

THE LOGOS PAPERS

An Introduction

Context and Purpose of the Papers

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God (John 1:1). The Logos is the eternal Word of God who makes God known.

And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us (John 1:14). Jesus is the Word of God, the Logos incarnate. He is Christ, Savior and Lord, by whose rule *the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea* (Isaiah 11:9).

Christ, by the Holy Spirit, builds the Church, which is the City of God, the Kingdom of God. The Spirit leads the Church into all truth, summed up historically in its creeds and confessions (John 16:13; Acts 15). The City of God has foundations; a city without foundations cannot last (Hebrews 11:10; Revelation 21:10-20).

Christ is the stone the builders rejected; he was crucified by the sin of all men. Yet God raised him from the dead and has made him the cornerstone (Psalm 2:1-2; Isaiah 53:5-7; Psalm 118:22; Acts 4:11). The Logos, by whom all things were made, is present in all men as reason, in the creation as general revelation, in history as special revelation/Scripture, and was incarnated in Jesus Christ, full of grace and truth (John 1:3-5, 10-11, 14, 18). This Logos is rejected by men in every way he reveals God, yet he is chosen by God to rule over all men to make God known (Matthew 28:18-20).

The Logos Papers seeks to articulate more clearly the worldview of creation–fall–redemption and its application to culture. It seeks to do so both by establishing the foundation from the Logos in general revelation, Scripture and Historic Christianity, and by responding to ongoing challenges to the knowledge of God from within and from outside the Church.

Historic Christianity affirms: Man's chief end is to glorify God, in all that by which he makes himself known, in all his works of creation and providence (Westminster Shorter Catechism and Confession of Faith of 1648: SCQ 1, 101; WCF 4.1, 5.1). Yet no one seeks God and no one understands. All have sinned and come short of the glory of God (Romans 3:11, 23). For the basic things about God and man and good and evil are clear to all who seek so that unbelief is without excuse (Romans 1:20-21; 2:1, 14-15; Deuteronomy 30:11-14).

In the spiritual war between belief and unbelief, which is age-long and agonizing, good will overcome evil (Genesis 3:15). The Logos is Truth. It overthrows arguments and every pretension raised up against the knowledge of God and takes every thought captive to make it obedient to Christ (John 17:17; 2 Corinthians 10:4-5).

Order and Process in Coming to the Knowledge of God

1. There is an *existential* order in the human condition in coming to know basic things (about God and man and good and evil).

- i. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge (Proverbs 1:7).
- ii. Understanding begins with seeking, and seeking begins with fear of suffering.
- iii. The curse (toil, strife, and old age, sickness and death) is God's call to man to stop and think. The curse intensifies to war, famine and plague in every age (Genesis 3:14-19).
- iv. Natural evil (the curse) is a universal call back from moral evil; left to oneself no one seeks God, no one understands, no one does what is right (Romans 3:10-11).
- v. Moral evil is to neglect, avoid, resist and deny one's reason in the face of what is clear about God. To deny one's reason brings spiritual death of meaninglessness.
- vi. Natural evil is the third and final call back from sin and the noetic effect of sin in self-deception and self-justification in not seeking God.
- vii. When the curse is imposed, the promise of redemption is also given: there will be a spiritual war (between belief and unbelief), age-long and agonizing, in which good will overcome evil (Genesis 3:14-15).

Application:

1. Begin with self-examination. Human suffering (toil, strife and old age, sickness and death) is a call to stop and think.
2. Acknowledge natural evil serves to restrain, recall from and remove moral evil and spiritual death (meaninglessness, boredom and guilt).
3. Since natural evil is imposed on man by God, as mercy, through the curse as a call back, the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. Fear acts on truth in humility.

2. There is an *ontological* order in human nature in coming to know basic things.

- i. We are to love God with all our heart, our mind, our soul and our strength (Luke 10:27).
- ii. Man is made in the image of God, as a triune personality. Man is a unity of diversity in all aspects of his being. The image of God in man reveals God.
- iii. Loving self above God shows a failure to know and acknowledge God. Man is restored to the knowledge of God by regeneration and is further transformed by knowing the truth.
- iv. The order in man is: mind, soul and strength; the intellectual, emotional and practical; knowledge, holiness and righteousness; prophet, priest and king. Disregard for God's order brings divisions, apostasy, cultural decay and collapse.
- v. Man is a body-soul unity. Man does not live by bread alone but by every word of God. Male and female in the image of God reveal God as creator and upholder of all things.
- vi. Man's life is not determined by time (history and culture) or by place (geography and race) but by grace through faith. All can use reason to know what is clear.
- vii. Love of the good (the knowledge of God) is the source of unity in each person and among all persons. The curse is fully removed only when the good is fully realized (Isaiah 11:6-9; 1 Corinthians 15:25-26).

Application:

1. Begin with man's need as a rational being for understanding the meaning of things.
2. Do not place practical and psychological needs above the need for meaning and truth.
3. Observe the order within and among all aspects of human nature: within the soul and between soul and body; within gender and between nature and nurture; between the universal (common to all) and the particular (unique in each).

3. There is a *logical* order in human thought in coming to know basic things.

- i. What may be known of God is objectively clear to reason so that unbelief is without excuse. Both the nature of God and the moral law are clear from general revelation (Romans 1:20, 2:14-15).
- ii. Man is more or less conscious and consistent in his basic beliefs. Both skepticism and fideism fail to see what is clear, and both are rooted in uncritically held assumptions.
- iii. Thinking is presuppositional—we think of the less basic in light of the more basic. Clarity begins and grows only if the most basic is in place. Reason as the laws of thought is most basic. Rational Presuppositionalism (RP) uses reason as the test for meaning in basic beliefs.
- iv. Foundation in worldview is built upon common ground (what is necessary for thought and discourse), and begins with the cornerstone (understanding good and evil).
- v. In RP, meaning is more basic than truth. Experience requires interpretation in light of one's basic belief. In concept, the finite and temporal presuppose the infinite and the eternal. In argument, conclusion presupposes premises.
- vi. In philosophy, ethics presupposes metaphysics, which presupposes one's epistemology. If there is agreement on what is more basic there will be agreement on the less basic.
- vii. In theology, one is to proceed from general revelation to special revelation to Historic Christianity. In Scripture, one must proceed from the foundation of creation–fall–redemption in Genesis 1-3, through each historical epoch, to the last book of Revelation. In Historic Christianity, one must proceed from the earliest council, building upon the assumptions and implications of each, to the latest council.

Application:

1. Begin with the more basic; we are to think of the less basic in light of the more basic.
2. Begin with Common Ground (what is necessary for thought and discourse—Paper No. 2). Reason and Integrity will lead to Rational Presuppositionalism and the Principle of Clarity.
3. All disputes can be settled (whether in philosophy or theology; whether interpersonal or international) if the more basic is in place. We are to avoid fruitless disputes by beginning with the basics.