

A Systematic Theology for the 21st Century

Volume 01 Prolegomena

Dr. Edward G. Rice

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Preface

Greetings in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

As a USAF retired systems engineer turned Baptist Preacher of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, and armed with a staunch belief in the preserved accuracy of the inspired Scriptures, I praise the Lord that he has provided me the unique opportunity to assemble “A Systematic Theology for the 21st Century.”



As a systems engineer for thirty years (since 1972), I focused on systems analysis. Systematic theology has intrigued me ever since my first Bible institute course in 1975. I have amassed multiple systematic theology books and never found one that is wholly Biblical. In 2013 my seminary work at Louisiana Baptist Theological Seminary, under Dr. Steven Pettey, assigned me to read and analyze six volumes of “Systematic Theology” by Lewis Sperry Chafer, the founder and previous president of Dallas Theological Seminary. Initial critique of this neo-evangelical's voluminous, wordy, often unorganized work, answered the question, “Is there not a cause?” A Systematic Theology for the 21st Century is indeed a valid need. It cried out to be written and it was a work that I was privileged to endeavor.

God says he built man with an inner knowledge of the Creator's eternal power and Godhead. Further, God reveals from heaven, to every man, his wrath against all ungodliness. This true Light “*lighteth every man that cometh into the world.*” The Bible says the righteous God, The LORD of hosts, tries the reins and the heart of every man. The prophet Jeremiah writes of God, “*I the LORD search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings.*” The psalmist says, “*my reins also instruct me in the night seasons.*” With his tugs on the reins of your heart, you have come far in your studies, be sure that you have come to a knowledge and submissive acceptance of God's only begotten Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. The beloved Apostle John wrote, “*And many*

other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.”

Every Bible student is encouraged to follow through a list of Bible verses called by some the Romans road to heaven. The believing Bible student is encouraged to memorize them. That quintessential list of verses is John 3:16-19, 36, 5:24, Romans 3:10, 23, 5:8, 12, 18-19, 6:23, and 10:9-13. That last reference is God's formal acceptance policy for your receiving his free gift of salvation and eternal life. Got life? The beloved Apostle John writes, *“He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.”* Selah! It is Hebrew for “go-figure”, and it intends that you pause, meditate, and consider what you just read.

The Prolegomena is an expanded introduction to the task of assembling a systematic theology. It details why such a task must needs be undertaken and the “system” that is to make up a systematic theology.

A Bibliology for such a work is necessarily thorough. When one understands Gaussen's thorough explanation of inspiration, it is easy to understand the gross errors of Bible critics and Bible correctors who suppose that only the original manuscripts, written by the pen's of the original authors, were inspired. Chafer states his objection to the doctrine of inspiration succinctly, “The claim for verbal, plenary inspiration is made only for the original writings and does not extend to any transcriptions or translations.” That false objection goes forward to contend that there is now no inspired Bible in existence anywhere in the world. Chafer himself continues: “It is also true that no original manuscript is now available.” Chafer admits these two statements as indisputable facts. Shame on him. This false reasoning, that there is no inspired Bible in existence today, has engulfed all of Christendom and emboldened version makers to ignore, modify, and delete God's inspired words with wholesale abandon.

Gaussen exposed this errant thinking while Brook Foss Westcott (1825-1903) and Fenton JohnAnthony Hort (1828-1892) were just teenagers. Just the same the wide gate and broad path of Christendom followed after their brazen error. Bible critics and textual critics supposed that old manuscripts from Alexandria Egypt were most representative of such imagined and lost “original inspired

manuscripts.” Defending God's Holy Scripture from the pen-knives of these critics is an important part of our Bibliology today. Herein several chapters are dedicated to this defense and enlightenment.

When I began work on my Ph.D. in 2014 I set a goal to finish this Systematic Theology for the 21st Century in a five year period. When I finished my Ph.D. in 2017, I reestablished the same goal. This year, after publishing at least a draft of all twelve volumes in 2019, the goal remains. My plea for critique and correction also remains the same. I prefer friendly and constructive critique, but have found the hostile ones to be enlightening and beneficial for rounding out a stronger defense of truth. Feel free to engage in this effort, the many inputs I have received have strengthened the cause.

There is a cause. I pray that these volumes fully capture at least that.

Book I Vol 01 Prolegomena - Vol 02 Bibliology
Book II Vol 03 Theology - Vol 04 Christology - Vol 05 Pneumatology
Book III Vol 06 Anthropology - Vol 07 Hamartiology - Vol 08 Soteriology
Book IV Vol 09 Ecclesiology - Vol 10 Angelology
Book V Vol 11 Eschatology - Vol 12 Epilogue

A Systematic Theology for the 21st Century

Volume 01 Prolegomena

Introduction

Greetings in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Man that is in honour, and understandeth not, is like the beasts that perish. Psalm 49:20¹

There is no Baptist Systematic Theology work in print today, i.e. there is no Systematic Theology work that has the inerrant, infallible, verbally inspired word of God as its sole authority. There ought to be. There is a cause. Baptists, by definition, have the inerrant, infallible, inspired Holy Bible as their sole authority for all faith and practice. They should have a systematic theology book that does as well.

This Systematic Theology work is an ongoing effort intended to end with a “Systematic Theology for the 21st Century.” Anyone is encouraged to review the work as it is being assembled. All critiques will be welcomed and any born again believer is fully qualified to construct, and certainly to critique, such a work. A systematic theology is simply drawing a circle around the Holy Bible, and then rationally considering every principle, concept and thought that has been revealed to man by God. It shall be exhaustive, but in this venue, with your participation, it need not be exhausting.

Is there not a cause? As a systems engineer for thirty years (since 1972), I focused on systems analysis. Systematic theology has intrigued me ever since my first Bible institute course in 1975. I have amassed multiple systematic theology books and never found one that is wholly Biblical. In 2013, in my seminary work at Louisiana Baptist Theological Seminary, Dr. Steven Pettey assigned me to read and analyze six volumes of “Systematic Theology” by Lewis Sperry Chafer, the founder and previous president of Dallas Theological Seminary. Initial critique of this neo-evangelical, voluminous, wordy,

1 The Holy Bible

often unorganized work, answered the question, “Is there not a cause?²” A Systematic Theology for the 21st Century is indeed a valid need. It cries out to be written and it is a work that I must needs endeavor.

This and the eleven volumes which follow give a thorough treatment addressing this cause. The volumes are arranged in a logical and traditional order as follows: Vol 01 Prolegomena (Theology Introduction), Vol 02 Bibliology (The Doctrine of the Bible), Vol 03 Theology (The Doctrine of God), Vol 04 Christology (The Doctrine of Christ), Vol 05 Pneumatology (The Doctrine of Holy Spirit), Vol 06 Anthropology (The Doctrine of Man), Vol 07 Hamartiology (The Doctrine of Sin), Vol 08 Soteriology (The Doctrine of Salvation), Vol 09 Ecclesiology (The Doctrine of the Church), Vol 10 Angelology (The Doctrine of Angels), Vol 11 Eschatology (The Doctrine of Last Things), Vol 12 Epilogue.

This volume, Vol 01 Prolegomena (Theology Introduction), is the formal introduction to the work, and will subsequently include brief introductions of the ten volumes which follow. The twelfth volume then condenses all into an Epilogue.

Prolegomena

This endeavor is to mark out the Systematic Theology for the 21st century. Who needs to study theology systematically? God supposes that we all do, and Dr. Walter Allan Yoho words that succinctly.

If you recently graduated with honors – *Congratulations!*
If you were recently voted most valuable player on your basketball team – *That's great!* If you were recently awarded a big salary increase – *Good for you!* But none of these things is worth getting too excited about. No, there is one thing, only one, that should get a man or a woman really excited.³

Thus saith the LORD, Let not the wise man glory

2 The question is borrowed from a giant slayer. Reference 1Sam 17:29, “And David said, What have I now done? Is there not a cause?”

