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Editorial.

WE are glad to have the opportunity of publishing in the current number of *The Churchman*, four of the papers read at the conference of the Evangelical Fellowship of Theological Literature. We regret that limitation of space prevents the publication of the complete series, but we hope to include in our next issue one other paper, "The Authority of the Bible," by Rev. T. Isherwood.

We are confident that our readers will appreciate the value of these papers, though not necessarily agreeing with every word. It is one of the hopeful signs of to-day that there are in the Evangelical school of thought, scholars able to make such valuable literary contributions on a subject so vital, yet difficult because it is a matter concerning which there are such diverse views within the Church.

If there is one thing of supreme importance to-day, it is for authoritative teaching on the great truths of the Christian Faith. Through our inability to speak with assurance, we have allowed modern science, philosophy, and other great subjects which occupy the minds of thinking people, especially youth, to claim the field of authority, to the detriment of the Christian religion. If the Christian Church is to win back her rightful place she must declare God's truth with no uncertain sound. The Apostolic Church could say "we know" and it is quite evident from the New Testament that the early Christians were well instructed in the fundamentals of the Christian Faith, the converts were expected to have an appetite for "strong meat." The definite teaching which they received in Christian doctrine gave them both an intellectual faith as well as a personal heart experience which made their witness effective and enabled them to withstand in the day of persecution.

In the great days of reconstruction we must recapture the authoritative note of the Apostolic Church and their spirit of spiritual audacity. We must know what we believe. We must believe our text book—the Word of God. We must teach "not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth."

The Nature and Seat of Authority.

BY THE REV. CANON D. E. W. HARRISON, M.A.

I HAVE long felt that the problem of authority was fundamental for us Evangelicals, and that a real attempt to come to grips with it was long overdue. There are, I believe, historical reasons for our present lack of clarity, and it may perhaps help if I try to set out what these historical reasons are.

Our present Evangelicalism is in fact an amalgam in which we can distinguish three constituent elements. There is first the old Protestant orthodoxy—roughly the theological position of the articles or for that matter of the Savoy Declaration, the fruit of the Reformation. That, as Forsyth points out in his own analysis (*The Person and Place of Jesus Christ*, cap 7) rested on the objectivity of a given revelation: it is to use a modern phrase a Biblical theology. Secondly, in historical sequence, there is the influence of the Evangelical revival, with its emphasis on experience, coming very close in some of its phases to Pietism. Thirdly, there is the influence of the enlightenment which only came to us as Evangelicals in the nineteenth century through the influence of German theological thinking. At the risk of over simplification we may say that the first constituent element in our theological inheritance rests upon the objectivity of a given revelation, the second on the subjectivity of Christianised human nature, the third on the radical subjectivity of human nature or thought. In so far as we are really Evangelicals and not modernists our difficulties are bound up with our lack of clarity in distinguishing between, and rightly evaluating, the essential and permanent truths enshrined in the first and second elements in our inheritance. But for the purpose of this conference I think it is well that the third should be adequately dealt with at the outset.

Forsyth has done it so well that I shall paraphrase his analysis. Contrasting the influence of the Reformation and the enlightenment, he points out that “the one laid fundamental stress on guilt and grace, the other on native goodness and human love; for the one, man was the best thing in the universe and the greatness of his ruin the only true index of his nature; for the other, man was the saving thing of the universe and his progress the index of his greatness. The one lived by redemption and regeneration, the other by evolution and education. For the one, the incarnation is nothing but miracle, inexplicable but sure; for the other it is, in the last analysis, universal immanence. For the one, Christ is absolute, for the other He is but relative to the history from which He arose. For the one, Christ is the object of our faith, for the other He is but its greatest instance. In the one He is our God, in the other, our brother.” And his closing sentence I would make my own, “It is well that the issue should be clear if our choice is to be as intelligent and effectual as a faith should be.”

I wonder if in hearing that you felt, as I did when reading it, that much of what we call Liberal Protestantism savours of the enlightenment rather than the Reformation. And that Liberal Protestantism,

let us remember, is not yet dead in the Evangelical Churches of this country both Anglican and Free. You meet it in almost every clerical study group, because it is the tradition in which the vast majority of clergy over the age of forty were brought up. Dare I go further and suggest that it is the outlook which has become subtly associated with critical scholarship, with the consequent danger that true criticism will suffer from the association? And finally is this association not due to the fact that Biblical criticism was largely the work of men, especially in Germany, the background of whose thought was the Enlightenment rather than the Reformation, and who, therefore, largely unconsciously, found in the Bible the reflexion of their own image, and made that insight the criterion of rejection or acceptance.

Now I take it that our theological situation is that this "modernism", if I may use a dangerous word, has been smashed, and inevitably smashed, by the hard rocks of contemporary history, because the world is God's world, and history the field of His activity. Fundamentally, it is the theology of the Enlightenment which is bankrupt: critical scholarship is only in danger in so far as it rested upon the Enlightenment for its "insight" into the Bible. Some of you may not agree. But if there is, at any rate, a great measure of truth in what I am saying, then it is high time that we looked to our foundations.

In doing so we must, I think, recognize a second radical weakness, this time in our equipment. Most of us received our theological training in Oxford or Cambridge, and in neither is there any dogmatic or systematic theology. We have all been trained in historical theology, except for such doctrine lectures as came our way in a theological college. The result is that when we tackle, let us say, Karl Barth's "Doctrine of the Word of God," we find ourselves in a new world and acclimatization does not come easily. Now I do not suggest that there are not some compensating advantages. The discipline of history is well worth while, but a man may be an excellent historian without being a profound theologian. He may achieve a certain detachment, freedom from the bonds of any one theological system, and English theologians have always been a little proud of that kind of independence. But my point is that in our present situation it is not enough. We must become in the full sense of the word theologians, men who confront our own world with the Word of God. And that, at least for me, raises the problem of authority, the subject of our present conference, and the reason why it was chosen.

In reality there is no one problem of authority, but rather of authorities and the relation between them. I want to go on to speak of these under familiar heads; but before I do so I ought to try to say something of the nature of authority. When we use this term as Christians we are always, I take it, contemplating the meeting-place of God and man. We recognize that that confrontation is mediated as well as immediate, else our problems would not arise. But, however it is mediated—that is, whatever authorities we recognize—it is that presence of God into which man comes which is determinative, and it is the presence of the Triune God. Moreover this is universally true—of Christian, Jew, Mohammedan or pagan, whether man knows it or not. If this is true, we can go a step further as Christians and say that through Christ, in the Spirit, we know God to be holy love. Authority

is, therefore, the impact of Divine love upon our being. I have, I am aware, omitted some steps in this argument. I am assuming the revelation of God in Christ, and I am assuming that the New Testament contains a sufficient and substantially accurate record of that revelation. But that, amongst us, can be assumed. We can then say something, and something definite and final about the nature of authority; that it is the kind of authority which Christ Himself exercised in His ministry.

Perhaps we ought at this point, to stop and study the Gospels, but there are some conclusions to which I hope we shall all agree. It seems to me clear that our Lord sought to elicit rather than to impose, to appeal rather than to instruct. His temptations are sufficient evidence that he rejected all other conceptions of Messianic authority and power. His use of parable points in the same direction, and the supreme evidence is that of His death. It is deeply significant that in St. Mark, it is His death which elicits the great confession, "Truly this man was the Son of God." Can we agree that authority for us must always be so conceived?

But secondly, can we agree that our Lord assumed that there was that in man which could respond to His authority of love? Or rather, to put it more exactly, that His authority was such that it enabled men in His presence to respond. "Why do ye not even of yourselves judge τοδικαιον" with its implicit background of His own presence and word, seems to me to justify such a conclusion. The authority of Christ then is not such as over-rides my judgment, but rightly forms it. *Credo ut intelligam* is true if *Credo* means faith in its New Testament sense.

But thirdly, because Christ is holy love, to come into His presence means the realization of guilt. "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord" is the authentic response of man as he truly is. Authority, that is, essentially implies judgment, and response to it means acceptance of judgment. The ultimate truth is not that we judge, but that we are judged. That conclusion is going to involve us in difficulties at a later stage, but is it not an essential for all our thinking? And its necessary implication is that we need justification and it is God alone who justifies. We arrive at the *sola gratia, sola fide*.

Now what I want to suggest to you is that what has already been said of the immediate activity of God in Christ incarnate—that is of authority in its fundamental evangelical setting, must also be true of all mediated authority; that is, of all the authorities which we recognize as legitimate and, in their measure, binding upon us. To them let us now turn, taking them under the familiar heads of conscience and reason, the Church, experience and the Bible. The list could, of course, be extended. Let me say two things before I begin. First, that all I can or ought to attempt is an introduction, and that tentative. The detailed study will come in the papers to follow. Secondly, that I am primarily concerned with what I may call the hierarchy of these authorities, all of which we recognize to be real.

First then, conscience and reason. I start with the admission that I am not really clear here, myself. What Brunner has to say (The Divine Imperative p.156 ff.) seems to me profoundly true, but I have not included it in this brief analysis. My own starting point is the

recognition that apart from the context of a personal relationship with God, neither conscience nor reason can properly be called authoritative in the sense in which we have used the word. If we start from man as he is, then we must take the doctrine of original sin seriously, and that means that conscience is essentially the witness to the inner contradiction in which man is involved by his fallen nature. So at any rate the New Testament seems to imply. Conscience is not the Voice of God ; to say that it is, which is the theology of the Enlightenment, confuses the issue of revelation straightway. Conscience is not a part of man which has remained sound. However we define it, it is itself involved in sin. But, on the other hand, it is true that even in his sin man remains man, which means that in him there is the inherent capacity to be activated to response, to be drawn by the good and the true : and to discriminate between good and evil, the true and the false. I have tried to use words carefully : and it seems to me that even on this view, fundamentally different as it is from that of the Enlightenment, it remains true that conscience must be followed, even though it is vitiated by sin, as and when God acts upon it. From our side we have no other " criterion " in moral judgments.

Coming now to reason, we shall be equally careful with Farmer to define our terms. " Reason *per se* is an abstract idea to which nothing corresponds in the existential world : there are only rational personalities. If we mean by reason what the Greeks meant by *νοῦς* as distinct from *διακονία*, namely man's whole personality considered as functioning self-consciously, then even when, again, we recognize that it is vitiated by sin, we shall recognize that on our side of the personal equation—God and man—reason is the necessary and God-given means of receiving revelation—of responding to divine activity. " If, however, we mean by reason the mental processes by which the mind withdraws from the personal situation with its urgency of activity and decision, and substitutes for it an abstract pattern of logical or cause-effect relationships, then it cannot, as so defined, become the organ of revelation."

The position then to which I come seems to be this. If we are speaking of authority we mean that we envisage the personal confrontation of man by God. In that situation, man is confronted by holy love—that is with judgment and absolute demand, and this is true even though, to use Baillie's phrase, the confrontation be mediated immediacy. In so far as man's only organs of apprehension, judgment and response are conscience and reason, however vitiated by sin, he can only respond in loyalty to their dictates ; in that sense, their authority is real and final, but only in the context of revelation, and never in isolation from it ; and even in that context the element of divine judgment is always present. Even when man judges, he essentially does so in consenting to judgment.

I pass on to my second heading, *The Authority of the Church*, in which I include the authority of tradition. Here we meet the first of what I call inexactly our mediating authorities : and there is a general consensus of opinion that in experience, religious belief always rests upon such an authority. Baillie makes the point well—*Our Knowledge of God*, p. 181 f. " The Knowledge of God first came to me in the form

of an awareness that I was not my own " but one under authority, one who " owed " something, one who ought to be something which he was not. But whence did this awareness come to me? Not out of the blue. I heard no voice from the skies—it came from my parents." But he goes on to say, " I knew that they were under orders : that what my parents demanded of me and what they knew to be demanded of themselves were, in the last resort, one and the same demand." It is, therefore, important to recognize that the Church's authority is real, and that we are all dependent upon it. We shall further recognize that where there is wide consensus of Christian opinion we shall be wise to hesitate before setting it aside ; that when that opinion comes to us—as for example in the creeds—with centuries of confirmation in Christian life and experience, the weight of that authority is so great that only as a last resort can we diverge from it, and then not as ministers of the Church. I think as Evangelicals we ought to say this, and say it unhesitatingly.

Further, I believe we should recognize that the Holy Spirit is still at work in the Church, that the tradition is constantly being formulated afresh under His guidance, and that to His work in our midst we need to be sensitive. There should surely be no such thing as a merely static orthodoxy. The Church does not live by fixed dogma, but it must in the right sense of the word be dogmatic. That does not, however, mean that the Church is in any sense set free from the historical revelation, or free to reinterpret it.

The real problem comes when we ask whether this authority of the Church is, even for practical purposes, and much more from the standpoint of theology, ultimate. Is the dictum, " the Church to teach and the Bible to prove " true, as many Anglicans assert? Has the Bible a static role while the Church remains dynamic? Put another way, is the authority of the Bible always at two removes from us, that of the Church only at one? Now we have already, I hope, agreed, that faith is only possible in the context of the Church, we only know the Bible in and through the Church. But do we recognise with Baillie that the authority which is binding upon us is also binding upon the Church : that both in history and in life the Church is created by and dependent upon the Word ; that in fact our function as Churchmen and more particularly as theologians is to bring the Church's dogma and proclamation into ever renewed relationship to the Word (by which I here mean the Bible) in the light of the Spirit's guidance? If we do, which is, I believe, the fundamentally Evangelical position, can we go further and say that the light of the Spirit shines only from the Word—that His function is " to take of Mine and show it unto you " ? To this we shall return. But, meanwhile, it is important to recognize that under the influence of the Oxford Movement, the ground has shifted, even for many Evangelicals, and that we cannot exclude the problems raised by the widespread return to-day to an ecclesiastical authority as primary.

Thirdly I come to experience, and here we reach an important place, for here the influence of the Evangelical revival is, as I have said earlier, an essential part of our inheritance. Is there such a thing as the *testimonium Spiritus sancti*? Forsyth might have had Karl Barth in mind when he wrote. " Some scholars, to judge from their

writings do not seem even so much as to have heard of the Holy Ghost. They have a fatal dread of pietism, methodism and most forms of intensely personal evangelical faith. . . . They are . . . the victims of an intellectualism which means spiritual atrophy to Christianity." "Am I forbidden," he goes on to ask, "to make use of my personal experience of Christ for the purposes even of scientific theology?" He answers "If certainty do not lie there, where can it be found in life," and so must we. "We speak that we do know." "The Spirit beareth witness with our spirit." "Ye shall receive power, and ye shall be My witnesses." Only from within the evangelical experience can we speak in Christ's name "livingly" to Christian or pagan. This authority is indisputably real. But again the vital question is, is it ultimate? Or, put another way, has it any criterion of authenticity? I think we may find the answer in terms of preaching. Is it a perversion of St. Paul's words "We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus" to insist that in fact we do not preach our experience? Our experience enables us to bear witness, that is vital: but we do not set our experience before men as that in which they are to put their trust. In the last analysis, in mission preaching (the nearest we come to *κηρυγμα* except in the sacraments) do we not set before men Christ and His Word as the ultimate object of their trust? Is not our ministry essentially the one ministry of the Word and Sacraments, and does not the congruity of its two elements consist precisely in their objectivity? "Christ was the Word who spake it, He took the bread and break it, and what His Word did make it, that I believe and take it." Ultimately, I believe, that though apart from experience we can do and say nothing—for the Spirit is the life-giver—we are thrown back upon the Word.

And here in my last division all the deepest problems lie. What do we mean by the Word? Do we mean the whole Bible as it stands? Do we mean that part of the Bible which seems to us congruous with the Gospels? Do we mean Christ Himself, and if so, how do we relate the Bible to Him? Or again, do we mean the Bible statically conceived as a document to be analysed and its contents reduced to a set of propositions, or do we mean the Bible received dynamically as the medium of revelation as well as its record? In what sense do we take the revelation (or rather its content) as final? In what sense are we bound by the Biblical interpretation of events as well as the events themselves? I hope a later paper will answer these questions for us. I shall confine myself to making some preliminary suggestions.

