

LESSON 3

GENERAL REVELATION

Introduction

General revelation is often referred to as natural revelation since the subject concerns what can be known of God through nature. Paul's statement in Romans 1:19ff. implies that something can be known of God through nature: "For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made" (1:20). Not only material existence, but also man's natural reason accounts for another source of knowledge. The traditional view held that all people can know God through the powers of human reason. Aquinas believed that all but saving knowledge could be gained through natural reason.

General Revelation and Natural Theology

The meaning of revelation

Revelation is the self-disclosure of God to man. God is transcendent, that is, He is on a higher and separate level of existence than the created order. Before the creature can know his Creator, God must reveal Himself.

Four elements contained in revelation are:

1. God discloses Himself rather than truths about His nature. Revelation is God making Himself known.
2. Revelation comes through interpreted historical events rather than being an illumination of the intellect. Beliefs about God are not divinely-given propositional statements. God has entered into the history of man and has disclosed His being and nature through salvation events.
3. God's activity in history and in relation to the natural world must be interpreted. The primary role of prophet and preacher is to interpret God's self-disclosure through nature, historical

Another term for general revelation is

_____.

(natural revelation)

After you have read about the four elements in revelation (continued on page 32), fill in the blanks in the following statements with these words:

- truths
- activity
- discovery
- events
- intellect
- disclosure

1. God discloses Himself rather than _____ about His nature.
2. Revelation comes through interpreting historical _____ rather than being an illumination of the _____.
3. God's _____ in history must be interpreted.
4. Revelation is not man's _____ but God's _____.

(truths, events, intellect, activity, discovery, disclosure)

events, and the recorded Word in the terms of God's will for man.

4. Revelation is not man's discovery of God but God's self-disclosure. Karl Barth spoke of God as the 'Wholly Other'. Revelation implies God's 'hiddenness'. Man cannot discover God until God chooses to step into the spiritual view of man. In His hiddenness, God is far from us and foreign to us except as He Himself ordains and creates fellowship between Himself and us.

Revelation refers to the methods by which God has made Himself known to us and to the content which is made known.

God is invisible and inexpressible. He does not exist in the form of the physical world created by Him. The created world does not automatically reveal God because He is not identical with created things. However, God can reveal Himself through His creation. The fact of creation implies a Creator, but creation of itself indicates only that the Creator is powerful and wise.

The meaning of general revelation

General revelation, therefore, refers to what is known of God apart from the Old and New Testaments which record God's special revelation through Israel and His Son. Man's natural knowledge of God is not redemptive. The redemptive nature and acts of God are revealed through the history of Israel and Jesus Christ. These special revelatory acts are recorded in the Old and New Testaments.

The difference in general and special revelation

General revelation accounts for the universal religious consciousness of mankind. Special revelation is historical, being bound up with persons and happenings through which there is communication of God with mankind. Historical revelation culminates in the person of Jesus Christ. Christian theologians insist upon a unique and crucial distinction between Christianity and non-Christian religions because of the self-disclosure of God in the person of Jesus Christ, His Son. Non-Christian religions contain some truth which has been gained from general or natural revelation. However, that truth is only partial, and it is impure because of man's sinful distortion of truth. Because of his pride and self-interest, man does not interpret accurately the

[Empty box for student response]

God (can, cannot) reveal Himself through
CHOOSE ONE
His creation.

(can)

[Empty box for student response]

Match by writing the letter of the correct definition beside each term.

- ___ General revelation a. what is known of God apart from the Old and New Testaments
- ___ Special revelation b. redemptive nature and acts of God revealed through Israel and Jesus

(a-general, b-special)

[Empty box for student response]

Is this statement true or false?

Non-Christian religions contain partial and distorted truth. _____

(true)

[Empty box for student response]

truths and demands of God made known through nature, but he rationalizes them so they will fit his own sinful desires.

The meaning of natural theology

Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) worked out an elaborate system of natural theology based on reason and nature. He believed that man's reason was dependable and was the channel through which God made Himself known. He suggested that man's natural knowledge of God is essentially an activity of human reason which is capable of discovering a measure of truth about God. Only a knowledge of salvation is excluded from natural revelation.

A distinction must be made between natural revelation and natural theology. Natural revelation refers to the knowledge God makes known about Himself through nature and reason. Natural theology refers to the organizing of the knowledge of God through nature into a system of theology. Theology is a formulation of the truths about God by intellectual means in order that these truths may be more clearly seen.

