

Reformed Theology's Reformations Are Not Producing a Biblical Systematic Theology

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REFORMED THEOLOGY'S REFORMATIONS
ARE NOT PRODUCING A BIBLICAL SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY

A Thesis Presented to the Faculty
of Louisiana Baptist University

In Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for
Master of
Theological Studies

By

Pastor Edward G. Rice

December 2011

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Preface

In reading Thiessen, an Evangelical Protestant's 1949 *Introductory Lectures in Theology* and comparing Doerksen's 1979 Revision of the same, and then comparing each to Cambron, a Fundamentalist Baptist's 1954 *Bible Doctrines* work, the failure of the reformed theologian to spiral into a truly Biblical systematic theology is apparent. Protestants, as reformers reforming an apostate Catholic doctrine, have not and cannot produce a Biblical systematic theology. The Catholic doctrines steeped into the reformed theologian's background cause him to have certain errant concepts locked into place before he ever opens his Bible. Augustinian philosophies about predestination, concepts about millennial reign of Christ, about original sin of man, about the depravity of man and the creation of his soul, concepts which pit the decrees of God against the free will of man, concepts that will not be much effected by what the Bible record actually reveals, cause the reformed theologian to be extremely bias in any systematic theology. This bias needs to be systematically documented in a work which I will herein endeavor.

Subject: Your Thesis Grade

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Pastor Rice,

We received your thesis, it looked great, and we are delighted to place it in our LBU/LBTS library alongside the works of outstanding grads of the past like Chuck Missler, Jimmy DeYoung, Robert Sumner, Bill Gothard, and others (some of my heroes in the faith, whom I expect may be some of yours as well).

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God bless you,

Steve Pettey, D Min, PhD 318.686.2360

Dean of Louisiana Baptist Theological Seminary

Reformed Theology's Reformations Are Not Producing a Biblical Systematic Theology

Introduction

Reformed Augustinian Theology is, as its name so aptly captures, a reformation of bad Augustinian Theology that previously framed up the belief system of Roman Catholic Theology. The reformers began the reformation of the Roman Catholic theology and reformations have surged and subsided, reinvented and retreated in spurts and lapses until a common question is asked “Exactly what is reformed theology?” It is very conceivable that such a question needs a time tag because the reformation is on going and one needs to ask “What is reformation theology today?”, or “What was reformation theology at the turn of the century?” This work will analyze this rate of change for reformation theology. It is feasible to understand where the transformation began, in the heart of Roman Catholic Doctrine, and where it is to land, in the heart of Biblical Baptist Doctrine. It is more feasible to examine three major snags that have blocked the progress of this reformation. What initiated the reformers to depart from Catholicism and its horrid soteriology with its penance, purgatory and indulgences? Although reformations began at this point, the transition from Catholic doctrine to Bible Doctrine has not been consistent nor complete. Catholicism is herein likened to a hurtling asteroid, not a solid mass, but a huge mass of conglomerated debris which is hurtling through space on a trajectory away from an epicenter of truth. When it collides with a force called reformation the bulk of the debris that breaks off continues on that same general trajectory, but fragments do head off in completely different directions. Treating Reformed Augustinian Theology as a new mass of hurtling debris begs the question, “What is its general trajectory? Is it now circling towards the epicenter of truth?” or does it continue in the venue of its mother Church spiraling ever further from the truth? This model focuses and clarifies the position and course of Reformed Augustinian Theology with a clarity never before addressed.

I. The Hermeneutical Spiral vs Reformed Theology's Spiral

Theology, like mathematics is considered a science. In mathematics there are formulas for a multitude of shapes to include circles, ellipses and spirals. A spiral holds great interest in this analysis and only minor variation in its formula values distinguish an expanding spiral from a collapsing spiral; the rate of its expansion or contraction is equally arithmetically touchy. There is a golden spiral which has an interesting relationship to the golden rectangle¹ and which is considered in mathematics as the 'perfect spiral.' In the ocean it shows up as a sea shell; on land in the sunflower, in the mountains in a ram's horn, in the atmosphere as a hurricane or a twister, and in the cosmos as an expanding galaxy or a disappearing black hole; it is almost omnipresent. In theology such a wonder shows up in a quest for systematic truth about God. Grant R. Osborne has labeled well this quest for complete understanding of the God who reveals himself as "The Hermeneutical Spiral" when he wrote a comprehensive introduction to Biblical interpretation.²

As in mathematics this hermeneutical spiral may be ever expanding away from a center or ever zeroing in on a center. Ever since the reformers, led off by Martin Luther (1483-1546 A.D.), broke away from Catholic doctrine and contended that salvation was by grace "through faith; ... not of works, lest any man should boast,"³ it has been expected that the reformer's reformed theology would enter

1 Euclid of Alexandria Egypt (325 B.C. – 265 B.C.) Greek Mathematician, author of *The Elements*, and known as the Father of Geometry, defines a golden rectangle as one wherein removing a perfect square from one end results in another golden rectangle in the other to continue on infinitely. The ratio of length to width is then $1 : (1 + \sqrt{5})/2$, called the golden ratio, and connecting the diagonals of each square produces the golden, or perfect spiral.

2 Grant R. Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral*, (InterVarsity Press, Downers Grove, Ill, 1991), 12.

3 Ephesians 2:8-9, In 1517 Martin Luther wrote *Ninety-Five Theses* and refused to retract all of his writings at the demand of Pope Leo X in 1520 and the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V at the Diet of Worms in 1521.

into a hermeneutical spiral⁴, ever zeroing in on a center point of all the Revelation of Jehovah God. Such a systematic zeroing in on all the revealed truth that we have about Jehovah God and his Anointed Only Begotten Son would be called 'systematic theology'. This work will contend that Reformed Augustinian Theology is ever circling but never zeroing in and ergo not an effectual systematic theology. Although Reformed Theology, more properly labeled Reformed Augustinian Theology because all the errors of Catholicism are in embryo stage in the teachings of Saint Augustine⁵, has broken from many tentacles of Catholic doctrine, it continues, like the course of its mother, on an expanding spiral ever moving further from the truth and centerpiece of God's Revelation. Like a fragment of rock which brakes from a meteor hurling through space the whole protestant reformation, with its Reformed Augustinian Theology, continues generally on the same course established by its Mother Church and her doctrine; a course spiraling away from the eternal truth of revealed Scripture. The course correction has often been stated another way, 'the reformers were correct as far as they went, but they did not go far enough.' It will herein be demonstrated that they did not even go far enough to reverse the modulus of their spiral and Reformed Augustinian Theology, in all its stages of reformation, is still ever moving away from a good hermeneutic, it is yet spiraling away from the centerpiece of Jehovah God's Revelation to man.

A. The Hermeneutical Spiral as a Model

The remarkable thing about simplistic models of very complex systems is that they are understandable, memorable, and applicable; i.e. they work. They help us comprehend and keep in focus the big picture, ... the whole system, while giving understanding of the observable details. In theology the 'big picture' is indeed big, ... it is

4 Hermeneutics used herein is the science interpretation and the methodology of interpretation of the Biblical text.

5 Robert Anderson, *The Bible Or The Church, 2nd ed.*, (London: Pickering and Inglis, n.d.), quoted "The Roman Church was molded by Augustine into the form it has ever since maintained. Of all the errors that later centuries developed in her teaching, there is scarcely one that cannot be found in embryo in his writings." 158.

infinite. There will be no understandable, memorable, and applicable concept for finite minds outside of a simplistic model. The hermeneutical spiral is an exceptional model for this purpose.

When setting out to capture and categorize all attainable knowledge on a subject the task is called 'science', (sci·ence noun, def. 1.a. The observation, identification, description, experimental investigation, and theoretical explanation of phenomena.)⁶. When the subject is God the task is called theology, ergo theology is a science, and when one is very systematic in his approach it would result in a systematic theology, There shall be no apology for this discipline even though others have previously muddied the trail we must take. Begin such a path by reading the Holy Bible from Genesis to Revelation. It is, as discovered in that reading, the complete revelation of God to man. If you make it through the 'begats' of Genesis, the Hebrew names in Numbers, the killings and wars of the historical books, the poetry, the prophecies, the gospels, the acts and the letters of apostles and the Revelation of Jesus Christ, you have made it further than the casual reader but in one pass through the book you have not assimilated all the knowledge of this revelation. You have made but the first circle around theology. In order to zero in on all central truths of this revelation one must take another pass through each of the 66 books and begin, in several subject areas, to 'hone-in' on, and gain focus of each central truth. This multi pass 'circling-through' and 'honing-in' on what is herein revealed is aptly likened to a spiral; i.e. a hermeneutical spiral. In mathematics the remarkable thing about the spiral is that it may be spiraling in, spiraling out, or ever circling without apparent change. So to is ones approach to theology. In physics a spiral is caused by an outside force, for example gravity, and a change of course for any spiraling item necessitates yet another outside force to influence it, for example a momentum, collision, or a new gravitational attraction. We have then, in the spiral, an excellent model, and an exceptional tool to help us understand how we understand theology. The outside forces are not gravities acting on a rock but similar tugs and attractions acting on our spirit and mind to move our soul.

6 (*The American Heritage Dictionary, 3rd ed.*, under the word “science”)

A profound and exemplary use of this model may further document its simplicity and application. Countless volumes have not exhausted a core consideration of systematic theology, the doctrine of Christ, and particularly the deity of Christ. In the Bible Christ was clearly and emphatically the Son of God and the Son of man. God is infinite, man is finite, and our finite mind will never comprehend this union. Was Jesus omniscient, omnipotent and omnipresent? If Jesus was as much God as if he were not man, and as much man as if he were not God, as is the best worded consideration of this dilemma, and God is omniscient, omnipotent, and omnipresent, then Jesus was as well. The Reformed Theology 'jury' is in on this, all the major theologians are in lock step agreement that baby Jesus, lying there in a manger of hay was indeed, yeah must needs be, (... although it defies all other logic), he was then and forever is omniscient, omnipotent and omnipresent. They point to their Bible and quote that he knew Hebrew without learning, did marvelous miracles with his own power and said I am with you always, ergo present in heaven and on earth, ergo omniscient, omnipotent and omnipresent. Our finite minds will not fully grasp such infinite combinations. And those who would wrestle with the Reformed Augustinian Theology's illogical determinations are accused of having even lesser finite minds.

For this author a far better understanding is attained, and more conceivable model is found in our little understanding of a helical spiral. Jesus set aside the glory which he once had when he took on the finiteness of humanity. When he was an infant he had no knowledge of Hebrew, Greek or Aramaic letters, he was not able to flee to Egypt on his own power, and he could only be in one place at one time. As he *“increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man”* (Luke 2:52) he embarked on a hermeneutical spiral, a golden spiral, truly a perfect spiral wherein he ended at a center point having all the glory, the power and the authority that he had in the beginning.

Conceive in this model that there must needs be a force ever acting on a body to cause its ever decreasing 'orbit' into a center point. The same force that acted on Jesus the Christ, The Son of God, The Son of man, and “drew” him from finite humanity back to his infinite deity is worth our analysis because it is equally available to you and I. It is a devils lie that *“ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil”*

(Gen. 3:5). This force can not make man something he never was: no matter how many would believe Joseph Smith, Charles Taze Russel, or the Devil's lie. But the force can restore one to the state that they were previous; i.e. for Christ, fully reinstated to his position in the God head; for man, fully reinstated to his absolute innocence before, and fellowship with God his creator. This force that can draw one to center is the inspired Word of God enlivened by the Spirit of God. Job 32:8 says "But there is a spirit in man: and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding."

In physics a body can embark on a spiral in, or on a spiral out, or on a perpetually circling or constant orbit. It is all dependent on the moments, momentums, and forces at work on the body. Major outside forces can indeed change a body's natural course. This model of a spiral is a very effective tool to analyze the course of Reformed Augustinian Theology, and comprehend where it is going by analyzing where it has been.

B. The Word of God, The Acting Force.

The sole authority for all theology must needs be the Holy Scriptures. In the studying, understanding, and believing of the Scriptures is found the hermeneutical spiral which formed a reasonable basis for our use of the spiral in this analysis. It has been stated that the Word of God is the force that induces a body to spiral toward center. Resisting the force, equivalent to questioning or misrepresenting the Holy Scriptures, results in decreasing the modulus of the spiral and thus no longer spiraling into the center. Rejection and rebellion towards the force, equivalent to rejecting a verse as errant or refusing to believe a verse of the Holy Scripture can result in a reversing of the modulus of the spiral and thus ever expanding away from central truth. With this rough description of our model the inner workings may be more finely examined.

The first premise, that Holy Scripture must be our Sole authority for theology is expressly defended by authors of systematic theology. Thiessen's *Introductory Lectures in Theology* supposes that theology is only possible because of the general and special revelation of God, and

the mental and spiritual endowments of man.⁷ The Bible, he further contends, is the only inerrant revelation of God, which is the complete embodiment of all special revelation.⁸

Although it seems relatively obvious to say that every thing we know about God must come from the God who reveals himself, it may be less obvious and worth repeating that this revelation, given to finite man by an infinite God, must needs be inerrant, i.e., God's word will not lead us into error, i.e. He reveals himself to man perfectly. The imperfections within hermeneutics are not on account of Him, and man's tendency to change or dismiss portions of His revelation are rejection and rebellion against the force which moves us toward central truth. Reformed Theologians Thiessen, Strong, Hodge, and Shedd each affirm the first assertion about infallibility but then practice the latter, rejecting and rebelling against certain Scripture. They thus disengage from a good hermeneutical spiral. They justify this brazen rejection by using allegorical methodology which originates in their mother Church, and by severely restricting 'inspiration'. Thiessen's outlandish and illogical declaration that "only the original autographs were inspired" resolves, for him, their propensity to dismiss inerrancy. It has no consideration that the inerrant Scripture says "holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." They insist that the authors only 'wrote' as they were moved, and that writing was lost by shoddy, opinionated copyists! Ergo they try to restrict and limit 'inspiration' and bound and contain inerrancy. Dr. Grady put it more cynically in his book *Given by Inspiration*, "It is the thesis of this book that whenever the Scripture is allowed to speak for itself, the doctrine of inspiration will be seen to have a wider jurisdiction than the scholar is willing to concede."⁹ Dismissing, allegorizing and rejecting plain Scripture with a dismissal of the inerrancy, which they previously establish as essential to theology, must be further addressed in this thesis.

7 Henry Clarence Thiessen, *Introductory Lectures in Systematic Theology*, (Grand Rapids, Mich., William B. Eerdmann Publishing Company, 1949), 31.

8 *Ibid.*, 41-42.

9 William Grady, *Given by Inspiration*, (Grady Publications Inc. Swartz Creek, MI, 2010), 89.

II. The Baseline of Error for Reform

To evaluate the rate of reformation in Reformed Theology it is worth while to evaluate how much reform is necessary. There are three major fields of theology where Catholicism strayed from the truth and a forth which sets their error in stone. The theologians call them soteriology, ecclesiology, and eschatology. Roman Catholic's misrepresentation of truth in these three areas is then permanently secured in their very bad Bibliology, herein referred to as Scripturology.

The reformers finally revolted against the grievous errors in Catholic soteriology but the grievous error of Roman Catholic ecclesiology and eschatology still seethe and boil in Reformed Theology, and the over ridding root of these grievous errors is still found in Reformed Theology's tainted Bibliology. Each of these theological shortfalls need to be more fully outlined and sourced before the baseline of their error can be established .

A. Baseline of Error in Soteriology

Soteriology is the doctrine of 'So Great Salvation' a phrase from Hebrews chapter 2. The word comes from the Greek 'soterion', meaning "a savior's deliverance" and the Greek 'ology', meaning "the accumulation of knowledge and learning."¹⁰ What we know about salvation (and all the other 'ologies' herein examined) should be assimilated from an inerrant, infallible source and not from Greek philosophy or 'Church Fathers.' A baseline of Roman Catholic error about 'So Great Salvation' cannot be fully established without a reasonable description of the Biblical truth about the subject.

Questions beg to be asked on this topic. Who can get saved? How does one get saved? What happens when one is saved? How assured is a one of their salvation?, and How long is this salvation assured for?

The Scriptures dictate that salvation is available to 'whosoever will' in 'all the earth'.

¹⁰ (*American Heritage Dictionary, Third Edition*, under the word "soteriology").

“That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3:15 -16). “Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else” (Isa 45:22).

The Scriptures dictate that there is nothing one can 'do' to attain eternal life.

“But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away” (Isa 64:6). “Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us” (Tit 3:5), “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast” (Eph 2:8-9).

"What shall a man do to attain eternal life?" The question looms before every religion. There is but one right answer to this question. How a teacher, denomination, religion or church answers this one question determines whether they are a true religion or a false religion. Catholicism failed this test and the glare of their error on this question is what initiated the whole reformation.

The Scriptures dictate that some real things happen to an individual when Jesus 'saves' them, 'quickens' them, and gives them eternal life. When Jesus Christ saves someone he does not leave one sitting around wondering if they 'got it'. There is literally a 'born again' experience, as he said, when one is born spiritually. Just as one is born physically into this world one is born spiritually into the kingdom of God, that is the whole argument of John 3. In John 5:21,24-25 he further clarifies:

For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will. ... Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth

on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life. Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live.

When one is quickened by Christ the Bible dictates five distinct things which happen. A born-again one is 1) **Converted** via repentance and faith in Christ, 2) one is **Justified** before God through Christ, 3) one is **Regenerated or Quickened**, i.e. made alive where once you were dead in trespasses and sin, 4) one is **Indwelt**, permanently, by the Holy Spirit of God, and 5) one is **Baptized** into the body of Christ, (there is no water in this spiritual, not physical baptism). In accord with the Scriptures, these all happen in an instant and are all permanent and everlasting.¹¹

Christ did not misspeak when he said in John 3:16 "Has, (present perfect tense) everlasting life." When these five events occur simultaneously in ones life, there is little doubt that some thing has happened to the individual. Generally they can tell five other things that happened; they can tell (1) that they 'got saved', generally (2) 'when' they got saved, usually (3) who showed them the way of salvation in Scriptures, necessarily (4) 'how great' it is to be saved, and (5) how great it is to know that they are saved. Again the Scriptures are clear:

He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son. And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God (1John 5:10-13).

¹¹ Edward Rice, *A Biblical Understanding of The New Birth Clarifies Doctrines about Sacraments, Election, and Perseverance of Saints* 2000, published at <http://www.gsbaptistchurch.com/seminary> (accessed 11/11/2011).

Baptists call that giving a testimony of when God saved you. Every member of a Baptist Church has a salvation testimony. They state it before being baptized in believers baptism, and they are baptized by immersion as a public declaration of that testimony, and they must do both before they can be a member of a Baptist Church.

The Scriptures dictate that once one has been converted and brought from death unto life, quickened by Christ, declared Justified by the Father, indwelt by the Spirit of God and wholly immersed into the body of the Lord Jesus Christ, there is no going back. This seems perfectly obvious from the understanding of what actually and Biblically happens when one is saved, but it has been a contentious issue among Protestants because of their poor doctrinal start into soteriology, the doctrine of so great salvation.

This then is the concise Biblical answer to the five questions, Who can get saved?, How does one get saved?, What happens when one is saved?, How assured is one of their salvation?, and How long is this salvation assured for? This long established baseline of Biblical truth on soteriology is comprehensively developed in other references but is presented here to capture the basis for a baseline whereby one can determine the reform that is necessary to Roman Catholic Doctrine on the subject of soteriology. The Roman Catholic answers to the same questions must be more fully examined.

The question of 'Who can get saved?' is answered in Roman Catholic Doctrine in predestination. The declaration for the predestination of sinners to be saints can be found in their Catechism, "To God, all moments of time are present in their immediacy. When therefore he establishes his eternal plan of "predestination," he includes in it each person's free response to his grace."¹²

But this can also be more so extracted from Saint Augustine's declarations they rely on. The grossest errors of Saint Augustine center around an over riding authority of 'The Church' and, center stage in this consideration is a 'compulsory salvation'. From this authors book, "Augustine twisted and hyper extended Scripture unmercifully to

12 Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1993, Pt1Sect2Chpt2Art4p2, #600, http://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0015/_INDEX.HTM (accessed 12/18/2011).

arrive at, and defend these doctrines. The ugly twists still permeate the theology books of our day.”¹³

Augustinian error fell from St. Augustine (A.D. 354 - 480) Bishop of Hippo, North Africa, in two major areas. The first in the doctrine of the church, the second in the doctrine of salvation. The two areas of error met where salvation was compulsory. In Augustin's mind salvation could be forced upon a soul by infant baptism or by his doctrine of the two swords, wielded by the Roman Church. But he also devised that God himself had to force salvation onto totally depraved souls by His Sovereignty. All the errors of catholicism are in embryo stage in the teachings of Augustine.¹⁴ ... These errors came to full and wretched bloom in the Roman Catholic Imperial Church of the medieval period. When Constantine (A.D. 306-337) saw the political advantage of replacing the mandatory Roman paganism with a mandatory 'Christian' paganism he locked arms with the Roman Church and brought a second sword, a steel sword, into their mix. The Church at Rome took the allegorizing of Augustine and concluded with him that Jesus said to sell your garments and buy swords and that two swords are sufficient¹⁵ (Luke 22:38).

Constantine commanded that there be 'one state ordered religion' for 'one unified empire.' This scheme used God's Sword of the Spirit, supposedly wielded by the Roman Church, united with Man's Sword of Steel, wielded by a magistrate, to force the Kingdom of God upon all the unified Roman Empire. What became called Constantinianism (or compulsory Christianity, vs. voluntary salvation by faith via free will), is found in its embryonic stage in Augustin's theology. Leonard Verduin writes in *The Reformers and Their Stepchildren* “The theological absurdity that God preselected individual souls for salvation and forces his will on them with an irresistible grace is but

13 Edward Rice, *The Biblical Doctrine of Election and Predestination*, (ISBN: 978-0-578-02455-4, Pastor E. G. Rice Publishing, 54 Main St. Box 99, Dresden NY 14441, 2009,) 9.

14 Robert Anderson, *The Bible Or The Church, 2nd ed.*, (London: Pickering and Inglis, n.d.), quoted “The Roman Church was molded by Augustine into the form it has ever since maintained. Of all the errors that later centuries developed in her teaching, there is scarcely one that cannot be found in embryo in his writings,” 158.

15 St. Augustine of Hippo, *The Writings Against The Manichaeans And Against The Donatists* (LC Call no:BR60), html npnf104 iv.ix.XIX, 195, [Palm copy page 338].

one of the problems of Augustinian's compulsory salvation theology."¹⁶ Augustine's compulsory salvation via infant baptism, via 'be baptized' or 'be burned' or via God's sovereignty has caused many a Baptist, Anabaptist, Monetanist, Waldensian, Donatist, and Bible Believer their martyrdom. Baptists needn't lean toward it in any form today, especially not in the realm of election or foreordained salvation of some individuals.

Augustine gets worse in his error as he continues to allegorize and misconstrue Scripture as follows:

This (namely the 'enlarged fulfillment' idea which now puts the Church in position to coerce) He (Christ) shows plainly enough in the parable of the wedding feast; after He had summoned the invited ones ... and the servants have said 'It has been done as you ordered and yet there is room' the Master said 'Go out in the highways and hedges and compel them to come in in order that my house may be full.' Now observe how that it was 'bring them in' and not 'compel them,' by which the incipient condition of the Church is signified, during which she was but growing toward the position of being able to compel. Since it was right by reason of greater strength and power to coerce men to the feast of eternal salvation therefore it was said later ... 'Go out into the highways and hedges and compel them to come in.'¹⁷

He goes on with his theology of coercion into the kingdom but understand here that salvation is obtained by listening to the Scriptures, not by listening to the Roman Catechism:

Perseverance in faith: Faith is an entirely free gift that God makes to man. We can lose this priceless gift, as St. Paul indicated to St. Timothy: "Wage the good warfare, holding faith and a good conscience. By rejecting conscience, certain persons have made shipwreck of their faith." To live, grow,

16 Leonard Verduin, *The Reformers And Their Stepchildren*, (Grand Rapids Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1964), 65.

17 Augustine, *Letter to Donatus*, No. 173.

and persevere in the faith until the end we must nourish it with the word of God; we must beg the Lord to increase our faith, it must be "working through charity," abounding in hope, and rooted in the faith of the Church.¹⁸

Understand that from this misuse of Scriptures they suppose ones salvation is secured and maintained by begging the Lord to increase ones faith. It is not. Nor is it secured by works of any sort. Catechism #162 misrepresents the new birth and salvation of a soul which is only attained by calling on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ (Rom 10:13) not by working through the sacramental system of any Church.

B. Baseline of Error in Ecclesiology

When considering the rate of reform necessary to correct the Roman Catholic error about the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ, one primarily encounters a binary decision. Either Christ intended that there be one unified body united, directed and controlled by a human and "infallible" vicar of Christ here on earth, or he intended that local bodies of believers remain autonomous, independently controlled by congregational rule, and under the overseer of a fallible under-shepherd called a Pastor or Bishop, which office is to be occupied by an ordained Elder. This turns into a binary, this or that, decision because just a little compromise on either end of these two extremes results in a multi-headed, this will never work, chaotic disintegration of unity and leadership. One might end up with a multitude of sects, each with their own hierarchy of control over a small group of believers in separated denominations. Each might pretend that they are the right ones while still contending that they are all bound together in a unified body of Christ which is now gone invisible and designated the bride of Christ. This is a binary decision because you can not leave the Catholic Church under an "infallible" vicar of Christ just a little bit. One will indeed need to go all the way back to the Biblical model for an un-conglomerated position here.

18 Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1993, Pt 1, Sect 1, Chap 3, #162, http://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0015/_INDEX.HTM (accessed 12/18/2011).

Ecclesiology is the assimilation of all the attainable knowledge about the called out, assembled body of believers referred to as the Church. The primary concern in this research is more particularly the definition and the control and leadership model used for the Church. The Roman Catholic's error in ecclesiology is brazen and present in its name. Catholic means Universal. The Church at Rome coupled itself to the Roman Emperor to usurp itself as the sole authority and dictator of a unified Catholic Church to which all other local churches must ascribe allegiance or be terminated. That may be succinct and brazen but it is accurate. The Roman Catholic Church 'evolved' a hierarchy of control and invented a papal line of descendents starting from Peter to insist and demand that their current 'Father' was authentic and infallible.

To say that this is foreign to the Scripture and the teachings of Christ is an understatement, and to say that one can reform this concept and come up with a reasonable ecclesiology is absurd. Such a Catholic Church mentality needs to be totally abandoned while a New Testament local assembly with a Biblically based model of leadership needs to be embraced.

A good definition of the church is essential in differentiating a true ecclesiology. While Thiessen soft shoes and completely side steps the exactness of the word *ecclesia*, Cambron and Ryrice both accentuate its importance. The fact that the Bible and Baptists exaggerate the Local Church over the Catholic Church is captured effectively in the assembling and assembly ingredients of the definition of *eccleisa*. Thiessen leaves it off completely because it does not fit his concept of the Catholic Church. (In actuality the pure and completely "catholic church" will not be assembled until its Rapture, when the tares and pretenders will be left behind.) A thorough definition of *ecclesia* is essential to seeing the Bible and the Baptist's emphasis on the assembly of the Local Church. The NT word '*ecclesia*' is properly defined as: the called together (often misnomered 'called out') assembly of believers in Jesus Christ. Note the emphasis is on the assembly and the called together above the called, or called out.

Likewise a clear differentiation between the Catholic Church concept and the local church concept is essential to construct the Roman Catholic baseline of error and the Bible based baseline of truth.

