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# The <sup>+</sup> Seminarian

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**Festival of the Holy Trinity**  
**1951**

THE LUTHERAN THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY AT PHILADELPHIA

# The <sup>+</sup> Seminarian

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**Dedicated**  
to the  
**Class of 1951**  
of  
**The Lutheran Theological Seminary**  
at  
**Philadelphia**



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**Pax Domini Nobiscum**

# The Editor's Page



## CELEBRATION

This is indeed a day for celebration. With this issue THE SEMINARIAN is completing its first full year of publication since 1946. Since the renewal of THE SEMINARIAN in the spring of 1950, the staff has looked forward anxiously to this day. We are truly thankful for the reception by the students and friends of the Seminary and for their continued support. We have moved from the travails of last year to the growing pains of this. Our greatest battle was and continues to be with rising prices. There have been times when it seemed necessary to suspend publication, but always in time of need the student body has come to our rescue, and provided the additional funds. We have endeavored throughout the year to present the very best in student achievement. While maintaining this high level of scholarship, we have given to all the opportunity of having a part in this enterprise. In this time of change when other Seminary organizations have modified their aims, THE SEMINARIAN remains true to its original intent and purpose: A Journal of Student Expression. It is the hope of the staff that this function may be preserved. During the coming year we look forward to increased participation by all members of the Student Body in the submitting of material for publication. Again we express our thanks to all for the financial support without which this would not be possible.

## IN CLOSING

As another year of Seminary life draws to a close, we must bid farewell to part of our Student Body. To those graduating to higher work in the field we dedicate this issue of THE SEMINARIAN. To those whose names are herein listed we wish many blessings. We shall ever remain one in spirit, and in service. The staff and editor of THE SEMINARIAN wish to extend to the Faculty and Students of the Seminary and to all our brothers in Christ, our heartfelt wishes for a pleasant and profitable summer in the service of our Lord.

THE EDITOR

Mount Airy, May 1951.

# The Sacrament and Theology

In the traditional scheme of dogmatics, the doctrine of the Sacrament of the Altar is relegated to a relatively minor position under the study of the work of the Holy Ghost, which itself is one of the last subjects covered, after the more important aspects of theology, like that of Christology, have been treated. First we deal with the conception of God—or perhaps the nature of Christianity as a religion of revelation. At least we discuss the person and nature of Christ, the character of sin and faith, and the nature of salvation long before we get to a discussion of the meaning of the Sacrament of the Altar.

However, this scheme presupposes a certain type of thinking about things which goes in for "theologizing"—if not "philosophizing"—which would give a certain reality to thought totally apart from experience. The argument is from "characteristics of God" and "purposes of creation" rather than from the experience of encounter with God that we meet in the Gospel and the Sacraments. We can only speak about God because He has spoken to us, communicated with us through His Word. It is this experiential character of the Christian life which makes valid any Christian philosophy or theology stemming from it. A description of God is always the description of a God who communicates with His people, and this through the Word and the sacraments.

It is for this reason that it is important to understand that the Sacrament of the Altar is one of the means by which God has spoken to us, and is, therefore, important for an understanding of God—a theology. In fact, an un-

derstanding of the means which God uses in His communication with us is absolutely necessary for a real understanding of the Christian faith.

\* \* \*

The Christian faith is grounded in an event: the Incarnation. "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us." This is the central fact upon which the Christian life is focused. Everything within the Christian faith receives meaning from this event. The Sacrament of the Altar is only meaningful if the Incarnation actually took place. Only if God really did become a man in that Man from Nazareth, is it meaningful to break bread together in remembrance of Him. Only if His death is an atonement for sin is it meaningful to partake of His Body and His Blood. Only if this Jesus was exalted to the right hand of God is it meaningful to believe that in the Sacrament we have fellowship with Him as our Saviour.

But the Incarnation becomes known and meaningful to us only through the Gospel and the Sacraments. It is through these Means of Grace that we are confronted with that central event, for they set forth and proclaim that "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself." The Sacrament of the Altar does this very clearly.

