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The Word in the Word

By WALTER R. ROEHRS

(ED. NOTE: This essay was read in London, Paris, and Bad Boll, Germany, as a part of the program of the European theological conferences, conducted by the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod during the past summer. It concerns itself exclusively with the relationship of the incarnate Word to the written Word of God. Other essays dealt with the Word of God as a means of grace and the proclamation of the Gospel.)

Our topic the same noun occurs twice: the *Word* in the *Word*. By its formulation our topic also asks us to think of these terms in a given relationship to each other: the *Word in the Word*. Thus the problem is stated. Two concepts, identical to the extent that they can be represented by the same semantic symbol, must be differentiated from each other by their relationship to each other. In a somewhat less cryptic form our topic could also be stated thus: What is the relationship between the Word made flesh (*Logos sarkos*) and the written Word of Scripture (*logos graphos*)?

It appears to be abundant reason for asking this question. Theologically one frequently finds the term "Word" used so vaguely in context that all distinctions are blurred. Word and Word become a paronomasia, *ein Wortspiel*, with a double entendre. On the other hand, Word and Word dare never be so close that they confront each other from opposite poles, or negating each other. The fact that the same vocable denotes either concept indicates that there is a sensitive balance between the two meanings that must be preserved and that nothing dare be done on either side of the scale that would disturb this equilibrium.

As a result of these introductory remarks, this essay will endeavor to explore a twofold relationship of the Word to the Word. The

I

CONTRASTS

In taking up the distinctive and distinguishing features of each concept, we must, at the very outset, underscore the basic fact that we are not dealing with contrasts that involve categorical antitheses. But since certain characteristics are found in only one or the other concept, but not in both, we are justified in pointing out a number of

A. Valid Contrasts

1. The first distinction that must be stated unequivocally is this, that the *logos graptos* declares the *Logos ensarkos* alone to be the object and content of saving faith.

In an absolute and final sense it is only faith in Christ Jesus that snatches me from the powers of darkness and translates me into the inheritance of light. Scripture answers the question: "What must I do to be saved?" thus: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved and thy house" (Acts 16:31). Scripture knows of no other foundation of saving faith than that which is laid: Jesus Christ.

Among evangelical Christians this is a self-evident and uncontroverted fact. It deserves special mention here, however, to obviate the misconception that acceptance of the full authority of Scripture puts a book in the place of Jesus Christ as the foundation of faith. Those who accept the unabridged authority and claim of Scripture have always recognized that the *Logos ensarkos* and the *logos graptos* do not stand in an identical relationship to faith. But perhaps this distinction has not been underscored sufficiently at all times, simply because it was not the real point at issue.

To substantiate this view I shall quote, for example, from John Schaller, who writes in the *Theologische Quartalschrift*, April, 1920, p. 145: "This belief (in Scripture) is not *in itself* an essential part of saving faith, not only because a person may very well have the saving faith without even knowing of the existence of the Bible as the book of God's revelation¹ . . . but also because such belief in the divine origin of the Bible may also be found in the *unregen-*

¹ As an example Schaller refers to the faith of the baptized infant; Schreiner refers to Abraham, who believed "without even having a page of the Bible in his hands," p. 37 in *Ist die Bibel Gottes Wort?*

erate (cf. the scribes and Pharisees as described in the New Testament) without ever leading to their conversion." Schaller therefore rejects Baier's contention: "*fides iustificans generalem illam fidem praesupponit et includit.*" The author, of course, also emphasizes in the same connection that acceptance of the entire Scripture thereby does not become a matter of indifference, for he continues: "It is unthinkable that a believer should rely on some selected statements of the Bible as spoken by God while he rejects other statements as inventions of men."

Hence the Word of God in its strict sense is the saving message of Jesus Christ. Schaller refers to a number of passages which bear this out: Rom. 1:17; Luke 8:11; John 17:6; Acts 4:31; 13:46; Rom. 9:6; 1 Cor. 14:36; 1 John 2:14; 1 Peter 1:25. But "although the Bible never describes itself by this name,"² it will become evident that the term "Word of God" is applicable to Scripture in this sense that the Word laid down in Scripture is the object of our faith since it demands to be heard and accepted as the Word of divine revelation.

2. Another contrasting relationship between the Word and the Word must emerge from the observation that although the noun *logos* in the singular denotes both concepts, as the testimony of and through Christ it occurs in the singular and the plural. It is the antithesis of the Word and the words.

There is, of course, only one *Logos ensarkos*. He is the singular occurrence of a *hapax*; hence no plural is possible. But it is a striking fact that it is none other than the evangelist St. John who not only uses the term *logos* frequently in this sense, but also employs the singular and the plural of *logos* to designate the witness of and to Christ preserved in Scripture. The Word speaks words. John 12:48: "The Word (*logos*) that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the Last Day." John 14:23, 24: "If a man love Me, he will keep My words (*logon*), and My Father will love him . . . he that loveth Me not keepeth not My sayings (*logous*); and the Word which ye hear is not Mine, but the Father's which sent Me."

We must furthermore not overlook the fact that the same Evangelist does not hesitate to designate the Word and the words spoken by the Word by means of the synonym of *logos*, *rema*, in the sin-

² Schaller, p. 144.

gular and the plural. *Rema*, however, never occurs as a synonym of the *Logos ensarkos*.

This contrast deserves mention. One at times hears references to Jesus as the Word as if there were no words by Him or concerning Him and as if *logos* occurred only to designate the personal Word made flesh. This conception is not correct, for we are brought into contact with the *Logos ensarkos* and receive His salvation by means of the words which He and others through "the Spirit of Christ, who was in them" (1 Peter 1:10), have spoken, preserved for us, and declared to us in the Scriptures.

The dead but risen and glorified Word Himself makes this distinction between Himself and the words by which He conveys and channels His blessings to men. Confronting His disciples on the way to Emmaus, He makes Himself known, in order to be apprehended by them, not by the fact of His presence but on the basis of the written Word. Luke 24:44-47: "These are the words (*hoi logoi mou*) which I spake unto you while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning Me. Then opened He their understanding that they might understand the Scriptures and said unto them: Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem."