In the first place we shall, I believe, be agreed that in its primary sense, Christ is the Word of God, and He only. Our approach surely is that the heart of our religion is the Incarnation and Atonement: Christ's person and work. Secondly, we shall understand the Old Testament essentially in the light of the New: but that means we shall approach the *whole* Old Testament in the light of the New. One of the most pernicious trends in critical study, as I see it, is the tendency to throw out of the Old Testament everything except the prophets, and to regard everything after deuterio-Isaiah as virtually retrograde. I suspect that the unacknowledged reason for this is an aversion from a sacrificial doctrine of atonement. Thirdly, if we are true to our

starting point in speaking of authority as inherent in the meeting of God with man, we can only conceive of the Bible dynamically as the organ of revelation—or if you will as effective through the concursus of the Holy Spirit. The twin heresies are surely Fundamentalism and Transubstantiation, and both leave out the work of the Spirit. So far I hope we may agree. If we do, several new books on the Old Testament ought to be written.

But vital problems remain, and for me one of the most vital is this. Put bluntly, "Have I any right to say that St. Paul or St. John is wrong? Am I free to depart from the New Testament interpretation of the work of Christ? Can I, by critical study, dig down to events and then re-interpret them?" We are agreed that Christ is the final and sufficient revelation of God to man, and that revelation consisted in His Person and work: but is it not true that the classic interpretation of both is to be found not in the synoptic Gospels, but in the apostolic testimony of Paul and John and the Epistle to the Hebrews; and are we not bound by that interpretation, by the apostolic testimony? If the Church is apostolic, and if we as Evangelicals do not interpret apostolicity in terms of continuity of ministry by ordination, are we not bound to take our stand upon continuity of apostolic testimony? If we desert it are we not preaching another Gospel, a different Christ? Put another way, have we any right to say that the work of the Holy Spirit is such that we are made free even from the New Testament interpretation of the Christ?

So I come to a close. Our real need is to be able to say with Paul, "We have the mind of Christ." That does not mean freedom to think, it means a theology. It does not mean a laying bare of the foundations by critical study and the erection upon them of a 20th century superstructure. It does mean, as I believe it meant for the Reformation fathers, the acceptance of the record of revelation given us in Holy Scripture, and the sustained attempt to understand it as a coherent whole. But it also means a sustained effort to relate to it the present life and witness of the Church of God as both built upon it and standing under it. For that task we can rightly pray that the Holy Spirit shall take the things of Christ and show them unto us, giving us grace to accept, and accepting to grow.

I am aware that I have raised more questions than I have solved. I am sure that I lie wide open to criticism, but perhaps I have said enough to provoke discussion.

The Authority of the Holy Spirit in the Natural Life of Man.

BY THE REV. E. STEINLY, M.A.

I. STANDPOINT.

CAN we rightly speak of the authority of the Holy Spirit of God in the life of the world as distinct from the life of the Church?

In the Church, witness is borne that the Eternal Word of God, through whom all things were made, became flesh in Jesus, the Son of Mary, and that this one Eternal and Incarnate Word, alike the Firstborn of all creation and the Firstborn from the dead, is Lord over all mankind. Moreover, this witness, it is affirmed, is borne in the Church by the Spirit of God Himself, howbeit not apart from, but as the very source and ground of, the witness borne by the spirit of man. Are we to suppose that the Spirit of God bears witness with our spirits to the authority of the Word of God only in the Church, or may we suppose, and indeed affirm, that in the world also, God has never left His Word without the witness of the self-same Spirit? The answer that we give to this question will have more than an academic significance, since it will condition the strategy of our preaching of the Gospel, as well as affect the form of our philosophy.

Of necessity, Christians can try to give an answer to this question only from the standpoint of the Christian faith. As Christians we stand, or at anyrate we believe that we stand, on the mount of "special," that is to say, unique and final revelation, and that, as we gaze upon the plains of human life, we are able to see things which those living wholly on the plains of "general" revelation (if there be such) either see less clearly or do not see at all.

First of all, we see how great is the gulf fixed between man and his Maker owing to what is termed "original sin." Man, we affirm, has so far rebelled against, and grieved the Holy Spirit of God, that he has not scrupled to set up for himself false gods, made in man's own image. He has been able to do this because of his capacity for self-transcendence. In consequence, the *de jure* authority of the Creator-Spirit of God has given place to the *de facto* authority of the creature-spirit of man. As Paul puts it, man has "worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator." Man, being thus self-alienated from the life of God, is at the same time alienated from that life by God Himself, so that man cannot reconcile himself to his Maker. He does not, however, thereby cease to be either religious or rational, but henceforth, his worship becomes divorced from knowledge of God, and his wisdom a thing which is not from above. In short, the natural man, seen from the standpoint of the Christian faith, is both idolatrous and self-deceiving.

Secondly, however, although the Christian sees, in a way which the non-Christian does not, how great is the gulf between sinful man and his Maker, yet he also detects marks of the presence of the Spirit of

God in the lives of men which to others are quite invisible. Men's hearts, he would say, burn within them because of the gracious presence of that Spirit, without knowing the cause of such burning. Likewise, men's minds are quickened by His creative touch, and yet have little or no conscious knowledge of Who it was who touched them. Indeed, man's corporate rejection of the authority of the Holy Spirit, as He bears witness to the claims of the Word of the Creator, sometimes finds formal expression in individual lives and groups either as "honest doubt" or as militant atheism, but it by no means follows that from such individuals and groups the Holy Spirit has been wholly withdrawn. On the contrary, it is possible to have that mediated, yet immediate, knowledge of God, termed faith, even though, as Dr. John Baillie has pointed out, such knowledge be utterly repudiated. Most Christian thinkers have put forth the contention, of course, that knowledge of God is really a matter of inference. As the late Dr. Hastings Rashdall has affirmed, "even among theistic nations, an immediate knowledge of God is claimed by very few."¹ Dr. Rashdall himself, shared this inferential view of man's knowledge of God. Prof. A. N. Whitehead maintains it in his book, "Religion in the Making." The great St. Thomas Aquinas maintained it. For such thinkers, it is the business of philosophy to create a belief in God, if there be God. All arguments for belief in God, however, are usually singularly unconvincing, save to those who already believe in God on other grounds. It would appear, therefore, that Dr. Baillie is nearer the truth when, in reference to some words of the late Professor Cook Wilson, he writes that "the proper business of philosophy is not to create relief but to bring it to a consciousness of itself."² Nature is not so much an argument for, as a sacrament of, her Maker. In consequence, all men, as St. Paul indicates, know God, although not all men glorify Him as God and therefore are conscious that they know Him. Despite, then, the professed ignorance of any personal presence of God among large sections of the human race, and despite the general moral failure of man which lies behind that ignorance, Christians may rightly speak of the authority of God's Spirit in the life of the world, and seek to understand something of its exercise and meaning.

II. THE FACT OF SIN.

Since, however, God's Holy Spirit bears witness to the authority of His Word with, and not apart from, our spirits, it is well that we should note carefully the bearing of the fact of sin and the Christian doctrine of the Fall upon the fact and doctrine of that divine witness. As is well known, Dr. Barth, the great Swiss theologian, resolutely affirms that, in the words of Dr. J. A. Mackay, "the revelation-value of natural theology in all its forms is a mere human presumption."³ "I am an avowed opponent," writes Dr. Barth himself, "of all natural theology." He is this because he believes, with the compilers of the old Scottish Catechism, that "the Image of God (is) utterly defaced in man." This doctrine of total corruption, as it is termed, is Dr. Barth's intransigent answer to the humanism of to-day, as it was the intransigent answer of many of the Reformers to the humanism of their day. In consequence, God's revelation of Himself is, for Dr. Barth, quite literally His revelation as the *hidden* God. It is "like a

sudden flash of light in a dark room."⁴ Without that flash of light, man, Dr. Barth would maintain, walks wholly in darkness. If this is the case, then, of course, there can be little point in talking about the authority of the Holy Spirit in the religious and rational life of natural man. Moreover, Dr. Barth would appear to teach that, even in the lives of believers, that Word of God in Christ to which the Holy Spirit testifies, continuously draws near, but never actually abides within, the heart of sinful man. "The Scriptural announcement of God's revelation," he writes, "must be ever increasingly *becoming* the voice of the living God to us."⁵ Thus, if one interprets Dr. Barth aright, he teaches that not only does man's being in the image of God only become actual fact when the light of the Spirit of Christ our Saviour shines in his heart, but also this light is a series of intermittent and uncertain flashes, and not a continuous glow. It is difficult to believe however, that Socrates, for example, was as totally corrupt as his judges, or that Paul, when he told Christians to walk as children of light, only thought of them as children of darkness, howbeit a darkness occasionally dispelled by a flash of light. Dr. Barth's whole position, in fact, seems to imply that God's creative activity is wholly identical with His gracious activity, that this activity is absent from the life of natural man, and that it is revealed to the life of the Christian believer by the Holy Spirit only in terms of promise and never in terms of fulfilment.

Far from identifying the creative with the gracious activity of the Spirit of God, Dr. Emil Brunner, Dr. Barth's great contemporary, makes a clear-cut distinction between them. Dr. Brunner refuses to believe that man's religious and rational life is wholly conceived in sin and shapen in iniquity in such wise that natural man is utterly devoid of any revelation of God. For him, "no religion in the world, not even the most primitive, is without some elements of truth . . . no philosophy . . . (is) without truth—not even materialism."⁶ Howbeit, so profound is the error in either of these that the revelation in them is but "indirect." In fact, it merely signifies that the form of God's image whereby man, as a responsible and rational being, is distinguished from the beasts, is unimpaired by the "Fall" while the content of that image, whereby man possesses both freedom and goodness, is "wholly effaced by sin." It is obvious, of course, that man's life is divided against itself. Nevertheless, Dr. Brunner's interpretation of this as a clearcut division between form and content is much too cut and dried. For one thing, as Dr. John Baillie points out, the ravages of sin affect the form no less than the content or filling of man's life. For another, as this same author also notes, the doctrine of total depravity, whether applied to both the form and content of the divine image in man, as in the case of Dr. Barth, or applied, as by Dr. Brunner, to the content alone, is erroneous, since total corruption is merely a limiting conception, and not anything which can exist. However, by distinguishing, as he does, between two varieties of revealed knowledge, rather than between natural and revealed knowledge, Dr. Brunner has rid himself from the metaphysical presuppositions of Stoic pantheistic thought, whereby the soul of man was conceived to be a detached fragment of an immanent world-soul, and set human life once more under the active authority of the Spirit of the living God.

Thus, whereas the Stoic, Zeno of Citrium, regarded man's moral and spiritual knowledge as due to innate ideas,⁷ the Christian regards such knowledge as "the blessed fruit of God's (that is to say, the Spirit's) personal and historical dealings with man's soul."⁸

There is, then, in man, as Dr. Baillie asserts, "no *nature* apart from *revelation*. Human nature is constituted by the self-disclosure to this poor dust of the Spirit of the living God." Dr. Barth's teaching implies that this truth is of significance for the natural man only in a merely archæological sense, and Dr. Brunner's, that it is of significance only in a merely formal sense. God's revelation of His own Lordship, to which, we believe, the Spirit of God has called them to bear witness, does not necessarily imply, however, that such revelation is not found outside the Christian Church or is found only in a formal sense. In the world, as in the Church, revelation, as Dr. H. H. Farmer affirms, is a category of personal relationship,⁹ although, as we have seen, men may not be aware that it is such a category. This implies, as Dr. Farmer points out, not that man is passive and God alone active, but that man is active, in some sense, on the personal level, as distinct from the impersonal. Thus, in contrast to Dr. Barth and his followers, who confine revelation to the Christian Church, and affirm that revelation *is* divine activity, 'as if the copula expressed an identity,'¹⁰ it is contended that we are not mistaken in looking for the marks of God's self-revelation in the world, and that "revelation *per se* is not identical with divine activity—but it is also human receptivity; and receptiveness is not entirely a passive thing." Likewise, in contrast to Dr. Brunner and his followers, it is contended that this receptivity of the divine Word constitutes something more, even in fallen man, than the form or empty frame of the *imago dei*. The fact that men worship false gods does not necessarily mean that they do not at the same time, however ignorantly, also worship the true, and that what they worship in ignorance is not set forth in knowledge in the Christian gospel. Similarly, because men are afflicted with "the most disgraceful ignorance"¹¹ of imagining that they have knowledge of that of which they are ignorant, does not necessarily imply that such ignorance is absolute or that all men are equally ignorant. Thus, we are not mistaken if we believe that the Spirit of God has never left Himself wholly without witness in the worship and reasoning of man, even in his fallen state and that the Christian, if anyone at all, may through the guidance of the same Spirit of God, discern positive marks of such witness.

III. THE HOLY SPIRIT AND MAN AS RELIGIOUS.

In his book, "The Natural and the Supernatural", the late Dr. John Oman, seeking to find that in man whereby he became set free from the leading-strings of his nurse, mother nature, comes to the conclusion that it is to be found, not in man's capacity to reason, or make tools, or laugh, but in his capacity to be religious.¹²

The ground of all religion, as Dr. R. Niebuhr has affirmed, is the essential homelessness of the human spirit in the world.¹³ Human life points beyond itself. It possesses a mysterious capacity of self-transcendence, that is, of standing continuously outside itself in terms of infinite regression. This capacity of self-transcendence leads

inevitably to the search for transcendent Reality. In this search, "the mind", to quote some words of Dr. H. H. Farmer, "works in a predominantly synthetic way, not breaking impressions up, but rather fusing them together into significant totalities."¹⁴ Moreover, this synthesising activity of the mind is a matter of intuition, not of volition, since "to synthesise impressions by a deliberate act of the will into total significant situations, apprehended as such, is impossible."¹⁴ Synthesising intuitions are not under volitional control for the further reason that "they are part of what is essentially a feeling response to the world," since they "have to do at some point or other with the relationship of whatever is going on to our own interests and values."¹⁴

Human life, then, points outside itself religiously and intuitively, to a transcendent Beyond. It does something more, however. It falls into the temptation to make itself into that Beyond. This is the significance of any system of polytheism such as, for example, the Olympian system. The gods of Homer, when they emerge finally from that ultimate foundation of primitive religion which, as Mr. Christopher Dawson writes, is "an obscure and confused intuition of transcendent being,"¹⁵ are really beings made in the likeness of men. To them we may apply some words of the late Professor George Adam Smith, written concerning the gods of the nations around Israel: "Their gods were made in their own image, their religion was the reflex of their life."¹⁶ Being made in the image of men, these gods do not claim to be Creators, as Dr. Gilbert Murray has pointed out, but only conquerors.¹⁷

Since man is made in the image of his Maker, however, he can never remain satisfied with a god or with gods made in his own image. "By virtue of his capacity for self-transcendence," writes Dr. R. Neibuhr, "he can look beyond himself sufficiently to know that a projection of himself is not God."¹⁸ Thus the Athenians came to look, not merely at, but also beyond, the Olympians. First, these gods were themselves symbolized through the art of the sculptor. Subsequently, however, as Dr. Murray has indicated, each god himself was conceived to be, not transcendent Reality as such, but only a symbolic aid towards conceiving that Reality. It was in this symbolical sense that "Socrates," as Professor E. O. James states, "could profess his belief in the old Olympian heroes."¹⁹ Thus the story of the development of Greek religion is the story of a movement both towards and away from idolatry. Men created gods in their own image, but had not completed their task before they began to recognise that these gods were really only projections of themselves, and at best, therefore, not Reality itself but only symbols of Reality. In Greek religion we have both man's idolatrous worship of false Gods and his ignorant worship of the true God. The false gods are but "vanities", as the Acts of the Apostles indicates, but the "unknown God" behind these is none the less the True, and He it is who, in the Christian Gospel, is made known to all mankind.

