CHAPTER IV

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We are engaged in asking what the Christian Church has meant by inspiration, interpretation and relevancy in so far as the Scriptures are concerned. Only by understanding this are we able to ascertain our own continuity with it. We have discovered that there is a tendency among those who hold a "high" view of inspiration to interpose authoritative interpreters between men and God's word. The Reformation was primarily a casting off of the false authority of the Catholic Church to interpret Scripture. We enter now another period of struggle in regard to Scripture. In this period there is a great "shaking of the foundations." How the Church met and responded to the challenge will tell us important things about its views of inspiration and will explain something about its methods of interpretation. The agent of the challenge is Modernism.

Modernism, in broad terms, is anything new in practice or thinking. More specifically it refers to a spirit contrasted with that of the reactionary. It seeks to express the old in contemporary terms, or to introduce new points of view to correct the old. There have always been moderists in the Church, as for instance
Thomas Aquinas, who "modernised" medieval theology by means of Aristotle. But the Modernism of which we speak is a particularised example of the general. It has earned a capital letter. It arose in the Enlightenment, grew with the scientific spirit and aligned itself with a type of Biblical criticism destructive of the authority and supernatural aspects of the Bible. It used such acceptable terms as "faith," "revelation," "conscience," "truth" in a sense entirely different from the traditional meaning. "Truth" is relative to a changing situation, not an absolute. "Revelation" is not a supernatural invasion of the human, but an indefinable inner experience, individualistic and authoritative for no one. The Bible is, therefore, unnecessary as an objective standard of religion or morality, and actually detrimental to human progress if it is considered as an authority. The Christ of history is not the Christ of faith. The Christ of history was only a man. The Christ of faith is a figment of the hero-worshipping mind which added fantasy to imagination, as evolution altered men's thought processes. Science is more dependable than religion and the two must not be confused. Since the truths (?) of religion are not available to the scientific methodology, they are to be discarded as the useless child's play of a growing race. The hypothesis of an evolutionary origin and developmentalistic "process," informed Biblical scholarship, and consequently, robbed the Scriptures of the authority which the Creeds had posited in them. Sin was
discounted, and the atonement was discarded as a relic of unchristian
religions. God was "in" every man and progress toward the heights
was inevitable. Such was Modernism in the nineteenth century, though
perhaps no one person held all that was involved in it.

Modernism came into violent conflict with three major religious
forces. The first was with the Catholic Church on the basis of author-
ity. The second was with the Reformed Churches on the basis of ortho-
dox, and the third, with a reaction within its own ranks on the basis
of Revelation. All three saw it as a struggle in the area of a doc­
trine of Scripture.

Modernism and Catholicism

Modernism challenged all authority political and religious,
in France and all of Europe. It was aligned with democracy as against
autocracy in any form. Since Catholicism was hand in glove with the
secular government, it was obliged to fight democracy indiscriminately
with religious freedom. The move for separation of church and state
was a move against papal authority. Pope Pius IX, in 1864, issued a
Papal Bull condemning 80 propositions of theologically or philoso-
ically false propositions. Near the turn of the century, Abbe Loisy,
a professor in the Catholic Institute in Paris began teaching Modern­
istic principles, particularly in regard to Biblical criticism, for
which he was condemned and excommunicated. It would have been dis-
astrous for the authority of the Church to discover that it was not securely moored to Scripture. Rev. A. L. Lilly was forced out of the Church for the same reason as was Paul Sabatier who wrote and lectured with great effect in favor of the new modernism. He said

... at the bottom of Modernism there is ... an effort to arrive at an idea of the Church which shall be closer to life and truer to practice ... . . . . . . Jesus was a modernist, He was a rebel, revolutionary.¹

The emphasis of the Modernistic movement was toward a "vital immanence" of God in the hearts and consciences of men against Rome's external and ecclesiastical authority. The position had been given strong expression by a French Catholic philosopher, Lucien Laberthonniere. Then July 28, 1906, Pope Pius issued a scathing Encyclical, Pieni 1 Anim, in which Modernism was denounced and the right of seminary novitiates to read newspapers or attend public meetings where democratic principles were apt to be mentioned was denied.

This was followed in 1907 by the Lamentabili Sane Eritu, issued by the "Holy and Universal Inquisition," which enumerates and anathematizes the sixty-five errors of Modernism. It was circulated to stimulate exegetical work among Catholic Scholars to offset the false scriptural interpretations of Loisy and other Modernists.²


The Catholic Church had met Modernism and in its own way had conquered. The method of coercion of conscience is quite foreign to Protestantism.

In connection with the rise and rejection of Modernism a positive emphasis was initiated in the form of Neo-Thomism. The task of the New Scholastics is to relate Catholic theology to the modern world strictly within the terms of St. Thomas. It is a difficult task to bring modern physics into the Aristotelian metaphysical fold. And Biblical scholarship, thriving elsewhere, has finally compelled the Catholic church to acknowledge the glaring errors of the Vulgate. Recently, her own scholars have begun to produce new versions of the Bible, from corrected manuscripts, but the church retains the exclusive right of infallible interpretation.

**Modernism and Protestantism**

Modernism came into great conflict with Protestantism in America about the same time that it challenged Catholicism in the old world, but with very different results. That which is known as the Fundamentalist controversy is strictly an American phenomenon, though a Biblicism of a milder type and known as fundamentalism was gathering strength on the continent.

The occasion for controversy was rooted in a typically American development of Puritanism, — Calvinism. It is extremely
doubtful that America was ever as religiously oriented as is sometimes imagined. American freedom was congenial to all sorts of intellectual freedoms, but Stewart Cole is probably right when he described the bias of community life in which the "personal test of Christianity was two-fold — right belief and proper conduct." ¹

To observe the Christian Church in this type of situation is to recognise a regulative agent of the first magnitude . . . Its ideals were as fixed as those of its milieu: either an individual accepted salvation and became a Christian, or he willfully neglected divine forgiveness and was informed of the suffering he would experience in the next world; either he sought and shared the fellowship of saints or he divorced himself from the church and endured the role of the religiously disclaimed.²

Whether the irreligious man took his excommunication seriously or not, certainly the church was serious in its attitude toward lack of conformity in religion and morals.

The church control of the community was gradually weakened by industrialization. Factories called for "hands." Men congregated in large and larger cities. Material goods replaced spiritual values. New ideals of success arose displacing the older religious norms. Industrial developments were the result of scientific advance. Science was king. It "debunked" fears of the universe.

