

THEOLOGICAL QUARTERLY.

VOL. II.

JANUARY 1898.

No. 1.

Doctrinal Theology.

THEOLOGY.

Theology in the narrower sense of the term is the doctrine of holy Scripture concerning the true God.

Theology in this sense must be distinguished from Natural Theology, which is a chapter in Philosophy, primarily inscribed in the book of Nature, "*the heavens declaring the glory of God, and the firmament showing his handiwork, day unto day uttering speech, and night unto night showing knowledge,*"¹⁾ so that "*the invisible things of God from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead.*"²⁾ Thus it is that the fundamentals of natural theology swell the volumes of ancient philosophy, and the statement of modern ethnology that "there has not been a single tribe, no matter how rude, known in history or visited by travelers, which has been shown to be destitute of religion,"³⁾ says nothing that is new to us who have it from higher authority that there is among all heathen some knowledge of God, since "*that which may be known*

1) Ps. 19, 1. 2.

2) Rom. 1, 20.

3) Brinton, Religions of primitive peoples, p. 30.

of God is manifest in them; for God hath showed it unto them.”¹⁾

Man is a rational being, and the light of reason is sufficient to establish not only the existence, but also such attributes as the power, the wisdom, the justice, of God, by induction and deduction, to the satisfaction of the human mind, which bears the idea of God within itself and naturally demands of and dictates to itself and other rational minds some recognition of the first fundamental truths of natural theology. Of course, the religions of the heathen world and the books of ancient and modern philosophers also bear witness to the truth that human reason in its present natural state is woefully depraved. The same Apostle who says that the invisible things of God are beheld by the vision of the mind,²⁾ also teaches that the mind of natural man is vain,³⁾ his understanding darkened,⁴⁾ his heart hardened, insensible to impressions,⁵⁾ that the god of this world has blinded the minds of them which believe not.⁶⁾ God's handwriting still covers every inch of the universe; but man's defective mental vision prevents him from making out, even with his telescopes and microscopes, what the heavens as well as the mustard seeds declare. The very title of Cicero's book "*De Natura Deorum*" betokens what every page of his book substantiates, that its author had read the book of nature in a more execrably bungling way than ever brought a schoolmaster's wrath upon a tiro in Latin who blundered through a sentence in Cicero. And yet Cicero was far in advance of many philosophers of this our age of natural sciences, who say with earlier fools, "There is no god."⁷⁾ We know the genesis also of this

1) Rom. 1, 19.

2) Rom. 1, 20: τὰ ἀράτα αὐτοῦ . . . νοούμενα καθορᾶται.

3) Eph. 4, 17: ἐν ματαιότητι τοῦ νοῦς αὐτῶν.

4) Eph. 4, 18: ἐσκοτισμένοι τῇ διανοίᾳ ὄντες.

5) Eph. 4, 18: διὰ τὴν πώρωσιν τῆς καρδίας αὐτῶν.

6) 2 Cor. 4, 4: ἐτύφλωσεν τὰ νοήματα τῶν ἀπίστων.

7) Ps. 14, 1.

degenerate state of human minds. "When they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened."¹⁾ Thus it was that "professing themselves wise, they became fools."²⁾ This is the process of devolution to which the modern theories of evolution largely owe their existence and ready acceptance. Things which cannot be known, but only imagined, are given forth and received as facts and truths to justify the failure and unwillingness to know and acknowledge "that which may be known of God," the Maker and Lord of creation.

What may be the compass of that *γνωστὸν τοῦ θεοῦ*, that which may or might be known of God from His revelation in Nature, we have not here to investigate. St. Paul mentions the Creator's "eternal power and Godhead,"³⁾ which comprises the existence and essential attributes of God. We know, however, that nothing which God would have us know concerning himself has been revealed only in Nature, and not also in holy Scripture.⁴⁾ We further know that many truths concerning God are recorded in Scripture and not in Nature.⁵⁾ And, lastly, we know that God's handwriting in Nature bears with it a natural conviction, while the power of Scripture is supernatural, effecting in the heart of the reader a spiritual discernment and divine assurance of the truths therein set forth.⁶⁾ For these reasons we look upon Scripture as the only source of Christian theology also in the article *de Deo*, and define theology proper as the doctrine of holy Scripture concerning the true God.