Cambron again clarifies this best. The Bible says in Mt 16:18 “And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” The word *ecclesia* is used in 4 ways, #1 a local assembly, “Unto the church of God which is at Corinth ...”; #2 local assemblies, “unto the churches of Galatia: Grace be to you and peace ...”; #3 the body of living believers unnumbered “beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it ...”; and #4 the complete body of Christ, “Husbands, love your wives even as Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it ...”; but NEVER as a catholic body assembled and organized to be head over any other part of the body!¹⁹

In Mt. 16:18 Jesus is speaking of the church as in sample #4, as the complete body of Christ. Thus one can contend Thiessen's assertion that 1Cor 15:9, Gal 1:13, and Phil 3:6, with cf Acts 8:3 (the persecuted Church) is speaking specifically of a catholic, universal Church. For the Bible Says 1Co 15:9 “*For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God...*”, Ga 1:13 “*For ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it: ...*”, Php 3:6 “*Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless ...*”, Ac 8:3 “*As for Saul, he made havock of the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women committed them to prison.*” Again the word *ecclesia* is used in 4 ways, #1 a local assembly; #2 local assemblies; #3 the body of living believers unnumbered; and #4 the complete body of Christ; but NEVER as a catholic body assembled and organized to be head over any other part of the body! In these references the church is referenced as in sample #3, as the body of living believers unnumbered .

There is not much use of a Catholic Church in a Biblical ecclesiology. The Apostles never addressed messages to a Catholic Church, always addressing them to local churches. Romeish doctrine went where Apostles would never go, attempting to address messages to the 'Catholic Church', thinking themselves Popes, or Church

19 Cambron, Mark G., “Bible Doctrines”, Zondervan Publishing House, 1954, pg 214-215.

Fathers, eventually even thinking themselves infallible. What they hold is indeed a very dangerous and misconstrued ecclesiology.

C. Baseline of Error in Eschatology

Eschatology is the doctrine of last things more particularly the second advent of Christ and the events that unfold afterwards. Roman Catholic eschatology took a hideous and brazen wrong turn from what the Bible describes as soon coming. Reforming such a radical departure from literal Scripture will necessitate quite a major overhaul. Thus evaluating Reformed Augustinian Theology's eschatology can be a very revealing measure when it comes to evaluating the reformer's progress in moving toward Biblical truth.

The foundation for Roman Catholic Eschatology is the genius combination and melding of Christianity with Greek philosophy. Such a toxic mixture was first made palatable by Clement of Alexandria. (150-215 A.D). Consider that Clement's father was alive to witness the Roman Empires annihilation of the Jews from Jerusalem and the destruction of the entire city. The constructed plateau on the top of Mount Moriah, holding Herod's magnificent temple, the temple Jesus cleared out with a whip twice, was leveled. It was scraped level, and not one of Herod's magnificent stones remained on top of another. So overpowering was the complete annihilation of Jews and Judaism that nobody, Clement included, could believe that they would ever be completely restored. Clement is the first recorded scholar of the Scripture to wholly dismiss the promised restoration of the twelve tribes of Israel. He rejected the literal return of Christ to set on the literal throne of David, on God's literal Hill of Zion. It was absolutely inconceivable at that time.

Clement of Alexandria, Greek founder of the school of Alexandria, must now found and develop the allegorical exegetical method, or believe that God could promise and do the impossible. He did the former when he should have done the latter. Dr. Virkler says of him “A well known patristic exegete, Clement of Alexandria (150-215 C.A.)²⁰

20 C.A., usually C.E., Is the modernist 'please don't mention the birth of Christ in my calendar' way of saying A.D. . Anno Dommini in Dionyseus Exiguus' Latin 'Year of our Lord.' (*American Heritage Dictionary 3rd ed.*, under the word “Anno Dommini”).

Clement believed that Scriptures hide their true meaning so that mere humans might become inquisitive and because it is not suitable for everyone, particularly mere laity, to understand. He theorized that Scripture has both a literal and a spiritual meaning, with the deepest riches available only to those who understand the deeper spiritual sense.”²¹

Three truths important to this research are captured in Virkler's paragraph on Clement of Alexandria. First, he calls Clement of Alexandria the 'patristic exegetic.'²² Roman Catholicism accepted him as a Father of their Church stating: “Clements rule of faith was sound. He admitted the authority of the Churches tradition. He would be, first of all, a Christian, accepting, 'the ecclesiastical rule', but he would also strive to remain a philosopher, and bring his reason to bear in matters of religion.”²³ With this background Virkler assigned Clement to be the father of the *critical* explanation or analysis of the text of Scripture. The very first and true father of this 'critical method' was Satan, that old Serpent, who exercised this craft in the Garden of Eden. Secondly, Virkler, reveals the allegorical exegetical practice of forsaking the literalness of Scripture and grasping for a hidden, spiritual, hypothetical interpretation. Such a process was necessary for Clement to both dismiss the promises of the restoration of Israel, which were quite unbelievable in his day, and to allegorize away a literal one thousand year reign of Christ (called the *Millennium* in Latin, *Chiliasm* in Greek). Third, Virkler's research shows some origin of the Catholic doctrine that lay people or laity, should not be allowed to read Scripture because they do not have the resources to interpret the allegoricals of Scripture. Laity, who can not properly perceive the deeper spiritual sense of Scripture, might think to take it literal. The

In this researcher's papers A.D. Is proudly used without exception, in Virkler's work, not so much.

21 Henry A. Virkler, *Hermeneutics*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2007), 53.

22 *Patristic*:adj. of or relating to the church fathers or their writings, from *patriarch* The male head of family or tribe, Any of the early biblical characters regarded as fathers of the human race, A man who is older and higher in rank than yourself. *Exegetic*: adj. Of or relating to *exegetis*: *an explanation or critical interpretation of a text.* (WordWeb 8, Princeton University, 2006).

23 The Catholic Encyclopedia, www.newadvent.org/cathen/04045a.htm, under the word “Clement of Alexandria” (accessed 11/20/11).

clergy must keep the laity out of the Bible lest they hurt themselves with its literalness. Indeed, Clement of Alexandria, was a father to the allegorical method and a father to Roman Catholicism. It is distressing when evangelicals ignorantly but reverently call him or any other Catholic Saint, their “Church Father.”

Origen of Alexandria (185-254 A.D.) was Clement's prize student of philosophy. Called “one of the greatest Christian Theologians”, he continued in Clement's school of thinking to over emphasizing the mystical – allegorical renderings of Scripture, especially attacking the literal return and Kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ. This emboldened denial that God could restore Israel and the brazen denial that Christ would set up a literal kingdom like he implied in Acts, seems almost diabolical. *“When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power”* (Acts 1:6-7). Yet, both Clement and Origen were doing what they considered a great service to God. Origen took Clement's allegorized methods and became an avid student of the Old Testament Scriptures. In his quest he became a renowned textual critic of these Scriptures and compiled a Hexapla, or six column interlinear Old Testament. He compared the (1) Hebrew text with (2) Hebrew written in Greek characters, with (3) Aquila's 130 A.D. most literal Greek translation, with (4) Symmechus' idiomatic and eloquent rendering of its revision, with the (5) Septuagint Greek translation, with, finally, (6) Theologians slight revision of the Septuagint. Even with all this hand copying and comparison of the promise made by God to Israel, Origen's mind was made up by Clement that there would be no literal regathering of the tribes of Israel nor any literal kingdom where Christ would set on the throne of David and rule the world from Zion for 1,000 years. It was inconceivable, therefore skillful and extensive use of allegory enabled them to rationalize the literal into fiction.

Origen, as an esteemed Church Father of Catholicism, passed on his bias and his mystical allegorical methods to Jerome, the translator of the Latin Vulgate Bible and to Saint Augustine, the founder of all Roman Catholic doctrine.

In Roman Catholicism there would be no millennial reign of Christ and those who would believe in *Chiliasm*, the Greek equivalent, would be scoffed, ridiculed and put out of the Church. In Roman Catholicism the allegorical method would be embraced as its overriding primary method of interpretation of all Scripture. In Roman Catholicism, laity were not allowed to read the Scriptures, much less do the allegorical interpretation of Scripture which was left to only Catholic trained clergy. Thus the area of Eschatology was in need of massive reform with wholesale abandonment of their methods, ideas, and philosophies. A massive reform which will be seen quite lacking in Reformed Augustinian Theology.

D. Baseline of Error in Theology

A fourth area of Roman Catholic Doctrine found in need of great reform is that of theology itself. Not that there is any lack in knowing or defining the characteristics of God, His 'omni' characteristics, as his omnipresence, omniscience, and omnipotence; or His moral characteristics of love, veracity or justice. These characteristics are defined as best as a finite mind can define an infinite God. But there is missing an application of these characteristics that would develop into the personal knowledge of God. It is this personal, growing, and intimate fellowship and communion with God that man was created for. Rev. 4:11 says "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created." Christianity is not a religion, it is a relationship. Roman Catholicism is a religion. Exodus 33:11a, says of Moses' relationship "And the LORD spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend." Genesis declares that God came down to fellowship with man in his innocence in the cool of the day, and God doesn't want our religiosity, he wants our relationship. Jesus said it to his disciples, from now on I don't call you servants, but friends, (John 15:15) "*Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you.*" Paul said it in Philippians 3:10 "*to know him and the power of his*

resurrection”, Paul prayed it for his converts, that you may know God, that you may know his will ...etc.

In the whole Bible, in almost every narrative, God especially interacts with man and then waits for mans action before he interacts again with another personal, in real time, interaction. The stodgy, fatalistic God defined by the religion of Roman Catholicism, where man moves about as pawns in God's game of chess, is the horrible product of a religion that does not know God, a theology that simply attempts to define God.

Roman Catholicism promotes ones relationship with the Roman Church or with 'Mother Mary' but not one with God. The loss of volunterism and the initiation of compulsory salvation has already been evaluated, but note here that it drives away a personal, intimate relationship with God. It is a relationship that, in Scripture, God seeks from the creature made in His image. In the consideration of Theology then, the baseline of Catholic error is that it comes nowhere near to a personal relationship and knowledge of God. That is what the Bible portrays as our purpose. The task of reform is to come away from theology's structured characterization of the qualities of God to a place where Christians, via theology, come to know the person and personality of God. This too is no small challenge for reformers. For one not entangled in the impetus of Catholicism and its structure, the whole Bible drives us toward this intrinsic knowledge of God. Especially ennobling in this relationship building is God's revelation of the things that are to shortly come to pass. A precious intimacy with God is built by his revelation of all his plans for the future, and this intimacy is completely missing in a religion that denies the very tenants of this revelation.

E. Baseline of Error in Bibliology / Scripturology

When the basis of all faith and practice is to be the sole infallible inerrant, inspired word from God, one needs to have a careful regard for its handling and its judicious treatment for the determination of every doctrine; Roman Catholicism did neither. Three major and interactive failures occurred in Catholic scripturology, their hermeneutical method, their Bible critical methods, and their exacting

their authority over its authority. Failures in ones scripturology are proven systematic failures. Catholicism in infancy exercised this type of error to baptize its first infant and explore baptismal regeneration. Ignoring, rationalizing and over powering Scripture's authority lead it down the path where a whole artificial system of penance, sacramental service and works could purchase salvation. Thirteen hundred years down this pathway they crossed some line when they offered this purchased salvation to the highest bidder, but make no mistake, the root of their error was first and foremost a faulty scripturology.

In its infancy Catholicism, from its root in Rome, exercised this type of error to dictate its rule over what other Churches did or believed. When the Roman Emperor offered that church in Rome its sword, the faulty ecclesiology was already in place because of this very faulty scripturology. It wielded that sword through thirteen hundred years of tyrannical rule. Again the seeded error in scripturology became unbelievably daunting. Roman Catholicism was so grossly strayed from Scripture that the dilemma, this time in faulty ecclesiology, caused the rational mind of man to protest and demand reforms.

In its conception, Roman Catholicism came to be because of this type of error in belief of Scripture; an error whereby Clement of Alexandria could not, and would not, believe the promise of God to his chosen people, Israel. The practice of denying the written Word and allegorizing it away, caused the inability to rightly divide the Word of truth concerning Bible prophecy, making for a warped and defective eschatology. Similarly the the wholly distorted, un-Scriptural view of soteriology, ecclesiology, and eschatology, caused the distortion of a knowledge of God. The whole personality of God the Father and author of Scripture is thereby distorted to a point where discarding all Roman Catholic doctrine and theology would be better than reforming it in part. In this distortion of the person of God they substituted themselves as the new 'Elect of God' and discarded, yeah even despised the Jews as much as Hagar, the Egyptian handmaid, despised Sarah. Such a picture is almost allegorical, as Paul would say in rebuke of their allegories. Bad scripturology brought about both bad eschatology and ergo, very bad theology. They could know neither the true God nor his plans for the future when they so twisted and

dismissed his written Word. The high lights of this error in scripturology is to be briefly explored to define the baseline of error that was sorely in need of reform, or more so in need of total discard.

Scripturology may be a word invented by this author. In the theology discipline it is normally called Bibliology, which deals with a broader spectrum than what this investigation does. Bibliology includes how we got the Bible, genuineness, credibility, and canonicity and more. Scripturology is used in this analysis because there is greater concern here with how one handles the Scriptures that we have. “All Scripture is given by inspiration” is a strong stated starting point. Scripture is verbally inspired, implying that the very words which God used are crucial to his message. The words are infallible, meaning that they will never fail in any way. The words are inerrant, meaning that they do not contain, and will not lead one into any error whatsoever. Plenary inspiration means that every single word holds all of these qualities, from the most obscure words that count how many chariots Solomon had and how many stalls he built to contain them, to the most familiar expression where eagles are gathered to devour flesh at Armageddon. (This despite the scholarly knowledge of man who thinks God must have meant to say vultures and he misspoke, or perhaps the KJV²⁴ translators did not know as much about zoology as our modern scholars do.)

The going in premise of how we handle Scripture must be that God said what he meant and God meant what he said. Any attempt, by mere man, to “fix God's words” or to derive an extension of what God meant to say, or to critically attack unbelievable portions with source, form, literary, redaction, textual or other imagined criticism is errant scripturology. So what going in baseline of error, in need of reformation, does one find in Roman Catholicism? Two Catholic Church fathers, Clement of Alexandria and Origen, his student, set the stage for every conceivable error in scripturology. In his book *Hermeneutics* Verkler contrasts the Alexandrian School of Greek Philosophy and the Antiochal School of Jesus' Apostles. Springing from the former is the founding of the allegorical hermeneutic, from

24 KJV, The Holy Bible, the Words of God as translated into English in the Authorized (King James) Version without copyright, and without registered trademark.

the later the hermeneutic that Jesus used and taught, one of “grammatical-historical interpretation, that is, that a text should be interpreted according to the rules of grammar and the facts of history, (i.e.) an interpretation (should) be justified by a study of its grammatical and historical context rather than by an appeal to” the dogma of the interpreter.²⁵ Alexandrian philosopher's refusing to accept what God had said about the restoration, salvation and upcoming reign of Israel insisted that their dogma had greater authority than the Scripture. Origen, famed for his extensive work in compiling the multi-version Hexapla of the Old Testament Scriptures was not only a founder and promoter of the allegorical method, he became the founder and propagator of Bible Criticism. In just these two Catholic Church Fathers, is found every brazen error of Catholic scripturology. The allegorical method, implying God did not say what he meant, the “our dogma” as a higher authority than Scripture, and the Bible Criticism meant to cast version doubt on the Scriptures that we do have.

When such a flawed scripturology was passed on to Jerome and Augustine, the direction they steered Roman Catholicism is clear and undeniably wicked. Jerome translated the Catholic's Latin Vulgate Bible wherein their dogma of works overrode the Scripture's authority and every occurrence of the word 'repentance' is replaced with, and translated to, 'Penance' ; their dogma of a priesthood overrode the Scripture's authority and every occurrence of the word, 'presbyter' is replaced with, and translated to, 'priest'; their dogma of mystical magical sacraments overrode the Scripture's authority and every reference to a 'mystery' is replaced with, and translated to, a 'sacrament'. These are only three examples of the gross miscarriages of translation which were incorporated in the Roman Catholic, highly revered, Latin Vulgate. Other twisting of Scriptural truth adds up to so much perversion that their Bible became called, the Vulgar Vulgate.²⁶ Catholic Saint Augustine did not reform these gross errors in scripturology, instead he exploited them to more fully establish a tyrannical Roman Catholic Church that would answer to no authority

25 Henry A. Virkler, *Hermeneutics*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2007), 53.

26 This is a double play on words, because vulgar in linguistics means 'common' while 'common' use of the word came to mean vulgar in the sense we know it today.

and claim for itself infallibility. Catholic's Saint Augustine more fully developed an idea that the Catholic Church was only in its infancy as far as what Christ established, and it was now to evolve and mature into a strong authoritarian world leader that would subdue nations and rule the world with two swords.

Constantine then commanded that there be 'one state ordered religion' for 'one unified empire.' This scheme used God's Sword of the Spirit, supposedly wielded by the Roman Church, united with Man's Sword of Steel wielded by a magistrate to force the Kingdom of God upon all the unified Roman Empire. What became called Constantinianism, (or compulsory Christianity, vs. voluntary salvation by faith via free will) is found in its embryonic stage in Augustine's theology. Leonard Verduin writes in *The Reformers and Their Stepchildren*²⁷

It was Augustine, he perhaps more than any other, who supplied the Constantinians with arguments from the Scriptures (or rather with arguments fastened upon the Scriptures) whereby coercion was rendered theologically respectable. The expression found in Luke 14:23, "*Constrain them to come in,*" rendered in Latin *Compelle intrare*, was exactly what he needed in his running battle with the Donatists.

The followers of Donatus were offering to secede from the "fallen" Church and to go their own way, a step which the advocates of "Christian sacralism" (Constantinianism) could not permit, for it would strike at the very heart of their dream of a faith common to all in the empire. Hence they let it be known, early in the conflict, that schism would not be permitted but would be opposed, if need be with arms. Thereupon the Donatists pointed out that this would be to deviate from the policies of the Master, who had not raised a finger, much less a sword, to restrain people from going away. More than that, when a sizable group walked out He

²⁷ Leonard Verduin, *The Reformers And Their Stepchildren*, (Grand Rapids Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1964), 65.

had confronted His disciples with the wistful question, “Do you not also want to go?”²⁸

To this line of thought – the cogency of which had not escaped him – Augustine replied:

I hear that you are quoting that which is recorded in the Gospel, that when the seventy followers went back from the Lord they were left to their own choice in this wicked and impious desertion and that He said to the twelve remaining 'Do you not also want to go?' But what you fail to say is that at the time the Church was only just beginning to burst forth from the newly planted seed and that the saying had not yet been fulfilled in her “All kings shall fall down before Him, all nations shall serve him.” It is in proportion to the more enlarged fulfillment of this prophecy that the Church now wields greater power – so that she may now not only invite but also compel men to embrace that which is good.

(Augustine's *Letter to Donatus*, No. 173 as printed in *Select Library of Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers*, ed, Philip Schaff, Vol. 1.) Here we have an early representation of the notion that the Church of Christ was intended by its Founder to enter into a situation radically different from the one depicted in the New Testament. Here we have the beginnings of the notion, which reigned supreme in the minds of men all through the medieval times, that part way into the Christian era a change was intended by the King of the Church himself – a change whereby the world of apostolic times would become obsolete. This change was identified with the Constantinian innovation. This idea set forth by Augustine controlled the thought and the theology of European man all through medieval times. It led to all sorts of theological absurdities ... ²⁹

28 It should not surprise anyone but should here be noted that Augustine of Hippo, A.D. 345-480, did not quote the 1611 King James English of John 6:67 “Will ye also go away?” Augustine was more into Latin.

29 Leonard Verduin, *The Reformers And Their Stepchildren*, (Grand Rapids Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1964), 65.

Not Producing a Biblical Systematic Theology

So the stage for all Catholic error was set by their error in scripturology. Of all things that needed to be reformed and rebuilt from the ground up, none looms so important than this one because error here will always bloom into acceptance of other more horrid error. The basis of all faith and practice must be the plenary, verbally inspired, inerrant, infallible words of God.

III. The Model Applied.

The spiraling model which can be systematically applied to the baseline of Roman Catholic theology can likewise be systematically applied to each of the splinter groups, theologies, and denominations which came out of Catholicism when it collided with the philosophy and ideology of the reformers. The image of an asteroid hurling through space spiraling away from the center of truth is a feasible picture of Roman Catholicism. That this asteroid will reach such a distance from its epicenter that it is called mystery Babylon the mother of harlots is very conceivable and adequately portrayed in such a model. The collision of this out-spiraling asteroid with a force that ruptures it into a multitude of fragments is also very conceivable. These fragments, broken from the mother asteroid, scatter in every direction and their scattering, tumbling, masses represent the many splinters that come from the mother Roman Catholic Church. As they tumble, spin, and collide, pieces break from these fragments and proceed on still other trajectories. In the same fashion these splinters tumble, spin, and collide to send out various other splinters. This model is amazingly illustrative, and highly accurate. The majority of 'fragments' continue on the same course as their mother. One can hardly discern the difference between the Episcopal and the Roman Catholic Church. There is, however, a correct trajectory. One that is ever zeroing in on the epicenter of truth, one occupied by Anabaptist, Montanists, Waldensians, and the like. Some fragments took such a different course from the trajectory of this mother asteroid that they went to this correct trajectory, most did not.

Some might consider the force that collided with the mother asteroid to be the hand of God, but such is not altogether fitting. The Roman Catholic Church had spiraled so far out and away from that epicenter of truth dictated in the Holy Scriptures that the rational mind of man could no longer tolerate its brazen folly. Catholicism, aided by the Roman sword, had accumulated such totalitarian power and such a perception of infallibility and authority that it collided with the rational mind of man, who finally said, with 95 thesis, "this is wrong." The Protestant reformation was not initiated by the hand of God as much as it was initiated by the rational mind of man. If the hand of God were

more profoundly involved the change in trajectory would have been more profoundly Biblical. Instead it is profoundly rational, and still catering to Catholic Saint Augustine's rational philosophy. Such a model is so revealing and insightful that one would want to plot out each of the many trajectories encountered in the 353 major denominations in this 20th century.

Of particular insight is the understanding that Christianity launched another asteroid on a correct spiral, one that zeros in on the Scriptural truth. This one was launched from the 'school of Antioch' and not from the 'school of Alexandria.' This one had a basis of Scriptural accuracy, not a basis of Scriptures as allegorical fiction. This one had a quest to search out the mind of God, not a quest to search out the philosophy of man. This one had an ever zeroing-in spiral, wherein truth is the mainstay of its epicenter, not the ever spiraling-out and away from truth trajected by Roman Catholicism. In its own right, such an analysis of these two trajectories enlighten marvelous insight and comparisons.

So to, evaluating the trajectory of minor 'fragments' that set off on a new course and continue to spew forth splinters and wild false doctrines in perverse directions could well occupy the content of much research and analysis. Presbyterians splintered-off Charles Taze Russell, Joseph Smith, Ellen White, Mary Baker Glover Eddy, and a myriad of other cults with crazy directions and confused trajectories. By Robert Ingersoll's own description he recoiled from his father's Presbyterian God, who sent souls to an eternal hell because they were so ordained to go there before God formed the world.³⁰ Any one of these splinters and fragments, cults and denominations could receive enlightening analysis by holding such a collided asteroid model to even more scrutiny. Herein we restrain our analysis to examine one major hurling tumbling cluster of debris pounded from the mother asteroid, and set on a new trajectory; the cluster of debris called Reformed Augustinian Theology. It must be assessed. Is the overall trajectory of this debris an increasing spiral as was its mother or has

30 The author has read almost every work of Robert Ingersoll, founder of Atheism in America, from his birthplace museum across the street from Good Samaritan Baptist Church, in Dresden, NY, where the author pastors. Ingersoll's father was Pastoring the Presbyterian Church in Dresden at the time of Robert's birth.

this spiraling, twisting conglomeration of debris set out on the trajectory ever closing in on the epicenter of all truth? The thesis of this work shows the conglomeration of debris called Reformed Augustinian Theology is ever spiraling away from the epicenter of truth, like the trajectory of its mother.

IV. Reformed Theology's Reform of Soteriology.

It is pertinent to begin analysis of Reformed Theology's trajectory toward, or from truth with its position on 'so great salvation' which theologians call soteriology. It is this wedge of Bible truth that drove through the falsehood of Catholicism and splintered its momentous misdirection into so many splinters and denominations. Martin Luther broke from Rome's allegorical methods and boldly made the proclamation "the just shall live by faith." Not only in the sense that one lives daily by faith, but more so that life eternal can only be attained by faith alone. This hallmark declaration latched into the soteriology of all the reformers, and should have been the banner cry of every Protestant. It was not. Indeed most Protestants went back into some sacramental framework of works salvation or baptismal regeneration, to include infant baptism. Luther's hallmark revelation was again swallowed up in 'a religious endeavor to reach God by good works.' What of Reformed Augustinian Soteriology? How did it handle the questions "who can be saved?" How does one get saved? 'What happens when one is saved? How assured is one of salvation? And How long does one stay saved? It is unfortunate that even with these very basic questions about so great salvation Reformed Augustinian Theology does not score much better or more Biblical than does Roman Catholicism.

A. Reform of Who can be saved?

Concerning 'Who can be saved?' the overriding Biblical principle of voluntarism or the freewill of man is the quintessential ingredient for Biblical soteriology. It was missing in Catholicism where salvation became compulsory under Roman sword. It was no longer "Anyone who wants to be saved can be saved", as in "Whosoever will may come", but now, under Roman control, it became, "Be saved or die." After an ugly beginning Protestants eventually gave up the physical sword for a compulsory salvation via baptism, but John Calvin (1509-1564) held on to a compulsory salvation of sorts, and he also held onto

the sword for other coercions by the state. The Presbyterian responded to the cry of the Arminian 5 point 'Whosoever will' with their own 5 point succinct model known as T-U-L-I-P, and this became the hallmark of Reformed Augustinian Theology. With this model compulsory salvation is accomplished with the Sovereignty of God. In all Reformed Theology a soul is not saved because they are a 'whosoever will', voluntarily choosing to get saved. In all of Reformed Theology a soul is saved only if they were chosen by a Sovereign God before the foundation of the world.

Robert Johnson, a Former Director for The Institute of Reformed Theology states this T-U-L-I-P dependence as follows:

There are other proposals for what makes theology "Reformed." The syndics at the Council of the Synod of Dort (1618-1619: the full Canon of the Synod is available at the web site of The Center for Reformed theology and Apologetics), in their deliberations over what made Reformed theology reformed, gave rise to a mnemonic: the Gospel in a TULIP — Total depravity, Unconditional election, Limited atonement, Irresistible grace and the Perseverance of the saints.³¹

In the very root of Reformed Theology's soteriology, the conclusion is drawn that God in his absolute Sovereignty chose a tiny number of souls, not yet created, which would be saved and the rest of the not yet created souls would be damned to hell for all eternity. There are a number of driving forces which systematically crowd one to such a conclusion but the Bible is not one of them. Volumes of books have been written trying to rationalize and justify this absolute loss of volunteerism. Section X of this thesis more fully explores the ill-gotten logic and loss of man's volunteerism. Here suffice it to say that Biblically, when one receives Christ he becomes a Christian; when one receives the 'Elect One' he becomes elect. In the Bible election always has to do with service and never has to do with whether one goes to heaven or to hell. And in the Bible there are only 5 specific

31 Theology, *What is Reformed Theology*,
[http://www.reformedtheology.org/SiteFiles/ WhatIsRT.html](http://www.reformedtheology.org/SiteFiles/WhatIsRT.html), (accessed 11/11/2011).

things ordained before the foundation of the world, and none of them are souls that will, or will not receive salvation. Reformed Augustinian Theology fails the 'whosoever will' test of voluntarism for salvation, choosing rather to leave largely in place and unreformed a Roman Catholic idea of a compulsory salvation.