²Ibid., p. 11.
It took the place of religion. Biblical studies were conducted in the atmosphere of the newly discovered "king." Scientism arose and ruled. Darwin upset religious faith, as did the findings of geology. The earth was older than the 4004 years Bishop Ussher had calculated. Under the shock of the new discoveries, a shock we can scarcely appreciate today, there arose two responses in the Churches. Perhaps the greater portion of them blindly rejected science and appealed, in a sort of frantic fear, to the authority of Biblical literalism as a position of safety in a world shaken by doubt. A few ministers, who were forced to brave a hostile religious world, accepted all too naively, the untried implications of the scientific approach and attempted to read new content into the old terminology and so save the values of religion. Both sides allowed themselves to be forced into extreme positions, the former into an unnatural reactionary mood, the latter into a sensitive, defensive attitude that went farther in its feeling for freedom than later good judgment could justify. Here was the birthplace of modern religious conservatism and liberalism in America, dated somewhere between 1850 and 1875. Liberalism expressed its religious impulse in improving the lot of the downtrodden. It saw in the church a way to "bring in the Kingdom," by means of a social gospel and read the Bible in that light. It certainly was a corrective to the apathetic spirit of traditionalism in the churches. Furniss suggests the possibility that the apathy
was encouraged by big business which did not want an investigation into its methods. This is not proved but may suggest a reason for some of the stout resistance to better working conditions and social improvement. In a word, liberalism leaned heavily toward the "this-worldly" concerns, was heartily optimistic about its ability to lift humanity to Godlikeness and ever improving conditions, rejected the Biblical teachings it could not interpret in the light of this philosophy and joined its hand in matrimony to Science, not yet out of its swaddling clothes.

Conservatism, on the other hand, stressed the "other-worldly" values, encouraged people to bravely endure the injustice and temptation and evils of life and to look for deliverance in the next life. It was wrong to try to improve the social conditions in the world because such an effort defied God's word that said that the world would wax worse and worse; and because happy, comfortable people conclude that they do not need redemption in Christ. The author recalls hearing Boy Scout activities roundly condemned because the boy who learns to live a good moral life in his own strength would feel too self-righteous to require conversion. Conservatism was overly pessimistic. The "other-worldly" emphasis climaxed in such a stress on the immanent second-coming of Christ that in some quarters church building programs were curtailed and schools for

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ministerial training had to fight for an existence. The tendency was to reject completely secular scientific investigations as antithetical to Biblical scientific teaching. Bernard Ramm found two traditions in Bible and science both stemming from the developments of the nineteenth century. There is the ignoble tradition which has taken a most unwholesome attitude toward science . . . There has been and is a noble tradition in Bible and science, . . . in which learned evangelical Christians have been patient, genuine and kind and have taken great care to learn the facts of science and Scripture.  

Ramm found that "narrow evangelical Biblicism" and "Plymouth Brethren theology" had buried the noble tradition and science had repudiated both.

There were two directions of activity; the conservatives became highly evangelistic and discredited education relying on Sunday Schools and Bible conferences to indoctrinate converts; the liberals depended upon education to make Christians. The result was an ever deepening cleft running through Christendom.  

The tension in the church colleges and universities and seminaries was great. Whereas in 1875 a geology professor was dismissed for teaching that the human race descended from preadamic stock, and in 1885 progressive views opened Andover Seminary to criticism, most, if not all the church-controlled schools, including Union Theological Seminary and the University of Chicago, had


won their fight for theological freedom by about 1925. A very few schools remained conservative, among them Wheaton College.

The conservatives, now, were forced to build new schools and the era of Bible colleges arose in which the tenets of orthodoxy, in methodology and content were stressed. Many periodicals were started. J. H. Brooks edited The Truth and A. J. Gordon, The Watchword, both adventist in character. The Christian Herald (M. Bantes, editor), dedicated to the old faith. Jesus is Coming (by "W.E.R.") and fifty thousand copies of Pre-Millennial Essays (1878) were widely circulated. This is but a sample of the periodic type of literature. Able writers soon appeared, to defend the orthodox position. James Orr, with great philosophical skill, wrote voluminously. Augustus Strong of Rochester Seminary, set forth the reasonableness of the Christian faith in a three volume Systematic Theology. Robert Dick Wilson of Princeton, brilliantly defended the authenticity of the Old Testament documents. E. L. Mullins of Louisville defended the supernatural in religious thinking, and J. Gresham Machen, also of Princeton, attacked liberalism with scholarly force. There were many writers of less ability.

As American youth developed a taste for scholarship it went to Germany to study and came back to teach and preach the social

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1 Ibid., p. 42.
2 Ibid., p. 46.
gospel and the higher criticism of the Bible, which it learned there. Orthodoxy fought both issues particularly. Biblical criticism had reduced the supernatural element of Scripture to superstitions and the theory of evolution supported a reasonable gospel instead of a miraculous one. This of course cast question on the Virgin Birth, the resurrection, and a literal Second Coming of Christ.¹

Out of this tension developed the Fundamentalist movement. In 1902 George McCready Price wrote voluminously, rejecting evolution and proclaiming the Second Coming of Christ. Philip Mauro, a lawyer, joined the attack on Darwinism. William Riley, a Baptist preacher, in 1909 attacked higher criticism. In 1902, these men and others, and the Bible League of America joined forces, so that there was a body of orthodox believers voicing a strong protest to modernism. In 1910, the Stewart brothers in Los Angeles financed the publication and free distribution of ten or twelve booklets called, The Fundamentals, as a sort of manifesto of orthodoxy.²

These booklets contained articles by leading orthodox preachers, teachers, laymen, archeologists, Biblical scholars and evangelists, representatives from England, Germany, Scotland,

¹Ibid., p. 50.
Ireland and Canada as well as America, outlining the essentials of the faith. They centered around the five points of controversy as they came to a head at that time, namely, the Infallibility of the Bible, Christ's Virgin Birth, his Substitutionary Atonement, the Resurrection and Second Coming. Within two or three years over three million copies had been distributed and their influence served to give a sense of solidarity to the rather unorganised forces of orthodoxy, and undoubtedly gave the name, Fundamentalism to the movement, which now came into violent and unhappy conflict with Modernism. The story of that controversy is not the point of interest here, but some analysis of the view of Scripture which Fundamentalism held will engage our attention.

