God, Creation & Human Rebellion

Lecture Notes of Archibald Alexander

from the Hand of Charles Hodge

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Preface

And he was a ready scribe…which the LORD God of Israel had given.

—Ezra 7:6

The work before you came about in a unique way. I quite unexpectedly happened upon the manuscript of this volume in an online library. Realizing the value of this hidden treasure, I was quite dismayed that Charles Hodge's cursive notes of Archibald Alexander's lectures on systematic theology were nearly unreadable. But with a bit of time, effort, and scrunching of the face, individual words were picked out, then sentences. I sat back and realized that the only thing preventing this gem from seeing the light of day was a significant amount of human labor that regular people could do.

The amount of labor involved to transcribe and check the 260 manuscript pages would be too much for a solitary, busy individual. However, with a bit of recruiting of friends through the internet, who kindly and readily volunteered their time and work, our ten-person team was able to knock out the task in two months. Great thanks is due to these selfless "scribes" whom the Lord gave for this endeavor: Sheila West, Alex Sarrouf, Tucker Fleming, Justin and Genesis Spratt, Bence Gyula Fazekas, Logan West, Mark Wallace, and Psyche Joy Ives. To our surprise, by the end of the project we were able to read Hodge's old handwriting quite well!

Hodge's notes are sometimes abbreviated and terse. Updated English, punctuation, formatting, and minimal stylistic changes have been made in order to make these notes easier to read, all the while trying to preserve something of their original character. Text and footnotes in brackets are the editor's. Foreign languages were translated by the editor. Alexander's Scripture quotations are almost always from the King James Version or close to it (possibly due to them

being given from memory, from the original languages, or as a paraphrase, or it may be due to Hodge's shorthand). The original manuscript is available at Internet Archive under the "creator," "Hodge, Charles," and is titled, "Lecture Notes of Archibald Alexander on Theology" (https://archive.org/details/lecturenotesofar00hodg). For any questions regarding the original reading, see the manuscript.

This volume is a gift to you out of love for Christ, who gave everything for His beloved people. The editors and transcribers have received no financial compensation for their work in order that the final cost of this volume might be lower and that the work would receive a wider distribution. We hope that, by the story of this preface, many "regular" persons will be inspired to accomplish similar and greater feats that will bless the kingdom of Christ throughout the world. May the Lord make spiritual "silver and gold" become "as plenteous as stones" (2 Chron. 1:15) so that the earth may become "full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea" (Isa. 11:9)!

Travis Fentiman, MDiv

Foreword

Nothing is more to be desired in our day than a return to the theologically rich teaching of the best days of Princeton Seminary. In those blessed years following Archibald Alexander's appointment as the first professor for Princeton Seminary,[1] the study of theology was to the students far more than an academic exercise. Under the deeply spiritual influence of Alexander, students were given a profound love for Christ, for the sacred Scriptures, and for the souls of those who heard them preach.

Princeton Seminary was set up by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America under the leadership of Dr. Alexander in 1812. It is the oldest of the Presbyterian seminaries in the United States. From the start the theology taught there was influenced by Jonathan Edwards and was referred to as belonging to the "Scottish School."

Another representative theologian who taught there included Charles Hodge, who, along with Dr. Alexander, promoted the doctrines of the excellent Westminster Confession and catechisms. The extent to which Princeton Seminary was used by God in those days to advance His church is apparent from the fact that Hodge taught nearly three thousand students in the fifty years of his ministry in the seminary.

The term *Princeton theology*, used to describe the outstanding Bible-based theology of the seminary, began to be used about the year 1831. The exposition of good doctrine was now appearing in the journal known as the *Biblical Repertory and Princeton Review*, which was concerned to enter into controversy with the followers of the well-known, and then popular,

[1] Alexander held three separate titles over his career at Princeton: professor of didactic and polemic theology (1812–1840), professor of pastoral and polemic theology (1840–1851), and professor of pastoral and polemic theology and church government (1851).

evangelist Charles Grandison Finney (1792–1875). Finney, regrettably, belonged to a very different theology that held to such wrong ideas as "perfectionism"—that a Christian can become sinlessly perfect in this life. He also taught that, of himself apart from God's effectual grace, man has the ability to repent.

Sadly, Westminster Confession Calvinism was declining in America at this date. Evolutionary ideas would begin to influence the popular mind in the late 1850s with the publication of Darwin's *Origin of the Species*. Against all such errors the faithful theologians at Princeton Seminary were firmly opposed. Dr. Alexander's students, contrary to the backsliding spirit of their day, were being taught to love the theology of Francis Turretin of Geneva and of John Owen, the eminent Calvinist theologian of England.

During these early days at Princeton, Professor Alexander gathered the students together on Sabbath afternoons for prayer and discussion relating to issues of practical theology. His aim was to build up students' souls in godliness in addition to academic excellence. The goal in view was the saving of souls and the building up of young men to be spiritual leaders whose lives reflected genuine godliness.

According to A. A. Hodge,[2] one of the outstanding traits of Alexander was his gift of originality, which showed itself in his genius for spontaneous ways of expressing deep, spiritual truths. As we discover from his biographies, Dr. Alexander had a wonderful memory enriched by his wide reading. He had an amazing capability for giving wise counsel to those who sought his advice and opinion.

A. A. Hodge also informs us that Dr. Alexander possessed the remarkable gift of being able to talk wisely. Alexander himself was aware of this, and he could speak of himself in this

[2] Archibald Alexander Hodge (1823–1886) was the son of Charles Hodge, named after the latter's beloved professor.

way: “If I have any talent, it is to talk sitting in my chair.” He had a mind schooled in the best Reformed doctrine.

In the classroom students were taught divine truths so clearly that they sometimes felt their eyes could see things invisible and eternal. Students sat spellbound as they listened to Alexander expound divine doctrines, the power of which shaped mind and character and prepared them for their future life’s work in the pulpit. Reverence for God, the Bible, and truth are all-important if a man is to be an influential preacher.

Among the eminent theologians who studied at Princeton was Charles Hodge (1797–1878), who graduated in 1819 and became an eminent instructor himself at the seminary in 1820. The book now before you consists of notes on theology taught by Dr. Alexander in the seminary and written down by Hodge in his own cursive handwriting. Little did young Hodge imagine that his carefully written records of Alexander’s lectures would be published and made available to the Christian world some two hundred years later! But such is the wonderful providence of God.

Alexander later became the professor of pastoral and polemic theology and church government. In his declining years, he supported many worthy and good causes such as the American Sunday School Union, the American Bible Society, and the American Tract Society. “Old age,” Alexander wrote in later life, “is not an unpleasant part of life, where health and piety are possessed.” He fell ill on September 18, 1851, and felt sure he was soon going to die. His condition worsened on October 17 to the point where he became unable to walk any more. His mind, though, was as clear as ever. He offered a lovely prayer in preparation for eternity and went to be with the Lord a few days later on October 22, 1851.

Maurice Roberts

Verbi Dei Minister

Introduction

Dr. James M. Garretson

What value can be found in a seminary student's lecture notes from the early nineteenth century? Much in every way when one learns that the scribblings are the classroom records of two of the greatest theologians and seminary educators in the history of American Christianity.

It is given to only a few men each century to have an impact on future generations of church leaders and educators. In this respect, the lives and literary legacies of Archibald Alexander (1772–1851) and his prize student and successor, Charles Hodge (1797–1878), are without peer in the record of American theological education. Readers familiar with the history of American Christianity recognize the strategic role Princeton Theological Seminary served in its development and expansion. Founded in 1812 by the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, the seminary was intended to be a bastion of orthodoxy in preparation of a pious and learned Presbyterian ministry.[1] Rooted in the theological heritage of colonial Presbyterianism, Princeton was envisioned as a ministerial training institution devoted to the cultivation of practical, or experimental, piety as much as to the formation of a Christian mind.[2]

The founding of seminaries during the nineteenth century signaled a new and more advanced model of ministerial training intended to offset population growth and the shortage of

[1] For recent overviews of American Presbyterianism, see Lefferts A. Loetscher, *A Brief History of the Presbyterians* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1983); James H. Smylie, *A Brief History of the Presbyterians* (Louisville: Geneva Press, 1996); D. G. Hart and John H. Muether, *Seeking A Better Country: 300 Years of American Presbyterianism* (Phillipsburg, N.J.: P&R Publishing, 2007); Bradley J. Longfield, *Presbyterians and American Culture: A History* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2013); and S. Donald Fortson III, *The Presbyterian Story: Origins and Progress of a Reformed Tradition* (n.p.: Presbyterian Lay Committee, 2013). Hart and Muether are particularly useful in examining the theological currents that affected the development of Presbyterianism in the United States.

[2] For a primary source collection of sermons, lectures, articles, and essays on the theology of pastoral ministry that was taught at Princeton Seminary during its first century, see James M. Garretson, *Princeton and the Work of the Christian Ministry*, 2 vols. (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 2012).

available clergy for existing pulpits and an expanding frontier. Denominational seminaries also provided opportunity for preservation of their ecclesiastical heritage for future generations.

Various factors gave impetus to the new educational model. As American colleges adjusted their curriculum at the end of the eighteenth century to accommodate advances related to the scientific Enlightenment, church leaders became increasingly distressed at the diminishing number of graduates interested in pursuing ministerial office. Many schools also noted a decline in student piety. Campus life was often marred by decadence and student rebellion. The combined impact of these circumstances helped undermine the Christian educational interests for which the majority of American colleges had been founded during and after the colonial period.[3] Institutions originally founded to train and supply future ministers to American congregations were now redirecting their energies to other educational objectives.[4]

In addition to a period of massive political upheaval, American culture in the late eighteenth century also saw the rise of the Radical Enlightenment and its corresponding impact on church and society. Deism and infidelity were rampant, immorality was widespread, and church attendance was in decline. Philosophical skepticism and a virulent hostility to Christianity threatened the moral foundations of society, even as churches struggled to defend and explain Christian doctrine in relation to the emerging scientific and philosophical paradigms.[5]

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[3] For analysis of these changes and the concerns they created for the founders of Princeton Theological Seminary, see Mark A. Noll, "The Founding of Princeton Seminary," *Westminster Theological Journal* 42 (Fall 1979): 72–110. For a more detailed examination of the institutional and educational changes taking place at the college since its founding in 1746, see Mark A. Noll, *Princeton and the Republic, 1768–1822: The Search for a Christian Enlightenment in the Era of Samuel Stanhope Smith* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1989).

[4] For an informative introduction to the period, see William C. Ringenberg, *The Christian College: A History of Protestant Higher Education in America* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2006), 41.

[5] For important studies documenting the broader development of theology in America during this period and its impact on American church life, see Paul C. Conkin, *The Uneasy Center: Reformed Christianity in Antebellum America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995); and E. Brooks Holifield, *Theology in America: Christian Thought from the Age of the Puritans to the Civil War* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2003).

American colonial colleges had placed strong emphasis on training in grammar, logic, and rhetoric. Study of Greco-Roman literature and mastery of the Greek and Latin languages were mandatory. The curriculum included study of theology and Christian evidences, but the number of required courses was minimal in relation to the overall program. Upon graduation, ministerial aspirants would often attach themselves to resident clergy in preparation for ordination. While useful for the practical experience it provided, the model was uneven and very much dependent on the personality and availability of the overseeing minister.

The older model with its classical curriculum necessarily gave way to study in the hard sciences. Declining interest in the ministerial office paralleled student enthusiasm for the new courses being adopted. The classics curriculum would undergo revision in the face of new advances in science. While theological courses had been part of traditional curriculum among America's colleges, study of the liberal arts had always overshadowed time spent on theology, to the detriment of the ministerial preparation envisioned. Increasing hostility to historic Christianity likewise impacted curriculum consideration. Confronted with the apologetic challenges of Enlightenment thought and deterioration in campus piety, it became apparent a new model for ministerial training was needed.

Not everyone was as equally committed to the educational preparation valued by the Presbyterian Church. Cultural factors at home and academic changes abroad would have an equally profound impact on how ministerial preparation was conceived and implemented in American church life at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Populism would prove a powerful factor in American culture, as would the increasing allure of the German university model to American educational philosophy. The former would devalue formal education, while

the latter would methodologically and principally corrupt the subject matter from within the academy.

It is arguable that with the passing years, the educational level of clergy declined in relation to the democratizing tendencies inherent to the rise of American populism during the early nineteenth century.[6] Formal training was disparaged by some and minimized by others. Clericalism was rejected in favor of a democratic populism, leveling hierarchical distinctions in both society and the church. Whether in empowering the common man in society or the laity within the churches, the effect devalued structured leadership. Presbyterianism was affected by the movement, but not to the extent of other church traditions.

Simultaneous to these developments in America was the rise of German universities with their accompanying specializations in ancient Near Eastern literature, languages, and culture. The German university model would subsequently redefine the nature of biblical research, the writing of theology, and the framing of the Christian message as it found popular outlet in the pulpit. Interest in a supposedly detached scientific objectivity in studying the natural sciences and now sacred truth had replaced historic recognition of and dependence on the work of the Holy Spirit in illumining a biblical text for its meaning and application. Sacred learning had given way to secular methodology in studying the Bible and writing theological texts, which was reflected in both academic and popular publications.

However well-intentioned the fresh discovery of the Bible's meaning and message may have been, the effect of the new educational model would prove disastrous to the church's spiritual vitality and witness, both in Europe and North America. Rather than reinforcing Christian belief, this new focus maligned the Bible's message and denied the integrity of its

[6] For the standard study, see Nathan O. Hatch, *The Democratization of American Christianity* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1989).

transmission and translation. Once the Bible's inspiration was denied, its authority was rejected and religious skepticism became the order of the day in the very institutions earmarked for training clergy.

But the problem with the German model was bigger than the methodological issues being embraced. A detached and scientific objectivity to the learning process is no more attainable in the study of theology than in any other field of study. Learning is interactional between subject and object, even more so when the interest of study is the person-to-person, divine-human relationship of Creator and creature. In this interaction, learning is always relational and never impersonal. Consequently, a person's character and faith, or lack thereof, will have an inevitable impact on one's approach to studying the Bible and embracing its message of salvation and judgment.

What is true for the student is equally true for the teacher. Knowledge of spiritual truth requires a spiritually teachable disposition (John 7:17). Although the German university model became normative in American college education, an awareness of the Holy Spirit's role in ministerial education had not been forgotten by Princeton Seminary's founders. They believed that spiritual truth could be properly understood, embraced, and taught only by spiritually minded men. The doctrines we believe must be accompanied by a believing faith in the revealed deposit of divine truth embodied and preserved in the Old and New Testaments. Apart from the new birth, or divine regeneration of the human soul, theology can never be taught properly nor understood "experimentally" in all the ways Christ intends His Word to be believed and obeyed.

Accordingly, Princeton Seminary's founding documents drew attention to the spiritual character of the professors as well as the subject matter.[7] Aiming for an able and faithful

[7] For a comprehensive account of the ministerial and spiritual priorities that characterized the seminary from its founding in 1812 through its reorganization in 1929, see David B. Calhoun, *Princeton Seminary*, vol. 1,

ministry, the school's founders and early faculty were as equally committed to the cultivation of personal piety in their individual and community life as they were to serious academic study in preparation for the grave and holy calling of the Christian ministry.[8]

In contrast to the limited instruction in theology, biblical studies, church history, and practical theology provided by colonial colleges, the new model of ministerial education would provide several years of advanced study in these respective fields. The classical curriculum was still considered the best foundation for a learned ministry, but now it would be accompanied by the intensive and detailed coursework that marked early nineteenth-century ministerial curriculum. Some departments in the new seminary curriculum were based on training introduced at college or pre-college academies and tutorials. Instruction in homiletics, or preaching, built on existing principles relevant to the history, purpose, and practice of rhetoric. Courses in exegesis, biblical studies, and doctrine were covered in greater depth. Likewise, instruction in church history, historical theology, and church government took on new importance in relation to the developing identity and mission of American Presbyterianism.

While it was not uncommon for students to have mastered Greek and Latin *before* entering college, study of the Hebrew language was only in its infancy in American educational institutions at the beginning of the nineteenth century. The inclusion of Hebrew studies in the seminary curriculum was a new development in ministerial academic formation. Few today realize that upon completion of his two-year study in European universities, thirty-year-old Charles Hodge was one of the most competent linguists of ancient and modern languages living in America during the 1830s.

Faith and Learning, 1812–1868 (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1994); and David B. Calhoun, *Princeton Seminary,* vol. 2, *The Majestic Testimony, 1869–1929* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1996).

[8] For an institutional history of the school, see James H. Moorhead, *Princeton Seminary in American Religion and Culture* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012). For a study of Alexander's role in founding the seminary, see James M. Garretson, "Archibald Alexander and the Founding of Princeton Theological Seminary," *The Confessional Presbyterian* 8 (2012): 3–19.

Although changing nineteenth-century educational currents would eventually place greater emphasis on the ministerial office as a *profession* rather than a *calling*, initial interest in a specialized ministerial curriculum paralleled developing specialization within the university curriculum. Seminaries sought to provide the kind of specialized training that would enable ministers to defend and present biblical truth with a commensurate level of education equivalent to the best universities of the time.

A school's reputation is only as good as the faculty it employs.[9] While the broad contours of the curriculum and educational objectives were determined in advance of faculty appointments, it was not until the opening year of the school in 1812 that Archibald Alexander was elected as its first professor of didactic and polemic theology. Alexander would be joined the following year by Samuel Miller (1769–1850), and a few years after that Charles Hodge would join his former professors as instructor in biblical languages. Together, the three men would establish the spiritual and intellectual trajectory of Princeton Theological Seminary for generations to come.[10]

Archibald Alexander was middle aged when he was appointed as Princeton Theological Seminary's first professor.[11] His background served him well in his new position. As a young man, he worked as an itinerant missionary along the Virginia/North Carolina border, afterward

[9] For a collection of funeral sermons, eulogies, and related biographical observations on nineteenth- and early twentieth-century faculty, see James M. Garretson, *Pastor-Teachers of Old Princeton: Memorial Addresses for the Faculty of Princeton Theological Seminary, 1812–1921* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 2012). For a related study, see Gary Steward, *Princeton Seminary (1812–1929): Its Leaders' Lives and Works* (Phillipsburg, N.J.: P&R Publishing, 2014).

[10] For analysis of the theological emphases that emerged during the school's first century, see Mark A. Noll, *The Princeton Theology, 1812–1921: Scripture, Science, and Theological Method from Archibald Alexander to Benjamin Warfield* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1983).

[11] For a biography of Alexander's life, see James W. Alexander, *The Life of Archibald Alexander, D.D.* (1854; repr., New York: Sprinkle Publications, 1991). For a twentieth-century intellectual biography, see Lefferts A. Loetscher, *Facing the Enlightenment and Pietism: Archibald Alexander and the Founding of Princeton Theological Seminary* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood, 1983). For a brief introduction and overview of Alexander's life, see John Oliver Nelson, "Archibald Alexander, Winsome Conservative (1772–1851)," *Journal of the Presbyterian Historical Society*, 35 (March 1957): 15–33. For an older overview and evaluation, see *Biblical Repertory and Princeton Review*, "Archibald Alexander," index volume, no. 1 (January 1870): 42–67.

serving as pastor of several rural charges and as president of Hampden-Sidney College, a small school in Virginia. He subsequently received a call to pastor the Pine Street Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia, where he served prior to his appointment at the seminary.[12]

A natural scholar, Alexander was also a popular preacher and caring pastor.[13] Converted during his teenage years, Alexander witnessed firsthand the transformation of Virginian culture as it was impacted by revival during the 1790s. A profound spiritual sensitivity marked his pastoral ministry and labors as a professor. Alexander was often sought out by congregants and students for spiritual guidance on matters of faith and practice.[14]

Alexander wrote apologetic works, theological treatises, academic articles, and popular publications, but he is probably most remembered for his important work *Thoughts on Religious Experience*, first published in 1841.[15] The nineteenth-century equivalent to Jonathan Edwards's eighteenth-century classic, *The Religious Affections*, Alexander's treatment is a penetrating series of essays on the work of the Holy Spirit in relation to a life of piety.[16]

As the seminary's founding faculty member, Alexander was responsible for designing the curriculum and providing classroom instruction. By the end of the first academic year, student enrollment had increased, and the General Assembly appointed Samuel Miller to serve alongside

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[12] Alexander's preparation for his faculty appointment at the seminary is recounted in John DeWitt, "Archibald Alexander's Preparation for His Professorship," *Princeton Theological Review* 3 (October 1905): 573–94.

[13] For a study on Alexander's theology of preaching and pastoral ministry, see James M. Garretson, *Princeton and Preaching: Archibald Alexander and the Christian Ministry* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 2005). For observations on Alexander's published sermons, see Hughes Oliphant Old, *The Reading and Preaching of the Scriptures in the Worship of the Christian Church*, vol. 6, *The Modern Age* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007): 228–43.

[14] For a representative selection of Alexander's writings on piety, see James M. Garretson, *A Scribe Well-Trained: Archibald Alexander and the Life of Piety* (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2011).

[15] For a recent bibliography of Alexander's material, see Wayne Sparkman, "The Rev. Dr. Archibald Alexander (1772–1851): An Annotated Bibliography," *The Confessional Presbyterian* 8 (2012): 120–52.

[16] See Archibald Alexander, *Thoughts on Religious Experience* (1840; repr., Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1978). For a critical review of Alexander's work, see Gordon E. Jackson, "Archibald Alexander's *Thoughts on Religious Experience*, a Critical Revisiting," *Journal of Presbyterian History* 51 (Summer 1973): 141–54. For an overview and summary of its contents, see Steward, *Princeton Seminary (1812–1929)*, 73–96.

Alexander as professor of church history and ecclesiastical government. Apart from shared instruction in pastoral theology and homiletics, the two men were free to specialize in their respective departments.[17]

Alexander, like several of his sons who would later teach at the seminary, was a polymath. Having received his education as a young man through tutors and regional academies, he was particularly influenced by Rev. William Graham while a student at Liberty Hall Academy.[18] Graham was a graduate of the College of New Jersey, where he studied under Dr. John Witherspoon. Instruction in moral philosophy and rhetoric marked Witherspoon's curricular interests, as did incorporation of elements of the Scottish philosophical school known as Common Sense Realism. Graham's academy was modeled in large measure on Witherspoon's educational emphases.

Scottish philosophy—a mixture of Baconian inductive thought and observations on how the human mind or senses can know not just perceptions but objective reality—was extremely influential in shaping American intellectual culture. Authors such as Francis Hutcheson, Thomas Reid, and Dugald Stewart found inroads into American society through the academy and pulpit alike. The approach proved a popular apologetic deterrent to the philosophical skepticism and resulting moral relativism associated with thinkers such as David Hume. Baconian methodology and Scottish Realist philosophy would become the reigning intellectual paradigm undergirding theological instruction in America throughout the nineteenth century, although with waning influence outside more conservative theological institutions in the decades following.

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[17] For Miller's instruction on preaching and the work of the pastoral ministry, see James M. Garretson, *An Able and Faithful Ministry: Samuel Miller and the Pastoral Office* (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2014).

[18] Modeled on the curriculum John Witherspoon established under his educational reform as president of the College of New Jersey, Liberty Hall Academy placed strong emphasis on classical studies, moral philosophy, criticism, "practical mathematics, mensuration, and navigation." Graham's academy eventually became Washington and Lee University.

Alexander first began studying theology during his teenage years. Puritan authors such as Bates, Boston, Flavel, and Owen, alongside the writings of Jonathan Edwards, helped shape Alexander's theological convictions, as did the works of Hugh Blair on belles lettres and rhetoric. Francis Turretin's three-volume *Institutes of Elenctic Theology* was instrumental in fine-tuning Alexander's maturing theological framework, as were the secondary standards of the Presbyterian Church, the Westminster Confession of Faith and Larger and Shorter Catechisms.[19] Turretin's work served as the main theological text for the study of theology at Princeton Theological Seminary for most of the nineteenth century until replaced by Hodge's three-volume systematic theology in the early 1870s.[20]

For the majority of his tenure at Princeton, Alexander served as professor of didactic and polemic theology. With increasing age, he relinquished the chair to Charles Hodge in 1840, at which time Hodge was elected by the General Assembly to the renamed chair of exegetical and didactic theology. During his final decade at the seminary, as professor of pastoral and polemic Theology,[21] Alexander was able to devote more of his attention to the field of practical theology—a subject for which he was eminently suited and one which, with the passing of the centuries, remains the most celebrated among his many literary contributions.[22]

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[19] For a recent critical edition of Turretin's classic work, see Francis Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, 3 vols., trans George M. Giger, ed. James T. Dennison Jr. (Phillipsburg, N.J.: P&R Publishing, 1992–1996). For a study on Turretin's life and writings, see James W. Alexander, "Institutio Theologiae Elencticae," *BRPR* 20, no. 3 (July 1848): 452–63.

[20] Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, 3 vols. (1871–1872; repr., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979).

[21] In the last year of his professorship (1851), Alexander's title was expanded to include church government.

[22] "Christians, and especially clergymen, of strong intellect, of studious habits, of scholastic attainments, often find their professional pursuits so absorbing to their taste, as to become their great temptation. They bury themselves in books—exhaust their minds in researches, which though they may be theological in their relations, are purely intellectual in their process. But, I think no one who intimately knew Dr. Alexander can think otherwise, than that profoundly as he studied the range of theological and philosophical science, his heart was in the Bible, and in experimental religion; that *his* musings were not on the speculative theories of his own, or other men's minds; but in the revelations of the divine Spirit, and the actual workings of the human heart, in its relations to God and inspired truth." From John Hall, "A Sermon on the Death of Dr. Alexander," cited in Garretson, *Pastor-Teachers of Old Princeton*, 13.

Like Alexander, Hodge's family was of Scots-Irish descent. But unlike Alexander's rural upbringing and stable family life, Hodge's personal history prior to his college years was marked by repeated tragedy, financial stress, and relocation.[23] Presbyterian in affiliation, the Hodges would be numbered among influential civic and commercial leaders in the city of Philadelphia at the end of the eighteenth century. Hodge's father had served as a surgeon with the Continental Army during the American Revolution, later becoming a prosperous dockside merchant in Philadelphia. Six months after Charles was born, his father died, leaving his widowed mother responsible for raising two of the five children who had not succumbed to measles or the yellow fever epidemics that ravaged Eastern Seaboard cities such as Philadelphia during the 1790s.

Unfortunately, the Hodges never recovered from the death of their father; the family's commercial interests suffered loss through absence of his entrepreneurial skill, regional epidemics that decimated their business ventures and home life, and later embargoes arising out of war with England. An industrious caretaker of her children's needs and future professional security, Mary Hodge, Charles's mother, took in boarders and rented out portions of the houses in which they lived in order to make ends meet. The family would move as needed to accommodate their modest income; at one point, Mary Hodge sent Charles to Somerville, New Jersey, to attend a college preparatory academy in anticipation of a future career in medicine.

Mary Hodge's industriousness provided important educational opportunities for her children, first in Philadelphia and later at the College of New Jersey. Hodge's older brother, Hugh, would become a renowned Philadelphia gynecologist whose groundbreaking expertise in this field furthered advancement of female medical care from which today's practitioners still

[23] For an older biography of Hodge, see Archibald Alexander Hodge, *The Life of Charles Hodge, D.D., LL.D., Professor in the Theological Seminary, Princeton, N.J.* (1880; repr., Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 2010). For recent treatments of Hodge's life, see Paul Gutjahr, *Charles Hodge: Guardian of American Orthodoxy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011); Andrew A. Hoeffecker, *Charles Hodge: The Pride of Princeton* (Phillipsburg, N.J.: P&R Publishing, 2011); and S. Donald Fortson III, *Charles Hodge* (Darlington, UK: EP Books, 2013).

benefit. Charles Hodge would find early entrance to the College of New Jersey, graduating in 1815 at the age of eighteen. The seminary began a year prior to Hodge's matriculation at the college; as a young boy, Hodge was present in the gallery, listening to Alexander's inaugural lecture and related presentations by Samuel Miller and others delivered at the opening convocation in August of 1812.

While growing up in Philadelphia, Hodge was influenced by his family pastor and prominent churchman and educator, Dr. Ashbel Green.[24] By the time of Hodge's arrival at the College of New Jersey, Green was serving as president of the college and in a similar capacity on the seminary board. Like Hodge's future seminary mentors, Alexander and Miller, Green was also committed to confessional churchmanship and experimental piety. Beloved as a pastor and respected as a preacher, Green placed strong emphasis on catechetical training in the spiritual nurture of his congregation and care for covenant children.[25] Green's pastoral influence in Hodge's life predated Alexander's; while often overlooked, it played a seminal role in shaping Hodge's life and theology.

Revival swept through the college during the winter months of 1814–1815. Green and Alexander spoke often to the students and provided spiritual counsel. Seventeen-year-old Charles Hodge, along with a large number of the student body, experienced the effects of the Spirit's work in conversion and commitment to a life of piety. In January 1815, Hodge made public

[24] Green played an important role in rebuilding the College of New Jersey, founding Princeton Theological Seminary, and shaping nineteenth-century American Presbyterianism. For an informative introduction to Green's life, see Joseph H. Jones, ed., *The Life of Ashbel Green, V.D.M.* (New York: Robert Carter & Bros., 1849). A review of Green's biography by J. W. Alexander appeared in the same year. See James W. Alexander, "The Life of Ashbel Green, V.D.M., Begun to Be Written by Himself in His Eighty-Second Year, and Continued till His Eighty-Fourth; Prepared for the Press, at the Author's Request, by Joseph H. Jones, Pastor of the Sixth Presbyterian Church, Philadelphia," *BRPR* 21, no. 4 (October 1849): 563–82.

[25] Hodge sat under Green's catechetical instruction, the substance of which was subsequently published in two volumes (vol. 1, 1829; vol. 2, 1841). For a review of the first volume of Green's lectures, see Archibald Alexander, "Review: *Lectures on the Shorter Catechism*, by Ashbel Green," *BRTR* 2, no. 2 (1830): 297–309. Alexander's remarks can also be found in Garretson, *Princeton and the Work of the Christian Ministry*, 1:315–16.

profession of faith and joined the Presbyterian Church at Princeton. The experiences of these months would prove instrumental in Hodge's spiritual development and future leadership in the church.

Upon graduation from the college in 1815, Hodge returned to Philadelphia to live with his mother and recuperate his health. As the months passed, Hodge felt called to the Christian ministry and planned on attending seminary. During these months, he also had opportunity to accompany Alexander on an itinerant missionary tour, further deepening his friendship with the older man. By the time Hodge completed his seminary studies in 1819, Alexander had become more of a spiritual father than a professor to the fatherless young man.[26]

While a student at seminary and during the year following his graduation, Hodge's vision for Christian service became more focused as he tested his gifts in preaching and pastoral care in combination with Alexander's mentoring and spiritual friendship. He pursued licensure while serving various temporary ministry positions. Hodge soon received invitation from Alexander to serve at the seminary as instructor of biblical languages. Hodge's scholarly aptitude seemed to lay claim on service as a professor over that of a pastor-preacher, although he continued to preach as opportunity afforded. Following additional study of the Hebrew language while in Philadelphia, in May 1820 Hodge received a one-year appointment to teach biblical languages at his alma mater. Hodge's scholarship and classroom competence would be rewarded by the General Assembly when he was elected on May 24, 1822, as professor of oriental and biblical literature, a position he would hold for almost two decades until his reassignment to the department of exegetical and didactic theology.

[26] For a touching review of Alexander's biography, see Charles Hodge, "Memoir of Dr. Alexander," *BRPR* 27, no. 1 (January 1855): 148. Hodge's review can also be found in Garretson, *Pastor-Teachers of Old Princeton*, 27–52.