How absurd is the claim of the Sacrament: "This is My Body! This is My Blood! I am here, come unto Me! Here is Christ!" Here? How can this be? Surely this is superstition! Christ is exalted far above the heavens at the right hand of God. He has a "spiritual" body. True, He is omnipresent—He did say, "Lo! I am with you always."—but this cannot

possibly mean that He comes to us "in, with and under" the bread and wine. The finite is not capable of containing the infinite!

But in the Sacrament we do have Christ's real presence. And it is the same Christ who sat at table with Pharisees and with Publicans. It is the same Jesus of Nazareth whose blood was shed on Golgatha, the same Jesus who suddenly appeared among His disciples a few days later, the resurrected Lord who ate fish by the shores of that Galilean lake. It is He who is present with us in the eating and drinking of the bread and wine.

"How can this be? Christ is in heaven. Did He not ascend to His heavenly Father? How can His Body and His Blood be present in the Sacrament, except in a figurative sense? How can the finite hold the infinite?" These questions, brought out by the doctrine of the Sacrament, illustrate the inability of men to resolve the paradox or solve the mystery of God become flesh in Jesus Christ. It is foolish to believe that the doctrine of the Lord's Supper holds irrational or even superstitious elements that the doctrine of the Incarnation does not, unless the Incarnation itself is also spiritualized and rationalized away. The questions above not only bring into question the possibility of Christ's real presence in the Sacrament, but also actually bring into question the possibility of an Incarnation. If Christ cannot be really present, with His Body and His Blood, in the Sacrament, objectively to both believer and unbeliever, then God could not possibly have taken the form of a servant and become man, much less to have been resurrected to life.

But it is this absurdity that we are asked to believe! We are asked to believe that a certain

Mary, a peasant girl, was the mother of God our Saviour! That Jesus the carpenter son of Joseph is none other than our Redeemer, our Lord and our God! We are asked to believe that God the Infinite became man the finite! Surely this is absurd. But upon it depends our eternal salvation.

The doctrine of the Sacrament helps to point this up. For it is here we encounter this absurd claim: God became man.

\* \* \*

A consideration of the Sacrament also helps us in trying to understand just what faith is. We idealize the apostolic age. We wish we had lived in Palestine during the first century. "Surely it would have been easier to believe if we had seen Our Lord ministering to people, and heard Him as He preached to the multitudes. The people in those days were really hicky." The idea is that somehow they must have had an advantage over us, living, as we do, so far removed from those momentous events. The Sacrament helps us see this as a caricature.

The Sacrament tells us that Christ is just as surely and really present with us as He was with His first disciples. There is no advantage conferred by the chance of history. Then, as now, sight and faith were two different things. Then, as now, it was faith which saw the Lord.

We need not be idealistic about the apostles and their faith. Just as Christ's Body is obscured by the bread, just as His Blood is obscured by the wine, so was the divine obscured by the human, God obscured by man. It is only in faith, not sight, that forgiveness and fellowship are assured to us. And it was only in faith that the apostles were assured that Jesus

was the Messiah of God. Jesus' claim that He was the Son of God was met with cries of "Blasphemy!" This was not surprising. Who could believe that this man was the Son of God? The apostles could. They did—in faith!

Perhaps there was even a disadvantage to living in the time of Christ. Many times faith was sorely put to the test. How could a suffering and dying man, condemned by a Roman court, be the Messiah, the Saviour? Jesus died and was buried. And His disciples had trusted that He was the one that should come. But surely the Sacrament points the way to understanding that faith must always remain faith. It is not sight. Some day we shall see face to face. But now we see as in a mirror, dimly. Faith is the blind groping and commitment which, seeing bread and wine, believes that this is His Body and Blood given and shed for the remission of sin. It is the same thing that was required of the disciples who, seeing a mere man, believed that He was the veritable Son of the Living God. This is what faith is. This is the kind of faith required by the Sacrament!

\* \* \*

The doctrine of the Sacrament of the Altar also helps us to understand just what the Word of God is. We are accustomed to speak of the Word **and** sacraments, as if these were two different, though connected things. But the sacraments are merely concrete expressions of the Word. The character of the Sacrament of the Altar therefore throws light upon the character of the Word itself.