It is instructive to note at this point, that the title, Fundamentalism, was accepted by several religious groups but with varying connotations. An important evangelicalism was active in Great Britain during the years which spanned the time of the American controversy. In England and Scotland a revival of conservativism, without the reactionary emphasis known in America was revitalising the churches. It came to expression in the Keswick Conferences which stressed the Victorious Life emphasis rather than creedalism, primarily. G. Campbell Morgan, also, though a Fundamentalist in the British manner, was active among the American groups for a time. He taught in the Los Angeles Bible
Institute during the time of debate. But his idea of the fundamentals and his spirit was quite different from that exhibited by much of American Fundamentalism. There is a spiritual quality to his teaching quite missing from some other conservative authors. Taking the historic facts and fundamental doctrines of the Christian faith for granted, he presses on to stress the spiritual nature of man and the importance of a right relationship to God. That, he says, is the meaning of the Bible, the reason of Calvary, the value of Pentecost.\(^1\) In one of the rare occasions when Morgan spoke roughly he stressed the importance of personal rightness: "A man who speaks about being right with God, yet who has no consciousness or care about being right with others, is a liar."\(^2\) Another minister and writer, who considered himself fundamental was F. B. Meyer whose message breathes the same spiritual quality. Other names could be mentioned, such as A. H. Carter, Christobel Pankhurst and A. C. Dixon. About this time, in Germany, there were conservative men speaking of the fundamentals, but knowing nothing of the American spirit.\(^3\)

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\(^2\) Ibid., p. 19.

But even in the United States, Fundamentalism was a term that described a number of points of view. In fact, it was as difficult then as it is now to "locate" the meaning of it. Never was the Northern Baptist Convention drawn into the doctrinal coercion which fundamentalism sought so desperately to impose. It steadfastly maintained a freedom from control and considered the statement of the New Hampshire Confession sufficient to cover its faith. Though it considered itself fundamentalistic it refused to accept the notion that pre-millennialism was a tenet of that persuasion. "Fundamentalism is not," said Goodchild, "a pre-millenarian movement."

He continued, "There are as many views about the return of our Lord among fundamentalists as will be found among other bodies of Christian people." Even in regard to inspiration there were differences of opinions. Dr. Maxwell, in a keynote address, before a Conference on Christian Fundamentals, (February, 1922) said that it was not for a literal interpretation of Scripture that they contended: "Our contention is for the fact of inspiration and not a theory about it."  

E. Y. Mullins, in a midst of the controversy, and very much a fundamentalist, sounded out a warning to his fellows.

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The controversy has degenerated into an attack from one side on one or two positions... such as a premillenialism, which lend themselves easily to caricature and ridicule. From the other side the attack has taken the form of attempts to secure legislative action to prevent the teaching of evolution in the public schools. Nothing could be more ill-advised than for Americans to attempt to employ legislative coercion in the realm of scientific opinion.¹

The spiritual vitality in some quarters of American Fundamentalism is to be noted. Mullins said,

No religion or theology can long hold sway unless it is big enough to grasp life as a whole, or to state the same truth in another way, unless it is religious enough to serve the ends of religion.²

George Truett, represented fundamentalism and yet a deep spiritual eagerness characterized his ministry. His noon day talks at the Chicago Baptist Convention in 1927, drew the largest audiences of any of the sessions and he was forced by popular ministerial demand to set apart the early mornings for prayer and counsel with them. This seemed to be the end of the bitter fundamentalist fight in the Baptist groups.³ In the writer’s recollection, the Church of the Nazarene, among other "Holiness bodies," while considering itself fundamental, was always careful to distinguish that term from fundamentalistic. It was characterized by a deep revivalistic

²Ibid., p. 77.
passion similar to the spiritual fervor of the groups in Great Britain.

By way of analysis it may be noted that Fundamentalism as described above, was forced into existence by tremendous pressures built up in many areas of American life, all of them focusing in some measure upon traditional Christianity. Some answer had to be given and Fundamentalism was the handiest answer at the moment. Basically, it was one metaphysical system pitted against another, supernaturalism against naturalism. Neither side had taken stock, maturely, of its assets and liabilities and so the clash was emotional in great measure rather than intellectual. The Modernists assumed an evolutionary hypothesis before they opened the Bible. The Fundamentalists assumed an infallible Bible before they had opened the Book. Both sides took "ignoble" positions, and held them with an extreme, defiant and often bitter spirit. Modernism held science to be its authority. Fundamentalism made the Bible its authority, for everything. Both claimed for its authority, infallibility. Science could not be wrong, and the Bible could not be wrong. Science had no place for the supernatural and the Bible was wholly supernatural. In this way the split widened and hardened. It is asserted by Cole and Furniss and innumerable writers everywhere that it was a split on the basis of literacy versus illiteracy. It is our opinion that this is an emotional judgment and one that
cannot wholly stand up under scrutiny, but the fact remains, as Ramm reminds us, that Fundamentalism's blanket rejection of science, was "ignoble." Science was rejected before it was understood. Modernism, too, soon found its blanket rejection of the supernatural ill-advised. Both sides erred.

But in the throes of the conflict, and in the absence of an adequate middle ground, the Church was forced to a loyalty on one side or the other. The split went down through denominations and aligned Churches against each other. Extreme fundamentalism was derisive in spirit, highly definitive in its doctrine, and unimaginatively uncompromising. (From this point on, Fundamentalism will refer to the extreme views which were held). Now the significant thing about Fundamentalistic faith is that it has no historic roots. This does not mean that the individual doctrinal tenets had not been held by the Church, but it does mean that the peculiar emphasis as exhibited by the Five Points has no counterpart anywhere in Christian history. There is certainly no Biblical basis for lifting up these five items as a preaching norm, as a rule of faith or as a test of orthodoxy, and there is no precedent in any creed upon which they rest. The very grouping is unfortunate as it caricatures Christian faith by a distortion of emphasis. There is no word about a relatedness of Christian doctrine to vital life concerns, or any practical issues. It is highly abstract in nature. It lifts
peripheral truths to centrality. Relating to the one item with which this study is concerned, a doctrine of Scripture, we note that the stress on the word — the literal letter, against science and Biblical criticism, had never been known before. Its nearest counterpart is the statement in the Westminster Confession, but which we have already found referred finally to the thought back of the word, not the word itself. Certainly, neither Luther or Calvin held to this rigid view and only the decree of the Council of Trent equals it. Is it the American penchant for mechanising everything it touches, including thought, that prompted the unnaturally sharp definitions of the Fundamentalists movement? Our language encourages a thinking in absolutistic categories unknown to European languages. It is difficult to be subtle in English. We are very quick, also, to "label" everything and we are prone to throw the label over a person or thing too quickly, without a full examination of all aspects of the case. This lack of true tolerance throws us into racial, religious and political strata, classified only on the basis of some superficial consideration and the Indian social caste system is scarcely any more sovereign than ours. Because of the provincial and unhistorical nature of the Fundamentalist theory of Biblical inspiration, born in a heated controversy, we conclude that it does not represent the best in Christian expression. The basis for this conclusion is further fortified by the fact which a
study of the history of Fundamentalism will show, that each particu­
lar denomination treasured sets of "distinctives," as the essentials,
which were peculiar to each and did not represent a unanimous con-
viction even of conservative Christianity.

