

the legitimate basis of the canon and the reliability of the revelation are clouded. Ministerial students are indoctrinated in the decisive importance of such alleged sources as J, E, D, P, Q and Ur-Marcus, postulated sources for which the critics have adduced neither actual original sources nor extant fallible copies," pp. 13-14. See also Eta Linnemann, *Is There a Synoptic Problem? Rethinking the Literary Dependence of the First Three Gospels*, Translated from the German edition, *Gibt es ein synoptisches Problem?* by Robert W. Yarbrough (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1992).

64 *Ibid.*, 3:248-249 and pp. 482-483.

65 White, *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 796-800. See also White, *Selected Messages* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1958), 1:20-21. "Prepossessions, prejudices, and passions have a strong influence to darken the understanding and confuse the mind even in reading the words of Holy Writ. The disciples traveling to Emmaus needed to be disentangled in their interpretation of the Scriptures. Jesus walked with them disguised and as a man He talked with them. . . . He opened their understanding that they might understand the Scriptures. How quickly He straightened out the tangled ends and showed the unity and the divine verity of the Scriptures."

66 White, *The Great Controversy*, pp. 624-625.

67 Philip Edgcumbe Hughes, editor, *Creative Minds in Contemporary Theology*, (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1966), p. 135. (For a more complete discussion see the entire section on Bultmann by Robert D. Knudson, pp. 131-162.)

68 David S. Dockery, *Biblical Interpretation Then and Now* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1992), pp. 166-167.

69 Grant Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral, A Comprehensive Introduction to Biblical Interpretation* (Downer's Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1991), pp. 10-11.

70 *Ibid.*, p. 289.

71 David L. Edwards, *Evangelical Essentials, A Liberal-Evangelical Dialogue With a Response from John Stott* (Downer's Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1988), pp. 104-105.

72 *Ibid.*, p. 105.

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81 White, "The Southern Field," *The Southern Watchman* (Nashville: Southern Publishing Association, April 24, 1902), p. 5.

82 White, *Education*, p. 170.

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SCRIPTURE AND THEOLOGY

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Introduction

The subject of "Scripture and Theology" has had my conscious interest ever since my student days. As part of my graduate work I took a major in Systematic Theology for the M.A. degree in the Theological Seminary at Andrews University. I could not leave this area of interest and subsequently took a cognate in Contemporary Theology as part of my my Ph.D. program at Vanderbilt University, while majoring in Biblical Studies. I continued to work and read, write and publish, lecture and teach with a mind toward both Scripture and theology.

It may be said from the start that this subject of "Scripture and Theology" is at the heart of the modern crisis in theology. And there is a crisis in theology in Christianity at large as has not existed at any time before. Since the Seventh-day Adventist Church is a microcosm of the larger world around us, we are not immune to the larger crisis of theology.

It is a truism to say that modern theology at large is like a boat floating in the uncharted waters of a stormy ocean without anchor or compass. Has this reality of theology in the larger sphere of Christendom become a reality in the Seventh-day Adventist Church? If it is not a reality yet, or if we are on the way for it to become a reality within the Advent movement, then it is high time to think together about the impact these powerful forces can have on Adventist theology and teaching.

An indisputable fact of our time is that modern theology is plagued by an unimaginable pluralism. Anything goes. This is

evidenced by multiple and radically divergent approaches, contextualizations, methodologies, systems and types of theology,¹ which are rather confusing to the uninitiated person and even to the initiate.

This essay aims to provide basic knowledge regarding the issues on the relationship of "Scripture and Theology" as it exists at present. We will survey five divergent theological approaches. In the last part we will provide proposals for a Scripture-based theology that will continue to sustain God's people in the end-time. We believe that Scripture challenges all theological proposals and methods, pointing the way for theology that needs to be explored and travelled.

The Issue of Authority

The most fundamental issue in theology (the study and science of God, man, and world) and "theological method" (the approach used to explicate matters relating to God, man, and world) revolves around and centers in the issue of authority. What holds authority in theology? What is the source or what are the sources of authority in religious thought, and in our case in Christian and Adventist thought?

Secularized Authority

Since western mankind lives in a secularized and humanistic world in which man is the focus of all that counts, we have to ask some foundational questions. Is man—his thinking and planning, his aims and goals, his interests and well-being, his way of doing things—the highest authority for life and faith? Is there a higher authority than man himself? These and related questions cannot be avoided; they must not be brushed aside. These questions and issues define both the structure of one's theology and the meaning of life.

It is pointed out by many theologians that the secular understanding of reality (the prevalent mode of thinking in our own time) is based on the autonomy of humankind. When we speak of the autonomy of humankind, we reflect the Enlightenment view of man as a being who has no longer any higher norm than himself. Man has created his own autonomy and has become his own authority

in all matters. In this view humans are in need of no external norm, higher authority, or anything that is beyond them.

Modern Secularity

The influential liberal theologian Langdon Gilkey, Professor Emeritus at the University of Chicago, has analyzed the modern theological scene with such great adeptness that we can follow many of his assessments in our descriptions of what is happening today. He summarized the issue of authority in effective terms, defining "modern secularity" by stating that "modern secularity is, therefore, the autonomy and freedom of man, his inalienable birthright and, fortunately, his innate capacity to know his own truth, to decide about his own existence, to create his own meaning, and to establish his own values."² In this sentence he summarizes the modernistic conception of the total freedom and autonomy of man and his complete and full independence from anything beyond himself.

Overthrowing Sacred Orders

This way of perceiving secularized humanity implies, writes Gilkey, "the toppling of sacred orders inherited from the past, . . ."³ The "toppling of the sacred orders" includes what every believing Christian holds dear. It means, as Gilkey continues to explain, that "many of the historic forms of religion, with their traditional authorities of various sorts stemming from the distant past, their requirements of faith, obedience, submission, and self-surrender, and their insistence that man is fulfilled when he patterns himself according to the divine image"⁴ is to be abandoned.

Furthermore, it means that every human being has to subscribe, if he or she wishes to be in tune with modern culture, to the spirit of modernity, a secular spirit, without any moorings in divine authority or in God as a superior Being. Accordingly there is no longer any divine Reality that informs human beings about the best and most successful way of life in the here and now as a way of preparation for a future eternal life. The eternal is the now, the present existence, and there is no future eternity beyond the here and now.

This secularized view of reality and life is what theologians

and philosophers describe as modernity. Our own time is a time of modernity. Humans are making themselves into gods, deciding on their own what is right and wrong, what is good and bad, and what is acceptable and unacceptable. Humans set their own standards on their own terms. In this age of modernity there is no authority or norm beyond what humans decide by themselves.

Autonomous Man

Ultimate authority, in modernity's way of viewing reality, is rooted in humanity alone. In this sense man is to be understood as "autonomous man"⁵ with "autonomous reason." "Autonomous reason" is the capacity of the human mind to make its own independent decisions which are the ultimate norm. It is a given among modernistic, liberal theologians to view reason, the human capacity to use the rational faculty of the mind, as an independent source of knowledge untouched by sin and its influences. Thus, reason is seen as a superior source of knowledge, more than anything else. "Autonomous man" is rationalistic in this sense of the reliance on reason as the final norm for thought, life, and theology.

The phrase "God is dead," in what has become known as the Death of God theologies⁶ of the 1960s, summarizes the secularized cultural mood and the rejection of any norm or authority beyond that created by mankind. "God is dead" means that the traditional picture of a personal God who has revealed Himself in history and who is known through the Word of God has died in the mind of persons belonging to modernity. The God of historic Christian faith is dead. In this radical theology religion is seen without theology and theology without God.⁷

These brief introductory remarks on the issue of authority reveal that in modernism, in the present age of modernity, authority is based on man and his thinking and not on God and His revelation. The latter view, namely that there is a God who has revealed Himself in Scripture, is considered as outdated. Scripture is but the thinking of the pious of the past and largely part of the outdated tradition of the Church.

Authority in Theology

As we turn to the matter of authority in theology, it is incum-

bent on us to address the roles of the four classical sources of theology: Scripture, tradition, reason, and experience. What role does each source have in theology? Should one source have the role of highest authority? Should it function in a norming role, that is, as ultimate authority in a theological system?

From the viewpoint of modernity and its self-autonomous spirit, it is not surprising that there are theologians (large numbers of them, working in differing systems of modern thought) who consider these questions strictly out of order. Many of these modern theologians have opted for a correlation approach in which all four foundational sources (and others) are used without any single one of them functioning in a norming role. This way of thinking is characterized by the very nature of our age; relativism is the rule of all systems of thought.

A significant number of theologians opt for a combination approach in which two or three of the sources, namely, tradition, reason, experience (all of which are based on human endeavor) are given the highest norming role in theology. Far from denying any roles for the sources of tradition, reason, and experience in the theological enterprise, it has to be admitted that the historical revelation known as Scripture has functioned heretofore as the *primary role* in classical Protestant and orthodox theology.⁸

Our brief paragraphs on modernity's secular spirit above reveal fully that this classical view no longer holds sway in liberal theology in general. Fundamental changes have taken place in modern theology over the last two centuries, particularly in recent years, that involve a paradigm change⁹ from classical orthodox models where Scripture reigned supremely for the theology of the Church to the models of relativism in authority of the present age.

Do Christians have to give up or give in to the spirit of modernity? Is it possible that at the end of the twentieth century God will have a believing people who will be loyal to Him at all costs? A people of complete and full faith who will pattern their lives and their belief system on the basis of the divine revelation of God Himself as embodied in the Bible as the sufficient Word of God? Do all believers have to conform to modernity's way of viewing reality? Can there be believers who are not transformed by modernity, who are not conformed to modern ways of thinking, but who are in-

formed and transformed by what God has shown to be His way and His will for the best good of humanity?

We will investigate below how and why different theological systems use Scripture in an unauthoritative manner. This way of using Scripture has been described as the "functional" use of Scripture in theology. We will reflect on its implications for a theology that seeks to be faithful to the internal witness of the Bible. We will also suggest some proposals for a theology that is based on the internal claims of Scripture itself.

Defining Scripture and Theology

It is necessary to define what we mean by "Scripture" and "theology" since we are dealing with the relationship of the two. The definitions will clarify how we will use the terms in this essay.

Scripture

When we refer to "Scripture" in this essay we mean the Bible, consisting of sixty-six books. Protestants continue to use only the books of the Old Testament which composed the Hebrew Bible used by Jesus and the apostles and early Christians in New Testament times.¹⁰

Scripture is taken to be the "inspired Word of God." By this we mean every book of the Bible shares in being fully inspired (see 2 Pet 1:19-21; 2 Tim 3:16; John 10:35; Heb 1:1-3).¹¹ We will come back to the topic of inspiration and the claims made for it in the Bible in the last part of this essay.