The Sacrament is clearly an event, an act in time and place. It is something that takes place,

or is celebrated. And we usually contrast this event with the preached Word, or the written Word. But if the Sacrament is an event, so is the preached Word, so is the written Word. It is pretty clear that something really does happen in the Lord's Supper. Christ is present with His Word. At the altar, this presence can either be an offence, or a proclamation of God's grace. It calls for real commitment. But this is equally true of the Gospel. The proclamation is also an event. Something that actually happens. Christ is truly present, and as truly demanding as in the Sacrament. The preaching of the Gospel may be done by man, but in it is God the Holy Ghost. The proclamation of the Gospel is as real and actual an event as the celebration of the Lord's Supper. It is an act of God in just as real a sense as the Sacrament.

And it is just as personal, and individual. We often make the distinction between individual and general. We have the Word of God which is general in character, and then we have the sacraments which are individual and personal in character. This is a very false distinction. The Word, like the sacraments which are the "Word in action," is just as personal and individual. Reading the written Word is a very personal act of God. It is not general. Nor is the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost, through the written Word, speaks and addresses the reader personally. The preaching of the Word is also not merely general. For just as in the Sacrament we hear the personal and individual "Given for thee; shed for thy sins," so in the oral proclamation we have a very individual address, through which the Holy Ghost works repentance and faith.

This character of the Word we see clearly from the Sacrament of the Altar.

\* \* \*

The Sacrament also helps to point up the Christian life in contrast to a general religious or ethical life. The Christian life is centered upon a Lord. But the Christian finds (or is rather found by) this Lord in given acts and events. The Christian life is therefore centered around these given acts and events. It is therefore that the Christian life is sacramental, and like the Holy Ghost, is bound to the Means of Grace.

The Christian life is a life of fellowship with Christ. And we have fellowship with Him in the fellowship of believers, the communion of saints, gathered about His living Word and His real presence. The Sacrament shows us that that life is not Christian, no matter how moral, ethical or religious, unless it is centered upon Christ as He reveals Himself to us. This is why the Church is so important for the Christian. He is a fake who claims membership in Christ's flock, but who remains apart from the Church, and thus apart from the Head of the Church. Life in Christ is life in the Body of Christ. This the Sacrament makes very clear.

The daily sorrow and repentance, by which Luther so profoundly described the Christian life, is emphasized in the Sacrament of the Altar. The Christian life is hut a continuous repetition of true repentance and commitment in faith, under the impact of sin which continually besets us. This is the meaning of frequent partaking of the Sacrament, for it is here that we receive the joyous good news that God, for Christ's sake, has forgiven us all our sin,

and it is here that we recommit ourselves to Him in gratitude. Why frequent communion? Because we need frequent assurance of forgiveness. Why frequent communion? Because we need to continually recommit ourselves in faith to Him whom we have offended by our sin.

The simplicity of the sacramental life often gives offence. Surely this is not the Christian life! This is quietism! Where is there an attempt to walk in His steps? Where is the dynamic for a life of utter discipleship? The Sacrament stands as a stumblingblock to those who see the Christian life in moral and ethical terms. Where is the dynamic? It is in the Holy Ghost who, through Word and Sacrament, is the One who converts and sanctifies, and leads into all truth. It is this to which the Sacrament continually calls us.

\* \* \*

What I have been trying to say by way of these various illustrations is this. There is a certain priority to the Means of Grace. By this I do not mean only in regard to the coming to faith, but also in regard to an understanding of the faith. The Sacrament of the Altar thus has something to say to us descriptive of the Incarnation, faith, the doctrine of the Word, the Christian life, and perhaps other aspects of Christian theology. Because of this real priority, the doctrine of the Sacrament of the Altar ought to have a more prominent place in our thinking about the Christian faith, and in its academic form, in dogmatics. For the Sacrament is a real sourcebook in Christian doctrine, one that cannot be lightly disregarded.