1) Rom. 1, 21.

2) Rom. 1, 22.

3) Rom. 1, 20. Note that Paul does not say *θεότης*, but *θεότης*, which points more toward the attributes of God.

4) This appears from the texts by which the doctrines of the *Sufficiency* and the *Purposes* of the Bible are established. cf. THEOLOGICAL QUARTERLY, Vol. 1, pp. 388 f.

5) 1 Cor. 2, 7—13.

6) 1 Cor. 2, 7—13, and other texts teaching the efficacy of Scripture. THEOL. QUARTERLY, Vol. I, p. 388.

EXISTENCE OF GOD.

In the first place, then, Scripture teaches that God *is*, exists, is an entity, a being.

The various endeavors to demonstrate the existence of God by arguments and processes of reasoning, as the ontological, cosmological, teleological, anthropological, and historical arguments, are philosophical rather than theological, and, hence, do not concern us here. We have no use for them in theology. When God says in Scripture: "*I am*," we know theologically that *He is*. The first verse of Genesis teaches the existence of God at the beginning of time, saying: "*In the beginning GOD created the heaven and the earth;*"¹⁾ and the last page of Revelation avers the existence of God at the end of time, saying: "*If any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, GOD shall take away his part out of the book of life.*"²⁾ And in the middle of the sacred volume we hear Moses say of God's everlasting existence: "*Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art GOD.*"³⁾ And hence he who denies the existence of God is for all times written down a *fool*.⁴⁾

PERSONALITY OF GOD.

God does not exist in the manner of an energy or power residing in a material being or aggregate of beings, a soul of the universe;⁵⁾ nor as a material aggregate endowed with or exerting power;⁶⁾ nor as a complex organism consisting of a material macrocosm and a spiritual principle;⁷⁾ but as a personal Spirit, complete and subsisting of and in himself.

God has independent existence; we have not; *in him we live and move and have our being*.⁸⁾ *He is before all*

1) Gen. 1, 1.

3) Ps. 90, 2.

5) Hylozoism.

7) Pantheism.

2) Rev. 22, 19.

4) Ps. 14, 1.

6) Materialism.

8) Acts 17, 28.

*things, and by him all things consist.*¹⁾ God distinguishes himself from all created things, saying: “*I have made the earth and created man upon it; I, even my hands, have stretched out the heavens, and all their host have I commanded.*”²⁾ And the Psalmist says: “*In wisdom hast thou made them all.*”³⁾ To make all things in wisdom, to command the heavens and all their host, are acts of a supreme intelligence, of which all things depend, and which depends of no one, existing in ever present existence before all things in heaven and in earth, visible and invisible, thrones and principalities and powers.⁴⁾ As a being of individual self-consciousness God speaks of *himself* in the first person singular of the personal pronoun and the finite verb more than a thousand times in the Old Testament alone, as, f. e., *I am the Lord: that is MY name.*⁵⁾ He is and would be spoken to in the second person singular of the personal pronoun and the finite verb, and millions every day in the Lord’s own prayer address him: “*Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name,*” thus clearly distinguishing the person or persons speaking from the person spoken to. It is, therefore, clear that hylozoism, materialism, and pantheism are but so many forms of atheism, denials of the personal God, who is the only true God, the God of Scripture.

SPIRITUALITY OF GOD.

“*God is a spirit,*”⁶⁾ says Christ; *πνεῦμα ὁ θεός* with the emphasis on the predicate, *πνεῦμα*. What would the Savior say with this emphatic statement? The Samaritan woman has learned to look upon Jesus as a prophet,⁷⁾ a man by whom God speaks, and improving her opportunity, she changes the subject of the conversation, which had taken rather an uncomfortable turn, and, more by way of sugges-

1) Col. 1, 17.