Full Inspiration of Scripture. The Biblical books are written in human languages by human agents, but still remain the product of full and complete inspiration. Such full and complete inspiration is called "plenary inspiration," full inspiration. There is no doubt on this issue. In this sense the Bible has God as its Author, while it is written by inspired human writers who reveal their own styles and modes of expression. Inspiration involves the superintendence of the Holy Spirit so that what the human writer puts down in written form is a fully trustworthy expression of what God wished to communicate in His Word.

Poetic Inspiration of Liberalism. This understanding of the Bible is characteristic of liberal, neo-Protestant, theology. In liberal

theology universal, poetic or general inspiration is claimed to be the common heritage of humankind. "Poetic inspiration" is the inspiration common to all human writers regardless of whether they are religious or not. This is the position of neo-Protestant theology.¹² The designation "neo-Protestant" theology is a substitute for liberal theology.

Personal Inspiration of Neoorthodoxy. In neoorthodoxy (a system of theology rooted in Karl Barth and his followers) inspiration is limited to a so-called "personal inspiration." It is claimed that the Bible writer is inspired in the sense that he has a personal encounter with God, but without any transmission of content from God through the Holy Spirit. What he has written is only the result of an encounter which results in some numinous insight gained by human reflection in which no information was communicated from God. The writings of the Bible are but the witness to the personal numinous encounter. The word "witness" used much in theological writings of encounter theologians communicates that the biblical writings are not inspired, but that the writers had a divine-human encounter void of any content. Thus, what is written by those who are said to have had this encounter does not carry the stamp of inspiration. The encounter model of inspiration which is empty of divine content is widely accepted today.

This concept of "personal inspiration" as just depicted is the standard model in "moderate historical criticism"¹³ of more recent times.¹⁴ In this view, inspiration is fully subjective; it is person-oriented but not Scripture-oriented. Whatever such "inspired" persons write is not the result of divine inspiration or guidance in which actual information is passed on and put into writing.

We must be fully aware of the fact that this so-called "moderate historical-critical" view claims that the writers of the Bible did not receive any content in the experience of inspiration. We have to stress again that in this view the Bible is written in the same manner as any other written document of the past or the present. It can, therefore, be investigated in the same manner and by the same historical-critical method that is used for any other ancient or modern written work.

The limitation of inspiration to the subjective level is a convenient invention of modernity. It makes possible to understand

and interpret the Bible as fully time-bound and historically conditioned by the past and cultures of the past. It robs the Bible of its authority as the Word of God valid for all times, all places and circumstances within the guidelines of its internal structures.

It is of great importance to recognize additional implications of this so-called "moderate" view, sometimes referred to as the "post-critical" view. Since, according to this view, the Bible is not inspired, it is not and cannot be considered as the Word of God. Therefore, the Bible is redefined as a "witness" to the Word of God. The theologically sensitive reader will give careful attention to the widely used term "witness," and the significance it holds in this system of neoorthodox theology. In the theological system known as neoorthodoxy the claim is made that the Bible can "become" the Word of God. This may happen when a person is subjectively touched by what is written and in this subjective and personal encounter which is occasioned by the words of the Bible the latter "becomes" the Word of God for that person. Despite such a subjective experience the Bible itself is *not* the Word of God.

Scripture's View of Inspiration. The informed Christian recognizes that 2 Timothy 3:16 contains another view of inspiration. "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, . . ." Here the biblical text maintains that Scripture itself is inspired.¹⁵ "Holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit" (2 Peter 1:21, NKJV). The Bible writers were inspired and the Scripture they produced "is given by inspiration of God." It is "God-breathed" (*theopneustos*). Thus, the writings of the Bible themselves are inspired by God. We will develop this in more detail in the last part of our essay.

This does not mean that Scripture is verbally inspired in the sense of mechanical dictation theory as has been held by some Roman Catholics¹⁶ and Protestants¹⁷ in the post-Reformation period. Rather, the Holy Spirit has given by revelation in a variety of forms and ways (Heb 1:1-3) to the writers who wrote the books of the Bible actual information. And these inspired writers in turn, again under the superintendence and guidance of the Holy Spirit, "spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit" (2 Peter 1:21). Since "all Scripture is given by inspiration of God" (2 Tim 3:16), what is written in Scripture is the authentic and trustworthy Word of God, delivered to us in a trustworthy form, providing actual and proposi-

tional truth from God. It can be understood fully and correctly only through the illumination of the Holy Spirit and by Scripture interpreting itself, that is, *sola Scriptura*¹⁸ in the sense that Scripture is to interpret Scripture.

Theology

How shall we define "theology," since there is such a plethora of models, types, and definitions? We are faced today with an unsurpassed pluralism of theologies and methods for theology. We can barely find a path through the multiplicity of approaches and systems which are available.¹⁹ However, the basic question still remains, What is theology?

Biblical Theology. Restricted to the Bible itself, we may speak of Old Testament theology,²⁰ New Testament theology²¹ and Biblical Theology.²² These three areas of theology belong properly to the field of study known as Biblical Studies. We do not refer to them when we speak of "theology" in the strict sense, although they too are theologies.²³ When we speak of "theology" in this essay, we do not refer to these disciplines in Biblical Studies or to their relationship to dogmatic/systematic theology.²⁴ The focus of this essay is systematic/dogmatic theology.

Systematic/Dogmatic Theology. The term "theology" generally refers to the discipline of systematic theology or dogmatic theology. Although a distinction can be made technically speaking between systematic and dogmatic theology,²⁵ we will consider both systematic and dogmatic theology as a single category.

"Theology" in the sense of systematic/dogmatic theology means for our purpose the construction of a theological system of beliefs regarding God and man, sin and salvation, the view of the world from the perspective of the divine, the present church and the future kingdom to come. This definition of "theology" implies the explication of the Christian message in a systematized, coherent, constructive, and orderly way.

We are not narrowing systematic theology to such modern theological systems as "existentialist theology,"²⁶ "process theology,"²⁷ "theology of hope,"²⁸ "liberation theology,"²⁹ "feminine theology,"³⁰ "black theology,"³¹ and other such systems or subsystems which have emerged in recent years.³²

As already stated at the beginning, "theology" is the study or science of God in relation to who He is, to creation, revelation, humanity, to humankind's present sinful condition and divine salvation provided, and to the entire divine plan of redemption which ultimately climaxes in a new heaven and a new earth.

Sources and Norms for Theology

Anyone who seeks to construct a theology is confronted with two major questions: (1) What sources shall be used in the development and presentation of theology? The second major question is equally important, because it touches on the essence of the theological enterprise as a whole: (2) What normative value is to be given to any of the sources which are employed in the theological system? Does any single source, or do any combination of sources, have greater weight than another source or other sources?

The traditional four sources of theology, as they have been known in typical Protestant systems of theology over the centuries, are Scripture, tradition, experience and reason. Let us briefly turn our attention to each one of them.

Scripture

The first source consists of Scripture, which, if understood as the inspired Bible, has a quality different from the other three sources. Scripture, or the Bible, considered on its own terms, has been historically taken to be the Word of God, and as such it has had the role of a norming function, at least in orthodox Protestant theology in the past and the present.³³

This historical, norming function has placed Scripture in a category by itself. This is not the case in historical-critical theology, as we shall see further on. In historical criticism Scripture is humanized and relativized to the extent that it is not more than a human word among other human words. The entire goal of historical criticism is to make the Bible human and nothing but human,³⁴ so that one can distinguish between the "Word of God" and the "Word of Man,"³⁵ the latter being the Bible.

We have seen that this is true also in "moderate" historical criticism where inspiration is acknowledged as a personal encounter by the followers of neoorthodoxy. No divine information is

communicated in this way of understanding Scripture. This kind of inspiration is incapable of saying and uninterested in declaring that Scripture is inspired. It retreats to the view that "none of Scripture is objectively Word of God, yet held that any of it can *become* Word of God through a personal divine confrontation."³⁶ The Word of God is personalized and identified with Jesus Christ. Aside from this Scripture is a "witness" to the Word of God.³⁷

The presentation of the self-testimony of the Bible, both the Old and New Testaments, in the last section of this study will provide an overview of the picture of the nature of Scripture as understood by Scripture itself.

Tradition

Before we turn to a discussion of each of the three remaining historic sources of theology, we do well to reflect on the difference of these three sources as a group as compared to Scripture. Tradition, experience, and reason, have a common denominator. They share with each other the human element, a non-divine aspect. What we wish to state clearly is that tradition is a product of man; experience is what humans experience on the horizontal level of existence; and reason is the capacity inherent in human beings to think and use logic and all the other elements of reflection and thinking of the human mind. In short, Scripture, while the product of human writers, is more than the product of men. It is divine revelation. On the other hand, tradition, experience, and reason are elements of humanity which are the product of human activity. They share in common the purely human and non-divine elements of existence, thought and reflection.

Tradition can have different meanings. In Roman Catholicism the decisions on Scripture and tradition of the Council of Trent on April 8, 1546,³⁸ have become the norm of Roman Catholicism.

Those who disavow the role of tradition in theology entirely may listen to the president of a Baptist seminary who "once said with tongue in cheek: 'We Baptists do not follow tradition. But we are bound by our historic Baptist position!'"³⁹ We do not say too much, if we admit that every community of faith, church, or denomination has some tradition of its own in addition to that of Christianity at large. While tradition need not be denied, the ques-

tion is, What role that is assigned to it? The tradition of the Christian church at large and the tradition or heritage in which we ourselves function needs to be recognized for what it is: tradition!

What authority or norming function will tradition hold in theology and life? Will it stand side by side with Scripture? Will tradition *and* Scripture together function as final norms for theology?

The Roman Catholic Church has assigned to tradition a place of domination in theology. The "Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation" as voted at the Second Vatican Council in 1965 declares regarding the two sources of Scripture and tradition that through "tradition the Church's full canon of sacred books is known" and that "it is not from sacred Scripture alone that the Church draws her certainty about everything which had been revealed."⁴⁰ This affirms the teaching of Roman Catholicism that Scripture is always understood and interpreted in the light of her continuous tradition.⁴¹

Tradition plays an ever increasing role in liberal and neo-Protestant theology.⁴² Some Protestants may suggest that there is no tradition. When the informed Protestant deals with tradition, will he give it a place equal to Scripture? Will he give in to the Catholic model of giving tradition a dominating place? We hope not! In the historic Protestant understanding "tradition will give way to Scripture."⁴³ The Catholic view of "not from sacred Scripture alone"⁴⁴ is opposed by the Reformation principle "by Scripture alone" (*sola Scriptura*). This can only be the case, if Scripture has not been "demythologized" along the lines of presuppositions based in a modern, secular world view, "de-inspirationized" on the basis of the norms of modernity, "relativized" on the basis of modernity's understanding of man and reality, and so on.

