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been prepared for the month of September.

So we begin another year at Dordt College. God has been gracious to us in past years. We witness on every side the evidence of His blessings—the fine buildings, the pleasant surroundings, impressive enrollments, financial stability, a faithful constituency, a truly competent Board of Trustees, and a well qualified faculty. Are we ready and willing

to take advantage of our opportunities unto the greater praise and honor of God's name? Oh! that Dordt College might stand in this world as a glowing tribute to that most excellent name. Let Dordt College inspire men everywhere to sing "Lord, our Lord, in all the earth, How great Thy Name. Thine the Name of matchless worth, excellent in all the earth. How great Thy Name."

REVELATION: HARMONY VERSUS CONFLICT

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The nature of a relationship between two things is determined by the nature of the things to be related. This is true especially with regard to the character of the relationship between "general" and "special" revelation.

The meaning of "general" and "special" in this connection cannot be determined abstractly. It is inextricably intertwined with the whole question of the very essence and scope of the Christian life style. The fundamental issue is whether the nature of the Christian walk of life is half-heartedly dualistic or whole-heartedly integral.

The Problem

Western Christianity has generally opted for a way of life which can be characterized by the somewhat psychologistic expression of religious schizophrenia. Its commonly accepted assumption has been that there are two sources of revelation, two a priori realms, two ways of living. With one part of his heart and life, the reborn person lives directly and immediately in the presence of God, whereas with the other part of his existence he lives more like someone who is in hiding and who

spends his time and energy in a world in which God is present only indirectly and mediately.

Though it is never openly stated, it is also assumed that ultimately there are two Gods, each God requiring a different type of response from man. One God is the Creator and Lawgiver who has revealed himself in a very general way through the works of creation. The other God is the Redeemer and Provider of the Gospel who has made himself known especially through the words of the Bible. Knowledge of the former God is common to all people and not necessarily based on Scripture, whereas the latter God is knowable only to believers and solely by means of the Bible. The redeeming God of special revelation is then, somehow, taken more seriously at his Word than the creating God of general revelation.

"One may try as hard as he can to stress the need for a common Christian confession and the seeming harmony between 'general' and 'special' revelation, but it will be to no avail. It is impossible to establish a peaceful co-existence between two mutually exclusive religious principles."

Although a genuine child of the Lord does not want to live such a divided life, he is, nevertheless, constantly tempted to think in this manner and to compromise his basic commitment to the one Lord of all reality. When he has to articulate in theory and express in practice the genius of Christian education, politics, economics, art, athletics, psychology, theology, philosophy, etc., he all too often has recourse, in spite of the fact that he is a believer, to an answer which is not sufficiently pagan to be rejected entirely, nor sufficiently biblical to be accepted uncritically.

The distorted framework of reference we are alluding to presents itself in a variety of ways. At first sight, these various ways may seem to be dissimilar. Upon closer scrutiny, we discover, however, that they are at bottom all religiously the same. Well-known manifestations of this erroneous religious stance are the following set of terms: general and special, natural and supernatural, common and special, works and words, indirect and direct, science and faith, learning and believing, curriculum

and chapel, culture and Christ, job and calling, philosophy and theology, natural and biblical, nature and grace, human and divine, man-centered and God-centered, Arminian and Calvinistic, covenant of creation (works, nature) and covenant of redemption (grace, believers).

One of the inevitable results of such a religious dualism and functional dichotomy is the rise, sooner or later, of severe tensions in life and society. One may try as hard as he can to stress the need for a common Christian confession and the seeming harmony between "general" and "special" revelation, but it will be to no avail. It is impossible to establish a peaceful co-existence between two mutually exclusive religious principles. The life of the Christian person and the Christian community remains split at the very core. Outward unity

is in fact an illusion. Suspicions of heresy make their ugly appearance, and the wholesome effects of concrete communal witness in all of life to the one God of all revelation are reduced to a minimum, if not eliminated.

