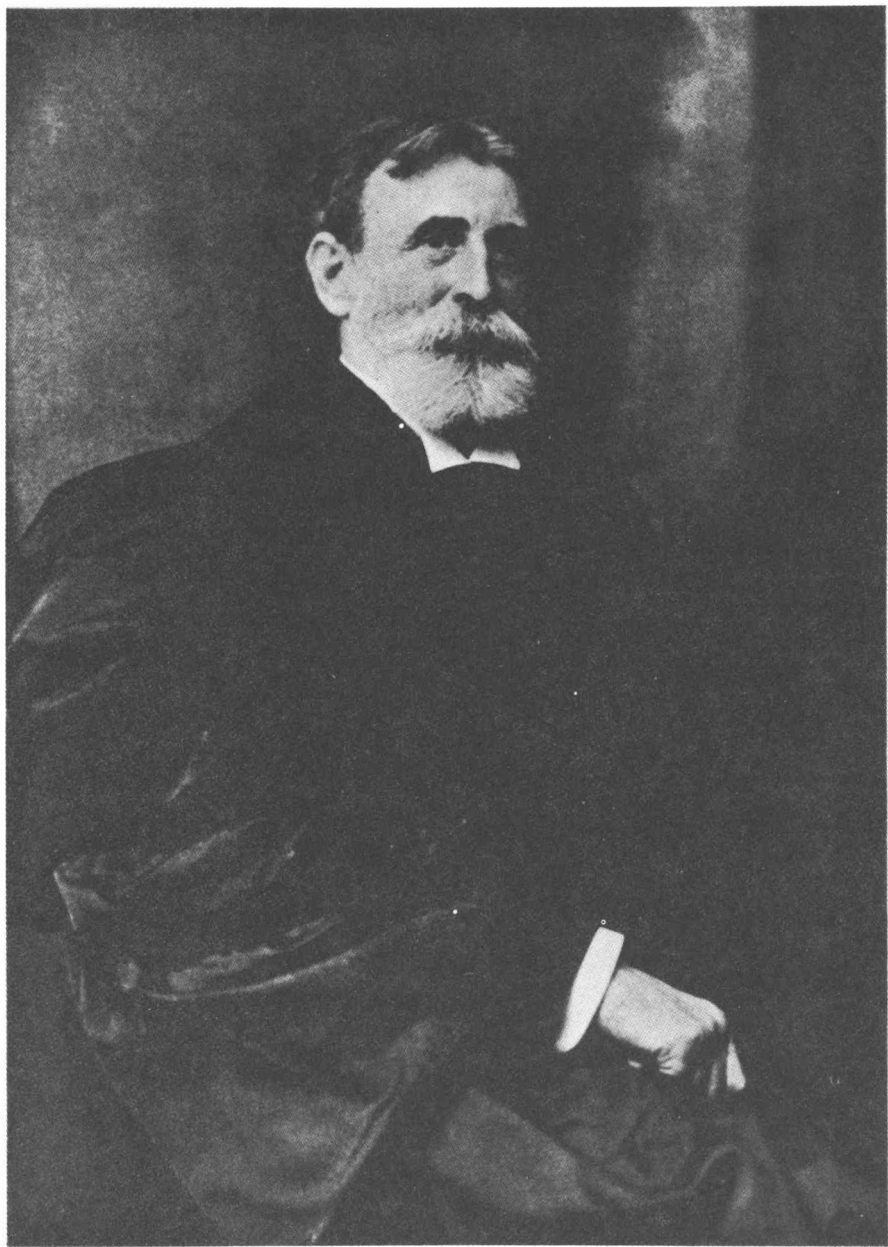


The
INSPIRATION
and
AUTHORITY
of the
BIBLE

BENJAMIN B. WARFIELD



BENJAMIN BRECKINRIDGE WARFIELD

THE INSPIRATION AND AUTHORITY OF THE BIBLE

BY

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New Jersey, 1887-1921*

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“The Scripture cannot be broken”

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FOREWORD

THIS volume contains the principal articles by the late Benjamin Breckinridge Warfield having to do with the nature and authority of the Bible. A distinctly biblical theologian, fully abreast of the critical scholarship of the day, and a foe of irrationalism in all its forms—faith for him was conviction grounded on evidence—it is not surprising that he devoted such exceptional attention to this theme. Written from time to time and printed in various publications during his lifetime, these articles were included in the volume *Revelation and Inspiration* published by the Oxford University Press subsequent to his death. Unfortunately the sponsors of that volume—of which a limited edition was printed—underestimated the interest it would attract with the result that it has not been obtainable for several years. These articles have been reprinted by the Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company—in response to a widespread demand—under a different title because the content of this volume, even apart from its Introduction, is not exactly the same as the content of the volume published under the auspices of the Oxford University Press. We are of the opinion that in choosing the title *The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible* it has chosen a title more indicative than the previous one of the main thesis Warfield sought to establish in these articles.

That the view of the inspiration and authority of the Bible expounded and defended in these articles is essentially that which has been held by the Christian Church in all its main branches throughout its entire history, at least until recent times, is generally admitted. It is somewhat different, however, as regards the claim that the doctrine of the Bible held and taught by the Church is the doctrine of the Bible not only held and taught by the writers of the New Testament but by Jesus himself as reported in the Gospels. To the exegetical

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establishment of this claim, so frequently ignored and even denied, Warfield brings the resources of his immense scholarship. The evidence in its support is marshalled comprehensively in chapter three and with, perhaps, unexampled thoroughness as regards the meaning of certain crucial words and phrases as employed in the New Testament in chapters six, seven and eight. The practical and apologetical significance of this fact—for fact we believe he has abundantly proven it to be—is emphasized throughout these articles but especially in chapters two and four.

The major difference between this volume and its predecessor is its Introduction by Cornelius Van Til, Ph.D., Professor of Apologetics in Westminster Theological Seminary of Philadelphia. If the articles included in this volume had been published in book form during Warfield's lifetime it is safe to say that he himself would have written some such introduction. Even if he had done so Dr. Van Til's introduction would not be superfluous in view of the developments in philosophy and theology since Warfield's death in 1921. For instance the most important cleavage within Protestantism today as regards the inspiration and authority of the Bible—that between the Theology of Crisis, or so-called Neo-orthodoxy, and the historic Protestant position—had not yet made its appearance. We count ourselves fortunate, therefore, in being able to preface these articles by Warfield by so extensive an article written by one who is as fully abreast of the thought-movements of today as Warfield was of his day and who nevertheless shares his view of the inspiration and authority of the Bible. An outstanding feature of Dr. Van Til's contribution is its challenge of the modern theory of knowledge insofar as it has significance for the question of the infallibility of the Bible as it came from the hands of its writers. While many influential scholars under the influence of that theory deny not only the actuality but the very possibility of an infallible Bible, Dr. Van Til maintains not only the actuality of such a Bible but its vital importance not only for theology but for science and philosophy.

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Evangelicals, other than Reformed, who hold that "Scripture cannot be broken" will take exception to the representation that only the followers of Calvin have a theology in which this conception of Scripture fully fits. It is not to be supposed, however, that this will keep such evangelicals from welcoming this volume with its scholarly defense of that view of the nature and authority of the Bible that they profess in common with their Reformed brethren. At the same time they will no doubt agree that in order to justify their objection they must be able to show that this conception of Scripture fits into, finds a more natural and logical a place in their system of theological thought, whether Lutheran or Arminian, than in the Reformed.

S. G. C.

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I

INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

IN the present volume there is offered to the public a reproduction of the major writings of the late Benjamin Breckinridge Warfield on the doctrine of Scripture. In his day Dr. Warfield was perhaps the greatest defender of what is frequently called "the high Protestant doctrine of the Bible." More particularly as one of the outstanding Reformed theologians of his day he was deeply concerned to defend the view of Scripture set forth in the Westminster Confession of Faith. He was not concerned to defend the classical Reformed view of Scripture merely because it was found in the Confession to which, perhaps for other reasons, he had subscribed.¹ For him the classical doctrine of the infallible inspiration of Scripture was involved in the doctrine of divine sovereignty. God could not be sovereign in his disposition of rational human beings if he were not also sovereign in his revelation of himself to them. If God is sovereign in the realm of being, he is surely also sovereign in the realm of knowledge. Scripture is a factor in the redeeming work of God, a component part of the series of his redeeming acts, without which that series would be incomplete and so far inoperative for its main end.² As one deeply interested in the progress of the doctrine of God's sovereign grace, Warfield put all his erudition to work for the vindication of an infallible Bible.

In his writings there is a discussion on the general problem of Scripture. There is also a very detailed and painstaking analysis of questions pertaining to textual and higher criticism. Through it all there is the contention that the Bible is, in its autographa, the infallible Word of God.

It is not our purpose here to analyze or recapitulate that argument. The reader can see at a glance with what care and

¹ Cf. p. 419.

² Cf. p. 80.

acumen it proceeds. It is our purpose rather to ask whether it is true, as is frequently asserted, that the day for such an argument has passed. There will always be room, it is said, for a critical analysis of the text of Scripture as there will always be room for a critical analysis of the text of *The Critique of Pure Reason*. But who today thinks that the original manuscripts of Scripture will ever be found? And who today thinks that, if they could be found, we should be in actual possession of the infallible Word of God? In any case, does not God come to man by free and living personal encounter even when he uses the words of the past? With such rhetorical questions many would dismiss Warfield's argument as wholly irrelevant to our present situation. It is perhaps not too much to say that, for many professing Christian theologians, the idea of a final and finished revelation from God to man about himself and his place in the universe has no serious significance today.

No doubt the first thing that those who still profess adherence to the traditional view of the Bible should do is to ask whether in stating the argument for their view they have done it in such a way as to challenge the best thought of our age. To challenge that thought requires of us that we should enter sympathetically into the problems of the modern theory of knowledge. Modern man asks how knowledge is possible. In answering this question he wants to be *critical* rather than *dogmatic*. He says he seeks to test all assumptions, not excluding his own.

Those who believe the Bible in the traditional sense have no cavil with this manner of stating the matter. Certainly Warfield would not have had. He was a profound as well as an erudite theologian. His many contributions in the field of doctrine and apologetics show him to have been a man fully abreast of the thought of his time. He was aware of the developments in post-Kantian philosophy as well as post-Kantian theology. Nor was he unmindful of the philosophical assumptions that underlie the factual studies of modern biblical research.

Since Warfield's day the matter of the philosophical presuppositions that underlie the factual discussion of the data of

knowledge has come to stand in the foreground of interest. Great emphasis is being placed upon the subject's contribution in the knowledge situation. Every fact, we are told, is *taken* as much as *given*. It is as useless to speak of facts by themselves as it is to speak of a noise in the woods a hundred miles from the woodman's house. In consequence the distinction so commonly made by Ritschlian theologians between judgments about pure facts and judgments about values is not so common as it was a generation ago. In a recent analysis of the question of religious knowledge in our day Alan Richardson says:

"The consequences of this false distinction between judgments of fact and judgments of value have proved a veritable *hereditas damnosa* in subsequent theological discussion. From it springs directly the false contrast between the 'simple Gospel' of Jesus and the 'theology' of the apostolic Church. The true Gospel is regarded as consisting in the simple facts about and teachings of the historical Jesus, who can thus be objectively portrayed by modern historical research, while the interpretations of St. Paul and the other apostles may be discarded as representing values for them which are no longer values for us."³

The Ritschlians were seeking to safeguard or reinstate the rightful place of objectivity in the gospel message. "They were trying to safeguard the objectivity of the facts themselves, as existing independently of the wishes of the believer. They thus placed great emphasis upon the historical character of the revelation, and they held that historical research, being scientific and independent of all value-judgments, could put an end to subjective speculation and free us from all the 'accretions' of traditional dogma."⁴ Yet the Ritschlians themselves knew that "many able and well-disposed minds have looked at the historical facts and have found no revelation in them . . ."⁵ Thus "the illusion of 'objective' or uninterpreted history is finally swept away. The facts of history cannot be disentangled from the principles of interpretation by which alone they can

³ *Christian Apologetics*, p. 148. London: The S. C. M. Press, 1947; New York: Harper & Brothers, 1948.

⁴ *Idem*, p. 149.

⁵ *Idem*, p. 150.

be presented to us *as history*, that is, as a coherent and connected series or order of events. Christian faith supplies the necessary principle of interpretation by which the facts of the biblical and Christian history can be rationally seen and understood."⁶

It is this principle of the inseparability of the facts from the principle of interpretation by which they are observed that has been greatly stressed since Warfield's time. We shall call this the new, the current, or modern principle. In contending for the relevance of Warfield's argument for our day it is with this principle that we shall primarily need to be concerned. In it lies embedded the current form of the problem of objectivity in religious knowledge.

It is claimed that it is only by means of this principle that true objective knowledge of God and of his Christ can be obtained. For in it, the subjective itself has been taken into the objective. In the traditional view, we are told, the subject stood hostile over against the object. The object of knowledge itself was conceived in a static sort of way. In consequence the subject's activity in relation to the object was discounted or disparaged. When the subject rebelled against this artificial and dictatorial sort of treatment its only recourse was to cut itself loose from all connection with the objective aspect of the gospel. The result was rationalism, materialism and secularism.

The contention is further made that only by the use of the principle of the interdependence of fact and interpretation can the uniqueness of the Christian revelation be maintained. Christianity is an historical religion. It stands or falls with the facts of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth. But the categories of orthodoxy could do no justice to the uniqueness of historical facts. According to the tenets of traditional belief, we are told, the facts of history are handled as roughly as Procrustes was accustomed to handling his guests. According to orthodoxy the whole of history is said to be but the expres-

⁶ *Idem*, p. 150.

sion in time of a static, changeless plan of God. God himself was conceived statically. He was eternally the same. There was no increment of being or wisdom in him. He was all-glorious. How then could anything that should take place in the course of history really add to his glory? Man's chief end was said to be to glorify God while all that man might have done in the course of fulfilling this task had already been done, or could not be done. God was thought of as the first cause of man and his world, thus making all things in the world, including man, mechanically dependent upon him. Man was endowed with certain static qualities such as rationality and will which together were called the image of God. These qualities man could neither gain nor lose. Even though he was said to have fallen, and thus to have lost original knowledge, righteousness and holiness, this fall was pre-determined. And among those that had thus "fallen" there were some that were pre-determined to a changeless eternal life and others who were pre-determined to a changeless eternal death. Thus the whole of history, including even its purported miracles, was reduced to something static.