Reason

Our statements on reason (and experience) will be brief. In our subsequent investigation of some theological systems we will recognize how reason is used in theology today and what role reason plays. We are reminded, however, that since the onset of the age of rationalism (about two hundred years ago) reason has taken on an ever increasing role and has been employed in many instances as

the superior norming agent. This is true not only of the liberal tradition of doing theology in neo-Protestantism and the Thomistic and neo-Thomistic systems of Roman Catholicism, but seemingly even in some evangelical theologies.

There is a constant temptation to use "autonomous reason," which is the reason of the man of modernity who makes his own rules and norms, the reason which is by design uninformed by divine revelation as it given to us in the Word of God. "Autonomous reason" is used in many systems of modernistic theology as a source which surpasses all other sources of theology.

We believe that God has given man his reason as a gift to be used appropriately. Like any other gift God has given to mankind, reason is to be informed by the superior revelation of God, is to be transformed by the Holy Spirit, and is to be used as a servant in theology. In this sense we may speak of reason as a tool sanctified by divine activity.

Experience

Experience has played a major role in liberal systematic theology over the last two hundred years. We will point this out when the system of Friedrich Schleiermacher is investigated as a major system below.

Evangelicals or conservative theologians and Christians, however, are by no means aloof from experience. The current emphasis on experience as the highest norm of authority is manifested in the charismatic movement. The role of so-called "Spirit baptism" in classical Pentecostalism is one case in point.⁴⁵

The "second" and "third" waves of the charismatic movement need to be brought into the picture with its emphasis on healing and modern prophecy, in order to recognize the power of experience in current theology and life.⁴⁶ The response so often given by charismatic Christians is that a particular teaching of the Bible (clear and often acknowledged to be a genuine biblical teaching) cannot be followed until the Holy Spirit tells them to. Here, the personal experience of charismatics asserts itself as the highest norm for faith and living.

Contemporary Models of Theology

A prominent theologian describes the contemporary situation in theology as follows: "To begin, I have to say with virtually all the other interpreters that modern theology is incredibly pluralistic and diverse."⁴⁷ This is no overstatement. Theological pluralism has reached unprecedented proportions in our own time.⁴⁸ We have to admit that the argument for pluralism among some vocal Adventists reflects this trend.

For our study on the relationship of Scripture and theology, a decision had to be made among the many models and systems. It was felt best to select the two most influential theologians of the last two hundred years: Friedrich Schleiermacher, the father of liberal theology, and Karl Barth, the most prominent theologian of neoorthodoxy (dialectical theology). They are recognized as trailblazers, bringing about shifts in the theological paradigms that have remained permanent. An Adventist teacher, Richard Rice, who has recently published a major book after twenty years of reflection on reason and faith, deserves to be heard on the same subject of "Scripture and Theology." These practitioners of the theological craft belong to the non-evangelical world of theology.

But the evangelical world of theology must not be neglected. The best known living evangelical theologian is Carl F. H. Henry, who has produced six massive volumes on theology in recent years, deserves to be heard. It also seemed appropriate to pay attention to a rising but moving star, Clark Pinnock, who considers himself as a "moderate" theologian. He wishes to be understood as an Evangelical.

The reader who is totally unfamiliar with systematic theology may find this section of the paper to be particularly challenging. Indeed, we have to cover much ground and are unable to unpack all technical language and every new concept. This is an inevitable hazard in an essay where space is limited. But we hope that it will be informative and helpful, even with these limitations.

To those who have some familiarity with the issues involved, we hopefully will bring new insights to the subject. In addition, there are many eager minds who would like to learn something foundational about what is happening in theology today, and they will benefit from this next section. Let us be reminded that Adven-

tists reflect many influences from ideas published beyond our own faith community. It may be helpful to thought leaders in the pew and elsewhere, if they gain some additional understanding and insight into theological systems that have left or may be influencing Adventist beliefs, thought and life.

Liberal and Neoorthodox Models of Theology

Friedrich Schleiermacher and Experience Theology. We begin with the father of modern liberal theology, Friedrich D. E. Schleiermacher (1768-1834), because he departed from previous theological methods, particularly the classical orthodox approach, setting out a radical new course for theology. Many other minds have followed this new course, each in his/her own way, or are fundamentally indebted to it, to the present.

This German theologian was brought up in a conservative Moravian home and himself once held Bible-informed views. But his theological education weaned him away into new thought patterns. He sought "to avoid the alternatives of an orthodoxy based on revealed truth and a natural theology based on abstract speculation," writes Colin Brown quite correctly.⁴⁹ What did Schleiermacher do that was so radically different?

In the year 1799 Schleiermacher published his famous work entitled, *On Religion: Speeches to its Cultured Despisers*.⁵⁰ The publication went through four editions⁵¹ in 32 years, revealing its long-range popularity. Students of theology read it to this day. In the words of Rudolf Otto, himself a major figure of liberal theology in our century, this work is the "main gateway to the intellectual world of the later renovators of Protestant theology."⁵²

Schleiermacher presented his full system of theology in his monumental work, *Glaubenslehre*, which appeared first in 1821/22, and was translated under the title, *The Christian Faith*.⁵³ Since Schleiermacher broke radical new ground in the theological scene, we need to ask what did he depart from and where did he lead theology?

The radical break with previous theology was intended, writes theologian Peter C. Hodgson of Vanderbilt University, to "free the believer from the external and arbitrary authority of a supernaturally mediated revelation and verbally inspired religious texts

[viz. Bible].⁵⁴ Thus, Schleiermacher did not base his theology on the foundation and authority of the Bible as the inspired Word of God. He rejected this approach outright, refusing to acknowledge the Bible as authoritative and normative for theology, faith and life.

Schleiermacher broke through the old debate between rationalism, which denied the supernatural (namely, miracles, God entering history in Christ, the virgin birth, Christ's bodily resurrection, etc.) any place in theology, and the supernatural, which was still adhered to in orthodox Protestant theology. Having decided not to base his theology on the Bible nor on so-called "natural theology" with its various proofs of God based on extra-Biblical thought—which Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) in his volume, *The Critique of Pure Reason* (1781), had criticized⁵⁵ in a powerful way—Schleiermacher based his system on experience.

In basing his theology on experience, Schleiermacher used a descriptive analysis of the experience of man. He claimed that religion is "a sense and taste for the Infinite."⁵⁶ Religion is a matter of "feeling." Schleiermacher says, "Feeling is piety, in so far as it expresses . . . the being and life common to you [humanity] and to the All."⁵⁷ Feeling is "the operation of the world upon you."⁵⁸ It is easily seen that Schleiermacher is pantheistic in his definition of "feeling."

Religion is something in man which "is infinite, not only because something new is ever being produced in time, by the endless relations both active and passive between different minds and the same limited matter; not only because the capacity for religion is never perfected, but is ever being developed anew, . . . is ever entering deeper into the nature of man."⁵⁹ It follows that God is not out there somewhere in the universe communicating with man on earth. Rather the "immediate and original existence of God [is] in us through feeling."⁶⁰ Here God is seen in man and not as something outside of man.

Schleiermacher does not develop a theology without God, but one where God is in man. Thus, he developed an "anthropological method" for theology,⁶¹ one which is based on experience with the "feeling of absolute dependence."⁶²

Karl Barth, the father of neoorthodox theology, described Schleiermacher's new theological system which employs argu-

ments from ethics, philosophy of religion and apologetics,⁶³ as a "theology of feeling, of awareness."⁶⁴ It is the awareness and feeling which resides inside humanity and is common to all humanity.

Schleiermacher needs no Scripture for his theological system. His theology of feeling and human awareness turns away from supernatural revelation embodied in the Bible as the highest norm and authority for theology. He bases his theological system of thought instead on anthropology, using the analysis of man as the norming factor for his theology. In Schleiermacher's system man is the ultimate norm for theology.

In his view Christianity needed to be interpreted within the limits of human experience, "making humanity itself the source and arbiter of Christian truth," as Clark Pinnock points out.⁶⁵ This meant that Schleiermacher could no longer call his system a "systematic theology," and he gave it instead the name of *Glaubenslehre*, "the teaching of faith," human faith found in Christianity.

Schleiermacher could not call his theology the "doctrine of God," as Paul Tillich notes,⁶⁶ because his theology of human faith "is the description of the faith as it is present in the Christian churches."⁶⁷ It is not a faith described and legitimized in Scripture.

The anthropological foundation for this new liberal theology has many dimensions and implications. One dimension is that "Christianity becomes a religion among other religions. There are other religions besides Christianity."⁶⁸ For Schleiermacher it meant that "the Spirit [which is not the Holy Spirit but the universal Spirit] reveals Himself in all human history."⁶⁹ Therefore, there could not be simply one true religion.⁷⁰ Christianity is for him merely "the highest order" of religion.⁷¹ While Christianity is for Schleiermacher the "highest, the truest, the most fulfilling of all religions,"⁷² he is directly succeeded by Hans Küng, David Tracy, John Hick, A. Kidder, and others in our own time who suggest that Christianity is but one religion that brings salvation aside from the other religions in the world which also lead to salvation. This modern trend has had and continues to have profound influences on missions, its redefinition, and reorientation.

We cannot pursue every angle of criticism that is to be levelled against Schleiermacher and his anthropological theology. This has

been done by many others.⁷³ But we need to recognize the significant turning point which his system brought about, a turning point that made "humanity itself the source and arbiter of Christian truth. It made belief in God, as [liberal theologian Ludwig] Feuerbach noted, sound a lot like a human projection of its own desires and aspirations."⁷⁴ In Schleiermacher's system theology dwells in man rather than God.

Schleiermacher's system of theology does not use Scripture in any sense as a norm for theology. It breaks with Protestant orthodoxy on the use of Scripture for the construction of theology. Scripture is rejected as a binding source for theology, because it was merely as an expression of the believing community. Scripture is replaced by what Schleiermacher has called "feeling." Thus, Schleiermacher is the father of modern theology in the sense that he produced a theology "from below."⁷⁵ He brought about a "paradigm shift" in theology,⁷⁶ providing the classical model for liberalism which has spawned theologies in many differing directions in the nineteenth and twentieth century.

Karl Barth and Neoorthodox (Dialectical) Theology. The term "neoorthodoxy" is a designation for a major development in twentieth century Protestant theology. Another designation for this new direction in theology is "dialectical theology." It is most directly associated with the theology of Karl Barth (1886-1968), which he began to develop from the 1920s onward, although Emil Brunner (1889-1966) played a major role besides others (namely, Eduard Thurneysen, Friedrich Gogarten).