Emil Brunner granted that some knowledge of God comes through nature—there is a natural revelation or a revelation through creation.¹ The acknowledgement of revelation in creation does not necessarily lead to the recognition of natural theology. The Bible itself refers to a revelation in creation: "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handiwork [the work of his hands]" (Psalm 19:1).

The Christian idea of the Creator forces us to admit the reality of a revelation in creation. The Creator has imprinted the mark of His Spirit upon His creation.

Brunner pointed out that the 'natural man' (man without Biblical revelation) does not derive the same beliefs about God and his responsibilities to God as the man who has received special revelation. "Sin not only perverts the will, it also 'obscures' the power of perceiving truth where the knowledge of God is concerned."² The person who has experienced redemptive or special revelation interprets the revelation in creation differently from the natural man.

¹ Brunner, The Christian Doctrine of God, pp. 132ff.

² Ibid., p. 133.

Write the correct term before its definition--

Natural revelation
Natural theology

_____ refers to a knowledge of God through creation and reason.

_____ refers to the organizing of that knowledge into a system.

(natural revelation, natural theology)

Sinful man perverts natural _____.

(revelation)

Although the natural man cannot construct a valid natural theology, there is a knowledge of God which comes through creation. God's revelation through creation accounts for the universality of religion, but man's sinful nature requires special redemptive revelation before man can experience valid and complete truth.

Contributions of Reason to Theology

If God is hidden, reason is helpless to discover Him; however, reason may produce conclusions about His existence. Reason cannot prove the existence of God, nor does it lead to the actual experiencing of God. Reason can become autocratic in that it becomes the authority for determining what can be accepted in religion. The exaltation of reason in the eighteenth century led to the denial of miracles which seemed unreasonable. Religious faith amounted to little more than a belief in God who deserves to be obeyed. If man lives ethically, God will bring about justice and equity in the future life. Although reason alone cannot bring man to God, God uses human reason in His self-disclosure.

Human thought has produced a number of rational arguments or evidences for the existence of God. The evidences are not proofs in the sense of establishing undisputable evidence that God exists, but they support Christian faith. A Christian who by faith accepts the existence of God is strengthened to know that his faith does not conflict with reason. The following rational arguments present the reasonableness of belief in the existence of God.

Cosmological argument

'Cosmos' means world. The cosmological argument reasons that the existence of God is necessary in order to account for the existence of the world. Every effect must have an adequate cause. The atheist is content to believe that the world is self-existent. The theist believes that the world, the effect, has been caused by God. The argument states that if something now exists, something must be eternal unless something comes from nothing. The theist believes that God is eternal and caused the world, which now exists, to come into existence.

The non-theist has two philosophical choices. Either he can believe that something comes from nothing or the material universe is eternal. It is more irrational to believe that something comes from nothing than to believe that an eternal God has caused the universe and its motion. Scientific

Natural revelation does not provide a knowledge of _____.

(redemption)

Is this statement true or false?

Although reason alone cannot bring man to God, God uses human reason in revelation.

(true)

The cosmological argument reasons that the _____ of God is necessary in order to account for the _____ of the world.

(existence, existence)

theories do not support the belief that hydrogen atoms are coming into existence without a cause and new galaxies are arising in an expanding universe. After studies have been made, scientists have concluded that in the farthest regions of known space, quasars (celestial objects that resemble stars but emit unusually bright blue and ultra-violet light and radio waves) are not originating but degenerating.³ According to the second law of thermodynamics or the law of entropy, heat from the sun and stars passes into a cold state, but the reverse is not true. The universe which is dependent on heat energy is running down. This theory reveals that the universe did not always exist; otherwise, the energy from heat and motion would already have expended itself. The universe has an end; therefore, it must have had a beginning. Who started the movement of the earth around the sun, and who brought into existence the heat energy and motion by which the universe operates? Science points to a beginning for the universe. The cause of the beginning of the created world cannot be identical with it. Nature is not eternal nor ultimate; it was created by an infinite, eternal Being.

The teleological argument

Teleology comes from the two Greek words *telos* or *teleios* which means the end or purpose for which a movement is being directed and *logos* which means word, statement, assertion, or reason. The teleological argument is based upon purpose. It is sometimes called the argument from design. A study of nature reveals there is design and purpose in creation.

