

THE TRINITY REVIEW

For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare [are] not fleshly but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. And they will be ready to punish all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled.

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A Guide for Young Christians

John W. Robbins

When God saves us sinners, he causes us to believe certain propositions about himself and about ourselves—ideas that we formerly thought were not true. In an instant, God resurrects us from the spiritual death of unbelief and makes us understand and believe the truth about both Jesus Christ and ourselves. Scripture refers to this event by using several figures of speech: being born again, being born from above, enlightening the mind, being resurrected from the dead, and giving us a heart of flesh for our heart of stone. What this figurative language literally means (and if you do not know what figurative language literally means, you do not know what it means) is that God affects our minds directly, causing us to accept as true, ideas we formerly thought were not true. He gives truth—figuratively called “light” in Scripture—directly to our minds.

Jesus had a conversation with his disciple Peter that illustrates the point: Jesus asked Peter, “But who do you say that I am?” Peter answered, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” Jesus responded to Peter, “Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in Heaven” (*Matthew* 16:15-17). Now Peter had traveled and lived with Jesus, and certainly he had heard Jesus preach many times. But Jesus says that it was God the Father who revealed these truths to Peter’s mind. Jesus explicitly denied that Peter had come to know and believe these propositions on his own steam, for “flesh and blood did not reveal” these truths to Peter—God the Father had revealed them to Peter directly. We are all in the same situation as Peter in this regard; Peter’s answer is every believer’s answer; and Christ’s response to Peter is the same as his response to all believers. Just as Peter is not the unique recipient of this truth, so he is not the unique recipient of direct revelation.

All believers get the truth they know directly from God. We are not aware of the Father’s work, just as Peter was not aware, but had to be informed by Christ. The truth just “dawns” on us. (This figure of speech is also used in Scripture: See *2 Peter* 1:19.) John tells us that “the anointing you have received from him abides in you, and you do not need that anyone teach you; but as the same anointing teaches you concerning all things, and is true, and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you will abide in him” (*1 John* 2:27). The anointing does not give us truth apart from or different from the Word; the anointing is the Word in us—the “implanted word,” to use James’ phrase.

But God did not reveal to Peter—and he does not reveal to us—all truth in one instant. In the first moment of faith, God reveals to us all the truths required to save us, but they are not all the truth he intends for us to know. When we are saved, God gives us part of his truth, the fundamentals as it were, but we will be learning his truth the rest of our lives. We will never exhaust all the truth that God has to teach us, even during endless years in Heaven. But with many distractions competing for our attention today, the young Christian may need some guidance on where to find that truth, and how to study.

The Truth of Scripture

When we were saved, the truths we believed came from the Bible. We may not have been reading the Bible at the time; perhaps we were listening to a sermon in church or on the radio; perhaps we were simply talking to a friend, or meditating silently in our home. But whether we actually had a Bible before us or not, we were saved only by believing the truths found in the Bible. As we grow, that is, as we learn more and more of God’s truth, we will continue to find truth only in the Bible. Again, we may be

reading the newspaper when God uses a story on crime, for example, to remind us of some truth that we had read in the Bible the day before. God causes us to understand what we read in the Bible, and to believe it.

God's truth is found only in the 66 books of the Bible. That does not mean that all other books are absolutely false, for some authors have studied the Bible for years and have written excellent discussions of the truths of the Bible—discussions that the Holy Spirit can use to help us understand God's Word more quickly and more accurately than we might if we relied merely on our own education and background. But the statement does mean that the Bible is the only *source* of truth. Whatever truths other authors may have, they have received them from God's Word.

