

The INSPIRATION *and*
AUTHORITY *of the* BIBLE

Revised and Enhanced

BENJAMIN B. WARFIELD

Edited by John J. Hughes



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For those who love the Word of the Lord

CONTENTS

Foreword to the Revised Edition	xiii
Foreword to the First Edition	xix
Acknowledgments	xxiii
Introduction to Warfield's Works by Sinclair B. Ferguson	xxvii
Abbreviations	xxxix

1. The Biblical Idea of Revelation 1

The Nature of Revelation

The Religion of the Bible—The Only Supernatural Religion
General and Special Revelation

The Process of Revelation

The Place of Revelation among the Redemptive Acts of God
Stages of Material Development

Modes of Revelation

Modes of Revelation
Equal Supernaturalness of the Several Modes
The Prophet—God's Mouthpiece
Prophecy in Vision Form
"Passivity" of the Prophets
Revelation by Inspiration
Complete Revelation of God in Christ

Biblical Terminology

The Ordinary Forms
"Word of Jehovah" and "Torah"
"The Scriptures"

2. The Church Doctrine of Inspiration 37

Universal Agreement

<i>Two Defective Views</i>	
<i>Rationalistic View</i>	
<i>Mystical View</i>	
<i>The Origin of the Doctrine</i>	
<i>Questions about the Doctrine</i>	
<i>Conclusion</i>	
3. The Biblical Idea of Inspiration	67
Theōpneustos	
2 Timothy 3:16	
2 Peter 1:19–21	
John 10:34–35	
<i>Jesus’ View of Scripture’s Authority</i>	
<i>The NT Authors’ View of Scripture’s Authority</i>	
<i>How God Gave Us the Scriptures</i>	
<i>The NT Authors and the Development of Scripture</i>	
<i>Inspiration and Revelation</i>	
4. The Real Problem of Inspiration	107
<i>Overview of the Problem</i>	
<i>The Biblical Doctrine of Inspiration Clear</i>	
<i>Modifications to the Biblical Doctrine Undermine Scripture’s Authority</i>	
<i>Christ versus the Apostles</i>	
<i>Accommodation or Ignorance?</i>	
<i>Teaching versus Opinion</i>	
<i>Facts versus Doctrine</i>	
<i>Immense Weight of Evidence for the Biblical Doctrine</i>	
<i>Strong Presumption against Alleged Facts Contradictory to Inerrancy</i>	
<i>Conclusion</i>	
5. “Scripture,” “The Scriptures,” in the New Testament	167
<i>The Idea of a Canon of Sacred Scriptures</i>	
<i>Synonyms for “Sacred Scriptures” in the NT</i>	
<i>The Use of Graphē in the NT</i>	
<i>Graphē, Graphai, Gramma, Grammata, and Literary Documents</i>	
<i>Graphē, Graphai, Gramma, and Grammata in NT Usage</i>	
2 Peter 3:16 and Hai Graphai	
<i>Hē Graphē Used in NT to Refer to Individual Passages of Scripture</i>	

Uses of Graphē and Graphai in the NT

“It Is Said”; “It Is Written”

On the Terms Bible, Holy Bible

6. “God-Inspired Scripture” 221

The Evidence of the Lexicons

Cremer’s Deviation from the Norm

Θεόπνευστος: The Width of Its Usage

Θεόπνευστος and the Sibyllines

Θεόπνευστος and Plutarch

Θεόπνευστος and Pseudo-Galen

Analysis and Evaluation of Diel’s Solution

Θεόπνευστος and the Fifth Book of the Sibyllines

Θεόπνευστος and the Testament of Abraham

Θεόπνευστος and Nonnus

Θεόπνευστος and an Inscription Found at Bostra

Active Sense of Θεόπνευστος Not Supported

Uniformly Passive Significance of Θεόπνευστος Supported

Θεόπνευστος Means “God-Breathed”

Θεόπνευστος and Philo’s View of Scripture

Θεόπνευστος and Its Unbroken Exegetical Tradition

Θεόπνευστος Understood in Its Context

Conclusion

7. “It Says:” “Scripture Says:” “God Says” 279

The Equivalence of “God” and “Scripture”

Scriptures Spoken of as if They Were God

God Spoken of as if He Were the Scriptures

*Passages with Subjectless Λέγει or Φησί Discussed in Greek Grammars
and Commentaries*

Dr. T. K. Abbott’s Comments on Ephesians 4:8 and 4:15

Lightfoot and Heinrici’s Support

Confusion in Dr. Abbott’s Mind

George Purves: “St. Paul and Inspiration”

Westcott on the Use of the OT in the Epistle to the Hebrews

Hebrews and Paul Compared More Broadly

Philo’s Fundamental Conception of Scripture

Ephesians 4:8, 5:14, and Impersonal Greek Verbs

Contents

Φησί as Impersonal
Cases of Subjectless Λέγει and Philo
Conclusion

8. “The Oracles of God” 335
 Τὰ Λόγια in Classic Greek Usage
 Τὰ Λόγια in Hellenistic Greek Usage
 Τὰ Λόγια in Patristic Greek Usage
 Τὰ Λόγια as a Synonym of Αἱ Γραφαί in the Early Fathers
 Conclusion

Appendix A: Other Articles by Warfield on Inspiration
 and the Bible 401

Appendix B: Introduction to the First Edition
 by Cornelius Van Til 403
 The Purpose of This Introduction
 Philosophical Presuppositions and Knowledge
 The Inseparability of Facts and Interpretation
 The Antithesis between Authority and Reason
 Authority
 Reason
 Authority and Abstraction; Reason and the “Beyond”
 The Infallible Word and Orthodox Christianity
 The Non-Infallible Word and Orthodox Christianity
 The Wholly Unique and Ultimate Irrationality
 The Self-Contained God versus the Self-Contained Man
 “Truths of Fact”
 Aquinas, Butler, and a Non-Christian Philosophy of Fact
 These Arguments Compromise Scripture’s Teaching about Its Own Clarity
 These Arguments Compromise Scripture’s Teaching about Self-Deception
 The Clear-Cut Antithesis between the Two Positions
 Infallibility and the Sovereign God of the Bible
 Faith and Reason
 Faith Subordinated to Reason
 Using Correlativity to Harmonize Faith and Reason
 Faith and Reason Equally Impersonal
 Infallibility and the Reformed Faith

Contents

The Infallible Word and Sin
The Necessity of Scripture
The Perspicacity of Scripture
The Sufficiency of Scripture
Revelation in Scripture and the Testimony of the Spirit
The Authority of Scripture
The Philosophical Relevance of Scripture: It Alone Speaks Infallibly of God, Man, and the Universe
The Natural Man: Image of God, Knowledge of God, Grace of God, Spirit of God
Reasoning by Way of Presupposition
Christian and Non-Christian Principles of Continuity and Discontinuity
The Self-Contained God and Mystery
Two Positions with Respect to Reality and Knowledge
Authority and Reason according to Lutheranism, Romanism, and Dialecticism
Lutheranism
Romanism
Theology of Crisis
Conclusion: God's Sovereignty and Scripture's Infallibility

Appendix C: The Canon of the New Testament: How and
When Formed 467
The Formation of the Canon of the NT

Appendix D: Inspiration and Criticism 475
Is the Church Doctrine of the Plenary Inspiration of the NT Endangered by the Assured Results of Modern Biblical Criticism?
The NT Authors Claim Verbal Inspiration for Their Writings
The Inspiration Implied in These Passages Is Directly Claimed Elsewhere
The NT Authors Treat One Another's Writings as Verbally Inspired Scripture
The NT Authors' Writings Were Received as Scripture
Objections to NT Doctrine of Inspiration Must Deny That Claim
Modern Biblical Criticism Has Not Disproved the Authenticity of Any NT Book
Modern Biblical Criticism Has Not Disproved the Verbal Inspiration of Any NT Book

Contents

Glossary of Defined Terms	507
Bibliography	513
Select Books on Warfield and His Theology by Fred G. Zaspel	543
Brief Biography of Benjamin B. Warfield by Samuel G. Craig	545
Index of Scripture and Other Works Cited	585
Index of Names	605
Index of Subjects	615

FOREWORD TO THE REVISED EDITION

THE theological writings of Benjamin Breckinridge Warfield (1851–1921) on the inspiration and authority of the Bible are as timely today as they were when he published them in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The issues he so competently addressed, created by scholarly attacks on orthodox Christianity and the Bible, are still with us, and their forms are not much altered. Warfield's meticulous, sometimes seemingly omniscient scholarship, coupled with his academic acumen, has long been regarded as exemplifying the finest that Princeton Theological Seminary produced, before its reorganization along modernist theological lines in 1929.

Before coming to Princeton, Warfield was Professor of New Testament Literature and Exegesis at Western Theological Seminary in Pittsburgh for eight years,¹ during which time he published, among other writings, *An Introduction to the Textual Criticism of the New Testament*,² the first textbook on New Testament textual criticism written by an American, and distinguished himself as a New Testament scholar of the highest order. In his biographical sketch of Warfield (included in this volume), Samuel G. Craig wrote:

In view of the exceptional gifts as an exegete he had displayed and the promise they offered for the future along that line, many of his wisest friends and well-wishers questioned the wisdom of his accepting this new call [to teach at Princeton]. Years afterwards, if our memory serves us right, William Robertson Nicoll, the distinguished editor of *The British*

1. Warfield served at Western for nine years (1878–87). He was a lecturer his first year and then was promoted to professor.

2. Benjamin Breckinridge Warfield, *An Introduction to the Textual Criticism of the New Testament*, 7th ed. (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1907), 225 pages. It went through seven editions (1886–1907). Warfield was 35 years old when this book was first published.

Weekly, expressed the opinion in that publication that it was a thousand pities that Warfield did not continue to make the New Testament his chief field of study in the belief that such were his qualifications as an exegete that had he done so he might have ranked with Meyer and others as a New Testament commentator.³

Warfield's unquestioned skill as a New Testament exegete shines brightly in the chapters of this volume (especially in the area of lexicography⁴), where he is by no means out of his depth when crossing swords with the leading New Testament scholars of his day, e.g., H. Cremer, J. B. Lightfoot, B. F. Westcott, and F. J. A. Hort, showing genuine appreciation for their work on the one hand and perceptive criticism of some of their arguments and conclusions on the other.⁵

During his more than thirty-three years at Princeton (1887 to 1921) as the Charles Hodge Professor of Didactic and Polemic Theology, Warfield wrote the majority of the "more than forty books and booklets, nearly seven hundred periodical articles, [and] more than a thousand book reviews"⁶ that were published during his lifetime. After Warfield's death, his brother, Ethelbert D. Warfield, no mean scholar in his own right, working with William Park Armstrong and Caspar Wistar Hodge, selected eighty-nine of those articles and published them in ten volumes from 1927 to 1932 with Oxford University Press under the title *The Works of Benjamin B. Warfield*.⁷ These volumes were subsequently reprinted by Baker Book House in 1981, 1991, 2000, and 2003.

From 1948 to 1958, P&R Publishing⁸ published a five-volume collection of Warfield's best theological articles under the titles *The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible*, *The Person and Work of Christ*, *Biblical and Theological Studies*, *Calvin and Augustine*, and *Perfectionism*. In his informative,

3. Samuel G. Craig, "Benjamin B. Warfield—Biographical Sketch," last accessed April 23, 2021, <http://graceonlinelibrary.org/biographies/benjamin-b-warfield-biographical-sketch-by-samuel-g-craig/>.

4. See especially chapters 5, 6, 7, and 8.

5. The eight chapters in this volume were originally published in 1915, 1894, 1915, 1893, 1910, 1900, 1899, and 1900, in that order.

6. Fred G. Zaspel, *The Theology of B. B. Warfield: A Systematic Summary* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010), 27.

7. Benjamin Breckinridge Warfield, Ethelbert Dudley Warfield, and William Park Armstrong, *The Works of Benjamin B. Warfield* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1927–32).

8. Then known as the Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company.

analytical forewords to the original volumes in this collection, Samuel Craig, P&R's first president and the series editor for the Warfield volumes, explained that with few exceptions all the articles were taken from various volumes in the out-of-print Oxford University Press edition of Warfield's works.⁹

The goal of this current project is to provide twenty-first-century readers—including scholars, students, and educated laypeople—with more accessible, readable, and useful versions of these books. To achieve these goals, I have made the following improvements:

- In the table of contents, I have listed each chapter's top-level outline, thus making it easy to see the main topics that Warfield covers, and I have noted whether a chapter is technical or nontechnical in nature.
- I have added a fulsome abstract at the beginning of each chapter and study questions and a "For Further Study" section at the end of each chapter. The abstracts are designed to provide an overview and summary of the chapters, using Warfield's own words as much as possible. The study questions reflect the key issues that Warfield addressed in the chapters and should be beneficial for classroom use. The annotated "For Further Study" sections, created by Warfield scholar Fred Zaspel with assistance from fellow Warfield scholar Jeffrey Stivason, list works by Warfield and works by other authors related to each chapter's main topics. "For Further Study" selections are intended to illuminate the many topics that Warfield covers and to expand the reader's understanding of them.
- Within each chapter, I have broken excessively long paragraphs into shorter ones (assisted in this task by Scott Christensen, Karen Magnuson, and Amanda Martin), created internal A- and B-heads to serve as road maps,¹⁰ modernized footnotes and bibliographies (see below), created bibliographies for chapters that lacked them,¹¹

9. ED. NOTE. A physical comparison of the original P&R articles with their OUP counterparts indicates that P&R reproduced the OUP articles using a photomechanical process.

10. Of the eight chapters in this volume, only chapter 1 ("The Biblical Idea of Revelation") and chapter 4 ("The Real Problem of Inspiration") had internal outlines.

11. Only chapters 1, 3, and 5 had bibliographies, and the entries typically lacked complete information by today's standards.

and when possible supplied the actual information in places where Warfield used *ad loc.*, *in loc.*, *loc. cit.*, *op. cit.*, and *sub voc.* I have also conformed the use of italics and quotation marks to *The Chicago Manual of Style* (17th ed.). Additionally, except in quotations, I have followed CMS's recommendation to use shortened citations in place of "ibid." to avoid confusion, for example: "Monod, 357" instead of "ibid., 357."