The form of revelation that went with this static conception of reality as a whole was naturally that of conveying to man in the form of intellectual propositions the content of this eternally changeless plan. The mind of man was not given any significant function in the realization of this plan. All man could do was to accept passively the set of propositions, together forming a system of doctrine, that was laid before him. No difference was made in orthodox theology between the revelation that took place in the events of history and the recording of that revelation in the Scripture. Even the minds of the prophets, who were called the special media of revelation, were thought of as being primarily passive in their reception of revelation.

But with the acceptance of the notion of the interdependence of the facts of history and their principle of interpretation, we are told, all that has changed. Revelation is now seen to be historical or eventual. The events are genuinely significant for

it is their very individuality and reality that is presupposed even for the making of a "system of truth." It is no longer some abstract static deity, who stands back of history from whom in some mysterious, wholly unintelligible way a set number of propositions drop till he decides it is enough, but it is the living God who gives himself in his revelation. When God thus actively gives himself then man spontaneously responds. He responds with love and adoration because it is through God giving himself that man is able to respond. Revelation thus becomes a process of interaction between God giving himself to man and man by God's grace in return giving himself to God. *God is what he is for man and man is what he is for God.* It is this divine-human encounter in constant living form that is said to overcome the meaningless and artificial staticism of the traditional concept of Scripture.

In claiming true objectivity and uniqueness for itself the modern principle also claims certain other advantages. It claims to have solved the problem of authority and reason. Those who stress the need for authority and those who stress the need for reason are both in search of objectivity.

Those who advocate the idea of authority hold that reason cannot give objective certainty in knowledge. In particular it cannot give objective certainty in the religious field. Reason may assert things about God and about things beyond the experience of man but what it thus asserts cannot be said to be a part of knowledge by experience. By reason man cannot reach into the field of the divine. At least he cannot there speak with the same assurance that he is wont to employ with respect to the empirical realm.

Therefore if there is to be any certainty with respect to the unique historical facts of Christianity and, in particular, if there is to be any assurance with respect to the miraculous element in Scripture, this, it is often said, will have to be accepted on purely non-rational grounds. Now this is precisely, it is said, what the traditional view wanted men to do. Men were required to believe the utterly non-rational and even the irrational, or meaningless. They were asked to believe in the

self-existent and self-contained God. This God was said to be eternal and unchangeable. And then they were asked to believe in the causal creation of the universe at a certain time. This is to say they were asked to hold that this world and all that it contains were rationalistically related to and dependent upon God and at the same time they were asked to believe that this rational dependence of the universe upon God was effectuated by means of the arbitrary action of God's will. Thus they were asked to be both rationalists and irrationalists at the same time. But fundamentally it was irrationalism that prevailed. The believer was to accept blindly what was offered by absolute authority.

It is true that the Roman Catholics tried hard to soften down the bald antithesis between authority and reason by their doctrine of analogy of being. They did not have the courage of their conviction and therefore did not start with the Creator-creature distinction as basic to all their interpretation of doctrine. They started with the idea of being as such and introduced the distinction of Creator and creature as a secondary something. This did at first seem to produce the necessary rational connection between God and man. For it posited a principle of unity that reduced the Creator-creature distinction to a matter of gradation within one general being. And then corresponding to the principle of continuity thus brought into Christian thought from Plato and Aristotle, they did also hold to a measure of real individuality in history. They attributed a measure of freedom to man in independence of the plan of God. They even gave God a measure of freedom so that by his will he did not always need to follow the dictates of a rational eternally unchangeable nature.

"The distinction between the inner necessity of the very being of God and the free determination of His will is in Thomism a distinction of opposites. The element of necessity is understood as inherent to the relations within the Godhead. The causation of created being, on the other hand, is attributed to the will of God, who does not create of necessity (Qu. XIX, a.3). In this latter sense God exercises 'liberum arbitrium'

(a.10). 'The will of God has no cause' (a.5). This arbitrary nature of divine freewill must needs be extended to the Ideas in God."⁷

It is also true that Lutheran and Arminian theology to some extent followed Rome in both of these respects. But neither Lutheranism nor Arminianism had the courage of its convictions. They always fell back on the Scriptures as an infallible external authority. And this is also, though to a lesser degree, true of Rome.

So it remained true, we are told, that by and large orthodox Christians continued to believe in a non-rational concept of authority. The early Reformers seemed to have a more modern or dialectical view but then they were soon followed by those who made the belief in an infallible book the test of orthodoxy. But how can such a view of authority expect to yield the objectivity of which it was in search? Such an authority can, in the nature of the case, speak only of that which is beyond the reach of man. It must speak of that which has no intelligible relation to man. It speaks of a God who exists in such a form as to be wholly out of touch with the categories of man's own existence. It therefore speaks of what must be inherently meaningless for man.

In particular it must be noted that the traditional view of authority led to self-frustration. Nowhere is this more clearly the case than when it sought to deal with the facts of history. The notion of absolutely authoritative revelation with respect to the facts of history is a contradiction in terms.

But, we are told, now all that is changed. With the new principle we are no longer asked to talk about the inherently meaningless. When we are asked to believe the Word of the prophets we are not asked to think of some blank of which they are first supposed to have thought. We can now think of the facts of revelation as they appeared in history. Then we may use the insights of the prophets for the interpretation of these events. "Christians believe that the perspective of biblical faith enables us to see very clearly and without distortion

⁷ Evgueny Lampert, *The Divine Realm*, London, 1944, p. 37.

the biblical facts as they really are: they see the facts clearly because they see their true meaning. On the other hand, when once the Christian meaning of the facts is denied, the facts themselves begin to disappear into the mists of doubt and vagueness.”⁸

In short we are asked to accept the expert authority of a great personality, not that of abstract system. We stand face to face with the great personality of Jesus Christ as the central figure of the category of revelation. We trust in him. The traditional view could not deal with genuine history because it reduced historical fact to mere logical connection in a timeless system. On the other hand, the system that was presented by the traditional view was, because of the very destruction of history it required, totally aloof from those whose experience is time-conditioned (Cf. Dorothy M. Emmet, *Philosophy and Faith*, London, 1936; William Temple, *Nature, Man and God*, London, 1935).

The problem of reason too is said to be solved by the modern principle. Our reason is no longer asked to abdicate. It is not asked to accept blindly an abstract system of truth. Neither is our reason even required to admit that there is an area about which it has nothing to say. According to the traditional view there were two sources of revelation quite distinct from one another. “Natural theology, as distinct from revealed theology, consisted of those truths about the divine Being which could be discovered by the unaided powers of human reason. This kind of knowledge of God, it was held, was accessible to pagans as well as to Christians, and indeed, after the days of Albertus Magnus and St. Thomas Aquinas, it was generally conceded that Aristotle was the great master of this type of knowledge of God. But this natural knowledge of God, it was held, does not give to man all that he needs to know; it is not *saving* knowledge, and it cannot satisfy the craving of the human soul for that measure of truth which is beyond the natural capacity of the human mind. The full Christian knowledge of God and of His redemptive activity on man’s behalf, as expressed in

⁸ Alan Richardson: *Op. cit.*, p. 105.

such doctrines as those of the Incarnation and the Trinity, can be learnt only from revelation and is not ascertainable by the natural reason. Man is an *ens incompletum* and therefore stands in need of the divine grace.”⁹ Against this orthodox conception of the relation of faith to reason, says Richardson, the old liberal view argued that in revelation we had little more than the republication of what is essentially discoverable by reason. But this view “finds few supporters amongst theologians of the front rank today.”¹⁰ It is only with the full recognition of the value of the new principle that we have found the harmony between the “natural knowledge of man” and “special revelation.” It is no longer necessary to distinguish between the natural and the supernatural in revelation. There is rather general and special revelation. “The only kind of theory of the knowledge of God which will adequately embrace all the facts of man’s experience will be one which recognizes that there are two kinds of revelation or divine disclosure of truth. There is first *general* revelation, which pertains to the universal religious consciousness of mankind; and there is also *special* revelation, which is mediated through particular episodes at definite times and places in history. The broad distinction between general and special revelation is that the former is non-historical, in that its content is not communicated to mankind through particular historical situations but is quite independent of the accidents of time and place, whereas the latter is historical, that is, bound up with a certain series of historical persons and happenings through which it is communicated to mankind.”¹¹

It is true of course that in matters of historical communication we cannot attain unto impartial and impersonal knowledge of facts. “The illusion of having attained an impartial scientific viewpoint is the inevitable penalty of embracing the rationalist theory of the nature of historical research; there are no such things as ‘absolute perspectives’ in existential matters; we see facts not as they are in themselves, but in the

⁹ *Idem*, pp. 110-111.

¹⁰ *Idem*, p. 113.

¹¹ *Idem*, p. 117.

light of our own personal categories of belief and interpretation." ¹²

At last then there has come to us what is essentially a solution of the age-old problem of authority and reason. Authority no longer speaks of an abstraction; reason no longer refuses to accept the expert assertions about the "beyond." The faith principle must be freely accepted in the interpretation of the whole of history. Christianity deals with the supernatural and the miraculous. It is in vain to follow the rationalists in their efforts to expunge all of the miraculous from the earliest documents of Christianity. Nor is it necessary to do so. In fact it is precisely the supernatural and the unique that we desire. History would not be history without it. But to hold to the historical element in religion and with it to true uniqueness, yes even to hold to the miraculous character of Christianity, is not to hold to what is out of relation with general human experience. "We must never deny to the philosophical activity of the mind its proper function of elucidating and unifying all our experience." ¹³ Our experience of religious truth, as of truth of historical fact in general, may indeed be doubted from a strict historical point of view. Christianity stands or falls with the idea of the resurrection of Christ under Pontius Pilate. "A Christianity without the belief in the resurrection of Christ as an historical event would be another Christianity than that which the world has hitherto known; . . ." ¹⁴ But it is quite possible for historical research as such to doubt the fact of the resurrection. "What we find in the accounts of the resurrection of Jesus is obviously, from the modern historian's point of view, full of difficulties, which there is no probability that any further investigation at this distance of time could entirely remove." ¹⁵ "But the strictly religious interest in these events does not demand that the historian's curiosity should be fully

¹² *Idem*, p. 107.

¹³ Clement C. J. Webb, *The Historical Element in Religion*, London, 1935; p. 93.

¹⁴ *Idem*, p. 100.

¹⁵ *Idem*, p. 103.

satisfied before faith is accorded to them.”¹⁶ Only a genuine experience of intercourse with a living historical person victorious over death can lie behind the creation of the Christian church. In this way we have not left the safe ground of experience in talking about the resurrection of Christ. We have used it as a “fact” that is required as a limit without which our experience of the church community is unintelligible.

If there is anything that is clearly implied in the preceding discussion, it is that the rejection of the Bible as the infallible Word of God is connected with the rejection of that of which the Bible claims to give infallible revelation. The rejection of the traditional view of Scripture involves the rejection of Christianity as orthodoxy holds to it. The argument about the Bible and its claim to infallibility is certainly no longer, if it ever was, exclusively an argument about “facts.” Nor is it characterized on the part of those who reject biblical infallibility by the older deistic and rationalistic effort to reduce the whole of life to an illustration of the law of non-contradiction. Pure factuality, that is pure non-rationality, is freely allowed a place in the philosophical principles of those who are engaged in biblical criticism.

To be sure, it is taken for granted that not much can be said today from the point of view of factual defense for the orthodox point of view. It is also customary to assert that the benefits of old liberalism must be conserved. Old liberalism is said to have been right in its rejection of orthodoxy and its literalism. But, it is argued, we must now go beyond old liberalism. It was rationalistic. It claimed to be able to give what was tantamount to an exhaustive explanation of reality. It too did not allow for genuine historical fact. It did not permit of newness in science or miracle in religion. We must now make room for both. We must substitute for a philosophy of static being the transcendental philosophy of pure act. Then we shall

¹⁶ *Idem*, p. 103.

be able to save the insights of orthodoxy. For orthodoxy was not wholly wrong. Luther and Calvin knew that Christianity was unique, that it was historical and that it required the Holy Spirit's testimony for men to accept it. They knew that it was not rationally defensible in the strict sense of the term. But all these insights were burdened down with the incompatible ideas of an infallible Bible and a fixed system of truth as revealed in that Bible. The salvation of men was made to depend upon their accidental acquaintance or non-acquaintance with, and their acceptance or non-acceptance of, a set of propositions about the nature of reality found in a certain book. Thus the Reformers were rationalists in their teaching of salvation by system and irrationalists in their willingness to permit this supposedly indispensable system of truth to be distributed by the winds of chance.

Rejecting both this rationalism and this irrationalism of orthodoxy, and rejecting also the remnants of rationalism found in old liberalism, we now at last have reached a category of revelation that is not mechanical but personal. In the Bible we now confront God as personal Creator—our Creator, not the cause of the universe.

Orthodoxy left the question as to how God and his world might be brought together unsolved. Its conception of causation led logically to his identification with the world. "To see in God the cause of the world or its prime mover means either to substitute the idea of causality for its opposite and utterly deform it, or to make an attempt on God (*and* on the world!), by making Him wholly immanent in the world and dragging them both into a single monistic being—*vide* Aristotelianism!"¹⁷ "The existence of God is known by an act of madness, daring, and love: it is to throw the thread of life into the heavens in the certainty that it will take hold there without any guarantees of causality; it is a dumb, beseeching act; it is a prayer. *Sursum corda, sursum, sursum, sursum!*"¹⁸

¹⁷ Evgueny Lampert: *The Divine Realm*, p. 42.

¹⁸ *Idem*, p. 43.