Samuel Miller's impact on Hodge's student life at the college and seminary was also substantial. A son of the manse and longtime pastor in the city of New York, Miller was an intellectual historian who became a renowned professor of church history and church government. His publications in these fields became standard treatments of their topics. Dignified and stately in deportment, Miller, like his colleague Archibald Alexander, was passionately invested in the lives of his students. An advantage of the smaller student enrollment during the seminary's first decade was the close personal contact it provided between faculty and students. The formality of the classroom was more than offset by the familial atmosphere of the campus, with its common ministerial vision and fostering of lifelong friendships. Miller and Alexander were in many respects de facto spiritual father figures for the young men under their tutelage. Their piety, meekness, and humility bore powerful testimony in the example of Christlike love and service that marked their public ministry and campus presence.

Besides the formal classroom instruction, one of the means used to foster experimental piety among the students as Christian men and in their future service as pastors was the Sabbath afternoon conference. Here Alexander and Miller, and later Hodge, would discuss the practical implications of applied theology to the students' lives and public calling. An inspiring record of these weekly gatherings is provided by A. A. Hodge in a collection of his father's sermon outlines, *Princeton Sermons*.[27]

A related but separate observation on the spiritual impact of the two senior professors can be found in an address Charles Hodge delivered at the reopening of the seminary chapel on

[27] See Charles Hodge, *Conference Papers: Or Analyses of Discourses, Doctrinal and Practical, Delivered on Sabbath Afternoon to the Students of the Seminary* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1879); reprinted as *Princeton Sermons: Outlines of Discourses, Doctrinal and Practical, at Princeton Theological Seminary* (1958; repr., Banner of Truth, 2011), vii–xviii.

September 27, 1874. Hodge's remarks capture the pervasive spiritual atmosphere present at the campus during its opening decades, due in no small measure to Alexander and Miller:

> They were in the first place, eminently holy men. They exerted that indescribable but powerful influence which always emanates from those who live near to God. Their piety was uniform and serene; without any taint of enthusiasm or fanaticism. It was also Biblical. Christ was as prominent in their religious experience, in their preaching, and in their writings, as he is in the Bible. Christ's person, his glory, his righteousness, his love, his presence, his power, filled the whole sphere of their religious life. When men enter a Roman Catholic Church, they see before them a wooden image of Christ extended upon a cross. To this lifeless image they bow. When students entered this Seminary, when its first professors were alive, they had held up before them the image of Christ, not graven by art or man's device, but as portrayed by the Spirit on the pages of God's word; and it is by beholding that image that men are transformed into its likeness from glory to glory. It is, in large measure, this constant holding up of Christ, in the glory of his person and the all-sufficiency of his work, that the hallowed influence of the fathers of this Seminary is to be attributed.[28]

Any assessment of Alexander's instruction in theology must keep these considerations in mind in order to understand the personal and intensely spiritual backdrop to Hodge's academic experience. The pervasive spiritual atmosphere present during weekly meetings in the "Old Oratory," was equally present in the formal classroom instruction. Study of theology always took place within this devotional context. Even the most metaphysical considerations were examined within this atmosphere; while speculation was eschewed, students were taught that theology, properly conceived, is doxological in nature and must be approached with a spiritual disposition in order to live all of life *coram Deo*.[29] The combination of spiritual fervor; experience of revival; power of Spirit-anointed, Christ-centered preaching; missionary interest; faculty involvement; and sense of the holy calling of the pastoral office would have done much to shape the aspirations and convictions of the young men who attended the school at this time.

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[28] See Hodge, *Life of Charles Hodge*, 586–87.

[29] Nicholas Murray would later write, "His was the most simple-hearted piety. He read the Bible like a child, and he exercised a simple faith in all it taught and promised. There was no effort to explain away its doctrines, or to modify its principles by the teaching of philosophy falsely so called. He was a metaphysician; and yet all the metaphysics and German mysticism upon earth weighed not a feather with him against one simple text of Scripture fairly interpreted. His mind and heart were imbued with Divine truth, and his experience of its power was rich and ripe." See Alexander, *Life of Archibald Alexander*, 654.

Faculty commitment to spiritual life was accompanied by diligent study of Scripture and related texts. In his work as a professor, Alexander read widely in biblical, systematic, and historical theology. Criticism, hermeneutics, and typology were areas of concentrated research.[30] Alexander was conversant with the works of Herman Witsius, Johannes Cocceius, and other seventeenth-century divines whose writings had yet to be translated from their Latin originals. Among the subjects included in the theology curriculum was the study of mental philosophy (epistemology), an area of special interest for Alexander.

Alexander's approach to the study of mental philosophy is summarized in the correspondence of Joseph Henry, LLD, a former student at the College of New Jersey and later secretary of the Smithsonian Institute:

> He had studied in early life the subject of mental philosophy, and had adopted the principles of the inductive method. All ideas he considered as derived from sensation or consciousness, and without attempting to explain the essence of mind or of matter, he contented himself with a knowledge of the laws of their phenomena, and with referring these to the will of the Creator of the universe. All knowledge superior to this was derived from revelation, the truths of which, however mysterious and beyond reason, he adopted with implicit confidence. He was much interested in all questions of physical science, and particularly in the researches in which I was engaged. All his conceptions of truth were simple and clear. His was not a mere speculative faith, or a theoretical system of Christian duty, but one which was eminently reduced to practice. He taught by his example as well as by his precepts, and his influence will long live after him, not only in his published works, but in the memory of his pupils, and in its effect on the character and conduct of all who enjoyed the pleasure and profit of his quaintance.[31]

Like his mentor, William Graham, Alexander formulated his own system of mental philosophy. While Alexander embraced aspects of the Scottish school, he adapted it where appropriate in relation to studying Scripture and the theology of the Westminster standards.[32]

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[30] For related publications, see Archibald Alexander, *The Canon of the Old and New Testaments Ascertained; or the Bible Complete without the Apocrypha and Unwritten Traditions* (New York: D. A. Borrenstein for G. & C. Carvill, 1826); and Archibald Alexander, *Evidences of the Authenticity, Inspiration, and Canonical Authority of the Holy Scriptures* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1826).

[31] See Alexander, *Life of Archibald Alexander*, 685–86.

[32] For observations on Alexander's instruction on the relationship between that of the intellect and affections, see Loetscher, *Facing the Enlightenment and Pietism*, 168. For a perceptive article examining the

Alexander viewed its observations as preparatory to, but not determinative of, the content and character of revealed truth. Alexander's religious epistemology defended a unitary operation of the soul (mind, will, and emotions) while recognizing rational and moral dimensions to human cognition. Alexander's biographer summarizes his approach:

> Deeply persuaded that many theological errors have their origin in a bias derived from false metaphysics, he set about the methodizing of his thought upon mental philosophy, always keeping in hand the clew which he had received from his venerated preceptor, William Graham. The German philosophy was as yet unknown among us, and he was never led to travel the transcendental or "high priori road," but treated mental phenomena on the inductive method, as the objects of a cautious generalization. While he uniformly recommended the perusal of Locke, it was as he often declared, not so much for the value of his particular conclusions, as for the spirit of his investigation, the calmness, patience, and transparent honesty of that truly great man. He likewise expressed great favour for Reid, Beattie, Buffier, Campbell and Stewart, with whose general methods, as well as their views of intuitive truths and constitutional principles of reason, he was in agreement, while he dissented from many of their definitions, distinctions, and tenets. These were subjects which fell in with his tastes, habits of thought and course of reading; and as preliminary to the development of the revealed system, he regarded them as forming a necessary part of every complete theological course.[33]

According to J. W. Alexander, Archibald's skill in metaphysical reasoning was especially notable in "his lectures on the Will, and his elaborate refutation of Dr. Thomas Brown's work on Causation." "No portion of his course," we are told, "more awakened the interest of his auditors and such was the ingenuity with which he made these lessons bear on theological questions still in reserve, that in the days of church-controversy it used to be a common remark, that students

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relationship between piety and reason among the early Princetonians, see Paul Kjoss Helseth, "'Right Reason' and the Princeton Mind: The Moral Context," *Journal of Presbyterian History 77* (1999): 13–28. For a related treatment examining the interrelationship between piety, Scottish Common Sense Realism, and the Reformed epistemological convictions that informed Alexander's approach to the teaching of theology and apologetics, see Paul Helseth, *"Right Reason" and the Princeton Mind: An Unorthodox Proposal* (Phillipsburg, N.J.: P&R Publishing, 2010), 3–39. For a seminal article on the relationship between Scottish Enlightenment philosophy and its impact on American theologizing, see Sydney E. Ahlstrom, "The Scottish Philosophy and American theology," *Church History* 24 (1955): 257–72. For an extended study on the related impact of the Scottish Enlightenment on science, ethics, faith, and reason, see George M. Marsden, "The Collapse of American Evangelical Academia," in *Reckoning with the Past: Historical Essays on American Evangelicalism from the Institute for the Study of American Evangelicals*, ed. D. G. Hart (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1995), 221–66.

[33] Alexander, *Life of Archibald Alexander*, 366.

who had been imbued with Dr. Alexander's metaphysics were sure to swallow his entire system."[34]

The seminary curriculum also included study of natural religion and moral philosophy (ethics), the latter a subject of posthumous publication.[35] Alexander incorporated insights from both general and special revelation into his approach. "While he was far from being a rationalist, he was never satisfied with the tactics of those reasoners who under the pretext of exalting revelation, dismiss with contempt all arguments derived from the light of nature." For Alexander, general revelation serves the purposes of special revelation. "Here he freely declared his judgment that many sound, able and pious men had greatly erred. He rendered due homage, therefore, to the labours of such writers as Nieuwentyt, the younger Turretine, and Paley, and spent much time in considering and unfolding with nice discrimination the various schemes of argument for the Being and Perfections of God, and the necessity and antecedent probability of a revelation."[36]

As an educator, Alexander was a popular communicator.[37] Fidelity to revealed truth lay at the heart of his instruction, the responsibilities of which rested heavily on his conscience.[38] As his biographer is careful to note, "The anxieties belonging to an attempt to lay down the great

[34] Alexander, *Life of Archibald Alexander*, 367.

[35] See Archibald Alexander, *Outlines of Moral Science* (New York: Charles Scribner, 1852).

[36] Alexander, *Life of Archibald Alexander*, 367.

[37] William M. Paxton, a student and later professor at the seminary, left record of Alexander's instruction: "As a teacher, the impression made upon the students was his power to penetrate a subject. The class to which I belonged heard his lectures upon Didactic Theology as well as those of Dr. Hodge. Dr. Hodge gave us a subject with massive learning, in its logical development, in its beautiful balance and connection with the whole system. Dr. Alexander would take the same subject, and strike it with a javelin, and let the light through it. His aim was to make one point, and nail it fast. I always came from his lecture with these words running through my mind, 'A nail driven in a sure place.'" See William M. Paxton, "Archibald Alexander, D.D. Address," in Garretson, *Pastor-Teachers of Old Princeton*, 24–25.

[38] A former student writes of Alexander's orthodoxy and paternal regard for his students: "As a professor of Theology he was able, discriminating, sound in the faith, and most ardently attached to the great doctrines of grace; and as a teacher he was as a father to his pupils." See Alexander, *Life of Archibald Alexander*, 655.

lines of a method for teaching the whole system of revealed truth, to those who were to be the ministers of the Church, were just and burdensome."[39]

In the early years of his professorship, Alexander's approach was "more extemporaneous and colloquial; there was more use of existing manuals, and less adventure of original expedients." For study of theology proper, Alexander believed it "best taught by a wise union of the text-book with the free lecture." While selections from various seventeenth- and eighteenth-century authors were translated and distributed, Alexander assigned Turretin's *Institutes of Elenctic Theology* as his primary theological text. He felt Turretin's treatment the best textbook for training the mind and learning the doctrines of the Christian faith in a concise and orderly fashion.[40]

Turretin made special effort to organize his subject matter in a question/answer format. By such arrangement, propositional statements made topics of inquiry clear, thereby inviting statements of defense or rebuttal. Preservation of truth and promotion of piety were both of concern. Truth and error were real, and Turretin wanted his readers to be able to understand, explain, and defend the Christian faith in a clear and logical manner. Turretin's goals match nicely with Alexander's interests. Both valued biblical truth in its exposition and defense. Each expressed concern about the danger of doctrinal decline and spiritual declension.[41]

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[39] Alexander, *Life of Archibald Alexander*, 368.

[40] "It was ponderous, scholastic and in a dead language, but he believed in the process of grappling with difficulties; he had felt the influence of this athletic sinewy reasoner on his own mind, and had observed that those who mastered his arguments were apt to be strong and logical divines." Alexander, *Life of Archibald Alexander*, 368.

[41] Practical considerations were likewise impetus to publication of a popular theology for lay people. See Archibald Alexander, *A Brief Compendium of Bible Truth* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1846), 136–38. This was reprinted by Reformation Heritage Books in 2005.

Alexander augmented assigned readings with personal observations.[42] He also worked hard to provide students with resources that facilitate the learning process. Alexander's pedagogy is recounted in brief summary by his biographer:

> Dr. Alexander often dissented from the learned Genevan, and always endeavoured to cultivate in his students the spirit and habit of original investigation. It is likely that his labours at this period derived a peculiar vivacity from his time of life, from the freshness of the employment, and from the necessity of adapting himself to a limited circle. He very laboriously engaged in making such brief aids in the way of syllabus and compendium as might furnish to the student a manageable key to the whole classification. He prepared extensive and minute questions, going into all the ramifications of theology; lists of which still remain in the hands of some alumni. He assigned subjects for original dissertations, which were publicly read, and commented on by both professors and students; a near approach to the acts held in the old university schools, under the scholastic moderator. To this were added, at a date which we find ourselves unable to fix with precision, the debates of a theological society, meeting weekly, always on some important topic, and always closed by the full and highly animated remarks of the professor.[43]

For instruction in theology, Alexander, like Turretin, preferred a topical arrangement of subjects. While respectful of the redemptive-historical character of Scripture and theologians who made it the organizing principle of their theological instruction, Alexander preferred the advantages of the former for focused study and retention in understanding.

> The natural and simple light, in which it was a characteristic of the professor to view all subjects, and the predominance of logical nexus as the element of association in his mind, concurred to cause a preference for the ancient and more obvious scheme of classifying Scripture truth. Hence he did not adopt the Federal method of arrangement, as it has been called, of Witsius; great as was his sympathy with the evangelical warmth and unction of that school. For the same reasons his judgment disapproved the order suggested by Chalmers, in the preface to what remains of his original and striking but fragmentary theological course. For, while he agreed with this great author in considering the plan of redemption as the ultimate scope and crowning glory of all theology, he nevertheless preferred as a medium of scientific communication, that disposition of topics which takes its departure from the Being, Attributes, and Works of God; that is, from Theology in its strictest acceptation.[44]

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[42] "As a Professor in the theological seminary, he discharged every duty, not only with signal ability, but with great punctuality and fidelity. His lectures were generally written; and they were always luminous, and, to every thoughtful student, in a high degree attractive." See William B. Sprague in *Presbyterian Reunion: A Memorial Volume, 1837–1871* (New York: De Witt C. Lent & Company, 1871), 114.

[43] Alexander, *Life of Archibald Alexander*, 369.

[44] Alexander, *Life of Archibald Alexander*, 370.

Classroom assignments reflected Turretin's approach. Students were expected to read assigned material, provide a written or oral summary of the subject matter, and make defense of the content reviewed. By such means, students became familiar with the material and the organizing principles underlying its presentation. Students learned sound doctrine as well as how to think and reason.

> On each head or title he was accustomed to assign a considerable portion of the text-book, to be carefully perused by the class, and to be made the subject of a sifting examination; also naming the chief authors who had treated of the points respectively, and sometimes, when these works were numerous, allotting them to different students, with a requisition that they should give some account of each, either orally, or what was more common, in writing. This examination and these essays gave rise to brief but animated remarks from the chair, and he was never more felicitous or more convincing than in such impromptus; in which his eye would kindle and flash, and his expressive face become radiant, as he poured forth the gatherings of an extraordinary erudition, or pursued the thread of nice and delicate analysis, with a clearness and closeness of argument which his partial hearers thought unrivalled. To this was added, however, and with greater fullness as years advanced, the delivery of formal and elaborate lectures on the grand articles of the faith.[45]

The design of the curriculum was both to instruct in sound doctrine and provide training that would enable ministers to defend the Christian faith and refute "gainsayers." A graduate of the seminary would be able to explain orthodox doctrine and refute heresy and detractors to the Christian faith. Study of polemical theology, therefore, formed an important part of the theological curriculum.[46] The approach Alexander adopted was twofold. With respect to heresies and theological distortions within the professing church, Alexander utilized historical analysis in elucidating doctrinal compromise, its effects on individuals and corporate church life, and the

[45] Alexander, *Life of Archibald Alexander*, 370–71.

[46] Polemic theology addressed a wide cross-section of religious outlook. Representative lecture topics include Arminianism, heresies of the primitive church, Arianism, deism, indifferentism or latitudinarianism, Socinianism, Epicurianism, French infidelity, atheism, unitarianism, modern Socinianism, Judaism, Jewish Talmud, semi-Pelagianism from Jansenians, ancient Greeks, Anabaptists, Moravians, Arian-Quaker controversies, points of controversy with the papists, Spinoza, pantheism, ethnicism or paganism, theology and Hindus, religion of the Grand Lama, Mohamedism, quietism, Buddhism and Djanas, history of polemic theology, and the evils of theological controversy.

remedies required for restoration of biblical orthodoxy. J. W. Alexander explains his father's manner of handling heresy:

> The division of this department into Didactic and Polemic Theology, which the Plan of the institution made imperative, gave the professor an opportunity to go over all the leading doctrines in the way of defence against the objections of errorists, heretics, and infidels. In doing this he brought to bear his remarkable stores of recondite reading. He gave the biography of eminent opponents, clear analyses of their systems, and refutation of their reasons. Of necessity he was thus carried into the field of *Dogmengeschichte*, the progress of controversies, the debates and conclusions of councils, the construction of creeds, and the whole round of symbolical theology. What might be considered by some an inordinate length of time was devoted to the cardinal differences, such as the controversy with Deists, Arians, Socinians, Pelagians, Arminians, papists and Universalists; all being made to revolve around the Calvinistic system, which, upon sincere conviction, he had adopted.[47]

Training in polemical theology also included introduction to religions that students would encounter on foreign mission fields as well as aberrations of Christianity taking root in American culture during the early nineteenth century.[48]

> He was so earnestly in favour of having the young clergyman armed at all points against adversaries, that he greatly extended his lectures, so as to embrace the varieties of heathenism and Mohammedanism with which missionaries must be brought into conflict; and also the forms of error which prevail in our Western country. Accordingly he has left copious reviews of Campbellism, Shakerism, and even Mormonism, with details which show how largely and attentively he must have examined all the available authorities of these heretics. In conducting these studies, he alighted on a method which gave him great pleasure, and was always interesting to his pupils. Early in the session each member of the class had allotted to him some erroneous system of controversy, to be made the subject of a dissertation. The whole term was sometimes allowed for preparing these, and some of the essays became almost volumes. All this was over and above his extensive course of lectures. He was far from having a stereotyped plan; but besides undertaking new subjects of instruction in the close of his life, as we shall occasion to say, he made frequent changes in his *modus operandi* to the last.[49]

Alexander's biographer is careful to note that while his formal duties required study of polemical discourse, "he was in no sense an active controvertist." Rather, he sought to convince

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[47] Alexander, *Life of Archibald Alexander*, 371.

[48] American religion underwent vast changes in the nineteenth century. For an informative and richly illustrated study of its development, see Grant Wacker, *Religion in Nineteenth Century America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000). For an important treatment of one of the most influential new religious movements, see Philip F. Gura, *American Transcendentalism: A History* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2007).

[49] Alexander, *Life of Archibald Alexander*, 371–72.

through careful reasoning and winsome testimony to the truth of the gospel message. "When falsehood was read or heard by him, it was the tendency of his mind, from its strong logical interest, rather to yield himself to the consideration of adverse arguments, and to weigh them with a judgelike calmness, than to seek on the spot for weapons of refutation." A principled and peace-loving man, "his practical maxim was the *audi alteram partem*; and those who were privy to his daily studies were astonished at the time which he bestowed on the most dangerous writers. And yet his own opinions were held with a firmness which in his mature years seemed to suffer not even a momentary shaking. The habits to which allusion has been made, tended beyond doubt to produce in him a peculiar reserve and impartiality in stating the opinions of adversaries, and in refuting them."[50]

While a variety of student lecture notes exist from Alexander's classes, an obvious benefit of the present collection is their author. Hodge was just as meticulous in his note taking as a student as in his later labors as a professor. The same precision of expression found in his personal writings can be found in the compact nature of his notes. But of what importance are Hodge's notes for today's student of theology?

It is often the case that profundity and prolixity go hand in hand. But good educators know the value of simplicity in style and delivery. The best teachers have so mastered their material that their presentation is marked by clarity and order. The result is material that is both informative and comprehensible.[51] While some, perhaps most, material offered in theology

[50] Alexander, *Life of Archibald Alexander*, 372–73.

[51] Charles Hodge spoke of Alexander's impact on his students: "The three great sources of influence, ascendancy over the intellect, power over the religious feelings, and ability to win the affections of his pupils, united in Dr. Alexander, each in an eminent degree. His talents and learning rendered all his lectures instructive. They communicated knowledge, removed difficulties, illustrated important principles, and produced conviction." Charles Hodge, "Memoir of Dr. Alexander," 157. See also Garretson, *Pastor-Teachers of Old Princeton*, 47–48.

courses is worthy of expanded treatment, there is also important pedagogical value in material that is both manageable in amount and easy to recount.

Because Hodge attended the seminary during its first decade, his notes provide record of the emphases Alexander wished to impress on his students in relation to the great issues facing the church, theological education, and pastoral training at the outset of the nineteenth century. While in his early years as a professor Alexander would have been glancing backward in history at the threat of infidelity and deism, he also lived at a time of pronounced change in theological study—whether from German "neologists" and philosophers or from the changing trajectory of American theology soon to be awash in disputes about transcendentalism, romanticism, "new measures," resurgent Pelagianism, debate surrounding strict or system subscription, true and false religious experience, and reasons for division within the Presbyterian Church in the eighteenth and again in the nineteenth century.

Similar in style to catechetical instruction, the compact format allows a quick summary of key matters brief enough to be easily digested but substantive enough to provoke additional thought and inquiry. Although further study and comparison would be necessary to learn of the ways in which Alexander added, deleted, or rearranged material throughout the years of his instruction, today's reader is able once again to join Hodge and other young men in the lecture hall as their revered professor explains the manner in which the "deposit of truth" finds expression in systematic doctrinal formulation.

It is likely that fellow students would have checked with Hodge to make sure their notes were accurate. Hodge's diligence provides contemporary students of theology opportunity to sit once again at the feet of one of Christ's choice gifts to His church.

Systematic

Theology

Princeton, Jan. 1818

The Chain of Salvation

God has ordained

Christ has merited

The Word promises

The sacraments seal

Faith receives

The mouth confesses

Works testify

Salutis Catena

Deus ordinavit

Christus meruit

Verbum promittit

Sacramenta obsignant

Fides recipit

Os fatetur

Opera testantur

Chapter 1

Philosophy of the Mind

1. What is truth?

Truth, which is the object of all science, scarcely admits of a strict definition. Beattie[1] says, that is truth which the constitution of our nature determines us to believe, and that is falsehood which the constitution of our nature determines us to disbelieve.

2. Is the mind of man capable of attaining any certain knowledge?

Yes. The supposition that it can be proved that all human knowledge is uncertain destroys itself by taking it for granted that the uncertainty of our knowledge can be certainly known. So man can[not] be a consistent universal skeptic, for he would have to doubt of the reality of his doubting everything.

3. Are there innate ideas in the mind of man?

No, if we understand this phrase as used by Mr. Locke,[2] who considered it as meaning certain impressions or notions existing in the mind previous to and independent of reflection and sensation. It is one thing herein to say that men have an innate knowledge of such and such things, and another to say that they have an aptitude to receive them. The mind is not a *tabula rasa* [blank slate].

4. Are there any self-evident or intuitive truths?

[1] [Possibly James Beattie (1735–1803), *Evidences of the Christian Religion*, 2 vols. (1786).]
[2] [John Locke (1632–1704) was an English philosopher and influential Enlightenment thinker.]

Yes. Those propositions which, from the constitution of my nature, I am under the necessity of believing as soon as they are presented to my mind are called self-evident truths. Or, that is an ultimate principle which forces our belief by its own intrinsic evidence and which cannot by any reasoning be rendered more evident.

5. On what evidence does the belief of our existence rest?

We have no other direct evidence of our existence than that of consciousness, though strictly speaking existence is not the object of consciousness, but we are conscious of our thoughts. That which does not exist cannot think. In this view Descartes's[3] *cogito ergo sum* [I think, therefore I am] is correct.

6. On what evidence do we believe that the world exists?

On the testimony of our external senses we cannot help believing it.

7. Why do we believe what we distinctly remember?

We can give no other reason than that such is the constitution of our nature that we are under the necessity of believing what we distinctly remember, as well as what we perceive or are conscious of.

8. Why do we believe in testimony?

Our belief is not the result of experience but arises from the constitution of our nature.

[3] [René Descartes (1596–1650) was a French mathematician, scientist, and the father of modern Western philosophy.]

9. Into how many kinds may first truths be divided?

1. The existence of the objects of sense and consciousness
2. Necessary truths, as mathematical axioms
3. Philosophical principles, as that every effect must have a cause
4. Moral truths
5. Truths reported to us by a competent number of witnesses, past or present
6. Truths founded on uniform experience, as that the sun will rise tomorrow
7. Those founded on memory

10. Can their number be ascertained?

No.

11. How can they be distinguished from vulgar prejudices?

The essential qualities of first truths are:

1. They are incapable of proof or disproof, as all other truths are less clear and certain;
2. [They are] admitted in all countries and at all times;
3. They are practically followed even by contrary theorists.

With respect to many we can be certain that they belong to this class; with regard to others it may be doubted whether they are known by the faculty of common sense or by a short process of reasoning.

12. Can there be any reasoning with those who deny them?

No. For there can be no reasoning without premises, and these in the first instance must be self-evident. Reasoning is the comparison of ideas already known and thereby inferring others before unknown. If some things are not admitted without proof we would have to reason on *ad infinitum* [to infinity].

13. Can intuitive truths be always easily distinguished from the deductions of reason?

No.

14. Are there some truths necessarily in every science?

In every science there must be some truths self-evident or we could never commence our investigations.

15. Are the conclusions of reasoning more certain than first principles?

No. For these conclusions derive all their strength from the premises or principles from which they are drawn. The superstructure cannot have more stability than the foundation.

16. Can our belief in these principles be shaken by reasoning?

No. Though we may be unable to answer the arguments of sophisters against them, yet we can't withhold our assent from what is self-evident if we try.

17. How does it appear that matter and mind are essentially different?

If the word *matter* be taken in the sense in which it is used in natural philosophy, there can be no doubt on the subject. For of all the properties essential to matter, not one can be

predicated of mind; and of those essential to mind, not one can be predicated of matter. Therefore the substances to which these properties belong must be essentially different.

18. Could omnipotence endow matter with the power of thinking?

No; it implies a contradiction. It is the same as to ask whether a being can be essentially active and essentially inactive at the same time.

19. Are our ideas of mind as clear as those of matter?

Yes, our ideas of each are confined to their properties and are as clear in the one case as the other.

20. What is perception, and what are the immediate objects of the mind in perception?

Perception is the means by which the mind keeps up its intercourse with external things. Considered as an act of the mind, it requires these three particulars:

1. Some notion of the object perceived
2. An irresistible conviction of its present existence
3. This conviction is immediate and not the result of reasoning

The objects of the mind in perception are the qualities of bodies with certain states and conditions of our own bodies, mechanical powers, chemical powers, and so on. Every object of perception must have a real existence, must be external, and must be present.

21. What was long the opinion of philosophers on this subject?

It was long supposed that species, forms, phantasms, or ideas were the immediate objects

of perception.

22. To what skepticism did this opinion lead?

Berkeley's[4] taking for granted that all the objects of our knowledge were ideas proved that the material world does not exist. And Hume,[5] setting out with dividing all the perceptions of the human mind into impressions and ideas, and by asserting that the latter differs from the former only in being a weaker perception, comes at last to the conclusion that "mankind" (both soul and body) "are nothing but a bundle or collection of different perceptions which succeed each other with inconceivable rapidity and are in a perpetual flux or movement."[6]

23. Can we explain how the impressions on the organs of sense produce perception?

No. A certain sensation is always followed by a certain perception, but how or why, we cannot tell. Dr. Hartley attempted to explain it on the principle of nervous vibrations.

24. What is sensation, and how is it distinguished from perception?

Sensation is distinguished from every other act of the mind in having no object distinct from the act itself. Its essence consists in being felt. Sensation is related to perception as the sign to the thing signified.

Sensation taken by itself does not imply the belief of anything external, but perception does. Sensation supposes a sentient being and a particular way in which that

[4] [George Berkeley (1685–1753) was an Irish philosopher, known for his view of what later would be called subjective idealism.]

[5] [David Hume (1711–1776) was a Scottish philosopher who is known for his influential view of empiricism, skepticism, and naturalism.]

[6] Hume

being is affected, but nothing more. Perception supposes something distinct from the mind which perceives and the act of perception.

25. What is consciousness?

It is an involuntary act and signifies the immediate knowledge we must of necessity have of all the present operations of our minds. It regards only what is present and also what is in the mind.

26. What is judgment?

That act of the mind by which one thing is affirmed of another or denied of another.

27. What is memory?

That faculty by which we have an immediate knowledge of things past. It implies the capacity of retaining knowledge and also a power of recalling it to our thoughts.

28. What is reasoning?

It is that power of the mind by which we draw inferences or by which we are convinced that a relation belongs to two ideas on account of our having found that these ideas bear certain relations to other ideas.

29. Do we always give an implicit belief to memory?

Yes. We are forced by the constitution of our nature to believe what we distinctly remember; and we can’t help it if we would.

30. Does memory never deceive us?

No. We are sometimes at a loss to know whether we remember or not, but it is impossible that what we do remember should not be true. It is sometimes difficult to distinguish memory and imagination.

31. What is conception and what is imagination?

Conception is that power of the mind by which we are able to form a notion of our past sensations or of absent objects of perception. Its business is to present the mind with an exact transcript of what we have felt or perceived.

Fancy selects and presents to imagination all the materials it requires, and imagination is the power of so modifying these materials (or in other words our conceptions) by combining the parts of different ones together so as to form new wholes of our creation. See App., p. 3.[7]

32. What is attention, and should it be reckoned a distinct faculty?

Attention is the fixedness of the mind on a particular object. When this object is external it is called "attention," but receives the appellation of "reflexion"[8] when the object is within. It is not a distinct faculty.

33. What is abstraction?

Abstraction is the faculty by which we resolve or analyze a subject into its known

[7] [This inexplicable "App.," which occurs throughout the original manuscript, appears to have been a syllabus or supplement to Alexander's lectures, possibly an appendix.]

[8] [reflection?]

attributes, or it is the power of considering certain qualities apart from the rest.

34. Are there any general conceptions?

Yes. And these are formed by the power of abstraction, separating from individuals their attributes and then by the faculty of generalization, collecting such as are common to a number into one idea. In this way our notions of general species are formed.

35. For what do general terms stand for in reasoning?

In regard to this point there have been three different opinions, the advocates of which have respectively been called Realists, Nominalists, and Conceptualists.

Plato and Aristotle,[9] though they differed in some particulars relative to this subject, both taught that there were certain substantial forms or essences corresponding to general form terms, and the mind contemplated [these] when it used these terms.

