

Biblical Theology

Old and New Testaments

GEERHARDUS VOS

Wipf & Stock
PUBLISHERS
Eugene, Oregon

Wipf and Stock Publishers
199 W 8th Ave, Suite 3
Eugene, OR 97401

Biblical Theology
Old and New Testaments
By Vos, Geerhardus
ISBN 13: 978-1-59244-291-1
ISBN 10: 1-59244-291-9
Publication date 7/10/2003
Previously published by Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1948

PREFACE

In the words of Thomas Aquinas, Theology *a Deo docetur, Deum docet, ad Deum ducit*.¹ After suffering much from the anti-intellectual and anti-doctrinal temper of our times, Theology is perhaps in somewhat better repute now than during the early years of the present century. This change of attitude is to be welcomed, even though it must be confessed that even in conservative Protestant circles Theology is still far from receiving the attention and respect which, as the knowledge of God, it ought to have.

The present volume is entitled *Biblical Theology – Old and New Testaments*. The term ‘Biblical Theology’ is really unsatisfactory because of its liability to misconstruction. All truly Christian Theology must be *Biblical Theology* – for apart from General Revelation the Scriptures constitute the sole material with which the science of Theology can deal. A more suitable name would be ‘History of Special Revelation’, which precisely describes the subject matter of this discipline. Names, however, become fixed by long usage, and the term ‘Biblical Theology’, in spite of its ambiguity, can hardly be abandoned now.

Biblical Theology occupies a position between Exegesis and Systematic Theology in the encyclopaedia of theological disciplines. It differs from Systematic Theology, not in being more Biblical, or adhering more closely to the truths of the Scriptures, but in that its principle of organizing the Biblical material is historical rather than logical. Whereas Systematic Theology takes the Bible as a completed whole and endeavours to exhibit its total teaching in an orderly, systematic form, Biblical Theology deals with the material from the historical standpoint, seeking to exhibit the organic growth or development of the truths of Special Revelation from the primitive

¹ ‘Is taught by God, teaches God, leads to God.’

Preface

pre-redemptive Special Revelation given in Eden to the close of the New Testament canon.

The material presented in this volume has previously been issued at various theological institutions in mimeographed form. It is a matter of satisfaction to me that it is being made available to the public in a suitable permanent printed form by the Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company. The editing of the material for the press has been done by my son, the Rev. Johannes G. Vos, who studied this work as a student at Princeton Theological Seminary and is in hearty agreement with the theological viewpoint of the book. It is my hope that this volume may help many ministers and theological students to attain a deeper appreciation of the wonders of the Special Revelation of our God.

Grand Rapids, Michigan
1 September 1948

GEERHARDUS VOS

PUBLISHER'S NOTE

This new printing, entirely reset in 1975, differs from the original publication only in the introduction of subheadings, the division of the text into shorter paragraphs, and the use of a new scheme for transliteration of the Hebrew words. The content of the book remains entirely the same as in earlier printings.

CONTENTS

The Old Testament

PART ONE

THE MOSAIC EPOCH OF REVELATION

I INTRODUCTION: THE NATURE AND METHOD OF

BIBLICAL THEOLOGY

3

Division of Theology into four great departments – definition of Biblical Theology – the various things successively designated by the name of Biblical Theology – guiding principles – objections to the name ‘Biblical Theology’ – the relation of Biblical Theology to other disciplines – the method of Biblical Theology – practical uses of the study of Biblical Theology

2 THE MAPPING OUT OF THE FIELD OF REVELATION

19

Pre-redemptive and Redemptive Special Revelation – the division of Redemptive Special Revelation – ‘Diatheke’

3 THE CONTENT OF PRE-REDEMPTIVE SPECIAL

REVELATION

27

Four principles: life, probation, temptation, death – mortality and immortality

4 THE CONTENT OF THE FIRST REDEMPTIVE SPECIAL

REVELATION

41

The three curses – ‘seed’ – human suffering

5 THE NOACHIAN REVELATION AND THE DEVELOPMENT LEADING UP TO IT

45

Cainites and Sethites – Revelation after the Flood

6 THE PERIOD BETWEEN NOAH AND THE GREAT PATRIARCHS

56

The prophetic deliverances of Noah – the table of the nations – the division of tongues – the election of the Shemites to furnish the bearers of redemption and revelation

vii

Contents

7 REVELATION IN THE PATRIARCHAL PERIOD	66
<i>Critical views – the historicity of the patriarchs – theophanies – the Angel of Jehovah – the Patriarch Abraham – the principle of election – the objectivity of the gifts bestowed – the promises fulfilled supernaturally – the divine name ‘El-Shaddai’ – faith as found in patriarchal religion – ethical elements – the Patriarch Isaac – the Patriarch Jacob – election – the Bethel dream-vision – the wrestling at Peniel</i>	
8 REVELATION IN THE PERIOD OF MOSES	100
[A] The Place of Moses in the Organism of Old Testament Revelation	100
<i>The prominence of Moses</i>	
[B] The Form of Revelation in the Mosaic Period	105
<i>The pillar of cloud and fire – the Angel of Jehovah – the name and the face of Jehovah</i>	
[C] The Content of the Mosaic Revelation	109
[1] <i>The factual basis. Deliverance from foreign bondage – deliverance from sin – a display of divine omnipotence – a demonstration of sovereign grace – the name ‘Jehovah’ – the Passover</i>	109
[2] <i>The Berith made between Jehovah and Israel</i>	121
[3] <i>The organization of Israel: the theocracy. The function of law</i>	124
[4] <i>The Decalogue. Of world-wide application – religious in character – the Ten Words – the First Word – the Second Word – the Third Word – the Fourth Word</i>	129
[5] <i>The Ritual (ceremonial) Law. Symbol and Type – the Tabernacle – the majesty and holiness of God – the place of worship – Christ is the anti-typical Tabernacle – the sacrificial system of the law – offerings, gifts, sacrifices – the relation between the offerer and his sacrifice – the stages of the sacrificial ritual – vicariousness defined – the meaning of ‘covering’ – the variety of offerings – uncleanness and purification – totemism – ancestor-worship – the animistic theory</i>	143

PART TWO

THE PROPHETIC EPOCH OF REVELATION

1 THE PLACE OF PROPHETISM IN OLD TESTAMENT REVELATION	185
<i>A kingdom-producing movement – the word as the instrument of prophetism – a factor of continuity – two main periods of prophetism</i>	
2 THE CONCEPTION OF A PROPHET: NAMES AND ETYMOLOGIES	191
<i>The Hebrew term nabhi – the Greek term prophetes – the terms ro‘eh and chozeh</i>	
3 THE HISTORY OF PROPHETISM: CRITICAL THEORIES	198
<i>The History of prophetism – the origin of ‘nabhi’-ism’ in Israel, arguments and counter-arguments – did the later prophets create ethical monotheism?</i>	

4 THE MODE OF RECEPTION OF THE PROPHETIC REVELATION	212
<i>The views of Kuenen examined – ‘kernel-revelation’ – the ‘divination’ theory – revelation through speech and hearing – revelation through showing and seeing – revelation through rapture – bodily effects – the intra-mental state – extreme critical views answered</i>	
5 THE MODE OF COMMUNICATION OF THE PROPHECY	230
<i>Speech – miracles</i>	
6 THE CONTENT OF THE PROPHETIC REVELATION	234
[A] The Nature and Attributes of Jehovah	234
<i>Monotheism – the nature and attributes of Jehovah – omnipotence – ‘Jehovah of hosts’ – Jehovah’s relation to time and space – omniscience – holiness – righteousness – emotions and affections</i>	
[B] The Bond between Jehovah and Israel	256
[C] The Rupture of the Bond: The Sin of Israel	263
<i>Collective national sin – the corruption of ritual worship – Amos 5.25 – Isaiah 1.10–17 – Hosea 6.6 – Micah 6.6–9 – Amos 4.4 – Jeremiah 7.21–23 – social sin – Hosea’s doctrine of sin – Isaiah’s doctrine of sin – Israel’s sin as viewed by the prophets historically</i>	
[D] The Judgment and the Restoration: Prophetic Eschatology	286
<i>The views of the Wellhausen school of criticism – the eschatological teaching of the prophets – Hosea – Isaiah – the ‘latter days’ in Hosea – the ‘future glory’ in Isaiah</i>	

The New Testament

I THE STRUCTURE OF NEW TESTAMENT REVELATION	299
[1] <i>From indications in the Old Testament</i>	
[2] <i>From the teachings of Jesus</i>	
[3] <i>From the teachings of Paul and the other apostles.</i>	
<i>The new dispensation is final – is a further revelation to be expected?</i>	
2 REVELATION CONNECTED WITH THE NATIVITY	305
<i>Aspects of the Nativity</i>	
3 REVELATION CONNECTED WITH JOHN THE BAPTIST	311
<i>Matthew 11.2–19 – John the Baptist and Elijah – John the Baptist’s testimony to Jesus – John’s baptism – the baptism of Jesus by John – the descent of the Spirit on Jesus – the post-baptismal testimony of the Baptist to Jesus – John 1.15, 30 – John 1.29, 36 – John 1.34 – John 3.27–36</i>	
4 REVELATION IN THE PROBATION OF JESUS	330
<i>The temptation in the wilderness – the Lord’s temptation and our own – the specific form assumed by our Lord’s temptation – the Lord’s temptations interpreted – Deuteronomy 8.3 – Deuteronomy 6.16 – Deuteronomy 6.13 – temptability and peccability</i>	