Neoorthodoxy was a reaction against the liberal theology developed by Schleiermacher and his followers during the 19th and early 20th centuries and which reduced Christian faith to general religious truths and moral values manifested in theologies "from below." In the wake of World War I, and with the failure of liberal Christianity, neoorthodoxy attempted to recover certain biblical perspectives without turning back to classical Protestant orthodoxy and its normative view of Scripture.

The major giant in the beginning of the neoorthodox (dialectical) theology was the Swiss theologian, Karl Barth. He wrote over 500 books, articles and papers and has the credit of producing a monumental theology which he entitled in English, *Church Dog-*

matics,⁷⁷ eschewing the designation "systematic theology" which he associated with the system of Schleiermacher and his followers. Barth's influence on subsequent theology is immense and continues into the present. It has also affected the thought of some Adventists.

1. *Redefinition of Word of God.* Barth developed a new understanding of the Word of God. Historically, the Word of God designated the inspired Bible. Not so for Barth. In his view the Word of God has three forms:

(a) It is the Word proclaimed. This means that the preaching, the proclamation of the Christian (pastor) is the Word of God.⁷⁸ The proclaimed Word is no empty word but an active Word, which is contemporaneous, dominant, and bringing about decisions.

(b) The Word of God is the Son, Jesus Christ. He is the Word of the Father, the Word revealed.⁷⁹ The concept of the Word of God is in this way personalized. The Word of God is not a book; it is not the Bible; it is a person, Jesus Christ.

(c) The third form of the Word of God is the Word written. The Word of God is not a thing, an object, the Bible, but God Himself speaking. Scripture is not direct revelation from God as had been held previously in orthodox Christianity.

God speaks to humans through the Bible as through a witness.⁸⁰ In this sense the Bible is a "witness" to the Word of God which is Jesus Christ. When the Bible or a part of the Bible speaks to an individual in a transforming way, then this "witness" becomes the Word of God. In this sense, the Bible, or parts thereof, can become the Word of God.

2. *The Bible as Witness.* The Bible has the character of "witness" primarily in neoorthodox (dialectical) theology. In the past, among orthodox Protestant theologians, the Bible, or Scripture, was seen as an objective revelation containing truth content. But for Barth, the Bible is only a "witness" to God's revelation that can speak to us in some given circumstances. For this reason, in the theology of Barth and in neoorthodoxy, the Bible is no longer the Word of God; it can become the Word of God when it speaks to a human person in a revelatory or transforming way.

Carl F. H. Henry's analysis of Barth is incisive and correct: "Scripture is a fallible witness through which God in Christ per-

sonally encounters the trusting reader or hearer. Scripture is authoritative not because it communicates divinely given information about God and his ways but because 'it provides our normative link with God's self-disclosure'.⁸¹

3. *The Functional Use of Scripture.* Barth also provided a new way of using Scripture in theology. David H. Kelsey in his magisterial tome, *The Uses of Scripture in Recent Theology* (1976), reveals perceptively that with Barth's new definition and understanding of the Word of God and a new way for the use of Scripture in theology emerged.

Kelsey identifies seven different uses of Scripture in modern theology, but these fall essentially into two major categories. In the first category it is held that Scripture contains God's actual revelation. The Bible is divinely inspired and, therefore, it contains true doctrine, real truth, authoritative teaching which the church needs to follow. This view is held by orthodox Protestant evangelicalism (see, for example, B. B. Warfield).⁸²

The second category, Scripture usage is viewed only as functional, according to Kelsey. The functional use of Scripture is manifested by Barth and followed by many others. He is the first one of a long line of theologians for whom "the authority of scripture is understood in *functional* terms."⁸³

What does the "functional" use of Scripture here mean? It means that the authority of Scripture does not rest in the fact that the Bible is inspired and contains actual revelation from God. It does not mean that the Bible is the Word of God either in its entirety or in certain parts, because Barth and his followers do not hold this view. It does not mean that the Bible is the divine depository of God-given truth, that its content is doctrinal or that doctrine can be derived from it in a direct way. It does not mean any of these things which are basic to orthodox Christianity. The "functional" use of Scripture means that Jesus Christ may reveal Himself through our confrontation or encounter with the Bible. "God's self-revelation in Jesus Christ, says Barth, was an event in which God reveals himself and 'speaks as *I* and addresses as *thou*'."⁸⁴ Thus, Scripture is not authoritative by virtue of any inherent quality or content. The authority of Scriptures is "by virtue of a function they fill in the life of the Christian community."⁸⁵ For

Scripture to have *functional* authority means that its authority "consists in its functioning to 'author' or shape decisively communal and individual entities."⁸⁶

"Functional" authority may be contrasted with "objective" authority. In the view of genuine Protestant thinking of the past Scripture had "objective" authority in the sense that authority actually rested in Scripture itself whether the reader acknowledged or recognized it. The modern view of "functional" authority, on the other hand, means that Scripture can become an authority in a Christian community, in a religious communion, or in the life of an individual, depending on subjective or communal circumstances. But Scripture does not have standing authority within itself whether it is recognized by a community or by an individual. In other words, the "functional" use of Scripture means that Scripture can "*become*" the Word of God under certain circumstances for an individual or a community, but in itself and of itself the Bible is not the Word of God.

This "functional" authority of Scripture is obviously a radical change in the way in which Scripture had been used and understood in historic Christianity. Barth's use of Scripture in functional terms is "a watershed for modern theology."⁸⁷ It indeed is that. It is also revolutionary, not because it puts us on the right course, but because it has become the prevailing mode of much modern theology.⁸⁸ In the past Scripture had authority in itself. It was saying something authoritatively, because it was God's Word. This is no longer so in neoorthodox (dialectical) theology.

4. *"Casebook" Use of Scripture.* Based on the functional use of Scripture with its limited role of authority, the Bible can be understood as a "casebook"⁸⁹ which may be used toward a specific end. The "cases" of the past, embodied in Scripture may be guidelines, concepts, or models on the basis of which one can allow the church at present to be shaped. The differing circumstance in various cultures and places may allow the biblical cases to have relevance in the present or to provide principles that may be applied. In other situations this may not be the case. The "casebook" approach is based on the limitation of biblical authority and the "functional" use of Scripture. The "casebook" approach to Scripture does not

recognize that Scripture has inherent authority for all cases regardless of time, cultures, and circumstances.

In short, the "functional" use of Scripture has relativized the Bible, robbing it of its inherent claims to be the Word of God. It has relegated the Bible's role to a word, as any other word, that may function in a meaningful way for a person or a community. In other words, the Bible no longer has any inherent authority. It can, however, be used as a "casebook" from which theologians may abstract principles that may be helpful in modern life. These principles can be joined with other principles from other sources or can be redefined by other sources in respective socio-cultural settings.

Richard Rice and Rational Theology. Richard Rice of La Sierra University (formerly La Sierra campus of Loma Linda University) has written a book entitled, *Reason and the Contours of Faith* (1991). It describes the various contours of faith in modern progressive and liberal theology as well as that of reason, giving reason a powerful role. The work is an apology for a reason-grounded and reason-oriented faith, a modern form of natural theology which gives the impression of having a neo-scholastic orientation. His book is in conversation primarily with and dependent on progressive liberal theologians. Evangelical alternatives are hardly reflected.

We are particularly interested in the role of Scripture in Rice's work, since he is an Adventist teacher and theologian well read in modern, neo-Protestant and some Catholic theology. This is also important since historically Adventists have prided themselves as being a "people of the Book," whereby they meant to base their teachings on the Bible as the primary source for doctrine. The inclusion of this tome by Rice has particular relevance because he addresses, and is extensively interested in, the interrelationship of reason and faith in theology. In the chapter, "Reason and Responsible Belief,"⁹⁰ the subject of "Evidence and the Sources of Knowledge" is under discussion. While this section does not speak of the role of Scripture, the author concludes that "we are entitled only to beliefs that we can support with adequate evidence and valid arguments."⁹¹ The "valid arguments" are understood to mean rational arguments.

Rice understands theology, among other things, "as an applica-

tion of reason to the contents of faith, or the beliefs of a particular religious community."⁹² He holds that "doctrines arise, not from the Bible alone, but from the dynamic interplay between the Bible and the living experience of the church, . . ."⁹³ This statement is explicit on the way doctrines are to arise: "The dynamic interplay between the Bible and the living experience of the church."

Adventists have historically held, and still hold, that the Bible is the source and norm for Adventist doctrines. In the first of the twenty-seven "Fundamental Beliefs of Seventh-day Adventists" it is stated, "The Holy Scriptures are the infallible revelation of His will. They are the standard of character, the test of experience, the authoritative revealer of doctrines, and the trustworthy record of God's acts in history."⁹⁴

Rice seems to posit another way for doctrines to be developed. For Rice theology is the result of "the dynamic interplay" between the Bible *and* the church's living experience. This "and" reveals that the Bible is no longer determining the final shape of theology. The Bible *and* experience calls for "a parallel characterization of theology."⁹⁵ This leads Rice to define "theology as an attempt to formulate a coherent exposition of Christian doctrine that is faithful to the authority of the Bible and responsive to the experience of the Christian community."⁹⁶ What does this "and" without a qualitative priority mean for Rice's theologizing? He does not present the Roman Catholic model for theology, which is the two-source theory of "Scripture and tradition." Roman Catholicism has another "and." But Rice has also an "and." He speaks of a dynamic interplay in theology of the sources of the Bible *and* experience. We have seen that Rice can and does say that Christian doctrine is to be "faithful to the authority of the Bible. . . ." This explanation could give the impression that the Bible has a unique "authority" in theologizing. But this is not the case, because he qualifies it by emphasizing that Christian theology needs to be "responsive to the experience of the Christian community." Rice gives the impression so far that he holds to a two-source theory with the sources of Scripture *and* experience as equal sources for theology. He claims that "theology involves bringing the church's experience to bear on the Bible and bringing the Bible to bear on the experience of the

church."⁹⁷ This is a kind of correlation approach to theology reflective of Paul Tillich.