3 Walter Allan Yoho, “*YAHWEH The Greatness of God,*” Volume 1 of 3, FBCPublications.com, 2010,71

in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the LORD which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the LORD.

Jeremiah 9:23-24

The thing that impresses God the most about any given individual is how much that individual is impressed with God. Indeed, it is a tragedy of enormous extent “that he should be so little in our thoughts who sparkles in everything which presents itself to our eyes.”⁴ But, oh, how our Dear Lord loves to honor and bless that individual that delights himself in the Lord and is altogether taken up with his God!⁵

Then shalt thou delight thyself in the LORD; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it.

Isaiah 58:14

That one needs to study God is instinctive in our nature. That one should do it systematically is required by the immensity of the subject. The wise preacher has said:

I the Preacher was king over Israel in Jerusalem. And I gave my heart to seek and search out by wisdom concerning all things that are done under heaven: this sore travail hath God given to the sons of man to be exercised therewith.... And I gave my heart to know wisdom, and to know madness and folly: I perceived that this also is vexation of spirit. For in much wisdom is much grief: and he that increaseth knowledge

4 Cited by Walter Allen Yoho, Stephen Charnock, *The existence and Attributes of God*. I. Grand Rapids, MI:Baker Book House, Reprint, 1979, 168-169.

5 Ibid. Yoho, 72

increaseth sorrow... I have seen the travail, which God hath given to the sons of men to be exercised in it. He hath made every thing beautiful in his time: also he hath set the world in their heart, so that no man can find out the work that God maketh from the beginning to the end.

Ecc1 1:12,17-18, 3:10-11

The Systematic Theology for the 21st century needs a Prolegomena. Prolegomena is a preliminary discussion, especially a formal essay introducing a work of considerable length or complexity. Prolegomena comes from the Greek, “*Prolegein*” – meaning to say before hand.⁶ Such an introduction essay to a systematic theology, is necessary here to set some pre-conditions, to scope out the formidable task, and, in this instance especially, to redefine the “system” in “systematic” and differentiate this effort from the many other works of this nature.

Theology is the compounding of two words, “*theos*” for God, and “*ology*” for a verbose, exhaustively researched, consideration of, a meditation on, a discussion about, and a communication of, its topic. Theology is thus an exhaustively covered presentation of everything that could be known about God and everything that God has done. Knowing everything under the sun is a pretty daunting task.

The travail given to man by God is to seek and search out all things that are done under heaven. (Ecc1. 1:13, 3:10). All rational minds are to be exercised in this travail. By God's grace and his wisdom this impossible travail turns into joy, when our relationship with him is made right through the new-birth⁷ in our Lord Jesus Christ. A systematic theology is a supreme culmination of that joy. The systematic gathering, categorizing, and analyzing of everything that God has revealed to man could indeed be a great travail. It is a task that can naught be completed, and, because it is the finite grappling with the infinite, it can not be fully successful. It is, however, the

6 The American Heritage Dictionary, 3rd edition 1994 Soft Key International, s.v. *Prolegomena*

7 John 3:16-18, 36, 5:24, Rom 3:10, 23, 5:8, 12, 18, 6:23, 10:9-13, i.e. *The Romans Road to Heaven*.

exertion given to the sons of men, and one dare not slack from its calling. Every effort is herein made to cause this exhaustive task to be less of a “sore travail” and more of a “no greater joy.”

I have seen the travail, which God hath given to the sons of men, to be exercised in it. He hath made everything beautiful in his time: Also he hath set the world in their heart, so that no man can find out the work that God maketh from the beginning to the end... I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth (Eccl. 3:10, 3John 1:4).

Theology is for Everyone

Every rational thinking human is developing a theology. God created humans with that inborn propensity. In its basest form theology is man's *musings* about God. God implanted such musing in every rational mind. What think ye of God the creator? What think ye of Christ? What think ye of sin? What think ye of the fall of Lucifer? What think ye of “So great Salvation?”

Hear, O Israel; the LORD our God is one LORD; and thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou settist in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way: and when thou liest down and when thou risest up (Deut. 6:4-7).

What think ye of God? What think ye of His Words? In a less raw form, theology must be more than musing about God, it must take on a more organized pattern and a more thorough consideration of God centered things.

The organization of this systematic theology follows the traditional structure listed below.

Vol. 01 Prolegomena	Vol. 07 Hamartiology
Vol. 02 Bibliology	Vol. 08 Soteriology
Vol. 03 Theology	Vol. 09 Ecclesiology

Vol. 04 Christology	Vol. 10 Angelology
Vol. 05 Pneumatology	Vol. 11 Eschatology
Vol. 06 Anthropology	Vol. 12 Epilogue

A Christian, being one who has individually confessed and accepted the atoning blood of Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, for their saving, has a quickened, corrected, and personal relationship with the LORD God and Creator. They also have a charge from him that they carefully develop a theology. A theology, again, is a musing about, a consideration of, and an analysis of, (*ology*) everything that can be known of God (*Theos*), and of everything that God has done in this his universe. An unregenerate mind is self centered, rebellious, Christ less, and ergo, God less. His pursuit of theology will turn to self worship, (i.e. evolution as it promotes the self made man) and/or creature worship, (worshiping the creature, i.e. stars, images, idols, animals, humans, angels, et al.) more than Creator worship (Rom 1:10). The quickened mind of the born again believer, however, is enlightened and guided away from a self centered theology, into a God centered, Holy Spirit directed theology. But, theology is still the travail assigned to every rational mind. Carefully organizing one's musing about God, when done skillfully, with method and thoroughness, should be called systematic.

Why Systematic?

“Systematic” actually speaks toward the organizational method for the development of a theology. A systematic theology will be such in three particulars. First, it must be systematically holistic. There is to be nothing in particular left out. There is to be a stepping back and a consideration of the larger picture, as it were, and this review is to ask, “Is there anything not fully considered?”

Second, for a theology to be systematic, it needs a systematic method of consideration for each of its parts. A Bible doctrine work provides due consideration of every major theme taught in the Bible. A systematic theology must exceed Bible doctrine in that it must also methodically give due consideration to what the Bible does not teach, even what God has not revealed. Man has developed some beliefs about God which are not found nor supported in the Bible. Rational

philosophy and irrational religions have come to bare on what one believes about God, man, and the Bible. These sources insert deception in one's theology; deception which must be systematically routed out. A Biblical theology must have the Holy Bible as its sole source of truth, non-Biblical sources must fall outside of the system of consideration.

Lastly, for a theology to be systematic, it needs to pursue a solid analytical method, rather than the scientific method which has been relied on in past systematic theologies. A scientific method cannot fulfill a truly systematic purpose. In a truly systematic method a circle or sphere encompasses the whole system to be considered. Parts, participants, and other systems outside of this sphere of consideration, must be fenced out of consideration by a strong, conscious border.

Ergo, for some systematic theologies, the sphere contains everything ever believed about God, but to produce a Biblical theology that sphere need only contain everything revealed to man by God in the Holy Bible: Distinctly clarified, God's written word is IN, and the vision of a 500 foot high Jesus that Oral Roberts saw is NOT IN; nor the Golden Tables of law that Joseph Smith allegedly received from an angel in Palmyra, New York. Notice in drawing a border around a system, certain things are purposely, and consciously left out. It will be seen that this last particular of a systematic theology, that of defining the system under consideration, is crucial, and recognizing the pieces which must fall outside of the system has been the downfall of previous works. A good theology will thus be holistic, methodical and a closed system, with the Bible as its sole authority. Thus a good theology is a systematic theology, and a controlled systematic theology is a good theology.