The occasion of conflict in each communion was the
question of the priority of the historic distinctives
that had given individuality to that particular doc­
trine... In every denomination orthodox men
considered that their church's distinctives were the
essentials of supernaturally-prescribed Christianity.¹

The closest agreement came in their estimate of the Bible, but "even
so, Baptist and Disciple traditionalists took a different position
from that of Methodists or Episcopalians,"² and all of them different
from English evangelicals. It would be indiscreet to hold any one
group totally right and the others totally wrong. Cole, in the same
connection cites the disintegration of the seventeen "fellowships"
which were active all or part of the time between 1910 and 1930 and
gives as a possible cause the "unyielding individualism of its
leaders,"³ an admission made by William B. Riley.⁴ We may inject a
modern note, by referring to the "mushroom" growth of undenominational

¹Cole, History of Fundamentalism, p. 322.
²Ibid., p. 323.
³Ibid., p. 325.
⁴Cole, loc. cit.
tabernacles, centered about a strong personality, which began in the midst of the controversy, and in connection with it, and is only now declining in vigor. All of them played up some points of Fundamentalism, were divisive in spirit and lacked historical continuity, ecclesiastically and doctrinally.

It may be further noted as we look into the Five Points of Fundamentalism that one central emphasis ties them together, supernaturalism, or more particularly the fact of miracle. It was this emphasis, undoubtedly, that lay back of the choice of the points. Science and religion clashed at the level of miracle. But if we look a little more closely we will discover that the issue of miracles lay against an even more basic presupposition. It was the static metaphysics of Aristotle, coupled with Newton's "laws of nature;" against a more dynamic view of reality. Every tenent of Fundamentalism stressed miracle defined in terms of Aristotelian metaphysics and Newtonian physics. Science denied miracle on that very basis. In terms of the lowest common denominator, the actual controversy was over a philosophical definition of miracle. Fundamentalists said, our cause is lost if science can disprove miracles. Science did disprove many "miracles" by a new definition of nature but the cause of Christianity was not thereby lost.

The question here cannot be an evaluation of modern science or philosophy or the validity of any one definition of miracle.
Most Christians and many non-Christians believe in the possibility of miracles, but it is disconcerting to try to find an agreeable definition of it. Hume's disproof of miracle was on the basis of one of the definitions of nature and epistemology. He showed that Newton's "laws" of nature were a figment of the imagination. No one has ever been able to demonstrate a necessary causal relationship, he said, therefore that which appears to be a violation of it (or miracle), is simply the unaccustomed context of the event. This, philosophically, destroyed science as well as religion.

Kant "rescued" science and morality from such skepticism by transferring the "law" from nature to mind. Each in its own way is a rationalistic system, metaphysically, and seems to have no basis in Biblical thinking. It is significant that the New Testament term for what is translated "miracle" in the English, is some form of the word "power" and the response to the exercise of it is astonishment and wonder. "Breaking" a law of nature is never the implicit idea of miracle in the New Testament. Rather the wonder was regarded as a mastery of the forces of nature by God — a sovereignty over physical and spiritual things — and this is a very different matter. Ramm reminds us that the Biblical view of nature was singularly free of any untenable philosophical views of nature through which it passed during the long years of its building. It knew nothing of a law of nature but only the will of God.
Providence is just as much the work of God as creation. Nature is the arena of God's activity and the subject of his will. The real issue between modernism and conservatism ought never to be fought in the area of some view of nature but in the realm of a conception of God in relation to his world. Significantly, also, is the fact that the virgin birth and the resurrection of Christ are not in the New Testament regarded as "wonders" but simply as basic facts of empirical history. These events do not validate Christ but are validated by him. By this, it is not meant that the virgin birth and the resurrection are considered unimportant, untrue or unverifiable. On the contrary, if one considers himself to be a Bible believer, he cannot escape the acceptance of these facts as Biblical truths. But it may be observed that the New Testament did not attempt to prove the deity of Christ by way of these facts but rather having come into vital relationship with the risen Lord these facts became meaningful and inevitable to the believer. Paul had all the evidence available for the resurrection of Christ but he was only convinced of the fact in connection with the meeting with the Living Christ on the way to Damascus. If Paul, in the midst of the living witnesses to the resurrection, was not convinced by them of its truth or of its testimony to the deity of Christ, but needed a personal meeting

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1Rama, The Christian View of Science and Scripture, p. 8;
with the Lord himself, it is not surprising that two thousand years later the same pattern of proof should be the norm. But this will be more fully examined in the last chapter.

Christians, through the centuries, and today, have held varying philosophical theories regarding the nature of reality. A theological judgment cannot be authoritative on that basis. But in the writer's opinion it was the elevation of this one point as the central issue of Christianity throwing all central issues out of focus which put Christianity in a ridiculous light. Fundamentalism naively fused its belief in miracles to a philosophical position and a view of physics. When Christian youth met the new physics, the whole philosophical structure, which had been religiously associated with the Christian faith, collapsed and took Christianity with it. All too many a Fundamentalist youth apostacised at the eye piece of a microscope. His neatly packaged arguments for the Christian fundamentals were never even opened, science began on another level, and the twain never met.

In anticipation of a discussion in the last chapter of the difference between the natural and supernatural in the Bible, three preliminary words are ventured here. The first is in relation to the supernatural, as such, the second is in regard to miracles, and the third to inerrancy. In the writer's opinion it was not the stress on the reality of the supernatural which confused the issues in the
Controversy, but an immature view of the whole philosophy of the supernatural. The issue arose something like this. Science denies the miraculous and with it the supernatural. Christianity is supernatural and its faith is proved by the miraculous. Its Bible is supernatural, and therefore must be perfect and infallible. To admit any measure of fallibility and humanity in the Bible would deny its miraculous and supernatural character with the consequent capitulation to naturalism. Its authority would therefore be nullified and the Christian religion would fall apart. Science and Biblical criticism attacked that supernatural perfection, therefore Fundamentalism rejected science and Biblical criticism. The error, in the writer's opinion was in equating authority and inerrancy. The issue is not inerrancy but authority. To confuse the two matters is to imperil the essential Christian truth. On the basis of seventeen or eighteen hundred years of Christian history in which the authority of the Scriptures was never equated with verbal inerrancy, the suggestion is made that to presuppose inerrancy on the basis of the Scriptures' supernatural character is unnecessary to its authority, and actually is misleading since the Book is both human and divine. Its authority must rest on a more firm foundation as will be shown in a later chapter.