- I have provided complete bibliographical information in footnotes and bibliographies—information that should facilitate accessing the same texts that Warfield cited—including full author names when possible.¹² As appropriate, I created proper footnotes from in-line citations, while leaving others in place for clarity of reading. By and large, I have not provided bibliographical information for the many classic commentaries that Warfield cites in this manner: "see Mayor on James 4:5, and cf. Lightfoot on 1 Cor. 2:9, Westcott on John 7:38, Godet on Luke 11:49." Most of these commentaries are well known and can easily be found in research libraries, digital collections, and online.
- Throughout the chapters, I have conformed spelling and capitalization to *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary* (11th ed.), abbreviations for biblical books to P&R's house style, abbreviations for primary sources to those in *The SBL Handbook of Style* (2nd ed.), the citation style for primary texts to the decimal style advocated by the *SBL Handbook* (§ 8.3), and the citation style in footnotes and bibliographies to *The Chicago Manual of Style* (17th ed.). A table of abbreviations provides a guide to the many primary sources Warfield cites.
- To assist in navigation, throughout the book left running headers display the current chapter's title, and right running headers display the chapter's current main outline level.
- Scattered throughout the volume I have added 170 editor notes—indicated by "ED. NOTE." These provide translations of obscure

12. Many of the books listed in each chapter's bibliography can be found in full-text PDF format on the HathiTrust Digital Library site (<https://www.hathitrust.org/>). Articles in journals formerly published by Princeton can be found in full-text PDF format in "The Princeton Theological Seminary Journals" collection (<https://commons.ptsem.edu/pts-journals>).

Latin words and phrases, definitions of opaque English words, where the chapters in the volume first appeared (e.g., *Princeton Theological Review*), comments on bibliographical matters, and other pertinent information designed to help the reader. The “Glossary of Defined Terms” at the end of this volume lists the 100+ lexicographical editor notes.

- A comprehensive bibliography of 430 entries lists the books and journal articles cited in this volume. Three indices—Scripture and other works cited, names, and subjects—professionally created by John Muether, make it easy to locate various sorts of information.

To guide readers interested in studying Warfield and his theology, Fred Zaspel has provided a helpful annotated list of key titles—“Select Books on Warfield and His Theology”—for which I am grateful.

Other changes from the first edition of this volume include making Cornelius Van Til’s introduction an appendix and substituting for chapter 5 the *Princeton Theological Review* article of which it was a condensation.¹³

To help ensure the scholarly integrity of this volume, apart from conforming Warfield’s spelling and use of case to *Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary*, I have not altered his words, including leaving “Holy Ghost,” rather than changing this to “Holy Spirit” (though Warfield uses both terms), and not changing “Jehovah” (= YHWH) to “LORD.”

This volume brings together Warfield’s best articles on the inspiration and authority of the Bible. In these articles Warfield expounds and defends the biblical teaching on these topics, and shows that the church doctrine is the New Testament doctrine, which is built on Christ’s own teaching, as well as on that of the Scriptures as a whole. The first four chapters in this volume are nontechnical; the last four are technical. All eight chapters reflect Warfield’s incisive scholarship.

Warfield was a watchman on the wall of orthodoxy. His temperament, training, and talent, together with his deep love for Christ and his amazing knowledge and work ethic, resulted in his being the twentieth century’s greatest defender of the faith. His writings have been studied with profit for well

13. “Scripture,” “The Scriptures,” in the New Testament,” *PTR* 8, no. 4 (1910): 560–612.

Foreword to the Revised Edition

over a hundred years—a tribute to his clear, careful, cogent, gospel-centered exposition of orthodox Christianity, which he called “the redemptive religion,” and to his fearless exposition and defense of it.

My prayer is that this revised, enhanced volume will help foster an increased interest in Warfield’s writings and that his words will continue to speak to the church across the coming decades with their original power and clarity.

John J. Hughes
Whitefish, Montana

FOREWORD TO THE FIRST EDITION

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 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 3 and with, perhaps, unexampled thoroughness as regards the meaning of certain crucial words and phrases as employed in the New Testament in chapters 6, 7, and 8. 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 2 and 4.

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 neoorthodoxy, 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.

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

Foreword to the First Edition

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.

Samuel G. Craig

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to thank the following people for their help with this project.

Bryce Craig, P&R Publishing's president, envisioned the project, asked me to head it up, and has encouraged me along the way, for which I am most grateful. Bryce's grandfather Samuel G. Craig (who along with J. Gresham Machen founded P&R) was a student of Warfield's at Princeton and later his good friend—so much so that P&R has the very desk at which Warfield studied and wrote, as well as many of his armchairs. The articles in this book may well have been written at that desk! The theology of Warfield—the twentieth century's greatest expounder and defender of the Reformed faith as embodied in the Westminster Confession of Faith—has been inextricably entwined with P&R's publishing vision for over ninety years, since the company was founded in 1930.¹

Sinclair Ferguson, an expert on Warfield's theology, graciously lent his expertise and reputation to this project by writing the excellent "Introduction to Warfield's Works," which follows these acknowledgments and for which I am most appreciative. In his introduction, Dr. Ferguson aptly explains why Warfield's theological writings have a timeless quality that makes them as valuable today as when they were first published:

Warfield's perspective was that of a biblical theologian, and there is therefore a kind of timelessness and constancy about much of his writing. In

1. Samuel Craig was also on the organizing committee for Westminster Theological Seminary and a trustee (1929–36). In 1934 he delivered the commencement address to the seminary's fifth graduating class, referencing Warfield no fewer than nine times. See Samuel G. Craig, *Westminster Seminary and the Reformed Faith* (Philadelphia: Hathaway & Brothers, 1934), republished in *Christianity Today* 5, no. 5 (October 1934): 108–12. In May 1930, P&R launched the magazine *Christianity Today*, and Dr. Craig served as its editor until 1949. In 1956 the journal's name was acquired by the company now known as Christianity Today International.

Acknowledgments

addition, he was, in the most fundamental sense, a radical theologian. He penetrated to the *radix*, to the root, of the issues with which he dealt, as he also did with the doctrinal positions of the theologians whose work he analyzed. He penetrated to, and formulated his thought based on, first principles. And it is these qualities that make so much of his work ongoingly relevant, even in a world where much has changed. So while in his writings a modern reader may occasionally encounter a name now largely forgotten, his positive exposition of Christian doctrine has a perennial quality about it. The way he thinks, the approach he adopts to theological questions, the profound biblical orientation of what he writes, the theological principles that he brings to light, coupled with his elegant writing style, all combine to give his work a lasting quality that can be appreciated just as much in the first decades of the twenty-first century as it was in the parallel decades of the twentieth century.

Fred G. Zaspel, author of the magisterial and highly acclaimed *The Theology of B. B. Warfield: A Systematic Summary* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010), graciously spent hours creating the “For Further Study” sections that appear at the end of each chapter. He was assisted in this task by Jeffrey A. Stivason, also a Warfield scholar, whose *From Inscrutability to Concursus: Benjamin B. Warfield’s Theological Construction of Revelation’s Mode from 1880 to 1915* P&R published in 2017 as part of our Reformed Academic Dissertations series. Dr. Zaspel also contributed the helpful annotated “Select Books on Warfield and His Theology,” which is part of this volume’s end matter. A hearty thanks to both these men for their invaluable contributions to this volume and for their many encouraging words.

Thanks also to these Warfield scholars who provided valuable advice and suggestions about various matters, along with welcome encouragement and enthusiasm for the project: Kim Riddlebarger, author of *The Lion of Princeton: B. B. Warfield as Apologist and Theologian*, Studies in Historical and Systematic Theology (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2015); Bradley J. Gundlach, author of “B. B. Warfield (1851–1921): Evolution, Human Origins, and the Development of Theology,” in *Science and the Doctrine of Creation*, eds. Geoffrey Fulkerson and Joel Chopp (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2021), 59–83; and David P. Smith, author of *B. B. Warfield’s Scientifically Constructive Theological Scholarship*,

Acknowledgments

Evangelical Theological Society Monograph Series 10 (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2011).

So that we could retypeset the Warfield volumes, we had the text professionally keyboarded, and this included having the Greek keyed in Beta code.² To convert the Beta-coded Greek to proper Greek, Christopher J. Samuel at SIL kindly provided a Beta-Code-to-Unicode converter, as well as a converter that changed Roman numerals to Arabic ones in biblical citations. Jeffrey Jou carefully entered the Hebrew into the chapters, using an electronic copy of *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*, thus helping to ensure the highest degree of accuracy, and he proofread the Greek and Hebrew in the typeset copy. John Muether created three indices—Scripture and other works cited, names, and subjects—that make it easy to locate various sorts of information. Thank you Christopher, Jeffrey, and John.

To make Warfield's writing more inviting and easier to read, my friend and P&R author Scott Christensen,³ one of the best writers I know, assisted me in carefully dividing many of Warfield's huge paragraphs into smaller ones.⁴ For Scott's painstaking help I am truly thankful.

As editing progressed on this volume, my P&R colleague Amanda Martin provided valuable advice in response to various questions, helped with the task of creating more paragraph breaks, and made excellent suggestions for improving the readability of the text. I am most grateful for her assistance.

Karen Magnuson assiduously applied her amazing copyediting skills to this volume and graciously answered my many editing-related questions; I am deeply indebted to Karen for her excellent work. Mary Ruth Murdoch meticulously proofread this volume with eagle-eyed precision, and for her careful work I am also grateful. Karen's and Mary Ruth's expertise has helped to ensure that this volume meets the highest standards of professionalism in academic book publishing.

Finally, I am thankful to my wife, Claire, a former fellow Westminster Theological Seminary student who is also a Warfield reader, for her patience

2. "Beta Code," last accessed April 24, 2021, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Beta_Code.

3. *What about Free Will? Reconciling Our Choices with God's Sovereignty* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2016); *What about Evil? A Defense of God's Sovereign Glory* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2020).

4. ED. NOTE. Frequently in the original P&R books, Warfield's paragraphs are over two pages long. One sentence alone was over 300 words!

Acknowledgments

with me as I disappeared for many hours and many days to work on this volume and for her consistent encouragement to do so.

May the Lord of Glory be glorified by this volume, and may it serve to help build up his church throughout the world.

John J. Hughes
Whitefish, Montana

INTRODUCTION TO WARFIELD'S WORKS

SINCLAIR B. FERGUSON

IT is a privilege to introduce this new edition of collected writings of B. B. Warfield. Behind the privilege lies a personal narrative.

While I can pinpoint the first time I heard of B. B. Warfield, it was not my first encounter with the surname. For *Warfield* was the maiden name of “that woman”—the description of choice employed by my mother’s generation for Mrs. Wallis Simpson. Her entrance into the life of Edward, the Prince of Wales and heir to the British throne (upon the death of his father, George V), precipitated a constitutional crisis and led to his abdication in December 1936.

The twice-divorced Mrs. Simpson was always known to me as Wallis *Warfield* Simpson. Little did I know in my childhood that in due season the writings of one of her distant cousins, Benjamin Breckinridge Warfield, would come to mean so much to me. But so it proved to be. Years later, in my very first days at university, an older student referred me to the writings of “B. B. Warfield” in such reverential tones that I realized that whoever he was, and wherever his work was to be found, he was clearly an author who merited careful attention.

In those days, however, apart from a small collection of his essays entitled *Biblical Foundations*,¹ Warfield’s works were virtually nowhere to be found in Scotland. Thankfully for me, I was surrounded by older students in our

1. B. B. Warfield, *Biblical Foundations* (London: Tyndale Press, 1958).

Inter-Varsity Fellowship group who read serious Christian books as well as contemporary paperbacks. And these senior students had somehow discovered an organization known as The Craig Press Agency through which books published in the United States were imported into the country. Its catalogue listed a five-volume set of Warfield's works—and even better news, they were available at highly discounted prices (an irresistible combination to a young Scottish student). And so as a teenager I eagerly purchased five volumes that became familiar companions.

It is these volumes that are here republished. They have been freshly edited and formatted in a user-friendly form in this new edition and include new material. Now a new generation can enjoy this enhanced presentation of the work of a genuinely great American theologian.

B. B. Warfield died in 1921. Since then, the output of literature in theological scholarship, not least of a conservative variety, has increased exponentially. So it might be assumed that the republication of material more than a century old has only antiquarian value.

In Warfield's case, however, there are reasons why this is far from the truth. For one thing, Warfield's perspective was that of a biblical theologian, and there is therefore a kind of timelessness and constancy about much of his writing. In addition, he was, in the most fundamental sense, a radical theologian. He penetrated to the *radix*, to the root, of the issues with which he dealt, as he also did with the doctrinal positions of the theologians whose work he analyzed. He penetrated to, and formulated his thought based on, first principles. And it is these qualities that make so much of his work ongoingly relevant, even in a world where much has changed. So while in his writings a modern reader may occasionally encounter a name now largely forgotten, his positive exposition of Christian doctrine has a perennial quality about it. The way he thinks, the approach he adopts to theological questions, the profound biblical orientation of what he writes, the theological principles that he brings to light, coupled with his elegant writing style, all combine to give his work a lasting quality that can be appreciated just as much in the first decades of the twenty-first century as it was in the parallel decades of the twentieth century.

In addition, while the names change and the contexts differ, the basic theological issues with which Warfield had to deal frequently reappear

under a different name, only thinly disguised as something new and different. And one of the virtues exemplified in his work—first observed by him, he believed, in his own revered teacher Charles Hodge—is that he has the capacity to make his readers *think*.

Scripture

Warfield continues to be best known today (and most frequently quoted across the board) for his work on the doctrine of Scripture, much of which is embodied in this set in the volume titled *The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible*. Indeed, if we were looking for tributes or memorials to him, one would be found in the tendency of modern Bible translations to render *theōpneustos* in 2 Timothy 3:16 as “God-breathed” or “breathed out by God” rather than (as in the older, King James tradition) by “inspired.” This reflected Warfield’s discussion of the term and his argument that Scripture is not “breathed into” (in-spired) by God but rather “breathed out” by God. It is, to echo Jeremiah 1:9, God’s words in man’s mouth, not man’s words then given the character of being “inspired.” In this way, Warfield was able to emphasize both the divinity and the humanity of Scripture.

Warfield expounded not only the nature of Scripture as “God-breathed,” but also its self-referential consciousness that what “it said” was what “God said.” Thus, what Scripture says should be heard, received, and obeyed as what “God says.” He thus shared John Calvin’s famously stated view that because of this, believers reverence the Scriptures aright only when they “regard them as having sprung from heaven, as if there the living words of God were heard.”²

In fact, relatively few theologians have breathed the spirit of Calvin’s combination of doctrine and devotion as did Warfield. This is in large measure the reason that so much of his work that was originally written for academically oriented journals has been read with such pleasure and profit by Christians beyond the academy. That said, contemporary seminary students who come to Warfield in this new setting of his work will doubtless breathe a sigh of relief that the editor has judiciously broken down Warfield’s extensive paragraphs

2. John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, ed. John T. McNeill, trans. Ford Lewis Battles (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1960), 1.7.1.

into lengths digestible by us moderns. Warfield lived in a day—remembered now only by the elderly—when students were taught that a paragraph began with the introduction of a new idea or development in thought and closed when it in turn had been fully developed and exhausted. It was not unusual for Warfield to sustain a thought he wished to expound for more than three pages! But while the format is now more user-friendly, the substance remains unchanged. These pages remain genuine BBW!