Natural religion signifies man's rejection of, and craving for, a transcendent "He", and not just a transcendent "It," Who can be to man what Dr. H. H. Farmer has called a "final succour." Because the Olympians were not that, they gave place eventually in popular devotion to the deities enshrined in the Mystery Cults of the Hellenistic

Age. These cults spread because they met, or claimed and were felt to meet, that "final succour" of which Dr. Farmer speaks. In that age of despair, men were conscious, in a way that we are not conscious, of what Dr. J. S. Whale has called "the vast, empty senseless nothingness of death",²⁰ with the result that the human spirit was seized with a great craving for some assurance of immortality. The mystery religions seemed to give at least some degree of assurance, even if only they gave, as no other religion of that time gave, moving and tragic expression to that craving. They gave relief because they were each, in the words of Wordsworth, "a timely utterance." Were they more than this? It is difficult to believe that they were not, if only in some dim and largely unconscious sense. At any rate, they provided the soil in which the seed of the message of the Gospel was sown, and, as Dr. John A. Mackay has written, "the full truth about the seed can only be known by the response of the soil in which it is planted."²¹ In the rise of the Mystery Cults, no less than in the allegorising process which made the Olympian deities symbols of Reality, and not Reality itself, we may discern the outskirts of the ways of the Spirit of God, as He bears authoritative witness to the call of the true and living God.

Perhaps this is the place to say a word about what have been called "natural sacraments." Continental theologians are wont to describe those "phenomena which regulate the communal life of humanity", as Dr. Martin Dibelius describes them, as "the orders." By "natural sacraments" are meant, I presume, "orders which are of a natural kind, such as, for example the orders of sexual life, the family. "It is part of our belief in God the Creator," writes Dr. Dibelius, "that, with this creation, orders were also indicated that gave a clear indication of God's will."²² But "we live in a fallen world," this writer continues, "in which all created life . . . has become distorted." In consequence, these orders provoke man to disobedience or excess. Yet they do not thereby cease altogether to point man to his Creator. Rather do they mediate, however imperfectly, a meaning beyond themselves which enables natural man, to distinguish between what St. Paul calls "natural use" and "that which is against nature." They point to, as well as veil, the will of the Creator. Of course, if we believe, with Dr. Barth, that the image of God has been wholly defaced in fallen man, or, with Dr. Brunner, that it has been wholly defaced as regards content, if not as regards form, we will not speak of these natural orders as sacraments, but if we believe, with Dr. John Baillie, that the facts of man's life do not warrant such interpretations of the effect of the Fall, then we will not hesitate to speak of natural sacraments, and see, in the joys and discipline of family life the world over, marks of the authority of the Spirit of God as He both makes the marriage of two human beings "a preparation and anticipation of the ultimate communion of spirit with spirit"²³ and makes the care and discipline exercised by parents towards their children a pointer to the care and discipline exercised by the One God and Father of all towards those who are members of His family, not by virtue of creation only, but also by right of adoption and grace.

We have touched upon the significance of religion in the Graeco-Roman world, and of the religious significance of what have been called

“natural sacraments.” It is a far cry chronologically from the pre-Christian age in Europe to the age following upon the Renaissance, but it is not so religiously. Each was an age of so-called “natural religion” in the development of which spontaneity had given place to reflection. Whereas, however, Christianity as a historical and an eschatological religion triumphed over the natural religion of the ancient world, it was the natural religion of the post-Renaissance age which really triumphed over Christianity, partly by absorbing from Christianity a monotheistic faith, and partly by casting its mantle over the new scientific movement and giving to scientific discoveries the significance of prophetic revelations. God became the God of Nature (spelled of course, with a capital “N”) rather than the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and Isaac Newton was his prophet, so much so that a pagan, pious and scientific generation could acclaim with delight the words of Alexander Pope :

Nature and Nature's laws lay hid in night :
God said, Let Newton be ! and all was light.²⁴

“Religion,” writes Dr. Farmer, “inevitably grows feeble and corrupt if it be isolated from the other interests of life.” This natural religion which had such a vogue in this country in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries differed from the natural religion of the ancient world in that it was really “a mental abstraction from the reality of a historical religion,” a pleasing hobby, in fact, rather than a faith by which to live. The universe was now known to be God's toy, provided for the enjoyment of His children (of course, men *were* His children !) and His children were quite adorably captivated with it. So religion, in becoming “Natural,” became bloodlessly rational, and deistic.

Worse was to follow. A great thinker, Friedrich Schleiermacher, arose who, in leading the attack against this so-called natural religion, caused religion itself to pass finally out of the realm of theology into that of anthropology. He led the attack, not in the name of revelation and the personal Self-revealing God, but in the name of religion considered as a thing-in-itself, and the feeling-state which characterizes it. Schleiermacher was in fact, guilty of “the very error with which he charges the rationalists,” “except that he commits it in the realm of feeling whereas they had committed it in the realm of reason”²⁵, namely, the error of abstraction. He established for religion a false autonomy, isolating it not only from philosophy and ethics, but also thereby from its “Object,” or rather its “Subject,” and so largely denuded it of all objective content. Henceforth, religion no longer meant what it meant, for example, to Calvin, in his *Institutio Religionis*. At best, it merely connoted man's eerie concern with an Object comprehended, as by Dr. Otto, under what the late Dr. B. H. Streeter has termed the “portmanteau-conception”²⁶ of the Numinous. In the end, however, it becomes “simply blind feeling, feeling without all content,” as, for example, in Dr. Julian Huxley's “Religion without Revelation.” In this connection, it is interesting to note some words of Dr. Quick, in his book “The Gospel of Divine Action” to the effect that “from many Anglo-Catholics, Otto's impressive work received a warm welcome” because it seemed to give “the

clue to the real business of religion—adoration of a mysterious presence ‘wholly other’ than the end and interests of natural humanity,”²⁷ and so justified, of course, extra-liturgical devotion before the Sacrament.

What are we to say of the whole movement in the post-Renaissance age first, of “natural” religion, that is of a religio-rational approach to external or physical nature and second, of “positive” religion, that is, of a religio-emotional approach to internal or psychical nature? Here, if anywhere, man would appear to be in the far country, feeding upon the husks of his own abstractions. These could not nourish his spirit, apparently cast away, as it now seemed to be (though this was not ultimately the case) from the presence of the Holy Spirit of God, with the result that, in our own day, it shivers in the winter and gropes in the darkness of a cold and dead materialism. As a final comment on the whole movement, some words of J. A. Chapman, based upon Dr. E. Brunner’s “Mysticism and the Word” may be quoted, thus: “Intellectualism is the degeneration of the Word; it is the Word which no longer knows its origin and meaning. Romanticism is the reaction against this, but in attacking intellectualism, it attacks the Word itself and thereby injures the spinal marrow of the Spirit.”²⁸

The bloodless and stillborn child of Schleiermacher’s approach to “religion” is a thing called “comparative religion,” a non-existent, like Aristotle’s “matter,” which “neither is nor is not” but is just “not yet”! The non-Christian religions of the East do at least exist. Historically, they have been preceded by an age of polytheism, corresponding to the age of the Olympians and this polytheistic age itself followed one in which the unity of awareness of the Supernatural remained, as Dr. Oman puts it, “a general dim background of one reality.”²⁹ Yet, although polytheism represents the break-up of this primitive unity of awareness, it does not do so absolutely. On the contrary, to quote Dr. Oman again, “it is doubtful if there ever was a polytheism entirely without a sense of one Supernatural as a dimly felt awareness.” Polytheism is characterized, in fact, not by the absence of the presence of the one supreme God but, as Mr. G. K. Chesterton has pointed out in his book *The Everlasting Man*, “the presence of the absence of God.” There is “a void, but it is not a negation; it is something as positive as an empty chair.”³⁰ In short, polytheism is really a kind of jungle in which the One true God is lost, and yet somehow known to be lost.

It is the quest for this lost One which lies behind those historical or “positive” religions which arose out of a background of polytheism. To interpret them merely as exemplifications of a phenomenon called religion is woefully to misinterpret them. The call of the unknown God, in however faint and misunderstood a fashion, is somehow echoed and heard in them, and the key to unlock their meaning is to be found in the authority of the Spirit of God and not in the states of the soul which they may or may not tend to foster. Men in the main sought for the lost One by going in two apparently opposite directions. Some trod the *via mystica*, seeking for the Eternal behind the illusion of the transitory. Others trod the *via apocaliptica*, seeking for a revealing of the Eternal in the transitory. Humanly speaking, they have not found, or rather they have not been found. Yet, in the light

of the Christian faith that it is God who seeks us and not just we who seek God, we may apply to all seekers the well-known words of Pascal : "Thou wouldest not be seeking me, hadst Thou not already found me," and may see in their toil and suffering and endurance, not only marks of human sin and failure, but also the marks of One who Himself toiled and suffered and endured to bring salvation and victory to all mankind.

IV. THE HOLY SPIRIT AND MAN AS RATIONAL.

In his book, *Science and the Modern World*, Professor A. N. Whitehead points out that one of the antecedents of our modern approach to the investigation of nature is "a widespread instinctive conviction in the existence of an order of things."³¹ Just as man's religious intuitions and activities arise out of an obscure awareness of transcendent being, so his rational intuitions and activities arise out of an obscure awareness that this transcendent Reality is one, not of confusion but of order, and that Reality has stamped this order on the multiplicity of things in nature. Man acts rationally when he apprehends that objective meaning, or coherence amidst manifoldness, in external and human nature alike which has its creative source in a transcendent Unity. If, therefore, the activity of the Holy Spirit bears in any wise positive relation to the life of man, it must be the ground of his rational capacity no less than of his religious.

We do well to note, however, as Dr. H. H. Farmer bids us note,³² the ambiguity in the word reason as commonly used. Sometimes, we mean by reason man's whole personality acting so as to integrate its own life in relation to its environment in such a way that its final interests and values are affirmed and pursued. This work of integration is intuitional, that is, it is not under the conscious control of the will of the empirical *ego*, but belongs to that "moment" when the ordinary distinctions of our consciousness are transcended. At other times, we mean by reason intellect as distinct from feeling and will, acting in such a way as to analyse or break up the significant wholes presented by the intuitive reason, and fit the parts so disconnected into an abstract pattern of logical or cause-effect relationships. This work of analysis or disintegration is under the control of the will of the empirical *ego*. Thus, in the intuitive reason, man is confronted with the claim of unconditional values which impose themselves on his whole personality, whereas in the analytical or discursive reason, he himself imposes a logical pattern on the abstractions which he, as it were, has himself created. The claim of unconditional values gives rise to the idea of a moral Law of Nature whereas the logical pattern results in the formulation of scientific laws, devoid of any moral claim upon man's conscience.

Let us first of all consider the significance of this *Lex Natura* or Law of Nature which has played such a prominent part throughout the centuries in the life of western man. When it was originally conceived, it was the product of Greek, that is to say, Stoic ontology. "In Stoic philosophy," writes Dr. E. Barker,³³ "the whole universe is conceived as a single intelligible unity, pervaded by reason. The whole universe was only one Substance, or *Physis*, in various states, and that one Substance was Reason, was God. Reason, God, Nature

were all synonyms . . . In God, this essential Reason was whole and pure : in man, it was a fragment . . . By it . . . (man) was knit to God, and knit to his fellows . . . From it . . . he derived the law of the one universal society." Thus, to the Stoic, Nature was self-existent Being expressing in one universal society its own Law. It provided an ethical basis for the legal order, But, of course, the *Lex Natura* as formulated by Reason and as embodied in the legal order were two different things, and so a distinction had to be drawn between the original Law of Nature and that form of it which was adapted to prevailing conditions.

Christian theology eventually took over the idea of the Law of Nature in order, writes Dr. Werner Wiesner³⁴, "to defend the earthly sphere as God's creation against any dualistic devaluation of the natural order." It could do this without difficulty, since "the Stoic theory of a fall from the original state of mankind could be connected without difficulty with the Biblical thought of the Fall." In Scholasticism a further development took place. "The Stoic conception of the Law of Nature established a connection with the Aristotelian view of the cosmos as a series of grades of being interrelated teleologically." Thus, the Law of Nature, as finally conceived in Christian tradition, is the offspring both of Stoic ontology and of Aristotelian teleology. It stands not only for the original Law of the universe in contrast to the one which has been vitiated by human guilt, but also for the world-law immanent in the grade of being characteristic of the earthly in contrast to the law in the grade of being characteristic of the heavenly. And, of course, this Stoic-Aristotelian *Lex Natura* was interpreted, or at any rate meant to be interpreted, in the light of what is meant by the law in the Bible.

The Reformers, according to Dr. Wiesner, in asserting the Biblical doctrines of Creation and Eschatology, rejected alike the Stoic ontological and Aristotelian presuppositions of the Law of Nature, and made this *Lex Natura* solely identical with the revealed Law of God, that is, the Decalogue. They rejected the notion of two laws, one of Nature and the other of Supernature by which the first was completed, and retained only one divine Law, the full knowledge of which was derived, not from the intuitive reason as such, but from Biblical Revelation. "They called it the Law of Nature, however, because the knowledge of it was implanted in human nature, and though this knowledge had been darkened by sin, there were still traces of it remaining . . . sufficient to leave a man without excuse. This view obviously arose under the influence of Augustine, and seemed to have the support of Romans ii. 14ff."

In the modern era, the idea of the Law of Nature has undergone further change, owing to the influence of the Enlightenment. On the one hand the idea either of a Supernatural in contrast to a Natural Law or of a Revealed Law, the knowledge of which was originally implanted in human nature, has been discarded. On the other hand, reason itself has become the ultimate standard for man, and not a divine law implanted in reason. "It is believed that the 'rational' organisation of human society can be discovered purely out of general ideas of reason." Thus, the modern rationalist idea of a Law of Nature is that of a law of human nature devoid of any theological

or objective content. Modern ideological movements are a protest against the claims of reason thus conceived "to be the organising and forming principle of human life,"³⁵ as Dr. R. Niebuhr points out.

Can we relate the authority of the Spirit to the claims of the Law of Nature as set forth by the Scholastics, the Reformers and the Rationalists respectively? In the modern rationalist view of reason, and the romantic protest against it, we can at least see, howbeit only from the standpoint of the Christian faith, an unconscious testimony to the truth that God is, in the words of Dr. Niebuhr, "the source of vitality as well as of order. Order and vitality are a unity in Him."³⁶

What of the Scholastic view of *Lex Natura*? Can we really align Stoic ontology with the Biblical doctrine of Creation and Aristotelian teleology with the Biblical doctrine of Eschatology? Dr. Werner Weisner maintains that we cannot. They are, he writes, "mutually exclusive . . . The world does not reach its goal in virtue of its immanent laws but by God's free gift. . . God has not abrogated His Providence in favour of an immanent world-order." He further writes, "This combination of natural law with God's law of Love to Him and to one's neighbour can only be brought about as the Love of God is re-interpreted in the sense of mysticism. Love to God is then an act of union with the divine being . . . not a new relation to God as a person in which all action is rooted . . . The Bible (however) knows no mystical love of God which leaves the world behind it, but only a love of God which issues in confidence in Him, in obedience to His will, and in the service of one's neighbour amid earthly circumstances."

Dr. Wiesner not only rejects the mediaeval doctrine of Natural Law as inconsistent with the Biblical doctrine, but also affirms that the "subjective" idea of the Law of Nature as held by the reformers, that is, the idea that the Biblical Law is implanted, howbeit in distorted and fragmentary form, in human nature, is really untenable. He allows, of course, that man has a vitiated knowledge of that law of love which issues in the service of one's neighbour. He contends, however, that "man relates the ethical requirements (of this law) no longer to God but to his idols" with the result that it is of service to man only so far as his preservation is concerned. In other words, of the Law of God as embodying the saving no less than the sustaining grace of God towards man, there is, according to Dr. Weisner, no knowledge implanted in fallen man at all.