Zeno[10] and his followers of the stoical sect[11] held, on the contrary, that universals had neither form nor essence but that they were mere nominal representations of particular objects. The doctrine of Aristotle prevailed generally until the eleventh century, when Roscellinus[12] embraced the opinion of the Stoics, and together with his pupil Abelard[13] greatly spread the doctrine of the Nominalists.[14]

[9] [Plato (c. 428–348 BC) and Aristotle (384–322 BC) were both Greeks and were two of the most important philosophers of the ancient world.]

[10] [Probably Zeno of Citium (c. 334–c. 262 BC), who was a Greek philosopher of Athens and the founder of the Stoic school.]

[11] [Stoicism was a school of Hellenistic philosophy that emphasized personal ethics involving not being controlled by a desire for pleasure or fear of pain, understanding the world around us, and treating others justly.]

[12] [Roscellinus (c. 1050–c. 1125) was a French philosopher and theologian, often regarded as the founder of Nominalism.]

[13] [Peter Abelard (1079–1142) was a French scholastic philosopher, theologian, and logician.]

[14] [Nominalism is a metaphysical, philosophical view that denies the existence of universals and abstract objects, holding them to exist in "name" only.]

Conceptualists[15] differ naturally from both the preceding. They maintain that as words are connected by common consent with certain attributes common to many individuals, that as soon as a general term is pronounced, all these attributes are brought before the mind by the faculty of conception and that this collection of ideas (or conception) is the object contemplated when general terms are employed.

36. In the use of general terms, does the mind always think of an individual?

No.

37. What is association, and what is its importance?

Association is the tendency of the mind to pass from one thought to another on account of some relation between them. It is of the greatest importance as it has great influence in regulating the succession of our thoughts and, by the indissoluble combinations it leads us to form in our infancy and youth, affects both our intellectual powers and moral characters. See App., p. 4.

38. What is conscience, and is it an original faculty?

There are three different opinions on this subject:

1. Some consider conscience not only as an original, but also an indifferent faculty, so that the decisions of conscience and the understanding may be directly opposed to each other, and that conscience is always right.[16]

[15] [Conceptualism lies between Realism and Nominalism and denies the presence of universals in particulars outside of the mind's perception of them.]

[16] [Nathaniel] Emmons [(1745–1840) was a New England, new school theologian who developed post-Edwards, Hopkinsianism further.]

2. That it is neither original nor uniform and that it would permit men to determine that injustice and ingratitude are morally right but that utility prevents their making such decisions.[17]

3. That it is an original, but not an independent faculty, involving in every act the exercise of the understanding together with an approving or disapproving emotion of the heart. See App., p. 4.

39. Is it properly called "the Moral Sense"?

Moral sense refers as much to the actions of others as to our own. Conscience refers only to our own. The latter is the exercise of the former on a particular class of objects. Yet conscience is often used in the extended sense of the first of these terms.

40. Is it uniform in its dictates?

Yes, within certain limits; that is, as there are first principles in every science, so in morals there are some things so plain that men never differ in regard to them. But when we leave these, the decisions of conscience become as various and inconsistent as the conclusions of reason on points of mere speculation.

41. Is conscience distinct from the understanding?

No. It is the exercise of the understanding on moral subjects accompanied by a feeling of the heart as to their being right or wrong.

[17] Paley/Locke [William Paley (1743–1805) and John Locke (1632–1704) were English philosophers. The former was a Christian apologist; the latter was one of the most influential Enlightenment thinkers.]

42. Is there anything more in conscience than a judgment of the understanding?

Yes. See the foregoing answers.

43. How can the diversity in the operations of conscience be accounted for?

In the same way as we account for the vast diversity in the operations of other original faculties, such as taste and judgment. Men often agree in a moral principle though they err in its application. Thus one nation approves of parricide,[18] while another reprobates it; yet the conscience of both teach that we ought to do good to our parents.

44. What are simple ideas and what are complex ideas?

A simple idea is an idea of a simple object, that is, of an object without parts—or it is an idea that cannot be resolved into two or more ideas. A complex idea arises from the combination of two or more simple ideas, or it is an idea of a complex object.

45. Are all our simple ideas derived from sensation and reflection?

Such is the general opinion of philosophers, but it is difficult in this way to account for our ideas of identity, of unity, of duration, and so on. See App., p. 4.

[18] [The killing of one's father, or parents.]

Chapter 2

Theology

46. What is theology?

It is that system or body of doctrine concerning God and divine things revealed by God, for His own glory and man's salvation.

47. In what sense was the word used by heathen authors?

They used it as synonymous with metaphysics. Aristotle divided philosophy into natural, mathematical, and theological.

48. How was it used by the fathers of the Christian church?

They applied the term particularly to that part of the Christian doctrine which treated of the divinity of our Savior. Hence John is called by them *Theologus* [Theologian].

49. How is theology divided?

Into true and false. True theology is divided into that of vision and that of revelation; the latter again is divided into natural and supernatural, and into natural and revealed.

50. What is natural theology?

It consists in the knowledge of those truths concerning the being and attributes of God, the principles of human duty, and the expectation of a future state derived from reason alone.

51. How does it appear that there is any natural theology?

It is proved from man's having a natural law written in his conscience (Rom. 2:14), from all nations having some religion, and from its being so congenial to our minds.

52. Is that theology sufficient to lead men to the true knowledge of God?

It may lead us to the knowledge of God as Creator, Preserver, and Governor, and to the knowledge of those attributes manifested in the works of God, but it cannot make us acquainted with His character as Redeemer and as a God who forgives iniquity, transgression, and sin.

53. Has natural theology been held in its purity by any nation destitute of revelation?

No, and it is remarkable that the progress of corruption in the doctrines of religion have been in exact proportion to the advance of nations in the arts and sciences.

54. Should a perfect knowledge of natural theology give any hope to a sinner?

No, it cannot disclose the plan according to which God can be just and yet justify the ungodly, and therefore it can afford no rational hope that God will pardon sin.

55. How do men acquire the idea of a God?

The mind of man is so formed that though it has no innate ideas of God, nor any intuitive perception of His existence, yet it has a faculty well suited to receive this truth so that when it is proposed, it easily and readily apprehends it.

This differs from Descartes's notion of an innate idea only in making it necessary that the truth should be proposed to the mind. This knowledge of a deity has probably been preserved in the world by tradition; without this, men would be atheists.

56. How can the existence of God be demonstrated?

The arguments for the being of God have generally been divided into those from *a priori* [from what is before] and those *a posteriori* [from what comes after]. It has also been argued from the universal and uninterrupted consent of all nations, from the aptitude of our minds to receive this truth, and from the operations of natural conscience.

57. What is the nature of the argument *a priori* [from the prior]?

It consists in arguing from cause to effect. It begins with establishing our own existence from consciousness, that we are not necessarily existent and therefore must have a cause; that something must have existed from all eternity or nothing could ever have existed; that this being must exist by an internal necessity of nature; that what exists necessarily must exist alike everywhere, must be perfect, act everywhere, and so on.

It is, however, very generally doubted whether this argument has any foundation or whether it is at all conclusive. Dr. Samuel Clark's[1] demonstration is the most ingenious and learned specimen of this method of arguing. See Dr. Alexander's lecture.

58. What is the nature of the argument *a posteriori* [from that which is later]?

It is a reasoning from the effect to the cause. It is founded on the principle that every

[1] [There were many prominent theological and philosophical writers by the name of Samuel Clark(e) during the 1600s and 1700s, including an Anglican (bap. 1624–1669), puritans (1599–1682) and (1626–1701), and a latitudinarian Anglican (1675–1729).]

effect must have a cause, and whatever excellence is found in the effect must exist in a much greater degree in the cause.

59. How is the existence of God proved from the structure of the universe?

The works of nature prove the existence of God by their production, harmony, preservation, and adaptation to their ends. Design, wherever manifested, is an unanswerable proof of a directing intelligence.

60. How is this truth established from a consideration of the body of man?

By the order and fitness of every part, we are "fearfully and wonderfully made" [Ps. 139:14], and from the admirable difference of the features of men.

61. What is the force of the argument from general consent?

The universality and uninterruptedness of the belief in the existence of God is a phenomenon that nothing but the truth of the fact can solve, particularly when we consider that all wicked men must wish it were not so. The idea of a God is not derived either from sensation or reflection; its existence in the breasts of men can only be accounted for by supposing it to be received by tradition from the first man, who must have received it from God Himself.

62. Can any argument be drawn from miracles in favor of this truth?

Nothing very conclusive, as it is more difficult to establish the truth of a miracle than of the divine existence.

63. How does the existence of conscience prove the being of a God?

There is a law in the human mind that in some measure is the rule of good and evil; this law must have a lawgiver, the transgression of this law excites the dread of punishment, and this operation of conscience is universal, regarding even the most secret acts of wickedness. Moreover, men cannot free themselves from the authority of conscience, however much they may desire it.

64. On what argument did Descartes depend for the proof of this truth?

He held that the idea of God was impressed on the mind of man by the Deity Himself. And that as we have an idea of an infinite being, that of which this idea is the type must also exist.

65. In what way do atheists attempt to evade the arguments in proof of a god?

Modern atheists endeavored to maintain the eternity of the world and its inhabitants; ancient atheists, admitting the world was formed in time, deny that it is the work of an intelligent agent, but the result of a fortuitous concourse of atoms.

66. How can it be demonstrated that the world is not from eternity?

1. From the continual changes constantly occurring before our eyes
2. From the natural history of the world
3. From the late origin of the arts and sciences
4. From there being neither history nor monument indicating the world to be older than

five or six thousand years

5. From the decay of the centrifugal force

67. How can the absurdity of an infinite succession of dependent beings be proved?

It is proved by the argument of the chain of an infinite number of links that it would be absurd to say supported itself when we cannot discover the least tendency to self-support, though we ascend it as high as our thoughts can reach.

Or, we may argue thus: when a man is brought into being, the whole cause necessary to produce this effect must at that time be in existence. But when a man is from his immediate parents only, it may be that all of his progenitors are in existence; therefore all the cause necessary for the production of a human being resides in his parents, *quod est absurdum* [which is absurd].

68. Have there been any speculative atheists?

Yes, some few among both the ancient and modern philosophers have professed themselves to be atheists. Atheism has even had its martyrs. Lucilio Vanini,[2] a native of Naples and teacher of atheism in France, was condemned and executed at Toulouse, AD 1619.

69. How do you know that God is a being of infinite perfection?

It is a dictate of nature, a first principle that must be taken for granted and that indeed is included in the very definition of the term *God*.

[2] [Lucilio Vanini (1585–1619) was an Italian philosopher, physician, free-thinker, and one of the first significant representatives of libertinism.]

70. How can this be reconciled with the prevalence of idolatry and polytheism?

It is very difficult to remove all the difficulties arising from these sources to this opinion. The difficulty may be lessened by remarking that

1. The heathen, in worshiping images (at least in the first instance), considered them merely as the habitations of their deity.
2. Those gods to whom they ascribed principles and actions inconsistent with perfection were merely intermediate deities.
3. From the corruption of human nature, superstition has obtained such power as to make men believe and act in opposition to even the first principles of reason.
4. They received implicitly the religious opinions of their forefathers without inquiring or thinking for themselves.

71. Is the unity of God a dictate of natural theology?

If we admit that it is taught by the light of nature that God is infinitely perfect, it must follow that nature teaches His unity, as infinite perfection excludes the idea of superiority or equality in any other being. Besides, we have clear evidence of the existence of one God, but see no proof of more than one.

72. How is the spirituality of God demonstrated?

It is demonstrated that He is entirely different from matter, as matter is inert essentially, but God must be active essentially. Spirit is the noblest of substances with which we are acquainted; we therefore ascribed it to God from the principle recognized above.

73. How is the omnipotence of God proved?

It is proved by creation; there is no indication of want [lack] of power to be discovered in the universe.

74. How does it appear that He is wise?

It is manifested by the variety and beauty of His works, by the fitness of creatures for their end, and in the subordination of one creature to another. Wisdom is the right use of knowledge.

75. Can His omnipresence be demonstrated by reason?

Were God not capable of perceiving and acting in all places at all times, He must be limited and possessed only of finite knowledge.

76. Does the goodness of God appear evidenced from His works?

It is manifested in the provision He has made for the happiness of His creatures, in the pleasures of animal life, and in the intellectual powers of man. The air, earth, and sea are full of animated happy beings.

77. Does natural theology teach that God should be observed and worshiped?

Yes, our obligation to obedience rests on the omnipotence and infinite excellence of God and His relation to us as Creator and Preserver.

78. Do all men agree in this truth?

Mankind in general does, as appears from every nation having some form of religious worship, though there are doubtless individuals who question the propriety of praising God or the efficacy of addressing Him in prayer.

79. Does it inform us how we should worship Him?

It is a dictate of natural religion to pray, but the method of approaching God by a mediator is a subject entirely of revelation.

80. Can we learn the justice, holiness, and truth of God from a survey of His works?

These attributes, properly speaking, cannot be said to be capable of demonstration from the works of God. We are led to ascribe justice to God from the dictates of conscience and the sentiments of justice in our own breasts. The same may be said of the other two: they are included in the idea of an *ens summe perfectum* [all-perfect Being].

81. Does it teach that the wicked will be punished?

Yes, reason teaches that it shall be well with the righteous and ill with the wicked. That the doctrine of future punishment is a part of natural religion appears from its being prevalent in all nations and ages; its truth is strongly confirmed by the natural dread excited by conscience in the breasts of the wicked and by the analogy of the present state, since God has ordered that our happiness or misery, even here, shall depend in a great measure on our own conduct.

82. How does it appear that God exercises a moral government over the world?

1. The first argument in proof of God's moral government is that since in fact God does govern the world by the distribution of rewards and punishments according to some settled rule, it is more natural that this rule should be the moral merit or demerit of men.
2. That peace and external advantages are the natural consequences of prudence in regard to ourselves and our affairs, and inconvenience and suffering the result of negligence and rashness.
3. From the natural course of things, vicious actions are to a great degree actually punished as mischievous to society, and there is a necessity for its being so.
4. In the natural course of things, virtue as such is actually rewarded and vice as such punished. Virtue, as such, is rewarded by the satisfaction attending it by the hope of future happiness and by the approbation of all good men, and so on.
5. The tendencies of virtue and vice are necessarily to produce respectively good and bad effects, both in individuals and in societies. Thus power under the direction of virtue is more efficacious than if directed by vice.

83. By what arguments is the immortality of the soul proved?

1. By its immateriality
2. It is not probable that God should make all His creatures temporary
3. The capacity of the soul to increase in knowledge is unlimited
4. The desire of immortality being deeply implanted in our souls
5. The unequal distribution of good and evil in this world

6. [The idea has been] Prevalent in every age and nation

84. What degree of conviction do these arguments produce?

They only render the truth of the doctrine probable; it is the gospel that brings life and immortality from this state of dimness and obscurity into light.

85. Is the knowledge of the truths of natural religion sufficient to salvation?

No:

1. Since Christ is only known by the gospel
2. Because the state of the Gentiles is called the times of ignorance (Acts 17:30)
3. Were salvation by a common religion, [there would be] no necessity of revelation, but the world by wisdom knew not God

86. In what respects is natural theology defective?

It cannot teach us the true character of God, the method of reconciliation to Him by an atonement, the nature and extent of our duties to the Supreme Being, [or] our destiny in a future state, and it is defective in certainty, authority, and motives.

87. Is the necessity of revelation evinced [proved] by a view of the truths of natural theology?

Yes; reason teaches man only sufficient [enough] to render him sensible of the necessity of being taught of God.

88. How is the necessity of revelation evinced by the view of the history of the world?

By observing that

1. In exact proportion as men increased in human wisdom have they become ignorant of God.
2. The most erroneous and shocking ideas were prevalent respecting His nature and worship.
3. The state of morals arising from these errors was exceedingly corrupt.

89. Was not revelation necessary to give a greater certainty to the truths of natural religion?

Yes, as the greatest men have only been doubtful of some of the most important branches of true religion, such as the immortality of the soul, and so on, and as the sophistry of man's deceitful heart would teach him to question the plainest principles of natural theology.

90. Was it not necessary to give authority and sanction to these truths?

It was.

91. Was not revelation necessary to inform us whether God was reconcilable to sinners, and on what terms?

The delay of punishment might excite in the sinner some hope that God would show mercy, but reason could never discover that a just God could pass by transgression. And we see all men erring in regard to the terms on which they expect forgiveness, trusting to works of righteousness, not to grace through faith.

Chapter 3

Revealed Theology and Prophecy

92. What is revealed theology?

The system of doctrine contained in the Word of God.

93. How can it be proved that a revelation has been made?

It is evident that a revelation is practicable, and we have seen that from the nature and situation of man, it is both probable and necessary. And that it has been made is certain from the internal and external evidences accompanying certain communications professing to be from God.

94. By what means was a revelation made?

By immediate converse with God, by the ministry of angels, by Urim and Thummim [Ex. 28:30], by voices, visions, and inspiration in these last times that God has spoken to us by His Son.

95. Why was it necessary that it should be committed to writing?

1. It was necessary to preserve it as a constant rule of faith and practice

2. To vindicate it from fraud and corruption

3. To propagate it to posterity and to those afar off

96. Is everything that God has revealed to man contained in the sacred Scriptures?

No, although they comprehend all that is necessary to salvation, as is proved because

1. A curse is pronounced against those who should add or detract from the Word
2. The end of the Scriptures requires their perfection
3. Traditions are forbidden: “teaching for doctrines the commandments of men”
4. No reason can be given why God should wish one part of the Word to be written and another part delivered *viva voce* [by living voice]

97. How can it be proved that the sacred Scriptures contain a divine revelation?

First, from the internal evidence they possess, which is

1. That from them may be extracted a system of religion entirely new, both with regard to object and doctrines, not only infinitely superior to but unlike everything that had before entered into the mind of man.
2. That from them also may be collected a more extensive, correct, and pure system of morals than is to be found in all the works of the wisest men of preceding ages.
3. That such a system of religion and morality could not possibly have been the work of any man or set of men, much less of the obscure and illiterate persons who actually did discover and publish it to the world. It must be from God.

Second, from the external evidence of miracles and prophecy.

98. How can the authority of the sacred Scriptures be established?

It rests on the credibility of the apostles and prophets as witnesses of facts and as deliverers of doctrines; and since them, it is supported by the strongest historical evidence.

99. What is the difference between genuineness and authenticity?

A book is genuine when it is the production of the man whose name it bears, authentic when what it communicates is correct.

100. What is a miracle?

It means in the original import of the word, “a wonder”; more definitely, it is an effect contrary to the established constitution or course of things, or a sensible deviation from the known laws of nature.

101. Are miracles of different kinds?

Yes:

1. Such as none but God Himself can perform, implying omnipotence
2. Such as require supernatural agency but may be supposed to be within the power of good or evil spirits

102. How do miracles prove a divine revelation?

They are the testimonies of God in favor of the truth they are wrought to maintain. Neither can their authority be diminished by observing that even demons have performed miracles. For this objection bears only against the second kind of miracles mentioned above, and these are always attended by circumstances that determine their origin.

103. Is any testimony sufficient to prove a miracle?

Yes. It is plain that it is possible that a miracle may be wrought under circumstances that render deception impossible.

104. What was Hume's argument against miracles, and how is it answered?

He maintained it to be contrary to experience that a miracle should be true but not contrary to experience that testimony should be false. Therefore the argument against miracles he thought to be stronger than any drawn from testimony could be in their favor. His argument is founded on the principle that experience is the ground of our confidence in testimony, which is just the reverse of the truth since the most experienced are generally the most incredulous. This doctrine of Hume's is fully confuted by Dr. Campbell, by Dr. Gleig, by Professor Prince, and so on.

105. Wherein are the miracles of the sacred Scriptures different from those related in other books?

Other miracles are defections in the number, circumstances, or character of those who bear testimony for them, or the miracles themselves are such as may be accounted for by supposing them to be merely false perceptions. Or they are only tentative miracles, or exaggerated stories, and so on. See [William] Paley's *Evidences*.

106. Can the success of the gospel be accounted for without miracles?

No, the success of such a system as the gospel, in spite of the most uniform and powerful opposition, and [in being propagated] by the weakest instruments would, except on the supposition of miracles, be a greater miracle than any contained in the sacred Scriptures.

107. Could the witnesses of Christ's miracles have been deceived?

No.

108. Was it possible for them to have obtained credit if what they said had been false?

No, for those to whom they preached were addressed as witnesses of the truth of the facts they asserted.

109. Can any reason be assigned for their attempting to establish an imposture?

None, for men do not choose evil for its own sake. And from the nature of the religion which they propagated: the worldly prosperity of its first teachers was incompatible with success. As they knew themselves to be impostors, they could be activated by no hope of future reward, and here failure and success were alike to be attended with misery.

110. Is a man's suffering for his opinions any proof of their truth?

None, men have died on different sides of the same question. Error can boast almost as many martyrs as truth.

111. Is it an evidence of his sincerely believing them?

Yes, "all that a man hath will he give for his life."

112. If Christianity had been an imposture, could its propagators have avoided betraying themselves?

They could not. The history they record is so long and circumstantial that their perfect harmony appears not only to require the truth of what they communicate but also a superintending care of providence.

113. If miracles are important to prove a revelation, why have they ceased?

Because their frequency would destroy their authority, since it would then be difficult to distinguish the interruptions from the regular course of nature. Besides, there may be reasons with which we are not acquainted why it is best that they should not now be wrought. See App. p. 7.

114. Is the evidence of miracles as strong now as at first?

It is. At present our belief in miracles rests on the testimony; at first it rested on the witness of the senses.

115. If miracles should now be wrought in favor of doctrines opposite to the Bible, what would be the consequence?

It is impossible that miracles of the first class should be wrought in opposition to the Bible since God cannot deny Himself, and the tendency of miracles of the second kind being bad proves their origin to be evil and thus destroys their authority.

116. How does prophecy prove a divine revelation?

Because it argues a knowledge of futurity that can only be derived from God.

117. Are prophecies always obscure?

Generally, before their accomplishment.

118. Why is prophecy so often involved in obscure and symbolical language?

1. Because they were not intended so much for those to whom they were at first delivered as for ages then future
2. Were they more obvious it would be objected that the event was made to correspond to the prediction by those interested in the accomplishment

119. Does the obscurity of some prophecies weaken the evidence of those that are plainer?

No, our not understanding all does not prove we can understand none.

120. What particular prophecies have been remarkably fulfilled?

Of the deluge; of the number of Abraham's posterity; of the superiority of Jacob over Esau; of the destruction of Nineveh, Babylon, Jericho, Jerusalem; of the Messiah, the time of His coming as mentioned in Daniel, His character, fate, chapter 53 of Isaiah, and so on.

120. Can it be proved that these prophecies were written before the events occurred to which they refer?

Yes, they are found in the most ancient book in the world, preserved by those who are unfriendly to the cause many of them are produced to support.

121. Are any prophecies fulfilling now?

Continued dispersion of the Jews, independence of the Arabs, progress of the gospel.

122. Does the evidence of prophecy become stronger or weaker by the lapse of time?

Stronger.

123. Have there been any true prophecies besides those contained in the Bible?

It is very probable that many predictions uttered by men divinely inspired were never recorded in the Bible, but as the knowledge of futurity belongs only to God, there never could have been a true prophecy not derived directly or indirectly from Him.

124. What judgment should we form of the heathen oracles and the books of the Sibyls?[1]

1. The testimony respecting many is unsatisfactory.
2. The responses were often so given as to suit the event, should it happen either way.
3. They failed much more frequently than they proved correct.
4. The truth of the event may often be accounted for by the skillfulness of the prophet or prophets in conjecturing, or by the assistance of demons whose wonderful sagacity and great experience might enable them to conjecture what was future with considerable certainty.

The books of the Sibyls were merely a collection of Jewish, Christian, and heathen sayings turned into wretched verse. This collection was made by some

[1] [A collection of oracular, often prophetic, utterances written in Greek hexameters ascribed to the Sibyls, who were thought to be prophetesses who uttered divine revelations in an ecstatic state. Fourteen books and eight fragments of Sibylline Oracles survive in an edition of the sixth or seventh century AD]

indiscreet Christian about the time of Antonius Pius;[2] this is what is now extant. But besides these there were ancient oracles of the Sibyls mentioned by Plato, Aristotle, Varro,[3] and Livy.[4] Who or how many the Sibyls were is not known. The character of the authors must have been bad as they often directed to wicked and superstitious services. Hence if they were inspired it must have been by demons.

The story of the three books sold to Tarquin[5] is a mere fraud. Those laid up in the capitol were subject only to the inspection of the sacred college. When those were burned with the capitol in the time of Scylla and search being made in order to restore them, abundance of prophecies under the name of the Sibyls were produced so that about 80 years BC, the world was filled with them. Augustus[6] is said to have burned two thousand volumes of them. These contained many prophecies relative to the Messiah, derived probably from the Jews scattered among the nations.[7]

125. What is the internal evidence of the truth of the sacred Scriptures?

Those proofs that are founded on the nature of their doctrines and the character of the dispensation itself.

126. How do the matter, scope, and style of the sacred Scriptures prove their divinity?

[2] [Antoninus Pius (AD 86–161) was a Roman emperor.]
[3] [Marcus Terentius Varro (116–27 BC) was an ancient Roman scholar and writer.]
[4] [Titus Livius (64 or 59 BC–AD 17) was a Roman historian.]
[5] [Lucius Tarquinius Superbus was the semi-legendary last king of the Roman kingdom. This story of the acquisition of the Sibylline books is one of the famous mythic elements of Roman history.]
[6] [Augustus (63 BC–AD 14) was the first Roman emperor.]
[7] [There is an illegible note on the inside margin.]

The matter or contents testify to its divine origin by the sublimity of its mysteries and purity of its precepts extending even to the thoughts; their scope in tending to glorify God, sanctify and save man; their style, by its majesty, simplicity, and gravity.

127. Is there any evidence to be derived from Jewish and heathen authors?

Yes, Tacitus, Suetonius, the younger Pliny, and Juvenal[8] all speak of the Christians, and Tacitus especially gives a succinct account of their origin. There is in Josephus[9] several allusions to the Christian history; the genuineness of the most important of those, however, is disputed.

With respect to the Old Testament, many of the facts there recorded are to be found preserved in obscure allusions in the works of early heathen writers, such as the state of innocence, the fall, the deluge, and so on. See Butler, p. 67.[10]

128. Are there any contradictions in the sacred Scripture?

There is a most wonderful harmony in all the sacred writers, considering their circumstances, such as admits of no other explanation than a divine superintendence. Those inconsistencies that do exist may in general be accounted for by recurring to the similitude of things done at different times and the ambiguity of names (one person or place having several names). It must, however, be admitted that there are some

[8] [These were all Roman writers in the first two centuries AD.]
[9] [Josephus (AD 37–c. 100) was a Jewish historian during the first century.]
[10] [Possibly Joseph Butler (1692–1752), *The Analogy of Religion, Natural and Revealed.*]

discrepancies, particularly in numbers, only to be reconciled on the supposition of the corruption of the text.[11]

129. Are there any doctrines contrary to reason?

None, though there are many incomprehensible.

130. Does the chronology, geography, and history of sacred Scripture coincide with what other writers teach on this subject?

In general they do. Where there is a disagreement, the sacred Scripture, apart from their inspiration, are the best entitled to credit.

131. Do the sentiments, customs, and manners mentioned or alluded to in the sacred Scriptures agree with what is known of Eastern nations?

Very exactly, even as they are at the present day, for in the East, national character and manners have changed much less than in the West.

[11] [Alexander probably has in mind the histories and numbers of the lists of kings in Chronicles and the numeric accounts of Ezra and Nehemiah, as numerous kings had the same name and as this numerical data is particularly not easy to harmonize. However, Alexander's allowance of the permanent and irremediable corruption in the transmission and preservation of the Scriptures is contrary to Matt. 5:18 and many other express statements of the Scriptures themselves. The numeric data in Ezra and Nehemiah can be harmonized (as books on Bible difficulties demonstrate), as well as the chronologies of the kings. For the latter, see Floyd Nolen Jones, *Chronology of the Old Testament: A Return to the Basics*, 14th ed. (The Woodlands, Tex.: KingsWord Press, 1999).]

Chapter 4

Inspiration

132. What is inspiration, and into how many kinds is it divided?

Any supernatural influence on the mind of man that enables him to discover truth or to understand it, which by the exertion of his natural powers he would not have discovered or understood so clearly, may be called inspiration. As to its object, therefore, it may be considered

1. As leading to the knowledge of truth before unknown
2. As affording clearer knowledge of truth before known
3. As giving assurance to the mind of the truth, of such things as we have observed ourselves, or heard from others

But with respect to which when left to ourselves we are liable to fall into mistakes, it has been distinguished into that of

1. Suggestion
2. General superintendency
3. Of elevation

133. What is meant by inspiration of immediate suggestion?

That by which the Spirit of God reveals particular truths to the mind immediately. This revelation may be of words as well as of things, or the truth may be revealed and it may be left to the person inspired to clothe it in his own language.

134. What is meant by superintendency and elevation?

Superintendency is that by which the Spirit influences the inspired person to write or speak such things as he may know by the common means of acquiring information but which preserves him from the errors incident to human imperfection.

Elevation exists where no new truths are revealed and when no particular superintendencies are required, and it consists in strengthening and elevating all the powers of the mind for some special purpose so that the production shall far exceed the natural abilities of the person.

Such inspiration we may suppose existed in those who composed divine songs and also when persons were called to make their defense before kings and governors. But in the latter case it would appear that the very words as well as the ideas were suggested to them by the Holy Ghost. In the composition of divine poems and psalms, something more was necessary to preserve from error than mere elevation of mind.

It is doubtful, therefore, whether this ought to be considered as a distinct species, for we have reason to believe that even preachers and writers may have their minds elevated by a divine influence, but we cannot say that they are inspired, for that which distinguishes inspiration from the illumination of which all Christians partake is that by the former something unknown is revealed, whilst by the latter, the mind is furnished with a spiritual discernment of truths that speculatively were well understood before.

135. Is this distinction correct?

Not altogether.

136. What kind and degree of inspiration is to be ascribed to the sacred writers?

1. The plenary inspiration of the sacred Scriptures should be maintained.
2. Though the inspiration was plenary, yet there is no necessity of supposing any greater influence on the mind of the person inspired than what was sufficient to accomplish the object in view.
3. The proper method, therefore, of ascertaining the kinds and degrees of inspiration will be to consider the difference of the matter contained in the Holy Scriptures.
4. Many things in Scripture must be considered a direct revelation from God, both as to the ideas and words, such as laws and positive institutions; prophecies, whether literal or symbolical; and to this class belong also the discourses and sayings of our Lord Jesus Christ, who was the great medium of communication between God and man.
5. But many things contained in Scripture are of such a nature that they could be known, and some of them must be known by those who received them without any revelation. The question, then, is what need was there of inspiration to write such things? Answer: it was necessary
    1. To guide the persons in the selection of facts and circumstances
    2. To preserve them from such slips of memory as all men are liable to, and to revive in their memory such discoveries as could not be exactly retained too long a time
    3. To assure them of facts they may have received only on probable evidence
6. It is not necessary to suppose that, in writing such parts of the Scriptures, the very words were suggested to them, as the truth of the facts and not the beauty or sublimity of the language was the object in view, and the great variety of style in the sacred

Scriptures evinces that the writers were in a good degree left to choose their own language.

But as the precision and perspicuity with which truth is communicated depends greatly on the language by which it is conveyed in order to [receive] a clear revelation of the will of God, it was necessary that fallible and especially unlearned men should be under a particular guidance in the selection of their words so as to preserve them from ambiguous and improper terms. The rule, therefore, seems to be this: that as far as was necessary for certainty and perspicuity in the things revealed, there was a superintending influence in guiding to the selection of proper words.