If He made Himself known thus, then it certainly behooves us also to seek Him as the Word *in* the Word, in the words of Scripture which testify of Him. The Lutheran World Federation convention at Hannover offered much edifying material under the general topic of "The Living Word." But the distinction between the Word and the Word was obliterated in some written and oral presentations, at least it was not set forth clearly. At times the utterances seemed to give way to a Christological spiritualism. The door to every aberration will swing wide open the moment we lose sight of the basic truth that Word and Word remain the Word *in* the Word, for the Word says: "If ye continue in My word (*to logo mou*), then are ye My disciples indeed" (John 8:31).

3. If this statement is true, then we must not overlook another contrast between the *Logos ensarkos* and the *logos graphos*. It is

the distinction that must be made also as to the manner, or mode, of God's revelation in the Word made flesh and the written Word respectively. To obviate any misunderstanding arising from a pun on the term "Word," I shall refer to these two processes of God's revelation as incarnation and inverbation.³

In His revelation God communicates with us. But "God spoke at sundry times and in diverse manners" (Heb. 1:7). He hath indeed "in these last days spoken unto us by His Son" (Heb. 1:2). How did He speak to us by His Son? The answer is: by the incarnation. As already stated, when the Word was made flesh, God spoke a Word of revelation that is *hapax*. God did not reveal Himself in that manner again; no other human being has the distinction that in him "dwelleth the fullness of the Godhead bodily (*somatikos*)" (Col. 2:9). Hence Jesus is the revelation of God in a most singular, unprecedented, unrepeated manner. John 1:18: "No man hath seen God at any time; the only-begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him." Therefore this Word speaks words of divine revelation in the authority of His own person: "I say unto you." Coming from the bosom of the Father as the eternal *Logos*, He is able to speak as did the Prophets: *kob amar Jabweb* (Thus saith the Lord), but is not in need, as they were, of awaiting the *neum Jabweb* (the oracle of the Lord) for the authentication of His message. His authority is: "I and the Father are One."

Not only what He says is God's Word. Everything He is, does, and endures is the declaration of God's eternal counsel, a proclamation of the decree made before the foundations of the earth . . . before "all things were made by Him" (John 1:3). Because "in Him was life, and the life was the light of men" (John 1:4), the purpose of this unprecedented, unequalled, and unrepeated revelation was not merely to bring us authentic knowledge of God, but to reconcile us with God in the flesh. This happened only once and is the miracle of the incarnation.

However, God did not speak to men only through His Son, but

³ Again it is true that even these two differentiating terms do not connote absolute opposites. The Word made flesh and the Word appearing in human language and spelling are both the revelation of God. But by employing two terms we desire to stress the fact that each Word comes to us as a revelation of God in a manner differing from the other and with a specific purpose.

"at sundry times and in diverse manners." What did He do to communicate His holy and gracious will to men? In order to inform men of the salvation in the Word made flesh before and after the *kairos* of the incarnation had come, He employed another miracle of revelation, the miracle of the inverbation. God did not become human flesh; God came in human words. But this coming of God is and remains for me just as mysterious and incomprehensible as the incarnation. As little as I can fathom how the Babe in the manger at Bethlehem is Mary's and God's Son, so little can I explain how it is possible for God to communicate His divine thoughts of mercy in the imperfect language and accents of fallible men. He does tell me that He designated and employed special men as media of His revelation. Proksch (Kittel, *s. v. logos*, p. 96) says, for example: "In his [Jeremiah's] discourse Jahweh's Word takes on form (*verkoerpert sich*) (Jer. 1:11, 12), and the Roll of the Book, which he writes with the help of Baruch, contains nothing but the words of God (Jer. 36:2: 'Take thee a roll of a book, and write therein all the words that I have spoken unto thee'). But this Word also exerts a compulsion upon Jeremiah against which his own nature revolts (20:7 ff.); this Word is very definitely distinguishable from his own human thoughts. . . . The Word of God, which does not arise from his own soul, but invades it like a searing fire, compels him to reproduce it in his proclamation."

Incarnation and inverbation, then, have this in common: both are the unique revelation of God. But this fact does not authorize us to speak of them as if they were one and the same act of God, accomplished in the same manner and for the same purpose. In the second part of this essay, when we take up the analogy that exists between them, we shall come back to this point.

In establishing the right relationship between Word and Word, we must, however, also beware lest we set up

B. Incorrect Contrasts

In many quarters of theological thought the view is frequently expressed that antitheses must arise as soon as we equate God's Word and Scripture, or, to put it differently, when the claim is made that Scripture not only contains the Word of God but also *is* the Word of God. The opposition to this equation arises in part from

a false understanding of the Word of Scripture. But it is also the result of faulty reasoning, permitting only one conclusion of an alternative to stand when both statements of the alternative are true. An example would be the false statement "A tree cannot be green because it is firm" when in fact the tree is green *and* firm.

1. The first incorrect contrast that we must guard against appears in the statement frequently heard: Scripture is the dead letter of a book; the Word of God is a living power.

The latter sentence of this antithesis is, of course, acknowledged as true by all concerned: The Gospel is "the power of God unto salvation" (Rom. 1:16). "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing. The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life," John 6:63. "So then, faith cometh by hearing" (Rom. 10:17).

But does this positive statement about the Gospel necessarily include and prove the contrasting negative conclusion: Hence Scripture is not dynamic, but static and a dead letter? Is there no other logical alternative than to conclude: The Gospel loses its power and becomes the lifeless letter of a dead book, becomes *dinghaft* (mere matter) if and when it is committed to writing and is preserved for us in this written form?

The answer is: Such a contrast is not a logical necessity. There is an alternative which is not excluded by the affirmation of the power of the Gospel. No, the tree is not only firm, but also green. Scripture does not merely have the static form of the written and printed word, but it is also and at the same time and for that very reason dynamic and living, the *dynamis* of God.

But does not Scripture itself speak of the dead letter of Scripture and thus validate the above contrast? Yes, it is true that Paul refers to a use of Scripture that leaves the reader dead in unbelief. He knows that the power inherent in Scripture is not that of magical formulae that snap into action automatically by mere recitation. Therefore Scripture, he says, can be prevented from exerting its life-giving power when the reader or hearer insulates himself against it by unbelief. This happens when Scripture is not read, regarded, and accepted as the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Scripture cannot bring life to him who denies that the *graphie* (Scripture) testifies to the Coming One, that the Gospel of Jesus Christ is

a fulfillment of the *graphe*, which is set down for me in the *grammata* (the letters). 2 Cor. 3:14-17: "But their minds were blinded, for until this day remaineth the same vail untaken away in the reading of the old testament; which vail is done away in Christ. But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the vail is upon their heart. Nevertheless when it shall turn to the Lord, the vail shall be taken away. Now the Lord is that Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty."