Contents

5 THE REVELATION OF JESUS' PUBLIC MINISTRY	343
[A] The Various Aspects of Christ's Revealing Function	343
<i>Four divisions of revelation by Christ – Jesus' revealing work in the Gospels</i>	
[B] The Question of Development	348
[C] The Method of Jesus' Teaching	350
<i>Similitudes – parables proper – specialization-parables – the 'allegorical' method – the philosophy of the parabolic teaching – 'time' and 'truth' in the Fourth Gospel</i>	
[D] Jesus' Attitude Toward the Scriptures of the Old Testament	357
<i>A 'religion of the Book' – certain critical claims disproved</i>	
[E] Jesus' Doctrine of God	363
<i>Jesus' teaching on the divine Fatherhood – Jesus' stress on the divine majesty and greatness – the retributive righteousness of God</i>	
[F] Jesus' Teaching on the Kingdom of God	372
[1] <i>The formal questions. The kingdom in the Old Testament – the kingdom in the Gospels – 'the kingdom of Heaven' – modern theories of 'the kingdom' – the two-sided conception of the kingdom</i>	372
[2] <i>The essence of the kingdom. Divine supremacy in the sphere of power – faith as related to the kingdom's power – 'faith' as used in John – divine supremacy in the sphere of righteousness – our Lord's critique of Jewish ethics – repentance – divine supremacy in the sphere of blessedness – kingdom and church</i>	385
INDEX: SUBJECTS AND NAMES	403
SCRIPTURE REFERENCES	417

The Old Testament

PART ONE

THE MOSAIC EPOCH OF REVELATION

ONE:

INTRODUCTION: THE NATURE AND METHOD OF BIBLICAL THEOLOGY

The best approach towards understanding the nature of Biblical Theology and the place belonging to it in the circle of theological disciplines lies through a definition of Theology in general. According to its etymology, Theology is *the science concerning God*. Other definitions either are misleading, or, when closely examined, are found to lead to the same result. As a frequent instance, the definition of Theology as 'the science of religion' may be examined. If in this definition 'religion' be understood subjectively, as meaning the sum-total of religious phenomena or experiences in man, then it is already included in that part of the science of anthropology which deals with the psychical life of man. It deals with man, not with God. If, on the other hand, religion be understood objectively, as the religion which is normal and of obligation for man because prescribed by God, then the further question must arise, why God demands precisely this and no other religion; and the answer to this can be found only in the nature and will of God; therefore ultimately, in thus dealing with religion, we shall find ourselves dealing with God.

From the definition of Theology as the science concerning God follows the necessity of its being based on revelation. In scientifically dealing with impersonal objects we ourselves take the first step; they are passive, we are active; we handle them, examine them, experiment with them. But in regard to a spiritual, personal being this is different. Only in so far as such a being chooses to open up itself can we come to know it. All spiritual life is by its very nature a hidden life, a life shut up in itself. Such a life we can know only through revelation. If this be true as between man and man, how much more must it be so as between God and man. The principle involved has been strikingly formulated by Paul: 'For who among men knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of the man which is in him? even so the things of God none knoweth, save the Spirit of God' [1 Cor. 2.11]. The inward

THE OLD TESTAMENT

hidden content of God's mind can become the possession of man only through a voluntary disclosure on God's part. God must come to us before we can go to Him. But God is not a personal spiritual being *in general*. He is a Being infinitely exalted above our highest conception. Suppose it were possible for one human spirit to penetrate directly into another human spirit: it would still be impossible for the spirit of man to penetrate into the Spirit of God. This emphasizes the necessity of God's opening up to us the mystery of His nature before we can acquire any knowledge concerning Him. Indeed, we can go one step farther still. In all scientific study we exist alongside of the objects which we investigate. But in Theology the relation is reversed. Originally God alone existed. He was known to Himself alone, and had first to call into being a creature before any extraneous knowledge with regard to Him became possible. Creation therefore was the first step in the production of extra-divine knowledge.

Still a further reason for the necessity of revelation preceding all satisfactory acquaintance with God is drawn from the abnormal state in which man exists through sin. Sin has deranged the original relation between God and man. It has produced a separation where previously perfect communion prevailed. From the nature of the case every step towards rectifying this abnormality must spring from God's sovereign initiative. This particular aspect, therefore, of the indispensableness of revelation stands or falls with the recognition of the fact of sin.

DIVISION OF THEOLOGY INTO FOUR GREAT DEPARTMENTS

The usual treatment of Theology distinguishes four departments, which are named Exegetical Theology, Historical Theology, Systematic Theology and Practical Theology. The point to be observed for our present purpose is the position given Exegetical Theology as the first among these four. This precedence is due to the instinctive recognition that at the beginning of all Theology lies a passive, receptive attitude on the part of the one who engages in its study. The assumption of such an attitude is characteristic of all truly exegetical pursuit. It is eminently a process in which God speaks and man listens. Exegetical Theology, however, should not be regarded as confined to Exegesis. The former is a larger whole of which the latter is indeed an important part, but after all only a part. Exegetical Theology in the wider sense comprises the following disciplines:

- (a) the study of the actual content of Holy Scripture;
- (b) the inquiry into the origin of the several Biblical writings, including

Introduction: the Nature and Method of Biblical Theology

the identity of the writers, the time and occasion of composition, dependence on possible sources, etc. This is called *Introduction*, and may be regarded as a further carrying out of the process of Exegesis proper;

(c) the putting of the question of how these several writings came to be collected into the unity of a Bible or book; this part of the process bears the technical name of *Canonicity*;

(d) the study of the actual self-disclosures of God in time and space which lie back of even the first committal to writing of any Biblical document, and which for a long time continued to run alongside of the inscripturation of revealed material; this last-named procedure is called the study of *Biblical Theology*.

The order in which the four steps are here named is, of course, the order in which they present themselves successively to the investigating mind of man. When looking at the process from the point of view of the divine activity the order requires to be reversed, the sequence here being

(a) the divine self-revelation;

(b) the committal to writing of the revelation-product;

(c) the gathering of the several writings thus produced into the unity of a collection;

(d) the production and guidance of the study of the content of the Biblical writings.

DEFINITION OF BIBLICAL THEOLOGY

Biblical Theology is that branch of Exegetical Theology which deals with the process of the self-revelation of God deposited in the Bible.

In the above definition the term 'revelation' is taken as a noun of action. Biblical Theology deals with revelation as a divine activity, not as the finished product of that activity. Its nature and method of procedure will therefore naturally have to keep in close touch with, and so far as possible reproduce, the features of the divine work itself. The main features of the latter are the following:

[1] *The historic progressiveness of the revelation-process*

It has not completed itself in one exhaustive act, but unfolded itself in a long series of successive acts. In the abstract, it might conceivably have been otherwise. But as a matter of fact this could not be, because revelation does not stand alone by itself, but is (so far as Special Revelation is concerned) inseparably attached to another activity of God, which we call *Redemption*. Now redemption could not be otherwise than historically successive, because it addresses itself to

the generations of mankind coming into existence in the course of history. Revelation is the interpretation of redemption; it must, therefore, unfold itself in instalments as redemption does. And yet it is also obvious that the two processes are not entirely co-extensive, for revelation comes to a close at a point where redemption still continues. In order to understand this, we must take into account an important distinction within the sphere of redemption itself. Redemption is partly objective and central, partly subjective and individual. By the former we designate those redeeming acts of God, which take place on behalf of, but outside of, the human person. By the latter we designate those acts of God which enter into the human subject. We call the objective acts central, because, happening in the centre of the circle of redemption, they concern all alike, and are not in need of, or capable of, repetition. Such objective-central acts are the incarnation, the atonement, the resurrection of Christ. The acts in the subjective sphere are called individual, because they are repeated in each individual separately. Such subjective-individual acts are regeneration, justification, conversion, sanctification, glorification. Now revelation accompanies the process of objective-central redemption only, and this explains why redemption extends further than revelation. To insist upon its accompanying subjective-individual redemption would imply that it dealt with questions of private, personal concern, instead of with the common concerns of the world of redemption collectively. Still this does not mean that the believer cannot, for his subjective experience, receive enlightenment from the source of revelation in the Bible, for we must remember that continually, alongside the objective process, there was going on the work of subjective application, and that much of this is reflected in the Scriptures. Subjective-individual redemption did not first begin when objective-central redemption ceased; it existed alongside of it from the beginning.

There lies only one epoch in the future when we may expect objective-central redemption to be resumed, viz., at the Second Coming of Christ. At that time there will take place great redemptive acts concerning the world and the people of God collectively. These will add to the volume of truth which we now possess.

[2] *The actual embodiment of revelation in history*

The process of revelation is not only concomitant with history, but it becomes incarnate in history. The facts of history themselves acquire a revealing significance. The crucifixion and resurrection of Christ are examples of this. We must place act-revelation by the side of

word-revelation. This applies, of course, to the great outstanding acts of redemption. In such cases redemption and revelation coincide. Two points, however, should be remembered in this connection: first, that these two-sided acts did not take place primarily for the purpose of revelation; their revelatory character is secondary; primarily they possess a purpose that transcends revelation, having a God-ward reference in their effect, and only in dependence on this a man-ward reference for instruction. In the second place, such act-revelations are never entirely left to speak for themselves; they are preceded and followed by word-revelation. The usual order is: first word, then the fact, then again the interpretative word. The Old Testament brings the predictive preparatory word, the Gospels record the redemptive-revelatory fact, the Epistles supply the subsequent, final interpretation.

