

THE
COLLECTED WRITINGS

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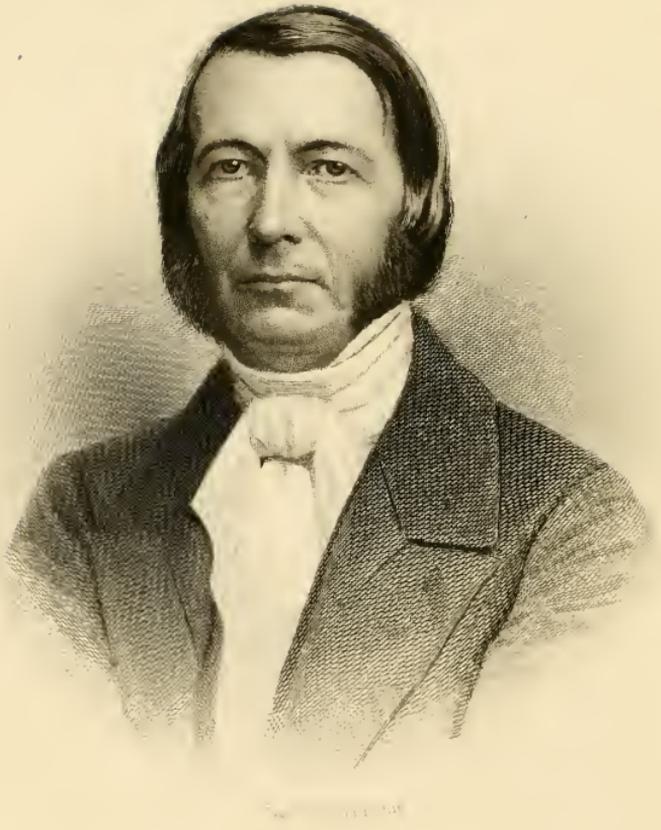
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J. H. Moonwill

APPENDIXES.

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PREFATORY NOTE TO APPENDIXES.

APPENDIX A is Dr. Thornwell's Inaugural, delivered on the evening of the 13th of Oct., 1857, at the Presbyterian Church of Columbia, S. C., in the presence of the Board of Directors of the Seminary, and of many members of the Synod of South Carolina on their way to its meeting at Laurensville the next day. He had, however, actually entered on the duties of the Chair of Didactic and Polemic Theology during the previous year.

Upon that occasion the Rev. Dr. Thomas Smyth, of Charleston, first pronounced a solemn charge to the Professor, who then subscribed the usual formula binding him to teach nothing contrary to the standards of the Church, and delivered this Inaugural. It was not read, nor did he have it before him; but, as his manner was, having written it by way simply of preparing his mind for the effort, he delivered it far more fully in many parts than it was written, and throughout the whole of it in words which came to him on the occasion. Those whose privilege it was to be present can never forget the fervour and the force with which he gave utterance to the views presented in this discourse. He had written it the night of the 12th of October at one sitting, but, as he said, "with his mind at a white heat."

Appendix B consists of the questions of Dr. Thornwell, of which he made use in examining his classes upon the Lectures. It is proper to say that for the Lectures upon Original Sin, upon the Pollution and Guilt of Sin, and upon Degrees of Guilt, the full form of his questions could not be found, and it was necessary to supply the gap with a few questions from a more summary form found amongst his papers; and that his Questions upon the State and Nature of Sin are not a complete copy.

Appendix C is an Analysis of the most important Chapters of Calvin's Institutes, with Notes and Comments by Dr. Thornwell. The *Institutio* was his text-book, and he used these papers in examining his classes. They are, of course, brief and informal, and sometimes quite familiar and abrupt in style, but they are deemed too intrinsically valuable to be omitted here.

Appendix D is composed of Dr. Thornwell's Questions to his Classes upon the Institutes. They are confined to the most important Chapters of Book I.

APPENDIX A.

DISCOURSE DELIVERED BY

DR. THORNWELL,

UPON BEING INAUGURATED AS PROFESSOR OF THEOLOGY.