However, this is not the end of the story in Rice's theological system as outlined in his recent book. The Bible is viewed by means of the experience of the community's understanding of truth, viz. tradition and its present experience. On the other hand, the church scrutinizes its "formulation of truth in light of the Bible."⁹⁸ But the "effort to hear what the Bible says directly," and on its own terms without the mediation of tradition, is designated as "futile."⁹⁹ He maintains that doctrines need to be brought "into harmony with the concrete experience of Christians."¹⁰⁰

In contrast to this position the "concrete experience of the Christian" has to be informed and shaped by the divine revelation of the written Word of God, Holy Scripture. It is the all-encompassing and all-sufficient norm that provides the foundation, structure and shape of a Scriptural theology for Adventists as the "people of the Book." For Rice, however, doctrines or the church's teachings are influenced by tradition, harmonized on the basis of the church's concrete experiences and reason. Scripture, or the Bible, has in Rice's system no supreme authority over other sources of theology such as experience, reason and tradition; it is subject to the community's experience and other norms. The Bible's authority is thus subordinated to the human sources of experience, reason, and tradition.

As noted, Scripture does not function as a primary norm in the model of theology as presented by Rice. The final arbiter of what is appropriate to the faith of a given community is "the application of reason to the contents of faith, or the beliefs of a particular religious community."¹⁰¹ Evidently, Scripture is not viewed as the depository of divinely revealed teaching which is authoritative and normative for the faith of the church so that the other sources such as reason, community, experience and so on are ultimately judged by it.

For Rice the entire Bible is not even equally authoritative. What counts is the "authority of the Bible [that] lies in its conceptual content."¹⁰² In historic, orthodox Protestant theology "what is authoritative about Scripture is its doctrinal content, and this content is revelation itself—of direct divine origin, inspired fully in all its parts, infallible with respect to matters of doctrine or belief,

to be translated without alteration into theological propositions."¹⁰³ Rice's theological system does not conform to such a view of Scripture.

There is a vast chasm between Rice's "conceptual content" of the Bible which has authority and the authority of the "doctrinal content" of the Bible. For Rice it is only the "conceptual content" and the "intellectual content of the Bible that interests them [theologians]."¹⁰⁴ The "conceptual content"¹⁰⁵ of Rice seems to be the same as the functional use of Scripture outlined by Kelsey.¹⁰⁶ Therefore, Rice can speak of the Bible as having "fundamental authority for Christian theology," while he insists that the Bible "is not the only place where theological reflection originates nor the direct source from which all theological positions arise."¹⁰⁷

We need to keep in mind that the functional use of Scripture professes nondiscrimination toward other views, but it excludes the view of the Bible as the revelational depository of "objective truth."¹⁰⁸ But this is the very claim Adventists make for the Bible along with scores of other Bible-believing Christians.

The theologian also needs to make a decision as to what "patterns" of the Bible are most important. In the view of Rice not all beliefs in the Bible are equally important.¹⁰⁹ Thus, "it is appropriate to distinguish levels of doctrinal significance and search for a thematic center for the Bible."¹¹⁰

Rice seems to be aware that the search for the center of the Bible involves a "canon within the canon" which was first introduced into Protestant theology by Schleiermacher.¹¹¹ The idea of a "canon within the canon" means that there is a higher norm within Scripture on the basis of which other parts of Scripture are assigned a lesser place or are said to be of lesser importance for life and teaching. Rice employs the idea of a center, precisely in the sense of liberal theology,¹¹² as a means to "distinguish levels of doctrinal significance." Rice places himself with these limiting qualifications of the role of Scripture into the camp of theologians who recognize the Bible only in its functional role and use.¹¹³

We need to point to some implications of the theological model as Rice has outlined it in his recent publication. If the "living experience of the church" functions as a (or possible *the*, if it is not reason) major norm for theology, as he maintains, then it seem

inevitable that regional and national theologies, ethnic and liberation theologies, and so forth, will not only arise within Adventism, but they will be viewed as normal and a healthy demand in theology. These theologies could be seen as precursors of the development of independent, regional Seventh-day Adventist churches similar to that of Lutheran, Baptist and other communions. In any case, if the Rice approach to theology becomes a model that is followed, pluralism in Adventist theology will experience a big boost. Theological pluralism seeks the least common denominator. It is known to lead to disunity, disfunction, and a loss of mission.

Neo-Evangelical and Evangelical Models of Theology

Clark Pinnock and Moderate Theology. Clark Pinnock is a well-known, self-designated "moderate" theologian from Canada, who is on the move (to the left of center in the theological spectrum).¹¹⁴ He sees himself among "postconservatives"¹¹⁵ who have moved from the conservative camp of theology to what others call the camp of "neo-evangelicals."¹¹⁶ The latter espouse historical criticism¹¹⁷ and no longer view the Bible as having ultimate authority for theology. Pinnock is clearly a neo-evangelical theologian who defected from the historic evangelical camp.

In the chapter entitled "Sources of the Story,"¹¹⁸ in his book, *Tracking the Maze*, Pinnock lists and discusses the four sources for theology: Scripture, tradition, experience and reason. He expresses himself rather clearly on the relationship of these four sources to each other. "These various sources of theology," he writes, "ought to be held in creative tension as responding in their different ways to the revelation of God. . . . To overemphasize one source to the exclusion of the others is like having a table with uneven legs."¹¹⁹

For our topic on the relationship of "Scripture and Theology," we are informed that in his system the four sources stand next to each other without any single source being assigned a higher norm than another source. Each one, as it were, is a leg of equal length needed for constructing a theology. They are related to each other in a "dialectical way." None of them, Scripture included, is an "objective source of timeless propositional truth existing independent of and external to any other [of the sources] in their own right."¹²⁰

Pinnock designates his theological system as a "moderate" theology in contrast with liberal models of theology, which Pinnock calls "progressive."¹²¹ "Moderate" is a designation selected to keep himself somewhere without taking the Bible as the final authority for theology.

For Pinnock "moderate" is contrasted with (1) "progressive" (namely, "liberal") theologians such as Gordon D. Kaufmann, Edward Farley, John Hick, Schubert Ogden, Rudolf Bultmann, Paul Tillich and other theologians of the liberal tradition¹²² and with (2) "conservative" theologians such as Abraham Kuyper, Cornelius Van Til, G. C. Berkouwer, Carl F. H. Henry, the Old Princeton theologians, and others.¹²³

Pinnock defines "conservative theology" as "essentially a theology of authority, based on a putatively heaven-sent cognitive revelation that is supreme over all the earth-bound philosophies and experiences of humankind."¹²⁴ For Pinnock, the Bible is no longer "the objective Word of God exalted above all that is merely human and historical."¹²⁵ He held a conservative view as late as around 1970,¹²⁶ but had abandoned it by the time he wrote his book, *The Scripture Principle* (1984), taking an "empirical approach."¹²⁷ In Pinnock's theological system the "empirical approach" holds the key to his theologizing.

Carl F. H. Henry and Rational Evangelical Theology. Carl F. H. Henry, the acknowledged giant of evangelical theologians of our time, published his six-volume systematic theology under the title, *God, Revelation and Authority* (1976-1983). His first volume is devoted to "preliminary considerations" of theological prolegomena.¹²⁸ Henry is in conversation, dialog, and debate on the major issues confronting theology in the modern context of secularism. He takes "Christianity. . . to be a logically consistent system of revelational truth"¹²⁹ and a "rational religion."¹³⁰

Henry's "criteria of theology" include the roles of revelation, reason, Scripture, consistency and coherence.¹³¹ Considering that "theology is a rational discipline,"¹³² he states that "divine revelation is the source of all truth, the truth of Christianity included; reason is the instrument for recognizing it; Scripture is its verifying principle; logical consistency is a negative test for truth and coherence a subordinate test."¹³³

Much can and should be said about Henry's role of reason and rationality. He is considered to be an evangelical theologian in whose system reason plays a key role. Donald Bloesch has noted incisively that "the method of Gordon Clark and Carl Henry is deductive, deriving conclusions from given rational principles."¹³⁴ Bloesch, on the other hand, holds that revelation is not at the disposal of human reason. Bob E. Patterson has stated that "revelation, not reason, must be the final authority; . . ."¹³⁵

If revelation is first tested for truth by reason, then reason is greater than revelation. Even if, as has been maintained by Henry, "revelation is a disclosure of truth that stands in continuity with rational truth,"¹³⁶ it is certain that the revelation embodied in the Bible is not given the highest norming function in theology.

It is clear that in Henry's system "Scripture" plays an important role as a source of theology, but it hardly has the role of being in and of itself the final norm for theology. It seems that this role is ultimately assigned to reason. This is brought out in illuminating statements on the power of reason. "The Christian religion assigns a critical and indispensable role to reason,"¹³⁷ says Henry. "Christian theology unreservedly champions reason as . . . a logical discriminating faculty competent to test religious claims."¹³⁸

Would this not mean that the religious claims of the Word of God are included? Evidently Henry assigns in practice a role to reason as a higher arbiter than Scripture itself. Thus, in his theological system Scripture holds the role of a "verifying principle," but reason holds the place of highest arbiter for religious truth because Scripture is placed in a rationalist framework. "Henry . . . [is] placing Scripture in a rationalist rather than an idealist framework, . . ."¹³⁹

It is surely correct that Henry is indebted to the conservative philosopher-theologian Gordon H. Clark¹⁴⁰ and his use of rationality.¹⁴¹ This connection reveals that human reason is the final norm of what is reasonable. Since reason is a "logical test for truth" and reason is "the instrument for recognizing it [the truth of Christianity]," Henry cannot free himself from having replaced reason for faith.

At this point we must break off our discussion. It would be interesting to investigate other evangelical theological systems as

those of Donald G. Bloesch,¹⁴² Millard J. Erickson, James Montgomery Boice,¹⁴³ G. C. Berkouwer,¹⁴⁴ Gordon R. Lewis and Bruce A. Demarest,¹⁴⁵ J. Rodman Williams,¹⁴⁶ among others. While this cannot be done here, it is hoped that the theological systems selected and discussed have served to illustrate how varied is the relationship between Scripture and theology among the various major theologians. Hopefully it has illumined and will assist in understanding the role of Scripture in some strands of modern theology.

It is evident from our survey that the role of Scripture in theology is perceived in a variety of ways. None of the systems presented employ Scripture in a manner similar to the best of classical orthodox Protestant theology. It is astonishing to find Scripture's role diminished and relativized even in the forms of neoevangelical and evangelical theology which we considered last!

There is a task yet to be done. We need to reflect anew on the role of Scripture for theology based on Scripture's own internal testimony. This is important since Scripture makes claims for itself that cannot be brushed aside without harm to church and society, to the gospel itself and the mission of the church.

Scripture as Authoritative Norm of Theology

It is a given that theology, as any other discipline, has to be studied and presented "from somewhere." It is impossible to study and to present theology as a system or as an orderly presentation "from nowhere." Therefore, as outlined above, there are two major approaches that have emerged over the centuries of thought in Christianity. They are historically described as (1) theology "from above," which takes the divine and unique revelation of God as embodied in Scripture, which is the Word of God, as the ultimate norm for theology, and (2) theology "from below," which takes other sources such as tradition, reason, experience and so on as the determinative norm and authority for theology.