Christianity Is Unique

You as a young Christian should understand that Christianity is unique. Jesus said, "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life. No man comes to the Father but by me." Christianity is not one among several competing religions, each of which possesses some truth and has some value. Jesus Christ is "the Truth." All other religious and philosophical figures are imposters. Religions may promise to satisfy our senses, our feelings, our desires, and our wills, but Christianity alone satisfies our minds. Alone among the religions and philosophies of the world, Christianity offers us truth. You have probably seen the bumper sticker: "Jesus is the answer." If we understand that in the Bible alone Jesus has given us the answers to our questions, we can understand how Jesus is the answer to our questions about God, man, and the universe. Scripture provides us with information that can be found nowhere else. Christianity denies that any other religion is true; that all roads lead to Heaven; and that there is any other name in the universe by which we must be saved.

Because Christianity is the truth, and because truth is intellectual, not emotional or experiential, Christianity must be understood and believed—not caught, felt, sensed, or encountered. Because Christianity is the truth, the importance of understanding, knowledge, and wisdom can hardly be overstated. God himself is a God of truth. *Deuteronomy* 32:4 describes God as "a God of truth." In *John* 14:6 Jesus says, "I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man comes to the Father but by me." In *John* 14:17 the Holy Spirit is called the "Spirit of Truth." One of the tools you should obtain very early, as we will discuss below, is a good concordance, for it will assist you in finding quickly the hundreds of passages in Scripture in which understanding, truth, wisdom, and knowledge are praised, and we are commanded to seek them.

Feeding on the Word of God

God reveals his mind, that is, himself, to us in Scripture alone. God has graciously given us a book of a thousand

pages to read, study, meditate on, understand, and believe. We grow spiritually only when we "bite," "chew," and "digest" the Word of God. "Biting" is reading the Bible or listening to the reading of Scripture. "Chewing" is comparing one passage of Scripture with other passages of Scripture, or memorizing a passage of Scripture in order to think about its meaning later, or listening to or reading an exposition of Scripture. "Digesting" is meditating on Scripture—not the mindless meditation of Eastern religions, in which the goal is to empty your mind of thought—but the intellectual meditation of Christianity, in which the goal is to fill your mind with the thoughts of God revealed in the Bible. By pondering them, turning them over and over in your mind, all the while asking God to help you understand their meaning and to see how they relate to other truths in the Bible, you digest the spiritual food—the intellectual food—God has so generously given to us in the Bible.

"Digesting" is first understanding and then believing the truths of Scripture. As we eat a meal, we do all three things—biting, chewing, and digesting—simultaneously, after taking the first bite. We do not wait until the first bite of food is digested before we take a second. And as with eating meals, it is important to bite, chew, and digest God's Word simultaneously, and on a daily basis. In order to grow and be healthy, we need to eat frequently and regularly—and our spiritual food is much more important than our physical food. As we digest the truths of the Bible, we grow in grace and knowledge, which is the prayer that the apostles utter in their letters to the churches. As we grow, we are able to understand and articulate the truths we have learned more and more clearly, more and more consistently, more and more accurately. We become more fruitful. We are able to work out—to practice—what we have learned. But if we do not read the Bible, if we do not think about its message, if we do not understand what it means, we cannot and will not grow as Christians. Just as there is no royal road to learning, so there is no mystical road to spiritual growth. The Bible itself, while commending the trusting attitude of children toward their parents, an attitude that should be our model of Christian faith toward our Father in Heaven, commands us not to remain children in understanding, but to grow up: "Brethren, do not be children in understanding; however, in malice be babes, but in understanding be mature" (*1 Corinthians* 14:20). Growing up requires food, and a lot of it; a Christian's only food is the Scriptures; and our only provider is God himself, who feeds us daily.

The First Book

Because of the absolutely indispensable role of the Bible in your growth and life as a Christian, it is important to acquire and read an accurate translation of the Bible. All translations are not equally good. In the twentieth century there were scores of Bible versions published in English.