[3] *The organic nature of the historic process observable in revelation*

Every increase is progressive, but not every progressive increase bears an organic character. The organic nature of the progression of revelation explains several things. It is sometimes contended that the assumption of progress in revelation excludes its absolute perfection at all stages. This would actually be so if the progress were non-organic. The organic progress is from seed-form to the attainment of full growth; yet we do not say that in the qualitative sense the seed is less perfect than the tree. The feature in question explains further how the soteric sufficiency of the truth could belong to it in its first state of emergence: in the seed-form the minimum of indispensable knowledge was already present. Again, it explains how revelation could be so closely determined in its onward movement by the onward movement of redemption. The latter being organically progressive, the former had to partake of the same nature. Where redemption takes slow steps, or becomes quiescent, revelation proceeds accordingly. But redemption, as is well known, is eminently organic in its progress. It does not proceed with uniform motion, but rather is 'epochal' in its onward stride. We can observe that where great epoch-making redemptive acts accumulate, there the movement of revelation is correspondingly accelerated and its volume increased. Still further, from the organic character of revelation we can explain its increasing multiformity, the latter being everywhere a symptom of the development of organic life. There is more of this multiformity observable in the New Testament than in the Old, more in the period of the prophets than in the time of Moses.

Some remarks are in place here in regard to a current misconstruc-

tion of this last-mentioned feature. It is urged that the discovery of so considerable an amount of variableness and differentiation in the Bible must be fatal to the belief in its absoluteness and infallibility. If Paul has one point of view and Peter another, then each can be at best only approximately correct. This would actually follow, if the truth did not carry in itself a multiformity of aspects. But infallibility is not inseparable from dull uniformity. The truth is inherently rich and complex, because God is so Himself. The whole contention ultimately rests on a wrong view of God's nature and His relation to the world, a view at bottom Deistical. It conceives of God as standing outside of His own creation and therefore having to put up for the instrumentation of His revealing speech with such imperfect forms and organs as it offers Him. The didactic, dialectic mentality of Paul would thus become a hindrance for the ideal communication of the message, no less than the simple, practical, untutored mind of Peter. From the standpoint of Theism the matter shapes itself quite differently. The truth having inherently many sides, and God having access to and control of all intended organs of revelation, shaped each one of these for the precise purpose to be served. The Gospel having a precise, doctrinal structure, the doctrinally-gifted Paul was the fit organ for expressing this, because his gifts had been conferred and cultivated in advance with a view to it.

[4] *The fourth aspect of revelation determinative of the study of Biblical Theology consists in its practical adaptability*

God's self-revelation to us was not made for a primarily intellectual purpose. It is not to be overlooked, of course, that the truly pious mind may through an intellectual contemplation of the divine perfections glorify God. This would be just as truly religious as the intensest occupation of the will in the service of God. But it would not be the full-orbed religion at which, as a whole, revelation aims. It is true, the Gospel teaches that to know God is life eternal. But the concept of 'knowledge' here is not to be understood in its Hellenic sense, but in the Shemitic sense. According to the former, 'to know' means to mirror the reality of a thing in one's consciousness. The Shemitic and Biblical idea is to have the reality of something practically interwoven with the inner experience of life. Hence 'to know' can stand in the Biblical idiom for 'to love', 'to single out in love'. Because God desires to be *known* after this fashion, He has caused His revelation to take place in the milieu of the historical life of a people. The circle of revelation is not a school, but a 'covenant'. To speak of revelation as an 'education' of humanity is a rationalistic and utterly un-scriptural

Introduction: the Nature and Method of Biblical Theology

way of speaking. All that God disclosed of Himself has come in response to the practical religious needs of His people as these emerged in the course of history.

THE VARIOUS THINGS SUCCESSIVELY DESIGNATED BY THE
NAME OF BIBLICAL THEOLOGY

The name was first used to designate a collection of proof-texts employed in the study of Systematic Theology. Next it was appropriated by the Pietists to voice their protest against a hyperscholastic method in the treatment of Dogmatics. Of course, neither of these two usages gave rise to a new distinct theological discipline. This did not happen until a new principle of treatment, marking it off from the disciplines already existing, was introduced. The first to do this was J. P. Gabler in his treatise *De justo discrimine theologiae biblicae et dogmaticae*. Gabler correctly perceived that the specific difference of Biblical Theology lies in its historical principle of treatment. Unfortunately both the impulse of the perception and the manner of its application were influenced by the Rationalism of the school to which he belonged. The chief characteristic of this school was its disrespect for history and tradition and the corresponding worship of Reason as the sole and sufficient source of religious knowledge. A distinction was drawn between (a) past beliefs and usages recorded in the Bible as a matter of history and (b) what proved demonstrable by Reason. The former was *a priori* rejected as unauthoritative, while the latter was received as truth – not, however, because found in the Bible, but because in agreement with the deliverances of Reason. If the question was put, what use could then possibly be served by its presentation in the Bible, the answer was given that at an earlier stage of development men were not yet sufficiently acquainted with Reason to base on it their religious convictions and practice, and consequently God accommodated Himself to the ancient method of basing belief on external authority, a method now superseded.

It is important to observe that this so-called *Rationalismus Vulgaris* was not (and, so far as it still survives, is not) a purely philosophical or epistemological principle, but has a specifically religious colouring. Rationalism has so long and so violently attacked religion that it cannot seem amiss to turn the tables and for a moment criticize rationalism from the view-point of religion. The main point to notice is its undue self-assertiveness over against God in the sphere of truth and belief. This is a defect in religious endowment. Reception of truth on the authority of God is an eminently religious act. Belief

in the inspiration of Scripture can be appraised as an act of worship under given circumstances. This explains why rationalism has by preference asserted itself in the field of religion even more than in that of pure philosophy. This is because in religion the sinful mind of man comes most directly face to face with the claims of an independent, superior authority. Closely looked at, its protest against tradition is a protest against God as the source of tradition, and its whole mode of treatment of Biblical Theology aims not at honouring history as the form of tradition, but at discrediting history and tradition. Further, rationalism is defective, ethically considered, in that it shows a tendency towards glorification of its own present (that is, at bottom, *of itself*) over against the future no less than the past. It reveals a strong sense of having arrived at the acme of development. The glamour of unsurpassability in which rationalism usually sees itself is not calculated to make it expect much from God in the future. In this attitude, the religious fault of self-sufficiency stands out even more pronouncedly than in the attitude towards the past.

It was formerly considered a merit to have stressed the importance of tracing the truth historically, but when this was done with a lack of fundamental piety it lost the right of calling itself theology. The rationalistic brand of Biblical Theology, at the same time that it stresses the historical, declares its product religiously worthless.

To define the issue between ourselves and this type of treatment sharply, we should remember, that it is not a question of the apprehensive function of the reason in regard to religious truth. Man is psychically so constructed that nothing can enter into his knowledge except through the gateway of the reason. This is so true, that it applies equally to the content of Special Revelation as to the ingress of truth from any other source. Nor is it a question about the legitimate functioning of the reason in supplying the mind of man with the content of natural revelation. Still further, reason has its proper place in the thinking through and systematizing of the content of Special Revelation. But the recognition of all this is not identical with nor characteristic of what we technically call rationalism. The diagnosis of the latter lies in the atmosphere of irreligion and practical disdain of God which it carries with itself wherever appearing. The main fault to be found with people of this kind is that to the pious mind their whole outlook towards God and His world appears uncongenial because lacking in the most primary sense the sensorium of religion.

Ever since its birth in this rationalistic environment Biblical Theology has been strongly affected, not only in the way in which philosophical

currents have touched Theology in general, but in a special manner to which its nature especially lays it open. This is shown in the extent to which, at the present time, the treatment of Biblical Theology is influenced by the philosophy of evolution. This influence is discernible in two directions. In the first place, the qualitative advancement found by the hypothesis of evolution in the world-process is extended to the emergence of religious truth. It becomes an advance, not only from the lower to the higher, but from the barbarous and primitive to the refined and civilized, from the false to the true, from the evil to the good. Religion, it is held, began with animism; next came polytheism, then monolatry, then monotheism. Such a view, of course, excludes revelation in every legitimate sense of the word. Making all things relative, it leaves no room for the absoluteness of the divine factor.

In the second place, the philosophy of evolution belongs to the family of positivism. It teaches that nothing can be known but phenomena, only the impressionistic side of the world, not the interior objective reality, the so-called 'things in themselves'. Such things as God, the soul, immortality, a future life, etc., cannot enter into human knowledge, which in fact is no knowledge in the old solid sense. Consequently all these objective verities come to be regarded as lying beyond the province of Theology. If the name *Theology* is still retained, it is as a misnomer for a classification and discussion of religious phenomena. The question is no longer as to what is true, but simply as to what has been believed and practised in the past. Alongside of this general camouflage of the science of religion under the name of Theology, and inseparable from it, runs the turning inside out of Biblical Theology in particular. This becomes the phenomenology of the religion recorded in the literature of the Bible.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Over against these perverse influences it is of importance clearly to lay down the principles by which we propose to be guided in our treatment of the matter. These are:

(a) the recognition of the infallible character of revelation as essential to every legitimate theological use made of this term. This is of the essence of Theism. If God be personal and conscious, then the inference is inevitable that in every mode of self-disclosure He will make a faultless expression of His nature and purpose. He will communicate His thought to the world with the stamp of divinity on it. If this were otherwise, then the reason would have to be sought in His being in some way tied up in the limitations and relativities of

the world, the medium of expression obstructing His intercourse with the world. Obviously the background of such a view is not Theism but pantheism.

(b) Biblical Theology must likewise recognize the objectivity of the groundwork of revelation. This means that real communications came from God to man *ab extra*. It is unfair to pass this off with a contemptuous reference to the 'dictation' view. There is nothing undignified in dictation, certainly not as between God and man. Besides, it is unscientific, for the statements of the recipients of revelation show that such a process not seldom took place.