What are we to say to all this? In rejecting the distinction, made by the Scholastics, between the Law of Nature discoverable by reason (howbeit only imperfectly, owing to human sin, and so needing to be clearly defined by reference to revelation) and the Law of Supernature or Grace revealed by God, and asserting instead that there is only one Law of God, revealed indirectly, that is, in distorted fashion, to fallen man, and revealed directly and clearly to redeemed man, Dr. Wiesner is undoubtedly true to the message of the Bible. When, however, Dr. Wiesner goes on to deny any saving value to "general" revelation, he is really making absolute that distinction between "form" and "content," between "reasonableness" and "goodness" which once it is made absolute, becomes wholly meaningless. In this regard, Dr. Barth's criticism of Dr. Brunner's conception of a knowledge

of God which is sustaining but not gracious may be quoted. "With what right," asks Dr. Barth, "can Brunner affirm that a genuine knowledge of the true God, however incomplete . . . is nevertheless not a saving knowledge?"³⁷ The answer is, of course, with no right at all. In like manner, if we admit, as does Dr. Wiesner, that man has a knowledge of God's Law, then that knowledge, however vitiated it may be, must somehow be related to God and not merely to idols. Otherwise, Nature is "nothing but the kingdom of death and the Law of Nature . . . a law of wrath and punishment".³⁸

The fact is that the Law of Nature, that is, the Law of God as apprehended by fallen man, and the Biblical presentation of the Law of God, that is, the Law of God as witnessed by redeemed man, just because they are one and the same in source but not in apprehension, cannot be set in complementary relation the one to the other, as in scholasticism, nor yet in diametrical opposition the one to the other, as is the tendency among many Lutherans, but only in dialectical or paradoxical relation to one another. In the Biblical formulation of Divine Law, the human formulations are both confirmed and denied, just as an amateur conductor's rendering of one of Beethoven's Symphonies is both confirmed and denied by that of a master-conductor. In consequence, for Evangelical Christianity, the Law of Nature can not be regarded merely as a divine norm for secular as distinct from sacred institutions, providing a basis for a Sociology which can receive the *Imprimatur* of the Church. Rather is the Law of Nature in its purity that Law of Love which provides man with his norm in the totality of his personal dealings with his Maker which are inclusive of, although transcending, his dealings with his neighbours. The demands of such a "law of liberty," however, necessitate for the life of fallen man a law which limits his rejection of that "law of liberty," that is, a law which limits man in, rather than from, his sin ("for the hardness of your hearts," as our Lord put it) with the precise object of preserving for him the possibility of redemption. It can point to, but never provide, that redemption. It can keep in view, but never guarantee "personal fellowship in *agape*." Strictly speaking, therefore, there can be no "Christian sociology," if by that is meant a norm for secular institutions. There can, however, be such, if by it we mean a *preparatio evangelii*, that is, an order or dispensation which reflects, however imperfectly, not an immanent world-order, but that activity of the Spirit of God in the world which, because it is gracious no less than sustaining, sets a limit to human sin precisely in order that it may plant in the human heart first the need and then the message of redemption.

So far, the significance of the claims of the Law of Nature as witnessed by the intuitive reason has been discussed, and it has been suggested that this significance is to be interpreted in terms of the will of the Holy Spirit, as He bears witness in life to the objective Word of the Living God, and not in terms of an immanent Law of Nature, with Nature herself regarded as Self-existent Being. What are we to say, however, of those modern scientific "laws of nature" in which nature is mirrored as a vast machine, the parts of which consist solely of "matter" and "motion", and the behaviour or working of which expresses an ultimate immanent "law of causation"? These

“ laws of nature ”, and the “ law of causation ” which they presuppose, have been formulated, not by the intuitive but by the discursive reason, and, of course, they are couched in the indicative mood and not in the imperative.

It is well to remember that the modern scientific movement, no less than the work of the Reformers, represents, as Professor Whitehead observes, “ a recoil from the inflexible rationality of mediaeval thought.”³⁹ Only, whereas the Reformers were concerned primarily with listening to the Word of God in the Bible as verified by the *internum testimonium* of the Holy Spirit, the scientists were concerned primarily with speaking the word of man to nature, causing her to deliver up her secrets and put herself under the power of man’s will. Greek thinkers, notably Aristotle, in interpreting Nature in terms of the intuitive reason, formulated a doctrine of cause which envisaged a *permanent*⁴⁰ determinant for both “ matter ” and “ change ” or “ motion.” For them, therefore, “ matter ” was the vehicle of a conceptual determinant or Form, while “ change ” or “ motion ” is the vehicle of a similar determinant, which viewed from behind appears as an Efficient Cause and from before as Final Cause. For the modern scientists, however, there is no such permanent determinant of “ matter ” or “ motion.” Hobbes repudiated the idea of Formal Cause or determinant and Descartes of Final Cause. Thereby, the universe came to be regarded as composed of two ultimates “ matter ” and “ motion ” neither of which was the vehicle of any conceptual determinant. All that thought can do in regard to them is, as John MacMurray has indicated in his book, *The Boundaries of Science*, to construct imaginative devices for anticipating, and so controlling their observable behaviour. What, moreover, the physicist means by “ cause ” to-day is not really cause at all, but only blind sequence, since he treats the universe as if it were devoid both of cause, that is to say, Formal Cause, and purpose, that is to say, Final Cause.

Modern man, then, has addressed his word to Nature, as if she were his toy, to play with as seemeth him good. He has analysed her “ stuff ” into “ matter ” and “ motion ”, he has observed, either directly or with the aid of instruments, the “ communal customs ” of these abstractions, and he is able, in consequence to put her to his own use. He has even, in the science of psychology, put into this “ nature ” and its observable behaviour his own empirical *ego*, and in doing so, almost forgotten that self-transcendent *ego* which, in the very act of observing the empirical self as part of Nature, bears witness that it remains outside the field of observation. It is in relation to that witness, that having, as it were, possessed the universe, he faces the question, “ So what ? ” (to use a very expressive Americanism), and that we must look for the authority of the Holy Spirit, since, as Dr. H. H. Farmer indicates, scientific results, to be of value for the personal situation of man, have to be taken back into that situation. The scientific observer may contend that around the observed self there is to be noted only the determinism of impersonal sequence, but around the observer himself there gathers what Dr. Farmer calls “ the spontaneity of personal purpose.”⁴¹ Here, the results of science are taken back into man’s situation in the world, and enable man to obtain a truer grasp of the total significance of life. Here he ceases to

be a spectator and becomes an actor. Here he must act, and act decisively. Here he either lays his possession "at the apostles' feet," that is, he responds to the authority of the Creator-Spirit, or retains it for his own use. In short, the scientific "laws of nature," being, as they are, human devices for anticipating and so controlling the behaviour of Nature on its physical side, express only the authority of man, and exhibit the authority of the Spirit only at the point where man must decide what use he will make of them, although, of course, even man's very desire and power to use Nature is itself dependent upon the activity of the same Creator-Spirit.

IV. CONCLUSION.

We have reflected briefly on the life of fallen man in the faith that, in its religious and rational expressions, it bears positive relation to that authority of the Holy Spirit which is exhibited in the faith and life of the Christian Church. There have been periods in the history of man when quite obviously religion was "not simply," to quote some words of Dr. Niebuhr, "an inherently virtuous quest for God," but "merely a final battle-ground between God and man's self-esteem."⁴² In like manner, there have been periods when reason was not an inherently sincere quest for an ultimate unity which has its centre and basis in Truth, but was merely an attempt to establish false unities, centring round man's idols. In such periods, the authority of the Holy Spirit has been manifest in that prophetic witness to the Word of the Living God as bringing judgment upon the hypocrisy of religious man and the self-deceit of rational man. At the Reformation, the chosen vessel of this witness was Martin Luther. He proclaimed to the religiously-minded of his day that "apart from Christ, there is nothing but idolatry and vain fabrications of God."⁴³ Likewise, he proclaimed to the philosophically-minded of his day that "the whole of Aristotle is to theology as the darkness to the light."⁴³ In short, Luther bore witness that, in relation to the pretensions of religious and rational man, God is *Deus Absconditus*, the hidden God. To-day, the same witness is being borne by the great Swiss prophet-theologian, Dr. Karl Barth, and we do well to give careful heed to it.

At the same time, we need always to remember that man's religion has never been merely a form of hypocrisy and that his reasoning has never been merely a form of self-deceit, even in the times of his greatest apostasy. Both without and within the Church, the living God has never left Himself wholly without witness. Hence, attacks on man's religion and reasoning alike have never been made only by the messengers of the prophetic Word. They have also been made by its opponents. Thus, if Luther denounced the religion and philosophy of his day, so did "Hobbes the atheist." It was Hobbes who wrote that "the Papacy is no other, than the Ghost of the deceased Roman Empire, sitting crowned upon the grave thereof."⁴⁴ It was Hobbes who wrote that "scarce anything can be more absurdly said in natural Philosophy, than that which is now called Aristotle's *Metaphisiques*."⁴⁵ Similarly, it is not only Dr. Barth who denounces human religion and rationality to-day, but also the opponents of the prophetic and apostolic Word, both romanticist and materialist. If the attacks of Dr. Barth are a warning against the pretensions of religious and

rational man, those of unbelievers are likewise a warning that attacks on religion and reason as such are really attacks on man as made in the image of God. Hence, as Professor L. Hodgson indicates in his book, *Towards a Christian Philosophy*,⁴⁶ it is unfortunate, to say the least, that Dr. Brunner, for example, speaks again and again of reason being proud. Man may be proud, but not his reason as such. Man is only man in so far as he is both religious and rational, so that, in being confronted by the truth as it is in Jesus, he does not become less religious and less rational but more. His past religious and rational activities will come under condemnation, and yet, at the same time, he will know that, though he has resorted to false gods, he has also, even in his ignorance, resorted also unto the true God, and that while he himself was the seeker after the idols, it was not so much he who sought the true God as the true God who sought him. This being so, the religious and rational history of man is no mere melancholy record of illusion and error, although, of course, it has been so distorted by illusion and error that the truth has then seemed completely hidden. Rather is that history a record also that God, by the activity of His Spirit, has ever confronted man down the ages with the authority of His Word, and has ever sought man, even in the times and places when and where He seemed most absent.

"There come epochs," writes John Buchan in his biography of Montrose, "when a nation seems to move from the sun into the twilight."⁴⁷ The post-Elizabethan age was such an epoch. The post-Victorian age is also such an epoch. Britain, and indeed the whole of Europe, has moved out of the sun into the twilight. There has been a change of temper or mood. Optimism has given way to pessimism. In the Victorian era, men felt that, in moving from its old anchorage, civilisation was following in the wake of what Professor Whitehead has called "formulated aspirations," whereas in our own day men feel that civilisation is being driven, none knows whither, by "senseless agencies." "Evolution," that magical word in the vocabulary of nineteenth century speech, from connoting that kind of change in life which men felt could only be described as "Progress" with a capital "P", now has come to mean for many little more than a scavenging process by which the whole of man's past cultural achievements and ideals is being swept away, to make room for we know not what. Behind this change of temper or mood there lies a transposition of key, a change of climate, a shift of interests in life, and it seems impossible at present to assess the nature and meaning of this deeper change. Men's eyes, in consequence, are naturally fixed upon the tidal ebb of human life, and men's thoughts are of what appears to be the total wreck of life, stranded, as it were, in the quicksands of irreligion and irrationalism. When, however, the tidal flow of life returns, the wreck will not appear to be so total as it once seemed to be, though doubtless the re-floated vessel will in many ways be different from the old. Yet in that ship—such has been our contention—and not in those quicksands, is to be met the Lord of the winds and the waves of life's sea. He has seemingly been asleep while man has been perishing. Why He has slept, we cannot say. This, however, is our faith, that through the preaching of apostolic Gospel, He will awake in the life of man, and His Spirit will enable those in the

ship to articulate that cry which, though they knew it not before, is the inarticulate cry behind the whole religious and rational life of man, yea, even of fallen man, and which when articulated runs thus: "Of a truth, Thou art the Son of God."

- ¹ H. Rashdall, *Philosophy and Religion*, p. 108.
- ² J. Baillie, *Our Knowledge of God*, p. 250
- ³ J. A. Mackay, *A Preface to Christian Theology*, p. 142.
- ⁴ K. Barth, *The Knowledge of God and the Service of God*, p. 48.
- ⁵ K. Barth, *The Holy Ghost and the Christian Life*, p. 23
- ⁶ E. Brunner, *The Mediator*, p. 33.
- ⁷ J. Baillie, p. 48.
- ⁸ J. Baillie, p. 43.
- ⁹ H. H. Farmer, *The World and God*, p. 85.
- ¹⁰ E. L. Wenger, in *Studies in History and Religion*, p. 164.
- ¹¹ *Apology of Socrates*, p. 28A.
- ¹² J. Oman, *The Natural and the Supernatural*, p. 85.
- ¹³ R. Niebuhr, *The Nature and Destiny of Man*, Vol. 1. p. 14
- ¹⁴ H. H. Farmer, p. 33f.
- ¹⁵ C. Dawson, *Progress and Religion*, p. 90.
- ¹⁶ G. A. Smith, *Isaiah*, Vol. I. p. 98.
- ¹⁷ G. Murray, *Five Stages of Greek Religion*, p. 46. (Thinker's Library)
- ¹⁸ R. Niebuhr, Vol. I. p. 178.
- ¹⁹ E. O. James, *In the Fullness of Time*, p. 20
- ²⁰ J. S. Whale, *Christian Doctrine*, p. 178.
- ²¹ J. A. Mackay, p. 110.
- ²² Vol. IV., *Church, Community and State*.
- ²³ E. Barker, *The Values of Life*, p. 2.
- ²⁴ B. Willey, *The Eighteenth Century Background*, p. 5.
- ²⁵ J. A. Chapman, *An Introduction to Schleiermacher*, p. 98
- ²⁶ B. H. Streeter, *The Buddha and the Christ*, p. 314.
- ²⁷ O. C. Quick, *The Gospel of Divine Action*, p. 135.
- ²⁸ J. A. Chapman, p. 150.
- ²⁹ J. Oman, p. 386.
- ³⁰ G. K. Chesterton, *The Everlasting Man*, p. 101.
- ³¹ A. N. Whitehead, *Science and the Modern World*, p. 14 (Penguin).
- ³² H. H. Farmer, p. 86.
- ³³ E. Barker, *Church, State and Study*, p. 7.
- ³⁴ Art., *The Law of Nature and Social Institutions*, Vol. IV., *Church, Community and State*.
- ³⁵ R. Niebuhr, Vol. I. p. 38.
- ³⁶ R. Niebuhr, Vol. I. p. 29.
- ³⁷ J. Baillie, p. 31.
- ³⁸ C. Dawson, *The Judgement of the Nations*, p. 94.
- ³⁹ A. N. Whitehead, p. 14.
- ⁴⁰ J. L. Stocks, *Time, Cause and Eternity*, pp. 5-6.
- ⁴¹ H. H. Farmer, p. 220.
- ⁴² R. Niebuhr, Vol. I. p. 213.
- ⁴³ G. Hendry, *God the Creator*.
- ⁴⁴ T. Hobbes, *Leviathan*, p. 381 (Everyman).
- ⁴⁵ T. Hobbes, p. 368.
- ⁴⁶ L. Hodgson, *Towards a Christian Philosophy*, p. 131.
- ⁴⁷ J. Buchan, *Montrose*, p. 17.

The Authority of the Church.

