

### *Two Books of Revelation and Their Relation to Knowing God*

WCF 1-1. *Although the light of nature, and the works of creation and providence do so far manifest the goodness, wisdom, and power of God, as to leave men inexcusable; yet they are not sufficient to give that knowledge of God, and of his will, which is necessary unto salvation.*

Belgic Confession: 2. By what means God is made known unto us

*We know him by two means; first, by the creation, preservation and government of the universe; which is before our eyes as a most elegant book, wherein all creatures, great and small, are as so many characters leading us to contemplate the invisible things of God, namely His power and divinity, as the apostle Paul says, Rom. 1:20. All which things are sufficient to convince men, and leave them without excuse. Secondly, he makes himself more clearly fully known to us by his holy and divine Word, that is to say, as far as is necessary for us to know in this life, to his glory and our salvation.*

*Psm. 19:1-4 The heavens are telling of the glory of God. And their expanse is declaring the work of His hands. Day to day pours forth speech. And night to night reveals knowledge. There is no speech or language where their voice is not heard. Their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world.*

*Rom. 1:18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, 19 because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. 20 For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse. 21 For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God, or give thanks; but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened.*

*1 Cor. 1:21 For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not {come to} know God, God was well-pleased through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe.*

#### 1. Characteristic of Book 1: Nature

- **Universal and Common to All**

*Men cannot open their eyes without being compelled to see him... He has engraved unmistakable marks of his glory, so clear and so prominent that even unlettered and stupid folk cannot plead the excuse of ignorance.*  
John Calvin

- **Insufficient In Itself**

*Although the Lord represents both himself and his everlasting Kingdom in the mirror of his words with very great clarity, such is our stupidity that we grow increasingly dull toward so manifest testimonies, and they flow away without profiting us. V.11*

*We ought not to rack our brains about God: but rather we should contemplate Him in His works... no long or toilsome proof is needed to elicit evidences that serve to illuminate and affirm the divine majesty... we are called to a knowledge of God; not that knowledge which, content with empty speculation, merely flits in the brain, but that which will be sound and fruitful if we duly perceive it, and if it takes root in the heart. V.1.9 John Calvin*

#### II. In Relation to Book 2: Super-Nature Explained in "Word"

- **Issues in Faith and Science (Infallibility and Fallibility... a partnership) (Acts 17)**

A. A. Hodge, *The Confession Of Faith* (1868)  
(On Chapter 1, IV, Section 1 "Of Creation")

The book of revelation and the book of nature are both from God and will be found when both are adequately interpreted to coincide perfectly.... The one (revelation in the bible) was designed and is admirably adapted to lay the foundation of an intelligent faith in Jehovah as the absolute Creator and the immediate former and providential ruler of all things. But it was not designed either to prevent or to take the place of scientific interpretation of all existing phenomena and of all traces of the past history of the world which God allows men to discover. Apparent discrepancies in established truths can have their ground only in perfect knowledge. God requires us both to believe and to learn. He imposes upon us at present the necessity of humility and patience.

- **Issues in Apologetics: “Another Playing Field” and the insufficiency of “evidentialist” (Reason seeking Faith) apologetics without spiritual transformation in Presuppositions (1Cor. 2:9ff) (Faith Seeking Understanding)**

Insufficiency of Nature In the Knowledge of God: Two Illustrations:

1. Descarte:

- a. I have an idea of God in my mind.
- b. The idea of God is infinite and perfect
- c. An infinite and perfect idea could only come from an infinite and perfect being.
- d. God must exist in order to be the origin of the idea of God

The only alternative is that it is innate in me, just as the idea of myself is innate in me. And one certainly ought not to find it strange that God, in creating me, placed this idea within me to be like the mark of the workman imprinted on his work; and it is likewise not essential that the mark shall be something different from the work itself.

Descartes, *Meditations: IVs*

2. Locke:

Though God has given us no innate ideas of himself; though he has stamped no original characters on our minds wherein we may read his being; yet having furnished us with those faculties our minds are endowed with, he hath not left himself without witness; since we have sense, perception, and reason and cannot want a clear proof of him, as long as we carry ourselves about us. *Nor can we justly complain of our ignorance in this great point; since he has so plentifully provided us with the means to discover and know him.*

John Locke, *Essay concerning Human Understanding*, Chapter 10.1

"Teleological Argument" (Argument from Design)

1. All design implies a Designer
2. Great design implies a great designer
3. There is great design in the world.
4. Therefore there must be a great Designer of the world.

*Seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand... as the Prophet Isaiah has said, "You shall indeed hear but never understand, and you shall indeed see but never perceive.*

*Matthew 13:13*

The Two Playing Fields:

1. God is the final court of appeal
2. Man is the final court of appeal

*Sin will reveal itself in the field of knowledge in the fact that man makes himself the ultimate court of appeal in the matter of all interpretation... Man has declared his autonomy as over against God.*

*When we say that sin is ethical we do not mean, however, that sin involved only the will of man and not also his intellect. Sin involved every aspect of man's personality. All of man's reactions in every relation in which God had set him were ethical and not merely intellectual; the intellectual itself is ethical.*

*C. Van Til*

A Confessional Approach:

*Speculative Schemes and systems have their intrinsic interest, but none will do justice to what occurred through Christ until we view it from within Christ, from that position in which a saving trust has placed us, a position created by the Holy Spirit in the presence of faith in accordance with that Word which the Holy Spirit himself inspired. In Christology, then, we can only philosophize from faith, not to faith, and our thought must resonate with what Christ reveals himself to be through Scripture with the revealed purpose of his coming and not with the ways we might like to see him as modern people. This means that to understand Christ aright, we must also know something about our own guilt. We must know ourselves to be sinners. We must have hungered and thirsted after righteousness. The New Testament, after all, was not written for the curious, for historians, or even for biblical scholars, but for those in all ages and cultures who want to be forgiven and to know God.*  
*David Wells, The Person of Christ...*

○ **Issues in Worship (Gravitas and Faith) (Pss 148) (Participation in Two Temples)**

Therefore TWO temples:

- 1) One cannot be discerned apart from the other temple FIRST We need the Special temple that mediates God as redeemer, in order that we can access the Common temple that reveals God as creator!!

BOTH temples are filled with the presence of God, even Jesus Christ—again, just one though, the sacramental-temple of word and sacrament is able to convert us, re-create us, in order to see Jesus in the other creation-temple

- 2) Creation-Temple as a place of spiritual renewal AND communion with Christ—albeit insufficient in itself apart from church-temple means of grace in word, sacrament, communal order of one anothering!

Summary:

Creation was designed to serve a far more exalted function than the housing of a variety of creature-beings in the several distinctive areas of the earth. The cosmic structure was built as a habitation for the Creator himself. Heaven and earth were erected as a house of God, a palace of the Great King, the seat of sovereignty of the Lord of the covenant. The garden of Eden was not only the original land flowing with milk and honey, it was the original holy land. Paradise was a sanctuary, a temple-garden. Ezekiel calls it "the garden of God" (28:13) and Isaiah "the garden of the Lord" (51:3) The presence of this Glory gave promise that an ectypal likeness of the archetypal sanctuary would be reproduced in the visible world. Inchoate deep and darkness would be transformed into a cosmic temple for the enthronement-revelation of the divine Glory-light.

For you shall go out in joy and be led forth in peace; the mountains and the hills before you shall break forth into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands. Isaiah 55:1

*"In him we live and move and have our being";*

"Elizabeth Barrett Browning:

*Earth's crammed with heaven,  
And every common bush aflame with God;  
But only those who see take off their shoes,  
The rest sit round it and pluck blackberries.*