Orthodox Protestant theology has historically taken the stance as a theology "from above," that is, as a theology oriented to the highest authority: derived from and grounded in Scripture. But theology has been transformed over the last two hundred years into a theology "from below"; a theology where human norms carry

ultimate authority. This is true not only in the neo-Protestant theological tradition of which Schleiermacher is the father, but also in other major systems. Liberal theology over the last two hundred years is engaged in a "revolt against Biblical authority."¹⁴⁷ And it is evident from the major voices of our survey of evangelical theology that some evangelical theological systems are likewise beginning to move away from the certainty of Scripture in the construction of their theological systems. It is evident from the history of theology that liberal theologies breed more liberal theologies and evangelical theologies which are not solidly based on Scripture tend to move towards the liberal camp. If one stretches the little finger of the hand of theology towards liberal theology "from below," whether in the form of experience, reason, or tradition, then the dragon of liberalism snatches up the entire hand of theology. Theology can only be safe, if engaged in on the foundation of a high view of Scripture as the Word of God and by assigning it the highest norm for theology.

Foundations for a Scripture-based Theology

There is a genuine need to return to full and unrestricted biblical authority in a true theology "from above." In this section of our consideration of the relationship of "Scripture and theology," it is imperative to state in a number of theses, or major summary statements, foundational propositions on the nature, role, and function of Scripture in the enterprise of theology.

Theology is not a building without foundations.¹⁴⁸ The foundations have to be laid soundly for the building of theology to survive the storms of theological conflict and the shaking caused by the earthquakes of intense inquiry. The structure of theology has to stand the test of time. Historically, as we have observed above, the sources, or may we say foundations of theology, have been Scripture, tradition, experience, and reason. Other foundations have been added or the traditional ones have been refined and enlarged. Unless we have the "right" foundation, we will not have the "right" theology. We argue that the "right" foundation of theology is Scripture in its entirety. Scripture rightly understood within its own framework (namely, *sola Scriptura*) is the foundation and norming norm for theology to be biblical and adequate for

the life of the believer, the faith of the church, and the mission to the world.

Theology is the motor that drives the church. A motor that sputters and breaks down will not get the vehicle to its destination. If the Adventist church is to have a conveyance that will not break down, then it needs to have an engine that is of divine origin. The Bible, as the Word of God, contains all the divine parts needed for our engine, a theology "from above." Such an engine will make the church arrive at its God-appointed destination.

The remainder of our essay will outline the Scriptural foundation of theology. We intend to enumerate some foundational conceptions regarding a theology which is both postcritical and postmodern¹⁴⁹ as well as postprogressive and postfundamentalist. These conceptions would serve as foundation for a constructive theology, a genuinely Bible-based systematic/dogmatic theology faithful to the genuine Reformation heritage of *sola Scriptura*.

1. Theology, if true to its name as "the study/science of God," is to be a science "from above" and not "from below." It is to be a science grounded in the Bible as its supreme, authoritative source and ultimate norm, transcending and informing all other sources from whatever field of human endeavor they derive. Scripture is to function as this norm, because it is derived "from above" in the sense that it is God's unique and authoritative, comprehensive and inclusive horizon of revelation.

A theological system that is "from above" is a system that must be based on Scripture as the highest and most authoritative norm for theology. All other sources for theology have to be informed, mediated and controlled by Scripture as the Word of God. It has been stated with insight by Clark Pinnock that in modern theology "the term *liberal* suggests the removal of practically all the constraints of Scripture and tradition from a position of authority for theology and a virtual surrender of the continuity of Christian doctrine, which ends in a rudderless, open-ended, infinitely flexible stance."¹⁵⁰

Theology, and work in theology, must have a rudder. Without a rudder theology is adrift like a boat afloat in a never ending ocean. Furthermore, theology cannot be without an anchor. Scripture functions as an engine and as rudder, giving direction and setting

the goal, and as an anchor, providing the needed certainty and foundation for theology.

Theology is to be perceived as a supra-subjective enterprise. This can be had only if there is a supra-human revelational norm that is above all other norms and on the basis of which human subjectivity is controlled and overcome. The supra-subjective and supra-human norming agent is given to humanity in what we call Scripture. Although there is a subjective element in everything humans do, the agent controlling subjectivity must come "from above." It is provided in the Word of God that calls us to surrender to Him who is the Author of Scripture.

Theology is to be more than merely the best of human contemplation, construal, and thinking. It is to be more than the best of all that is "from below." It is to be more than the best of universal experience of humankind. It is to be more than the best of human reason individually or collectively. If it is really and truly theological science—not merely some sort of anthropological science—then there is no option but to perceive it as deriving its norming norm "from above," from the God-given revelation embodied in the entirety of Scripture.

In deriving its norming norm (*norma normens*) "from above," and given its subject matter as the study of God and His ways with both man and world, theology calls for a foundation and grounding in that which God has provided as His unique revelation and disclosure of Himself. That revelation and self-disclosure is most uniquely and directly incarnated in Scripture, the Word of God, given through "men who spoke from God as they were moved by the Holy Spirit" (1 Peter 1:21).

2. The illuminating power of the Holy Spirit is to guide the theologian in his theological task. The same Holy Spirit which inspired the Word of God gives illumination to each seeking human being. Each sincere seeker, so illuminated, can understand, appreciate and appropriate God's revealed knowledge and will.

The Holy Spirit acts as a transforming agent in the life of the seeker, providing a light for the divinely ordained path and theological pilgrimage leading from earth to heaven. There is no true knowledge from God unless it comes by means of the Holy Spirit and through the Word of God.

Without the Holy Spirit's continuing work, contained in, guided by, and directed through the divine revelation of Scripture, theology is bound to deteriorate into human thinking "from below." In the latter case, it would not make much difference whether reason, tradition, or experience becomes the norming norm.

3. Scripture is the inspired Word of God. It carries within itself the self-authenticating and norming authority for the faith and life of the church and its theology.

The statement that "Scripture is the inspired Word of God" is based on the self-testimony of Scripture. It is the self-claim of the Bible that it is the Word of God. This is the consistent testimony of both Jesus Christ and the apostles. It is contained and communicated in various forms and multiple ways in the Bible itself.

Peter notes emphatically that "no prophecy ever came by the impulse of man, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God" (2 Pet 1:21, RSV). "Prophecy" is Holy Spirit originated. It is not the fruit of human imagination, thought, or genius. It never came "by the impulse of man" but has its origin in God, who by means of the Holy Spirit inspired the prophets with His message.

"Prophecy," as the term is used in 1 Peter, is not restricted to the so-called prophetic parts of Scripture alone. Moses was designated a "prophet" (Deut 34:10; 18:15, 18) and Moses is credited with having written the Pentateuch, the first Five Books of Scripture (Josh 1:7-9; 24: 25, 26; 1 Kgs 2:2-4; Ezra 7:23-26; etc.) which are authoritative Scripture.

David expressed his conviction that his words originated from the Holy Spirit: "The Spirit of the LORD spoke by me, and His word was on my tongue" (2 Sam 23:2, NASB). The entire Bible of both Testaments is conceived of as deriving from "prophets."¹⁵¹

Daniel recognized that the book of the Jeremiah was "the word of the LORD" (Dan 9:2, KJV) and the angel Gabriel refers to the "scripture of truth" (Dan 10:21, KJV).

Jesus appeals to Bible of his day, the Old Testament, as the word of authority as He combats the Devil at his temptation. Jesus resisted the Devil by stating, "It is written," and quoting Scripture (Matt 4:4, 7, 10). Satan responded by misconstruing Scripture to which Jesus replied again, "It is written."

Jesus repeatedly appealed to "Scripture" as the Word of God

which is fulfilled (Lk 4:21; Mk 12:10; Matt 26:54; John 7:38; 13:18; 17:12; 19:24; etc.). Scripture comes by the "prophets" (Matt 26:56) and they are understood to speak by the Holy Spirit (Rom 1:2; 16:26).

The Bible supports the spiritual gifts given to the church, including the gift of prophecy which is a special mark of God's true end-time remnant (1 Cor 12-14; Rev 12:17; 19:10). The gift of prophecy (viz. the writings of Ellen White), always subject to the norming norm of Scripture, functions in association with Scripture in theology and not as an addition to the biblical canon.

Paul shows that "all Scripture is given by inspiration of God" (2 Tim 3:16). Thus, "all Scripture" is "God-breathed," which is the literal translation of the Greek term *theopneustos*. "All Scripture" derives from God Himself. Jesus Christ Himself maintains that "Scripture cannot be broken" (John 10:35, NASB), maintaining its unity and coherence.

A detailed study of the Acts of the Apostles reveals time and again that "Scripture" (Acts 1:16) is that "which the Holy Spirit foretold by the mouth of David" (vs. 17, NASB). When Joel, the "prophet" (Acts 2:16) spoke, it was "God" speaking (vs. 17). So "God spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets from ancient time" (Acts 3:21, NASB) and Moses is the first one cited (vs. 22). God "announced beforehand by the mouth of all the prophets, that Christ should suffer, . . ." (Acts 3:18, NASB). The "Holy Spirit spoke through the mouth of our father David Thy servant" (Acts 4:25, NASB) quoting from Psalm 2. Stephen introduced an Old Testament quotation with the words "God spoke" (Acts 7:6).

This brief and limited conspectus of the identity of God who spoke through the Holy Spirit by the mouth of the prophets (who are the Bible writers) is the consistent self-testimony of the Bible. The process of revelation is that God "reveals" Himself (Deut 29:29; 1 Sam 3:21; Isa 22:14; Dan 2:22, 47; Eph 3:3-5) "by the word of the LORD" (1 Sam 3:21). Thus, we conclude that the consistent picture in the New Testament is that the Old Testament is the "Word of God" which came through the Holy Spirit by means of his servants the prophets. They, in turn, wrote it down (Exod 17:14; 24:4; Deut 31:9; Josh 24:26; 1 Kings 2:3; Ezra 3:2; Jer 30:2; cf. Rom 15:15; 1

Cor 4:14; 2 Cor 2:3; 1 Pet 5:12; 2 Pet 3:1; 1 John 1:4, 2:12, 26; Jude 3; etc.).¹⁵²

Sometimes the question is raised whether the New Testament is also understood as the "word of God." A brief consideration of 1 Timothy 5:18 reveals that the introduction "for the Scripture says" (NASB) refers to a passage from the Old Testament *and* a saying of Jesus recorded in Luke 10:7: "The laborer is worthy of his wages" (cf. Matt 10:10). It has been suggested that Paul refers to the canonical Gospel of Luke as Scripture. We cannot be certain about this, but the wording affirms that a saying of Jesus (or a collection of his sayings in gospel form) had the status of "Scripture" for Paul.¹⁵³

The preaching of "the good news" by Philip is "the word of God" (Acts 8:12, 14). The proclamation of the gospel is to those who receive it "the word of God" (Acts 11:1; cf. 12:24; 13:46; 17:13; 18:11; 19:20). This reveals that the apostolic preaching and teaching is "the word of God."