Augustus Strong, was a Reformed Baptist of 1907; reformed because during his 40 years at Rochester Theological Seminary he “taught a theology that combined traditional reformed emphasis, distinctive Baptist convictions on the organizations of churches and a relative openness to modern ideas.”³² He was Baptist because “he served as the first president of the Northern Baptist Convention (now Augustinian Baptist Churches in the U.S.A.)”³³ His *Systematic Theology* proposes that God has “decreed to secure the actual acceptance of this salvation on the part of some, or in other words, the decree of election.”³⁴ Strong fusses to ensure his position is sublapsarian³⁵ and not superlapsarian³⁶ but takes no consideration at all for eliminating mans free will with the election of souls for salvation before the foundation of the world. Strong does not even address the loss of 'whosoever will may come.' Thiessen of 1949 was somewhat less reformed and a bit more Baptist; reformed because of his stance on reformed doctrines; a Baptist because of his presidency of a Baptist College, and only 'a bit more Baptist, because he refused to be called fundamental during the neo-evangelical rise, and the Baptist college where he was president until 1947, turned to be the neo-evangelical Master's College upon his death. Thiessen, espousing reformed theologies of decrees and election, and feeling bad about the sabotage of mans free will, comes up with a worthy rationalization. In this rationalization, before the foundation of the world God's election of souls for salvation was actually accomplished by His keen foreknowledge instead of an arbitrary selection process. Perhaps, he

32 Christian Classics Ethereal Library, Biography: Augustus Hopkins Strong, <http://www.ccel.org/s/strong> (accessed 11/11/2011).

33. Ibid.

34 Augustus H. Strong, *Systematic Theology, Vol III Ch II Sect I*, (Philadelphia, Valley Forge PA, The Judson Press, 1907, 35th printing 1993) 778.

35 A sublapsarian view holds that Christ died, at least in some sense, also for the whole world.

36 A superlapsarian view holds that Christ died only for 'the elect.'

reasons, in God's infinite foreknowledge, He can 'see' who would have voluntarily choose salvation and He then Sovereignly choose them for eternal salvation. Just the same, some get in and some do not, and all lose the volunteerism of free will. Despite his noble effort to rationalize his final thesis is that God by some means, perhaps His foreknowledge of what a person might choose or not choose, God chooses, before the foundation of the world, who gets in and who goes to hell. Individual man, still, has no will nor say one way or another. Reformed Theology like Roman Catholicism before it, eliminates the volunteerism from salvation and free will from human life, ergo it cannot and it does not align with Scripture which says: “Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, Mt 10:32, Lu 12:8” or “whosoever shall not be offended in me Mt 11:6, Lu 7:23” or “whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, Mt 12:50, Mr 3:35” or “whosoever will save his life, Mt 16:25” or “Whosoever therefore shall humble himself, Mt 18:4” or “Whosoever will come after me, Mr 8:34” or “whosoever shall receive me, Mr 9:37, Lu 9:48” or “Whosoever cometh to me, Lu 6:47” or “whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him, Joh 4:14” or “whosoever liveth and believeth in me Joh 11:26” or “through his name whosoever believeth in him Ac 10:43, Joh 3:15” or “whosoever believeth on him Ro 9:33, Ro 10:11” or “ whosoever believeth on me Joh 12:46” or “whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved. Rom 10:13” “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” “For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.” ... “That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the Scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.”

The volunteerism of man, especially as it relates to salvation, so prevalent in the Holy Bible, is not present in Roman Catholic Soteriology. The reformers, particularly John Calvin, the author and founder of Reformed Augustinian Theology, did not reform this error, instead we find that all volunteerism for salvation, and all free-will of

man is forfeited for the absolute Sovereignty of God. In this case the reform is almost worse than the original error, it is at least far more subtle. At least, however, there are no magistrates with swords involved.

B. Reform of How does one get saved?

Concerning “How does one get saved?” The need for reformation and indeed the initial call for reformation reverberated around this very question. Catholicism's extraction of Old Testament law and Old Testament works in their misrepresentation and allegorizing of the Old Testament Scripture certainly needed a reformation. Their brazen insertion of 'penance' everywhere the Scripture spoke of 'repentance'; their callous switching to a 'priesthood' each time Scripture referenced 'presbytery' and their insertion of 'sacraments', when God intended the 'mystery' of the gospel to be revealed, is detrimental to Biblical soteriology. All of this developed into a religious system of works whereby one generated their own righteousness until there was perhaps enough 'self churned' righteousness, penance, and suffering accumulated to get you into heaven. If you had some left over, like surely Mother Theresa did, the Catholic Church declared you a saint and allowed you to make some of your excess available to others who asked “pray for us sinners.” Yes, this system needed reformation and when the Roman Catholic Church began selling indulgences, like free tickets to heaven, the rational mind of man cried out for it. Although most Protestant denominations which fractured off from the Mother Catholic Church continued on a trajectory whereby salvation was by works and remission of sin was by baptismal regeneration, the Reformed Theology of John Calvin did not. Salvation was attained by grace through faith. The just shall live by faith. There is no works one can do, no mysterious sacrament the Roman Catholic Church could give you whereby you could generate your own righteousness. Indeed the righteousness of man is as filthy rags to God, and even the plowing of man is sinful. The complete reformation of a system of salvation by works was so very complete that in reformed theology, not only is there no works you can do to attain salvation, there is no 'thing', of any sort, that you can do, you cannot even seek God, nor repent, nor pray a

sinner's prayer. In their model man is not just dead in trespasses and sin, he is stone dead with no rational working mind or volitional will. Ergo, how does one get saved in reformed theology? One way alone, it is if God chose you before the foundation of the world, other than that, there is nothing you can 'do' to be saved nothing.

In reformed theology, then and now, with no change in course, with a 'locked-in' trajectory, salvation is only attained by being chosen and foreknown (or foreknown and chose) and that choosing and election is only logically fitting when it is accomplished before the foundation of the world. Not only is voluntarism eliminated, but God's described method is frustrated. Reformed Augustinian Theology needs major reformation in this area.

Biblically there IS something one must 'do' to be saved. One must confess, one must believe; “*That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the Scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. ... For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved*” (Rom.10:9-11,13). One must 'work'; “*Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God? Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent*” (John 6:28-29). One must 'strive'; “*Then said one unto him, Lord, are there few that be saved? And he said unto them, Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able*” (Luk.13:23-24). One must 'seek'; “*But if from thence thou shalt seek the LORD thy God, thou shalt find him, if thou seek him with all thy heart and with all thy soul*” (Deut 4:29). There are some things one must 'do' to be saved, and they must do them voluntarily.

C. Reform of What happens when one is saved?

Concerning 'What happens when one is saved?', Reformed Augustinian Theology, here, made a complete transformation from the error of Catholicism. They strongly contend that one is converted by repentance toward God and faith in Jesus Christ, justified by a

declaration of the father, quickened by the power of God, indwelt by the Holy Spirit of God, and baptized into the body of Christ. (The exact explanation, intent, and understanding of this latter act may vary widely amongst evangelicals.) However, their previous misrepresentations of souls being elect to receive salvation and their model of one starting out dead, and dead totally, with no volitional will toward God, causes them to instigate a sequential order for these 5 otherwise instantaneous occurrences. Since man is so dead in total depravity, they reason, he must first be quickened before he can be converted. Ergo God only quickens a soul which he has chosen for conversion and this quickening is done when? Just prior to ones conversion.... no; just prior to God drawing a soul to himself.... no; just after ones age of accountability.... no; just after ones birth.... no; actually just after ones conception, or perhaps at the creation/insertion of ones soul, or perhaps.... even speculated by many.... before the foundation of the earth! That, in speculation, is when elect souls are quickened. This is an ugly chink in Reformed Augustinian armor but is necessitated and argued add-nauseous in order to defend their model of the 'dead in trespasses and sin,' and its corresponding Tulip petal, the total depravity of man. The question of the timing for this quickening does periodically get reformed, but it is always sequentially separated from the new birth. Ergo, the placement of quickening back into the instantaneous new birth of a soul can not be successfully accomplished by Reformed Augustinian Theology.

In Bible truth all five of these events, 1) Conversion, 2) Justification, 3) Quickening, 4) Indwelling, and 5) Baptism into Christ, occur simultaneously and they occur at the time of ones new birth. John Calvin, whose rational mind was obsessed with this complete loss of volunteerism, in all his hallowed *Institutes*, could not, and did not, completely account for this characteristic of what happened to a person when they get born-again saved. The Presbyterians who rounded out the formation of Reformed Augustinian Theology drove it even further from the truth with their 1618 Synod of Dordt and the formation of the infamous T-U-L-I-P. Reformed Augustinian Theology will rationalize this error in volumes of books but they will not discard that little flower of error.

D. Reform of The Assurance of Ones Salvation?

Concerning the assurance of ones salvation the reformation from Catholicism's system of works salvation was complete enough in Reformed Theology. They recite the verses "*These (things) 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*" (John 20:31); "*Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live*" (John 5:25); "*And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God*" (John 5:11-13); and "*The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God*" (Rom 8:16). Although they can recite these verses with us there is a deep rooted difference in how they are pondered. Other verses can be more troublesome verses that appeal to the overall voluntarism of salvation; verses like. "*Ye are in the spirit If so be that the spirit of God dwelleth in you. Now if any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his.... if Christ be in you.... if the Spirit.... dwell in you*" (Rom. 8), or ideas like "*Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, ... work out your own salvation with fear and trembling*" (Phil.2:12). Recall that in Reformed Theology you are not saved by anything you 'do'; you are saved by being chosen before the foundation of the world. Your assurance is an assurance that you were one of the chosen ones and not an assurance that you were converted, justified, quickened, indwelt and baptized into Christ. The latter comes from a written promise that can be held out and examined, it is the 'substance of things hoped for the evidence of things not seen', the former comes from a warm fuzzy feeling that you are one of those chosen ones. It relies on a rationalized idea of how God must have done things before the foundation of the world. There is a difference, and as long as Reformed Theology rests on the notion that you are saved because you are chosen before the foundation of the world there will be a stigma on the assurance of salvation issue, (i.e. how can you work out your own

salvation? What can you 'do' if the spirit does not dwell in you or if it does not bear witness with yours? In reformed theology there is nothing you can do!) One saved by being chosen for salvation before the foundation of the world can not look back on their voluntary decision to accept Christ and find an assurance that Christ will keep his promise, they must look back to a rationalization of a doctrine of election and find an assurance that they were a chosen one. Reformed assurance differs from Bible assurance.

E. Reform of How long one is saved for?

Concerning how long one is saved, again Reformed Theology so reformed the Roman Catholic establishment of works salvation that scarcely a trace of “enduring to the end” is to be found. 'Once saved, always saved,' is embedded in Reformed Theology because if God chose you for salvation before the foundation of the world, he could not very well un-choose you in the middle of your life, no matter how vile an act or thought you have committed. Although this premise is Biblical the rational here it is again twisted because the election of souls for salvation rational is twisted. Biblically, 'once saved, always saved' is true because the work God did in you to quicken you cannot rightly be undone; the declaration made when God declared you justified, cannot be undeclared; the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the believer is sealed, and cannot be unsealed, and the baptism whereby one has been baptized into Christ is so through an immersion that one cannot come back out of there. No matter what dastardly deed you might contemplate or do, these assured occurrences cannot be undone. “If so be the Spirit of God dwells in you,” you are secure eternally because he saved you; not because because He chose you, or even because you chose Him, but because there was a transaction accomplished, a new birth as Jesus described it, and that transaction is eternal. Take note that eternal security is not even because you volunteered, or voluntarily chose him as your Saviour, but because He acted; and there was a transaction accomplished and that transaction is eternal.

V. Reform Theology's Failures in Ecclesiology.

The idea that there is to be one authoritarian universal (or Catholic) “Mother of all Churches” with all individual diocese regions and lesser churches looking to and dependent on her for all authority control and rule is completely and categorically un-Scriptural. That concept is in dire need of complete reformation. The tyrannical rule of the Roman Catholic Church, as well as the Church of England was indeed another major reason why the rational mind of man did finally rebel and strive to reform such a Jezebel. But alas the reformers could not bring themselves to go all the way back to a Biblical model.

A Biblical model of control and leadership is where independent, autonomously controlled, local congregational bodies of believers determined their own authority, their own doctrine and their own practice. Instead of this model there was an explosion of denominations with denominational controls, each wanting to be in charge of all; each attempting to wield authority over another lesser *Ecclesia* (gathered, assemblies of believers); and each thinking in this rupture of their mother church that there must still remain a Supreme, Mother, Universal or Catholic Church. This indeed was troublous times for Anabaptist, Monetanists, Waldensians and the few remaining unslain Donatists who knew the importance and Scriptural precedence for autonomous local bodies of believers, and new the importance of believers baptism. They were being persecuted and slain not only by Rome and England but now by every totalitarian denominational authority that thought only their baptisms were proper.

In his book *History of Baptist Vol 1* John T. Christian writes:

That there were many persons called Anabaptists who were fanatics there is no doubt. When it is remembered, however, that the worst of outrages were committed against them, and that they were hunted like wild beasts, that their women were attack, that they were drowned in rivers and burnt at the stake, that every means of exasperation was used

against them, we are only surprised that they were as moderate as they were.³⁷

Christian's History of Baptist shows this bad ecclesiology of Roman Catholicism migrated well into protestant reformers ecclesiology:

The Council of St. Gall, at the instigation of Zwingli, it is alleged, determined to rid themselves of the "Dippers." As the Baptists dipped for baptism they were to be drowned for punishment. The edict is as follows:

In order that the dangerous, wicked, turbulent and seditious sect of the Baptists may be eradicated, we have thus decreed: If any one is suspected of rebaptism, he is to be warned by the magistracy to leave the territory under penalty of the designated punishment. Every person is obliged to report those favorable to rebaptism. Whoever shall not comply with this ordinance is liable to punishment according to the sentence of the magistracy. Teachers of rebaptism, baptizing preachers, and leaders of hedge meetings are to be drowned. Those previously released from prison who have sworn to desist from such things, shall incur the same penalty. Foreign Baptists are to be driven out; if they return they shall be drowned. No one is allowed to secede from the (Zwinglian) church and to absent himself from the Holy Supper. Whoever flees from one jurisdiction to another shall be banished or extradited upon demand (Simler, Sammlung, I. ii. p. 449)³⁸

The edict from the counsel of St. Gall was extended in March of 1530 to include the statement: "All who adhere to or favor the false sect of the Baptists, and who attend hedge-meetings, shall suffer the most severe punishments. Baptist leaders, their followers, and

37 John T. Christian, *A History of the Baptists*, (Providence Baptist Ministries, PBM Desktop Publications, Granbury, Texas, 2006), 66.

38 *Ibid.*, 82 .

protectors shall be drowned without mercy.”³⁹ The reformers continued in the ecclesiology of their Mother Church, keeping the Universal, Catholic Church in their doctrine, but more troubling is that they kept the tyrannical aspects of Roman Catholicism in their persecution of Baptists.

What then did Reform Augustinian Theology reform in Roman Catholic tyrannical ecclesiology? Did they spiral all the way back to a Biblical model of local autonomous Churches with no Universal, Catholic Church? No not exactly. Even Thiessen holds onto the Catholicness of the Church.

The theological issues of ecclesiology is best contrasted against Thiessen's catholic church concept by Cambron's local church description. Therein he states

While we believe that the Body of Christ is composed of all believers from Pentecost to the Rapture, we do stress the importance of the *local* church, or assembly. The local assembly is the physical body by which the Body (Church) is manifested. God stresses the importance of the local church by giving it officers and ordinances. He who is ashamed of the local assembly is ashamed of that which was established at Pentecost. The local church, as well as the Body of Christ, was established at Pentecost.⁴⁰

That opening paragraph modestly captures the Bible and Baptist emphasis on the local Church rather than the catholic Church which Thiessen's reformed position continually emphasizes. A strong emphasis on the catholicness of the Church overspreads all of Reformed ecclesiology.

While Thiessen soft shoes and completely side steps the exactness of the word *ecclesia*, Cambron and Ryrie both accentuate its importance. The fact that the Bible and Baptists exaggerate the Local Church over the Catholic Church is captured effectively in the 'assembling' and 'assembly' ingredients of the definition of *eccleisa*.

39 Ibid.

40 Mark G. Cambron, *Bible Doctrines*, (Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1954), 214.

Thiessen leaves it off completely because it does not fit his concept of the Catholic Church. Nor does he readily give a definition of Church, nor does he address the misgivings about its definition. He points out 3 things the church is not, (not Judaism improved, the kingdom, or a denomination) and then says the church (yet undefined) is considered in two senses, catholic (universal) and local. Finally on pg 408, under his universal sense he gives a secondary definition of “A group of people called out from the world and belonging to God.”⁴¹ Consider that the 'catholic church' as an assembled body, will not be assembled until the rapture of the whole Church, (consider also that the Reformed Theologian does not believe that rapture will occur.) A thorough definition of *ecclesia* is essential to seeing the Bible and the Baptist's emphasis on the assembly of the Local Church. 'Ecclesia' is properly defined as: the called together (often misnomered 'called out') assembly of believers in Jesus Christ. If there is no assembling there is no Church body, but where 2 or 3 are assembled, there is a Church with His authority (Matt 18:20). Although the assembly is not to be confused with a catholic church, a universal body or an invisible church, there are a few uses of the *ecclesia* to refer to the people themselves whether assembled or not.⁴² The 'Church' is an English rendition, not a translation or a transliteration for the NT word '*ecclesia*'

“The English word 'church' comes from the Greek word *kuriakos*, which means 'belonging to the Lord.' This adjective occurs only twice in the New Testament: It is used of the Supper of the Lord (1Cor 11:20), and of the Lord's Day (Rev 1:10).”⁴³

When it comes to the founding of the Church no theology book addresses the Bible truth as thoroughly as Roy Mason does. His purpose in writing is to show the perpetuity of the Baptist's Biblical doctrine and he thus puts great emphasis on the founding and organization of the local Church over any “universal, invisible theory” of a Church. Mason establishes well that Jesus founded the Church, not at Pentecost when all the theologians insist, but prior to his

41 Henry Clarence Thiessen, *Introductory Lectures in Systematic Theology*, 405-408.

42 Mark G. Cambron, *Bible Doctrines: Beliefs That Matter*, (Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Michigan), 213.

43 Henry Clarence Thiessen, *Introductory Lectures in Systematic Theology*, 407.

ascension. When Jesus was with them, he establishes the body of assembled believers, (*the ecclesia*) which 1) had the Gospel, 2) were baptized believers, 3) had an organization, 4) had the proper Head, 5) had both the proper ordinances, 6) had the Great Commission, and 7) had met and were meeting prior to Pentecost.⁴⁴ That is a description of a founded Local Church. NOT invisible, NOT catholic, but founded and local.

The Reformed Augustinian ecclesiology which defines the Church, like the Roman Catholics, as the Universal, Catholic collection, but not assembly, of ALL believers under a single head, is wholly inadequate and very unScriptural. The Bible principle is that when one gets saved, they become a member of the family, not a member of a Church or body of believers; when they are baptized by a group of believers that assemble and have Mason's 7 ingredients, they become members with that group in that local body. This compasses a good systematic understanding which develops a good Biblical ecclesiology never developed by reformers.

44 Roy Mason, *The Church That Jesus Built*, (Challenge Press, Lehigh Valley Baptist Church, Emmaus PA), 18.

VI. Reform Theology's Failures in Eschatology.

An overwhelming and systematic failure of Reform Theology is evidenced in its wholesale acceptance of Catholic Doctrine of last things, or Eschatology. Indulgences, Sacraments and Penance doctrines logically demanded that Catholic soteriology be overthrown and over hauled with major reforms. Likewise Catholic authoritarian and tyrannical slaughter of millions logically demanded that Roman Catholic ecclesiology be overthrown and overhauled and it received inadequate treatment by reformers. But the idea that God's promises to Israel, her restoration into the promised land, her wholesale salvation from all the nations of the world, and her reestablished throne of David to be occupied by the Lord Jesus Christ for a 1,000 year reign, ... such Biblical promise was still logically and perceptibly inconceivable to reformers. Reformed Augustinian Theologians refused to reform Catholic Eschatology, instead only a couple of minor patches were in store for this massive and now diabolical categorical denial of Scripture.

Covenant Theology is the patch work quilt used to provide a scholarly cover up for the brazen denial of literal Scripture. The rejection and scoffing of the millennial reign of Christ, was not to be reformed. The primary tool for this blatant rejection of Scripture truth is the hermeneutical methods developed by the Catholic Church Fathers, Clement of Alexandria and Origin of Alexandria. There allegorical method, whereby Scripture “conceals a secret hidden meaning that only the supremely spiritually astute can see and comprehend” caused, and causes, unmitigated problems. This same myth of allegory caused a caste system of clergy vs laity to grow and flourish. This lording of clergy over laity is called out in Revelations as the doctrine of the Nicolaitans.⁴⁵ Ergo it is called out in the very book that reformers most wanted to allegorize, the Revelation of Jesus

45 'Nicolaitans' is the combination of two Greek words, referencing the victor of the people and the destruction of the people, it also contains syntax of the 'laity' which comes from the middle English for non-specialized people. 'Nicolaitans' is thus, by linguistics, a reference to a professional 'clergy' raising victorious and lording over a non-specialized 'laity.' Clearly a thing which the Lord hates.

Christ.⁴⁶ This Nicolaitan doctrine is hated by the Lord, but coveted by Protestants. Covenant Theology and its A-millennial prospectus is set at odds with the literal rendering of Scripture which purports a Dispensational Theology. Ergo the battle lines are drawn. It is wise to step back and take in the big picture wherein one realizes that Covenant Theology is Roman Catholic Eschatology repackaged. This bad doctrine of last things initiated from the Greek philosophy of Alexandria Egypt is a philosophy that has gone through the whole of the reformation without receiving any of its own.

A. Dispensational Theology vs Covenant Theology

Theology books do not distinguish well between Biblical Dispensational Theology, and Reformed Augustinian Covenant Theology. The best coverage of the two was found in Virkler's Hermeneutics Book, but Virkler's coverage is quite bias towards the reformed position. A dispensation is "a period of time during which man is tested in respect of obedience to some specific revelation of the will of God."⁴⁷ The seven dispensations outlined in Scripture and presented by C.I. Scofield⁴⁸ are:

- 1) Dispensation of Innocence or Freedom Gen 1:28-3:6
- 2) Dispensation of Conscience Gen 4:1-8:14
- 3) Dispensation of Civil Government Gen 8:15-11:0
- 4) Dispensation of Promise Gen 11:10-Exod 18:27
- 5) Dispensation of Mosaic Law Exod 18:27-Acts 1:26
- 6) Dispensation of Grace Acts 2:1-Rev 19:21
- 7) Dispensation of the Millennium Rev 20

Dispensationalism has its origin in the Scriptures and a good hermeneutical exegesis. When Jesus says he WILL build his Church,

46 The Lord Jesus Christ's message to the Church at Ephesus said "But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate." His message to the Church at Pergamos was "So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate." (Rev 2:6, 15)

47 Henry A. Virkler, *Hermeneutics*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2007), 127.

48 C.I. Scofield, *The Scofield Reference Bible*, (Oxford University Press, Inc., 1909), 5.

and we have a NEW covenant, Bible believers tend to believe Him over what Catholic Saint Augustine believed. Covenant Theology has its origin in Reformed Theology's unreformed Catholic error about the Church and its dismissal of Israel as God's chosen People. This error was rooted in their Alexandrian philosophers and Church Fathers, to include Catholic Saint Augustine.

Dispensationalism is found always holding to the exact accuracy, inerrancy, infallibility, and literalness of Scripture, as did Christ. Virkler accuses dispensationalists of inserting discontinuity in the 'pattern of salvation', but if any discontinuity truly exists it occurs because God intended it, and revealed it in His Word. Virkler accuses that dispensationalism was developed in 'stages of development'; as if it was therein invented, but if there have been stages they are stages of resurgence. It is only because dispensationalism has long been squelched out by Catholic and Reformed Augustinian Theologians that it is finding resurgence in these last 100 years. The 20th century recall and re-establishment of dispensationalism as a doctrine of Protestant denominations⁴⁹ has thus seen the following steps:

1. John Nelson Darby (1800-82) and the British Plymouth Brethren worded it.
2. The Niagara Bible Conferences in the late 1800s reworded it.
3. The Scofield Reference Bible in 1909, worded it well. C.I. Scofield attended that Niagara Bible Conference.
4. Lewis Sperry Chafer developed multi-volume Systematic Theology promoting Scofield's dispensational delineation, and
5. In 1965 Charles Ryrie's *Dispensationalism Today* more thoroughly defined it (two years later modernists of the New Scofield Reference Bible slightly modified Ryrie's description of it.)

These steps are not the development of dispensationalism but its resurgence. When Cain, the first born of Adam and Eve, became the first first-degree murderer, God refused that man should take justice into their own hands (Gen 4:15). Lamech strove to expand and exploit the lack of man's governing power when he became the second first-degree murderer (Gen 4:15). But when it had "*repented the LORD*

49 Bible believers like Baptist, Anabaptist, Monestianist, Waldensian, and Donatist have always held to the Millennial Reign of Christ and the dispensational divisions that frame it.

that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart” (Gen 6:6). God destroyed man and set up a new dispensation with new rules and a new covenant. From now on God levies a new system of man governing man for these first-degree murders. *“And surely your blood of your lives will I require; at the hand of every beast will I require it, and at the hand of man; at the hand of every man’s brother will I require the life of man. Whoso sheddeth man’s blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man“* (Gen 9:5-6). Clearly and with the most straight forward hermeneutics this is dispensationalism. The Reformed theologian, allegorizing this change of plan and purpose out of God's Holy Word is diabolical. Trying to contend that there is only one covenant is the blind leaders of the blind.

Again these steps are not the development of dispensationalism, because Jesus and Paul declared dispensational truth that was present in the Scriptures back to creation. The table below contrasts the features of Biblical Dispensationalism and Reformed Covenant Theology.

Biblical Dispensationalism	Reformed Covenant Theology
Has its origin in the Scriptures and a good hermeneutical exegesis. When Jesus says he WILL build his Church, and we have a NEW covenant, Bible believers tend to believe Him over Saint Augustine.	Has its origin in Reformed Theology's attempt to reform Catholic error about the Church and its dismissal of Israel as God's chosen People. This error originated in their Alexandrian philosopher and Church Fathers, Saint Clement, Origen, and Augustine.
Acknowledges the Bible's seven various relationships which God sets up with man.	Supposes a single covenant of grace to cover all time since the fall of man.
Recognizes eight specific covenants which God made with man. (Edenic, Adamic, Noahic, Abrahamic, Mosaic, Promised Land, Davidic, and New)	Fabricates two umbrella covenants to cover all eight of the ones God calls out; a covenant of works in the Garden of Eden and a covenant of grace afterward. A Covenant of Grace, they reason, overshadows each of the lesser covenants.
Depicts the varied salvation history detailed in Scripture wherein presently,	Supposes a single OT and NT covenant of grace wherein God promises

in the New Covenant, God provides a no-works salvation by grace through faith.	Salvation through faith, and the sinner promises a life of faith and obedience (a conditional covenant)
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Theology books covering Eschatology do not provide an adequate contrast between Covenant Theology and Dispensational Theology. Any short and honest analysis of the two shows the latter to be derived from the literal rendering of the Bible, the former derived from Reformed Augustinian Theology, and their twisting of Bible truth to force fit the Alexandrian philosophy of the Catholic Church Fathers.

B. Replacement Theology

The acceptance of the Reformed Augustinians Reformed Theology's Covenant Theology endangers all Biblical eschatology because of their Replacement Theology. Replacement Theology is a subdivision of Covenant Theology that deals with the audacious act of substituting the Catholic Church into the promise line of Israel. The contention is that the Catholic Church (Roman or Protestant) replaces Israel and stands in line to allegorically receive all the promises made to Israel. Israel was replaced, they contend, because of her rejection of Messiah. Harsh and extreme allegorical methods are used to force fit all those promises into the Catholic Church. With horrid allegorical methods Roman Catholics have force fit into their purview and domain all the promises God made to Israel during his millennial reign period.

“And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the LORD. And they shall go forth, and look upon the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against me: for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh ...” (Isa 66:23-24). cannot be accomplished in Catholicism.

“The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock: and dust shall be the serpent’s meat. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy

mountain, saith the LORD ..." (Isa 65:25), is not a Catholic Church provision.