Modern evolution threatened to destroy this argument. Evolutionists argued that the pattern of nature was determined by the struggle for life and adaptation, not by the design of a Creator. The eventual result was to widen the range of truth and to make the argument cover the whole history of the universe. "Nature begins with the inorganic, and rises to the vital, and then to the sentient, and then to the rational, moral, and personal, reaching its climax in man."⁴ Physicists have shown that man's life on the earth is based on an intricate design. If the sun were closer to the earth, the temperature

³ For a fuller discussion, see Dallas M. Roark, The Christian Faith (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1969), p. 5.

⁴ E. Y. Mullins, The Christian Religion in Its Doctrinal Expression (Philadelphia: The Judson Press, 1917), p. 127.

Nature is not eternal or _____; it was created by an infinite, eternal _____.

(ultimate, Being)

The assertion that there is design and purpose in creation is called the _____.

(teleological argument)

would rise too high for human life. If the earth slowed down significantly, the nights would become too cold and the days too hot, and the earth would alternately freeze and burn. The dust particles in the air are needed as the nuclei of raindrops when water vapour condenses. The atmosphere composed of air and dust particles protects the earth from being scorched by light rays from the sun. Ecologists are saying much today about the intricate balance of nature which man is threatening. There is a cosmic design.

In moving from the physical to the spiritual level, the emphasis is shifted to the divine Mind which designed the universe according to a purpose. History is moving towards a goal and is guided by a divine Power. Men are made for God, and apart from Him they are without peace. Man is a spiritual organism who cannot find peace and purpose apart from God. God is necessary to account for man as a spiritual being who reaches out for spiritual fellowship with his Creator.

Man as an intelligent being could not have been produced by unintelligent forces. According to Christian faith, man is created in the image of an intelligent God; therefore, he has intelligence which corresponds to the rational design of the universe. He is able to know the world in which he lives because man's mind and world have been designed by the same divine Mind. Man can know and interpret the world in which he lives because it was originated by an intelligent Being. "Only that which originates with intelligence and expresses intelligence can be interpreted by intelligence."⁵ The creative mind of God constitutes the bond of union between man's mind and the world as an object of man's knowledge. The world has meaning because meaning was put into it. Man is able to understand the meaning of the world because both his mind and the world are grounded in an intelligent God.

Objections to the teleological argument are:

1. Evil, suffering, and sin do not appear to fit into the design and purpose of a good God who rules the universe.
2. Much of the universe seems to be impartial to design and purpose.
3. The argument cannot prove a personal, eternal, and infinite God.

⁵ Conner, Revelation and God, p. 60.

God is necessary to account for man as a _____ being who reaches out for _____ fellowship with his _____.

(spiritual, spiritual, Creator)

According to the teleological argument, why can man as an intelligent being know and interpret the world? _____

(because it was created by an intelligent Being)

Evolutionists have pointed out that progress is the result of slow development in the 'struggle for survival' and not a design on the part of a Creator. The theory of the 'survival of the fittest' is based on the arguments that the strong devour the weak, and many more beasts are born than survive. Is it the design of the Creator to bring into existence animal life for the purpose of destruction?

The Christian doctrine of sin points out that the world does not exist now according to its original plan because of man's sinfulness. The world 'fell' when man fell into sin. Man's struggles against the evils of his environment remind him that he is not God but a weak creature who must look to his Creator. These struggles against his environment are educative. Hardships and tragedies often lead to the development of faith which is to man's eternal benefit. The objection that the presence of evil proves the world was not designed by a good, personal God is based on the presupposition that good and man's material comforts are synonymous. This presupposition is not necessarily true. Often those who struggle least experience less development in character and make less contribution to the world in which they live. It is doubtful that any part of the animal world could have advanced to the level of man without pain. It is doubtful that the best of man emerges without struggle and pain. Great leaders are born in the midst of crises. Men climb higher when the barriers are higher.

Man could not be a free moral being apart from the possibility of sin. If man could only do good, he would have no choice between good and evil. He would be limited greatly in his human nature and could only act according to mechanical necessity. But man is a free moral agent, and he frequently chooses to sin. His sin brings tragedy to himself and to others. If the evils related to human sin were removed from the world, the problem of evil would be greatly reduced. The Christian view sees purpose in even the evil of our present world. History is the scene of God's redemptive activity, and it is moving towards a consummation in which sin and evil will be removed from man's experience.