PAUL E. HOFFMAN



# Segregation

On the 6th of March, students in all classes answered a group of questions. Some of the questions turned out to be foolish, because they indicated nothing. Another group were of no value except that they constructed a model of the Mt. Airy brand of seminary. Perhaps you would like to know what this average Mt. Airy theological student is like. You come from a community of 25,000; your age is between 23 and 25 years; seventeen of you are pastors' sons; seven are sons of farmers; your roommate is probably the son of a person engaged in some type of industrial work; you do not travel far to go home on vacations; you live near the Seminary; when you are home and attend church, you look about and discover that there are over 200 people present; on your way home from church, you notice few Negroes and Jews, for they are not numerous enough to draw your attention; an Indian or Mexican would surprise you; a Negro would surprise you if he came to your church some Sunday morning; you have never seen a Negro worship in your church; it is not that a Negro would not be seated in your church; the problem has never been important because a Negro has never come to the Service. These are some of the indications of the Mt. Airy Mr. Seminary and his environment.

The questionnaire consisted of fifteen questions. Four of them

indicated the attitude of Mr. Seminary toward the problem of our relationship with the Negro. These four questions were the following:

1. Negroes are inferior and should be segregated as much as possible in the community.
2. Negroes, while not inferior, are sufficiently different to make segregation (in schools, hospitals, churches) desirable.
3. There is no essential difference between Negroes and white people, but it is preferable for them not to mingle together socially (at dances, parties, etc.).
4. There is no difference between Negroes and white people, and they should live together as one people in the community, each being treated on the basis of his individual worth.

Questions #1 and #4 are a cross-check to each other. If these questions were not answered consistently, the questionnaire was not counted. Questions #2 and #3 indicate two types of social contact with the Negro Race. Question #2 is directed toward the desirability of segregation of Negroes as a racial unit of society. Question #3 is directed toward the segregation of the Negro in personal relationships with other races on an equal basis. The answers to this group of questions are compiled in Table I.

Table I (in %)

Total Returns—47

- |   |       |
|---|-------|
| 1. Segregation as a racial unit desirable.....          | 13.4% |
| 2. Segregation in social contact desirable.....         | 42.2% |
| 3. Segregation of both kinds (#1 and #2) desirable..... | 11.2% |

The results of this survey indicate that approximately one out of two seminarians desires social segregation, but only about one out of ten desires segregation in institutions. The breakdown of those who desired segregation (45.3%) is in Table II.

Table II (in %)  
Total Returns—44

1. Segregation as a racial unit desirable . . . . .	29.5%
2. Segregation in social contact desirable . . . . .	93.1%
3. Segregation of both kinds (#1 and #2) desirable . . . . .	25.0%

Table II shows in the breakdown of those desiring segregation that in its social application, it was very desirable with more than nine out of ten in this category. About three out of ten desired segregation as a racial unit. One out of four desired both types of segregation.

As a cross-check on the geographical distribution of those desiring segregation, Table III was compiled to discover if any section of the country influenced the results.

Table III (in %)

	By Synods	Total Student Body
Min. of Penna. . . . .	43.9%	41.5%
New York . . . . .	19.4%	21.5%
Pittsburgh . . . . .	4.0%	7.4%
New Jersey . . . . .	4.9%	8.2%
Central Penna. . . . .	0.0%	4.4%
Others . . . . .	26.8%	17.0%

This Table indicates that the geographical distribution of the individual had no important influence on the questionnaire.

The questionnaires indicated that the group surveyed would lean more to segregation on a social level. They have very little concern for the problem of institutional segregation. This desire for social segregation is contrary to the commonly held belief that the problem does not exist when personal contact is made, and the Negro is judged according to his basic worth as an individual and not as a racial unit. We are willing to be friendly with a Negro until

the social contact becomes an invitation into our social group. When this happens we become concerned, and immediately are belligerent to the Negro. As long as we can maintain a friendship which allows both persons the opportunity to treat each other as "things," we are tolerant. This attitude of the group surveyed accounts for the low percentage of a desire for segregation when the Negro is met as a racial unit.