The peculiar nature of the "and" in each of the above-mentioned sets of terms is profoundly religious, not theological or philosophical, in essence. One might wish the latter were the case! Our problem could then be solved rather easily! However, it is because of the existentially religious character of the relationship between the two terms of each set that the "and" is filled with all sorts of profound implications which directly affect our understanding and account of the Christian's role and calling in the world.

Three Wrong Answers

In Western Christianity three wrong answers have been given concerning the nature of this "and," i.e. of the relationship between "general" and "special" revelation. In all three instances, injustice is done to the cen-

tral thrust of the covenantal life style. The requirement of the latter is in essence nothing less than that man live his whole life in the direct presence of Jahweh. In all his activities—such as voting, writing, painting, buying, selling, fabricating, playing, composing, sewing, cooking, cultivating, teaching, preaching, counseling, laughing, weeping, etc.—

this third suggestion is the most common and complex one. The essence of the relationship between the two sources of revelation is believed to be one of addition, superceding, surpassing, complementing, completing, transcending, trumping. When a Christian looks at the cultural products of the non-Christian, he reacts by saying: "We have, or do, that

"In all his activities—such as voting, writing, painting, buying, selling, fabricating, playing, composing, sewing, cooking, cultivating, teaching, preaching, counseling, laughing, weeping, etc.—man is called upon, by the very structure of his being human, to discern and obey the Word of God."

man is called upon, by the very structure of his being human, to discern and obey the Word of God. In the measure that he refuses to do this, he distorts the proper meaning of life and history. The three erroneous answers which fail to do justice to the wholeness of man's life before God are the following:

1. "General" and "special" are thought to be fundamentally the same: general revelation is the same as special revelation and vice versa. This approach results in a denial of the biblical meaning of the Great Divide already referred to in Genesis 3:15. It also eliminates the distinction between what has confusingly come to be known as common grace and special grace. The term which best describes this interpretation of the Christian's role and task in the world is "worldliness."

2. "General" and "special" are believed to be each other's polar opposites. The relationship is now not one of identity but of conflict. The two sources of revelation, and the concomitant ways of living, are related to each other in an either/or manner. This view of life does not so much deny the scriptural antithesis as it distorts its real essence. There is no such thing as common grace. One is either a Christian or, for example, a politician, businessman, artist, etc. Because of this a-cosmic or ascetic dimension, this type of Christianity can best be characterized by the term "world-flight."

3. "General" and "special" are neither completely identical, nor entirely in conflict. This third position attempts to modify and combine the two previous ones. This explains why

too, but we make, or do, it better." This third position tries, in this manner, to correct the error of worldliness in the first position, and the mistake of world-flight in the second position. It does not outrightly reject, nor wholeheartedly accept the biblical view of the antithesis. The essence of this type of synthesis—found especially in Roman Catholic, Protestant Scholastic and Neo-Orthodox circles—can best be designated, in distinction from the former two, by the term "world-compromise."

There are two subtypes in this third form of synthesis. Whereas, the one gives priority to the grace-pole, the other type places all the stress upon the nature-pole. The former is characteristic of scholastic Protestantism; the latter is typical of Fundamentalism and Neo-Orthodoxy. The first group of thinkers is sometimes referred to as being rationalistic or intellectualistic, the second group as being fideistic or confessionalistic.

Contribution of John Calvin

The significance of John Calvin as a Reformer was his ability to avoid the pitfalls of any one of these three unbiblical attitudes toward life. He had no use for the "worldliness" of Secularism and Humanism, the "world-flight" of Anabaptism, and the "world-compromise" of Roman Catholicism. Gripped by the power of the Kingdom-Gospel, he was able to refrain from denying, absolutizing, or relativizing special revelation or general revelation. Even more than Luther, Calvin was

fascinated by the power and simplicity of the kind of life lived by redeemed creatures who have rediscovered, and now wish to make known, the indivisible unity of God, the unbreakable coherence of his revelation, and the integral response of human life as religion. There is no tension anywhere and at any time in God's revelation. To find such conflict is impossible, and to conjecture it is forbidden. The God of Scripture is the same as the God of Jesus Christ, and this redeeming God is, in turn, no other than the God through whose Word heaven and earth have been created and are being upheld.

