because we need to understand why unbelief today is so theological, why it uses the language of Scripture. In a review by Countess of Reymond's new book, which appeared in the November 18, 1977, *Christianity Today*, he deals with Reymond's criticism of Van Til:

"Having conceded indebtedness to both Clark and Van Til, he (Reymond) now reviews the 1945 conflict between these men over epistemology. Van Til insists that man can know nothing as God knows it. God knows univocally, man only analogically. 'We dare not maintain that (God's) knowledge and our knowledge coincide at any single point.' When Van Til asserts that he refused to make any attempt at stating clearly any Christian doctrine because he desires to defend Christianity, Reymond exclaims: 'This is an incredible statement!' Van Til's analogous knowledge becomes no knowledge at all, and this is what Clark has charged. In addition Reymond draws a noteworthy parallel:

'Exceedingly strange it is that as ardent a foe of Barthian irrationalism as is Van Til, he comes nevertheless to the same conclusion concerning the nature of truth for man as does Barth.'

'But neither does Clark escape Reymond's razor. He too is a presuppositionalist. For the Christian apologist, 'only arguments whose conclusions follow necessarily from correct premises and therefore which give formally valid demonstrations' are to be embraced. Clark's supreme major premise for all his deductions is that 'the Bible is the Word of God.'"⁸

Now what's wrong with that? Clark's problem is that he's not consistent in that! And what Van Til is saying is that we cannot know God as God, we cannot know the mind of God exhaustively or directly, but only *analogically*. We know God inescapably but as creatures our knowledge is *creaturely*. To be able to grasp God as He is in His being, we would have to be God. The very words we apply to God are beyond our ability to comprehend; eternal, omnipotent, without beginning or ending, unchanging. Our minds stagger and falter as we try to comprehend what God is.

As I said previously, we cannot know God exhaustively, but we can know Him truly because God is consistent to himself. Our knowledge of God is always creaturely knowledge. But what does Reymond want? He wants to know God as God! He wants to know God by his reason, which, if it were possible, would mean that we could have salvation by reason, and all those who were potential philosophers would be saved by their logic. Van Til denies the identity of the mind of God and man. Man knows God in terms of His self-revelation and there is no coincidence between the two minds. One is the uncreated mind of God, and ours is a creaturely mind. The incarnation is a unique event.

But what these theologians are trying to do, like Reymond, is to bridge the gap between God and man apart from the incarnation. To say, in effect, there is a bridge other than the incarnation in Jesus Christ; my intellect can bridge the gap. And those who are like Tillich are saying, rather, there is no need to bridge the gap because I am that which you see. Only when we realize that humanity can be reborn as God by being reunited can we participate in the eternal and realize what we are. They use the language of theology to assert humanism. It is God's revelation that declares God, not man's logic.

Peter tells us in 1 Peter 1:10-12, and Daniel again in Daniel 12:4,8-9 and 8:27 and 10:21, that the men through whom God gave the Scriptures studied their own writings in order that they might grasp what God was saying. Because when God spoke through them there was more speaking than they themselves, and more than their own minds could grasp. We do not share the mind of God, we do not have the same being nor the same content, we *receive* the revelation of God, and we understand it as creatures.

The knowledge we have of God is *inescapable knowledge* because it is in every atom of our being.

“All things were made by him, and without him was not anything made”

Every fiber of our being, every atom in the universe witnesses to God! Our ability to apprehend that witness is a creaturely and limited ability. It is limited by the fact that we are creatures, and by the fact that we are sinners. Even when in eternity the barrier of sin is removed, we remain eternally creatures, never able to grasp the totality of God, never able to know Him absolutely, and always able to know Him truly, because everything in God is in perfect harmony with all else. I change, and I may not be dependable at all times, and I may

say one thing one day and another thing another, but God says:

"I am the Lord, I change not."

So, when we have one word from God, we know it is in line with every other word He will declare. It is in harmony with it. When we have any knowledge of God, therefore, we know the whole being of God truly.

Now, as Countess goes on to deal with this in his review he says of Reymond:

"His proposed solution to the Van Tillian dilemma is that the creature and the Creator do have knowledge that coincides as far as content is concerned, but man is never able to know a fact exhaustively. "The solution to all of Van Til's difficulties is to affirm, as Scripture teaches, that both God and ~ share the same concept of truth and the same theory of language."

9

So Reymond says, there has to be a coincidence between God and man, which is another way of saying that we shall be gods also. Now is this Christian theology, or is it the theology proposed by Satan when he said, "Ye shall be as gods?" The gap is only bridged by Jesus Christ, not by the mind or logic of man.

But, man the theologian wants to make an end-run around the Bible. He wants to make an end run around the barrier of the Council of Chalcedon. He wants some kind of participation in the eternal, in God, some kind of coincidence with the mind of God. When you tell him, as Van Til does: "That's impossible." Then he wails as Reymond and Countess do that: "oh, you have made any faith in any knowledge of God impossible!" In other words, they refuse to allow man to be a

creature. What they are saying is that man cannot know God unless he too has aseity. Unless you can speak about the autotheotēs, the aseity, of man. This is what they're aiming at. Again we're reminded of Genesis 3:5: "Ye shall be as God," the great temptation.

But Chalcedon says in terms of Scripture there is a barrier, that the incarnation is unique, that even in the incarnation there is a union of the two natures, very God of very God and very man of very man, but without confusion. We cannot confuse the human and the divine. Man knows as God ordains that he shall know. Calvin tells us in a very beautiful passage in his *Institutes*:

"On this, indeed, if on any of the secret mysteries of the Scripture, we ought to philosophize with great sobriety and moderation; and also with extreme caution, lest either our ideas or our language should proceed beyond the limits of the Divine word. For how can the infinite essence of God be defined by the narrow capacity of the human mind, which could never yet certainly determine the nature of the body of the sun, though the object of our daily contemplation? How can the human mind, by its own efforts, penetrate into an examination of the essence of God, when it is totally ignorant of its own? Wherefore let us freely leave to God the knowledge of himself. For 'he alone,' as Hilary says, 'is a competent witness for himself, being only known by himself.' And we shall certainly leave it to him, if our conceptions of him correspond to the manifestations which he has given himself, and our inquiries concerning him are confined to his word."¹⁰

This is a beautiful statement and Calvin is very much to the point. The theologians who formulated the creeds did not seek to penetrate the mind of God, but to set forth what God says in His Word, and to erect barriers to false theologies, to close the door to heretics. Berkhof has said with regard to the

work of true faith as it manifests itself in the great creeds of the faith.

“It has never tried to explain the mystery of the Trinity, but only sought to formulate the doctrine of the Trinity in such a manner that the errors which endangered it were warded off.”¹¹

As a result, Calvin’s insistence on the aseity of God the Son, of God the Holy Spirit, as well as God the Father barred the door to the use of the Son as a means of access into the life of the Father and into his being. The same is true of God the Spirit. There are many today who through the various charismatic movements seek some kind of penetration into the life of the Spirit. Thus, whether it is Tillich or Reymond or the charismatics, each in their own way insisting on man’s independent exploration and penetration or participation in the eternal. Their effort is ungodly. They are simply looking into a dark mirror, and participating in their own reflection. They do not see God, but only their vain imagination.

God is a tri-unity, one person and three persons, each distinct, yet each exhaustive of divinity itself. God is one conscious being, as Van Til said, and yet tri-conscious.¹²

“All things were made by him, and without him was not anything made that was made.”

He is totally personal, hence truth is personal. We know all things in terms of Him. As David says in Psalm 39:6:

“For with thee is the fountain of life: in thy light shall we see light.”

But man the sinner wants independence from God and that is his original sin. But when he strikes out on his own it leads to

collapse! He can know nothing then, and the whole universe becomes meaningless. As a result, man, while denying God in reality, tries nowadays through the form of theology to retain the advantages of God while declaring that *he* is God. His goal is to marry heaven and hell together with man as the king, but in spite of all this, God the Lord remains King, and judgment is in His hands.

In brief, we should not be surprised that the most fearful ungodliness in our day comes from the church, is expressed as theologies. Whether we talk about Tillich or Moltmann or Pannenberg or any of these others, we are talking about theologies that strike at the life of the faith, and substitute something else.

Are there any questions now?

We dealt with a very difficult subject, but one that we have to face because this is the factor we are facing more and more in our day - this type of approach to the faith.

No questions? Well then, we'll take a break and resume in a little while.

1. John 1:3
2. Benjamin Breckinridge Warfield. *Calvin and Calvinism*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1931, 283, 284.
3. Van Til, C. (1979). *An Introduction to Systematic Theology* (p. 220). Phillipsburg, NJ.
4. Edmund J. Fortman. *The Triune God: A Historical Study Of The Doctrine Of The Trinity*. Philadelphia: Westminster of Philadelphia, 1972, 262-271.

5. Keith Hearn, "Sermon at Stanford, Leading Theologian Views Man's Quest." (Palo Alto, CA: Palo Alto Times.) Monday, January 25, 1965. p. 24.
6. Paul Tillich. *The New Being*. Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 2005, 159.
7. Paul Tillich. *The Shaking of the Foundations*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1948, 23.
8. Review of Robert L. Reymond's: *The Justification of Knowledge*, by Robert H. Countess, "A New Era Or a New World." (Christianity Today.) Vol. XXII, no. 4, November 18, 1977, p. 34 (300).
9. Review of Robert L. Reymond's: *The Justification of Knowledge*, by Robert H. Countess, "A New Era Or a New World." (Christianity Today.) Vol. XXII, no. 4, November 18, 1977, p. 34 (301).
10. John Calvin: *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. (Philadelphia, PA: Presbyterian Board of Christian Education, 1936.) Book I, Chap. XIII, xxi; vol. 1, p. 162f.
11. Berkhof, L. (1938). *Systematic Theology* (p. 89). Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.
12. "God is a one-consciousness being, and yet he is also a tri-conscious being." Van Til, C. (1979). *An Introduction to Systematic Theology* (p. 220). Phillipsburg, NJ.

