THEOLOGIZING

An Analysis of a Method of Formulating THEOLOGY

Introduction to Fundamentalism

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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by

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study is to present an introduction to systematic theology. Thus, such a volume is usually called a prolegomenon, which implies it is a prologue or preface to a book of theology. Actually, the study includes items not found in most prolegomena. It contains the attitudes, methods and techniques that are used to construct a systematic theology. Therefore, this is a study of the methodology of theology.

The author is a fundamentalist and is committed to historic Christianity. Therefore, he will not introduce any new doctrine nor will he attempt to change any of the conservative beliefs. His main concern is with the methodology of theology, which he will call theologizing.

1See Chapter One for definition of fundamentalism, footnote 9, 10, 28, 30.

2Theology is a process and a product. As a product, "Theology is the science of God and the relations between God and the universe." Augustus H. Strong, Outlines of Systematic Theology (Philadelphia: The Griffith and Rowland Press, 1908), p. 1. Another accepted definition of theology is more complete, "Christian theology is the scientific determination, interpretation, and defense of these Scriptures together with the history of the manner in which the truth it reveals have been understood, and the duties they impose have been performed by all Christians in all ages." A. A. Hodge, Outlines of Theology (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1896), p. 15.

The definition that will be used in this study refers to the process. "Theologizing is the process whereby a person who has both experienced salvation and has grown in spiritual maturity, searches out all truth concerning God and His work, in both supernatural and natural revelation, using the rational process of inquiry and the experiential resources of faith with a purpose of organizing the result of his study into a complete, comprehensive and consistent expression that can be communicated, defended and admired."
1. Aims of this Study

The purpose of this study is to examine the methodology of theology. The aims are implied in question and this study will develop as the following questions are answered.

1. Why is there a need to approach systematic theology in the light of experience? The problem is introduced in Chapter One from the personal observations and experience of the author. As such, this justifies why the author is concerned with this problem. This chapter does not vindicate the need for a methodology of experience. Later chapters will become self-vindicating as they demonstrate the existence of experience in theologizing.

2. What are the implications of experience in the process of revelation from its original inception with God to its intended objective in the life of a person? The answer examines the nature of experience and traces it in an historic development from the existence of God to the formulation of a doctrinal statement.

3. What is the role of historical quest, exegesis, faith and art in theologizing? What influence does experience have on these methods of gathering theology? The methods by which theologians develop a statement of faith are examined in this chapter.

4. What is the role of philosophy or rational inquiry in theologizing? The process of arriving at truth by observation, measurement, formulation of hypothesis, and proving law/principles in examined in this chapter. The plan of biblical revelation is related to philosophic inquiry.

5. What is experience and what is its process in man? This
chapter examines the biblical teaching of personality to determine the nature of experiences: spiritual, physical and rational. Since the term heart is the word used in Scripture for personality and is the center of experience, a thorough study is made of this New Testament doctrine.

6. What is theological experience? The nature of a theological experience is examined by looking at the complexities of the personality as it interacts with objective truth. The ingredients of a theological experience are collated and its impact on the personality is scrutinized. Finally, three new forces are introduced: the theologizing focus, the life-producing field, and the theological life-space.

When the above stated six questions are satisfactorily answered and conclusions presented, this study will reach its logical conclusions. To only half answer these questions is to fail this study. Also, to go beyond these questions is to violate the purpose of this study. Therefore, certain limitations must be noted to keep the focus of this study clear.

II. The Limitations that Give Direction to this Study

Every area of study must have limits upon its educational research for several implied reasons. First, the research student will dissipate his energies and resources if parameters are not established. And, in the second place, his study would never be concluded without a self-induced barrier. The heart of a true student would demand limitless research into every implication and possible sources that relate to his problem. Also, the interrelationship of all knowledge in its axiology would never allow a student to complete any research project without self-imposed limitations.
The author has defined six questions that will give direction and meaning to this study. When they are answered adequately, the author will have completed his project. However, there will be an unlimited number of questions that will grow out of this study. To answer every new question beyond those defined in the introduction is impossible.

This study will not construct a detailed theology of each of the areas of systematic theology. If every area were completely discussed, the author would be writing a comprehensive systematic theology, which is impossible. It is his intention to complete that task, but it falls outside of the limitations of this study. Here the only objective will be to construct an introduction to the methodology of formulating systematic theology.