Many of these are not translations at all, but paraphrases, condensations, amplifications, and adaptations. None of these is suitable for the study of the Bible. When God inspired the Bible, he inspired not only general ideas, but also the exact words the apostles and prophets wrote down. Consequently, for a translation to be accurate, it must recognize the importance of the individual words, and stick as closely as possible to a word-for-word translation. Any purported translation of the Bible that treats the Bible's actual words loosely is misleading. Such a loose translation will make a close study of the text impossible. Of the commonly available versions, you should acquire and study the **King James** or the **New King James** versions and avoid those versions, such as the *New International*, the *New English*, the *Revised Standard*, and Bibles produced by cults such as the Jehovah's Witnesses or the Roman Catholic Church-State, for they treat the actual words that God inspired with less respect than they deserve. They add to, subtract from, and mistranslate the Hebrew and Greek words of the originals. Another good, though less easily available, translation is the **Literal Translation**, edited by Jay P. Green, Sr. Both the *Literal Translation* and the *New King James* avoid the archaic English of the 17th century *King James*, which hinders the understanding of 21st century readers.

As you grow as a Christian, you will want to learn the Greek alphabet, and later some Greek grammar, so that you will be able to check the translations against the original Greek of the New Testament. A good Greek textbook is J. Gresham Machen's **New Testament Greek for Beginners**.

Once you have an accurate translation of the Bible to study, you should read the Bible from cover to cover, from *Genesis* to *Revelation*, in order, with no skipping. It is sometimes surprising to talk to Christians who have been saved for years who have not even once read the entire Bible. Part of our sinfulness is our laziness, and Satan uses every vice and device he can to keep us from the Word. The first time through the Bible, you may not understand much of what it says. That is normal. When one studies any new subject, whether that subject be history, geometry, or Christianity, he is likely to miss most of what he reads the first time he reads it. The first time a youngster tries to ride a bicycle he is likely to fall. That is no reason to give up—otherwise no one would learn either to ride a bike, to demonstrate a theorem, or to understand theology. Understanding usually requires study, just as riding well usually requires practice. You as a young Christian should not borrow the books mentioned in this essay, but acquire them for your own permanent library. They should be readily available for repeated and frequent reference and study. They will prove useful to you, your family, and your friends for a lifetime. After you have read the Bible through once, begin again at *Genesis*—this time with a specific question in mind, such as, “What does the Bible

say about God?” or, in keeping with the plan laid out below, “What does the Bible say about itself?” Repeatedly reading the Bible with specific questions in mind is one of the most effective methods of study. Be sure to take notes on what you find, and keep them in a permanent notebook.

There are several good reference works that will help you understand what you read. A good concordance—both **Strong's Concordance** and **Young's Concordance** are based on the *King James Version* and remain the most thorough concordances available—is indispensable to Bible study. (A concordance is an alphabetical list of words that appear in the Bible, together with the citation for each appearance, and information about the Greek and Hebrew originals. It functions as a cross-reference and an elementary dictionary. Good computer software will contain the same elements as a good concordance.) In addition to a concordance, a Bible encyclopedia and dictionary are very helpful for furnishing background information on the culture, geography, customs, and technology of the cities and nations mentioned in the Bible. Two very helpful encyclopedias are the two-volume **Wycliffe Bible Encyclopedia** and the five-volume **Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible**.

Three very useful guides for studying the Bible are the **Westminster Standards**, consisting of the **Westminster Confession of Faith**, the **Larger Catechism**, and the **Shorter Catechism**, all written in the 1640s. The *Westminster Confession* remains the best summary of the Bible yet written. The *Confession* summarizes in 33 short chapters the teaching of Scripture on everything from Scripture itself to the Last Judgment. Dr. Gordon Clark's commentary on the *Confession*, **What Do Presbyterians Believe?** is the best short introduction to what the Bible teaches. You as a young Christian should read *What Do Presbyterians Believe?* and the Scripture verses cited in it very early in your studies. This will give you an introduction to the whole system of truth taught in Scripture and will enable you to see the forest, not merely the trees. The *Catechisms* will help you grasp the definitions of important terms in Scripture, such as *justification*, *adoption*, *predestination*, and *alone*, as well as understand such basic items as the Ten Commandments and the Lord's Prayer. A useful study guide to the *Westminster Confession* is Dr. W. Gary Crampton's *Study Guide to the Westminster Confession*.

