

(7) From the beginning of Greek philosophy men have continually tried to reach a clear and certain knowledge of God, not along the path of religion, but by the way of philosophy, by speculative thought, and thus to overcome the irrationalism of the purely religious formation of ideas. These philosophical doctrines of God now confront one another in irreconcilable opposition. Above all, none of them can possibly be combined with the Christian Idea of God. The relation of the "God" of Plato or of Aristotle with the God of the Biblical revelation is that of the Either-Or. The same may be said of every other speculation. The reason for this will be given in the next chapter: the God of thought must differ from the God of revelation. The God who is "conceived" by thought is not the one who discloses Himself; from this point of view He is an intellectual idol.

2. Preliminary definitions of the doctrine

Natural theology consists of those theologically significant propositions formulated by unaided human reason. The term "theologically significant propositions" refers to propositions (or statements of affirmations) that convey truth concerning God and His relations to the universe. Natural theology affirms that unregenerate human beings, employing reason alone, can formulate theologically significant statements. The assumption here is that man's power or faculty of reason has not been affected by the Fall, and is thus not corrupt or depraved. The further assumption is that the process of reasoning can be sound or fallacious, but not sinful or affected by sin. Of course, it is admitted that a sinful use can be made of reasoning, but in such a case the sinfulness inheres in the use, not in the process of reasoning itself.

3. Biblical teaching concerning the doctrine

- a. The Scriptures at which we have looked in connection with general revelation all have some bearing here. These Scriptures tell us:
 - (1) Human beings perceive general revelation
 - (2) Human beings ought to draw sound inferences from general revelation to the true knowledge of God
 - (3) Human beings suppress the truth of general revelation and pervert it
 - (4) Human beings construct lying idols, false gods out of their imagination