

# How Does Revelation Occur?

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Two cultural factors of the nineteenth century virtually determined that revelation would be the dominant theological topic of the twentieth century.

First, many successes in the nineteenth century gave the so-called scientific method impressive esteem and credentials and, both by implication and directly, raised the whole problem of *how we know* (epistemology) in both philosophy and theology. Second, from John Locke on, modern philosophy has become more and more concerned with the theory of knowledge (epistemology) and less and less concerned with general theories of reality (metaphysics). In fact, to some of the philosophers of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, philosophy was virtually reduced to the theory of knowledge. This meant that the problem of knowledge became the foremost preoccupation of theology — and that is precisely the problem of revelation. So science and philosophy forced the concept of revelation to the center of theological attention.

Karl Barth made the original breakthrough at this point and also in many ways set the course of the discussion. Unfortunately the Barthian materials are massive, for Barth discussed not only revelation itself but also such allied subjects as the various meanings of the expression “the word of God,” the concept of inspiration, the concept of canon, and the concept of tradition. It is amazing how fast the materials on revelation grew in the 1920’s.<sup>1</sup>

The questions I want to pose are these: Where does revelation take place? That is, in what realm or territory or area does it occur? Where is its material content or its decisive action to be found?

I shall discuss leading alternatives and then sum up with my own view.

## I. REVELATION AS INSIGHT

8 Religious liberalism (or religious modernism, or neoprotestantism) is that movement which was begun by Friedrich Schleiermacher<sup>2</sup> and which dominated the theology of the nineteenth century and the early part of the twentieth century. It lost its theological leadership with the emergence of men like Barth, Emil Brunner, and Rudolf Bultmann; but it still has representatives today and is making some sort of comeback in America in connection with "process theology." There were several kinds of liberalism and different versions of revelation, but they all had one thesis in common: the rejection of the orthodox view of revelation as supernatural disclosure of truth recorded in divinely inspired Scripture. If there was one concept that pervaded liberalism or modernism, it was the conviction that revelation is primarily *insight*.<sup>3</sup>

That is, man has ethical or moral or spiritual or perhaps even metaphysical convictions that come to him as insight. But if one were to describe the process as part of God's work among men, it would be called revelation. The remarkable character of Holy Scripture, and particularly of Jesus, lies in the number of unusually rich spiritual intuitions to be found in them. These intuitions or insights have an empirical verification in the fact that the great spirits of all centuries have found them to be valid.

There was also a metaphysical undergirding of this view in the religious liberals. They did not wish to become pantheists, yet they wanted the continuity between God and man as taught in pantheism. Many of them solved this problem with the word *panentheism* — God is in all things, yet not to the degree that the relationship could be called pantheism. So the divine Spirit and the human spirit were joined, as it were, stone-to-stone, brick-upon-brick, in this exaggerated doctrine of divine immanence. Accordingly, what is called insight or intuition as man gropes for spiritual reality can also be seen as revelation as God meets man in man's quest for God.

In a sense, even before it emerged, this theory of revelation had already been refuted by Pascal, who repudiated "the God of the philosophers" in favor of "the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob," and by Soren Kierkegaard, who was the father of an exaggerated doctrine of transcendence in the early Barth of the 1920's. Certain works by Kierkegaard contain the philosophical and theological roots of the destruction of the doctrine of revelation as insight.<sup>4</sup> Barth's own work includes vigorous assaults on the liberal theology of revelation,<sup>5</sup> and a book by Brunner, directed primarily at Schleiermacher, is another refutation of the liberal view.<sup>6</sup>

But such criticisms have not eliminated this view. As I have mentioned,

religious liberalism is attempting to take on new life in an alliance with "process philosophy." This philosophy is built basically on categories taken from biology and on the more dynamic notions of matter in recent atomic physics. Its patron saint is Alfred North Whitehead, a mathematician and scientific philosopher who gives process theology a hoped-for scientific blessing. Other prominent names in this philosophical lineage are Henri Bergson, Samuel Alexander, and (later) Pierre Teilhard de Chardin.

A recent representative of process theology is Kenneth Cauthen,<sup>7</sup> who holds that there is a normative core in Scripture for Christian theology, and that Christ gives us the normative basis for our understanding of God. Within this context, Cauthen at times speaks of revelation as though it were doctrinal, propositional, conceptual, revealed truths. When he gets to the specifics, however, revelation is not of this order but is essentially an *experience of meaning*. We are thus back to the older liberal definition, now set forth in a more modern and more sophisticated manner that profits from the recent history of theology.

In America and Great Britain there is a kind of consensus about the nature of philosophy, which is considered to be "analytic" or "linguistic." Ordinarily this kind of philosophy regards all statements about art, poetry, ethics, and religion as nonsense statements — meaningless statements in the sense that they are incapable of verification (according to certain stipulations about the nature of verification). Hence analytic philosophy<sup>8</sup> is looked upon as a harsh critic of Christian theology.

However, Christians informed in this kind of philosophy have said that the so-called "linguistic veto" of this school does not, as a matter of fact, put an end to Christian theology. Christian theology, in fact, may be rewritten from just this standpoint.<sup>9</sup>

The theologians who use philosophical analysis as their philosophical method (and who represent a spread of theological opinions) do not speak so much of revelation as they do of the nature or character of theological sentences. But in expressing the character of theological sentences they indicate a functional or operational view of revelation. In general, these theologians believe that theology is a certain way of putting our experience together, or a certain angle from which we look at the world and man, or a certain perspective we have from a particular vantage point, or a certain kind of grid through which we look.

Implicit in all of this is the idea that revelation is not so much special knowledge or divinely revealed truth as, rather, a special way in which man looks at God, man, and the universe, and the special kind of language he

uses to express himself in this regard. At this level, and if this is the only level intended, this view becomes another version of revelation as insight.

Or, to put it another way: modern analytic philosophy does not believe that revelation as traditionally understood (as conveying to man truth as propositions about God and salvation) can stand up against logical analysis, which shows that such propositions cannot really be informative or cognitive. Therefore if there is such a thing as revelation, it must be different from the older idea of it. Revelation, then, is more like suddenly seeing the plot in a clever book or drama, or getting a sudden insight into the character of a friend. Here the old liberal doctrine of insight has been set forth in a more guarded way so that it will not run counter to contemporary analytic philosophy.

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## II. REVELATION AS SPECIAL CONFIGURATION

On the surface, the theology of Bultmann and the theology of Paul Tillich seem to differ greatly. Their common root in Martin Heidegger and Kierkegaard, however, gives them certain similarities that are obscured by the two men's differing approaches to theology. Both men reject what they consider to be the old orthodox view of revelation, namely, the communication of divine truth through supernatural means. Furthermore, both have rejected the liberal theology of the nineteenth century and therefore do not duplicate the older liberal notions of revelation. They present views of revelation that are essentially existential or governed by existential structures.