The ontological argument

The word *ontos* comes from the verb 'to be'. This argument is based on the implications of 'necessary being'. The fact that man is able to think about God or has certain necessary ideas and thoughts of God's existence gives evidence that He does exist. Is the idea of a perfect being possible unless the being exists? God is that Being of which nothing greater can be conceived. The argument states, "Man has an idea of a perfect

According to Christian doctrine, does the world exist now according to its original plan? _____

(no)

Why does it not exist according to its original plan? _____

(because of man's sinfulness)

Could man be a free moral being apart from the possibility of sin? _____

(no)

Finish reading this paragraph on the next page, then fill in the blanks in the following statement. (Compare your answer with the text.)

The ontological argument states, "Man has an idea of a _____ being; existence is an attribute of _____; therefore, a _____ being must exist."

being; existence is an attribute of perfection; therefore, a perfect being must exist."⁶

An objection to this argument is that the idea of a perfect being does not carry with it the conclusion that such a being exists in fact. Even if ideas of the mind are objectively real, the idea of the existence of a perfect being is existence in thought only, not existence in fact. Is the idea of a perfect being a necessary idea which comes to consciousness as the mind develops or is it given to the individual by society? Must there be an adequate objective cause for our ideas?

If man's thoughts of a perfect being are deceptive, man's mind is not dependable and he cannot be sure of knowing anything. By faith, man accepts the dependability of his mind. By the same faith, he accepts the dependability of his mind to conceive of an ultimate being who is God.

The moral argument

This argument is similar to the previously discussed rational arguments for the existence of God. Man lives in a moral universe. What accounts for the difference between right and wrong?

Communists have answered that right is determined by what is good for the party. Lying, stealing, and the invasion of free countries are judged right if they advance the communist goal of world-wide conquest.

The movement known as the 'new morality' establishes pleasure and self-fulfilment as the criteria for right and wrong. According to this view, man is not to be limited by externally imposed moral restrictions. He should exercise his freedom in fulfilling his instinctual desires. He has the freedom to do as he pleases if his actions do not cause harm to others. This philosophy has existed long enough for it to be seen that great problems are created for a society which rejects an external moral standard. For each person to create his own standard of morality based on personal desires results in frustration, moral degeneration, and social disintegration.

Man's moral nature. — Man is a moral being. His conscience gives evidence of his moral nature by putting him under obligation to obey its behests or to suffer guilt and remorse if the directive of

⁶ Roark, The Christian Faith, p. 9.

An objection to the ontological argument is that it does not conclude that such a perfect _____ does _____.

(being, exist)

Just as man must accept by faith the dependability of his mind, so he accepts by faith that there is an ultimate being who is _____.

(God)

What gives evidence of man's moral nature?

(his conscience)

the conscience is violated. Much of society's suffering and mental anguish today is the result of a guilty conscience. The work of psychiatrists is largely in the area of dealing with anxiety caused by guilt.

The conscience does not establish the standard of right and wrong, but it is the mechanism by which the standard is applied to one's life. Every person has some moral standard, but the standards of some are higher than those of others. The degree of moral sensitivity is determined by one's personality pattern, religious teachings, and parental and environmental influences. Conscience, however, is developed but not originated by influences.

The moral structure of the universe.—The universe has a moral design. Society cannot exist without ethical standards. Man as a moral being requires a moral environment. The best explanation for the existence of man's conscience and the corresponding moral structure of the universe is a Creator who is the source of both. Theism states that God is a moral Being who has established moral laws in His creation and who demands righteousness of man. Man is obligated to be righteous because God is righteous. It is God's nature to be just in His dealings with man, and He requires justice in man's dealings with his fellow-man.

The disruption of injustice.—A Christian belief holds that sinful man is incapable of establishing a standard of justice. Moral actions concern man's relationship to his fellow-man. Man's sinful nature focuses attention on benefits for self. Sinful man tends to trample underfoot the rights of his fellow-man because of self-interests. Society cannot function when every man regards only his self-interest. Society, as well as individuals, functions properly when the needs and concerns of others are considered.

The nature of right and wrong.—Right is that attitude or action which benefits the other person. Wrong is that attitude or action which harms the other person. The distinction between right and wrong is based on the nature of God who is love. Love is the concerned attitude and action of a person in meeting the needs of others. Wrong is an act of neglect or abuse of the other person who is in need. Man may have the moral inclination to do right because he is created in the image of God, but the sinful tendency of self-interest is stronger and controls his actions. Often man rationalizes in an effort to justify his actions. Because of his sinful tendency, man's standard of morality falls below the standard required by Christian teachings based on the nature of God.