Creation, then, is a mystery. But its mystery is "positively implied in the depths of our very existence: as such it becomes accessible to us; it illuminates and gives impetus to our thought and knowledge . . . Created life, then, must be regarded as the *other-being* of this world in the relative. In creation divine life becomes other to its divine subject. In it take place, as it were, God's mysterious self-alienation and return to Himself through His object which was still Himself, a losing of His self-sameness, self-negation and re-appropriation of Himself in the other. The very act of creation is an activity whereby this world exists, is 'planned-out' as a being other than the Creator. Creation is therefore the establishment of other existence or existence in the other."¹⁹

Still further, as orthodoxy interpreted the problem of origins in terms of impersonal physical causation so it interpreted the problem of sin in impersonal biological terms of inheritance. By the new principle every man virtually stands where orthodoxy claims that Adam and Eve stood, face to face with the claims of the personal God. Better than that, in terms of the new principle every man comes directly face to face with Christ and the necessity of choosing for or against him. The last vestiges of impersonalism have disappeared.

In view of all these claims it is apparent that the orthodox apologist cannot pacify the adherents of the new principle by making certain concessions. There are otherwise orthodox believers who are willing to concede that Scripture was not infallibly inspired. They seek to preserve the general historical trustworthiness of the Bible without maintaining its infallibility. Those who make such "minor concessions" will find, however, that the same objections that are raised against an infallible Bible will hold in large degree against a Bible that is essentially trustworthy in some more or less orthodox sense of the word. Those who recede from the high claim of Scriptural infallibility as maintained by Warfield to the position of maintaining the general trustworthiness of Scripture, do not in the least thereby shield themselves against the attack of the mod-

¹⁹ *Idem*, p. 50.

ern principle as outlined above. That principle attacks the very possibility of the existence in history of an existential system. And the orthodox advocates of the general trustworthiness of Scripture cannot afford to give up the claim of Scripture to provide such a system.

It is of importance to note that the current principle of Scripture is of a piece with modern philosophical and scientific procedure in general. The history of recent philosophy has been in the direction of "phenomenalism." We are not now concerned about the internal differences among modern philosophers. What is of significance in the present discussion is that, by and large, the methodology of modern philosophy and science involves the idea of the wholly unique or the purely factual. Since Kant the idea of pure fact ordinarily stands for pure existential possibility. On this question German philosophy has gone its course till it has reached a position fitly exemplified by Heidegger's notion of reality temporalizing itself. The British-American point of view is expressed by Samuel Alexander's *Space Time and Deity* and by the works of John Dewey or Alfred North Whitehead. In France the philosophy of Bergson is typical. There is a general assumption that reality has an utterly non-rational aspect. Moreover, what is true of modern philosophy is, generally speaking, also true of modern science. Current scientific methodology also assumes absolute contingency in the sphere of fact.

So then the whole emphasis of the modern principle with respect to the Bible, insofar as that is expressed in willingness to accept the "supernatural" and the "miraculous" is in accord with the idea of general philosophy and science. Philosophy and science also accept the "miraculous" and the "unique," but they mean by the supernatural and the unique that which men have not yet rationalized, or that which may be forever unrationalizable, that is, the purely contingent. In fact emphasis should be laid upon the latter idea. Reality is assumed to have something ultimately mysterious in it. The God of modern thought is no less surrounded by mystery than

is man. Events in history are therefore in part determined by that within them which is made up of the ultimately irrational.

On this assumption of modern thought there could be no infallible interpretation of historical fact, no existential system of truth in the orthodox sense of the term. The orthodox principle of continuity is taken to be impossible by an assumed doctrine of chance.

Corresponding to this general concept of factuality as ultimately non-rational is the idea of rational coherence as being merely a matter of perspective. If factuality is non-rational, it is to be expected that rationality will be merely "practical." That is to say rationality will not be that which the "rationalists" before Kant thought it was. Post-Kantian rationality is, broadly speaking, correlative to non-rational factuality. It does not pretend to reduce factuality itself to relations within an exhaustively rational system. If there is to be no individuation by complete description there can be no claim to a system that is exhaustive. A non-rational principle of individuation allows only for a *de facto* system.

We are now prepared to state the issue between the basic principle of interpretation of human life and experience that thus comes to expression in modern theology, philosophy and science and that which comes to expression in the idea of an infallible Bible as set forth by Warfield. That issue may be stated simply and comprehensively by saying that in the Christian view of things it is the self-contained God who is the final point of reference while in the case of the modern view it is the would-be self-contained man who is the final point of reference in all interpretation.

For the Christian, facts are what they are, in the last analysis, by virtue of the place they take in the plan of God. Idealist logicians have frequently stressed the idea that if facts are to be intelligible they must be integrally related to system. But idealist philosophers do not have any such system as their negative argument against the adherents of the "open uni-

verse" requires them to have. Together with the pragmatists they assume an utterly non-rational concept of pure fact. Thus there is in their view no individuation by complete description. There is a kernel of thingness in every concrete fact that utterly escapes all possibility of expression. "There always are, and always will be, loose ends, 'bare' conjunctions not understood, in all our actual natural knowledge, just because it all starts from and refers to the historical and individual, which analysis cannot exhaust."²⁰ Taylor does not mean to say merely that God does and man does not have the ability to exhaust the meaning of individual facts. He is making an assertion about reality which, he assumes, is true for God as well as for man. Both God and man are, for Taylor, confronted with non-rational material.

So then only the orthodox Christians actually hold to that which idealist philosophers cannot hold while yet they recognize it to be the minimal requirement even for the distinguishing of facts from one another. And among orthodox Christians it is only they who hold with Warfield to the comprehensiveness of God's plan who do full justice to the Christian principle.

This does not mean that the orthodox position is tantamount to a return to pre-Kantian rationalism. Not even those rationalists were able to do altogether without "truths of fact" which, to the precise extent that they existed, detracted from the "rational" interpretation of the whole of reality that was the aim of a Leibniz or a Wolff. They did not make the God-man distinction fundamental in their thought. The orthodox Christian does. He claims for God complete control over all the facts and forces of the universe. Hence he claims for God exhaustive knowledge of all things. All the light of men is in relation to him who is *the* Light as candlelight is in relation to the sun. All interpretation on the part of man must, to be true, be reinterpretation of the interpretation of God by which facts are what they are.

²⁰ A. E. Taylor: *The Faith of a Moralist*, London, 1931, Series II, p. 172.

That this is the case has never been so clear as it is now. All too frequently Christian theology and apologetics has not been consistent with its own principles. It has sought to prove the existence of God and the propriety or necessity of believing in the Bible as the Word of God by arguments that assumed the possibility of sound and true interpretation without God and without the Bible. Following the example of Aquinas such men as Bishop Butler and his many followers assumed that by "reason," quite apart from any reference to the Bible, it was possible to establish theism. Fearing to offend the unbeliever they thus failed to challenge his basic approach. Thus the full claim of Scripture about itself was not even presented. Virtually assuming that the candle of human reason derived its light exclusively from itself they set out to prove that there was another, an even greater light than the candle, namely, the sun.

The Aquinas-Butler type of argument assumed that there is an area of "fact" on the interpretation of which Christians and non-Christians agree. It virtually assumes a non-rational principle of individuation. It therefore concedes that since historical facts are "unique" nothing certain can be asserted of them. But this assumption, always untrue, has never before appeared so clearly false as today.

To be sure, there is a sense in which it must be said that all men have the facts "in common." Saint and sinner alike are face to face with God and the universe of God. But the sinner is like the man with colored glasses on his nose. Assuming the truth of Scripture we must hold that the facts speak plainly of God (Romans 1:20; Romans 2:14-15, etc.). But *all* is yellow to the jaundiced eye. As he speaks of the facts the sinner reports them to himself and others as yellow every one. There are no exceptions to this. And it is the facts as reported to himself, that is as distorted by his own subjective condition, which he assumes to be the facts as they really are.

Failing to keep these things in mind, Thomas and Butler appeal to the sinner as though there were in his repertoire of

"facts" some that he did not "see yellow." Nor was this done merely for the sake of the argument. Thomas and Butler actually placed themselves on a common position with their opponents on certain "questions of fact."

The compromising character of this position is obvious. It is compromising, in the first place with respect to the objective clarity of the evidence for the truth of Christian theism. The psalmist does not say that the heavens *probably* declare the glory of God, they surely and clearly do. Probability is not, or at least should not be, the guide of life. He who runs may read. Men ought, says Calvin following Paul, to believe in God, for each one is surrounded with a superabundance of evidence with respect to him. The whole universe is lit up by God. Scripture requires men to accept its interpretation of history as true without doubt. Doubt of this is as unreasonable as doubt with respect to the primacy of the light of the sun in relation to the light bulbs in our homes.

But according to Thomas and Butler men have done full justice by the evidence if they conclude that God *probably* exists. Worse than that, according to this position they are assumed to have done full justice by the evidence if they conclude that *a* God exists. And *a* God is a finite God, is *no* God, is an idol. How then can the Bible speak to men of the God on whom all things depend?

In presupposing a non-Christian philosophy of fact the Thomas-Butler type of argument naturally also presupposes a non-Christian principle of coherence, or rationality. The two go hand in hand. The law of non-contradiction employed positively or negatively is made the standard of what is possible or impossible. On this basis the Bible could not speak to man of any God whose revelation and whose very nature is not essentially penetrable to the intellect of man.

In the second place, the Thomas-Butler type of argument is compromising on the subjective side. It allows that the natural man has the plenary ability to interpret certain facts correctly even though he wears the colored spectacles of the covenant-

breaker. As though covenant-breakers had no axe to grind. As though they were not anxious to keep from seeing the facts for what they really are.

The traditional argument of Thomas and of Butler was, moreover, not only compromising but also self-frustrative. More than ever before, men frankly assert that "facts" are taken as much as *given*. Thus they admit that they wear glasses. But these glasses are said to help rather than to hinder vision. Modern man assumes that seeing facts through the glasses of himself as ultimate he can really see these facts for what they are. For him it is the orthodox believer who wears the colored glasses of prejudice. Thus the Christian walks in the valley of those who more than ever before identify their false interpretations of the facts with the facts themselves.

The argument of Thomas or of Butler does not challenge men on this point. It virtually grants that they are right. But then, if men are virtually told that they are right in thus identifying their false interpretations of the facts with the facts themselves in certain instances, why should such men accept the Christian interpretation of other facts? Are not all facts within one universe? If men are virtually told that they are quite right in interpreting certain facts without God they have every logical right to continue their interpretation of all other facts without God.

From the side of the believer in the infallible Word of God the claim should be made that there are not because there cannot be other facts than God-interpreted facts. In practice, this means that, since sin has come into the world, God's interpretation of the facts must come in finished, written form and be comprehensive in character. God continues to reveal himself in the facts of the created world but the sinner needs to interpret every one of them in the light of Scripture. Every thought on every subject must become obedient to the requirements of God as he speaks in his Word. The Thomas-Butler argument fails to make this requirement and thus fatally compromises the claims of Scripture.

It has frequently been argued that this view of Scripture is

impracticable. Christians differ among themselves in their interpretation of Scripture. And even Christ, says A. E. Taylor, if we grant his genuine humanity, would himself introduce a subjective element into the picture. Or, assuming he did not, and assuming we knew his words without doubt, those who would live by his words would in each instance insinuate a subjective element.

These objections, however, are not to the point. No one denies a subjective element in a restricted sense. The real issue is whether God exists as self-contained, whether therefore the world runs according to his plan, and whether God has confronted those who would frustrate the realization of that plan with a self-contained interpretation of that plan. The fact that Christians individually and collectively can never do more than restate the given self-contained interpretation of that plan approximately does not correlativize that plan itself or the interpretation of that plan.

The self-contained circle of the ontological trinity is not broken up by the fact that there is an economical relation of this triune God with respect to man. No more is the self-contained character of Scripture broken up by the fact that there is an economy of transmission and acceptance of the word of God it contains. Such at least is, or ought to be, the contention of Christians if they would really challenge the modern principle. The Christian principle must present the full force and breadth of its claim. It is compelled to engage in an all-out war.

But if the Christian position has not always been consistent with itself the same holds true of the non-Christian position.

It has not been brought out clearly in the history of non-Christian philosophy till recent times that, from its point of view, all predication that is to be meaningful must have its reference point in man as ultimate. But that this is actually the case is now more plain than ever. This is the significance of Kant's "Copernican Revolution." It is only in our day that

there can therefore be anything like a fully consistent presentation of one system of interpretation over against the other. For the first time in history the stage is set for a head-on collision. There is now a clear-cut antithesis between the two positions. It is of the utmost significance that we see what is meant by this antithesis. It does not mean that any one person fully exemplifies either system perfectly. But it does mean that to the extent that the two systems of interpretation are self-consistently expressed it will be an all-out global war between them. To illustrate this point we may refer to Paul's teaching on the new man and the old man in the Christian. It is the new man in Christ Jesus who is the true man. But this new man in every concrete instance finds that he has an old man within him which wars within his members and represses the working out of the principles of his true new man. Similarly it may be said that the non-believer has his new man. It is that man which in the fall declared independence of God, seeking to be his own reference point. As such this new man is a covenant breaker. He is a covenant breaker always and everywhere. He is as much a covenant breaker when he is engaged in the work of the laboratory as he is when he is engaged in worshiping gods of wood or stone. But as in the new man of the Christian the new man of the unbeliever finds within himself an old man warring in his members against his will. It is the sense of deity, the knowledge of creaturehood and of responsibility to his Creator and Judge which, as did *Conscience* in Bunyan's *Holy War*, keeps speaking of King Shaddai to whom man really belongs. Now the covenant breaker never fully succeeds in this life in suppressing the old man that he has within him. He is never a finished product. That is the reason for his doing the relatively good though in his heart, in his new man, he is wholly evil. So then the situation is always mixed. In any one's statement of personal philosophy there will be remnants of his old man. In the case of the Christian this keeps him from being consistently Christian in his philosophy of life and in his practice. In the case of the non-believer this keeps him from being fully Satanic in his opposition to God.