First, they believe that revelation is something "special." It is not insights or intuitions that a spiritual man may have in moments of meditation or contemplation. Yet it is not supernatural revelation in any sense of the term, as both men are firm antisupernaturalists. Revelation is "special" in a non-supernatural way that I have called *configurational revelation*.

Revelation is essentially a special kind of existential experience: it has an existential pattern or structure or constellation or configuration. Not all existential experience is revelation, but revelation is a special kind of existential event. One may coin expressions like "existential-spiritual" or "existential-theological" or "existential-kerygmatic" to suggest what revelation is to Bultmann and Tillich.

In the pattern set by Kierkegaard, these men believe that we may speak of two kinds of knowledge and two corresponding kinds of reasoning processes. There is objective or scientific or empirical knowledge, which is attained (in its most accurate form) by the scientific method. At a lower

level it includes any kind of knowledge a man may have of his external or objective world. Then there is existential territory, which is known by "existential reason," if one may so speak. Religion is in this territory of the existential, and therefore is some form of "existential reason" — or, better, "existential kind of reasoning or structuring."

Revelation, then, is a special configuration of factors in existential territory. Bultmann, writing as a New Testament scholar, sets forth his ideas of revelation in a more exegetical way than does Tillich, who writes more philosophically.

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To Bultmann the message of the New Testament is kerygmatic and existential. By the use of the term "kerygmatic" he wishes to express his conviction that revelation is something *addressed* to us (*Anreden*). Something that is truly addressed to us is not to be treated as though it were merely a matter of being true or false, but as something that makes a demand and calls for decision. Thus the gospel is not a general religious message to man, but a specific word of address to a specific man in a specific situation. Bultmann understands the gospel in existential terms because he believes that existentialism details exactly how men dispose or manage or govern their lives. He sees existentialism not so much as another version of modern philosophy but as a kind of neutral, objective description (hence "phenomenological" in the primitive sense of this term) of the manner in which men concretely and specifically order or manage their existence. Revelation occurs in this context.

Revelation, then, is not communication of doctrine, not impartation of new knowledge about God, not religious information which hitherto we did not have. It is an "existential communication" in the Kierkegaardian tradition. It is an existential transformation whereby man moves from an "old man" or an "old nature" manner of living to that of the "new man" or the "new nature." From God's standpoint, revelation is the kerygma or the Word; from man's standpoint it is a new self-understanding. But revelation is an event in which there is both God's kerygma and man's faith, or else there is no revelation. Revelation is thus a dyadic concept.

Hence revelation is by configuration. The kerygma is not part of man's ordinary knowledge; so revelation is not ordinary insight or intuition. Nor is revelation a supernatural disclosure. It is a special existential-kerygmatic constellation or configuration within the wider context of a universe governed unvaryingly by law.<sup>10</sup>

Tillich's theory of revelation is also a constellation or configuration theory.<sup>11</sup> What I wish to discuss here is the point at which he regards revelation

as special but not supernatural. Tillich uses three words to express the special character of revelation: *mystery*, *ecstasy*, and *miracle*. Each of these terms indicates that the experience of revelation is not an ordinary event. Each also indicates that it is an intensely existential experience. And each also shows that revelation is a constellation of known elements within our experience (symbols, "myths") which can be grasped only in the existential mode. Hence the constellation is dyadic: revelation is revelation when it is both given and received. If there is no reception there is no revelation.

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In Tillich's theology of revelation, however, there are complexities not found in Bultmann, whose theology is at times an almost naive restatement of Heidegger's philosophy in theological terms.<sup>12</sup> Tillich is not a pure existentialist (as he is sometimes represented). He was profoundly influenced by German idealistic philosophy; and he also had a very articulate theory of religious symbols. These elements are part of his doctrine of revelation, and with them he advances beyond Bultmann. For example: the Ground of All Being (derived from German idealism) radiates its nature through the universe, and these radiations appear to man as symbols. Revelation then occurs when one of these symbols (reflecting some valid aspect of the Ground of All Being) is grasped existentially in miracle, mystery, and ecstasy. Yet revelation never becomes a supernatural event; for in all its specialty it remains within the natural sequence of events in the universe.

Two objections apply to both Bultmann and Tillich. First, neither really presents a biblically based concept of revelation grounded in a meticulous study of words and texts. Second, what is said of revelation seems to be far more grounded in philosophical considerations than in the phenomenon of revelation itself.

Kierkegaard taught existentialism as subjectivity, not as subjectivism. But all forms of existentialism, theological or philosophical, are between a rock and a hard place (and that without relent) in having to show that subjectivity is nothing but a sophisticated version of subjectivism (or perhaps, even worse, solipsism). And this requirement plagues existentialist versions of revelation.

### III. REVELATION AS ENCOUNTER

If we grant that these various views of revelation overlap each other, or that parts of one are incorporated in another, it is plain that there are existential elements in Brunner and Barth. Brunner confesses that he is a

faithful disciple of Kierkegaard; and although Barth has declared his independence from existentialism, some critics feel that he is doing the same sort of thing in theology that Heidegger does in philosophy.

But in Barth and Brunner there are significant additions that move them beyond the positions of Bultmann and Tillich. Barth and Brunner put much more objectivity and history into their doctrines of revelation than do Bultmann and Tillich, and so distance themselves enough to warrant a separate classification. The difference centers in the concept of *encounter*. Although Bultmann's and Tillich's views might also be called "encounter" theories (as "encounter" is one of the more stable terms in the vocabulary of existentialism), Barth and Brunner greatly enlarge the concept.

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Liberalism and existentialism, they say, make revelation too subjective, and thus the word of man and the word of God become confused. But orthodoxy so objectifies revelation that the mystery, hiddenness, and transcendence of God are betrayed. Only in a strong doctrine of divine act and of the divine word conjoined to the proper internal response of faith can justice be done to the concept of revelation. This is the concept of encounter in an expanded sense.

I shall not try to separate Barth from Brunner but instead spell out elements they have in common.

First, both believe that the supreme instance of revelation is Jesus Christ as God-Incarnate. Immediately this means that the center of gravity for the doctrine of revelation is "out there" — before me, with me, and after me. Furthermore, revelation is understood christologically: the "Word of God" in its primary historical instance is Jesus Christ, the God-man.