Miracle, as such, is not the major subject under discussion, but it may make for clarity to suggest that the issue of miracles
should be subservient to the fact of revelation — God's self revelation. Such revelation is a miracle. Miracle as it is commonly defined is not per se revelation. Miracle is not the first line of defense, but God's self-disclosure is. Regardless of the philosophical or physical pre-supposition, revelation is the point at issue in the Christian system. God speaks and God acts, and His speaking and acting originates from His own initiative and not out of the milieu of the cause effect relationships of the natural system.

But a point of great importance is that when revelation becomes revelation it enters the natural and accommodates itself to it, else the natural could not comprehend it, or transmit or communicate it.

Inerrancy, then, is an abstract deduction from the presupposition that the supernatural revelation must display its supernatural character to give evidence (1) of its nature and (2) to its authority. Since its physical properties are words, words must be the object of its perfection and infallibility. There is nothing else to be perfect but the words, as said the Fundamentalists. But can supernatural perfection be either contained in human words or recognized as perfect by imperfect men?

The danger in thus positing inerrancy and authority in the literal and human word of Scripture is at least two-fold. The first
danger is that an examination of the Bible will reveal defects which thereby casts question on its physical inerrancy and consequently on its divine authority. Warfield saw this and arbitrarily placed perfection back on the autographs which are unavailable to us. This is a retreat to philosophical abstraction and quite unconvincing outside of the area of cold logic or blind credulity.

We have no word of revelation in regard to the autographs hence no basis for faith regarding them. The second danger arises out of the first. Authority is posited in a material object. The end of revelation, according to the extreme Fundamentalists, rests in an inerrant word. Inspiration climaxes in a book. "Inspiration is of books, not men — not the writers but the writings," wrote one of the authors in The Fundamentals.\(^1\)

Another author writing in the series quotes the decision of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in 1893.

The Bible as we now have it in the various translations and revisions when freed from all errors and mistakes of translations, copyists and printers, is the very Word of God, and consequently, wholly without error.\(^2\)

This focuses attention on the medium of revelation, not on the One

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who is revealed. There is a two-fold danger here. The first danger is sacramentalism in which an object becomes a carrier of grace.

The Roman Catholic Church early saw that the efficacy of its sacraments would have to be divorced from the persons of its priests and so by-passed the moral character of men, (or the "inspiration" of ministers) and placed it more securely, so they thought, in the physical object. Bread, oil, wine, water, words (the formal aspect of making an object a sacrament), all became holy. Now, those objects after becoming sacraments, are supernatural. They are in and of themselves, grace. Protestantism stands in imminent danger of repeating this error in conceiving of words as the culmination of revelation. The second danger arises right here, in that, where words are sacred, legalism inevitably results. Fundamentalism has become legalistic in many quarters. Legalism is always harsh, self-righteous and unteachable, the very characteristics that Jesus and Paul exposed in the highly religious Jews who kept every facet of the law. From this legalism the Living Lord has been lost from His Word. The Lordship of Christ is either minimised or denied or arbitrarily put into another and future dispensation. Actually, the contact between men and a living Christ is severed. Dr. A. W. Toser, a Chicago minister (Alliance), speaking in Moody Church, in the writer's hearing, on an October night, 1954, as a guest speaker for a Mid-America Keswick Conference, expressed this
sentiment in almost these words: "There is no Savior-hood outside of the Lordship of Christ. We cannot just throw a Scripture at God and claim Christian status, we must accept His full Lordship over our lives. This truth the Fundamentalists have lost." Its loss separates them from the concerns of men and the desperate needs of the contemporary world. It isolates Christ from the human situation.

Exegesis, to relate this situation to interpretation, becomes coldly formal, unspiritual, theoretical and unrelated to life. This fact has given rise to a new cry for Biblical theology but the cry comes principally from non-Fundamentalist circles as we shall see.

As early as 1921, E. Y. Mullins, in analysing the controversy saw that the "chief danger in the situation has been the confusing of issues." Mullins, Christianity at the Crossroads, p. V. This he seeks to clarify. Christians believe in "the inspiration and sufficiency and finality of the Scriptures for religious purposes. But the chief issue is not the doctrine of the inspiration or authority of the Bible. The central question is whether there was anything supernatural in the character and career of Jesus Christ?" Mullins, Christianity at the Crossroads, p. V. The climax of Mullin's book is in the stress on the living Christ of Christian experience. He quotes with approval Luther's answer to the question, "What is the Word of God to be believed? The Gospel of God concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who was incarnate and crucified, and who is risen again and glorified by the Holy Ghost the Sanctifier" (De Litertate Christiana). Mullins, Christianity at the Crossroads, p. 236.

Carl Henry believes that Fundamentalism must "experience a rebirth of apostolic passion." Henry, The Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism. (Preface) He thinks that marginal issues
Catholicism won a "decision" in its bout with Modernism. Decisions are not always convincing or victorious. It is an open question as to whether Papal Bulls settle issues or simply drive them under cover to fester and ultimately weaken the organism from within. Did Fundamentalism lose or win in its controversy with Modernism? Certainly Fundamentalism was thrown, quite intact, out from the center of religious and theological concerns of the world, to the periphery of the real issues, where it is now forgotten by everyone but those in it. Can it be compared to the conservative, orthodox, correct Antiochian school in ancient days — a school which simply was brushed to the sidelines to die, by the less correct, less orthodox, actually modernistic Alexandrian school which kept contact with the vital issues of the day? The comparison have been put in the place of centrality and that we have needlessly invited criticism and even ridicule, by a tendency . . . to parade secondary and even obscure aspects of our position as necessary frontal phases of our view (Preface). Fundamentalist preachers are almost silent about social evils (p. 18). Fundamentalism has "failed to" develop the grand social implications of its message (p. 28). In revolting against the Social Gospel it also revolted against the Christian social imperative (p. 32). This unwillingness to join hands with other agencies for the lifting of human ills has caused the Fundamentalist to be dropped from the program, and yet the ministry in which he engages is often made possible by the work of the Federal Council which he rejects (p. 37). The hesitancy to preach the Kingdom now message, he believes, is to fail to follow Jesus' example. It is the relevance of the redemptive message today, that we need so desperately (Chap. IV). The problem is not finding another vital message "but rather of giving the redemptive word a proper temporal focus" (p. 65).
is not altogether without point.

For decades fundamentalism has proved itself impotent to change the theological and ecclesiastical scene. Its lack of influence has relegated it to the peripheral and subsidiary movements of Protestantism. Wherever fundamentalism and modernism came into test in a theological struggle, fundamentalism lost every major battle in the historical field. It has demonstrated little power to crack the social situation challenging the church today. The motivating loyalty to fundamentalism on the part of many Christians lies in its orthodoxy, its faithfulness to the Word of God. However, the judgment of history on fundamentalism is that it has failed.