The goal of seeing or understanding the big picture early in one's Christian life is very important. It is one of the reasons why you ought to read the entire Bible through, in order, from Creation to Consummation. Unless you can see the whole picture, you will not understand many of the details found in Scripture. You will not understand how the parts relate to the whole, how the doctrines mesh together into an elegant and intricate system of truth. Many older Christians remain lost in the details, not knowing what Abraham has to do with Jesus,

nor love with law. They know some Bible stories and have memorized a few favorite verses, but how all these things fit together into one coherent and unbreakable whole escapes them. They may not even realize there is a whole, not seeing the forest for the trees. (This is not to say, of course, that memorization of Scripture is bad; Scripture itself says it is very good: "Your Word have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against you." As you read, you should commit verses and entire passages on such topics as Scripture, God, Jesus, and salvation to memory.)

After you have read *What Do Presbyterians Believe?* you should take the time to study what is perhaps the best systematic theology ever written: **The Institutes of the Christian Religion** by John Calvin. While keeping in the mind the whole of God's message to his people, *The Institutes* fills in many of the details. It is organized in roughly the same fashion as the *Westminster Confession of Faith*, beginning with a discussion of how we can know God and, unlike the *Confession*, ending with a discussion of government. You may find it helpful to organize your detailed studies in the same fashion. The major topics to be studied are

1. The Doctrine of Scripture
2. The Doctrine of God
3. The Sovereignty of God and God's Decree
4. The Doctrines of Creation and Providence
5. The Doctrine of the Covenant
6. The Doctrine of Sin
7. Jesus Christ
8. The Doctrines of the Atonement and Salvation
9. The Doctrines of Justification and Faith
10. The Doctrine of Sanctification
11. The Doctrines of Worship and the Church
12. The Doctrines of Marriage and the Family
13. Civil Government and Society
14. Church History
15. Christian Philosophy
16. The Defense of the Faith
17. Cults and Pseudo-Christianity

1. The Doctrine of Scripture

On the doctrine of Scripture, which is foundational for all of Christianity, you should acquire, read, and re-read **God's Hammer: The Bible and Its Critics**, by Dr. Gordon H. Clark. Clark explains what it means to say the Bible is truth, and how we may know it is truth. As part of his explanation he refutes those scholars who have attacked or rejected the complete truth of Scripture.

Then read **The Divine Inspiration of Scripture**, by Louis Gaussen. Gaussen was a nineteenth-century Swiss pastor whose book assembles and organizes in one place the hundreds of statements in Scripture in which Scripture claims to be the Word of God. The cumulative effect of Gaussen's work is the refutation of any critic who suggests

that the Bible claims to be God's Word in only a few instances, and that it is really not the Word of God, but a work of mere men.

Read **The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible**, by Benjamin Warfield. Warfield was a professor at Princeton Seminary at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries. His book is an excellent explanation of the doctrine of the verbal (the exact words) and the plenary (the entire Bible) inspiration of the Scriptures.

Read **The Battle for the Bible**, by Harold Lindsell. Lindsell chronicles, explains, and refutes the attack on the inerrancy of the Bible within churches calling themselves "evangelical." Previously Roman Catholic and Modernist churches had denied the inerrancy of Scripture, but from the 1950s on more and more men and churches that identified themselves as "evangelical" denied the inerrancy of Scripture as well.

There are several books that are helpful to the young Christian who faces objections from unbelievers that the Bible is contradictory or simply historically inaccurate. Among these are the following: **Alleged Bible Contradictions Explained**, by George DeHoff; **Alleged Discrepancies of the Bible**, by John Halley; and the **Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties**, by Gleason Archer. The book by Dr. Archer is the most recent and comprehensive; the first two are older, though still useful, works.