Calvin stresses that God's revelation in the nature, order, design, and structure of creation is real, majestic, even awe-inspiring.

Hence it is obvious that, in seeking God, the most direct path and the fittest method is, not to attempt with presumptuous curiosity to pry into his essence, which is rather to be adored than minutely discussed, but to contemplate him in his works, by which he draws near, becomes familiar, and in a manner communicates himself to us. (I, V, 9)¹

It must be acknowledged, therefore, that in each of the works of God, and more especially in the whole of them taken together, the divine perfections are delineated as in a picture, and the whole human race thereby invited and allured to acquire the knowledge of God, and, in consequence of this knowledge, true and complete felicity. (I, V, 10)

Calvin goes on to show that due to man's ingratitude, which leaves him without any excuse, he is now in need of "another and better help" to lead him "properly to God as the Creator." The God of Scripture is not different from the God of creation. It would be sin to think and believe such a thing. It is because of man's terrible folly that the inscripturated Word is needed to point the sinner back to God the Lawgiver (I, XII, 1).

Not, in vain, therefore, has he added the light of his Word in order that he might make himself known unto salvation, and bestowed the privilege on

those whom he has pleased to bring into nearer and more familiar relation to himself. . . For as the aged, or those whose sight is defective, when any book, however fair, is set before them, though they perceive that there is something written, are scarcely able to make out two consecutive words, but, when aided by glasses, begin to read distinctively, so Scripture, gathering together the impressions of Deity, which, till then, lay confused in their minds, dissipates the darkness, and shows us the true God clearly (I, VI, 1).

. . . in addition to the proper doctrine of faith and repentance in which Christ is set forth as a Mediator, the Scriptures employ certain marks and tokens to distinguish the only wise and true God, considered as the Creator and Governor of the world, and thereby guard against his being confounded with the herd of false deities. Therefore while it becomes man seriously to employ his eyes in considering the works of God, since a place has been assigned him in this most glorious theatre that he may be a spectator of them, his special duty is to give ear to the Word, that he may the better profit. . . If true religion is to beam upon us, our principle must be, that it is necessary to begin with heavenly teaching, and that it is impossible for any man to obtain even the minutest portion of right and sound doctrine without being a disciple of scripture (I, VI, 2). It being thus manifest that God, foreseeing the inefficiency of his image imprinted on the fair form of the universe, has given the assistance of his Word to all whom he has ever been pleased to instruct effectually, we, too, must pursue this straight path, if we aspire in earnest to a genuine contemplation of God;—we must go, I say, to the Word, where the character of God, drawn from his works, is described accurately and to the

life; these works being estimated, not by our depraved judgment, but by the standard of eternal truth (I, VI, 3).

However, even these "glasses" alone are not sufficient. The sinner cannot see through the spectacles of Scripture and behold the displays or spectacle (I, V, 14) of creation, unless his heart has been reborn, his "eye" has been cured from its blindness. What is needed is the work of the Holy Spirit to regenerate the "I" of man, so that he may know Jesus Christ as the Savior and Mediator in whom all things cohere. The Bible is not God, neither Christ, nor the Holy Spirit. Yet, the Spirit never works apart from the written Word of God, and this written Word speaks to us about the Word which became flesh on our behalf. In scholastic Protestantism, after the Reformation, this important work of the Holy Spirit has often been ignored or relativized. One of the main reasons that the writings of Calvin are still so dynamic, and therein classical, is the fact that he constantly stresses this all-important dimension of the Christian religion.

... our conviction of the truth of Scripture must be derived from a higher source than human conjectures, judgments, or reasons; namely the secret testimony of the Spirit (I, VII, 4).

Let it therefore be held as fixed, that those who are inwardly taught by the Holy Spirit acquiesce implicitly in Scripture; ... Such, then, is a conviction which asks not for reasons; such, a knowledge which accords with the highest reason, namely knowledge in which the mind rests more firmly and securely than in any reasons; such, in fine, the conviction which revelation from heaven alone can produce. I say nothing more than every believer experiences himself, though my words fall far short of the reality... let us now understand that the only true faith is that which the Spirit of God seals on our hearts (I, VII, 5).