3) Ps. 104, 24.

5) Is. 42, 8.

7) John 4, 19.

2) Is. 45, 12.

4) Col. 1, 16. Ps. 90, 2.

6) John 4, 24.

tion than by a direct question, solicits an opinion as to the relative merits of the Samaritan and the Jewish religions. But having pointed out the different places of worship as the distinctive features of the two religions, she has exposed herself to correction. The Savior would lead her to understand that the true religion is not restricted to one place or another, but that true worship is the worship of the true God, and the true God is not limited by space or peculiar to any particular place, mountain or city or temple, as material objects are, but *God is Spirit*, immaterial in his nature. "A spirit," says the risen Lord, "hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have."¹⁾ There is, then, a specific difference even between the spiritual body of the resurrection²⁾ and the nature of a spirit, which is immaterial, not only πνευματικόν, but πνεῦμα. Nor is God composed of a material and an immaterial element, as we are, consisting of body and soul; but he is simply Spirit, complete in his spiritual nature. When Scripture speaks of God as having a face, eyes, ears, a nose, of the arm, the hand, the finger, the heart of God,³⁾ such anthropomorphisms are, like the anthropopathisms, which ascribe to God human affections,⁴⁾ so far from denying the spirituality of God, that they are rather so many ways and means whereby the Holy Ghost would bring nearer to our human comprehension some of the wonderful works and ways of God, who in his spiritual nature is incomprehensible to our mental grasp. That whatever is thus said ἀνθρωποπαθῶς in Scripture must be understood and interpreted θεοπρεπῶς, appears also from the fact that in the same chapter in which God is twice said to have *repented* that he had made Saul king over Israel,⁵⁾ we also read:

1) Luke 24, 39.

2) 1 Cor. 15, 44—46.

3) Gen. 3, 8; 4, 16; 6, 11. Exod. 33, 12. Ps. 11, 4; 139, 16. Ps. 10, 17; 34, 16. Is. 22, 14. Ps. 18, 8. Exod. 6, 6. Is. 52, 10; 62, 8. Jer. 27, 5. Exod. 7, 4; 13, 3. Ps. 63, 9; 95, 4. Luke 11, 20. Jer. 31, 20.

4) Gen. 6, 6. 1 Sam. 15, 11. 35. Gen. 8, 1. Ps. 13, 2.

5) 1 Sam. 15, 11. 35.

"The strength of Israel will not lie nor repent; for he is not a man, that he should repent."¹⁾ And, likewise, all the anthropomorphisms of Scripture leave the statement intact that *God is Spirit*.

UNITY OF GOD.

God is Spirit. So are the angels spirits,²⁾ and their number is very great. Thousand thousands minister unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stand before him.³⁾ But God is *one*, inasmuch as he cannot but be what he is, and there never has been, nor is, nor ever will be nor can be another like him. *The Lord, he is God, there is none else beside him.*⁴⁾ He says: "*I am the Lord: that is my name, and my glory will I not give to another.*"⁵⁾ Where there are more than one of a kind, the one may fitly say to the other: I am what thou art. But God says: "*I am that I am.*"⁶⁾ God is not only an individual and in this sense *one*. Paul was one, but not the only one of his kind; there were other apostles, other Israelites, other servants of Christ, other men, besides him. David was one king; but there was a king of Israel before him, and there were others after him. But God says: "*I am the first, and I am the last; and besides me there is no God.*"⁷⁾ "*I am he; I am the first, I also am the last.*"⁸⁾ "*I am God, and there is none else; for I am God, and there is none like me.*"⁹⁾ "*I am the Lord, and there is none else; there is no God beside me.*"¹⁰⁾ No God before him, no God beside him, no God after him: that leaves him the one and only God from everlasting to everlasting; and what was said to Israel of old: "*Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord,*"¹¹⁾ was equally true when Jesus said: "*The first of*

1) 1 Sam. 15, 29.