This Systematic Theology for the 21st Century is undertaken because it is unprecedented. In this author's fifty three years as a born again believer, (1960 – 2013), and thirty years as a theologian, there has not been found a systematic theology work that has been thoroughly Biblical, thoroughly Baptist and thoroughly systematic. A thoroughly Biblical systematic theology not only contends for an inerrant, infallible, plenary, verbally inspired Holy Bible, it discards confessions, orthodoxies, and traditions which over step that Bible as sole authority. A thoroughly Baptist Systematic Theology contends for

the perpetuity of a right and righteous remnant. This remnant holds the rightly divided word of truth, understood in a historical, grammatical, literal manner, as the word of truth that reveals God's dispensational truths. It also contends that Roman Catholic doctrine has always been wrong and the tentacles of Roman Catholic error have rooted in the whole of Protestant doctrine like leaven. Baptists are not, and never have been Protestants.⁸

A thoroughly systematic, systematic theology is holistic, methodical, and carefully bounded in a system of truth. There are other tremendous works of systematic theology and thorough coverages of Bible doctrines. This one is meant to stand alone in these three hallmarks, Biblical, Baptist, and Systematic. Careful definition of the latter will ensure the previous two hallmarks.

Theology Is Not a Science

Previous theologies have been built as if theology were a science. A scientific method starts with a hypothesis which it twists and refines through experimentation until it holds enough merit to advance to a theory. Theologians have considered theories reliable enough to place in their science based systematic theologies. In the scientific method, after a theory receives more extensive testing and refinement, it becomes a law. As an engineer this author loves and respects the scientific method. Kepler used it expertly to derive the laws of planetary motion. As a theologian this author insists that the scientific method has no place in deriving the "Thus saith the LORD" kind of truth which a true theologian is looking for.

The eminent Dr. Lewis Sperry Chafer, a theological genius, falls into this trap of theory making. Chafer's Volume IV of Systematic Theology contains 250 pages of his Ecclesiology, and 190 pages of his Eschatology but it includes much material not related to either topic at all. Such inexcusable lacking organization is the result of both an overall poor organizational practice and an inadequate definition of a systematic theology in general. Dr. Chafer contends that a systematic theology is "The collecting, systematically arranging, comparing, exhibiting, and defending of all facts concerning God and His works

8 John Christian, Baptist History Vol 1

from any and every source."⁹ This author stated previously that in making such a brash definition Chafer unwittingly puts philosophers such as Aristotle and Plato, and Roman Catholics such as Saint Augustine and Saint Aquinas, and Protestants who persecuted Baptists, men such as Martin Luther and John Calvin, on equal grounds with Holy Scripture. In writing his eight volumes of Systematic Theology he repeatedly makes this blunder.

A Systematic Theology is not to be an unabridged rendition of everything ever believed about God, as Chafer has boasted. It is to be a systematic organization of each truth that God has revealed in his inerrant, infallible record, truths that are then given systematic analysis wherein they can debunk the theoretical conjectures of previous philosophers and theologians.

In his fourth volume Dr. Chafer needs both a strong organization of the truth about the Church, the Church age, and the end times and then a relentless attack of the Reformed Theologian's Covenant Theology, Replacement Theology, and Catholicness of the Church. Chafer's lacking organization and discipline make such a success unachievable. Chafer's unsystematic system and flawed organization of material brings about a very flawed doctrine, i.e. a flawed doctrine in a flawed approach which it conceals in exaggerated verbosity.

Pilot asked Jesus "What is Truth?" In my statistics class I taught that truth is discovered by four primary means, only one has proven reliable. Philosophy says "I think therefore I am." In their field one thinks, reasons, deduces and believes, expecting he has therein discovered truth. Then, in the turn of the last century scientists formalized the scientific method, and used it in founding natural laws operating in our universe. In this method a hypothesis is tested, refined, and observed into a theory, which is tested, refined, and observed into a natural law. Leading theologians pounced on this, and considered theology as "the queen of the sciences." They filled their systematic theology books with theories that they documented into laws expecting that they had discovered the truths about God. But science is only an able tool to lead and surmise the truth about natural laws, not supernatural laws.

9 from www.ChristianBook.com book promotion paragraph quoting Dr. Chafer's promotion of his "Systematic Theology" (Accessed Dec 2013).

Philosophy is an essential and useful tool but it cannot decipher infallible truth. Science has proven irreplaceable at determining some natural laws, but it cannot begin to categorize the supernatural, and it is by no means infallible. In his lifetime the Father of Systematic Theologies, Charles Hodge, saw the scientific method become the mainstay of all systematic study. He incorporated it into his systematic theology, not perceiving this horrid shortfall. Perhaps a statistical analysis of studies and surveys can determine infallible truth.

Statistics had an ugly beginning. It had trouble overcoming its nemesis, "Figures don't lie, but liars figure." The surveys and studies, the analysis and presentation of averages and standard deviations, could surely lead to truth. But consider how statisticians and politicians readily misleads people into some grandiose untruths. In statistics a majority believing something is supposed to derive the truth. If the survey says, "All men are liars," how much should one trust the survey of all men. Statistical analysis might have a place in categorizing the contributions and side effects of certain drugs, but statistical analysis is never reliable in determining absolute truth.

Know that philosophy and science do the same misleading. For philosophy rationally comprehending something makes it a personal truth. One need only mention Christian Science founder Mary Baker Glover Eddy's idea that this world is "only in the mind" to alert the dangers of philosophy. Now we have come to where science has elevated the spontaneous generation of life to a teachable truth, and "scientists" even teach as truth the insane idea that "survival of the fittest" had changed beagle dogs into Clydesdale horses, and lizards into bald eagles. Thus science-so-called¹⁰ cannot discern truth. Ergo these forms of discriminating truth have their notable flaws.

The forth method of discerning truth is the "Thus saith the LORD" method. This is not the religious method. Indeed a religion's source of their truth is generally some ugly combination of the previous three mentions. Even in Dr. Chafer's Systematic Theology this "Thus saith the LORD" method too often takes a back seat to religion and survey. One would expect that a section on Ecclesiology would begin with God's notable definition of the Church and its formation. Instead Dr.

10 1Ti 6:20 O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of **science falsely so called**:

Chafer first philosophizes about angels, Jews, Gentiles and Christians. He then gives the scientific method a spin and presents theories that have been advanced. He then has the audacity to present a statistical survey of who believes what. Organizing theology systematically requires that a baseline of truth be established up front. That base line must proceed with a "Thus saith the LORD" as its sole source. All other methods are fraught with blunder. Dr. Chafer's eight volumes make up example "A" in that blundering.

An approach which "collects and systematically arranges, compares, exhibits and defends all facts concerning God and his works from any and every source," is a fool's path. Systematically such an approach is theological malpractice. To be Biblical and Systematic there must be a sole source. Lack of organization and direction is serious, but a total miss-organization of the "system" in "systematic", coupled with a strong reliance on extra Biblical sources make Chafer's eight volumes inexcusable.

It is reiterated here that Dr. Lewis Sperry Chafer, founder of Dallas Theological Seminary in 1924, does not use the sharpest language and does not expose the error of the 70+ denominations that he is pandering to. He is the epitome of neoevangelicalism as herein defined. I would not discredit Dr. Chafer's genius, sincerity, or integrity, only his methodology.

Theology Has Not Been Systematic

A thorough analysis is systematic only because it has thoroughly and systematically analyzed a system. This truth has been so maligned by theologians, and is so crucial for a successful systematic theology, that it needs to be given a thorough clarification in this prolegomena. Any analysis and especially one so crucial as a theology, must needs be systematic to be effective and thorough. A theology can only be systematic when there is a defined system under consideration. Failure to perceive this fact has been the downfall of previous "systematic" theologies.

Charles Hodge (1797-1878), from Princeton Theological Seminary, may be considered the Father of the Published Systematic Theologies. He was very genius, a very gifted communicator, and very Presbyterian. Such a Father of the Published Systematic Theologies

made two glaring errors in his prolegomena, and consequently in his published work. Charles Hodge considered theology a science which must follow a scientific method, just like the other sciences. Charles Hodge also loosely compassed a border around his theology, i.e. his system under consideration, which attempted to capture everything ever known, ever observed, and ever believed about God, and all His works. Consider why these are indeed untenable errors for an effective and efficient systematic theology.