7. Many compositions contained in Scripture are of a devotional and moral kind, such as psalms and prayers. These, when they proceed from pious men, are to be considered as inspired, though we are not to consider every declaration or discourse in the sacred Scriptures as inspired, as those of Job's friends, the speeches of wicked men.[1]
8. The last class of Scripture truths are such as contain reasonings and discussions on particular points, such as the epistles of the apostles. Here we think that the writers were under a divine guidance so as to be preserved from error, but in the choice of words and in the particular style of writing and method of reasoning were left very much to their own natural genius. So far, however, as divine assistance was requisite to make the reasoning correct and to guide them to proper words by which to express their ideas, so far was it afforded to the inspired writers.

[1] [Alexander's purpose in this discussion is to differentiate the providential operations in how God immediately and directly inspired from His Holy Spirit the various sayings and accounts of variously morally qualified persons in the Scriptures, probably from critics who criticized inspiration as a simplistic (and therefore untrue) concept. While Alexander rightly denies the immediate and direct inspiration by the Holy Ghost to the evil speeches of men in Scripture (evil does not come from God), yet there is no reason to believe that Alexander did not believe that the special governance of God was still upon those evil speeches and that the entirety of the sixty-six books of Scripture are still authoritative canon for the church, rightly interpreted in their context.]

136. Were the words as well as the ideas revealed?

See the answer to the proceeding question.

137. In how many different ways were revelations made?

1. Many truths recorded in Scripture were spoken by God Himself or by Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Thus, immediate intercourse existed between God and the first man.
2. Truths not capable of being known by reason were revealed to chosen men by immediate suggestion to the mind, as the gospel to Paul.
3. Revelations were frequently made by visions, in which by some symbolical representations the persons were instructed in the truths intended to be made known.
4. Revelations were made by dreams, of this we have numerous examples.
5. They were made by the mission of angels.
6. By Urim and Thummim, and voices, or as the Jews say[2] בת קול.

[2] [For the urim and thummim, see Ex. 28:30 and Num. 27:21. The Hebrew above is pronounced "bat kohl" and literally means "daughter of a voice," or, "the proceedings of a voice," namely God's voice. The term was given by the Jews for the places in the Old Testament where God audibly spoke from heaven, though many superstitious and extrabiblical legends became attributed to this term.]

Chapter 5

Attributes

138. Are the divine attributes the same with the divine essence?

They are, for were they not, God would be neither supremely simple nor perfect since He would be made up of different attributes really distinct. Neither could He be immutable were His attributes distinguishable from His essence.

139. How are they usually distinguished?

Theologians have adopted various modes of distribution. The most common are those into communicable and incommunicable, natural and moral.

140. What attributes are termed communicable?

Knowledge, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, truth.

141. What are the incommunicable?

Self-existence, independence, simplicity, infinity, eternity, immutability, unity.

142. Is there any objection to this distribution of the divine attributes?

It has been objected that of those attributes called incommunicable, some faint resemblance is to be found in creatures. Thus finite duration is some image of infinite duration as much as finite power of omnipotence.

143. How are they otherwise divided?

Natural and moral, absolute and relative.

144. What are the natural perfections of God?

Unity, self-existence, omnipotence, immutability, spirituality, eternity, wisdom, knowledge.

145. Which are the moral perfections of God?

Justice, holiness, goodness, truth.

146. Are there any other theological divisions of the divine attributes?

Negative and positive.

147. What perfections arise out of the necessary existence of God?

All His natural perfections and some of His moral, as Dr. S. Clarke[1] supposes.

148. What perfections are dependent on the divine will, and what on His understanding?

His moral attributes depend on His will, as morality is seated in the will. His knowledge and wisdom appear to be connected more immediately with His understanding.

149. What names are given to God in the Holy Scriptures?

Jehovah Aleim [Elohim, YHWH God], Adonai Jah [Lord Yah], Sheddi [Shaddai, Almighty], Aloi [Elohi, my God].

[1] [See the footnote under question #57.]

150. What is the import of these names?

יהוה signifies “self-existence” [and] “eternity” from הוה; אל imports “strength” from איל [help], אלה [God] *a cultu* [from the cult]; שדי “all-sufficient,” if from שדה “all mighty”; “to pour forth,” if from שדה *vastavit* [made empty]; אהיה “I am” imports “independence,” “immutability,” “eternity,” and so on. יה from היה “to exist” denotes “the essence” ο, ων; עליון “most high” from עלה “to ascend”; אדון “Lord,” “supporter.” The Greek names κυριος and θεος are also significant. The first denotes “self-existence” from κυρω “to exist,” also “authority.” The second, “maker,” “pervader,” from θεω “to place.”[2]

151. Is there any distinction between the self-existence and independence of God?

No; the latter is implied in the former. What exists of itself can depend on no other.

152. How can it be demonstrated that God is self-existent and independent?

These imply that God cannot but be, and be what He is, and that altogether in and of Himself. They are proved

1. From express passages of Scripture: “I am that I am” (Ex. 3:14); “I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending” (Rev. 1:8).
2. As God is the cause of all things and the upholder of them all, it would imply a contradiction to say He was dependent on anything.
3. If God is infinitely above the highest creatures, He can depend on none.

153. How may the unity of God be demonstrated?

[2] See *Horae Solitariae*.

It may be proved from His self-existence and infinity. The unity of God means that there neither is nor can be more than one individual divine substance. It is plainly declared in the Word: Deuteronomy 6:4, “Hear oh Israel, the Lord our God is one God.” Exodus 20:3, “You shall have no other gods before me.” James 2:19, “You believe that there is one God, you believe well.” The unity of God is inferred from His necessary existence and infinity, from the unity of design observable in the world, and from the supposition of more gods than one being unnecessary.

154. How is the spirituality of God evinced?

The spirituality of God is His immateriality, and it comprises a negative and positive idea. The first consists in removing from our idea of God the known properties of matter. The second in referring to Him the powers of perception, thought, will, and action. That God is immaterial appears from

1. His self existence
2. His being where body is
3. From His omnipresence
4. From His invisibility
5. From the express language of Scripture. “God is a Spirit” (John 4:24).

155. What is meant by the simplicity of God, and how is it proved to be a divine perfection?

The simplicity of God is that divine attribute by which God is not only free from all composition or division but utterly incapable of either. It is proved

1. From the divine independence

2. From His unity

3. From His absolute perfection

156. Is God necessarily invisible?

Yes; spirit is invisible.

157. Is activity essential to God?

Yes, an inactive spirit is a contradiction.

158. What is meant by the "life" of God?

The most perfect kind of existence, comprehending both being and blessedness, by which He not only is and is happy but also is the source of existence and happiness. God is life essentially, "The Father has life in Himself" (John 5:26) and eternally.

159. Is there any distinction between the immensity and omnipresence of God?

The omnipresence of God arises from His immensity: the latter as an absolute attribute belonging to God from eternity, the former refers to His relation to place as existing in time.

160. How does it appear that God is omnipresent?

1. From the plain declarations of Scripture; see Psalm 139. "Do not I fill heaven and earth says the Lord" (Jer. 23:24).
2. It is necessary that the preserver of all things should be present with all things.

3. It is necessary to His perfection.

161. Is He everywhere present with His essence or only with His power and knowledge?

Effects being produced everywhere proves that God is essentially everywhere. Besides, His power and knowledge belong to His essence.

162. Is He equally present everywhere?

Yes, though not in the same manner: His glorious presence is particularly in heaven, His gracious presence with the good, and so on.

163. Is He present in empty space beyond the limits of creation?

Yes, for He might create other worlds beyond the bounds of those already made, and He would be essentially present in them as well as in ours. Whatever pertains to God is infinite, but were His essence contained within any limits, it would be finite. Solomon says, “Behold the heaven of heavens cannot contain You” [2 Chron. 6:18].

164. Is space a divine attribute? Or is it a creature? Or quality? Or nothing?

Space is nothing more than a certain relation of being and cannot be conceived of but as relation. We derive the idea from extended substances.

165. How may it be demonstrated that God is eternal?

The eternity of God implies His existence without beginning or end, or succession of duration. That He is without beginning is inferred

1. From His self-existence
2. From express passages of Scripture, “I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was” (Prov. 8:23).

That He is without end is inferred from His spirituality, simplicity, and immutability. “From everlasting to everlasting, God” [Ps. 90:2].

166. Does the eternity of God exclude all succession of duration?

Yes, because

1. He is said to be before succession. “Before the day was, I am” (Isa. 43:13).
2. Were His duration successive, then there must have been some first day or year, which is inconsistent with the idea of eternity. Besides, a day would then be but a day to Him, and not “as a thousand years” [2 Peter 3:8].
3. Succession is inconsistent with immutability and perfection.
4. His knowledge proves Him without successive duration. “For He sees the present without a medium, the past without recollection and the future without foresight. To Him all truths are but one idea, all places but one point, and all times but one moment.”

167. Have we any idea of duration without succession?

No, our idea of duration is derived from the succession of our ideas.

168. Do not the Holy Scriptures speak of past, present, and future with respect to God?

Yes, in accommodation to the only mode in which we are capable of conceiving of the works of God and in respect to the effects produced in times.

169. Is time a portion of eternity or something entirely distinct?

They are entirely distinct, being species of duration directly opposed. Eternity always was and will be; it is one unsuccessive, unmoving presence. Time began, continues by succession, and is to terminate.

170. Is immutability a divine perfection?

Immutability is that perfection by which all possibility of change is denied in the deity. Malachi 3:6, "I am the LORD, I change not"; Hebrews 13:8, "Jesus Christ the same yesterday today and forever." The immutability of God belongs to everything pertaining to the divine nature. To suppose Him capable of change is inconsistent with His supreme perfection, with His simplicity, and with His eternity. Indeed, true eternity is true immutability, though they differ in our conceptions. Immutability is the state itself, eternity the measure of that state.

171. Is the will of God immutable as well as His essence?

Yes, because

1. The will of God is the same with His essence; it is *Deus volens* [God-willing].
2. His purposes are eternal.

3. There can be no cause for a change in the divine will. He may will a change without changing His will. Psalm 33:11: “The counsel of the Lord stands forever; the thoughts of his heart to all generations.”

172. Is immutability of will reconcilable with liberty?

Yes, for the liberty of God’s will does not consist so much in indifference as in independence on all things without Himself. What God is, He chooses to be, though He is what He is immutably; and to be immutably good is no weakness, but the height of perfection.

173. How can the repentance of God be reconciled with immutability?

This language is used in accommodation to the weakness of our capacity in the same manner as the several members of the body are in Scripture referred to God. When, therefore, God is said to repent, it is nothing more than that there is such a change in His conduct as in man proceeds from a change of mind, or repentance; though this change in God’s dispensation was the object of an eternal immutable decree.

174. How can the nonfulfillment of threatenings be reconciled with immutability?

All these threatenings are conditional, though the condition may not have been expressed; and they are intended more to declare what could be the result of natural causes or the inseparable connection between demerit and punishment than what God intends to accomplish in every particular case.

175. How is the knowledge of God distinguished?

It may be variously considered

1. As to its mode and object
2. Speculation and practical
3. As the knowledge of simple intelligence and of vision

176. What is the knowledge of simple intelligence?

The knowledge of all possible things, of all that may be, though it never shall be.

177. What is the knowledge of vision?

The knowledge of all things future. It follows the act of the divine will decreeing, which it presupposes.

178. Is there any *Scientia Media* [middle knowledge]? [3]

This signifies a middle species of knowledge between the two just mentioned, differing from the knowledge of intelligence (or natural knowledge), because it relates to future

[3] [In short, middle knowledge served the grounds for the idea that God chose to predestine to come to pass one of the possible universe-outcomes that His creatures might have chosen apart from God's decree. This was an attempt to reconcile man's free will with God's sovereignty. Middle knowledge was first set forth by Jesuits, most notably Luis de Molina (1536–1600), in the late 1500s and was shortly adopted by Jacob Arminius (1560–1609) and most of his followers. At the Reformation, the Reformed, following in the Augustinian tradition, posited that God has two fundamental types of knowledge: (1) knowledge of all things possible that He could bring to pass if He so chose and (2) knowledge based on His actual, free decree to create and ordain all things that will ever come pass—a knowledge of all things future. The Jesuits and Arminians posited a type of knowledge for God in between these two, or a "middle knowledge." This middle knowledge involved a knowledge of what creatures would do in various possible situations considered apart from any decree of God. God chooses a possible scenario, or world, for His creatures where their autonomous free will is not impinged on, but which gives God's desired outcome, and God wills to create it so. The typical Reformed response to this, as Alexander gives, is not to accommodate such a paradigm but to deny that such a middle knowledge is possible for God at all. It is impossible for anything to happen, or to be conceived of happening, apart from the concurrent will of God, as the creature is in all ways dependent on the will of the Creator.]

things, and from that of vision, because it refers to things only hypothetically future.

Turretin's[4] arguments against a *Scientia Media* are

1. That the other two kinds of knowledge embrace everything that is capable of being known
2. Because things cannot be foreseen as true that are not true
3. Because all the acts of a created will are subject to the divine providence
4. No uncertain knowledge is to be attributed to God
5. *Scientia Media*

A. Destroys God's dominion over the free acts of the will.

B. If there were a *Scientia Media*, some other cause might be assigned for predestination than the mere *beneplacitum* [good-pleasure] of God.

179. By whom and for what purpose was it invented?

By the Jesuits to support the semi-Pelagian doctrine respecting the foreknowledge of faith as the cause of election, and to maintain the freedom of the will.

180. Does the knowledge of God extend infallibly to contingencies?

Anything is said to be contingent in the language of theology that in the nature of things might have been otherwise than it is. It refers not to the event that is certain but to the mode of production. That God knows things contingent is proved

[4] [Francis Turretin (1623–1687) was a professor of Geneva, representing something of the height of scholastic Reformed orthodoxy. Turretin's *Institutes* in the Latin were widely used at Princeton and many orthodox seminaries in America in the 1800s. Turretin's section is found in *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, ed. James Dennison (Phillipsburg, N.J.: P&R Publishing, 1992) 1:212–18.]

1. From its being said in the Bible: “Hell and destruction are before the Lord, how much more the hearts of the children of men.” [Prov. 15:11]
2. From His predicting them
3. From the perfection of His nature
4. From His decreeing them

181. Is the knowledge of God noetical or dianoetical?[5]

Noetical; He perceives everything by intuition.

182. What is the object of the divine will?

Good.

183. Does God will anything necessarily?

Necessity is twofold:

1. Absolute, by which a thing from its nature cannot be otherwise than it is
2. Hypothetical—that is, something else being granted, the other follows of necessity, as salvation from election

Now God wills Himself absolutely necessarily, because He is the chief good and therefore He cannot but will and love Himself.

184. Does God will anything freely?

[5] [The difference is that noetical, for Alexander (see #402), refers to a knowledge of things through a simple intuition unmediated through anything or the things themselves, which knowledge God alone has. Dianoetical refers to knowledge through discursive reasoning based on the things themselves, which knowledge creatures have.]

Liberty also is twofold:

1. That of spontaneity which is opposed to coercion
2. That of indifference

In the first sense, what God wills most necessarily, He wills freely. But in the second also He wills all created things freely. For all created things are with respect to God contingent; that is, He might will or not will them.

185. Is the will of God properly divided into secret and revealed?

Yes, the first refers to the will that lies hid in God, the last to that made known in the law and gospel. The first has for its object all things God has determined to effect or permit, the second all that relates to our duty.

186. What other terms are used to express this distinction?

Decretive and preceptive, ευδοκιας and ευαιρεστιας ["approval" and "good pleasure"]. These are derived from Scripture: the first, [from] Matthew 11:26; the second, [from] Romans 12:2; Ephesians 5:10; also *beneplaciti et signi* [of good pleasure and of sign].

187. Is there no contrariety in these two wills?

No. The decretive will determines the event; the preceptive prescribes the duty. They do not contradict each other, because they have different objects, and though God may will that event should take place contrary to His precept, yet He forces no one to act against His commandment.

188. Is the will of God properly distinguished into antecedent and consequent?

No. By the first is understood that by which God wills something to a rational creature prior to any act of the creature; the second is that by which He wills something after some act or many acts of the creature.

Thus they say He has an antecedent will to save all men, and a consequent will to save only those who believe. Christ had an antecedent will to gather together the children of Israel and a consequent will to scatter them abroad. But this is dishonorable to God, as it ascribes contrary wills to Him, makes Him mutable, His will inefficacious, and subjects Him to the conduct of man.

189. Into efficacious and inefficacious, absolute and conditional?

If these terms refer respectively to the decretive and preceptive will of God, they may be correct; but if they are referred only to the decretive will, they are not.

190. Can any cause be assigned for the divine will? Can any reason?

The will of God is the first cause, the cause of all things, and consequently it can have no cause prior to it. But as God does everything most wisely, He must have reasons for His volitions though they be hidden from us.

191. Is the will of God the primary rule of right and wrong?

It is as it regards man because God is perfectly good, but not as it respects God Himself, for God wills many things because they are good in themselves. Were the will of God the only rule of right and wrong, He might make atheism, envy, pride, and so on virtues.

192. How does it appear that justice is a divine attribute?

Justice is that attribute which disposes God to render to Himself and all His creatures that which is equal and right. Psalm 11:7: “The righteous Lord loves righteousness.” His justice appears in His giving righteous laws to all His creatures, in the sanctions of these laws, and so on.

193. What is general justice?

It is that by which God does what is right in all His works.

194. What is vindicatory justice?

That by which God punishes sin as sin.

195. How can it be demonstrated that this last is an essential attribute of God?

1. From the voice of Scripture
2. From the dictates of conscience and the consent of all people
3. From the sanction of the law and all the Levitical ceremonies and from our redemption by the death of Christ

196. How may it be proved that God is good?

1. Because it is essential to perfection.
2. He that is the cause of all created good must be the supreme good.
3. His word declares Him good. Psalm 25:8: “Good and upright is the Lord.”

4. Proved from the works of creation, providence, and redemption.

197. How is goodness defined?

It is that attribute by which God is beneficial to His creatures.

198. What is the love of God, and how is it distinguished?

The love of God is His natural delight in that which is good. It is distinguished in the love of benevolence, beneficence, and of complacency.

199. What is love of benevolence, what of beneficence, what of complacency?

The first is that by which God from eternity wished well to His creatures, the second that by which He does them good in time, the last is that by which He delights in them on account of some rays of His own image He finds upon them.

200. By what considerations is the love of God recommended to us?

By the majesty of Him who loves, by the vanity and unworthiness of its recipients, by the dignity of Him in whom we are loved, and by the multitude and richness of the blessings that flow from it.

201. What is the grace of God?

God's free favor and love. It is distinguished into common and special.

202. How are the mercy and the grace of God distinguished?

Mercy is the divine benignity exercised toward the miserable. Grace is the same benignity exercised toward the unworthy.

203. Wherein does the greatness of the divine mercy appear?

1. From the character of Him who exhibits it, who is perfectly blessed and independent
2. From the character of its objects who are enemies, miserable and sinful
3. From its effects: redemption from sin and hell, and the conferring eternal life
4. From its duration, which is eternal

204. How is the truth of God evinced?

It is that essential attribute by which God is infinitely removed from all falsehood and deceit. It is evinced by the sense of the excellence of truth found in the minds of His creatures, by the fulfillment of predictions, and so on.

205. Can it be proved from the sacred Scriptures?

Romans 3:4: “Yea, Let God be true and every man a liar.” Psalm 31:5: “Into your hands I commit my spirit: You have redeemed me, O Lord God of truth.” Psalm 100:5: “For the Lord is good, his mercy is everlasting, and his truth endures to all generations.”

206. What is the distinction between the truth and faithfulness of God?

The truth of God consists in the exact agreement of His words and works with His thoughts, inclination, and will. His faithfulness consists in the exact correspondence of

His works with His declarations, predictions, and all the relations in which He stands to His creatures.

207. Does the word *holiness* mean any distinct attribute or the aggregate of all?

Some divines consider it as a distinct attribute, others as the aggregate of all.

208. Can the holiness of God be defined or analyzed?

Charnock defines it to be negatively "a perfect and unpolluted freedom from all evil," positively as the "rectitude or integrity of the divine nature."[6]

209. Is omnipotence an attribute of God?

Yes, though the power and will of God do not differ essentially, but the first is more extensive than the latter. It is divided into ordinate and absolute: the latter is that by which He is able to do what He will not do, yet which may be done; the first is that by which He does that which He has decreed to do. It [omnipotence] is

1. Ascribed to Him in the sacred Scriptures: Matthew 19:26: "with God all things are possible"
2. Proved from power in His creatures
3. Proved from the works of creation, providence, and redemption

210. Can God do anything?

Yes, anything not repugnant to His nature, nor involving a contradiction.

[6] [Stephen Charnock (1628–1680) was an English Puritan divine who wrote the classic on the existence and attributes of God: *Discourses upon the Existence and Attributes of God* (London: Thomas Tegg, 1840), 470]

211. How are impossible things distinguished?

Into supernatural, natural, and moral.

212. What is a supernatural impossibility?

Such as implies a contradiction and that divine power cannot effect, such as to make a sensitive stone.[7]

213. What is a natural impossibility?

That which cannot be effected by the power of second causes, as creation.

214. What is a moral impossibility?

That which cannot be done consistently with the laws of holiness.

215. Is it any derogation from omnipotence not to be able to do impossibilities?

No. They are not the objects of power.

216. Could God create an infinite being?

No. Two infinite beings imply a contradiction.

217. Could God deny Himself or act inconsistently with His perfections?

2 Timothy 2:13: “If we believe not, yet He abides faithful: He cannot deny Himself.”

[7] [Alexander may be referring to making a stone that can sense things. However, if it could sense things, then, by definition, it would not be a stone.]

218. What is the dominion of God?

It is His absolute right to and authority over all His creatures to do with them as He pleases.

219. On what is His dominion founded?

The foundation of God's dominion is twofold:

1. The supreme excellency of His nature
2. The number and richness of His benefits as Creator and Preserver

220. Is the dominion of God absolute and unlimited?

Yes. As He is perfectly independent, so He is subject to no law but does with His own what He wills, and no one can say unto Him, "What doest Thou?" [Job 9:12].

221. Have we any adequate ideas of God?

None. We know only in part. God is infinite and, of course, by every finite being, incomprehensible. "Can you by searching find out God?" [Job 11:7].

222. How does it appear that God is infinitely perfect?

It is a dictate of common sense and should always be considered as a first principle in theology. The Scriptures represent all His attributes as infinite.

223. Do the works of God prove Him infinite in all His perfections?

His works, unless it be the act of creating, are all finite, and therefore cannot strictly be said to prove their author infinite.

224. Do all men agree in ascribing infinite perfections to God?

They do, as far as their ideas of perfection extend.

225. Is God infinitely happy?

Yes, for His independence and omnipotence place Him beyond the reach of all external evil, and His infinite perfection and holiness forbid the supposition of any cause of pain within Himself; but if happy at all, He must be infinitely so.

226. Is it right to ascribe to God everything we know to be a perfection?

We can’t avoid it.

Chapter 6

Trinity

227. Does the light of nature teach us anything of the mode of the divine existence?

It does not, because the works of nature are not capable of being the medium of such a communication.

228. Is the doctrine of a Trinity of persons in the unity of the divine essence inconsistent with reason?

It is not contrary to reason, though beyond its reach. A doctrine is properly said to be contrary to reason when it contradicts some first principle of reason or some conclusion derived by demonstration from first principles. But the doctrine of the Trinity does not contradict any such principle or conclusion, because we do not say that three persons in the Godhead are one person, or that one divine being is three divine beings.

The argument drawn from reason against this article of our faith rests on this principle, that because among angels and men every distinct person is also a distinct being, therefore if we say there are three distinct persons in the Godhead, we must admit there are three distinct beings in the deity, which is Tritheism. But this is evidently arguing from finite to infinite, which must from its nature be an inconclusive argument.[1]

229. Has the doctrine of a Trinity in deity been prevalent among ancient nations?

Yes. Evident traces of the doctrine can be discovered in the mythology of almost every

[1] *Waterland against Claude*, Question 22. [Daniel C. Waterland (1683–1740) was an Anglican theologian who was anti-latitituinarian and defended the Trinity in numerous works.]

nation in the world; And it should be remarked that the nearer we ascended to the fountain of traditionary knowledge, the more correct has been the opinion of the ancients on this subject.

230. Does this doctrine invoke any contradiction in terms?

No, as seen before.

230. Can it be comprehended by man?

No, and that both because it is but partially revealed and because of the impossibility of finite creatures embracing completely what relates to infinite God.

230. Is the word *Trinity* to be found in sacred Scripture, and is it proper to use?

The word itself is not found in sacred Scripture, but it still should be used because of its utility, in defining the precise meaning of those who receive the doctrine it contains. It is absolutely necessary in expounding Scripture that words not found in the Bible should often be employed.

231. Is this doctrine revealed in the Old Testament?

Yes, though like other parts of the plan of divine truth, with much less clearness than under the gospel dispensation. That it was revealed is proved

1. From Genesis 1:26 where God says, “Let us make man in our image.”
2. From the Spirit being said, “to brood upon the waters,” and from such expressions as these, “I will save them by Jehovah their God” [Hos. 1:7].

3. From the history of the creation, which is attributed to each of the three persons of the Trinity.
4. From the liberation from Egypt, which is also ascribed to each of the divine persons: "I am the Lord your God which brought you out of the land of Egypt." Yet in Exodus 3:2; 23:20; 32:34, the Angel of the Lord is said to have done it. That this Angel was also God, appears from his being called the "God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob" (Ex. 3:6). See also Exodus 14:19 and 13:21; 23:20, and so on. This work is ascribed to the Spirit (Isa. 63:7–9);
5. From the descriptions of the Messiah
6. From the threefold benediction of the high priest (Num. 6:23–24) and from the Trisagion (Isa. 6:3)
7. All those passages asserting the deity of the Son and Spirit
8. The same being is God both of the Old and New Testament. This doctrine is found explained with wonderful clearness in Jewish writers before the Advent.[2]

232. Is it a fundamental doctrine in the Christian system?

Yes, so far as to believe there is but one God, that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit having the divine perfections ascribed to them are that God, though distinguished from each other by those acts and relations we are accustomed to call personal. This is proved

1. From John 17:3: "This is eternal life, that they might know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent."

[2] [See, for instance, Peter Allix, *The Judgment of the Ancient Jewish Church against the Unitarians in the Controversy upon the Holy Trinity and the Divinity of Our Blessed Savior* (Oxford, 1821).]

2. Because it contains the great object of faith and worship, “He that denies the Son, the same has not the Father” (1 John 2:23).
3. Because on this depends the doctrines of the incarnation, atonement, the mission of the Spirit, regeneration, and so on.
4. Because it is the great distinguishing doctrine between Christianity and Judaism, Mahometanism, and so on.

233. How does it appear that there are three distinct persons in the divine essence?

1. From the baptism of Christ (Matt. 3:16), where the Father spake from heaven, the Son ascended from the Jordan, and the Spirit descended from above in the form of a dove and rested upon Him.
2. From our baptism: “Teach all nations baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost” (Matt. 28:19).
3. From the apostolic benediction: “The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost be with you all” (2 Cor. 13:13).
4. Those places in which mention is made of three to whom divine works are equally attributed, as John 15:26; 1 Corinthians 12:4–6.

234. Is the word *person* to be taken in its common and definite sense?

No. The word *person*, when applied to the deity, is distinguished from the term as applied to men:

1. Divine persons are in substance perfectly one and the same with and in one another, but all created persons are separable.

2. Divine persons are the same individual substance, but created persons can only have the same kind of substance.
3. All divine persons are and must be one and the same being, but every created person is a distinct being. Brown[3] defines a person, "A thinking substance, which can act by itself." Calvin's[4] definition is a "*Subsistentia* in the essence of the Deity, by which it is related to others, yet distinguished by incommunicable properties." Melanchthon's:[5] "An individual subsistence, living, intelligent, incommunicable, not sustained by any other and not a part of any other."

235. Is the distinction of persons real or modal?

The divine persons are said to differ from the divine essence *ut modus a re* [according to the mode of the thing], being the thing itself with personal properties. It is also real and essential.

236. Does not the doctrine of three distinct persons lead to Tritheism?

No, for the three persons are the same essence.

237. By what properties are the persons of the Trinity distinguished?

They are distinguished:

[3] [John Brown of Haddington (1722–1787) was a divine of the Scottish Secession Church. *A Compendious View of Natural and Revealed Religion*, book 2, ch. 2.]

[4] [John Calvin (1509–1564) was an influential French/Swiss theologian, pastor, and reformer during the Protestant Reformation. He was a principal figure in the development of the system of Christian theology later called Calvinism. *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, book 1, ch. 13, section 6.]

[5] [Philip Melanchthon (1497–1560) was a German Lutheran reformer, collaborator with Martin Luther, the first systematic theologian of the Protestant Reformation, intellectual leader of the Lutheran Reformation, and an influential designer of educational systems.]

1. By what relates to themselves, in regard to each other

2. By their external operations

First, the Father is said to be unbegotten, the Son begotten, the Holy Ghost to have proceeded. Secondly, the Father is said to work of Himself, the Son to work from the Father, the Spirit from both.

238. Are the personal properties communicable?

They are not.

239. Do the terms *Father* and *Son* express the eternal relation of the first and second persons?

This was universally the opinion of Christians during the early ages of the church. Roell[6] was the first, who, admitting the Godhead of the second person, denied His eternal filiation. Turretin argues for the doctrine against the Socinians:[7]

1. From Psalm 2:7: "You are my Son, this day have I begotten You."

2. From Proverbs 8:22–23, and so on, "The Lord possessed Me in the beginning of his ways."

3. From Micah 5:2: "His goings forth were of old even from everlasting."

4. From the nature of His sonship.

5. From His being called the "image of the invisible God" (Col. 1:15 and Heb. 1:3).

It is further urged in favor of this doctrine that the Son is represented as sent (1 John 4:9–

[6] [Hermann Alexander Roell (1653–1718) was a Dutch Reformed professor at Franeker.]

[7] [Named after Fausto Sozzini (1539–1604). Socinianism denied the pre-existence of Christ, limited the foreknowledge of God, denied original sin, rejected the propitiatory view of the atonement, did not hold to infant baptism, and replaced hell with annihilationism.]

10; Gal. 4:4).

2. “God was manifested in the flesh” (1 Tim. 3:16). “The Son was manifested” (1 John 3:8). Hence the Son must have existed as God and as the Son previous to His advent.
3. In Hebrews 1:2 God is said to have made all things by His Son, which implies His preexistence as the Son.
4. In Hebrews 7:3 we are told that Melchizedek was made like the Son of God, without beginning of days.

240. Is Christ called the Son of God in reference to His incarnation?

Those who answer the preceding question in the negative, answer this affirmatively and vice versa.

241. Does the Holy Spirit proceed from the Son as well as the Father?

This question was long and warmly debated between the Greek and Latin churches; the Greeks contended that the procession was from the Father only. The Latins, that it was both from the Father and the Son. The opinion of the Latins appears to be best supported by the sense of Scripture, because

1. The Spirit is said to be sent by the Son as well as by the Father
2. The Spirit of the Son, not less than the Spirit of the Father, is said to be given (Gal. 4:6)
3. What the Spirit has is said to be of the Son (John 16:13–15)
4. Christ breathed the Spirit upon His disciples (John 20:22)

242. From what sources is the evidence of Christ's divinity derived?

From the names, attributes, offices, and works ascribed to Him in the sacred Scriptures.

243. By what names and titles of the true God is He called?

"Jehovah," "God," "The Lord of Hosts," "The Almighty," "The Most High" (Mark 5:7; Luke 8:28), "The Everlasting Father," "Prince of Peace" (Isa. 9:6; John 14:11, Luke 1:79), and so on.