3) Dan. 7, 10.

5) Is. 42, 8.

7) Is. 44, 6.

9) Is. 46, 9.

11) Deut. 6, 4.

2) Ps. 104, 4. Heb. 1, 14.

4) Deut. 4, 35.

6) Exod. 3, 14.

8) Is. 48, 12.

10) Is. 45, 5; cf. vv. 21. 22.

all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord,"¹⁾ and when the scribe said: "*There is one God, and there is none other but he,*"²⁾ and when Paul wrote to the Corinthians: "*There is none other God but one,*"³⁾ and to the Ephesians: "*One God and Father of all,*"⁴⁾ and to Timothy: "*For there is one God and one mediator between God and men.*"⁵⁾ This is the one God who has revealed himself in Scripture. All other so-called gods are idols, the gods of philosophers, of antitrinitarian unitarians ancient and modern, of pantheistic theologians, of Free-masons and Odd-Fellows and similar societies, as well as the fictions which peopled Olympus, and the idols of wood and stone and all manner of fetishes worshiped amid the darkness of paganism. "*For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth (as there be gods many and lords many) but to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things and we in him;*"⁶⁾ and whoever joins in the worship of another god, offends against the first commandment of the one true God: "*Thou shalt have no other gods before me.*"⁷⁾

THE TRINITY IN UNITY.

God is one. But God is also three. The one statement does not contradict the other. Every man is one, one individual, one person, one human being. But every man is also two, body and soul, two distinct quantities, so distinct, that the one, which is material in its nature, can never become the other or a part of the other, which is immaterial in its nature. There is, however, a vast difference between the human duality in unity and the divine trinity in unity. In man, body and soul are parts, neither of which is a man, but both of which together constitute the man,

1) Mark 12, 29.
 3) 1 Cor. 8, 4.
 5) 1 Tim. 2, 5.
 7) Exod. 20, 3.

2). Ibid. v. 32.
 4) Eph. 4, 6.
 6) 1 Cor. 8, 5. 6.

one complete human person. In the divine trinity there are no parts, but the divine unity is one undivided and indivisible divine essence, and the divine trinity is not a trinity of parts but of persons, each of whom is in the same sense God. There is no God but the first Person; there is no God but the second Person; there is no God beside the third Person; and yet each Person is God, the same God, the only God. And, again, the first Person is not the second nor the third; the second is not the first nor the third; the third is not the first nor the second. Nor are the three Persons successively God, three successive modes or phases of existence in the manner of the Sabellian *πρόσωπα*, or three successive stages of divine activity. Modalistic as well as dynamistic monarchianism is proscribed as error in the very first chapter of Genesis, even in the first verse and the first three words of the Book.¹⁾ *In the beginning God created.*²⁾ In these words God reveals himself as existing in the beginning, as *being* when the world *was made*. And here, where God is first named in Scripture, we learn that there was then, in the beginning, plurality in God, אֱלֹהִים being the plural form of the noun. But while the form of the noun indicates plurality *in* God, it does not mean plurality *of* Gods; and that the Creator of heaven and earth is *one* God, is indicated by the form of the predicate verb, בָּרָא, *created*, which is singular.

The plurality in God furthermore appears in the same chapter when we read: *God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.*³⁾ But man's Creator is again *one* God, and the next verse says: "*So God created man in HIS (not their) own image,*"⁴⁾ the image of one Creator, who goes on to say: "*Behold, I have given*⁵⁾ *you every herb bearing seed.*"⁶⁾

1) בְּרֵאשִׁית בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים.

2) Gen. 1, 1.

3) Gen. 1, 26; cf. Gen. 3, 22: Behold, the man is become as one of us. Gen. 11, 7: Go to, let us go down.

4) Gen. 1, 27.

5) נָתַתִּי, the singular form.

6) Gen. 1, 29.

