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THE WORD OF THE BIBLE AND SCIENCE Part 1(Emil Brunner)

"It is quite true that the church has not always had this clear vision of the relation between Christ and the Bible, otherwise many a passionate struggle might have been avoided. But the best teachers of the Church from the beginning to modern times always had - at least in practice, if not like Luther in clear theoretical formulation - insight into this fact of the subordination of Scripture under the message of Christ. We need the Bible because through this tradition alone can we know and understand Christ. This holds true of the old Testament as well as of the New. Christ cannot be understood without the Old Testament. I do not mean by this that the historian needs the knowledge of Israelite history and literature in order to be able to explain the life of Jesus - that is a separate matter, and does not concern us; I mean that the individual believer or the Church cannot know Jesus as Saviour, without the knowledge of the covenant between God and Israel in the Old Testament. From its first beginning. the church held fast to this conviction by calling Jesus the Christ, the Messiah. Christ, Messiah, means the personal fulfilment of that to which the whole old Testament revelation points."

Emil Brunner was Professor of Theology at the University of Zurich. This extract is taken from his The Word and the World (1931). Student Christian Movement Press, Bloomsbury Street, London, pp. 82-94.

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NEWS BRIEFS (From the Internet)

* The earth is absorbing more sunlight

Conventional wisdom believed that clouds and pollution were keeping out slightly more sunlight than before and thus ameliorating the effects of global warming. Last month three studies published in Science have shown otherwise. Since 1990 the earth has been getting an average of 0.16 watts of energy per square meter per year. The results are consistent with research published last year that found that the earth's albedo or reflectivity has increased over the last few years. Experts are warning that research on albedo is vital to understanding global warming. Unfortunately, this seems to be falling on deaf ears. NASA has yet to agree to launch satellites to allow more detailed studies of the earth's reflectivity.

* The mother of black holes

Previously, scientists thought that black holes are born from stars around 20 times the size of the earth's sun. New evidence suggests that these mother stars have to be much bigger - perhaps 100 times the size of the sun. The evidence comes from strange stars with enormously strong magnetic fields. Magnetars, as these stars are called, were first discovered in 1998. They are produced from stars around 40 times the size of the sun suggesting that black holes must develop from something much bigger. A magnetar's magnetic field would wipe out the information on a magnetic strip from 100 000km away and kill you as you approached it's surface.

* The vinegar fly knows something some politicians don't

Drosophila melanogaster, the vinegar fly so beloved by geneticists is responding evolutionarily to global warming. Researchers have tested the frequency of its genes for alcohol dehydrogenase and other digestive enzymes. They found that the frequency of the form of the gene adapted to tropical climates has been increasing. The increase corresponds to an average increase in temperatures of 0.5 degrees celsius over the last twenty years. The question now is which politician is prepared to learn from a fly?

* Link to large herbivorous dinosaurs found

Earlier this month researchers published their discovery of an odd, 125 million-year-old feathered dinosaur fossil called Falcarius utahensis. It has features transitional between mean velociraptor-like carnivores and later large-bodied therizinosaur herbivores. Falcarius was bipedal but had stubbier legs adapted for carrying more weight. Its meat-cutting teeth are smaller and more adapted to leaf-shredding and it would have had a larger gut and more vat-like stomach for fermenting plants. Yet, with sharp claws of ten centimetres, it still retained something of the weaponry for which its forebears were notorious.

* Birds and bees do it, now robots do it

Engineers in the USA have made a robot that can reproduce itself. Made of a set of modular cubes called molecubes, a 3-molecube robot can reproduce itself in about a minute. The robots are simple at present but promise a great deal - robots that can repair themselves or reorganise themselves for a different function. This would make them very useful for space exploration or work in hazardous environments where conventional maintenance systems are impractical.

*Water strider inspires robot

Engineers have created a robot that can skate along water. Like the insect that inspired it, the robot has six legs, has water-repellant hairs on the end of its legs, is light-weight at 0.6 grams and its legs have a range of motion of 90 degrees. Unlike the water strider which can travel at the speed of 600 cm per second, the robot travels at just 5 centimetres per second. But, they are working on this.

* The hidden fire of fire ants

Fire ant workers sometimes open fire on certain of their queens. Researchers are beginning to understand why. It turns out that some queens in the nest carry a gene that makes them more fertile. However, the gene also causes a pheromone or chemical signal to be released which under certain conditions is equivalent to the order "open fire." The message is passed from worker to worker. They descend on the queen and kill her. Scientists believe that the fertility gene - pheromone combination is an evolutionary strategy for fine-tuning reproduction and genetic diversity. When conditions are good reproduction is emphasised. When conditions are trying the fertile queens are sacrificed to allow the genes of other queens to be replicated.