As a check on the answers given by the Seminarians, questions 2

and 3 were taken from a questionnaire that the YMCA distributed among college level groups.

The reports of this were used as a control group. Table IV contains the answers in both instances.

Table IV (in %)

	Mt. Airy (97)	Control Group <sup>Correction</sup> <del>(44,116)</del> / 116 <i>J. Cook</i>
1. Segregation as a racial unit desirable .....	13.4%	13.7%
2. Segregation in social contact desirable .....	42.2%	41.0%

The significant fact of Table IV is the similarity of the answers of the Mt. Airy survey to the control group. This would indicate that the former group is divided as to the segregation of the Negro in the two categories of racial unit and social level in proportion, as the control group outside of the Seminary. This similarity is a disturbing factor, because it indicates that the social ethic that we as

seminarians have toward the Negro is not based upon Christian principles, but upon the principles we have assumed as habits from our environment. The challenge of the problem is that we must destroy the constant reproduction of the habit pattern, and build on the Christian ethic of the Gospel of Christ.

JAMES F. COOK



# *The Dependence of Christian Theology Upon Revelation*

For Christians the basic source of all knowledge of God is revelation. And yet, as such, Christians possess no monopoly on revelation, nor do all Christians mean the same thing by it. Perhaps even more important, it is only fair to note that in a certain sense all religions believe that God is disclosed somewhere and somehow—whether that disclosure is in reason, in conscience, in nature or in some sacred document or book. We see, therefore, that from our point of view revelation may simply mean or come to be a synonym for the content of religious consciousness. It may also be claimed that all theories of religious knowledge, whether they are based on moral value, mystical experience, scientific method or rational metaphysics, reach their fruition in revelation. In addition, it is important to notice that just as definite conditions must be fulfilled in the attainment of any sort of non-religious knowledge, so apprehension of the nature of God is regarded as contingent upon a correct approach. The intimate relationship between the approach adopted and the conception of God arrived at should be clear. God always turns out to be congruent with what in the nature of the case a given method of religious knowledge is equipped to handle. This does not mean, however, that as is sometimes asserted, "the epistemological dice of the religious man are more loaded" than those of the atheist, scientist, skeptic or naturalist, because most philosophies which reject belief in God adduce epistemological reasons for discounting or ignoring the only possible ways in which man

could become aware of God's reality.

Since time immemorial man has ever tussled with this problem. Upon study we may note that inclusive in any general theory of religious knowledge in so far as it attempts to accept Christ at all as a special revelation of God are the attempts to show the compatibility between what Christ discloses and the general method advocated. In the majority of cases this takes the form of regarding Christ as the most perfect exemplar of the "correct" approach to God, and the clearest manifestation of the deity to whom the method as a whole points. Thus a union with Christ is, as it were, a fulfillment of the mystical vision, but the union with God which this Christ makes possible is continuous with mystical experience in general. Let us cite several examples to illustrate this. In all of these instances a basic pattern prevails: God can be known through some general human capacity, wherein human nature is most closely linked to the divine, and Jesus Christ represents the highest development of this general capacity. For example, Hegel's doctrine of the Incarnation, wherein the universal is embodied in the particular, is simply an epitome of the entire Hegelian system. With Ritschl, the worth which constitutes the affinity between all men, that is, the spiritual as over against the natural—this affinity and God reach its highest manifestation in Christ. Even in the case of Schleiermacher the religious consciousness which constitutes piety in all men is most perfectly developed

in Christ. It can properly be said that in liberal theology, generally, where God is most clearly disclosed in human goodness, Christ is divine because he is the "best" man. The ultimate of this trend is to be found in Shailer Matthew's recent book(\*) where so-called "science" tells us that the cosmos is a "personality-producing process," and that Jesus typifies the general trend of this process. While it is true that Roman Catholic theology constitutes a standing exception to this basic pattern, it still envisages a harmony between special revelation and man's natural knowledge. The one competes with the other, supplying exactly those deficiencies which man with his inescapable attachment to sense data cannot surmount while at the same time satisfying those demands toward which his soundest natural aspirations point. It is like a keystone slipping into an otherwise broken arch. Here, to be sure, Christ is not included in the general theory of religious knowledge, as a highest instance, and thereby continuous with the rest. Instead, reason and revelation, which you might type as the natural and supernatural, are fitted together like two layers of cake and coated with an icing of tradition and church rulings.