...but that we have no eyes to perceive it [the representation of the Godhead in the displays of creation]

until they are enlightened through faith by internal revelation from God (I, V, 14).

Then only, therefore, does Scripture suffice to give a saving knowledge of God when its certainty is founded on the inward persuasion of the Holy Spirit... it is foolish to attempt to prove to infidels that the Scripture is the Word of God. This it cannot be known to be, except by faith (I, VIII, 13).

He who has the Spirit of Christ within himself can begin to understand, in the light of Scripture, God's revelation in creation. The relationship between God's revelation in Scripture and his revelation in creation is not one of explicit addition, nor one of implicit contradiction.

It may now be proper to show, that in Scripture the Lord represents himself in the same character in which we have already seen that he is delineated in his works (I, X, 1).

Moreover, the knowledge of God, which is set before us in the Scriptures, is designed for the same purpose as that which shines in creation—viz. that we may thereby learn to worship him with perfect integrity of heart and unfeigned obedience, and also to depend entirely on his goodness (I, X, 2).

Once more, Calvin could have opted for any one of the three possible interpretations of the meaning of life and Scripture: Secularism, Anabaptism, or Roman Catholicism. He chose to move in an entirely different direction, however. He could do this because he refused to allow any tension to arise between God's revelation in Christ, in the Bible, and in creation. It is precisely the uniqueness of the reformational understanding of life and reality that, in order to be able to discern the majesty of God's revelation in his cosmic theatre, the sinful "I" of man must be reborn through the Spirit of Christ, so that with his opened "eyes" of faith, he may look through the glasses of Scripture and see the spectacle of creation.

This approach explains also why Calvin disagreed so strongly with the Anabaptists'

denial of the significance of Scripture. "... the Holy Spirit so cleaves to his own truth, as he has expressed it in Scripture, that he then only exerts and puts forth his strength when the word is received with due honor and respect" (I, IX, 3). In opposition to the heresy of Manicheism, Calvin emphasized the natural goodness of creation:

... it is not admitted that there is anything naturally bad throughout the universe; the depravity and wickedness, whether of man or of the devil, and the sins thence resulting, being not from nature, but from the corruption of nature; nor, at first, did anything whatever exist that did not exhibit some manifestation of the divine wisdom and justice (I, XIV, 3).

His reaction to Roman Catholicism was evident especially in connection with his views about man, the instituted church, and the state. Although remnants of Roman Catholic Scholasticism still remained in some of his views, the main thrust of Calvin's work and writings clearly indicates that he wanted to move into a new direction.

... the common dogma came to be, that man was corrupted only in the sensual part of his nature, that reason remained entire, and will was scarcely impaired. Still the expression was often on their lips, that man's natural gifts were corrupted, and his supernatural taken away. Of the thing implied by these words, however, scarcely one in a hundred had any distinct idea (II, II, 4).

His attitude towards Classical Learning, Humanism, and the Renaissance was not one of cultural negativism, nor one of cultural optimism. He always expressed great awe when confronted by the greatness of man's cultural achievements. Yet, at the same time, he did not close his eyes to the failure and blindness of even the most learned and cultured persons. About Plato, for whose ideas he cherished great admiration, Calvin has to write: "How completely does Plato, the soberest and most religious of them all, lose himself in his round globe?" (I, V, 11) The Secularist, not knowing Jesus Christ, has no use for Scripture, and thus

remains blind to the real revelation of God in creation, in spite of the fact that he can discern so much in that creation.

Between Calvin and Kuyper

At the end of the sixteenth century, the impact of the earlier reformational movement started to wane. In philosophy, Rationalism became dominant, and in theology a form of Protestant Scholasticism gained control. In opposition to Secularism and Anabaptism, this particular form of Protestantism intellectualized God's Word and began to restrict it by reducing it primarily to a linguistically determined book.

The pendulum-swing between false dilemmas soon started. In opposition to a cold and nominal Christianity, Anabaptism arose. It placed great emphasis upon the Spirit and inner experience. Spiritualistically, it closed its eyes not only to much in Scripture but also to much, if not most, in creation and culture.