Theology is long considered a science, like Biology, Archaeology, Astronomy and Physics, and oftentimes, by those wishing to more ennoble it, theology is called “the Queen of the Sciences.” But theology is not a science at all, and dare not follow a scientific method. There is no science or scientific method which allows for an inerrant, infallible, plenary, verbally inspired, authoritative source as a final authority, yeah, as its sole authority. Biblical theology does, indeed it must.

The scientific method and any resulting science which is framed by its tenants is based on hypothesizing about observations and then extensively testing the hypothesis. This scientific method, actually formalized on Charles Hodge's 50th birthday, involves five steps: 1) Formulation of the question about an observed phenomena, 2) Formulating a hypothesis which conjectures its answer, 3) Predicting the logical consequences of the hypothesis, 4) Testing to see if the real world behaves as predicted by the hypothesis and, finally, 5) Analyzing the results of the real world experiment in order to refine the hypothesis. Now after a hypothesis has been extensively tested and widely and generally accepted, with no evidence to dispute it, it may be generalized and summarized into a theory. After a theory has been extensively tested and widely and generally accepted, with no evidence to dispute it, and no exceptions to be found, it may be generalized and summarized as a law. Does this seem like a sound way to determine theology? I trow not.

Johannes Kepler (1571-1630), German mathematician, astronomer and astrologer, used this very method for constituting the laws of planetary motion, but what we know about God, in our theology, has absolutely nothing to do with observing, questioning, hypothesizing, theorizing and constituting laws. Charles Hodge erred

when he attempted to fit the scientific method into his theology development, and that glaring error has found root in systematic theologies right up to Geisler's 2002 extensive (1664 pages) publication.¹¹ The error is manifest in Hodge's first serious topic of consideration;¹² Hodge makes his first argument the proof of the existence of God. The Holy Bible, which he has conjectured to be his sole source and sole authority for theology, is herein set aside. The Holy Bible takes one on no such philosophical adventure. It is Charles Hodge's treatment of theology as just another of the natural sciences which causes him to employ techniques found in philosophy and in the scientific method. Likewise, following the *Father of Published Systematic Theologies*, this 'proof of the existence of God' is the first coverage of Augustus Strong's 1907 Baptist work of Systematic Theology,¹³ as it is Henry Clarence Thiessen's 1949 Baptist work of systematic theology.¹⁴ It is given coverage in Lewis Sperry Chafer's 1948 verbose six volumes of neoevangelical work of *Systematic Theology*,¹⁵ and even in Geisler's 21st century evangelical effort.¹⁶

The Holy Bible extends no effort towards the proof of God's existence. He is the "I AM." Further, it is revealed in inerrant, infallible language that every human born into this world knows of his eternal Godhead, and is without excuse (Romans 1). Even further, it is revealed in that inerrant, infallible communicate that His Only Begotten Son, his Anointed One, the Christ, is the light that lighteth every man. There is no scientific hypothesis about His existence, a hypothesis which is carefully brought to the fruition and proof by a scientific method, because theology is not a science. Science and its methods support mans groping for greater knowledge, theology dare not do that groping like other sciences must. Theology is a process of

11 Normal L. Geisler, *Systematic Theology in One Volume*, Bethany House, 2002, 3, 4, 5, 11

12 Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology: Volume I*, Charles Scribner & Company, 1871, 1

13 Augustus H. Strong, *Systematic Theology: Three Volumes in 1*, Philadelphia, Valley Forge PA, The Judson Press, 1907

14 Henry Clarence Thiessen, *Lectures in Systematic Theology*, Grand Rapids, Mich., William B. Eerdmann Publishing Company, 1949

15 Lewis Sperry Chafer, *Systematic Theology Vol 1-6*, Dallas Seminary Press, 1948

16 Geisler, *Systematic Theology in One Volume*.

collaborating and organizing declared truth, not a science of exploring, on a quest for scientifically confirmed truth.

Charles Hodge, genius and communications master, opened a course of study which laid aside the inerrant, infallible sole source of theology and picked up the philosophy book. He, and all systematic theology books which followed his outline, pursue the ontological argument for the existence of God. “I think therefore I am,” as a profound statement, may find a sound home in a philosophy book, but it, and its presumed author, have no place in a theology book. Likewise a teleological a posteriori argument, which “proves” the existence of God, is nothing more than philosophical fodder for scholars showing how knowledge puffeth up. It has no place in a Biblical systematic theology book. Further, supposing “a power which produces intelligence and rational thought might lack an intelligence and rational thinking” is such a profound tom-foolery that it should not even be considered in a good philosophy book.¹⁷ Hodge, and those following his theological footsteps, give this teleological argument due consideration in a systematic theology book which they suppose should follow a scientific method, because they suppose that theology is just another of the sciences. Theology is not a science, and should never stoop to a scientific method to try to prove the existence of God, or to “prove” anything else that has been revealed to man by an infallible, inerrant source.

Science is “The observation, identification, description, experimental investigation, and theoretical explanation of phenomena,”¹⁸ and a theologian dare not call the study of his God and Creator anything resembling such a definition. Science is, “such activities restricted to a class of natural phenomena,” and a theologian dare not call his supernatural God only a natural phenomena. Science is, “such activities applied to an object of inquiry or study,” and a theologian dare not call his infinite God and Creator just an object nor employ “such activities” in his travail to know/understand all things under heaven. Science is, “methodological activity, discipline, or

17 No critique of Hodge's use of philosophical cosmological argument or philosophical moral argument need be considered here, his careful following of scientific method for these arguments is just plain errant.

18 American Heritage Dictionary, s.v. *science*

study: An activity that appears to require study and method: and knowledge, especially that gained through experience,” and the theologian dare not lean on any of these secondary definitions to capture what he must capture from an inerrant, infallible, plenary, verbally inspired written revelation authored by his infinite Creator. Theology is not a science, and it cannot be captured in its entrapment.

The scientific method is “The principles and empirical processes of discovery and demonstration considered characteristic of or necessary for scientific investigation, generally involving the observation of phenomena, the formulation of a hypothesis concerning the phenomena, experimentation to demonstrate the truth or falseness of the hypothesis, and a conclusion that validates or modifies the hypothesis.”¹⁹ Their method is excellently suited for mans comprehension of all of God's creation, (Would that it were followed by the humanists with their wild hypothesis that breeding dogs together long enough will produce a Clydesdale horse, or that copulating lizards eventually hatch out a bald eagle!) but the scientific method has no place in theology.

Theology must needs be exploring, categorizing, comprehending and understanding the God who reveals himself, and in so doing it is far above the natural phenomena that mere science explores. When the theologian resorts to science and scientific method in his task, he does theology a great disservice; as has Hodge, Strong, Thiessen, Chafer and Geisler. When one has an inerrant, infallible, plenary, verbally inspired sole source of truth, which these theologians affirm (Thiessen and Chafer only affirm that we once upon a time had it, but lost it due to incompetent copyists, Geisler affirms that we only have 90% of the text left²⁰ but should trust what we have anyway, while modernist textual critics try to reassemble the rest), there is little need for a scientific method which strives to deduce what truth is, and no justification for categorizing theology as a science which must rely on such methods.

Consider the *System* In Systematic

¹⁹ American Heritage Dictionary, s.v. *scientific method*

²⁰ Geisler, *Systematic Theology*, 177

An insurmountable disservice has been done to theology by those who have not properly enveloped the system under consideration. Systematic, in the sense of a systematic theology, must include more than a planned ordered procedure of investigation, it needs to include a definition of the system which is to be considered. Charles Hodge, the *Father of the Published Systematic Theologies* thought to use the methods of science to explore and reason out all that could be known about God. It has been seen that the methods of science are suited for exploring all natural phenomena of God's creation, but are not at all suited for exploring the uncaused cause of all that phenomena. It must now be considered that Hodge's definition of exactly what was to be explored was far too broad and inclusive. Hodge attempted to document everything that has ever been believed about God since the coming of Christ, the manifestation of God. In this broad sweeping gesture, for it never was a clear definition, Hodge must include all the philosophies of man, all the teachings of the Roman Mother Church, all the humanist and atheist perspectives and their discussions about how many angels might dance on the head of a pin. This failure to scope his systematic theology, failure to narrow down and accurately define his approach to so daunting a task, is what has given theology a daunting shudder for most Christians, and caused systematic theology to leave a bad taste in the mouth of even the most honest preacher.