5 IDOLATRY

Calvin in his institutes of the Christian religion devotes considerable space to the subject of 'idolatry.' He declares that idolatry means all images of God, whether material or immaterial, whether carved by a woodcutter or sculptor, or fashioned by a philosopher or theologian. Calvin declares that only God can describe himself. Now, idolatry has very often received intellectual justification from more than a few people.

For example, I recall reading one justification of Hindu idolatry. The writer pointed out that many images, for example in Hindu temples, will have not two but eight or six hands. Supposedly this means that God is omnipotent, and it is a way of conveying that to the simple believer. Again others will show God with not only two eyes but perhaps a third eye or more. Again these rationalizers will say that this is designed to teach the simple person that God is unseen.

Well, this type of justification is absurd. First of all, Hinduism has no concept of an omnipotent or an all seeing God; and second, even if one has in a particular religion that doctrine,

God forbids any such representation of himself. When the Scripture declares in the Ten Commandments:

“Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven images”¹

This is case law. Now case law gives us a minimal principle in order to establish a minimal case in order to establish a general principle.

“Thou shalt not muzzle the ox when he treadeth out the corn.”²

This says that very ox, the animal that works for us, deserves something from what he works to produce. It follows from this, Scripture tells us, that the laborer is worthy of his hire.³ It follows even more, then, that those who labor worthily for the Lord are worthy of double honor or double pay.⁴ This is case law.

So, the simplest, crudest example, a graven image, is taken by the law, God declares it is forbidden. If such a simple and primitive thing is forbidden, it means the more elaborate things, the constructs of the human mind, of theology and philosophy are forbidden. God, in other words, forbids idolatry in its every form. The presupposition behind idolatry is exactly what we’ve been talking about in the previous session. That man can know God exhaustively, so that he can take God and describe him fully in an image, which is either carved by man or set forth by the logic of his mind, and he says: “Here is God defined.”

But when we began this series on the doctrine of God,

1. Exodus 20:4

2. Deuteronomy 25:4

3. Luke 10:7

4. 1 Timothy 5:17

remember, we dealt with Moses as God confronted him in the Sinai desert and he asked of God: "what is thy name?" Names were definitions in Bible times. He asked God to define himself and God refused. He said: "I am that I am, I am He who Is." All things are defined by me, in other words, but I cannot be defined, for to define is to set limitations and fences. When I define a tree I define it in contradistinction to everything around it, when I define myself I am saying I am definable, there are limits to my being. But there are no limits to God. God went on to *describe* myself in his revelation:

"I am the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob." ⁵

Now, idolatry declares that God can be defined, either in a graven image or in an intellectual or a theological image; but all we can do is to describe God as He Himself reveals Himself in his Word. Anything other than that is idolatry. How do we know God? Not as an object like a tree or a book. I can know you, and you can know me, by observing me, by studying me. But God is infinite, eternal, far beyond the ability of our mind. He is the ground of all knowledge. In thy light shall we see light, ⁶ David said. He is not an object, but the ground of all knowledge. We were all made by him. We know him inescapably because he reveals himself, but we can never know him exhaustively. We can never define him, put limits around him and say: "thus far goes God and no further."

When you define me, you put a name on me: R.J. Rushdoony. This means I am not John Jones, or Mike McGonigle. I am limited. But how can you put a limit around God and say: "with this name, with this definition, with this logical analysis, with this image I have defined God, here He is." That's

5. Exodus 3:6

6. Psalm 36:9

impossible. The very words whereby God declares himself in Scripture: "The eternal one," ⁷ "I am the Lord, I change not, ⁸ the same yesterday, today, and forever. ⁹ All-seeing, all-wise." Who from all eternity decrees all things that come to pass, Who knows the beginning and the end. ¹⁰ How can you put a definition around him? A fence? This is why idolatry is so radically anti-Biblical, anti-God. It tries to put a fence around God, a definition.

Man cannot know God exhaustively. But idolatry presupposes man's ability to know God exhaustively and definitively. But God declares that He alone can declare His own council. In Isaiah we are told, in Isaiah 40:13-14, as God attacks the idolatry of the day he declares:

"Who hath directed the Spirit of the Lord, or being his counsellor hath taught him? With whom took he counsel, and who instructed him, and taught him in the path of judgment, and taught him knowledge, and shewed to him the way of understanding?"

No man, in other words, can enter into the council of the Lord. How can any man define him?

Well, let us go further into the subject of idolatry; sophisticated idolatry. Men can go to the Bible and use the Bible to create idols. How so? If you take certain portions of the Bible and emphasize them to the exclusion of the rest then you are using material out of the Bible, apart from the whole of the Bible, to the exclusion of the rest. Then you are using material out of the Bible apart from the whole of the Bible to build an intellectual idol. Thus, the Arminians with their doctrine of

7. Habakkuk 3:6

8. Malachi 3:6

9. Hebrews 13:8

10. Isaiah 46:10

God have created an idol. Some hyper Calvinists have created idols. Why? They take one thing and they stress it to the exclusion of all else! That leads to an idol. God is more *than* any one aspect of Him, and if we take the Bible *partially* we use that to create an idol. All heresies result, by and large, from partial uses of the Word of God to create idolatries.

Furthermore, a false emphasis, even on the whole Word of God, can lead to idolatry. Systematics distinguishes between the ontological Trinity and the economical Trinity. Now what does that mean? The ontological Trinity is God in himself, the economic Trinity is God in his revelation, in his manifestation. We can never see God in himself, but we can see the economical aspects of the Trinity, the work of the Trinity in relationship to us.

Now, Arminianism stresses the economical aspects of the life of the Trinity. God the Son is our savior; what God does for us, what the Spirit does for us. And it winds up by seeing the Bible in terms of *man*, and in terms of what is being done for man by God. So it uses the material of the Bible to create an idol and it has the economical life of the Trinity alone emphasized. Some Calvinists will do the same for the ontological aspects of the Trinity. They'll take his sovereignty, or his omnipotence, or his eternal counsel; and this is all they'll talk about, so that they become historically irrelevant, they do nothing in history.

One man, a reformed pastor, wrote to me not too long ago of some hyper Calvinists with whom he was talking who were totally disinterested in abortion. They considered it an irrelevant subject. Why? because they wanted to concentrate on the doctrines of the ontological Trinity. They are idolaters. They take one aspect of the totality of God and they concentrate on it. True, the ontological Trinity, God himself, is prior to God and his revelation, but as we approach God we cannot neglect one for the other. The Word of God manifests the totality of

God. It does not permit us to concentrate on one, to emphasize one at the cost of another. And so we have, when we have such an emphasis, idolatry.

It is idolatry, thus, to emphasize any aspect of either the ontological or the economical Trinity; Christ as redeemer, God as sovereign, or predestination rather than sanctification, or sanctification to the exclusion of much else.

Now, in the economical Trinity there are sometimes subordination. God the Son in his work of redemption works *under* the Father. The Spirit is sent by the Father and the Son. This means that in their *activity* one subordinates Himself to the other, but in the ontological Trinity, in the *being* of God, there is no subordination in the Father and the Son and the Spirit. They are eternally one, and eternally equal. The Son is eternally the Son.

You see, God's economy, God's manifestation of himself in history, is not something that is a Johnny-come-lately in the life of God. God didn't suddenly think, about six or seven thousand years ago: "Hmm, let's create a world, let's work out a plan of salvation." God didn't, two thousand years ago, decide maybe that: "God the Son better go down there and be incarnate, we've got to do something about the mess down there." No. Scripture tells us *from all eternity*, God so decreed it. So that, if we are to temporalize the idea, which is really impossible, we would have to say billions and trillions of years ago, if such a concept could be applied to the life of the Trinity, God had from all eternity created what He would do. The economy and the ontology of God cannot be separated, and the activity of God is not an afterthought in the life of God.

Thus we cannot depreciate the one or the other, nor separate them. Thus, we cannot know God in terms of His actions alone, nor in terms of His being alone, but in terms of His

total self-revelation in His Word. Otherwise we falsify and we fall into idolatry. Idolatry is both a result and a cause; idolatry begins, of course, with self-worship. When man says: "I will be God." Calvin made clear that idolatry was not derived from ancestor-worship; it was a common opinion as far back as Calvin's day that man began with ancestor worship and little by little fell into idolatry. But Calvin says:

"The true state of the case is, that the mind of man, being full of pride and temerity, dares to conceive of God according to its own standard."¹¹

Man projects his self-worship into some form of idolatry. I pointed out that idol in idolatry can be a graven image or a picture, a painted picture, or an intellectual image, it can also be an institution. It can be the church or the state, and too often the church has become an idol. In some branches of the church, the church is spoken of as a continuation of the incarnation. Most Protestants speak of the church as the body of Christ and they think: "we are the scriptural ones." Are they? Well the church is spoken of as 'the body of Christ' in Ephesians 1:23 and in Colossians 1:18 - and of course in 1st Corinthians 12:27, let's concentrate on that. Because they tell us, it's a particular congregation here that is spoken of as the body of Christ, is it so? Is Paul dealing with the local congregation as an institution or a community? Now there's a difference between a *community* and an institution; a community can be an institution, but an institution is not necessarily a community. Moreover, what is Paul's concern in the passage? 1 Corinthians 12:27. His concern is that the covenant people recognize that they are members one of another, that's what he said, and that they are a community in Christ. Their life is

11. John Calvin: Institutes of the Christian Religion, Bk. I, ch. XI, VIII; vol. I, p. 122f.

not in the institution, nor in themselves, but in Jesus Christ who is both the head and the body. As a result, the focus of Paul's statement when he speaks of the body of Christ is not in the community even, certainly not in the institution, but in the fact that they are *members of Christ*.