I TRUST that I am not insensible to the solemnity of this occasion, nor to the momentous character of the relation into which I am about to enter. When, a little more than twenty-two years ago, I was set apart by the imposition of hands to the general functions of the ministry and the special duties of a pastor, I felt that my position was a solemn one, and the text from which on that occasion the usual sermon was preached, "Who is sufficient for these things?" exactly expressed my sense of the magnitude and grandeur of the duties I had assumed. The cure of souls is a burden; however, like the Redeemer's burden, it is lightened to those who sincerely and humbly seek His glory. It is a burden—a burden upon the conscience and a burden upon the heart—but still a burden of that peculiar kind that he who has once borne it would rather bear it on for ever than be released from it. He feels it a greater burden to be without it than to have it. That burden I have ever since carried. When, three years afterward, I was called to mingle in another sphere the elements of Divine and human knowledge, and to minister at the altars alike of philosophy and religion among those who are pre-eminently the hope of the land, I felt that I had undertaken an arduous trust—that I stood in relations of grave responsibility to the Church and to the State. But those occasions, solemn as they were, and serious and awful as the duties they imposed, yield to this in the magnitude of the trust and the strength and emphasis of the obligations imposed. A single parish, though it contains immortal souls—and one soul is more precious than the world—is yet a comparatively narrow sphere; the circle of relations and the compass of operations can be partially measured. A charge

like that of the College, though it touches upon many and complicated interests, is yet for the most part bounded by the State. The *sphere* here is not incommensurable. But the office of a teacher in a school which aims to prepare a ministry for the whole Church and for a dying world, which aims to realize the ascension gifts of the Saviour in evangelists, pastors and teachers, until the whole body of Christ shall be gathered and the bride be adorned to receive her husband at His second coming in glory and majesty and power,—a trust like this no mortal may lightly assume it; an angel's intellect cannot gauge the extent and magnitude of its influence. It is that trust, deep, awful, momentous, whose consequences lose themselves in the abyss of an unfathomable eternity, bearing alike on the destinies of redeemed and lost; it is this trust which I am to assume this night. Unborn souls are destined to wail or rejoice at these transactions. Who is sufficient for this work? Fathers and brethren, not I!—with profound impression of the truth I say it, Not I! And, like Moses, as I buckle on the armour of a graver warfare than I ever waged before, I utter from the heart the prayer of conscious weakness: "If thy Spirit go not with me, carry me not up hence." Nothing reconciles me to these perilous responsibilities but the full persuasion that God, through you and the operations of His Spirit upon my own soul, has called me to the functions for which you have girded me to-night.

I have reached a crisis in my life, and as I stand to-night and look back upon the past and forward to the future, I can distinctly see that the cloud has led me by day and the pillar of fire by night; and though it has often been by a way that I knew not, I now perceive that all my training, whether moral, intellectual or spiritual, the bent of my studies, the peculiar turn of my mind, my cherished tastes and my chosen speculations, have all been controlled and modified and shaped with reference to the solemnities of this hour. God had this night in His own eternal view when in yonder college walls I rose up early and sat up late to store my mind with that knowledge which I then designed to make only an instrument of ambition. I can understand that spell which bound me to Homer's matchless verse and the immortal tongue in which Demosthenes wielded at will "the fierce democratic of Athens." I can comprehend the mysterious charm which the Stagyrite threw around me, and the enchantment with which I listened to Schoolman and Monk as they discoursed in mood and figure of the high problems of existence. I can understand the fascination with which I loved to go with Socrates to the market or listen to Plato's lectures, and to his great pupil, "the intellect of his school" (*fop*, though his companions called him), when he built up the whole encyclopædia of knowledge. Up to this point, by God's help, I have safely come; I can praise Him for the past, and I hope that I am not unprepared to trust Him for

the future, and with my whole heart I hereby consecrate myself with what little knowledge and little experience I have been able to gain,—I consecrate all freely, unreservedly, for ever, to His glory and the service of His Church.