As you mature as a Christian, you will hear about something called "textual criticism." This is an important topic, and it concerns the original Greek text of the New Testament on which all translations into English or other modern languages are based. Some schools and scholars have sought to undermine confidence in the reliability of the Bible by casting doubt on the reliability of the Greek text. There are several books that are very useful for the Christian to study on this matter. Among them are these: **The Future of the Bible**, by Jakob van Bruggen; **The Identity of the New Testament Text**, by Wilbur Pickering; and **Logical Criticisms of Textual Criticism**, by Gordon Clark. The first two books are a more general discussion of the whole field of textual criticism, while the last is a narrow examination of some of the conclusions reached by textual critics showing how capricious and whimsical they are in their judgments of the reliability of Greek texts of the New Testament.

While the student is mastering the doctrine of Scripture, he should be reading good commentaries on Scripture. There are several general texts that act as helpful introductions to the Bible, and many commentaries on individual books of the Bible. Among the introductory texts are **The Five Books of Moses**, by Oswald Allis; **The New Testament: An Introduction to Its Literature and History**, by J. Gresham Machen; **An Old**

Testament History of Redemption, by Franz Delitzsch; and **A Survey of the Bible**, by William Hendricksen.

Helpful commentaries on the Bible include those by Calvin, Gill, Hendricksen, and Clark:

Commentaries on the New Testament, by William Hendricksen. Hendricksen is a twentieth-century Reformed theologian whose commentaries on several New Testament books are quite helpful.

Exposition of the Old Testament and New Testament, by John Gill. Gill is an eighteenth-century Reformed Baptist whose commentaries are in many instances better than Hendricksen's.

Calvin's Commentaries, by John Calvin. Calvin wrote a commentary on almost every book in the Bible, and his commentaries are still among the best available. If you are in doubt as to the meaning of any passage of Scripture, consult Calvin, Clark, Gill, and Hendricksen, in that order.

Clark's Commentaries, by Gordon Clark.

Gordon Clark wrote commentaries on 12 New Testament books:

Colossians

Ephesians

First Corinthians

First John

First and Second Thessalonians

New Heavens New Earth (1 & 2 Peter)

The Pastoral Epistles (1& 2 Timothy, Titus)

Philippians

Read them in any order you wish, according to your interests, but read them all. They are not technical commentaries, but commentaries intended to be read by ordinary Christians who want to grow in their understanding of the Bible. Clark's comments are always helpful.

Charles Hodge, one of the leading Reformed theologians of the nineteenth century, also wrote some excellent commentaries on Scripture, including **Ephesians, First and Second Corinthians, and Romans**.

Edward J. Young, one of the foremost Hebrew and Old Testament scholars of the twentieth century, wrote several excellent commentaries on Old Testament books, including

Isaiah

Genesis 1

Genesis 3

My Servants the Prophets

Prophecy of Daniel

Psalms 139

2. The Doctrine of God

After studying the doctrine of Scripture and reading good commentaries on the Scriptures themselves, the doctrine of God is the next topic to tackle. Steven Charnock's **The Existence and Attributes of God** may

be intimidating to a young Christian, for it is more than a thousand pages long, but it is worth the time and effort involved. Here are a few more books by Gordon Clark, not only to read before one reads Charnock, but also to add to one's personal library: **Lord God of Truth, The Holy Spirit, and The Trinity**.

3. The Sovereignty of God and God's Decree

Because of the sinfulness of men, the sovereignty of God has been a topic of debate within the churches since the time of the apostles. The Apostle Paul in his letter to the Romans answers some of the more common objections to the doctrine of the absolute predestination of God. Among the better discussions of this issue are these books, which you should acquire and study:

Absolute Predestination, by Jerome Zanchius

The Bondage of the Will, by Martin Luther

Calvin's Calvinism, by John Calvin

Predestination, by Gordon Clark

The Reformed Doctrine of Predestination, by Loraine Boettner

Religion, Reason, and Revelation, by Gordon Clark.