There are other areas usually included in theological prolegomena that are not covered in this volume. First, the aim of theology is not examined explicitly in definitive form. This will be included in ecclesiology when it is written. However, an implicit description of theological aim appears in Chapter Two.

Also, arguments and proofs for the existence of God are sometimes found in a prolegomena. The author intends to include this material in a volume on Theology Proper because that area deals with the nature of God. His existence is assumed in Chapter Two, which describes the sources of ideas and experience.

Some prolegomena include a survey of false theories of theological

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3 Strong, op. cit., pp. 1-17. The areas of prolegomena covered by Strong include the following topics: (1) Definition of Theology, (2) Aim of Theology, (3) Possibility of Theology, (4) Necessity of Theology, and (5) Relation of Theology to Religion.
methodology. Such a study would not enhance the aims of this study. The author intends only to show the influence of experience on theological methodology.

Finally, a historical study of the role of experience in theology was not attempted. The two complete sources have already been constructed. The author would be duplicating the efforts of other scholars should he write such a history.

Certain areas were not fully explored because it was not the purpose to completely examine these disciplines. The eternal nature and attributes of God were not fully systematized. The author was examining the eternal existence of experience. He only surveyed the nature and attributes of God as they related to experience. The same could be said for revelation, inspiration, and illumination.

When a study was made of philosophic method, a general survey was presented. The casual reader will recognize that hundreds of volumes have been written on this subject. The author wanted only to show the influence that philosophic inquiry had on biblical revelation and experience; hence he limited his exploration to relating these topics.

Conclusion

When a theologian begins his work of theologizing, he is confessing not only his belief in God, but also a responsibility for his

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action. For a confession of faith is more than a propositional statement. It is the reflection of the person and his inner feelings about God. So, the theologian is responsible for the projection of his experience. Also, the theologian must give an account of the things he says about God. He is accountable to God, to others and to himself for the conclusions he shares. And in the final analysis, he will be judged by this threefold panel. The criterion for this judgment should be truth. But, it is difficult for the theologian to be absolutely sure his conclusions are truth. The same problem exists for others who judge the theologian. God's judgment is always truth, but again it is difficult to discern what God is saying, because the process of judging the results of theology is the same as those used originally in formulating the theology.

In every process of writing systematic theology, a theologian is convinced he is strong in his own belief. But, he seldom realizes his written statement of faith is also a statement of weakness. Many deceive themselves because they have great confidence in their rational processes. Such superconfidence in one's rationalism leads to faulty conclusions. The theologian who would write New Testament theology must recognize his inadequacies in words and content. For no words can adequately describe God. We cannot go beyond the description of Scripture; hence, a theological statement exposes one's weakness about God.

Therefore, this student asks for tolerance from those who read this attempt at theologizing. No one recognizes the weakness more than he. He requests help from those who are qualified to give advice, so he can construct a workable theology.
CHAPTER ONE

THE NEED FOR A METHODOLOGY OF THEOLOGY

The author is attempting to write an introduction to systematic theology for four reasons. First, it is a burden that comes from God. He views writing a prolegomenon as responding to a call from God. Just as a pastor is called into full-time service, so the author feels God is leading him to prepare this work.

Second, Christianity must be interpreted to every generation, and the 1980s are no different. There is a need to apply Bible doctrine to the unique needs of a generation that is experience-oriented.

Third, no one has written a theology of fundamentalism. The author is part of that movement and recognizes that its lack of systemization may be the source of some of its problems.

Fourth, most theologies have been boring to read. Students have lost their zeal to win souls or preach the gospel by an academic study of systematic theology. The author wants to prepare a complete approach to theology that will feed the student's spiritual appetite and motivate him to service.

I. To Satisfy a Burden

We cannot do everything that we desire in one short life. To each is given the task appointed by God. The author feels deeply that God wants him to write a systematic theology. This burden has been on his heart for several years. Now someone may properly ask why someone
has a burden. But there is no answer to that question because burdens are given by God, usually to motivate a servant of God to fulfill the call of God. But if the burden is from God, a Christian can do nothing but fulfill the obligation of that burden.¹ The author's burden to write a systematic theology began as a simple desire; then it became an infatuation and developed into a passionate love. Now this burden has grown, as love becomes marriage, into the fulfillment state. This obligation, based on deep feeling, is becoming a reality in this manuscript.