The security which you have exacted from me, that I shall not indulge a licentious liberty of speculation, nor teach for doctrines the commandments of men; the restraints which you have put upon the excursions of philosophy or the conjectures of fancy; the limits within which you have wisely and righteously bound me,—are no oppression to my spirit. The pledge which I have solemnly given, that I shall neither directly nor indirectly teach any doctrine contrary to the venerable Standards which I have just subscribed, I mean faithfully to redeem. I was not born in your department¹ of the kingdom of God; it was that Confession which first drew me to you. Your noble testimony for God and His truth brought me into your communion, and the same love to your doctrines which first induced me to cast in my lot among you continues to burn in my bosom, and to inspire me with zeal for the propagation of those doctrines in all wise and proper methods.

I am not ashamed of that Confession of Faith. I am not ashamed of the men who formed it, of the men who adopted it, of the noble army of martyrs and confessors who have sealed its doctrines by their blood. When the Long Parliament of England had itself solved the question, What is human liberty? and reduced to practice the answer which William the Silent had before given, two centuries in advance of his age, as to the foundation and ends of civil government; when this body of true and immortal Englishmen had answered the question, What is liberty? they collected a nobler assembly than had ever met in St. Stephen's Hall before, and proposed to them the question which Pilate proposed to Jesus, What is truth? What is the truth of God? The answer of this venerable conclave of learned, praying, godly divines was your Confession of Faith. It was the answer of religion to freedom; it was the faith that made the mighty men of war and peace—which distinguished a period in which were deposited the seeds of all that has been noble, generous or great in the history of England or America from that day to this. Then and there the marriage rites betwixt Liberty and Truth were duly solemnized; from that period they have gone hand in hand, and are destined to keep together until they shall finally, in their Master's name and by their Master's power, subdue the world! Ashamed of the Westminster Confession of Faith? the inspiration of Heroes and Sages, of Martyrs and Philosophers?—a faith that has founded states, immortalized kingdoms and redeemed countless multitudes of souls from the thral-

¹ Dr. Thornwell's mother was a member of the Baptist Church.

dom of slavery and sin? No, never! I love it, sir, and love it with all my heart, and bless God that in His providence I was permitted to see that book with a knowledge of which my earlier years had not been blessed as yours were—though, thanks to a noble mother, I was taught from the cradle those eternal principles of grace which that book contains. Your Church is the Church of my adoption, your ministry the ministry which God led me to seek when he called me into the kingdom of His Son; and your Church I love, not as a sect, not from personal, private or political considerations, but for her noble testimony, her glorious history, her moral power, her spiritual freedom—the mother of heroes and saints, of scholars, orators and statesmen, a blessing to this world and a sure guide to everlasting joy. God is known in her palaces for a refuge. For, lo! the kings were assembled, they passed by together; they saw it and so they marvelled, they were troubled and hasted away. I would say of her as David of his darling Jerusalem: “If I forget thee, let my right hand forget her cunning! If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth!”

But this general view of what I am to teach as not contrary to and as consistent with the Confession of Faith is hardly a sufficiently exact description of the scope and sphere of the department which you have committed to my hands. The occasion requires that I should more minutely and accurately sketch my own conceptions of the nature of the work I have to do, and of the manner in which it should be done. You will bear with me, then, while I unfold, as briefly as I can consistently with clearness, the scope of Theology, its claims to be considered as a science, and the principle which should regulate the arrangements of the parts and their combination into a complete and harmonious whole.

I. The first question is, What is Theology? What is that definite and precise matter which distinguishes it from every other department of inquiry, and gives to it the unity and consistency which pertain to a science?

1. The word *Theology*, compounded of two Greek terms, properly implies a discourse of which God is the subject. The speculations of Pherecydes and Hesiod concerning the origin of things were styled *theological*; they themselves were called *Theologians*, and their cosmogonies denominated *theologia*. But the gods of the Muses were very different from the God with whom we have to do, and the generations and works which poetry, fiction and idolatry ascribe to the deified heroes of Olympus have nothing in common with the sublime fiat of our God, who sitteth in the heaven upon a throne of unchangeable being, and who has but to speak and it is done, to command and it stands fast. Still, these early and crude cosmogonies illustrate the

tendency of human speculation to begin at the beginning, and I am quite sure that no adequate conception can be framed even of our own God without taking in the great fact of creation. A system of Theology cannot possibly ignore this truth without halting at every subsequent step. The Bible opens with God as Creator, and there is hardly a passage in the Psalms or Prophets in which God distinguishes Himself from the false gods of the heathen without appealing to the circumstance that He is the Creator of all things. Modern writers on Natural Theology have paid entirely too little attention to this peculiarity, and have consequently been content with a proof of His being and perfections which represent Him at best as only a huge man—the great Mechanic of the universe. But it would be preposterous to constitute creation as the adequate subject of Theology; that is only one skirt of the Divine glory.