Partly out of reaction to this form of pietistic Christianity with its other-world-mentality, Liberal or Secular Protestantism arose. Dissatisfied with both Spiritualism and Biblicism, it chose for a form of naturalistic Immanentism.

For the next three hundred years, scholastic Biblicism, subjectivistic Pietism, and secular Humanism vied for control. Each rejected the other's presuppositions and walk of life. Among them a mood of suspicion prevailed. Each suspected the other of something bad. Although they repelled each other, at the same time they needed each other, be it negatively, for their reason to exist. If someone was not a Biblicist, he had to be—by definition!—either a Pietist or a Secularist. If one was not pietistic, he was believed to be either biblicistic or liberal; if one was not liberal, he simply had to be either biblicistic or anabaptistic. What kept the Christian community occupied was, as a result, often relentless accusations, ecclesiastical excommunications, and denominational exclusivisms. As time elapsed, the pendulum-swing became bigger and increasingly more painful. A vicious circle of communal heresy-hunting began to ensnare the Christian community.

Not one of the three elements which Calvin had inseparably connected with each other, namely God's majestic revelation in creation, in the Word-made-flesh, and in Scripture, can ever be "boxed-in," i.e. abstracted or isolated from the rest, with impunity. Life is one piece. This holds true for God's revelation as well. The trouble often, however, is that, when one tries to give expression to this in theory and practice, he is regarded by Liberals as a fideist, by Pentecostalists as a book-worshipper, and by Biblicists as a subjectivist. It is, therefore, not at all surprising that he who rejects the problematics of all three becomes, in turn, suspect by all three, and soon discovers that all three are equally hostile to his position.

Abraham Kuyper

Although there are definite scholastic traces in his thought-pattern, Abraham Kuyper was genuinely aware of the need for and nature of a more scriptural understanding of God's revelation, reality, and human life. In a speech entitled "BOUND TO THE WORD," Kuyper

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made a distinction between the word of God, referring to Scripture, and the Word of God, referring to God himself. He also stated several times that the Word of God is manifest not only in Scripture but also in "Nature and History." This Word possesses its inherent authority in both forms. He also talked about "the many-sided Word of God in Nature and Scripture."²

What one needs, said Kuyper, is not merely a view of Scripture in general but also a definite world-and-life view. The latter is impossible to obtain, however, within a framework of reference which is biblicistic.

... the defenders of the general Scripture formula miss a unifying principle. It appears that they seek, helter skelter, for a text which sounds like proof for this or that position, but they never come to a rich organic

unity which we might present in the figure of a plant. Their view may be illustrated by a person going into a garden to pick a bouquet. Such a one selects here and there a choice flower and then binds those together with a ribbon that has no organic connection with the bouquet. On the other hand, those who confess to belong to one of the great historic movements of Christianity possess a life-and-world view which constitutes an energetic and unifying principle. They have no other purpose in mind than to have a system which relates all things God has placed in creation and has revealed in his Word (*ibid.*, p. 7).

C. Van Til

It is undeniable that Cornelius Van Til has thus far not been able to disentangle himself completely from the cobwebs of a nature/supernature problematics. Be this as it may, it must

also be said, however, that he does not wish to polarize any facet of God's revelation and that he seeks to affirm the idea of harmony between God's revelation in "Nature and History" and his revelation in Scripture:

It is, to be sure, from Scripture rather than from nature that this description of God is drawn. Yet it is this same God, to the extent that he is revealed at all, that is revealed in nature... it is the God of saving grace who manifests himself by means of nature.³

Van Til maintains that the qualifications usually ascribed to inscripturated revelation can, and ought to, be applied also to God's general revelation. Necessity, authority, sufficiency, and perspicuity are characteristic of all God's revelation.

It is this stress that from the beginning,

revelation both in the facts of the created universe and by means of direct thought communication to man from God with respect to those very facts and man's task with respect to those facts—that marks the particularity of the Reformed outlook on Christianity. It is this idea of the interrelatedness of every aspect of the revelation of God to man that is all important (*ibid.*, p. 12).