Conventional theologians have tried to compensate for this failure by inappropriately dividing a “Practical Theology” and a “Biblical Theology” from this more foreboding “Systematic Theology.” Such divisions are artificial and damaging. They imply that practical theology is not Biblical theology, that Biblical theology is not practical. They imply that neither can be systematic. Properly, yeah, even systematically, considering the errors in Hodges approach can embolden a far better approach. A systems analysis approach to theology must replace the failed philosophical and scientific method's approach. Such an analytical method can restore theology to a valid position of being practical, Biblical and systematic.

Systematic Is Accomplished With Actual Systems

With a system analyst an overwhelmingly complex system²¹ is subdivided into smaller systems. The analyst draws a line, or border around each system, and explores the interacting interdependence of just this one system under his consideration. This is a powerful and versatile tool for analysis of very complex systems, and the complexity of this one, theology, is infinite, ergo there is no more suited methodology for its comprehension. Consider some finite illustrations of its success.

The automobile is a reasonably complex system and its complexity has advanced annually in recent years. The exhaust system is a tiny element of the more complex engine system, which is part of the drive system which is an integral part to the automobile. The exhaust system has a muffler which is an element in a sound muffling system and a catalytic converter which is part of an emissions control system. Each group of interacting, interrelated or interdependent elements forming a complex whole is a system in itself and these systems combine and interact to form a system called the automobile. The automobile is part of a larger system called the transportation system. To use an automobile you do not need to know that platinum is a catalyst for the chemical reaction which breaks down engine emissions. That may only be consoling knowledge when you have to open your wallet to replace a catalytic converter, or when you want to know why it is against the law to buy a used one. (The latter law being part of a crime prevention system.) On a very physical level one can thus comprehend what a system is and how a systematic analysis is necessary for comprehension, design, and troubleshooting of an automobile. Rational beings are rational because they can take another step towards abstraction. Let us therefore do just that.

Biology is the study of all living things. Plants are living things and the study of plants is called Botany. Entomology is the study of insects. There are certain defined boundaries for when a living thing is considered a plant and when it is categorized as an insect. A mosquito is an insect with an intricately designed system for extracting blood from a mammal when plant's liquids are not satisfying. A mammal is a class of warm blooded vertebrate animals characterized by a covering

21 American Heritage Dictionary, s.v. *system*, A group of interacting, interrelated, or interdependent elements forming a complex whole.

of hair on the skin and the production of milk to nourish its young. One need not labor the fact that although they may be called “ologies,” these are all systems with interacting inter-related or inter-dependent elements forming a complex whole.

Biology is a defined bordered system which fits into an even larger system of study. Biology, the study of living things, is not really the study of all living things. It has a border or restriction which prevents the study of angels under this category. Borders and restrictions are good and necessary in categorizing the studies of our interacting systems.

With that much understanding in place one can approach theology with a system analysis methodology and redefine the whole realm of Systematic Theology. That re-definition is prudent and necessary. Charles Hodge opened an overwhelming flood gate when he included in his systematic theology input from Orpheus and Homer just because they were called Greek Theologians²², and when he referenced the genius of Aristotle just because Aristotle classed the sciences as physics, mathematics and theology and he wrote about nature, numbers and that which concerns God.²³ In reality the philosophical genius of Orpheus and Homer, and the scientific genius of Aristotle, needs no accommodation in a theology book whatsoever.

It is necessary that Biblical theology consider the Holy Bible as its sole authority and sole source for truth. Draw a circle around Aristotle and other geniuses and call it Philosophical theology, encircle Saint Augustine and his Roman Catholic Church and call it Roman Catholic theology, encircle John Calvin and the Westminster confession and call it Presbyterian Theology, encircle Charles Darwin and humanist manifestos and call it humanist theology. et al.. All these are separate systems with borders, interconnections, and interactions, but they are outside of the purview of a systematic analysis of all that God has revealed about himself in Holy Scripture.

Each of these circles must be considered systems in themselves. They are purposely separated from each other like the insect is separated from the plant and the mammal. They may each undergo their own systematic analysis, and they each have various interacting,

22 Hodge, *Systematic Theology Vol 1*, 34 (of 682 pages soft copy).

23 *Ibid*, 34.

interrelated and interdependent elements. For the theologian, carefully defining the separate systems is essential for understanding the effect they might have on a truly Biblical Systematic Theology.

Charles Hodge as a *Father of Published Systematic Theologies* set a precedence for considering theology as a science, and for incorporating all that was ever believed about God. His use of Philosophy, introduced the immaterial and material dichotomy of man, instead of the Bible's trichotomy, his use of Saint Augustine introduced the catholicness of the church instead of the Bible's emphasis on the local church, his use of Roman theology introduced penance, priest, and clergy, the Westminster Confession, decrees, predestination of souls, and fatalism; indeed all who followed in Hodge's footsteps, Strong, Thiessen, Chafer, and Geisler, gave inclusiveness greater consideration than Biblical exclusiveness. When Geisler wrote his 21st century systematic theology his goal was to systematically capture all that is believed by evangelicals; Nicene Creed, neoevangelicalism, theistic-evolution and all. Such an all encompassing theme takes up every bit of 1,664 pages and advances Hodges' myth that a systematic theology must incorporate everything that reasonable minds have ever believed about God. That is error.

A systematic theology which uses the Holy Bible for its sole source and uses a system analysis approach instead of a scientific method can isolate itself from the effects of philosophy, Catholicism, Reformed theology, neoevangelicalism, theistic evolutionist, et al. Such a task is accomplished by using great care in how the systems are bounded. Where in time past it was considered that all these systems overlapped, certainly reformed theology and Roman theology both had some Bible theology, and perhaps Reformer had more than Rome, even so, it was not deemed essential to make each a wholly separated system. All interactions and interrelationships between these systems need to be interfaced as inputs or outputs and system borders need to be kept secure. This isolation of separate systems is an essential key for this type of systematic analysis.

In times past a huge system of Christian belief was captured by encircling a myriad of overlapping belief systems and truth was supposedly captured by testing various hypothesis by a scientific method. Such a process was flawed and has failed. It was ever testing

and hypothesizing and never coming to the truth. Using a system analysis methodology isolates each system of belief behind clear borders, allows only guarded and understood interrelations, and allows our focus on any of the individual systems. Herein the system which shall capture that focus will be called Biblical Theology.

A system called Biblical Theology, with a function of generating its very name, is isolated from all other systems of theology and contains, enveloped in a sphere, as it were, the 66 books²⁴ written by forty-four Hebrew authors over a period of 1592²⁵ years, and called the Holy Bible, the Bible, the Holy Scriptures, the Scripture, the Word of God and the Words of God. God, through the psalmist in Psalm 119:1-8 (the Aleph octet of this tremendous Hebrew acrostic), captures “his word” (vr 9) in seven descriptors, calling it - the law, his testimonies, his ways, thy precepts, thy statutes, thy commandments, and thy righteous judgments (each octet thereafter uses these seven descriptors, seven per octave, an awesome study in itself).

Consider, for a moment, what else should be in this system. Let us, eliminating the obvious, eliminate the teachings of Aristotle, the Roman Catholic Church, and the Westminster Confession of Faith, and John Calvin's Institutes of the Christian Religion. These will not be herein found making up Biblical theology. One need not slander any of these, but one needs to isolate them from our Biblical Theology. These may be isolated into their own separated systems, systems with controlled, supervised interfaces.