Second, both believe that whatever normative or authoritative character Holy Scripture has is based on its christological character ("Christ hidden in the Old Testament; Christ revealed in the New Testament"). This christological approach to Scripture and to doctrine in general has called forth the adjectives "christocentric" and "christomonistic." Scripture itself is not immediately revelation nor in a direct sense the word of God. In Barth's overworked expression, it is the *witness to* revelation. It is a witness that revelation has occurred and a promise that it will occur again. However, even though Barth and Brunner continuously affirm that Holy Scripture is not revelation per se, nevertheless they use it in a way that functions as revelation (or at least revelational).

If the objectivity A in this doctrine of revelation is the Incarnation, and if objectivity B is Holy Scripture (christologically and functionally understood), the objectivity C is doctrine. Faith is not a sigh, a moan, or a shout.

Faith has content, and that content is doctrinal. There is no ineffable mysticism here. So doctrine, then, is part of the nexus of revelation. Again, doctrine in and of itself is not revelation; but doctrine points toward, witnesses to, informs of revelation. Doctrine is not revelation; but there is no revelation without doctrine. Thus Christ is a person and not a doctrine, but he is a person known in, and understood by, doctrine.

The third assertion of Barth and Brunner is that revelation also includes the acts of God. If revelation were purely doctrinal or conceptual, Christianity would be a kind of gnosticism. If revelation were solely man's religious experiences, he would never get outside his human skin to a divine revelation.

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But here is a fine point. The act of God is supernatural, but not in any traditional understanding of the supernatural. God's act never breaks out into the open in such a way that it becomes obvious to all men — men without faith — as an act of God. Yet, contrary to the opinion of the liberals and of Bultmann, God is not here merely shadowboxing in history. God does act supernaturally, and that makes a difference in history — but always in such a way that the act is known only in faith. Thus to the eye of ordinary men Jesus was a rabbi from Nazareth about whom some unusual stories had collected. But to the disciples he was the Son of God, for they saw him through the enlightened eyes of faith.

This view of the supernatural activity of God displeases many theologians. Some orthodox critics believe that Barth in particular has shoved the real acts of God in history into a vague kind of spiritual history (*Urgeschichte, Gottesgeschichte*) that is indeed shadowboxing and not confronting reality. Liberal and existentialist critics think that Barth's version of history destroys the very meaning of history, for a history of the supernatural acts of God is incomprehensible to man. Man can manage only causal or immanent relationships, not supernatural ones.

Fourth, Barth and Brunner build up a strong doctrine of the reception of revelation by man, thus rounding out the concept of encounter.

Revelation is (a) received by faith. Both Barth and Brunner have extensive, existential discussions of the powerful and active nature of faith. Revelation is (b) realized in the sinner by the power of the Holy Spirit. (Here is a restatement of the Reformation doctrines of (i) the union of Word and Spirit and (ii) the witness of the Holy Spirit.) And revelation is (c) an encounter with God himself. In revelation we truly meet God. Thus the doctrinal or theological element is important but not central. Divine confrontation is at the center.

Barth's view of revelation has come in for further criticism in regard to the way he relates revelation to Scripture. His critics on the liberal side believe that he is caught in a contradiction. On the one hand he admits that human and "worldly" character of Scripture as one with every man's own human and worldly existence. Just as no man is inerrant or free from contradictions, so Scripture itself, to be truly human and worldly, must have error even in its theology. An inerrant Scripture would be out of man's orbit. But, on the other hand, when Barth actually uses Scripture in his theology, he uses it in the same authoritative and definitive way as the orthodox theologians do.

Barth's critics on the conservative side state that he has a faulty view of Scripture. He has worked up a magnificent structure in his theology of revelation, but when he comes to the doctrine of inspiration, his work is inferior from both scholarly and logical points of view. In short, he attempts to rest an immense doctrine of revelation on a very fragile and defective view of inspiration.

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#### IV. REVELATION AS INTERPRETED EVENT

A number of scholars in the nineteenth century attempted to formulate a view of revelation that would grant biblical criticism its rightful claims and at the same time preserve the fundamental authority of Scripture for theology. This they did by making an act of God, an event of history, the primary datum of revelation. This event was then *interpreted by prophet and apostle*, and these collected interpretations form the canon of Holy Scripture. In that these interpretations may be wrong, there is a genuine function for biblical criticism. But in that they are mainly right, the Holy Scripture is a record or a witness or a document about revelation — but it is not the primary datum of revelation itself.

This view has received a fresh interpretation by the so-called "Pannenberg circle," a group of German scholars led by Wolfhart Pannenberg.<sup>13</sup> The question is: How does this interpretation differ from that of the nineteenth century scholars who seemed to say much the same thing? The following exposition indicates Pannenberg's main contributions.

First, he thinks that both Barth and Bultmann represent a flight from history. Bultmann, for example, says that the meaning of the cross is not open to ordinary historical science but is existential and known only in faith. So the investigating historian is stopped right there. Barth says that revelation is a special kind of history (*Urgeschichte*) which cannot be treated by ordinary methods of historical research. So he too stops the his-

torian. But Pannenberg says we cannot ignore historiography in a scientific age. So he boldly declares that the events which make up the "stuff" of revelation are open to objective, scientific, historical investigation and can be demonstrated to be factual. In spite of all the critical problems associated with the resurrection accounts in the New Testament, Pannenberg believes that ordinary historical methods can validate the resurrection of Jesus.

Second, in Pannenberg's view revelation is indirect. It is not an immediately given body of information. Revelation is in the implications of the acts of God. The acts of God are at the primary level; revelation is at a level once removed.

Third, there is a special way in which these events are interpreted as revelation. Each such event occurs within a tradition of interpretation, which has its own history (*Traditionsgeschichte*, *Überlieferungsgeschichte*). Thus the resurrection of Christ is interpreted in the light of the traditions of the Jews about apocalyptic events and especially about the resurrection of the dead.

Fourth, the resurrection of Christ is the clue to the meaning of history. History's meaning can be known only at the end of history, but the resurrection of Christ is "proleptic;" it anticipates the meaning of history that will be discovered at its end. The resurrection of Christ does not disclose the totality of the meaning of history, but it does give us some idea of what history is all about.

Pannenberg's intention is obvious: he wants to make the Christian faith an intellectually respectable option for the educated man. This he does by stating that the acts of God are open to historical investigation and by proposing that such investigation does verify the essentials of biblical history. This thesis then forces him to the concept of indirect revelation, that is, revelation as the interpretation of the acts of God.