List four influences on the degree of one's moral sensitivity.

_____, _____
 _____, _____

(personality pattern, religious teaching, parents, environment)

Are the following statements true or false?

1. The universe has a moral design. _____
2. Society can exist without moral standards. _____
3. Man is a moral being but he does not require a moral environment. _____
4. Man is obligated to be righteous because God is righteous. _____

(1. true, 2. false, 3. false, 4. true)

Write right or wrong before its definition.

_____ is the attitude or action which benefits the other person.

_____ is the attitude or action which harms the other person.

What is the basis of the distinction between right and wrong? _____

(right, wrong, the nature of God who is love)

Situational ethics.—A contemporary movement referred to as 'situational ethics', tends to reject 'absolute moral standards' and emphasizes that living by love is more Christian than living by law or rule. Situational ethics is sometimes related to the 'new morality' which seems to advocate greater permissiveness for our changing society. Love as the principle for guiding conduct is set forth in the New Testament by Christ, Paul, and John. However, the principle of love does not negate the law but fulfils it. The Bible states that God is love. When the Christian is controlled by divine love, there is no conflict with revealed Biblical law. Man's sinful nature keeps him from maintaining the standard and applying the principle of Biblical love in his actions. His actions require specific rules or laws to guide him.

The moral unity of the Bible and the world.—The moral standard of the Bible, which establishes the standard of Christian conduct, is based on the nature of God. This standard corresponds with the moral pattern of the world which God created. Man finds greater harmony in life when his conduct corresponds with the moral structure of the world. When man violates moral standards, he brings eventual, if not immediate, harm to himself and others. An alcoholic destroys his own body, brings distress and deprivation to loved ones, and may bring death to innocent people. A thief often brings greater distress to loved ones than to himself. An unfaithful companion can contract a debilitating disease, destroy his family relationship, and harm the spiritual and social relations of other persons implicated in his sin. Nature and society are so designed as to bring punishment upon the person who morally violates their standards. Creation has a moral structure.

Man's religious nature

It has previously been noted that religion is characteristic of man universally. Man expresses his desire to relate to the spiritual world by various means. The religious desires of men are so strong that drastic actions have been taken in an attempt to satisfy those needs. Some groups have offered their first-born as sacrifices to their gods. Man is desperate in his need to be accepted by his God.

What accounts for man's religious nature and thirst for God? Are superstition and fear adequate explanations for man's persistent religious desires? If religion originated as a result of his lack of understanding the world about him, why does it continue to persist in scientific societies? Some anthropologists and psychologists have suggested that religion is transmitted from adults to their

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| <p><i>When the Christian is controlled by divine _____, there is no conflict with _____ law.</i></p> <p><i>(love, Biblical)</i></p> |
| |
| <p><i>When man's conduct corresponds with the moral structure of the world, he finds greater _____ in _____.</i></p> <p><i>(harmony, life)</i></p> |
| |

children. Communistic societies have attempted to eliminate the teaching of religion to youth; yet, the young people continue to manifest, in various forms, religious concern. Communists have substituted the State or the Party as the god to whom young people are to give their loyalty and highest devotion. Nations may turn to idolatry, but people do not deny God without turning to another god. Mankind is incurably religious.

If there is no God or ultimate meaning to life, the vast majority of men can expect to do no better than live a life of deception and searching. More than fifteen centuries ago, Augustine pointed out that man is made for God and cannot find peace until he rests in God. Man's religious nature is a fact which cannot be denied. Is it not more reasonable to conclude that God created man to be religious than to conclude that religion is an illusion, forcing man to live a life of deception to find peace?

The Value of General Revelation

The rational arguments for God

The arguments based on the explanation of the origin of the universe, the purpose and design of creation, a necessary perfect being, and the moral structure in the world are not proofs that there is a God, but the arguments support faith instead of opposing it. These arguments strengthen the Christian belief there is one God who created the world and made man for fellowship with Himself. The arguments show that it is more reasonable to believe in God than to deny His existence. They point out evidences of God in creation and show something of the nature of God; however, it is uncertain whether those who designed the arguments would have come to their rational positions apart from prior belief in God.