Hence not the least shadow of criticism falls upon *ha gegraphtai* (what is written), because Paul, through the Spirit, has learned to know that this Scripture was given by God in order to be a *paidagogos* to Christ. But for the person who denies and obviates this God-intended purpose of Scripture it is not a source of life. It leaves him dead in trespasses and sin, no matter how often he reads it.

But although Scripture does not quicken automatically or magically, it is not dead. Paul nowhere calls it dead. It is not neutral. When it does not save, it kills. Its letters decree death to everyone who has not found refuge from their curse in Jesus Christ. Therefore Paul wants to exercise the ministry not of the unfulfilled letter, but of the New Testament fulfillment. "For the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life" (2 Cor. 3:6).

The fact that this *graphe*, the Old Testament itself, wants to be understood thus is also recognized by Paul. Cf. Romans 10. For after he has pointed to the Old Testament as God's Law and to Christ as the *telos* (end) of the Law, he says: "That is the Word of faith which I preach" (v. 8); "for the Scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on Him shall not be ashamed" (v. 11); "for [again a quotation from Scripture] whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved" (v. 13). "But they have not all obeyed the Gospel, for Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report?" (V. 16.) Furthermore, the well-known words of Gal. 3:11: "But that no man is justified by the Law in the sight of God, it is evident; for [again a quotation from Scripture] the just shall live by faith." In 1 Cor. 2:9, 10 Paul shows again from what is written that this knowledge must be effected by the Spirit: "But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit."

Gramma and *nomos*, *gramma* and *graphe*, are therefore inter-

changeable synonyms for the written form of the revealed will of God. All have a killing effect if they are interpreted and read without the *charisma* of the Spirit, who works faith in Christ as the fulfillment of all of Scripture. In themselves, in their origin and in their intended purpose, they are not dead, for Paul can also say: "Wherefore the Law is holy, and the Commandment holy and just and good. Was, then, that which is good made death unto me? God forbid. But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the Commandment might become exceeding sinful. For we know that the Law is spiritual; but I am carnal, sold under sin." (Rom. 7:12-14.)

Because this passage from Paul is quoted so often in order to prove that Scripture contrasted with the proclamation of the Gospel is dead, it was necessary to append this somewhat long digression regarding the opinion of the Apostle regarding Scripture.

The fact that I do not give up the dynamic power of Scripture when I equate the Word of God and Scripture becomes evident also from many other passages which indicate the purpose of the written Word. The incarnate Word, as well as the Evangelists and Apostles show by their use of Scripture that the latter is not a dead letter.

At the end of the *Logos* Gospel, John says: "But these are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that, believing, ye might have life through His name" (John 20:31). In the same way Jesus says: "For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed Me, for he wrote of Me" (John 5:46). Scripture supplies Jesus with a live weapon of defense to ward off temptation. It is the triple *gegraptai* which puts Satan to flight (Matt. 4:4-7). Scripture is the *dynamis* through which that repentance which is necessary for faith is effected: "By the Law is the knowledge of sin" (Rom. 3:20). In saying this, Paul is referring to the *grammata* of the Law: "For we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles that they are all under sin; as it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one" (Rom. 3:9,10). The knowledge that the Law has this wholesome effect, but becomes a killing letter when one endeavors to be justified before God by means of the Law, is also brought about by Scripture: "For, as many as are of the works of the Law are under the curse, for it is written, Cursed

is everyone that continueth not in all things which are written in the Book of the Law to do them [Deut. 27:26 f.]. But that no man is justified by the Law in the sight of God it is evident, for [Rom. 1:17: 'It is written'] the just shall live by faith." (Gal. 3:10, 11; Hab. 2:4.) Furthermore, saving faith in the redemption from the curse of the Law also proceeds from Scripture, because Paul continues: "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the Law, being made a curse for us, for it is written: Cursed is everyone that hangeth on a tree" (Gal. 3:13). The assurance that no one is excluded from this salvation from the curse of the Law also is derived from Scripture: "Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace, to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed . . . as it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations" (Rom. 4:16, 17). By means of Scripture this faith is also safeguarded against offense: "For they stumbled at that stumbling stone, as it is written: Behold, I lay in Sion a stumbling stone and rock of offense; and whosoever believeth on Him shall not be ashamed" (Rom. 9:32, 33; cf. Is. 28:14, 16). From Scripture, faith, when it is tried in affliction, can also draw the power to cling to the love of God. Rom. 8:35-37: "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For Thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us."

These examples could be multiplied. On the basis of those cited it is sufficiently evident that the following contrast is not valid: The Gospel is the power of God; Scripture is a dead letter. We conclude this section by asking: Who are we to prescribe to the Giver of that revelation through which we are to be saved: You dare not express and lay down Your revelation in words consisting of letters; if You do so, then Your power to accomplish what You desire is dissipated and must cease? Our confession: "I believe that Jesus Christ is my Lord," dare not be elaborated into: "but I am the lord of His Scripture."

2. If Scripture is not a dead letter, but the dynamic Word of God, then we have already provided a reason why the next contrast

cannot be established: The Word of God makes men free; the letter enslaves.

This antithesis, however, merits some scrutiny because an unequivocal and unconditional submission to all the statements of Scripture is often misunderstood and misinterpreted. Such an obedience to the written Word is termed legalistic Biblicism. The yoke of Rome, it is said, is merely replaced by a pope made of paper pulp (*papiernes Papsttum*, Schreiner, p.45) and the free exercise of our faith is again shackled by a religion of legal restraint and compulsion.

But this contrast is not valid. Submission to Scripture is not in the nature of repression by the demands of an external legal code or of compulsion by any extraneous force (at least it should not be and does not have to be). Obedience to Scripture is the obedience of Christ engendered by the Scripture. When the believer bows in humility and surrender to Scripture, he is actuated by the same "force" that "compels" him to obey any of God's precepts: the love of Christ constrains him.