What marks out Warfield's contributions to the doctrine of Scripture, but also all his other work, is that it is so biblically erudite. His own career path, providentially, imitated that of his teacher the elder Hodge. Like him, he was first a professor of New Testament. He thus was equally at home in the pages of Scripture as he was in the pages of the great works of theology.

What is more, his assessment of the writings emerging from the guild of systematic theologians was always the result of viewing their teaching through lenses crafted to a biblical prescription. Doing theology for him was never a matter of merely comparing the opinions of other theologians and choosing the best available option (with perhaps the occasional reference to Scripture). That modern form of the older scholastic methodology (which the Reformers found so stultifying) was far removed from his own approach. Even after his appointment to teach theology at Princeton Seminary, he could produce the kind of work illustrated by *The Lord of Glory*³ that demonstrated his detailed and patient attention to the text of Scripture. And although he did not follow Hodge's example of writing biblical commentaries, he was perhaps an even richer exegete than his teacher. He admired Hodge's scholarship as well as revering him as a person (he thought he had never made a major decision without asking himself, "What would Dr. Hodge think about this?"), but believed that although he had a Calvin-like instinct for getting to the meaning of a passage, he had a relative disinterest in fine exegetical distinctions.

Christology

Warfield's significance has perhaps been slightly distorted in theological circles by a somewhat monolithic interest in his work on Scripture. Important

3. B. B. Warfield, *The Lord of Glory: A Study of the Designations of Our Lord in the New Testament with Especial Reference to His Deity* (New York: American Tract Society, 1907).

though that is, it represents only one element in his contribution. The availability of these five volumes should help to prevent the first of them from obscuring the others. In fact, Warfield was equally insightful, and perhaps we could say even more “at home,” when he was writing on Christology, as *The Person and Work of Christ* illustrates.

Here Warfield regularly engaged with the critical scholarship of his time. Indeed, as his many book reviews give evidence, he regarded it as part of his calling to interact with theological trends in Europe and to give guidance on them to the church in the United States. That scholarship is now over a century old, and not every reader will be immediately attracted to an essay entitled “The Two Natures and Recent Christological Speculation” or be familiar with names such as Johannes Weiss and Paul Wilhelm Schmiedel. But Warfield had an ability to penetrate to the underlying issues—surely a hallmark of all truly great theologians. This means that his discussion of what may now seem remote and doubtfully relevant views becomes a kind of heuristic tool in his hands by which we gain a deeper understanding of biblical teaching. He thus stimulates us to think reflectively and critically about similar (and sometimes the same) views when they are expressed in our own time. When we read Warfield, we can be confident that nothing, ultimately, will be wasted on us. He understood that David’s axiom “If the foundations are destroyed, what can the righteous do?” (Ps. 11:3)⁴ is as true in contemporary theology as it was in ancient Israel.

But by no means does all of Warfield’s work on Christ engage head-on with critical scholarship. One of the glories of the first edition of this set was that it contained his magnificent essay “On the Emotional Life of Our Lord.” For reasons not immediately clear, this was omitted from the ten-volume Oxford edition of his works. It had been prepared as part of a multiauthor book that the Princeton Seminary faculty produced to commemorate the centenary of the institution in 1912.⁵

Landmark study though it was, “On the Emotional Life of Our Lord” was long a relatively unknown piece. Perhaps its existence was partly obscured by the assumption that everything of real merit from Warfield’s pen was to be

4. All Scripture quotations in this introduction are from the ESV.

5. B. B. Warfield, “On the Emotional Life of Our Lord,” in *Biblical and Theological Studies* (New York: Scribner, 1912), 35–90.

found in the “definitive” Oxford edition.⁶ Thankfully, in more recent years, its appearance online and as a separate publication has helped to restore it to the prominence it merits.

Here, in dealing with the humanity of Christ, we find Warfield at his best and most sensitive as he reflects carefully and reverently on the text of Scripture and on the person and experience of the incarnate Savior. It would be no exaggeration to say that if this essay appeared nowhere else, or if a reader pondered no other essay in *The Person and Work of Christ*, it would be worth the price of the whole volume. Warfield provides Christians of all levels of intellectual ability and theological interest with much to reflect on in his exposition of the experience of the Logos made flesh. More than that, he writes with such an evident spirit of devotion that these pages should lead to both admiration for Christ and a renewed spirit of love for him. This is theology in the tradition of Augustine and Anselm, of Calvin and John Owen.

Breadth of Learning

The same spirit of reverence will be detected throughout the essays in the volume of *Biblical and Theological Studies*.

One of the interesting features of the Warfield corpus as a whole is that no *book* comes from his pen that could simply be designated a work of systematic theology. As an author, he was chiefly an essayist. And yet when his essays are surveyed en masse, it is possible to run a systematic-theology magnet over them and extract at least the building blocks for a systematic theology.⁷ It is no surprise, then, that contained in this volume we find Warfield's expositions of the biblical doctrine of the Trinity and individual pieces on the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit as well as aspects of soteriology. All this is rooted in his article “Christian Supernaturalism”—which in some ways serves as a leitmotif for his theology as a whole and points

6. Further evidence that there was much more of abiding significance in the Warfield oeuvre was demonstrated by the publication of two volumes of *The Selected Shorter Writings of Benjamin B. Warfield*, edited by John E. Meeter (Nutley, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1970, 1973), containing over a hundred further essays.

7. As has been demonstrated in Fred G. Zaspel, *The Theology of B. B. Warfield: A Systematic Summary* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010).

forward to the basic antithesis that his student J. Gresham Machen would later articulate in his powerful *Christianity and Liberalism*.

Warfield was, as is well known, a cessationist.⁸ But he would have vigorously repudiated confusing his view of the noncontinuance of the spiritual gifts associated with the apostolic ministry and period with a denial of the supernatural. For him, the Christian faith is through and through supernatural from start to finish, from creation, through providence, to redemption, to final consummation. Any other view for Warfield would be tantamount to practical atheism. Not only his understanding of Christian theology in general but his exposition of soteriology in particular gives eloquent testimony to his Jonah-like conviction that “salvation belongs to the LORD!” (Jonah 2:9).⁹ Yet supernaturalism and the sovereignty of God are carefully set within the biblical parameters that he believed were so well expressed in the Westminster Confession of Faith to which he was so devoted: in God’s sovereign providence, “all things come to pass immutably, and infallibly; yet by the same providence, He ordereth them to fall out, according to the nature of second causes, either necessarily, freely, or contingently” (WCF 5.2).

It is impossible to survey these volumes without realizing that while Warfield’s learning extended to the great theological tradition, at the same time his interests focused on certain important individuals and moments in that history. He believed that it is true not only that we “comprehend with all the saints . . . and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge” (Eph. 3:18–19), but that it is in communion with saints who have been doctors of the church that we grow in our understanding of God and the gospel. Since he viewed the Reformed faith as biblical Christianity come to its most consistent and richest expression, it is not surprising that his work reveals a special concentration on the life and thought of Augustine of Hippo among the fathers, on John Calvin among the Reformers (as the volume *Calvin and Augustine* in this set indicates), and on the Westminster divines in the later Puritan era.

8. As he indicated at length in his Thomas Smyth Lectures given at Columbia Seminary in 1917–18, published as *Counterfeit Miracles* (New York: Scribner, 1918).

9. On this Warfield elaborated in lectures he gave at Princeton in 1914, published as *The Plan of Salvation* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1915).

Nor was Warfield's breadth of learning that of a dilettante. His articles in these areas are the kind that can be produced not by a search engine but only by careful study of the original sources. Warfield understood the big trends, but he also had an eye to detail. Not all theologians who grasp the big picture and are comfortable with great ideas and movements have the necessary patience for such close attention to detail. Warfield did.

In large part due to his wife's health, but perhaps also temperamentally, in the church at large Warfield never occupied the position commanded by Charles Hodge. In the providence of God, the Warfields had no children. He was therefore more often at home—reading, reflecting, writing, and developing his rare familiarity with the fathers, the Reformers, and the Puritans. His facility in ecclesiastical history operated in smooth tandem with his learning as a systematic theologian. And these were rooted in his foundational expertise as a biblical scholar. Both the teaching of Scripture and its spirit anchored the various dimensions of his thinking in a remarkable balance and harmony.

The Scholar as Theological Pastor

One further feature of Warfield's work should be mentioned here. As a scholar, he was a minister of the gospel. He understood that the theologian who has been ordained as a doctor of the church rather than a pastor of a congregation nevertheless shares the same calling, while employing gifts suited to his different sphere of ministry. Both are called, in their distinct yet intimately related spheres, to be shepherds of the sheep. This means feeding them on the one hand and guarding them on the other. The flock needs both nourishment and protection.

Warfield's writings exhibit his belief in God's common grace, and the conviction he shared with Calvin that therefore truth is truth wherever it is to be found. He could manifest a spirit of appreciation toward other authors for what was good and noble in their writings, yet at the same time dismantle errors that he believed were on a trajectory that distorted biblical truth and therefore would ultimately harm the people of God. To some extent he had learned this disposition from his beloved Charles Hodge, who could be generous even to a theologian such as Friedrich Schleiermacher, whose

preaching he had heard during his sojourn in Berlin, but whose approach to theology was almost a diameter removed from his own.¹⁰ Yet at the same time, many of his articles make it clear that Warfield was not slow to use the red ink of the corrector. He could, in Pauline style, express appreciation for what was good and thereafter carefully demolish everything that was not. He believed that false teaching is not only mistaken but spiritually noxious. He was therefore not slow to be critical when criticism was warranted. The intellectual scalpel he used was employed to cut away the harmful and dangerous and to make healing and sound doctrine possible.

One area in which Warfield's critique has sometimes rubbed against the evangelical grain both then and now is in his essays gathered in the volume on *Perfectionism*. Here he expresses some severe criticisms of the so-called Higher Life movement that had begun to flourish in the nineteenth century. He included in its various manifestations the teaching that had become associated with the Keswick Convention that was held annually in the English Lake District and with its various satellite conferences. While appreciative of its emphasis on devotion to the Lord Jesus Christ, he was sharply critical of the way in which it separated sanctification from justification. These, for Warfield, as for Calvin, were seen as distinct aspects of salvation that must never be either confused with each other or separated, as if one could be justified by one act of faith while needing another act of faith in order to be sanctified. In Christ, and in union with him, both realities belong together.

But Warfield was nothing if not theologically prescient. He might not have been surprised to see the basic confusion at the heart of Higher Life theology morph into other forms of "higher life" in which the blessings offered to faith were abstracted from the Christ in whom they are found. This is not to say that he made the mistake of assuming that every individual who saw justification as being received by one act of faith and sanctification by another one would accept every mutation of that view. But the root of it he consistently opposed.

10. Perhaps the most striking footnote in all three volumes of Hodge's *Systematic Theology* is his reference to August Tholuck's comment that in his family Schleiermacher would say to his children, "Hush, children: let us sing a hymn of praise to Christ," to which Hodge adds: "Can we doubt that he is singing those praises now? To whomever Christ is God, St. John assures us, Christ is Savior." Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology* (New York: Scribner, 1871), 2:440n1.

Warfield's concern here indicated the extent to which he thought not only in terms of first principles, but also in terms of trajectories and logical and existential implications. Beyond the essays published in this set, one of the most striking illustrations of this in his writings was the trajectory he traced in the movement in the northern Presbyterian Church to ordain women to the eldership. At the root of this movement he detected the uprooting of basic biblical principles that, he believed, contained the seeds of a trajectory that, if followed through, would ultimately undermine the biblical teaching on marriage and family life.¹¹ He might have been saddened, but perhaps not surprised, by the way in which both the ordination of women and the establishing of "gay marriage" have emerged in mainline churches in the Western world. In his own view, what is present in the root (in this case a distortion of the creation order) has the potential to produce disease in the fruit. Again, it should be emphasized that he did not make the mistake of assuming that people either accept or follow through to the full implications of their presuppositions. But his analysis and warnings were surely given out of his concern as a doctor of the church to fulfill his responsibility to shepherd the flock of God theologically. Perhaps in the light of that conviction, as his response to criticism of his thoroughgoing supernaturalism, his cessationism, his critique of the Keswick movement,¹² he would simply have reminded himself that the Lord's words "Woe to you, when all people speak well of you, for so their fathers did to the false prophets" (Luke 6:26) applied to theologians as well as all other Christians.

If one were to ask what drove Warfield on to produce such a significant body of work, perhaps the answer lies in a conviction that had developed as he moved from his late teenage years into his twenties. As he sat with his close college and seminary classmate Charles Barrett on the first Sunday evening of their seminary careers, Barrett asked his friend what had made him, in 1872, at the age of twenty, decide to enter the ministry. Warfield

11. It is worth noting, however, that in 1889–90 Warfield chaired the church committee that explored the question of women deacons in the church and recommended their appointment (but not their "ordination").

12. It should be said here that at least in its original location in the English Lake District, the teaching given at the Keswick Convention has decisively, if in an unheralded way, moved away from the earlier "higher life" emphasis.

replied quietly, "Because I think that in the work of the ministry I can do the most to repay the Lord for what he has done for me."¹³

But perhaps this introduction is best closed not by comments on Warfield's theology viewed from a century's distance, but with the testimony of two men who knew him. At his memorial service in the First Presbyterian Church, Princeton, on May 2, 1921, Francis L. Patton reflected on the man himself. His words give us a glimpse of what it must have been like to be his student:

In his young manhood of those days Dr. Warfield was a most imposing figure. Tall, erect, with finely moulded features and singular grace and courtesy of demeanor, he bore the marks of a gentleman to his finger-tips. There was something remarkable in his voice. It had the liquid softness of the South rather than the metallic resonance which we look for in those who breathe the crisp air of a northern climate. His public utterances took the form of a conversational tone, and his sentences often closed with the suggestion of a rising inflection, as if inviting a hospitable reception from his hearers. He lacked the clarion tones of impassioned oratory, but oratory of this kind was not natural to him. He kept the calm level of deliberate speech, and his words proceeded out of his mouth as if they walked on velvet.¹⁴

The five-volume collection of Warfield's works was the original brain-child of Dr. Samuel Craig, who with Dr. J. Gresham Machen founded the present publishers—and under whose auspices these volumes first reached Scottish shores. Perhaps, therefore, it is fitting that the closing words of this introduction should be left to Machen, once Warfield's student and later his colleague. In a letter to his mother the day following Warfield's funeral, the thirty-nine-year-old Machen wrote:

Dr. Warfield's funeral took place yesterday afternoon at the First Church of Princeton. . . .

13. Quoted from the *Princeton Seminary Bulletin* 15, no. 1 (1921): 10–11, in David B. Calhoun, *Princeton Seminary*, vol. 2, *The Majestic Testimony* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1996), 117.

14. Francis L. Patton, "Benjamin Breckinridge Warfield, D.D., LL.D., Litt.D.: A Memorial Address," *PTR* 19, no. 3 (July 1921): 370.