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THE great authority¹ of the Church in the secular order during the medieval period was the outward counterpart of an almost unquestioned inward authority in its own distinctive life. It was this latter authority which was called in question by the Reformers, for to them it seemed to be the result of a false and dangerous development which had secularized the very concept of church authority. The sixteenth century dispute in Christendom was concerned with the nature of church authority, of which the Reformers believed they had a better account to give than their opponents. Some words of Barth are relevant to this issue. Speaking of the word Protestantism, he says, "this word describes the polemical character of the true Church, but it does not exhaust the conception of the evangelical church. It protests against man, who would fain set himself in the place of God, and against justification by works, for we do well to reflect that as early as the sixteenth century this protest was directed, not only against Rome, but also against the fanatics."² The exigencies of controversy caused an arrested development of the reformed understanding of the Church and its authority so that Brunner can justly say "the question of the church is indeed THE unsolved problem of Protestant theology."³ It is against this background of 'indeterminate' theology that we have to consider the authority of the church.

The church is not a voluntary association for the cultivation of spiritual life formed by those who share this interest, neither is it a club, but the result of the choice and calling of man by God. The *ecclesia* of God is the company of the elect, that is of those who have been called out from the world by God and, having heard that call, have responded to it, in faith. It is the continuation of the Old Testament Qahal which designated Israel a people chosen of God, through whom He desired to fulfil His purpose in the world. Since Israel according to the flesh repudiated the Messiah, the Christian congregation became the true Qahal of God, the new or renewed Israel.⁴ The setting of the mission of Jesus is the people of God and only in that context can His person and work be understood. The Church, then, is not a human creation, it is not a building made with hands, but a community constituted by God into which man is admitted as he learns faith in Jesus. "The Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved."⁵ The response of saving faith involves the incorporation of the believer into the holy community of God. No one can have Jesus without His church, for it is a part of the Gospel itself. The given-ness of the church is necessarily involved in the given-ness of the Gospel and is not the result of any inevitable human propensity to join together on a common basis. One of the characteristic words of the New Testament is the word *κοινωνία* which cannot be fully rendered by the English word 'fellowship'. It signifies the sharing in a common life whose source is the saving acts of God. The book of

the Acts of the Apostles is concerned to show that this *κοινωνία* is something altogether new, originated by an act of God at Pentecost. As Lionel Thornton has put it—"The Christian life is in part a shared response to God, and again that joint response is called forth by the gracious acts and gifts of God of which we are fellow recipients."⁶

It is at this point that we may begin to define the authority of the Church. The act of becoming a believer is not a solitary event, but through it we are united to God and to our fellow believers. It is because the church is the place where the Word of God is proclaimed and heard that there is any possibility of our becoming Christians. The worshipping community in which the Word of God has free course to be glorified is the historical connecting link between the Jesus of History and every period of time and every individual. It is the distinctive, indispensable means by which Christian life is created and maintained. It is for this reason that in the opening chapter of the fourth book of 'The Institutes of the Christian Religion', Calvin laid so much stress on the Church "as our Mother,"⁷ and that Luther wrote, "the Church is the mother that gives life to and nourishes every Christian."⁸ No one becomes a believer save through a message communicated to him by others.⁹ This human word is never the ground of faith but it is always the cause of faith when it is given by God the capacity of reminding other men of the reign of God, of His grace and of His judgment.

The saving revelation of God in Jesus Christ always meets us through historical means. This mediated immediacy is such that it can bridge the gap of the centuries. It is found only in the proclamation of the Word and the celebration of sacraments which are acts of the church. As Karl Barth put it, "Jesus Christ lives by the tidings about Him being proclaimed and heard. This is His life on earth."¹⁰ He lives then in His church and is known *there* by faith and not outside. That is to say, Jesus Christ does not live and is not known in such a way that one could seek Him but shun His people, or love Him but despise His people. Christianity is an individual but never a private matter. The Christian faith as a divine-human thing must exist in the world in some visible form and the Church is that form in which it exists. So to quote Barth again, "One can be a good citizen without belonging to a political party. One can be musical without belonging to a choral society. But one cannot hold the Christian faith without holding it in the church and with the church."¹¹

There is, however, a great difference between the Reformed understanding of the Church as the place where faith is born and the Catholic conception of submission to the church embodied in the person of the successor of Peter, or some mystical consensus fidelium.¹² The church we have said, is a community called into existence by God and, therefore, no man can be its master. It is governed by a transcendent authority, none other than the Lord Himself.¹³ It cannot be ruled by an individual or an assembly or by officials. Jesus Christ rules the Church for He has been given to be "the head over all things to the Church which is His body."¹⁴ It was He who said, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth" which means that He is Lord both of the church and of the world.¹⁵ The sovereignty is in the hands of Jesus Christ Himself and there is no sovereignty of man which may

thrust itself into the place of Christ. There has been no delegation of authority by Christ into the hands of any man or group of men in such wise that Christ has withdrawn from the active ruling of His church.¹⁶ The church is not divine revelation which has been institutionalized nor is it an organization which has obtained possession of the Gospel or of the Word of God so that it is master of these things. It cannot dispose or administer the will and the grace of God for He has not resigned to it His will, His truth or His grace in the form of a definite sum of super-natural powers. God has spoken and still speaks to the church and in the church, but He has not resigned His voice to the church so that the voice of the church can be identified with the voice of God and so possess an independent divine authority. It was this kind of church authority which was repudiated by the reformers since it gave to man a sovereignty which by right can only belong to Jesus Christ. This form of Christian titanism is a constant temptation to the church, Roman or Reformed, and leads inevitably to a grievous distortion of faith. To contest for the recovery of apostolic faith in its purity and power meant an insistence on the maintenance of this clear distinction between the church and her Lord and their respective authorities. In Barth's picturesque phrase "God remains the Lord of His own House."¹⁷

Thus the church lives, not by virtue of any self-generating power of her own doubtless originally bestowed upon her by her Lord, but by being under the governance of that Lord who is her life. He is not, therefore, nor ever can be an assured possession which she is able to take for granted, but is only possessed by faith in such a way that He retains His sovereignty over her and in her.¹⁸ In speaking of the church as the minister of the grace of God to the world we can never speak in such a way that the church or any organ of its life replaces Christ. This was why the Reformers laid so much stress on the "Crown rights of the Redeemer" and the consequent destruction of all those elements of traditional Christianity which seemed to them to invade the honour of Christ the King. A sentence from Calvin's Institutes—"Christ is the only master of the church" might well stand as the text on which the whole work is a commentary.¹⁹

If then, Christ always remains the master in His own house, the house of faith into which the elect, the called and chosen, enter; if He is alone the Sovereign of the church, do we then speak of the church as His Kingdom? Is it to be identified with the Kingdom of God so that we may say with Augustine "The church even now is the Kingdom of Christ and the Kingdom of Heaven"?²⁰ There can be little doubt, as Bishop Headlam has pointed out, that this conception, though spiritual and philosophical in Augustine, had a far-reaching influence in building up the Medieval church as a world power²¹ which succeeded only too well in obscuring the Lordship of Christ in the Church. The statesmen and ecclesiastics who built up the imposing fabric of a 'respublica Christiana' found in this identification the spiritual justification for their work.

The Kingdom of God, the reign of God in and over a fellowship of redeemed men is the end, the eschaton of all human history of which only God knows how it is to be realized. It will be His act completing the purpose of Creation in Redemption and giving meaning and fulfil-

ment to the whole process.²² This kingdom is the hope of the Church as it was of the prophets. It is a living, working reality in human history and yet not realized.²³ The Church has been constituted by the fact that the Kingdom of God has drawn near in the coming of Jesus Christ. But we still live in time and not in eternity and the kingdom is still veiled from our eyes for it is not being and will not be realized in history.

If, then, the Kingdom is the hope of the church, the two cannot be identified and the Church can only be understood in the light of that End which is beyond herself. She is not her own end and this is one of the most significant differences between Roman and Reformed Christianity. The Church is always the church under the Cross,²⁴ the community of the redeemed who are still sinners but who, by their membership in the church, testify that they "desire" "a better country."²⁵ The church is an eschatological community since it came into being at a decisive moment of reference to the eschaton and since it lives in hope and expectation of that Kingdom. Its character and, therefore, also its authority point beyond itself to something which is yet to come. It is a community which has had a foretaste of the Kingdom since in its life the powers of the age to come have already entered into the world. It is the place of God's beginning of a new chapter in the life of mankind in Christ. The eschatological act of full redemption has been brought into the present not in completeness, but proleptically as a foretaste, an earnest. So we may speak of the church as a pledge of the Kingdom, of the common life of the church in Christ as a foretaste of the life of the kingdom, and of the achievements of the grace of Christ as the earnest of full redemption. In Brunner's fine phrase the church is "the earthly historical veil which conceals the Kingdom."²⁶ This time in which we live, this time in the life of the church, is the time between the Ascension and the Return of Jesus Christ, so that the church is a between-the-times community. By its life and by its speech it points on to the fulfilment of its confident hope, while already it enjoys a foretaste of the powers of that age that is to come. The prayer of the church is "Thy Kingdom come" so that the church never resigns itself to the status quo, but having an expectation which is real longing, stands in the world as the place where already the saving activity of God is at work.

This eschatological nature of the church in its relation to the Kingdom has obvious significance for the sociological need of our time and shows that there can be no possibility of any attempt to return to the medieval method of an articulated hierarchy administering a carefully co-ordinated system of law. The church is not the Kingdom already realized but points beyond itself to the Kingdom. When the Kingdom is come, the church will exist no longer. Its authority in this sphere is the authority of a community which testifies to a confident hope arising from the present activity of the powers of the age to come.

If Christ is the Lord of the church which is a community awaiting full redemption, and no human sovereignty, however expressed, may usurp His position, we have to ask how that dominical sovereignty is exercised? There has not been, as we have already argued, any surrender of authoritative sovereignty by the Lord to the church, or to any order therein, so that the authority which the church does exercise

is itself subject to the authority of the Lord. In the Roman Church there is no appeal from a pronouncement of the Holy See to Christ because the voice of the Pope is so identified with the voice of Christ that failure to hear the voice of the Holy Father means inability to hear the voice of Christ. Hence, as Barth has shown, there is no opportunity for the lordship of Christ to become concrete in the church, "to get its proper play".²⁷

Reformed theology begins at this point—man must in no wise usurp the authority of Christ in the Church. So Calvin asserts, "It is the right of Christ to *preside* over all councils and not share the honour with any man. Now I hold that He presides only when He governs the whole assembly by His Word and Spirit."²⁸ This involves a serious attempt to avoid the spiritual and theological dangers of theocracy. The church may, and indeed must, speak and act—she must make decisions, affirm truth and deny error and this can take place in no other way than in the formulation of resolutions and in confessions of faith. Such decisions and confessions are never mere table talk, nor do they carry the authority of learned and plain men in such a way that they minister to edification without obligation. Creeds and confessions have authority because in them the church is speaking under a sense of responsibility to the Word. So in our time the churches on the continent have again become confessing churches as they have confronted militant paganism, because they have been zealous for the sovereign lordship of Christ. Important as such confessions are, they neither increase nor diminish the authority of the Word, nor can they set up any new doctrine which goes beyond the Word of God. They are not, in principle, free from error, but as attempts to make clear first to herself and then to the world her faith in Jesus Christ, they are part of the church's service of the Word. In this way they may become a worthy sign to remind future generations of the truth once known, but they are not to be regarded as the attempt to make absolute the piety or the theology of any given time. They possess no such static authority and only have binding power in so far as they testify to the Word. Their purpose is to serve as a genuine reassertion of the testimony of the apostles and the extent to which they do this is the measure of their authority. In the possibility of appeal from them to the Word of God are to be found both the due limits within which such confessions may be drawn up and prove of service, and also the place in which the sovereignty of Christ is made concrete in the church.

When we turn to consider the subject of dogma and the discipline of dogmatics within the church, we find the same dangers, the same authority and the same limits within which dogmatics are effective. The testimony to Jesus the Mediator has always been accompanied by an intellectual formulation of its message. That formulation is not itself the faith, nor is it to be identified with the Word of God. It is what happens when the Church cross-questions herself about that faith by which she lives. It is a function of faith which operates within the Christian church but as it is also "a part of the work of human knowledge"²⁹ it can never be binding in conscience. Its significance is chiefly negative, with the aim of protecting the message of the Gospel from destructive misunderstanding. Christian dogma has again and again acted as a kind of breakwater to keep out the invasion of a false

intellectualism into the church's life. It is concerned to remove the misunderstandings and perversions against which the Gospel has to contend. Hence in every period in the history of the church it is a task which needs to be done afresh, for although the Gospel changes not, the misunderstandings which confront it differ from age to age. "Dogmatics as such, does not inquire what the Apostles and prophets have said, but what we ourselves must say, on the basis of the Apostles and Prophets."³⁰ Thus dogmatics of to-day will seek to make its position quite clear over against a religion of immanence or of evolution. By means of thought, faith is able to carry on a discussion with unbelieving error. But the discussion must not be confused with faith nor dogma be identified with that which it is there to conserve. It exists for the sake of the proclamation of the Christian message and its authority depends upon the measure of success it achieves in creating room for the Divine Word to have free course.

It is when the relationship is reversed and dogma is confused with faith that the devastating evil of an arid intellectualism descends upon the church and a human authority usurps the dominion which by right belongs only to the Lord. Then faith is corrupted by orthodoxy and the wall of defence destroys that which it was erected to defend. The disaster arises not from dogma itself, which is a necessary procedure in the church but from the fact that a false and aspiring authority has identified the intellectual expression of the truth as it is in Christ with the Word of God. Faith is then turned into doctrine and scholasticism dominates the church. This was what happened in the reformed churches in the later sixteenth century, thus reproducing the false authority of doctrine in the Roman Church; so that divine truth became mixed with human error and falsity under the pretext of jealousy for the divine honour.³¹ All that we can do is to try to express the Word of God in the purest form of doctrine we can find, recognising always that this procedure itself must stand continually under the reforming judgment of the Word and is, therefore, a work which must be continually renewed. The purest expression of the doctrine always remains distinct from the Word and is not to be confused with the Word. God may speak through doctrine that is less pure than it might be³² and it may be that He will not speak through the purest doctrine. That is to say the Word of God is never at the disposal of man—God remains the Lord in His own house. It is not a Word which can be manipulated according to choice but a living personal challenge which stands over against the theologian in judgment. Dogma has significance and, therefore, authority as witness, in that it points to something behind and above itself—the Word with its constant ethical challenge. So soon as it becomes fossilised into a concrete word, an object for consideration, then dogma oversteps its limits and usurps the place of Christ.

It will perhaps be well if we were to speak here of the place which tradition may have in interpreting the Gospel. The attitude of Rome is quite unambiguous in the matter. "We receive with sentiments of equal piety all the books as well of the Old as of the New Testament," declared the Council of Trent, "and also the traditions relating as well to faith as to morals, inasmuch as coming either from the mouth of Christ Himself or dictated by the Holy Spirit they have been pre-

served in the Catholic Church in uninterrupted succession." We may ask by what standard this tradition is to be measured? If it is equally authoritative with the Bible itself, is it because it not only confirms the Word of the Bible but also that the Bible needs such confirmation, or is it because it supplements that Word? Such a position can only be maintained logically by the emergence of the teaching office as a third source of revelation. This is what has happened in the ascription of an infallible teaching authority to the Pope. Only in this way can tradition be regarded as a second source of revelation, in addition to the Scriptures. Here is a clear instance of the self-apotheosis of the church, of the construction of a human idol which is worshipped as Christ.