Our position, however, does not imply that all revelation came after this objective fashion. There is an ingredient which may properly be called 'subjective revelation'. By this is meant the inward activity of the Spirit upon the depths of human sub-consciousness causing certain God-intended thoughts to well up therefrom. The Psalms offer examples of this kind of revelation, and it also occurs in the Psalmodic pieces found here and there in the prophets. Although brought up through a subjective channel, we none the less must claim for it absolute divine authority; otherwise it could not properly be called revelation. In this subjective form revelation and inspiration coalesce. We must, however, be on our guard against the modern tendency to reduce all revelation in the Scriptures to this category of the *ab intra*. That is usually intended to deprive revelation of its infallibility. A favourite form is to confine revelation proper to the bare acts of self-disclosure performed by God, and then to derive the entire thought-content of the Bible from human reflection upon these acts. Such a theory, as a rule, is made a cover for involving the whole teaching of the Bible in the relativity of purely human reflection, whose divine provenience cannot any longer be verified, because there is nothing objective left to verify it by.

The belief in the joint-occurrence of objective and subjective revelation is not a narrow or antiquated position; it is in reality the only broad-minded view, since it is willing to take into account all the facts. The offence at 'dictation' frequently proceeds from an under-estimate of God and an over-estimate of man. If God condescends to give us a revelation, it is for Him and not for us *a priori* to determine what forms it will assume. What we owe to the dignity of God is that we shall receive His speech at full divine value.

(c) Biblical Theology is deeply concerned with the question of inspiration. All depends here on what we posit as the object with which our science deals. If its object consist in the beliefs and practices of men in

the past, then obviously it is of no importance whether the subject matter be considered as true in any other or higher sense than that of a reliable record of things once prevailing, no matter whether inherently true or not. A Biblical Theology thus conceived ought to classify itself with Historical Theology, not with Exegetical Theology. It professes to be a History of Doctrine for Biblical times. It treats Isaiah as it would treat Augustine, the sole question being what was believed, not whether it was true or not. Our conception of the discipline, on the other hand, considers its subject matter from the point of view of revelation from God. Hence the factor of inspiration needs to be reckoned with as one of the elements rendering the things studied 'truth' guaranteed to us as such by the authority of God.

Nor should it be objected that in this way we can postulate inspiration for so much in the Bible only as pertains to the special occasions when God engaged in the act of revelation, so that as Biblical theologians we could profess indifference at least to the doctrine of 'plenary inspiration'. The conception of partial inspiration is a modern figment having no support in what the Bible teaches about its own make-up. Whenever the New Testament speaks about the inspiration of the Old, it is always in the most absolute, comprehensive terms. Consulting the consciousness of the Scriptures themselves in this matter, we soon learn that it is either 'plenary inspiration' or nothing at all. Further, we have found that revelation is by no means confined to isolated verbal disclosures, but embraces facts. These facts moreover are not of a subordinate character: they constitute the central joints and ligaments of the entire body of redemptive revelation. From them the whole receives its significance and colouring. Unless, therefore, the historicity of these facts is vouched for, and that in a more reliable sense than can be done by mere historical research, together with the facts the teaching content will become subject to a degree of uncertainty rendering the revelation value of the whole doubtful. The trustworthiness of the revelations proper entirely depends on that of the historical setting in which they appear.

Again it should be remembered that the Bible gives us in certain cases a philosophy of its own organism. Paul, for instance, has his views in regard to the revelation structure of the Old Testament. Here the question of full inspiration, extending also to the historical teaching of Paul, becomes of decisive importance. If we believe that Paul was inspired in these matters, then it ought greatly to facilitate our task in producing the revelation structure of the Old Testament. It were superfluous labour to construct a separate view of our own. Where

THE OLD TESTAMENT

that is attempted, as it is by a certain school of Old Testament criticism, the method does not rest on an innocent view about the negligibility of the factor of inspiration, but on the outright denial of it.

OBJECTIONS TO THE NAME 'BIBLICAL THEOLOGY'

We shall now consider the objections that have been made to the name *Biblical Theology*.

(a) The name is too wide, for, aside from General Revelation, all Theology is supposed to rest on the Bible. It suggests a droll degree of presumption to preempt this predicate 'Biblical' for a single discipline.

(b) If it be answered that 'Biblical' need not be understood of an exceptional claim to Biblical provenience, but only concerns a peculiar method employed, viz., that of reproducing the truth in its original Biblical form without subsequent transformation, then our reply must be that, on the one hand, this of necessity would seem to cast a reflection on other theological disciplines, as though they were guilty of manipulating the truth, and that, on the other hand, Biblical Theology claims too much for itself in professing freedom from transforming treatment of the Scriptural material. The fact is that Biblical Theology just as much as Systematic Theology makes the material undergo a transformation. The sole difference is in the principle on which the transformation is conducted. In the case of Biblical Theology this is historical, in the case of Systematic Theology it is of a logical nature. Each of these two is necessary, and there is no occasion for a sense of superiority in either.

(c) The name is incongruous because ill-adjusted to the rest of our theological nomenclature. If we first distinguish the four main branches of theology by prefixing to the noun 'Theology' an adjective ending in '-al', and then proceed to name a subdivision of one of these four on the same principle, calling it Biblical Theology, this must create confusion, because it suggests five instead of four main departments, and represents as a coordination what in reality is a subordination.

For all these reasons the name 'History of Special Revelation' is greatly to be preferred. It expresses with precision and in an uninvincible manner what our science aims to be. It is difficult, however, to change a name which has the sanction of usage.

THE RELATION OF BIBLICAL THEOLOGY TO OTHER DISCIPLINES

We must now consider the relation of Biblical Theology to other disciplines of the theological family.

(a) Its relation to Sacred (Biblical) History. This is very close. Nor can it fail to be so, since both disciplines include in their consideration material which they have in common with each other. In Sacred History redemption occupies a prominent place, and to deal with redemption without drawing in revelation is not feasible, for, as shown above, certain acts are both redemptive and revelatory at the same time. But the same is true *vice versa*. Revelation is so interwoven with redemption that, unless allowed to consider the latter, it would be suspended in the air. In both cases, therefore, the one must trespass upon the other. Still logically, although not practically, we are able to draw a distinction as follows: in reclaiming the world from its state of sin God has to act along two lines of procedure, corresponding to the two spheres in which the destructive influence of sin asserts itself. These two spheres are the spheres of being and of knowing. To set the world right in the former, the procedure of redemption is employed; to set it right in the sphere of knowing, the procedure of revelation is used. The one yields Biblical History, the other Biblical Theology.

(b) Its relation to Biblical Introduction. As a rule Introduction has to precede. Much depends in certain cases on the date of Biblical documents and the circumstances of their composition for determining the place of the truth conveyed by them in the scheme of revelation. The chronology fixed by Introduction is in such cases regulative for the chronology of Biblical Theology. This, however, does not mean that the tracing of the gradual disclosure of truth cannot reach behind the dating of a document. The Pentateuch records retrospectively what unfolding of revelation there was from the beginning, but it also contains much that belongs to the chapter of revelation to and through Moses. These two elements should be clearly distinguished. So much for the cases where Biblical Theology depends on the antecedent work of Introduction. Occasionally, however, the order between the two is reversed. Where no sufficient external evidence exists for dating a document, Biblical Theology may be able to render assistance through pointing out at which time the revelation content of such a writing would best fit in with the progress of revelation.

(c) Its relation to Systematic Theology. There is no difference in that one would be more closely bound to the Scriptures than the other. In this they are wholly alike. Nor does the difference lie in this, that the one transforms the Biblical material, whereas the other would leave it unmodified. Both equally make the truth deposited in the Bible undergo a transformation: but the difference arises from the fact that

THE OLD TESTAMENT

the principles by which the transformation is effected differ. In Biblical Theology the principle is one of historical, in Systematic Theology it is one of logical construction. Biblical Theology draws a *line* of development. Systematic Theology draws a *circle*. Still, it should be remembered that on the line of historical progress there is at several points already a beginning of correlation among elements of truth in which the beginnings of the systematizing process can be discerned.

THE METHOD OF BIBLICAL THEOLOGY

The method of Biblical Theology is in the main determined by the principle of historic progression. Hence the division of the course of revelation into certain periods. Whatever may be the modern tendency towards eliminating the principle of periodicity from historical science, it remains certain that God in the unfolding of revelation has regularly employed this principle. From this it follows that the periods should not be determined at random, or according to subjective preference, but in strict agreement with the lines of cleavage drawn by revelation itself. The Bible is, as it were, conscious of its own organism; it feels, what we cannot always say of ourselves, its own anatomy. The principle of successive *Berith*-makings (Covenant-makings), as marking the introduction of new periods, plays a large role in this, and should be carefully heeded. Alongside of this periodicity principle, the grouping and correlation of the several elements of truth within the limits of each period has to be attended to. Here again we should not proceed with arbitrary subjectivism. Our dogmatic constructions of truth based on the finished product of revelation, must not be imported into the minds of the original recipients of revelation. The endeavour should be to enter into their outlook and get the perspective of the elements of the truth as presented to them. There is a point in which the historic advance and the concentric grouping of truth are closely connected. Not seldom progress is brought about by some element of truth, which formerly stood in the periphery taking its place in the centre. The main problem will be how to do justice to the individual peculiarities of the agents in revelation. These individual traits subserve the historical plan. Some propose that we discuss each book separately. But this leads to unnecessary repetition, because there is so much that all have in common. A better plan is to apply the collective treatment in the earlier stages of revelation, where the truth is not as yet much differentiated, and then to individualize in the later periods where greater diversity is reached.