Introduction to Warfield's Works

I am thankful for one last conversation I had with Dr. Warfield some weeks ago. He was quite himself that afternoon. And somehow I cannot believe that the faith which he represented will ever really die. . . .

Nearly everything that I have done has been done with the inspiring hope that Dr. Warfield would think well of it. . . . He was the greatest man I have known.¹⁵

The republication of these five volumes of Warfield's works in this splendid new edition is surely a further confirmation of Machen's conviction that the faith Warfield represented will be nourished for yet another generation of his readers, and indeed can never really die.

15. Ned B. Stonehouse, *J. Gresham Machen: A Biographical Memoir* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1955), 310.

ABBREVIATIONS

General

A.D.	<i>anno Domini</i> (“in the year of our Lord”)
ad loc.	<i>ad locum</i> (“at the place”)
ASV	American Standard Version / American Revised Version
AV	Authorized Version / King James Version
b.	Babylonian Talmud
BBW	Benjamin Breckinridge Warfield
B.C.	before Christ
bis	twice
<i>BSac</i>	<i>Bibliotheca Sacra</i>
ca.	<i>circa</i> (“about”)
cf.	<i>confer</i> (“compare”)
ch. / chap.	chapter
chs. / chaps.	chapters
coll.	columns
comp.	compiler (<i>pl. comps.</i>), compiled by
cp.	compare
CR	<i>Contemporary Review</i>
CSEL	Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Akademie der Wissenschaften in Wien, and Kaiserl, Akademie der Wissenschaften in Wien, <i>Corpus scriptorum ecclesiasticorum Latinorum</i> (Vienna: Hoelder- Pichler-Tempsky, 1866–)

Abbreviations

CSHB	Barthold Georg Niebuhr, <i>Corpus scriptorum historiae byzantinae: Editio emendatior et copiosior, Consilio B. G. Niebuhrii</i> , 50 vols. (Bonn: E. Weber, 1828–97)
dim.	diminutive
ed.	edited by; edition
e.g.	<i>exempli gratia</i> (“for example”)
<i>Encyc. Bib.</i>	T. K. Cheyne and J. Sutherland Black, eds., <i>Encyclopedia Biblica: A Critical Dictionary of the Literary, Political and Religious History, the Archaeology, Geography, and Natural History of the Bible</i> , 4 vols. (London: A. and C. Black, 1899–1903)
Eng.	English
enl.	enlarged
esp.	especially
ESV	English Standard Version
ET	English translation
et al.	<i>et alii</i> (or <i>et alia</i> , “and others”)
f.	and following (singular)
ff.	and following (plural)
GCS	Kirchenväter-Commission der Königl, Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Preussische Akademie der Wissenschaften, and Deutsche Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin, <i>Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten drei Jahrhunderte</i> (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1897–1969)
HE	Eusebius, <i>The Ecclesiastical History of Eusebius Pamphilus</i> , trans. Christian Frederic Crusé, with notes selected from the edition of Henry de Valois (Henricus Valesius) (London: George Bell & Sons, 1897)
IAB	Benjamin B. Warfield, <i>The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible</i> , ed. John J. Hughes, rev. and enhanced ed. (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2023)
ibid.	<i>ibidem</i> (“in the same place”)
i.e.	<i>id est</i> (“that is”)
in loc.	<i>in loco</i> (“in the place”)

Abbreviations

inter alia	among other things
ISBE	James Orr, John L. Nuelsen, Edgar Young Mullins, and Morris O. Evans, eds, <i>The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia</i> , 5 vols. (Chicago: Howard-Severance Co., 1915)
JTS	<i>Journal of Theological Studies</i>
KJV	King James Version
καὶ τὰ λοιπά	καὶ τὰ λοιπά (“and the remainder,” “et cetera”)
loc. cit.	<i>loco citato</i> (“in the place cited”)
LXX	Septuagint
m.	Mishnah
Mangey	Thomas Mangey, <i>Philonis Judaei Opera quae reperiri potuerunt omnia</i> , 2 vols. (London: G. Bowyer, 1742)
MS	manuscript
MSS	manuscripts
NASB	New American Standard Bible
NIV	New International Version
n.p.	no place; no publisher; no page
NT	New Testament
O.E.	Old English
op. cit.	<i>opere citato</i> (“in the work cited”)
OT	Old Testament
OUP	Oxford University Press
p.	page
PG	Jacques Paul Migne, ed., <i>Patrologiae Cursus Completus: Series Graeca</i> , 162 vols. (Paris: J. Migne, 1857–86)
PL	Jacques Paul Migne, ed., <i>Patrologiae Cursus Completus: Series Latina</i> , 217 vols. (Paris: J. Migne, 1844–64)
pp.	pages
PQ	<i>Presbyterian Quarterly</i>
PRR	<i>Presbyterian and Reformed Review</i>
PTR	<i>Princeton Theological Review</i>
PWC	Benjamin B. Warfield, <i>The Person and Work of Christ</i> , ed. John J. Hughes, rev. and enhanced ed. (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2023)

Abbreviations

rev.	revised
RV	Revised Version / English Revised Version
§	Section sign; refers to individually numbered sections of a document.
sc., scil.	<i>scilicet</i> (“namely”)
sic.	Intentionally so written; exactly reproduces the original text.
sq.	sequence
ST	Thomas Aquinas, <i>Summa Theologiae</i>
subst. or s.	substantive, -al
s.v.	<i>sub verbo, sub voce</i> (“under the word”)
<i>Symm.</i>	Symmachus translation of the Septuagint
<i>Theod.</i>	Theodotion translation of the Septuagint
trans.	translated by
v.	verse
viz.	<i>videlicet</i> (“namely”)
v.l.	<i>varia lectio</i> (“variant reading”)
vol.	volume
vols.	volumes
vv.	verses

Apostolic and Church Fathers

<i>1 Apol.</i>	Justin, <i>Apologia i</i>
1–2 Clem.	Clement of Rome, 1–2 Clement
<i>Autol.</i>	Theophilus, <i>Ad Autolyicum</i>
Barn.	Barnabas
<i>Basil. hom.</i>	Rufinus, <i>Homiliae S. Basilii</i>
<i>Cels.</i>	Origen, <i>Contra Celsum</i>
<i>Coh. ad Gent.</i>	Clement of Alexandria, <i>Cohortatio ad Graecos</i>
<i>De Adver.</i>	Cyril of Alexandria, <i>De Adversus</i>
<i>Dial.</i>	Justin, <i>Dialogus cum Tryphone</i>
<i>Ep. ad Hier.</i>	Augustine, <i>Ad Hieronymum presbyterium</i> (letter 82, to Jerome)
<i>Ep. ad Manet</i>	Jerome, <i>Epistle ad Manet</i>
<i>Ep. encycl.</i>	Athanasius, <i>Epistula encyclica</i>

Abbreviations

<i>Epistula</i>	Cyril of Alexandria, <i>Epistula Fr. Origen Prov. Fragmenta ex commentariis in Proverbia</i>
<i>Fr. Prov.</i>	Origen, <i>Fragmenta ex commentariis in Proverbia</i>
<i>Haer.</i>	Irenaeus, <i>Adversus haereses (Elenchos)</i>
<i>Hom. Col.</i>	Chrysostom, <i>Homiliae in epistulam ad Colossenses</i>
<i>Hom. Gen.</i>	Chrysostom, <i>Homiliae in Genesim</i>
<i>Hom. Jer.</i>	Origen, <i>Homiliae in Jeremiam</i>
<i>Hom. John</i>	Origen, <i>Homiliae in John</i>
<i>Hom. Jos.</i>	Origen, <i>Homiliae in Josuam</i>
<i>Ign. Eph.</i>	Ignatius, <i>To the Ephesians</i>
<i>Ign. Magn.</i>	Ignatius, <i>To the Magnesians</i>
<i>Ign. Phld.</i>	Ignatius, <i>To the Philadelphians</i>
<i>Ign. Smyrn.</i>	Ignatius, <i>To the Smyrnaeans</i>
<i>Orat. paneg.</i>	Gregory the Wonderworker (Thaumaturgus), <i>Oratio panegyrica in Origenem</i>
<i>Paed.</i>	Clement of Alexandria, <i>Paedagogus</i>
<i>Pan.</i>	Epiphanius, <i>Panarion (Adversus haereses)</i>
<i>Philoc.</i>	Origen, <i>Philocalia</i>
<i>Pol. Phil.</i>	Polycarp, <i>To the Philippians</i>
<i>Praef. Psal.</i>	Jerome, <i>Praefatio Psalms</i>
<i>Praep. ev.</i>	Eusebius, <i>Praeparatio evangelica</i>
<i>Praescr.</i>	Tertullian, <i>De praescriptione haereticorum</i>
<i>Princ.</i>	Origen, <i>De principiis (Peri archōn)</i>
<i>Protr.</i>	Clement of Alexandria, <i>Protrepticus</i>
<i>Quis div.</i>	Clement of Alexandria, <i>Quis dives salvetur</i>
<i>Sel. Ps.</i>	Origen, <i>Selecta in Psalmos</i>
<i>Strom.</i>	Clement of Alexandria, <i>Stromateis</i>

Classical Authors¹

<i>1–3 [4] Philip.</i>	Demosthenes, <i>Philippica i–iv</i>
<i>Ann.</i>	Tacitus, <i>Annales</i>
<i>Apat.</i>	Demosthenes, <i>Contra Apatourium</i>

1. Abbreviations of spurious works are bracketed.

Abbreviations

<i>Arch.</i>	Cicero, <i>Pro Archia</i>
<i>Av.</i>	Aristophanes, <i>Aves</i>
<i>Chers.</i>	Demosthenes, <i>De Chersoneso</i>
<i>De divinat.</i>	Aristotle, <i>De divinatio per somnum</i>
[<i>De hist. phil.</i>]	Galen, <i>De historia philosophia</i>
<i>Dem.</i>	Demosthenes
<i>Div. somn.</i>	Aristotle, <i>De divinatio per somnum</i>
<i>Epigr.</i>	Callimachus, <i>Epigrammata</i>
<i>Eq.</i>	Aristophanes, <i>Equites (Knights)</i>
<i>Eryx.</i>	Plato, <i>Eryxias</i>
<i>Eth. nic.</i>	Aristotle, <i>Ethica nicomachea</i>
<i>Geogr.</i>	Strabo, <i>Geographica</i>
<i>Heracl.</i>	Euripides, <i>Heraclida</i>
<i>Hipp.</i>	Euripides, <i>Hippolytus</i>
<i>Hist.</i>	Tacitus, <i>Historiae</i>
<i>Il.</i>	Homer, <i>Ilias, Iliad</i>
<i>Iph. aul.</i>	Euripides, <i>Iphigenia aulidensis</i>
<i>Iph. taur.</i>	Euripides, <i>Iphigenia taurica</i>
<i>Leptin</i>	Demosthenes, <i>Contra Leptines</i>
<i>Mor.</i>	Plutarch, <i>Moralia</i>
<i>Mulier. virt.</i>	Plutarch, <i>Mulierum virtutes</i>
<i>Nub.</i>	Aristophanes, <i>Nubes</i>
<i>Od.</i>	Homer, <i>Odyssea, Odyssey</i>
<i>Pac.</i>	Aristophanes, <i>Pace</i>
<i>Phaed.</i>	Plato, <i>Phaedo</i>
<i>Phil.</i>	Demosthenes, <i>Philippica</i>
<i>Plut.</i>	Plutarch
<i>Phoen.</i>	Euripides, <i>Phoenissae</i>
[<i>Plac. philos.</i>]	Plutarch, <i>De placita philosophoru</i>
<i>Soph.</i>	Isocrates, <i>In sophistas (Or. 13)</i>
<i>Them.</i>	Themistocles
<i>Thes.</i>	Plutarch, <i>Theseus</i>
<i>Timocr.</i>	Demosthenes, <i>In Timocratem</i>
<i>Var. hist.</i>	Aelian, <i>Varia historia</i>
<i>Vesp.</i>	Aristophanes, <i>Vespae</i>

Deuterocanonical Works

2 Esd.	2 Esdras
2 Macc.	2 Maccabees
4 Macc.	4 Maccabees
Ecclesiastic.	Ecclesiasticus
Sir.	Sirach/Ecclesiasticus
Tob.	Tobit
Wis.	Wisdom of Solomon

Josephus

A.J.	Josephus, <i>Antiquitates judaicae</i>
B.J.	Josephus, <i>Bellum judaicum</i>
C. Ap.	Josephus, <i>Contra Apionem</i>

Mishnah, Talmud, and Related Literature

b. Šabb.	Šabbat
m. Meg.	Mishnah Megilla

Old Testament Pseudepigrapha

<i>Sib. Or.</i>	<i>Sibylline Oracles</i>
T. 12 Patr.	Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs
T. Ab.	Testament of Abraham
T. Benj.	Testament of Benjamin

Philo

<i>Abr.</i>	<i>De Abrahamo</i>
<i>Agr.</i>	<i>De agricultura</i>
<i>Cher.</i>	<i>De cherubim</i>
<i>Conf.</i>	<i>De confusione linguarum</i>
<i>Congr.</i>	<i>De congressu eruditionis gratia</i>

Abbreviations

<i>Contempl.</i>	<i>De vita contemplativa</i>
<i>Decal.</i>	<i>De decalogo</i>
<i>Det.</i>	<i>Quod deterius potiori insidari solet</i>
<i>Deus</i>	<i>Quod Deus sit immutabilis</i>
<i>Ebr.</i>	<i>De ebrietate</i>
<i>Fug.</i>	<i>De fuga et inventione</i>
<i>Gig.</i>	<i>De gigantibus</i>
<i>Her.</i>	<i>Quis rerum divinarum heres sit</i>
<i>Leg. 1, 2, 3</i>	<i>Legum allegoriae I, II, III</i>
<i>Legat.</i>	<i>Legatio ad Gaium</i>
<i>Migr.</i>	<i>De migratione Abrahami</i>
<i>Mos. 1, 2, 3</i>	<i>De vita Mosis I, II, III</i>
<i>Mut.</i>	<i>De mutatione nominum</i>
<i>Opif.</i>	<i>De opificio mundi</i>
<i>Plant.</i>	<i>De plantatione</i>
<i>Post.</i>	<i>De posteritate Caini</i>
<i>Praem.</i>	<i>De praemiis et poenis</i>
<i>Prob.</i>	<i>Quod omnis probus liber sit</i>
<i>Prov. 1, 2</i>	<i>De providentia I, II</i>
<i>Sobr.</i>	<i>De sobrietate</i>
<i>Somn. 1, 2</i>	<i>De somniis I, II</i>

I

THE BIBLICAL IDEA OF REVELATION

ABSTRACT

This chapter,¹ a nontechnical overview of the biblical idea of revelation, is divided into four parts: (1) The Nature of Revelation, (2) The Process of Revelation, (3) Modes of Revelation, and (4) Biblical Terminology.