The Reformers faced with this distortion of church authority placed the Church firmly under the authority of the prophetic-apostolic Word of the Bible. This was the limit of its authority and this was to be the test of any tradition which might be received. Does tradition bear witness to the Word of God declared in Jesus Christ or does it conform to that Word? Here is a barrier erected between tradition and Scripture which signifies that Another and not the Church, is the Teacher of the church. To say this does not imply that church tradition has no authority, for it is not possible to make a simple appeal to the Scriptures while ignoring the experience of the church with the Scriptures. Impoverishment of life and mutilation of faith are the inevitable results of such a proceeding. Moreover, the fact that the Scriptures need exposition, which task is performed as proclamation in the Church, demands for tradition a relative authority. In this way we recognize that the Spirit has been at work in the church before us and our Christian life, born and nourished in the Church, is the proof of this. It is not possible, except by denying the reality of our own Christian calling, to overleap the centuries and immediately link up with the Bible again. It is not agreement with the Father and Councils as such, that is demanded of us, but respect and obedience to their voices in so far as they testify to the voice of God, from whose utterance their speech is ever to be distinguished. Holy Scripture is the criterion of our study of the Church's past and what contradicts Scripture is to be rejected. The obedience which is demanded of us towards the Church's past can be comprehended, says Barth, under obedience to the Fifth commandment—"honour thy father and thy mother"³³ and this is a limited and relative authority since we must obey God more than mother or father. Nevertheless there is an obedience due to mother and father and this we owe also to the church's past expressed in tradition.

We have followed the argument so far because we began by asking how the sovereignty of Jesus Christ was exercised in the church. Creeds and Confessions, Dogma and Tradition are all functions of the church, decisions of faith which she is bound to make. But they are not acts of a church which has been endowed with divine authority in such a measure of divine resignation that her words cannot be distinguished from the Word of God and are, therefore, binding in conscience as that Word by its nature must be. On the contrary, the significance of such acts is the bearing of witness to the self-revelation of God in Christ, the pointing beyond themselves to something or rather Someone

who is their sovereign. There is appeal from a creed, a confession, a dogma or a tradition to the Word of God, and all these things need to be brought under the scrutiny of Jesus Christ the Living Word. Their authority, which is real and living, depends upon the validity of their testimony to Him.

We have now to try and come to grips with this question of the exercise of sovereignty in the church, that is, its government by Jesus Christ through which it was created. How does the church learn to refrain from usurping the position of Christ and look to Him as her living Head and Governor? The answer is that she can do this in no other way than that in which she comes to know Jesus Christ Who came in the flesh. We know Him through the testimony of the Apostles and the witness of the prophets whose function is now fulfilled in that of the Apostles. The church is always faced with the question, "What is true church?" since there is ever present the possibility that it may decline into false church even though it preserves an outward orthodoxy. This is a question of true and false authority and one which is always to be welcomed by the church, for it is only as it confronts this challenge that it can know itself as 'true church'. In facing this question we shall be able to make a decision in the problems of the development of the historical forms of church life.

The Church then has to come to terms with the facts of her origin in the testimony of apostles and prophets. To be a church which can make proclamation of the Word of God she has to be Apostolic. This has been an unvarying note of true Catholicity, of genuine church existence and makes a dividing line between us and those who would reject the apostles in favour of the findings of historical criticism.³⁴ To be apostolic means that the church must stand in some definable relationship with the Apostles who were in Calvin's words³⁵ "to be the first architects of the church and to lay its foundations throughout the world." "Ye are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the chief corner stone."³⁶ It was because the Reformers were convinced that other foundations had been laid for the erection of their contemporary church that their "protestant" labours were directed to its re-establishment on that one foundation beside which there can be none other, the apostles and prophets with Christ Jesus as the chief corner-stone. The crucial issue here concerns the meaning of apostolicity.

There can be no doubt that the authority of the Apostles was of fundamental importance in the life of the early church. "That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you . . . that ye may have fellowship with us"³⁷ gives us the key to the understanding of this apostolic authority. St. Paul on more than one occasion found himself obliged to defend his gospel or to enforce his injunctions by reminding his readers of his apostleship. "Am I not an apostle"³⁸ is the question he presses upon the Corinthians. Through all his epistles runs the note of conscious responsibility because he had been called out to be an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God.³⁹ Behind this lies the tremendous sense of mission with which the whole Christian errand began. An *ἀποστολος* is essentially a man sent with a mission to accomplish. "As My Father hath sent Me, even so send I you."⁴⁰ Luke says that

those whom the Lord chose to be the bearers of His message, the witnesses to the proximity of the kingdom, he also named 'apostles', His sent ones.⁴¹ Does all this require us to suppose that in its origin the church was an organized 'legal' institution with duly appointed rulers who already exercised a formal judicial function in the power of binding and loosing? If so, then a succession in hierarchical office within the church, exercising a divinely given *magisterium* would be the principal function and the criterion of apostolicity. When, however, we examine the New Testament to see whether this is the picture, there are three important facts to be noticed.

First of all, the word apostle is used in three different ways. An Apostle is one of the twelve chosen and commissioned by the Lord Himself, so that *οἱ ἀποστολοι* is practically a synonym for *οἱ δώδεκα*. In the opening words of several of his epistles, Paul seems to confine the word apostle to fairly narrow limits, although wider than the twelve for he was included although "as one out of due time." "Paul called to be an apostle and Sosthenes our brother." "Paul called to be an apostle and Timothy our brother."⁴² The word is also used with a wider connotation to include some of the leading men of the early Church who were performing apostolic work in fulfilling the commission of evangelism. Thus in Acts,⁴³ "the multitude of the city was divided and part held with the Jews and part with the apostles" where Paul and Barnabas are the men in question. In Philippians⁴⁴ Epaphroditus is spoken of as "my fellow worker and fellow soldier and your apostle." Thirdly, there appears to have been an even wider use of the word *ἀποστολος*, perhaps to indicate something that could be said of an individual, who without being one of the twelve, yet had something in common with the twelve as witnesses of the Resurrection and bearers of a ministry. Thus Paul speaks⁴⁵ of Andronicus and Junia who are of note among the apostles and in Ephesians he says in a general way that God gave some to be apostles.⁴⁶ The meaning of this use of the word apostle in the wider sense survived in later times, for Hermas in describing the fourth course of his mystical tower, says that it consists of forty who are apostles and teachers of the preaching of the Son of God,⁴⁷ while Eusebius, commenting on Paul's account of the Resurrection appearances of Jesus says, "there were very many apostles indeed in imitation of the Twelve."⁴⁸

In the second place the nature of the apostolic authority was undefined. The twelve owed their general pre-eminence to their close companionship with Jesus in the days of His flesh,⁴⁹ to the privilege of being witnesses to His Resurrection, to the fact that they had been sent forth to preach by Jesus Himself in His earthly life, and to the fact that they had received authority over devils. The record of their activity contained in the book of the Acts seems to be the logical counterpart of these privileges. Except for the close companionship with Jesus many others shared these privileges, besides the twelve. But there are no grounds for supposing that a strictly circumscribed group of Apostles possessed a divine prerogative obtained by no-one else and so possessed an authoritative leadership in administering a divinely sanctioned law. We have no record of the apostles exercising this kind of hierarchical rule. When Paul is given the gift of the Holy

Ghost it is through the laying on of hands by a certain disciple who is not an Apostle and otherwise unknown. There does not appear to be the need for any apostolic check on the admission of people into the Christian community or any apostolic rules for such admission which all local communities were obliged to respect. When Peter is called to account for his conduct in eating with the Gentile converts, there is no assertion of apostolic authority either by Peter or by the Apostles generally, but merely an attempt on the part of Peter "to carry the whole body with him by patient explanation of the circumstances and considerations belonging to the case."⁵⁰ In the crucial instance of the Jerusalem council, the letter sent from the council to the brethren in Antioch, Syria and Cilicia lays no stress upon the position or authority of the apostles and of the elders associated with them. As Hort put it, what is sent is a strong expression of opinion, "more than advice and less than a command . . . a certain authority is thus implicitly claimed. There is no evidence that it was more than a moral authority but that did not make it less real."⁵¹

In the third place there is no evidence of any attempt by the apostles, whether the twelve or a wider body, to appoint legal successors. The authority they possessed as the special intimates of the Lord, as pre-eminently His witnesses, was not the legal authority of an hierarchy. There was no prerogative given them for transmission. The apostolate formed a regulative centre exercising a moral authority such as every missionary with a young church must possess. Perhaps this was why Calvin⁵² could speak of it as an extra-ordinary office occasionally raised up in other epochs "as God has done in our times to form churches where none previously existed." The apostolate was an office whose function was to do that which is done ἀπαξ in the church.⁵³ The authority and position of the Apostles died with them in its personal form.

There was no authority possessed by the apostles in virtue of their position and which guaranteed their testimony as the truth. The Testimony is not authoritative because it is apostolic testimony but it is testimony which points away from man to Jesus Christ and His unique authority which constitutes them apostles.⁵⁴ The uncertainty we have found in the attempt to define the New Testament limits of the apostolate and the apparent irregularity of Paul's call to the apostolate serve as continual reminders to the church that the apostolic testimony is testimony to a God who is Lord over apostles also and reserves His freedom to work where and as He will even in independence of apostles. Apostolicity then, will be the mark of a church whose testimony to Jesus Christ is the same as that of the Apostles. If we ask what means we have of knowing what the testimony of the Apostles actually was, we are not left in any doubt since the Apostles left us in the Holy Scriptures their testimony to the life, death, resurrection and ascension of their Lord in order that we might separate the Church of Christ from any synagogue of Satan. As Forsyth put it⁵⁵ in a brilliant phrase, "that precipitate of their message, that fixed capital of their divine industry was their real successor", and again, "the real successor of the apostolate was not the hierarchy, but the Canon of Scripture written to prolong their voice and compiled to replace the vanished witness."

The canon of Scripture controls the church in its life and witness in a fashion analogous to the authority exercised by the apostles in person in the early years of the church—that is by virtue of its testimony to Jesus Christ.⁵⁶ It does this, not because it possesses any prior guarantee of catholicity, still less of infallibility, bestowed upon it by the church or even by the apostles, nor because it is itself the Revelation and therefore authoritative, but because it is the deposit of apostolic testimony. The acts of God, to which the apostolic testimony bore witness, created both the church and the Scriptures. The fact that unbelief can still persist when confronted with this Scripture reminds us that it is only a token of revelation.

The canon of Scripture is not authorised or created by the church but recognized by it and the church is then bound by what it has recognized. The word *κανων* in the first three centuries was applied to what was recognized as apostolic and stood for the “*regula fidei*.” Only since the fourth century has it been applied to Scripture—the list of books in the Bible—recognized as apostolic.⁵⁷ We lay stress on the word recognized for it does not imply a superior authority on the part of the one who recognizes but an acknowledgment that what stands over against him as canon of Scripture has an independent authority—it may even be an authority over him. Thus for instance, the 1921 Act of Parliament which regulates the State’s attitude to the Church of Scotland, recognizes the spiritual authority and independence of the Kirk. It acknowledges an authority which it can neither bestow nor take away. Thus the church acknowledges the canon as the apostolic testimony to Jesus Christ, and in so doing it acknowledges that, in so far as Scripture is the Word of God it is the measure and the standard, in short the controlling authority over the church. The church recognizes this authority of Scripture for no other reason than that here God Himself has spoken of Himself, and still by His Spirit confronts with Himself, the man who reads in faith. Apostolic testimony, whether spoken or written, is only true testimony in so far as it brings hearers and readers under the *κρῖσις* of the living God in Jesus Christ. “It is the canon because it has imposed itself as such upon the church and invariably does so.”⁵⁸

But the Scriptures are not self explanatory, neither are they a series of proof texts or a collection of rules. They require exegesis and it is the duty of the church to expound these writings and to find in them the materials for her proclamation. This does not, however, deliver the Scriptures into her hand or give her any authoritative power over them. They still remain the regulative canon of her life, since in the very handling of them the church is brought under the *κρῖσις* of Jesus Christ. Moreover, the church has the duty after every exegesis, of making clear to herself the difference between text and commentary and of letting the text speak again and again without restriction, so that she may experience the authority of the “*successio apostolorum*” in their testimony to Jesus Christ.

Further the fact that the Scriptures are written, has this significance that they stand over against the church as a “concrete authority with a singular aliveness of its own,”⁵⁹ an authority which means that the church is not left to conduct a monologue with herself on themes

springing out of her own life. But the written canon confronts the church, speaking, judging, controlling, above all, signifying, that the church lives, not by virtue of any authority residing in itself but in obedience to a Lord who has spoken. It is God the Holy Spirit who truly expounds the Scriptures and makes their words His contemporary Word.

To speak of exposition of the Scriptures in the church leads naturally to some consideration of the ministry in relation to the authority of the church. We begin with the proposition that the ministry is given to the church and not a human device or construction, "He gave some apostles, some prophets and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ."⁶⁰ The church then does not create ministry. It can neither give nor take away the things that make a good minister of Jesus Christ, for these come from God on high. There is, therefore, no ministerial magisterium which was at the disposal of the apostles and which by ordination is legally handed on from age to age.

His twelve apostles first He made
His ministers of grace,
And they their hands on others laid
To fill in turn their place.

The final result of such a conception is to identify the Church with the ministry in such a manner that the lay congregation is almost an embarrassment—or a regrettable necessity to enable the ministry to perform its functions. It opens the door to a clericalism in which the church is the clergy and can only fulfil its functions in the secular order under the guidance or, more frequently, the direct leadership of the clergy. Part of the blame for the failure of the medieval experiment lies in the fact that it was a clerical and not a church effort. Despite the existence of reformed churches for the last four hundred years the practical identification of the Church and the ministry persists in the popular mind, so far as it knows anything at all of a Christian ministry. This can be seen in the frequent use of the phrase "he is going in for the church" meaning that he desires to be ordained, and in the almost universal phrase "Why does not the Church give a lead" where the church means the bishops and other leading members of the ministry.

The ministry, like everything else in the life of the church, is under the sovereignty of Christ, and its work of proclamation, whether in Word or in Sacrament, is for the purpose of setting forth Jesus Christ who is the content of the Apostolic testimony. An apostolic ministry implies not a succession of office but a real identity of testimony and its authority is bounded by that testimony and is effective in the measure that it reproduces apostolic faith within the church. The ministry is not the lord of the church. The word of Paul expresses its function when he says "Not that we have lordship over your faith, but are helpers of your joy, for by faith ye stand."⁶¹ But we ought to recognize the spiritual fact that the church will be largely what its ministry makes it. The ministry is handling the re-creative Word of God and as an institution it is a gift to the church like the preacher's power. The man to whom is committed this ministry is neither the mouth piece of the church nor its chairman nor its secretary. The church

members will not hear in his speech the echo of their own voices, since he is not their servant but the servant of the Word and apostle to the church. It is as servant of the Word that he serves the church. His function in the church is a necessary means by which all its members are enabled to hear the Word of God and live the true Christian life. In so far as he is obedient to the sovereign Lord of the church who called him and gave him testimony to speak, the minister of the Word exists as part of the church's effort to acknowledge Christ alone as her Lord. The ministry is given to the church and not at her disposal but ministers are appointed by the church. It is this human disposition and authority, a necessary though subordinate part of the life of the ministry, which can be handed on in ordination. A man must be lawfully sent⁶² as well as divinely called to this office and the authority of the church in this matter is what Forsyth called "a selective power,"⁶³ to discriminate between the claimants to prophetic respect and scope. The church provides the personnel for a function already created by the Word of God, and to quote Forsyth again "what does come from the Church is the recognition of an authority it cannot confer and the provision of an opportunity."⁶⁴ The authority of the ministry is drawn from the Word else the message would not be a message of the Word to the church. What is derived from the church is the opportunity of the ministry.

If then we attempt to sum up in a sentence the authority of the Church here briefly considered in its diverse aspects, we should say that the church as the earthly body of Christ is a secondary token of revelation pointing beyond itself to the revelation of God in the flesh of Jesus Christ.⁶⁵ That revelation is a mediated immediacy, for God meets us through historical means and principally through proclamation and sacraments which are themselves tokens of Jesus Christ. The Lord rules the church through its obedience to the Word of the Apostolic testimony deposited in the Scriptures and only through such obedience can it acknowledge truly the sovereignty of its Lord. The Church in this sense, though conditioned and secondary, is none the less indispensable for Christian life. The present earthly body of Christ is a body of humiliation as was His fleshly body and its effective authority will depend upon the extent to which in bearing testimony to Him it creates the opportunity for Him to exercise His authority upon modern man as He did upon His Apostles.

