

A Synopsis of Theology, or Divinity

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Drawn up for the benefit of his flock

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A Synopsis of Theology, or Divinity¹

Theology is a divine doctrine,² according to the Scriptures,³ of religious living unto God,⁴ in order to Man's happiness⁵ and God's glory.⁶ Theology (or the doctrine of divinity thus described) may, for the clearer understanding of it, be considered according to all the four causes of it:

I. The Efficient Cause (or first principle of this doctrine of theology whereupon it is firmly grounded, wherein it is clearly revealed and whereby it is fully proved) is the divine revelation of it in the

1. Holy Scripture

II. The Formal Cause of this doctrine of theology, is either:

1. Inward, that is, that sweet harmony between the sense of this doctrine and the true sense of Scripture and (so consequently) the mind and meaning of God Himself.

2. Outward, that is, the method or disposition of this system or body of divine doctrine which may be variously drawn up according to the various rules of art and method, provided always that the order of divine dispensations clearly observed in Scriptures be not thereby inverted or obscured.

III. The Material Cause, comprising all the subject matters wherein our religious living to God consists which are handled in divinity and may be reduced to two heads (whence the two parts of divinity result), that is:

¹ [For a short, eight page, biographical sketch of Roberts, the English puritan, see *The Covenant Theology of Francis Roberts* (2000) pp. 29-37. This particular work of Roberts was originally a one page poster and was (according to Dr. C. Matthew McMahon) Roberts' most popular work. Little is known about the background of this work other than that it displays the Ramist logic popular during that historical era and it "was published two years after he became the minister of St. Augustine's." Lim, *Covenant Theology*, p. 32] A replica of the original work, which is more easily visually understood than this text edition, can be purchased at [Puritan Publications](#).

² 1 Tim. 6:3; Rom. 6:17 with 2 Tim. 1:13; Heb. 5:12 with 6:1; Isa. 51:4; John 9:29; Matt 21:25; John 6:45; Gal. 1:11,12.

³ Isa. 8:20; John 5:39; Rom. 15:4; 2 Tim. 3:15-17.

⁴ John 6:68; Acts 5:20.

⁵ Rom. 6:11,22,23; John 3:36 with 5:24; 1 Jn. 3:15.

⁶ 1 Cor. 10:31; 2 Cor. 4:10,11; Phil. 1:20.

1. Matters to be known and believed concerning God. They respect God's:
 1. Nature, wherein are considered:
 1. What God is in Himself. So He may be considered:
 1. Essentially, as one in essence:
 2. God
 3. Unity of essence
 2. Personally, as three in subsistence:
 4. Trinity of persons
 2. Who, or what manner of God He is; both according to the divine:
 1. Titles, by which He is named:
 5. The names of God
 2. Properties, which are to Him attributed, that is, the divine:
 6. Attributes:
 1. Essential
 2. Personal
 2. Works, which are either:
 1. Internal, eternal and immanent in God Himself, that is, his decree itself:
 7. Works of God in general
 8. Decree
 2. External, temporal and transient from God to the creature, that is, his actual execution of his decree, which He does by two ways:
 1. Original production of all things out of nothing, exceedingly good, which may be considered:
 1. More generally, in reference to the whole world, by:
 9. Creation

2. More specially, in reference to the principal parts of the world, [that is] intellectual creatures, in:

1. Heaven

10. Angels

I. [in their] State of creation

2. Earth

11. Men

2. Actual provision for all things created, by his actual providence, both in his:

1. Natural dispensations, for the general good of all the creatures' natural-beings and well-beings, and this by his:

12. Providence:

1. General

2. Particular

2. Supernatural dispensations, for the special good of the intellectual creatures in their supernatural-beings and well-beings, partly by his:

1. Confirmation of the elect angels that kept their first estate, whom the reprobate angels left:

13. Confirmation of angels

II. [Also, those in their] State of corruption

2. Restoration of man that lost his first estate. Herein are comprised the:

1. Malady, into which man was plunged and from whence he was to be restored, that is, his first apostasy from God, by his:

14. Fall into

1. Sin

2. Misery

III. State of Restitution.

2. Remedy, whereby man was restored from this malady, that is: redemption by Jesus Christ. In this redemption are to be observed three things:

1. The publication or revelation of it to mankind in the glad tidings of the:

15. Gospel

2. The operation or preparation of it for man. Herein consider:

1. The person that wrought man's redemption: only that Immanuel, God-Man.

16. Redemption

17. Jesus Christ

2. The office laid upon Him whereby He accomplished this work:

18. Office of Christ

3. The states wherein He discharged this office:

19. His state of

1. Humiliation

2. Exaltation

3. The application of it unto man. This application may be considered:

1. Absolutely in itself; and so it contains God's:

1. Salvific benefits themselves, which in Christ are applied by several steps and degrees, translating man from: misery to mercy, from sin to grace, from grace to glory. And this by advancing man to:

1. Union to Christ, separating man unto Himself from the common corrupt mass of mankind, by:

20. Effectual vocation

2. Communion with Christ

1. In his spotless righteousness, by:

- 21. Communion with God in Christ
- 22. Actual justification

2. In his matchless Sonship, by:

- 23. Adoption

3. In his true holiness, by:

- 24. Real sanctification

IV. State of perfection

4. In his endless happiness, by:

- 25. Eternal glorification. This glory is communicated:

- 1. Particularly and incompletely to every elect soul, only at his particular:

- 26. Death

- 2. Generally and completely to both souls and bodies of all the elect, at the general

- 27. End of the world

2. Instrumental means, whereby these saving benefits are effectually applied, that is, the outward ordinances of God, which are either:

1. Ordinarily used upon all occasions. These are either:

- 1. Primary ordinances, made more principally prevalent for the breeding and nourishing [of] union and communion with Christ. These are to be considered:

1. Essentially, according to their substance and peculiar operation, both to our:
 1. Confederation with God in Christ, as the dispensation and preaching of the
 28. Word
 29. Promises
 30. Covenant of Grace
 2. Confirmation in that confederation, as the administration of the seals of the Covenant:
 31. The sacraments
2. Accidentally, according to their circumstance and manner of administration in the times before, and under, the Old and New Testaments:
 32. Manner of administration of the Covenant and sacraments, before and under the Old and New Testaments
2. Secondary ordinances, subservient unto the former in promoting the birth and growth of grace in the soul:
 33. Reading, or hearing the Word read
 34. Catechizing
 35. Religious conference
 36. Meditation
 37. Prayer
 38. Singing of Psalms
 39. Communion of saints
2. Extraordinary, used only upon special and extraordinary occasions for the advancement

and improvement of our interests in Christ.
These are religious:

- 40. Fasts
- 41. Feasts
- 42. Vows or Covenants

2. Relatively, in reference to:

1. The proper instrument, whereby on our part this application is savingly received, that is:

43. True faith

2. The peculiar subject, unto which these benefits of redemption are applied by these means, that is:

44. The Church

2. Matters to be done and observed in obedience unto God. Herein are to be observed:

1. The rule of obedience, laid down more generally in the Word of God [and] more specially in the Law of God which regulates obedience, in:

1. Political and civil matters. Thus the Jews' commonwealth was regulated by the

45. Law

46. Judicial Law

2. Ecclesiastical and religious matters, which are either:

1. Typical, peculiar to certain times and persons only. Thus the Jewish Church (during the Old Testament) was under the pedagogy of the

47. Ceremonial Law

2. Moral, appertaining to all persons at all times. Thus both Jews and gentiles, before and under both the Old and New Testaments, are under the:

48. Moral Law

2. The nature of this obedience, which is considered:

1. More generally. Here are considered the general nature of:

- 49. Obedience
- 50. Good works

2. More specially; and so it comprehends:

- 1. The inward principle of obedience whence all obediential acts do flow, that is, the infused habit, or habits, of true:

51. Virtue

- 1. Theological
- 2. Philadelphical [of brotherly love]

- 2. The inward and outward acts, or exercise, of obedience, flowing from this principle of virtue, [is] to be expressed:

1st Table [of the Ten Commandments]

- 1. Towards God, in a holy worship of Him, which is styled religion and piety. This piety is exercised:

- 1. In the having and worshipping of the true God (and Him alone) for our God in Christ, which is the proper scope of the:

52. Religion; piety

53. 1st Commandment

- 2. In the true worship of this true God. And herein is contained:

- 1. The true and pure worship itself, which is to be performed to this one only true God, merely according to his own will, as is prescribed in the:

54. 2nd Commandment

- 2. The adjuncts of this worship:

- 1. The true manner how this true God will always be worshipped by us, that is, so reverently, holily, sincerely, etc. as may be most honorable to his great and holy Name, as is required in the:

55. 3rd Commandment

2. The special time when God will be more solemnly and publicly worshipped, that is, on his day of Sabbath, both under the Old and New Testament, which Sabbath is sanctified by Him authoritatively and is to be sanctified by us obediently, as is enjoined in the:

56. 4th Commandment

2nd Table [of the Ten Commandments]

2. Towards man in righteousness, brotherly love and sobriety, which are to be performed:

1. In deed, word and thought towards our neighbor, considered either:

1. Relatively, in reference to that relation, order or degree of his condition, wherein God has set him amongst men, by giving respective honor to him, according to the:

57. Righteousness, brotherly love, sobriety

58. 5th Commandment

2. Absolutely, in regard of:

1. His person, preserving his:

1. Life and health, by offices of humanity, enjoined in the:

59. 6th Commandment

2. Purity, by offices of chastity, required in the:

60. 7th Commandment

2. His goods and possessions, by acts of commutative⁷ justice, prescribed in the:

61. 8th Commandment

⁷ [pertaining to exchange]

3. His good name, by acts of truth and veracity,
commanded in the:

62. 9th Commandment

2. In the very first motions of the heart (even those motions that go before a complete and deliberate assent) towards our neighbor in reference to all and every one of the foregoing commandments of the second table [of the Ten Commandments]. The well ordering of which motions is charged upon us in the:

63. 10th Commandment

IV. The Final Cause, or the end whereunto our religious living unto God tends, is either:

1. Subordinate, and less principal, respecting man, that is, the present and future:

64. Happiness of man

2. Ultimate, and most principal, respecting God Himself, that is, the present and eternal:

65. Glory of God

The End