The arguments are more valuable to strengthen Christian faith than to convert agnostics or atheists. The arguments do agree with scientists that there is order and purpose in nature. They may disagree with the philosophy of science concerning the origin of natural order and progress. A knowledge of the arguments may serve the purpose of removing doubts which hinder belief, but a knowledge of God comes through faith in response to witness rather than rational arguments.

Knowledge of God through creation

Man can know something about God by observing God's creation. He has left the impression of His

Man is incurably _____. If he does not worship God, he will turn to other _____.

(religious, gods)

Underline the more reasonable statement.

1. God created man with a religious nature.
2. Religion is an illusion, forcing man to live a life of deception to find peace.

(1)

The greatest value of the rational arguments for the existence of God is to strengthen _____.

(Christian faith)

nature on His created work. However, natural revelation gives to man limited and inadequate knowledge about God. According to Romans 1:20ff., man knows enough about God through nature to become responsible for living a just life. Nature does not reveal to man sufficient knowledge about God for redemptive purposes.

Conclusion

Man's knowledge of God through the design of the world about him and his own innate religious nature prepare him for special revelation through Christ. This limited knowledge explains the universal thirst for a right relation with God. Although man may know little about the Old and New Testaments, he may be under deep conviction and conscious of his need of forgiveness. General revelation may be used by the Holy Spirit to prepare a man to repent and to accept by faith the new life in Christ when he hears the 'good news'.

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| |
| <i>General revelation prepares man for</i> |
| _____ |
| <i>through Christ.</i> |
| <i>(special revelation)</i> |
| |

Home Study Exercises

Basic activity (Levels 1, 2, and 3). The following questions are based on the study guide.

1. List four elements contained in revelation. (1) _____
_____ (2) _____
_____ (3) _____
_____ (4) _____

2. Draw a line under the correct statement: (1) The created world reveals God. (2) God cannot reveal Himself through creation since He is not identical with created things. (3) God can reveal Himself through His creation.

3. Distinguish between general and special revelation. _____

4. If non-Christian religions are based on general revelation, why does the world need Christianity? _____

5. Distinguish between natural revelation and natural theology. _____

6. Give two reasons why natural revelation is inadequate. (1) _____
_____ (2) _____
7. What is the cosmological argument? _____

8. What is the teleological argument? _____

9. Summarize the teleological argument with regard to intelligence. _____

10. List two answers to the objection that sin does not fit into the design and purpose of a good God. (1) _____
_____ (2) _____
11. What is the ontological argument? _____

12. What element of man gives evidence of his moral nature? _____
13. Distinguish between right and wrong. _____

14. What evidence is there that the world has a moral structure? _____

15. What is the best explanation for the universal religious nature of man? _____

16. What is the greatest value of the rational arguments? _____

17. What is the value of general revelation? _____

Supplementary activity (Levels 2 and 3):

1. Which rational argument is the basis of the statement, "God is necessary to explain the world"?
2. Give the essence of an Old Testament Scripture and a New Testament Scripture which state God's revelation through nature.
3. Read pages 55-69 in Christian Doctrine by Shirley C. Guthrie and answer the following questions:
 - (1) What are the evidences of God in creation?
 - (2) What are three attitudes of theologians concerning a natural knowledge of God?
 - (3) What are the arguments against a valid knowledge of God through nature?

Advanced activity (Level 3):

1. List the strengths and weaknesses of the rational arguments.
2. Read pages 53-64 in Shaping Your Faith by C. W. Christian and answer the following questions:
 - (1) Why does Dr. Christian reject the approach of traditional theology in which theology results from a kind of monologue between God and man? Do you agree with his conclusion?
 - (2) Do you conclude that Dr. Christian advocates or opposes the concept of general revelation? Support your answer.
 - (3) What are the four primary sources of personal theology according to Dr. Christian and why are they more properly called source-norms?

Optional reading: Revelation and God by Conner, pages 55-74.
The Christian Doctrine of God by Brunner, pages 151-156.
The Doctrine of God, Vol. 1 of Systematic Theology by Strong, pages 52-110.
The Christian Religion in Its Doctrinal Expression by Mullins, pages 1-22, 49-72.

Seminar Discussion

1. What are the differences between general revelation, natural theology, and special revelation?
2. What is Brunner's position concerning natural revelation and natural theology?
3. Which of the rational arguments is strongest in its support of God?
4. What are the sources of general revelation?
5. What is the value of general revelation?
6. Have someone review the "source-norms" of personal theology discussed in Shaping Your Faith.