The work of Christ as Mediator is restorative of that which was originally given... Are we then to conclude that there is only one means by which we may learn of God? Not at all. Believers should do justice to both forms of revelation. With the spectacles of Scripture they now read with good effect the book of nature and of history (*ibid.*, p. 120).

As far as the meaning of Art. II of the Belgic Confession is concerned, Van Til agrees with the explanation given by dogmatists such as A.D.R. Polman and G.C. Berkouwer. The same is true with respect to the significance these men ascribe to the Canons of Dort, III-IV, article 4, 6 and 7.⁴

G. C. Berkouwer

In spite of the differences of opinion that exist between the views of A. Kuyper, H. Bavinck, H. Dooyeweerd, D.H.Th. Vollenhoven, C. Van Til, H. Stoker, and G.C. Berkouwer, all these Reformed thinkers agree that a biblically-directed confession demands an emphasis upon the unity and harmony of all God's revelation. What is at stake is nothing less than God's honor and the unambiguous meaning of life. The essence of all revelation is to confront man with the Will of the Lord. This Will comes to man as a command, requiring him to live in the presence of Jahweh, to obey and love his Word. A "Follower of the Way" will not become pentecostalistic, biblicistic, or secularistic; yet, he remains at all times inspired, scriptural, and historically relevant! Discussing the question of "General and Special Revelation," Berkouwer makes the following pertinent observations:

Faith in Israel's God again opens up the windows to the world, and man once more discovers the works of God's hands. For this world, for the sun and the moon and the stars—for all that God has made—there arises renewed interest and importance... More and more the fact is clear that the general revelation of God does not stand next to the special revelation, but that special revelation opens our eyes to the greatness of God's works and points the way to the Psalmist's song of praise: "O Lord our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth!" (Ps. 8:1)

The distinction between general and special revelation does not posit a rupture in the unity of God's revelation, but points out rather the revealing acts of God in history in the way of creation, fall and redemption... And if the revelation of God in Jesus Christ opens the eyes, then the abstraction is broken, and the life in the world becomes the service of God and of one's neighbor. Then the meaning of life and the world is revealed once more, and... we shall understand also how firmly the distinction between general and special revelation is connected with guilt and enstrangement.

Consequently, in all our considerations of this distinction we must be careful that the guilt is not denied. The special revelation of God in Jesus Christ is the divine answer to this guilt as the surprise of God's love, as the new spring of God's mercy.⁵

Conclusion

What we have seen thus far is of great importance for our understanding of the nature and role of the academy. Christian scholarship is threatened in its integrity, as soon as some kind of tension is allowed to exist between God's revelation in creation (in reformed thought usually referred to by the (questionable) expression "Nature and History") and his reve-

lation in Scripture. Biblicistic scholarship is a contradiction in terms: it ceases to be scholarship in the measure that all one actually does is read and quote Scripture.⁶ Reading Scripture is a peculiarly confessional, not theoretic, activity. Secularistic scholarship is by definition not only not Christian but even anti-Christian. A Pentecostalist view of life does not leave any room whatsoever for genuine scholarship: creation and Scripture are either irrelevant or of secondary importance; having the Spirit in the inner recesses of one's soul is what counts. The genius, in other words, of a reformed and reforming institution of learning is intimately connected with our recognition of the very core of God's unified revelation, the basic meaning of human life as religion, and the fundamental thrust of man's calling and task in life.

It is safe to posit that wherever tensions arise between the two forms of revelation, namely in creation and in Scripture, the full biblical significance of God's definitive revelation in Jesus Christ, the Son of His love, the Word incarnate, through whom everything has been made and in whom God is now reconciling the whole world unto himself, has not been duly acknowledged and appropriated. The inevitable result of such a confessional lack of clarity and consequent conflicting life style is confusion, ambiguity, suspicion and grief within the Christian community.