The passage from Paul to which we alluded above actually deals in its real context with the freedom from the Law and from the letter of the Law. How did this freedom come to be? Did it not come into existence when Christ fulfilled the Law that kills and was laid down in letters, when He permitted Himself to be killed in order to deliver a deathblow to the written Word of the Law and to deprive it of its deadly effect and claim upon us? The letter of the Law contained in the *graphie* has as its purpose—and this is the purpose established by God—that its curse is to kill, kill with eternal death. For the unbeliever Scripture is and remains not only dead, not only an enslaving, but even a killing letter of the curse of the Law. Paul's experience on the way to Damascus therefore did not eventuate for him in a denial of this authority and claim of Scripture. But because the veil of unbelief was there removed from his eyes, he was given the joyous conviction that he had been liberated from the coercive power and the damning curse of the Law through Him who nullified the enslaving and killing effect of the Law in that He, being made under the Law, redeemed us from the curse of the Law.

Hence Paul can call the whole Old Testament *nomos* (1 Cor.

14:21; Rom. 3:10-18), but he can also prove from the same *nomos* that the threat and the curse of the Law have been rescinded and abolished for him who through faith is in Christ, the Fulfiller of the Law. There is no condemnation, no enslaving and damning Law, for the believer. Because the Ceremonial Law, according to God's counsel and economy of revelation, was to serve as pointing forward to the coming of Him through whom the Law was fulfilled and abrogated, this legal code, this *skia* (shadow) of the body, could no longer stay in effect when the *Logos* became flesh. Even the Law, written by God into man's heart and then spelled out in the recorded laws of the inscribed tablets, has ceased to have any coercive or damning power for him who embraces this Fulfiller of the Law in faith. To the self-righteous, who desire to be accepted by God on the basis of their doing the works written in the *nomos*, the Law still proclaims the threat of eternal damnation; it curses the unbeliever; it condemns the works of the flesh that proceed from the unbelieving heart.

For the believer, then, inasmuch as and in as far as he embraces Christ in faith, there no longer exists a letter of the Law, written or unwritten, that enslaves him. He does the will of God in the obedience of Christ. And in this same childlike obedience, motivated by love, he submits also to the words which came to him through the Spirit of Christ and are given to him for his instruction in doing the will of God. I believe in Scripture as it stands, not because of any external coercion of its letters; but because of the liberty wherewith Christ has made me free I desire to be His obedient child and to hearken to every word of this Redeemer.

Yes, indeed, the Scripture enslaves. That is a function of Scripture inasmuch as it also contains the Law. But it enslaves and condemns only unbelief. We should add here, however, that unbelief expresses itself not only in the coarse deeds of the flesh, but also in every contradiction to God's will, which emanates from the unbelieving heart as its source and fountain. All self-will, which refuses to bow to every word of God's revelation, thus becomes subject to the same condemning judgment of Scripture. This is true also because the incarnate Word requires this obedience to the inspired Word. He upbraids and condemns the unbelief of His disciples from Scripture: "O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the

Prophets have spoken. . . . And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself" (Luke 24:25,26). He castigates and condemns the unbelief of the Pharisees with the words of Scripture and demands the acceptance of His person because Scripture demands it! "Jesus saith unto them: Did ye never read in the Scriptures, The Stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the Head of the corner. This is the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes?" (Matt. 21:42.) Because the Pharisees rejected this word of Scripture, "they sought to lay hands on Him" (Matt. 21:46). Jesus excoriates the unbelief of the Sadducees with these words: "Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God . . . but as touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God" (Matt. 22:29,31). In a succeeding verse (v.34) we read that by this application of Scripture to the Sadducees "He had put the Sadducees to silence." Where can the brothers of Dives find the condemnation of their ungodly lives and how can they be led to repentance? The answer is: "They have Moses and the Prophets; let them hear them . . . if they hear not Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead" (Luke 16:29,31). When the Pharisees wanted to know what God condemns as sin, Jesus refers them to the sum of the divine Law laid down in Scriptures (Matt. 22:37-40). Jesus pronounces His "woes" upon the unbelief of the Pharisees on the basis and in the name of the written Law. Yes, it is true, Scripture enslaves and condemns men; Jesus condemns men by means of Scripture. But Scripture condemns and enslaves only such as continue in unbelief, and unbelief in every form.

The Apostles followed in the footsteps of their Lord. Paul, e. g., inveighs against the presumption (*hybris*) of unbelief, which rejects the Gospel (to the Jews, a stumbling block; to the Greeks, folly) by calling attention to "the weakness of God . . . that is stronger than men. . . . That, according as it is written, he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord" (1 Cor. 1:25,31). In the same way he condemns the pride of men, which expresses itself in their relationship to their fellow men, with the instruction: "Learn . . . not to think of men above that which is written, that no one of you be puffed up for one against another" (1 Cor. 4:6).

And how shall we condemn unbelief today, also and specifically the unbelief of false doctrine, if we do not employ this "enslaving" power of Scripture? What right would we have, for example, to condemn the work righteousness of papistic doctrine? Certainly not because men issued a manifesto that we call the Augsburg Confession. Whence did Luther derive the right to condemn the proclamation of the medieval Church as non-*kerygma* and as non-Gospel? Certainly not from the pronouncements of the Church which preached this false doctrine. Whence comes our authority to pronounce a *damnamus* upon the Reformed doctrine of the Lord's Supper? Certainly not because Luther wrote his words upon a table. With what do we oppose the vagaries with which the sects, such as Jehovah's Witnesses, seek to make inroads upon our members? Certainly not with the fact that we call ourselves Lutherans and that they have assumed a different name. Whence stems our witness against the materialism of Communism and against our contemporary secular culture? Certainly only because with Jesus and Paul we can say: *gegraptai*, "It is written." Why quote and adduce Bible passages at all if thereby we do not confess that Scripture is given also for the purpose of suppressing unbelief, and unbelief in every form, that Scripture alone offers us the criterion by which we know what is of the Spirit and what is of the flesh? Is that an enslavement? Yes, indeed, Satan is to be trodden underfoot, but not only when he endeavors to mislead us to adultery, but also when he says: "Yea, hath God said?" But this obedience, by which we submit to Scripture, this crucifying of the old Adam according to the prescription of Scripture, does not flow from a spirit of enslaving fear but from the spirit of freedom, which says: *Abba*, dear Father, I delight to do Thy will.

In this connection another observation should be made. Is it not true that the Lutheran Church in some sections is no longer able to be obedient to Christ in all things because the equation of the Word of God and Scripture has been surrendered? The result is that all discipline of doctrine becomes impossible. How is it possible that fundamental doctrines of the Lutheran Confessions, yea, of Christian faith, can be flouted with impunity? Why is such an aberration passed over as *berechtigtes Anliegen* (an individual's privilege)? Is it not to a great extent for the reason that by the

surrender of Scripture as the Word of God we have lost every right to condemn unbelief? (Cf. the vagaries of Bultmann.)