Now, to make that institution or the community itself the body of Christ is idolatry. Because the members are grafted into the body, are they not? Paul tells us that we are members of Christ by the adoption of grace. We are like a wild branch that is taken and grafted into the tree; the life is in the tree! Christ is himself the body and the head, we are His possession because the body, Paul says, is of Christ. It is his body and we are members by adoption, by grace, not by nature. Our gifts he says in the same chapter, 1 Corinthians 12:4, our gifts as members of that body are from God the Spirit, not from ourselves. Thus, we can speak of the church as the body of Christ, use the words of Scripture, but we've fallen into idolatry if we identify that body with an institution. The language of Scripture is precise, it doesn't allow us to appropriate that language for our creation, our institutions, or ourselves. To do so is idolatry. Calvin put it this way:

"...whatever belongs to the Deity, should not be transferred to another."

He says in full:

"We said, at the beginning, that the knowledge of God consists not in frigid speculation, but is accompanied by the worship of him. We also cursorily touched on the right method of worshipping him, which will be more fully explained in other places. I now only repeat, in few words, that whenever the Scripture asserts that there is but one God, it contends not for the bare name, but also teaches, that whatever belongs to the Deity, should not be transferred to

another. This shows how pure religion differs from idolatry.”¹²

The Lord is very clear in His Word.

“Thou shalt have no other gods before me.”¹³

How can we have other gods before him? With graven images, with institutional images, with painted or with intellectual images. By taking His name in vain and applying it to the things that are of us. You cannot put either God or His name or anything that is of Him to an idolatrous use. Idolatry, thus, is strictly forbidden.

Are there any questions, now?

Yes?

[Audience] Can the use of religious icons be said to be legitimate in terms of Scripture?¹

[Rushdoony] Yes. Their use, beautiful as the icons are, is definitely not in terms of Scripture. Because Scripture makes clear that we are not to have any graven images, nor to bow down to them, nor to use them in worship. Now, there is a difference between icons and art; what the icons do is to make the graven things - or the painted things, rather - basic to worship. Now I can enjoy an icon as a work of art, but I cannot view it as a thing religious.

Yes?

12. John Calvin: Institutes of the Christian Religion, Bk. I, ch. XII, I; vol. I, p. 132.

13. Exodus 20:3

[Audience] Could you comment on the origin and significance of the word 'Church?' ⁱⁱ

[Rushdoony] Yes, a very good question. Now, the word 'church' as we have it is a very confusing word. It comes from *kyriakon* dome, the house, or body, or the house or temple, or place of the Lord. The word 'church' in the New Testament is 'ekklesia,' which is an Old Testament word which is translated as 'congregation' and 'assembly.' When we study what those words mean, they can mean the whole of the kingdom of God or they can mean the actual army of Israel, they can mean the state, they can mean the worshipping group, they can mean even a family in the faith. So it is inclusive of the kingdom and everything that is a part of the kingdom.

Now when the New Testament speaks of "the church in Corinth" it means the totality of the believers there in their total life, as a worshipping institution, or as a community, or as families and as governing bodies. So the term 'church' is a very broad one in Scripture; but for us it means either a building or a denomination! As a result, when we read the Scripture and it says 'church,' we are thinking about the First Baptist church, or the First Presbyterian church, or Trinity Episcopal, and so on, or of denominations. So we are misinterpreting it, we're thinking institutionally and locally, and yet when Scripture speaks of 'the church' it also speaks of the general assembly of the first born; inclusive of men in heaven and earth, and angels.

So you see, when we use the word 'church,' we're limiting it. It would help a great deal if we dropped the word 'church' from our vocabulary. I don't know whether this is possible anymore because this confusion which began early in the life of the church and which Rome [the Roman Catholic Church] pushed to the nth degree, the Protestants have carried over, is now so deeply imbedded that there's a great deal of confusion. When we speak of the worshipping institution we

should perhaps say ‘chapel,’ or perhaps the Christian synagogue because that’s what it was originally called — “the Christian synagogue.”

But today of course, they’ve taken over the word ‘church’ and we’ve confused things in Scripture. It’s hard when we read the New Testament to think that the word there that is given as church means something more than our word today conveys to us.

I was saying that when people speak of the church, the institution, as the body of Christ it can be idolatrous because they will think of it as the institution. So they will say, “here’s the body of Christ in the world - the institution of the church.” But if the United States government were Christian, it would be the body of Christ. Chalcedon is a part of the body of Christ, Christian schools are a part of the body of Christ, Christian families are a part of the body of Christ, you see. So if we limit it too one segment, we’ve taken a part of it and identified it with the whole, and we’ve created an idol out of that institution because every part of the kingdom is a part of the whole, and represents the whole, is an outpost of the whole; the church is of the body of Christ.

Yes?

And by ‘church’ I mean the local congregation is of the body of Christ, but it is not itself the totality of the body of Christ, nor is the institution the body.

Yes?

[Audience] How can we best define God? ⁱⁱⁱ

[Rushdoony] We cannot define God, we can describe him you see? And God describes himself in His Word, and He reveals himself, but He never defines Himself. So there is no sentence whereby you can say, “this is God defined.” Now, you can define man as a creator made in the image of God with

knowledge, righteousness, holiness, and dominion, created male and female... Okay, you've described man there as God describes him, and it's also a definition. But God cannot be defined, you see. That's why his name, *Yahweh* or *Jehovah*, is simply the statement "I am that I am." He describes himself; the whole of the Bible is a description and a revelation of God but never a definition, definitions limit.

We cannot enter into his being, we can only dimly grasp it because we have a creaturely mind, and therefore we cannot know God directly as He is, He is too great for our mind to grasp.

[Audience] But will we not know him fully once we are glorified? ^{iv}

[Rushdoony] Mhm. When we are resurrected in the new creation in its totality we will not have the impediment of sin in knowing Him, but we will still be creatures, so we'll never be able to grasp him. But we can know him truly! Because the Bible says: "the only begotten is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared it."

Now, remember, I said one Word of God is consistent with everything else so that it's a true word. I'm not totally consistent, we were discussing afterwards, after the first session, and having a little fun here because, my wife can tell you I'm not always consistent, I'm sure Cathy could make the same statement about Ed Powell. No? You don't think so, Ed?

Well, maybe not...

But ah, we cannot as creatures have either that *infinite being* or that absolute consistency. Now in the new creation we will be without sin and we will be consistent to that degree, but we are still creatures and God is the eternal one.

Yes?

[Audience] Could you help delineate the distinction between knowing someone truly and knowing them exhaustively? ^v

[Rushdoony] Well, for example, if I were to try to define my wife how would I do it you see? We cannot even know this world exhaustively - God's creation, and God's creatures. The most I can do is tell you some things about her which might fit a million other women in the United States. I might show you her pictures that would help you identify her, but how well would you know her? Only by living with her as I do do I know her. I don't know her exhaustively, she's still got surprises. And if I can never know anything in God's creation exhaustively, then how can I know the Creator exhaustively?

Yes?

[Audience] I think today the church is really plagued with the idea of, unless they know everything they can't know anything, so they really deny knowing [it] in the first place. They think that you've gotta be an expert. You know? And so unless the expert speaks - whoever that is - they won't know anything.

[Rushdoony] Mhm.

Any other questions or comments?

Well, if not, our meeting is adjourned and we will meet again on the tenth.

6 GOD AND CREATION

Continuing our studies on the doctrine of God, and in this first period our subject will be 'God and creation.' The Bible makes it clear that God created all things not out of any necessity, but out of sovereign grace by the Word of His mouth. Not only in Genesis 1, but in John 1:1-14, Ephesians 3:9, Colossians 1:16, Hebrews 1, Revelation 4:11, Hebrews 11:13 Psalm 33:6, we are told emphatically that God is the Creator and that he created all things by his sovereign and gracious word. Psalm 33:6 is very emphatic. In Psalm 33:6 we read:

*By the word of the Lord were the heavens made;
And all the host of them by the breath of his mouth.*

Moreover in verses four through nine we read:

*For the word of the Lord is right; and all his works
are done in truth.
He loveth righteousness and judgment: the earth is
full of the goodness of the Lord.
By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and
all the host of them by the breath of his mouth.*

*He gathereth the waters of the sea together as an
 heap: he layeth up the depth in storehouses.
 Let all the earth fear the Lord: let all the inhabitants
 of the world stand in awe of him.
 For he spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it
 stood fast.*

Now, what these verses emphatically teach us is 'fiat' creation. God said, and it was so. Moreover, very literally the Hebrew of Psalm 33:9 "he commanded, and it stood fast," is "he commanded and there it was," so that when God declares something by his fiat word and says, "Let there be light" or "let there be this and that," at that instant, all of it is there. This is the doctrine of fiat creation. The breath of his mouth creates instantly. Thus the Psalmist says in verses eight and nine:

*Let all the earth fear the Lord:
 Let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe
 of him.
 For he spake, and it was done;
 He commanded, and it stood fast.*

Calvin was sometimes impatient with wayward theologians and unbelieving philosophers, whom he called "that sty of swine"¹ and he spoke to the necessity of believing the Bible and beginning with the fact that God is the creator. This establishes the Lordship of God; if God is the creator in the literal sense, who by His fiat word made all things. He commanded, and there it stood. Then man has no claim on God. Nor is there anything in the creation that is a product of the creation, it did not evolve, it did not develop, it was created a mature creation. Creation, therefore, the Bible declares was in six

1. John Calvin: Institutes of the Christian Religion, Bk. I, ch. V, v; Vol. I, p. 67.

days. Genesis 1 is literal history. Creation is not a process, but an act.