* Enormous x-ray explosions from the sun may have produced the earth

The existence of the earth is a puzzle. The young earth could well have spiralled into the sun due to powerful gravitational forces. Why didn't it? Astrophysicists believe they may have an answer in x-ray flares from the young sun a thousand times more powerful than today's solar flares. These would have caused turbulence in the proto-planetary disks that acted against gravitational force. The evidence comes from observations of young suns in the Orion Nebula cluster that are very much like what the sun would have been 4.5 billion years ago.

* The sun may be behind whale beachings

German scientists have found evidence that solar flares may be causing whale beachings perhaps by upsetting the whales internal compass. They compared sightings of beachings with astronomer's records of sunspots in the North Sea over 300 years. Sunspots are a reflection of solar radiation. They found that 90% of the whale sighting occurred during the shorter, high-energy sun cycle. Changes in solar output have a dramatic effect on the earth's magnetic field and could make the whales magnetic sense of direction go awry - if they have one. The system is known to occur in other animals such as pigeons.

* The mother of the Milky Way

There is something extraordinary at the centre of our galaxy. If "it's not a black hole at this point it's going to be something perhaps even more exotic." So says astrophysicist Fulvio Melia. He believes it is a supermassive black hole. The evidence? Three million suns worth of material constricted in a region no larger than our solar system with stars travelling at 5000 to 7000 kilometres per second. Scientists used to think that black holes were just destructive because they inexorably absorb surrounding material. But now it seems clear that they are also essential to the formation of galaxies including our Milky Way.

Humour from the web
FROM THE LIPS OF CHILDREN

"Yes," replied Jesus, "have you never read,

" `From the lips of children and infants
you have ordained praise?"
(Matthew 21:16b)

As a nanny, I was listening to two little girls in the bath. "Well, I keep asking," said one, "what is this hole in my tummy?" Reply from the other:

"If you really want to know, that's where God poked you to see if you were done."

A friend's child would persist in swearing and, to try and make him stop it, he was told that Jesus was always with him and knew everything he said and didn't like boys swearing. It seemed to work for a time until one day he was riding his tricycle and his mother heard him say:

"Hold tight Jesus, we're going round this bloody corner."

One of our nursery schools was performing its nativity play. The three wise men were offering their gifts to the baby in the manger when one of them forgot his lines. The teacher tried in vain to prompt him, but he was unreceptive. In desperation she told him: "Just say anything then." Whereupon the boy looked closely at the baby and said:

"Isn't he like his Father!"

A 6-year-old sustaining an argument with another who had declared that God did

not exist:

"Of course there's a God. If there wasn't, they wouldn't put a van for him on all the trains."

Source: Rees, N. (1983) Babes and Sucklings. Unwin Paperback, London.

Spot the Fallacy

THE FALLACY OF CAUSAL REDUCTIONISM OR HOW MANY HANDS DOES IT TAKE TO CLAP?

Mike L Anderson

How many hands does it take to clap? Two. Can you imagine someone arguing that it is the right hand that does the clapping with an opponent arguing that is actually the left? As ridiculous as this sounds, this style of argument is commonly used in one of those subjects that many people feel very strongly about - gun ownership. The gun control debate is largely polarised into pro-gun and anti-gun lobbies that fall into this and other fallacies in their preoccupation with their cause. Professor of Law, Andrew D. Herz goes so far as to say that "deceit, misperception, and dereliction of responsibility" have "characterized America's dysfunctional gun control debate" (1) Professor of Law, Andrew Jay McClurg says in an article entitled "The Rhetoric of Gun Control" that "it is better to make decisions based on straight thinking than on crooked thinking... While this may seem to state the obvious, an examination of the rhetoric used in virtually any political debate shows that we usually do not abide by this principle in the arena of public decisionmaking" (2).