244. Are these names never applied to mere creatures?

The epithet *god* is sometimes figuratively ascribed to angels and magistrates, but not so with the rest.

245. Is the name Jehovah ever ascribed to Christ, and is it communicable?

This name as it expresses the incommunicable essence of the deity and implies necessary, independent, and eternal existence, is most clearly peculiar to the only true God. It is applied to Christ as Redeemer (Isa. 60:16 and 63:7–9). Jeremiah prophesied that a righteous Branch should be raised to David, a king in whose days Judah should be saved, whose name should be called "Jehovah our Righteousness" (Jer. 23:6). Zechariah 12:10: "They shall look on Me whom they have pierced." Here the name Jehovah is used, and this passage is by John referred to Christ [John 19:37]. See also Isaiah 47:4; 54:5, 8; Jeremiah 33:15–16; see App., p. 8.

246. What divine attributes are ascribed to Christ?

Eternity: Proverbs 8:22–23 and Micah 5:2: “his going forth were of old even from everlasting.” Revelation 1:8, “The First and the Last.” John 1:1 and 8:58.

Omnipresence: “Where two or three are gathered together in my name” (Matt. 18:20). John 3:13; Colossians 1:17; Hebrews 1:3.

Omnipotence: Revelation 1:8: “The Almighty”; Philippians 3:21; Revelation 11:17–18; 22:12–13, 20.

Omniscience: John 21:17 “Lord, You know all things.” John 1:18; 2:25; Matthew 9:23; Revelation 2:13; Hebrews 4:13.

Immutability: Hebrews 1:11, 12: “The heavens shall perish, but You remain.... You are the same, and your years shall not fail.” Hebrews 13:8; Psalm 102:24–27.

247. What works is He said to have wrought that prove His divinity?

The creation, preservation, and redemption of the world.

248. By what passages of the sacred Scriptures do you prove that Christ created the world?

John 1:3: “By Him were all things made, and without Him was not anything made that was made.” Hebrews 1:2; 3:4; Colossians 1:16–17.

249. Is Jesus Christ declared in the sacred Scriptures to be the preserver of all things?

Yes. Hebrews 1:3: “Upholding all things by the word of his power.” Also John 5:17, 19; Colossians 1:17–18.

250. How do you prove that the new creation is His proper work?

Because redeeming, calling, justifying, sanctifying, preserving, and, at last, raising sinners are all ascribed to Him in sacred Scripture: Matthew 20:28; Acts 20:28; John 5:21, 25; 10:16; Matthew 9:6; Isaiah 53:11; Colossians 3:13; Ephesians 5:28, 29; Hebrews 13:12; 9:14; John 10:10, 28; Jude 1; John 5:28; 1 Peter 3:18.

251. Do the miracles of Christ prove His divinity?

Yes, because some of these required almighty, and hence incommunicable, power, yet they were performed by His own inherent virtue, and thus the apostles declare that they act in the name and through the power of Christ (Acts 9:34).

252. What worship is ascribed to the Son in the sacred Scriptures?

Divine, as Hebrews 1:6: “Let all the angels of God worship Him.” Psalm 2:12: “Kiss the Son.” John 5:22: “The Father has given all judgment to the Son, that all men might honor the Son even as they honor the Father.” Revelation 5:13, Every creature in heaven, earth, and sea are represented as saying, “Blessing and honor and glory and power be unto Him that sits on the throne and unto the Lamb forever and ever.”

253. Did He permit divine worship to be paid Him when on earth?

Matthew 2:11, The wise men of the east “fell down and worshiped him”; so did Nathaniel and Thomas and His disciples when He ascended. He required this worship in commanding His disciples to believe in Him as they believed in God (John 14:1), in requiring supreme love (John 21:15–17; Mark 12:30, and so on), also obedience and

subjection of soul (Matt. 17:5), in instituting baptism, and so on. See App., p. 9.

254. Does He receive divine honor in heaven?

Yes, as seen above.

255. Is the famous text 1 John 5:7[8] a part of authentic Scripture?

This question has been very much disputed. The text has been defended by Bengelius,[9] Mills,[10] Horseley[11] and others, and opposed by Father Simon,[12] Wetstein,[13] Griesbach,[14] and the majority of modern commentators. The testimony as it stands at present is decidedly against the text: it is not found in any of the Greek codices now extant, nor in any of the ancient versions, nor in the Russian copies of the Bible before the fourteenth century, nor is it quoted by any of the early fathers.

It is urged in favor of it that it is found in the Complutensian polyglot published [in] AD 1520, and in the Latin codices, which reach as high up as the ninth century, that it is quoted by Vigelius Tapsensis[15] about the sixth century, and that it is now so common in all editions of the Bible.[16]

[8] [1 John 5:7: "For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one."]

[9] [Johann Albrecht Bengel (1687–1752) was a Lutheran pietist clergyman and Greek-language scholar known for his edition of the Greek New Testament and his commentaries on it.]

[10] [John Mill (1645–1707) was an English theologian. Mill is noted for his critical edition of the Greek New Testament, which included notes on many variant readings.]

[11] [Samuel Horsley (1733–1806) was the bishop of Rochester from 1793.]

[12] [Richard Simon (1638–1712) was a French priest who was an influential biblical critic, orientalist, and controversialist.]

[13] [Johann Jakob Wettstein (1693–1754) was a Swiss theologian best known as a New Testament critic.]

[14] [Johann Jakob Griesbach (1745–1812) was a German biblical textual critic whose fame rests on his work in New Testament criticism.]

[15] [Vigilio, bishop of Tapso (Tunisia), an ecclesiastical writer.]

[16] See App., p. 10.

256. Are the texts Acts 20:28[17] and 1 Timothy 3:16[18] authentic as contained in our Bible?

With respect to the last mentioned, it is objected that it is not found in all the Greek codices, nor in the Syriac, Arabic, or Latin versions as it is in our copies, but is written "*he* was manifested" [as opposed to "God was manifested"]. But as there are only two codices with this reading, they should not be opposed to all the rest.

It can also easily be accounted for that this diversity should exist, since the ancient M.S.S. [manuscripts] were written in capitals, and words that occur frequently are often contracted, thus πρ for πατερ [father] and ΘC for ΘEOC [God], which shows that OC, "who," might easily be mistaken for ΘC, "God." And there is a dispute whether it is OC or ΘC in the Codex Alexandrinus even among those who have inspected the M.S. [manuscript]. The sense of the passage appears to require the reading adopted in our Bibles.

With respect to the text in Acts 20:28, there are three different readings: εκκλησιαν του θεου [church of God], του κυριου [of the Lord], του κυριου και θεου [of the Lord and God]. For the first there are a few M.S.S. with the Vulgate, and latter Syriac; for the second [there are] some M.S.S., and these the most ancient: the Coptic, Armenian, [and] Ethiopic versions; for the third there is a great majority of M.S.S.

257. Have any important texts been made to support the divinity of Jesus Christ by attending to the Greek article?

Yes. It has been ascertained that και[19] is often exegetical as well as copulative and that

[17] [Acts 20:28: "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which He hath purchased with his own blood."]

[18] [1 Tim. 3:16: "And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory."]

this is the case when it is placed between nouns, the first of which has an article and the latter has none: 2 Corinthians 1:3, "Blessed be God and" ([or] "even" as it should be rendered) "the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ."[20] ο θεος και πατερ. See also Ephesians 1:3; 2 Thessalonians 2:16; 1 Peter 1:3; Romans 15:6; Philippians 4:20; Colossians 2:2.

Upon this principle the following passages strongly teach the deity of Christ: Titus 2:13, "Looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God και even our Savior Jesus Christ." So 1 Timothy 5:21, "I charge you before God και even the Lord Jesus Christ." Also Ephesians 5:5, "Kingdom of Christ even και of God," and 2 Thessalonians 1:12, "The grace του θεου ημων και κυριυ Ιησου Κριστου [of our God and Lord Jesus Christ]." See 1 Timothy 6:13; 2 Peter 1:2; Sharpe;[21] and Middleton.[22]

258. What light arises on this subject by comparing the texts of the Old and New Testament?

It is found that the names, works, and titles which in the Old Testament are ascribed to the true God are in the New Testament applied to Jesus Christ. Compare Isaiah 7:14 with Matthew 1:23; Isaiah 63:11 with Luke 2:11; Isaiah 3:8 with 2 Corinthians 3:18; Psalm 77:15 with Luke 1:51; Psalm 104:24, Matthew 11:19; [and] 1 Samuel 15:29 with 2 Corinthians 12:9; Isaiah 54:5 with 2 Corinthians 11:2; Isaiah 8:14 with Romans 9:33.

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[19] [Commonly translated "and," but it has other grammatical uses as well. The "exegetical" use of this article between two nouns means that the latter noun explains the former noun.]

[20] [The King James Version translates it correctly, per the point Alexander is making: "Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ."]

[21] [Granville Sharp (1735–1813) was a social activist, biblical scholar, classicist, and a talented musician. In Greek classical literature he stumbled on what is now known as the Granville Sharp Rule, which very much applies to key passages regarding Christ's divinity, some of which Alexander quoted: "When the copulative *kai* connects two nouns of the same case, if the article *ho*, or any of its cases, precedes the first of the said nouns or participles, and is not repeated before the second noun or participle, the latter always relates to the same person that is expressed or described by the first noun or participle."]

[22] [Thomas Fanshawe Middleton (1769–1822) was a noted Anglican bishop who followed Sharp and wrote the book *The Doctrine of the Greek Article Applied to the Criticism and Illustration of the New Testament* (London, 1833).]

259. How does it appear that the Holy Spirit is a person distinct from the Father and the Son?

1. From personal actions being ascribed to Him, as teaching (John 14:26), witnessing (John 15:26), revealing future things (1 Tim. 4:1), separating men for the ministry and sending them out (Acts 13:2 and 20:28), conferring gifts on men (1 Cor. 12:11).
2. From our Savior saying, "I will ask the Father and He will send you another comforter" (John 16:7).
3. From the distinct mention made of Him in baptism in the apostolic benediction.
4. From His appearing in a visible form at the baptism of Christ (Matt. 3:16) [and] at the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:3).
5. Because men are said to sin, to blaspheme, to lie against the Holy Ghost (Isa. 63:10; Matt. 12:31–32; Acts 5:3). See App., p. 10.

260. How can the divinity of the Holy Spirit be established?

From the names, works, attributes, and worship ascribed to Him in sacred Scripture.

261. What divine names and so on are given to the Holy Spirit in the sacred Scriptures?

1. The names:
    A. Jehovah of Hosts: compare Isaiah 6:9 with Acts 28:25, "Well spake the Holy Ghost by Isaiah"; 2 Samuel 23:2
    B. Most High God: Psalm 78:56; Hebrews 3:17–18
    C. The Lord: 2 Thessalonians 3:5; Matthew 9:38
2. Attributes:
    A. Eternity: Hebrews 9:14, "Who through the eternal Spirit"

B. Omnipresence: Psalm 139:7, “Whither shall I go from thy Spirit?” 1 Corinthians 3:16; 2 Timothy 1:14

C. Omniscience: 1 Corinthians 2:10–11, “For the Spirit searches all things, yea the deep things of God.” 2 Peter 1:21

D. Omnipotence: Luke 1:35, “The power of the Highest.” 1 Corinthians 15; Romans 8:11

3. Works:

A. That of creation: Psalm 104:30, “You send forth your Spirit, they are created; You renew the face of the earth.” Genesis 1:2; Job 26:13

B. Preserving all things: Psalm 104:30; Isaiah 34:16

C. Performing miracles: Matthew 12:28; 1 Corinthians 12:4

D. Convincing men of sin: John 16:9

E. Enlightening their minds: Ephesians 1:17, 18

F. Regenerating their hearts: John 3:5, 6, and so on.

4. Worship: By prayer, Revelation 1:4; 2 Thessalonians 3:5; in baptism, and so on.

262. How can it be demonstrated that these persons are one in essence?

1. Because these three persons are all comprehended under one supreme individual appellation, as Isaiah 44:24, “I am the Lord that makes all things, that stretches forth the heavens alone, etc.” The Trinity is the God of Israel, and so on.

2. They have in common the name Jehovah: Deuteronomy 6:4, “The Lord our God is one Jehovah.” Psalm 83:18, “You whose name alone is Jehovah, are most high over all the earth.”

3. Because the authority, the council, and the power by which all things are directed are ascribed to Christ and the Holy Spirit in common with the Father.
4. Because they participate in those divine attributes that can belong only to the divine essence. There can be but one infinite Being.
5. Because there is a concurrence in all the acts of the Godhead: the Trinity made all mankind, quickens the dead, instructs us, and so on.

263. How does it appear that they are equal in all respects?

This necessarily results from their respective divinity. They have the same names, worship, works, and nature, and therefore must be equal and in essence the same. Those passages of sacred Scripture in which any inferiority is attributed to the Son or Spirit refer merely to the different parts they have condescended to act in the economy of Redemption. *Quare, Gloria Patri, et Filio, et Spiritui Sancto in eternum* [Wherefore, glory be to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit forever].

Chapter 7

Decrees

264. What are the decrees of God, and how does it appear that they exist?

They are called the “essential, internal acts of God.” They are His eternal purposes. Their existence is

1. Proved from the perfection of the divine nature. His knowledge being infinite and infallible supposes that He has determined things to be as they are.
2. They are proved from the harmony observable in creation and providence.
3. They are constantly ascribed to God in the sacred Scriptures.
4. They are also proved by the prediction of things the most contingent (Amos 3:7; Matt. 8:17; John 19:36).

265. What kind of acts are the decrees of God?

The acts of God are divided into three kinds:

1. Those internal acts which have no relation to beings without;
2. External transient acts, as [making] creation;
3. Those internal acts of God which have a reference to things without. Of this last kind are decrees, being the councils of God concerning future things without Himself.

266. Are the divine decrees essentially or accidentally in the divine nature?

They cannot be considered as accidents in the divine nature, for this would be inconsistent with simplicity, contrary to absolute perfection, and opposed to immutability, for accidents are the root of all change. And this is as much as is necessary to be said on this subject, for we cannot easily conceive of decrees being the divine essence, of which they are the internal acts.

267. Are all the decrees of God from eternity?

Yes, because this is attributed to them in the sacred Scriptures, as when the kingdom is said to be prepared for the righteous "from the foundation of the world" (Matt. 25:34), also [in that the righteous are said to be] elected (Eph. 1:4; 2 Tim. 1:9); also from Acts 15:18, "known unto the Lord are all things from the beginning of the world." If the decrees are made in time, then after the manner of men God acts from the circumstances of the moment, which is altogether inconsistent with His infinite perfection.

268. Are the decrees of God immutable?

Yes. There may be changes in the external dispensations of His providence, but there can be none in His purpose, because this would argue some defect in His foreknowledge, wisdom, or power. "The counsel of the Lord stands forever; the thoughts of his heart to all generations" (Ps. 33:11). Hebrews 6:17, "Wherein God willing more abundantly to show the immutability of his counsel."

269. Are the decrees of God wise and free?

Yes. This appears from His wisdom and sovereignty manifested in the execution of them. For whatever perfections God manifests in His works, these He designed in His eternal purpose to glorify. Romans 11:33, “O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God.” Matthew 11:26, “Even so Father: for so it seems good in your sight.”

270. Are the decrees of God absolute or conditional?

The decrees of God are all absolute considered in themselves because

1. They are from eternity.
2. They are dependent only on the good pleasure of God (Matt. 15:25; Eph. 1:5).
3. They are immutable (Isa. 46:10).
4. It is inconsistent with the wisdom and power of God to make decrees that have uncertain objects.
5. It makes the purposes of God dependent on the fickle will of men. Isaiah 46:10, “Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things which are not yet done, saying my counsel shall stand and I will do all my pleasure.”

271. May they not be considered as conditional in regards to their object?

They may—that is, the event or object is decreed under a condition; thus, salvation under the condition of faith. But this mode of speaking confounds conditions and means.

272. Do the decrees of God involve the certainty of future events?

Certainty, or as Turretin says, necessity is of three kinds:

1. Physical, such as resides in second causes (e.g., fire will burn)
2. That of coaction[1]
3. Hypothetical necessity of the event, by which things in their nature contingent cannot but take place, on account of the ordination of God

In this last sense things decreed are necessary, or rather certain, because

1. The eternal and immutable purposes of God must take effect.
2. This necessity is asserted in sacred Scripture: Matthew 18:7, "For it must needs be that offenses come." Matthew 26:54, "But how then shall the scriptures be fulfilled that thus it must be?"
3. The most casual things are said to come to pass of necessity: Exodus 12:12, 13; Proverbs 16:33; John 19:36.
4. They are foreseen as future and therefore must take place.
5. They are predicted as future, and the Word of God cannot fail. See [Jonathan] Edwards, *Freedom of the Will*, part 2, section 11.

273. Does the decree of God make Him the author of sin?

No, because the decree, though it may render sin certain, is not the cause of sin, since it neither imports the evil disposition from whence it flows nor intimates the least approbation of it, but is merely permissive. There is a great difference between allowing sin and causing it. It may be considered as the polar star of theology to remember that God is infinitely perfect and to ascribe to Him nothing which is not consistent with this character. See Edwards, *On the Will*, part 4, section 4.

[1] [Compulsion, specifically a person outwardly forcing another person to do something.]

274. How are the decrees of God conversant about the free acts of moral agents?

God uses all things agreeably to the nature He has given them. He works with necessary causes in one way and with contingent causes in another, violating the nature of neither, yet accomplishing His purposes by both.

275. Is there any just ground for the distinction between absolute and permissive decrees?

There is, in a certain view. God decrees all good absolutely and is the cause of it, but He permits evil, though the decree to permit is in itself absolute.

276. What is a permissive decree?

Such as relates to sinful actions. "A permissive [decree] determines the event of the evil permitted and overrules it to a good end, contrary to the intention both of the work and the worker." Fisher's[2] *Catechism* [Q. 7.28] It merely determines the certainty of its event.

277. Are all things, even the most minute, decreed?

Nothing is so vast or so minute as to be beyond the limits of God's providence or plan. The hairs of our heads are numbered, and a sparrow falls not to the ground without the notice of our heavenly Father [Matt. 10:29–30].

[2] [James Fisher (1697–1775) was a founder of the Scottish Secession Church.]

Chapter 8

Predestination

278. Does the word *predestination* include reprobation as well as election?

In the sacred Scriptures the word is more frequently used in application to election only, but most divines now extend it to embrace both because the word προοριζειν is often used in reference to wicked actions and because reprobation is expressed by Zanchius[1] as perfectly synonymous with predestination.

279. Were angels predestinated as well as men?

Yes: Paul says to Timothy, "I charge you before God and the elect angels" (1 Tim. 5:21). If some were elected or chosen, it implies that others were left or reprobated, who are said to be reserved in chains and darkness to the great judgment.

280. Is man as fallen the object of predestination?

This is generally the opinion[2] among orthodox divines in opposition to those who suppose that man, as creatable, was the object of God's predestinating decrees,[3] because

1. That which does not exist cannot be the object of a positive decree.
2. If man, as creatable, was the object of predestination, then either all creatable men or only a part of them must have been predestinated; but it is evident that

[1] [Girolamo Zanchi (1516–1590) was an influential Italian, Reformed theologian, and professor.]
[2] [Also known as infralapsarianism. Alexander below calls it sublapsarianism.]
[3] [Known as supralapsarianism.]

all were not, and if but a part were, they must have been foreseen as certainly future, and so on.

3. If a man as creatable and fallible[4] was the object of predestination, then the creation and fall are means of predestination, which they cannot be, otherwise God would have entered into a decree to save or destroy man before He had determined His creation or its fall.
4. This doctrine makes God to reprobate men before that through sin they were liable to reprobation.

It may moreover be further argued in favor of man as fallen being the object of predestination

1. Because the saints are said to be chosen out of the world (John 15:19).
2. From Paul's figure of the mass from which the vessels of honor and dishonor were made (Rom. 9:21). This mass represented the object of predestination, which, with it, must have been corrupt.
3. Because the illustration of the mercy and justice of God in election and reprobation supposes the object of these decrees to be already miserable or sinful.

281. Does not a wise agent always determine the end before the means?

This principle is the ground of the famous axiom of Twisse,[5] "That which is last in execution was first in design," which Turretin says holds with regard to the ultimate end, but not to all others (which would prove that what is next to last in execution must have

[4] [Able to err.]

[5] [William Twisse (1578–1646) was a prominent English supralapsarian and moderator of the Westminster Assembly.]

been next to last in design, etc.). It also holds where there is an essential subordination of things, but there is no such subordination between creation, fall, and redemption.

282. What is the supralapsarian doctrine in regard to the order of decrees?

They make the decrees of election and reprobation to precede the decrees to create and to permit man to fall.

283. What is the sublapsarian doctrine, and wherein does it differ from the other?

The sublapsarian doctrine is that the creation and permission of the fall of man were decreed before his election or reprobation. The first of these [views, supralapsarianism,] makes man as creatable and fallible (or to be created and to fall), as the object of the decree of predestination; the second [makes] man as created and fallen [to be the object of predestination].

284. Is there at bottom any difference between these two systems?

None. The purposes of God in reference to men may be viewed in the following order:[6]

[6] [This "solution" is very similar to that of Peter van Mastricht (1630–1706). Heinrich Heppe summarizes and quotes Mastricht in *Reformed Dogmatics* (Wipf & Stock, 2007), ch. 8, "Predestination," p. 162:

> Mastricht e.g. attempts to mediate the opposition between the supra- and infra- lapsarian ways of looking at it by distinguishing a fourfold *actus praedestinationis* [acts of predestination] (III, ii, 12): "Four acts of God are here to be observed:
>
> (1) the purpose to manifest the glory of mercy and of punishing righteousness;
> (2) the statute to create all men and permit them to lapse in a common beginning.
> (3) of those created and fallen to choose one in whom He would acquire the glory of mercy, and to reprobate another in whom He would obtain the glory of avenging righteousness.
> (4) an intention to prepare and direct the means corresponding to election and to reprobation.
>
> By reason of the first act of predestination the object could only have been *homo creabilis et labilis* [man creatable and mutable], since no decree so far is presupposed to have been made concerning creation and the fall: by reason of the second act it is strictly *homo creandus et lapsurus* [man to be created

1) His decree to manifest the glory of His perfections in His dealings with man

2) His decree of creating and permitting them to fall

3) His fore-appointment of some men to be subjects of mercy and others of wrath

4) His fixing the means necessary for both of these objects

285. Did not God determine all things by one most simple act?

Yes, the decrees of God may be considered as one most perfect purpose, which destroys all debate relative to their order.

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and to fall]; by reason of the third *homo creatus et lapsus* [man as created and fallen]; by reason of the fourth *homo electus et reprobus* [man as elect and reprobate].

Since therefore, so far as it is distinguished from election and reprobation, predestination consists of two prime acts, you would be most accurate in saying that the object of predestination is *homo creabilis et labilis, creandus at lapsurus*; while at the same time the object of election and reprobation is *homo creatus et lapsus*. Thus most conveniently you will have reconciled specifically dissident views and most safely removed difficulties with which each side wants to saddle the side opposed to it."]

Chapter 9

Election

286. What is election, and of how many kinds?

This word sometimes signifies a vocation [calling] to an office, sometimes a selection of a whole people to be in covenant with God, also the gracious act of the Holy Spirit whereby men are separated from the world (John 15:19). But more properly or strictly it is that eternal, sovereign, unconditional, particular, and immutable act of God whereby He chooses some men to everlasting life through Jesus Christ.

287. How can it be demonstrated that election is personal? Because

1. Particular persons are said to have their names written in the Book of Life.
2. Some men are represented as personally chosen to everlasting life (Eph. 1:4–6; Matt. 20:16).

288. Is Christ the cause and foundation of election?

No, because

1. Election is made from the mere good pleasure of God: “I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy” [Rom. 9:15; see also Eph. 1:5].
2. The mission of Christ was the effect of election and consequently cannot be its cause: “God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son” [John 3:16].
3. The elect are the object of Christ’s merit, and the object must be before the act.

4. The determination of the end must precede the destination of the means. But salvation is the end and Christ is the means. Thus, the desire to heal the sick precedes the application of remedies.

289. Is it the same thing to be the foundation of salvation and of election?

No, Christ is not only the foundation but the sole foundation of salvation, though not of election. For many more causes are requisite for salvation than for election, and the means of election are the causes of salvation.

290. Has the act of election no respect to Christ?

Yes, it regards Him as the grand means of its accomplishment. For salvation never was appointed to man but in reference to Christ, and God, by the same act by which He determined to redeem His children, determined to send them Jesus.

291. Was election founded on the foresight of faith and holiness?

No, because

1. Faith and obedience are the fruit of election, Romans 8:29, “Whom He predestinated, them He also called.” Ephesians 1:4, “He has chosen us that we might be holy.” Acts 13:48, “And as many as were ordained unto eternal life believed.”
2. Election is of the sole good pleasure of God and not of works, Romans 9:11, “that He the purpose of God according to election might stand not of works but

of Him that calls." [Romans 9:16,] "So then it is not of him that wills nor of him that runs, but of God who shows mercy."

3. If election be from the foreknowledge of faith, then man chooses God rather than God man, but Christ says, "You have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you" (John 15:16).
4. If election was founded on the foresight of faith, there would be no room for the objection noticed by Paul in the ninth [chapter] of Romans, to which he simply replies, "who are you," and so on. See *Hora Solitaria*, Elect.

292. What is meant in the Scriptures by the foreknowledge that precedes election?

This is not a mere theoretical knowledge but also practical, implying approbation and affection; in this sense it is frequently used in the Scripture (John 10:14). That this foreknowledge is not a mere prescience [foreknowing], appears

1. First, because with this He foreknew those whom He reprobates as well as those whom He elects
2. Because mere prescience is not the cause of anything
3. Because nothing can be foreseen of God but what He Himself has determined

293. Is election certain and immutable?

Yes, because the decree of election, like all the other decrees of God, are immutable, "My counsel stands firm, and I will perform all my pleasure" (Isa. 46:10). "The gifts and calling of God are without repentance" (Rom. 11:29. See also Heb. 6:17; Rom. 9:11).

Also 2 Timothy 2:19, “The foundation of God stands firm having this seal. The Lord knows those that are His.”

Secondly, it is impossible to deceive the elect (Matt. 24:24).

Thirdly, there is an indispensable bond between election and glorification, as appears from the golden chain exhibited by the apostle in Romans 8:29–30, “Whom He did foreknow, them He did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, etc.”

Fourthly, the names of the elect are said to be written in heaven (Phil. 4:3; Heb. 12:23; Luke 10:20), which denotes the infallibility of their salvation. The wicked are said to be written in the earth (Jer. 17:13).

294. Can the number of the elect be increased or diminished?

No.

295. May believers be assured of their election in this life?

This can be known not by ascending into heaven and reading the Book of Life but by perusing the book of conscience. Turretin resolves the case into a practical syllogism, the major of which is in the mind and the minor in the heart. Whosoever truly repents and believes is elected; I repent and believe: [Therefore] *electus sum* [“I am elect”]. This further appears from the saints being represented as being certain of faith (which is the fruit of their election): “I know in whom I have believed” (2 Tim. 1:12).

Secondly, from the witness of the Spirit, Romans 8:16, “The Spirit itself bears witness with our spirits that we are the children of God” (Eph. 4:30; 1 John 3:24).

Thirdly, the example of the saints: Abraham, David, [and] Paul.

Fourthly, the effect is confidence and full assurance: "Let us draw near to and with a true heart and full assurance of faith" (Heb. 10:22; Eph. 3:12; 1 Peter 1:18; John 16:22).

296. Will this not lead to security and licentiousness?

No, far from it, because nothing can be a greater incentive to piety than a lively sense of the love of God and of the benefits freely bestowed upon us [who are] no better than others involved in the same ruin with ourselves. Besides, no man has any evidence of his being of the elect unless he leads a holy life.

297. How do you prove that the decree of God to save believers and to condemn unbelievers does not comprehend the whole of the decree of election?[1]

First, because predestination in the Scriptures always refers to persons and not qualities. "Many are called, but few are chosen" (Matt. 20:16). "Whom He did foreknow, them He did predestinate" [Rom. 8:29].

Secondly, because predestination is represented to us as an efficacious will or determination of God.

Thirdly, because it has been proved that election precedes the faith of those who are finally saved.

[1] [This view, usually associated with Arminianism, holds that persons become believers by cooperating with their natural power with the assisting grace of God or remain unbelievers of themselves, and that predestination is simply God's ordained will to save those who have become believers or to condemn those who remain unbelievers.]

298. Is there in God a general will to save all men?

No, which is proved from the decree of election and reprobation, which is inconsistent with this general will.

Secondly, if God did will the salvation of all, would He not will also the means necessary to their salvation?

Thirdly, if God has this general will of saving all, this will is either absolute or conditional. If absolute then all will be saved; if conditional, then He must either effect in them the necessary condition or merely require it. If the last, as it is impossible for man to obey it, the salvation of such He never could have willed.

Fourthly, if God wills to save all, then either all are saved (which is false), or God has an inefficacious, unproductive will (which is absurd).

Fifthly, He cannot wish to save those to whom He never sends the necessary means of salvation.

299. Does not the decree of election include the means?

Yes, they are co-ordained and inseparably connected.

300. If the means never were used, would an elect sinner be saved?

No, for this would be uniting what God has forever separated: vice and felicity, moral evil and physical good. “Without holiness no man shall see the Lord” (Heb. 12:14).

301. Does this doctrine discourage the use of means?

It ought not, for the end, though fixed, can be obtained only by the use of appointed means; to neglect therefore the one is to forfeit the other. Besides, those who urge this excuse for negligence do not regulate their conduct in regard to temporal things by the same rule.

302. Had God any reason for electing some and rejecting others of the same mass?

An infinitely wise Being cannot act without a reason, but the reason of preferring one rather than another resides not in the object of the choice, but in God Himself.

303. Do we know any reason for this distinction?

No, the Scriptures refer it to the mere *bene placitum* [good pleasure] of God.

Chapter 10

Reprobation

304. Can the doctrine of reprobation be separated from that of election?

No. The election and salvation of some implies the preterition and destruction of the rest.

305. Is reprobation properly distinguished into negative and positive?

Yes. The first referring to preterition, the second to praedamnation; both of these are positive as the[y] relate [to] God inasmuch they require a positive act of the divine will. See App., p. 12[?].

306. Is preterition founded on the sin of its object?

Yes, if considered separately—that is, it is necessary that the object of preterition be sinful; but if considered comparatively, sin is not the foundation of the act of preterition—that is, it is not the cause of one rather than another, being left.

307. Is the foresight of unbelief and impenitence the cause of one's being left rather than another?

This [being left] is to be referred to the mere good pleasure of God as appears from Romans 9:18, "whom He wills, He hardens", also from the case of Jacob and Esau and the figure of the potter. Thus our Savior says, "even so Father, for so it seems good in

your sight." Unbelief is the ~~effect~~ consequence[1] of reprobation, and of course could not precede it. "You therefore hear them not because you are not of God" (John 8:47). "But you believed not, because you are not of my sheep." And if reprobation be founded on the foresight of impenitence, then it is not so great a mystery. And the apostle would not have attributed it to the sovereignty of God as its only foundation.

308. What is the positive act of reprobation?

This includes a destination to perdition and to the intermediate steps of blindness of mind and hardness of heart, of those whom God had seen proper to leave in the state of corruption brought on by the fall of man.

309. Is there in it any destination to punishment without regard to sin?

No. Punishment always presupposes guilt.

310. Is the positive act of reprobation an act of justice or sovereignty?

Of justice.