Now what this means is that there is a total dependance of the creation on the Creator. There is no inherent power in the creation whereby it developed itself and came to the point that it is at today. What the creation has done, rather, is not to evolve, but to devolve! It has gone downhill as a result of the Fall, as a result of sin. There is no inherent power in matter or in the universe. Thus, the doctrine of fiat creation: He spoke the word and there it stood, stresses the gap between God and man. God is God and man is a creature. It is the mark of paganism always to deny that gap, or to blur it, or to try falsely, apart from Christ, to bridge it.

Thus, we can say that the goal of all efforts to eliminate the strict doctrine of fiat creation is to eliminate God. Whenever you tamper with the doctrine of fiat creation, you begin to eliminate God from your thinking. God becomes an idea, He becomes remote, he no longer is the living God...the source of all power and authority.

You see, the problem for unbelievers, for atheists, for unbelievers, for evolutionists, is not creation out of nothing. Because every evolutionist believes in creation out of nothing, that's how the universe appeared! "Once there was nothing, and out of that nothing came the first atom, or molecule, and now that it evolved, all things." It isn't the doctrine of creation out of nothing that they object to, but creation by God out of nothing. It is God that they will not tolerate. What they believe in is the greatest of miracles because all this universe came out of absolute nothingness, according to them.

Now as we shall see in our next period, the necessary concomitant to the doctrine of fiat creation is predestination. Because, if creation is the absolute work of the sovereign God,

then it is His plan and His decree that governs it, this is why when you tamper with the one doctrine you tamper with the other. If you tamper with absolute fiat creation you tamper with predestination, if you tamper with predestination you very quickly begin to alter the doctrine of fiat creation. If the universe, moreover, is self-generated, if it has evolved, then so has history. Then history is not a part of God's plan, but it manifests in man's plan. Van Til has pointed out that this is what Collingwood, one of the most popular philosophers of history, has done. Van Til writes:

"Collingwood thinks that the modern historian should follow Vico, the Italian philosopher, in holding the *verum et factum convertuntur*. Says he: 'The fabric of human society is created by man out of nothing, and every detail of this fabric is therefore a human factum, eminently knowable to the human mind as such.'" ²

"Nothing short of this will do for Collingwood if we are to be rid of what he thinks of as the dualism between God and man." ³

You see, deny God as the creator and predestinator, and you make man the creator and the predestinator. We'll go into that more in our next period. You affirm creation out of nothing, then, and you transfer it to man and to the universe, which are then self-generated, and everything then in the universe is self-generated. Ancient Greek philosophy held that the mind of man participates in the mind of God, so that God's truth and being are not really beyond man but are a part of the life of man. As a result, they transferred all power, all determina-

2. Van Til, C. (1974). *The New Hermeneutic* (p. 84). Phillipsburg, NJ.

3. Van Til, C. (1975). *New Synthesis Theology of the Netherlands* (p. 13).

from any god that might exist into the hands of man. And modern philosophy has done this to the nth degree.

But you also transfer infinity! One of the things I was taught when I was quite young, in junior high, in fact, was that the universe is infinite. Well how do they know? How do they know that the universe is infinite? Infinity is an attribute of God, if you deny the living God, then you are going to say that whatever is your ultimate, if it is the universe, is infinite. And so it's a matter of necessity for modern thought to affirm the infinity of the universe, which they do on a matter of principle, as a matter of faith. Therefore, time has no beginning. There are millions and billions of years, stretching out to all infinity, and just as God eternally was so something eternally was. It had a beginning, but there always was a something, a potentiality, an infinite possibility. Once you deny God, all the attributes of God are transferred to the universe, or to something in the universe like man! Or some institution of man, like the state or the church or the university, whatever you choose to make the locale of all your divine attributes. Moreover, if the universe is self-existent and self-generating, then the law of God is irrelevant to such a world.

Well, since the doctrine of evolution began to dominate the modern world, beginning with Hegel who is the real father of it in modern thought, what it has done is to undermine the doctrine of biblical law. Because if God rules all things, then God is the source of all law for the state, the church, the schools, the family, for everything. But, if the universe has evolved and is self-generating, then law is also self-generated. It is also something that comes from within the universe. Then if God gives the word, like the Bible, well, you can say it's an interesting word, very interesting, it can even be inspiring, but it's not a command-word. You see, we need to attack the idea of the Bible as an inspiring word. It's an inspired Word! But inspiring? It's a command word. God didn't give it

to us to read and say: "Oh this is beautiful, it fills my soul with all kinds of lovely thoughts." No. God gave it so that we would read it, obey it, and put it into practice. It is the command-word and it is the command-word because God is the creator. He commanded it, and there it stood. All things. For humanism, however, man develops all things out of nothing, and all things are self-generated.

We have two doctrines in Scripture that affirm a radical discontinuity between God and man. There are many other, but two stand out. The doctrine of creation; fiat creation by God, all things out of nothing. And what is the other doctrine that confirms a radical discontinuity? Can anyone think of it? It's a very practical doctrine. The Sabbath. What's the meaning of the Sabbath? It says that our lives don't depend on us, our salvation is not our doing, so we regularly take hands off our lives and we rejoice that it is God who saves us. It is God's work that is determinative in the life of men and of nations, and so we affirm a radical discontinuity.

The Sabbath, thus, and Creation are tied together. The seventh day of creation, that is the pattern, and it celebrates the day of redemption, the Passover, in the Old Testament, and the Resurrection in the New Testament. When God works, when God offers a completed thing, and all man has to do is relax and enjoy it, and rejoice in it! Then he goes out and he obeys God the rest of the week, in the confidence that your labor is not in vain in the Lord. ⁴ That all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. ⁵ That not one word spoken in His name will return unto the Lord void, ⁶ because He is God.

4. 1 Corinthians 15:58

5. Romans 8:28

6. Isaiah 55:11

God is not tangled in creation, he rests, and he is separate from it.

So man is to detach himself from creation and his work, and to celebrate God's works of creation and redemption. The world is created by God, finite and good. Evil is a moral, not a metaphysical fact. Sin and death are unnatural, they are not normal, they are like a cancer on the universe. Health and life are normal, they are not ideals. Moreover, once we believe in God as absolute Lord and creator, we see our creatureliness, not as something to be overcome, but as something to rejoice in. Consider the fact that in so many religions, men hate creatureliness. They try to overcome it. They are opposed to marriage, because, well, marriage means dependance, you see, on another person, interdependence. They become ascetics. Alexander the Great did not like to associate with women too much because to be dependent on them revealed his mortality. He disliked having to eat, because it reminded him he was a creature! He wanted to be a god, and there are many today who have that kind of sentiment.

In fact, in our day, for many, the appeal of NASA and of the so-called 'space age' is that supposedly it helps us overcome creatureliness. About eighteen years ago when our space exploration was first beginning to appear on the horizon, one major corporation involved in aerospace had a full-page ad' in *Time* magazine showing the scientist holding a baby, ostensibly, except it was not a baby, it was a man in a space suit by the feet, as though it were a newborn baby, and saying: "the cord's been cut." The cord to what? To the earth, to creatureliness! Man now was going to transcend this world and creatureliness.

And this is the insanity of the goal that marks so much of what NASA does (with our tax money, of course). But it is our glory to be human, to be creatures, to be male and female. It is sin to deny this and to seek to be as God. From Babel, The

Tower of Babel, to the modern state... man is bent on playing God and transcending creatureliness, and saying: "I do not need to function as a creature; I will create fiat laws, fiat economics; I will be as God."

But man was created to be God's creature, and this is our joy. It is our calling, our knowledge, our righteousness, our holiness, and our dominion, which we realize by being creatures under God. Thus, the doctrine of creation is not only important theologically, but practically. How we live, and whether we enjoy life will be determined by this doctrine. And today there are people all around us who are incapable of enjoying life because they are determined to play God, and to be something more than a creature. This means no interdependence, and it means living apart from any dependance on anything.

Did you know there are actually people today who are not only concerned with avoiding the eating of meat, but who are wondering about the legitimacy of vegetables? "We're killing something, we're dependant on something," and as a spoof not to long ago, someone wrote on the right to life of germs, presented it as a serious argument and demanded that the government take an interest in the civil rights of germs, and there were actually people who bought that argument! Why should anyone have to live in a world that they were so interdependent on things that their life depended on the lives of other things, and other people depended on them. They want to be as God, above and beyond all that, but it is our joy to be creatures.