He is right. Both camps fall into one very same fallacy. Starting with the pro-gun lobby, the oft-used slogan is "guns do not kill people, people kill people." A spokesperson for the National Rifle Association once said that guns do not "get off the shelf, get out of the box and hurt somebody" (3). The anti-gun lobby, counter with "guns kill people" (4) and "ban guns and the crime rate will go down." There is truth in each of the slogans, but each lobby wants to make one particular cause the major or only cause. This fallacy has been called causal reductionism (5) but it could be called the argument of the one-handed clap. Yes, people are an important cause of murder, but so are guns. People supply the motive and pull the trigger; guns supply a means. One study estimated that keeping a gun in the home carries a murder risk almost three times greater than not keeping one (6) although this figure is probably an overestimate because of reverse causation (guns brought into the home to counter a specific threat) and other confounding variables (7). To minimize the role of guns in crime, some pro-gun lobbyists love to point out that violent crime has increased in New York City despite severe conditions attached to gun ownership. Again, the one-handed clap! Professor McClurg points out that as "many as ninety percent of the handguns used to commit crimes in New York City are transported there from states without stringent gun control laws (8)." On the other hand, the anti-gun lobby often minimises the role of people in crime. Guns give violent expression to existing tendencies. Inge Larish points out that "men who perpetuate violent crime against women - rape and assault, especially - would greatly benefit from civilian gun bans" since for "most women, men's fists are lethal force" (9). One has to factor in the possibility of intelligent, opportunistic criminals welcoming the prospect of their victims being less able to defend themselves.

Is the answer, then, to encourage widespread gun ownership so that the crime rate will go down. This is the argument of some pro-gun pressure groups and is behind the slogan "Outlaw guns and only outlaws will have guns." Again the one-handed clap! Yes, legal guns can protect citizens against crime. They can also be bought or stolen for criminal purposes. In the USA, "most illegal weapons were originally purchased legally, then stolen or sold into the "black market""

(10).

In short, guns, crime and society make up a very complex system- there are many causes behind gun-related crime and homicide in countries. Unfortunately, as the above examples illustrate, all too often the rhetoric does not foster understanding of the multiple causes behind gun-related crime, but instead polarises thinking into simplistic pro-gun or anti-gun categories. This does not bode well for finding ways to reduce crime. Would it not be much better to ask such question as how can we fine-tune the criteria for deciding who can own which guns and under what conditions to optimally protect citizens while safeguarding their freedoms? This requires a lot of careful research and thinking indeed. I have written a multi-agent computer programme that explores the macro-level effects of countervailing micro-level forces on homicide rate. This is available on my web site (11).

There is one cause that is routinely ignored in discussions about gun control and it is spiritual in nature. An effective police force, an efficient judiciary and a wise legislature are all very good and proper, but are not the only causes of civil society. As Rabbi Jonathon Sacks points out, "The more law is inscribed upon our hearts, the less it needs to be policed in the streets (12)." Ignoring the spiritual is also a kind of fallacy of causal reductionism. What Moses had to say is relevant to gun control. Pointing a gun at a victim and pulling the trigger is very easy to do. Many do not because they are persuaded by the knowledge that murder is an act of disobedience against God who will call all to account on the Day of Judgement. And Jesus Christ is the Greatest Persuader of a better way. His greatest act of persuasion came when He died on the cross. He showed that the greatest act of power was not through a gun, but through the powerlessness of death on the cross. This great love-act has melted the hearts of millions and converted them into pursuing change through love rather than power. There is no question that a gun can stop a bad citizen from hurting you - but Jesus stops bad citizens by making them into good citizens. The Jesus way is superior because converted bad citizens can spiritually reproduce good citizens. Jesus does better than eliminating the bad; He produces the good. Of course, the Jesus way is not coercive; it depends on the willingness of agents to respond authentically and they may not. The Jesus way does not do away with the need for the State or for personal responsibility in protecting ourselves. To claim it does would be another instance of the fallacy of the one-handed clap. But it is no less this fallacy to ignore the way of Jesus.

Notes

1. Herz, A.D. (1995) Gun Crazy: Constitutional False Consciousness and Dereliction of Dialogic Responsibility. *Boston University Law Review* 75: 57. <http://www.saf.org/LawReviews/Herz1.html>
2. McClurg, A.J. (1992) Rhetoric of Gun Control. *American University Law Review* Fall, p. 53. <http://www.saf.org/LawReviews/McClurgA1.html>
3. Quoted in Herz.
4. Miller, K (2004) Persuading America http://www.arcuk.org/pages/persuading_america.htm
5. Hoover, A.J. (1982) *Don't You Believe it*. Moody Press, Chicago, p. 94.
6. *Ibid*.
7. Elder, L. (2002) More Gun Control, Please! <http://www.CapMag.com> by Larry Elder (October 24, 2002)

8. McClurg, ibid.
9. Larish, I.A. (1996) Why Annie Can't Get Her Gun: A Feminist Perspective on the Second Amendment. University of Illinois Law Review
10. Cited in Herz.
11. <http://www.mikelanderson.com>
12. Sacks, J. (1995) Faith in the Future. Darton, Longman & Todd, pg. 18.