There are several reasons for the Fundamentalists' failure to win real victories. One of them is mentioned (among others) in Ramm's new book. The deficiency, he says,

was that of an improper spirit. Too frequently orthodoxy fought the critic with sarcasm or vilification or denunciation. This too often involved a similar treatment of the facts of science. Such a strategy was futile.2

To the particular point of interest in this study is the opinion of this writer that one of the most important failures lay in the Fundamentalists' dependency upon abstract argument. The most beautiful logical system stands impotent before living facts. The Fundamentalist is able to conjure up syllogisms and formulas and self-evident principles and logicalities and manipulation of evidence to resolve any Biblical discrepancy anyone can produce, or for any doctrine he desires

1Harold John Ockenga, "Theological Education," Bulletin of Fuller Theological Seminary, Vol. IV, No. 4.

to present. But it is hard to remember all the devious turns in
the system if it is not reviewed very often and it is distressing
to note the lack of attention to these details, in the face of the
common man wanting an answer, within the time allotment of his
attention span. The Bible itself, reduced its arguments to facts
one could see and feel and experience. When all the verities of
Christian truth are highly complex rationalizations and remote
abstractions which make no practical difference to daily life, they
cannot stand up before the demonstrations of science or the needs of
men. Christianity is primarily a life, not logic. Jesus was a man,
not an idea. Redemption is a very practical matter, with dynamic
life implications. It is the Lordship of Christ, not merely a
philosophy to be accepted.

Modernism in Revolt

Modernism was met by a third major foe. This antagonist was
one of its own carefully nourished children who turned on its parent
in an hour of disillusionment. Catholicism met and dispatched
Modernism in France. Fundamentalism met and permitted itself to be
pushed off the center of the stage by Modernism in America. Neo-
Orthodoxy met and "chastised" Modernism, first in Switzerland in the
person of Karl Barth, and then everywhere where Modernism had gained
a foothold in religion. Catholicism had fought off Modernism's
threat to its authority. Fundamentalism had sought to protect its orthodoxy against Modernism's academic freedom. Barth challenged Modernism on the point of God's Revelation to man. Modernism has lost its ground for special revelation in its identification of the divine and human and in a consequent morass of relativism.

"The only absolute that remained was that of John Dewey's 'Absolutely no Absolute.' It was this extremity of historical relativism . . . that proved Neo-Orthodoxy's opportunity." 1

Modernism's conception of God's immanence and the inevitability of progress, man's natural goodness, gradual perfectibility, and its view of the Bible as the word of man, was challenged by a return to the classic Protestant doctrines of God's transcendence, man's sin and justification by faith, and a return to the Bible as the Word of God. Barth's Epistle to the Romans, became a manifesto of the new movement, in its early days. Neo-Orthodoxy, as Barth called it, spread, first through Emil Brunner to the United States who parted theological company with Barth, and then in various forms in the United States and Europe. Each leader prefers his own title for his position. Each takes a distinctive theological stand. Only the analysis of the most common attitudes toward the Bible among them can be attempted here and the title most in keeping with

that general attitude, Neo-Supernaturalism, will be used.

Neo-Supernaturalism on the surface seems to "cut across the modern mood somewhat in the spirit of the Biblical tradition." It rejects the Kantian agnosticism regarding the superphenomenal. It defies Modernism's immanent God. It singles out the Schleiermachian "consciousness theology" for particular attack. It says God speaks to man, for man cannot by searching discover God. Man is a sinner and stands under the awful judgment of God. But God is not available to man because He belongs to a qualitatively different order than does man. He is Wholly Other. He breaks obliquely into man's world, like a flash of lightening, demanding moral and spiritual decision. It is not an "experience," as the modernist understood in his world of eternal continuity, it was an "existential" event, completely discontinuous with an orderly world. Revelation, in this view, is restored to Protestant status, in that (1) a wholesome separation is established between God and man, and (2) the occasion for a special contact is made necessary and (3) the initiative of a personal, holy God in making the self-disclosure, is demanded. The Bible is properly termed the Word of God because in the entire Bible, not simply in parts of it, does revelation occur. Revelation takes place in the very words of Scripture. There is a dynamic charge of

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God's special revelation in connection with the Bible. All of this is in direct opposition to Modernism's view of the Bible. But before we examine the result in Modernistic thinking it will be well to compare the view with the more orthodox view of Scripture.

The name of the movement, Neo-Supernaturalism, suggests the point of departure. This school of thought is supernaturalistic but conceived in a way uncongenial to traditional Christianity. If Luther and Calvin seemed to have held it as the Neo-Supernaturalists say, the impression probably has resulted from their reaction to Catholic and mystical familiarity with God (each in its own way) which was repulsive to both Reformers. The idea, according to Barth, came from Søren Kierkegaard's conception of the "qualitative difference between time and eternity." In a crude way the difference between parallel lines and crossed lines would illustrate what he means. God and the supernatural are so different that it is really useless to try to speak of one in the language of the other. Man's world is historical to him, or related to his level of existence. God's world is "beyond history," not temporally but "eschatologically," on another level of existence, or a promise. The two existences are in no way related or relatable. But God can and has and does cut across man's world in judgment. Man knows this has occurred but he cannot grasp the

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occasion to hold it and examine it. It does not become a part of his equipment. This "revelation" is fresh and new, never static or second-hand. Anything which accommodates itself to the natural order ceases to be revelation. It may be a record of revelation but it reveals nothing to anyone. Revelation is never finished, never propositional, never even actually experienced. Man, in reality, never "knows" God for God is never object, but always subject, he is rather, "known by" God and in that situation comes into existence, God crowds in on man, wholly on His own terms.\(^1\)

With this as a background it is obvious that Neo-Supernaturalism considers orthodoxy wrong when it equates Scripture with the Word of God, and absolutizes the words and sentences as themselves God's revelation, finished and accessible to all men. Divine things must be experienced directly. But experience in any mystical sense is also rejected as "holy psychological datum," not valid as revelation. There is no Subjective criterion in mysticism by which to identify God from demons. Barth's encounter with the Word of God is activistic,\(^2\) not on man's part but on God's part. Revelation is God acting.

\(^1\) Cornelius Van Til, The New Modernism (Philadelphia: The Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1946)

This view is counter to the Reformer's view in that they took the Bible, as a direct revelation in history, completely for granted. To Barth, a historical event as a basis of faith is a contradiction in terms. If the "incarnation" could be historically proved, revelation and faith would cease to exist.

Barth's doctrine of the Word of God, then, is not a doctrine of Scripture, as such, for the activism of God speaking, is both a continuing and therefore an incomplete process, and also that which is incapable of being identified with any phenomenal object. The emphasis is on the speaking God, primarily, and not on the One who has spoken. We confront the Word of God in preaching and the sacraments in so far as there are repetitions of the Divine Promise. On the ground of the Word which God has spoken, directions is given in His Church . . . to the Word which He . . . will speak. 1

The Word is found also in Scripture, the written Word, which is not revelation itself, but a "concrete form of the Churches' memory of God's past revelation."