Should an infinite God be enclosed in this system called Biblical Theology? The system is indeed finite and cannot contain the infinite. But consider the desire to capture all of God that the finite mind can possibly grasp, and consider that that whole realm of possibility is already in this system, it is all captured in the Holy Bible.

*The secret things belong unto the LORD our God:
but those things which are revealed belong unto us and
to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of
this law.*

24 There will follow a full justification for the allowance of these 66 books.

25 The Pentateuch was written at Sinai in 1492 B.C. (memorable date) and The Revelation of Jesus Christ in 100 A.D.

Deut 29:29

Should the influence of the Holy Spirit of God be in our system called Biblical Theology? No. Consider carefully this answer. In a system analysis methodology elements recognized in the system must be isolated as a separate operating system, i.e. a subsystem, which performs a function pertinent to the larger system.

Consider, for example, the automobile exhaust system. It performs three functions, it conducts exhaust gas to the rear, it muffles the sound of the engine exhaust, and it cleans up some exhausted emissions. Certainly the piping system in charge of conducting gas does some muffling. Certainly the catalytic converter muffles some as well, but each subsystem in this system has a separate function to perform and gets isolated into its own system. Their interrelationship and interactions are marked by defined and controlled interfaces. There are indeed three separate functions in the exhaust system.

In our system called Biblical Theology, there is only one function, organizing revealed truth. If the Holy Spirit or more specifically the influence of the Holy Spirit is considered an element in this system he must be recognized as a separate subsystem which comes to bear on that revealed truth. In doing so one must consider that, allegedly, the Holy Spirit revealed a 500 foot image of Jesus to Oral Roberts. It is thus obvious that the Holy Spirit shall not be considered as a separate system operating within the system of Biblical Theology. Any work and influence that the Holy Spirit of God does must be done within the 66 books of the Words of God. And thus saith the Scripture:

Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.

John 16:13

For the revelation of truth which belongs in a Biblical Theology, the Holy Spirit of God must not be a separate operating agency. He shall only work in the confines of the revealed Word of God.

Should the rational mind of man be an element, i.e. a subsystem,

inside of our system called Biblical Theology? If one carefully followed the reasoning just developed about the Holy Spirit the easy answer is, No. And thus saith the Scripture: “*Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth*” (2Tim 2:15). For the revelation of truth which belongs in a Biblical Theology, the rational mind of man must not be a separate operating agency, it shall only work in the confines of the revealed Word of God.

It is curious that theologians who want to use profound philosophies as a source of wisdom, never use God's chosen philosophers. They will reference Socrates (469-399 BC), Plato (428-348 BC), Aristotle (384-322 BC), even Mani²⁶ (216-274 AD), but God included two exceptional philosophy books in his 66 book communication, Job and Ecclesiastes. Philosophy is the pursuit of wisdom by purely intellectual means. This emphasis on logical reasoning rather than the empirical reasoning, done in science, is not more capable of deducing theological truth than is science. Both negate the inerrant, infallible, plenary, verbally inspired Word of God as the sole source of theological truth. Indeed it is the exclusion of phenomenological observation (science) and rationalism (philosophy) which drives the theology student to require his sole source in the first place.

Although philosophy will not achieve a theology, one's theology should not be void of logical reasoning. God's philosopher Job, spends forty two chapters philosophizing about man being justified before a Holy God. God's philosopher, Solomon, spends twelve chapters philosophizing about the vanity of man. Both are clearly philosophy books. Both are frustrated in finding truth, until God steps in. In Job he steps in with a staunch rebuke, in Ecclesiastes with a plan for life. Such is the sole value of philosophy in developing theology. Man is totally reliant on God to lead us into truth. Jesus said it thus: “I am the... truth,... no man cometh to the Fathers but by me” (John 14:6).

It is clarified then that there is only one element operating inside of our system called Biblical Theology, and that element is the Holy Bible. The function of our system is to organize every thing that can be known about God and about all His works. The beauty of this

²⁶ Ibid., 236.

Systematic Theology is that it is to develop a theology which has the inerrant, infallible, plenary, verbally inspired Holy Bible as its sole source. The strength of this Systematic Theology is that it purports an ability to separate itself from the influences of the Roman Catholic Church, the Westminster Confession, Saint Augustine of Hippo, Saint Thomas Aquinas, John Calvin, the Humanist Manifesto, et al.

Two weaknesses of this Systematic Theology come to mind. First, as just clarified, the Holy Spirit of God and the rational mind of man must be functionally operating inside of the system, but they have been refused a position as an operating subsystem of the system. This may be more of an analytical decision than a weakness, but it will require some consideration during the development of theology. A second weakness of this Systematic Theology is that it is very foreign to all previous methodologies for building what has come to be called systematic theology. This too is more of a necessary analytical decision than a weakness, but it will require a redefining of how one does theology, and that redefining will not be accepted by some traditionalists. Dr. Chafer spends considerable time analyzing theories about God and how God does things. This systematic theology need not examine any theories, because it does not treat theology as a science.

How many angels might dance on the head of a pin will be given every consideration that the Holy Bible gives to the question, none. The system excludes man's philosophical reasoning as a source of truth.

One final consideration about this improved systematic methodology has to do with the interacting, interrelating and inner dependency of the systems it defines. There is, for example, a necessary output and input interface defined between the Reformed Theology system, and our Biblical Theology system. For this consideration our larger system will be all that is to be considered truth, but Covenant Theology does have an adverse influence on how some interpret the Bible and at times due consideration of this misleading should be examined. Some outside systems considered for this interaction might be 1) other "Systematic Theologies," a system called 2) Roman Catholic Theology, a system called 3) Reformed Theology, and a system called 4) Evangelical Theology (Perhaps

included just to recognize the extensive documentation effort of Norman L. Geisler).

As minimal as it might be, there is an output from Biblical Theology which is input to Roman Catholic Theology. Is there an output from Roman Catholic Theology which serves as an input to Biblical Theology? I trow not! The purpose of this systematic development is to keep our Biblical Theology separate from all influences of the Roman Catholic Church.

Likewise there is an output from Biblical Theology which is input to Reformed Theology, perhaps noticeably larger than the one to Rome. Is there an output from Reformed Theology which is input to Biblical Theology? Again, No. Such a connection is purposely severed. Likewise, again, Biblical Theology outputs to Evangelical Theology. Likewise its input from Biblical Theology is perceptibly larger than Reformed Theology's. But, alas, again, output from Evangelical Theology must not find its way to be an input to our Biblical Theology. Ergo, all output from other systems which might act as input to Biblical Theology are purposely and conscientiously severed.

Consider that there is an output from Roman Catholic Theology that serves as input to Reformed Theology, and another inputting stuff into Evangelical Theology. Consider also that Roman Catholic Theology has mutated because of input from Reformed Theology, and likewise, from the output of Evangelical Theology. It is adequate to be conscious of all this dynamic while being wholly focused on the system called Biblical Theology.

Also consider that there is a sound rule in Bible Hermeneutics (the Art of Bible Interpretation) which states that each interpretation should be compared with what man has always believed about a text. It is called the Rule of Orthodoxy. This is still a sound rule and is fitting for one's development of theology, when it is limited to being a rule of reasonableness and not a rule of absolutes. In this context of a systematic development of a Biblical Theology a Rule of Orthodoxy is not to be elevated to a position where it might supply input of truth to our system. A Rule of Orthodoxy might, however, find some application in the rational mind which is studying to shew itself approved unto God. Even in that application great care must be

exercised that such “orthodoxy” not find an input avenue into Biblical Theology. It is still essential that Biblical Theology have a sole source in Holy Scripture.

Systematically Based On a Solid Bible Doctrine

A systematic theology must, at its basest level, be solid and thorough in Bible doctrines, and this one shall rely extensively on Dr. Cambron's excellent *Bible Doctrines* book. There is no truer, or more thorough, published, Baptist, and Biblical doctrine than that of Dr. Mark G. Cambron.²⁷ His teachings on Theology at Tennessee Temple Bible School thoroughly lay the foundation for this systematic theology. His book, *Bible Doctrines*²⁸ will, with the permission of the Cambron Institute²⁹, be given in block quotes throughout this effort. The book is readily available through <http://www.thecambroninstitute.org>, and it forms the foundational basis for this systematic theology.³⁰ It will be given in its entirety in the block quotes throughout this work.