¹ This paper assumes that Christians agree in acknowledging that the Church possesses authority. Its purpose is to try and define the limits of that authority. It should be noted that "Reformed" is here used, not in its technical meaning of "Calvinistic" but to imply those who stand in succession to the general reforming movement of the sixteenth century.

² *Credo*, pp. 197-8.

³ *Divine Imperative*, p. 523.

⁴ Galatians vi. 16.

⁵ Acts ii. 47.

⁶ *Common Life in the Body of Christ*, p. 32.

⁷ *Inst.* IV 1. 1-2.

⁸ Quoted in *Revelation*, ed. Hugh Martin and John Baillie, p. 299.

⁹ I Corinthians xv. 3, 11, cf. *Paul and his Predecessors*, A. M. Hunter, pp. 14-18.

¹⁰ *Knowledge of God and Service of God*, p. 153.

¹¹ *op. cit.* p. 155.

¹² cf. "Not Scripture alone, nor the original deposit alone, nor the continuous teaching of the Church through the Christian centuries alone but the union of all three in the earthly representative of our Lord. That voice of the Church for

which we look is not of the East without the West or of the West without the East ; it is not of England without Rome or of Rome without England : it is not of the first century by itself or the fourth or the eighth or the sixteenth or the twentieth : it is not of any particular place or any particular time. It is in regard to both time and place, properly universal." *Darwell Stone—Churchman and Counsellor*, F. L. Cross, p. 353.

- ¹³ *The Christian Message in a Non-Christian World*. H. Kraemer, p. 419.
- ¹⁴ Eph. i. 22-23.
- ¹⁵ Matthew xxviii. 18.
- ¹⁶ *The Mediator*, E Brunner, p. 226.
- ¹⁷ Quoted on p. 76 of *The Nature of Catholicity* D. T. Jenkins.
- ¹⁸ On this and allied paradoxes of Christian thought and life see Reinhold Niebuhr *Beyond Tragedy*.
- ¹⁹ *Inst.* IV. viii. 1. ²⁰ *De Civitate Dei* xx. 9.
- ²¹ *Doctrine of the Church and Reunion* A. C. Headlam, p. 147.
- ²² *The Nature and Destiny of Man* Reinhold Niebuhr. Vol. II. *Human Destiny* pp. 50-52, 297-8.
- ²³ *The Kingdom of God and the Son of Man*. R. Otto pp. 135-137 and many other places.
- ²⁴ Barth *Credo* p. 121. ²⁵ Hebrews xi. 16.
- ²⁶ *Divine Imperative* p. 526.
- ²⁷ *Doctrine of the Word of God* (E.T.) p. 109. ²⁸ *Inst.* IV. ix. 1.
- ²⁹ *Doctrine of the Word of God* (E.T.) p. 17. ³⁰ *ibid.*, p. 16.
- ³¹ *Human Destiny* (Gifford Lectures, Vol. II) R. Niebuhr p. 225.
- ³² Brunner *Divine Imperative* p. 528.
- ³³ *Credo* p. 181.
- ³⁴ Jenkins *op. cit.* p. 32. ³⁵ *Inst.* IV. iii. 4.
- ³⁶ Eph. ii. 20. ³⁷ I John i. 1-3.
- ³⁸ I Cor. ix. 1.
- ³⁹ I Cor. i. 1. ⁴⁰ John xx. 21.
- ⁴¹ Luke vi. 13. ⁴² Col. i. 1 ; II Cor. i. 1 ; Phil. i. 1.
- ⁴³ Acts xiv. 4. ⁴⁴ Phil. ii. 25.
- ⁴⁵ Rom. xvi. 7. ⁴⁶ Eph. iv. 11.
- ⁴⁷ Simul ix. 15, 16, 25. ⁴⁸ H.E. 1 : 12. 5.
- ⁴⁹ Acts i. 21. ⁵⁰ Hort, *Christian Ecclesia* p. 58.
- ⁵¹ *ibid.*, pp. 83, 85.
- ⁵² *Inst.* IV. iii. 4.
- ⁵³ *The Ministry in Relation to Spiritual Gifts* : H. J. Wotherspoon p. 208.
- ⁵⁴ *The Nature of Catholicity* : D. T. Jenkins, pp. 28, 55.
- ⁵⁵ *The Church and the Sacraments*, P. T. Forsyth, p. 59.
- ⁵⁶ cf. Articles VI and XX in B.C.P. and similar statements in other Reformed Confessions.
- ⁵⁷ Barth *Doctrine of Word of God*, p. 113.
- ⁵⁸ *ibid.*, p. 120.
- ⁵⁹ *ibid.*, p. 118.
- ⁶⁰ Eph. iv. 11-12.
- ⁶¹ II Corinthians, i. 24.
- ⁶² Article XXIII of Articles of Religion, Article XIV of Confession of Augsburg.
- ⁶³ *The Church and the Sacraments* p. 127. ⁶⁴ *ibid.*, p. 128.
- ⁶⁵ cf. A. M. Ramsey *The Gospel and the Catholic Church* p. 120.

The Authority of the Testimonium Internum.

BY THE REV. W. F. P. CHADWICK, M.A.

THIS paper will take us in many directions and it is well that the relevance of the subject with which it deals should be made clear from the start.

There is the story of a young girl who went for the first time to Keswick. At the end of the week a testimony meeting was held, at which people were asked to say what the week had meant to them spiritually. During this meeting the girl listened with wonder to the experiences she heard and wondered how she could find eloquence to express what had come to her. At last, tremblingly, and hardly daring to open her lips, she stood up and offered her contribution. It came in the form of a single text, "I know that my Redeemer liveth." Observe about this story

1. That her knowing was the result of intuitive feeling, not of discursive reasoning, and that this feeling carried with it an authority not to be questioned.

2. That her experience is couched in the language of Scripture and of the scriptural tradition and is thus connected with other experiences like it.

3. That her experience comes to her within the fellowship of the church.

Now take another illustration. An Anglican clergyman relates a conversation which he had with a friend on the subject of prayer. "In prayer" said the friend, "I raise my hand upwards, but never have any consciousness of Another's hand reaching down to grasp it." Note here the entire absence of the intuitive feeling referred to in the previous instance. In place, is a blind confidence, which I imagine rests, ultimately, on the witness of the Church.

The contrast between these two illustrations raises the problem of the authority of the *testimonium internum*. At heart the problem is concerned with the place of the pragmatic in spiritual life. Dean Inge prophesied many years ago that the emphasis of the future would fall on experience, and the success of the Oxford Group technique offers a strong suggestion that he was right. No system of thought has laid a more pronounced emphasis upon this intuitive feeling element than did the work of Schleiermacher, and it is proposed to open the discussion by considering some of the criticisms made on his work for the indication they give of the issues that arise.

From these criticisms it will appear that dangers have to be faced as soon as we begin to stress the element of experience. The contention of Schleiermacher was that religion is God-consciousness. Later he altered this to the "feeling of dependence." Whichever way he is taken, the emphasis is on feeling. Religion for him is not religious practice, still less is it speculation. It is experience of God. This represents an enormous advance on a barren intellectualism.

But unfortunately this profound revolt and contribution was spoiled in various ways. "The sacred rights of feeling were too often conferred upon the shallow claims of sentimentality." This is something that has occurred often enough in evangelical history. Someone has defined sentimentality as "enjoyment without obligation." The element of obligation was lacking in Schleiermacher's conception of religion. The religious experience is not simply tenderness. It is tenderness mixed with awe. These two are found together for example in Wesley's diary, Dec. 1744: "I felt such an awe and tender sense of the presence of God" he writes. Love so amazing, so divine, *demands!* Man fails at that demand, and in God's presence he knows it. Schleiermacher with his pantheistic bias had no sense of sin. Wesley with an even more fervent stress upon experience is saved from this distortion by his keen realisation of the atonement.

"Redeeming love has been my theme
And shall be till I die."

The root trouble is that Schleiermacher never really gets to reality, but remains enmeshed in the experience. He deals with human feeling generally without ever getting to the Object which is the source of it.

A further point which will be of some significance later, also arises. Schleiermacher bases everything on a pure and separate "intuition-feeling." But the question arises, is there any such "pure intuition-feeling" known to us? Intuition-feeling the experience certainly is. But is it "pure" intuition? Does it owe nothing to the Bible and the Church? Another case of supposedly "pure" intuition does nothing to encourage belief in this kind of immediacy. Nothing could be more immediate than our consciousness of self. But it is not a pure immediacy. There is an interesting passage in "The World of William Clissold" in which Mr. H. G. Wells describes how this "immediate" consciousness arises, or at least is developed. "One very early moment of self-discovery", he writes, "comes to my mind, when I was lying naked on my back gazing in a sort of incredulous wonder at my belly and knees . . . 'Me?' I thought." Observe how here the consciousness of self is developed at the same time as the consciousness of the outer world and in contrast to it. So it is with so many of our so-called immediacies. They grow and are enriched and indeed discovered in the resistances and contrasts of outward life. Victor Murray in "Personal Experience and the Historic Faith" calls attention to this development of the religious sense through the resistance to self realisation inherent in Time-Space, and Subject-Object relationships. In the midst of these resistances we are led to the knowledge of a world transcending them (*cf.* Wordsworth *passim.*). Religious feeling is not the withdrawal from sights and sounds, but the interpretation of the sights and sounds in the light of the experience of transcendence which has been introduced to us through them. Feeling at such a level has been enriched by thought until it has become insight.

It is this mediation of the outward, I take it, to which Baron von Hugel is referring in his constant reiteration of the "givenness" of our experience of God. He points out that the so-called "subjective"

is not primary and is not pure. *From the start* we have knowledge of other realities than ourselves and our knowledge of ourselves proceeds only in and through and in contrast to our knowledge of these other realities. It is so with our experience of God—"At the beginning it is only a deep delicate sense of otherness, of eternity, of prevenience, of more than merely human beauty, truth and goodness." This is the raw material. Developed religious experience demands the influence and insight of historical religion before it can come to pass. So, we may observe, that a place is left open for the influence of environment in determining our capacity to receive the experience of God. Already we have noted this in the case of the girl at Keswick.

One last point in regard to Schleiermacher needs to be noted. His assertion that "History is the highest object of religion" involves, if it is to mean anything at all, self-conscious spirit revealing itself most fully in specifically human history. History means people and significance for people. If religion is feeling-intuition and has history for its highest object, then religion involves Revelation in history and the feeling-intuition will be anchored to it. But Schleiermacher never takes Revelation seriously. Religion is always for him man's discovery of God. As a result, as H. H. Mackintosh points out, "the shadow of psychologism lies across his work." He is always liable to be more concerned with the experience of God than with the Reality lying behind it. If he had paused to consider the authority of the Bible revealed in its contact with the human spirit, he might have been saved.

Our concern with these criticisms of Schleiermacher has thrown this much light upon the authority of our experience of God. The stress is rightly placed upon it. Religion is experience of God. It is not a law of conduct, and it is not a metaphysical speculation. Schleiermacher rendered a profound service when he wrote again across religion the words of the Master, "From within." But his contribution was spoiled by a triple failure to do justice to the experience he described. He failed, while stressing the immediacy of the experience, to indicate sufficiently how that immediacy is a mediated immediacy. It is never pure subjectivity but is always known to us through the interpretation of the outward. Its authority is not simple but complex. The experience which seems so simple and compelling, in fact derives its authority from more than one source. We shall see how this is evident in the New Testament.

Again, Schleiermacher failed to do justice to all that is implied in religious experience by the sense of sin. Granted that religion needs to be guarded against distorted presentation as a moral code, this must be secured by an ethic of grace, not by blindness to sin.

Lastly, he failed to do justice to the concept of Revelation, and as a result omitted one of the profoundest elements in religious experience, the divine initiative. Religion is reduced to man's discovery of God and the heart of the Gospel torn out.

Now I want to look in quite another direction and examine what St. Paul and St. John have to say about assurance. For in doing so we shall see how complex is the authority of feeling-intuition in these New Testament writers. Assurance is an inward feeling, but how far from pure subjectivity! It is assumed by both writers that faith which lays

hold of God is a matter of direct consciousness and we can obviously know that it is there. We not only enter the number of those whom God receives, but we can *know* that we have so entered. In other words there is experience which claims authority in this exalted realm. In Romans viii., 12-18, St. Paul points to a dual witness. The Spirit Himself *συνμαρτυρεῖ* with our spirit. This Greek word is frequent in the New Testament for something which affords proof. *So here we have the Pauline conception of the authority.* It is a meeting place of two witnesses. How do the spirit of man and the Holy Spirit bear joint witness? St. Paul is clear about that; in the cry *Abba, Father.* St. Paul thus lays the stress on Filial Consciousness. It is interesting to note that in St. Paul the conception of "adoption" or "sonship" takes the place of the Johannine "new birth." This filial consciousness is the possession of those led of the Spirit and for St. Paul affords proof that we are God's children. Now note again the emphasis on the pragmatic. It is an essential part of the argument that in man's noblest part he is conscious of a supernatural influence destroying the dominion of sin. To this influence he glowingly submits. This filial confidence and moral power go together. They have the same source. They rise and fall together. It is the effect that identifies the source as distinctively the Spirit of God. But that is not all. For St. Paul the Spirit is always the Spirit of our Lord Jesus Christ. So he goes further and keeps the experience just described in the closest possible relationship to Christ. It involves pardon, and the assurance of pardon and carries with it the hope of glory.

So without in the least belittling the element of feeling intuition in the assurance here depicted we must also take note

- (1) That it assumes Christ's claim as the Son of God to declare authoritatively the divine pardon ;
- (2) That it rests ultimately on the recorded evidence—documentary and historical—of Christ's own words and deeds, life, death and rising again.

This means that though it is an "immediate" experience it is delivered from mere subjectivity.

For St. Paul then,

We know in experience : Our knowledge is the result of feeling-intuition.

The experience is confirmed by the facts of the historical Christ. We are still further assured by the moral and spiritual experience of Sonship and dominion over sin which are the work of the Holy Spirit.

We begin with the words and teaching of Christ. Spiritual confidence and assurance which bear evidently the marks of their divine origin follow. Lastly, conscience, the inner faculty by which a man judges and approves his own actions and motives, sounds in harmony with the rest.

When we turn to St. John's first epistle the account is essentially identical. For him the stress is even more upon the acceptance of the written word manifested in outward life of power. And again it is an experience within the context of the Christian fellowship. We "know" first of all because of our *obedience.* "Hereby we know that we

know Him, if we keep His commandments." Life must be brought alongside Christ in the Scriptures and compared. Secondly we "know" because we *love*. "We know that we have passed from death to life because we love the brethren." For St. John lack of supernatural love is lack of Christianity. This needs facing in connection with Wesley's doctrine of Perfection which is based on it. Thirdly, we "know" because we have an anointing.

"Hereby we know that He abideth in us by the Spirit which He hath given us."

Then comes a very significant addendum.

"Hereby know ye the Spirit of God : Every Spirit that confesseth Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is of God."

It would be hard to find a tighter connection between the inward experience and the historical revelation. St. John links his conception of assurance to

Jesus Christ in the flesh—the ideal and pattern of life.

Jesus Christ the Son—the revelation of God's face to man,

Jesus Christ the Anointed—the appointed Saviour from sin and judgment. So whether it is St. Paul or St. John the same thing stands out, Religion is not vagueness, it is "knowing". It is an experience.

(1) Such "knowing" bears a threefold mark

The Self is right with God

The Self is right with the brethren

The Self is right with itself.

(2) Such knowing is directly connected with the life, death, resurrection and teaching of the historical Jesus.

(3) Such knowing is in the context of the Christian fellowship.