PRACTICAL USES OF THE STUDY OF BIBLICAL THEOLOGY

It remains to say something about the practical uses of the study of Biblical Theology. These may be enumerated as follows:

(a) It exhibits the organic growth of the truths of Special Revelation. By doing this it enables one properly to distribute the emphasis among the several aspects of teaching and preaching. A leaf is not of the same importance as a twig, nor a twig as a branch, nor a branch as the trunk of the tree. Further, through exhibiting the organic structure of revelation, Biblical Theology furnishes a special argument from design for the reality of Supernaturalism.

(b) It supplies us with a useful antidote against the teachings of rationalistic criticism. This it does in the following way: The Bible exhibits an organism of its own. This organism, inborn in the Bible itself, the critical hypothesis destroys, and that not only on our view, but as freely acknowledged by the critics themselves, on the ground of its being an artificial organism in later times foisted upon the Bible, and for which a newly discovered better organism should be substituted. Now by making ourselves in the study of Biblical Theology thoroughly conversant with the Biblical consciousness of its own revelation structure, we shall be able to perceive how radically criticism destroys this, and that, so far from being a mere question of dates and composition of books, it involves a choice between two widely divergent, nay, antagonistic conceptions of the Scriptures and of religion. To have correctly diagnosed criticism in its true purpose is to possess the best prophylaxis against it.

(c) Biblical Theology imparts new life and freshness to the truth by showing it to us in its original historic setting. The Bible is not a dogmatic handbook but a historical book full of dramatic interest. Familiarity with the history of revelation will enable us to utilize all this dramatic interest.

(d) Biblical Theology can counteract the anti-doctrinal tendency of the present time. Too much stress proportionately is being laid on the voluntary and emotional sides of religion. Biblical Theology bears witness to the indispensability of the doctrinal groundwork of our religious fabric. It shows what great care God has taken to supply His people with a new world of ideas. In view of this it becomes impious to declare belief to be of subordinate importance.

(e) Biblical Theology relieves to some extent the unfortunate situation that even the fundamental doctrines of the faith should seem to depend mainly on the testimony of isolated proof-texts. There exists a higher ground on which conflicting religious views can measure themselves

THE OLD TESTAMENT

as to their Scriptural legitimacy. In the long run that system will hold the field which can be proven to have grown organically from the main stem of revelation, and to be interwoven with the very fibre of Biblical religion.

(f) The highest practical usefulness of the study of Biblical Theology is one belonging to it altogether apart from its usefulness for the student. Like unto all theology it finds its supreme end in the glory of God. This end it attains through giving us a new view of God as displaying a particular aspect of His nature in connection with His historical approach to and intercourse with man. The beautiful statement of Thomas Aquinas is here in point: (*Theologia*) *a Deo docetur, Deum docet, ad Deum ducit.*

TWO: THE MAPPING OUT OF THE FIELD OF REVELATION

In the mapping out of the field of revelation, the main distinction to be drawn is that between General and Special Revelation. General Revelation is also called Natural Revelation, and Special Revelation called Supernatural Revelation. These names explain themselves. General Revelation comes to all for the reason that it comes through nature. Special Revelation comes to a limited circle for the reason that it springs from the sphere of the supernatural through a specific self-disclosure of God. It seems best to define the relation between the two separately (*a*) as that relation existed prior to, and apart from sin, and (*b*) as it exists in a modified form under the regime of sin.

First, then, we consider the relation apart from sin. Nature from which natural revelation springs consists of two sources, nature within and nature without.

God reveals Himself to the inner sense of man through the religious consciousness and the moral conscience. He also reveals Himself in the works of nature without. It is obvious that the latter must rest on the former. If there were no antecedent innate knowledge of God, no amount of nature-observation would lead to an adequate conception of God. The presupposition of all knowledge of God is man's having been created in the image of God. On the other hand, the knowledge from inner nature is not complete in itself apart from the filling-out it receives through the discovery of God in nature. Thus first does it receive its richness and concreteness. The Bible recognizes these facts. It never assumes, even in regard to the heathen, that man must be taught the existence of God or a god. When it exhorts to know God, this simply means to become acquainted with Him through knowing what He is.

Now to this antecedent knowledge from the two sources of nature there can be added a supernatural self-disclosure. This is something we usually associate with redemption, but this is not exclusively so.

We here consider it apart from man's need of redemption. The main thing to notice is that it adds a content of knowledge which nature as such could not produce. This is the very reason why it is called supernatural.

Next we take account of the manner in which the relations described are affected and modified through the entrance of sin. It is a mistake to think that the sole result of the fall was the introduction of a supernatural revelation. As we shall presently see, supernaturalism in revelation, though its need was greatly accentuated by sin, did not first originate from the fact of sin. But, sin entering in, the structure of natural revelation itself is disturbed and put in need of correction. Nature from within no longer functions normally in sinful man. Both his religious and his moral sense of God may have become blunted and blinded. And the finding of God in nature without has also been made subject to error and distortion. The innate sense of God as lying closer to the inner being of man is more seriously affected by this than his outward observation of the writing of God in nature. Hence the exhortation addressed in Scripture to the heathen, that they shall correct their foolish pre-conceptions of the nature of God through attention to the works of creation, e.g., Isa. 40.25, 26; Psa. 94.5-11. The main correction, however, of the natural knowledge of God cannot come from within nature itself: it must be supplied by the supernaturalism of redemption. Redemption in a supernatural way restores to fallen man also the normalcy and efficiency of his cognition of God in the sphere of nature. How true this is may be seen from the fact that the best system of Theism, i.e. Natural Theology, has not been produced from the sphere of heathenism, however splendidly endowed in the cultivation of philosophy, but from Christian sources. When we produce a system of natural knowledge of God, and in doing so profess to rely exclusively on the resources of reason, this is, of course, formally correct, but it remains an open question whether we should have been able to produce such a thing with the degree of excellence we succeed in imparting to it, had not our minds in the natural exercise of their faculties stood under the correcting influence of redemptive grace.

The most important function of Special Revelation, however, under the regime of sin, does not lie in the correction and renewal of the faculty of perception of natural verities; it consists in the introduction of an altogether new world of truth, that relating to the redemption of man. The newness here, as compared with the supernatural revelation in the state of rectitude, relates to both the form and

content, and, further, also affects the manner in which the supernatural approach of God to man is received. As to the form of direct intercourse, this is objectified. Previously there was the most direct spiritual fellowship; the stream of revelation flowed uninterruptedly, and there was no need of storing up the waters in any reservoir wherefrom to draw subsequently. Under the rule of redemption an external embodiment is created to which the divine intercourse with man attaches itself. The objective products of redemption in facts and institutions are a reminder of this changed manner of divine approach.

The same change is observable in the perpetuation of the divine manifestations received in the past. Where an ever-flowing stream of revelation was always accessible, there existed no need of providing for the future remembrance of past intercourse. But a necessity is created for this in the looser, more easily interrupted, only in principle restored, fellowship under the present enjoyment of redemption. Hence the essential content of the new redemptive revelation is given a permanent form, first through tradition, then through its inscription in sacred, inspired writings. Neither for this objectivity of the content, nor for this stability of the form will there be any further need in the perfected state of things at the end. As to the newness in the content, this is the direct result of the new reaction of the divine attitude upon the new factor of sin. A different aspect of the divine nature is turned towards man. Many new things belong to this, but they can all be subsumed under the categories of justice and grace as the two poles around which henceforth the redeeming self-disclosure of God revolves. All the new processes and experiences which the redeemed man undergoes can be brought back to the one or the other of these two.

It should be emphasized, however, that in this world of redemption the substance of things is absolutely new. It is inaccessible to the natural mind as such. To be sure, God does not create the world of redemption without regard to the antecedent world of nature, nor does He begin His redemptive revelation *de novo*, as though nothing had preceded. The knowledge from nature, even though corrupted, is presupposed. Only, this does not involve that there is a natural transition from the state of nature to the state of redemption. Nature cannot unlock the door of redemption.

Finally, sin has fundamentally changed the mood of man in which he receives the supernatural approach of God. In the state of rectitude this was not a mood of fear, but of trustful friendship; in the state of sin the approach of the supernatural causes dread, something well to

THE OLD TESTAMENT

be distinguished from the proper reverence with which man at all times ought to meet God, and which is inseparable from the act of religion as such.

PRE-REDEMPTIVE AND REDEMPTIVE SPECIAL REVELATION

In the foregoing it has been assumed for the sake of distinction that before the fall there existed a form of Special Revelation, transcending the natural knowledge of God. This is the point at which to explain its possibility, its necessity and its concrete purpose. Its subject matter will be afterwards discussed. The possibility and necessity flow from the nature of religion as such. Religion means personal intercourse between God and man. Hence it might be *a priori* expected that God would not be satisfied, and would not allow man to be satisfied with an acquaintance based on indirection, but would crown the process of religion with the establishment of face-to-face communion, as friend holds fellowship with friend.

The same conclusion may be drawn from the concrete purpose God had in view with this first form of supernaturalism. This is connected with the state in which man was created and the advance from this to a still higher estate. Man had been created perfectly good in a moral sense. And yet there was a sense in which he could be raised to a still higher level of perfection. On the surface this seems to involve a contradiction. It will be removed by closely marking the aspect in regard to which the advance was contemplated. The advance was meant to be from unconfirmed to confirmed goodness and blessedness; to the confirmed state in which these possessions could no longer be lost, a state in which man could no longer sin, and hence could no longer become subject to the consequences of sin. Man's original state was a state of indefinite probation: he remained in possession of what he had, so long as he did not commit sin, but it was not a state in which the continuance of his religious and moral status could be guaranteed him. In order to assure this for him, he had to be subjected to an intensified, concentrated probation, in which, if he remained standing, the status of probation would be forever left behind. The provision of this new, higher prospect for man was an act of condescension and high favour. God was in no wise bound on the principle of justice to extend it to man, and we mean this denial not merely in the general sense in which we affirm that God owes nothing to man, but in the very specific sense that there was nothing in the nature of man nor of his creation, which by manner of implication could entitle man to such a favour from God. Had the original state of man involved

any title to it, then the knowledge concerning it would probably have formed part of man's original endowment. But this not being so, no innate knowledge of its possibility could be expected. Yet the nature of an intensified and concentrated probation required that man should be made acquainted with the fact of the probation and its terms. Hence the necessity of a Special Revelation providing for this.