311. Is it possible for any man to know in this life that he is reprobated?

No, however certain he may be of present enmity to God, he cannot be assured that God has determined to permit him to remain so.

312. Has not this doctrine a tendency to lead men to despair?

[1] [This is a significant emendation. If Hodge, following Alexander, had left *effect*, it would imply that God's reprobation produces unbelief (something sinful, which is contrary to the goodness of God). Using the word *consequence* signifies that the unbelief is from man, and follows reprobation, but is not produced directly by God.]

Not unless abused, but [it] should rather excite them to carefulness and diligence in their walk and conversation.

313. Are the offers of mercy to all men consistent with the reprobation of some?

Yes, because these offers are not intended as intimations of His will to save all to whom they are made, but to declare the way of salvation and to exhibit their duty to accept of it. Besides, God's requiring obedience from those who hear the gospel is the appointed mean[s] of converting the elect; at the same time it renders those who are reprobated more useful and happy in the present world.

314. Ought the doctrine of predestination to be publicly preached?

Yes. Because Christ and [His] apostles taught it publicly: Matthew 11:20–25; John 8:17; 16:17.[2] Secondly, because it is one of the most important truths of the gospel, being the foundation of our gratitude and humility toward God, our support in temptation, our consolation in distress, and our incitement to piety and holiness. Thirdly, to free the doctrine from the calamities its adversaries cast upon it.

315. How ought it to be preached?

With the greatest moderation and prudence, being mindful to keep within the limits prescribed in the sacred Scriptures and not being wise above what is written. Respect also should be had to persons, times, and places, not to deliver it suddenly to all men but by degrees, most frequently inculcating those part[s] best calculated to be useful. It should be viewed *a posteriori, non a priori* [from derivative knowledge, not prior knowledge],

[2] [The references to the book of John are not very legible and appears to be mistaken.]

reading the book of conscience, rather than attempting to scan the book of life; avoiding all vain questions; *scopus unicus nobis debet fidem instituere, non curiositatem pascere, aedificationi consulere non gloria velificari* [The only aim for us ought to be to establish faith, not to feed curiosity, but to consult edification, not the glory in sailing].

Chapter 11

Creation

316. How are the acts of God distinguished?

Into immanent and intrinsic, immanent-extrinsic, and transient-extrinsic. These last are called His works and are distinguished in those of nature and those of grace.

317. What sort of an act is creation?

It is a transient-extrinsic act.

318. Is it a production out of nothing?

Yes, this is the proper signification of ברא [to create] and κτζειν [to create].

319. What is the difference between mediate and immediate creation?

Immediate creation is simple production *ex nihilo* [out of nothing]. Mediate creation is the molding of matter already existing, but so crude as to be within the power of no second cause to arrange it.

320. Can we conceive how something can be produced from nothing?

No.

321. Does not creation imply a change in God?

No. Because it is an external-transient act from God and not in God. It implies no new

will, nor perfection, but is merely the eternal will and determination of God going into effect. The change is in the creature *a non esse ad esse* [from non-being to being].

322. Is the creating power communicable to any creature?

No.

First, because it is ascribed to God alone, Isaiah 44:7, 24, "I am Jehovah who made all things, who stretched out the heavens alone, and spread abroad the earth by Myself." And thus the name Creator is given to Him alone as an incommunicable epithet.

Secondly, because it is made the characteristic [which distinguishes] between the true God and idols (Jer. 10:11–12).

Thirdly, because creation is a work of infinite power.

Fourthly, because every creature must have a subject on which to act, or it can do nothing.

323. Does the working of miracles require almighty power?

There are some that do, others do not. And if men are ever employed in performing those of the first kind they are to be considered merely as moral instruments.

324. How can it be demonstrated that this world was not eternal?

It is proved first by those passages that expressly declare the world to have been created, as "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth," [Gen. 1:1] and those which express the eternity of God by declaring [that] He existed before the foundation of the

world.

It is also proved from the late invention of useful acts, the short reach of history but to a few thousand years past, from the world's being still far from completely inhabited, from the heights that remain on the surface of the earth though they are continually washing down by the rain, and so on. Besides, it is impossible that the world should be coeternal with its maker; neither can any finite creature be eternal.

325. At what season of the year was the world created?

Some are of the opinion that it was in the spring, but most divines refer it to the fall:

1. Because the Israelites began their civil year in Egypt in the fall.
2. The deluge probably commenced in the fall, the season for rain: "but it was the second month."
3. The sabbatical year commenced in the fall.
4. It would be most convenient for man and other animals that the earth should be created with all its fruits.

326. Was the world created in a single moment or in six days?[3]

Augustine[4] was of opinion that the world was created in a moment, and [that] the days mentioned by Moses refer to the knowledge of angels, but this is opposed to the simple

[3] [The gap theory, which posited a long and undefined gap of time between Gen. 1:1 and 1:2, became popularized a few years before these lectures by the Scottish minister Thomas Chalmers in his astronomical lectures in 1814, though this may not have been known to Alexander. The day-age theory of Gen. 1 (interpreting the days of creation week to be long ages) did not arise till after the publication of the foundational work of Charles Lyell, *Principles of Geology* (1830–1833), which advocated the principles of uniformitarianism, that natural principles acting slowly and uniformly over long spans of time could account for earth's natural history. Persons espousing and popularizing the day-age theory of creation on this foundation included the Swiss-American geologist Arnold Guyot (1807–1884), the Scottish geologist Hugh Miller (1802–1856), the Canadian geologist John William Dawson (1820–1899), and the American geologist James Dwight Dana (1813–1895).]

[4] [Augustine of Hippo (AD 354–430) was the most significant church father in North Africa.]

narration of Moses, to the world's being without form and void and to the account of the institution of the Sabbath. Notwithstanding this, the respective work of each day must have been the effect of but a momentary exertion of omnipotence.

327. What was the order of creation in the six successive days?

In the first day were created heaven, earth, and light. By the first of these is meant particularly the "third heavens" [2 Cor. 12:2]; by the "earth," chaotic matter; by light, a lucid body collected in one part of the hemisphere to distinguish between the day and night.

The work of the second day was the creation of the firmament or expanse, that is, the atmosphere; and the division of the waters above from those below the expanse, that is, the clouds from the waters mixed through the earth.

The work of the third day was the collection of the waters and the production of the herbs and fruits of the earth.

[On] the fourth were created the sun, moon, and stars.

On the fifth the fowls and fish were produced.

And on the sixth, all terrestrial animals together with man, the lord of this lower world, *quoddam universitatis compendium* [which was the capstone of the whole].

328. When was man created, and how?

He was created on the sixth day from the dust of the earth and in the image of God.

329. Is there any evidence that man existed before Adam?

None, and the whole current of Scripture is against the opinion: 1 Corinthians 15:45, "The first man was made a living soul;" Eve is called the mother of all living (Gen. 3:20). He must have been the first man by whom sin passed upon all men, and this was Adam. All men are called the children of Adam (Ps. 49:2). If men existed before Adam, there must be for them a new church and a new plan of salvation.

330. Was man created *in puris naturalibus* [pure nature], that is, without moral qualities?

No:

First, because man was made in the image of God and thus good and righteous (Eccl. 7:29).

Secondly, because he was made for the glory and worship of God (Prov. 16:4; Rom. 11:36), for which both wisdom and holiness were requisite.

Thirdly, because where two qualities directly opposed to each [other] can be predicated of the same subject, one or the other must belong to that subject. And fourth, this state of *pura naturae* is a mere fancy supported by no evidence.

331. In what did the image of God in which man was created consist?

It consisted neither in any participation of the divine essence (which can be asserted only of the Son), nor in any similitude in outward appearance, but in his nature, righteousness, dominion, and immortality—

To the first of these pertains the substance of the human soul, being spiritual, incorruptible, and immortal, endowed with intelligence and will.

The second: original righteousness, consisting in wisdom of mind,

holiness of will, and rectitude of affections, together with the most perfect harmony among all his faculties. That man was possessed of this original righteousness is proved:

First, Genesis 1:31, “God saw all this which He had made, that they were very good,” and from Ecclesiastes 7:29, “God made man upright.”

Secondly, the image which is restored to us by grace and perfected in heaven must be the same as that in which man was created, for it is called a renovation.

Thirdly, because God made man perfect, and this perfection was not merely voluntary, that is, arising from holy acts of the will, but supposes a holy principle whence these actions flow.

And lastly, original righteousness was necessary to enable man to serve God or exercise his dominion over creatures.

The third constituent of this image of God is the dominion given to man over the creatures of this lower world, and also his immortality.

332. Was the first man immortal before the fall?

Yes, because

Man was made in the image of God, which supposes immortality.

Secondly, because if Adam was holy, he ought to be immortal, since God has connected inseparably righteousness and life, sin and death; and from the nature of things, moral good and physical good must be united, and vice versa.

Thirdly, Adam incurred death by sin (Gen. 2:17 and 3:19); hence, death is

said to have entered by sin and to be its wages (Rom. 5:12 and 6:23).

Fourthly, what is contrary to nature cannot be a consequent of nature.

Lastly, no cause of death existed before the fall.

333. Was original righteousness natural or supernatural?

Natural, that is, it was necessary to the perfection of his nature, and was one of the natural gifts conferred on man in the state of integrity, but [it] did not belong essentially to nature. There is a difference between constituent faculties and moral principles; a change in the first implies a change of species, but not so of the other.

That it is natural appears because whatever is transmitted *ad posteros* [to posterity] must be natural, and had Adam remained holy he would have propagated a holy nature as he did a corrupt one after his fall. The remains of original righteousness are natural. If original righteousness be supernatural, then the want [lack] of it must be natural: natural ends require natural means. It was the natural end of man to honor God and be happy, for which original righteousness is necessary.

334. Are human souls created immediately [by God] or propagated *ex traduci* [by being carried over (from the parents to the child)]?[5]

Turretin and most other divines embrace the opinion of immediate creation and argue in favor of it from first, the law of creation; second, the testimony of Scripture; third, from reason.

In regard [to] the first, he says our souls ought to have the same origin as that of Adam. The texts of sacred Scripture he produces are Ecclesiastes 12:7, “The dust returns

[5] [The two views as to the origin of the soul are called creationism and traducianism.]

to the earth as it was but the spirit returned to God who gave it"; Zechariah 12:1, "The word of the Lord which stretches out the heavens, and lays the foundations of the earth, and forms the spirit of man within him"; Hebrews 12:9, "the Father of our spirits," and so on. The reasons he urges against it are drawn from the difficulty of accounting for the mode in which this propagation is effected.

Dr. Alexander unites the two opinions and considers human parents as much the authors of the soul as of the body, that God creates them both, yet both produced by means of parents, so that in common they partake of Adam's nature. The soul never had an existence separate from the body, and from the first moment of its being belongs to the guilty race of man.

335. Were human souls created all at once or successively as men are born?

As men are born.

336. Is the soul of man immortal in its own nature?

Yes: All Scripture is founded upon the immortality of the soul (Matt. 22:32; 10:28), and those places in which eternal life is promised, or eternal death threatened; from the providence of God; His truth and wisdom require it; the desire of immortality proves it; spirituality; independence of the body; the consent of all nations.

337. Were all worlds created during the six days mentioned in Genesis?

We have no reason to think they were not.

338. When were angels created?

> This is not a subject of revelation. Most divines suppose they were included [in] the works of the six days, the principal argument in favor of which is that what was before the foundation of the world is, in the language of sacred Scripture, from eternity (Ps. 90:2; Prov. 8:22). But this supposition allows too little time for the fall of those who kept not their first estate, for the devil's determining on the destruction of man, and his effecting his ruin.[6]

[6] [Be it considered whether at least six days were sufficient for the fall of Satan, if, in its outward expression, Satan's temptation of Eve and Adam to disobey God (which would overthrow the human race, the special object of God's favor) was the first outward manifestation of his rebellion, a third of the angels (Rev. 12:4) following thereafter. This understanding is consistent with the account in Isa. 14:12–15, which likely refers to Satan's fall into sin by pride, desiring to be like the Most High. Isaiah's account is general and reveals the birth and growth of sin internally in Satan, though it does not necessarily detail the specific instances of how this pride manifested itself in specific outward actions; thus, it is consistent with Satan's temptation of Eve being the first outward manifestation of Satan's subtle and treacherous rebellion. It is also possible that Satan's open rebellion from God in heaven happened before his temptation of Eve, and yet within the space of at least six days. If man did not remain long in his first estate (as is possibly referred to in the Hebrew of Ps. 49:12), then it is no wonder if some of the angels did not either.]

Chapter 12

Providence

339. What is the meaning of the word *providence*?

The corresponding Greek word is προνοια [forethought, or provident care] from προτερον [prior] νοει [perceive], and has been considered as including the foreknowledge, decree, and government of God. But more properly it belongs to the execution and direction of what from eternity He had decreed.

340. How does it appear that there is a providence?

1. From the voice of nature and consent of nations
2. From Scripture
3. From the nature of God
4. From the nature of creatures, and so on

341. What opinion did the wiser heathen entertain on this subject?

Plato says, "*quod sic currant omnia, parva et magna*" ["as all things run along, small and great"]. Aristotle says, "Whatever a pilot, charioteer, leader, lawgiver, general are in their respective situations, the same is God in the world." The Stoics held the same opinions. Seneca[7] and Cicero[8] both wrote on the subject.

342. What is the doctrine of Scripture on the subject of providence?

[7] [Seneca (c. 4 BC–AD 65) was a Roman Stoic philosopher.]
[8] [Cicero (106 BC–43 BC) was a Roman statesman, orator, and philosopher.]

The Scriptures uniformly represent God not merely as the creator of all things but as the constant upholder and director of all things. See particularly Job, from chapters 12 to 41; Psalms 8, 19, 91, 102 and 107; Proverbs 16 and 20; Matthew 6 and 10; Acts 14 and 17. This is taught also by three great symbols:

1. Mount Moriah where Isaac was rescued, hence the phrase יהוה יראה [Gen. 22:8, 14, Yahweh provides], *dominus providebit* [the Lord will provide]
2. Jacob's ladder
3. The wheel of Ezekiel

343. Can any argument be derived from the nature of God in favor of a providence?

Yes, because His interference is as necessary for the support as for the creation of the world, and from Him all second causes derive their efficacy. The doctrine may also be inferred from His wisdom, power, and goodness.

344. How can a Providence be demonstrated *a posteriori*?

1. First, from the nature and condition of creatures, which requires the continued support and protection of God. Psalm 104:28–29, "You hide your face and they are troubled; You take away their breath and they die and return to their dust."
2. From the harmony and order observable in the world
3. From the accomplishment of prophecies
4. From the revolutions of states and empires, which prove that it is by the Lord that kings reign and princes decree justice (Prov. 8:15)
5. From remarkable mercies and judgments

6. From conscience

345. Does not every argument for the existence of God prove His providence?

Yes, they are inseparably connected: if there is a God, He must be everywhere present, beholding the evil and the good, and if present, must be actively so. Hence, the sacred writers distinguish the true God from idols by referring to His providence, and they were considered atheists who denied the one as much as those who denied the other.

346. Does the doctrine of providence destroy contingency?

In theological language, contingency is opposed to necessity, and everything that in the nature of things might be otherwise than it is, is said to be contingent. This the providence of God does not remove, because things remain indifferent in relation to second causes though certain in reference to the first.

347. Does it take away liberty and the use of means?

No, for the certainty it induces is merely hypothetical, arising from the decree of God, and implies no coaction on the will, which acts inevitably while it acts freely. In respect to the use of means, the certainty of the end does not destroy but supposes the necessity of the means, and the concurrence of the first cause does not exclude the concurrence of second causes but draws them after it.

348. In what way does sin take place in the providence of God?

By His permission and efficacious direction, but it is by no means produced efficiently by

Him.

349. How can the prosperity of the wicked and the calamities of the pious consist with providence?

Although the justice and providence of God require that it should be well with the righteous and ill with the wicked, they do not require that it should always manifestly be thus. For there is great wisdom in permitting some crimes in this world to go unpunished to show that this is not the state of retribution. Moreover, did we view things aright, we should not decide that every trial the believer meets with is an evil or that the prosperity of the wicked is always a good.

350. Does the doctrine of providence involve a fatal necessity?

It does not as this term is generally received.

351. What is fate: physical, mathematical, stoical, and Christian?

The word is derived from *fando loquendo* [its use in speaking]. The Greeks used the word ειμας μενη α μσιεω to divide, also πρωμενον *ordinatum* α περατοω *termino*. Physical fate is nothing more than the necessary connection between cause and effect. Mathematical fate is that [which is] supposed to arise from the influence of the stars. This of course was held only by believers in astrology. Stoical fate, according to Chrysippus[9] is the "natural connection and order of all things from eternity, one succeeding to others, and this chain remaining immutable." Cicero calls it the "order or series of causes, etc." Seneca makes it an irrevocable necessity controlling the course of both human and divine affairs, "so that

[9] [Chrysippus (c. 279 BC–c. 206 BC) was a Greek Stoic philosopher.]

the supreme ruler, though he governs continually, obeys."

This fate differs from Christian necessity because it places the necessity of things without God, whereas the latter refers it to His eternal decree. It also subjects God Himself to this necessity, but the other subjects the necessity to God. Again, it confounds all causes, but the Christian fate distinguishes between natural and free causes, and preserves both. Christian fate is the order or series of causes, dependent on divine providence, by which it produces its effects. See App. 13.

352. Ought Christians to retain and use the word *fate*?

No, for whatever ideas those who use the term may attach to it, it has so long been used in a sense inconsistent with truth on this subject that it will certainly be misunderstood.

353. Does providence extend to all things, small as well as great?

Yes, because He created all things and therefore cares for all. This is ascribed to God in the sacred Scriptures: first, generally, as Nehemiah 9:6, "Thou, even Thou art Lord alone; Thou hast made heaven and the heaven of heavens with all their host, the earth and all things that are therein, the sea and all that is therein; Thou preservest them all." And particularly in such passages as Luke 12:7, where the hairs of our heads are said to be numbered. So in Matthew 10:29 and 6:28, and Psalm 147:9, where the fowls of the air, the lilies in the field, and even insects are said to be under the care of God.

354. Is an attention to things minute and vile incompatible with the majesty of God?

No, if He saw fit to create them, why not to preserve them? Besides, it exalts our idea of

the wisdom and power of God, which can be exercised with equal ease over the things the most stupendous and the most minute.

355. How does it appear that fortuitous and contingent events are regulated by providence?

Because in the sacred Scriptures the direction of such circumstances is attributed to God, such as the falling of an axe head, a falling lot, a random arrow, and so on (Prov. 16:33; Ex. 21:13; Deut. 19:5).

356. How does it appear that free, voluntary actions are subject to providence?

From Proverbs 16:1, the preparation of the heart and the answer of the tongue are from God. Proverbs 21:1, “The king’s heart is in the hand of the Lord as the rivers of water; He turns it withersoever He will.” Jeremiah 10:23, “It is not in man that walks to direct his steps.” Exodus 12:36, “And the Lord gave the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians.” Numbers 22:23, chapter containing the history of Balaam. Philippians 2:13, “For it is God that works in you to will and to do of His good pleasure.”

357. How many things are included in the doctrine of providence?

Conservation and government.

358. What is meant by conservation and government?

The first implies the upholding all creatures in their particular forms, in their powers of action and in the actions themselves. The second, His superintendence of all things and His leading and directing them to their destined ends. And this includes

1. His fixing certain laws or rules

2. His concurrence or cooperation with and directing the motions of His creatures according to these stated rules and His own purpose

359. Is the concurrence of providence with human actions general and indifferent, or particular and directive?

Durandus[10] and many of the papists thought that nothing more was necessary than that God should create and uphold the rational agent, without affording any concurrence at the time of action. The Jesuits maintained that there is a general concurrence but that this was determined to its particular effect by second causes. But the concurrence contended for by most orthodox divines consists in

1. God's giving to second causes their efficiency

2. His preserving it

3. His exciting and applying second causes to action

4. Determining them to act

5. Directing them to their appointed ends

The arguments in favor of this particular and directive concurrence are

First, because in the sacred Scriptures the effects or actions of second causes are ascribed to God. Thus He is said "to have sent Joseph into Egypt" (Gen. 45:7). The heart of the king is said to be in His hand, and so on [Prov. 21:1]. He is represented as using the wicked as his sword, rod, and so on (Isa. 10:15, 26; 13:5). We are said in Him to live and move and have our being (Col. 1:17 [and Acts 17:28]).

[10] [Durandus of Saint-Pourçain (c. 1275–1332/1334) was a French Dominican philosopher and theologian.]

Second, because God is the governor of the world, and therefore all actions external and internal, good and bad must be subject to His control.

Third, as the creature has its being, so also it must have its actions in God; otherwise, the second cause would be coordinate and independent.

Fourth, if God exercises but a general concurrence, it is vain to pray to Him in regard to anything in reference to which free agents are concerned.

Fifth, He is then no more the author of good than of evil. But James 1:17 says, “Every good and every gift is from above,” and 1 Corinthians 4:7, “What have you that you did not receive”; Romans 11:36, “For of Him and through and to Him are all things.”

Sixth, on the supposition of a mere general concurrence, God could not be said to direct the falling of a sparrow or of the lot, to give rain and snow and winds, or to provide food for the young ravens, and so on (Job 38:41; Ps. 147; 1 Sam. 2:7–9, etc.)

Lastly, this would render the decrees of God uncertain and His foreknowledge fallible; it would withdraw the operations of the will from His dominion; it would make the creature more efficient than God and destroy the principal foundation of piety, which is the dependence of our will to the will of God.

360. What is the difference between moral and physical concurrence?

Moral concurrence is that in which he that concurs operates as a moral cause by persuading or dissuading of fixing or removing objects or occasions. Physical

concurrence implies an efficacious and real influence in the production of the effect by a positive influence.

361. What is the difference between mediate and immediate concurrence?

Each of these are of two kinds: *quoad suppositum* [which has been supposed] and *quoad virtutem* [according to the power]. Immediate concurrence of the first kind is when no other substance intervenes between the cause and the effect to receive the action of the cause, as when water chills. Of the second kind is when the cause acts by its own peculiar virtue or power, as when fire burns. Mediate concurrence of the first kind is when some substance intervenes between the cause and the effect, as between writing and the writer. Of the second when the cause acts not by its own virtue, as the shining of the moon.

362. Does the concurrence of the deity extend only [to] the preservation of the principle of action or also to the action itself?

Turretin says it extends to both. God is the author and preserver of all creatures and gives them all their power and affords them whatever is necessary to every individual act, but no man knows the mode of the divine cooperations. All we can do is to avoid all opinions that tend to take away accountability from man or to make God the author of sin. The soul is essentially active, acts from its nature, and acts of itself. [So] Dr. Alexander.

363. What is the difference between previous and simultaneous concurrence?

Previous concurrence is that by which God is said to influence causes, to excite creatures and induce them to act, and also to direct this action to one thing rather than another.

Simultaneous is that by which He produces the act as to its entity or substance. These differ not essentially from each other, the latter being merely the form continued.

364. How does it appear that a previous concurrence takes place in the operations and actions of creatures?

First, the nature of the first cause and the subordination of second causes: the first cause [God] is the first mover in every action; second causes must be acted upon in order to act, otherwise they cease to be second causes.

Second, from this, that what is of itself indifferent to many actions to act or not to act cannot be determined but by some other.

Thirdly, when two free causes [God and persons] are united in the production of the same effect, they either must both be excited and directed to act at the same time by some superior cause, or both from their nature determined to act, or the one must be determined by the other. In the case under consideration, the two first cannot be admitted, therefore the last must or there can be no simultaneous concurrence.

Fourthly, if God from eternity has decreed all these free actions, He must in time predetermine the will to these actions, otherwise His decrees might be frustrated.

365. Does not such a concurrence infringe the liberty of the creature?

No, for there is no physical necessity imposed upon the will, but it is determined agreeably to its nature to act. In a separate or divided sense, indifference as to the event is not removed from the will, though it is as considered united with the first cause. This motion of God is consistent with the mode of operating belonging to the will.

366. Does it not make God the efficient cause of all events?

The actions of the second causes are said to belong to God *efficentis* [efficiently], but to creatures both *efficientis et formaliter* [efficiently and formally] and are denominated from them.

367. How can such a concurrence take place in evil actions and God not be the author of sin?

This concurrence extends only to the entity of the act and not to its character and moral quality. The act itself must be distinguished from its evil, which is but a circumstance.

368. How can such a concurrence previous as well as simultaneous be reconciled with liberty and contingency?

It is attempted to reconcile these in some measure on the following grounds, that is, from the order of the causes among themselves and from the mode of acting proper to them, which is explained thus:

First, the concurrence of providence and the human will is not of equal and collateral causes, but of unequal and subordinate.

Second, God concurs with second causes agreeably to their nature as His decree is concerned both in determining the event and the causes that produce it, so His providence secures the event without violating the nature of those causes.

Third, this concurrence is rational, so influencing the will that it determines itself.

Fourth, this concurrence is different in respect to good and evil actions: in

the former it produces both the entity and the moral quality of the act; in the latter merely the entity.

369. Is it possible clearly to understand this subject? See App. 13.

It is not in our present state.

370. Are sinful actions under the direction and government of providence?

Yes, and that neither by merely being permitted as Pelagians[11] maintain, nor by being efficiently produced, but in being efficaciously ordered and directed.

371. How many things may be distinguished in sinful actions?

Three:

1. The entity of the act
2. The evil of the act
3. The adjunct of the act, that is, the consequent judgment or punishment

372. What is meant by the permission of sin?

This permission is not moral (as opposed to prohibition and [that] which implies approbation)[12] but physical (as opposed to production[13]). Secondly, it is not merely negative, supposing only a cessation of the divine will and providence in reference to evil

[11] [Named from Pelagius (c. AD 360–418), who debated Augustine. Pelagianism held that Adam's original sin did not taint human nature and that humans' wills are capable of choosing good or evil without special divine aid.]

[12] [That is, it is not a moral permission that condones the thing permitted or tolerated.]

[13] [That is, physically permitting something is to be distinguished from physically producing something.]

actions,[14] but also positive as He not only did not will to prevent sin but willed not to prevent it.

373. Is sin ever the direct object of the divine will?

No, good alone can be the object of the will of God; in regard to sin His will terminates in the permission of it, which is good.[15]

374. Is sin properly speaking a mean[s] of promoting God's glory?

No, it is not a causal or effective mean[s] of honoring God, but the reverse, though it is the occasion of the illustration of His glory.

375. Why did God permit sin to enter into the world?

We cannot tell. The Arminians[16] think one principal reason was that He did not wish to interfere with the free agency of man. This permission of sin was not contrary to justice, since He was not bound to prevent it, nor to His wisdom because the condition of the creature was mutable according to His will (He was not obliged to counteract or destroy this mutability), nor to His goodness since He loved His creatures as long as they retained their integrity and as He has taken occasion hence to display His justice, mercy, wisdom and love. This [question] refers to permission of sin at first when creatures were holy.

As to its permission among fallen men, reasons are evident:

1. As it is a punishment

[14] [This distinguishes the Reformed view from other views, such as in Arminianism, Lutheranism, and so on.]

[15] [In that it is for a good ultimate end.]

[16] [Named after Jacob Arminius (1560–1609), whose system of theology was answered at the Dutch Synod of Dort (1618–1619).]

2. As it instructs believers in the knowledge of themselves

3. As examples

376. Is desertion included in the idea of the permission of sin?

It is, and this desertion is of two kinds:

First, privative, when it consists in the withdrawing of grace before enjoyed, but which had been abused.

Second, when it implies only the not affording the grace necessary to preserve from sin.

Or desertion in another view may be considered as threefold:

1. First, that of trial, to see what was in man, as was the case in regard to Adam, Hezekiah, and so on
2. That of correction, as toward the church: Isaiah 54:7; Psalm 12:3
3. That of punishment, which is a judicial desertion: 2 Kings 21:14; Jeremiah 7:29; Romans 1:24

377. Does God ever employ a positive influence in the production of evil?

Many suppose that besides the permission and desertion already mentioned, there is a certain efficacious operation in regard to evil that belongs to the Holy God. This opinion is grounded on those passages of sacred Scripture where this agency appears to be expressed, as when He is said to have hardened Pharaoh's heart [Ex. 4:21, etc.], to have commanded Shimei to curse David (2 Sam. 16:10), to have put a lying spirit in the mouths of the false prophets (1 Kings 22:23), to give a strong delusion that men might

believe a lie (in 2 Thess. 2:11), and so on. They confess, however, their inability to conceive of the mode of this operation, though [they] divide [it] into the three following particulars:

1. The offering of occasions of sinning
2. Delivering to Satan
3. A certain immediate operation on the heart, and this may be done by some internal proposition of objects by which the will is moved or by the impression of thoughts in themselves good, which the wickedness of men pervert

378. How is providence concerned with sin as to its beginning, progress, and end?

First, as to its beginning: in permission, desertion and a certain efficacious operation of providence. As to its progress in restraining it within proper bounds: so that it should not be greater in degree, more extensive in its operation or lasting in its duration than is for the best. And this is effected either by an internal illumination of the mind and repressing of evil principles or by an external removing of the occasions to evil and restraining of Satan. As to its end: in its wise ordering and direction so as out of evil to elicit good. "You thought it for evil, but God thought it for good." See Isaiah 10:5–7; Job 1:20–22; Acts 3:13–15.

379. Does not this concurrence with sin affect the purity of providence?

Not in the least, [not] any more than the rays of the sun are defiled by falling on things impure and corrupt. And though the same work is often ascribed to God and Satan or wicked men, yet it is in widely different respects. In one it is most holy, springing from a

holy principle and directed to a holy end. But in the other, [it is] a most evil work in its principle, means, and end. As a judge may use lions and other savage beasts as instruments of punishment, and a physician things evil in themselves as means of healing, so a holy God may employ sinful actions for holy ends.

380. Does it furnish any excuse for the sinner?

No, as it does not destroy his liberty nor spontaneity.

381. Does not the blame of an action belong to the principal cause rather than to the instrument?

This principle holds in regard to homogenous[17] causes (when both are positive and physical or both [are] privative and moral, as when we say that the Word sanctifies, therefore much more the Holy Spirit) but not in heterogeneous causes (the one being physical or positive, the other moral or privative, as because the sword which slays a man is an innocent cause, it does not follow that he that used it is also innocent).

Second, it is true in regard to entire and irrational instruments but not in regard to metaphorical or mixed instruments, as the man who spurs a lame horse is not the cause of his limping. But sinners are instruments of the latter kind.[18]

Third, the axiom is correct when the action of the principal cause is the same morally with that of the instrument, as because the disciple of Pelagius holds erroneous sentiments, therefore Pelagius himself did; but [the axiom] is not correct where the action

[17] [Things having the same nature.]

[18] [For instance, if God spurs a sinners, the spurring is not inherently wrong, and may be good, yet the sinner's consequent sinful response according to his nature, which God permits, is wrong and the evil is wholly of himself.]

is not the same morally, though it may be so materially.

382. Is not the cause of any cause also the cause of the effects of the last cause?

Yes, in regard to adequate causes when no true and proximate cause intervenes between the thing caused and the second cause. And also in regard to essential and necessarily subordinate causes, as He who caused the sun is the cause of light and heat.

But this is not the case where the cause of the inferior cause is so *per se* [of itself] and of the thing caused only *per accidens*.[19] Therefore, though the human will is the cause of sin and God [is] the cause of the human will, it does not follow that God must be the cause of sin, since the will is not necessarily or *per se* the cause of sin, but only by defect or *per accidens*.[20]

383. Does God ever tempt men to sin?

Temptation is twofold. The one for trial, the other of seduction; the one good, the other evil. In the latter sense, James says, "God tempts no man" [James 1:13]. When we pray that our heavenly Father would not lead us into temptation, it is in reference to the temptation of seduction, meaning that He would not deliver us to Satan to be tempted by him to evil. In the former sense He tempts, or rather tries, all His children.