The problem that remains is whether it can be shown that all revelation is secondary to an event. In the Old Testament, are not Proverbs and Ecclesiastes and Job intended to be direct revelation? And in the New Testament, can one speak of such books as Ephesians, Colossians, and Romans in terms other than direct revelation? I generally agree that the prior elements in all of Scripture (prior to inspiration and revelation) are the acts of God in history. This is what gives Christianity its rugged, empirical rootage in fact, not in theological speculation. Furthermore, certainly much of what we call revelation is interpretation of past events. But I must demur when it is suggested that *all* revelation is of a secondary, derived, or indirect nature.

## V. REVELATION AS COMPOSED OF IMAGES

Austin Farrer, a very capable British philosophical theologian, believes that studies about the inspiration of Scripture have reached a stalemate and that something new must be said. This must not be some sort of new version of an infallible inspiration, for biblical criticism shows that such a view is no longer an option for Christian theology. On the other hand, the real authority of scriptural revelation must be maintained.

One of the chief passions of Farrer's life is poetry.<sup>14</sup> And so he wishes to break the stalemate between a liberal view of Scripture (in which nothing is left of any theological consequence in Scripture) and the orthodox view (which presents the theologian with the impossible task of defending a verbally inspired text in the context of a century of real advance in biblical criticism) by deriving a new idea of revelation from poetry.

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The essence of poetry is its nonliteral character; that is, it is not prose. Poetry lives in the atmosphere of figures of speech of all kinds — metaphors, "pictures," images. These figures of speech reveal the deep insights of the poet (and so explain the claim that the poets are the true metaphysicians). Farrer transfers this concept of poetry to Scripture and says that what is really revealed is not so much words or propositions but *great images*, or "theological pictures" (my expression). Thus we really understand Scripture only when we understand its images. Exegesis can no longer be considered simply in grammatical or philological terms. The exegete has to be something of a poet himself to go beyond the words and sentences to the great images mirrored in the words and sentences.

The advantages of this view, Farrer thinks, are many. It gets the theologian off the hook of trying to defend a verbally inspired Scripture; it gives biblical criticism its rights; it preserves the authority of Scripture at the right place, namely, theological content; and it opens up a whole new method of interpreting Christian theology.

There can be no formal objection to revelation as consisting of literary images (and I doubt that any theologian has argued that revelation must have a particular literary form). The real question is whether *all* of Scripture, the *whole* content of revelation, is, as a matter of fact, contained in images. I can think of any number of passages that can hardly be called "image" passages but are rather prose in form. Further, the way some of the New Testament passages interpret the Old Testament depends on the use of a word or an expression; this means that revelation must be verbal to some degree, even if one maintains that the major concepts of revelation are inspired images.

## VI. A HISTORICAL PROTESTANT POSITION

Although there is no unified Protestant theology of revelation,<sup>15</sup> there are certain beliefs about revelation that in a general way have characterized the history of orthodox Protestant thought.<sup>16</sup> I now wish to spell them out, with the implication that I generally concur with them, although for my own personal satisfaction I would prefer to give them a far lengthier exposition than is feasible here.

First, revelation is *supernatural*. We are not thinking here of "general revelation" (as indicated in Psalm 19) but of what is usually called "special revelation." From the time of English deism, and from the pioneering theology of Schleiermacher, there has been a persistent conviction that, whatever it is, revelation is not supernatural. The rejection of the supernatural is based on the conviction that both science and philosophy have taught man the uniformity of nature, and this uniformity can be challenged neither by religion nor by revelation. On the theological side it has been argued that God is not a patcher or fixer or meddler in his creation but that he works through the laws and processes of nature.

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However, all of this can be said only if a doctrine of real sin is ignored. If man is actually sinful (as such doctrines as original sin and total depravity attempt to state), then he can be rescued only supernaturally. He needs both a supernatural redemption and a supernatural revelation. In formulating a doctrine of revelation, orthodox Protestants have felt that man's "sinnerhood" is a bigger problem to wrestle with than the scientific and philosophical demand for uniformity.

Second, revelation is *soteric*. Its concern is not abstract or general or philosophical or speculative. It is not a polite discussion on how man may know about God. The intention of special revelation is that it be part of the total redemptive activity of God. Just as man needs forgiveness of sins and justification, he also needs illumination about the true God. Therefore revelation must be seen as one of the major products of the love and grace of God who seeks the redemption of man.

Third, revelation is *doctrinal*. Modern theology (neoorthodox, existentialist, liberal) repeatedly insists that revelation is not doctrinal. We are told that in revelation God himself (and not a doctrine) meets us; or that revelation is a rearrangement of the existential furniture of the self, with no new furniture added; or that revelation is an insight or intuition of a moral or spiritual structure or a special kind of meaning.

This is all logical nonsense to me. Unless there is a conceptual element in the very fiber of revelation itself, then revelation is a meaningless sound

or a meaningless vision or a meaningless emotion. To say that I encounter God and not a doctrine is utter confusion. If I encounter God apart from some concepts, apart from some meanings, or apart from some interpretations, it is a senseless encounter. I encounter God in and along with concepts and doctrines, and therefore these concepts and doctrines must be revelational in some sense.

Certainly not all revelation is "propositional" or straight doctrinal statement. The Holy Scripture is filled with all kinds of literature and figures of speech. Certainly revelation may be in a symbol, in a dramatic event, in the character of a person. But revelation must eventually also become conceptual, or the root of true theology is destroyed. Although Barth and Brunner say in theory that revelation is encounter and not doctrine, in practice they have each produced a small library of doctrinal books — as if there is an enormous booty of concepts and doctrines in the revelatory event. And the notion that doctrinal materials can be drawn from a non-doctrinal revelation is a patent absurdity.

Fourth, revelation is *inscripturated*. Not all of God's revelations are in Scripture, nor need be. But Scripture contains those revelations of God that are intended as normative or authoritative for *all* the ages of God's people. When it is said that Scripture is the revealed word of God, it is not meant that every line of Scripture is given by direct revelation or that all that is known in Scripture is known only through divine revelation. Holy Scripture is the revealed word of God in that it contains that body of revelation which God has wished preserved for all ages in his church. In orthodox Protestantism, Holy Scripture is understood to be the special document of divine revelation and so to possess divine authority in what it teaches, as well as infallibility in what it intends to accomplish in the church and through the church in the world.

Fifth, revelation is *inspired*. That is, it is seen as revelation through the Holy Spirit. The real epistemological foundation of the Reformation was not "the Bible and the Bible alone" as the charter of the Reformation churches. Rather it was the union of Word and Spirit, as taught by both Calvin and Luther.<sup>17</sup> The Reformers did not believe that unenlightened eyes could read the spiritual word of God, but that God's word was to be read by the illumination of God's Spirit. This view saved the Reformers from an intellectualism in religion, and also it indicated that for the sinner to be reached in his sin there must be not only the external soteric word of God but also the internal renewing of the Holy Spirit.