Below is the Title page, the Forward and the Preface of that exceptional book. [block quote of Dr. Cambron's *Bible Doctrines* (Zondervan) 1-9, (TheCambronInstitute.org) 1- 5.]

27 Dr. Mark G. Cambron, B.A., M.A., Th.B., Th.M., Th.D., D.D., L.L.D., Litt.D., was one of the foremost theologians of our times. Born in Fayetteville, Tennessee on July 31, 1911. He was born-again in 1919. It was during a Billy Sunday campaign in Chattanooga that he trusted in the Lord Jesus Christ as his personal Savior. He served for many years at Tennessee Temple College (1948-59) with Dr. Lee Roberson and served as Dean of the College. From <http://www.thecambroninstitute.org> accessed 10/16/2013

28 Mark G. Cambron, *Bible Doctrines*, 1954, Grand Rapids, Michigan, Zondervan Publishing House, 60-69

29 The Cambron Institute, 35890 Maplegrove Road, Willoughby, Oh 44094

30 This author cannot recommend or condone the use of any of the modernist ecumenical copyright bibles, all of which brazenly disregard the inerrancy and infallibility of the verbally inspired Holy Bible by utilizing the Westcott and Hort Bible criticism, textual criticism and critical text as their source. It is noted and reproved in the Bibliology section of this work that Dr. Cambron's Bible Doctrines book recommends using the R.V., instead of the Holy Bible, 41 times for 54 Bible verses. These are each clarified in foot notes in this work.

A Systematic Theology for the 21st Century

BIBLE DOCTRINES

Beliefs That Matter

by

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Dean of Tennessee Temple Bible School

Chattanooga, Tennessee

Introduction by Herbert Lockyer, D.D.

Zondervan Publishing House

Grand Rapids, Michigan

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2

FOREWORD

Paul distinguished between the simplicities of the Word and its more profound truths. When writing to the Corinthians he said, “I have fed you with milk, and not with meat” (I Cor. 3:2). Certainly, newborn babes in Christ thrive on the sincere milk of the Word. With spiritual development, however, the meat of Scripture is masticated (chewed).

One wonders whether the prevalent carnality among religious people would have been prevented if only they had consistently listened to doctrinal preaching in their churches.

We fear that much of the present-day preaching is not only simple but superficial. The surface of the Bible is skimmed, but its depths are ignored.

How grateful to the Lord we are for fundamental seminaries and Bible institutes all over the land, in which young people are taught to handle the great doctrines of the Word! The Tennessee Temple Bible School is one of the outstanding training schools of this kind in the land, and is fortunate in having a gifted teacher like Dr. Mark G. Cambron as its Dean. Dr. Cambron’s monumental work, *Bible Doctrines*, reveals how he has launched out into the deep of God’s Word, and is able to present, in a clear and concise manner, those glorious doctrines of which God in Christ is Author, Matter and End.

We bespeak for *Bible Doctrines* a wide circulation among pastors, students and Christian workers in this and other lands! DR. HERBERT LOCKYER, D.D., LL.D.

3

PREFACE

“God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you” (Rom. 6:17). “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works” (II Tim. 3:16,17).

The crying need of the Church today is the knowledge of the Word of God. The Church is cold, indifferent to the one purpose for

which God has left it here — and that purpose is to win the lost to Christ. But it seems that some of God’s choicest leaders are falling into the different isms of today; the cause: the lack of the knowledge of the *doctrines* of God’s Word. God’s children are backsliding into sin; the cause: the lack of the knowledge of the *doctrines* of the Word of God. Christians must feed upon the Word of God to grow thereby. Thus, the Truth of God will act upon Christian lives and conduct.

The fact that man will not heed sound doctrine is a sign of the times — a sign that Christ is soon coming. “Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils” (I Tim. 4:1).

There is not a field of service anywhere but which demands of its pastors and ministers the right dividing of the Word of Truth. Souls are saved, yet these souls depend upon the Word for growth. The *Truth* will shape them, and *error* will misshape them. There is a vast difference between a person holding the Truth, and the Truth holding the person.

Therefore, in the study of the doctrines of the Scripture, may the student pray that not only shall he *know* the doctrines, but that they shall become a reality to his soul and spirit.

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Note: This concludes this block quote of Dr. Cambron's *Bible Doctrines* preface. (The referenced page numbers starting with "z" are from Zondervan's 1954 printed copy.)

Four Flaws in Previous Works

Immediately there are four principle flaws that need to be overhauled in previous works. Previous systematic theologies spend effort systematizing creeds, Roman dogma, philosophies, and "everything that man ever believed about God," rather than the systematization of Bible revelation. Current "Systematic Theologies" follow the deceived definition of Dr. Chafer who states that a systematic theology is an unabridged organized rendition of everything ever believed about God. Where is the sole-authority of the Bible in that? For example, the Westminster confession of faith establishes that God unchangeably decreed every thing that comes to pass... EVERYTHING! And that God decreed it all before the foundation of the world! The Bible is emphatic that Abraham, with his bargaining, Moses, with his intercession, Nineveh, with its repentance, Joash, with his arrows, Hezekiah, with his prayer, and Jesus, with his whosoever(s), each directly changed what God was going to do. Also, IF prayer changes things, so can we! And so can God.

One would expect Charles Hodge (1797-1878) to bow to such a Westminster creed, he was a Presbyterian. But when Augustus Strong (1836-1921), an American Baptist minister and Theologian, supports Westminster over the Bible, and Henry C. Thiessen (1883 - 1947), 1947 President of Los Angeles Baptist Theological Seminary, resoundingly supported Westminster over the Bible, and, finally, when Lewis Sperry Chafer, followed suit, it is time to re-write a systematic theology that presents what the Bible reveals over what the creeds state. Present systematic theology works are marred by what the Holy Catholic Church declared as truth. A Biblical one is direly needed.

Secondly, previous systematic theologies spend effort defending philosophies of man and rationality of man rather than systematizing Bible revelation. All the previous listed theologians spend undo time and effort wrestling with the ontological and teleological proof that there is a God. The Bible spends no effort in such vain philosophies of man. Also, Thiessen, particularly, expends great effort defending the

philosophical and Roman Catholic argument that man is only material and immaterial and NOT body, soul and spirit, i.e. a trichotomy in the image of God. In this error, he even calls Holy Scripture, just Paul's opinion.³¹ Chafer also makes reference to the dichotomy of man, but then later references his trichotomy; again Chafer has proven himself remarkably wordy, unclear, and inconsistent. He wanted to be all things to all denominations, even dispensational at times, but not at the expense of loosing the influential covenant theologians who taught at, and attended, Dallas Theological Seminary.

Thirdly all systematic theologies treated theology as a science. They tried to exalt it by calling it the “Queen of the Sciences”, but they still tried to discover truth by hypothesizing what it might be, exploring their hypothesis until it might be a theory about how God operates and thinks, and then supposing that, when their theory is believed by enough “scholars”, it was a discerned truth. That is how the scientific method discovers laws of natural science. That is the scientific method. It does not work on God who is Super-natural. Theology is not a science nor dare one use the scientific method to find the Truth of God. Once again, A Biblical Systematic Theology, with the Bible as its sole authority, was direly needed.

Lastly Thiessen and Chafer, by their own insistence, have no access to a verbally inspired, inerrant, infallible Holy Bible. They insist that nowhere in the world does such a Bible exist. Both base their systematic theologies on what textual critics, modern translators, and modern scholars thought God meant to say. A true theologian must base all theology on an inerrant, infallible, verbally inspired Holy Bible; it is our sole authority. For Baptists it is the sole authority for all faith and practice, and although we do have a reliably written and translated into English Holy Bible, we do not have a reliably written Systematic Theology in print. With this effort and your help we will get one in print, at least in eprint. Baptist Bible seminaries, colleges, institutes, and students deserve no less. Visit www.GSBaptistChurch.com/theology to follow this effort's ongoing development.