In “The Nature of Revelation,” Warfield shows that the religion of the Bible is supernatural, based on God’s self-revelation, and unique. God reveals himself to all humans through general revelation, but only to Israel and the church through special—inscripturated—revelation. These two modes of revelation form a “unitary whole,” each being “incomplete without the other.” General revelation reveals God’s glory, majesty, and power; special revelation reveals God’s purposes, plans, promises, and will. Special revelation is specifically tailored to the redemptive needs of fallen humanity.

In “The Process of Revelation,” Warfield shows that God’s redemptive self-revelation progresses through three stages (patriarchal, prophetic, and Spirit—NT) that culminate with the revelation of the incarnate Son himself and consists in redemptive deeds and words, each being incomplete without the other. “The revealing Spirit speaks through chosen men as his organs, but through these organs in such a fashion that the most intimate processes of their souls become the instruments by means of which he speaks his mind.”

1. Originally published as Benjamin B. Warfield, “Revelation,” in *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, ed. James Orr, John L. Nuelsen, Edgar Young Mullins, and Morris O. Evans, 5 vols. (Chicago: Howard-Severance Co., 1915), 4:2573–82. Reprinted in Benjamin Breckinridge Warfield, *Revelation and Inspiration*, ed. Ethelbert D. Warfield, William Park Armstrong, and Caspar Wistar Hodge (New York: Oxford University Press, 1927), 3–34.

In “Modes of Revelation,” Warfield discusses “three well-marked modes of revelation[:] . . . (1) external manifestations, (2) internal suggestion, and (3) concursive operation.” “External manifestations” include theophanies, miracles, and “every supernatural intervention in the affairs of men.” “Internal suggestion” includes visions and dreams—prophecy. God put his words in the mouths of the prophets in such a way that what they spoke were the Lord’s words and not their own. The result (not the process) is a form of dictation; “a power not himself takes possession of his [a prophet’s] consciousness and determines it according to its will” (e.g., 2 Peter 1:20–21). “Concursive operation” refers to the working of God’s Spirit with the will of human authors in a manner that results in a noncoerced, supernatural written product. All three modes were operative in all stages of biblical revelation. All revelation is from God. This essential fact, along with its singular end—building up the kingdom of God—is what gives unity to the entire process of revelation, in all its diverse manners and throughout all its epochs. It is “ever the one consistently developing redemptive revelation of God.” All forms of special or redemptive revelation that underlie and give content to the religion of the Bible “may without violence,” Warfield concludes, “be subsumed under one or another of these three modes—external manifestation, internal suggestion, and concursive operation. All, that is, except the culminating revelation, not through, but in, Jesus Christ. As in his person, in which dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily, he rises above all classification and is *sui generis*; so the revelation accumulated in him stands outside all the divers portions and divers manners in which otherwise revelation has been given and sums up in itself all that has been or can be made known of God and of his redemption. He does not so much make a revelation of God as himself is the revelation of God; he does not merely disclose God’s purpose of redemption, he is unto us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification and redemption.”

In “Biblical Terminology,” Warfield says, “There is not much additional to be learned concerning the nature and processes of revelation, from the terms currently employed in Scripture to express the idea. These terms are ordinarily the common words for disclosing, making known, making manifest, applied with more or less heightened significance to supernatural acts or effects in kind.” Warfield then discusses the salient OT and NT terms.

The Nature of Revelation²

The Religion of the Bible—The Only Supernatural Religion

The religion of the Bible is a frankly supernatural religion. By this is not meant merely that, according to it, all men, as creatures, live, move and have their being in God. It is meant that, according to it, God has intervened extraordinarily, in the course of the sinful world's development, for the salvation of men otherwise lost. In Eden the Lord God had been present with sinless man in such a sense as to form a distinct element in his social environment (Gen. 3:8). This intimate association was broken up by the fall. But God did not therefore withdraw himself from concernment with men. Rather, he began at once a series of interventions in human history by means of which man might be rescued from his sin and, despite it, brought to the end destined for him. These interventions involved the segregation of a people for himself, by whom God should be known, and whose distinction should be that God should be "nigh unto them" as he was not to other nations (Deut. 4:7; Ps. 145:18).

But this people was not permitted to imagine that it owed its segregation to anything in itself fitted to attract or determine the divine preference; no consciousness was more poignant in Israel than that Jehovah had chosen it, not it him, and that Jehovah's choice of it rested solely on his gracious will. Nor was this people permitted to imagine that it was for its own sake alone that it had been singled out to be the sole recipient of the knowledge of Jehovah; it was made clear from the beginning that God's mysteriously gracious dealing with it had as its ultimate end the blessing of the whole world (Gen. 12:2, 3; 17:4, 5, 6, 16; 18:18; 22:18; cf. Rom. 4:13), the bringing together again of the divided families of the earth under the glorious reign of Jehovah, and the reversal of the curse under which the whole world lay for its sin (Gen. 12:3).

Meanwhile, however, Jehovah was known only in Israel. To Israel God showed his word and made known his statutes and judgments, and after this fashion he dealt with no other nation; and therefore none other knew

2. ED. NOTE. The heads and subheads in this chapter follow those in the original *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* article.

his judgments (Ps. 147:19f.). Accordingly, when the hope of Israel (who was also the desire of all nations) came, his own lips unhesitatingly declared that the salvation he brought, though of universal application, was “from the Jews” (John 4:22). And the nations to which this salvation had not been made known are declared by the chief agent in its proclamation to them to be, meanwhile, “far off,” “having no hope” and “without God in the world” (Eph. 2:12), because they were aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenant of the promise.

The religion of the Bible thus announces itself, not as the product of men’s search after God, if haply they may feel after him and find him, but as the creation in men of the gracious God, forming a people for himself, that they may show forth his praise. In other words, the religion of the Bible presents itself as distinctively a *revealed* religion. Or rather, to speak more exactly, it announces itself as *the* revealed religion, as the *only* revealed religion; and sets itself as such over against all other religions, which are represented as all products, in a sense in which it is not, of the art and device of man.

It is not, however, implied in this exclusive claim to revelation—which is made by the religion of the Bible in all the stages of its history—that the living God, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and all that in them is, has left himself without witness among the peoples of the world (Acts 14:17). It is asserted indeed, that in the process of his redemptive work, God suffered for a season all the nations to walk in their own ways; but it is added that to none of them has he failed to do good, and to give from heaven rains and fruitful seasons, filling their hearts with food and gladness. And not only is he represented as thus constantly showing himself in his providence not far from any one of them, thus wooing them to seek him if haply they might feel after him and find him (Acts 17:27), but as from the foundation of the world openly manifesting himself to them in the works of his hands, in which his everlasting power and divinity are clearly seen (Rom. 1:20).

That men at large have not retained him in their knowledge, or served him as they ought, is not due therefore to failure on his part to keep open the way to knowledge of him, but to the darkening of their senseless hearts by sin and to the vanity of their sin-deflected reasonings (Rom. 1:21ff.), by means of which they have supplanted the truth of God by a lie and have come to worship and serve the creature rather than the ever-blessed Creator. It is,

indeed, precisely because in their sin they have thus held down the truth in unrighteousness and have refused to have God in their knowledge (so it is intimated); and because, moreover, in their sin, the revelation God gives of himself in his works of creation and providence no longer suffices for men's needs, that God has intervened supernaturally in the course of history to form a people for himself, through whom at length all the world should be blessed.

General and Special Revelation

It is quite obvious that there are brought before us in these several representations two species or stages of revelation, which should be discriminated to avoid confusion. There is the revelation which God continuously makes to all men: by it his power and divinity are made known. And there is the revelation which he makes exclusively to his chosen people: through it his saving grace is made known. Both species or stages of revelation are insisted upon throughout the Scriptures. They are, for example, brought significantly together in such a declaration as we find in Psalm 19: "The heavens declare the glory of God. . . . Their line is gone out through all the earth" (vv. 1, 4); "The law of Jehovah is perfect, restoring the soul" (v. 7). The psalmist takes his beginning here from the praise of the glory of God, the Creator of all that is, which has been written upon the very heavens, that none may fail to see it. From this he rises, however, quickly to the more full-throated praise of the mercy of Jehovah, the covenant God, who has visited his people with saving instruction. Upon this higher revelation there is finally based a prayer for salvation from sin, which ends in a great threefold acclamation, instinct³ with adoring gratitude: "O Jehovah, my rock, and my redeemer" (v. 14).

"The heavens," comments Lord Bacon, "indeed tell of the glory of God, but not of his will according to which the poet prays to be pardoned and sanctified." In so commenting, Lord Bacon touches the exact point of distinction between the two species or stages of revelation. The one is adapted to man as man; the other to man as sinner; and since man, on becoming sinner, has not ceased to be man, but has only acquired new needs requiring additional provisions to bring him to the end of his existence, so the revelation directed to man as sinner does not supersede that given to man as man, but supplements it with

3. ED. NOTE. *Instinct*: profoundly imbued, infused.

these new provisions for his attainment, in his new condition of blindness, helplessness, and guilt induced by sin, of the end of his being.

These two species or stages of revelation have been commonly distinguished from one another by the distinctive names of natural and supernatural revelation, or general and special revelation, or natural and soteriological revelation. Each of these modes of discriminating them has its particular fitness and describes a real difference between the two in nature, reach, or purpose. The one is communicated through the media of natural phenomena, occurring in the course of nature or of history; the other implies an intervention in the natural course of things and is not merely in source but in mode supernatural. The one is addressed generally to all intelligent creatures, and is therefore accessible to all men; the other is addressed to a special class of sinners, to whom God would make known his salvation. The one has in view to meet and supply the natural need of creatures for knowledge of their God; the other to rescue broken and deformed sinners from their sin and its consequences. But, though thus distinguished from one another, it is important that the two species or stages of revelation should not be set in opposition to one another, or the closeness of their mutual relations or the constancy of their interaction be obscured. They constitute together a unitary whole, and each is incomplete without the other.

In its most general idea, revelation is rooted in creation and the relations with his intelligent creatures into which God has brought himself by giving them being. Its object is to realize the end of man's creation, to be attained only through knowledge of God and perfect and unbroken communion with him. On the entrance of sin into the world, destroying this communion with God and obscuring the knowledge of him derived from nature, another mode of revelation was necessitated, having also another content, adapted to the new relation to God and the new conditions of intellect, heart, and will brought about by sin. It must not be supposed, however, that this new mode of revelation was an *ex post facto* expedient, introduced to meet an unforeseen contingency. The actual course of human development was in the nature of the case the expected and the intended course of human development, for which man was created; and revelation, therefore, in its double form was the divine purpose for man from the beginning, and constitutes a

unitary provision for the realization of the end of his creation in the actual circumstances in which he exists.

We may distinguish in this unitary revelation the two elements by the cooperation of which the effect is produced; but we should bear in mind that only by their cooperation is the effect produced. Without special revelation, general revelation would be for sinful men incomplete and ineffective, and could issue, as in point of fact it has issued wherever it alone has been accessible, only in leaving them without excuse (Rom. 1:20). Without general revelation, special revelation would lack that basis in the fundamental knowledge of God as the mighty and wise, righteous and good maker and ruler of all things, apart from which the further revelation of this great God's interventions in the world for the salvation of sinners could not be either intelligible, credible, or operative.

Revelation in Eden

Only in Eden has general revelation been adequate to the needs of man. Not being a sinner, man in Eden had no need of that grace of God itself by which sinners are restored to communion with him, or of the special revelation of this grace of God to sinners to enable them to live with God. And not being a sinner, man in Eden, as he contemplated the works of God, saw God in the unclouded mirror of his mind with a clarity of vision, and lived with him in the untroubled depths of his heart with a trustful intimacy of association, inconceivable to sinners. Nevertheless, the revelation of God in Eden was not merely "natural." Not only does the prohibition of the forbidden fruit involve a positive commandment (Gen. 2:16), but the whole history implies an immediacy of intercourse with God which cannot easily be set to the credit of the picturesque art of the narrative, or be fully accounted for by the vividness of the perception of God in his works proper to sinless creatures. The impression is strong that what is meant to be conveyed to us is that man dwelt with God in Eden, and enjoyed with him immediate and not merely mediate communion. In that case, we may understand that if man had not fallen, he would have continued to enjoy immediate intercourse with God, and that the cessation of this immediate intercourse is due to sin. It is not then the supernaturalness of special revelation which is rooted in sin, but, if we may be allowed the expression, the specialness of supernatural revelation.

Had man not fallen, heaven would have continued to lie about him through all his history, as it lay about his infancy; every man would have enjoyed direct vision of God and immediate speech with him. Man having fallen, the cherubim and the flame of a sword, turning every way, keep the path: and God breaks his way in a roundabout fashion into man's darkened heart to reveal there his redemptive love. By slow steps and gradual stages he at once works out his saving purpose and molds the world for its reception, choosing a people for himself and training it through long and weary ages, until at last when the fullness of time has come, he bares his arm and sends out the proclamation of his great salvation to all the earth.

Revelation among the Heathen

Certainly, from the gate of Eden onward, God's general revelation ceased to be, in the strict sense, supernatural. It is, of course, not meant that God deserted his world and left it to fester in its iniquity. His providence still ruled over all, leading steadily onward to the goal for which man had been created, and of the attainment of which in God's own good time and way the very continuance of men's existence, under God's providential government, was a pledge. And his Spirit still everywhere wrought upon the hearts of men, stirring up all their powers (though created in the image of God, marred and impaired by sin) to their best activities, and to such splendid effect in every department of human achievement as to command the admiration of all ages, and in the highest region of all, that of conduct, to call out from an apostle the encomium⁴ that though they had no law they did by nature (observe the word *nature*) the things of the law. All this, however, remains within the limits of nature, that is to say, within the sphere of operation of divinely directed and assisted second causes. It illustrates merely the heights to which the powers of man may attain under the guidance of providence and the influences of what we have learned to call God's *common grace*.

Nowhere, throughout the whole ethnic domain, are the conceptions of God and his ways put within the reach of man, through God's revelation of himself in the works of creation and providence, transcended; nowhere is the slightest knowledge betrayed of anything concerning God and his purposes,

4. ED. NOTE. *Encomium*: formal expression of praise; panegyric (eulogistic oration or writing).

which could be known only by its being supernaturally told to men. Of the entire body of saving truth, for example, which is the burden of what we call *special revelation*, the whole heathen world remained in total ignorance. And even its hold on the general truths of religion, not being vitalized by supernatural enforcements, grew weak, and its knowledge of the very nature of God decayed, until it ran out to the dreadful issue which Paul sketches for us in that inspired philosophy of religion which he incorporates in the latter part of the first chapter of the Epistle to the Romans.