THE DIVISION OF REDEMPTIVE SPECIAL REVELATION
'BERITH'

This is what we call in dogmatic language 'The Covenant of Grace', whilst the pre-redemptive Special Revelation is commonly given the name of 'The Covenant of Works'. Care should be taken not to identify the latter with 'The Old Testament'. The Old Testament belongs after the fall. It forms the first of the two divisions of the covenant of grace. The Old Testament is that period of the covenant of grace which precedes the coming of the Messiah, the New Testament that period of the covenant of grace which has followed His appearance and under which we still live. It will be observed that the phraseology 'Old Testament' and 'New Testament', 'Old Covenant' and 'New Covenant', is often interchangeably used. This creates confusion and misunderstanding. For this reason, as well as for the sake of the subject itself, the origin and meaning of these phrases require careful attention. The Hebrew word rendered by the above nouns is *berith*. The Greek word is *diatheke*. As to *berith*, this in the Bible never means 'testament'. In fact the idea of 'testament' was entirely unknown to the ancient Hebrews. They knew nothing of a 'last will'. From this, however, it does not follow that the rendering 'covenant' would be indicated in all places where *berith* occurs. *Berith* may be employed where as a matter of fact a covenant in the sense of agreement is referred to, which is more than can be said for 'testament'. Only the reason for its occurrence in such places is never that it relates to an agreement. That is purely incidental. The real reason lies in the fact that the agreement spoken of is concluded by some special religious sanction. This, and not its being an agreement, makes it a *berith*. And similarly in other connections. A purely one-sided promise or ordinance or law becomes a *berith*, not by reason of its inherent conceptual or etymological meaning, but by reason of the religious sanction added. From this it will be understood that the outstanding characteristic of a *berith* is its unalterableness, its certainty, its eternal validity, and not (what would in certain cases be the very opposite) its voluntary, changeable nature. The *berith* as such is a 'faithful

THE OLD TESTAMENT

berith', something not subject to abrogation. It can be broken by man, and the breach is a most serious sin, but this again is not because it is the breaking of an agreement in general; the seriousness results from the violation of the sacred ceremony by which its sanction was effected.

DIATHEKE

With the Greek word *diatheke* the matter stands somewhat differently. The rendering of *berith* by this word amounted to a translation-compromise. *Diatheke* at the time when the Septuagint and the New Testament came into existence not only could mean 'testament', but such was the current meaning of the word. It was, to be sure, not its original meaning. The original sense was quite generic, viz., 'a disposition that some one made for himself' (from the middle form of the verb *diatithemi*). The legal usage, however, referring it to a testamentary disposition had monopolized the word. Hence the difficulty with which the Greek translators found themselves confronted. In making their choice of a suitable rendering for *berith* they took a word to whose meaning of 'last will' nothing in the Hebrew Bible corresponded. And not only this, the word chosen seemed to connote the very opposite of what the Hebrew *berith* stood for. If the latter expressed unchangeableness, 'testament' seemed to call up the idea of changeableness at least till the moment when the testator dies. Moreover the very term 'testament' suggests the death of the one who makes it, and this must have appeared to render it unsuitable for designating something into which God enters. When notwithstanding all these difficulties, they chose *diatheke*, weighty reasons must have determined them.

The principal reason seems to have been that there was a far more fundamental objection to the one other word that might have been adopted, the word *syntheke*. This word suggests strongly by its very form the idea of coequality and partnership between the persons entering into the arrangement, a stress quite in harmony to the genius of Hellenic religiosity. The translators felt this to be out of keeping with the tenor of the Old Testament Scriptures, in which the supremacy and monergism of God are emphasized. So, in order to avoid the misunderstanding, they preferred to put up with the inconveniences attaching to the word *diatheke*. On closer reflection these were not insurmountable. Though *diatheke* meant currently 'last will', the original generic sense of 'disposition for oneself' cannot have been entirely forgotten even in their day. The etymology of the word was too perspicuous for that. They felt that *diatheke* suggested a

sovereign disposition, not always of the nature of a last will, and restored this ancient signification. And in this way they not merely overcame an obstacle; they also registered the positive gain of being able to reproduce a most important element in the Old Testament consciousness of religion.

The difficulty arising from the fact of God's not being subject to death is a difficulty only from the standpoint of Roman law. The Roman-law testament actually is not in force except where death has taken place, cp. Heb. 9.16. There existed, however, in those times a different type of testament, that of Graeco-Syrian law. This kind of testament had no necessary association with the death of the testator. It could be made and solemnly sanctioned during his life-time, and in certain of its provisions go into immediate effect. The other objection arising from the mutability of the Roman-law testament fell away likewise under this other conception. For not only was changeability foreign to it; on the contrary, the opposite idea of unchangeableness entered in strongly [cp. Gal. 3.15].

From the Septuagint the word *diatheke* passed over into the New Testament. The question has long been under debate whether here it should be rendered by 'covenant' or by 'testament'. The A.V. in as many as 14 instances translates *diatheke* by 'testament', in all other cases by 'covenant'. The R.V. has greatly modified this tradition. In every passage, except Heb. 9.16, where the statement allows no escape from 'testament', it has substituted 'covenant' for the 'testament' of the A.V. In all probability an exception ought likewise to have been made for Gal. 3.15, where, if not the explicit statement of Paul, at least the connection leads us to think of 'testament'. The Revisers were obviously guided in this matter by the desire to assimilate as much as possible the modes of statement in the Old Testament to those in the New Testament. This was in itself a laudable desire, but it seems that in certain cases it prevented due consideration of the exegetical requirements. Since the R.V. was made, the tendency of scholarship has on the whole favoured 'testament' rather than 'covenant'. There are passages still under debate, for instance those recording the institution of the Lord's supper, where a further return to 'testament' may seem advisable.

The distinction between a 'former *berith*' and a 'new *berith*', or an 'old *diatheke*' and a 'new *diatheke*', is found in the Bible in the following passages: Jer. 31.31; the words of institution of the supper; and a number of times, with varying phraseology, in the Epistle to the Hebrews. It is, of course, in none of these passages a *literature* distinc-

tion, corresponding to our traditional distinction between the two parts of the canon. It could not be this, because when these passages were written no second division of the canon was yet in existence.

Sometimes 2 Cor. 3.14 is quoted as a Biblical instance of the canonical distinction, because Paul speaks of the 'reading' of the old *diatheke*. It is assumed that to the reading of the old *diatheke* a reading of a new *diatheke* must correspond. In that case we should have here a prophetic foreknowledge on Paul's part of the approaching formation of a second, a new, canon. This, while not impossible, is not likely. Vs. 15 shows why Paul speaks of a 'reading' of the old *diatheke*. It is the reading of Moses, i.e., the reading of the law. Since the law is frequently called a *berith*, a *diatheke*, Paul could call its reading a reading of the old *diatheke*, and yet not suggest that a second canon was in the making. There was an old *berith*, which existed in written form, there was likewise a new *berith*, but the latter is not yet represented as likewise destined to receive written form.

The comparison is between two equally completed things, not between two things of which the one possesses completeness, the other still awaits it. The whole distinction is between two *dispensations*, two arrangements, of which the one is far superior to the other. The designation of the two canons may later have support in this Pauline passage; nevertheless it rests on an inexact interpretation. At first, even long after Paul, other terms seem to have been used for distinguishing the two parts of Scripture. Tertullian still speaks of the Old and New 'Instrument'.

Finally, it should be noted that, when the Bible speaks of a two-fold *berith*, a twofold *diatheke*, it means by the 'old' covenant not the entire period from the fall of man to Christ, but the period from Moses to Christ. Nevertheless, what precedes the Mosaic period in the description of Genesis may be appropriately subsumed under the 'Old Covenant'. It is meant in the Pentateuch as a preface to the account of the Mosaic institutions, and the preface belongs within the cover of the book. Likewise the 'New Testament' in the soteric, periodical sense of the word goes beyond the time of the life of Christ and the Apostolic age; it not only includes us, but extends into and covers the eschatological, eternal state.

THREE:

THE CONTENT OF PRE-REDEPTIVE SPECIAL REVELATION

We understand by this, as already explained, the disclosure of the principles of a process of probation by which man was to be raised to a state of religion and goodness, higher, by reason of its unchangeableness, than what he already possessed. Everything connected with this disclosure is exceedingly primitive. It is largely symbolical, that is, not expressed in words so much as in tokens; and these tokens partake of the general character of Biblical symbolism in that, besides being means of instruction, they are also typical, that is, sacramental, prefigurations conveying assurance concerning the future realization of the things symbolized. The symbolism, however, does not lie in the account as a literary form, which would involve denial of the historical reality of the transactions. It is a real symbolism embodied in the actual things. The modern mythological interpretation can at this point render us this service, that it affirms the intention of the mythopoeic mind to relate in the myths actual occurrences.

FOUR PRINCIPLES

Four great principles are contained in this primeval revelation, each of them expressed by its own appropriate symbol. These were:

- [1] the principle of life in its highest potency sacramentally symbolized by the tree of life;
- [2] the principle of probation symbolized in the same manner by the tree of knowledge of good and evil;
- [3] the principle of temptation and sin symbolized in the serpent;
- [4] the principle of death reflected in the dissolution of the body.