4. The Doctrines of Creation and Providence

There have been many books published on the topic of creation in the twentieth century, but virtually all of them are written from a scientific point of view or are narrowly focused on such topics as the length of the days of *Genesis* 1 or problems with the theory of evolution. No sound book-length discussion of the doctrine of creation written from a theological or philosophical point of view seems to be currently available. However, there are many chapters in other books that discuss the doctrine in very helpful ways. Read the chapters on creation and providence in Clark's **Predestination**, Charles Hodge's **Systematic Theology**, and Calvin's **Institutes**.

5. The Doctrine of the Covenant

O. Palmer Robertson's **The Christ of the Covenants** is one of the best books on the subject.

6. The Doctrine of Sin

Gordon Clark's **The Biblical Doctrine of Man** is an excellent discussion of the nature of man, the fall of man, and total depravity.

7. Jesus Christ

We measure all of history by the birth of Christ, yet he is a figure mostly misunderstood two thousand years after his birth. In **The Incarnation**, Gordon Clark has written a path-breaking book defending the Biblical doctrine that Christ was and is both fully God and fully man. Another important book from Clark in understanding Jesus Christ

is **The Johannine Logos**. An older, standard work is **The Person and Work of Christ**, by Benjamin Warfield.

8. The Doctrine of the Atonement and Salvation

We recommend reading Clark's book first, and then filling in the details with Smeaton: **The Atonement**, by Gordon Clark; **The Doctrine of the Atonement According to the Apostles**, by George Smeaton; **The Doctrine of the Atonement According to Christ**, by George Smeaton.

9. The Doctrines of Justification and Faith

While the apostles were still alive, the churches began departing from the Gospel by denying that the objective and alien righteousness of Christ alone justifies us. Paul wrote a polemic against such denials of the Gospel in his letter to the Galatians, and spent three chapters discussing justification in his letter to the Romans. But for 1,400 years, the *Gospel* was obscured by legalism in the churches, until God enlightened the mind of Martin Luther in the sixteenth century, and from Luther spread across the globe. You should read these books on justification:

Commentary on Galatians, by Martin Luther

The Everlasting Righteousness, by Horatius Bonar

Faith and Saving Faith, by Gordon Clark

The Doctrine of Justification, by James Buchanan

Justification by Faith Alone, by Charles Hodge

Another good source of information on justification is **The Trinity Review**, which contains scores of essays on various topics, including many on justification by faith. One volume that is scheduled to appear in 2001 is **The War on the Gospel** by John Robbins. Remember that the doctrine of justification is the central doctrine of the Bible, and that if it is denied, all the rest of one's ideas, though they may sound very Christian, are not. The Apostle Paul in his letter to the Galatians damned men who denied the doctrine of the imputed righteousness of Christ even though they professed to believe in God, the deity of Christ, and other doctrines of the Bible. Luther called the doctrine of justification the doctrine by which a church or an individual stands or falls, and Calvin called justification the principal article of the Christian religion.

10. The Doctrine of Sanctification

Two of the best books on the subject are Jerry Bridges' **The Pursuit of Holiness** and Gordon Clark's **Sanctification**.

11. The Doctrines of Worship and the Church

A large part of the reason for the Protestant Reformation was the perversion of Christian worship that prevailed in the Middle Ages. An excellent discussion of the reform of worship in the sixteenth century is Carlos M. N. Eire's book, **War Against the Idols: The**

Reformation of Worship from Erasmus to Calvin. Eire, a Roman Catholic, shows how superstitious and idolatrous even the late "enlightened" Middle Ages were. A new book, **The Church Effeminate and Other Essays**, edited by John Robbins, is a large collection (740 pages) of some of the best essays of the past five centuries on the structure, purpose, and function of the church and Christian worship. Douglas Bannerman's **The Scripture Doctrine of the Church Historically and Exegetically Considered** is also very helpful.