But however true it is that non-Christians are always much better in their statements of philosophy and in their lives than their own principle would lead us to expect and however true it is that Christians are always much worse in the statement of their philosophy and in their lives than their principle would lead us to expect, it is none the less also true that in principle there are two mutually exclusive systems, based upon two mutually exclusive principles of interpretation. And in our day the non-Christian principle of interpretation has come to a quite consistent form of expression. It has done so most of all by stressing the relativity of all knowledge in any field to man as its ultimate reference point. It would seem to follow from this that Christians ought not to be behind in stressing the fact that in their thinking all depends upon making God the final reference point in human predication. The Thomas-Butler type of argument confuses this basic issue.

Secondly, the issue at the present time is not whether man is himself involved in all that he knows, whether facts are taken as much as given. That man as the subject of his knowledge is to some extent taking as well as giving facts may be taken for granted by all. As such it is a quite formal matter. The question is whether in his taking of facts man assumes himself to be ultimate or to be created. Both Descartes and Calvin believed in some form of innateness of ideas, yet the former made man and the latter made God the final reference point in human thought.

The issue about the Bible is thus seen to involve the issue about the sovereign God of the Bible. It involves the idea of an existential system. The opposition between the two points of view is all comprehensive. There is no question of agreeing on an area or dimension of reality. Reason employed by a Christian always comes to other conclusions than reason employed by a non-Christian. There is no agreement on the faith principle that is employed. Each has his own conception of reason and his own conception of faith. The non-Christian conception of reason and the non-Christian principle of faith stand or fall together. The same is true of the relation between

the Christian principles of reason and of faith. The one will always be in analogy with the other. If one starts with man as ultimate and therefore with his reason as virtually legislative for reality then the faith principle that is added to this in order to fill out the interpretation of man's religious as well as his scientific interests will be of such a sort as to allow only for such facts and such rationality as are also allowed by his reason. There will be occasion to develop this point more fully when we are dealing more directly with the Romanist view of tradition. Romanism makes the effort to attach a Christian faith principle to a non-Christian principle of reason. The result is compromise with the non-Christian principle of the autonomous man.

On the surface it might seem that there is on the modern principle a great difference if not a contrast between the procedure of faith and that of reason. It will be said that in the field of science and philosophy man is merely following a method that involves no personal relationships at all. Science and philosophy is said to deal with the impersonalist factors of the material universe. It is said to deal merely with the subject-object relationships in a non-personal way. It is said to be non-existential. Then it is added — and in this the modern view is joined by those who claim to be critical of it in the realm of religion, the Romanists and the dialecticists in theology — that of course in natural things the impersonal method of human reason must be allowed to have full sway. Certainly no man is to be asked to make a *sacrificium intellectus*. Only orthodoxy requires us to make that. The "absurdity of Christianity" has no bearing on the facts of chemistry and biology.

Frequently, and in particular in the case of the Romanist, it may then be added that God will not require man to believe on faith something that is contrary to what he has already learned to know by his God-given reason. Appeal is made to the idea of man's creation in the image of God. In doing so men virtually assert that the faith principle that is to be accepted must be adjusted to the principle of reason that is already at work in the so-called lower dimensions of life. Man is said to be created

in the image of God, but the explanation is made that this does not mean that he has been causally produced by God. In other words the image idea is itself interpreted in terms that are out of accord with orthodox theology. In the case of Thomas Aquinas this takes the form of saying that as far as reason is concerned it is not possible to disprove that Aristotle was right about his conception of eternity for the world. That means that if creation is to be accepted it must be accepted by a non-rational principle of faith. Thus the faith principle is made to fit the non-Christian principle of reason used in the first place. The faith principle must then be made non-rational. It must be identified with the idea of accepting as an aspect of reality that which is non-rational.

Then if the harmony of the two is to be effected it can be done and is done by the notion of correlativity. The principle of faith then stands for belief in the unique as that comes to us in the facts of history. The principle of reason then stands for the notion of coherence as that comes to us primarily in science. The two may be combined and that which is believed in faith will be analogous to what is believed in science and in philosophy. There will be the same principle of continuity and the same principle of discontinuity in both faith and reason. The only difference will be one of degree. In the realm of faith there is more of discontinuity and less of continuity while in science there is more of continuity and less of discontinuity. Then too the seemingly sharp difference between the impersonal realm of science and the personal confrontation of religion will virtually disappear. The impersonal realm is not ultimately impersonal at all. How could it be if in science we also have "selective subjectivism?" It is true that those who hold to the modern principle continue to speak of the non-biased historian as imitating the method of science in its impersonalism. But there is no unbiased historian and there is no unbiased scientist. Both have the same fundamental bias. Both have the same fundamental bias of making man ultimate. Therefore science is as personalist as is religion.

On the other hand the two of them are equally impersonal.

A point of great importance to the modern approach is its claim that it for the first time has done full justice to religion as personal confrontation. The effort at this point is the same as that of personalist philosophy in general. (*Cf.* the writings of Borden P. Bowne, Knudson, E. S. Brightman and Flewelling.) But all non-orthodox personalisms are virtually impersonalist. This too is not difficult to perceive. They all want to start with man as ultimate in the realm of science and philosophy. They argue that if our beliefs are to be affirmed without reasons then there is no difference between Nazism and Christianity and no settlement but by force. If God himself put propositions into our minds he would have to appeal to our reason or we could not tell his truth from the devil's falsehood. But the assumption of this manner of putting things is that man himself as such must be the standard between the truth of God and the devil's falsehood. And unless he is willing to assert that he is himself directly the source and standard of law as an individual he must appeal to some abstract law above himself and other individuals. He must with Socrates demand a definition of holiness in itself apart from what gods or men have said about it. In the rational realm he will appeal to the law of non-contradiction. He will not accept as revelation from God that which he cannot order by means of the law of non-contradiction. But then he ought really to do away with the idea of speaking of God as personal and with speaking of Christ as his Lord whom he would obey. He can then listen to God if God can show him that what he says is in accord with the non-personal law of contradiction or the impersonal law of the good as man himself in any given situation interprets this.

The conclusion then is that both in religion and in science the modern temper is impersonalist in its conception of some abstract super-personal law and personalist in that in practice even this impersonal law is interpreted in terms of the standards that are within man himself apart from God. Thus there is no personal confrontation of man with either God or Christ. Both of these become impersonal ideals that man has set before himself. These depersonalizations may be hypostatized

and then anew personalized. It is only then that they meet the demands of modern man and answer to the requirements that man has set for himself as his own ultimate standard of right and wrong, of truth and falsehood.

It will now be apparent in what way the argument between those who hold to the infallible Bible and those who hold to man as the final reference point will have to be carried on. It cannot be carried on in the traditional way that has been set for both the Romanist and the Protestant by Thomas Aquinas and his school. This method does indeed fit into a Romanist scheme of things. Of this more in the sequel. But, as already pointed out, it does not fit in with the Protestant view of Scripture and of theology.

We have now cleared the ground by pointing out that both the position of those who believe and that of those who do not believe in the ultimate authority of Scripture have to be brought to a measure of internal self-consistency if the argument between them is to be really fruitful.

There can be then no way of avoiding the fact that it is in the theology of Warfield, the Reformed Faith, that we have the most consistent defense of the idea of the infallibility of Scripture. This is not to lack appreciation of the Evangelicals or non-Reformed Protestants who hold *con amore* to the Bible as the infallible Word of God. But it is only in a theology such as that of Warfield, a theology in which the doctrine of salvation by the grace of the sovereign God has come to something like adequate expression that the doctrine of the Bible as the infallible Word of God can, with full consistency, be maintained. It is only on this basis that the modern idea of revelation as event without being at the same time in part man's own interpretation of event can be opposed at every point. If God is really self-contained and if he has really causally created this world and if he really controls it by his providence then the revelation of himself and about this world must be that of

fully *interpreted fact*. All facts in the whole of created reality are then God-interpreted.

This is true no less of the things of nature than of the things of Scripture. Accordingly when man is confronted with the facts of nature and is called upon to give them a scientific interpretation he is no less engaged in the re-interpretation of that which has already been fully interpreted by God to himself than when he reads his Bible. This does not mean that God has exhaustively revealed the meaning of these facts to man. Man would not even be able to receive into his mind a full revelation of all that God has in his mind. Moreover it is true that the revelation of God in nature is "factual," rather than propositional. This is partly true even of Scripture. Just the same it is also true, and this is basic, that as man studies any of the factual revelation of either nature or Scripture he is required to do so in subordination to and in conformity with the propositional revelation given him in the way of direct communication by God. This was true even before the Fall. The revelation of God in the facts of nature has always required and been accompanied by revelation in propositional form given by supernatural positive communication. Natural and supernatural revelation are limiting concepts the one of the other.

Thus the work of scientists and philosophers is no less a re-interpretative enterprise than is that of theology. And only thus can a genuine unity of outlook be obtained. Then and then only is there an intelligible, and at the same time a consistently Christian, connection between general and special revelation. From the formal point of view it is to be appreciated that the modern principle has worked out what it believes so consistently as to have a unified concept of both the natural and the supernatural. We have seen how it is maintained that general and special revelation are of a piece with one another. This is no doubt true. Orthodox Christianity ought to maintain the same thing from its own point of view. But then in its case this unity of outlook comes from the fact that

all human interpretation is regarded as re-interpretative of God's self-conscious interpretation.

It is in this way that the place of Scripture as the infallible Word of God can be seen to fit in with the idea of orthodox theology in general. The idea of Scripture must, as the Reformed theologians have pointed out so fully and clearly, be brought into connection with sin. But in order to see the precise connection between Scripture and sin it is first necessary to indicate that even prior to the entrance of sin man needed supernatural communication. Man as finite needs to be told directly by God about the ultimate direction of the course of history. He cannot deal as he ought, as a covenant keeping being, with anything that he deals with at all, unless he deals with it in the light of the destiny of the whole of the created realm of being. Each thing is what it is in relation to the final goal of history. Therefore if he is to deal with each thing as it ought to be dealt with, that is, according to its "essence," he must ever keep this destiny clearly in view. He has, to be sure, innate knowledge of God. But this innate knowledge is not a timeless principle within him from which he can logically deduce what will happen in the course of time. Neither is this innate knowledge a sort of potentiality that will naturally develop into an actual knowledge of God. Least of all is it a mere form that needs for its correlativity a filling that derives from the realm of brute fact. It is a God-given activity within man that needs to feed upon factual material which is itself the manifestation of the self-contained plan of God. It is therefore a limiting concept that needs over against itself another limiting concept, namely, that of factual material that can serve as grist for its mill.

But then when sin comes into the picture there is an ethical complication. Sinful man wants to suppress the truth of God that comes to him. His new man within him suppresses or seeks to suppress that which springs from the old man within him. The natural man is at enmity with God. He always seeks to make himself believe that he has not been confronted with

God; his forms of worship are ways by which he makes himself believe that God is finite. Even when he says he needs and sorely needs a transcendent God, he will say that this transcendent God can only probably be known.²¹ If he can make himself believe that the evidence is doubtful he has again found excuse for himself. In reality the evidence is perfectly clear. All men, says Calvin, following Paul's *Romans*, cannot help but know God. The objective facts are facts precisely and alone because they reveal God. And the only true thing that can be said about them is response about them to God. So it is not because the evidence is not clear but because man has taken out his spiritual eyes that he does not, and ethically cannot, see any of the facts of the world for what they really are.

This is not to say that man is a devil. Man is not a finished product. He is in principle opposed to God but his old man within keeps that principle from manifesting itself in full fruition in this life. In principle he is engaged in all-out war against God. Hence his need for redemption. And this redemption must be by God himself. Hence, the substitutionary atonement. Hence the death of Christ for those whom God has given him. The whole of man's relationships as a finite personality were, in the first place, with God. So now redemption cannot be mediated by certain facts that are not themselves wholly related to and dependent upon the plan of God. Such facts would not be revelational of God's grace at all; they would be revelational of nothing. More than that, and of special significance in this connection, the facts, as such, could not be revelational in themselves without the Word. The very idea of objective revelation to man required for its completion the idea of objective revelation to man by supernatural propositions about the facts that it records. In the idea of objective revelation to man the ideas of fact and interpretation of fact are therefore limiting concepts one of the other.

But we have to proceed further. Just as facts and word revelation require one another so the doctrine of inspiration

²¹ Cf. Dorothy M. Emmet—*The Nature of Metaphysical Thinking*, London, 1946; Harold A. Larrabee—*Reliable Knowledge*, New York, 1945.

of Scripture is once again the limiting concept that is required as supplementation to the idea of fact revelation given to us in word revelation. The issue here is not at all a question of the use of man's natural abilities. The orthodox view does not hold that in receiving revelation from God man's abilities need to be suppressed. Warfield points out that God could and did freely use the various gifts of intellect and heart that he himself had given to men who were the special instruments of his revelation. The issue is therefore whether those who were called upon to be prophets or apostles needed the direction and illumination of the Spirit so as to guide them and keep them from error. And the answer is that only God can reveal God.

Thus we have the objective situation before us. If sinful man is to be saved he must be saved against his will. He hates God. God's work of salvation must be a work into territory that belongs to him by right but that has been usurped by King Diabolus. And the government illegitimately in control of man's soul controls all the means of entrance, through eye gate, ear gate and nose gate. So an entrance has to be forced. Concrete has to be built under water. And when God by grace makes friends within the enemy country these friends are still but creatures. They are as much as was Adam in need of supernatural word revelation. And they are, even so, often and always to an extent under the influence of the old man within them and so would even when redeemed never be able to interpret mere revelational facts correctly and fully. Hence the necessity of Scripture.

Protestants also claim that Scripture is perspicuous. This does not mean that it is exhaustively penetrable to men. When the Christian restates the content of Scriptural revelation in the form of a "system" such a system is based upon and therefore analogous to the "existential system" that God himself possesses. Being based upon God's revelation it is on the one hand, fully true and, on the other hand, at no point identical with the content of God's mind. Scripture is therefore perspicuous in the way that all of God's revelation of himself as the self-contained God is perspicuous. All things in the

universe are perspicuous in that they can be nothing but speakers of God. The very essence of things is exhausted ultimately in what they are in relation to God. And God is wholly light, in him is no darkness at all. So in Scripture God's purpose for man in his relation to his environment in this world and in his relation to God who controls both him and his environment is so clear that he who runs may read it.