[1] *The principle of life and what is taught concerning it by the tree of life*
The tree of life stands in the midst of the garden. The garden is 'the garden of God', not in the first instance an abode for man as such, but specifically a place of reception of man into fellowship with God in God's own dwelling-place. The God-centred character of religion

THE OLD TESTAMENT

finds its first, but already fundamental, expression in this arrangement. [cp. *Gen.* 2.8; *Ezek.* 28.13, 16]. The correctness of this is verified by the recurrence of this piece of symbolism in eschatological form at the end of history, where there can be no doubt concerning the principle of paradise being the habitation of God, where He dwells in order to make man dwell with Himself. But this symbolism of paradise with its God-centred implication appears in still another form in the Prophets and the Psalter, viz., connected with the streams so significantly mentioned in Genesis as belonging to the garden of God, here also in part with eschatological reference. The prophets predict that in the future age waters will flow from Jehovah's holy mountain. These are further described as waters of life, just as the tree is a tree of life. But here also the waters flow from near the dwelling-place of Jehovah (His mountain), even as the tree stood in the midst of the garden. Still in the Apocalypse we read of the streams of the water of life proceeding from the throne of God in the new Jerusalem, with trees of life on either side. It will be observed that here the two symbolisms of the tree of life and the waters of life are interwoven. For the Psalter, cp. *Psa.* 65.9; 46.4, 5. The truth is thus clearly set forth that life comes from God, that for man it consists in nearness to God, that it is the central concern of God's fellowship with man to impart this. In the sequel the same principle appears in negative form through the expulsion of sinful man from paradise.

From the significance of the tree in general its specific use may be distinguished. It appears from *Gen.* 3.22, that man before his fall had not eaten of it, while yet nothing is recorded concerning any prohibition which seems to point to the understanding that the use of the tree was reserved for the future, quite in agreement with the eschatological significance attributed to it later. The tree was associated with the higher, the unchangeable, the eternal life to be secured by obedience throughout his probation. Anticipating the result by a present enjoyment of the fruit would have been out of keeping with its sacramental character. After man should have been made sure of the attainment of the highest life, the tree would appropriately have been the sacramental means for communicating the highest life. After the fall God attributes to man the inclination of snatching the fruit against the divine purpose. But this very desire implies the understanding that it somehow was the specific life-sacrament for the time after the probation. According to *Rev.* 2.7 it is to 'him that overcometh' that God promises to give of the tree of life in the midst of his paradise. The effort to obtain the fruit after the fall would have meant a desperate

attempt to steal the fruit where the title to it had been lost [cp. Gen. 3.22].

[2] *The second principle: Probation and what is taught concerning it in the symbolism of the tree of knowledge of good and evil*

This tree also stands in the midst of the garden [cp. Gen. 2.9 and 3.3]. There is more mystery and hence far greater difference of opinion concerning this tree than there is about the tree of life.

(a) First there is the mythical interpretation. It takes the tree as a piece of pagan mythology introduced into the Biblical record. The idea is a thoroughly pagan one, that of the jealousy of the gods lest man should obtain something felt by them to be a private divine privilege. This result is meant to be inherently connected with the eating of the fruit: the prohibition of eating aims at the withholding from man of what is called the 'knowledge of good and evil'. As to what this knowledge of good and evil was supposed by the myth to consist in, is not interpreted by all in the same way. According to one view it was understood by the myth as the rise of man from the purely animal state in which he existed to the plane of reasonable, human existence. The gods wanted him to remain an animal, and therefore forbade the eating of the reason-imparting fruit.

According to another view the myth puts the original state of man higher; he was endowed with reason from the first. Only, he existed in a state of barbarism below all culture. The gods wanted to keep this rise to civilization from man, considering it a privilege of their own. According to these forms, then, of the mythical interpretation, the motive ascribed to the gods by the framer of the myth was the same; the difference comes in through the varying interpretation of what the 'knowledge of good and evil' was conceived to be.

An objection that may be urged against this common feature of the two forms, viz., the ascription of jealousy to the Deity, is, so far as the Biblical account is concerned, as follows: God is represented as having Himself planted the tree in the garden. This would amount to a solicitation of the very same evil result that His jealousy sought to prevent. Moreover the actual result ill accords with the situation expected in this pagan version of the narrative. After man has actually eaten of the tree, God does not act as though He had anything to fear from the encroachment of man. He retains His absolute superiority. As a poor, helpless sinner, man stands before God.

The objections to the second form of the mythical version of the account according to which the rise to a state of 'culture' was the prohibited thing are several. First of all, this view rests on the sub-

ethical, physical interpretation of the phrase 'to know good and evil'. It must on this view bear the sense of knowing what is beneficial and what is harmful in the physical sphere, otherwise the obtaining of the knowledge of good and evil could not stand for progress in civilization. Now our contention is not that the phrase in question cannot and never does have the physically oriented significance. We even grant that such seems to have been an ancient application of the phrase before it was specifically applied to the ethical sphere. Not to know good and evil describes the immaturity of childhood, and also the post-maturity, the dotage of old age, when people are said to have become childish [cp. *Deut.* 1.39; *Isa.* 7.15, 16]. But our contention is this, that the phrase does have also the specific sense of maturity in the ethical sphere [cp. 2 *Sam.* 14.17, 20]; and further that the import of the narrative here requires us to take it in that sense. The concrete symptom from which in the sequel the knowledge of good and evil is illustrated is the sense of nakedness, and nakedness not as an injurious, uncomfortable state, but as something arousing sensations of an ethical kind.

A further objection against this second form of the mythical version may be drawn from the prominent part woman is represented to have played in the transaction. Would an Oriental myth-maker have given this role to a member of what is in the Orient usually regarded as the inferior sex? Could woman be regarded in such a circle as more efficient than man in the advancement of civilization? Agriculture, one of the most powerful factors in the progress of civilization, is represented in the account as a punishment, not as something desirable from man's point of view, withheld from him by the gods. In order to escape from these difficulties, of which the force cannot be denied, some writers propose to cut up the narrative into two sections, finding in the one the representation of divine jealousy roused by the fear of man's advance in culture, and in the other an account of man's fall into sin as the traditional interpretation assumes. Into this critical phase of the question we cannot enter here.

Dismissing, then, this mythological version of the account, we proceed to examine:

(b) a second interpretation of the tree, and of the phrase 'knowledge of good and evil' connected with it. This view attaches itself to the linguistic observation that in Hebrew 'to know' can signify 'to choose'. The name would then really mean 'the tree of the choice of good and evil'. Some keep this in the general form of 'the tree by means of which man was to make his choice of good or evil'. This would be

equivalent to 'the probation-tree'. Others give a peculiar sinister sense to the word 'knowing', making it to mean 'the independent autonomous choice over against God's direction of what was good and what was evil for man'. This makes the name of the tree one of evil omen anticipating the disastrous result. In itself this would not be impossible, although it could hardly be considered a likely view. An objection, however, lies in this, that an arbitrary twist is thus given to the verb 'to know', when it is made to mean not 'to choose' in general, with a neutral connotation, but particularly 'to choose presumptuously', for which no evidence can be quoted. The most serious obstacle to the whole view, in both of its forms, arises from this, that it takes 'knowledge' as descriptive of an act, the act of 'choosing', not as descriptive of a state, the acquaintance with good and evil. Now in the sequel the symbol of the 'knowledge of good and evil' is found in the consciousness of nakedness, and nakedness stands not for an act but for a condition.

Thus we are led to the view most commonly held in the past:

(c) the tree is called the tree of 'knowledge of good and evil', because it is the God-appointed instrument to lead man through probation to that state of religious and moral maturity wherewith his highest blessedness is connected. The physical meaning of the phrase has been transferred to the spiritual sphere. On this view the name does not prejudice the result. To attain to a knowledge of good and evil is not necessarily an undesirable and culpable thing. It could happen in a good way, in case man stood in probation, no less than in an evil way, in case man fell. The name is neutral as to its import. That this is so frequently overlooked is due to the prohibitive form which the probation-test assumed. Because man was forbidden to eat of the tree associated with the knowledge of good and evil, it has been rashly assumed that the knowledge of good and evil was forbidden him. Obviously there is in this a confusion of thought. The prohibitive form of the test has quite a different cause, as will be presently shown.

If now we enquire how the maturity designated as 'knowledge of good and evil' was to be attained, either in a desirable or in an undesirable sense, regard must be had first of all to the exact form of the phrase in Hebrew. The phrase is not 'knowledge of the good and the evil'. It reads, literally translated: 'knowledge of good-and-evil', i.e., of good and evil as correlated, mutually conditioned conceptions. Man was to attain something he had not attained before. He was to learn the good in its clear opposition to the evil, and the evil in its clear opposition to the good. Thus it will become plain how he could

attain to this by taking either fork of the probation-choice. Had he stood, then the contrast between good and evil would have been vividly present to his mind: the good and evil he would have known from the new illumination his mind would have received through the crisis of temptation in which the two collided. On the other hand, had he fallen, then the contrast of evil with good would have even more vividly impressed itself upon him, because the remembered experience of choosing the evil and the continuous experience of doing the evil, in contrast with his memory of the good, would have shown most sharply how different the two are. The perception of difference in which the maturity consisted related to the one pivotal point, whether man would make his choice for the sake of God and of God alone.