12. The Doctrines of Marriage and the Family

The books of Dr. Jay E. Adams are unsurpassed in this field. Start with **Competent to Counsel and Christian Living in the Home**.

13. Civil Government and Society

Christians have written a great deal on political matters. E. C. Wines' **The Hebrew Republic** is a nineteenth-century work, and Gordon Clark's **Essays on Ethics and Politics** is a more recent statement of Christian political theory. **Ecclesiastical Megalomania: The Economic and Political Thought of the Roman Catholic Church** by Dr. John Robbins teaches by contrast what a Christian society should look like. One should also read the chapter on "Politics" in Dr. Clark's book, **A Christian View of Men and Things**.

14. Church History

Much of the history of the church is almost invisible to the modern Christian. Soon after the first century and the deaths of the apostles, the churches fell into serious doctrinal errors, including serious errors in the doctrine of the church. A perverted form of church government arose, transforming the presbyteries of the early church into episcopacies and monarchies. For more than a millennium in the West the churches, united under the Bishop of Rome, oppressed and persecuted those who professed Biblical faith. One of the policies of the Roman Catholic Church-State was the re-writing of history through the fabrication of many false documents and the suppression of accurate records. Consequently, it is difficult to obtain an accurate history of the church during the millennium when the Roman Church-State dominated Europe. Some books that are helpful, however, are **The Complete Book of Martyrs**, by John Foxe, originally published as **Acts and Monuments** in eight volumes; **The History of the Christian Church**, by Philip Schaff (Schaff held some un-Biblical theological views, but his history is a standard work); and **The History of the Reformation in Europe in the Time of Calvin** and **History of the Reformation in the Sixteenth Century**, both by J. H. Merle D'Aubigne.

15. Christian Philosophy

As you grow and understand in greater detail how Christianity is a whole system of thought, not just scattered truths about God and man, you will become more and more interested in applying that system to such diverse topics as education, economics, politics, and philosophy. You will benefit greatly from studying the works of Dr. Gordon Clark in these fields, for Clark, more than any other thinker, has applied Biblical truth to the whole of life and thought. He has earnestly sought to “bring every thought into captivity to Christ,” as each Christian is commanded to do.

Against the World: The Trinity Review 1978-1988, edited by John W. Robbins.

Against the World is a collection of 70 essays, many written by Dr. Clark, originally published in *The Trinity Review*. The essays discuss such topics as the role of Biblical law in the life of the individual and society, the arguments for the existence of God, psychology, economics, current events, apologetics, scientific creationism, the nature of the church, and many more.

A Christian Philosophy of Education, by Gordon Clark.

A Christian View of Men and Things, by Gordon Clark.

Education, Christianity and the State, by J. Gresham Machen.

This book is a collection of essays and speeches by one of the most courageous and knowledgeable defenders of Christianity and freedom in the twentieth century.

Historiography: Secular and Religious, by Gordon Clark.

Language and Theology, by Gordon Clark.

Logic, by Gordon Clark.

Thales to Dewey: A History of Philosophy, by Gordon Clark.

Thales to Dewey is Dr. Clark’s peerless explanation and refutation of 2,500 years of secular and religious philosophy. There is nothing like it in any language, for rather than confusing the student with innumerable details about men and ideas, Dr. Clark focuses on the theories of knowledge of the major philosophers, showing them all to be failures. The failure of non-Christian theories of knowledge is the fatal flaw of non-Christian philosophies. By laying an axe to the root, Dr. Clark destroyed non-Christian philosophy and religion.

16. The Defense of the Faith

Many books that purport to be Christian apologetics have been published in the twentieth century, but nearly all of them espouse a Roman Catholic approach to the subject. Gordon Clark, however, developed a Biblical approach to the subject, and his principles for defending the faith are set forth in these books: **An Introduction to Christian Philosophy**, **The Philosophy of Science and**

Belief in God, and **Three Types of Religious Philosophy**.