The Scriptures, furthermore, teach that the plurality in God is a plurality of *persons*. Thus we hear God speaking in the first person to God addressed in the second person: *The Lord said unto my Lord, "Sit THOU at MY right hand, until I make THINE enemies THY footstool."*¹⁾ And again: *"The Lord hath said unto me, 'THOU art MY Son; this day have I begotten THEE.'*"²⁾ In these texts an *ego*, a person, asserts itself as distinct from another person recognized as such by being addressed as persons are addressed. The person speaking is the *Lord*; the person spoken to is also *Lord*, not inferior, but of the same dignity, a divine person, occupying the throne of God, not as a second God; for there is but one God; but as a second divine person. In like manner God is distinguished from God, not essentially, but personally, when then the Psalmist says: *"THY throne, O GOD, is for ever and ever; the sceptre of THY kingdom is a right sceptre. THOU LOVEST righteousness, and HATEST wickedness; therefore GOD, THY GOD, HATH anointed THEE with the oil of gladness above THY fellows."*³⁾ Here we have two persons, the person spoken *to* and the person spoken *of*, the one anointing and the other being anointed, the one being God, a divine person, and the other being God, a divine person, their divine essence being the same, not two Gods, but one God.

But the distinction in God is not of two only; it is of *three*. In Isaiah God speaks, saying: *"Hearken unto me, O Jacob and Israel, my called; I am he; I am the first, I also am the last. Mine hand also hath laid the foundation of the earth. . . . Come ye near unto me, hear ye this; I have not spoken in secret from the beginning; from the time that it was, there am I: and now the Lord God, and his Spirit hath sent me."*⁴⁾ Here he who speaks is God, the Creator of the world, the first and the last, the only true God. But this divine Person also speaks *of* God, saying:

1) Ps. 110, 1.

3) Ps. 45, 6. 7.

2) Ps. 2, 7.

4) Is. 48, 12. 13. 16.

“The *Lord God*, and *his Spirit*, hath sent *me*,” thus distinguishing three persons, Himself, the *Lord God*, and his *Spirit*. That *Spirit of God*, who moved upon the face of the waters in the beginning,¹⁾ is, as the *Word of the Lord*, the *Creator of the heavens and the host thereof*,²⁾ the *Maker of man and Giver of life*,³⁾ the one true *God*, but a distinct *Person*, breathed or spirated by *God*, the spirating *Persons* in the same *Godhead*,⁴⁾ just as according to a text already quoted, another divine person is also *God*, of the one divine essence, but personally distinguished as the person begotten, the *Son*, from the *Person* who has begotten him, the *Father* in the *Trinity*.⁵⁾

The reader may have noticed that the doctrine of the *Trinity in Unity* has in this treatise been exhibited solely from the *Old Testament Scriptures*, which, from the days of *Calixt* down to the present day, have been declared inadequate to the purpose of clearly setting forth this fundamental doctrine of the *Christian religion*. The *New Testament* gives us the same doctrine in all its points. *Christ* charges his church to baptize “*in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost*,”⁶⁾ and this baptism is baptism “*in the name of the LORD*.”⁷⁾ At the baptism of *Christ*, the *Trinity* is revealed, the *Father* bearing witness to the *Son*, on whom the *Holy Ghost* descends in the shape of a dove.⁸⁾ The *Son* speaks to the *Father* and of the *Holy Ghost*, saying: “*O Father, glorify THOU ME with THINE own self, with the glory which I had with THEE before the world was*.”⁹⁾ “*When the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the father, even the Spirit of Truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify*

1) Gen. 1, 1.

2) Ps. 33, 6. Note the parallelismus membrorum.

3) Job 33, 4.

4) Ps. 33, 6. 2 Sam. 23, 2. Job 33, 4. Gen. 1, 1.

5) Ps. 2, 7.

6) Matt. 28, 19.

7) Acts 10, 48.

8) Matt. 3, 16. 17. Luke 3, 22.