Are there any questions now?

Yes?

[Audience] Is it wrong to want to go to the moon?

[Rushdoony] I would say it is very wrong to explore space and to want to go to the moon, if you're going to do it with tax money.

If, if it were a private enterprise activity, then it would be done in terms of a practical motive, a practical motive. I believe in my *Mythology of Science* I pointed out a statement by NASA that they were trying to explore space in order to find life somewhere; in other words, in order to disprove the Bible. They're doing this with our money! It has no practical consequences but if you ask for some tax money for any godly purpose, you'd be clobbered you see? Not that we would want to ask for it.

Now, if it were done by industry it would be done for very practical motives with practical results; but it wouldn't be done under the present circumstances, that's for sure.

People talk a great deal about how much we're spending for national defense, and for this and that, and the other thing, we're not spending on the war, or on poverty, and so on. But they pay no attention to what we're spending for the exploration of space. One economist, Dr. Röpke has called it the modern counterpart of the pyramid-building of the ancient Pharaohs. I think that's a good analogy, it's about as useful.

Any other questions?

Well, if not, we'll take about a five to ten minute break.

7 PREDESTINATION

Our subject in this period is predestination. Predestination is a very obvious fact. The necessity for discussing it is a moral fact because man refuses to accept it because it denies the ultimacy of man. In discussing predestination, therefore, certain things need to be pointed out. First of all, the only real alternatives as we view the world are predestination or chance. Either everything is the product of chance, and chance rules the universe, or we have predestination. We cannot, without being guilty of self-contradiction, deny God and then insist that there is a world of order around us. The universe of order presupposes absolute order behind it, an absolute mind, an absolute purpose. So that it becomes a necessity for those who are consistent atheists or evolutionists or humanists to affirm chance, or to refuse to raise the question of order.

When I was a student, a member of the University of California philosophy department admitted in a discussion that it was either chance or predestination. He said, moreover: "if you allowed yourself..." (he was talking to students who were pragmatic naturalists like himself) "if you allowed yourself to get into a discussion of origins with any Christian, you'd be the loser.

So, he said, "the thing to do is to say I refuse to raise the questions of origins, or of order. I simply take the order of the universe as a given. For granted. Just as you refuse to say 'where did God come from?' I refuse to say 'where did order in the universe come from.'"

Now, he was asked a second question which he refused to answer. If we do that, have we not revised the same God of Scripture under the name of natural order in the universe? Have we not then transferred everything God is to the universe, so we have 'God' without the name of 'God.' You see, to believe that there is an order in the universe, and it is not from God, is to believe in greater miracles than any Christian believes in. Those who believe in chance, those who deny God, are the ones who truly have the greatest faith, and the most perverse of all faiths, the blindest of all faiths.

Then second, as we saw in our previous period, the doctrine of fiat creation requires predestination. Total creation means total control. At the Council of Jerusalem, the apostle James said in Acts 15:18:

"Known unto God are all his works, from the foundation of the world."

Creation and history have no surprises for God. He planned it all, he made it all, he governs it all. To affirm predestination means to affirm total fiat creation and vice-versa.

Then third, because God is the creator and the predestinator of all things, His predestination of all things is both universal and particular because every detail is His handiwork as well as the overall purpose and plan. Election is thus both particular and general. All who are in covenant with Christ and in Christ are elected by God for redemption, and that redemption is both particular and general. It embraces the covenant-people and it embraces the individuals. In John 10:1-7 we are

told that the good Shepherd knows his sheep, He calls them by name and he leads them. Both election and reprobation are a part of God's total government.

Then fourth, because predestination is not only a necessary part of creation but also of government, wherever sovereignty and government are claimed, there also predestination is claimed. If we say God is the Lord, then we believe God is the Creator, Governor, Predestinator, and the Lord of all things. Wherever we say man is the Lord, then we say man must govern absolutely and predestinate absolutely. Then man says as Henley did:

*I am the master of my fate,
I am the captain of my soul.*¹

And this is what Sartre says also in his philosophy; and of course it leads to exactly what we have today; the modern state, with total planning, with total jurisdiction, with sovereignty. The goal of the modern state is to plan everything totally, absolute planning and control. Nothing is to be outside the government, the planning, the directional guidance of the state; because man becomes the predestinator.

About two weeks ago I had a very interesting experience, which I've told to one or two of you, about the difference in this country in the years before World War II and since then, because we still had elements of Christianity, and the state was still to a degree limited, although, the change had been taking place for some time. A man who comes to our Santa Maria meeting went to Virginia City recently, and an old friend and neighbor in his nineties asked him when he was there to see if the house he grew up in was still standing. He said: "My grandfather built it, we left it in the early nineties

1. William Ernest Henley; 'Invictus.'

when the mines were beginning to play out. There were lots of houses vacant so we didn't even bother to put it up for sale. We never bothered to leave our address with the county clerk, so we never got a tax bill, and of course it's probably been sold long since, if it's still standing." And he said also: "Please locate my grandfather's grave and see that it's taken care of." Well, Ted went there, and he did take care of the grave, and he located the house, and he went to the county courthouse to check out the records. He found that the house had stayed idle from the early 1890's to 1940, when it was put up for sale for back taxes and cost. There was only one bidder; he refused to pay one penny over the back taxes and costs. So he got the house, an old Victorian type house with a lot of gingerbread, for \$6.47. Now that seems like a century or two away, but that was not too many years ago.

What does it tell us, that illustration? The difference in taxation! The difference in the civil government's claim to govern, in its claim to jurisdiction. In those days the government did very little beyond dealing with justice. Because there was more of a Christian character there was very little crime. I use the illustration often of my little home town here in California that in those days, at only twelve hundred people less than now, it has about forty-five hundred now, four thousand five hundred, then it had one policeman and a relief man. They had a little one room jail, which about once a year had some drunk in it. That was a big event, highschool kids would parade by because that was one of the big news in town; somebody was in jail! Big event of the year. Now they have an eighteen man police force and a lot of problems. What's the difference? The moral character. And what happens as the state takes the place of God and says 'we will predestinate, we will plan everything'. It undercuts the faith, and therefore it undercuts character, it undercuts morality, and there is a social disintegration and the answer of the state is more controls, more predestination by the state. You see, predesti-

nation and providence, and other doctrines of our faith, do not disappear when men deny these things to God. They reappear in *political form* as aspects of the life of the state. All men believe in predestination, but they disagree as to the source of it. All men believe in providence, but they no longer believe in the providence of God. They believe in the providence of the state. The disagreement with regard to predestination is as to the *source* of predestination.

Then fifth, predestination is inseparable from grace. To deny predestination to God is to deny his sovereign grace. Grace means that the favor of God was not because of any cause in us, but totally of God's good pleasure. But to say that there is no predestination is to say that determination comes from us, and therefore, when God does something for us it is not grace, it is our doing. We are the determiners, we are the self-savers. The Westminster Confession of Faith in speaking of God's eternal decree says:

“God, from all eternity, did, by the most wise and holy counsel of His own will, freely, and unchangeably ordain whatsoever comes to pass, yet so, as thereby neither is God the author of sin, nor is violence offered to the will of the creatures; nor is the liberty or contingency of second causes taken away, but rather established.”²

God's predestination does no violence to the will of the creature, whereas the state's predestination does violence to us continually. It leads either to finally terror, or to Pavlovian conditioning. One reason why the state is so interested in education is it wants to control us, condition us to obey when it decrees it will govern us. the state, however, is not God. It cannot create, and it cannot govern as a God without disaster.

2. Westminster Confession of 1646: III. Of God's Eternal Decree I.

The state's grace is corruption; it means subsidies, it means immorality.

Then, sixth, we must say with regard to predestination that ultimacy cannot be given to foreknowledge. There are those who say God predestined what he *foresaw*. What this does is to make man ultimate, it says that God is a spectator. God sits on the sidelines with a telescopic lens, as it were, looking down the ages to see what John Doe is going to do way down there and He says: "Oh, that's what's going to happen. Isn't that interesting." No. The Scripture tells us:

"For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate..."³

The two are inseparable, foreknowledge is a part of God's predestination. In fact, Paul condemns this in Romans 9:11-20. He says:

"For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;

It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger.

As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.

What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid.

For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.

So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy.

3. Romans 8:29

For the Scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth.

Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth.

Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will?

Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?"

In other words, God is *emphatic* as he speaks here through the hand of Paul. It's not foreknowledge that comes first. God foreknows because he predestined."

Then, seventh, we must say when we speak of God as the first cause (as the Westminster Confession statement does) and man as the second cause, we do not do this in an Aristotelian or Thomistic sense. Van Til has written in his book on Scripture and confession concerning that:

"Thomas constructs his man and his world by means of the Aristotelian form-matter scheme. Man, he says, is created by God. But this means that God his Creator is the first cause of man's existence. Aquinas virtually identifies the biblical teaching on creation with the Aristotelian notion of cause. Having God as his first cause, man participates in the being of God. But it also means that man is not identical with God but only participates in him and therefore has an existence

apart from God. This separate existence is due to his participation in pure matter, pure nonbeing, pure contingency.”⁴

Now, man must begin as against the climates in Aristotle with God as creator. There is no necessity in God. In Aristotle’s first cause there is necessity. Out of nothing, creation out of nothing, means not only out of no matter but out of no necessity, no material, only out of God’s good pleasure.