3. The word "obedience" leads us to another contrast between Word and Scripture that is often advanced. It is asserted that the Word results in the *certitudo* (certainty) of a spirit-worked faith; in Scripture, if it is equated with the Word of God, the *securitas* (security) of human sight and demonstrable proof is sought. This contrast is based on false presuppositions regarding the origin of the Scriptures.

Many of the proponents of this antithesis indeed believe that Scripture is more than a human book. It is divine in origin in that they understand and accept the inspiration of Scripture as a miraculous operation and intervention of God. But they declare that when the Word of Scripture is equated with the Word of God, this miracle is reduced to a human theory which explains and eliminates the miracle and makes it "earth-bound" and "material." Those who identify Word of God and Scripture are accused of rationalizing the miracle of inspiration through a "theory" of inspiration. It is said: You no longer believe; you demonstrate.

It is no doubt true that expressions have been used by such as uphold the full authority of Scripture which may have given occasion for this criticism. But the miracle of inspiration does not become something demonstrable by this so-called theory of inspiration. On the contrary, the miracle is raised to a higher power, if it is at all permissible to speak of greater and smaller miracles.

First, however, we must ask: What is a "theory" of inspiration? If the claim of those who hold that Scripture, on the one hand, is indeed the actual words of men, and, on the other, that these words of men through the miracle of inspiration have become the infallible Word of God, is called a theory, what about those who deny this infallibility of Scripture? Is it true that they do not put forth any theory in their explanation of how the Scriptures came into existence? They certainly do, for their theory is as follows: The inspiration of the authors did not take place with the result of infallibility; the inspiration affected the writers only partly so that human frailty and error was not excluded in the product of their labors.

Since this latter theory is often bolstered with the words: "We

have these treasures in earthen vessels" (2 Cor. 4:7), it may help to clarify the situation if we contrast these two theories by means of the following parable, although the passage in which these words occur does not deal with Scripture or inspiration at all. The one theory could then be described as follows: When God proceeded to give His holy and gracious will expression in permanent form, He poured the clean and unadulterated water of His revelation into an earthen vessel. This vessel, however, was not a perfect medium. It had bad cracks so that much of the pure water which was poured into it was not retained but escaped. Furthermore, in this vessel of human media there was a sediment of impurity so that the pure water was clouded and rendered partly impure. As a result we cannot say that we have the water in its unadulterated purity. On the contrary, it must be filtered by us of its impurities.

The other theory says: Yes, the vessel has cracks and a sediment of impurity, but when God proceeded to pour His pure water into it, He effected at the same time that the vessel became watertight for His purpose and that no admixture with impurity took place. To put it differently: God did not permit Himself to be frustrated in His purpose of bringing His Word of complete truth to men because only imperfect media were at His command, but He accomplished that which He had determined to do: to bring His truth in unadulterated and complete form to men in spite of the shortcomings of the human media.

That in brief describes the two theories. If we wish to speak of the process of inspiration at all as a "theory," it certainly is clear that the one view deserves the term theory as well as the other.

But the claim is made that, in order to maintain this theory of pure water in an impure medium, we must resort to a harmonization of Scripture which operates with human and not divine logic, which rationalizes, which demonstrates *ad oculos*.

Again the question must be raised: Is a harmonization involved in only the one theory? The answer can only be: No, a harmonization is necessary to maintain both positions. What is the difference?

To get at the basic principles involved, we must begin with the claim of Scripture "Thus saith the Lord." What do we do with this claim? If we let it stand as it reads — unharmonized — then we have the obligation of accepting everything thus spoken as true

and authoritative. Hence we must seek to understand how the individual words of this Word are in harmony with one another.

This task extends into many areas. To it belong the problem of the original text and all the questions involved in textual criticism; the quotations of the Old Testament in the New Testament; the factual and logical statements of verse and verse, which apparently are not consistent with one another; the comparison of Biblical and secular history; the statements of Scripture and the pronouncements of science in all areas; the language, especially in the Old Testament, which offends the sensibilities of many; the apparently low level of morality of the imprecatory Psalms; the questions raised by isagogical investigation; the question regarding the Canon; etc.

What ridicule and scorn have been heaped upon the harmonization of these assumed contradictions! Again it is true that explanations of these problems have been given which are not valid and which at times even appear ridiculous. Nor do we want to blink the fact that this harmonization of word and word of Scripture is beset at times with seemingly insurmountable difficulties. There are questions which we must answer quite honestly by saying: *Ignoramus*, we do not know as yet how this is to be understood or solved.

But at this point we are not interested in establishing how many of these problems can be solved to everyone's satisfaction and how many still remain unsolved. To seek and find these solutions is and must remain the task of Biblical study.

We do have before us, however, the basic question: Is a harmonization employed to uphold only the theory of the pure water in the impure vessel? What do the proponents of the other theory do with the claim "Thus saith the Lord"? Is it not true that they, too, take recourse to a harmonization? It differs from the other harmonization in this, that with one fell swoop all of Scripture is harmonized. With what? The answer certainly must be: with the *securitas* of human thinking and not with the *certitudo* of faith. Because men are convinced by human thinking that the words "Thus saith the Lord" are not literally true, all pronouncements of Scripture which one does not understand on the basis of human investigation or which in some cases are also put into antithesis

against one another without cause are harmonized with the theory of the imperfect media of revelation. After one has judged the pronouncements of Scripture according to this criterion and has brought them into harmony with human thinking, one can say: This is pure water because I have removed the impurities.

In this connection another question arises: Does the acceptance of pure water in impure vessels require a *sacrificium intellectus*? The answer, on the one hand, is No. The revelation of God is not irrational in this sense, e. g., that we are no longer permitted to count to ten when earthly things are enumerated or when Scripture gives data involving numbers. But is it not true that many serious errors have been made in the name of the human *intellectus* in the judging of Scripture? How many pages of Biblical history, for example, have not been excised from Scripture merely because human investigation at that stage of historical research was unable to verify these statements of Scripture, only to gather these pages again from the wastebasket of myth and legend and to reinsert them into Scripture as accepted history!