In the event of Revelation it becomes the word of God. The Bible cannot be abstracted from the activity of God, by Whose power it becomes ever again His Word. He is not bound to His word, but His word is bound to him. 2

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1 Ibid., p. 60.
2 Ibid., p. 61.
Scripture is one of the tokens of revelation. Tokens are symbols or legends of the miraculous, such as the Virgin Birth and the Empty Tomb. Scripture reports these important legends. The Old Testament as anticipation and the New Testament as recollections form the Holy Scriptures. Holy Scripture as such is not the revelation. And yet Holy Scripture is the revelation, if and in so far as Jesus Christ speaks to us through the witness of His prophets and apostles. True, there has never been a single person who for his part could honestly say that he has heard Jesus Christ speak equally clearly in every part and parcel of the Scriptures . . . There are large portions of Holy Scripture in which they have not yet heard the voice of Jesus Christ . . . But only in Scripture, as far as we know, can Jesus Christ speak to us again.1

Barth also seeks, behind Scripture for, "the Revealed Word" or God's Son who is identical with the Word. This Word is a personal and private event, a "spiritual speech," directed to individuals, but it cannot be spoken of, for it is a secret revealed only in terms of the actual event of God speaking. The Word of God, identified as it is with Jesus Christ, makes us contemporaries with all Christians of all ages. It is the "eternal movement in the present." The Word is "God-with-us."2

It is also a Deed — a decision. God forces a crisis upon man but it is God's decision and always good. The Word, as hidden,

1Karl Barth, Chapter II, in Revelation, ed. by John Baillie and Hugh Martin, pp. 67-68.

2McConnachie, The Barthian Theology, p. 65.
seems to mean that revelation, taking place as it must in the cosmos which is the realm of sin and opposition to God, is distorted by the cosmos. We can see only one side of a thing, never enough to systematise it. Scripture is then, but a witness to revelation, never revelation itself. It is a human word, written by one who had experienced revelation, but being human, it is always much less than perfect. Revelation is always known but the receptical is never so. God never changes, but men do. Because men change, what they have written is dated. The Scriptures are not without error, but the Revelation of which they speak, is without error. Inerrancy can only be spoken of the "Word became Flesh."

Jesus Christ is supremely the Word of God translated into our human flesh and speech and if we are to speak of plenary inspiration it can only be of Him.¹

Revelation is never impersonal — just the expression of truths or ideas, but the confrontation of a "thou" addressed to an "I." "The Word of God does not lie in the Bible in any static form,"² but becomes God's word to us so far as God allows it to become. The Bible "finds" us (not we, it), and ever and anon, becomes to us, the Word of God, constituting a "permanent occasion of crisis."

Revelation includes the gift to receive it. "In other words,

¹Ibid., p. 106.
²Ibid., p. 117.
revelation is revelation only when by the Spirit it gets through to men." Scripture then, is not revelation but the "permanent possibility of revelation."¹

Barthianism, as just described, is a strange mixture of truth and error. This reviewer appreciates the emphasis on the majesty of God and His "otherness" in comparison to man. Man is not a part of divinity in the sense of metaphysical continuity so that he need stand in no awe before his Maker. The emphasis on Revelation in contrast to discovery is proper and central to Christianity. In the writer's opinion, the rejection of an autonomous, independent status for Scripture, is right. The Word of God as a Living, personal encounter between man and God, not simply a static object has a measure of truth in it which has been quite rejected since Reformation days. Verbally, at least, the place given to the Word as Christ, a personal Word is superb. But, Barth is not an evangelical in the proper sense of that term. Semantically speaking, and that is the chief concern of this study, Barth does not mean by evangelical words what evangelicals mean. Barthians and Evangelicals cannot "converse" intelligibly for the reason that each comes to these terms with a different context of reference. The issue is again metaphysical, or in a conception of the nature of

reality. This time the key word is revelation and not actually miracle because, in Barth's world there is no place for a real miracle. There is no place for miracle because the natural world cannot accommodate the "stuff" of the supernatural. Revelation cuts through the natural and leaves no trail. It cannot accommodate itself to the natural. It cannot add to nature. Barth maintains the "one-way" passage, the monergistic direction of revelation, but puts it beyond the comprehension of man, besides. Man is aware that he has been experienced by God and so has encountered the revelation event, but the knowledge of that event is not his, for he was the object not the subject of the event. The object cannot be the subject, else God would take on the "untranscendent" status of being the object of knowledge, and so would cease to be God. Therefore man cannot carry away with him any permanent souvenir of the occasion. He may tell what natural, historical surroundings he was in when the event occurred, but this could never be revelation either to him or to others. Revelation is a divine act, rooted in the very on-going being of God. One wonders if even an awareness does not leave some knowledge.

This radical bifurcation of the supernatural from the natural raises questions. They are simple questions. What does supernatural, in Barth's sense, mean? Is it a real existence or is it an idea only? If it is real, what evidence do we have, revelational or
experiential to substantiate the claims that are made? It cannot be known by revelation because no supernatural revelation can result in human knowledge, therefore, to say it is by revelation is a contradiction in terms. It may, on the other hand, be an event but it is not experiencable, according to Barth's teaching, and if it were, "subjective psychological datum" has no criterion for determining the source of the stimulus and if it did it would only describe the sensations, not the source. We cannot verify the claim by experience, then, even if we did experience revelation. Revelation must then, be an idea. But if the supernatural is so qualitatively other, no idea of it can be formulated. In fact, how is it to be spoken of at all? We are driven to the conclusion that if man cannot carry anything away with him of the revelation event since he is merely the object of it, he cannot even speak of it without "nonsense" and meaninglessness and the Bible as a record of it would be impossible.

The Bible then cannot be revelation as it is a purely human book, subject to all the errors of men's understanding of the revelational events they went through. It is a record of men's understanding, not of God's disclosure. Interpretation, in Barth's system would include a grammatical approach, not a historical grasp, because history, as such obscures any revelation. In this view the Bible as a human book is utterly divorced from the Bible as a divine revelation. It is possible to regard it exactly like the Modernists
regard it, and that is precisely what is done. The only difference is that Barthians make the Bible the meeting place between God and man. It is the rendezvous, the occasion place, and that alone. Actually, neo-supernaturalism has neither seriously challenged Modernism's Bible or Modernism's metaphysics. Its Book is just as inert as Modernism's human book and it cannot defend its transcendent God because it has no epistemological equipment to know whether there be such a God or no, by way of revelation or experience.