What does predestination require of us? This is a good question to ask as we deal with the doctrine. Paul when he speaks in Romans 11:33-36,

“O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor? Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again?”

In these three verses Paul echoes a number of passages from the Old Testament. Isaiah 40:13, Jeremiah 23:18, Job 11:7 and in 15:8 and 35:7, Psalm 36:6, Psalm 92:5, quite a few passages that he echoes there. What do these passages do? They express the joy and the delight of man, his amazement, the depth of the riches of God. The door is barred to all attempts to probe the mind of God. We are told that He is past searching out, that because God is God the mind of man can never penetrate him. God can reveal himself to us, we can know Him truly, but we can never exhaust the inexhaustible riches of God. What is required of us, then, as we contemplate the mysteries of God in predestination? Faith. The faithful present themselves as a living sacrifice to God in continual service. They obey him. They have confidence in action, they

4. Van Til, C., & Sigward, E. H. (1997). *The Articles of Cornelius Van Til* (Electronic ed.). New York.

declare that nothing can separate us from the love of God. When Paul in Romans 8 speaks of God's absolute predestination, he tells us in Romans 8:28:

"...all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose."

He goes on to say:

"If God be for us, who can be against us?"

He tells us that it means that nothing in heaven or on earth, neither life nor death nor angels nor principalities can separate us ever from the love of God, because predestination makes it as sure as the Almighty God Himself.

"Therefore, if God be for us, who can be against us?" This is what predestination means. It is the arming of the Christians. It means that he has an absolute certainty, and assurance that God is begun something and he will complete it, that when God declares the kingdom of this world *shall* become the kingdom of our Lord and Christ, it will be *so*, because God is the predestinator and what he says will come to pass. We can look at the tyrants of this world, and the cheap politicians, and the shoddy preachers who are like Calvin's "sty of swine" preaching a false gospel, and we can know God has declared what your future is if you will not repent and believe. And it is not you who shall prevail no matter what the power and money behind you, because that is nothing against the power of God. It is God who shall prevail. Predestination is our armor. It tells us that our faith is not an empty thing, that it is as strong as the promises of God, so it is a magnificent and a glorious doctrine.

Are there are questions now?

Yes?

[Audience] Can you comment on the meaning of the word 'foreknowledge'?

[Rushdoony] The common and popular definition of foreknowledge when it is separated from predestination is that God was able to look down the ages and to see what was coming, that long before you were born he figured out the situation - just as a good handicap for a horse race can figure out which horses have a chance of winning and placing - only God can do this better than a handicapper. That's the way it is unusually defined by and Arminian. But as Scripture declares it, foreknowledge and predestination are inseparable — God knows because he's drawn up the plans! He knows every detail thereof. So foreknowledge and predestination are inseparable, they are different sides of the same coin.

Yes?

[Audience] How does foreknowledge differ from omniscience?

[Rushdoony] Well, it is an aspect of omniscience, omniscience is total knowledge and wisdom, and foreknowledge is directed to the future, so it's a more specific term than omniscience, omniscience is the broader term.

[Audience] Is foreknowledge used just in reference to the elect?

[Rushdoony] No. To all things. God's foreknowledge is of everything, it is total. In other words we are told that the very hairs of our head are numbered, that not a sparrow falls apart from the knowledge of our Father. So it isn't his reference to the elect alone, we're told with respect to Judas that God knew what he was going to do so it's total.

Yes?

[Audience] Would you comment on the Jarvis Gann initiative? [1978 California Proposition 13]

[Rushdoony] Ah, would I comment on the Jarvis Gann initiative? I'd say, all you can say about it is that it's a question of survival. The question today across the country is who is going to go bankrupt; the cities and states, or the people. The politicians are determined that you and I are going to go bankrupt first, then of course the cities and states will also go bankrupt, they're bankrupting the people of New York City. This is why New York City have block after block of buildings standing abandoned, literally abandoned! And they're talking about a homesteading act to take to the people on welfare and allow them to homestead these houses on the condition that they will renovate them with the expenditure of so many thousand dollars, which, of course the homestead act will provide if and when it is passed.

Now you are I are either going to be bankrupt or the state is going to be bankrupt; I'd much rather see the state of California go bankrupt or else practice economy!

[Audience] Do you think that this will bring the Federal Government in as the subsidizer of local County facilities...?

[Rushdoony] It's already subsidizing, indirectly, most of those things. Meanwhile, what is happening here in this state is that, well --I have dinner with one of our groups from Southern California, he's the scientist who designed the cone for the moon shot and he is connected with the weather satellites now. And he said, almost all the tire companies have left California, the General Motors assembly plant in Southern California is moved out of the State. His company is in a \$40 million building project, but they actually had a board meeting recently to determine whether they would just sell

the building and move out of the State, the reason of course is the general tax on the business picture here.

So it's pure suicide. Professor Laffer of The USC. has said that proposition thirteen will actually increase the revenue in time and it'll bring business back to the State. If not, your taxes will have doubled in one to three years, almost certainly.

Yes?

[Audience] When our Lord says, "I never knew you" to the reprobate, what did he mean by that? What knowledge did he not know them in?

[Rushdoony] Yes... This was in the parable of judgement in Matthew 25, the sheep and the goats before the Lord. There were all in the parable professing Christians, who present themselves: "We are Christians, we are here. Lord, take us in." And so he tells them, "I never knew you as one of mine, depart from me," because they claimed to be his, and he said, "I never knew you as one of mine."

[Audience] Doesn't that have to do with foreknowledge?

[Rushdoony] No, no. That has nothing to do with foreknowledge.

[Audience] Why?

[Rushdoony] It's as in the, ah-- His statement that he knows his sheep and he calls them by name, and so he says these who are not his sheep, but are goats, "I never knew you."

[Audience] Now somebody like Boettner, what's his view?

[Rushdoony] It would be what I have said. This is the Orthodox Reformed position.

Yes?

[Audience] How do we reconcile predesination and fore-knowledge with the gospel invitation? ⁱ

[Rushdoony] The answer to that is, we don't know. God emphatically declares that everything has been determined by him...and yet he also says that the invitation is out to them to come, and he gives them a time...but that man chooses not to. So we're dealing here with a realm of mystery and we have to take Scripture in terms of what it declares. It declares that man is responsible and accountable to God, and yet *absolutely predestined*. Now, it's not our privilege to pick and choose which of those two we want to believe, we have to affirm them both because God does.

Now it would be possible to go into the philosophical grounds of whereby you can justify those two, but even then, you go so far and then you have to stop. The passage I read from the Westminster Confession makes clear that the contingency acceptance causes is not denied but *established* by the predetermination of first causes. In other words that predestination establishes responsibility and accountability, and the free exercise of decision by the individual.

There's a good book on it by C.N. Cochrane, *Christianity and Classical Culture*, but when you've read all this you still have to say, "God says it, I have to accept it," both. We don't pick and choose between the one and the other. Then you see, the problem disappears. Intellectually there are some things that are impossible for us to grasp. I know that when I was a university student my mind boggled at the thought that two different worlds could coexist in the same point in time and space with a slightly different atomic structure, two material worlds! It still boggles me, I've never forgotten that; another world and another room and another group of people could be right here, if only their atomic structure were slightly different, that baffles me, I don't understand it. But I took comfort in the fact that (it was explained to me when I was a

student also) that a good deal of science is giving names to things, not understanding them.

We still don't know how a black cow can eat green grass and make white milk, and we can eat it and have gray hairs as we get older. Now we give it names, you see, but we still don't know why it is so, we don't understand it. Well, we're surrounded by things that are incomprehensible to us in the natural world. We don't grasp the meaning of electricity but we can use it and then we have no problems.

[Audience] Well, I've looked at foreknowledge and omniscience as different, I know that God knows who the elect are and [they] who aren't. But I've looked at foreknowledge as something personal, that like David said, God had known him and in the passage when it says in the Sermon of the Mount, that talks about how he said "Lord, Lord" and he said "I never knew you." That if they were the elect he would have *known* them, he would have *foreknown* them.

[Rushdoony] No, no. That passage doesn't deal with foreknowledge at all.

[Audience] It's this idea that they said they were Christians but they weren't...

[Rushdoony] Yes. Right.

God knew when Noah was building the ark it was going to be for one family, even though he was told to preach.

Well, we will continue with the doctrine of God and conclude our studies in the doctrine of God at our next meeting in May.

8 WHY HAST THOU MADE ME THUS?

Let us pray.

Almighty God our heavenly Father, we gather together to learn the things that are of thee. Open our eyes that we may behold wondrous things out of thy law. That we may hear and that we may act, that we may be hearers and doers of thy Word. O Lord our God, the enemy today rages against thy kingdom on all sides. Make us strong and faithful in thy Word that we may stand against the enemy, so that the power of thy Spirit and Word prevail. Arm us by thy Word and by thy Spirit, that we may be more than conquerors through Jesus Christ our Lord. In His name we pray, amen.

We have been studying the doctrine of God, and as we draw near the conclusion, tonight in our first session we deal with: 'Why hast thou made me thus?' This is a question that of

course, Paul himself raises in order to answer humanists. In Romans 9:19, 21, we read:

“Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will? Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, *Why hast thou made me thus?* Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?”

Paul forestalls all objections by raising the question himself, and by setting it in the context of God’s sovereign and creating will. Paul’s argument is very simple. He reminds all those who raise this question: “God is God, and we are his creation.” He illustrates it by a very simple illustration; the potter and the clay. When the potter takes a piece of clay in his hands he can do with it as he wills and make of it whatever kind of vessel he chooses. But the analogy of the potter and the clay does not even *begin* to describe the difference between God and creation. Now then, shall the creature reply to God? Or indict God? Or say: “Why hast thou made me thus?”