* Feature article *

THE WORD OF THE BIBLE AND SCIENCE

Emil Brunner

"Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me" (John 5:39).

Christian faith is faith in the Bible. When the Christian speaks of the Word of God, he means in the first place the Word of Holy Scripture. That which holds together all the Churches of the world, from Roman Catholicism to the Quakers, from Luther to Cardinal Newman, that which throughout all historical changes of the Church has remained the same, the source from which Christianity has again and again drawn the power of renewal, is the Bible. During the nineteen hundred years of its history the Church has more than once been sick unto death; two hundred years ago Voltaire prophesied its end as certain in the near future. In the very house in which he made that prophecy there is at present an office of the British Bible Society, which annually sends out millions of Bibles in all languages into the world. It is the Bible which has again and again made the Church young and sound. True, there would be no Bible without the Church; this will be our subject to-morrow. But it is just as true that there would be no Church without the Bible. Christianity without the Bible would long ago have degenerated into an unrecognizable caricature.

When we say that Christian faith is belief in Jesus Christ, we tacitly imply that it is faith in the Bible. No Bible-no Christ; no Bible-no Word of God. What now more accurately is the relation between the Word of God and the Bible? - this will form the subject of our investigation in this lecture.

I

Many religions have their sacred books. But it is a sign of superficiality, though one which can be met with very often, to place all faith in such holy books on the same level. Yet the Christian's faith in his Scripture means something very different from what his Vedas or Bhagavadgita mean to the Hindu or his Koran to the Mohammedan. The Koran as well as the Indian holy books are divine oracles, text-books of revealed wisdom, law and rites. But for the true Christian the Bible is not a divine oracle of instruction; it is the testimony or witness to the revelation of God in Jesus Christ.

The revelation of God is not a book or a doctrine, but a living person. The relation between the Scripture and this person is clearly one of subordination: "Search the Scriptures ... and they are they which testify of me." Or, to use the words of Luther: "Christ is the King and Lord of Scripture." He, perhaps the most congenial interpreter of Scripture the Church has ever had, explicitly

asserted the subordination of the. Scripture to Christ, in such well-known utterances as these: "The Scriptures are the crib, wherein Christ is laid"; "if our enemies uphold the Scriptures against Christ, we on the other hand if necessary uphold Christ against the scriptures"; The Scriptures are Apostolic and canonical in so far as they teach Christ, and no further"; "It is for Christ's sake that we believe in the Scriptures, but it is not for the Scriptures' sake that we believe in Christ."

It is quite true that the church has not always had this clear vision of the relation between Christ and the Bible, otherwise many a passionate struggle might have been avoided. But the best teachers of the Church from the beginning to modern times always had - at least in practice, if not like Luther in clear theoretical formulation - insight into this fact of the subordination of Scripture under the message of Christ. We need the Bible because through this tradition alone can we know and understand Christ. This holds true of the old Testament as well as of the New. Christ cannot be understood without the Old Testament. I do not mean by this that the historian needs the knowledge of Israelite history and literature in order to be able to explain the life of Jesus - that is a separate matter, and does not concern us; I mean that the individual believer or the Church cannot know Jesus as Saviour, without the knowledge of the covenant between God and Israel in the Old Testament. From its first beginning. the church held fast to this conviction by calling Jesus the Christ, the Messiah. Christ, Messiah, means the personal fulfilment of that to which the whole old Testament revelation points.