Neither again would it do to confine *Theology* to a discussion of the essential relations of the Godhead, the generation of the Son, the procession of the Spirit; as the mythologists applied the term to analogous discussions concerning the dependences and births of their numerous brood of divinities. Plato used the word in this restricted sense as a discourse concerning the Divine nature, and the early Fathers of the Christian Church followed the example. Athanasius, Photius and Theophylact confine it to discussions concerning the Trinity; others give it a wider application, to any discourse of which the being and perfections of God are the subject; others restrict it to the consideration and proof of Christ in contrast with his humanity; and others apply the title to the Scriptures themselves, as being a discourse concerning the being, perfections and glory of God.

In all these cases there is a *περὶ θεοῦ λόγος*, but the aspect under which God is contemplated is too narrow and contracted to express what is now meant by *Theology*.

2. But we are not to suppose, on the other hand, that there can be an adequate knowledge of God—that He can be the object of a science in any such sense as that we can deduce from Him, from the essential perfections of His nature, the laws, properties and conditions of all existing things. Such knowledge would be science in the highest and most absolute sense, but such knowledge is the prerogative of God alone. It is to me passing strange that any man should ever have dreamed of an absolute knowledge of anything. Our science can never transcend our faculties, the soaring eagle can never outstrip the atmosphere which supports it. We know the essences of nothing; we cannot think a substance in itself; we cannot detach it from its properties and adjuncts and lay our fingers upon that secret, invisible, mysterious something which we construe in thought as the centre and bond of union and coexistence to these multifarious phenomena. We

know not matter, we know not our own souls, and how can we know God?

All our knowledge is relative and phenomenal, measured by our faculties and confined to appearances. But as far as it goes it is real—phenomena are not a sham; they are the indications of realities which transcend themselves and are embraced by faith.

Hence, the law of all human science is *induction*. We do not begin with things in themselves and then deduce their properties and manifestations, but we begin with appearances, and after ascending to our highest generalizations are compelled to admit that the thing itself still lies beyond our reach in the boundless domain of faith.

The incomprehensibility of God as an object of science is the universal confession of all classes of divines.

3. Then we are confined to phenomena, to manifestations, to the works of God. Now we advance one step farther: Is that knowledge of God's being, character and perfections which we are able to derive from His works, however complete and perfect it may be, that knowledge in which God is considered simply as a subject to be investigated and known,—is that the knowledge which Theology, properly so called, has in view? Is simple cognition the end of this knowledge, or does it exist merely as an intellectual relation to its object? Certainly not. This would be to degrade God and to make *Metaphysics* and *Theology* synonymous expressions. The knowledge of God which Theology has in view is the knowledge of God as the supreme good—the knowledge of God as the full and perfect and everlasting portion of the soul. It subordinates every other department of truth; it lays its hand upon every science, makes excursions into every field of speculation, but it brings all its treasures and lays them at the feet of a just Ruler and a merciful Redeemer. Theology, then, is precisely and definitely the science of true religion, or the science of the life of God in the soul of man.

4. This distinction applies as well to the nature as to the end of the knowledge, and hence what we now call *Theology* was by the primitive fathers and by the apostles, and even our Saviour Himself, called simply *knowledge*. It is a peculiar kind of cognition, like the perceptions of the moral faculty, and to distinguish it we call it a *living* knowledge in opposition to a formal apprehension. Here is the real source of traditionalism; it is not that the truth is systematic, but that the truth is not apprehended in its true character; it is not that there is science, but that the phenomena of the science are misunderstood.

II. The next point is, Can it be called a *science*?

The answer depends on what is meant by *science*.