Sixth, revelation is *christological*. This has perhaps been the most am-

biguous part of the historical Protestant view of revelation. Both Luther and Calvin have rather clear statements of the christological foundation of revelation, but neither makes it a working principle in his theology. In subsequent Protestant literature we find statements about the unique character of Scripture as the word of God, and also statements that Jesus Christ is the supreme Word of God, or the Word of God in its highest sense. But the two assertions were seldom if ever correlated. The theme persists, however, both at an academic level and in the popular devotional material, that that which makes Scripture truly Scripture, or that which really “sells” Scripture as the word of God, is Jesus Christ.

It was Barth and Brunner who announced that they were going to attempt to rebuild the whole concept of revelation and Scripture around Jesus Christ as the one Word of God. And Barth in his christocentrism or christomonism has made the christological approach to revelation the integrating theme of his entire *Church Dogmatics*.

Although evangelicals have been somewhat testy about some of the statements Barth and Brunner have made about Christ and Scripture (statements which really seemed to them in principle to derogate Scripture), nevertheless the evangelicals ought to be grateful to Barth and Brunner for making it clear that revelation and its chief product, Holy Scripture, are to be understood and interpreted christologically. If one does not like the way Barth and Brunner understand and interpret, one ought to attempt it in his own way. In the final analysis it is Jesus Christ as the God-Man, as Saviour and Lord, who binds us confessionally, intellectually, and, yes, emotionally to Christianity — not any formal theological view of divine revelation or divine inspiration or biblical inerrancy which has been developed in such a way that the argument is not affected whether or not there has been an Incarnation.

Finally, revelation is *accommodated*. It is “worldly,” anthropic revelation, adjusted to and characteristic of human beings. Calvin said that God speaks into the ears of the prophets as a nurse lisps words to a child in teaching it to speak. By this he meant the great condescension of God to man’s limited powers. In their accommodated character, the Holy Scriptures are the “lispings” of God. Luther spoke of the theology of the cross as over against the theology of glory. By the theology of the cross he meant the very human, the very broken, the very partial, the very paradoxical kind of information or revelation we have of God in our sinnerhood and finitude (in contrast to the impression given by some Roman Catholic scholastics, who wrote theology as if they did their research in some library in heaven).

In the nineteenth century, Abraham Kuyper tried to impress on theologians this "worldly" character of revelation, its partial character, and its adaptations to our scene and our modes of comprehension. He did not want to overstate the case for inspiration or to "oversell" the character of Holy Scripture.<sup>18</sup> In the twentieth century the British theologian Lionel S. Thornton attempted to show that just as Christ in the Incarnation became a humble man, so God's revelation in Scripture partakes of the same kind of humiliation.<sup>19</sup> (By the humiliation of Scripture Thornton meant to remind the church that Scripture was written by men, in human languages, in certain cultural periods, and therefore must of necessity bear a human or a "worldly" character in contrast to the old cliché that the Bible is a book dropped from heaven, which is virtually the Moslem view of the Qu'ran.)

This means two things: (*a*) Revelation was so given that it really meets us. It gets to us. It is not over our heads. (*b*) In our defense of the revealedness, inspiration, authority, and infallibility of Holy Scripture, we must never step out of the bounds of its form of humiliation.

## Comments

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The title of Ramm's article, the questions he raises, his historical overview of modern and contemporary "theology of the Word," and his own analysis and synthesis of the more conservative Protestant position on the nature of revelation all point up the perennial and inescapable problem of the openness and the exclusiveness of theology.

Where philosophical presupposition and thought have determined or dominated the direction of theological thinking, the resultant notions of revelation tend naturally to emphasize the subjective and noncognitive experiences of man in relation to God.

"Exclusive" theology, opposing the use of any concept taken from non-theological or nonrevelational areas, operates with notions derived from Scripture and uses its own inner logic in explicating and verifying the notions thus derived. The notions of revelation developed by theologians holding to a theological method of exclusiveness tend to stress the supernatural and objective element of revelation.

Between these two divergent ways of doing theology is the approach that in varying degrees rejects the exclusiveness of theology to allow for

modes of thought and concepts from parallel disciplines to become a part of the method and of the resulting theology.

Ramm's article, it seems apparent, criticizes most modern and contemporary views of revelation on the basis that they are not biblically based concepts but are "more grounded in philosophical considerations than in the phenomenon of revelation itself." Ramm finds this particularly true of Tillich and Bultmann. He interprets Barth and Brunner as attempting, with some success, to swing the theological pendulum toward relating revelation to Scripture and the supernatural. He recognizes, however, their dependence on some philosophical presuppositions that influence their notions of both natural and supernatural in the occurrence of revelation.

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With Ramm's sketch of historical theology and his critique I can agree. I can appreciate as well his fairness and carefulness in setting forth this material when he is so restricted for space in writing the article.

In response to Part VI, which states something of Ramm's own position, I offer the following observations, questions, and comments for his consideration.

1. First a general observation. In the introduction to his article, Ramm poses these questions: "Where does revelation take place? In what realm or territory or area does it occur? Where is its material content or its decisive action to be found?"

Are these locus questions answered in Part VI by saying that revelation is supernatural, is soteric, is doctrinal, is inscripturated, is inspired, is christological, is accommodated? Are these descriptive paragraphs too general in form and scope to get at the reality we point to as "revelation"? Perhaps, though, Ramm intends to show the meaning and the realm of revelation by descriptive implication.

2. If it is agreed that revelation is supernatural, would the argument in the article be strengthened by expanding the theological and experiential implications of the sentence "He [man] needs both a supernatural redemption and a supernatural revelation"? Just a bit more clarity here would help the reader.

3. What is meant in proposition five in the last sentence: "For the sinner to be reached in his sin there must be not only the external soteric word of God but also the internal renewing of the Holy Spirit"? This is a crucial point that is difficult to get at or to spell out.

We say that revelation is supernatural. We say that God's word as revelation is to be read by the illumination of the Spirit. What is the role of man's mind and what is the nature of his freedom in accepting or rejecting the

revelation? When first the Bible is read in his presence or he reads it or hears it expounded, does its message come to him only as bits of other information might come, and can it become a convicting and converting means for the Holy Spirit only if this man is willing to hear further what the revelation says? Or is the sovereignty of God such that each sinner man is confronted by the Spirit through the word whether he wishes to be or not?

These questions form a part of the question of locus — where revelation takes place or is to be found. Is it revelation for the individual only when he apprehends or is apprehended by it, or must we say revelation is revelation regardless of how men respond?

