

## B. Some needed Definitions

While it is difficult to use terms in consistent fashion, it is still necessary to offer some definitions in the hope of a fuller understanding of the subject material that arises in the course. The terms are defined in agreement with their use in this class and while it is hoped the definitions will be agreeable with those given in other classes it is not guaranteed that every teacher will say the same thing in the same way. Perhaps we should have these earlier in the syllabus but it is now or never.

### 1. Revelation definitions...

Revelation is defined as Divine self-disclosure in significant mode...a nice way of saying that when the disclosure is made you can grip it. Special revelation is the foregoing using immediate, supernatural mode for redemptive purposes while general revelation is the foregoing using mediate, naturalistic mode for general informational purposes. When we speak of the history of revelation we are discussing the history of special revelation as it is brought to us through the Scripture which is both revealer and revelation at the same time.

### 2. Doctrine definitions...

Doctrine has a threefold definition and often confusion results from not sharply observing these. In its primary sense, doctrine refers to what is given in the special revelation and recorded in the Scriptures...the simple objective understanding of what is there. In a derived sense the term refers to the teaching of Scripture as it is apprehended by men in either larger or small quantities, while in the popular meaning, doctrine suggests the communication and application of practical theology as it expresses teaching or practice. We will more often use the term in the derived sense in a course such as this and we may occasionally have to be reminded to make the needed distinctions in definition.

### 3. Theology definitions

Berkhof defines theology as.."the effect which the Divine revelation embodies in the Scripture, produced in the sphere of systematic thought. Theology is the fruit of reflection of the church on the truth, revealed in the word of God." (L. Berkhof: Recent Trends in Theology, p. 7) Accordingly systematic theology and dogmatic theology are terms of academic interchangeability in which the fruit of exegetical study is systematized into a self-consistent, coherent whole. Such discipline seeks to reconstruct from Scripture and its data, a single system of doctrine which will reflect the conviction that Truth is one.

### 4. Dogma definitions