Rooted in Jesus Christ and in the communion of the Holy Spirit, the biblical believer can work joyfully in the midst of God's creation. He knows that he is not deceived by what he sees and experiences. God is Jahweh: he is faithful to his own Word. His covenant with the day and with the night cannot be broken. God is so true to his Word that he curses and punishes those who disobey it. Those who obey it, he blesses, however. He is a child of the covenant who has caught a glimpse of what God has revealed about himself as Creator, about his abiding Word for this creation, and about the eternal life in the redeemed creature.

On the basis of such passages in Scripture as Psalms 8, 19, 33, 49, 95, 93, 104, 119, 139, 147, 148; Genesis 1; Job 38; Jeremiah 31 and 33; John 1; Ephesians 1; Colossians 1; Hebrews 1 and ; 1 Peter 3:5-7; Revelation 4:11, etc.,

it is abundantly clear that we are divinely enjoined to love, acknowledge, and live from out of and according to the WORD of God. This makes Christian living, and, therefore, also scholarship and academic training, not only a possibility but also, and foremost, a truly exciting reality.

1. John Calvin, The Institutes of the Christian Religion (Henry Beveridge translation). Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1953.

2. "BOUND TO THE WORD." The answer to the question, HOW IS A UNIVERSITY TO BE BOUND BY THE WORD OF GOD? Delivered at the meeting held at Middelburg, June 28, 1899 by A. Kuyper (Unpublished translation by Rev. C. Veenstra, Sioux Center, Iowa), p. 13.

3. Cornelius Van Til, The Protestant Doctrine of Scripture, volume I of In Defense of Biblical Christianity. A student syllabus, produced under the auspices of the den Dulk Christian Foundation of Ripon, California, 1967, p. 3.

4. Ibid., Appendix I, "General and Special Revelation," pp. 120ff. The substance of this appendix is the same as his address, under the same title, given at the First Calvinistic Science Conference in Grand Rapids, Michigan, May 21, 1954. Cf. Miscellaneous Addresses and Book Reviews (a syllabus). Philadelphia: Westminster Theological Seminary, 1964, p. 1-15, especially p. 9: "But to speak thus of the necessity and priority of Scripture is not in the least to deny that there is, in another sense, a priority of the works of God. . . Calvin first discerns the works of God and then the Word of God. But, strictly speaking, it is not possible to speak of a temporal priority of the one over the other. Their relation is rather that of supplementation." See also p. 10: "Supernatural revelation is not inherently and originally a revelation of grace; it is part and parcel of the normal and, in that sense, natural relation between God and man. . . And the idea that God's revelation to man is clear must pri-

marily be said of revelation as a unity, inclusive of both supernatural pre-redemptive and natural revelation. The revelation of God in nature as it now is, is still clearly manifestory of God." It is in this context that Van Til comments: "We may, therefore, with Kuyper, speak of twofold science and yet also speak of the unity of science." (p. 13) and: "Why should the Christian then not gratefully employ, for purposes of advancing knowledge, the funded results of the investigation of scientists, whether they be Christians or not? He may do so, only if he does not, while doing it, thereby concede the

independence or the juxtaposition of the natural principle as over against the special principle." (p. 14)

5. Carl F. H. Henry, ed., Revelation and the Bible. Grand Rapids: Baker Bookhouse, 1958, pp. 18, 19, 23.

6. The result of such an attitude to life, and especially of neo-Pentecostalism, is the establishment of all sorts of Bible Schools. One might as well put padlocks, then, on all institutions of (advanced) scholarship and on all other centers of training for various tasks in our culture and world.

THE UNIFORMITARIAN PRINCIPLE

by Richard G. Hodgson
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The Uniformitarian Principle Defined

The Uniformitarian Principle, which has been a basic assumption of historical geology since it was first proposed by James Hutton of Edinburgh, Scotland, in 1785, has been frequently questioned by Bible-believing Christians. Over the past two centuries many extreme statements have been made on both sides of this subject, so that it would be well to try

to set the record straight.¹

The Uniformitarian Principle holds that "...rocks formed long ago at the earth's surface may be understood and explained in accordance with physical processes now operating" (Gilluly, Waters, and Woodford, Principles of Geology, 3rd ed., 1968, p. 18). There are two reasons why this definition is far better than the brief dictum "The present is the key to the past," which is commonly