The apostle Paul makes reference to "the mystery of Christ" which was not made known in previous ages "has now been revealed by the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets" (Eph 3:4-5, NKJV). This give evidence that the apostolic preaching and writing is Spirit-originated in the same way as the words of the prophets in the pre-New Testament age. This is in harmony with the claim of Paul that "the gospel which was preached by me. . . came through the revelation of Jesus Christ" (Gal 3:11-12, NKJV).

John the Revelator maintains that "I was in the Spirit" (Rev 1:10) when he was given "the word of God, and the testimony of Jesus Christ, and all the things that he saw" (1:2).

The reference to "the rest of the Scriptures" in 2 Peter 3:16 within the argument concerning the letters of Paul "in which some things are hard to understand" indicates that Peter's use of "Scriptures" here "places Paul's writings on a level with other inspired Scripture."¹⁵⁴ The Pauline letters are here reckoned as belonging to "the other Scriptures."¹⁵⁵ This manner of referring to Paul's letters as "Scriptures" alongside the Old Testament indicates that they have been recognized as being on the same level as the OT Scriptures.

The term "Scripture" is used as a term for the authoritative

Word of God. It is authoritative not because man placed any authority in it, but because God had it produced by means of "inspiration of God" (2 Tim 3:16) through the Holy Spirit. Thus, it seems undeniable that the New Testament, as the Old Testament before it, is clearly given by means of the Holy Spirit. This is the consistent testimony of the apostles Peter, Paul and John in what they write.

4. Scripture derives its authority from God and the work and function of the Holy Spirit and not from the church. The church is the result and creation of the Word of God, Scripture, and not vice versa.

Protestantism and Catholicism have been divided for centuries on the question of the origin of the Bible's authority. Protestants have typically maintained that the Bible has an authority that is vested in itself, and that it is not derived from the church.

Since the Counter-reformation, Catholicism has maintained that the authority of the Bible is derived from the church. The influential three-volume work of the Italian Jesuit and cardinal Robert Bellarmine, *Disputationes de controversiis christianae fidei adversus huius temporis haereticos* (1586-1593), which was reprinted more than a hundred times in five decades, argued strenuously that the Bible is the gift of the church to Christians. If this position is maintained, it follows logically that the church with its tradition is the highest norm for theology.¹⁵⁶ Tradition from Rome includes both the post-New Testament tradition and the Bible. In Vatican II the "Word of God" is specifically identified with Scripture and tradition,¹⁵⁷ inclusive of papal pronouncements.¹⁵⁸

Modern, liberal Protestantism has come to view the development of the canon of the Bible also as the result of a purely historical process.¹⁵⁹ It is suggested that the Old Testament was recognized as canonical by not later than the third century B.C.¹⁶⁰ It cannot be overlooked that while among the criteria of New Testament canonicity are apostolicity, antiquity, catholicity, orthodoxy, inspiration¹⁶¹ and traditional use,¹⁶² Bruce Metzger writes in his magisterial tome, *The Canon of the New Testament: Its Origin, Development, and Significance* (1987), that "the church did not create the canon, but came to recognize, accept, affirm, and confirm

the self-authenticating quality of certain documents that imposed themselves as such upon the Church."¹⁶³

Metzger is correct in pointing again to the self-authenticating nature and inherent quality of the Bible. Inspiration is a criterion which is not limited to persons who wrote biblical books, but every biblical book qualifies because of inspiration. Because of inspiration "the words of Scripture are God's own words."¹⁶⁴

The fact of the self-authenticating quality of the biblical books moves Scripture beyond the authenticating function of the church. The real picture is that Scripture, written by the "apostles and prophets," created the church and not vice versa. The letter to the Ephesians insists that the church is the household of God, having been "built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the corner stone" (Eph 2:20, NASB).

5. Scripture must impact on theology in its full authority based on its inherent claims and quality. Scripture must not be reduced to a mere functional role or be considered as merely a source which can become the Word of God. Scripture is the very Word of God.

The functional role of Scripture for theology has been outlined by a variety of modern scholars. Professor David Kelsey has shown that the authority of Scripture is severely limited in modern theology, even among such figures as Karl Barth not to speak of Rudolf Bultmann and Paul Tillich among many others.¹⁶⁵

The functional use of Scripture in theology, as previously discussed above, means it does not inherently contain doctrine that calls for exposition. The functional use of Scripture looks for concepts,¹⁶⁶ narrative recital,¹⁶⁷ religious symbols,¹⁶⁸ and so on, which "may not be directly translated into theological concepts," write modern liberal theologians. They continue by stating that "theology rather has the task of 're-describing' what has been expressed biblically. . . , employing, for these theologians at least, a philosophical conceptuality (whether process, idealist, or existentialist) and an 'imaginative construal' of what Christian faith is all about."¹⁶⁹

Over against this kind of "doing theology" in the liberal tradition, it has to be maintained that the authority of Scripture derives from its actual truth content and not from any reduction of its subject matter to concepts, symbols, images, patterns, and so on that need to be re-described by mean of any philosophical system.

Scripture possesses divinely given truth content based in and provided by revelation.

Scripture possesses its own philosophy of reality. As such Scripture is trans-cultural despite the fact that it is written in languages of the past by people of that past. Its divine origin makes it authoritative for every place and at any time. Whereas the functional role of Scripture claims that "the *patterns* in scripture, not its 'content,' . . . make it normative for theology,"¹⁷⁰ the Bible itself, Jesus Christ, and the apostles show time and again that it is the "content," the very words that express the content, that is authoritative and normative. "The Bible *inherently* has authority,"¹⁷¹ because of its divine origin and its truth-content.

6. The enterprise of theology needs of the entire Bible. The theological enterprise must not be imprisoned by a center, focal point, core idea, major theme, basic concept, a part of the Bible whether the New Testament, the writings of Paul, or the like.

Theology cannot be oriented on the basis of any single theme, center, *Mitte*, focal-point, basic concept, or the like.¹⁷² One of many reasons for the "centered" approaches is to limit the content of the Bible to what may be considered the most relevant in a given time or at a given place. If there should be a center, some theme, topic, idea, or a combination of them, then it is inevitable that other things are assigned a marginal place, and invariably varieties of Scriptural truth are sidestepped in favor of others that are established or lifted up to a degree that they do not have when viewed from the entirety of the Bible.

The text insists that "all Scripture," and not part of Scripture, "is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work" (2 Tim 3:16, 17 NASB). God has given "all Scripture" for "teaching." The Biblical emphasis on "all Scripture" reveals the wholistic concept of the Bible. A theology faithful to Scripture needs "all of Scripture."

The ongoing search for a center of the OT, the NT, or the entire Bible is made necessary because of the limitation in authority that is accorded to the Bible by liberal and neoorthodox scholars. The need for a "center" is eliminated as soon as the entire Bible is recognized to have inspired status and divine authority. If the Bible

is understood for what it really is, namely the revelatory Word of God, then the quest for something of central importance ceases. Jesus Himself taught "all" and in giving the Great Commission He maintained that His followers are to teach "them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you" (Matt 28:19-20).

Every theologian who is looking for a center, maintaining that there needs to be a center, inevitably has made the decision that "it is appropriate to distinguish levels of doctrinal significance. . . in the Bible."¹⁷³ Scripture itself does not give any evidence for levels of doctrinal significance. Jesus Christ himself rejected the question which was the greatest law by summarizing and emphasizing immediately that "the second is like it" (Matt 22:37-39).

The multiplicity of centers that have been proposed¹⁷⁴ reveals among other things the subjective nature of the enterprise. The Bible does not reveal any single center, not even multiple centers, because the triune God Himself is the center¹⁷⁵ and both Testaments have the same God as the driving force of revelation.

7. A theological undertaking in which Scripture has full play cannot be focussed on a "canon within the canon." The phrase "canon within the canon" refers in simple language to a norm or idea within Scripture which is assigned a higher place than other parts of Scripture.

The idea of a "center" is linked to the idea of a "canon within the canon." The latter notion is emphasized ever since Schleiermacher.¹⁷⁶ The search for a "canon within the canon," that is, the quest for a higher norm within Scripture, has engaged theologians intensely for the last two hundred years.

It is an attractive notion, because it allows the individual theologian to emphasize a particular theme, or topic, or a specific concept as the focal-point or central idea of all of Scripture. Among such "canons within the canon" the concepts of covenant, kingdom of God, reign of God, law of God, righteousness, and so forth, have been proposed.

Martin Luther had the theological concept of "what points to Christ" (*was Christum treibet*) as a "canon within the canon" on the basis of which he could pronounce the letter of James in the New Testament an "epistle of straw." Luther did not find that James pointed to Christ.

Now the quest for a "canon within the canon" can be pronounced to have been unsuccessful.¹⁷⁷ Scholars and theologians cannot agree on what it is and from where it is to be taken.¹⁷⁸ The enterprise of finding a norm that is above all other biblical norms is recognized as a failure of a subjective undertaking.

The Bible itself does not provide such an internal key for its meaning. Here again the entirety of Scripture from Genesis to Revelation manifests itself as the Word of God. It cannot be "divided." Humans are not entitled to make their own Word of God. All of God's Word is given to the church for its well-being.

In concluding our remarks on the relationship of "Scripture and Theology," we affirm that a true Scriptural theology is one in which the theological proposals themselves are to be derived from the Bible. When the theological proposals derive from another source, whether it is reason, tradition, experience, or some combination of them, then the theological nature of the enterprise has compromised Scriptural authority in favor of another norm, a human one. Normative theology for the church and by the church has to be a theology that is based on and grounded in the normativity of Scripture, the Word of God, and its revelatory truth-content. Such a theological undertaking will revitalize the church as the community of the faithful and propel it forward to the completion of its God-given mission. Such a theological undertaking will evaluate reason, tradition, and experience on the basis of the divine norm, finding their appropriate places in a Scriptural theology.

Endnotes

¹ See Hans W. Frei, *Types of Christian Theology*, eds. George Hunsinger and William C. Placher (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1992); Douglas John Hall, *Thinking the Faith. Christian Theology in a North American Context* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress, 1989); idem, *Professing the Faith. Christian Theology in North American Context* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress Press, 1993).