"Shake thyself from the dust; arise, and sit down, O Jerusalem: loose thyself from the bands of thy neck, O captive daughter of Zion ..." (Isa 62:2), is not for Catholicism.

The Vatican of Rome cannot replace Jerusalem when God says *"O Zion, that bringest good tidings, get thee up into the high mountain; O Jerusalem, that bringest good tidings, lift up thy voice with strength; lift it up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God! Behold, the Lord GOD will come with strong hand, and his arm shall rule for him: behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him. He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young ..."* (Isa 40:9-11).

Because indeed *"The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever"* (vr.8).

Roman Catholicism cannot allegorically replace Israel when God says to her *"The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose. It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing: the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon, they shall see the glory of the LORD, and the excellency of our God. Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees. Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not: behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompence; he will come and save you"* (Isa 35:1-4).

Nor can they replace *"Look upon Zion, the city of our solemnities: thine eyes shall see Jerusalem a quiet habitation, a tabernacle that shall not be taken down; not one of the stakes thereof shall ever be removed, neither shall any of the cords thereof be broken. But there the glorious LORD will be unto us a place of broad rivers and streams; wherein shall go no galley with oars, neither shall gallant ship pass thereby.*

Not Producing a Biblical Systematic Theology

For the LORD is our judge, the LORD is our lawgiver, the LORD is our king; he will save us” (Isa 33:20-22).

No replacement theology hatched in Alexandria philosophy and Roman Catholic doctrine can make the replacement. They feared that some un-indoctrinated eye may find these Scriptures and see their lie. The reformers would not even reveal the lie. They instead concealed it in their Covenant Theology. Shame on Reformed Theologians for relying on such brazen tactics.

VII. Reform Theology's Failures in Theology.

“Thus saith the LORD, Let not the wise man glory 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 Theological failure of Reformed Theology is like the theological failure of Catholicism. It is a systematic failure to know God. It is not a failure to know or classify the absolute and relative attributes of God, theologians excel at giving attributes a zealous treatment. The failure to know God is instead rooted in their inability to see how he acts and reacts to mans free will. This is big. Their doctrine has totally eliminated mans free will. The failure to know God is rooted in their inability to believe the literal promises that he has made to Israel as his chosen people. Their doctrine of Covenant Theology has dismissed his promises to Israel and twisted his Scripture trying to claim those promises and the chosen title for themselves. The failure to intimately know God is rooted in their allegorizing away the Revelation of Jesus Christ. They call the tremendous personal and intimate revelation of “the things which shall be,” 'apocalyptic fiction'! No greater insult can be given to a friend than to call his plans and dreams for the future artificial and fiction. Reformed Augustinian Theology has done just that to the Lord God our Almighty Creator. Each of these charges must be examined more fully.

When your belief system is fundamentally flawed in these three areas your knowledge of God, to know him, “*to speak to him face to face as a man speaketh with a friend*” (Exod 33:11), will be severely challenged. Any charge of fundamental error can, and when proven should, nullify a whole system of belief. Herein there are three charges of fundamental error that will produce major flaws in the Reformed Theologians system of belief.

A. Failed Friendship in The Fatal Flaw of Fatalism

Consider first the fatal flaw of fatalism. There are two primary ingredients in the Reformed Theologians flaw of fatalism. There is their concept that God chose, before the foundation of the world, certain souls which he would create, and save, and keep for all eternity, whom he called “elect”, and certain souls that he would create and damn to hell for all eternity, whom he called ..., well since such souls without a hope, do not seem to exist, God never seems to speak of such directly, and thus never calls them out specifically, they are not called anything in the Bible, or named in reformed theology. Consequently the Calvinist never mentions them if it can be avoided. They call the idea that they exist re-probation, but when their existence is brought up the Calvinist must blush and change the subject preferring rather to talk about grace or sovereignty. A highly broadcast evangelical recently preached that the Calvinist should preach these three points to them: 1) God hates you, 2) God has a horrible plan for your life, and 3) There is not a thing you can do about it. That is a complete dramatization of course, but it serves to illustrate the point. It is exactly what drove Robert G. Ingersoll (1833-1899), “Founder of Atheism in America”, first to agnosticism, then atheism⁵⁰.

50 Robert Ingersoll, “Ingersoll's Greatest Lectures- Why I Am An Agnostic”. The Freethought Press Association, 1944, pg 1-67. [Do not think ill of me because I own such a book. Since I Pastor Good Samaritan Baptist Church (1997 – Present) in Dresden, NY, right across the street from the Atheist Museum & Birthplace of Robert Ingersoll, they were “kind” enough to give me copies of his works; Dresden NY being his birthplace while his father Pastored the Presbyterian Church in town. Curiously Thomas A. Edison (1847-1931), my fifth cousin, twice removed on my father's side, 10 years Robert's junior, errantly wrote in the flyleaf of that book, pg iv, “I think that Ingersoll had all the attributes of a perfect man, and , in my opinion, no finer personality ever existed. Judging from the past, I cannot help thinking that the intention of the Supreme Intelligence that rules the world is to ultimately make such a type of man universal.” Thomas A . Edison. Thank you Lord, that man's genius does not impress you, *“For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which*

The other ingredient is the larger and overriding error, and in this flaw of fatalism it is the ingredient that so pitifully biases a personal knowledge of God. Reformed Theologians have an idea that from eternity past God has decreed and rendered certain all the events of the universe, past, present, and future. These, they hypothesize, are rendered certain in an infinite plan embracing causes and effects, including “not only the ends to be secured but also the means needful to secure them.”⁵¹ This idea is wholly their own hypothesis about God and is foreign to the revelation of Scripture. In Scripture it is amazing how many times God “repents” from what he intended to do and changes his direction. In Scripture we see repeatedly a God who puts choices before man and then waits, in real time, for man to make his decisions before the infinite omniscient God takes an action related to what this finite and rational man chooses. In Scripture man can be an intercessor and change the mind and action of the infinite omnipotent God. That is the superb wonder of the revelation in the book, that finite man, the creature, can be a “friend” to an infinite God his creator.

The Reformed Theologian dictates his definition of decrees and completely misses this divine attribute of Jehovah God. God wants a real time, personal, and intimate relationship with man, the only creature made in his image. The decrees of the reformed theologian forbid this intimate relationship. The Westminster Confession states it; that “God did from all eternity, by the most just and holy counsel of his own will, freely and unchangeably ordain whatsoever comes to pass.”⁵² It is errant. It does not align with Scripture. John Wycliffe (1320-1384) the first English Bible Translator had enough Roman Catholic brainwashing to state: “The Church is the totality of those who are predestined to blessedness. It includes the Church triumphant in heaven... and the Church militant for men on earth. No one who is eternally lost has part in it.” John Calvin states it, “We call predestination God's eternal decree, by which he compacted with himself what he willed to become

are not, to bring to nought things that are: That no flesh should glory in his presence.”(1Cor.4:26-29).]

51 Augustus Strong, *Systematic Theology*, 350.

52 Westminster Confessions of Reformed Theology, Chapter III, Sect I.

http://www.reformed.org/documents/wcf_with_proofs (accessed 12/26/2011).

of each man. For all are not created in equal condition; rather, eternal life is fore-ordained for some, eternal damnation for others,”⁵³ and again “there is no random power, or agency, or motion in the creatures, who are so governed by the secret counsel of God, that nothing happens but what He has knowingly and willingly decreed.”⁵⁴ This doctrine of decrees has a powerful hold on the logic of the human mind. It is such a tantalizing work of logic that it has even crept into Baptist dogma; “crept in un-aware” like false doctrines do (cf James 1:4). Again repeated, unchangeable decrees are supported by the logic of the majority of scholars, but they cannot at all be supported by Scripture.

Augustus Strong, a Reformed Baptist and Theologian spends 20 pages of his Systematic Theology Book rationalizing proof of the reformed doctrine of decrees. Thiessen, a less reformed and somewhat Baptist, also expends 20 pages in its defense. Before examining their “proof” of this doctrine, lets examine the preponderance of revelation against it. Very simply, and rationally, if God ever changes what he had planned then the plan was not decreed. The Reformed Theologian responds to this simplicity with rational complexity “God had decreed a plan whereby he appeared to change his plan, when he was just acting out the originally decreed and infinite plan.” Such an over-rationalization to save face with their doctrine of decrees, makes God's revelation of himself a process of deceit! In just a few scenarios one can choose the deceiver, is it God or is it this doctrine of decrees?

The basic ingredient here is that God does not deceive or conceal his true character in the revelation he has recorded for us, instead it is the doctrine of decrees which conceals and uses deceit. So why would a Baptist incorporate such deceit in a work of systematic theology? “*Knowledge puffeth up*” (1 Cor 8:1). It is extremely scholarly to develop the system of human philosophy and rational logic which portrays a God who has decreed everything that comes to pass. It is not at all Biblical. The Bible is re-pleat with examples where God interacts with the free will actions and cognitive skills of his creatures. It is virtually undeniable. No examples highlight the later interactions

53 John Calvin, *The Institutes*, Bk 3, ch 21, s. 5.

54 Ibid., 231-235.

better than the revelation of Bible characters which are called the friends of God. Briefly, examine Abraham, Job and Moses.

Abraham is called the friend of God because of Genesis 18. Two things need to be highlighted in this insightful exchange between Abraham and God. First is God's decision to share his intentions with Abraham. God says to himself: "Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do?" He goes on:

Seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him? For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment; that the LORD may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him. And the LORD said, Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous; I will go down now, and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, which is come unto me; and if not, I will know (Gen 18:18-20).

It needs pointed out here, especially for those entangled in the false teaching of decrees, that God did not know these things about Abraham because he could play out his life in his infinite foreknowledge like we repeatedly run through a film reel of "Its a Wonderful Life"⁵⁵ and know every detail of what happens next. In a Bible that means what it says and says what it means God has this conversation with himself. In this conversation he decides to share with Abraham what his present purpose is and what his tentative plans are. (Emphasis is on 'tentative' here.) He decides this because he has great plans for Abraham himself. He decides this at a last moment as he is getting around to leave on his business. He decided because he knows Abraham. The whole context here refuses that he "knows" how many hairs will be on Abraham's head tomorrow, what he will be doing in two weeks, or what he and his children will do in their every thought and deed. No, the context insists that God knows the

55 A 1946 Feature Film directed by Frank Capra, with James Stewart, Donna Reed, Lionel Barrymore.

personality and character of Abraham as a friend. The whole context here refuses that God has decreed from the foundation of the world every little detail of every little life and event. No, the context here insists that God was making decisions in real time; decisions which would alter his plans and even change his purposes; decisions that were want to be made based on the input from a “creature” which he had made in his own image. God made Abraham with his own free will, his own free agency, his own sovereignty (with a little 's'): man has “sovereign” control over his own actions. This little interchange alone violates every tenant of the philosophic doctrine of decrees. But there is more.

God now engages Abraham in a conversation where Abraham intercedes for the righteous that may be found in Sodom and Gomorrah. This profound revelation of the personality of God and the personality of Abraham cannot be dismissed lightly. God is not just playing a mind game with his finite creation, Abraham. God has not already predetermined his response to Abraham's input. God is not toying with a man that has been pre-programmed to respond a certain way and do certain things which were predetermined before the foundation of the world! Abraham here, and mankind in general, has been given a “free will” ability to think rationally and act independently of his creators “sovereign” control. This is so very contrary to the doctrine of decrees and so very evident in Scripture that one must consider God's statement to Satan himself: “Has thou considered my servant Job?”

Consider Job. If “God did from all eternity, by the most just and holy counsel of his own will, freely and unchangeable ordain whatsoever comes to pass,”⁵⁶ then Job is not in a contest at all. God's challenge to Satan is absolutely bogus, if indeed the doctrine of decrees is allowed to stand un-contested. Did God decree from eternity past that in one day of Job's life the Sabeans would take all his oxen and asses and slay his servants, that fire would fall from heaven and consume his sheep and shepherds; that Chaldeans in three bands would steal all his camels and slay his servants with the edge of the sword and that a great wind would come and destroy his seven sons and three

56 Westminster Confessions of Reformed Theology, Chapter III, Sect I., http://www.reformed.org/documents/wcf_with_proofs (accessed 12/26/2011).

daughters? What kind of God is that? To suppose that the Westminster Concessions is true, to suppose John Calvin was correct, that the reformed doctrine of decrees is sound, is to suppose that the whole book of Job is folly and no more than a depiction of vanity of life, vanity of reason, and vanity of God himself. If the book of Job is in the Bible it is a revelation of the free will of man, of his full ability to exercise integrity within the sovereign control he has been allotted. Every argument, every line, every revelation about Satan, God, and man is inspired, inerrant, “gospel truth” which teaches us that the doctrine of decrees is perfectly bogus and corrupt.

Consider Moses. The errant doctrine of decrees is hatched in the philosophical mind of man because the infinite God of eternity who created finite time cannot be locked in his own creation. Ergo God transcends time, which is to say that God can reel backward and forward in time exactly as we can with the “Its a Wonderful Life”⁵⁷ film reel. That is perfect logic and great philosophy but it is wholly at odds with revealed Scripture. God said to Moses “*I have seen this people, and, behold, it is a stiffnecked people: Now therefore let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them: and I will make of thee a great nation*” (Ex. 32:9-10). Was it possible that God could do what he offered here to Moses? Or, was God just “playing” the man and triggering an intercessory response that he had pre-programmed into Moses. Could God change all the plans already in place whereby his Messianic seed would come from Moses of the tribe of Levi, instead of being from the Lion of the tribe of Judah? This offer of God, and the intercessory role of Moses in this context, is either a wholesale deceitful depiction of an all Sovereign God toying with the mind and pre-programmed, pre-ordained “will” of man, or it is a revelation of a God which interacts with man to formulate a plan in real time and based on inputs from the free agent which he created in his own image. Again John Calvin insists “there is no random power, or agency, or motion in the creatures, ... nothing happens but what He has knowingly and willingly decreed.” This scenario places an insurmountable dilemma on the theologian who must resolve how an infinite God could “not yet

57 Again, a 1946 Feature Film directed by Frank Capra, with James Stewart, Donna Reed, Lionel Barrymore.

know” which direction he would take in a matter, but for the simple Bible believer, trusting in an infinite God with all of his finite mind, trusting in the infallible, inerrant, revelation of His book, it is very clear here that God made a real and legitimate offer to Moses. Recall that God talked to Moses face to face as a man speaketh with a friend (Exod 33:11). Due consideration of this offer is huge. It has an impact on all the 12 tribes of Israel and the gene line of the Christ. It must not be dismissed with the shallow reformed logic “well God knew from eternity past what Moses would say and God's plan in its infinite detail was just being duly executed in this passage.” No, this is a direct un-deceiving revelation from God that his plan is not pre-ordained from eternity past, is not fully established in every minute detail and is not mindlessly executed without regard to the free agency of man; man that He created in His own image; created, one must add, with a sovereign control over his own word and deed. Reading Exodus 32 without the pollutant of Reformed Theology and its doctrine of decrees is a down right enabling/ennobling experience that leads one to realize that they, too, could be a friend of God. Such freeing of the mind from the shackles of decrees and predestination enables an intimate friendship with God which empowers his promises about “*Whatsoever you ask in my name ...*” (Matt 21:22, Jn 14:13, 15:16, 16:23, 1 Jn 3:22, 5:15). This begs the question could God indeed change the future based solely on our input or action? Is the future decreed, or fluid?

Consider David. 1 Samuel 23:10-13 records:

“Then said David, O LORD God of Israel, thy servant hath certainly heard that Saul seeketh to come to Keilah, to destroy the city for my sake. Will the men of Keilah deliver me up into his hand? will Saul come down, as thy servant hath heard? O LORD God of Israel, I beseech thee, tell thy servant. And the LORD said, He will come down. Then said David, Will the men of Keilah deliver me and my men into the hand of Saul? And the LORD said, They will deliver thee up. Then David and his men, which were about six hundred, arose and departed out of Keilah, and went whithersoever they could go. And it was told Saul that David was escaped from Keilah; and he forbare to go forth.”

In the doctrine of decrees the reformed theologian means “that eternal plan by which God has rendered certain all the events of the universe, past, present and future.... one plan 1) that embraces not only effects but also causes, not only ends to be secured but also the means needful to secure them, 2) wherein decrees that have no chronological relation, 3) wherein the decrees have their origin in mans free will, 4) one plan where decrees are in respect of his providence wherein he forces (i.e. has previously, in eternity past foreseen) how “free creatures” will react “therefrom”, 5) these decrees lay neither compulsion or obligations upon the wills of men, and further 6) the doctrine of decrees must clearly stipulate that God's actual agency with regard to determining and predestinating “evil” is only a permissive agency.⁵⁸ One must contrast the very challenging reformed theologian's description of fore knowledge and King David's very agile use of it. David used God's fore knowledge to forecast a what-if scenario, then took actions which changed what God said would happen. I have tremendous respect for both John Calvin's and Augustus Strong's philosophical and logical prowess, but their theology, as far as their ability to know God, and see how he acts and reacts, is totally lacking in this regard. God told David what would happen. David changed his actions, and the “foreknown” did not happen as decreed. It needs to be kept that simple if you are going to know, and trust the God who reveals himself.

Consider Joash. II Kings 13 states it “*Now Elisha was fallen sick of his sickness whereof he died.*” King Joash came down to see the aged prophet who oversaw his grandfather's installation as King of Israel. In a strange symbolic ceremony, Elisha put his hands on the kings hands as he shot an arrow out the window eastward toward Syria. “*Then Elisha said, the arrow of the Lord's deliverance, and the arrow of deliverance from Syria: for thou shalt smite the Syrians in Aphel, till thou have consumed them*”. (2Kings 13:17). But the scene does get stranger; the elder Elisha continues “*And he said, Take the arrows. And he took them. And he said unto the king of Israel, Smite upon the ground. And he smote thrice, and stayed. And the man of God was wroth with him, and said, Thou shouldest have smitten five*

58 Augustus Strong, *Systematic Theology*, 353-354.

or six times; then hadst thou smitten Syria till thou hadst consumed it: whereas now thou shalt smite Syria but thrice” (2Kings 13:18-19). If the Bible is accurately depicting this 'victory determining scenario', God had not “purposed by decree, based on his most wise and holy counsel, freely and unchangeably, ordaining all that comes to pass.”⁵⁹ Here Israel's victories over Syria are not determined by His most wise and holy counsel, but by how many times Joash struck the ground with some arrows. Clearly God followed this ruling: “*So Hazael king of Syria died; and Benhadad his son reigned in his stead. And Jehoash the son of Jehoahaz took again out of the hand of Benhadad the son of Hazael the cities, which he had taken out of the hand of Jehoahaz his father by war. **Three times** did Joash beat him, and recovered the cities of Israel*”(2Kings 13:24-25) (emphasis added). The purpose of this whole curious accounting is not to reveal a fatalistic world entangled in Gods infinite foreknowledge. It is most assuredly given to show that the zeal you have will determine the actions of God and the results of your efforts. Such a scenario not only detracts from the reformed doctrine of decrees, it absolutely forbids it.

Consider Hezekiah. “*In those days was Hezekiah sick unto death. And the prophet Isaiah the son of Amoz came to him and said unto him, thus saith the Lord, set thine house in order; for thou shalt die and not live*” (2Kings 20:1). The classic argument against Reformed Augustinian Theology's doctrine of decrees is the realization that a God, who has decreed every thing that ever happens, and has so decreed from before the foundation of the world, and has caused that these decrees are eternally unchangeable, cannot possibly answer my prayer. He cannot change the future that has been decreed! The amount of paper consumed in trying to rationalize this idea around such an obvious snafu of rationalism should be an embarrassment to the Reformed Theologian. It is not. They do not even blush, for you see, only the very wise and very spiritual “Clergy” and theologians can actually see this very great and mysterious truth about the decrees of God.(Excuse this author's sarcasm.)

The two swindlers contend “as a matter of fact it is invisible to anyone who is too stupid and incompetent to

59 Henry Clarence Thiessen, *Introductory Lectures in Theology*, 147.

appreciate its quality.” ... “The prime minister was welcomed by the two scoundrels. ... “I can't see anything.” he thought. If I see nothing that means I am stupid, or worse, incompetent!” If the prime minister admitted he couldn't see anything, he would be discharged from his office. Finally the Emperor received the new suit.” “Yes, I am ready!” said the Emperor. “Don't they fit well?” He turned once again toward the mirror, because it had to appear as though he were admiring himself in all his glory.

The chamberlains who were to carry the train held their hands just above the floor as if they were picking up the train. As they walked they pretended to hold the train high, for they could not let anyone notice that they could not see anything.⁶⁰

It is embarrassing that two Baptists, Augustus Strong and Henry Clarence Thiessen are acting as the chamberlains, for the invisible doctrine of decrees. “A Small child said that he doesn't have anything on!” ... Finally everyone was saying “He doesn't have anything on!” “The Emperor shuddered, for he knew that they were right, but he thought, “The procession must go on!” “He carried himself even more proudly and the chamberlains walked along behind carrying the train that wasn't there”⁶¹

For Hezekiah God heard his prayer and God changed his sovereign written decree. In fact:

And it came to pass, afore Isaiah was gone out into the middle court, that the word of the LORD came to him, saying, Turn again, and tell Hezekiah the captain of my people, Thus saith the LORD, the God of David thy father, I have heard thy prayer; I have seen thy tears: behold, I will heal thee: on the third day thou shalt go up unto the house of the LORD. And I will add unto thy days fifteen years; and I will deliver thee and this city out of the hand of the king of Assyria; and I will

60 Hans Christian Anderson, *The Emperors New Clothes*, (C.A. Reitzel, Copenhagen, 1837), www.pitt.edu/rdash/type620.html (accessed 10 Dec 2011).

61 Ibid.

defend this city for mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake (2 Kings 20:4-6).

If God will change his sovereign and written decree for his servant David's sake, be sure that he will change things in our future for Jesus' name sake. Jesus, God's only begotten Son, said it “*Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you*” (John 15:16).

These five song verses, called “A Calvinist's Worst Verse”, were written by the author for his grandchildren who sing the song “If You Believe”:

Hezekiah heard from Jehovah God that he would die;
He turned his head and to the wall he made his cry.
Isaiah heard right back from God within the hour;
God changed his plan, cause prayer has power.

CHORUS

If you believe You shall receive.
There's not a trouble or care the good Lord can't relieve;
For, ... He is just the same today;
All you have to do is trust and pray
Believe, you must believe.

Moses Stood and heard God changing his decree;
I'll wipe them out and then from you I'll raise my seed.
But Moses cried, and interceded for the rest;
God took advice, .. to know what's best.

God lift up Job, ... said to the Devil he's the best;
The Devil laughed, and asked if Job could stand a test?
While God looked on, the Devil surely had his way;
But from God's side, Job would not stray!

Abraham smiled, when God had told him his good news;
Then God stepped back, said Should I share all of my views?
God did suspect, ... his servant surely would go straight;
God trusted Abe, ... and all went great!

Joash thrashed, the arrows hard against the ground;
God had not said, ... the more you thrash the greater crown.
But Joash lacked, ... when Jehovah God would see his zeal;
That sealed his fate, ... without appeal!

CHORUS

If you believe You shall receive.
There's not a trouble-or-care the good Lord can't relieve;
For, ... He is just the same today;
All you have to do is trust and pray
Believe, you must believe.

(3 ORIGINAL VERSES ANONYMOSE)

When David stood before the giant with a sling,
Goliath laughed, ... at such a puny little thing;
But David knew, his faith in God would stand the test;
He flung the rock, God did the rest.

When Daniel stood, within the hungry lions den;
Nobody thought, that there was any hope for him.
But all night long, the lions never took a bite,
God took away, their appetite.

I read about, how Paul and Silas were in jail,
Nobody there, nobody there could go their bail.
But when they prayed, ... They found that God was on their side;
The jail house door swung open wide.

On the basis of what is clearly revealed in the Bible the whole doctrine of decrees must be completely and wholly revoked. It can never respond to the revelations about Abraham, Job and Moses and their intimate friendship with Jehovah God. It can never account for God's changing of future events for David, Joash and Hezekiah. It cannot explain away with its own illogical arguments how 1) God repented in Genesis 6, "*And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart*" (Gen 6:6); 2) It cannot explain God's unmitigated repentance prompted by Nineveh's unmitigated repentance in Jonah 3, "*And God saw their works, that*

they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil, that he had said that he would do unto them; and he did it not” (Jonah 3:10), and 3) It cannot explain God's genuine offer of repentance “without a word diminished” in Jeremiah 26:2-3 “*Thus saith the LORD; Stand in the court of the LORD’S house, and speak unto all the cities of Judah, which come to worship in the LORD’S house, all the words that I command thee to speak unto them; diminish not a word: If so be they will hearken, and turn every man from his evil way, that I may repent me of the evil, which I purpose to do unto them because of the evil of their doings”* (Jeremiah 26:2-3). The Reformed Theologian takes these arguments, lifts himself up by his philosophical and rationalistic boot straps and calls them antinomy (an·tin·o·my def.- 1.

*Contradiction or opposition, especially between two laws or rules. 2. A contradiction between principles or conclusions that seem equally necessary and reasonable; a paradox.*⁶²⁾ or relies on anthropathism (an·thro·pop·a·thism def.- *Attribution of human feelings to things not human, such as inanimate objects, animals, or natural phenomena.*⁶³⁾ and sometimes even anthropomorphism. (an·thro·po·mor·phism def.- *Attribution of human motivation, characteristics, or behavior to inanimate objects, animals, or natural phenomena.*⁶⁴⁾ It is very dangerous to consider Scripture to be deceitful in this regard. No, the Reformed Augustinian Theology's doctrine of decrees is hopelessly reliant on philosophy and rationalism and fully defiant of the clear revelation of Scripture. It is wholly errant, and it has deceit as its basis. The doctrine of decrees has two tentacles, one reaching all the way through the doctrine of election, and one which reaches deep into the relative attributes of God. The doctrine of election will meet the same fate as the doctrine of decrees; neither can stand the scrutiny of Scripture. The problems created in understanding an infinite God who steps into the finiteness of time to interact with man made in his own image are not insurmountable. It may be challenging to resolve how an eternal God could step into time and interact with man, but it cannot be denied that he does. The doctrine of decrees is a trivial, Scripture denying solution to this dilemma. That God took on finiteness is an

62 (*American Heritage Dictionary 3rd ed.*, under the word “antinomy”).

63 Ibid.

64 Ibid.

important theme in the Bible, and that he could do it in time and remain eternal requires no simple solution. The doctrine of decrees contradicts Scripture and requires complex logical gymnastics to keep it afloat. Such is the status of this Roman Catholic originated, improperly reformed doctrine of decrees, it needs to be abandoned.

Friendship is based on a mutual trust, mutual respect and mutual admiration. The most miraculous aspect of true theology (studying, learning and understanding every aspect of Jehovah God) must always be a resulting friendship with God. Reformed Theology is missing every aspect of the mutuality of friendship. It may, in a sense, capture mans admiration's for an infinite God, but it completely obliterates the relationship whereby that infinite God steps out of eternity and enters into the time zone of his creation and ponders his thoughts with admiration. "*For the ways of man are before the eyes of the LORD, and he pondereth all his goings*"(Prov 5:21). It may, in a sense, contain a respect for the in-finiteness of an Almighty God, but in perceiving man as a miniscule pawn, and that a totally depraved pawn in an infinite plan, it has completely mis-characterized God's respect for man. Man, created in the image of God, holds, awesome as it is to say, the respect of God. It may seem, in a sense, that reformed theology has a trust in God, but such trust is not mutual. It does not trust the revelation of God, whereby in Scripture, God steps into our time zone and has a genuine interaction with his creation, nor does it perceive the trust that God allots toward man. He allows mans free-will action and decision. God requires of us that we no longer be servants, but friends, friends with God.