Behind even the ethnic development, there lay, of course, the supernatural intercourse of man with God which had obtained before the entrance of sin into the world, and the supernatural revelations at the gate of Eden (Gen. 3:8), and at the second origin of the human race, the Flood (Gen. 8:21, 22; 9:1–17). How long the tradition of this primitive revelation lingered in nooks and corners of the heathen world, conditioning and vitalizing the natural revelation of God always accessible, we have no means of estimating. Neither is it easy to measure the effect of God's special revelation of himself to his people upon men outside the bounds of, indeed, but coming into contact with, this chosen people, or sharing with them a common natural inheritance.

Lot and Ishmael and Esau can scarcely have been wholly ignorant of the word of God which came to Abraham and Isaac and Jacob; nor could the Egyptians from whose hands God wrested his people with a mighty arm fail to learn something of Jehovah, any more than the mixed multitudes who witnessed the ministry of Christ could fail to infer something from his gracious walk and mighty works. It is natural to infer that no nation which was intimately associated with Israel's life could remain entirely unaffected by Israel's revelation. But whatever impressions were thus conveyed reached apparently individuals only: the heathen which surrounded Israel, even those most closely affiliated with Israel, remained heathen; they had no revelation.

In the sporadic instances when God visited an alien with a supernatural communication—such as the dreams sent to Abimelech (Gen. 20) and to Pharaoh (Gen. 40, 41) and to Nebuchadnezzar (Dan. 2:1ff.) and to the soldier in the camp of Midian (Judg. 7:13)—it was in the interests, not of the heathen world, but of the chosen people that they were sent; and these instances derive their significance wholly from this fact. There remain, no doubt, the mysterious figure of Melchizedek, perhaps also of Jethro, and

the strange apparition of Balaam, who also, however, appear in the sacred narrative only in connection with the history of God's dealings with his people and in their interest. Their unexplained appearance cannot in any event avail to modify the general fact that the life of the heathen peoples lay outside the supernatural revelation of God. The heathen were suffered to walk in their own ways (Acts 14:16).

The Process of Revelation

Meanwhile, however, God had not forgotten them, but was preparing salvation for them also through the supernatural revelation of his grace that he was making to his people. According to the biblical representation, in the midst of and working confluent with the revelation which he has always been giving of himself on the plane of nature, God was making also from the very fall of man a further revelation of himself on the plane of grace. In contrast with his general, natural revelation, in which all men by virtue of their very nature as men share, this special, supernatural revelation was granted at first only to individuals, then progressively to a family, a tribe, a nation, a race, until, when the fullness of time was come, it was made the possession of the whole world.

It may be difficult to obtain from Scripture a clear account of why God chose thus to give this revelation of his grace only progressively; or, to be more explicit, through the process of a historical development. Such is, however, the ordinary mode of the divine working: it is so that God made the worlds, it is so that he creates the human race itself, the recipient of this revelation, it is so that he builds up his kingdom in the world and in the individual soul, which only gradually comes whether to the knowledge of God or to the fruition of his salvation. As to the fact, the Scriptures are explicit, tracing for us, or rather embodying in their own growth, the record of the steady advance of this gracious revelation through definite stages from its first faint beginnings to its glorious completion in Jesus Christ.

The Place of Revelation among the Redemptive Acts of God

So express is its relation to the development of the kingdom of God itself, or rather to that great series of divine operations which are directed

to the building up of the kingdom of God in the world, that it is sometimes confounded with them or thought of as simply their reflection in the contemplating mind of man. Thus it is not infrequently said that revelation, meaning this special redemptive revelation, has been communicated in deeds, not in words; and it is occasionally elaborately argued that the sole manner in which God has revealed himself as the Savior of sinners is just by performing those mighty acts by which sinners are saved. This is not, however, the biblical representation.

Revelation is, of course, often made through the instrumentality of deeds; and the series of his great redemptive acts by which he saves the world constitutes the preeminent revelation of the grace of God—so far as these redemptive acts are open to observation and are perceived in their significance. But revelation, after all, is the correlate of understanding and has as its proximate end just the production of knowledge, though not, of course, knowledge for its own sake, but for the sake of salvation. The series of the redemptive acts of God, accordingly, can properly be designated *revelation* only when and so far as they are contemplated as adapted and designed to produce knowledge of God and his purpose and methods of grace.

No bare series of unexplained acts can be thought, however, adapted to produce knowledge, especially if these acts be, as in this case, of a highly transcendental character. Nor can this particular series of acts be thought to have as its main design the production of knowledge; its main design is rather to save man. No doubt the production of knowledge of the divine grace is one of the means by which this main design of the redemptive acts of God is attained. But this only renders it the more necessary that the proximate result of producing knowledge should not fail; and it is doubtless for this reason that the series of redemptive acts of God has not been left to explain itself, but the explanatory word has been added to it.

Revelation thus appears, however, not as the mere reflection of the redeeming acts of God in the minds of men, but as 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. Thus the Scriptures represent it, not confounding revelation with the series of the redemptive acts of God, but placing it among the redemptive acts of God and giving it a function as a substantive element in

the operations by which the merciful God saves sinful men. It is therefore not made even a mere constant accompaniment of the redemptive acts of God, giving their explanation that they may be understood. It occupies a far more independent place among them than this, and as frequently precedes them to prepare their way as it accompanies or follows them to interpret their meaning. It is, in one word, itself a redemptive act of God and by no means the least important in the series of his redemptive acts.

This might, indeed, have been inferred from its very nature, and from the nature of the salvation which was being wrought out by these redemptive acts of God. One of the most grievous of the effects of sin is the deformation of the image of God reflected in the human mind, and there can be no recovery from sin which does not bring with it the correction of this deformation and the reflection in the soul of man of the whole glory of the Lord God Almighty. Man is an intelligent being; his superiority over the brute is found, among other things, precisely in the direction of all his life by his intelligence; and his blessedness is rooted in the true knowledge of his God—for this is life eternal, that we should know the only true God and him whom he has sent. Dealing with man as an intelligent being, God the Lord has saved him by means of a revelation, by which he has been brought into an ever more and more adequate knowledge of God, and been led ever more and more to do his part in working out his own salvation with fear and trembling as he perceived with ever more and more clearness how God is working it out for him through mighty deeds of grace.

Stages of Material Development

This is not the place to trace, even in outline, from the material point of view, the development of God's redemptive revelation from its first beginnings, in the promise given to Abraham—or rather in what has been called the *protevangelium*⁵ at the gate of Eden—to its completion in the advent and work of Christ and the teaching of his apostles; a steadily advancing development, which, as it lies spread out to view in the pages of Scripture, takes to those who look at it from the consummation backward, the appearance of the

5. ED. NOTE. *Protevangelium*: a messianic interpretation of Genesis 3:15 that understands “he shall bruise your head” (ESV) as a reference to the coming Messiah and “you shall bruise his heel” (ESV) as a reference to Satan, over whom the Messiah will triumph.

shadow cast athwart preceding ages by the great figure of Christ. Even from the formal point of view, however, there has been pointed out a progressive advance in the method of revelation, consonant with its advance in content, or rather with the advancing stages of the building up of the kingdom of God, to subserve which is the whole object of revelation.

Three distinct steps in revelation have been discriminated from this point of view. They are distinguished precisely by the increasing independence of revelation of the deeds constituting the series of the redemptive acts of God, in which, nevertheless, all revelation is a substantial element. Discriminations like this must not be taken too absolutely; and in the present instance the chronological sequence cannot be pressed. But, with much interlacing, three generally successive stages of revelation may be recognized, producing periods at least characteristically of what we may somewhat conventionally call theophany, prophecy, and inspiration.

What may be somewhat indefinitely marked off as the patriarchal age is characteristically “the period of Outward Manifestations, and Symbols, and Theophanies”; during it, “God spoke to men through their senses, in physical phenomena, as the burning bush, the cloudy pillar, or in sensuous forms, as men, angels, etc. . . . In the prophetic age, on the contrary, the prevailing mode of revelation was by means of inward prophetic inspiration”: God spoke to men characteristically by the movements of the Holy Spirit in their hearts. “Prevailingly, at any rate from Samuel downwards, the supernatural revelation was a revelation in the hearts of the foremost thinkers of the people, or, as we call it, prophetic inspiration, without the aid of external sensuous symbols of God.”⁶

This internal method of revelation reaches its culmination in the New Testament period, which is preeminently the age of the Spirit. What is especially characteristic of this age is revelation through the medium of the written word, what may be called apostolic as distinguished from prophetic inspiration. The revealing Spirit speaks through chosen men as his organs, but through these organs in such a fashion that the most intimate processes of their souls become the instruments by means of which he speaks his mind.

6. Andrew Bruce Davidson, *Old Testament Prophecy*, ed. J. A. Paterson (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1903), 148; cf. 12–14, 145ff.

Thus at all events there are brought clearly before us three well-marked modes of revelation, which we may perhaps designate respectively, not with perfect discrimination, it is true, but not misleadingly, (1) external manifestations, (2) internal suggestion, and (3) concursive operation.

Modes of Revelation

Modes of Revelation

Theophany may be taken as the typical form of “external manifestation”; but by its side may be ranged all of those mighty works by which God makes himself known, including express miracles, no doubt, but along with them every supernatural intervention in the affairs of men, by means of which a better understanding is communicated of what God is or what are his purposes of grace to a sinful race. Under “internal suggestion” may be subsumed all the characteristic phenomena of what is most properly spoken of as *prophecy*: visions and dreams, which, according to a fundamental passage (Num. 12:6), constitute the typical forms of prophecy, and with them the whole prophetic word, which shares its essential characteristic with visions and dreams, since it comes not by the will of man but from God. By “conursive operation” may be meant that form of revelation illustrated in an inspired psalm or epistle or history, in which no human activity—not even the control of the will—is superseded, but the Holy Spirit works in, with, and through them all in such a manner as to communicate to the product qualities distinctly superhuman.

There is no age in the history of the religion of the Bible, from that of Moses to that of Christ and his apostles, in which all these modes of revelation do not find place. One or another may seem particularly characteristic of this age or of that; but they all occur in every age. And they occur side by side, broadly speaking, on the same level. No discrimination is drawn between them in point of worthiness as modes of revelation, and much less in point of purity in the revelations communicated through them.

The circumstance that God spoke to Moses, not by dream or vision but mouth to mouth, is, indeed, adverted⁷ to (Num. 12:8) as a proof of the peculiar favor shown to Moses and even of the superior dignity of Moses above

7. ED. NOTE. *Advert*: to call attention (to).

other organs of revelation: God admitted him to an intimacy of intercourse which he did not accord to others. But though Moses was thus distinguished above all others in the dealings of God with him, no distinction is drawn between the revelations given through him and those given through other organs of revelation in point either of divinity or of authority.

And beyond this we have no scriptural warrant to go on in contrasting one mode of revelation with another. Dreams may seem to us little fitted to serve as vehicles of divine communications. But there is no suggestion in Scripture that revelations through dreams stand on a lower plane than any others; and we should not fail to remember that the essential characteristics of revelations through dreams are shared by all forms of revelation in which (whether we should call them visions or not) the images or ideas which fill, or pass in procession through, the consciousness are determined by some other power than the recipient's own will.

It may seem natural to suppose that revelations rise in rank in proportion to the fullness of the engagement of the mental activity of the recipient in their reception. But we should bear in mind that the intellectual or spiritual quality of a revelation is not derived from the recipient but from its divine giver. The fundamental fact in all revelation is that it is from God. This is what gives unity to the whole process of revelation, given though it may be in divers portions and in divers manners and distributed though it may be through the ages in accordance with the mere will of God, or as it may have suited his developing purpose—this and its unitary end, which is ever the building up of the kingdom of God. In whatever diversity of forms, by means of whatever variety of modes, in whatever distinguishable stages it is given, it is ever the revelation of the one God, and it is ever the one consistently developing redemptive revelation of God.

Equal Supernaturalness of the Several Modes

On a *prima facie* view it may indeed seem likely that a difference in the quality of their supernaturalness would inevitably obtain between revelations given through such divergent modes. The completely supernatural character of revelations given in theophanies is obvious. He who will not allow that God speaks to man, to make known his gracious purposes toward him, has no other recourse here than to pronounce the stories legendary. The

objectivity of the mode of communication which is adopted is intense, and it is thrown up to observation with the greatest emphasis. Into the natural life of man God intrudes in a purely supernatural manner, bearing a purely supernatural communication. In these communications we are given accordingly just a series of “naked messages of God.”

But not even in the patriarchal age were all revelations given in theophanies or objective appearances. There were dreams, and visions, and revelations without explicit intimation in the narrative of how they were communicated. And when we pass on in the history, we do not, indeed, leave behind us theophanies and objective appearances. It is not only made the very characteristic of Moses, the greatest figure in the whole history of revelation except only that of Christ, that he knew God face to face (Deut. 34:10), and God spoke to him mouth to mouth, even manifestly, and not in dark speeches (Num. 12:8); but throughout the whole history of revelation down to the appearance of Jesus to Paul on the road to Damascus, God has shown himself visibly to his servants whenever it has seemed good to him to do so and has spoken with them in objective speech.

Nevertheless, it is expressly made the characteristic of the prophetic age that God makes himself known to his servants “in a vision,” “in a dream” (Num. 12:6). And although, throughout its entire duration, God, in fulfillment of his promise (Deut. 18:18), put his words in the mouths of his prophets and gave them his commandments to speak, yet it would seem inherent in the very employment of men as instruments of revelation that the words of God given through them are spoken by human mouths; and the purity of their supernaturalness may seem so far obscured. And when it is not merely the mouths of men with which God thus serves himself in the delivery of his messages, but their minds and hearts as well—the play of their religious feelings, or the processes of their logical reasoning, or the tenacity of their memories, as, say, in a psalm or in an epistle, or a history—the supernatural element in the communication may easily seem to retire still farther into the background.

It can scarcely be a matter of surprise, therefore, that question has been raised as to the relation of the natural and the supernatural in such revelations and, in many current manners of thinking and speaking of them, the completeness of their supernaturalness has been limited and curtailed in the

interests of the natural instrumentalities employed. The plausibility of such reasoning renders it the more necessary that we should observe the unvarying emphasis which the Scriptures place upon the absolute supernaturalness of revelation in all its modes alike. In the view of the Scriptures, the completely supernatural character of revelation is in no way lessened by the circumstance that it has been given through the instrumentality of men. They affirm, indeed, with the greatest possible emphasis that the divine word delivered through men is the pure word of God, diluted with no human admixture whatever.

The Prophet—God’s Mouthpiece

We have already been led to note that even on the occasion when Moses is exalted above all other organs of revelation (Num. 12:6ff.), in point of dignity and favor, no suggestion whatever is made of any inferiority, in either the directness or the purity of their supernaturalness, attaching to other organs of revelation. There might never afterward arise a prophet in Israel like unto Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face (Deut. 34:10). But each of the whole series of prophets raised up by Jehovah that the people might always know his will was to be like Moses in speaking to the people only what Jehovah commanded them (Deut. 18:15, 18, 20).