And yet it is also true that we sacrifice the sovereignty of all human thinking when we acknowledge the truth of Scripture by which we are saved. Faith is irrational only in the sense that it cannot prove or demonstrate itself. The *sacrificium intellectus* of faith is indeed a burnt offering, which consumes us in our entire thinking and feeling, but it is also a thank offering, because in sincere gratitude toward God we accept everything that God has revealed to us in Scripture in order that we might know Him and His grace in Christ Jesus. We surrender to Him the decision as to what we are to know and not to know as necessary for our salvation.

What finally and in the last analysis is at issue? The writer of one of the articles in Schreiner's book would like to eliminate the catalogs of vice (*Lasterkataloge*) of the Old Testament from Scripture as the Word of God because they offend the modern Christian. If we are honest and place our hands into our bosom of flesh and blood, what still remains to us the greatest vice of Scripture? The answer is John 3:16. In the very heart of the Gospel message we still must struggle with the temptation, "Yea, hath God said?"

It is incorrect, then, to say: the Word produces the *certitudo* of faith. If, however, we identify the Word with Scripture, then we

are seeking a *securitas* of human sight. This antithesis is not justified. Nor does it solve the fundamental issue; in fact, it raises new problems. It creates the dilemma that we no longer know: Is this the voice of Esau or of Jacob that we hear?

If we have thus far set forth valid distinguishing features of the Word of Scripture and the Word made flesh, we have taken the first step in establishing the relationship of these two concepts to each other. But the simple fact that both may be and are represented by the same vocable should make it clear that we must think of them also as existing in a relationship of

II

ANALOGY

To some extent this analogy has already been formulated negatively in the first part. There remains, however, the task of stating this analogy *e contrario* in precise, positive terms. In doing so we must first guard against establishing a relationship that involves

A. A False Analogy

The relationship of the Word made flesh and the Word of Scripture cannot be based on an unqualified identity of the "human element" of both. The "human side" of Scripture is not analogous to the human nature of Jesus Christ to the extent that the constituent elements and factors of the one can also be found in the other.

Such a violation of the intended *tertium comparationis* of this analogy is involved in one of the major arguments against the infallibility of the Word of Scripture as the Word of God. It is said: Scripture was written by fallible men; hence it cannot be exempt from error because Jesus also was a man.

There is indeed an element of coincidence in the fact that the Word of Scripture was spoken and written by men in the flesh and that the eternal Word became flesh and dwelt among men. But before we can establish to what extent this similarity of circumstance permits us to draw parallels between the two concepts, we must be sure that in the equation (human side of Scripture = human nature of Jesus) we have valid concepts on both sides of the equal sign. For the fallacy of this equation, as and if it is used to disprove the equation: Word of God = Word of Scripture, con-

sists not so much in the equal sign but in false ballast with which at least one of the concepts is weighted as it is thrown into the balance. If concept "A" represents an invalid assumption, then the statement $A = B$ cannot be true.

The Christological basis of this analogy is evident.⁴ The pivot upon which it turns is the human nature of Christ. Only after this term has been clearly defined will it be possible to determine the validity of the comparison and the conclusion regarding Scripture drawn from it.

When we ask: "Who and what is Jesus Christ?" a part of the correct answer is: "He is true man." It is charged, however, that the full equation of the Word of Scripture with the Word of God fails to do justice to this doctrine of the incarnation: it lapses into the old heresy of docetism. Almost every recent publication contains this challenge: "You must take the incarnation seriously." (Cf. e. g., Kittel's *Woerterbuch*, s. v. "logos" and Schreiner, *op. cit.*). The same thought is expressed by Heinrich Vogel in his *Christologie*, p. 375: "What else is possible but that the Word (of Scripture) should be found in His (Jesus') form?"

But to take the incarnation seriously, according to the same point of view, also demands making Jesus subject to human fallibility, at least in matters of purely human judgment. A completely infallible Jesus, it is said, negates the incarnation: Jesus is and remains God in the phantom form of a human body. Vogel says on p. 335: "The human thinking of him, who became one of us, is in its being joined with the Word of God, subject to the law of human thinking."⁵ Therefore, by analogy, to say that the infallible Word of God is to be identified with Word of Scripture is also docetism. It posits God in the phantom body of a human alphabet: the words of Scripture can no longer actually be the words spoken by men.

Since, in the case of many theologians, this view of the incarnation is not intended to be a summary denial of Jesus as "the Way,

⁴ The doctrine of the person of Christ was central to the 12 papers read and discussed at Bad Boll. The general topic was "Die Kirche in christologischer Schau" (The Church viewed Christologically).

⁵ Das menschliche Denken dessen, in dem Gott einer von uns wurde, ist als das mit dem Worte Gottes geeinte Denken dem Gesetz menschlichen Denkens unterworfen.

the Truth, and the Life," the question quite naturally arises: How far and to what areas does this possibility of erring on the part of the Word made flesh extend? There apparently is no uniform answer to this question. In the main the usual reply is that we are dealing here with quite harmless mistakes, for, it is said, to be in error and to sin certainly are not synonymous.

Thus the thinking of Jesus is portrayed as limited by the erroneous and imperfect historical knowledge which He shared with His contemporaries. He designated as historical events which were regarded as actual history by everyone in His day, e. g., Jonah, the Queen of Sheba; in fact, all narration in the Old Testament is elevated by Him into the realm of the historical. If Jesus had lived today, He would not have spoken as He did, for He would have had the benefit of modern historical research, which has shown that what the Old Testament presents as history is largely legend, fable, myth.

Similarly Jesus, we are reminded, did not push beyond the horizons and the contemporary view regarding the origin of the Old Testament books. He still says: "Moses saith" and "Isaiah saith." Living today, He would have been benefited by modern isagogical studies and would have been in a position to make more adequate statements on the authorship of the Old Testament books. Whether He Himself knew any better, or whether He merely accommodated Himself to the prevalent erroneous notions of His contemporaries, is of little consequence in the final analysis.

But these mistakes are said not to be serious or dangerous; they do not negate or annul the validity of the actual message of revelation. The truth of God exists in spite of these few inconsequential errors. The information and the proclamation that Jesus brings regarding God and His holy and gracious will is not shot through with human errors; it remains revelation from the bosom of the Father.