The issue at stake between God and man is sovereignty. If God is sovereign, man is responsible to and accountable to God, but if man is sovereign then God must account to man. Of course, this is the goal man the sinner. Man’s religious quest is to make all things in Heaven and Earth answer to him. All things must be made to serve him, to gratify him, and if God is displeasing then man the sinner says: “so much the worse for God.” Man the sinner seeks the fulfillment of his dream of an egocentric universe, or at the very least, a man, centered universe. The existentialists do not stop there, they’ve gone beyond normal humanism. It cannot be just man, centered, it has to be self, centered; so that, as I’ve pointed out on a previous occasion, for Sartre is not God is

not the problem, but his neighbor, because if I am God, then my neighbor has to be the Devil. Man must reign in his own individual ego. And man seeks this goal in his religion, in politics, in education, in every area of life.

Now, since the Fall, man has been a fast master at sniveling self, justification.

“The woman thou gavest to be with me, she did give me, and I did eat.”¹

Man has always been prone to say that all his sins are somehow God’s fault. All of the griefs of life are blamed, not on his sin or on his folly, but on God’s supposed hard-heartedness. Man continually complains about life, as though the purpose of life were self fulfillment, having an easy time, having an easy living condition. This is what everyone wants, and people resent the fact that God does not give it to them. But Paul is emphatic; we were not made for ourselves, but for the Lord and by the Lord. We are the clay, He is the potter.

Now, again and again Scripture uses that imagery of the clay and the potter, to site a couple of examples, Isaiah 64:8:

“But thou, O Lord, thou art our Father, we are the clay and thou our potter. We all are the works of thy hands.”

Again, Jeremiah 18:3-6:

“Then I went down to the potter’s house, and, behold, he wrought a work on the wheels. And the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter: so he made it again another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make it. Then the word of the Lord came to me, saying, O house of

1. Genesis 3:12

Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter? saith the Lord. Behold, as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are ye in mine hand, O house of Israel."

Scripture is emphatic that we are absolutely God's property. He can do with us as He pleases. We have no ground for complaint against God. We must obey him, we must bring all things including ourselves into captivity to Christ the King. Paul is emphatic, we are not our own, he tells the Corinthians, we are doubly His; He made us, He redeemed us, yet, too often the basic cry of man is this: "Why have you made me thus?"

Part of that cry is the denial of God's right to be God over us. God never asks our consent, the conditions of our lives are entirely of His choosing, and for His purpose. Our calling is to do what He wills. Thus, the doctrine of God and his sovereignty is not a matter of dispute, it is not a matter for discussion; it is the ground and condition of life. We did not make this world, nor ourselves, but God did and we had better live it on God's terms or we are living in terms of an imaginary God and in an imaginary universe. Thus we have to say that the true theologian is the one who hears the Word of God and obeys Him.

In Scripture there are many passages, and some time I'm going to deal exclusively with the meaning of faith. Faith means to hear and to obey. Again and again if you look up those three words in the Bible you will see that they are virtually identical in their meaning in Scripture. When people are spoken of in Scripture as being unbelieving, God says:

"They will not hear, they will not obey, they are a disobedient generation." ²

2. Isaiah 30:9

The three words are identified as virtually the same in their meaning. Adam, therefore, was a true theologian when in the garden of Eden he heard the voice of God and he obeyed it. When he named the animals, tilled and dressed the Garden of Eden. When he obeyed God he was a true theologian because he heard the Word of God, he understood the Word of God, he applied the Word of God. Theology is not an armchair matter, it has to do with the Word of God. The very word 'theology' comes from 'logos' and 'theos;' God, word. Anyone who hears the Word of God or knows the Word of God obeys it and applies it. As long as Adam, therefore, obeyed it and applied it, as long as Adam therefore sought to develop the knowledge of God, worked to enhance God's righteousness or justice, sought after holiness and exercised dominion over the earth he was a sound theologian.

He became a false theologian when he raised questions with respect to God. When he listened to the question of the tempter: "Why hast thou made me thus?" Yea hath God said. Theology, therefore, is not the raising of questions concerning God, but the hearing and obeying of the Word of God and the application and the development of its implications for the totality of life and the world. Thus, Adam was a *false theologian* when he listened to Eve and the tempter, when he raised questions with God's right to command him, and with respect to God's Word and God's sovereignty. The basic questions of false theology have always been: "Yea hath God said?" and: "Why hast thou made me thus?"

The doctrine of God, you see, and all of theology, is intensely practical. It determines how we live, and who rules over us. Is our God the living God of Scripture, or the fallen and the dead Adam? Does God reign in our lives, or is He merely a resource for us? A great deal of the church today does not believe in God in the biblical sense. They believe in God in the humanistic sense as a resource for man. Why not try God?

After all, you've tried marijuana, you've tried liquor, you've tried sex, and you've tried a lot of other things, and they haven't done all that you'd like to have them do for you, so why not try God? If that sounds familiar it's because it's an argument that is often used, and I've heard it used. "Why not try God?" Another resource for man. That's not theology, and it is not Christianity.

Christian faith, moreover, and Christian theology is more than an academic matter. It is the ground of a man's life, of his motivation, of his purpose, of his meaning. When we look at Job in Scripture, we find a very troubled man who raised many questions and had doubts, but the bedrock was a living faith. He could cry out even as he argued with God.

"Though he slay me, yet will I trust him." ³

Job's life and his faith were inseparably one. The questions in Job's mind were peripheral to his life, they were not essential to it. Basic to his life was:

"I know that my redeemer liveth." ⁴

"Though he slay me, yet will I trust him."

Faith is more than a matter of opinion or belief, it is the nature and character of our life, and it is not separable from us. This is why the doctrine of God is so basic; the doctrine of God is a failure in our theology and in our pulpits, it does not establish God as the living God who is the foundation of all things, who we can never question and say: "why hast thou made me thus?" who is God over us. We see ourselves as the clay in his hands. To have a doctrine of God means to have a faith

3. Job 13:15

4. Job 19:25

that we cannot be separated from, one which is the essence of our life. Paul himself faced all the alternatives, and he could say very simply:

“For me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain.”⁵

Thus, as against all false theologies and philosophies and religions, Paul stood firm on the doctrine of the living God who is absolute Lord. And he warned the Colossians:

“Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.”⁶

When we talk about the doctrine of God, therefore, we are talking about something that is more important to our life than our heartbeat and our blood. We are talking about the living God who made us, and in whom we live and move and have our being.

Are there any questions, now?

No questions, then?

Oh, yes! Alright?

[Audience] How would you define an ‘egocentric universe,’ Dr. Rushdoony?⁷

[Rushdoony] An egocentric universe is one in which essentially *you are the universe* and everything in the world exists

5. Philippians 1:21

6. Colossians 2:8

7. Question added due to poor audio.

for your pleasure. The best example of an egocentric concept the universe is existentialism. For existentialism, the only thing that is important is the individual and his self, you are to be influenced by nothing outside of yourself, from the past, the present, the family, church, school, anything else. This is why Sartre could say, as I pointed out that the village wino was a more consistent existentialist than an existentialist Prime Minister, because the Prime Minister would still be thinking about the boulders in the country, while the wino thought only about himself."

Does that help make it clear?

Well let's take a ten minute break now.

9 ANTI-ABSTRACTIONISM

In this session we shall be dealing with what I call Anti-Abstractionism. The idea of course has reference to the doctrine of God. The idea of God, or some substitute for God, keeps cropping up in anti-Christian atheistic philosophy; with good reason. Without the doctrine of God, every philosophy faces very serious problems. The universe, then, is meaningless. A world without God is not only empty of meaning, but also of direction, purpose, and reason. Science becomes impossible in a universe that is totally without meaning. Man's life, then, is also radically and totally absurd. As a result, man again and again resorts to some idea of God while calling it something else in order to preserve the freedom of man. He requires a backdrop of meaning.

As a result, even though the doctrine of evolution insists that chance is ultimate, all the same, the philosophers of evolution keep trying to introduce step by step into that chance process an element of meaning, direction, and purpose. Of course the whole thing is nonsense. Even to speak of a 'chance process' is a contradiction, because a process means an orderly sequence of events, and chance is never orderly. To say that the universe, a monument of order, so that on the one hand

these evolutionists speak of determinism, and yet on the other hand they speak of totally a product of chance. And totally, at all times, functioning by chance involves massive logical contradictions.

There's no question that unbelief requires miracles far greater than any the Bible has ever given us, requires a suspension of logic, requires a staggering faith to believe, somehow, there can be total chance, and yet meaning and order; the antithesis of chance. But man must have everything that God provides, but he does not want God. He will attempt to gain 'God' without God, and his own freedom again and again.

There was a book published in the 1920's which I think in its title summed up the quest of sinful man: *God Without Thunder*.¹ There you have it. Modern man wants a God who gives him all the advantages of God without being God, and without making any claim on man. Well of course, we have a major school of theology that has risen which offers precisely that: Karl Barth and the Barthian school. Everything that has followed Barth, while it has departed from much in Barth, still clings to this essential aspect. Barth saw the emptiness of the universe without God. He faced in a particularly intense form the crisis of modern man.