In this great promise, securing to Israel the succession of prophets, there is also included a declaration of precisely how Jehovah would communicate his messages not so much to them as through them. “I will raise them up a prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee,” we read (Deut. 18:18), “*and I will put my words in his mouth*, and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him.” The process of revelation through the prophets was a process by which Jehovah put his words in the mouths of the prophets, and the prophets spoke precisely these words and no others. So the prophets themselves ever asserted. “Then Jehovah put forth his hand, and touched my mouth,” explains Jeremiah in his account of how he received his prophecies, “and Jehovah said unto me, Behold, I have put my words in thy mouth” (Jer. 1:9; cf. 5:14; Isa. 51:16; 59:21; Num. 22:35; 23:5, 12, 16). Accordingly, the words “with which” they spoke were not their own but the Lord’s; “And he said unto me,” records Ezekiel, “Son of man, go, get thee unto the house of Israel, and speak with my words unto them” (Ezek. 3:4). It is a process of nothing other than dictation which is thus described (2 Sam. 14:3, 19),

though, of course, the question may remain open of the exact processes by which this dictation is accomplished.

The fundamental passage which brings the central fact before us in the most vivid manner is, no doubt, the account of the commissioning of Moses and Aaron given in Exodus 4:10–17; 7:1–7. Here, in the most express words, Jehovah declares that he who made the mouth can be with it to teach it what to speak, and announces the precise function of a prophet to be that he is “a mouth of God,” who speaks not his own but God’s words. Accordingly, the Hebrew name for *prophet* (*nābhī*), whatever may be its etymology, means throughout the Scriptures just “spokesman,” though not “spokesman” in general, but “spokesman” by way of eminence, that is, God’s spokesman; and the characteristic formula by which a prophetic declaration is announced is: “The word of Jehovah came to me,” or the brief “saith Jehovah” (אָמַר יְהוָה, *n^e’um Yahweh*).

In no case does a prophet put his words forward as his own words. That he is a prophet at all is due not to choice on his own part, but to a call of God, obeyed often with reluctance; and he prophesies or forbears to prophesy, not according to his own will but as the Lord opens and shuts his mouth (Ezek. 3:26f.) and creates for him the fruit of the lips (Isa. 57:19; cf. 6:7; 50:4). In contrast with the false prophets, he strenuously asserts that he does not speak out of his own heart (*heart* in biblical language includes the whole inner man), but all that he proclaims is the pure word of Jehovah.

Prophecy in Vision Form

The fundamental passage does not quite leave the matter, however, with this general declaration. It describes the characteristic manner in which Jehovah communicates his messages to his prophets as through the medium of visions and dreams. Neither visions in the technical sense of that word, nor dreams, appear, however, to have been the customary mode of revelation to the prophets, the record of whose revelations has come down to us. But, on the other hand, there are numerous indications in the record that the universal mode of revelation to them was one which was in some sense a vision, and can be classed only in the category distinctively so called.

The whole nomenclature of prophecy presupposes, indeed, its vision form. Prophecy is distinctively a word, and what is delivered by the prophets

is proclaimed as the “word of Jehovah.” That it should be announced by the formula, “Thus saith the Lord,” is, therefore, only what we expect; and we are prepared for such a description of its process as: “The Lord Jehovah . . . wakeneth mine ear to hear.” He “hath opened mine ear” (Isa. 50:4, 5). But this is not the way of speaking of their messages which is most usual in the prophets. Rather is the whole body of prophecy cursorily presented as a thing seen. Isaiah places at the head of his book: “The vision of Isaiah . . . which he saw” (cf. Isa. 29:10, 11; Obad. v. 1); and then proceeds to set at the head of subordinate sections the remarkable words, “The word that Isaiah . . . saw” (Isa. 2:1); “the burden [margin “oracle”] . . . which Isaiah . . . did see” (13:1). Similarly there stand at the head of other prophecies: “the words of Amos . . . which he saw” (Amos 1:1); “the word of Jehovah that came to Micah . . . which he saw” (Mic. 1:1); “the oracle which Habakkuk the prophet did see” (Hab. 1:1 margin); and elsewhere such language occurs as this: “the word that Jehovah hath showed me” (Jer. 38:21); “the prophets have seen . . . oracles” (Lam. 2:14); “the word of Jehovah came . . . and I looked, and, behold” (Ezek. 1:3, 4); “Woe unto the foolish prophets, that follow their own spirit, and have seen nothing” (Ezek. 13:3); “I . . . will look forth to see what he will speak with me, . . . Jehovah . . . said, Write the vision” (Hab. 2:1f.).

It is an inadequate explanation of such language to suppose it merely a relic of a time when vision was more predominantly the form of revelation. There is no proof that vision in the technical sense ever was more predominantly the form of revelation than in the days of the great writing prophets; and such language as we have quoted too obviously represents the living point of view of the prophets to admit of the supposition that it was merely conventional on their lips. The prophets, in a word, represent the divine communications which they received as given to them in some sense in visions.

It is possible, no doubt, to exaggerate the significance of this. It is an exaggeration, for example, to insist that therefore all the divine communications made to the prophets must have come to them in external appearances and objective speech, addressed to and received by means of the bodily eye and ear. This would be to break down the distinction between manifestation and revelation, and to assimilate the mode of prophetic revelation to that granted to Moses, though these are expressly distinguished (Num. 12:6–8). It is also

an exaggeration to insist that therefore the prophetic state must be conceived as that of strict ecstasy, involving the complete abeyance of all mental life on the part of the prophet (*amentia*), and possibly also accompanying physical effects. It is quite clear from the records which the prophets themselves give us of their revelations that their intelligence was alert in all stages of their reception of them. The purpose of both these extreme views is the good one of doing full justice to the objectivity of the revelations vouchsafed⁸ to the prophets. If these revelations took place entirely externally to the prophet, who merely stood off and contemplated them, or if they were implanted in the prophets by a process so violent as not only to supersede their mental activity but, for the time being, to annihilate it, it would be quite clear that they came from a source other than the prophets' own minds.

It is undoubtedly the fundamental contention of the prophets that the revelations given through them are not their own but wholly God's. The significant language we have just quoted from Ezek. 13:3: "Woe unto the foolish prophets, that follow their own spirit, and have seen nothing," is a typical utterance of their sense of the complete objectivity of their messages. What distinguishes the false prophets is precisely that they "prophesy out of their own heart" (Ezek. 13:2-17), or, to draw the antithesis sharply, that "they speak a vision of their own heart, and not out of the mouth of Jehovah" (Jer. 23:16, 26; 14:14). But these extreme views fail to do justice, the one to the equally important fact that the word of God, given through the prophets, comes as the pure and unmixed word of God not merely to, but from, the prophets; and the other to the equally obvious fact that the intelligence of the prophets is alert throughout the whole process of the reception and delivery of the revelation made through them.

That which gives to prophecy as a mode of revelation its place in the category of visions, strictly so called, and dreams, is that it shares with them the distinguishing characteristic which determines the class. In them all alike the movements of the mind are determined by something extraneous to the subject's will, or rather, since we are speaking of supernaturally given dreams and visions, extraneous to the totality of the subject's own psychoses. A power not himself takes possession of his consciousness and determines it according

8. ED. NOTE. *Vouchsafe*: to graciously give or grant something to someone; to grant as a privilege or special favor.

to its will. That power, in the case of the prophets, was fully recognized and energetically asserted to be Jehovah himself or, to be more specific, the Spirit of Jehovah (1 Sam. 10:6, 10; Neh. 9:30; Zech. 7:12; Joel 2:28–29).

The prophets were therefore “men of the Spirit” (Hos. 9:7). What constituted them prophets was that the Spirit was put upon them (Isa. 42:1) or poured out on them (Joel 2:28–29), and they were consequently filled with the Spirit (Mic. 3:8), or, in another but equivalent locution, that “the hand” of the Lord, or “the power of the hand” of the Lord, was upon them (2 Kings 3:15; Ezek. 1:3; 3:14, 22; 33:22; 37:1; 40:1), that is to say, they were under the divine control. This control is represented as complete and compelling, so that, under it, the prophet becomes not the “mover,” but the “moved” in the formation of his message. The apostle Peter very purely reflects the prophetic consciousness in his well-known declaration: “No prophecy of scripture comes of private interpretation; for prophecy was never brought by the will of man; but it was as borne by the Holy Spirit that men spoke from God” (2 Peter 1:20, 21).

“Passivity” of the Prophets

What this language of Peter emphasizes—and what is emphasized in the whole account which the prophets give of their own consciousness—is, to speak plainly, the passivity of the prophets with respect to the revelation given through them. This is the significance of the phrase: “it was as borne by the Holy Spirit that men spoke from God.” To be “borne” (φέρειν, *phérein*) is not the same as to be “led” (ἄγειν, *ágein*), much less to be “guided” or “directed” (ὁδηγεῖν, *hodēgeín*): he that is “borne” contributes nothing to the movement induced, but is the object to be moved. The term *passivity* is, perhaps, however, liable to some misapprehension, and should not be overstrained. It is not intended to deny that the intelligence of the prophets was active in the reception of their message; it was by means of their active intelligence that their message was received: their intelligence was the instrument of revelation. It is intended to deny only that their intelligence was active in the production of their message: that it was creatively as distinguished from receptively active. For reception itself is a kind of activity.

What the prophets are solicitous that their readers shall understand is that they are in no sense coauthors with God of their messages. Their

messages are given them, given them entire, and given them precisely as they are given out by them. God speaks through them: they are not merely his messengers, but “his mouth.” But at the same time their intelligence is active in the reception, retention, and announcing of their messages, contributing nothing to them but presenting fit instruments for the communication of them—instruments capable of understanding, responding profoundly to, and zealously proclaiming them.

There is, no doubt, a not unnatural hesitancy abroad in thinking of the prophets as exhibiting only such merely receptive activities. In the interests of their personalities, we are asked not to represent God as dealing mechanically with them, pouring his revelations into their souls to be simply received as in so many buckets, or violently wresting their minds from their own proper action that he may do his own thinking with them. Must we not rather suppose, we are asked, that all revelations must be “psychologically mediated,” must be given “after the mode of moral mediation,” and must be made first of all their recipients’ “own spiritual possession”? And is not, in point of fact, the personality of each prophet clearly traceable in his message, and that to such an extent as to compel us to recognize him as in a true sense its real author?

The plausibility of such questionings should not be permitted to obscure the fact that the mode of the communication of the prophetic messages which is suggested by them is directly contradicted by the prophets’ own representations of their relations to the revealing Spirit. In the prophets’ own view they were just instruments through whom God gave revelations which came from them, not as their own product, but as the pure word of Jehovah. Neither should the plausibility of such questionings blind us to their speciousness. They exploit subordinate considerations, which are not without their validity in their own place and under their own limiting conditions, as if they were the determining or even the sole considerations in the case, and in neglect of the really determining considerations.

God is himself the author of the instruments he employs for the communication of his messages to men and has framed them into precisely the instruments he desired for the exact communication of his message. There is just ground for the expectation that he will use all the instruments he employs according to their natures; intelligent beings therefore as intelligent

beings, moral agents as moral agents. But there is no just ground for asserting that God is incapable of employing the intelligent beings he has himself created and formed to his will, to proclaim his messages purely as he gives them to them; or of making truly the possession of rational minds conceptions which they have themselves had no part in creating. And there is no ground for imagining that God is unable to frame his own message in the language of the organs of his revelation without its thereby ceasing to be, because expressed in a fashion natural to these organs, therefore purely his message. One would suppose it to lie in the very nature of the case that if the Lord makes any revelation to men, he would do it in the language of men; or, to individualize more explicitly, in the language of the man he employs as the organ of his revelation; and that naturally means, not the language of his nation or circle merely, but his own particular language, inclusive of all that gives individuality to his self-expression. We may speak of this, if we will, as “the accommodation of the revealing God to the several prophetic individualities.” But we should avoid thinking of it externally and therefore mechanically, as if the revealing Spirit artificially phrased the message which he gives through each prophet in the particular forms of speech proper to the individuality of each, so as to create the illusion that the message comes out of the heart of the prophet himself.

Precisely what the prophets affirm is that their messages do not come out of their own hearts and do not represent the workings of their own spirits. Nor is there any illusion in the phenomenon we are contemplating; and it is a much more intimate, and, we may add, a much more interesting phenomenon than an external accommodation of speech to individual habitudes.⁹ It includes, on the one hand, the accommodation of the prophet, through his total preparation, to the speech in which the revelation to be given through him is to be clothed; and on the other involves little more than the consistent carrying into detail of the broad principle that God uses the instruments he employs in accordance with their natures.

No doubt, on adequate occasion, the very stones might cry out by the power of God, and dumb beasts speak, and mysterious voices sound forth from the void; and there have not been lacking instances in which men

9. ED. NOTE. *Habitude*: habitual disposition or mode of behavior; usual way of doing something; custom.

have been compelled by the same power to speak what they would not, and in languages whose very sounds were strange to their ears. But ordinarily when God the Lord would speak to men he avails himself of the services of a human tongue with which to speak, and he employs this tongue according to its nature as a tongue and according to the particular nature of the tongue which he employs. It is vain to say that the message delivered through the instrumentality of this tongue is conditioned at least in its form by the tongue by which it is spoken, if not, indeed, limited, curtailed, in some degree determined even in its matter, by it. Not only was it God the Lord who made the tongue, and who made this particular tongue with all its peculiarities, not without regard to the message he would deliver through it; but his control of it is perfect and complete, and it is as absurd to say that he cannot speak his message by it purely without that message suffering change from the peculiarities of its tone and modes of enunciation, as it would be to say that no new truth can be announced in any language because the elements of speech by the combination of which the truth in question is announced are already in existence with their fixed range of connotation. The marks of the several individualities imprinted on the messages of the prophets, in other words, are only a part of the general fact that these messages are couched in human language, and in no way beyond that general fact affect their purity as direct communications from God.

Revelation by Inspiration

A new set of problems is raised by the mode of revelation which we have called “concurvive operation.” This mode of revelation differs from prophecy, properly so called, precisely by the employment in it, as is not done in prophecy, of the total personality of the organ of revelation, as a factor. It has been common to speak of the mode of the Spirit’s action in this form of revelation, therefore, as an assistance, a superintendence, a direction, a control, the meaning being that the effect aimed at—the discovery and enunciation of divine truth—is attained through the action of the human powers—historical research, logical reasoning, ethical thought, religious aspiration—acting not by themselves, however, but under the prevailing assistance, superintendence, direction, control of the divine Spirit. This manner of speaking has the advantage of setting this mode of revelation sharply

in contrast with prophetic revelation, as involving merely a determining, and not, as in prophetic revelation, a supercessive action of the revealing Spirit. We are warned, however, against pressing this discrimination too far by the inclusion of the whole body of Scripture in such passages as 2 Peter 1:20f. in the category of prophecy, and the assignment of their origin not to a mere “leading” but to the “bearing” of the Holy Spirit.