Shortly after the first world war, a new movement came into the foreground, and is exemplified in the writings of Emil Brunner. This movement, generally known as "Barthian" is important because it uses revelation in a sense radically different from any of those heretofore mentioned. Brunner is unique in his assertion that the fundamental meaning of revelation is that it comes from beyond any possible coalescence of

divine and human action. For him, the religious knowledge accessible to man through the employment of his own capacities is not limited merely by his finitude and his attachment to sense data, but, far more seriously, it is limited and distorted by man's sinfulness. This thereby predicates an egocentric predicament which is not merely epistemological but also spiritual and ethical. Thus the right knowledge of God is dependent upon right relations with God, and man is at war with perfect love. The claim to this alienation of man from God is based upon the assertion that this alienation is reflected in the failure of all philosophical attempts to arrive at a knowledge of God. This comes out most clearly in the fact that all thinking about the concept of God is always as monologue. This "idea" of a God may be regarded as (a) a unity which lies beyond the destruction between subject and object and discloses itself solely to feeling because it transcends thought, or (b) as an all-embracing spirit which is discovered by penetrating inwardly to the depths of our own spirits, or finally (c) as referring to a world ground which is reached inferentially from the objects of experience. Brunner labels these three alternatives of identity, idealism, and realism, as "philosophy." He also goes so far as to declare that Kant's ethical theism really belongs under the second type instead of constituting a fourth alternative; for, despite Kant's stress upon the transcendence of God, he regards the noumenal or non-empirical self also as transcendent, even though this identification is of an ethical instead of a spiritual variety. Hence, Brunner claims that the philo-

\* *Is God Emeritus?*

sophical belief in a personal God is a contradiction in terms. By so doing he takes it for granted that philosophy, as such, must necessarily confine its conception of God to what can be known from the inspection of or the interpretation of human experience. Thus the philosophical belief in a personal God (which of course is the God of a Christian) is impossible because the idea of a God as correlative with man always falls short of the Christian conception of God as creator, whose relations with the world and with man are free instead of necessary, and who confronts us not as an "idea" but as a definite personal subject. If this is true he cannot be the subject of philosophical belief. But where then, one asks, may we obtain a knowledge of God?

To the Christian, the source-doctrine of God is the Holy Bible. This source, however, does not enter into competition with philosophical concepts of Him but is the one alternative idea among the others. For the Biblical doctrine puts an end to this monologue where God is dealt with in terms of human experience, and instead, singularly bears witness to a dialogue in which God takes the initiative. In the Bible God discloses Himself as an Act in history, and this is very different from saying that history discloses God! Also, in Jesus Christ a redemptive power which is otherwise inaccessible is made not only manifest as is true with a universal truth—but instead is made incarnate. Now, philosophy tries (and fails) to remove the paradoxical character of this event by transforming this incarnation itself into an "idea." We are told by philosophers that, for example, the ethical and religious principles of Christianity and the Christian concept of a God entering history can re-

tain their permanent validity irrespective of accidents in history. Notice that philosophy is inherently compelled to make this divorce between the truth of Christianity and the Person who mediates this truth because it knows nothing of a gulf between man and God which thought cannot bridge. Thus, Brunner asserts, philosophical knowledge of God, which assigns Him to an appropriate place in a man-made scheme always remains in sharp contrast to faith: for faith is most precisely that act of obedience wherein man responds to the redeeming love of God as He breaks through the self-isolation and autonomy of human life from beyond history and thought.