17. Cults and Pseudo-Christianity

Three of the most influential pseudo-Christian movements in the West are Roman Catholicism, Arminianism, and Pentecostalism. There are many good books about Roman Catholicism:

Counterfeit Miracles, by Benjamin Warfield.

Counterfeit Miracles discusses not only the miracles of Christian Science, but also Roman Catholicism and other cults.

Ecclesiastical Megalomania: The Economic and Political Thought of the Roman Catholic Church, by John Robbins.

This book is a detailed examination of the official statements of the Vatican on economic and political matters. It demonstrates the collectivism and totalitarianism of the Roman Catholic Church-State. It is the only such book written by a Christian in the twentieth century.

Graven Bread, by Timothy Kauffman.

Quite Contrary, by Timothy Kauffman.

These two books by Kauffman focus on the Roman Catholic idolatry of the Eucharist and Mary.

Papal Power, by Henry T. Hudson.

Hudson was missionary in Rome and became familiar with the power of the papacy while working in the shadow of the papacy.

Roman Catholicism, by Loraine Boettner.

Boettner’s large book discusses many aspects of Romanist doctrine. It is the most comprehensive book currently available on the subject.

Two of the best books on the charismatic movement are **The Charismatics and the Word of God**, by Victor Budgen; and **A Theology of the Holy Spirit**, by Frederick Dale Bruner. Both books are excellent. There are also many issues of *The Trinity Review* that discuss the charismatic movement at www.trinityfoundation.org.

Perhaps the best antidote to Arminianism is John Gill’s **The Cause of God and Truth**, which examines all the “Arminian verses” in the Bible and explains their meaning.

The Theology of the Major Sects, by John Gerstner is a useful guide to several contemporary cults.

The Changing World of Mormonism, by Gerald and Sandra Tanner is an excellent explanation of the American religion of Mormonism, written by two former Mormons.

Dr. Martin and Deidre Bobgan have written several good books about psychology, showing that it is incompatible with Christian theology and demonstrating how some prominent Christian leaders rely on psychology rather than the Bible.

Conclusion

There are many religious books that will be vying for your attention as a young Christian. Some of them are helpful; most are harmful. We live in a time of great apostasy, when most of the religious literature rolling off the presses of Europe and North America is either blatantly hostile to Christianity, or subtly subversive. Remember the warning of the Apostle Paul at the conclusion of his letter to the Ephesian Christians: "Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand."

This list of books, though relatively short, will give you as a young Christian the beginnings of an excellent theological education. Of course, all uninspired books are liable to error, and these are no exception, but you can read and study them with confidence, praying all the while that God will enlighten your mind, keep you from error, and guide you into truth. When you are done, you will be able to say with the Psalmist:

Oh, how I love your Law!

It is my meditation all the day.

You, through your Commandments, make me wiser than my enemies;

for they are ever with me.

I have more understanding than all my teachers,

for your Testimonies are my meditation.

I understand more than the ancients,

because I keep your Precepts.

I have restrained my feet from every evil way,
that I may keep your Word.

I have not departed from your Judgments,
for you yourself have taught me.

New Book

The newest volume in the "Signature Series," *The Works of Gordon Haddon Clark*, is now available.

Thales to Dewey: A History of Philosophy is Dr. Clark's peerless explanation and refutation of 2,500 years of secular and religious philosophy. There is nothing like it in any language, for rather than confusing the student with innumerable details about men and ideas, Dr. Clark focuses on the theories of knowledge of the major philosophers, showing them all to be failures. The failure of non-Christian theories of knowledge is the fatal flaw of non-Christian philosophies. By laying an axe to the root, Dr. Clark destroyed non-Christian philosophy and religion.

Thales to Dewey is available from The Trinity Foundation in both hardback (\$29.95) and paperback (\$21.95). Send your check to Post Office Box 68, Unicoi, Tennessee 37692. Please add \$5.00 for shipping and handling.