Ramm says, "Revelation was so given that it really meets us. It gets to us. It is not over our heads." By this does he mean anything apart from the notion that revelation is accommodated to man?

Finally, making my own brief statement of faith, I feel that we have a divine activity and a human response (in relation to what we have historically termed "revelation") which is extremely difficult to conceptualize or verbalize.

It is easier for me to understand revelation as it relates to Scripture (I choose this, since the great difference in theological stance is here) in a movement-type model where what God wants man to know and what man must know can be seen contextually yet in dynamic motion historically and experientially. The "word of God" (his will, his message, his communication of that knowledge which is essential for man's well-being and eternal salvation) comes from his own eternal mind and is communicated to his chosen messenger through his chosen method — be it event, impression, vision, or direct message. This "word" under the guidance of the Holy Spirit is further spoken or written through the unique personality of the one who speaks or writes. This guidance, which we term "inspiration," is not fully explicated in Scripture; it is only claimed by those who receive it. We are not able to get at what actually happened.

The words and thoughts which are inscripturated are not the reality to which they point, but they can be used by the Holy Spirit in cooperation with the human spirit to confront man with God's will, judgment, and gospel. Thus the word of God has moved from God to man through Spirit, through spoken, written, transmitted, translated, canonized, proclaimed, and interpreted word of man. "Thus is it true of the Bible, as it was of Christ, that 'the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us.' "\*

\* ELLEN G. WHITE, *The Great Controversy* (Mountain View, California: Pacific Press Publishing Association 1911), p. vi.

In Ramm's article we have in part a review of the various theological positions that pertain to the question at hand. In the last section the author sets forth and defends "A Historical Protestant Position." I have the highest regard for Ramm's theological position and skill, and I acknowledge his significant contribution in the field of revelation. This article, however, as he acknowledges, hardly permits a thorough discussion of the question.

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When the writer states that the problem of theory of knowledge "is precisely the problem of revelation," one is led to ask: What is the starting point? Is it axiomatic to say that the locus of revelation is supernatural, propositional, doctrinal, inscripturated, inspirited, christological, accommodated? How does one establish these as the proper place to begin? If the starting point is by an appeal to a historical Protestant position, what guarantees the trustworthiness of the position to which the appeal is made? Can we believe this historical position because it claims what we allow to it? Are we left simply with his affirmation as an act of faith?

To the degree that revelation is able to speak its own authentic word as to the locus of that revelation, to that degree will revelation preserve its independence and objectivity. What ensures to us the realm of revelation? To secure certainty, what is the correct point of departure and the prior court of appeal? The starting point is crucial.

Ramm argues for an objective revelation as opposed to the subjectivity of existentialism and neoorthodoxy. He opposes Barth's "shadowboxing" in terms of revelation as historical, but he seems to lend credence to it by neglecting the realm of the historical in the position he defends at the end. He criticizes Pannenberg's emphasis on history as the realm of revelation and the consequent insistence on a definite rational objective foundation. Then he fails to do justice to the realm of history. One gets the impression that the locus of history is of little consequence.

In the development of history, God has unfolded his plan of redemption. There is nothing subjective or mystical about this. The facts of revelation are the facts of history. That revelation occurred in history is basic to the nature of the Christian faith. Historical reliability as it relates to the locus of revelation is essential. God came to man. God wrought out the divine redemption in history. This is where revelation took place. "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us."

If revelation did not occur in history, then it could well be relegated to

the realm of myth. Revelation could be discredited. The apostles, in preaching the gospel, showed the revelation to rest upon sure and incontrovertible facts. More than five hundred living persons bore witness to Christ's resurrection (1 Corinthians 15:6). The revelation of Jesus Christ is deeply rooted in trustworthy historical facts. In the human situation of man's lost estate, Jesus Christ came down from heaven, lived as a man among men, bore men's sin in his body on the tree. That historical event is part of the revelation, not prior to it. Unless revelation took place in time and space, no genuine knowledge of God's movement toward man would be available. The redemptive attitude and work of God could not be known.

Granted that the standpoint of pure history does not guarantee spiritual apprehension. Faith is needed. Meaning of the historical revelation cannot be understood simply by looking at the events. God must speak the word that reveals his intention and his purpose. Both the event and the word belong to the sphere of revelation. These two aspects cannot be separated. If revelation is propositional, it is also historical. God is responsible for both. The historical facts are one side of the coin. The revealed word is the other. God never intended revelation as history to stand by itself. God communicated his message and intent along with the act itself.

The Christian must contend for the trustworthiness of revelation in both spheres. Both are equally significant for the Christian, the fact and the meaning. Both constitute revelation. Both are real in time and space. Both take place because God acted and spoke. Both reveal to man the supernatural nature of revelation. God moves in history and works in history for the redemption of man. He alone possesses the meaning to his own work. There are not two realms of history: *Historie* and *Geschichte*. Faith does not belong to one realm and knowledge to another. Faith reposes in the objectively given and interpreted facts of history.

Revelation as history is therefore capable of historical authentication. Revelation is primarily not in man, even though it is for man. The issue here is not man's spiritual grasp and understanding of it, but the place where it occurs. If revelation did not occur in history, then it did not occur at all. Men are confronted with revelation regardless of the presence of faith or its absence.

To say that only faith can understand the historical events, can be to undermine the knowledge basis of truth and to concede the argument to the existentialist. It is misleading to attempt an interpretation on the basis of faith alone. Understanding becomes invalid if the historical is made doubt-

ful or is derogated. Correct apprehension of Jesus Christ and God's movements toward man are well nigh unrecognizable if the historical is discarded.

The biblical view is that God addresses truth to the reason and heart of man in historical events and in Scriptural propositions. Both spheres are realms of revelation. The apprehension of revelation arises out of both (a) the rational impact of the events and propositional truths and (b) the direction of the Holy Spirit on the mind of man.

Only in this way do we have a safeguard against an exaggerated immanence indicated in Tillich's *Ground of Being* and existentialist subjectivism. Man is fashioned by God for a rational knowledge of revelation as well as for the response of faith. To reach man, revelation must include an address to reason as well as to faith. No compelling evidence for revelation exists if it is asserted in neglect of the objective sphere of history as the locus of God's initiative.

Led by the Spirit, the believer can study, investigate, and evaluate the historical facts. The spiritual realities present need to be grasped by faith also. No human historian's analysis can say all that God performed in the event. Yet the central truth of the revelation remains in that event as portrayed to the eyes of man, even though he often fails to grasp its meaning.