The sad fact is that such a view of what Jesus knew and did not know need not be limited to such harmless mistakes. Once a Jesus capable of error is posited, who and what is to prevent anyone from denying the claim to truth of any and all words of this fallible man? This is exactly what Vogel, for example, does when he says: "His thoughts, words, and sentences of truth as such are not

as yet the truth," p. 340. In other words, the errors to which Jesus was subject are not only of a technical nature; the very words in which He expresses Himself do not represent the truth. At this point truth begins to take flight into the fog of mysticism. The incarnation is volatilized into a "logotheism," as Baillie points out in his book *God Was in Christ*, a theism which is pure *Schwaermerei*. This is, indeed, docetism in its most violent form. But why not? Who will deny Vogel the right to take this next step, once we have agreed that Jesus is a fallible man?

And, finally, who, on this basis, has an answer for men like Eduard von Hartmann when he insists that error is not harmless but dangerous? Because Jesus was not safeguarded against error, His teaching was in many respects deleterious. Says Hartmann in his *Christentum des N. T.*: "Jesus was a man . . . who was endowed with a rather unusual mental capacity but also was a man of great intellectual defects; he was filled with a noble and sublime spirituality, but also subject to many dangerous errors and to far-reaching human frailty (e. g., his disregard of work or labor, of property, or family duties)."

Few indeed are the theologians who stoop to such blasphemy of Jesus and such desecration of His Word. But who is able to stop these blaspheming mouths if one accepts the premise: One must take the incarnation seriously; that is, Jesus was capable of error?

The fact of the matter is that Scripture gives no indication of witnessing to a *Logos* made flesh who is fallible like man. Least of all does He Himself distinguish between such words of His as are of divine origin and such as are produced merely as the result of the thinking of His human mind. The question of the Pharisees "Who are You?" He answers thus: "Even the same that I said unto you from the beginning. I have many things to say and to judge of you, but He that sent Me is true; and I speak to the world those things which I have heard of Him" (John 8:25, 26). Also: "But now ye seek to kill Me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God; this did not Abraham" (John 8:40). And again: "He that loveth Me not keepeth not My sayings, and the Word which ye hear is not Mine but the Father's that sent Me . . . but the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost . . . shall teach

you all things and bring all things to your remembrance whatsoever I have said unto you" (John 14:24, 26).

Vogel would not have come to his faulty conclusion regarding the fallibility of Jesus if he had remained consistent in his portrayal of the human nature of Jesus. His main thesis on the existence of Jesus in a bodily form is the following: "As to the humanity of Him in whom God became one with us, it is the humanity of one existing in the reality of a human form, subject to the necessities and functions of the body, born bodily, crucified and raised bodily, but in such a manner that the use of His body is determined by the work which He came to perform" (p. 317). Well stated. But when he treats of the human mental capacities of the divine *Logos* in this human body, it is significant to note that he omits the last clause and does not say: "In this manner that the use of his mind and intellect is determined by the work which He came to perform." The human nature that He assumed, also in its mental capacities, had the one purpose of accomplishing our salvation. It is true that we read of Him that He grew in wisdom and knowledge. But He did not have to take a course in psychology, for He knew "what was in man." He grew in wisdom, but He did not have to major in jurisprudence, for He is equipped with judicial knowledge and insight so complete that He can render judgment on the eternal fate of all men appearing before His judgment seat. He did not know when the Judgment Day would come by a self-imposed limitation of the knowledge that was His as the Son of God. But when He does make statements about Judgment Day, they are correct. By what process of human thinking does He know that the words of verdict on that day will be: Inherit the kingdom prepared for you; depart into eternal destruction? We must beware, then, lest we separate the human knowledge of Jesus from the soteriological purpose of His coming. If we approach this question from the point of view of human anthropology or psychology, we are prone to repeat the fatal mistake that the Pharisees made when they said: "If this Man were a prophet, He would have known who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth Him" (Luke 7:39).

It cannot be maintained, then, that the human side of Scripture is analogous to the human nature of Jesus in this respect, that

neither is exempt from human error. "A" is not equal to "B" because what "B" represents is a fallacy. Whether Scripture contains errors is a question which cannot be solved by appealing to the incarnation of the eternal *Logos*.

This analogy exists, but only to this extent: As Jesus was a true man, so the authors of Scripture were and remained true human beings also under the influence of God's inspiration; they did not turn into lifeless machines and unthinking automatons; they were speaking, thinking human beings, different from one another in temperament, style, vocabulary, and other idiosyncrasies. To enable these human beings, speaking in their own vocabulary, also to speak the Word of God, God performed the miracle of inspiration, the *inverbatio*. In the eternal *Logos* made man, and as man revealing God to us and reconciling us with God, we are confronted with the miracle of the incarnation.

At this point mention could be made of a few other incorrect analogies that are often drawn between the *Logos ensarkos* and the *logos graptos*. It is said, e. g.: "Is it not true that we must think of our whole theology as a *theologia crucis*? Hence Jesus and the Scripture must be viewed under the sign of the Cross (*unter dem Zeichen des Kreuzes*)." Or again: "In Jesus we have God making Himself known and also concealing and obscuring Himself (*eine Enthuellung und Verbuellung*); so God's revelation in Scripture is also clothed in the concealing and obscuring of the letter of the Word; the Word (singular) is concealed and obscured in the words." These and similar statements, however, are based on the same half-truths that we found in the claim: Scripture has a human side because Jesus was a true man, and therefore they need no separate refutation.

B. The Correct Analogy

What then is the correct analogy between these two concepts, both of which are designated by the same term *logos*? It is this: the *Logos ensarkos* and the *logos graptos* both are God's Word of revelation. God speaks in His Son and in Scripture to accomplish my salvation.

In reality these two acts of divine revelation are in a relationship to each other that transcends all analogies of human thinking. God's Word never is the speaking of men. We must, therefore,

beware lest we seek to analyze this Word of God much as we break up a drop of water into its component parts of hydrogen and oxygen in their proper balance of two to one. If we subtract the eternal *Logos* from Scripture as its Author, Content, and life-giving Power, then we lose both. If we attempt to isolate a *logos ensarkos* for ourselves, divorced from the witness of Scripture, then we are again putting asunder what God hath joined together.

What does God say to make my salvation possible when He speaks in the *Logos ensarkos* and the *logos graptos*? In the incarnation God speaks in order to put into execution the eternal council of His love at that *kairos* in human time and in the manner determined by Him. God speaks before and after the incarnation in the Word and words uttered and written by human beings, also in His own determined manner, in order to bring to men the good news of this eternal plan of redemption and its accomplishment, and in order to create in men the faith which accepts this accomplished salvation through the power with which He has invested these words.