1. If *science* is taken in the subjective sense for habitual knowledge, Theology is pre-eminently a science. Its truths are the very bone and

sinew and marrow of a Divine life—the very moulds into which the whole frame of the mind is cast. The perfection of science in this sense is indicated by the ease and spontaneousness of congruous acts, as in Rhetoric, Grammar, Logic.

2. If *science* is objectively taken for a mere logical and systematic arrangement of dependent and connected truths, there can be but one answer, unless it is affirmed that there is no distinction here of more and less general.

3. But if by *science* is meant a deduction from principles intuitively given, and a demonstration from the nature and properties of its matter, then there is no science of God, but at the same time there is no science of anything else. All knowledge begins in faith; principles must be accepted, not proved, and it matters not whether you call them principles of faith or reason.

4. But it is said that there is no unity of matter—God, angels, men, creation, providence, etc. But there is a unity of *relation*, and it is under that relation that they fall under the consideration of theological science.

5. If by *science* is meant the highest certainty of reflective knowledge, then we have it here in a pre-eminent degree.

6. It is the *queen science*. It makes all other sciences ministers to God, and draws a Divine life from them. It quickens knowledge and converts speculation into life.

III. I come now to the arrangements and method of the science.

Theology as a science was slowly developed in its reflective form. The first creeds were accepted as facts, and men lived upon the truth without having traced the deep philosophy which pervades it. It was a life, but not a system. The successive controversies which arose reduced to scientific precision the great doctrines of the Trinity, of the incarnation and of grace; but still a complete view of the whole system of doctrine in its logical coherence was not attempted until the eighth century, when the foundations were laid of the scholastic Theology in the work of John Damascenus. He was followed by John Scotus Erigena, who applied the method of Aristotle to the questions of religion. The scholastic Theology received a fuller development at the hands of Lombard, the Master of the Sentences, and its final consummation in the great work of Thomas Aquinas. These productions of the Middle Ages are not without their value, and he who applies to them with a discriminating search will find many a jewel in the heaps of rubbish which cover it.

1. The first great division is a division according to the sources:

Into *Natural and Revealed Theology*. This is not to be confounded with the distinction of Natural and Revealed Religion, which is indeed a distinction in the thing itself, in the matter considered. But who in

constructing a science of minerals would distinguish them according to the senses which report their properties? Truth is truth, and the divisions of a science should spring from its object-matter, and not from contingent circumstances and relations.

2. Into *Dogmatic and Polemic, or Elenctic*. This is only a division of the mode of treating it, and as the science of contraries is one, it appears to me that every didactic treatise is obliged to be in some degree polemic.

But taking Dogmatic Theology as a science, is there any principle in the whole system which can be called central, and around which all the parts may be made to revolve? Is there any feature which gives shape and position to every other feature? Two such principles have been proposed—(1.) In the Dutch school the doctrine of the Covenants; and (2.) In more recent times, the fact of redemption, the incarnation, or the Person of Christ.

There are serious objections to both these methods considered as logical exhibitions. The theory of the Covenants makes an accidental feature—the mode of administration—determine the character of the thing administered. It has advantages, but also disadvantages, and much has to be postulated as prior to the covenants which in this view does not constitute a part of the whole. It does not exhaust the subject. But to start from redemption, or from incarnation, or from the Person of Christ, gives us no point of logical connection with natural religion. Grace and nature are widely separated states, and the religion of grace and the religion of nature have no bridge between them.

Without criticising farther the method of others, I proceed to indicate the principles upon which, in my judgment, the whole subject can be logically treated without confusion, mixture or undue separation of parts.

The central principle of all Theology is *justification*, and every Divine system of religion is only the answer which Divine wisdom gives to the question, How shall a moral creature be justified? If that creature be considered simply as a creature in the image of God, the answer is the Religion of Nature; if that creature be considered as fallen, as a sinner, the answer is the Religion of Grace. Here the principle evidently rules the parts; they grow out of it and spring from it, and there is not a single doctrine of religion which may not directly or remotely be traced to it. Let us consider this more distinctly.