Scripture is further said to be sufficient. It is a finished revelation of God. It does not stand in a relation of correlativity to its acceptance as the word of God by man. It may be compared to the internal completeness of the ontological trinity. This trinity requires within itself the idea of the intercorrelativity of the three persons of the Godhead and the correlativity of the diversity represented by these three persons to the essence of God. As important therefore as it is to keep a clear distinction between the ontological and the economical trinity in the field of theology so important is it to make clear that the facts of God's revelation in general and of his special revelation are mutually dependent upon one another for their intelligibility and again the facts of Scripture are related by way of interdependence upon the work of the Holy Spirit in inspiration.

It is only if this interdependence is maintained that it is possible to indicate clearly that the work of the Church in collecting the canon or the acceptance of the revelation of Scripture as the word of God stands in a relation of one way dependence upon it. It is true that as far as the whole plan of God with history, and, in particular, with redemption, is concerned the revelation in Scripture requires the acceptance of that revelation by the Church and the individual for what it is. It is true further that for the acceptance of that revelation it is again upon the testimony of the Spirit that we must depend. And this testimony brings no direct personal information to the individual. It works within the mind and heart of the individual the conviction that the Scriptures are the objective Word in the sense described. Still further it is of the utmost importance to stress that this testimony of the Spirit is in the heart of the

believer as supernatural as is the work of inspiration of Scripture itself. If this were not the case the main point of our argument to the effect that in Christianity God is the final reference point of man would not be true. Even as the internal completeness of Scriptural revelation may be compared to the internal completeness of the ontological trinity, so the acceptance of this revelation as the part of man under the influence of the Holy Spirit may be compared to the work of the economical trinity. On the one hand creation and providence must be maintained as being an expression of the plan of God. Yet this work is not an emanation of the being but an expression of the will of God. And these two are not to be contrasted with one another in the way that we have seen Thomas Aquinas contrast them. And not being contrasted to one another they cannot be made correlative of one another. The ontological trinity is wholly complete within itself. The works of God within do not require the works of God without. The revelation of God in creation and providence is wholly voluntary. In the same way also the acceptance or the rejection of the revelation of God on the part of man must be kept distinct from revelation itself. To be sure, even the acceptance of revelation is itself revelational of God in the more comprehensive sense that all that happens in the universe happens in accord with the will of God. In this sense even the rejection of the will of God by man is revelational of God. For Satan is not some sort of principle of non-being that is somehow given some sort of power independent of God. He is a creature of God that has fallen into sin. And the entrance of sin is within the plan of God. It is on this basis only that one can maintain the sovereignty of grace. It is the God who is truly sovereign in all things who alone can be sovereign in giving or withholding grace.

On this basis alone is it possible to distinguish the orthodox position of the relation of objective revelation and subjective acceptance of this revelation from the modern view in which the two have become correlative to one another and even made into aspects of one process. It is said in the modern view that revelation and discovery are like the convex and the concave

sides of the same disc. And there is not much that the Romanist or the Arminian views can offer in opposition to this. The modern view has substituted for the ontological trinity and the free creation of the world the idea of reality as a process. In this process God and man are aspects of the same reality. But the consistently orthodox position keeps God and the universe apart. The laws of the universe depend on God and do the bidding of God but they are not laws of the being of God. So the activity of the mind of created man depends upon God. It can function only in connection with a universe that is itself wholly dependent upon God. The two together must be revelational of the same God. Man must re-think God's revelation. So man is responsible for the revelation of God in the universe about him and within him. He is again responsible for the revelation of grace as it comes to him. His rejection of the original revelation of God did not take place except within the counsel of God; his renewed rejection of the revelation of the grace of God does not happen independently of his counsel. But in each case it is a genuine action on his part. The acceptance or the rejection of God's revelation is no more identical with revelation than are the laws of the created universe identical with the internal procession of the Son from the Father.

Finally a word must be said about the authority of Scripture. Here again our start may be made from the idea of the ontological trinity. The self-contained God is self-determinate. He cannot refer to anything outside that which has proceeded from himself for corroboration of his words. Once more the conservative view stands squarely over against the modern view when this conservative view is set forth according to the principles of the Reformed Faith. For on this basis, as already emphasized a moment ago, the mind of man is itself in all of its activities dependent upon and functional within revelation. So also it is, as already made clear, with respect to the material that confronts it anywhere. All the facts are through and through revelational of the same God that has made the mind of man. If then appeal is made from the Bible to the facts of history or of nature outside the Bible recorded in some docu-

ments totally independent of the Bible it must be remembered that these facts themselves can be seen for what they are only if they are regarded in the light of the Bible. It is by the light of the flashlight that has derived its energy from the sun that we may in this way seek for an answer to the question whether there be a sun. This is not to disparage the light of reason. It is only to indicate its total dependence upon God. Nor is it to disparage the usefulness of arguments for the corroboration of the Scripture that comes from archaeology. It is only to say that such corroboration is not of independent power. It is not a testimony that has its source anywhere but in God himself. Here the facts and the principle of their interpretation are again seen to be involved in one another. Thus the modern and the orthodox positions stand directly over against one another ready for a head-on collision.

It is now apparent in what manner we would contend in our day for the philosophical relevance of Scripture. Such philosophical relevance cannot be established unless it be shown that all human predication is intelligible only on the presupposition of the truth of what the Bible teaches about God, man and the universe. If it be first granted that man can correctly interpret an aspect or dimension of reality while making man the final reference point then there is no justification for denying him the same competence in the field of religion. If the necessity for the belief in Scripture is established in terms of "experience" which is not itself interpreted in terms of Scripture it is not the necessity of Scripture that is established. The Scripture offers itself as the sun by which alone men can see their experience in its true setting. The facts of nature and history corroborate the Bible when it is made clear that they fit into no frame but that which Scripture offers.

If the non-believer works according to the principles of the new man within him and the Christian works according to the principles of the new man within him then there is no interpretative content of any sort on which they can agree. Then both maintain that their position is reasonable. Both maintain that it is according to reason and according to fact. Both bring the

whole of reality in connection with their main principle of interpretation and their final reference points.

It might seem then that there can be no argument between them. It might seem that the orthodox view of authority is to be spread only by testimony and by prayer, not by argument. But this would militate directly against the very foundation of all Christian revelation, namely, to the effect that all things in the universe are nothing if not revelational of God. Christianity must claim that it alone is rational. It must not be satisfied to claim that God probably exists. The Bible does not say that God probably exists. Nor does it say that Christ probably rose from the dead. The Christian is bound to believe and hold that his system of doctrine is certainly true and that other systems are certainly false. And he must say this about a system of doctrine which involves the existence and sovereign action of a self-contained God whose ways are past finding out.

The method of argument that alone will fit these conditions may be compared to preaching. Romanist and Arminian theologians contend that since according to the Reformed Faith man is dead in trespasses and sin there is no use in appealing to him to repent. They contend that since the Bible does appeal to the natural man it implies that he has a certain ability to accept the revelation of God. They contend further that Scripture attributes a measure of true knowledge of God to the natural man. To all this the Reformed theologian answers by saying that the Bible nowhere makes appeal to the natural man as able to accept or as already to some extent having given a true, though not comprehensive and fully adequate, interpretation to the revelation of God. To be sure, the natural man knows God. He does not merely know that a god or that probably a god exists. By virtue of his old man within him he knows that he is a creature of God and responsible to God. But as far as his new man is concerned he does not know this. He will not own this. He represses it. His ethical hostility will never permit him to recognize the facts to be true which, deep down in his heart, he knows in spite of himself to be true. It is this new man of the natural man that we must be concerned to

oppose. And it is to his old man that we must make our appeal. Not as though there are after all certain good tendencies within this old man which, if sufficiently played upon, will assert themselves and reach the ascendancy. Not as though we can, after the fashion of a liberating army, appeal to the underground army of true patriots who really love their country. The true appeal may be compared to Christ's speaking to Lazarus. There was not some little life left in some part of his body to which Christ could make his appeal. Yet he made his appeal to Lazarus, not to a stone. So the natural man is made in the image of God. He has the knowledge of God. The appeal is made to what is suppressed. And then as it is the grace of God that must give man the ability to see the truth in preaching so it is also the Spirit of God that must give man the ability to accept the truth as it is presented to him in apologetical reasoning.

This reasoning will accordingly have to be by way of pre-supposition. Since there is no fact and no law on which the two parties to the argument agree they will have to place themselves upon one another's positions for the sake of argument. This does not mean that we are thus after all granting to the natural man the ability to reason correctly. He can follow a process of reasoning intellectually. He may even have a superior intellect. But of himself he always makes the wrong use of it. A saw may be ever so shiny and sharp, but if its set is wrong it will always cut on a slant. Hence, following Paul's example when he asks, "Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world," we also place ourselves on the ground of the opponent. We may first ask him to place himself on our ground. We can then show that if there is to be rationality at any point there must be rationality at the basis of all. But on his own basis he will understand this to mean that there can be nothing temporal and unique. He will claim that this is determinism.

We may then ask him to show how on his position there is genuine significance in the individual facts of history. He will

answer that this is the case because his principle of coherence by which he unites these facts is not determinist but is itself correlative to the facts in their individuality. He will say that he begins by presupposing the genuine individuality of these facts and that this is a basic ingredient in his thought.

At this point it will be necessary to point out that on this basis individuality consists of non-rationality. By definition the individuality and reality of temporal things must then have nothing to do with an all-controlling plan of God. Creation is set over against causation by God. In similar fashion the orthodox idea of providence is denied. The principle of discontinuity is not found within the plan but in opposition to the idea of a plan of God. To be sure, a plan of God may be accepted but then it will be accepted as a limiting concept in the modern critical sense of the term. And this limiting concept is the opposite of the idea of a plan as a constitutive concept. It is of the essence of the modern principle to say that the thingness of the thing, to the extent that this may be spoken of at all outside its relation to the human knower of that thing, is independent of any divine knowledge or activity. In other words all antecedent being is rigorously excluded from the idea of individuality.

This involves the view that all reality, as far as can ever be known by man, is of a piece. But even this cannot really be said. It can only be said that all the reality that man will know must be of one piece. At least reality must not be distinguished into uncreated and created reality in the way that orthodoxy does. But as far as there may be any sort of reality that is beyond the knowledge of the human mind it must have no qualities at all. It must be interchangeable with the idea of pure possibility. The only alternative to making God the source of the possible in the universe is to make pure possibility or chance ultimate and therefore the mother of all being.

The point just made should be stressed. The modern approach requires the notion of pure non-being. At least it needs the notion of being in which there is no rationality at all. Then this pure being must, as far as the world of power is concerned,

be identified with creativity. This sort of view has found expression in the works of Alexander, Bergson, Whitehead and Dewey. But it is important for us to know that it is precisely from this same point that all modern theology must also begin if it is to be true to its principle. Fundamental to the idea of uniqueness in history or in any other dimension on this basis is the notion of pure Chance. When theologians speak of this they call it the *Father*.

This is only to say that for modern thought time is ultimate. If God is said to have consciousness it must be consciousness in time. He must himself be subject to the same conditions to which man is subject. But then it must be remembered that on this basis the idea of God is a personalization of a non-rational force. All non-orthodox views are essentially non-personalist. This is usually admitted in the field of science. But it is no less true in theology. There could be no harmony between science and theology on this basis if both did not share an ultimate impersonalism with respect to man's environment. Theology then becomes a matter of hypostatizing and personalizing forces that in reality are non-personal. Gilson says with respect to Aristotle that so far as he has a god that exists this god is plural and that so far as he has a god that is known this god is a principle. The same may be said for all non-Christian philosophy.

So then we may distinguish between two aspects of the idea of individuality on the non-orthodox basis. There is first this notion of pure possibility or force as hypostatized and personalized. But as such it is a limiting concept and out of reach of the actual knowledge of man. It is but a projection into the void of personal ideals that man has formed individually or collectively. From the orthodox point of view such a God is but an idol since he has proceeded from the mind of sinful man that is opposed to God.

This God then is as unknown to man and as unreachable by man as was the God of Plotinus. As it is the projection of an ideal on the part of man so the only way it can be reached by man is by way of his identification with it. And this is in

reality the aim that is back of the method of non-orthodox theology and non-Christian philosophy or science. The whole of the ethical struggle on this basis becomes one of lifting man into the same high idealized realm of being into which he has put his God. This is virtually how A. E. Taylor puts it when he says that the Greek and the Christian views of the ethical problem are the same, namely, that of escaping the limitations of finitude.

In the second place individuality is that which is such *for man*. That is, so much of this chance reality as has been brought within the categories of human logic must conform to the laws of this logic. It may be said that space and time are not categories of logic but institutions that precede all logical manipulation. But at some point in the activity of the mind of man the miracle of contact must take place between the logical function of the human mind and non-logical or non-rational existence. Every handling of factual material such as counting is in reality the making of a judgment about the nature of the whole of being.

Between these two individuals—the one that is wholly by itself and unknown and the one that is *for man*—there is therefore a wide difference. If Christ were to be thought of as the individual that is *for us* and therefore *known* he would have nothing unique about him. In fact on that basis there is nothing unique about human personality in general. It is then woven into the patterns of relationships that are impersonal. On the other hand if Christ is to be identified with the individual that is in itself and prior to all relationships with human knowledge then *he* is or *it* is wholly meaningless.

This then is the dilemma. If the individual is to be really individual it is unknown; if it is known it is no longer individual but an instance of a law.

One can see that it is this dilemma that faces the modern principle when it seeks to combine its concepts of science and of religion. In the former all is said to be impersonal and in the latter all is personal. Yet if there is to be any harmony between the two outlooks they must either be both personal

or both impersonal. Both are personal in that both presuppose the human person as ultimate and both are impersonal as both surround this human person with an ultimate impersonal environment.

But for the moment our main point is to stress that the rejection of the orthodox principle of continuity requires the acceptance of a non-Christian principle of discontinuity. And this is a notion of individuality as wholly non-rational taken as a limit.

So Christ according to the modern principle becomes an ideal that man has set for himself.