B. Failed Friendship in The Denial of God's promises to Israel

The second systematic error that flaws the theology of the Reformed Augustinian is their refusal to acknowledge the nation of Israel as God's chosen people who will yet receive the promises that he made to them. This error is catastrophic, in that it slaps Jehovah God in the face and snubs its nose at the people that God most loves. One may study all the theological attributes of Jehovah God but when you deny and allegorize out all the unbelievable promises which he has

made to the Jews, to the house of Judah, to the truly chosen people of God, to the nation of Israel that is to be regathered into their own promised land, well you will never get to know Jehovah God with those denials. You will not speak to him face to face as a man speaketh with a friend. Attempting to love the chosen seed of Israel's race while at the same time denying, yeah trying to steal away, what was promised to that race, is one of the most diabolical unreformed beams in the eye of the Reformed Augustinian. Covenant Theology came straight from Roman Catholic's denial of Israel's place in God's promises. Their collecting of God's promises and applying them all to a Universal Catholic Church in their twisted ecclesiology went completely unreformed by the reformers.

Covenant Theology relies on the gross allegorizations of literal promises to justify an idea that the church was present in the Old Testament. Roman Catholics contend that when the chosen nation of Israel, the “Old Testament Church of God”, rejected and crucified the Messiah, God replaced it with the Holy Roman Catholic Church. The only reform made to this audacious concept is the removal of the word “Roman.” Covenant Theology rejects the dispensational divisions in the Bible and contends that there is only one covenant after the fall of man. Virkler errantly insists that Covenant Theology promotes Bible continuity while dispensationalism promotes Bible discontinuity⁶⁵; he supposes that it places more emphasis on the additive while dispensationalism emphasizes the disjunctive nature of covenants⁶⁶ and he supposes that Covenant Theology is old, stable and steadfast while dispensationalism is ever changing and late coming theory.⁶⁷ His bias toward this un-biblical concept of Covenant Theology is evidenced and these three contentions are in error.

As a proponent of Covenant Theology, Virkler's explanation of the concept states “Covenant Theologians view all biblical history as covered by two overarching covenants, a covenant of works until the fall and a covenant of grace from the fall to present.... The covenant of grace is the agreement between God and a sinner in which God

65 Henry A. Virkler, *Hermeneutics*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2007), 123-124.

66 *Ibid.*, 134.

67 *Ibid.*, 128.

promises salvation through faith, and the sinner promises a life of faith and obedience. All Old Testament, New Testament and contemporary believers are part of the covenant of grace” He goes on to say “Reformed Theology, from which Covenant Theology developed, has historically viewed the church as existing from the beginning of human history to the end of the world.”⁶⁸ Virkler and the Reformed Augustinians, may sooth their rationalism with an idea that it provides continuity, that it is additive and not disjunctive, or that it has been believed and allegorically explained for a very long time, but Covenant Theology sprang from Clement of Alexandria's 2nd century philosophy denying Israel's restoration and supposing Chilian's⁶⁹ impossibility. What is slightly older is the Lord Jesus Christs' initiation of the “New Covenant”, its documentation in a “New Testament” and therein his inspired explanation of our current dispensation. The whole hypothesis that there is but one covenant is rooted and grounded in the idea, the idea foreign to the Bible, that the Wholly Roman Empirical Catholic Church was going to replace the position held by God's chosen people Isreal.

It is essential to step back and take a complete systematic view of Reformed Augustinian Theology. If all you do is study John Calvin's institutes, or Johnathan Edward's definition of what free will isn't, if you systematize what the “Church Fathers” believed and wrote or even became a follower of the current charismatic genius of John Piper⁷⁰, you can easily be led down the smooth logic and majority line of thinking. You too will fail to bring to reformation the aged philosophical concepts of Clement, Origen, Jerome and Catholic Saint Augustine. But God did indeed make some distinct and literal promises to his chosen people Israel. He will fulfill the promises made to the house of Jacob; he will not, yeah he cannot, forsake these promises to a nation, to a people , to twelve tribes, to his servant David. “Ge 13:15 *For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever*”, again “Ex 32:13 *Remember Abraham,*

68 Ibid., 132-133.

69 Chilian is the Greek, Millennial is the Latin, 1,000 Year Reign of Christ the English.

70 John Piper is the 5 point Calvinist Pastor for Preaching and Vision at Bethlehem Baptist Church (Minneapolis, MN) and the founder of Desiring God., <http://www.desiringgod.org>

Isaac, and Israel, thy servants, to whom thou swarest by thine own self, and saidst unto them, I will multiply your seed as the stars of heaven, and all this land that I have spoken of will I give unto your seed, and they shall inherit it for ever”, again, “Jos 14:9 And Moses swore on that day, saying, Surely the land whereon thy feet have trodden shall be thine inheritance, and thy children’s for ever, because thou hast wholly followed the LORD my God”, again ”2Sa 7:13 He (Solomon) shall build an house for my name, and I will stablish the throne of his kingdom for ever”, again “2Sa 7:16 And (David) thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever”, and again “2Sa 7:24 For thou hast confirmed to thyself thy people Israel to be a people unto thee for ever: and thou, LORD, art become their God”

Gentiles who have been grafted in must not use diabolical and allegorical methods to write out Israel and put in its place a Wholly Mother Of Harlot, Roman Empirical Catholic Church, nor a Protestant Reformed, and now invisible, Catholic Church. The whole concept and depraved hypothesis is insulting to Scripture. As such it is insulting to its author. As such one will never be a friend of God no matter how well they might articulate his divine attributes.

Dispensationalism, on the other hand, is derived from a complete reliance on the accuracy, literalness, inerrancy and infallibility of the Bible. When Jesus declared that there is now a new covenant in his blood, believers need the wherewithal to believe him. When God through the pen of his apostle Paul spells out “*the dispensation of the grace of God.... How that by revelation he made known unto (Paul) the mystery....which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the spirit, that the gentiles should be fellow heirs and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel*”(Eph 3:1-6). This is not vain ramblings of Paul, nor Paul's opinion (as previously proposed by Thiessen). This is Holy Scripture! It is not to be dismissed lightly but digested word by word, to include the word 'dispensation.'

Virkler gave what he calls a history of dispensationalism without mentioning these powerful Biblical sources. As he states it they had their beginning in the 1900's. The Biblical development of dispensationalism is covered previously in this work. Covenant

Theology then has its roots deep in Clement and Origen's brazen denial of Christ's Millennial Kingdom and God's promised restoration of the 12 tribes of Israel. It is called the reformed position but it is not much reformed from what the Roman Catholic Church had established as its doctrine. It uses diabolical exercises in allegorical interpretation to erase from the Bible the millennial reign of Christ, which they attribute to the Holy Catholic Church as the new Israel, the chosen nation of God, which they attribute to the Holy Catholic Church being the new chosen people of God. Now the 144,000 Hebrew witnesses are going to be problematic so they make them out to be apocalyptic fiction. There is no greater systematic error in reasoning than is found in Covenant Theology. It is nothing more than unreformed Roman Catholic doctrine in protestant clothing.

Covenant Theology is such a brazen denial of what Scriptures declare that its proponents will forever be at odds with the author of that Scripture. You cannot be a friend of God while couching his revealed word in allegorical methods which paint him as a great deceiver. It is very learned men who are swallowed up in, and promoting this deception but in God's economy majority rule is always wrong. It is the remnant who entered a narrow gate and embark on a straight path towards God's truth and God's heart who find his friendship. Dispensational understanding, as such a narrow view, represents a complete acceptance of the literal message and a complete acceptance of God's chosen people Israel. That is well pleasing to God. Such empowers a friendship with God which is the highest goal of theology proper. An intimate friendship with God is further denied those who believe they are but pawns with no real ability to act outside of God's Sovereign decree. Such a friendship is surely denied to those who fail to love and respect God's first love and chosen people, Israel. But it is impossible to achieve a friendship with God when one rejects in disbelief the most intimate plans and desires that only intimate friends share with each other.

C. Failed Friendship in The Denial of the Millennial Reign of Christ

The denial of the millennial reign of Jesus Christ and the events that accommodate such a dispensational period, as they are so vibrantly depicted in the Revelation of Jesus Christ, is a direct denial

of intimate friendship with God. This denial was conceived and hatched via the Greek philosophers of Alexandria Egypt. It was embedded in the Roman Catholic Churches denial, scoffing, and scorning of Chiliasm, or Millennialism. It was never reformed by the reformers but instead forced into a devisive Covenant Theology, architected by the Reformed Augustinian Theologians. In human relationships intimate relationships are embodied in the open sharing of dreams, desires, and aspirations. To scoff and deny such aspirations is ultimately injurious to such intimacy.

Once upon a time there was a King building a vast kingdom. At its center was a gargantuan but still growing castle. The king's young son romped in its corridors and played in its cavernous rooms. "Come with me and see the vast addition I am making to the eastern wing of the castle," said the king to his son.

"I don't care about your plans and constructions over there," replied he son. "I only want to play and eat and have fun here where the castle is complete. Your plans for the eastern wing do not interest me at all."

A servant's son also played in the courts of the castle. He was ever exploring the old rooms filled with ancient treasures where his father cleaned and swept. His favorite haunt was near the eastern gate where workers were moving walls and excavating new rooms. "What are you building this room for?" the servant boy would ask the king as he happened down the corridor. "And what is the picture in that tapistry on the other wall?: he asked pointing back up the corridor the king had come down. "What is this huge courtyard and sea of glass you are building off the eastern wing?" The king delighted in the many questions and curious explorations of the servant's boy. He took him by the hand and led him toward the eastern wing exploring the tapistry, the little room they passed and the courtroom with the sea of glass.

Intimacy with God is found in a curious exploration in where he has been and where he is going. "*Hear, ye deaf; and look, ye blind, that ye may see. Who is blind, but my servant? or deaf, as my messenger that I sent? who is blind as he that is perfect, and blind as the LORD'S servant? Seeing many things, but thou observest not; opening the ears, but he heareth not*" (Isa 42:18-20).

There is a tight relationship in these three ingredients which deny intimacy in our relationship with God. Believers are often enticed into various portions of the error by adopting two or three leafs of the T.U.L.I.P., by accepting a Covenant Theology while pretending to love Israel, by denying the pre-tribulation rapture of the church but still pondering the rest of the Revelation of Jesus Christ. Reformed Augustinian Theology has not reformed Roman Catholic error and thereby is a whole system of theology containing the whole of their systematic error. In stealing Israel's elect status and denying the free agency of man, there is a denial of mans ability to act on his own whims and desires in this relationship. In adopting a Covenant Theology which denies God's promises to his chosen people and misappropriates (or steals) them for themselves, there is a denial of God's truly chosen first love. And in denying what God has laid out for the future, the culmination and uniting of his promises to both Israel, the nation of God, and the Church of His Christ, the New Covenant people of God, there is a denial of a friend's most intimate revelation of himself. Taken in any part, with an ignorance of the whole, reformed theology robs intimacy and a knowledge of God. Taken in whole as a complete systematic error it will absolutely forbid a full knowledge of God and an intimate friendship wanting to develop.

The interrelationship of these three errors is still intriguing, intriguing like John wondered at the woman of Rev.17:6. The high point of the error is the denial of Israel's place in the promises of God. In trickling down one side of that hideous slope the reformed theologian grabs onto an errant concept that he is the new chosen one of God. T.U.L.I.P.s and decrees grow on that slope where they believe they were chosen from the foundation of the Earth. In trickling down the other side of that hideous slope the reformed theologian denies the restoration of Israel to be accomplished in the upcoming 1,000 year reign of Christ. The 1,000 year reign of Christ, called Chiliasm, from Greek, Millennium from Latin, is very literal in the Revelation of Jesus Christ. Rev 20:2-7 says:

*And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him **a thousand years**. And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a*

*seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till **the thousand years** should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season. And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ **a thousand years**. But the rest of the dead lived not again until **the thousand years** were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him **a thousand years**. And when **the thousand years** are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison. (Rev 20:2-7)(emphasis added).*

It is likely an overkill to insert here all 212 verses of the Old Testament which point to the Millennial Kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ, so I will only insert one of the authors essays which candidly points out the power of these verses.

Msg #945 God's Chosen

What The Bible Says Good Sam's Penny Pulpit by Pastor Ed Rice

When one reads the 212 verses of the Old Testament which reveal Jehovah God's intention to gather and restore Israel to their promised land and rule the world through them with his only begotten Son sitting on the throne of David in the city of Jerusalem on Mt. Zion, one can see the vanity of Christendom when they think this book is about them. For a very short period in the His-Story of the world Gentiles have full access to the Kingdom of God and may be 'grafted in' to His purposes of restoring His chosen people Israel. Commissioned only to preach the gospel to every creature, the 'Church' has vainly swollen its head and ego to where 'they' actually hated and persecuted God's chosen people. 'They' say *"I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked"* (Rev 3:17). It is not our task to bring peace on earth (Micah 4:3), nor make the lion lie down

with the lamb (Isa 65:25). It is but to “*be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth*” (Acts 1:8). As believers we need to revisit our role as 'such a worm as I' and 'only a sinner saved by grace'. Christ says to 'Christendom' “*Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.*” Read through the 212 verses and then realize anew the scope of “*For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*” We need to be about our Fathers business.

Pastor Ed Rice, Good Samaritan Baptist Church, Dresden NY
300 Words for Week #945, 09 Nov 2009 www.GSBaptistChurch.com

In this life one may well count true friends on the fingers of one hand. True friends can intimately share all their thoughts and dreams, visions and purposes with each other and never fear rejection or reprisal. In His Holy Scripture the Lord Jesus Christ has intimately shared all his plans for His future with believers. Studying them can move you into a closer, more intimate relationship with Him. Dr. C.I. Scofield says a believing study of Biblical Prophecy will 'ennoble' a Christian.⁷¹ Not a curious study, not an allegorical study, not an apocalyptic study, but a believing study.

Consider then that the systematic error of reformed theology, the error wherein it deny's Israel's place in the promises of God, the error wherein they take for themselves the chosen status, and the error wherein they deny the dispensational 1,000 year period called Millennium or Chiliasm. It is indeed systematic error. Every tentacle of Covenant Theology tends to deny and preclude the fulfillment of Holy Scripture. It is, in whole errant theology and produces an errant approach to knowing God. One cannot be endeared to God by denying the nation he loves, nor by twisting the promises He made to them and making it apply to themselves; nor by denying them the 1,000 year dispensation He has prophesied to be up coming. Every tentacle of their error that reaches into the life of a church or a saint causes a misnomer of theology. The highest plain of man is to know God. These errant concepts will keep one from that plain. It is only achieved

71 C.I. Scofield, *Prophecy Made Plain*, (Grand Rapids Mi, 1967), 22.

when you trust implicitly; which means trusting his Word without allegory, accepting his promises without regard, and standing in awe of his prophecy even when it includes a millennial reign involving the 12 tribes of Israel. “Blessed are all they that put their trust in him.”

VIII. Reform Theology's Failures in Bibliology / Scripturology.

Observe and hear all these words which I command thee, that it may go well with thee, and with thy children after thee for ever, when thou doest that which is good and right in the sight of the LORD thy God.... 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. (Deut. 12:28, 29:29).

The failure of Reformed Theology's soteriology, ecclesiology and eschatology all result from three errors in their scripturology. There is more effect here than cause. The failure to regard the exactness and the complete authority of God's written word allows tentacles of error into every area of one's theology. The error made in Reformed Theology's scripturology is major and universal in its impact. When one approaches the Bible with a light regard for its exactness and a full bag of misconceptions developed, believed, and defended by his "Church Fathers," they will advance the verses that support their belief and minimize those that reject their belief. This is a systematic trait of Reformed Augustinian Theology. Such a tact requires a flawed scripturology and this flaw is explored in this effort. The three fold error involves errant ideas about inspiration, Bible criticism and translation methods. Ergo they cause a horrendous erosion of Bible authority. Before fully exploring this threefold error in Reformed Theology's scripturology some examples of Scripture's loss of authority are appropriate. Also note that any attack on the authority of the Word of God is diabolical. Satan is the father of Biblical criticism. His questioning "yeah hath God said?" is the premium question through the 6,000 years of the existence of the universe. Note also that just a little erosion of Biblical authority is a very versatile enemy, emboldening a complete dismissal of Bible truth in order to hold to ones own dispositions.

A. Age of the Universe and Reformed Rejection of Scripture

James Ussher, (1581-1656), the Anglican Archbishop of Armagh and Primate of all Ireland between 1625 and 1656, used nothing but Biblical authority and tedious accounting to demonstrate that the world was created in 4004 B.C. and is thus today 6,015 years old. Such accounting, based on verbal, plenary inspiration coupled with inerrancy and infallibility of Scripture, is scoffed today because science (falsely so called) has proven that rocks and galaxies are millions, yeah billions of years old. These scholars, modernist and scientists hold such power over the rational mind that the best Bible believers we can muster on the subject, including creationists, will only come back to “perhaps 10,000 years.” This vague rounded number is used in case God made some accounting errors in Methuselah age of 969 years, or perhaps used a different, misleading system when he told Moses to jot down “*And Adam lived an hundred and thirty years, and begat a son in his own likeness, after his image; and called his name Seth: And the days of Adam after he had begotten Seth were eight hundred years: and he begat sons and daughters: And all the days that Adam lived were nine hundred and thirty years: and he died*” (Gen 5:3-5). It became good sport to scoff at Ussher because he used the alignment of planets to come up with an exact date and time of the 6 days of creation but his chronology of Bible events to include Adam's life and death, has been confirmed repeatedly and those who hold to inerrancy and infallibility of Scripture are comfortable when hearing that the universe is only 6,015 years old. Those who are uncomfortable with inerrancy not so much.

It is noteworthy that James Ussher preceded by 300 years the diabolical deceptions of Brook Foss Westcott (1825-1903) and Fenton John Anthony Hort (1828-1892), two Anglican ministers fully steeped in the Alexandrian philosophy that “there is no perfect Bible”⁷² Westcott and Hort brought Biblical criticism into vogue for 'scholars so called.' Modernist chronological works have not leaned on Biblical accuracy, and scoff the tremendous strides made by James Ussher. It

72 Samuel C. Gipp, *The Answer Book, Questions #44, 44.*

is also note worthy that Ussher was contemporary with the 57 linguistic giants that labored for 7 years (1604-1611)⁷³ to translate the Greek Received Text (T.R.) and the Ben Chayyim Masoretic Text (M.T.)⁷⁴ into the English language, and Biblical Scholars of that day readily believed in the verbal, plenary inspiration of the infallible, inerrant Scriptures.

Secondly note that James Ussher was contemporary with Jesuit astronomer Christopher Clavius (1537-1612 A.D.) who was recruited by Rome to fix the Julian Calendar which had allowed the solar equinox to drift from March 21st to almost April Fools Day (which is very likely why April 1st carries that name to this day). The Roman popes, who thought themselves infallible, were tired of dating Easter on a very fallible Julian Calendar.⁷⁵ Julius Caesar needed a reformed calendar for his world empire and following his conquest of Egypt in 709 a.u.c. (i.e. anno urbis conditae expresses a date in years since 753 B.C., the traditional founding of Rome.) (which is what we now call 46 B.C.) he adopted the Alexandrian Aristarchus calendar, which recognized a solar year of 365 $\frac{1}{4}$ days, likely taken from the Babylonians in 239 B.C. This Julian Calendar, as it became called, was 11.23 minutes per year too long, accumulating a whole day every 130 years. In James Ussher's lifetime it was resolved to make a leap year only when the year was divisible by 4 but not by 100 or if it was divisible by 400, because a year has 365.2422 days, not 365.25 days. This intriguing mathematical solution allowed Ussher a zeal to roll back a calendar through all eons of time, even back to the 6 day creation! The extraordinary detail found in the Bible and the extraordinary exactness found in this new mathematics of calendars made James Ussher the extraordinary explorer of past chronologies. His extensive investigative work is still trustworthy today.

Rejection of Ussher's dates illustrates the ability of man to dismiss details of God's revelation in order to hold to a larger philosophical idea. Surely all the scholars are agreed that the world is more than

73 D.A. Waite, *Defending the King James Bible: Fourfold Superiority: Texts, Translators, Technique, & Theology*, (The Bible for Today Press, Collingswood, NJ), 1992, 39.

74 *Ibid.*, 27.

75 Peter Meyer, "Julian Gregorian Calendar", www.hermetic.ch/cal_stud/cal_art.html (accessed Mar 2010).

6,015 years old, armed with only an infallible Bible, “Who am I to disagree?” Surely all the scholars agree that God decreed every thing that will happen, after all: *“God did from all eternity, by the most just and holy counsel of his own will, freely and unchangeably ordain whatsoever comes to pass.”*⁷⁶ Armed with nothing more than an infallible Bible, “Who am I to disagree?” Then a child said “The Emperor has no clothes!” Be that child! Although every attack on the authority of the Bible is diabolical the depraved nature of man is headstrong and stiff necked in extending such attack to support his every bias. The Reformed Theologian has three powerful bias’s that have been examined, that of election, that of decrees and the allegorized apocrypha to eliminate the 1,000 year reign of Christ.

It has been stated that a three fold error in Reformed Theology's Scriptureology is to be explored but this cause and effect should be further explored. Only a slight disregard in verbal inerrancy produces a significant disregard in Scripture. Before examining their disregard of Scripture's authority and accuracy, examine a couple more diminishing effects that it produces.

B. Body, Soul and Spirit and Reformed Rejection of Scripture.

The inerrant, infallible, plenary verbally inspired Holy Scripture says in 1 Thes 5:23, *“And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.”* Using the revealed Scripture as our inerrant authority causes one to understand that man consists of body, soul and spirit, a mirror image of God being Father, Son and Holy Spirit; a direct application of loving the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might (Deut. 6:5). The first use of the word 'inspiration' in Job 32:8, *“But there is a spirit in man: and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding,”* requires that there is a spirit in man. Yet Thiessen, more strongly influenced by philosophies and logic of man than the authority of Scripture states that “conscious testifies that there

⁷⁶ Westminster Confessions of Reformed Theology, Chapter III, Sect I.
http://www.reformed.org/documents/wcf_with_proofs, (accessed 12/26/2011).

are two elements in man's being we can distinguish a material part and an immaterial part. But the conscious of no one can discriminate between soul and spirit.”⁷⁷ Ergo Thiessen dismisses, rejects, and refuses to believe this very basic tenet of man, that he has a soul and a spirit. Thiessen goes on to justify his rejection of the Scriptural authority by slinging mud towards others. He points out that Gnostics, Apollenarians, Semi-Pelagians and Annihilationists are all trichotomists and he wants no part with such heretical teachings.⁷⁸

Such a divergence of 'opinion' about the 'being of man' must not be dismissed lightly. Reformed Augustinian Theologians, here Thiessen, brazenly dismiss infallible, inerrant Scripture and use as their authority, philosophy, logic, conscious, and historical teachings of their mother Church. The depth of Thiessen's problem is visible when he writes “Paul seems to think of body, soul, and spirit as three distinct parts of man's nature (1 Thess.5:23). The same thing seems to be indicated in Heb. 4:12, where the Word is said to pierce 'even to the dividing of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow.’ “ (Scripture quoted here is by Thiessen, and from Thiessen's favored, modernist ASV⁷⁹, produced by Bible critics).

Here Thiessen writes about God's inerrant Scripture with such aspersion as “Paul seems to think...”! But 1Thess. 5:23 is not a record of what “Paul seems to think”. It is a record of what “*Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost*” (2 Peter 1:21). It is a part of the All in “*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* (not 'adequate'

77 Henry Clarence Thiessen, *Introductory Lectures in Systematic Theology*, 226.

78 Ibid. 227-228.

79 The American Standard Version (ASV) which was copyrighted and published by Thomas Nelson & Sons in 1901, and in 1928, the International Council of Religious Education (the body that later merged with the Federal Council of Churches to form the National Council of Churches) acquired the copyright from Nelson and copyrighted the ASV in 1929. Although these copyrights expired, the American Standard Version, referenced in this research is still copyrighted by Online Bible Foundation, 12 Birkfield Place, Carlisle, Lanarkshire, Scotland, M184PZ, ©2006.

NASV⁸⁰, not 'thorough' NIV⁸¹; not 'competent' ESV⁸² but '**PERFECT**' KJV, as in the Holy Bible), *thoroughly furnished unto all good works*" (2 Tim. 3). Bear in mind that these 'theologians' have already established that plenary, inerrant, infallible, verbal inspiration is essential for the development of systematic theology. And yet the light esteem for Scripture is what causes ecumenical modernists to "*break their bands asunder*; (that is the LORD's bands, and His Anointed's bands!) *and cast away their cords from us* (that is the LORD's cords, and His Anointed's cords!)" (Ps. 2). When they dismiss all of 1 Timothy 2 and 3 because it is just a record of what "Paul seems to think" they are trying to break the bands of God and cast away his cords.

It says women should not "teach nor usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence." But with this command, they follow

80 The New American Standard Version (NASV), 1973 Revision, copyright by The Lockman Foundation, 1960,1962,1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, and 19732, La Habra, Calif, with all rights reserved. The Lockman Foundation, not Jehovah God, is the registered owner of these words.

81 The "NIV" and "New International Version" trademarks are registered and per requirement of the New York International Bible Society it must be stated that Scriptures quoted herein are taken from the HOLY BIBLE:NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION © 1978 by the New York International Bible Society, used by permission of Zondervan Bible Publishers, (excepting the 16 verses which they refused to even translate, they being absent from their delinquent Greek manuscripts from Alexandria Egypt) or were quoted from the Zondervan Corporation ©2002 NIV Compact Thinline Bible which allows up to and inclusive of five hundred (500) verses to be quoted without their written permission. The Zondervan Corporation, not Jehovah God, is the registered owner of these words.

82 The "ESV", "English Standard Version" are registered trademarks of Crossway, Use of either trademark requires permission of Crossway. When quotations from the EXV text are used in non-saleable media, such as church bulletins, orders of service, posters, transparencies or similar media, a complete copyright notice is not required, but the initials (ESV) must appear at the end of the quotation. Publication of any commentary or other Bible reference work produced for commercial sale that uses the English Standard Version (ESV) must include written permission for use of the ESV text, Permission requests that exceed the above guidelines must be directed to Crossway, Attn: Bible Rights, 1300 Crescent Street, Wheaton, IL 60187, USA. The Holy Bible, English Standard Version (ESV) is adapted from the Revised Standard Version of the Bible, copyright Division of Christian Education of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. All rights reserved. Crossway, not Jehovah God, is the registered owner of these words.

Thiessen's lead and say "It is just Paul's opinion and we will not heed it as infallible, inerrant, inspired Scripture" (The NIV, NAS, and ESV will not even use the word 'inspiration'). A very dangerous precedence is herein set by the Reformed Augustinian Theologian, a precedence that rules evangelicals and leavens into fundamentalism. With this precedence they rationalize and balance all the facts to which their "conscious testifies" and then they just know for a fact that man is only body and soul and not body, soul, and spirit (or they know for a fact that women can pastor just as well as men can). Then it is alright to directly dismiss Scripture as nothing more than what "Paul seems to think" or what "Peter seems to think" or what "Isaiah, Moses and Hosea or Hezekiah seem to think." Rejecting the very certain indication of this single verse (1 Thess 5:23), the dominant teaching principle of the tricotomy of man, of loving the Lord thy God with all thine heart and all thy soul and all thy mind, and the dominant reflection wherein God says let Us make man in OUR image are dismissed because 2nd and 3rd century philosophers like Origen and St. Augustine insist that man is only 'dicotomy', because logical philosophers have determined that man has only material and immaterial parts.

This is systemic of the Reformed Augustinian Theologian's errant methodology. They have made up their mind what they are going to believe before they ever experience what the Bible says about the subject. They will not follow a hermeneutical spiral. They will not set aside a concept because the Scriptures do not support it. Yeah even when the Scriptures oppose it. Reformed Augustinian Theology is thus not true theology and tarnishes the very word.

C. The Reformed Threefold Error in Scripturology

The whole basis for such a disregard for the authority of Scripture is the previously mentioned threefold error found in all evangelicalism and rampant in Reformed Theology. A bad concept of inspiration, a perverse dependance on Biblical criticism and a full blown reliance on a bad translation method. These are all interrelated. Each should be examined in turn.