II

In contra-distinction to all Eastern sacred books, the Old Testament is the thoroughly Messianic book, which means that it has its centre of gravity in the future. In itself the prophecy of the Old Testament, as we saw in our second lecture, is incomplete. The prophet knows that there will be another kind of revelation, higher than the one which he has received, and that this alone will be true revelation; it will be the event in which God's Word will be present in person, the personal presence of the living God, the new covenant to which he points in his prophetic word. The prophet is the dominating figure of the Old Testament, together with the God-anointed king and the high-priest who performs the atoning sacrifice. All three ought to be united in one person, and their functions in one act, in which the relative contrasts of these three would be overcome. This person and event does not lie within the range of the Old Testament. It is the hope of the Old Testament; it is Jesus, the Messiah. The Word became flesh, the God-king in the new kingdom, the high-priest, who is Himself the atoning sacrifice, as the Epistle to the Hebrews shows us in its overpowering way. That is how the Christian community understood itself in vital relation to the old Testament, and that is how it must understand itself even to-day, if it is not to wander off into Greek rationalism or mysticism. We can understand the Fourth Gospel only in connection with the old prophets, e.g., Isaiah, and Paul only in connection with the book of Genesis. On the other hand we can say that the meaning of the old Testament breaks forth only in Jesus Christ. Just as the force and essence of an acorn is seen only in the full-grown oak, and the morning dawn only when the sun which has produced it rises above the horizon, so Jesus Christ is the meaning of the old Testament.

It is, however, easier to understand the connection between Jesus Christ and the New Testament, first, because the New Testament gives us the authentic account of the life of Jesus and of the origin of the Christian community. Jesus Christ is an historical event, which like all other historical events can be shared by later generations only through tradition. So the New Testament is first of all tradition concerning Jesus. But this tradition was understood from the beginning in a way which totally differs from that in which the modern mind with its scientific interests would understand it. The tradition is not an empirical objective account for the purposes of scientific or profane enlargement of

knowledge. For the church such an account would be of no value whatever. An objectively asserted fact of history means nothing to the believer. No: tradition, "paradosis," in the New Testament sense is always message, testimony, the word of faith designed for the creation of faith.

The biography of Jesus of Nazareth - this latest product of an ill-informed theology would have been just as repulsive to the early Christians as a mummified corpse is repulsive to us. Jesus of Nazareth, the rabbi, the so called historical Jesus, was an object of no interest for the early Christians and is of no interest today for those who have preserved some understanding of what Christian faith means. What interests the Church and the believer is Jesus Christ - the Jesus in whom God speaks to us His Word. The historical Jesus" is a corpse, a scientific abstraction which is of no value to us. It was not the deeds, the life; the teaching of the rabbi Jesus, that Mark or Luke wanted to hand down to posterity; like the author of the Fourth Gospel they wanted to tell the deeds and the Word of God in Jesus Christ.

Fervent Christians have often resented the act that the Word of Jesus Christ was fixed in writing and put together in a holy book. As a matter of fact, the book does not necessarily belong to Christian faith. It would be possible, abstractly, to conceive of the Christian Church without the New Testament the tradition and testimony being carried on simply as the living voice of the Church. But what would have happened even by the second century with such a tradition? We know that it would have become a pagan mythology. Whereas the living voice of the Church reminds us that omne vivum ex vivo nascitur, [all life originates from life](1) that the Word of God has always to be a present word, in order to be really God's Word, His Word to me; on the other hand, the commitment to writing reminds us that the Word of God is a unique historical event which took place once and for all between the years 1 to 30 of our Christian era.

The revelation of God is not a "presence," as the mystics and enthusiasts maintain; it has pleased God to reveal Himself once and for all. In a previous lecture I have tried to show that this once-ness determines absolutely everything in Christianity, namely, the personal character of revelation and faith, and the personality of God. On the other hand, the revelation of God is not perfectum [a perfected thing] (2) as the orthodox see it; what would a perfect or finished something, that was and is no more, be for me today? But the revelation of God is, if I may say so, a perfectum praesens [presently perfected thing] - that which happened then and there in Jesus Christ, and also that which as such God is saying to me here to-day. Hence the statement that God's Word speaks to us in the Holy Scriptures has at once to be supplemented by adding that the Word of the Bible is the Word of God to us only in so far as God's Holy Spirit opens our ears so that we can hear His voice in the words of the Apostles - something which at no time can be taken for granted. Bible without Spirit is orthodoxy; Spirit without Bible is mysticism or rationalism. Scripture and the Holy Spirit as one - this was the conception of true revelation which was held by the Reformers.