Corresponding to this non-Christian principle of discontinuity is that of continuity. The rejection of the Christian principle of discontinuity between God and man requires the acceptance of a rationalistic principle of continuity. It cannot be stressed too much that the most irrationalist positions today are still rationalist. They are rationalist in the sense that negatively nothing can be accepted by them but what man can himself see through by means of the principle of non-contradiction. No matter how much men stress the fact that rationalism is out of date and however much they laugh at old Parmenides, it remains true that they do the same thing that he did and that Procrustes did before him. The only difference is that they use the principle of non-contradiction negatively while Parmenides used it positively as well as negatively. In consequence Christ stands for ideal rationality which is said to be present to but not fully expressed in the process of reality.

But perhaps we should say that as interpreted by the modern principle Christ is in part free and in part rational. He is then an hypostatization and impersonation of what man is himself, namely, a combination of pure irrational factuality and formal rationality.

When this principle of pure rationality is allowed to function freely all individuality disappears. But lest this should happen pure rationality is made correlative to pure irrationality. Neither is ever allowed to function by itself. The result is that there is an appearance of real freedom, or transcendence

and also an appearance of coherence while in reality there is neither.

The dilemma that faces modern theology with respect to the person of Christ must also be applied to its conception of revelation. There has been a great movement away from rationalism of the pre-Kantian sort. This seems to make room for revelation. But it is the sort of revelation that is allowed also in modern science. It is the wholly different. As wholly different it is also wholly irrational. Then when it seems that the wholly irrational would control all things there appears an influx of the principle of rationality and this rationality would kill all miracle and all newness of any sort.

The net result is that there is nothing by way of revelation that is added to what man knows or can know by himself. Revelation is not higher than the highest in man and the coherence of that which is higher and is given by revelation to man is in reality but an extension of the coherence that is already in man.

It should be added that the problem here is the same as that which may be found throughout the whole field of science and philosophy. The problem is everywhere that of methodology. And the dilemma is always that of pure single thingness without meaning and abstract rationality without content.

So then it appears that the modern principle has neither uniqueness nor coherence to offer. It may speak of objective connection of contents between observed experiences. It may reject the orthodox idea of authority because there is then said to be no test between various claimants to authority. But it can itself point to no objective connections between any one fact and any other fact. It cannot show how one fact can be differentiated from any other fact. It cannot find any application for the law of contradiction. It cannot even furnish a footing on the basis of which it might make an intelligent negation of the Christian position. Yet it is required to do so if it is to live up to its standard of being critical. But then it is not critical. There is no real reflective inquiry here. There is no real

analysis of the basic concepts underlying knowledge. There is a dogmatic exclusion of a certain position without having shown how there is a foundation for excluding anything. There is a rejection of the Christian position as involving us in meaningless mystery. But there is instead an acceptance of that which is empty of all content. If the Christian notion of mystery is rejected because it is not penetrable to the mind of man, it ought to be possible for man to penetrate the whole of reality. And if he cannot penetrate the whole of reality he ought to be able to give an intelligible reason as to why it is that he cannot. But this he cannot do. He merely appeals to the use of the law of non-contradiction. But he himself has to maintain, unless he is a rationalist in the Leibnitzian sense of the term, that by this means it is not possible to establish the nature of reality. He must maintain that reality is prior to logic. But when he does this, then he has no reason to think that what he says in terms of logic will answer to what he himself says must be there in terms of fact. This is especially true inasmuch as he has by logic, by the law of contradiction, first excluded as impossible the idea that things should have any logical relation in them apart from what is put in them for the first time by their connection with the human mind.

So then it appears that the only position that has any connection between rationality and factuality is the position that works in terms of the self-contained God. It is true that there is mystery between this God and his creature. But it is also true that the only alternative to this mystery is mystery that is behind and before and around all forms of rationality. The Christian concept of mystery is that which is involved in the idea of God as the self-contained being and his plan for the whole of the created universe. The non-Christian concept of mystery, as implied in the modern principle, is that which is involved in assuming that all reality is flux and that factuality is more basic than logic or plan. The Christian concept of mystery is rejected as involving that which is meaningless. It is said to be meaningless on no better basis than that man cannot see through it clearly. Then the non-Christian concept

of mystery is accepted though it involves the acceptance of the idea of complete separation of being and knowledge. But on this basis the process of learning cannot be explained at all.

There are then two positions with respect to reality and knowledge. Applied to the question of the Bible it now appears that the infallible Bible is required if man is to have any knowledge and if his process of learning is to be intelligible. This does not mean that on the basis of Scripture it is exhaustively intelligible to man. Nothing is. And the all or nothing demand that underlies the modern principle is the source of the débâcle that has come about. But man does not need to know all. He needs only to know that all reality is rationally controlled. It does not kill his spontaneity and his reason if he has to think God's thoughts after him. It does kill all this if it has to function in a vacuum. And this, precisely, is what the modern principle asks man to do.

Christians need not be worried about the fact that the autographa are lost.²² On the other hand they must be deeply

²² It is well known that Emil Brunner regards the orthodox view of the infallibility of the autographa of Scripture as not only useless but as idolatrous. In addition to that he thinks that textual criticism has made it utterly untenable. How completely meaningless it is, to speak with Warfield of a sort of "Bible-X" of which nothing can be really known and of which we must, none the less, assert that it is virtually the same as the Bible we now possess (*Revelation and Reason*, p. 274).

But is the orthodox view so useless? We have shown that unless it is true men are lost in the boundless and bottomless ocean of chance. Is it idolatrous? Without it men must make and do make themselves the source and goal of all intellectual and moral effort; the true God if he revealed himself at all could not but reveal himself infallibly. Are the known facts of textual criticism out of accord with the idea of an original perfect text? On the contrary the whole process of this criticism gets its meaning from the presupposition of such a text. Without this presupposition there is no more point to turning to Scripture than to the Upanishads for the Word of God. The existence of a perfect original text of Scripture is the presupposition of the possibility of the process of human learning. Without it there would be no criterion for man's knowledge.

Orthodox scholars therefore pursue the search for this text with enthusiasm. Each step they take in dealing with existing manuscripts removes some "difficulty." And should a few errors of detail remain unsolved in time to come this does not discourage them. They have every right to believe that they are on the right road and that the end of their

concerned to maintain that an infallible revelation has actually entered into history. This is precisely as necessary as is the idea of the sovereignty of God in theology. The existence of all things in the world are what they are by the plan of God. The knowledge of anything is by way of understanding the connection that it has with the plan of God. The sin of man is within the plan of God. Its removal is within the plan of God. The facts of redemption, the explanation of those facts, are together a part of the plan of God. Man's acceptance is within this plan of God. On the current principle one thing can be exactly identical with the other in the realm of pure blankness. Hence anything as well as any other thing might happen. And if one thing rather than another does happen they are again reduced to virtual identity, by being placed as interchangeable parts in a timeless system. Or rather they are made to differ by means of complete description by the mind of man. That is, they could be made to differ only if there were such minute description. But there cannot be and so there will always be substitution of one for the other. This itself expresses the idea that in matters of history one cannot be too absolutely sure. We may feel that there is enough certainty at the bottom of things but we cannot be sure of any particular thing. We cannot be sure of the identity of Christ. In fact, as Brunner says, the identity of Christ is theoretically subject to question in the field of pure history. According to the rationalist position of the modern principle there should be individuation by minute description and therefore identity of indiscernibles in Leibnitz' sense of the term. Yet according to the irrationalism of the same principle real individuality must be due to the non-rational. Therefore there must be real difference in that which is indiscernible. But then the principle of individuation practically employed is a combination of these two principles. Hence it is that *Urgeschichte* is said to be related to present history while yet it is also said not to be related. It is wholly

way is near at hand. For those who do not hold to the orthodox view are at the mercy of a purely pragmatic and humanistic view of reality and truth.

other. Nothing can be said about it. Yet it becomes wholly identical ideally.

With this we might conclude this introduction to the biblical writings of Warfield. The whole issue may be further clarified, however, if note is taken of two forms of theological thought current in our day, namely, Romanism and dialecticism, which claim to have rejected the modern view without accepting the traditional Protestant position. Both of these viewpoints claim to have solved the problem of the relation of authority and reason. Is there then, after all, we ask, another alternative? Have we been too hasty in our insistence that one must either return to the infallible Bible or else forfeit the claim even to explain the possibility of science?

LUTHERANISM

Before turning to Romanism and dialecticism a word must be said in passing about orthodox Lutheranism. Its position on the relation of Scripture to reason is unique. It would challenge our main contention. It argues that it is in Lutheranism rather than in Calvinism that the Protestant doctrine of Scripture has found adequate expression and adherence. So far from really bowing to the infallible authority of Scripture the typically Reformed theologian, we are told, constructs his system of theology according to the requirements of reason. "Reformed theology is, in its distinctive characteristics, a philosophical system. Reason could not ask for more."²³ "Reformed theology insists that the Bible must be interpreted according to human reason, or according to rationalistic axioms."²⁴ These charges against the Reformed Faith center on the latter's effort to show the presence of coherent relationships between the various teachings of Scripture. "Calvin tells us, in his *Institutes*, that whatever does not agree, logically, with this central thought, is absurd and therefore false."²⁵ Calvinism is said at all costs

²³ Th. Engelder: *Reason or Revelation?* St. Louis, 1941, p. 74.

²⁴ John Theodore Mueller: *Christian Dogmatics*. St. Louis, 1934, p. 20.

²⁵ Engelder: *Op. Cit.*, p. 74.

to seek for a "logically harmonious whole" while Lutheranism is primarily concerned to ask what Scripture teaches.

What is forgotten in this criticism of Reformed thinking is that the latter, when true to itself, does not seek for "system" in the way that a non-Christian does. Its contention is that a "system" in the Christian sense of the terms rests upon the presupposition that whatever Scripture teaches is true because Scripture teaches it. With every thought captive to the obedience of Christ the Reformed theologian seeks to order, as far as he can, the content of God's special revelation. The Calvinist philosopher or scientist seeks to order the content of God's general revelation in self-conscious subordination to the infallible authority of Scripture. Nothing could be more unacceptable from the point of view of reason as taken by Engelder and Mueller.

Moreover it is only if the Christian "system" be set over against the non-Christian system that unbelief can be effectively challenged. Reformed thinking claims that Christianity is reasonable. To make good its claim it shows that reason itself must be interpreted in terms of the truths of Scripture about it. It is reasonable for a creature of God to believe in God. It is unreasonable for a creature of God to set up itself as God requiring a system of interpretation in which man stands as the ultimate point of reference. Not having a *system* of theology and philosophy in which reason itself is interpreted in terms of exclusively biblical principles, Romanism and Arminianism cannot effectively challenge the reason of the natural man.

It is here too that orthodox Lutheranism fails. In spite of specific Scripture teaching to the contrary it assumes, as does Arminianism, that man can initiate action apart from the plan of God. This is a basic concession to the non-Christian conception of reason. For the essence of this conception is its autonomy.

It is this basic concession to the non-Christian assumption of human autonomy that makes it impossible for orthodox Lutheranism to appreciate fully the difference between the Christian and the non-Christian ideas of *system*. On the one

hand it will therefore decry *system* and *reason* wherever it sees these—in John Calvin as well as in John Dewey. In doing so it virtually presents Christianity as being irrational giving foothold, unwittingly, to the idea of autonomy that lurks underneath all irrationalism. On the other hand when it undertakes, in spite of this, to speak of “the absolute unity of the whole body of truth” and of “the perfect coherency of its elemental parts”²⁶ it appeals to reason in the non-Christian sense of the term. As though Christianity may be thought rational, at least to some extent, by the “paramour of Satan.” “As the rational study of the book of nature points to its divine Creator, so the rational study of the book of revelation suggests that it is the work of a divine Author and that therefore it is more reasonable to believe than to disbelieve its claims (the scientific proof for the divine authority of Scripture).”²⁷ Failing to work out a truly biblical view of human reason orthodox Lutheranism is largely at the mercy of the cross currents of irrationalism and rationalism that constitute modern thought. Unable to put full biblical content into its own distinction between the ministerial and the magisterial use of reason orthodox Lutheranism fails to distinguish between what is objectively true and reasonable and what is subjectively acceptable to the natural man. The net result is that, for all its praiseworthy emphasis upon the fact that “Scripture cannot be broken” orthodox Lutheranism is subject to the criticism that has earlier been made on general evangelical or Arminian Protestantism, to the effect that it is insufficiently Protestant and therefore unable adequately to challenge the modern principle of interpretation that we have discussed.

The two positions to which we must now turn are those of the Roman Catholic church and of the Theology of Crisis. Each in its own way, these two positions oppose both the classical Protestant and the modern views of Scripture. Generally speaking, the Roman view stands closer to the traditional

²⁶ Mueller, *Op. Cit.*, p. 80.

²⁷ *Idem*, p. 123.

Protestant one and the dialectical view stands closer to the modern one. In fact, there is a deep antagonism between these two positions. One would surmise this antagonism to hinge on the question of antecedent being. Romanism claims to teach an existential system; Karl Barth and Emil Brunner, the two outstanding protagonists of the Theology of Crisis, are adherents of a modern critical epistemology and therefore abhor the idea of such a system. But the issue is not thus clearly drawn between them. Nor could it be. The reason is that Romanism itself suffers from the virus of the modern principle whose evil consequences it seeks to oppose.

ROMANISM

The church of Rome claims to be the true defender of authority. Its argument is that the traditional Protestant view of the right of "private judgment" as introduced by the early Reformers reaps its mature fruitage in the modern Protestant view of "religion without God." But the issue between "the Church" and the fathers of the Reformation was not limited to a question of interpretation of the Scripture. Back of the difference with respect to private or church interpretation of the Scripture lay the difference on the doctrine of Scripture itself.