1. Compromised Definition of Inspiration

The grossly compromised definition of inspiration is root and cause of the major scripturology error. The assurance of inspiration of Scripture has been staunchly defended and defined by Scripture itself and by the Bible believers of each generation. None has better defended, defined and explained it than Dr. Gaussen (1790-1863) in his book *Theopneustia*⁸³. To subvert this great work every evangelical scholar, modernist and ecumenical has attempted to limit the scope of this definition, defense and explanation. They do so by referring to the “original autographs” as being all that was inspired. Satan knows, and most of these scholars surely seem to realize, that limiting inspiration to only the autographs completely sidesteps the question, “Is the Bible I hold in my hand inspired?” thus is sidesteps all of Gaussen's great body of effort. There is not, nor did their ever exist, a collection of autographs. Never, non-existent, from eternity past to eternity future, nowhere on earth or in heaven is there a collection of Scripture autographs. Satan knows, and scholars must know, that if they can restrict inspiration, inerrancy, and infallibility to original autographs they have won the whole battle against the authority of Scripture. How is this battle progressing?

Dr. Thiessen ends his definition of inspiration with this sentence... “And again, inspiration is affirmed only of the autographs of Scriptures, not of any of the versions, whether ancient or modern, nor any of the Hebrew or Greek manuscripts in existence, nor of any critical texts known.”⁸⁴ The position, that only the autographs are inspired and that no inspired text in any form is in existence today, is the fruit of Bible criticism which in final form denies all inspiration, all infallibility, and all inerrancy. Although this position, worded boldly by Reformed Theologians, is carefully word-smithed by fundamentalists, it is NOT the historic Biblical position on inspiration. Such a Biblical position is best worded by Dr. Gaussen in his 365 page dissertation of the subject. That the 'original autograph' argument is a

83 L. Gaussen, *Theopneustia*, (The Bible Institute Colportage Ass'n., Chicago Ill., 1840), 1-365.

84 Henry Clarence Thiessen, *Introductory Lectures in Systematic Theology*, 107.

departure from that dissertation is best seen in the full summarizing quote of Dr. Gausson:

The necessary result, then, has been, that we all – Greeks, Latins, and Protestants – should have among us the same sacred book of the New Testament, without the difference of a single iota !

We have said enough on this great fact. We have felt it right merely to glance at it for the purpose of repelling an objection, since it took us away from our doctrine – to wit, the *primary inspiration* of Holy Scripture; and some have thought they could oppose us by urging, that, even were this doctrine true, it would be deprived of all effect by the alterations which Holy Scripture must have undergone. We behooved to show that these alterations are a vain and harmless phantom. While engaged in establishing a doctrine, we have already said, we have been lead to write a history. We would now, then, return to the doctrine. Nevertheless, before returning to it, we must once more conclude, that not only was the Scripture inspired on the day when God caused it to be written, but that we possess this word inspired eighteen hundred years ago; and that we may still, while holding our sacred text in one hand, and in the other all the readings collected by the learned in seven hundred manuscripts, exclaim with thankfulness, I hold in my hands my Father's testament, the eternal word of my God !⁸⁵

I hold in my hands and preach from my pulpit the inerrant, infallible, plenary, verbally inspired word of God. This has been the historic position of Baptists, if not fundamentalists, and such is properly illustrated by giving Spurgeon's notable commendation from Gausson's flyleaf:

The turning point of the battle between those who hold 'the faith once delivered to the saints,' and their opponents,

85 L. Gausson, *Theopneustia*, (The Bible Institute Colportage Ass'n, Chicago, 1840), 192.

lies in the true and real inspiration of the Holy Scriptures. This is the Thermopylae of Christendom. If we have in the Word of God no infallible standard of truth, we are at sea without a compass, and no danger from rough weather without can be equal to this loss within, 'If the foundation be removed, what can the righteous do?' and this is a foundation loss of the worst kind.

In this work the author proves himself a master of holy argument. Gaussen charms as he proclaims the Divine veracity of Scripture. His testimony is clear as a bell. - CHARLES H. SPURGEON⁸⁶

If the version that you hold has been tampered with by the Bible critics who do not hold that the 66 books of the Holy Bible ARE PRESENTLY THE inspired word of God, you should be remiss to make such a bold statement.

Further examine the fallacy of Dr. Thiessen's position. Understand that original and autographs is a redundancy in terms. Those concerning themselves with the original manuscripts are fussing over the autographs. For an autograph, even when sought out from celebrities of today, must drip from the pen held alone by the author. So to is the contention of these modernist, that unless the written words dripped from the pens of the apostles, prophets and holy men of God who SPAKE, they were not inspired . Only the original manuscripts, the actual autographs, are inspired, they say. Any copies, even copies over seen by the original authors and Apostles, contained scribal and copiest errors and editorials, they say, each copy containing enough error to nullify all future claims of inspiration, they say. Such a wild hypothesis cannot stand the mildest scrutiny.

The hypothesis has no basis in Scripture, none. When Paul surrounded himself with pen men and spoke the verse "*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*" (2 Tim 3:16, 17). Did God have in mind the non existent autographs? When God

86 L. Gaussen, *Theopneustia*, (The Bible Institute Colportage Ass'n., Chicago Ill, 1840), Flyleaf

said every one of those inspired words were preserved forever was it an allegorical statement that did not mean what was literally penned? When Moses came down off the mountain with a copy of the original ten commandments were they less than inspired? When Paul told Timothy to study and rightly divide the word of truth was he at all concerned that Timothy did not have any autographs to work with? When Jesus said “Verily I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.” was he ignorant that jots and tittles had already passed away? Or is it that the reformed, the protestant, and the modernist devised this hypothesis about original autographs being the 'only inspired Scripture'? They hypothesize that only original autographs are infallible. They hypothesize that only original autographs are inerrant. Certainly their hypothesis is ludicrous. It is not presented with a shred of Bible evidence. It is generated and supported only with their logical defense that their must be copiest errors and the original inerrancy is certainly lost, ergo the original infallibility is lost, ergo the original inspiration is lost, ergo we need not guard every word because nobody has an original autograph anyway. This whole unreasonable speculation is nothing more than an erosion of authority of Scripture. If only original autographs are inspired, infallible, and inerrant, and nobody has them, then nobody really knows what the Bible says and everybody's version is an equally accurate representation of what might have been said! There can now be a proliferation of copyright translations and everybody wins? The problem with their self serving hypothesis is this, Jesus did not substantiate it in the least, ergo any Christian that would believe what Jesus Christ himself believed, (and that should indeed be the stance of every believer) has no use for this flawed hypothesis.

In 1840 Gausson wrote the all defining, all encompassing documentation on inspiration. It is called *Theopneustia*. Every believer needs to come to the position Gausson fully develops in his work. Any Pastor/Teacher of Scripture that cannot comfortably arrive at his position should study on, to shew themselves approved unto God, until they, with Gausson can say “I hold in my hands the inspired, inerrant, infallible word of God.” Until one comes to that starting position the very authority of what is believed and preached shall be

questionable. God's intent is that we trust every word and treat each "word" as inerrant, trust every "jot" and consider that every jot is infallible, trust every "tittle", when we say ALL Scripture is given by inspiration, and while heaven and earth may pass, this book of the law shall not pass away...forever, O Lord the word is settled in heaven.

With such a staunch and settled 'going in' position you will never end up in the position where you say or think "that is just Paul's opinion." With Jesus' jot and tittle scripturology you cannot rightfully, in good conscious, rely on any allegorical interpretation, nor trust someone who uses allegory to develop exorbitant ideas about Israel, election, or tribulation. With a Biblically sound position on verbal plenary inspiration, inerrancy, and infallibility, you will never be comfortable with those who call the Revelation of Jesus Christ allegorical, apocalyptic fiction. When you fully appreciate that "*the words of God are pure words as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times*" (Ps 12:6). you will then be very leery when someone tries to rip 1 John 5:7 out of your Bible and throw it into a trash can, and justly so, i.e. justly leery.

The Reformed Theologian, with hands joined with modernist translators, turns from their sullied definition of inspirations to make the audacious claim that the inspired word of God has been lost, "but trust us, we can fix it for you." Reformed Theologians claim they can fix your broken Bible and they will use textual criticism to get back the original manuscript feeling. Before examining any detail of how the textual critic is going to "fix" the "Broke Bible" it would be wise to step back and check their preliminary results.

2. Textual Criticism the Reformed Theologian's Savior?

The textual critics have deemed that 1 John 5:7 should be stripped from your Bible and thrown into a Vatican trash can somewhere. They have determined that same fate for Matt 18:11; 23:14; Mark 7:16; 9:44, and 46; 11:26; 15:28. So too Luke 17:36; 23:17 and John 5:4. They would have to trash Acts 8:37; 15:34; 24:7; 28:29; Rom 16:24! They would also have to rip out most of Matt 5:44 and Luke 9:56 and in Col 1:14 cut out the phrase "Through His Blood." Why have

leading fundamentalists and their Bible colleges, like Bob Jones University, accepted this anarchy and taken up their pen knives to cut verses out of the their Bible? What forces are in place that would cause leading fundamentalists to follow after the Reformed, liberals and cults to cut out and discard Scripture verses that honest believers copied and held as sacredly inspired by God for the previous 1,900 years? They have followed after modernists and liberals with a flawed method of textual criticism. The tracking of this audacity back to it's diabolic source is strikingly easy. One might well ask where does this propensity for stripping words out of the Bible come from? The answer, it comes from Alexandria Egypt, home of Catholic Church father and Greek philosopher Clement of Alexandria and home of the original Bible critic, Catholic Church Father Origin of Alexandria. Whenever one hears mention the “best and oldest manuscripts” it behooves them to bring to mind Clement, Origin and Alexandria Egypt. That is where those manuscripts originate.

The frustration of dealing with today's textual criticism is that the battles for truth were fought so eloquently in the last two centuries that the straight and narrow path should be more fully occupied than it is today. Indeed the wide gate and the broad path following after Westcott and Hort's folly has invaded every avenue of evangelical circles. Today, men mindlessly reject the Received Text (TR) and pursue textual criticism with 'older is better' blinders on. Michael W. Holms, a well degreed Professor of Biblical studies at Bethel College in Saint Paul Minnesota, nods at Erasmus of Rotterdam's excellent analytic tools for textual criticism, but then dismisses Erasmus' effort with this slanderous accusation: “Consequently his (Erasmu's) text ended up representing in printed form **a late corrupt form of the Byzantine text-type.**”⁸⁷ He goes on to point out that this 'late corrupt form' called the 'Textus Receptus' ... “was the basis of all the major European Protestant translations prior to 1881, including especially the King James of 1611, and (the TR) **unwarrantedly** dominated the scholarly scene for over three hundred years.”⁸⁸ Thus Holms, required

87 David Alan Black & David S. Dockery, *New Testament Criticism and Interpretation, Section-Textual Criticism essay by Michael Holms*, (Zondervan Publishing House, 1991), 109.

88 *Ibid.*, 109.

reading at our evangelical seminaries, calls Westcott and Hort's extreme bias toward corrupted Sinaicus and Vaticanus⁸⁹ manuscripts, scholarly, while he calls those who would use the traditional text as having a 'superstitious reverence accorded to the TR.'⁹⁰

The error that Holms, Black, and Dockery are influentially passing on, saying that the TR is recent and corrupted, while the Westcott and Hort is the pure text based on older and better manuscripts, was birthed in the extreme textualism of Lachmann and Buttmann in 1842! Lachman's "first principle, at which he had hinted in a small edition eleven years before, was to discard the readings of the 'Received Text,' as being in his opinion only about two centuries old; whereas they conflicted with what he conceived to be better authority."⁹¹

On this false premise, regurgitated by Michael Holms 149 years later, Lachmann errantly discarded the 'recent TR' and would only use "the guidance of the Alexandrian (A), the Vatican (B), the Parisian (C), and four fragments, (P, Q, T, Z) besides an occasional use of the Cambridge manuscript (D), the old Italian manuscript in Latin; and the quotation of St. Irenaeus, St. Cyprian, Origen, Lucifer, and Hilary."⁹² Lachmann, however, had only one manuscript, Vatican B, that reached back to the fourth century. When Tischendorf discovered the Sinaiticus manuscript four years later, it was found to collaborate the massive deviations of the Vatican B. All the excitement of having two collaborating manuscripts from the fourth century completely overthrew all the proper rules of textual criticism. From that time on the broad gate and wide path which discarded the TR as 'recent and

89. Aleph (Ⲁ) and B manuscripts are the Greek Uncial manuscripts (mss) called Sinaicus and Vaticanus. Sinaicus was discovered and purchased by Constantine Tischendorf . In 1844 in the Convent of St. Catherine, on Mount Sinai, Tischendorf found monks lighting their stove with a discarded Greek unical manuscript now nomenclatured Aleph (Ⲁ). Both are thought to date back to the 4th century and come from Alexandria Egypt .

90 Ibid., Black, 109.

91 Edward Miller, *A Guide to Textual Criticism of the New Testament, Chapter III History of Textual Criticism*, (Dean Burgon Society Press, Collingswood NJ, 1886), 20.

92 Ibid., 21.

corrupted' and blindly accepted that 'older is better' was paved and well trodden.

Little research is needed to discover the truth of the matter. There is a straight and narrow path that shows that the TR is not recent nor corrupted. The clear and proven contention is that the Sinaicus κ and the Vatican B are the corrupted text. Dean Burgon (1813-1888 A.D.) demonstrates over and over that the TR was not edited together in the 1500's as Lachmann, Tischendorf, Westcott and Hort continually contend. He states:

The strength of the position of the Traditional Text lies in its being logically deducible and to be deduced from all the varied evidence which the case supplies, when it has been sifted, proved, passed, weighed, compared, compounded, and contrasted with dissentient testimony. The contrast is indeed great in almost all instances upon which controversy has gathered. On one side the vast mass of authorities is assembled: on the other stands a small group. Not inconsiderable is the advantage possessed by that group, as regards numerous students who do not look beneath the surface, in the general witness in their favour borne by the two oldest MSS. of the Gospels in existence. That advantage however shrinks into nothing under the light of rigid examination. The claim for the Text in them made at the Semiarian period was rejected when Semiarianism in all its phases fell into permanent disfavour. **And the argument advanced by Dr. Hort that the Traditional Text was a new Text formed by successive recensions has been refuted** upon examination of the verdict of the Fathers in the first four centuries, and of the early Syriac and Latin Versions. Besides all this, those two manuscripts have been traced to a local source in the library of Caesarea. And on the other hand ... **the Traditional Text ... has been discovered in the manuscripts of papyrus which existed all over the Roman Empire**, unless it was in Asia, and were to some degree in use even as late as the ninth century before and during the employment of vellum in the Caesarean school, and in

localities where it was used in imitation of the mode of writing books which was brought well-nigh to perfection in that city⁹³ (emphasis added).

The rash assumption that an older manuscript like the Sinaiticus α and the Vatican B are free from corruption is likewise wholly unfounded, and more so, illogical. How long does it take to corrupt a manuscript? Especially with the corruptions prevalent throughout the Sinaiticus α and the Vatican B wherein they continually drop the title 'Lord' and his position description 'Christ' from the name of the 'Lord Jesus Christ.' Dropping out the stuff one does not like is not new. The early church leaders warned about these Bible corrupters in the 2nd century!.

Eusebius cites the indignation of Dionysius, bishop in Corinth (c. 170 A.D.), for the heretics; tampering with his personal correspondence as well as the Scriptures: "As the brethren desired me to write epistles, I wrote them, and these the apostles of the devil have filled with tares, exchanging some things, and adding others, for whom there is word reserved. It is not, therefore a matter of wonder, if some have also attempted to adulterate the sacred writings of the Lord, since they have attempted the same in other works that are not to be compared with these."⁹⁴

Ireneaus gives equal warning of this common practice:

Ireneaus, a disciple of Polycarp, said of Marcion (150 A.D.): "he (Marcion) mutilates the Gospel which is according to Luke, removing all that is written respecting the generation of the Lord, and setting aside a great deal of the teaching of the Lord, in which the Lord is recorded as most clearly

93 John William Burgon, *The Causes of the Corruption of the Traditional Text of the Holy Gospels*, (Grand Rapids, MI, 1896), 120.

94 Eusebius Pamphilus, *The Ecclesiastical History of Eusebius Pamphilus*, 160, as quoted in *BI-300 Inspiration of Scripture I, Syllabus*, Landmark Baptist College, Haines City, FL, 60.

confessing that the Maker of this universe is His Father ... In like manner, too, he dismembered the epistles of Paul, removing all that is said by the apostle respecting that God who made the world, to the effect that He is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and also, those passages from the prophetic writings which the apostle quotes, in order to teach us that they announced beforehand the coming of the Lord.⁹⁵

Anyone who takes a text from Alexandria Egypt as pure, and the text that has stood solid for 1900 years as corrupt is camping with mislead fools. Indeed the Alexandrian family of texts, that is unduly weighted as pure by Westcott and Hort of old, and Nestle Aland of late, is the corrupted text and these men have called good - evil and evil – good.⁹⁶ This is the brazen error of modern textual criticism and there is no excuse for it's abiding with thinking, researching Christians, especially not with fundamentalists, more so still, not with Baptist's of any stripe.

The whole field of Bible Criticism has its purpose in creating an impenetrable fog around what the Words of God are and where the words of God came from. Source criticism contends that Matthew did not write Matthew, Mark did not write Mark and Luke did not write Luke. They hypothesize that they were written instead by mysterious and unknown 'evangels', that these 'evangels' all copied from a common source, some copied well, others not so much, and when you combine all these copies of a copy you end up with a synoptic view of the life of Jesus. Ergo you have the critical term of 'Synoptic Gospels' applied to these texts. Shame on any Bible believer who even steps into their slippery slope of linguistics and refers to Matthew, Mark and Luke as the 'Synoptic Gospels'! Any 'critical' look at the Bible is a non-believing look at the Bible, instigated by infidels. Reformed theologians, evangelicals and modernists also lend credence to a host

95 Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, eds., *The Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol 1*, 352, as quoted in *BI-300 Inspiration of Scripture I, Syllabus*, Landmark Baptist College, Haines City, FL, 60.

96 Isaiah 5:20 Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!

of Bible criticisms constructed and orchestrated by those who could not believe the Bible to be true. Founders include German scholars such as Johann Gottfried Eichhorn (1752–1827) and Wilhelm Martin Leberecht de Wette (1780–1849). Hermann Samuel Reimarus (1694–1768) became convinced that little of what the Bible said is true and in the 19th century people like David Strauss, Ernest Renan, Johannes Weiss, Albert Schweitzer began an investigation of what the 'real historical Jesus' might have been. With all this criticism taking root, the Reformed Theologian, evangelical, and modernist, now give credence to form criticism, redaction criticism, canonical criticism, rhetorical criticism, narrative criticism, psychological criticism, postmodern criticism and even feminist exegesis!

Now nestled in the center of these critics and criticisms is the tool that the Reformed Theologian, the evangelical, and the modernist want to use to 'fix' their hypothesized uninspired Bible. They contend that it is riddled with copiest additions which must be edited out and they will do that for God with their competent use of 'Textual Criticism'. Those who have been lulled into this authority eroding snare of the reformers have not done their systematic homework to realize the Alexandrian path they are being led down. John R. Rice is a hero of fundamentalist, and an avid author on the home but he had not done his critical homework concerning the Bible version issue. The reformed, the evangelical, and the modernist is not to be trusted when they want to rip things out of Scripture based on their very best Textual Critic. And their very best Textual Critic is still the team called Westcott and Hort; they tossed all twenty of the previous Bible verses, and many more, some that even the modernists were to ashamed to trash, into the Vatican trash can.(i.e. Mark 16). The reformed, the evangelical and the modernist, who continue trashing those twenty verses, claim that it does not change any Bible doctrine. It does, however, change ones scripturology! Once the Alexandrian philosopher has been given permission to throw twenty verses on the cutting room floor, the verses which remain do not hold the authority they originally held. It will now be pretty common to doubt any controversial words, to accept "a better translation is", to clarification and to trust 'scholars so called' with delineating what should and

should not be in our Bible. They may also reference Holy Scriptures as 'Paul's Opinion!'

The preface to the Revised Standard Version states it thus:

“The King James Version of the New Testament was based upon a Greek text that was marred by mistakes, containing the accumulated errors of fourteen centuries of manuscript copying....We now possess many more ancient manuscripts of the N.T. and are far better equipped to seek to recover the original wording of the Greek text.”⁹⁷

Shame on any Christian who would trust the Bible criticism and textual criticism of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. for crying out loud.

Dr. VanBuskirk, Vice President of Salt Lake Baptist College, Taylorsville, Utah, likens this degradation in authority to removing bricks out of the lower parts of a brick wall of a citadel⁹⁸. Of course the wall is left standing but the structure is cracked sagging and compromised to the point that you would not fully trust it. Trusting a reformed, evangelical or modernist's scholarly textual criticism to determine what verses are reliable and what verses should be castigated from God's Holy Scripture is dangerous. When they rely wholly on the Alexandrian Sinaicus and Vaticanus⁹⁹ manuscripts and trust the work of Brook Foss Westcott (1825-1903) and Fenton John Anthony Hort (1828-1892)¹⁰⁰ to frame up their criticism it is wholly

97 The Revised Standard Version, New Testament, is copyrighted 1946, © 1971, 1973 by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A., vii.

98 T.E. VanBuskirk, *The Doctrinal Chaos of the Translations, Why the King James Version is the Preserved Word of God*, (Salt Lake Baptist College, Taylorsville, Utah, 2007), 62.

99 Aleph (Ⲁ) and B manuscripts are the Greek Uncial manuscripts (mss) called Sinaicus and Vaticanus. Sinaicus was discovered and purchased by Constantine Tischendorf. In 1844 in the Convent of St. Catherine, on Mount Sinai, Tischendorf found monks lighting their stove with a discarded Greek uncial manuscript now nomenclatured Aleph (Ⲁ). Both are thought to date back to the 4th century and come from Alexandria Egypt.

100 Samuel C. Gipp, *The Answer Book: Question Number 44*,

<http://www.chick.com/reading/books/158/158cont.asp> (accessed 10/16/07) [Brook

unacceptable and endangers the authority of Scripture for those who would trust Bible critics of any flavor. This is the plight of the Reformed Theologian.

3. Broken Authority and Unreformed Dynamic Equivalence

The Reformed Theologian is intent on doing God a favor when he attempts to fix this un-preserved inspiration. They are often filled with zeal and intensity, but their integrity is challenged by this ignorance; textual critics especially, yeah no critics ever, are to be trusted in altering Gods Holy Words. A critical view is an infidel's view, that is what critic means! Once this authority of the written word of God has been thus challenged, its inspiration, inerrancy, and infallibility unjustly dismissed, its very words dismissed by Bible critics, there is little resistance when the Reformed Theologian, evangelical and modernist use dynamic equivalence methodologies to change God's wording. Dynamic equivalence is a fabricated contradiction of terms. Dynamic implying the changing, equivalence implying the staying the same. When a translator or Bible interpreter considers God's Words or wording incorrect or inappropriate for their intended audience they change it, and make it what they are sure God meant to say. They might pull together their team of experts and scholars to figure what God meant to say, and how they might improve his faulty word choice or sentence structure. They would never couch their action in those terms because they generally believe the Bible to be man made (at the least man preserved), and man edited as a conglomeration of the 'once upon a time inspired autographs'. Ergo their changes of God's words, so they say, better meet the needs of their modern diversified audiences; they are actually doing God a service, in their rational. Do not trust anyone who uses dynamic equivalence to change God's wordings.

Foss Westcott (1825-1903) and Fenton John Anthony Hort (1828-1892) were two non-Christian Anglican ministers. Fully steeped in the Alexandrian philosophy that 'there is no perfect Bible', they had a vicious distaste for the King James Bible and its Antiochian Greek text, the Textus Receptus.]

Examples of this distasteful practice include changing God's words "As it is written in the prophets," to their words "As it is written in Isaiah the prophet" (ASV, NAS, NIV). Since their scholars found a place where Isaiah made this statement they expect that God meant to say specifically where it was written but failed to. In "helping God out" this way they preclude that other prophets said the same. They think that "Holy men of God *WROTE* as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." when the Bible says "Holy men of God *SPAKE* as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (emphasis added). When nine times God spoke of a unicorn to make a point (Num. 23:22, 24:8, Deut 33:17, Job 39:9,10, Psalm 22:21, 29:6, 92:10 and Isaiah 34:7) the modernists threw out his point and His Hebrew word and made up their own, calling God's unicorn, "a wild ox." (ASV, NAS, NIV) They just knew that God was wrong because the unicorn is a fictitious creature from folklore. Ergo they changed God's word because he was obviously in error. However, there really is an antelope called the unicorn. He is called that because when he looks directly at you his horns align giving the appearance of having only one horn. God was using this creature to illustrate some truths and modernists have no right to change God's word because they are uncomfortable with it for any reason. This is especially bad when they think they know more than Him.

At the battle of Armageddon, which Reformed Theologians do not believe literal, God said in beautiful prose with figurative connotations "*For wheresoever the carcass is, there will the eagles be gathered together*" (Matt 24:28), and again "*For wheresoever the carcass is, there will the eagles be gathered together*" (Luke 17:37) (emphasis added). Any Zoologist with a minor education knows it is vultures that gather around carcasses so these 'scholars' throw out God's infinite knowledge and actual wording to insert their finite knowledge and vulgar vultures. (NAS, NIV) Do not trust a word changer. Hold on to verbal, plenary inspiration instead. The Scriptureology of the Reformed Augustinian has completely fractured any and all authority of Scripture for them. They may say anything you please about inspiration, inerrancy and infallibility, when they limit it all to the non-existent original autographs, they have allowed the complete dismissal of each. Their complete reliance on Textual Critics like Brook Foss

Westcott and Fenton John Anthony Hort, to restore some similitude of lost originals is flawed. That coupled with their love for Alexandrian philosophers and ergo Alexandrian texts, makes for a trajectory that will never come to the truth. They are certain they are doing God a favor when they change his words to clarify what he meant to say. These three fallacies in Reformed Theology enable them to employ allegorical methods to dismiss Israel as God's chosen people, claim that chosen status as their own and blow it out of all proportion with T.U.L.I.P. Broken Bible authority allows them to resolve the Greek philosophy that man is merely material and non-material, despite the Bible's claim that we are body, soul, and spirit. The gaps and fissures they made in their Biblical authority allow them to wholly dismiss the 7 dispensations of God and pretend there is only one covenant for them. God specifically wrote it down for Israel that: "*For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the LORD that hath mercy on thee*" (Isa 54:10). The uninspired, very fallible, in need of dire textual repair bible that they are left with, compels them to dismiss any pretribulation rapture of the Church because if the 1,000 year reign of Christ is allagorically read to be a 2000 Year reign of the wholly Catholic Church, then we are in the tribulation period right now and Satan is (just the same) bound by that wholly Catholic Church just like their Mother Roman Catholic Church taught them. Systematically, their broken Bible allows them to systematically stop all reform of bad Roman Catholic doctrine. Thus they have. Thus they spiral away from truth.

The Reformed Augustinian scripturology is thus a practical elimination of verbal, plenary inspiration and infallibility of the Bible; a promise that they can fix God's broken preservation with their own 'constructive' Biblical criticism and textual criticism, and an allegorical and dynamic equivalence that promises their 'clergy' and 'scholars' can tell us what God meant to say in the mean time. It sounds diabolical when you step back and look at their whole system of scripturology as well as the whole system of degraded authority. It is.

Evangelicals and Modernists have adopted entirely this whole tainted scripturology. Baptists only adopt bits and pieces of it at first, after all, it is the majority opinion. Eventually Baptist adopt enough of

it so they follow along on the trail of John Piper, and spiral out of truth into the spiraling trajectory of the Reformed Augustinians. Piper is a Reformed Baptist but he, and they are not all that reformed, and believers should not be that deceived, Baptists in particular.