31 Henry Clarence Thiessen, Lectures in Systematic Theology (Eerdmans, 1949), 226-227.

The New Improved Systematic Methodology

A systematic theology's methodology must break down the larger very complex system into its subsystems and then analyze the most meaningful subsystem individually under its own merit. The system that is under consideration for a Biblical systematic theology is every truth that has been revealed in the inerrant, infallible, verbally inspired Word of God. Set aside and block from consideration what has been theorized by scholars, what philosophy supposes, and what is statistically believed by most people. Truth about Jehovah God cannot be found by scientific method, rational philosophy, or statistical analysis. God has revealed himself, and a thorough study of that revelation leads to the Truth that surpasses science of nature, philosophy of man, and the statistics of what man believes.

The Father of Systematic Theologies, Charles Hodge, supposed that theology was a science and theorized that the scientific method, used to explore the natural sciences, would work just fine on the Supernatural. It did not. "Scholars" hypothesizing and theorizing about Roman Church doctrine, supposing that they will thereby find "Truth," has been the antithesis of a Biblical systematic theology. It leaves "scholars" theorizing about how many angels can dance on the head of a pin, while the harm they've done to systematic theology is almost irreparable.

Chafer's desire that his theology would be an unabridged thorough exploration of "everything ever believed about God" has tarnished the field with two other dangerous methods. The proof of God and the Truth of God cannot be found in a quote of Socrates, Plato, Aristotle or Mani. Philosophy rattles around in the brain of man trying to discover Truth and forgets that God's ways are not man's ways, nor God's thoughts, man's thoughts (Isa 55:8-9). Only the revelation of God leads to the Truth of God.

Dr. Chafer's Systematic Theology strategy of "everything ever believed about God" leaves the theologian wallowing in the doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church, the Westminster Confession, Saint Augustine of Hippo, Saint Thomas Aquinas, John Calvin, the Humanist Manifesto, et al.

Prolegomena's Natural Conclusion

The strength of this 21st Century Biblical Systematic Theology is that it purports an ability to separate itself from the influences of Egypt and Rome, it does not rely on philosophy, and it does not treat things of God as mere science, full of theories about things, it uses only the inerrant, infallible, verbally inspired Word of God as its source of all truth. God reveals himself to man in a completed book.

The secret things belong unto the LORD our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law.

Deuteronomy 29:29

A systematic methodology based solely on God's Word, is the basis for the development, documentation, and publication of this Systematic Theology for the 21st Century. It will unite Biblical Theology and Practical Theology with a true Systematic Theology. It is a different approach than has ere been documented for theology. It hails from the halls of the systems engineer and systems analyst. It is holistic. It is prudent that it be the premise for every theology. It is presented here as a tool, that the student of God might:

Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. But shun profane and vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness. And their word will eat as doth a canker.

2Timothy 2:15-17

God bless you as you make your theology systematic.

A Systematic Theology for the 21st Century

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About the Author

Pastor Ed Rice is a retired USAF Systems Engineer surrendered to be a Baptist Preacher of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Saved in 1960 at the age of eight he grew up tutored in the Scriptures through Tuscorora Baptist Church in Addison NY, where he married his high-school sweetheart Beverly Cook Rice. Drafted into the military off of the dairy farm in 1972, Ed and Bev Rice raised 3 boys while serving as a Missile Technician in the USAF. After completing a USAF AECF bootstrap program he graduated from Ohio State University with a degree in electrical engineering and was commissioned in the USAF where he served until 1995 as a systems engineer and weapons integration specialist at Wright Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio, and Rome Laboratories, Rome NY. He finished his Masters degree in Electrical Engineering through The Air Force Institute of Technology in 1990.

After being commissioned as a USAF officer in 1982 he pursued his systems engineering work in several classified research and development programs. While moving around the USA in his twenty three year military career he was a youth pastor and associate pastor in Independent Baptist Churches near his station. In 1995 he became Captain Rice, USAF retired, and surrendered to be a Baptist Pastor.

In 1998 he took the senior pastorate at Good Samaritan Baptist Church, in Dresden, New York where he pursued his theological studies at Louisiana Baptist Theological Seminary. At LBU Pastor Rice received his second masters degree in 2013, and his PhD in 2017. His son Michael is US Army retired living near Fort Hood Texas, Shane is an Independent Baptist Missionary pastoring Chiesa Biblica Battista, Mazara Del Vallo, Italy, and Matthew is serving our Lord Jesus Christ near Hamilton NY. Capt Rice has spent seven years teaching math and science with the ABeka Christian High School Curriculum, and seven years teaching college mathematics, a love of his life, at community colleges near his church.

Dr. Rice's staunch belief in the preserved accuracy of the inspired Scriptures and his extensive background in systems engineering make him uniquely qualified to assemble "A Systematic Theology for the 21st Century."

Personal Testimony of Pastor Edward Rice.

I was saved in 1960 at the age of eight. My father and mother were saved and founding members of Fellowship Baptist Church in Gang Mills New York. In 1958 my dad, Levi O. Rice, an agnostic, was invited by Cecil Palm to be a founding member of that church; both of my parents were born-again-saved two weeks later. My mother, Doris was converted from Roman Catholicism, and became a Christian. She stopped her Roman penance and practiced Bible repentance, stopped praying to Mary and called upon the Lord Jesus Christ to save her. She was thus converted from Roman Catholicism to the Lord Jesus Christ. Everyone needs converted from something. Mom and Dad were now born again, and two years later I was saved in revival services with Evangelist Dale and Opel Linbaugh. Opel cut the flannel graph burden of sin off little Christian's back in her Pilgrim's Progress presentation, and I was born-again-saved before it hit the basement floor. In 1995 I retired from the USAF as a systems engineer and became an ordained Baptist Preacher of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. "Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matt 18:3). Being converted is quite like a new birth, Jesus said so. If you have not been converted you should trust Christ today, and you must tell him that that is your intent. (see Romans 10:9-13).

Back Cover Photo Text:

As a USAF retired systems engineer turned Baptist Preacher of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, and armed with a staunch belief in the preserved accuracy of the inspired Scriptures, I praise the Lord that he has provided me the unique opportunity to assemble **“A Systematic Theology for the 21st Century.”**

3/20/24 Description and Back Cover Text:

A systematic methodology based solely on God's Word, is the basis for the development, documentation, and publication of this Systematic Theology for the 21st Century. It will unite Biblical Theology and Practical Theology with a true Systematic Theology. It is a different approach than has ere been documented for theology. It hails from the halls of the systems engineer and systems analyst. It is holistic. It is prudent that it be the premise for every theology. It is presented here as a tool, that the student of God might, *“Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, ...”* (2Timothy 2:15) God bless you as you make your theology systematic.

All 12 Volumes are available: Vol 01 Prolegomena, Vol 02 Bibliology, Vol 03 Theology, Vol 04 Christology, Vol 05 Pneumatology, Vol 06 Anthropology, Vol 07 Hamartiology, Vol 08 Soteriology, Vol 09 Ecclesiology, Vol 10 Angelology, Vol 11 Eschatology, Vol 12 Epilogue. See GSBaptistChurch.com/theology

A Christian, being one who has individually confessed and accepted the atoning blood of Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, for their salvation, has a quickened, corrected, and personal relationship with their LORD God and Creator. Be sure you have that, but we also have a charge from him that we prayerfully develop a theology. This thorough carefully assembled Systematic Theology can be a great help.

As a USAF retired systems engineer turned Baptist Preacher of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, and armed with a staunch belief in the preserved accuracy of the inspired Scriptures, I praise the Lord that he has provided me the unique opportunity to assemble **“A Systematic Theology for the 21st Century.”**

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