384. Does not the permission of sin fall under the rule not to do evil that good may come [Rom. 3:8]?

No, for there is a great difference between the doing and permitting of evil.

[19] ["By accident" in the Aristotelian sense, in that it is not necessary by the thing's essence.]
[20] [See question #473.]

385. Have any maintained that God was the author of sin?

Yes, some among both the ancient and modern sects, as Priscillianists,[21] and so forth.

386. Do they attribute anything of the blame or evil of sin to Him?

No, for then they must have believed that God was not a perfect being.

387. How do men abuse the doctrine of providence in relation to things past?

First, by murmuring against it as unjust; and in the pious there is often too much impatience, opposed to the humble submission becoming children. See examples of this resignation in Job 1:21; 2:10; Psalm 39:[9–]10; 1 Samuel 3:18. Second, by despair, as Cain, which is opposed to that firm trust and confidence the saints should possess.

388. How is this doctrine abused in relation to things future?

First, by too much confidence and security, leading to the neglect of the proper means for effecting their ends. Second, by anxiety and distrust. Thirdly, by placing too great or too little reliance on second causes.

389. What use should be made of the doctrine of providence?

1. Holiness, because the eye of a holy God, it teaches, is always upon us

2. Gratitude in prosperity

[21] [Named after Priscillian († c. 385), a wealthy nobleman of Roman Hispania. Priscillianism was a form of Christian asceticism, holding to gnostic-Manichaean doctrines including that matter and nature were evil.]

3. Patience and humility in trials (Ps. 39:[9–]10; Luke 22:42; 2 Sam. 16:10)

4. Repentance

5. Consolation in peace and tranquility of mind, as we lie in the bosom of our God, assured that all things shall work together for our good

Chapter 13

Angels

390. By what names are angels called in the sacred Scriptures?

Sometimes “spirits,” at other [times] “seraphim” and “cherubim.” Also “thrones,” “dominions,” and so on [Col. 1:16]. But most frequently they are called “messengers” from their office, being ministering spirits.

391. How does it appear that angels are real beings?

1. They are necessary to complete the grade of being

2. This appears from the oracles of the Gentiles, from the apparition of specters, from the cases of demoniacs

3. From the whole of sacred Scripture

392. How does it appear that they are created beings?

First, from those passages of sacred Scripture where it is said that God created all things and where angels are called His host, ministering spirits [Heb. 1:14], and so on.

Second, it is expressly asserted in Colossians 1:16–17, “By Him were all things made which are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were made by Him and for Him. And He is before all things and by Him all things consist.”

393. Did the creation of angels occur before this world was made?

Some divines think they were, others that they were not.

394. Does Moses make any mention of the creation of angels?

No, unless we consider it as contained in Genesis 1:1, as it is said [in] Genesis 2:1, “Thus the heavens and the earth were finished and all the host of them.”

395. Does not Job 38:6–7 imply that they existed before the world?

“When the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy,” many persons do consider this passage as intimating that they existed prior to our world. But Turretin and others suppose it means nothing more than that immediately on their creation they broke out in the song of praise for what they were and what they saw.

396. Are angels spiritual or incorporeal substances?

Yes, [they are spiritual] as appears

1. Because in sacred Scripture they are called spirits, and a spirit has not flesh and bones

2. Because spiritual faculties and operations are attributed to them

3. Were they corporeal, more than one could not be in the same place, but a legion was in one man [Mark 5:8–9]

397. With what bodies did angels appear?

It cannot be easily determined. They were real bodies, but whether they were created for them at the time or belonged to men then in existence or compacted from some other

matter cannot be ascertained.

398. What sort of knowledge do angels possess?

Angelic knowledge is fourfold:

1. Natural, such as appertains to them as a grade of being
2. Revealed, which God sees proper to make known to them
3. Experimental, which they derive from their intercourse with the world and the church (Eph. 3:10; Luke 15:10)
4. Supernatural, belonging only to the good angels: the vision of God, and so on

399. Do they know future contingencies?

No, for these depend on the free will of God and cannot therefore be known but by revelation. This knowledge is represent[ed] as peculiar to God (Isa. 41:22; 42:8–9). Created intelligences cannot foresee things as future but by considering the causes whence they are to flow, but the causes of contingencies are indefinite.

400. Can they search the heart?

No, for this belongs to God alone, “The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked, who can know it? The Lord searches the heart and tries the reins, etc.”

401. Can they comprehend the essences of things?

No.

402. Is their knowledge noetical[22] or dianoetical?[23]

Dianoetical, as God alone perceives all truth intuitively. But as they are so much superior to men, it is probable that the number of self-evident truths to them is far greater than to us.

403. Do they possess the power of mutual communication?

Yes, they are said to call one to another (Isa. 6:3; see also Zech. 2:3; Rev. 7:2; 14:18).

404. Are they endowed with liberty and moral agency?

They are; they possess intellect and the power of choice, which, together with conscience, constitutes moral agency.

405. Are they subject to passions and affections?

No, so far as these arise from a sensitive nature; their loving God, hating sin, and rejoicing in the salvation of a sinner are such exercises as belong to pure spirits, not being mingled with the perturbation that accompanies the operation of such passions in us.

406. What power do angels possess?

Their power, though exceedingly great, is limited. They can perform miracles of the second class.[24] With respect to bodies they can operate upon them in various ways, changing their places, and so on. They can also influence and excite the senses internal and external, but they cannot, at least, immediately operate on the rational soul, otherwise

[22] [A direct apprehending.]
[23] [An apprehending through reason, inference, or some other means.]
[24] [See question #101.]

they could read the thoughts.

407. Are there orders, or different ranks, of angels?

There is some difference of rank among them, as their different appellations prove; but what this order is we cannot tell.

408. How many hierarchies or orders do the papists suppose?

They make three hierarchies: the supreme, mediate, and ultimate; each of these are subdivided into three orders, making in all nine grades. In the supreme [hierarchy] they place cherubim, seraphim, and thrones. In the mediate: dominions, principalities, powers, virtues, archangels, angels. And to each of those they ascribe peculiar offices.

409. Whence did they derive this doctrine?

They receive it from the writings they falsely ascribe to Dionysius the Areopagite.[25]

410. Were these celestial hierarchies known to the fathers?

No, there is not the least notice of them in any of the early Christian writers as Irenaeus,[26] Augustine, Cyril.[27]

411. How does it appear that this notion is vain?

1. Because Paul, from whom this pretended Dionysius says he received the doctrine,

[25] [Dionysius the Areopagite is mentioned as a Christian convert of the apostle Paul in Acts 17:34. Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite was a Christian Neoplatonist who wrote in the late fifth or early sixth century AD]

[26] [Irenaeus († c. 202) was a significant early church father who originated from Smyrna.]

[27] [Either Cyril of Jerusalem (AD c. 313–386) or Cyril of Alexandria (AD c. 376–444), both significant early church fathers.]

makes no mention of it.

2. This threefold division does not embrace all the different appellations given in sacred Scripture to angels.

3. Paul mingles them all together when he calls them ministering spirits. The notion appears to come from the Platonic school,[28] which divides their genii [spirits] into super-*coelestes*, *coelestes* [heavenlies], and sub-*coelestes*.

412. Is Michael a created angel or is he the Son of God?

This person is mentioned only six times in the sacred Scriptures: three in the Old Testament (viz. Dan. 10:13; 10:21; and 12:1) and three times in the New Testament (1 Thess. 4:16; Jude 9; and Rev. 12:7). There are three opinions respecting him:

1. That by the name Michael is always to be understood the Son of God.
2. That it signifies some created angel.
3. That in some places it signifies the one and in some the other.

The first opinion is supported by the following arguments:

1. The name seems to lead to this sense: it may be interpreted, "Who is like that God" or "Who is as that God."
2. We never read of more than one archangel, which seems to indicate that he must be a divine person.
3. The good angels are spoken of as belonging to Michael (Rev. 12:7), but they have no Lord besides Jehovah; therefore, the archangel is Jehovah.
4. He is called "the Great Prince who stands for the people of God" (see Dan.

[28] [Probably more specifically the Neoplatonist school (a strand of the larger Platonist tradition), which had its origins with Plotinus in the third century AD and involved a celestial hierarchy.]

12:1). Who can this be but Christ?

5. An argument may be derived from a comparison of Jude 9 with Zechariah 3:1, 2.

6. The ancient Hebrews[29] understood the archangel to be greater than an angel. With them Michael is the same as Metatron, whom they call the chancellor of heaven, whose name is as the Almighty and signifies two things: Lord and Ambassador. This is the Angel by whom alone there is access to God.

The second opinion is that Michael is a created angel, entrusted with the government of the other angels, and [this] is supported by these arguments:

1. That Michael and the archangel are the same is granted on all hands. Now the archangel is distinguished from Christ: 1 Thessalonians 4:16, "For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God."

2. Michael is called "one of the chief princes" (Dan. 10:13). Here by "princes" we must understand the angels. The first princes are the chief angels, but Michael is one of them and therefore must be of the same order.

3. An argument is drawn from Daniel 10:21, "And there is none that holds with me but Michael your prince." It is thought that this speech would be very unsuitable of the Son of God, whose power is omnipotent and whose help is all sufficient.

4. An argument may be derived from this same passage; thus, Daniel relates that he whom he saw clothed with linen and so on [Dan. 10:5–6] was the Son of

[29] [That is, postbiblical Jews. Metatron is briefly mentioned in a few passages in the Talmud, though he primarily appears in mystical, Kabbalistic texts within rabbinic literature, such as the Zohar, which first appeared in the twelfth century.]

God, which agrees with the description given of him in Revelation 1. Now this same person who touched Daniel and spoke soothingly to him [Dan. 10:10–11] says, "The prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me one and twenty days: when, lo, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me" (verse 13). Whence it is certain that the Son of God who speaks and Michael, who is spoken of, are different persons.

5. It is said that Michael durst not bring a railing accusation (Jude 9). It is argued that this language is not becoming as applied to the Son of God.

The advocates of the opinion that Michael is Christ are Cocceius,[30] Witsius,[31] and so on.

413. What is the peculiar opinion of professor Lampe[32] respecting Gabriel?

He not only maintains that Michael is the Son of God but that Gabriel is the Holy Spirit. He says these two symbolical names are the only names of angels found in the sacred Scriptures and that he who supposes they belong to created angels forgets the nature of angels, which is spiritual, and they have neither language nor voice. If any think that these symbolical names are not proper names, but only names of office, it is incumbent on him to show why these names are given but to two of the whole choir of angels. But such things are attributed to Michael and Gabriel as can only agree with the notion of a divine person (see Dan. 10:16, 17, "For how can the servants of this my lord"), but the saints have never been accustomed to profess themselves the servants of angels. Wherefore nothing can be more probable than that these two names should belong to two

[30] [Johannes Cocceius (1603–1669) a prominent Dutch theologian and professor born in Bremen.]
[31] [Herman Witsius (1636–1708) was a prominent Dutch theologian and professor.]
[32] [Friedrich Lampe (1683–1729) was a German pietist pastor, theologian, and professor of dogmatics. He followed in the Reformed, Cocceian tradition.]

of the hypostases [persons] of the sacred Trinity, one of whom was sent out to procure, and the other to apply, salvation. Lampe says that the celebrated Hustius held the same opinion.

Moreover, Lampe thinks that the two cherubim over the mercy seat were intended to shadow forth their two divine persons, Michael and Gabriel. Witsius considers these cherubim as representing the angels, and Parkhurst[33] insists that they are symbolical indications of the Trinity.

414. Do the sacred Scriptures make mention of more than one archangel?

No. See answer 412.

415. What are the employments of angels?

Their duties are various as they respect God, themselves, the world, and men. In regard to God, they are employed in constant adoration and praise (Rev. 4:8; 7:11, 12) and in the most cheerful and holy obedience, "Thousand thousands ministered unto Him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him" (Dan. 7:10). They also adore Christ (Heb. 1:6) and ministered to Him while on earth (Luke 1–2; Matt. 4[:11]).

416. Why are they employed in ministering to the church?

Not because there is any absolute necessity for it, but rather from the kindness of God:

1. To the angels themselves as it confers on them the glory and delight of being fellow workers with God
2. To believers as it promotes their comfort

[33] [John Parkhurst (1728–1797) was an English academic, clergyman, and biblical lexicographer.]

3. It also tends to unite, by the communication of favors, angels with men in the bonds of love
4. It promotes the good of the universe by uniting superior and inferior beings in duties to each other
5. But especially it manifests the glory of God, the end of all things

417. What kind of a society do they form?

A society of harmony, holiness, and love.

418. Is there any reason to believe that they are instruments in the government of the world?

Yes. Aristotle supposed that they were employed to roll[?][34] on the stars. It appears, however, that they are concerned in the administration of the providence of God from Jacob's ladder [Gen. 28:12] and from Psalm 102, also from Revelation 14:18 and 16:5. And they are sometimes the guardians of empires (see Dan. 10 and 11). They also execute the designs of God toward men, evil and good, as in the punishment of Sodom (Gen. 19:11) [and] of the Egyptians ([Ex.] 12:29; also see 2 Kings 19:35; Isa. 37:36; Dan. 4:13, etc.). With respect to good men, they are often occupied in teaching or directing them (Gen. 16 and 32; Dan. 10; 1 Kings 19) and in guarding them: "The angel of the Lord encamps round about those that fear Him" (Ps. 34:7). Examples of this [are] frequent: in the case of Lot, the three friends of Daniel (see Acts 5:19; Luke 16).

419. Is there any foundation for the opinion that there are guardian angels?

It appears from the preceding answer that they are often the guardians of the saints.

[34] [That is, to ride on the stars?]

420. Has every individual or pious person a guardian angel?

This is a favorite opinion of the papists, and there are two passages of the sacred Scriptures commonly brought to support the doctrine. The first is Matthew 18:10, where the angels of little children are mentioned, and the other is Acts 12:15, in which Peter's angel is mentioned. But this last is only the exclamation of his friends in their surprise, and not the voice of sacred Scripture.

It may, however, be remarked that this belief is not inconsistent with any truth of the Bible. Turretin's arguments against it are

1. That there [is] no mention of these particular guardian angels in the sacred Scriptures, though so much is said of their ministering to the saints.
2. Because one [angel] is said to deliver or protect a great number of persons or a great many angels [are said] to have charge concerning one individual (Isa. 37; 2 Kings 6:17)
3. Because this sentiment arose from among the heathen

421. Do angels act as our intercessors with God?

No.

1. For He who intercedes for us can be no other than He who died; our advocate and propitiation are one and the same.
2. To offer the prayers of others to God is a part of the mediatorial office, and there is but one Mediator between God and man.
3. He only can present our prayers who purifies them.

4. This opinion is delivered from the heathen, among whom the idea of intermediate deities was so prevalent.

422. Is worship due to angels?

No.

1. As appears first from Colossians 2:18, “Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels.”
2. Because angels themselves reject it, as in Revelation 19:10 and 22:9.
3. Because worship belongs only to God, “You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only shall you serve” (Matt. 4:10).
4. The object of worship must be omnipresent.

423. Are the seven spirits mentioned in Revelation 1:4 created spirits?

No, but the Holy Spirit, because

1. They are joined with the Father and Son in the invocation.
2. They are mentioned before the Son, not from priority of nature or existence but [for] their parts in the plan of redemption.

Perhaps this appellation is in reference to the seven churches, or [it] may contain an allusion to the variety of the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

Chapter 14

The Covenant of Nature or of Works

424. In how many states may man be considered?

Four:

1. As formed at first
2. As lying in sin
3. As restored by grace
4. As perfected in glory

425. What was the original condition of man?

Happy and holy, thus bearing the image of his Creator, yet under His government and endowed with liberty to act freely.

426. What was the nature of that liberty with which man was endowed?

It was not the liberty of independence, nor of perfect indifferency of will, but it consisted in freedom from coaction [compulsion], from physical necessity, and from bondage, either to sin or misery.

427. Is the liberty of man in a state of sin the same as that in the state of innocence?

No, not altogether, though it is essentially. The liberty of Adam consisted in [the] ability not to sin; of man in a state of sin, in sinning freely. See Buck A. *Will*.[35]

[35] [This source could not be identified.]

428. Did Adam before the fall possess the power of believing in Christ?[36]

The Arminians answer in the negative in order to support their doctrine that a sufficiency of grace is given to every man[37] to enable him to believe in Christ. For if Adam had not this, then he never lost it; and therefore, God, before He could require this faith of all men, must bestow the power of exercising it on all. But the arguments in [the] affirmative are convincing:

1. Adam had strength of believing all God declared, therefore also the gospel.
2. He had the power of loving and obeying God and of perceiving truth, which is all that is required to faith.
3. Holy angels knew by revelation of the promised Savior and rejoiced in Him (see 1 Peter 1:11; Eph. 3:11).

429. Did God enter into covenant with Adam when he was created?

Yes. Because we find here all that is requisite for a covenant:

1. Parties
2. Conditions
3. A promise and penalty

God being Creator must be Governor and Legislator; man being a rational creature must be subject to this government and law. And as there was a promise given on the part of God in case of obedience on the part of man and a penalty threatened in case of

[36] [The question ought to be clarified further: Adam could have had no power to believe in what was unknown to him or what was not offered to him in innocency. However, if Christ was offered to Adam in innocency (to establish him and his race in eternal life, immutably, forever), did Adam have the ability by nature, without a superadded dispensation of the grace of God, to believe in Christ? This is the question that Alexander answers.]

[37] [Above and beyond what man has by nature.]

disobedience, a covenant was hereby entered into. This transaction is expressly called a covenant (Gal. 4:24); the law given to Adam implies a covenant of which the tree of life was the seal. See Witsius, *Covenants*, I, v, 3.[38]

430. What was the nature of this covenant?

It was a mutual agreement or stipulation in which God promised all good to man should he prove obedient. It is called a legal covenant because its condition on the part of man was the observance of the law. See App., p. 14.

431. How many covenants are there mentioned in sacred Scripture?

Two. The covenant of works and the covenant of grace, which was made with Christ as the second Adam, and in Him with all the elect.

432. In what character did God transact with man in the covenant of nature?

As Creator and Legislator possessed of unlimited power and goodness.

433. What was the condition of this covenant?

Perfect obedience in man, and this was general, comprising the knowledge, love, and worship of God with righteousness to all around him, and special, consisting in abstaining from the forbidden fruit, in which all was epitomized.

434. What properties were required in the obedience of man?

[38] [Timothy] Dwight, [*Theology Explained and Defended*,] vol. 1, p. 437; [Thomas] Boston on *Covenant of Works* [in *Works*, vol. 11. Boston (1676–1732) was an influential, evangelical Church of Scotland minister].

It was to have been sincere and universal; in degree, intense; in duration, perpetual.

435. What was the sanction of this covenant?

The promise of life and happiness everlasting; the threatening of death—temporal, spiritual, and eternal—comprehending all manner of evil to which transgression might lead.

436. How can it be proved that the covenant contained the promise of eternal life?

First, because eternal life was annexed to obedience to the law of works. Leviticus 18:5, "Whosoever does these things shall live in them." Matthew 19:17, "If you will enter into life keep the commandments."

Second, because Christ procures eternal life for us, and that by fulfilling the righteousness of the law. Besides, Christ restores what Adam lost.

Third, Adam could not have died had he remained innocent, neither could he continue always on the earth, for it would soon have become unable to contain his posterity; therefore, there must have been some other life prepared for him.

437. How does it appear that eternal death was the penalty threatened?

Because man was immortal, and the loss of God's moral image being part of the penalty, we have here two great constituents of eternal death: sin and immortality.

Besides, if mere temporal death were the penalty of the covenant of works, and eternal death the penalty of the covenant of grace, then the mission of our Savior has been an infinite evil to all who perish, changing their punishment from momentary to

everlasting. This opinion also represents the nature of sin as entirely different under the different covenants.[39]

[39] See Dr. E. Williams, *Essay on the Equity + Gov.*, ch. 5, 13. [Edward Williams (1750–1813) was a Reformed Welsh nonconformist minister. The work referred to is probably *An Essay on the Equity of Divine Government and the Sovereignty of Divine Grace* (1809).]

Chapter 15

Seals of the Covenant

438. Whence did the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil derive its name?

Not because it possessed or could impart the knowledge of good and evil, but at first sacramentally, as it was the sign of man's probation and the monitor to warn him lest he should know evil by experience as he already knew good, and afterward, from the event, as from eating its fruit man learnt how much good he had lost and evil he had incurred.

439. Why was this tree forbidden to man?

As a peculiar test of his love, as the obligation to obedience here did not result from anything in the nature of the thing prohibited but from the command of God merely. This was proper also to remind man that though [he was] constituted lord of the world, he was not independent, and by having an external symbol his obedience or rebellion would be rendered more obvious.

440. Why was the Tree of Life so called?

Bellarmine and others of the papists suppose it derived its name from its inherent power of conferring life, but like the tree of knowledge, it more probably received its title from its symbolical signification, its being the symbol of man's promised immortality. It was also a type of eternal life acquired and conferred by Jesus, and of Jesus Himself who is "the tree of life in the midst of the paradise of God" (Rev. 2:7).

441. Had it any inherent power of communicating or preserving life?

No, except that it might have been very refreshing and nutritious.

442. What was its use?

See in answer #440.

443. Why was man prohibited from use of this tree after the fall?

Because by sin he forfeited his claim to the blessing signified by this sign. The phrase "lest he eat and live forever" [Gen. 3:22] may refer to Adam's folly in expecting life from eating what had been prohibited.

444. If man had continued in obedience, would he have been translated to heaven?

It is most probable he would.[40]

445. What became of the earthly paradise?

Many of the popish writers believe it to be still in being in some unknown land and that Enoch and Elijah are there, whom they consider as the two witnesses who are come against Antichrist [Rev. 11:3]. For this, however, there is not the least foundation. It no doubt suffered the common destruction by the waters of the deluge if it had not long before that period ceased to be distinguishable.

[40] [For a full and persuasive defense of this majority position of Reformed theology from its classical era, see Francis Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, ed. James T. Dennison Jr. (Phillipsburg, N.J.: P&R Publishing, 1992), 1:583–86, 8th Topic, Question 6.]

Chapter 16

Sin

446. By what names or words is sin expressed in the original languages?

In Hebrew by חטאה, which properly signifies “a missing the mark.” The Greek αμαρτια [sin] from αμαρτανω [to sin] has much the same meaning.

447. What is the simple idea of sin?

“Want of conformity to the divine law.”

448. Is sin a mere negative of good, or has it something positive in its nature?

It does consist in privation, but this privation is corrupting so that sin implies a positive as well as a negative evil, as sickness is more than the absence of health.

449. Is sin a substance or a quality?

A quality; it has no real or essential existence.

450. What is the guilt of sin?

Guilt is the obligation to punishment for previous transgression. This obligation may mean desert [merit] of punishment or actual exposedness to it. Hence, guilt is of two kinds: the one inseparable from sin, the other removed by remission.

451. Is ill desert or demerit included in the idea of guilt?

Not in all senses of the term *guilt*. Sin may be considered either in reference to the command or precept of the law, or to its sanction or annexed threatening. From its connection with the first of these it derives its demerit, ανομια [lawlessness]; from the second, its guilt. In those who are renewed there remains this guilt of demerit, but not of exposedness to punishment, whereas Christ had the last without the first (Isa. 55:5; 2 Cor. 5:21; 1 Peter 2:22).

452. Is guilt removed by pardon?

Actual guilt is, but not guilt of demerit.

453. What is the stain or pollution of sin?

It is one of its effect[s] on the being that sins, by which the soul is infected. In regard to this sin is called a plague, a disease, a wound.

454. Is there any foundation for the distinction between the guilt of the fault and the guilt of the punishment?

The first is that by which the sinner is unworthy of the favor and deserving the condemnation of God. The second is that by which he is exposed to punishment and obligated to endure it. The papists say that the latter of these may remain though the former be removed by Christ, which is certainly improper since no liability [to] punishment can continue if all fault be taken away.

455. Is the death of believers a part of the penalty of the law?

No. It as well as the pains and afflictions of the present life are consequences of sin but are intended rather for correction than satisfaction. It is mercifully ordered that believers should die as well as others, for [otherwise] the death of an individual would then be, to all who witness it, a certain proof of his perdition. It would also anticipate the work of the judgment day were believers exempted from death.

456. Is there any ground for the distinction of sins into venial and mortal?

None; there are no venial sins, as is proved

1. From Romans 6:23, "The wages of sin are death" and the "soul that sins shall die" (Ezek. 18:20)
2. Because it is written "cursed is everyone who continues not in all things written in the book of the law to do them" (Deut. 27:26)
3. Whosoever "offends in one point is guilty of all" (James 2:10)
4. Because every sin is an offense against an infinitely perfect being and therefore an infinite evil
5. Christ died for all our sins; therefore, all must be mortal

457. Are all sins equal in malignity and guilt?

No.[41] This was the opinion of the ancient Stoics, but [it] is evidently paradoxical.

458. What was the sin of angels by which they fell?

[41] [Westminster Larger Catechism, #150: "Are all transgressions of the law of God equally heinous in themselves, and in the sight of God? All transgressions of the law of God are not equally heinous; but some sins in themselves, and by reason of several aggravations, are more heinous in the sight of God than others. John 19:11; Ezek. 8:6, 13, 15; 1 John 5:16; Ps. 78:17, 32, 56."]

There are several opinions on this subject. The two principal are,

First, that it was envy of man, whom it is supposed they knew by revelation was in Christ to be exalted above them.

The second is that it was pride, which is the most probable of the two since Paul in 1 Timothy 3:6 says "lest being puffed up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the Devil"; and we know that Satan is continually striving for the dominion of this world of which he is called the god (2 Cor. 4:4); and pride too was the sin to which he tempted Adam. Perhaps becoming rather remiss in contemplating the divine perfection, his attention was turned from God to himself, and admiring his powers, [he] conceived too high a love for them, which rose to pride and eventuated in rebellion.

459. What was the precise nature of the first sin of man?

This must not be considered as any simple or particular sin but as a general apostasy from God, including the violation of the whole moral law, as it implies unbelief and contempt of the divine command, ingratitude, pride, and profanation of God's name; want of proper affection to his posterity as by that act he ruined both himself; and also intemperance, sensuality, and theft. Hence appears its enormity.

The commencement of this sin may be placed in want [lack] of consideration of the interdiction of his Creator and also of His truth and goodness; then incredulity in the threatened punishment; next, crediting the promises of Satan; then corrupt desire of the fruit; and then pride and rebellion. Hence, it appears that the first step belongs to the understanding, and that ever preceded transgression.

460. How can it be accounted for that innocent man should sin?[42]

It is very difficult to account for the entrance of sin into a holy mind. Yet the mutability in which man was created supposes the possibility of his fall: the true cause of his sinning is found in the freedom of his will, which was capable of being so influenced by Satan that man should freely depart from God.

But we must not consider man even in his innocent state as a simple being, but as possessed of all those attributes and passions belonging to uncorrupted nature. These will exert a constant influence on the will, which renders care necessary, that they gain not the ascendancy. Thus, the appetite of hunger might operate on the will of a person perfectly holy and crave for indulgence under circumstances where the satisfaction of it would be improper.

Is it wonderful that a being thus constituted should be led astray? This, however, is the greatest difficulty attending the system of those who consider the will as determined by motive. The Arminians, in giving the will a self-determining power, avoid the difficulty.

461. Was the first sin owing to man's being deserted of God?

The term *desertion* seems to imply some previous offense in the person deserted and therefore is not so proper as [the term] *negation*. Since no grace before given was withdrawn from Adam, but God, having at first bestowed what was sufficient to enable him to stand, saw proper not to give what was requisite infallibly to prevent his fall.

[42] See Dwight, vol. 1, p. 400. [Timothy Dwight (1752–1817), *Theology Explained and Defended*, vol. 1, see Sermon 28, "The Temptation and Fall" and possibly Sermon 15, "The Decrees of God."]

462. Could this sin have been avoided?

It was certain in regard to the decree and providence of God but contingent in regard to Adam. The event was certain though the cause was free.

463. Could God have prevented it consistently with man's freedom?

Yes, by having imparted a greater degree of grace; if this were not the case, then the will of man is beyond the empire or dominion of God, which cannot be.

464. Did Adam lose the image of God by the first sin?

Yes, for it was a complete apostasy or turning from God as his chief good; it was not a particular sin but a violation of the whole covenant and law because spiritual death was the penalty of the law and because man is now born corrupt, which proves that Adam lost the image of his Creator.

465. How could a single act destroy all holy dispositions?

By its great enormity or by the penalty attached to it, as every sin deserved banishment from communion with God. Besides, there was something peculiar in this sin as it violated the covenant.

467. Was the first sin of Adam imputed to all his posterity?

It is, though this doctrine has been rejected by the Pelagians, Remonstrants,[43] Socians,[44]

[43] [Those who followed the theology of Jacob Arminius and remonstrated, or protested, against the Reformed doctrines of soteriology in the context of the Synod of Dort and following.]

and many others. Some among the orthodox, to avoid some of the difficulties pressing this opinion, made the distinction of imputation into immediate and mediate. This was first done by Placeus,[45] who defines immediate imputation to be that by which the sin of Adam is directly imputed to all his posterity (Christ excepted), as well [as] in the privation of original righteousness as [it has] exposed men to eternal death, and that simply because they are his children, antecedent to inherent corruption. Mediate imputation arises from a view of the hereditary corruption derived from Adam, of which we all partake and to which we all habitually consent and are therefore considered as participating in the sin of Adam.

468. Is this imputation mediate or immediate?

Immediate, as imputation is but a simple idea; the phrase "mediate imputation" is hardly correct.

469. How can this imputation be reconciled with justice?

Whenever the action of one person is imputed to another, it must be on account of some bond of union between them. This may be of three kinds:

1. Natural, as exists between parents and children
2. Moral or political, as between kings and subjects
3. Voluntary, as between friends

The first two of these constituted Adam our representative, in whose conduct it then became just that we should be involved. That he was considered as the representative of

[44] [Socinians]

[45] [Josué de la Place (c. 1596–1655 or 1665) was a French Protestant theologian and professor in the Reformed tradition at the Academy of Saumur.]

his posterity appears from

1. The nature of the covenant existing between him and his Creator
2. The image of God, which he received as belonging to his nature to be preserved or lost, not only for himself but for those who should partake of his nature
3. The community of punishment between Adam and his posterity
4. The parallel between Christ and Adam

470. By what arguments is it demonstrated?

It is proved

1. From Romans 5:12, “As by one man sin entered into the world and death by sin, so that death passed on all men for that all had sinned.” This death includes spiritual death, which has passed on all men; therefore, all men must have been accounted sinners previously.
2. From 1 Corinthians 15:22, “In Adam all died.” Then in Adam all must have sinned.
3. From the sins of parents being visited on their children (Ex. 20:5). See examples in Achan (Josh. 7:24–25), the Amalekites (1 Sam. 15:2), the sons of Jews [Matt. 23:34–36; 27:25], and many others.
4. From the propagation of sin; for if the sin of Adam be not imputed, how can we account for the pollution of depravity of Adam being communicated to his children?
5. From Adam’s being not only the natural but also the moral head of the human family, in whom they would have been holy had he remained so, and by whose

fall they were made sinners.

6. If we deny the imputation of Adam's guilt, we must also deny the imputation of Christ's righteousness since the apostle makes them to stand on the same ground.

471. What is original sin?

Augustine made original sin to consist in *concupiscentia,* or [the] irregularity of our desires; Anselm[46] in *nuditate justitiae* [the absence of righteousness]. Scotus[47] united the two, which is correct. That is, original sin is the destitution of original righteousness together with positive corruption, belonging naturally to all mere men from their connection with Adam.