9) John 17, 5.

of me."¹⁾ And yet the Father and the Son are *One*. "*I and my Father are ONE*, not εἷς, one person, but εἶν, *one being*,"²⁾ says the Son, and: "*He that hath seen me hath seen the Father.*"³⁾ In Christ, *God was manifest in the flesh.*⁴⁾ Jesus Christ, *the Son of God, is the true God,*⁵⁾ *over all, God blessed for ever,*⁶⁾ *our Lord and our God.*⁷⁾ He is not an angel, but above all angels, for *ALL the angels of God are to worship him.*⁸⁾ Thus the glory which God will not give to another is his.⁹⁾ But being essentially God, he is personally the Son of God, the first-begotten, πρωτότοκος,¹⁰⁾ *the only begotten Son, ὁ μονογενὴς υἱός, who is in the bosom of the Father,*¹¹⁾ *the only begotten Son of God,*¹²⁾ *the only begotten of the Father,*¹³⁾ with whom he is essentially one,¹⁴⁾ but personally distinct, the Logos being *God* and being *with God.*¹⁵⁾

Likewise, he who lies to the *Holy Ghost*, lies *not unto men, but unto GOD,*¹⁶⁾ and they in whom the *Spirit of God* dwells are the temples of *God.*¹⁷⁾ This *Spirit of God*, who is *God*, of the one divine essence, *proceeds from the Father,*¹⁸⁾ and is also the *Spirit of the Son,*¹⁹⁾ *the Spirit of Christ,*²⁰⁾ whom *Christ* will send from the Father,²¹⁾ even as the *Spirit of Christ* was in the prophets of the Old Testament before the incarnation of the Son of God.²²⁾ So, then, we have in the Godhead a third Person, distinct from the first and the second Persons, essentially *God*, who is *Spirit,*²³⁾

1) John 15, 26; cf. John 14, 15—17.

2) John 10, 30.

3) John 14, 9.

4) 1 Tim. 3, 16.

5) 1 John 5, 20.

6) Rom. 9, 5.

7) John 20, 28.

8) Heb. 1, 6.

9) cf. also John 5, 23. Phil. 2, 11. 12. John 17, 5.

10) Heb. 1, 6.

11) John 1, 18.

12) John 3, 16. 18. 1 John 4, 9.

13) John 1, 14.

14) John 10, 30.

15) John 1, 1.

16) Acts 5, 3.

17) 1 Cor. 3, 16.

18) John 15, 26.

19) Gal. 4, 6.

20) Rom 8, 9. 1 Pet. 1, 11.

21) John 15, 26.

22) 1 Pet. 1, 11.

23) John 4, 24.

of the same one and indivisible Godhead with the Father and the Son, but personally *the Spirit*, not the begetting Person, nor the begotten Person, but the *spirated* Person, proceeding from the Father as the Spirit of God, the Father, and from the Son as the Spirit of Christ, the Son of God, personally the Spirit of the Persons who spirate him, the Spirit of God and of glory,¹⁾ τῆς δόξης, that glory which the Lord God will not give to another, essentially one God with the Father and the Son, yet personally neither the Father nor the Son, but the Holy Ghost. A. G.

(To be continued.)

LUTHERAN POLEMICS.²⁾

The history of the Reformation is the history of a continuous war of nearly thirty years' duration. . . . On the one side stood Luther, a defenseless monk, with no weapon in his hand but the book of Scripture. . . . On the other side stood the Pope in full armor, with the temporal and the spiritual sword, as he called it, that is, political and ecclesiastical power, in his hand. . . . On the one hand stood error, on the other, the truth; on the one side the word of man, on the other, the word of God; and, above all, on the one hand stood, invisibly, Jesus Christ, the King of Truth and Captain of our salvation, with all his holy angels; on the other, Satan, the prince of darkness and perdition, with all his infernal host. . . .

But the history of the Reformation is not only the history of a war with foreign powers, but also that of a spiritual civil war. The Swiss preacher Zwingli, having at

1) 1 Pet. 4, 14.

2) This treatise is a translation of the greater part of a sermon by the late Doctor C. F. W. Walther.