Perhaps the contrast between philosophy and faith comes out most sharply in connection with sin. It is hardly necessary to point out that every philosophy of religion must somehow become a theodicy, for God must be made to fit this world. But where philosophy speaks of justifying the ways of God to man, the Bible in direct contrast has eschatology: it speaks of God reconciling the world to Himself. In other words, the contradiction of sin cannot be removed by thought but only by redemption. We also are forced to face something more startling. If it be true that philosophy as such must rest upon the assurance that this world, as it is, can be brought into a unified and intelligible system, then philosophy is intrinsically opposed to acknowledgment of the need for redemption! Even if, by pressing its enterprise to the brink of the irrational, it discerns the need for redemption, nothing within its power can give assurance that redemption has been forthcoming. If belief in forgiveness is introduced merely to me as a speculative demand, then

this is merely human frivolity and presumption. Even in human experience, genuine forgiveness cannot be coerced: it must be proffered by the other person. The Christian assurance of forgiveness is founded upon a divine act, not upon doctrine. Now let us not delude ourselves. This description of faith will be deluding to many people. Brunner has gone to extreme lengths in avoiding any suggestion of synergism. Even the decision of faith whereby one becomes a Christian is interpreted as being wrought in us by God, instead of being a possibility imminent within us. This seems to leave man with nothing to do so far as his salvation is concerned, and to instill a mood of fatalism. Also, one who regards himself as an "unbeliever" will ask resentfully why God has not chosen him—if neither his sinfulness prevents forgiveness nor his ethical striving can win it. In answer to this problem we must first review our conclusions and corollaries. The first thing to remember is that although there is nothing in man which can establish right relations with God, there is something in man to which God can lay hold. This is that capacity of respect which distinguishes man from brute, and which cannot be destroyed or escaped even by the most extreme retreats into subjectivity or the complete abandonment to sensual indulgences. Thus there is a sense in which conscience and rationality do remain links between man and God, but so long as reconciliation has not been brought about, these spiritual capacities will be employed in warfare against God. Also there is no direct way in which man can argue from human morality to divine righteousness, nor can we get from human reason to the divine mind by argu-

mentation. So long as one is confined to the conscience-recognition way in religion he stands condemned by perfect love which is spontaneous and cannot be achieved as a matter of obligation. So long as natural theology pursues its task unaided, it is committed to the hopeless enterprise of bringing the sinful world and sinful nature into a unified interpretation which supposedly points to God the Creator. But at the same time these same capacities of conscience and reason in their self-frustration can deepen the despair which may finally make one ready to receive the meaning of his existence as a gift instead of regarding it as at his own disposal. Then what Pascal referred to as "the grandeur and misery of man" especially the grandeur and misery of the attempt to reach a self-sufficient philosophy, shows the width of the gulf between God and man and yet points to the possibility of its being bridged from the God-ward, if we may so call it, side. Both legalistic religion and philosophy may be pedagogues which lead men to Christ, but unless morality is founded upon reconciliation, it will lead inevitably to utter despair, Phariseism, or frustration. And unless philosophy is founded upon reconciliation it will end in skepticism or complacent intellectualism. May we seek to avoid this at all costs.

In essence, the real problem centers around our conception of God and our theory of religious knowledge. The claim is made that the vicious circle existing between them has been broken through, and if one takes seriously the belief that the conditions of religious knowledge such as trust—as distinct from theoretical views—are furnished by God himself, he will not look upon criteria

other than revelation as possessing equal or independent validity. One is not trite when he claims that the theory a man possesses as to how God is known clearly indicates the sort of God he worships. To regard the theory as a means of man's achieving communion with God instead of as deriving from that communion and bearing witness to it, is to reject belief in revelation entirely. Most simply, therefore, we must choose between an attitude where man lays down the conditions and asks God to fulfill them, and an attitude which acknowledges that God establishes the conditions and apprehends man by coming to

him. So long as revelation bears the sense of active personal communion founded upon forgiveness, the notion of a general revelation of God in all nature and history is a contradiction in terms from a Christian point of view. For God is not personally related to man through all nature and history. We do not see God as righteous and merciful by generalizing from the characteristics of the temporal process. Instead we see Him through the eyes of a revealed faith and interpret all experience by His Word and the disclosures of His Christ, the Revelation.

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## Contributors to this Issue

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