In any event such terms as *assistance, superintendence, direction, control*, inadequately express the nature of the Spirit’s action in revelation by “concurrent operation.” The Spirit is not to be conceived as standing outside of the human powers employed for the effect in view, ready to supplement any inadequacies they may show and to supply any defects they may manifest, but as working confluent in, with, and by them, elevating them, directing them, controlling them, energizing them, so that, as his instruments, they rise above themselves and under his inspiration do his work and reach his aim. The product, therefore, which is attained by their means is his product through them. It is this fact which gives to the process the right to be called actively, and to the product the right to be called passively, a revelation. Although the circumstance that what is done is done by and through the action of human powers keeps the product in form and quality in a true sense human, yet the confluent operation of the Holy Spirit throughout the whole process raises the result above what could by any possibility be achieved by mere human powers and constitutes it expressly a supernatural product. The human traits are traceable throughout its whole extent, but at bottom it is a divine gift, and the language of Paul is the most proper mode of speech that could be applied to it: “Which things also we speak, not in words which man’s wisdom teacheth, but which the Spirit teacheth” (1 Cor. 2:13); “The things which I write unto you . . . are the commandment of the Lord” (1 Cor. 14:37).

Complete Revelation of God in Christ

It is supposed that all the forms of special or redemptive revelation which underlie and give its content to the religion of the Bible may without violence be subsumed under one or another of these three modes—external manifestation, internal suggestion, and concurrent operation. All, that is, except the culminating revelation, not through, but in, Jesus Christ. As in

his person, in which dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily, he rises above all classification and is *sui generis*;¹⁰ so the revelation accumulated in him stands outside all the divers portions and divers manners in which otherwise revelation has been given and sums up in itself all that has been or can be made known of God and of his redemption. He does not so much make a revelation of God as himself is the revelation of God; he does not merely disclose God's purpose of redemption, he is unto us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification and redemption.

The theophanies are but faint shadows in comparison with his manifestation of God in the flesh. The prophets could prophesy only as the Spirit of Christ which was in them testified, revealing to them as to servants one or another of the secrets of the Lord Jehovah; from him as his Son, Jehovah has no secrets, but whatsoever the Father knows that the Son knows also. Whatever truth men have been made partakers of by the Spirit of truth is his (for all things whatsoever the Father hath are his) and is taken by the Spirit of truth and declared to men that he may be glorified. Nevertheless, though all revelation is thus summed up in him, we should not fail to note very carefully that it would also be all sealed up in him—so little is revelation conveyed by fact alone, without the word—had it not been thus taken by the Spirit of truth and declared unto men. The entirety of the New Testament is but the explanatory word accompanying and giving its effect to the fact of Christ. And when this fact was in all its meaning made the possession of men, revelation was completed and in that sense ceased. Jesus Christ is no less the end of revelation than he is the end of the law.

Biblical Terminology

The Ordinary Forms

There is not much additional to be learned concerning the nature and processes of revelation, from the terms currently employed in Scripture to express the idea. These terms are ordinarily the common words for disclosing, making known, making manifest, applied with more or less heightened significance to supernatural acts or effects in kind. In the English Bible (AV)

10. ED. NOTE. *Sui generis*: unique; in a class of its own.

the verb *reveal* occurs about fifty-one times, of which twenty-two are in the Old Testament and twenty-nine in the New Testament. In the Old Testament the word is always the rendering of a Hebrew term גָּלָה, *gālāh*, or its Aramaic equivalent גָּלָה, *g^elāh*, the root meaning of which appears to be “nakedness.” When applied to revelation, it seems to hint at the removal of obstacles to perception or the uncovering of objects to perception.

In the New Testament the word *reveal* is always (with the single exception of Luke 2:35) the rendering of a Greek term ἀποκαλύπτω, *apokalúptō* (but in 2 Thess. 1:7; 1 Peter 4:13 the corresponding noun ἀποκάλυψις, *apokálupsis*), which has a very similar basal¹¹ significance with its Hebrew parallel. As this Hebrew word formed no substantive in this sense, the noun *revelation* does not occur in the English Old Testament, the idea being expressed, however, by other Hebrew terms variously rendered. It occurs in the English New Testament, on the other hand, about a dozen times, and always as the rendering of the substantive corresponding to the verb rendered “reveal” (*apokálupsis*). On the face of the English Bible, the terms *reveal*, *revelation* bear therefore uniformly the general sense of “disclose,” “disclosure.” The idea is found in the Bible, however, much more frequently than the terms *reveal*, *revelation* in English versions. Indeed, the Hebrew and Greek terms exclusively so rendered occur more frequently in this sense than in this rendering in the English Bible. And by their side there stand various other terms which express in one way or another the general conception.

In the New Testament the verb φανερώω, *phanerōō*, with the general sense of “making manifest,” “manifesting,” is the most common of these. It differs from *apokalúptō* as the more general and external term from the more special and inward. Other terms also are occasionally used: ἐπιφάνεια, *epipháneia*, “manifestation” (2 Thess. 2:8; 1 Tim. 6:14; 2 Tim. 1:10; 4:1; Titus 2:13; cf. ἐπιφαίνω, *epipháinō*, Titus 2:11; 3:4); δεικνύω, *deiknúō* (Rev. 1:1; 17:1; 22:1, 6, 8; cf. Acts 9:16; 1 Tim. 4:15); ἐξηγέομαι, *exēgéomai* (John 1:18), of which, however, only one perhaps—χρηματίζω, *chrēmatiszō* (Matt. 2:12, 22; Luke 2:26; Acts 10:22; Heb. 8:5; 11:7; 12:25); χρηματισμός, *chrēmatismós* (Rom. 11:4)—calls for particular notice as in a special way, according to its usage, expressing the idea of a divine communication.

11. ED. NOTE. *Basal*: related to or forming the base of something.

In the Old Testament, the common Hebrew verb for “seeing” (רָאָה, *rā’ah*) is used in its appropriate stems, with God as the subject, for “appearing,” “showing”: “the Lord appeared unto”; “the word which the Lord showed me.” And from this verb not only is an active substantive formed which supplied the more ancient designation of the official organ of revelation: רוֹאֵה, *rō’eh*, “seer”; but also objective substantives, מַרְאֵה, *mar’ah*, and מַרְעָה, *mar’eh*, which were used to designate the thing seen in a revelation—the vision. By the side of these terms there were others in use, derived from a root which supplies to the Aramaic its common word for “seeing,” but in Hebrew has a somewhat more pregnant meaning, הִזָּהַר, *hāzāh*. Its active derivative, הִזְעַה, *hōzeh*, was a designation of a prophet which remained in occasional use, alternating with the more customary נָבִיא, *nābhī*, long after רוֹאֵה, *rō’eh*, had become practically obsolete; and its passive derivatives הִזְזוֹן, *hizzayōn*, הִזְזוּת, *hāzūth*, מַהְצֵה, *maḥāzeh* provided the ordinary terms for the substance of the revelation or vision. The distinction between the two sets of terms, derived respectively from *rā’ah* and *hāzāh*, while not to be unduly pressed, seems to lie in the direction that the former suggests external manifestations and the latter internal revelations. The *rō’eh* is he to whom divine manifestations, the *hōzeh* he to whom divine communications, have been vouchsafed; the *mar’eh* is an appearance, the *hāzōn* and its companions a vision.

It may be of interest to observe that *mar’ah* is the term employed in Numbers 12:6, while it is *hāzōn* which commonly occurs in the headings of the written prophecies to indicate their revelatory character. From this it may possibly be inferred that in the former passage it is the mode, in the latter the contents of the revelation that is emphasized. Perhaps a like distinction may be traced between the *hāzōn* of Daniel 8:15 and the *mar’eh* of the next verse. The ordinary verb for “knowing,” יָדַע, *yādha’*, expressing in its causative stems the idea of making known, informing, is also very naturally employed, with God as its subject, in the sense of revealing, and that, in accordance with the natural sense of the word, with a tendency to pregnancy of implication, of revealing effectively, of not merely uncovering to observation, but making to know. Accordingly, it is paralleled not merely with גָּלָה, *gālāh* (Ps. 98:2: “The Lord hath *made known* his salvation; his righteousness hath he *displayed* in the sight of the nation”), but also with such terms as לָמַד, *lāmadh* (Ps. 25:4: “*Make known* to me thy ways, O Lord:

teach me thy paths”). This verb *yādhā* forms no substantive in the sense of “revelation” (cf. דָּאַתְּ, *da’ath*, Num. 24:16; Ps. 19:3).

“Word of Jehovah” and “Torah”

The most common vehicles of the idea of “revelation” in the Old Testament are, however, two expressions which are yet to be mentioned. These are the phrase, “word of Jehovah,” and the term commonly but inadequately rendered in the English versions by “law.” The former (*dēbhar Yahweh*, varied to *dēbhar ʿĒlōhīm* or *dēbhar hā-ʿĒlōhīm*; cf. *nēʿum Yahweh*, *massā Yahweh*) occurs scores of times and is at once the simplest and the most colorless designation of a divine communication. By the latter (*tōrāh*), the proper meaning of which is “instruction,” a strong implication of authoritativeness is conveyed; and, in this sense, it becomes what may be called the technical designation of a specifically divine communication. The two are not infrequently brought together, as in Isaiah 1:10: “Hear the word of Jehovah, ye rulers of Sodom; give ear unto the law [margin “teaching”] of our God, ye people of Gomorrah”; or Isaiah 2:3; Micah 4:2: “For out of Zion shall go forth the law [margin “instruction”], and the word of Jehovah from Jerusalem.” Both terms are used for any divine communication of whatever extent; and both came to be employed to express the entire body of divine revelation, conceived as a unitary whole. In this comprehensive usage, the emphasis of the one came to fall more on the graciousness, and of the other more on the authoritativeness of this body of divine revelation; and both passed into the New Testament with these implications.

“The word of God,” or simply “the word,” comes thus to mean in the New Testament just the gospel, “the word of the proclamation of redemption, that is, all that which God has to say to man, and causes to be said” looking to his salvation. It expresses, in a word, precisely what we technically speak of as God’s redemptive revelation. “The law,” on the other hand, means in this New Testament use, just the whole body of the authoritative instruction which God has given men. It expresses, in other words, what we commonly speak of as God’s supernatural revelation. The two things, of course, are the same: God’s authoritative revelation is his gracious revelation; God’s redemptive revelation is his supernatural revelation. The two terms merely look at the one aggregate of revelation from two aspects, and each emphasizes its own aspect of this one aggregated revelation.

“The Scriptures”

Now, this aggregated revelation lay before the men of the New Testament in a written form, and it was impossible to speak freely of it without consciousness of and at least occasional reference to its written form. Accordingly we hear of a Word of God that is written (John 15:25; 1 Cor. 15:54), and the divine Word is naturally contrasted with mere tradition, as if its written form were of its very idea (Mark 7:10); indeed, the written body of revelation—with an emphasis on its written form—is designated expressly “the prophetic word” (2 Peter 1:19). More distinctly still, “the Law” comes to be thought of as a written, not exactly, code, but body of divinely authoritative instructions. The phrase, “It is written in your law” (John 10:34; 15:25; Rom. 3:19; 1 Cor. 14:21), acquires the precise sense of, “It is set forth in your authoritative Scriptures, all the content of which is ‘law,’ that is, divine instruction.” Thus “the Word of God,” “the Law,” came to mean just the written body of revelation, what we call, and what the New Testament writers called, in the same high sense which we give the term, “the Scriptures.”

These “Scriptures” are thus identified with the revelation of God, conceived as a well-defined *corpus*, and two conceptions rise before us which have had a determining part to play in the history of Christianity—the conception of an authoritative canon of Scripture, and the conception of this canon of Scripture as just the Word of God written. The former conception was thrown into prominence in opposition to the gnostic heresies in the earliest age of the church, and gave rise to a richly varied mode of speech concerning the Scriptures, emphasizing their authority in legal language, which goes back to and rests on the biblical usage of “Law.” The latter it was left to the Reformation to do justice to in its struggle against, on the one side, the Romish depression of the Scriptures in favor of the traditions of the church, and on the other side the enthusiasts’ supercession of them in the interests of the “inner Word.”

When Tertullian, on the one hand, speaks of the Scriptures as an “Instrument,” a legal document, his terminology has an express warrant in the Scriptures’ own usage of *tōrāh*, “law,” to designate their entire content. And when John Gerhard argues that “between the Word of God and Sacred Scripture, taken in a material sense, there is no real difference,” he is only

declaring plainly what is definitely implied in the New Testament use of “the Word of God” with the written revelation in mind. What is important to recognize is that the Scriptures themselves represent the Scriptures as not merely containing here and there the record of revelations—“words of God,” *tōrōth*—given by God, but as themselves, in all their extent, a revelation, an authoritative body of gracious instructions from God; or, since they alone, of all the revelations which God may have given, are extant—rather as the revelation, the only “Word of God” accessible to men, in all their parts “law,” that is, authoritative instruction from God.

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Study Questions

1. How is “the religion of the Bible” considered a “supernatural religion”?
2. What distinguishes general from special revelation?
3. What two things unify the entire process of revelation, in all its diverse manners and throughout all its epochs?
4. What distinguishes general revelation in the garden of Eden from subsequent general revelation?
5. In what ways does God reveal himself to those who have not heard the gospel?
6. What are the three stages of God’s redemptive self-revelation, and in what do they culminate?
7. How does Warfield explain the place of revelation among God’s redemptive acts?
8. Explain Warfield’s understanding of prophets as vehicles of revelation and prophecy as a mode of revelation.
9. Regarding the modes of revelation, what does Warfield mean by “internal suggestion” and “concurvise operation”?

10. How would you summarize Warfield's views on "dictation" in this chapter?
11. In what way or ways is the revelation of God in Christ *sui generis*—unique—transcending external manifestation, internal suggestion, and concursive operation?

For Further Study

Related Warfield Works

- Warfield, Benjamin B. "Christianity and Revelation." In *Selected Shorter Writings of Benjamin B. Warfield—1*. Edited by John E. Meeter. Nutley, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1970. Chap. 2.
- . "Dream." In *Selected Shorter Writings of Benjamin B. Warfield—2*. Edited by John E. Meeter. Nutley, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1973. Chap. 11. A discussion of dream as a means of divine revelation as recorded in Scripture.
- . "Mysticism and Christianity." In *Studies in Theology*. 1932. Reprint, Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1988. Chap. 21.
- . "Revelation and the Idea of Revelation." In *The Works of Benjamin B. Warfield*. Vol. 1. 1927. Reprint, Grand Rapids: Baker, 1991. Chap. 2.
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