This difference can be signalized briefly by calling to mind again the gulf that separates a theology that does, and a theology that does not, take the distinction between the ontological and the economical trinity seriously. The former thinks in terms of an inner correlativity of personality and action within the Godhead. It makes this inner self-complete activity its controlling concept. It therefore employs a consistently Christian principle of continuity; it teaches an existential system. It therefore also employs a consistently Christian principle of discontinuity; it teaches man to think analogically. In contrast, the latter breaks up the internal completeness of the ontological trinity. It does so by positing man's ability to make ultimate decisions. Therewith the idea of an existential system is set aside. The God of Romanism does not determine whatso-

ever comes to pass. Space-time eventuation is set over against the plan of God. If the two are then to be brought together it must be by way of correlativity. Rationality and factuality are then abstractions unless joined in a process of correlativity.

It is in this way that Romanist theology, in positing man's "freedom" over against God, virtually throws overboard the biblical principles of continuity and of discontinuity and substitutes for them the non-Christian principles of continuity and of discontinuity. True, Romanism does not assert man's total independence of God. Accordingly its position is not consistently non-Christian. It seeks to build its theology in terms of two mutually exclusive principles. In practice this results in compromise. To the extent that it employs the Christian principle Rome should hold to the internal completeness of the ontological trinity, to an existential system and therefore also to an internally complete and self-authenticating revelation of God to sinful man in Scripture. To the extent that it employs a non-Christian principle it denies all these. Using both at the same time Romanism is like a Janus. It is like a Janus in its use of the principle of continuity. Against modern irrationalism it openly avows allegiance to the idea of transcendent being, the mystery of the trinity and a revelation of God that is not correlative to man. But then when going in this direction Rome seems to go much farther than does traditional Protestantism. It virtually holds to a principle of continuity that precedes or supersedes the Creator-creature distinction. In the clearest possible way Arthur O. Lovejoy points this out. He first quotes the following words from Thomas Aquinas: "Everyone desires the perfection of that which for its own sake he wills and loves: for the things we love for their own sakes, we wish . . . to be multiplied as much as possible. But God wills and loves His essence for its own sake. Now that essence is not augmentable or multipliable in itself but can be multiplied only in its likeness, which is shared by many. God therefore wills things to be multiplied, inasmuch as he wills and loves his own perfection . . . Moreover, God in willing himself wills all the things which are in himself; but

all things in a certain manner pre-exist in God by their types (*rationes*). God, therefore, in willing himself wills other things. . . . Again, the will follows the understanding. But God in primarily understanding himself, understands all other things; therefore, once more, in willing himself primarily, he wills all other things.'"²⁸ Then in reply to the argument of a Roman apologist who denies that Thomas really meant to teach the necessary creation of all possibles he adds: "Not only might the passage mean this; it can, in consistency with assumptions which Aquinas elsewhere accepts, mean nothing else. *All* possibles 'fall under an infinite understanding,' in Spinoza's phrase, and, indeed, belong to its essence; and therefore nothing less than the sum of all genuine possibles could be the object of the divine will, i.e., of the creative act."²⁹

According to the Thomistic principle of continuity then there should be not merely a theistic existential system but a Parmenidean type of changeless reality. But to save Christianity from modern irrationalism with a principle of continuity that is essentially Greek rather than Christian is to kill that which one seeks to save. Continuity in history is saved by reducing the facts of history to foci in a timeless logic. Thus to save is also to kill. In this respect, therefore, the Romanist argument against irrationalism is in the same position as is the idealist philosophy of such men as Bradley and Bosanquet.

But then Rome is well aware of the monistic character of its principle of continuity or coherence. It therefore blames it on others, on Plato, on Descartes, or especially on Calvin. It hopes to escape the complete identification of man with God that is inherent in its concept of univocism by means of its principle of equivocism. It refers the creation of the world to the *will* of God. It speaks of the *mystery* of the trinity. It stresses the *genuineness* of historical fact and of the *freedom* of man. It does all this against the "rationalism" and "necessitarianism" of pantheistic philosophers and Calvinistic the-

²⁸ Arthur O. Lovejoy, *The Great Chain of Being*, Cambridge, 1942, p. 73.

²⁹ *Idem*, p. 74.

ologians. But as in its principle of continuity Romanism leads directly into monism, so, in its principle of discontinuity or equivocism, Romanism leads directly into modern existentialism and irrationalism. In noting this fact Lovejoy quotes from Thomas the following words: "‘Since good, understood to be such, is the proper object of the will, the will may fasten on any object conceived by the intellect in which the notion of good is fulfilled. Hence, though the being of anything, as such, is good, and its not-being is evil; still, the very not-being of a thing may become an object to the will, though not of necessity, by reason of some good which is attached to it; for it is good for a thing to be, even at the cost of the non-existence of something else. The only good, then, which the will by its constitution cannot wish not to be is the good whose non-existence would destroy the notion of good altogether. Such a good is none other than God. The will, then, by its constitution can will the non-existence of anything except God. But in God there is will according to the fullness of the power of willing, for in Him all things without exception exist in a perfect manner. He therefore can will the non-existence of any being except himself, and consequently does not of necessity will other things than himself.’" ³⁰ Then he adds, "But the argument by which the great Schoolman seeks to evade the dangerous consequences of his other, and equally definitely affirmed, premise is plainly at variance with itself as well as with some of the most fundamental principles of his system. It asserts that the existence of anything, in so far as it is possible, is intrinsically a good; that the divine will always chooses the good; and yet that its perfection permits (or requires) it to will the non-existence of some possible, and therefore good, things." ³¹

Summing up then it must be maintained that the Thomistic principle of continuity is largely rationalistic and its principle of discontinuity is largely irrationalistic. When it defends the idea of the Bible as giving God's interpretation to man it is defending what any non-Christian idealist philosopher might

³⁰ Arthur O. Lovejoy, *Op. Cit.*, pp. 74, 75.

³¹ *Idem*, p. 75.

for the most part agree with, namely, the need of unity if man is to appreciate diversity. On the other hand when it defends the idea of the concrete historical character of God's revelation through the living church in its authoritative teaching function it is defending what any non-Christian pragmatic philosopher might for the most part agree with, namely, a non-rational principle of individuation. The result of defending both principles at the same time as correlative of one another is the idea of a growing system enveloping both God and man, a system in which God grows less than man and man grows more than God.

There is, then, no fundamental difference between the Roman and the modern principle of interpretation. The opposition of Rome to the modern principle springs from the elements of Christianity that are retained.

Turning more directly now to the Romanist view of Scripture it is convenient to look at two points. The one pertains to the question of the attributes of Scripture and the other pertains to the place of tradition and that of the church.

Roman dogmaticians are wont to think of the attributes of Scripture as these are set forth by Protestants as clearly exhibiting the rationalist character of traditional Protestantism. The argument at this point is virtually identical in nature with that employed by modern Protestantism. Christianity, it is said, is not the religion of a book.³² The point is that if we think of Scripture as being *the book* of Christianity we think of it as an abstraction, as some sort of abstract universal. As such it would be purely formal. We cannot apply the attributes of necessity, clarity, sufficiency and authority to an abstraction. We can use such adjectives only if we supplement the Scriptures with the idea of tradition and with that of the living church.

The assumption of this argument is that God cannot give a finished, clear, self-authenticating revelation about the course of history as a whole. The "unwritten traditions" are said to

³² Bernhard Bartmann: *Lehrbuch der Dogmatik*, Freiburg in Breisgau, 1923, Erster Band, p. 28.

have been "received by the Apostles from the mouth of Christ himself, or from the Apostles themselves, the Holy Ghost dictating . . ." ³³ A great deal of research has been expended on the question of the meaning of these traditions. ³⁴ The points of greatest importance for our purpose are as follows:

There is a distinction made between declarative and constitutive tradition. As the terms indicate it is only in the latter that we meet the idea of revelational content given by God *in addition to* Scripture. Bartmann contends that it is not so much the former as the latter to which Protestants object. ³⁵ This is scarcely correct. The idea of constitutive tradition militates against the Protestant doctrine of Scripture's sufficiency. But Rome does far more than maintain that there have been preserved some teachings of Christ or the Apostles not recorded in Scripture. For these by themselves might, on the Romanist principle, become a dead letter. It is in the claim of declarative tradition that the activistic character of Rome's concept of revelation is most clearly expressed.

Bartmann himself speaks of an objective content and an activity as equally contained in the idea of tradition ("*tr. activa simul et obiectiva*"). ³⁶ It is this present declarative activity that is of greatest importance. The Protestant is glad to make use of the works of great Bible expositors. He believes in the guidance of the Spirit in the church's work of interpretation of Scripture. Protestant churches formulate their creeds and these creeds are said to give the best brief systematic exposition of Scripture. But only Rome, in its concept of the active and finally authoritative teaching function of the church virtually identifies its interpretation of revelation with revelation itself.

Scripture and tradition objectively considered are said to be

³³ Cf. Philip Schaff, *The Creeds of Christendom, The Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent*, Vol. II, p. 80.

³⁴ Cf. August Deneffe, S. J., *Der Traditionsbegriff*, Münster, 1931; Joseph Ranft, *Der Ursprung des katholischen Traditionsprinzips*, Würzburg, 1931.

³⁵ *Op. Cit.*, p. 34.

³⁶ *Op. Cit.*, p. 28.

the *regula fidei remota*, the church is the *regula fidei proxima*.⁸⁷ The church received the Bible from God. According to its God-given charisma it explains this Scripture authoritatively. Scripture has its authority *in se* but the church has authority *quoad nos*. In its teaching function the church is infallible.⁸⁸ The church does not give authority to Scripture. That she has in herself through inspiration. But the church represents Scripture and its authority with men. When Calvin argues that the church is built upon the authority of the Bible rather than the Bible upon the authority of the church this is right, says Bartmann, when we speak of *auctoritas in se*, but not when we speak of *auctoritas quoad nos*.⁸⁹

It is now no longer difficult to see that the Roman view of Scripture is the fruitage and expression of its general principle of interpretation. The reasons Rome gives for rejecting the idea of the sufficiency and direct authority of Scripture are, to all intents and purposes, the same as those given by the modern principle. The idea of a self-authenticating Scripture implies the idea of an exhaustive interpretation by God, in finished form, of the whole course of history. But for Rome no less than for the modern Protestant theologian such an interpretation is an abstraction and needs in practice to be made intelligible to man by means of the teaching function of the living church. Rome stands no doubt near to the top of the incline and modern Protestantism lies near to the bottom of the incline. Yet it is the same decline on which both are found.

THEOLOGY OF CRISIS

Turning now to the Theology of Crisis we seem at first to be in an atmosphere of genuine Protestantism. Barth's consistent polemic against the Roman idea of *analogia entis* is well known. Both Barth and Brunner claim to teach a theology of the Word.

⁸⁷ Bartmann, *Op. Cit.*, p. 37.

⁸⁸ *Idem*, p. 38.

⁸⁹ *Idem*, p. 37.

This claim is directed against the Roman conception of tradition and the Church.⁴⁰ And the acceptance of the Word is said to be due to the internal testimony of the Holy Spirit.

Moreover, the *Theology of the Word* sets itself in opposition to modern Protestantism. Turning away from Schleiermacher and Ritschl it stresses the *transcendence* of God. God is said to be *wholly other* than man. Brunner would speak of Revelation and Reason rather than of Reason and Revelation. We are asked to accept a theology of Luther and Calvin.

Yet even a cursory reading of the Crisis theologians reveals that Luther and Calvin are seen through the glasses of a modern critical epistemology. Accordingly we are asked to drop all *metaphysics* once and for all. When speaking of God's transcendence we are not to think of some being existing in self-contained form prior to his relation to man. God is identical with His revelation.⁴¹ As identical with His revelation God is Lord. And "Lordship is freedom."⁴² God has freedom to become wholly divorced from himself and then to return into himself. In the incarnation God is free *for us*. Christ is God *for man* and man for God. He stands for the process of revelation, or atonement that brings man into unity of being with God.

Without going into further details it is at once apparent that it is Luther and Calvin rather than Schleiermacher and Ritschl that really constitute the foe of the Crisis theologians. The very heart of a true Protestant theology is the self-contained character of God. But it is this heart that has been cut out of theology by both Barth and Brunner. For the internal correlativity of the three persons of the trinity as taught by orthodox theology they have substituted the correlativity between God and man.

In every major respect, then, the dialectical principle of interpretation is identical with that of the modern principle

⁴⁰ Emil Brunner: *Revelation and Reason*, tr. by Olive Wyon, Philadelphia, 1946, pp. 127, 146.

⁴¹ Barth: *Kirchliche Dogmatik*, I, 1, p. 313.

⁴² *Idem*, I, 1, p. 323.

discussed above. There is the same assumption of the autonomous man as the ultimate reference point for predication. Hence there is the same sort of principle of discontinuity and the same sort of principle of continuity. There is, consequently, in effect, the same denial of all the affirmations of orthodoxy. We say *in effect* there is the same denial. For verbally the reverse is often true.

In noting the bearing of the general dialectical principle upon the problem of Scripture we may consider Brunner's latest and fullest discussion of the subject in his work on *Revelation and Reason*. It is clear throughout this book that the ramshackle dwelling of orthodoxy must be completely demolished if the new and permanent edifice of dialecticism is to stand. A Scripture that claims to speak of an antecedent God, a metaphysical Christ, requires us to make a *sacrificium intellectus* and therefore cannot be accepted. "Faith is aware of the higher rationality and the higher actuality of the truth of revelation, and is ready to maintain this; but it is also aware of the impossibility of asserting its validity within the sphere which the autonomous human reason has delimited for itself . . . The truth of revelation is not in opposition to any truth of reason, nor to any fact that has been discovered by the use of reason. Genuine truths of faith are never in conflict with logic or with the sciences; they conflict only with the rationalistic or positivistic metaphysics, that is, with a reason that arrogates to itself the right to define the whole range of truth from the standpoint of *man*."⁴⁸ And this means in practice for Brunner that the Bible cannot teach anything about the "phenomenal world." According to the critical principles adopted in earlier works and assumed in the present one the phenomenal world is the world of impersonal forces. And revelation is said to deal with the world of "personal encounter." But orthodox theology speaks of God as creating the "phenomenal world." By creating orthodoxy means causing it to come into existence. It does not realize that the impersonal mechanical conception

⁴⁸ Emil Brunner: *Revelation and Reason*, p. 213.

of causality within the universe can tell us nothing about a personal God beyond the universe.⁴⁴ Further, orthodoxy speaks of certain all-determining events that took place at the beginning of the history of the "phenomenal" world. It thinks of God's creation of man in his image, of man's breaking the covenant that God had made with him, as being determinative of his own present personal relation to God. The Apostle Paul apparently thought that through one man, representing all his descendants, sin came into the world and passed upon all men.