1. The principle of justification is not an original and essential principle of moral government. All which *that* implies is a law, a moral subject and a just ruler. Continued obedience would be continued favour, and one transgression, ruin. Here, each man is a unit, and his moral responsibility is in himself and for himself alone. The relations

through the law are the only ones which are essential and enter into the case. Now, while these individual relations and this individual responsibility are maintained, the principle of justification (1.) *limits probation* as to time, which is an act of infinite grace; (2.) *concentrates it* as to persons; whence federal headship—all are put into one. And here we may see the folly of the objection that I ought not to have been represented in Adam. The alternative was no limitation of probation at all, or a limitation as it pleased God, and a condensation as to the rule or measure of obedience.

Here, then, starting from the principle of justification, you have, *first*, the great doctrine of moral government in its essential principles presupposed; you have, *then*, the modification of that government in the Covenant of works and the whole system of natural religion; and, *more than all*, you have individual responsibility fully harmonized with covenant representations—a point which no other scheme attains.

2. The same thing is seen when you come to revealed religion. The question is, How shall a sinner be just with God? and the solution of that problem in consistency with the essential principles of moral government necessitates all the provisions of the covenant of grace. Hence the incarnation, hence the mysterious and wonderful person of the Saviour, hence His astonishing humiliation, His life of poverty, sorrow and obedience, and His death of agony and shame; hence His glorious resurrection and ascension, and His coming at the last day to judge the world. All the facts of His history and mediation depend upon God's purpose to justify the ungodly.

3. But it may be said that this view leaves a sinner just half saved—out of hell, but not fit for heaven. Here consider what it involves, the very essence, indefectibility before the fall, union with God after the fall—in other words, the *guarantee of holiness*. This is precisely what we are *justified to*—the very inheritance to which we are adopted.

This method is certainly exhaustive. It presents truth in its logical order, and, above all, it cuts up by the roots many erroneous systems of Theology. The whole doctrine of a precarious and contingent holiness is given to the winds, and the feet of the saints are established on a rock. And it explains precisely how they are individually and personally under the law, and yet in no danger of condemnation.

IV. The sources of Theology.

1. The facts of revelation. It is a science already developed in its principles, and to be received and mastered by us. The instrument employed is a sound interpretation under the guidance of God's Holy Spirit. But the theologian has not done his work when he has simply accepted his principles.

2. Many of these principles are found in ourselves, in the light of reason, and the two sources are to be blended.

3. But there is a higher work in evolving the philosophy of the whole system, and showing how it accords with the indestructible data of consciousness. We may carp and cavil at philosophy as we will, but it is a fundamental want of the human soul and cannot be dispensed with. Reflect man must and will, and religion has no sanctity to protect it from the torch of a searching inquiry into its principles. The error into which we may fall is twofold :

(1.) We may proceed on the assumption that Theology is to be constructed from consciousness—that the Divine life within us is the rule and measure of it. This is a radical mistake ; it is the rule and measure of that Divine life. We must try our hearts by it, and not it by our hearts.

(2.) We may go to the Scriptures with a preconceived system, and endeavour to harmonize their teachings with our illusive crotchets. This is the stone over which the New England theologians have fallen and broken their necks. They have made the Bible an appendix to their shallow and sophistical psychology, and to their still shallower and more sophistical ethics.

4. Now, the true method is to accept the facts of revelation as we accept the facts of nature. We are by enlightened interpretation to ascertain the dicta ; these are to be received without suspicion and without doubt. They are the principles of faith. Then from these principles proceed to the laws, the philosophy if you please, which underlies them, and in which they find their explanation and their unity. In this way we shall reach truth, and shall be partially able to harmonize it with all other truth.

5. But we must never forget that all cannot be explained. Our knowledge is a point, our ignorance immense. But we can know enough to glorify God, and to save our souls. We can know enough to make us sure that the unknown is full of glory and beauty.

Thus feebly have I sketched the work I have to do.

1. Is it not vast? God, Creation, Providence, Angels, Men, Heaven and Hell!

2. Is it not most important? Other knowledges bring comfort, power, wealth—this is eternal life.

3. The peculiar responsibilities of a religious teacher in this age. Irreligion is now a religion, a philosophy. An ignorant ministry will no longer do. God bless us, our Seminary, His Church and our work!