472. How do you prove the doctrine of original sin?

1. From Genesis 6:5, "Every imagination of the thoughts of his heart are only evil continually."
2. From Job 14:4, "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?"
3. From Psalm 51:5, "Behold, I was shapened in iniquity and in sin did my mother conceive me."
4. From John 3:6, "For that which is born of the flesh is flesh."
5. From Ephesians 2:3, "And were the children of wrath by nature even as others."
6. From Romans 5:12, "For by one man sin entered into the world and death by sin."

[46] [Anselm of Canterbury (1033/34–1109) was a significant philosopher and theologian of the High Middle Ages].

[47] [Duns Scotus (1266–1308) is generally considered to be one of the three most important philosopher-theologians of the High Middle Ages.]

7. From the necessity of universal death, redemption, regeneration, sanctification, and from the law of nature that every offspring should be like its parent.
8. From experience, universal corruption requires that there should be a principle of evil equally extensive.

473. Is the substance of the soul corrupted by sin?[48]

No, this was the opinion of Flacius Illyricus[49] in order more effectually to prove the imbecility of the human will in conversion. But this cannot be the case, because

1. God created, and does still produce every substance, which must therefore in essence be pure.
2. The sacred Scripture distinguishes between sin and the sinner.
3. Were this correct, Christ in assuming our nature must have taken our corruption, and man after his sanctification would be essentially different from what he was before.

474. How is original sin propagated?

It is impossible to say. There are two answers given to the question: the one general, that it is by impure generation; the other more particular, placing it in

1. The conception of the body, which must be unclean and corrupted
2. The creation of the soul destitute of original righteousness that is simply not pure, neither holy nor corrupt
3. The constitution of the man by the union of this negatively pure soul with a polluted

[48] [See question #382.]
[49] [Flacius Illyricus (1520–1575) was a Lutheran reformer from Istria (present-day Croatia).]

body, which as some say is like an impure vessel tainting the pure liquid that may be poured into it.[50]

475. If the soul be created pure, how can it be consistent with goodness or justice to connect it with a polluted body?

The soul is formed in the body and never had a separate existence. They, from the first moment of their existence, constitute the human being that fell in Adam and therefore justly inherit both his sin and corruption. “Who art thou that darkeneth counsel by words without wisdom?” [Job 38:2].

476. How is actual sin divided?

1. In relation to its object as God or our neighbor
2. In relation to its form as of commission or of omission, as sinful in itself or only in its mode (*per accidens*)
3. In relation to its principle or source as of ignorance or of knowledge, of infirmity or of maliciousness
4. As merely resident or as reigning, as remissible or as unpardonable

477. What is the sin against the Holy Ghost, and why is it unpardonable?

It is blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, not merely a sin of the heart, but one completed by words. Turretin makes it to consist

[50] [Alexander limits his answers to those consistent with creationism, that God immediately creates the soul of every newly conceived person. This requires him to explain the issue of how God can create a soul, which from its first existence is sinful, although God, by His pure and righteous nature, cannot immediately create anything evil. The answer of traducianism seems more straightforward on this point: the child receives its corrupted soul from the begetting of the corrupted souls of its parents.]

1. In sinning against the knowledge of the truth, and this knowledge must not only be theoretical and historical but also founded in conviction
2. In a total apostasy from the truth connected with a malicious rejection and denial of it, and this not from the fear of death or desire of gain but from hatred and contempt
3. An obstinate opposition to the truth such as that of the Pharisees and Julian the Apostate,[51] who even when dying exclaimed, "*vicisti Galilaee*" [You have conquered, Galilean!][52]
4. A confirmed perseverance in the sin to the end

This sin is unpardonable not from any deficiency in the mercy of God or the merit of Christ but because it is impossible that those who commit it should be renewed unto repentance (Heb. 6:6), and without repentance there is no forgiveness. This impossibility of repentance perhaps can only be accounted for by saying God has seen fit to determine that it should be connected with this enormous crime committed against the Holy Ghost, by whom alone we are enabled to repent or believe.

478. Can sin be the punishment of sin?

Yes, though sin that is actually sin is no part of the penalty of the law. It may, however, be either its own punishment or that of some preceding transgression, or of the sin of some other person. This [is] proved

1. From 2 Samuel 12:11–12, where the sin of David is said to be punished by that of Absalom

[51] [Julius I (331/332–363) was a Roman emperor from AD 361 to 363 and was the last non-Christian ruler of the Roman Empire.]

[52] [As quoted in Theodoret, *Ecclesiastical History* (c. 429), Book III, Ch. 20.]

2. From Romans 1:24 and so on, where God is said to have delivered up the Gentiles to vile affection on account of their idolatry
3. From 1 Kings 22:20, where a spirit of false prophecy was sent forth, a great sin in those who received it, [which was] at the same [time] a grievous punishment to them and the nation.
4. From those passages of sacred Scripture in which the punishment and the crime are represented as united in the same act, as in the defection of the ten tribes; in the oppression of the people by the Assyrians [Isa. 10:5–7], and so on (a punishment of one and a sin of the other); in the numbering of the people; the hardness of Pharaoh, and so on (see also 2 Thess. 2:11).

Chapter 17

On the Will

479. What is the will?

According to Locke, "the power or ability to prefer or choose"; according to Edwards,[53] "that by which the mind chooses anything"; and according to Dr. Reid,[54] "A power to determine to do or not to do things we conceive to be within our power."

480. In what variety of meaning is the word used?

It is employed in greater or less extent by different persons. Sometimes it is used to express all the active powers of man in distinction from his intellectual powers; thus, it is used when the powers of the mind are classed under two heads: will and understanding. The word *will* is also employed to signify both the faculty and the act, though the latter is correctly expressed by the word *volition*. The definition given by Dr. Reid:

> A determination of the mind to do or not, is the most exact and best corresponds with the common use of the word, for we may prefer one of two things when we will neither. I may prefer the life of a sailor to that of a soldier, though I may not will either of them. I choose that my pupils should conduct themselves properly, but I cannot be properly said to will it.

The faculty of will belongs to all sentient, active beings, other animals as well as man.

481. What does every act of volition imply?

That we had the power to have acted differently or not to have acted. A necessary

[53] [Jonathan Edwards (1703–1758) was an American congregationalist divine and philosopher.]

[54] [Thomas Reid (1710–1796) was a Scottish philosopher and popularizing proponent of Scottish Common Sense Realism.]

volition is a contradiction in terms. If we are under the necessity of doing a thing, there is no choice and, of course, no volition. This power of acting or forbearing to act is properly the liberty of the will. Every man is conscious of this freedom, and therefore no arguments can destroy his conviction that he possesses it.

The brutes possess this liberty, though in a more confined sense than man. When the stable door is open, the horse is at liberty to remain in his stable or go out to pasture. Liberty, therefore, does not constitute an accountable moral agent.

Reason and conscience with liberty are necessary to make a creature capable of a moral law. The degree of responsibility will be in proportion to the strength of our rational powers. We are as certain as we can be of anything that we are the authors of our own actions, and therefore [we] feel that we are accountable for them. It ought not to be, and is not, as far as I know, a matter of dispute whether the mind makes its own determinations. They who maintain the self-determining power of the will and they who insist on the influence of motives equally agree in this.

482. What is the direct object of volition?

1. The direct object of volition is some action of our own.
2. It is some action that we believe to be in our power. However much a man may desire to fly, he never wills it, nor anything he believes to be impossible. Thus, we see there is a clear distinction between will and desire.

483. Are will and desire ever opposite?

It has been a question whether these two things may be opposite in relation to the same

object. Mr. Locke and Dr. Reid maintain the affirmative, President Edwards the negative.

The proper answer seems to be that the will may be contrary to many desires which relate to its object, but never opposite to the prevailing desire. A man who is urged to eat of a certain dish may desire to comply with the solicitations of his friend, and he may also desire to eat because he has a strong relish for the food, but he wills not to eat because he believes it would injure his health. Now the will in this case opposes several desires, yet is coincident with the desire of health and ease that prevails over the rest.

Though will has for its direct object our own actions of mind or body, yet it may be some distant action. I may will to go to such a place or to do such a thing a year hence.

484. Do we ever will what we believe to be out of our power?

No, the object of our volition must be something that we believe to be in our power and to depend upon our will. A man may desire to make a visit to the moon, but he cannot will or determine to do it, because he knows it is out of his power.

485. What determines the will?

The will is determined by the active principles that exist and prevail in our nature when the volition is made. And according to this view our volitions are produced by principles in our own souls and are as much our own as they can be on any other hypothesis.

486. How many theories are there on this subject?

Five:

1. That the will determines itself

2. That the mind or soul determines it

3. That it follows the last dictate of the understanding

4. That the will is invariably determined by the strongest motive then in the view of the mind

5. That the will is determined by divine agency, which is the efficient cause of our volitions

But in the view of motives, the great objection to the word *motives* is that it is ambiguous. It is often used to signify the same with reasons, external objects suited to our inclinations. A man is said to have strong motives for doing a particular action when the reasons in its favor are cogent. A great sum of money is said to be a great motive to induce a man to swerve from truth and justice, but if there be no love of money it is no motive at all.

487. Is indifference essential to the liberty of the will?

By indifference is meant an equilibrium in which the will is without any antecedent determination or bias to one side or the other, that the determination may be entirely from itself and owing to its power and sovereignty.

And here we observe that to support this scheme of liberty, the indifference must be perfect and absolute. There must be a perfect freedom from all antecedent preponderation or inclination. Because if the will be already inclined before it exerts its sovereign power on itself, then its inclination is not wholly owing to itself.

Here I would lay down this as an axiom of undoubted truth: “That every free act is done in a state of freedom and not only after such a state.” If an act of the will be an act

in which the soul is free, it must be in a state of freedom and in a time of freedom. It will not suffice that an act immediately follow a state of liberty: liberty must continue and coexist with the act; for the very notion of a free act of the soul is an act in which the soul uses or exercises liberty.

Now the question is whether the soul of man ever puts forth an act of the will while it yet remains in a state of liberty, that notion of a state of liberty which implies a state of indifference. Or whether the soul ever exerts an act of choice or preference while at that very time the will is in a state of equilibrium, not inclining one way more than another.

The very putting [of] the question is enough to show the absurdity of the affirmative answer. For how ridiculous would it be for anybody to insist that the soul chooses one thing before another when at the very moment it is perfectly indifferent with regard to both! This is the same thing as to say that the soul prefers one thing to another at the very same time it has no preference.

Choice and preference can no more be in a state of indifference than motion can be in a state of rest. Motion may be the next moment after rest, but [it] cannot coexist with it in any, even [in] the least degree. So choice may be immediately after a state of indifference but has not coexistence with it; even the very beginning of it is not in a state of indifference. Therefore, if this be liberty, no act of the will is ever performed in a state of liberty or in [a] time of liberty.

488. Does liberty properly belong to the will?

Liberty in common speech is power, opportunity, or advantage that anyone has to do as

he pleases.

Now liberty cannot properly be ascribed to any being or thing but what has such a faculty, power, or property called "will." For that which is not possessed of will cannot have power of doing according to its will. And therefore to talk of liberty belonging to the very will itself is not to speak good sense, for the will itself is not an agent that has a will. That which has the power of volition is the man or soul, and not the power of volition itself.[55]

Liberty is a freedom from restraint. In the popular sense of the word it means that we can act agreeably to our choices, but in this sense it does not respect the will but the power of acting consequent on volition. It is doubtful whether liberty can be predicated of the will itself, as volition cannot be the effect of restraint.[56]

The truth is, choice supposes the power of embracing one of two or more things, each of which is in our power; the freedom of the will relates to these objects. A man has an opportunity of riding, walking, or sitting still. He chooses to ride. There is freedom and no constraint, as in his volition, for he might have refused to ride. Liberty as applied to the will therefore properly expresses the idea that belongs to every volition, [in] that he might have chosen something else.

But in the controversy on the freedom of the will, some apply the word *liberty* to the cause of volition. Volition is said to be free because the motives that persuade us to choose may be resisted. If we conceive a motive so strong acting on the will that it cannot be resisted, there is an end of liberty, and in proportion as the motives approach to irresistible force, in the common sense of men, the action is in the same degree excusable.

[55] Edwards.
[56] Dr. Alexander.

Now this is an important point and deserves serious consideration. Certainly the doctrine stated above is not universally true, for then the more wicked a man's heart, the more excusable his crimes, and vice versa, [more] than which nothing can be more absurd. But in regard to motives of a particular sort, there is some foundation for the opinion; and it is important that the distinction should be accurately made. I would therefore lay down the following propositions:

1. Every determination of the will is the effect of some active principle, of some affection, appetite, sense, or inclination.
2. Some of the active principles that govern the will are sudden and impetuous and act before there is time for reflection. A man whose temperament is constitutionally unstable receives from someone a blow in the face which produces instant pain. In a moment, before there is time for reflection, his anger is enkindled and his will is powerfully determined to strike the person from whom the blow came. This volition is produced instantly before he has time to consider consequences and reflect that the injury was undesigned.

Now this passion of anger seems to have been bestowed upon animals to lead them to defend themselves against sudden assaults. In man it precedes the exercise of reason, and in proportion as the passion was sudden and violent (in the common sense of men), the person is excusable for the act produced. The sin in this case consists in not guarding against this rising of passion and in suffering it to continue when we have time to reflect.

Other motives that are not so sudden in their operation are nevertheless violent and difficult to be resisted, as hunger and thirst, desire of rest after great fatigue, and the desire of deliverance from excruciating pain. Now if by any voluntary act these can be

removed, the will is constantly pressed to determine on the act. If there be no counter motives, this volition will immediately take place, as in animals who have no motives of any other sort.

But if we cannot obtain relief without committing an immoral act, there will then be a struggle between those principles and affections that influence us to avoid moral evil and the strong cravings of these natural appetites. Now the virtue of resistance in these cases is measured by the strength of the appetites to be overcome, and the sin of yielding by the same rule. But this is true only in regard to those natural and animal propensities or passions that act with a blind influence on the will. Yet these are never, strictly speaking, irresistible; that is, they are never so strong but that principles of piety may be strong enough to counteract them.

But with respect to passions that are in their own nature sinful, they cannot excuse. The stronger they are, the more sin. And whether we determine to act or not, their very existence is sin. Sin does not require an act of the will to bring it into being.

489. Is the will always determined by the state of the soul immediately antecedent?

Dr. Reid says, “That in all important determinations of the mind there must be something in the preceding state of the mind that disposes or inclines us to that determination.” If such an influence has any share in the business, it may as well be considered as decisive, for if the latter be inconsistent with liberty, so is the former, and perfect indifference would alone be consistent with liberty. It is true that the active principles of our nature incline us to a certain act according to the force of these principles. But after all, the mind determines, and this determination of the mind we call volition.

490. Has the will a self-determining power?

To prove that the will has no self-determining power, President Edwards observes that it must do this in the exercise of a power of willing. Therefore, every free act of choice is determined by a preceding act choosing the act, and this requires an act of choice preceding it, and so on ad infinitum [to infinity].

Now this appears to me to be a specimen of metaphysical quibbling. A faculty, in order to exert itself, must not be first supposed to act that it may act. The same reasoning will prove that the soul cannot act at all. For it may [be] said that the soul cannot act without exerting its power for this purpose, but the exertion of power is acting and requires a preceding exertion to produce it, and so on ad infinitum. How causes operate to produce effects we know not. How active beings are the cause of action we know not. But this we know, that where there are effects there must be a cause. It is in vain to search for anything intermediate between an active being and an action, as a faculty operates in a peculiar way agreeable to its nature and powers without supposing anything intermediate between the faculty and its operations.

But as to the question, "Does the will determine itself?" it cannot be intended [by the question] whether an act of the will determines itself. This would be making volition both cause and effect. An act supposes an agent, a volition, a capability of choosing. But there is an evident absurdity in supposing that the act or volition determines itself. I suppose therefore by [the phrase] the will determining itself is meant that the faculty of will determines the volitions, and by the will is understood all the active power of man or of the soul; there is nothing absurd in the doctrine.

The answers to this and the preceding question may be correct, but they do not reach the difficulty. The question returns, “What induces the mind to make the determination?” Is it regulated by the temper, inclinations, propensities, or appetites that form the state of the soul antecedent to the act, or is it sovereign and arbitrary, sometimes coincident with this existing state of mind and sometimes opposed to it?

491. Is the will always determined by the last act of the understanding?

Some maintain that it is, or that the will always follows, the last practical judgment of the understanding. There is at least some obscurity in this answer. There may be many judgments of the understanding in relation to the same subject or action viewed in different aspects. One judgment may be that the action is morally wrong; another, that it tends ultimately to my ruin; and a third, that it will afford me present pleasure. Now here are two judgments unfavorable to the action and one in favor of it, and yet this one may prevail.

If it be meant that previously to determining on this act my judgment must be that upon the whole it is best, this is not true, for I may have an intimate conviction that upon the whole it will be hurtful. But if I prefer present pleasure to greater permanent good, is it not my practical judgment that this temporary gratification is to be preferred to that distant good, and do I not therefore view it as the best?

The only difficulty here arises from compounding judgment with inclination. I am most inclined to seize the present pleasure, and therefore I choose it and determine on it; but it cannot be said correctly that my judgment or understanding decides that it is best. I may be deeply convinced that I am sacrificing a great, though distant, good for a

gratification of no real value, but appetite or passion is strong and has been accustomed to be indulged, therefore I yield.

As every act of the will must have an object, and as it belongs to the understanding to apprehend objects of every kind, so it follows that every act of the will must be preceded by some operation of the intellect. In this sense the will always follows the understanding, but this has no bearing on the subject: for when I determine, that which I refuse is in view of the understanding as well as that which I choose. It seems to me, therefore, to say that the will always follows the last practical judgment of the understanding, is not true, or it furnishes no satisfactory answer to the question.

The will of man is sometimes spoken of as the moral part of man's nature, and it is true that in all moral acts the will is concerned, but so is the understanding also. But if it be meant that the will is moral in all its acts, it is a great mistake. The will is often exercised where there is nothing moral, as any other faculty. There is nothing moral or immoral in choosing a peach in preference to an apple. It is an act of the will by which I lift up one foot before the other, but there is nothing moral in this. If all acts of the will be moral, then every animal has a moral nature, for every animal has will. The acts of children, before reason is in exercise, would be moral, for they exercise will.

The will in a large sense may be considered as the seat of moral actions. But in this sense it includes the exercise of reason and conscience, for let man be deprived of reason and the morality of the exercise of his will ceases. A madman can perform no moral acts. Every act of the will which is of a moral nature supposes and includes the exercise of reason. President Edwards says,

> That in some sense the will always follows the last dictate of the understanding. But then the understanding must be taken in a large sense

> as including the whole faculty of perception or apprehension and not merely what is called judgement or reason. If by the dictate of the understanding is meant, what reason declares is most for the person's happiness, taking in the whole of his duration; it is not true that the will always follows the last dictate of the understanding.

492. Is the will determined by the strongest motive?

Here two questions require to be previously settled. First, "What is meant by 'motives?'" and second, "What constitutes the strength of a motive?"

Mr. Edwards defines a motive to be "everything that moves, excites or invites the mind to volition." Again, everything that is properly called a motive "has some degree and sort of tendency or advantage to move or excite the will." That which has a greater degree of tendency is called the "stronger motive" and that which has the less the "weaker motive." "Whatever is a motive must be extant in the view or apprehension of the understanding." This seems to be accurately and correctly stated.

But when we come to consider what these are which have a tendency to move or excite the will, we find a good deal of explanation necessary. Those things that have a tendency to move the will consist commonly of an external object and a desire, inclination, or appetite for that object. Now it ought to be considered that an external object, however excellent intrinsically, has no sort of tendency to move the will unless there be some inclination to it. The whole strength of motives depends on the strength of these internal affections, appetites, or inclinations. Food is placed before me; if I have no appetite or wish for it, the food is no motive for me to eat. It exerts no power, sends forth no influence, and has no tendency to determine my will.

But if I am hungry, the food being suited to this appetite, I feel [a] strong tendency from the cravings of this appetite to take the food and eat it. Improperly, it may

be said the food induces me to eat, but strictly it is this internal desire. Now if no contrary inclination or appetite opposes the act of the mind, it will inevitably be determined.

But suppose I am informed that there is poison mingled with the food; however great my hunger, I will not eat, because the desire of living and the fear of dying are sufficient to counteract the desire of food. Or suppose I am forbidden to eat by someone whom I am under obligations to obey; suppose I cannot eat without violating my conscience and offending a superior. My decision now will depend on my desire to keep a good conscience and the fear and attachment I feel toward this superior. Suppose again that this food would injure my health, that by waiting some time I can be supplied with some [food] that will be wholesome, and that this is the only consideration or motive to counteract the appetite. The determination will then depend upon the strength of the appetite and the disposition I may possess to prefer a greater, though distant, good to a present gratification.

The doctrine of the strongest motive prevailing is true if we mean by *motive* not the object but the desire of the object, which is in the mind itself, and thus we come to the old conclusion that the mind determines its own volitions.

493. Can there be volition without motive?

Here Dr. Reid asserts two things that appear to me to be incorrect: first, that the mind often wills without any motive, and second, that it often wills contrary to the strongest motive. He divides motives into rational and animal, and considers the contest to [be] between these two sorts of motives in common cases.

Now as this last distinction is a radical [fundamental] principle in his system, we

will first consider it. Animal appetites solicit us to do a certain act; they impel us by a blind impulse. The understanding is not otherwise concerned in their operation than as it apprehends the objects of these propensities. But on the other hand, reason decides that the act which we are solicited to perform is injurious or is inconsistent with duty. Here are two influences but of entirely different kinds. The mind determines between them by a sovereign act and thus is free and master of itself.

This, if I mistake not, is a fair view of Dr. Reid's opinion. But I would answer that reason considered by itself can never be considered as a motive to action. If there were no active principles in the mind inclining it to embrace the objects reason brings to view, the strongest reasons would never counteract the gentlest cravings of appetite. I have no objection to this distinction of motives into rational and animal; nay, I think it correct. But rational motives suppose rational principles in our nature, that is, active principles guided by reason. And when there is a conflict between animal and rational motives, the determination will depend on their relative strength, and though the mind determines and determines freely, yet this determination is produced by the antecedent state of the mind as it regards the force of these opposite motives or principles.

For example, a man is urged to eat or drink something he knows will be injurious to him. The influence on his will is direct and urgent, but as he has reason and experience, he foresees the distant consequence and determines not to comply. Now I ask, had this man no regard to his health and comfort, would he refrain? Is it not obviously his strong desire of health that prevails over the cravings of appetite? Again, if a certain fruit be forbidden by our Creator, if appetite and other animal desires urge to eat and we refuse because it is forbidden by such a Being, is not the determination produced

by fear of offending or the love we have to holiness? If there were no such principles, would mere reason, however clear, have any effect? I think not.

494. What advantage would occur from the power of willing without motive or [willing] contrary to the strongest motive?

Suppose a man, the temper of whose soul is virtuous; he loves his Creator and fears to incur the accusations of his own conscience. These are his strongest motives in the moment when, by passion or appetite, he is solicited to transgress; but exerting his power of will, he determines against the strongest motive to violate his duty. Is such a power a perfection of his nature? Is he more accountable for such an act than if produced by habitual malignity? Dr. Reid himself admits that in all important determinations of the will, there is something in the antecedent state of the mind that leads to them. If we choose sometimes without motives and sometimes contrary to all motives, such a choice must be very irrational and such a power very inconsistent and dangerous.

A man has no inclination leading him to possess his neighbor's property but [rather] a strong desire to act justly, and yet he wills to steal something within his reach. Suppose such a volition in such circumstances; is the man accountable for it? He might say, "I know not whence this volition proceeded. There is nothing I am persuaded in my principles on in the antecedent state of my mind which could have produced such a determination, for I am habitually averse to everything of the kind. It must be attributed to the extraordinary power I have of willing without motives and contrary to them."

If it be said that we never will without motives but in trivial cases, then certainly such a power is of little consequence. And the reason why Dr. Reid thinks he wills

without motives, often everyday, is because the acts are of too little consequence to engage his attention and the motives pass unnoticed or make no impression on the memory. Dr. Reid says that "if a man could not act without a motive, he would have no power at all." Also, "that any action done without a motive can neither have merit [n]or demerit, is a self-evident proposition." He says moreover, "If we may act without motives, this power may enable us to act against the strongest in compliance with the weaker"; but on acknowledged principles such an act would have neither merit nor demerit and therefore [would be] of no consequence.

495. All things being the same precisely (both external and internal), can the volition be different?

This is the ultimate question respecting the will. Supposing all motives and circumstances external and internal to be the same, with the same person at different times, is it possible that the volition might be different? [Imagine] if a man has a strong appetite for intoxicating liquor in a place where it is offered, and at the time his disposition to reflect, his fear of God, and the consequences of sin are too small to counteract this restless appetite, so that he is led to drink to intoxication; suppose at another time the motives and circumstances [are] precisely the same: would he act differently?

Those who would decide in the affirmative might say that the man at one time calls up and exercises a resolution in resisting evil, which at other times he does not. That we are conscious of such power, that often the mind rejects thoughts and the most pleasing objects by virtue of this inherent power, now these things are true; but the question still is, "What induces the mind to exert its power in resistance?" Is it a blind,

inconsiderate act? Or does the importance of acting well and the bad consequence of yielding to temptation so strike the mind at this moment above what it did before that it becomes resolute in resisting evil? The latter is undoubtedly true.

But supposing a power in varying our volitions, in precisely the same circumstances, I ask, "What privilege or advantage [does] this give to man above what he is supposed to have on the other theory?" No other than this, that he may without reason or motive have acted differently from what he has done. The other theory supposes a power of changing but connects this change with an alteration in the view and inclinations of the mind at the moment. But if the volitions of the mind will always be the same in the same circumstances, how does it happen that we are conscious that we have done wrong, that we could have acted differently? But the question returns, "Does not this suppose a different state of the soul antecedent to the action?"

A man regrets that under the influence of passion he reproached his friend. He is conscious he could have avoided it. But how? By such considerations as would have moderated his anger, or if he had taken a moment's time to think of the consequences. Thus we shall find in every case in which we believe we could have acted differently, we suppose a change in the antecedent state of the mind.

496. What would be the effect of equal motives?

It is argued correctly that the motives being the same, the volitions will be the same also. But have we not power to change the influence of motives by directing our thoughts to other objects? Undoubtedly this is the case, but it has no direct bearing on the question. For changing the direction of our thoughts is the effect of volition, and we are led to it by

some motive that did not exist, or at least not in the same force [as] before.

A man has been overcome once and again by a particular temptation; the consequences have been distressing to him. He is assailed anew by the same temptation. It operates on him as before, but recollecting the pain [that] yielding has brought on him, he makes an exertion to change the direction of his thoughts. He calls in solemn considerations, and the snare is broken. Divine grace more commonly helps us in these cases.

The power that the mind has over the train of our thoughts is limited: sometimes we cannot exclude certain thoughts from our minds, we can only introduce others, and that with difficulty. A man who is on the rack or in a fit of the gout cannot exclude the thoughts of pain, nor a hungry man the thoughts of food from his mind. The consequences of equal motives coexisting in the mind would be that no act of the will would take place. But such a case never did, nor ever can, occur.

497. Is there a proper distinction between animal and rational motives?

There is, and on one account [it is] very important. Animal motives, consisting in natural propensities seated in the body, act blindly and urge the will by a certain force that is proportionate to their strength. Now this influence may be so powerful as to render it extremely difficult to oppose it, and in proportion to this difficulty the guilt of complying will be diminished.

For example, the desire of relief from racking pain is one of the strongest we experience. If a man tortured on the rack has deliverance offered him upon condition of his speaking some false word or performing some improper action, the motive is not

irresistible, or his guilt would be annihilated; but in proportion as it approached an impossibility to resist, his guilt in yielding is diminished. The same is the case with all other animal motives.

But the strength of rational principles on affections of the mind [which are] in their nature evil, so far from lessening, are the cause of guilt, which is in proportion to their strength. The animal motives are in their nature indifferent. The others partake of a moral nature in all their stages.

498. Can they be compared as to their strength?

There may be as just a comparison between animal and rational motives as between any other. Rational motives, contrary to what Dr. Reid supposes, affect all the active principles of the mind as well as the judgment, and as much so as animal motives. Therefore, they may be compared as to their relative strength. [So] Dr. Alexander.

499. Can mere reason ever be a motive to volition?

Dr. Reid says it can. By *reason* he means that calm, cool principle which has an influence on our action directly contrary to passion or mere animal motives. Animal appetites impel us by a blind impulse. Reason decides what ends are most worthy of being pursued and how far appetites and passion are to be indulged and when they are to be resisted.

But I would reply that reason considered in itself can never be considered as a motive to action. If there were no active principles in the mind leading us to embrace the objects reason brings to view, the strongest reason would never counteract the weakest animal motive. President Edwards says,

> That reason is one of the ingredients of the compound influence which moves and induces the will, that it is one thing to be estimated in considering the degree of the appearance of good which the will always follows. When it concurs with other things, its weight is to be put into the scale, but when against them, it is a weight in the opposite scale when it resists them; yet its resistance is often overcome by their greater weight, so that the act of the will is determined in opposition to reason.

And of course mere reason can never be a motive to volition.

500. What is it that ultimately determines our volitions to be what they are?

The answer to this question will best appear after recapitulating what has been said on this subject:

1. Strictly, the will is a determination to exert our power over our mind or body and is limited by the supposed power that we possess. I will to sit, to stand, to walk; I will to think of former scenes, to recollect what I have learned, and so on.
2. Will in a larger sense is choice or preference. I prefer a free to a despotic government; I choose a mild climate rather than a severe one. But the term *will* is not so properly used here; for I could not say, “I will a free government or mild climate,” these things not being within my power.
3. Will is used again to signify all the active powers, as when the faculties of the soul are distinguished into understanding and will.
4. Will belongs to all animals, and in them is regulated and determined by animal propensities. Where there is but one propensity, the volition is inevitable; when there are two or more, the strongest prevails.
5. Will in man is influenced by animal propensities as in inferior creatures, but he,

being endowed with reason and conscience, has other principles of action and also has other natural desires. He can, moreover, compare and reflect and consider, but when he determines, his will is coincident with the antecedent state of his mind.

6. The power that determines the will is not an act of the soul, but [rather is] in it. External motives and reasons have no force that they do not derive from the temper and inclinations of the soul. The soul therefore determines its own acts of will, but according to its own nature or the prevailing inclination at the time of making the volition. This makes us as much masters of our volitions as by any other hypothesis; for if we could determine to act contrary to all our principles, it would only be a power to act absurdly. Such an action could never be good, though the matter of it be correct.

Every volition must have an object; therefore, the exercise of the intellect precedes that of the will, but the will does not follow the last dictate of the understanding, but contrary to this yields itself to appetite, which it finds is most agreeable to indulge. But at the same time [it] knows that it is rejecting the greatest good. The will is not, therefore, as the greatest apparent good in view of the understanding[57] unless the mere strength of appetite is made the criterion of the degree of good.

No acts of the will are necessary, for necessity and liberty are incompatible. Yet the connection between volition and its causes is certain. Dr.

[57] [That is, the will does not follow simply the greatest apparent good in view of the understanding.]

Watts[58] and Dr. Reid advocate the doctrine of the will's self-determining power; Mr. Locke and President Edwards the opposite and correct doctrine, that it is determined by motives.

The two cardinal points in this subject are

1. Our volitions are produced by ourselves
2. The motives of them exist in our own nature; these are necessary to make man a free agent

The End

[58] [Isaac Watts (1674–1748) was an English nonconformist minister and philosopher, known best today for his popularization of hymns.]