But all this, Brunner argues or assumes, is but imaginary impersonation in a world of impersonal forces. If man is really to know himself as standing in personal relation to God, he must be rid of this attempt on the part of orthodox theology to reduce personalistic relations to impersonal physical and biological categories.

Moreover, what holds for the past holds, of course, also for the present and the future. How could the uniqueness of Christ and his work be maintained if he were identified with a man called Jesus of Nazareth? If the incarnation really meant the eternal Son's entrance into, and even partial identification with, some individual man in his physico-biological existence as orthodoxy maintains, this would again be the reduction of the personal to the impersonal. Then as to the future, orthodoxy speaks of a judgment day, a last day. But how could a personal God mediate his judgments by way of impersonal forces in an impersonal environment?

The entire idea of thinking of Scriptural revelation as confronting man with an existential system must be cast aside. The ideas of system and that of personal encounter are mutually exclusive of one another.

Brunner thinks of the idea of system as being, in the nature of the case, non-historical. The orthodox view cannot, he says, do justice to the uniqueness of the historical. Thus orthodoxy kills the very idea of prophetic prediction. "Thus where, as in the orthodox view, revelation is identified with supernaturally communicated doctrinal truth, the difference between that

⁴⁴ *Idem*, p. 286.

which was foretold and its fulfillment can well be ignored. It is timeless; that is, it is a doctrine perfectly communicated in one form of revelation and imperfectly in another. This point of view leaves out of account the decisive element in the Biblical revelation, namely, its historical character."⁴⁵

In presenting a non-historical system orthodoxy does despite to the freedom of the Holy Spirit.⁴⁶ It leads to "a breach of the Second Commandment; it is the deification of a creature, bibliolatry."⁴⁷ It "lacks a sense of community" and "does not allow for the necessary mediation between the word of the Bible and the modern man through the *viva vox ecclesiae*."⁴⁸ With its "fatal confusion of revelation with the communication of theological truths in doctrinal form" orthodoxy tends toward moralism and legalism.⁴⁹ In its direct identification of the words of the Bible with the Word of God orthodoxy interposes a curtain between the believer and his Christ.⁵⁰ It does not permit the believer to become genuinely contemporary with Christ.⁵¹

Substituting the idea of revelation as personal encounter for the orthodox one of system I may as a believer become as contemporary with Christ as was Peter.⁵² "No longer must I first of all ask the Apostle whether Jesus is really Lord. I know it as well as the Apostle himself, and indeed I know it exactly as the Apostle knew it; namely, from the Lord Himself, who reveals it to me."⁵³ Being thus contemporaneous with Christ the believer now shares in the grace and glory of God.⁵⁴ Being face to face with Christ as his contemporary also means having the true content of revelation. "We must say quite *clearly*: Christ is the Truth. *He* is the content; He is the "point" of all

⁴⁵ Emil Brunner: *Revelation and Reason*, p. 98.

⁴⁶ *Idem*, p. 145.

⁴⁷ *Idem*, p. 120.

⁴⁸ *Idem*, p. 145.

⁴⁹ *Idem*, p. 154.

⁵⁰ *Idem*, p. 145.

⁵¹ *Idem*, p. 170.

⁵² *Ibid.*

⁵³ *Idem*, p. 171.

⁵⁴ *Idem*, p. 117.

preaching of the Church; but He is also really its *content*.”⁵⁵ The Scriptures want to point to him. They want to be as a telescope through which the Christ is drawn near to us and we to him.

In addition to killing the true conception of revelation as personal encounter, orthodoxy, says Brunner, has done almost irreparable damage to the very idea of faith. “All Christian faith is based, according to this theory, upon faith in the trustworthiness of the Biblical writers. The whole edifice of faith is built upon them, upon their absolute and complete inspiration. What a fearful caricature of what the Bible itself means by faith. And on what a quaking ground has the Church of the Reformation, in its ‘orthodox’ perversion, placed both itself and its message! We owe a profound debt of gratitude to the historical criticism that has made it quite impossible to maintain this position. This mistaken faith in the Bible has turned everything topsy-turvy! It bases our faith-relation to Jesus Christ upon our faith in the Apostles. It is impossible to describe the amount of harm and confusion that has been caused by this fatal perversion of the foundations of faith, both in the Church as a whole and in the hearts of individuals.”⁵⁶

Over against this orthodox idea of a “closed Bible” Brunner advocates the idea of the “open Bible.” “It is not faith on an assumption based on an authoritarian pre-conception, but it is faith founded upon our relation to the content of that which is proclaimed in the Scriptures, or rather to the Person Himself, God manifest in the flesh, who speaks to me, personally, in the Scriptures.”⁵⁷

Enough has now been said to indicate that Brunner shares with the modern principle its non-rational principle of individuation. Revelational events must be separated from anything like propositional revelation. The correlativity between being and interpretation within the Godhead as maintained by orthodox theology is rejected.

⁵⁵ *Idem*, p. 151.

⁵⁶ *Idem*, p. 168.

⁵⁷ *Idem*, p. 169.

It is to be expected then that Brunner will also share the modern rationalistic conception of coherence. One who rejects the internal correlativity between revelational fact and revelational word by implication asserts the correlativity between non-rational factuality and abstract non-personal logic.

Looking at Brunner's principle of coherence or continuity what strikes us most is its pure formality. This is strictly in accord with a critical epistemology. And it is the only thing that fits in with the completely non-rational principle of individuality. Brunner says that the form and the content of revelation are fitted to one another. Now the content of revelation, as Brunner views the matter, is anything but systematic. Orthodoxy sought to harmonize the various teachings of the separate parts of Scripture in the interest of unity. But true unity includes all varieties of teaching. A true unity is such as not to kill the true uniqueness of history. And by uniqueness Brunner means, as we have seen, the non-rational. "Where the main concern is with unity of doctrine, historical differences continually cause painful embarrassment; but where the main concern is the unity of the divine purpose in saving history, historical differences are not only not embarrassing; they are necessary." ⁵⁸

Having been liberated from the orthodox doctrine of an infallible Bible by higher criticism, Brunner feels that he is also liberated from all concern for internal consistency of the Bible's testimony to Christ. "For at some points the variety of the Apostolic doctrine, regarded purely from the theological and intellectual point of view, is an irreconcilable contradiction." ⁵⁹

The real unity of revelation lies beyond and above the unifying efforts of logic. "It is precisely the most contradictory elements that belong to one another, because only thus can the truth of the Christ, which lies beyond all these doctrines, be plainly perceived." ⁶⁰

All this, however, seems to be purely negative. But this very

⁵⁸ *Idem*, p. 197.

⁵⁹ *Idem*, p. 290.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

negativity clearly brings out the pure formality of the principle of continuity employed. And being thus purely formal it is, in practice, correlative to the idea of pure contingency. The result is a form of transcendentalism. Accordingly, there can be no knowledge of anything transcendent. All reference to that which is transcendent must be in the way of ideals rather than in concepts.

All religious concepts are merely regulative not constitutive. Thus the whole of the realm of personal encounter between man and God is in the realm of the practical rather than the theoretical.

Yet we are not to think that there is no positive intellectual content in this theology of dialecticism. Since it so vigorously negates the orthodox view of reality which is based upon the Creator-creature distinction it naturally advocates a position which leads to man's absorption in God. Brunner's principle of continuity presupposes the virtual identity of man with God. It also self-consciously aims at the complete envelopment of the human subject by the divine Subject. Revelation and knowledge in this world, says Brunner, is always imperfect.⁶¹ But we aim to reach the perfect revelation, when we shall know as we are known. "Knowledge and revelation are then one; moreover, we are drawn into the inner being of God, and it is He alone who moves us inwardly to know Him . . . What is meant is that I am so drawn toward God that I have 'utterly passed over into God,' I am 'poured over into the will of God,' so that I have a share in His innermost creative movement; but, we must note, it is *I* who share in this movement."⁶²

Of course, when Brunner's principle of continuity thus leads him to complete absorption of man in God he quickly brings in the correlative principle of discontinuity by saying: "*I* do not disappear; my living movement, even though it is derived from God alone, is still *my* movement. I have nothing of my own to say, yet through God's perfect revelation I have a share

⁶¹ *Idem*, p. 185.

⁶² *Idem*, p. 192.

is what *He* is saying, and what He says is Reality. Thus I am what God says, what God thinks, and what He wills. The contrast between subject and object will completely disappear, but the fact of personal encounter, and thus of the nonidentity of God and myself, will remain. For I am in the truth and the truth is in me, as truth which is given to me and received by me, and this truth will be my very being, and my life."⁶³

This then is Brunner's Christ. "This truth will be no other than the God-man, Jesus Christ."⁶⁴ No Bible, in the orthodox sense, could possibly speak of such a Christ. The kind of Bible that fits with the dialectical principle is virtually the same as that which, as we have noted, fits with the modern principle. It is a Bible that "does not add to my knowledge."⁶⁵ It is a Bible that bears witness to a God who "does not 'instruct' or 'lecture' His people."⁶⁶ It is a Bible that contains high prophetic and apostolic perspectives from which, if we wish, we too may view reality.

If we accept the high perspective of prophets and apostles we too are prophets and apostles; we know precisely in the way they know. And though according to all our principles of knowledge the world of force is controlled by impersonal law yet we believe that somehow our ideal, our Christ, our virtual identification with God will be realized. "The personal truth of revelation, faith, and love includes within itself the impersonal truth connected with 'things,' and the impersonal truth connected with abstractions, but not vice versa. God Himself thinks, but He is not a thought. God has ideas, but He is not an idea. God has a plan, and He creates an order, but He is not a world order. God's Logos includes all the logos of reason within Himself, but He Himself is Person, the eternal Son."⁶⁷

The impasse that faces Brunner when he seeks somehow to combine his wholly impersonal realm of the phenomenal and

⁶³ *Ibid.*

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 27.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 87.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 373.

his wholly personal realm of the noumenal is the same as that of the modern principle. We believe it is obvious that it is only in orthodoxy that there is really personal confrontation of God and man. God meets man in nature. God meets man in the Old Testament. God, the triune God, meets man everywhere. In introducing the idea of an impersonal environment for man in nature, in the Old Testament and even in the propositional revelation of the New Testament while yet maintaining that only in the dialectical principle does religion mean personal confrontation of man with God, Brunner is compelled to make the person of man the final reference point. In the last analysis every theology or philosophy is personalistic. Everything "impersonal" must be brought into relationship with an ultimate personal point of reference. Orthodoxy takes the self-contained ontological trinity to be this point of reference. The only alternative to this is to make man himself the final point of reference. Thus dialectical theology is not a theology of the Word; it knows of no God who could speak a word. The God and the Christ of dialectical theology, like the God and the Christ of the modern principle is a projection of man himself. Feuerbach has every right to smile at this transcendence theology which is but undercover anthropology. It appears then that the Theology of Crisis works on the basis of a critical epistemology similar to that of Schleiermacher and his spiritual descendents and that it therefore holds a view of revelation and Scripture that is also similar to theirs.

The total picture that results from our brief general analysis then is as follows: The view of Scripture as so ably presented and defended by Warfield is held by orthodox Protestants alone. And among these orthodox Protestants it is only the followers of Calvin who have a theology that fully fits in with this idea of Scripture. Only a God who controls whatsoever comes to pass can offer to man His interpretation of the course of history in the form of an existential system. An evangelical,

that is a virtually Arminian, theology makes concessions to the principle that controls a "theology of experience." In admitting and even maintaining a measure of autonomy for man, such evangelicalism is bound to admit that the non-Christian principles of continuity and of discontinuity have a measure of truth in them. And to the precise extent that evangelicalism makes these concessions in its theology does it weaken its own defense of the infallible Bible. Such evangelicals have done and are doing excellent detail work in the defense of Scripture but they lack the theology that can give coherence to their effort. Therefore they also lack the general apologetic methodology that can make their detail-work stand out in its real challenge against the principle of experience.

The Roman Catholic position goes much further along the road of Evangelicalism in the direction of an experience theology. It breaks openly with the idea of the Bible as a self-contained revelation. Its conception of tradition and the church leads directly in the direction of the modern view.

As for the theology of Experience we have seen that it is today divided into two main camps. Of these two it is the Theology of-Crisis that seems to stand nearer to the orthodox view than does the other. Yet this is only appearance. In the case of both camps it is the experience of man himself, individually or collectively, that is the final reference point of all meaning.

This theology of Experience, as has been shown, now faces the abyss of the utterly meaningless. The principle of discontinuity is frankly irrational. It is embraced in the interest of the *uniqueness* of historical fact and revelation. But this uniqueness is purchased at the price of utter darkness. Then as to its principle of continuity this is purely formal and, therefore, without ability to come into contact with reality. It is embraced in the interest of flexibility. And indeed it is flexible. It comports with and even requires the idea of the utterly irrational for its correlative.

And in all this the theology of Experience is of a piece with

modern science and modern philosophy. The prodigal is at the swine-trough but finds that he cannot as a rational creature feed himself with the husks that non-rational creatures eat.

It is in this situation that the present volume goes out, beseeching the prodigal to return to the father's house. In the father's house are many mansions. In it alone will the "son" find refuge and food. The presupposition of all intelligible meaning for man in the intellectual, the moral and the aesthetic spheres is the existence of the God of the Bible who, if he speaks at all in grace cannot, without denying himself, but speak in a self-contained infallible fashion. Only in a return to the Bible as infallibly inspired in its autography is there hope for science, for philosophy and for theology. Without returning to this Bible science and philosophy may flourish with borrowed capital as the prodigal flourished for a while with his father's substance. But the prodigal had no self-sustaining principle. No man has till he accepts the Scripture that Warfield presents.

CORNELIUS VAN TIL.