IX. Reform Theology's Failure of Systematic Theology

Just the 'training' to be a Systems Engineer, sheds light on the gross error in reformed theology's systematic theology; it is not systematic, nor is it true theology. Performing a system analysis involves first encircling a 'system' with 'borders' and analyzing what goes on inside those borders. Other 'systems' that are outside the borders may receive output or contribute input to this system but they are not part of the system per se, because they do not function within the system under analysis. A system analysis may be done on the smallest functioning part or on the most grandiose functional process ever conceived by man, but it's first step is drawing the border that captures just the system. Ergo, system analysis requires first that the system be bordered in the finite. God is infinite. He can not be so encircled with a finite border, and thus a pure "systematic theology" must be restrained to what can be honestly known, which is to be found in what has been revealed: i.e. what God himself has revealed to man about himself.

Secondly the reformed theologians 'Systematic Theology' is not that. They suppose it would entail gathering, organizing and systematically ordering everything man has ever believed about God, when indeed it must be limited to that which can be known about God. They suppose it is a science, laden with brainstorming for hypothesis, proposing theories and forming proofs, as such it cannot contain all the "Thus saith the LORD"s belonging to a bordered finite systematic theology. The border that must be drawn to encircle and contain such a process would be the understanding of everything that has been revealed about God, and everything that has been revealed about God is, by His own revelation, contained in 66 books. The Reformed Theologian tries, ineffectually, to contain all of God in his systematic circle and errors in his making the 'infinite finite'. He further compounds his error by trying to encircle and include all that man has ever said or believed about God. He does the latter because his ulterior motive is to keep in focus what his 'Church Fathers' esteemed very highly. Since the Reformed Augustinian Theologian has in his main

purpose to reform the System of Beliefs of the 'Church Fathers', back to St. Augustine in particular, his 'systematic theology' is not theology proper nor is systematic in reality.

For the Bible believer, and for the purest per se, there is no such thing as 'Systematic Theology' that captures all of God. There has been genius that has recognized this dilemma and entitled their dissertations, 'Basic Theology' or 'Christian Theology', and the best of the actual theologies may be called 'Bible Doctrine.' Such was captured by Mark G. Cambron in his 1954 book by that title. Theology must use as its sole source what God has revealed about himself. Cambron, as a true Baptist, with Scripture as his sole authority, did that. Theology must recognize the impossibility of a finite mind comprehending the infinite God. Reformed Theology's 'Systematic Theology' is more their systematic study of what was previously believed about God, than it is a purest's pursuit of a systematic theology.

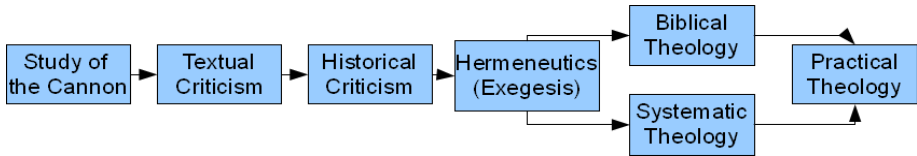
Cambron defines theology thus “The word 'theology' comes from the Greek word theos, meaning God. Thus, theology is the doctrine of God. To begin the study of the many Bible doctrines we must begin with the Source of all things – God!”¹⁰¹ Virkler, like Protestants, reformers, and reformed theologians, think so highly of their systematic theology that they partition it from Biblical theology, and think it separate from practical theology. They proceed that way because they are perpetually wrestling with what the 'Church Fathers' believed and struggling to systematically make it a Biblical theology. Catholics have 'Church Fathers' and we should little regard their philosophy when discerning what the Bible says. It is much more practical to make our Biblical theology both systematic and practical. Virkler diagrams a remarkably accurate chart of the Reformed Theologians dilemma.

Virkler's Hermeneutic's Relation to Other Fields of Biblical Study¹⁰²

101 Mark G. Cambron, *Bible Doctrines: Beliefs That Matter*, (Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1954), 8.

102 Henry A. Virkler, *Hermeneutics*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2007), 18.

Not Producing a Biblical Systematic Theology



In establishing a credence for 'scholars only' hermeneutics Virkler creates this insightful chart showing the relation of hermeneutics to other fields of Biblical study. It is a Reformed Augustinian Theologian's portrayal with several insightful snafus. Properly, a believer should first remove all criticisms from their Biblical fields of study. All Bible criticism is the art of examining Scripture as if it were not what it says. It is thus called criticism, because it takes a critic's look at the subject. A true Bible student should never major on what the critics are teaching, they are, by their definition, infidels. The three studies preceding Virkler's hermeneutics should thus be replaced by one labeled "Bibliology." Reformed Theologians confound Bibliology by intermixing ideas of critics and not accurately portraying what the Bible says about the Bible.

After the study of Hermeneutics, Virkler, again shows three blocks where there should be only one. It is insightful that the reformed theologian would tend to run Bible theology on a parallel track with systematic theology because they are indeed completely different. In this portrayal both are very different from 'practical theology' and these divisions are fabricated and divisive. So Virkler, stepping back and looking at the big picture so he can outline his hermeneutics, knows that systematic theology is not Biblical theology nor is it practical theology. Such an observation and good understanding would compel the simplification of the believers field of study to only three blocks, The field of Bibliology, The field of Hermeneutics, and then Biblical Theology, probably better called Bible Doctrine.

When you separate Bible theology from practical theology you do err. It is only practical to get all of our theology from the only source wherein God inerrantly and infallibly reveals himself. Separating systematic theology from Bible theology is practical for Reformed Theologians because systematic theology is more a study of all that man believed about God and the logical 'scientific' selection of which beliefs to maintain and which beliefs to reform. The forces of logic

and reason compel their 'systematic theology' to hold on to many 'Church Father' beliefs that are nowhere found in the Bible. The dichotomy of man is an excellent example, as it has always been believed by man, it appeals to ones logical thinking, and it is well defended by Greek philosophy from Alexandria, Egypt. When the Bible implies you should love the Lord with all your heart, body, and soul, or when Paul calls out body, soul, and spirit; or when God's Word says that God's Word can rightly divide soul and spirit, wherein the Greek mind can not and does not, the reformed theologian goes with his Greek mind and throws Scripture under the bus. The Reformed Augustinian Theologians esteem for the teachings of Church Fathers, particularly Clement of Alexandria, Origen of Alexandria, Jerome, author of the Latin Vulgate, and Catholic Saint Augustine, Bishop of Hippo, they esteem these Alexandrians and their older texts over the very words of God and His preserved text. This diabolical Reformed Augustinian Theology invades every theology book that is being used to train the preacher boys of our future. Although Cambron's work is out of print it is readily accessible through the Cambron Institute.¹⁰³ All his works are highly recommended for every truly Baptist Bible Institute, Bible College and Bible Seminary. If Cambron has one short fall, it is his failure to step back and take a graphic look at the systematic error of Reformed Theology and expose its ugly tentacles that reach into every avenue and field of theology proper. Reformed systematic theology, and ergo all systematic theology, carries the errant flavor of Israel denying Greek philosophy, which has its hub and center in Alexandria Egypt.

It is challenging for a Baptist, with the Bible for his sole authority, to find a good theology book that is not tainted with Reformed Augustinian Theology. When a Baptist writes a systematic theology book it rightfully turns into a Bible Doctrine book for the reasons outlined herein. There is none better than Cambron's for the born again Bible student. When such a student is cognizant of the major errors of reformed theology, an exhaustive systematic theology is likewise very useful for study. The more exhaustive work of Augustus Strong is the more highly recommended over lesser works like that of Thiessen's

103 A ministry of Florida Bible College Alumni Association, www.thecambroninstitute.org (accessed 12/2/11).

Lectures in Systematic Theology. Where as Strong thoroughly covers every side of each issue, Thiessen only presents his opinion on an issue. For example, Strong presents both the Universal, Catholicness of the Church and the more applicable localness of each Church. Thiessen's lectures show only the Catholicness of the Church because in his opinion the Church is Catholic. So too Strong thoroughly presents the errant reformed position of election of souls for salvation and God decreeing all that ever happens but he also dialogues well the extreme intolerance that such a position has on the free will of man. Thiessen's lectures just leads you down the garden path of election and decrees expecting that his novel rationalization about fore knowledge will sooth all nay sayers. Thiessen's lectures never address mans free will nor his positions inconsistency with it.

There are no systematic coverages of Eschatology in print in Theology books. Strong¹⁰⁴ presents good points to ponder but has no dispensational frame work. Thiessen departs from the reformed theology package and presents a moderately dispensational aspect of the end times, but includes no hint of what covenant theology is, with its complete banishment of Israel and allegorical apocalyptic treatment of the Revelation of Jesus Christ¹⁰⁵. Ryrie¹⁰⁶ presents a complete and thorough dispensational view of Eschatology, but while he describes the Amillenealists he does not tie them back to there Unreformed, Catholic and Alexandrian roots, nor to the Reformed Augustinian Theologian. Erickson¹⁰⁷ covers Eschatology as an important afterthought and is hardly worth mentioning here.

There is a need for a Bible theology book which exposes the systematic error of Reformed Theology. Presently all theology books teach one or more of the tentacles of error presented as truth. None contain an exposure of the whole system of error, which starts in Alexandria with their denial of Israels place in God's pleasure. A theology book which starts with Cambron's base of excellently presented truth and backs it into a systematic contrast with the

104 Augustus H. Strong, *Systematic Theology*, 981-1056.

105 Henry Clarence Thiessen, *Introductory Lectures in Systematic Theology*, 440-518.

106 Charles C. Ryrie, *Basic Theology*, (Victor Books , Wheaton, Ill., 1960), 439-522.

107 Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology*, (Baker Bok House, Grand Rapids Mi., 1983), 1149-1239.

reformers error of Calvinism and decrees in their Soteriology, with their long standing error of Catholicness in their Eschatology, and with the over riding error of Covenant Theology that twists every field of their theology, especially destroying their comprehension of the rapture, the tribulation period and the Kingdom age of the Lord Jesus Christ, i.e Eschatology. The resulting work could present a Biblical view of God, a view that believes every word He has written to us, believes every promise He ever made, and trusts in Him explicitly. Such a theology book would be as systematic as finite man can get, trying to comprehend an infinite God. Such a theology book could gender a greater love and trust for Jehovah God and His Only Begotten Son. Such a Bible believing study of His own Words can gender a friendship where one could speak face to face with God as a man speaketh with a friend. For only His own Words are *“quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart”* (Heb 4:12).

X. Reformer's non Biblical Doctrine of Election

The keystone of Reformed Theology has become their contention that God did elect, before the foundation of the world, certain few souls that would receive eternal salvation, while all the rest were to be damned to hell for eternity. The taking of a few Scriptures out of context and applying them to their misguided philosophy can be very convincing to those who have not studied out their whole evil principle. Understanding election in the corporate sense, for Gentiles, not for individuals, is essential for these out of context experiences. But understanding a completely Biblical Doctrine of Election is extremely valuable. In that light, the third chapter from the authors book *The Biblical Doctrine of Election and Predestination*, is included herein in its entirety. **Chapter 3 What is Election**

To see what Biblical election is all about, lets first carefully examine the use of the term throughout the Bible. To often one goes about this examination backward. They determine what they believe about a subject, then go to the Bible trying to support their belief. For most, this is the danger involved in examining the Biblical doctrine of election and predestination. There is present an a-priori unction that election has to do with a soul receiving salvation or rejecting it. It is a bold statement but it needs to be said here: 'Nowhere in the Bible is election concerned with the eternal, heaven or hell destiny of a soul.' Always, election is to *service* not to destiny. Now with any a priori belief system well shaken and on the table for examination let us begin by examining the election of Israel.

Israel was elect, a chosen nation, a chosen people. They were elect to do three major deeds;

- to deliver the Messiah to humanity;
- to deliver the written precepts of God to mankind; and
- to show monotheism to the whole world.

First, through Israel we trace the chosen seed. This righteous seed goes through individuals, tribes, kings, harlots and Moabites. For seed purposes, the Bible says that Jacob was loved and Esau was hated (Mal 1:2-3, Rom 9:13). Esau was not chosen for eternal damnation to

hell in this hatred, he was just not chosen as the seed line of the Lord Jesus Christ. The seed traced from Abraham through Judah (Gen 12:7, Gen 49:10), through David (2Sam 7:16), then for Joseph through Solomon, but for Mary through Nathan.¹⁰⁸ This elect seed is carefully traced to the Messiah who was to be of the tribe of Judah and the seed of David. This tracing of the seed line is a major drama of the Old Testament narrative, a drama that pits Satan against Jehovah God for the delivery of the seed that is to dash Satan's head (Genesis 3).

Secondly, Israel was elect to deliver the written precepts of God to mankind (Rom 3:1-2). Through Israel the 39 books of the Bible's Old Testament were written and preserved, and through them the 27 books of the Bible's New Testament were written¹⁰⁹.

Thirdly, Israel was elect to show to the whole world that “the LORD our God *is* one LORD” (Deut. 6:4, Mar 12:29), and that the world's polytheism was idolatry. In Mark 12:29 Jesus called this the first of all the commandments, and through Israel this message of monotheism was manifest to the world. He says to Isaiah “Ye¹¹⁰ *are* my witnesses, saith the LORD, and my servant whom I have chosen: that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I *am* he: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me. I, *even* I, *am* the LORD; and beside me *there is* no saviour. I have declared, and have saved, and I

108 Matthew 1 gives Joseph's lineage through Solomon while the lineage of Mary through Nathan is given in Luke 3, right after God announces of Jesus “Thou art my beloved Son.” The next verse in Luke 3 designates Joseph as the son-in-law of Heli, and follows the lineage of Mary, the mother of Jesus all the way back to Adam, calling him, Adam, the other son of God in complete accord with Romans 5, and 1Cor 15's 1st Adam vs God's 'last Adam'. Awesome.

109 Although some have hypothesized that Luke's Greek background indicates he was not Jewish by birth. They speculate that he was thus a Gentile and a non-apostle who authored two New Testament books, the Gospel According to Luke and The Acts of the Apostles. Since tradition says he was a Jew of Antioch and a Jew of the dispersion and, in any event, Luke wrote under the auspiciousness of the Apostle Paul, a Jew of Jews, in this work we shall leave such wild hypothesizing to the skeptics.

110 Note here that “Ye” is plural, God is not just talking to Isaiah, but to all of Israel about her calling. In the King James English any 2nd person pronoun starting with 'Y' is plural, like ye or you-all, any starting with 'T', like thee and thou, is singular. The nominative tense (subject) is thou, the dative tense (object) is thee, just like your mother taught you not to say “Me want to play” because of the first person singular nominative is properly 'I.' This clarity is lost in all modernist Bibles.

have shewed, when *there was* no strange *god* among you: therefore ye *are* my witnesses, saith the LORD, that I *am* God" (Isa 43:10-12).

The election of individuals and of people in the Old Testament was thus an election to accomplish a task. Nowhere in this election of a people to do these tasks is an individual soul elected or predestined to an eternity in heaven or an eternity in hell. Election in the Old Testament is always for service, to work the purposes of God in this life, here on this earth.

As in the Old Testament where individuals are chosen to accomplish three major tasks on this earth, so in the New Testament God has chosen individuals to accomplish three major tasks on this earth. Those with this tasking are called the elect. They are not chosen because of merit, not chosen at birth, nor before creation, but they become chosen, or elect, when they are born again into the body of the Elect One, the Lord Jesus Christ. Those who are 'in Christ' are as elect as the Christ. They were not chosen to be 'in Christ' but once they are 'in Christ,' through their new birth, they are elect for three major tasks. They are elect in Him:

- to be his witnesses to the lost dying world,
- to manifest Christ in this world, and
- to be the temple the Holy Spirit of God in this world.

Acts 1:8 says: "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." Christians are the elect in this world to be His witnesses. They become elect when they receive the Holy Spirit. They receive the Holy Spirit when they are born-again, converted, regenerated, saved, and ... not until. Through the Church we are commissioned to preach the gospel to every creature (Mar 16:15). We, as born again believers are to witness to every creature, even house to house, and to every nation, how God saved us, and can save anybody. They went house to house in Acts 2:46. Paul did so in Acts 20:20. We, who are in Christ, are elect to be His witnesses.

Christians are also elect in Him to be the manifestation of Christ to the lost dying world. That is why they were first called Christians; because they looked like, acted like, reacted like, and talked like the Christ. Believers are elect to be the manifestation of Christ in this

world. Jesus said it this way; “Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven” (Matt 5:14-16). The apostles regularly exhort us as the elect. Peter writes to 'strangers scattered about ... elect according to the foreknowledge of God' and then tells these elect:

“Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul; Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they behold, glorify God in the day of visitation” (1Pet 2:11-12).

Peter is not here writing to someone who is elect for a salvation experience down the road! No, he is exhorting those who are elect for service. The Apostle Paul regularly exhorts believers to behave like elect ones, and regularly reminds believers that they are the elect, because they are 'in Christ' not as if they will get 'in Christ.' Note his wording in Col 3:12-13,

“Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.”

This is not a challenge to those who are elect for salvation. It is a charge that the elect in Christ might be the manifestation of Christ in this world. A charge to the elect to the service that they are chosen for now that they are 'in Christ.'

Thirdly we are elect in Him as a people to be the temple of the Holy Spirit of God in this world. The Spirit that reproves the world of

sin, of righteousness and of judgment dwells only in the elect.¹¹¹ It does not dwell in one prior to salvation and no one prior to salvation can hold the title of 'elect.' The spirit enters in at salvation, one is then added to the kingdom of God, (John 3) added to the family¹¹² of God (as adopted, as dear children, as having a new Father) and therein we become the elect, the tabernacle of God. The late Evangelist Loren Dawson said it most clearly this way “In the Old Testament God builds a tabernacle for His people, in the New Testament God builds a people for His tabernacle.” If you are saved you are the elect, the temple of the Holy Ghost. If you are yet in your sins, unsaved, not yet regenerated, no matter how much Calvin and Augustine may call you elect before the foundation of the world, you cannot be elect for this service until you are ushered into the kingdom of God. There is a time when this presence of the Holy Spirit will be taken out of the world.¹¹³ Until that time it is the elect who are housing the Holy Spirit of God in this world. The New Testament elect are his chosen vessels for this purpose.

111 John 16:7-8 “*Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:*”

112 A believer is not automatically added to the Church of God when they are saved, nor do they become part of the Bride of Christ, when they are saved; they become family of God, brothers in Christ. The idea that all believers are immediately added to a universal (catholic) church or 'invisible' (protestant rationalized fictitious) church is nowhere found in the Bible. In the Bible one is added to the church only when one believes on Christ as their Lord and Saviour, are publicly baptized by immersion, and then united into a local church membership in order to continue in the doctrine of the apostles. Nor is the Church (which is local, independent, and autonomous) presently the Bride of Christ; it is the chaste virgin, cleansed by the Word and kept pure for the coming of the Bridegroom to take her away; she is then, on that day, and that day alone, the Bride of Christ. Note that even in our Bible based culture a bride is only a bride on the day of her wedding. Saved ones become family and enter the kingdom but they are not in the Church, until they join with a commissioned, local, Bible believing, Christ serving Church, and they are not the Bride of Christ till all believers are caught away to be that.

113 2Thes 2:6-8 “*And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming.*”

As before, in the Old Testament, this New Testament election is for *service* to work God's purposes in this life on this earth. Nowhere in the use of this term is an individual soul elected to an eternity in heaven or an eternity in hell. Further, nowhere in the New Testament's presentation of election, is any individual elected or chosen prior to his acceptance of Christ as Lord and Saviour.

So how has Christendom so readily departed from this Biblical representation of who the elect are? How have even Baptists succumbed to teaching that God foreknows who will be saved and who will be lost, thus sealing fates for eternity? In studying the Biblical doctrine of election we find that the Roman Catholic Church Father, Saint Augustine was wrong when he read into Scripture the predestination of individual souls into heaven. We see that John Calvin, who systematized this error into a theology and saw it permeate the Geneva Bible, did a great travesty to truth and theology. It is clear that the reformed theologian who preaches election as the predestination of individual souls into heaven or hell is so twisting the Bible doctrine of election as to make some two fold more the child of hell. So too the Baptist who believes and preaches the individual election of souls to heaven or hell is dabbling in error and false teaching which malign his very election to service as a witness to the world, as the manifestation of the love of Christ in the world, and as a temple of the Holy Spirit to reprove the world.

Nowhere in Scripture is an individual elected *to be in* Christ. But those that are in Christ are elect. Once 'in' they are the elect for special service in this world. One does not enter the kingdom of God because he was elected to enter (Eph 2:8-9 says "for by grace are ye saved" not by election), but one becomes the elect *because* he is born into the kingdom. (Eph 2:10 says "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.") One does not get in by election (John 3:14-19), but once 'in', one is elect and tasked to service. Again examine Col 3:12 as it clarifies that election is for work not for justification; "Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye." Now that we are in the kingdom of God, '*whosoever wills*' that are installed by grace through faith, and that not

of election, we are to behave as elect ones with work to do. Again, how does one get 'in'? You must make an individual decision of your will to accept Christ as your Lord and Saviour. "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Rom 10:13). Once 'in' you are elected to service for your Lord, as you walk here in this life. Ergo election is to service, not to salvation.

A table of Old Testament election and New Testament election helps clarify that election is always for service and not for an eternal destiny. It also points out the parallels in the two elections.

Old Testament Elections	New Testament Elections
To be the seed by which the Messiah would be brought into the world. Gen 12	To be the witness to a lost dying world that the Christ has come. Acts 1:8
To Deliver the written Word of God to the world. Rom 3:1-2	To be a manifestation of The Word, the Christ, in this world John 17
To show the world that "The LORD our God is one LORD" Deut 6:4, Mar 12:9	To be the temple of the Holy Spirit of God in this world. 1Cor 6:19-20

Can I get a witness? Yes, several. In "*Subjects Of Sovereignty*," Andrew Telford says:

"Nowhere in the Bible is Election connected with the salvation or damnation of a human soul. ... The most important phase of Election pertains to service ... Election has to do with service. It is God's elect who serve him."¹¹⁴

In "*The Theology Of The New Testament*," George B. Stevens states that:

What was the nature and the purpose of this divine election of Israel? I answer that Paul conceives of it as a historic action of God in setting apart the Jewish nation to a special mission or function in the world as the bearer of his revelation to all mankind. ... These chapters (Rom 9-11)

¹¹⁴ Andrew Telford, *Subjects of Sovereignty*, 55-56.

... speak of election to a historic function or mission, not of eternal destiny. ... Theology has often applied these ideas to the subject of man's final destiny. Whatever may be the logic of such an application, it is exegetically¹¹⁵ unjustifiable. ... Paul does not teach the doctrine of predestination which Calvin taught, nor does he teach the doctrine as held by historic Calvinism.¹¹⁶

And in “*Word Studies In The New Testament*” Marvin R. Vincent clarifies:

'Ekloge' election ... and kindred words, to 'choose', and 'chosen' or 'elect', are used of God's selection of men or agencies for special missions or attainments; but neither here (1Thes 1:4) nor elsewhere in the New Testament is there any warrant for the revolting doctrine that God has predestined a definite number of mankind to eternal life, and the rest to eternal destruction.¹¹⁷

In the pages that follow the Biblical doctrine of election will be explored. It will differ greatly from Reformed theology because it will be based on Biblical exegesis rather than on Augustinian error. It will contend with and dis-spell the Calvinistic theology and the reformed T.U.L.I.P.¹¹⁸ that sprang from the fertile protestant ground of misrepresented Scripture, from a vulgar Vulgate,¹¹⁹ and the erred doctrines that came from Alexandria Egypt.

The errors of Calvinism have crept into our Churches unawares. Directly they have quieted soul winners, halted street preaching, bus

115 Exegesis def. (from Greek) Critical explanation or analysis of a text. To interpret.

116 George B. Stevens, *The Theology of the New Testament*, 380-386.

117 Marvin R. Vincent, *Word Studies in the New Testament, Vol IV*, 16.

118 Total Depravity; Unconditional Election; Limited Atonement; Irresistible Grace; Perseverance of the Saints.

119 The Latin Vulgate of 405 A.D. was the Catholic accepted Bible. It is filled with translation errors, but dominated Western Christianity until the original Greek texts were incorporated from the Eastern Byzantine Manuscripts used in the Greek Textus Receptus and the 1611 translation of the AV known as the King James Bible.

routes, mission outreach and visitation efforts. Indirectly the tentacles of these errors have entangled our understanding of how an individual comes to Christ. They have given us the idea that God foreknows who will be saved, and it is all fixed in the future. Thus some Baptists, who are supposed to be people of the book, have gotten the ill conceived notion that their salvation was foreknown before the foundation of the world. Baptists have tangled into an idea that their lives are mapped out before the world was created. Such ill notions are from Calvin's theology book not from God's Holy Bible.

With this brief overview of Biblical election in view we will look at some theological considerations and then explore every conceivable Scripture that might address election, predestination and foreknowledge. This is important to make sure that the theological model that we tweak free of Calvinistic error remains true to Scriptures. This treatise will clarify and show that there are not two views of election, Calvin and Arminian, but three, Calvin's error, Arminian's reactive over correction, (Arminian over emphasizing free will) and the Biblical treatment of the doctrine of election and predestination. May God bless you in your studies of this latter view.

XI. Decrees of God vs Free Will of Man

When the reformed theologian steps up to an open Bible with his preconceived notion that God chooses before the foundation of the world the souls which will be saved and the souls which will be damned to hell, a miscarriage of Biblical truth is in place which will permeate every aspect of their theology. And so it has. No matter how many attempts there are to reform the theology of the reformers, this major belief system of Saint Augustine, John Calvin and all the Presbyterian denomination cannot be scrubbed from their unReformed Augustinian Theology. It is replete throughout their books. Such a belief system necessarily annihilates the free will choices of man and the mercy of God. Various means and verbose explanations are employed to soften and discuss that imposition but the encroachment is valid and unforgivable. The foremost provision for the rationalization that man, in actuality, has no free will is found in the decrees of Reformed Theology. Again this unBiblical idea that every breath taken was decreed before the foundation of the world necessarily proceeds from the unBiblical doctrine of election of souls for salvation and the incomprehensible, infinite, and eternal attributes of God.

An excellent coverage of the reformed theologian's 'out of context' development of the doctrine of decrees can be gained by reading through these answered eight questions. These eight questions were developed to aid in teaching from Thiessen's *Introductory Lectures in Systematic Theology* book and provide a good coverage of most of the 'out of context' Scriptures used in defending the doctrine of decrees.

Q1. Thiessen begins his doctrine of decrees acknowledging that “we come to the most mooted questions in theology,” define 'mooted' and why does he characterize this chapter so?

Ans. pg 147 Moot - “a hypothetical case argued by law students, an exercise ... to bring up as a subject of debate discussion or debate ... subject to debate; arguable.” Obviously Thiessen is acknowledging the extreme and long standing controversy around his doctrine that “God has decreed all that comes to pass”, because a plain reading of the Holy Bible indicates that God works in real time with man as a free

agent and all things are indeed not decreed before the foundation of the world as is decreed in Augustinian and Reformed Theology.

Q2. Suppose why Doerksen, in his revision of Thiessen, completely eliminated any hint that there is an extreme and long standing controversy in the Doctrine of Decrees.

Ans. pg 147 I suppose Doerksen is so very settled into a doctrine that “God has decreed all that comes to pass” that he refuses to acknowledge the existence of the opposition to such a view.

Q3. The problem with the doctrine of decrees wherein “God has decreed all that comes to pass” can be best emphasized with a dictionary definition of 'decree', state the definition.

Ans. American Heritage Dictionary: ”Decree (noun) an authoritative order having the force of law.”

Q4. The proof text for the doctrine of decrees in Isaiah 14 is taken out of context, only partially quoted and then exhaustively applied to “all that comes to pass!” What is the context and the verse they omit?