God does not deny man the truth by revealing his purpose in history. To say that the emphasis on the historical makes truth merely rational, rather than existential, is to miss the point. The issue is that God speaks to man in a clear, distinct, and intelligible communication. He condescends and descends to man's level in order to do just that. The supernatural nature of truth is not denied because revelation occurs on the level of time and space.

The problem in his article is not whether the position Ramm advocates is right, but on what grounds. The coming of God in history locates the revelation. God could be seen in Jesus Christ in the character he lived and revealed in his human person. "God was in Christ." The tendency is to make a distinction between the Jesus of history and the Christ of faith, to fail to blend the supernatural meaning with the historical account. Revelation moves in the realm of objective categories. Men who believed in Christ did not look past the human Jesus to grasp some mystical Christ of faith. They beheld in him "the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."

The purpose of Ramm's article is to answer the simple question as to where revelation took place. His main thrust is that God has revealed himself decisively in Jesus Christ and in the Holy Scriptures. With this we agree. But this means also that we must understand revelation in concrete

situations as authentically historical. In Christ the eternal revelation in whom we trust is himself historically present. Thus we may affirm that neither God nor Jesus Christ brought merely a new set of ideas philosophically or ethically conceived. The Son of God was born in history. He lived in human history, died in it, was raised in it. What happened in history lays claims on us.

Although one may sense some tension between revelation history and the application of the critical method in evaluating the events, one must show that the plane of history is the actual arena where God's movements took place. Since God begins here to break through to man, so must we understand and believe.

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This is no urge for another "Quest of the Historical Jesus," but rather an affirmation of biblical history as thoroughly trustworthy. I wonder if Ramm's failure to deal more directly with this historical realm is due to the shortness of time and space. Or does he wish to avoid this emphasis because of certain dangers that arise when the critical method is applied to revelation?

The realm of history is crucial. Biblical revelation shows that the prophets and seers were not at all concerned with their own experience with God in some form of immediacy. They were not exponents of inscrutable mystical experiences. The revelations that God gave them were rational, practical events and truths relevant to given historical situations.

The biblical emphasis on an objective historical basis provides a safeguard against all the various deviations exposed in the different theological positions Ramm describes. Once it is insisted that revelation takes place in the realm of history as God intended, the fact of revelation and the necessity of it as objective truth standing over against man becomes obvious.

Thus a genuine Christian consciousness exists, because it is supported by a sufficient factual basis. No biblical basis can be found for the view that man has access to a knowledge of God apart from God's movement in history. A genuine Christian consciousness can exist only where faith is supported by a sufficient knowledge and evidence basis. To deny historical and also propositional revelation actually deprives man of any objective criterion whereby he can discriminate between truth and error.

Being a responsible believer means making one's whole life a response to the salvation history recorded in the Bible. The birth, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ are central historical facts where the supreme revelation took place. It is not because people experience these things that they are true. It is because these are revealed truths on the plane of history that

they are true. Biblical historical revelation is not affected by any personal discovery of the supernatural. Man's experience and discovery are tested by it.

It is for this reason, in any discussion of the realm of revelation, that the historical should be given more consideration. It would be unfortunate if a review of the theological positions should prevent Ramm from giving the historical locus the attention it deserves.

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28

In the interest of brevity, my comments will be of somewhat general nature and addressed to a limited portion of Ramm's article.

Let me say first that his attempt to cover the waterfront has enticed Ramm into an impossible situation. Orthodoxy cannot be opposed to some of the newer "liberal" uses of the word revelation, simply because they exist on such differing planes of reality that the contact points necessary to conversation are missing. The older orthodox meaning and the newer usage are so unrelated that different words ought to be employed to obviate confusion. To apply the term, for example, to totally noncognitive experience is so to redefine it that no dialogue is really possible. Therefore I shall limit my criticism to those stated revelational concepts about which conversation can take place, that is, where "revelation" and cognition bear some kind of relation.

My chief negative reaction is to the either-or quality of Ramm's position. This is also a criticism that could be lodged against some of the quasi-cognitive positions he challenges. Both are at least to some extent correct in what they assert, but mistaken in what they ignore or explicitly deny.

There is an implicit dualism in a view of revelation that stresses only its supernatural qualities, just as there is implicit dualism undergirding the opposing naturalistic point of view. Biblical monotheism implies a denial of radical disjunctions between nature and supernature. God dwells, acts, and speaks on both floors.

If this is so, revelation has an "objective" element in the sense that Ramm and most conservatives hold. But who is to say that "insight," "experience of meaning," "self-understanding," "enlightenment of faith," "confrontation with God," or "interpretation of events" (unless we trivialize these terms into mere emotional titillation) do not also represent God at work at

his more usual level? Most of those who think of revelation as "insight," for example, would not say that insight has nothing to do with understanding. And when a man comes to understand something or some One, a revelation has occurred. Surely Ramm does not intend to imply that something is revealed when it is not received or comprehended — at least revealed to this particular man. In such a case the term "revelation" can, of course, be applied to *what* is given, but not to the *process* by which it is given.

The major fault of the early "liberal" expositors (continued with a vengeance in more recent liberal theologians) is that many of them hold a conception of God in which God formerly spelled with a capital G, becomes "god," the quotes denoting special usage — the "god" of order, design, beauty, and whatever, but no longer the God who is personal in the sense of intelligence, awareness, and activity.

The reasons are easy to sympathize with, being a reaction to an older god (note the lower case g), the somewhat stern, or occasionally benign, Jovian grandfather ensconced in splendor on some distant Olympus, hurling thunderbolts or making magic as the situation indicated — a god much "too small," to use Phillip's phrase, for the demands of our present view of things.

But in tidying up the nursery, the "liberals" threw out too much. The alternative to god is not "god" but God. And there can be no reason why the ground of our very being cannot also be intelligent, aware, and active, provided we do not tie those terms to the incidental time-space qualities with which they are associated in man. And if God possesses these personal characteristics — and we need to include a fourth, concern — there is no reason why he cannot also make himself known in a variety of ways limited only by the receivers of that knowledge.

On the other hand, many "conservative" theologians convey something of the older god by limiting him to supernatural activities — even if not quite as in the ludicrous example. There is no reason why God cannot be at work in the affairs, processes, and minds of men — even when the sign seems to read "men at work."

Biblical monotheism suggests that there is no place or process where God is not, that nothing is entirely outside of the divine activity — and, I would add, nothing intrinsically devoid of revelatory possibility.

Rather than either-or, revelation is *both-and*. God reveals himself in many ways. Whenever man comes to understand what God is saying, revelation — even revelation of the "revelation," if one prefers — has occurred.