III

I shall try to make this dilemma somewhat clearer from both sides; today, of course, the second one is the more actual. The modern religious man wants to have revelation, or at any rate religious truth, but without historical bonds. And why? Because - to repeat what was said previously - every man wants to stand on his own feet and to be independent of all others. In other words, the modern man wants to be autonomous through his own reason. He wants to have truth in himself. The modern man (in so far as he is truly modern) is a radical individualist, who will not admit that he is not - as far as knowing truth is concerned - self-sufficient. Self-sufficiency is the core of modernism. The entire development of the modern mind is like the story of Robinson Crusoe; it is an attempt on the part of the single man to live his own independent life, to

find truth by himself. I very much fear that this Robinsonade will not come to such a happy end as that famous work of fiction of the optimistic eighteenth century. But at any rate, nothing seems so repulsive to the man of our time as the idea that he should have to look for truth in a book which was written eighteen hundred years ago. Much has been said about the insufficiency of the Bible from the point of view of science; we shall come to this point later on. But one thing has to be made dear. If the modern man feels himself rather repelled than attracted by the Bible, it is not because of its scientific insufficiency, but because of the rationalism which will not permit him to acknowledge any authority in matters of truth outside of himself. The modern man wants to have a God; but he wants a God who speaks to him privately, and who speaks to him not from without but only from within, so that it is possible to identify God and self. He does not want God as authority but as immanent principle, a God who is the same as the innermost depths of the Ego. That is the reason why the Bible is so much disliked. For this book with its claim to be God's Word to me is quite undeniably outside of me, here on the desk. Beyond all doubt, I am not Jeremiah, or Job, or Paul. The Bible, with its clear assertion that it is the witness to the salvation in Christ, binds me to history and to other men, and destroys the delusion of autonomous reason. It is the index of the fact that I do not have truth in myself but have to get it from outside; as Luther says, justitia extra nos et aliena nobis [we find truth from outside and from others].

But no less false than this mystical or rationalistic emancipation from dependence on the past is the orthodox dependence on the past. While for living Christians the Bible always is the living present voice of God, orthodoxy has made the Bible an independent divine thing, which just as such, as a corpus mortuum [dead body], is stamped with divine authority. The individual believer has to believe beforehand, has to accept it as an axiom that between these two black covers nothing but divine truth is stored up. Then he may open the book and obediently accept everything which is said here as a word of divine authority. This materialistic, or, to be more exact, this idolatrous acceptance of Bible authority has done great damage to Christian faith. It is analogous to the Roman Church doctrine which requires from the individual believer the same axiomatic obedience to the teachings of the church, a confidence in advance, an antecedent sacrificium intellectus [sacrifice of the intellect], before one can come into contact with the contents of these teachings. This in both cases is what may be called blind authority and blind obedience, whereas the Scriptures require an obedience which is not blind, but seeing. You ought not 'to believe the Scriptures because the Scriptures say so, but because God tells you that these Scripture-words are His. No one has explained this true relation of seeing obedience to the Scripture more clearly than the Reformers. They never tire of making clear the distinction between a false blind Scripture authority-this suicidal idolatrous obedience, this faith in advance on the one hand, and that which they called autopistia, i.e., one's own hearing, one's own conviction of God speaking in the Scriptures. We trust the Bible, not because somebody says that it is God's Word, but because we hear God Himself say so. In the Bible we hear a language which we hear nowhere else; we meet a God whom we meet nowhere else. Here the secret of God's will is disclosed, whilst apart from the Bible it remains closed. The voice of God in the Bible captures our heart, un masks our existence, and opens up before us a new possibility; in hearing this voice we know that it is God's voice. That is why we believe in the Scriptures. Later on this Reformation view of the Bible was often confused with the orthodox view, although in point of fact we have to choose between them. The orthodox teachers could never have repeated Luther's words, that "the Scriptures are the crib wherein Christ is laid"; and Luther would never have approved of the opinion of later orthodoxy that everything in the Scriptures, just because it is in the Scriptures, is equally inspired by the Holy Spirit. For Luther and Calvin, those living exegetes, it was clear that the Scriptures are human testimony to divine truth, and that therefore the authority of Scripture is not direct, but indirect. But of course this doctrine did not lend itself so easily

to polemic purposes, nor did it satisfy the tendency towards an indolent security, as orthodox rationalism did. Of course it was easier to have God's Word enshrined in the holy book, so that whatever you took out of this sacred cupboard was divine inspiration, than to search the Scriptures for their witness to Christ. So far as the orthodox theory of Scripture is concerned, there is no distinction between this and the Indian or Mohammedan belief in their sacred books; the Bible has become a divine oracle.

Notes

- (1) [Editors note: Here and elsewhere we have translated from the Latin. Since we are not Latinists our translation should be taken with a grain of salt].
- (2) I.e. something finished and done with.

Emil Brunner was Professor of Theology at the University of Zurich. This extract is taken from his The Word and the World (1931). Student Christian Movement Press, Bloomsbury Street, London, pp. 82-94.

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