Now at long last the time has come to sum up. No better way could be chosen than along the line of H. H. Mackintosh's statement of the shortcomings of Schleiermacher. Welcoming the great emphasis on experience, he sees the dangers of subjectivity which always encompass it and asserts that what is wanted to complete Schleiermacher, is

(1) Something which attaches faith to history

(2) Something which makes the Person of Christ central and all-determining

(3) Something which places the concept of salvation under the rubric of sin and grace.

No conception of the authority of experience is adequate which fails to take account of these.

I. FAITH AND HISTORY.

This has been dealt with sufficiently already. Vital religion is tested by its sense of God active in the world. Nowhere is this more realised than in the Christian religion. The givenness of the Church is not argued in the New Testament. It is taken for granted as part of the experience.

II. THE CENTRALITY OF OUR LORD.

Enough has already been said to indicate how securely this is maintained by St. Paul and St. John. But we may go further. Not only is He central but also His experience is the condition of ours. At

this point we need a conception of its truth and correspondence to objective Reality which shall vindicate the whole experience as authoritative. We could not tolerate the thought that the source of all that is highest and best in us is based on illusion and unreality. The authority of our experience can never be indifferent to the authority of His.

It is important, therefore, in view of all that has gone before, to examine the experience of our Lord Himself. It is marked objectively by a number of characteristics which at once suggest a special authority. They mark Him out as more than His predecessors. There is His *uniqueness*, manifested in the originality of His Messianic claim. There is the universality of His outlook. There is the sanity and balance of His character and His power of endurance based upon the unshakable confidence that the Universe backs His experience. But we have to go deeper than that. His consciousness of sinlessness is something *sui generis*. It is in a category by itself. His moral authority partakes of the nature of absolute demand.

"Jesus intended to do more than make the best ideal clear for men, and more than live it out before them . . . He was confident that He could so influence men that they would be able for a life of power. The Jesus who thinks thus of Himself and who looks on humanity with such confidence in His power to redeem them from the terrible misery in which He sees everyone round Him stands as a fact before us, a fact that has no equal."¹ The problem arises, whence came all this? It was not derived. What is the alternative to His own claim that it came from His Father?

Passing more deeply still into His inmost consciousness we find there the most marked sense of a unique relationship to God. He never calls God "My Lord". Of the sentence (Matt. xi. 27) "No one knoweth the Son save the Father" James Denney has written "The sentence as a whole tells us plainly that Jesus is both to God and to man what no other man can be. He is the Son who alone knows the Father . . . and He is the Mediator through whom alone the knowledge of the Father comes to men." Into this experience we enter by faith in Him.

The centrality of His experience is no less decisive in the sphere of personal living. As it has been rightly said, "Power comes to men through Jesus Christ only when they are personally touched by the stronger elements of His consciousness, His moral authority, His claim to deal with sin, His sense of unique relation to God. It is precisely these experiences of Jesus which have dynamic moral force in the lives of men."

And again :

"Christ known only as ethical teacher, Christ known only as social reformer, works miracles but they are miracles of discouragement. Christ known in His own inner life as absolute Master, as Saviour and the only Son of the Father, has and bestows all power in heaven and earth." At every point behind our experience is the authority of His.

¹ I owe the quotations in this section to an admirable chapter in "Christian Experience and Psychological Processes" by Ruth Rouse and H. Crichton Miller.

III. RUBRIC OF SIN AND GRACE.

We have now to attempt the remaining task and place the concept of salvation under the rubric of sin and grace. First note what is the alternative. It is to place it under the rubric of self-realisation and liberation by God-consciousness. The experience of salvation which carries within itself its own authority is not an experience primarily of liberation, which might be a delusion, but of justification and *cleansing* by redeeming love manifested at a point. This, as I understand it, is the immense and overriding significance of the cry "My Saviour" which stamps the experience of Sonship with the hallmark of sincerity. This is why we know ourselves as "bought with a price." This is why the Evangelical with his special emphasis on feeling is lost when the Cross ceases to be central to his piety. The objectivity of the Cross confirms the experience.

But here there is something to be added. This cry is only authoritative if it is adequate to the facts. There must be an adequate experience of salvation. We must be very sure that our understanding of salvation is adequate to the nature of the man to be saved. When the cry "My Saviour" is uttered, who makes the cry? The answer is a human personality. Now personality implies a social context. This means that salvation has a social aspect and implies the Church. Side by side with the Church as the place where the Word is heard we ought to be able to say also "the place where full Saviourhood is realised." I have wondered sometimes as I have listened to our statements of doctrine whether we have missed real needs and lost real encouragement because we have forgotten the actual case. I find Barthianism essentially depressing because it is largely an encouraging explanation of a defeated situation. "We are all in a tunnel," says the Barthian. "The Christian has the advantage of knowing that it has an outlet." "But," we may object, "the tunnel is still a sewer, and the Christian still in it." All this is inadequate because salvation is conceived as legal status rather than as a living experience of saving grace in a redeemed community. The Cross is a satisfaction, but it is more than a satisfaction. It is the token of a startling, piercing, cloud-shattering experience of redeeming love, which alters the whole bias of a man's life and so becomes an incontestible witness to the human spirit. The man who has ceased to be at enmity with God is unmistakable in fact, whatever he may be in theory. This man who is so redeemed is a person. He is not an individual. In all the ramifications of his being as a person his redemption will be a manifest authority. There will be redeemed personal life and also redeemed community life. It is here we fail by expecting too little. The Church is not authoritative to-day because it is lacking in experience. It is an organisation doing a job and not a community realising redemption. The Evangelical prayer-meeting which, more than anything, perhaps, was a testimony to the community life of the redeemed, has ceased to mean anything. Personality will only function properly in a society of saved men and women and where, to the extent of the divine promise, sight takes the place of faith. The attempt to put this off to a Kingdom of God which shall be given as the explanation of history, is to evade God's answer to the longings of the human soul for a here-and-now salvation. This is the inescapable significance

of Wesley's doctrine of Perfection. It is *in the great congregation* that men are moved to cry "Hallelujah, what a Saviour." In such a salvation, encumbered as it is with a human body, there will be sufficient lacking to account for the longing of the Saints for the Heavenly City. But there will be sufficient given to make good the evangelical promises of a foretaste of glory. Most Church life is such a parody of this that it drives us to eschatological interpretations of the Sacraments.

In the last resort Redeeming Love is what gives its authority to the *testimonium internum* and Redeeming Love has no other authority than that it is irresistible to the love it has awakened. We began our discussions at this conference with the conception of an authority whose constraint was operative because it was freely accepted. The authority of the *testimonium internum*, where it is known, is the authority of invincible Love. "Paul the bond-servant of Jesus Christ," it cries. Whatever part the head may play in it, it is essentially a heart experience. You cannot parley with Love once it has conquered your heart, and while sin may turn the light of such love down and down and down, it can never put it out.

Book Reviews

THIS SERVICE : NOTES ON THE ORDER OF HOLY COMMUNION ACCORDING TO THE USE OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND ; WITH INTRODUCTION ; AND APPENDICES.

By Albert Mitchell, Member of the Church Assembly. London. Church Book Room. 10/- net.

By the publication of this book by Mr. Albert Mitchell, the National Church League has made accessible both to the student and the general reader a wealth of information regarding the history and interpretation of the Communion Service of the Book of Common Prayer. As the author reminds us, the English Prayer Book was one of the twin pillars of the Reformation ; the other being the English Bible. Together they have probably been the most potent influence in the formation and development of the English character during the last four hundred years. Both have sustained many assaults and weathered many storms, and in spite of a few unimportant archaisms they are both as fully relevant to the spiritual needs of to-day as they were to the times in which they were first issued or last authoritatively revised. Mr. Mitchell gives a brief account, sufficient for the purpose of this book, of the origin and growth of the English Bible, paying incidentally a well deserved tribute to the value and lasting influence of William Tyndale's work as a translator and emphasising the supreme authority of the Bible as the divinely inspired revelation of God's will with regard to man.

Of the history of the English Prayer Book, the next important literary monument of the Reformation in this country, a somewhat fuller account is given. The Prayer Book came later because no real doctrinal changes such as the Reformers had long had in mind could be effected while Henry VIII lived. He wished to retain the Papal religion, though without the Pope ; and he failed to realise that so vast a change as the abolition of the centuries-old Papal Supremacy would inevitably bring other changes in its train. A slight concession to popular feeling on the question of vernacular prayers was made towards the end of his reign by the issue in 1544 of a Litany in English ; but on Henry's death in 1547 a great deal more became at once possible. The prompt and far reaching changes which were marked by the issue of the First Prayer Book of Edward VI, which was issued almost at the beginning of the new reign, is a proof of the strength of the reforming movement which Henry had been able to keep in check while he lived. Of the subsequent revisions down to that of 1662 Mr. Mitchell gives a clear though condensed account. His account is indeed so

clear and interesting that some readers may not realise the vast amount of learning summarised in this lucid condensation.

We quote the following words from the conclusion of these introductory pages, as they not only state clearly the purpose of the book but also are an eloquent tribute to the surpassing merits of our Communion Service on which its object is to give some light.

"The following pages are put forth in hope and prayer that they may assist 'sober, peaceable and truly conscientious sons' and daughters 'of the Church of England' the better to know, understand and realise that in the Order of Holy Communion as set forth in the Prayer Book of 1661-2 they have, as an abiding possession, an expression of liturgical worship and devotion of great beauty for which they have no need to apologise. It is indeed not only a finished and proportioned work of literary art, but also the most worthy provision for the due and reverent ministration of the most comfortable sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ our Saviour that has yet been presented to the English speaking members of the Holy Church throughout all the world . . ." (p. 8).

Following this Introduction, there comes "The Order for the Administration of the Lord's Supper, or Holy Communion," as it is set out in the Prayer Book. This has, however, been carefully compared with the book annexed to the last Act of Uniformity, 1662, which is, of course, the standard and authoritative test; but though no attempt has been made to reproduce exactly the spelling and typography (such as the use of capitals, etc.) of the text, pains have been taken to secure that the punctuation follows in essentials that of the Annexed Book. This is necessary as in certain cases important issues depend on and are determined by the punctuation.

The text of the service is followed by about seventy pages of notes which give a consecutive historical and explanatory commentary on it. These notes form the main portion of the book, but the range and variety of the subjects to which they relate make it difficult to quote from them. The difficulty is simply that of selection. They are all interesting and the majority are important and will well repay the reader. There is a useful reference to the Homilies on page 53, with special mention of the Homily of Salvation, called by Article eleven of the Thirty-nine Articles, the Homily of Justification and regarded by the Article as a fuller treatment of the subject. An interesting but little known anecdote in connection with the Homilies is given by Mr. Mitchell: "When in 1805 Henry Martyn went to Calcutta on the Indian establishment, his faithful preaching of the Gospel aroused antagonism. Those of the other chaplains who approved of his Evangelical fervour but hesitated to follow his example, adopted the course of reading the Homilies, to which no exception could be taken, and it was in this way made manifest that his doctrinal position had the authoritative support of the Homilies: and faction was stilled." The vital distinction between England and Rome is incidentally shown on pp. 48-49 when we read that the Book of the Gospels which had the place of honour in the Palm Sunday procession at Canterbury in the Anglo-Saxon Church was displaced by Lanfranc in favour of the Host when he introduced the practice of Reservation. But we must leave it to the reader to discover and profit by the wealth of solid instruction and sound doctrine which these notes contain. He will be well rewarded.

The remainder of the book consists of five Appendices which add greatly to its value, for they allow of a fuller treatment of special points than could be given conveniently under the simple heading of "Notes". The first three deal, respectively, with the position of the Minister at the Lord's Table; the vesture of the Minister; and Reservation; then follows a translation of the Roman Canon of the Mass; and, lastly, the book concludes with a brief paper on "The Sacrifice of Christ—the fact of the Cross," that which it is the purpose of the Lord's Supper to bring as a continual remembrance before our minds.

The Appendix on the position of the Minister is a very learned and thorough piece of work and from a wealth of historical and archæological knowledge shows beyond dispute that the back to the people position has no support in primitive times, that it is of relatively late introduction; and that it did not become the authorised practice much before the thirteenth century when rubrics prescribing it began to appear in the service books. Mr. Mitchell gives as a frontispiece to the book a capital photograph (taken by himself) of the fine "Seven Sacraments" Font at East Dereham, Norfolk. It is octagonal in shape and on each of the sides is carved a representation of one of the seven sacraments of the Roman

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Church bearing the name. The eighth side is thought to relate to the dedication of the Church. The representation of the Lord's Supper on this particular Font (for there are others of the kind in East Anglia) shows a Bishop celebrating behind the Table and facing the people. The date would be about the beginning of the fifteenth century or a little earlier. The Appendix on the vesture of the Minister discusses the origin and development of liturgical dress with special reference to the Chasuble, or "Vestment" proper; and proceeds to consider the legal aspect of the matter in the light of the various judgments which have been given upon it. Though the history and law are intricate and sometimes perplexing, Mr. Mitchell writes interestingly and lucidly, which could only be done by one who was a thorough master not only of the principles which must govern any useful consideration of the subject, but also of all its details. His discussion of the action taken under Elizabeth is very clear, but we think that, notwithstanding his description of the unauthorised rubric of 1559 as illegal, he attaches more importance to it than it deserved. It was never acted upon; it conflicted both with the Injunctions of the same date and with Sandys' letter to Parker written at the time; and it seems to have been universally ignored. Contemporary opinion and contemporary official action are our best guides to the interpretation of the Act, and they point clearly enough in one direction.

The Appendix on Reservation is a timely reminder of present day tendencies and of the need to resist them; and the translation of the Roman Canon of the Mass will be useful to those who wish to compare our Service with that which it superseded. There is no need to apologise for either the general course or the details of the change. The final paper on "The Sacrifice of Christ" is a fitting conclusion to this able and valuable book. It brings us back to first principles and enables us to see that there is a vital underlying importance attaching to the matters of dress, ceremonial, etc., which we have been considering, that might, merely regarded in themselves, appear simply trivial. It is their symbolic meaning that justifies the closest examination of their claims.

It will be seen that the book deals largely with controversial matters. It is none the worse for that. We are not of opinion that controversy is to be deprecated. It is one way by which we can arrive at the truth; and Mr. Mitchell has given us in this book a model of the manner in which controversy should be conducted. He is adequately informed, scrupulously careful and moderate in statement, and always treats his opponents with respect and courtesy. No one, we think, can read his book without gaining in knowledge and in devotion to the Lord whose great love for us is commemorated in this Service. W.G.J.

PREFACE TO BIBLE STUDY

By Alan Richardson, S.C.M. 5/-

This book is not at all like the old books on Bible Study written by such men as Griffith Thomas and Harrington Lees. It is written by a man who obtained a First Class in Philosophy at Liverpool and a First Class in Theology at Oxford. He has been Study Secretary of the S.C.M. since 1938. He is the Author of *Credo's in the Making*, *The Redemption of Modernism*, and *The Gospel in the Making*. He sets out in this book to write about the Bible rather than about biblical criticism. He tells us plainly that "all that follows is written out of the deep conviction that the Bible is the covenanted means of God's self-communication with men, and that because God has appointed it for this purpose it possesses a value which no other book could ever have." He is convinced that "man hears God speaking to him as he kneels with the Bible in his hand." Nevertheless, he holds that "there can be no going back on the positions gained by the discoveries of biblical research. There may be modifications here and there, but the broad general conclusions are beyond cavil." However, in the best part of his book on *How to run Study Groups on the Bible* he says: "There is no need to over-burden the group with a series of facts about say, Q, or the four document hypothesis, or J.P.E. and D." The leader must be "On his guard against thinking that there is any saving value in such knowledge for lay members of groups, who want to know what the Bible says to them in the actual situation in which their life is set." We have to read a number of sermons by deacons who have newly come from College. We wish their teachers were as wise as Canon Richardson in counselling a wise reserve in the pulpit on matters which we feel, are still under discussion and are by no means "beyond cavil." This book is available for 2/- to those who join the S.C.M. Religious Book Club.

W. BARSON