Since it is God speaking to us for this purpose, it certainly is not within our privilege to ask in either case: Why does God speak thus and not in some other way? If in the first instance we ask concerning the incarnation with Anselm: "*Cur Deus homo?*" (Why did God become man?) in order to prove by human logic that Jesus necessarily had to be and act as He did, then we expose ourselves to the danger of wanting to be as God and to solve the mystery of His love. Likewise we should not usurp the right to sit in judgment upon the manner in which God determined to bring to us the *mysterion tou euaggeliou* (Eph. 6:20) in the written Word. As far as we can see, God could have arranged to let one man speak it all. He could have had it written in one style and vocabulary. He could have dictated it. It was within His prerogative not to have it written at all but to have this message brought to us from time to time by angelic messengers. But may I presume to ask: "*Cur logos graptos?*" Certainly not if thereby I mean to take exception to the manner in which God speaks to me. For as according to God's counsel there is no salvation outside of the *Logos* made flesh, so there is no *Logos* for me outside Scripture.

Dr. Hugo Odeberg in *Christus und die Schrift* stresses this rela-

tionship of the Gospel and Scripture: "Everything that the Gospel contains is something which happened 'according to the Scripture.'" As an example he points to 1 Corinthians 15 and continues: "In 1 Cor. 15:1-11 Paul gives a comprehensive presentation of how the Gospel is preached. . . . But in every fundamental point in this basic instruction from the Gospel we have the words which are constantly repeated as something essential: 'according to the Scripture.' . . . That all these things happened according to the Scriptures belongs to the real essentials of the Gospel."

It is at three decisive points that the written Word and the incarnate Word are congruent as God's speaking to man.

1. Man does not know how he can be liberated from the power of sin, how he can escape the curse of God which rests upon sin, how he can find a gracious God. God speaks in the incarnation of the *Logos* his Word of Reconciliation and Redemption. Man knows nothing authentic of the meaning of this *Logos* made flesh. God speaks in the human words of Scripture His Word which makes man wise unto salvation.

2. Furthermore, when God speaks, He does not speak empty sounds but creative words. Hence the second analogy consists in this: As the incarnate *Logos* is not an impotent, ineffectual Word, but the living Victor over sin, death, and hell, so the words which His Holy Spirit inspired men to speak and write are not hollow, fleeting semantic symbols or dead letters but living instruments of the power of God, creating and preserving saving faith.

We know that the incarnate Word fulfilled the purpose for which God spoke this Word, for God did not repudiate the cry of victory from the cross: "It is finished." The Church confesses this victory when she says: "The third day He rose again from the dead, He ascended into heaven and sitteth on the right hand of God, the Father Almighty; from thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead."

In like manner, Scripture contains not merely the neutral words of information and witness regarding the incarnate Word. Because it is also God who spoke this Word by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and by it still speaks to men, it is a Word alive with divine power. It is capable of putting into effect God's design in speak-

ing it. It overcomes the perversion of the natural mind. It penetrates the deaf ears of unbelief and enables man to hear and accept His Word of Reconciliation.

The disciples on the way to Emmaus experienced the power of this written Word as it was opened to them by the incarnate Word. What happened when Jesus revealed Himself to them by means of the written Word of Scripture? They said: "Did not our heart burn within us while He talked with us by the way and while He opened to us the Scriptures?" (Luke 24:32.) The Word of Scripture sets on fire; its flame burns into the heart.

The Apostles, by their proclamation of the Gospel, also show their conviction that the Word of Scripture is a living power. Odeberg stresses this fact as follows: "One would expect that they [the Apostles] would have much to say about the wonderful experiences that they had had. It was indeed something very extraordinary that they had experienced. But as Christ, when He set out to explain the meaning of the resurrection, did not speak of His own experience but rather of what the Scriptures say, so they, too, make their point of departure the written Scripture. The proclamation of Christ *after* His resurrection and His going to the Father corresponds to the proclamation regarding Him *before* His coming into this world (cf. the Book of Acts)." Philip, for example, does not say to the Ethiopian: "Put this old dead Scripture aside, and listen to something new that I have experienced and want to tell you"; he preaches Christ from Scripture. Paul, arraigned before Festus, bases "his hope toward God and a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust," not on a new proclamation but believes "all things which are written in the Law and in the Prophets" (Acts 24:14, 15). Every reader of Scripture knows that Scripture witnesses to itself as such a living Word.

3. God speaks in the incarnate Word and in the Word of Scripture a Word that is not heard and accepted by all. Hence we can establish this final analogy: As no man can call the *Logos ensarkos* Lord but by the Holy Ghost, so no man can call Scripture the Word of God but by the Holy Ghost. What God speaks to men in the incarnate and the written Word can be heard and accepted only by the ears of faith.

The Church confesses: I believe that Jesus Christ is my Lord.

It makes this confession only because it consists of the fellowship of believers. Everyone who makes this confession has thereby surrendered all claim to his own lordship and right of self-determination. Because the believer knows that his contradiction to God is resolved by his communion with God through Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh no longer is a contradiction for him. But this faith in the Word made flesh that God has spoken to the believer and permitted him to hear cannot be demonstrated logically or empirically.

In the same way, it is only a Spirit-wrought faith that can say: God has spoken and is speaking His saving Word to me in the written Word. That assurance is not man-made. It is not produced by logical proof, deductions, or historical verification.

Human demonstrations of truth need not be put into opposition to faith. They have their place, above all in the apologetic of Scripture. But when the believer refutes the charges that Scripture contains logical contradictions and historical inaccuracies, he does so merely because the attack on Scripture is in this area. He should not be accused of making the validity of divine truth dependent on the processes of reason. Nor does such an apologetic betray a small, insecure faith that needs to be bolstered.

But to say: "I believe in Scripture as the Word of God" is a statement of faith no less than to say: "I believe in Jesus Christ, God's Son and my Savior." When the Holy Spirit through the Word of Scripture creates saving faith in Jesus Christ, then the believer also hears these written Words as the speaking of God for his salvation.

The net result appears to be an argument in a circle: I believe in Jesus Christ because I believe in Scripture; I believe in Scripture because I believe in Jesus Christ. But this circle does not affect me as a *circulus vitiosus*. It exists because it has a center about which it revolves: Jesus Christ, my Savior. The lines that issue from this center in the words of Scripture form and preserve the circle. Without this center there would be no circle of faith; without the radii from the circumference I would miss the center.

The Word is in the Word.

"Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth."

St. Louis, Mo.