Barth wanted two things; first of all the freedom of man to be his own God, without saying so. Man had to be his own Lord, his own law. But second, Karl Barth wanted the full insurance of the doctrine of God; the biblical doctrine against an abyss of meaninglessness. And so, Karl Barth affirmed all the biblical doctrines as limiting concepts. That is, he said, we will insist that these are necessary categories of thought but that doesn't mean these are literally true. So Barth affirmed infallibility, inerrancy, the virgin birth, the resurrection,

1. John Crowe Ransom. *God Without Thunder, An Unorthodox Defense Of Orthodoxy*. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1930.

without believing any of it. He had to have authority so that the world would retain meaning, but no meaning that could lay a claim on man, because that is what man does not want. He wants a God that will give the full backdrop of a universe of total meaning, but never a meaning that will say: "This is the way, walk ye in it!"

Now, Paul, long ago warned Timothy against all such attempts at an *abstract* doctrine of God, a 'God without thunder,' a Barthian God who would provide insurance for man but never challenge man's freedom. He wrote in 2 Timothy 3:1-5:

"This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away."

"Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof."

You see, all such men have an abstract doctrine of God. They can affirm every article in the creed, they can claim to believe the Bible from cover to cover in a way that Barth did not, but their faith fits Paul's classification. If they are to all practical intent denying the power of the Word of God.

Now, let me illustrate what it means to have an *abstract* God. I'll not mention any names because I think some of you would immediately know of whom I am speaking. A professor who claims to be a pillar of orthodoxy and to believe the Reformed faith and every word of the Bible, recently became very very angry with a student who wrote a

paper in which he took seriously biblical law. Actually believed when the Bible said something, it meant what it said. The professor called in the student, rebuked him sharply, told him his point of view was not Christian; and finally after a considerable amount of debate back and forth, the professor said with some scorn and contempt: "I suppose you even believe, in terms of Deuteronomy 21:18-21, that rebellious children should be dragged out and stoned to death?" And he spoke of that passage of Scripture with contempt. Well, the student said, "Now, let's drop for the present whether that law is still valid or not - although I believe it is, and I believe it applies to all incorrigible delinquents and all habitual incorrigible criminals. But let's drop that. Do you believe that this law was intended by God to be obeyed from the time of Moses to the time of Christ? Do you believe that for those fifteen hundred years or so, God actually meant that that law should be obeyed? If so, why are you treating it with such contempt? Do you think God was absurd or insane when he gave that law?" "Well," the professor said: "We're not asked to take the law seriously like that. I don't believe God meant that laws like that should be ever obeyed." And he went on to explain his position that God was just trying to teach.

Now, let us consider the applications of that. If God didn't mean this, then did he mean: "thou shalt not kill," and: "thou shalt not commit adultery," or was he just trying to throw a little scare at us so we would go easy on doing those things? What was his professor saying about biblical law? He was saying that it was a limiting concept or a limiting notion, and when he said that God's word was the limiting notion in such serious matter where the death penalty was involved in some cases - he was saying that the God behind the word was a limiting notion, a limiting concept, and not the living God. His God, despite all his profession of faith, is an abstraction. He had the form of Godliness, but he was denying the power thereof.

Well let's take another example. There are many many people who call themselves 'fundamentalists' or 'evangelicals,' in this case the man called himself 'Reformed.' This professor who talks a great deal about the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, but never about biblical law. They detach the Holy Spirit from the Word and get involved in all kinds of spiritual exercises, spiritual gymnastics, as it were; but are not connected with the Word. I know one man, a very likable man, who believes the way to the higher life is to get up and spend two hours in prayer every morning. That's the way to be a better Christian. There are a great many men in his profession who could tell him how to clean up the place where he's working with a little application of God's "thou shalt nots," but no, he prays about everything and does nothing. His God is an abstraction, because he has abstracted the Holy Spirit from the Scriptures, and he has abstracted himself from life. To the degree you depart from the Word, you depart from the Spirit who gave the word. Abstractness is the besetting sin of the Christian church today. This is why it is involved in 'paper Christianity.'

I was very much delighted, in fact, excited this week, to get a telephone call from Washington, DC of a man in congress. He's very excited. He's discovered that God has something to say about everyday affairs in his law, and so he rattled off an outline of things he's going to work on in Congress. Why? Because he believes in the living God, and the living God has told him what has to be done about some very practical things. Is he going to pray about it? He's going to act because he is a man of prayer, of true prayer. There are people today who refuse to get involved in the fight against homosexuality in the name of being 'Christian.' There are actually people who claim to be fundamental or reformed who say that the laws of Leviticus 19 concerning sexuality are 'culturally conditioned,' and that what the Bible has to say about the relationship of male and female is culturally conditioned.

Where is their God? If he doesn't speak in the word he's an abstract idea of God that they have formed. He's an idol, a false image that they have created.

You see, if I define the Spirit-filled life in terms of things that I find easy to do; like spending two hours in the morning in prayer and feeling I've really done my work, I've been close with the Lord; or spending three hours in studying biblical commentaries, or doing exo spiritual exercises which are pleasing to me, then I have defined the Holy Spirit of God in terms of my spirit and the Word of God in terms of my word, and I am guilty of idolatry. I have an abstract 'god' who is not related to the Living God, although I may be using the words of the Bible to clothe that 'god.' In fact, if I define the Spirit-filled life apart from Scripture, then I make my spirit the 'holy spirit.'

Abstractionism gives us at best a God who is a wise counselor who gives us an inspiring word, and unhappily, that's all some people have when they go to the Bible. An inspiring word, from a wise counselor. This is the Word of the Lord, it is a command-word, I am required to read it and to know it even when I find it very uninspiring, when I find it unpleasant because it rubs me up the wrong way by telling me things I'd rather not hear. But I must listen. It is an *inspired* Word even when it is not inspiring to me. You see, the Bible forbids reduction and abstraction. The Bible tells us, for example, in Deuteronomy 4:1-2 that We can neither add nor subtract from Scripture, which is one word, a unity. In Revelation 22:18-19 with the canon closed we are told that words cannot be added to or subtracted from that one Word. There can be no abstraction of anything from it, no reduction. It's the totality of the Word that gives us the Living God, and we approach it in the totality of our being.

Biblical law tells us very very definitely, Leviticus 21:1-5, that every priest of God must be a whole man he cannot be

maimed. Deuteronomy 21:3 tells us that every member of the congregation must be a whole man; this did not mean that those who were crippled, or were eunuchs, or maimed could not be believers, but what it does tell us is that all those who had a position of vote and leadership in the kingdom, it had to be whole men. That the whole of man's being had to be brought into the kingdom, the whole of it had to hear the Word, the whole of it has to obey the word. The total word, the total man.

Now, that's a literal commandment, but it also has a tremendous meaning behind it, because what God is saying is that the whole of our life is under his word, the whole of our life must serve Him. That just as we cannot abstract God out of his word and create an idol, but we believe the whole Word of God, so it is the *whole man* that must serve God with all his heart, mind, and being. We can neither abstract God and make an idol out of Him with our own ideas, nor can we abstract ourselves out of this totality of obedience, and service, and life in and under God and His Word.

To depart from the Bible is to depart from the living God. It is the Word of God which reveals man, not the word of man. It is the Word of God which reveals God, not the word of man. For what Scripture declares to us is:

"Hear ye the word of the Lord."

Abstractionism, therefore, is forbidden in Scripture either with respect to God and His Word, or with respect to any aspect of our lives. We are entirely His, and entirely under Him, and we are called upon to love Him and to serve Him with all our heart, mind, and being.

Are there any questions, now?

Yes?

[Audience] What do you do when the civil law prohibits you from carrying out biblical law, such as the stoning of homosexuals?

[Rushdoony] Yes. Homosexuals are to be executed according to biblical law. Stoning was the biblical method, we're not tied to the methodology, but we are tied to the requirement of the death penalty. We cannot take the law into our own hands, we need to work for a society in which God's Law is kept, and we need to recognize that there is judgement on a society which bypasses God's Law. So we are under judgement. Whenever and wherever to any degree we depart from God's Word, God spells that out very very clearly and it's not by our might, but by God's Word that we must stand.

We can take heart on that homosexual issue that lately there has been a real evidence of resistance to homosexuals. The fact that in such liberal communities such as Dade County, Saint Paul's, Wichita, and Eugene Oregon of all places, the homosexuals got defeated so soundly is remarkable news, it is encouraging.

Any other questions?

NOTES

1. THE DOCTRINE OF THE TRIUNE GOD

- i. Van Til, C. (1971). *Psychology of Religion*. (p. 154). Phillipsburg, NJ.

2. THE TRINITY AND SUBORDINATIONISM

- i. Geehan, E. R., ed. (1971). *Jerusalem and Athens: critical discussions on the theology and apologetics of Cornelius Van Til*. (p. 344). Nutley, NJ.
- ii. Van Til, C. (1955). *The Defense of the Faith*. (p. 7). Philadelphia.
- iii. Question modified due to unclear audio.
- iv. Question modified due to unclear audio.

3. SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY

- i. John 1:3.
- ii. Proverbs 12:10
- iii. 1 John 2:20

5. IDOLATRY

- i. *Question added due to unclear audio.*
- ii. *Question added due to unclear audio.*
- iii. *Question added due to unclear audio.*
- iv. *Question added due to unclear audio.*
- v. *Question added due to unclear audio.*

7. PREDESTINATION

- i. *Question added due to unclear audio.*