Semantically, Barthian terminology is confusing to a traditionalist in theology or philosophy. Revelation which ordinarily means disclosure, in Barthianism seems essentially not to refer to an addition to human knowledge but only to God's activity. Revelation does not add anything to nature except Christ's person. The affirmation of God, as personal and holy and "Other" cannot be made on theoretical or empirical grounds. The Word of God is not a written or spoken language, but is God acting. God acting is simply one side of a two faceted event. When God acts man is saved. God does not act in a vacuum or in vain. Decision, therefore, is not a human reaction but God's initiative. We scarcely grasp the meanings of old familiar terms in the new setting.

This severe criticism does not mean to imply that Barth's rediscovery of the "new world of the Bible was negligible. Actually, it was one of the most revolutionary and far-reaching impulses in the
history of the Bible. But may we say that it was the inconsistency of the movement that made it alive? The Bible was read and the contents noted, and in the light of it, man's sinful status was revealed, as well as his need for redemption. The streams of theological thought flowing from Barthianism have taken the Bible seriously, a trend of events that has "antiquated Modernism," an ironical situation.

Reinhold Niebuhr's attitude toward the Bible expresses very well the major Neo-Supernaturalistic usage of it. He said it was to be taken "seriously but not literally." The Bible as symbol is not the worst method of interpretation which history has disclosed to us. The worst, possibly, was the unrestrained allegorical fantasy. Symbolic interpretation has Scriptural precedent, as much of the Book of Daniel and Revelation clearly shows (as well as many other passages). Symbolism has the advantage of expressing truths in picture language, more vividly and meaningfully than in prosaic words. But with all the advantage of symbolic interpretation it is a recognized fact that Christianity is a historic religion and it is the lack of the historic sense that vitiates neo-supernaturalism as a theology, whatever may be said for it as a philosophy.

Taking Brunner's juggling of the words Reason and Revelation

1Reinhold Niebuhr, Nature and Destiny of Man (Charles Scribner's Sons, 1953).
and adding a point or two to it we can characterise these schools of thought succinctly. Catholicism and Reformation theology speak of Reason and Revelation. Philosophy precedes Revelation. Modernism speaks of Reason, alone. Revelation is a misnomer. Barth speaks of Revelation. There is no philosophy in connection with theology. Brunner speaks of Revelation and Reason. "We do not begin our inquiry with reason and then work up to revelation, but, as a believing Church, we begin our inquiry with revelation and then work outwards to reason."¹ Brunner, then, champions revelation before reason, upholds the validity of general revelation against Barth's destroyed image of God and contends for the cruciality of the incarnation for Theism.

The failure of liberalism was rooted in the fact that it was predisposed against a God who intervenes in the world or in history.² The Bible was not taken seriously. Neo-Supernaturalism put God back into the affairs of men. God, now, is conceived as a God who judges and redeems the world.

Modernism and Today's Theology

Modernism has been traced through its attack on Catholic Church authority, and through its attack by Fundamentalism and into

²T. W. Manson, "The Failure of Liberalism to Interpret the Bible as the Word of God," The Interpretation of the Bible (London: S.P.C.K., 1946), p. 95.
its enervating civil war, out of which developed a new interest in the Scriptures and a Biblical theology. We have spoken of Modernism (1) as having been driven under cover by the Catholics, (2) as having driven the Fundamentalist spirit to the sidelines and (3) as having itself been antiquated by Neo-Supernaturalism. But Modernism, as an attitude, does not die. In one respect Modernism has served and does now serve Christianity very well, and that is in its perennial passion to bring the Bible into the vernacular. Always, this urgency to break with obsolete, “sacred” languages, has been met with stout resistance in the Church. Jerome was a modernist for putting the Greek text into Latin. Erasmus was a modernist for recovering the Greek text. Any tampering with the Vulgate has been rejected as a modernistic impulse by the Catholics, at least until recently. It took many years before the King James translation became an authorised version in practice, though the King has authorised its usage. The Revised Standard Version is yet regarded as the work of modernists in some quarters in spite of the fact that its very wide sales indicate that it is now read by a great audience. But it may be said that the result in each of these cases and numbers of others which might be mentioned was some sort of a “revival” of the religious impulse. Today, there is a resurgence of the right kind of Modernism. It is expressed recently as a need to bring “faith into relationship with realities and Reality,” which can demonstrate
that "Christianity is relevant to our situation and can be spoken in language with which we are familiar."¹ So far as a Bible-centered interest is concerned, religious modernism could be classified as (1) the liberal, whose head is "bloody but unbowed," as (2) the "chastened" liberal, as (3) the conservative who accepts, within reason the findings of modern Biblical scholarship, "some would see a theological interpretation of the Bible, not created independently of modern scientific research, but resting firmly on it,"² and (4) the ultra-conservative, who does not feel that it is necessary to adjust the Bible to the new day. It is that emphasis, among these groups, common to all that must interest us, namely the return to a Biblical theology. Brunner characterizes the new school of thought as one which wishes to be free from an "orthodox-confessional theory" or from the "orthodox traditional view of Scripture and free to return to a "Biblical understanding of revelation." This tendency, says Brunner, has approval "for the first time in the history of theology [in that] revelation, in its whole historical reality, became the object of theological reflection."³ This school of

³Brunner, Revelation and Reason, p. 11.
thought, no longer identifies revelation with infallible verbal
expressions, but goes back of the words, to the facts and meanings.
There has arisen a new theology of revelation.\textsuperscript{1} Carl Henry
describes the same mood of thought. He says that the mid-twentieth
century theology, in every quarter has a common interest in revela-
tion, even the renewed insistence on special revelation. But the
center of controversy is over the content of revelation.\textsuperscript{2}

There are a number of ideas of revelation. Revelation is
thought of as "propositional," or words only. It is conceived as
communication, or as thought as well as words. It is decision or
God acting. It is law to obey, or it may be the divine impulse to
love. It may have been applicable only to the contemporary situa-
tion or as prophetic of a future situation. It may be related to
material or to spiritual things. But in any case there is a deep
conviction that the Bible must speak today to our need, and theolo-
gies that fail to relate God to life and to life's problems will be
"shunted to a siding" and put out of service as all useless theories
have always been. The most forceful and convicting plea from
conservative circles to come from the press in recent years, to the
author's knowledge, is Bernard Ramm's book, \textit{The Christian View of

\textsuperscript{1}Ibid., p. 12.\textsuperscript{2}

\textsuperscript{2}Henry, \textit{The Protestant Dilemma}, p. 43.
Science and Scripture, in which he points out fearlessly the failure of an older Fundamentalism which failed to come to grips with facts, and disqualified itself for today's respect. He pleads for a revival not only of religion but of scholarship.