² Langdon Gilkey, *Naming the Whirlwind: The Renewal of God-Language* (Indianapolis, IN: Bobbs-Merrill Comp., 1969), p. 58.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 61.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 64.

⁶ G. Vahianian, *The Death of God* (New York: George Braziller, 1961). There are such writers as T. J. Altizer, W. Hamilton, P. M. van Buren who are usually identified as Death of God theologians.

⁷ See Kenneth Hamilton, *Revolt Against Heaven* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1965), pp. 143-165.

⁸ Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 3 vols. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1983), 1:17-125.

⁹ Robert C. Oden, *Agenda for Theology. After Modernity . . . What?* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1990). An informative essay on "paradigm change" and its meaning is provided by Frank M. Hasel, "Scientific Revolution: An Analysis and Evaluation of Thomas Kuhn's Concept of Paradigm and Paradigm Change for Theology," *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society* 2/2 (1991): 160-177.

¹⁰ Protestants have used the Bible of Jesus and the apostles, that is, the books of the Hebrew canon. However, the Bible of the Roman Catholic Church has more books than these, because it includes the so-called deuterocanonical (apocryphal) books of Tobit, Judith, 1 and 2 Maccabees, Wisdom, Sirach, and the Additions to Daniel as voted to be part of the Bible in the Council of Trent. See H. Jedin, *A History of the Council of Trent* (London, 1961), pp. 52-98. The Russian Orthodox Church excluded the deuterocanonical books. In the Greek Orthodox Church questions have been raised about the use of the deuterocanonical books for several centuries and no final ecclesiastical decision has been made.

¹¹ For a more detailed discussion on inspiration, see Gerhard F. Hasel, *Understanding the Living Word of God* "Adventist Library of Christian Thought, Vol. 1" (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1980), pp. 66-82.

¹² A typical example is provided by Friedrich Schleiermacher, *On Religion. Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1958), p. 114, defines inspiration in terms of human "productivity." It is an "outgoing of man into the world" (*ibid.*). He explained that inspiration "is simply the general expression for the feeling of true morality and freedom. . . . It is that action which springs from the heart of man, despite of, or at least regardless of, all external occasion" (*ibid.*, p. 89). These statements reveal that for Schleiermacher "inspiration" is not something that comes from God but something that issues from the heart of man without any "external [viz. divine] occasion."

¹³ On "historical criticism" and the "historical-critical method," see Eta Linnemann, *Historical Criticism of the Bible: Methodology or Ideology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1991); Gerhard Maier, *The End of the Historical-Critical Method* (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publ. House, 1977); Thomas C. Oden, *Agenda for Theology: After Modernity . . . What?* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1990); Jon D. Levenson, "The Bible: Unexamined Commitment of Criticism," *First Things: A Monthly Journal of Religion and Public Life* 30 (Feb. 1993): 24-33; idem, *The Hebrew Bible, the Old Testament, and Historical Criticism* (Philadelphia: Westminster/John Knox, 1993); Gerhard F. Hasel, *Understanding the Living Word of God* (Washington, DC: Biblical Research Institute, 1985). Linnemann, Oden and Levenson are three current witnesses of liberal scholars who have been raising most serious questions about the historical-critical method and who have turned against the method which has proven to be so devastating to the internal claims of the Scripture.

¹⁴ By "moderate historical criticism" is meant the study of the Bible by modernistic, progressive scholars of the historical-critical school who do not wish to deny that the Bible writers themselves could have been inspired in some form or another, but who deny that the Bible itself is the direct product of inspiration. This view, as shown above, is known as "personal inspiration," that is, the inspiration of persons which is separated from the inspiration of Scripture since in this view the latter, i.e., Scripture, is not perceived to be inspired. "Personal inspiration" without the inspiration of Scripture has been propounded since Schleiermacher. See Gerhard Maier, *Biblische Hermeneutik* (2nd ed.; Wuppertal und Zurich: R. Brockhaus, 1991), pp. 89-91.

¹⁵ A careful study of this text and its meaning is provided in Hasel, *Understanding the Living Word of God*, pp. 68-70.

¹⁶ The Jesuit Cardinal Robert Bellarmine (1542-1621) wrote in his *Disputations Concerning Controversies of the Christian Faith Against the Heretics of Our Time* (1586-1593) that "Scripture is the immediately revealed word of God, and was written as dictated by God. . . . There can be no error in Scripture, whether it deals with faith or with morals, or whether it states something general or common to the whole Church or something particular and pertaining to only one person. . . . In the Scriptures not only the opinions expressed but each and every word pertains to the faith. For we believe that not one word

in Scripture is useless or not used correctly." (*De controversiis* II, II, 12, cited in Richard J. Blackwell, *Galileo, Bellarmine, and the Bible* [Notre Dame/London: University of Notre Dame Press, 1991], p. 31).

17 In the Swiss Reformed *Formula Consensus Helvetica*, the so-called Second Helvetic Confession (1566), it was held that also the very letters of the Bible were inspired. Matthias Flacius (1567) and a few others in the seventeenth century supported a view of verbal dictation. See J. K. S. Reid, *The Authority of Scripture* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1957), pp. 84-86.

18 J. I. Packer, "'Sola Scripture' in History and Today," *God's Inerrant Word*, ed. John Warwick Montgomery (Minneapolis: Bethany Fellowship, 1975), pp. 44-45.

19 See the title of the recent book by Clark H. Pinnock, *Tracking the Maze: Finding our Way Through Modern Theology from an Evangelical Perspective* (New York: Harper & Row, 1990).

20 This discipline has been comprehensively described from its beginnings by Gerhard F. Hasel, *Old Testament Theology: Basic Issues in the Current Debate* (4th ed.; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publ. Co., 1992). See also Ben C. Ollenburger, Elmer A. Martens, and Gerhard F. Hasel, eds., *The Flowering of Old Testament Theology* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1992); J. H. Hayes and F. Prussner, *Old Testament Theology: Its History and Development* (Atlanta: John Knox, 1985) and Henning Graf Reventlow, *Problems of Old Testament Theology in the Twentieth Century* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985).

21 See the comprehensive survey of Gerhard F. Hasel, *New Testament Theology: Basic Issues in the Current Debate* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publ. Co., 1982). Note also Hendrikus Boers, *What is New Testament Theology?* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979); Heikki Räisänen, *Beyond New Testament Theology* (Sheffield: Almond Press, 1990).

22 Henning Graf Reventlow, *Problems in Biblical Theology in the Twentieth Century* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986); John Reumann, ed., *The Practice and Promise of Biblical Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991); Brevard S. Childs, *Biblical Theology of the Old and New Testaments: Theological Reflection on the Christian Bible* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993).

23 We may here only refer to the most recent tomes which have just come forth in the last few years such as Hans Hübner, *Biblische Theologie des Neuen Testaments*, 2 vols. (vol. 3 yet to appear) (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1990, 1993); Horst Dietrich Preuss, *Theologie des Alten Testaments*, 2 vols. (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1991, 1992); Gisela Kittel, *Der Name über alle Namen*, 2 vols. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1989, 1990); Peter Stuhlmacher, *Biblische Theologie des Neuen Testaments: Band 1, Grundlegung: Von Jesus bis Paulus* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1992), vol. 2. is to be published shortly.

24 Gerhard F. Hasel, "The Relationship Between Biblical Theology and Systematic Theology," *Trinity Journal* N.S. 5 (1984): 113-127.

25 See Karl Barth, *Protestant Thought: From Rousseau to Ritschl* (New York: Harper & Row 1959), pp. 319-354.

26 John Macquarrie, *An Existentialist Theology* (New York: Harper & Row, 1965).

27 "Process theology" has had its flowering and renaissance since the 1960s. Its key figures are John B. Cobb, Jr., Schubert M. Ogden, Norman Pittenger, Daniel Day Williams, Bernard Loomer, H. N. Wieman, David Ray Griffin, Peter Hamilton, Ewert Cousins, aside from many others. The theological system of "process theology" is built on the philosophical system of Alfred North Whitehead and also Charles Hartshorne. Among some general studies of "process theology" are D. Brown, et al., *Process Philosophy and Christian Thought* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merill, 1971); Ewert Cousins, ed., *Process Theology* (New York: Newman, 1971); and a critical evaluation from an evangelical perspective is found in Ronald Nash, ed., *Process Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1987).

28 The father of the "theology of hope" is the German theologian Jürgen Moltmann who published a book under the title, *Theology of Hope* (New York: Harper & Row, 1967). See also Joseph Pieper, *Hope and History* (1969); Rubem Alves, *A Theology of Human Hope* (1969), among many others. Moltmann took his inspiration from the work of the Marxist

philosopher Ernst Bloch. For an evaluation of the various theologies of hope, see Trutz Rendtorff, *Theologie der Revolution: Analysen und Materialien* (1968).

29 The Latin American liberation theology represented by Rubem Alves, Hugo Assmann and Gustavo Gutiérrez, its three founding fathers, is influenced by J. Moltmann but can be considered to be an indigenous theological movement. It is classified as a third world "political theology" and has now many proponents in many places. See the insightful studies by Atilio A. Dupertuis, *Theology of Liberation. A Study in its Soteriology* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1987); idem, "Liberation Theology," *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society* 2/2 (Autumn, 1991): 126-144; Emilio A. Núñez, *Theology of Liberation* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1985); Arthur F. McGovern, *Liberation Theology and Its Critics. Toward and Assessment* (New York: Mary Knoll, 1989).

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 166 See above n. 89.
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 171 I do not recall who made this statement.
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INTERPRETING SCRIPTURE: AN HERMENEUTICAL "DECALOGUE"

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Introduction

In the early 20th century the eminent Neo-Orthodox theologian, Karl Barth, emphasized how "every theology stands or falls as a hermeneutic and every hermeneutic stands or falls as a theology."¹ Midway through this century Rudolf Bultmann and his followers also emphasized the role of hermeneutics as a concern of crucial theological significance. In the last two decades prominent Evangelical theologians have expressed their judgment that the "key intellectual issue" in theology is the "persistent problem of authority" which concerns "especially the problem of hermeneutics."²

Within Seventh-day Adventist discussions of theological method during this latter period, attention has increasingly focused upon the question of hermeneutics, that is, the theory and practice of biblical interpretation.³ For me personally, the discussion on this topic at the 1974 Seventh-day Adventist Bible Conferences changed my whole perspective on Scripture and theology.⁴ Recent developments in theological thought in the church have pointed up how a given hermeneutic directly and dramatically affects the end-product of the theological enterprise.

With what hermeneutic shall we conduct our theological investigations? A bewildering array of past and current hermeneutical theories confronts us. These range from the allegorical