Of course, it is possible to go back of the *mere command* of God for finding the bottom-reason for why a thing is good and evil. This bottom-reason lies in the *nature* of God regulating His command. But in the present instance it was not a question of the ultimate theology or metaphysic of evil and good. For the simple practical purpose of this first fundamental lesson it was necessary only to stake everything upon the unreasoned will of God. And there was a still further reason why this should be done. If the inherent nature of good and evil had been drawn into the scope of the test, then it would have resulted in a choice from instinct alone rather than in a choice of a deliberate character. But it was precisely the purpose of the probation to raise man for a moment from the influence of his own ethical inclination to the point of a choosing for the sake of personal attachment to God alone.

Too much is often made of the purely autonomous movement of ethics, eliminating as unworthy the unexplained, unmotivated demand of God. To do the good and reject the evil from a reasoned insight into their respective natures is a noble thing, but it is a still nobler thing to do so out of regard for the nature of God, and the noblest thing of all is the ethical strength, which, when required, will act from personal attachment to God, without for the moment enquiring into these more abstruse reasons. The pure delight in obedience adds to the ethical value of a choice. In the present case it was made the sole determinant factor, and in order to do this an arbitrary prohibition was issued, such as from the very fact of its arbitrariness excluded every force of instinct from shaping the outcome.

From the true conception of the purpose of the tree we must distinguish the interpretation placed upon it by the tempter according to Gen. 3.5. This carries a twofold implication: first that the tree has

The Content of Pre-redemptive Special Revelation

in itself, magically, the power of conferring knowledge of good and evil. This lowers the plane of the whole transaction from the religious and moral to the pagan-magical sphere. And secondly, Satan explains the prohibition from the motive of envy. This also we have already found to be a piece of pagan-mythological interpretation. Again, the divine statement in Gen. 3.22 alludes to this deceitful representation of the tempter. It is ironical.

[3] *The principle of temptation and sin symbolized in the serpent*

There is a difference between probation and temptation, and yet they appear here as two aspects of the same transaction. The close interweaving reflects itself even in the use of identical words for trying and tempting both in Hebrew and Greek. We may say that what was from the point of view of God a probation was made use of by the evil power to inject into it the element of temptation. The difference consists in this, that behind the probation lies a good, behind the temptation an evil, design, but both work with the same material. It is, of course, necessary to keep God free from tempting anybody with evil intent [cp. *James* 1.13]. But it is also important to insist upon the probation as an integral part of the divine plan with regard to humanity. Even if no tempter had existed, or projected himself into the crisis, even then some form for subjecting man to probation would have been found, though it is impossible for us to surmise what form.

The problem arises, how we must conceive of the role played by the serpent in the fall, and of its traditional connection with an evil spirit. There are varying views in regard to this. Quite in keeping with the modern aversion to much Biblical realism in general, many are inclined to understand the entire account as a piece of allegorizing, which in the intent of the writer was not meant to describe a single occurrence but the ever-repeated efforts of sin to find an entrance into the human heart. The serpent then becomes a symbol or allegory with the rest. This view is contrary to the plain intent of the narrative; in Gen. 3.1, the serpent is compared with the other beasts God had made; if the others were real, then so was the serpent. In vs. 14 the punishment is expressed in terms requiring a real serpent.

Others have gone to the opposite extreme of asserting that there was nothing but a serpent. The terms used in the passages just quoted would certainly fit better into this than into the allegorical view. But it ill accords with the Scriptural teaching on the animal world in general to conceive of a simple serpent as speaking. The Bible always upholds against all pantheizing confusion the distinction between man who

speaks and the animals who do not speak, Balaam's ass forming the only exception on record.

It therefore becomes necessary to adopt the old, traditional view according to which there were present both a real serpent and a demonic power, who made use of the former to carry out his plan. So far from there being anything impossible in this, it finds a close analogy in the demoniacs of the Gospels, through whose mouths demons speak. Recent archaeological scholarship has at this point vindicated the correctness of the old exegesis, for in the Babylonian representations there appears often behind the figure of the serpent the figure of a demon. Besides, there is ample Biblical testimony for the presence of an evil spirit in the temptation.

True, the Old Testament throws no light upon the subject. This is for the twofold reason that, on the one hand, the fall is seldom referred to, and, on the other hand, the whole subject of evil spirits and of 'the Satan', 'the adversary' is long kept in darkness. For reference to the fall cp. Job 31.33; Hos. 6.7; Ezek. 28.1-19. For reference or allusion to the 'Evil Spirit' cp. 'the Satan' in Job; in 1 Chron. 21.1. Evil spirits in general appear, 1 Sam. 16; 1 Ki. 22. In none of these passages, however, is the first entrance of evil into the world of men brought into connection with Satan. For the first time, so far as we know, this is done in the Apocryphal book of 'Wisdom', where in 11.24, it is stated: 'By the envy of Satan death entered into the world'. In later Jewish writings also Sammael (The Angel of Death) is called 'The Old Serpent'. In the New Testament we have the words of Jesus to the Jews, John 8.44, where in the reference to the Devil he is represented as both a liar and a murderer from the beginning. This must refer to the temptation. 'The father thereof', i.e., of lying, means the primordial liar. Further, 'your father the devil' alludes to the phrase 'your seed' addressed to the serpent [*Gen.* 3.15]. So does the phrase 'children of the Wicked One' in Matt. 13.38. Paul in Rom. 16.20 understands of Satan what in the curse is made the serpent's punishment, viz., his being bruised under foot. 1 John 3.8 says that the Devil sins from the beginning. In Rev. 12.9, Satan is called 'the great dragon, the old serpent'.

It is said of the serpent that it was more subtle than any other beast of the field. This finds in its subtlety the reason of its fitness for serving as the demon's instrument. If Satan had appeared bluntly and boldly, the temptation would have been much less alluring. The tempter addresses himself to the woman, probably not because she is more open to temptation and prone to sin, for that is hardly the conception

of the Old Testament elsewhere. The reason may have lain in this, that the woman had not personally received the prohibition from God, as Adam had; cp. 2.16, 17.

The process of the temptation divides itself in two stages. In both the central purpose of the tempter is the injection of doubt into the woman's mind. But the doubt suggested in the first stage is of an apparently innocent kind, a doubt as to the question of fact. Yet there is already mixed with this a carefully disguised allusion to the far more serious kind of doubt consisting in the distrust of God's word recognized as such. In the second stage of the temptation this serious form of doubt casts off all disguise, because in the meanwhile the woman has in principle given entrance to the thought so skilfully put before her at the beginning. In the first stage it is at the start a mere question of fact: 'Yea, has God said?' Has the prohibition been actually issued? Still even here the suggestion of a more serious aspect of the matter lies in the words 'of every tree in the garden'. In this phrasing the Serpent hints at the possibility that, should such a prohibition have been actually issued, God has made it far too sweeping through excluding man from the use of the fruit of every tree.

Now the woman reacts to this in two distinct ways. First, as to the question of bare facts, she repudiates the intimation of no prohibition having been actually issued: 'God had said'. At the same time she rejects the suggestion, as though God had ignominiously extended the scope of the prohibition to all the trees: 'We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden.' And yet in the more or less indignant form of this denial there already shines through that the woman had begun to entertain the possibility of God's restricting her too severely. And by entertaining this, even for a moment, she had already begun to separate in principle between the rights of God and her own rights. In doing this she has admitted the seed of the act of sinning into her heart. And still further, in this direction goes the inexact form of her quoting the words of God: 'ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it.' In this unwarranted introduction of the denial of the privilege of 'touching' the woman betrays a feeling, as though after all God's measures may have been too harsh.

Satan does not fail to follow up the advantage thus gained. Entering boldly upon the second stage of the temptation he now seeks to awaken in the woman doubt in the pronounced form of distrust of the word of God recognized as such: 'Ye shall not surely die'. In the Hebrew of these words the placing of the negative at the opening of the sentence should be observed. Where for emphasis' sake the infinitive

and a finite verb are put together, and to this a negation is added, the negation usually stands between. Had this been followed here, the correct rendering would have been: 'Ye shall surely not die'. This would merely have cast doubt on the fulfilment of the threat. On the other hand the unusual construction followed makes it to mean: 'It is not so (what God has said), this: ye shall surely die'. This is intended to give the lie to God's utterance in the most pointed manner. And to the temptation to charge God with lying the reasons for the likelihood of His lying is added, viz., God is one whose motives make His word unreliable. He lies from selfishness; 'For God does know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as God, knowing good and evil'.

Thus prepared, the woman needs only the inducement of the delicious appearance of the fruit, apparently confirming the beneficial effect ascribed to its eating, for committing the overt act of sin. It is not, however, the mere sensual appetite that determines her choice, for her motive was complex; 'She saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise'. In part at least, the pivotal motive of the act was identical with the pivotal motive that gave strength to the temptation. It has been strikingly observed that the woman in yielding to this thought virtually put the tempter in the place of God. It was God who had beneficent purposes for man, the serpent had malicious designs. The woman acts on the supposition that God's intent is unfriendly, whilst Satan is animated with the desire to promote her well-being.

[4] *The principle of death symbolized by the dissolution of the body*

According to Gen. 2.17, God said: 'Of the tree of knowledge of good and evil thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die' [cp. 3.3]. On the basis of these words the belief of all ages has been that death is the penalty of sin, that the race became first subject to death through the commission of the primordial sin. At present many writers take exception to this, largely on scientific grounds. With these as such we have here nothing to do. But, as is frequently the case, strenuous attempts are made to give such a turn to the Biblical phrases as to render them compatible with what science is believed to require, and not only this, some proceed to the assertion that the Scriptural statements compel acceptance of the findings of science.

Attempts of this kind make for poor and forced exegesis. Scripture has a right to be exegeted independently from within; and only after its natural meaning has been thus ascertained, can we properly raise