To all responders I wish to say that my article is not the entirety of my belief about revelation. My books *Special Revelation and the Word of God* and *The Witness of the Spirit* would clarify some of the material in this paper.

30

I do not know if Alexander has read either Barth or Brunner on the absolute uniqueness of Christian revelation and on the immense problems one encounters in writing theology if that uniqueness is in any way qualified or if an alternative is given (as in "inclusive" or "open" approach to revelation). My attitude toward verbal and nonverbal elements in revelation is not either-or. But that revelation must *at least* be verbal. Otherwise theology would become impressionistic or psychological description.

Heppenstall is right in pointing out the lack of sufficient discussion of the historical dimension of revelation. I agree with most of what he says about revelation and history. A few years ago I published in *Christianity Today* an article on Christianity and history in which I pointed out this historical element so necessary to Christian faith, and in my book *Special Revelation and the Word of God* I do try to bring in the necessary historical ingredients in my theology of revelation.

My reaction to the first paragraphs of Heppenstall's critique is that he is really asking for apologetical materials. The question he raises is a valid one. But it is a question beyond the intention of the paper. Because Heppenstall had to work in limited space, it is risky to make an assessment of his total position. All I can do is register a feeling of uneasiness that he has not felt through to the bottom of the complex problem of the relationship of revelation, history (and historiography and the problem of a special biblical historiography), and theology.

My article does not contain my doctrine of general revelation nor of common grace. If it did, then some of Provonsha's feelings (that I have made too sharp a distinction between nature and grace) would be obviated. Nor have I dealt with the process by which revelation is internalized. If I did that, then again some of his objections could be answered or at least modified.

My one rejoinder to Provonsha's suggestion of a broader definition of

revelation (somewhat in Temple's mood that unless everything is potentially revelation nothing can be revelation) is that when we inspect these efforts to broaden revelation in contrast to how I have "narrowed" it, we find that special revelation, unique and incisive revelation, melts away and the very specific, authoritative concept of the Word of God becomes dilute and its biblical character is lost.

#### REFERENCES AND NOTES

- 1 EMIL BRUNNER's inaugural address at Zurich in 1925, *Philosophie und Offenbarung* [Philosophy and Revelation] (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr 1925; Zurich: Zwingli-Verlag 1938), reveals how sophisticated the discussion had become by that time.
- 2 FRIEDRICH D. E. SCHLEIERMACHER, *On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers* (translated by John Oman. New York: Harper and Row 1958).
- 3 KENNETH CAUTHEN, whose book *The Impact of American Religious Liberalism* (New York: Harper and Row 1962) marvelously clarifies the subject, states that in religious liberalism — which he differentiates from the more radical religious modernism — the concept of revelation was taken as synonymous with "insight, special moments of intuition, or human discovery" (p. 20).
- 4 SOREN KIERKEGAARD, *Philosophical Fragments* (translated by David F. Swenson. Princeton University Press 1936); *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (translated by David F. Swenson. Princeton University Press 1941); *On Authority and Revelation* (translated by Walter Lowrie. Princeton University Press 1955).
- 5 KARL BARTH, *Church Dogmatics* (volume one of four volumes, parts one and two. Translated by G. T. Thomson and Harold Knight. Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark 1936-1956).
- 6 BRUNNER, *Die Mystik und das Wort* (second edition, revised. Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr 1928; Zurich: Zwingli-Verlag 1938).
- 7 CAUTHEN, *Science, Secularization, and God* (New York: Abingdon Press 1969).
- 8 As formulated, for example, in A. J. AYER's little classic, *Language, Truth, and Logic* (second edition. New York: Dover Publications 1957).
- 9 The pioneering work in this direction is ANTONY FLEW and ALASDAIR MACINTYRE (editors), *New Essays in Philosophical Theology* (London: SCM Press 1955). Since the publication of this anthology a small library of books, supplemented by a plethora of articles in various journals, has been created.
- 10 FRANZ THEUNIS, *Offenbarung und Glaube bei Rudolf Bultmann* (Hamburg-Bergstedt: H. Reich 1960).
- 11 There is a long discussion of revelation in PAUL TILICH's *Systematic Theology* (volume one of three volumes, part one. University of Chicago Press 1951).
- 12 GERHARD NOLLER, in *Sein und Existenz* (Munich: Kaiser Verlag 1962), insists that Bultmann simply uses Heidegger in his own way, for he rather systematically misrepresents Heidegger's concepts in this theological appropriation of them. For a very faithful transcript of Bultmann's theology, one may read WALTER SCHMITHALS, *An Introduction to the Theology of Rudolf Bultmann* (translated by John Bowden. Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House 1968).

- 13 The basic series of essays from this group is contained in WOLFHART PANNENBERG (editor), *Revelation as History* (translated by David Granskou. New York: Macmillan Company 1968) ; to this series Pannenberg also contributed an essay. A general discussion of Pannenberg's position is in JAMES M. ROBINSON and JOHN B. COBB, JR. (editors), *Theology as History* (volume three of the series entitled *New Frontiers in Theology*. New York: Harper and Row 1967).
- 14 AUSTIN FARRER, *The Glass of Vision* (Glasgow: The University Press 1948).
- 15 As far as my own studies are concerned, the best statement of what I consider to be the Protestant position is given by ABRAHAM KUYPER, *Principles of Sacred Theology* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company 1953). However, in classroom work I observe that students find Kuyper very difficult to understand. I have expressed my own opinion in *Special Revelation and the Word of God* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company 1961) and have discussed closely related topics in *The Pattern of Religious Authority* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company 1957) and in *The Witness of the Spirit* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company 1959).
- 16 As far as I know, there is no book surveying the whole history of the concept of revelation from patristic times to the present. For modern times HUGH D. McDONALD has given us two volumes, *Ideas of Revelation: An Historical Study, A.D. 1700 to A.D. 1860* (London: Macmillan Company 1959) and *Theories of Revelation: An Historical Study, 1860-1960* (London: George Allen and Unwin 1963).
- 17 Most clearly in MARTIN LUTHER, *The Bondage of the Will* (translated by J. I. Packer and O. R. Johnston. Old Tappan, New Jersey: Fleming H. Revell and Company 1968) ; and in JOHN CALVIN, *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (edited by John T. McNeill ; translated by Ford Lewis Battles. Volumes twenty and twenty-one of The Library of Christian Classics. Philadelphia: Westminster Press 1960), especially book one, chapters one to nine, and book three, where the appropriation of salvation is treated as a unique function of the Holy Spirit.
- 18 See note 15.
- 19 LIONEL SPENCER THORNTON, *Form of the Servant* (three volumes. Naperville, Illinois: Alec R. Allenson, Inc., 1956).