Ans. pg 148 Their out of context proof text of Isaiah 14:24, NOT25, AND26-27:

The LORD of hosts hath sworn, saying, Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass; and as I have purposed, so shall it stand:—~~That I will break the Assyrian in my land, and upon my mountains tread him under foot: then shall his yoke depart from off them, and his burden depart from off their shoulders.~~ This is the purpose that is purposed upon the whole earth: and this is the hand that is stretched out upon all the nations. For the LORD of hosts hath purposed, and who shall disannul it? and his hand is stretched out, and who shall turn it back? (Isa.14:24-26, de-emphasis added)

In context this actually only deals with God's purpose and plan for the Assyrian. At its writing by Isaiah (Usshur 714 BC) both the Assyrian and Babylonian Captivity (Usshur 710 BC, 607 BC) and the annihilation of Assyria and Babylon (Usshur 630 BC, 586 BC) lie years off in the future. Verse 22 says “*For I will rise up against them, saith the LORD of hosts, and cut off from Babylon the name and remnant, and son and nephew, saith the LORD.*” The verse they tactfully omit is verse 25 which reveals the context and states: “*That I will break the Assyrian in my land, and upon my mountains tread him under foot then shall his*

yoke depart from off them, and his burden depart from off their shoulders.”

Q5. Their 'proof of decrees' by taking Scripture out of context is practiced with Ephesians 1 where they quote only portions of verse 9 and 11 and add them to the partial quote of Isaiah 14. What is the full context of Eph 1:7-12?

Ans. pg 148 The context of Ephesians 1 is the introduction wherein God the Father blessed us (vr 3-6) “*to the praise of the glory*” and God the Son redeemed us through his blood (vr 7-12) “*to the praise of His glory*” and God the Holy Spirit delivered the Word of Truth and sealed us (vr 13-14) “*unto the praise of His glory.*” In this context verses 7-12 states,

In whom (In Christ) we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace; Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence; Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: That in the dispensation of the fullness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him: In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will: That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ (Eph.1:7-12)

The context of this whole introduction is *what* the born-again believer has gotten “*into*” and not how he got “*in*”. It would behoove the Bible student to highlight each “*in*” in this chapter, and further note that we are now “*in the dispensation of the fullness of times*” (vr.10), which *dispensation* requires his greater attention.

Q6. A doctrine of decrees is developed by taking Romans 8:28 out of context and extending God's purposes to “one great all-inclusive purpose.” What is the actual context of Romans 8:28?

Ans. pg 148 Romans 8:28 reads, “*And we know that all things worked together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.*” The context here is for believers being the called according to his purpose and certainly not that “God has decreed all that comes to pass” in one giant all inclusive plan.

Q7. To develop that their hypothesized 'all inclusive, one eternal, infinite plan and purpose of God' was formed "before the foundation of the world" they combine Eph 3:11, taken out of context, with 1Pet 1:20, Rev 13:8, Eph 1:4, 2Tim 1:9 and Titus 1:2. In context, in each of these verses, what was called out as present "before the foundation of the world"?

Ans. Holy Bible Eph.1:11 *"In whom (In Christ) also we have obtained an inheritance, being (Now that we are in Christ) predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will: ... "* (parentheticals added)

1Pe 1:20 *"Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you,"* Here, from verse 19, *"But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: Who verily ... "*, it was Christ that was foreordained before the foundation of the world.

Re 13:8 *"And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world."* Here, obviously, it was the Lamb that was considered slain from the foundation of the world, and NOT who was, or was not, written in the book of life.

Eph 1:4 *"According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: ... "* Here it is the corporate 'us' (Gentiles in particular), i.e. those who get born-again-saved, who are chosen *in* him before the foundation of the world, i.e. for those who get *in*, via the ample "whosoever will"s in the Bible, we are, via this *"in-ness,"* "holy and without blame before him in love", as it was ordained before the foundation or the world. There are no yet-to-be-saved-unsaved included in the choosing.

2Ti 1:9 *"Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, ... "* Here only the present tense saved are thus called, i.e. one is not called to be saved, but once saved, they are become the called. Also, it is *"his own purpose and grace"* that was before the world began.

Tit 1:2 *“In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began; ...”*. Here God promised eternal life availability before the world began.

Q 8. The extensive and verbose development of a hypothetical eternal infinite plan executed by God wherein “God has decreed all that comes to pass” must necessarily result in a distorted doctrine of “gracious election!” What is that as stated?

Ans pg 156 Thiessen states it: “By election we mean that sovereign act of God in grace, whereby from all eternity He chose in Christ Jesus for Himself and for salvation, all those whom He foreknew would respond positively to prevenient grace.” The reformed definition of election that has never been readily accepted by Baptist, nor shall it herein be so accepted.

Although this doctrine of decrees aligns well with their preconceived theology and rationalizes well with reasonable logic of man, it does not fit at all with the Revelation of Scripture. The logical conclusion of decrees is come about because it is impossible for an eternal God to be limited to a finite time system that he created, just as it is impossible for an infinite God to be limited to a finite space system that he created. In the latter He is described as omnipresent, and not limited to any place in space. In the former He is described as eternal, and not limited to any place in time. The problem is that God reveals himself, as interacting with the free agency of man in real time, i.e. He is being finitely limited in time to a sequence of decisions being made by a finite human which has been given his own free agency. The impossibility of this revelation is not fully explored in this effort, except to say that the wonder of all revelation is that God would take on some level of finiteness in order to interact with, and redeem man. 'How this works,' is difficult to explain and a snafu in theology. Why, is made perfectly clear: *“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.”* (Jn.3:16-18).

XII. Reformed Theology and C.H Spurgeon

The ill conceived doctrine of election of souls to salvation is rightly called Reformed Augustinian Theology. Catholic Saint Augustine cultured it and the protestant reformers extracted it from Roman Catholicism. They then developed it into an ill fated T.U.L.I.P. Charles Haddon Spurgeon, called the Prince of Baptist Preachers, did write a paper called “A Defence of Calvinism” but he was not a T.U.L.I.P. supporter. In the fact of the matter John Calvin, who died in 1564 , did not endorse the T.U.L.I.P. model of the Presbyterian Synod of Dordt in 1618. Spurgeon's connections with Reformed Augustinian Theology is worthy of some of our study time.

A Presbyterian Clergy answering a letter to R.C. Sproul's organization curtly commented that “small minds should let Spurgeon be their spokesman when it comes to wording a Baptist position about Calvinism.” Charles Haddon Spurgeon (1834-1892) was indeed a British Reformed Baptist Preacher. He did indeed write *A Defense of Calvinism* which makes him a highly influential Baptist spokesman amongst reformed Christians of different denominations, especially the Presbyterians. But Baptists who read his work do not relish him as their spokesman concerning the error's of Calvinism. He spoke a noticeable twang of Reformed Augustinian in this defense, but more so, he articulated a staunch position against the fluctuations and doctrinal irresponsibleness of Arminianism. Baptists do hold to Spurgeons brazen denial of Arminian's doctrinal error, but not to his leanings toward Augustinian theology or Calvinism. Spurgeon states that:

"The old truth that Calvin preached, that Augustine preached, that Paul preached, is the truth that I must preach to-day, or else be false to my conscience and my God. I cannot shape the truth; I know of no such thing as paring off the rough edges of a doctrine. John Knox's gospel is my gospel. That which thundered through Scotland must thunder through England again."—C. H. Spurgeon

Indeed, Spurgeon became a well cited spokesman for the errant doctrine of Calvinism's Predestination. This entanglement with error is a result of excessive esteem for the Catholic's Saint Augustine, and the

Protestant's John Calvin. As he states it: "You may take a step from Paul to Augustine, then from Augustine to Calvin, and then-well, you may keep your foot up a good while before you find such another." When he visited the Simplon Hospice, he said:

"I was delighted to find that they are Augustine monks, because, next to Calvin, I love Augustine. I feel that Augustine was the great mine out of which Calvin digged his mental wealth; and the Augustine monks, in practicing their holy charity, seemed to say: 'Our Master was a teacher of grace, and we will practice it, and give without money and without price to all comers whatsoever they need.'¹²⁰

Spurgeon's love for these two brilliant minds caused him to overlook their error in this regard. His leaning into their error is well illustrated in his conversation with a peer:

"When Mr. Spurgeon went, years ago, to preach for Dr. Clifford, whose church was then at Praed Street, he said in the vestry before the service, "I cannot imagine, Clifford, why you do not come to my way of thinking," referring to his Calvinistic views.

"Well," answered John Clifford, "you see, Mr. Spurgeon, I only see you about once a month, but I read my Bible every day."¹²¹

For his defense of Calvinism, Protestants continually cite Spurgeon as a Baptist spokesman, and Baptists lean on his authority to travel on this garden path of predestinational error. This is the unfortunate side of C. H. Spurgeon's otherwise immaculate legacy. His tomb reads:

Here lies the body of
Charles Haddon Spurgeon
waiting for the appearing of his

120 William Young Fullerton, *Charles Haddon Spurgeon A Biography, Chapter 20*, (Spurgeon Archive, www.spurgeon.org, Internet Book, accessed Aug 2007), 184.

121 Ibid., Chapter 13, 135.

Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

On the other side of the tomb is the verse of the hymn he was accustomed to write in albums:

E'er since by faith I saw the stream
Thy flowing wounds supply,
Redeeming love has been my theme,
And shall be till I die.¹²²

Even though Spurgeon dragged Augustin's error into Baptist circles, his theme was always the redeeming love of Christ available to whosoever would believe. In his preaching it was profoundly clear that your fate for all eternity depended on what you personally did with the Only Begotten Son of God, and not on what God may have decided before the foundation of the world.

C.H. Spurgeon's work "*A Defense of Calvinism*"¹²³ would be better titled "A Defense of the Gospel." Although he mentions in passing three points of the Calvinist TULIP, he does not articulate an acceptance of their model as much as he rejects the Arminian model, there being only these two choices in popular view in the 1800s.

Conventionally there has been a straight line dividing Calvinism and Arminianism and you must plot out a position on that line. In this treatise we will establish a triangle model rather than a straight line model, the point of the triangle extending up and above the line, and providing ample footing to stand on that point well above the Calvinism vs Arminiansim line. Spurgeon stayed on the line positioned toward the Calvinist's half. You and I can elevate above the line and become Biblicists. To understand better where a Biblicist would differ from Spurgeon's defense let's look at a condensed outline of his "*Defense of Calvinism*."

122 Ibid Chapter 20, 188.

123 Charles Haddon Spurgeon, *A Defense of Calvinism*,
<http://www.spurgeon.org/calvinis.htm>.

On pages 1-15¹²⁴, Spurgeon defends the steadfast everlasting nature of one's salvation against the shallow fickleness of the Arminian model. Baptists hold dogmatically to this eternal security position, *“for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee”*. (Heb.13:5b).

On pages 15-30 he develops that salvation is all of grace and none of works. Again, the Bible and Baptists are clear on this point and likewise contend with the fickle Arminian model on this point. *“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: [it is] the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.”* (Eph.2:8-9).

On pages 30-60 he develops an “epitome of Calvinism” which he contends to be “Salvation is of the Lord.” His continual emphasis throughout, as is ours, is that salvation is by grace and not by works. In this section he uses 5 pages to purport that God loved him, and chose him before the foundation of the world. He uses no Scripture, for such a declaration, only a mocking slander against an Arminian preacher. Spurgeon therein regurgitates the baseless Augustinian doctrine that election of individual souls took place before the foundation of the world, but he does know better than try to find a Biblical defense of such tripe, there is none. Again he is more so rejecting Arminianism than defending Calvinism.

In pages 60-90 Spurgeon graciously speaks for John Wesley and his doctrine of whosoever will. He points out the dilemma between his own belief in election and the Wesley Brother's Biblical position on the free will of man. He defends his holding to the idea of decrees in this dilemma, but graciously backs away from a hard line Calvinistic model. Based on his own salvation experience, Spurgeon concludes that God must have chosen him, because he would never have chosen God. God must have orchestrated each event in his life, because they alone brought him to God. In this study we will learn that God's calling and wooing does not make for God's choosing and electing. In this study we will delineate that God's orchestrating of events in our lives does not necessitate a decree written before the foundation of the world. These are things that Spurgeon wrestled with in this defense,

124 The page numbers here are from a soft copy formatted in a pdb format, if you had the 12 page printout of the defense you would divide these pdb page numbers by 10 to find the described information.

but he never came to a clear Biblical position on election and decrees. You and I can do so more particularly.

In pages 90-100 he contends against universalism's model that says, 'all of mankind is saved by Christ's sacrifice'. Baptists contend against this as well, and need to all the more contend with the American Bible Society and the United Bible Society which are both so aligned with this abominable universalist doctrine.

In pages 100-120 Spurgeon acknowledges that his doctrine of election completely obliterates God's doctrine of "whosoever will may come." He mentions the matter of leaning toward the "less licentious" of the two doctrines. He again speaks out against Arminianism. Then C.H. Spurgeon delicately likens the two considerations as two parallel railroad tracks that run through the Bible but do not visibly touch; but when you look way off toward the throne of God they seem to merge, but only there. Spurgeon was no Calvinist, he just believed the Bible account of so great salvation was eternal.

Baptists, however, shall not let Spurgeon be their spokesman concerning the Doctrine of Election and Predestination. He developed no Biblical basis for a pre-world election of souls, though he apparently believed it, rather than believing in an Arminian model. He developed no Biblical basis for the decrees of God to include his own every thought and finger movement, though for himself, he would rather believe that, than to believe he moved toward God of his own free will. He developed no Biblical basis that God draws men with an irresistible grace, though he would rather believe that, than the Arminian preachers he heard. Spurgeon did not delineate the unBiblical errors of Reformed Augustinian doctrine of election and predestination. He reluctantly learned to speak them as his own beliefs. He could not foundation them in Scripture, though they are prevalent in theology books. You and I want to be more careful to let the Bible determine our doctrine of election and predestination.

Spurgeon and Calvin, Knox and Edwards were all great preachers, but they had their speech tainted with Reformed Augustinian. This author does not mind that they did. Nor mind that some might, but wants to educate about the slur in speech that comes from such tainted doctrine. It could be one would prefer to speak more legibly on the subject of election and predestination. It could be they will recognize

Reformed Augustinian and thereby better comprehend the King's English when considering His “so great salvation.”

J. Ligon Duncan III, Phd, in his article “What is Covenant Theology”¹²⁵ fraudulently accuses C. H. Spurgeon of supporting his errant thinking of Covenant Theology. He states:

The doctrine of the covenant lies at the root of all true theology. It has been said that he who well understands the distinction between the covenant of works and the covenant of grace, is a master of divinity. I am persuaded that most of the mistakes which men make concerning the doctrines of Scripture, are based upon fundamental errors with regard to the covenant of law and of grace. May God grant us now the power to instruct, and you the grace to receive instruction on this vital subject.” Who said this? C.H. Spurgeon — the great English Baptist preacher! Certainly a man beyond our suspicion of secretly purveying a Presbyterian view of the sacraments to the unsuspecting evangelical masses.

Duncan likes to drag the Baptist name into Presbyterian doctrine, but here he oversteps all bound. Baptists do believe in covenants, just not a single over ridding gargantuan one artificially developed by Reformed Augustinians. Their covenant dissolves God's chosen people Israel into a wholly Catholic Church. This is an unjust divisive use of C.H. Spurgeon's words to pretend he was a covenant theologian. Spurgeon's writings cannot affirm that he held to any form of Covenant Theology.

Spurgeon was indeed a renowned Baptist but a Reformed Baptist. He was a prince of preachers, but not a theologian per say. Ergo it can not be well established how Reformed vs how Baptist he was from his writings, which were predominately his preachings. This lack, and his leanings toward Reformed Augustinian Theology, makes him the less preferred as a Baptist spokesman. His preaching and oratory prowess is esteemed because of its gospel, not because of its reformed doctrine. One should look elsewhere to establish Baptist doctrine, and one

125 J. Ligon Duncan III, PhD, Senior Minister, First Presbyterian Church, <http://www.fpcjackson.org/resources/apologetics/> (accessed 20 Oct 2010).

should look elsewhere to establish Reformed Augustinian doctrine. The Baptist doctrine must spring from the inerrant, infallible, verbally inspired Word of God; Reformed Augustinian from the pen of Roman Catholic Saint Augustine (AD 354-480), Bishop of Hippo, North Africa, with inadequate revision.

XIII. The Quagmire Of Open Theology

Another, more current, 'knee jerk' reaction to the error's of Reformed Augustinian Theology's doctrine of decrees, as well as the reformed doctrine of election and predestination of souls, is what is now called 'Open Theism.' Like Joseph Arminian of 1542, who assembled and published five arguments against reformed theology, Richard Rice, (no relation to this author) a follower of Ellen G. White, the Seventh Day Adventist, published arguments against reformed theology in his 1994 book *The Openness of God: The Relationship of Divine Foreknowledge and Human Free Will*.¹²⁶ Just as reformed theologians of the Presbyterian Church over reacted to Arminian's five arguments with five bold and errant points of Calvinism, now known as T.U.L.I.P., there is building a large over reaction to Rice's Open Theology. Level heads of Biblical theologians have yet to develop and expound a sound Biblical systematic theology which captures God's emphasis of the free will of man, as well as God's sovereign control and foreknowledge of the events in His universe. Calvinism and Reformed Theology, with its roots in infant baptism, state churches, and burning or drowning Anabaptists, is not to be trusted with such a task. Even less could we trust Richard Rice, the Ellenist with roots in Whites' bizarre doctrines of the advents and pitiful doctrine of soteriology. Such a source is not reliable to outline a Biblical solution, but a dialog has been initiated that could produce a healthy alternative to Calvinism and Arminianism when taken in moderation.

Recognize here that this 'movement' arose because current systematic theology works have a blind bias toward reformed theology, with a non personal God who is unable to be influenced by our prayers, unreactive to mans free will decisions, and not responsive to mans independent actions. Until such a work is articulated, one must resolve the very strained understanding in his own mind. This work is but a flag that points out the dilemma, intending to keep you from camping in any of these three corners of Calvinism, Arminianism

126 Richard Rice, *The Openness of God: A Biblical Challenge to the Traditional Understanding of God*, John Sanders (Author), Clark H. Pinnock (Editor), William Hasker (Contributor), www.amazon.com/Openness-God-Challenge-Traditional-Understanding/dp/0830818529.

and now Open Theology. They are each riddled with error and inconsistency. It is currently better to open your Bible and think this out on your own than it is to trust the work of a single theologian writing from his 'camp'. The Reformed Theologian's answers are wholly inadequate, and the buzz of evangelicals reacting to open theology make a good catalyst for a type of independent thinking that keeps one out of the old ruts. (It can also drive us deeper into dead old ruts so that we do not have to think, be careful here, ruts are prevalent.)

Dr. John Sanders has taken up a defense of Open Theology as it has been modified to step out of an errant corner of thinking, back into Biblical light. He provides this partly quoted summary:

According to openness theology, the triune God of love has, in almighty power, created all that is and is sovereign over all. In freedom God decided to create beings capable of experiencing his love. In creating us the divine intention was that we would come to experience the triune love and respond to it with love of our own and freely come to collaborate with God towards the achievement of his goals. ...

Second, God has, in sovereign freedom, decided to make some of his actions contingent upon our requests and actions.... God, at least since creation, experiences duration. God is everlasting through time rather than timelessly eternal.

Third, the only wise God has chosen to exercise general rather than meticulous providence, allowing space for us to operate and for God to be creative and resourceful in working with us. ... What people do and whether they come to trust God makes a difference concerning what God does;-God does not fake the story of human history.

Fourth, God has granted us the type of freedom (libertarian) necessary for a truly personal relationship of love to develop. Again, this was God's decision, not ours. ...

Finally, the omniscient God knows all that can be known given the sort of world he created. ... We believe that God could have known every event of the future had God decided to create a fully determined universe. However, in our view

God decided to create beings with indeterministic freedom which implies that God chose to create a universe in which the future is not entirely knowable, even for God. ...

This view may be called dynamic omniscience (it corresponds to the dynamic theory of time rather than the stasis theory). According to this view God knows the past and present with exhaustive definite knowledge and knows the future as partly definite (closed) and partly indefinite (open)....

Our rejection of divine timelessness and our affirmation of dynamic omniscience are the most controversial elements in our proposal and the view of foreknowledge receives the most attention. However, the watershed issue in the debate is not whether God has exhaustive definite foreknowledge (EDF) but whether God is ever affected by and responds to what we do. This is the same watershed that divides Calvinism from Arminianism.- Dr. John Sanders¹²⁷

As open theology has been reformed by evangelical scholars it attempts to explain a practical relationship between the free will of man and the sovereignty of God. It clashes with what might be called classical theology where it touches an immutable and timeless God who fully determines the future of man kind. It can go extreme, but taken in moderation, it begins to expose and rectify some of the more obtrusive problems of Reformed Theology and Calvinism. This is more than simply a new corner of thinking. Stay out of corners when balancing God's sovereignty with His granting to man free will for decisions. Corners are mentally simple and one can settle in and relax their mind in them, but this is not the time to relax ones mind. Theologians are hereby on the verge of wording a sound resolution to an old, decaying, unBiblical timeless dilemma.

When a fatalistic and decreed universe is castigated (rejected or severely censured) the quagmire that classical theology enters is necessary and appropriate; it does have fatal flaws. Every aspect of God's revelation portrays man as a free agent and portrays God as

127 John Sanders, "Open Theology" <http://www.opentheism.info/> (accessed Feb 2007).

being limited to man's time frame. God created a matter continuum, and cannot be limited by it, he is spirit. God created a space continuum, and cannot be limited by it, he is omnipresent. God created a time continuum, but every indication is that he limits himself to mans time frame, and waits on mans free agency before he takes action or repents from previous decisions. It is a theologians quagmire, where a finite mind wrestles with an infinite God and some things will just not make logical sense. The Reformed Theologian forces it to make logical sense with his doctrine of decrees, but such a forced fit denies a multitude of Scriptures. It is an unacceptable solution for a Bible believer, but it is acceptable for a reformed theologian because their Bible does not carry that much authority and their logic can overrun what the Bible says without consternation. Open Theology in whole continues to be an unacceptable solution, but one needs to be very conscious of it, and its usefulness.

XIV. Conclusion

Reformed Augustinian Theology set out to reform Roman Catholic Theology into a purely Biblical Theology. It was not at all successful. The systematic error that formed Roman Catholicism formed from Clement of Alexandria's denial of Israel as God's chosen people, the denial of Israel's restoration to their promised land, and the denial of the upcoming 1,000 year reign of Christ. He refused to believe in a Kingdom age with Israel, Jerusalem, and the Throne of David at its center. Origen of Alexandria, Clement's student, facilitated this denial by fathering Biblical Criticism, and inventing the allegorical method of hermeneutics. Saint Jerome, a Doctor of the Catholic Church, facilitated this philosophy with a vulgar bias translation of Scriptures creating the Latin Vulgate, and Catholic Church Father Saint Augustine, genius and scholar, intertwined all of it into a perverted theology with a bad soteriology, a perverse ecclesiology, an accommodating eschatology, and a besetting scripturology. The Roman Catholic stage is now set with such a misguided theology, a theology so very errant to the core, that slight reform could never alter its deviant trajectory. When protestant reformers take their reformation all the way back to Saint Augustine they do not change the course of that evil spiral, their theology continues to draw humanity away from the truth of God.

A systematic analysis of Reformed Augustinian Theology and its trajectory away from truth shows that it continues along the trajectory established by its Mother, the Roman Catholic Church. It is still spiraling away from truth and it propels those connecting to it further and further from the truth of the Lord Jesus Christ. The major ingredient and prime factor in its errant direction is still its rejection of Israel as the chosen, elect, predestined nation of God. With Clement of Alexandria's philosophy, Origen's Bible criticism, and Catholic Saint Augustine's doctrines, they reject that the 12 tribes of Israel will be regathered and restored to their promised land where Christ himself will rule over them from the Throne of David for a 1,000 year Millennial Reign. The Covenant Theology which the Reformed Augustinians devised and constructed to contain a Catholic Church's

takeover of these direct promises to Israel is the hub of their errant philosophy.

Tentacles of error proceeding from this core, entangle and draw in believers and whole Churches. They are often perceived and adopted as stand alone doctrines, but they connect, eventually to the systematic core of reformed theology. Calvinism; the doctrine of decrees; the catholic, universal, invisible church philosophy; amillennialism and its extended family of rapture denying, Chiliasm scoffing, anti-dispensationalists; all have their root in the conforming reformers who would not leave the side of their Church Father, Saint Augustine of Hippo. Ergo the name Reformed Augustinian Theology is applicable to all Reformed Theology.

God says of Abraham's chosen seedline, "*And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed*" (Gen 12:3). Reformed Augustinian Theology is not cursing Israel, but striving to steal all of its promises and denying all its promised future. That will not go well. God said to Israel "*If thou ... call the holy of the LORD, honourable; and shalt honour him, not doing thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words; then shalt thou delight thyself in the LORD; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth*" (Isa 58:14). Such a plea could equally be levied onto Reformed Theology. They need to let Israel be the son's of Jacob. They purport that they are now the elect, chosen from the foundation of the world, chosen to receive salvation while all others are reprobate and left to, yea created to, suffer in hell for all eternity. Such a twisted soteriology is nowhere found in Scripture which ensures us that whosoever will may come. They purport that the Catholic Church is still a united, but now invisible, body of all believers. Ergo they have no use or understanding of God's local body of believers in their ecclesiology. They purport that this now invisible Catholic Church existed in the old covenant, now exists in Christ's new covenant, and holds all the promises made to that old covenant 'church' once called Israel. This is their Covenant Theology core, which denies all the seven dispensational periods outlined in the Bible, and is especially hostile to the upcoming Millennial Reign of Christ. Their catholic denial of Israel, misrepresentation of election, and allegorical denial of the

Revelation of Jesus Christ and his 1,000 year reign, cause such a faulty theology, that it is not pure theology or Biblical theology at all. They cannot know God when they twist his words and pretend they are the now the elect Israel. *“These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth; ... Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie”* (Rev 3:7,9). Reformed Augustinian Theologians, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie, hold onto their Church Father's claims that they are now the chosen and elect.

Many believers and many Churches buy into Calvinism, God's decrees, various twisted millennial positions, and invisible church ideologies, and they begin a slide into the reformed theology's realm of Alexandrian Greek philosophy. A treatment of God's Scripture wherein the Reformed Theologian thinks God's inspiration only applies to original autographs, which they suppose were not preserved by God, but were immediately corrupted. This is widely accepted by modernists and evangelicals. They consider that their Bible critical scholars can use the Alexandrian texts of their Church Father Origen to restore what God was unable to preserve. The majority of Christiandom, and all the copyrighting Bible Societies are reliant on this perverse strategy. Ergo reformed theologians are leading the way into the Laodicean Church age where *“These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God; I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.”*

A systematic review of Reformed Augustinian Theology's error is quintessential to walking a straight and narrow path of truth in the 21st century. Their error is universally invading and leavening all of

Evangelical Christianity, and even the staunchest Baptist Churches that are supposedly relying solely on the inerrant word of Holy Scripture for all their faith and practice. Their error is enticing but dangerous. Scholarly Calvinists and their doctrine of decrees; textual criticism and their supposed fixing of a broken Bible; Covenant Theology, emphasizing continuity but uniting old and new covenants,.... and Amillennialism, that requires that the Catholic Church usher in the final kingdom! The dangers are invasive. Such a systematic review of Reformed Augustinian Theology's error has not been discovered in this author's 52 years as a born again Christian. Every acquainted Regular Baptist Church therein visited has had an excess of Calvinism and Reformed Baptist doctrine infiltrating its teachings. This first cut of a systematic review of their error needs to be explored and published, but it surely needs to be expanded as well. May God bless you in such a quest.

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The Author is a USAF retired systems engineer turned Baptist Preacher who brings a fresh Biblical look at our systematic theology. His Master of Science degree in Engineering enlivens an analytical view of the doctrines of Reformed Augustinian Theology. You will be amazed at how much reformed doctrine departs from the Bible and

leans on Roman Catholic Saint Augustine's Philosophy We need to get back to sound Bible teachings with our doctrine. This treatise will move one in that direction.