One of the reasons the author has this burden is the necessity that every teacher has to contribute to the growth of knowledge. Every teacher has an obligation to pass on to others what he has learned; as a matter of fact, every Christian should communicate what he has received.²

Finally, the author wants to write a systematic theology because no person has ever arrived at perfect truth. There are many acceptable books on theology and some of these represent the author's conviction in certain areas. But as long as we are in the flesh, we will never agree totally with another person. And we can find some point of omission, addition or error in every book we read. All other serious theologians arrive at the same conclusion. Therefore, the author wants to express what he believes in a systematic and comprehensive manner.

The very fact that the motivation for this systematic theology

¹The Old Testament prophets experienced a burden when they received a message from God that they were required to deliver (Nah 1:1, Hab 1:1, Zech 9:1). My burden is not a supernatural message such as theirs, but it has similar expressions: (1) A burden is God's message (Mal 1:1), (2) A burden is something one must do, (3) A burden has no alternatives of expression (Jer 19:8), (4) A burden usually was delivered with desire and excitement (Jer 15:16).

²Teachers are warned concerning their awesome responsibility. "My brethren, be not many masters (teachers), knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation" (Jas 3:1, parenthesis mine).
began in personal experience will influence its development. The process by which theology is formulated will influence the final expression of its product. Every theologian has been influenced by his experiences, but every theologian does not acknowledge that influence. This volume at least recognizes it. This prolegomenon will do more than make observations; it will attempt to point out the dangers of experience and its positive contribution.

II. To Interpret Christianity to Our Times

The changing needs of our times demand a new systematic theology. "Every generation must fight its own theological battle." First, this means that Satan will devise a new strategy against Christianity every time church leaders answer the questions thrown at them. Second, every new group of church leaders must interpret Christianity to the changing needs of the next generation. In essence they must make a consistent presentation of God and His Word so that each succeeding generation can understand the revelation of God in light of contemporary problems, needs and changing situations. Because the world changes, man is forced to express his needs in different ways. (His ultimate need remains the same; however, each year there grows a new set of changing needs.) Therefore, we must reinterpret theology to every culture and its evolving society. But even in the midst of reinterpretation, the theologian must remember the Word of God does not change. Truth is immutable and revelation remains the same. The struggle of theology is

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3Quoted by Dr. Charles C. Ryrie in Systematic Theology classes at Dallas Theological Seminary, Dallas, Texas, where the author majored in Systematic Theology.
an eternal battle. Every age needs a new expression of truth, but the theologian must fight to remain at the center of truth, while he speaks to the contemporary men of his day.

Beyond the danger of drifting from the truth, the theologian faces the threat of false doctrine and its attack on Christianity. He must remain true to revelation, yet answer the false charges from without. Today, there are all types of external attacks on systematic theology. The liberal/modernist attacks must be constantly answered. The sociological pressure from media, the educational community and government are all growing. However, their pressure is never directly on systematic theology, but the erosion works on church culture, hence it influences the people who theologize and those who read it. We in America have lived in a Protestant/Puritan culture with its ethical influence. Those who came into our churches had the influence of a "Christian" nation. But, in the future, those who come into the church and seminary will have different theological needs. As a result, the problems need refining and redefining, to which theology speaks.

There are "special interest" groups influencing the church. These groups would have it ride a hobby horse. We have all seen churches which seem to have only one plank in their platform. A complete systematic theology would speak to the total needs of man and the world. Contemporary man needs to be confronted with the complete scope of God's truth.

The explosion of data and education makes the church seem outdated. She answers today's problems with yesterday's language and last year's formulas. We believe the answers are the same, but in relationship with today's experience, they must be expressed in formulas that solve
modern problems.

There are other internal needs that pressure theology to relate to the parishioner. The depersonalization of life causes people to live mechanical lives. People seem to have forgotten how to use the minds that are given by God. It is hard to conceive they never ask the "eternal" questions. There is little concern for where the world originated, what is man, and what is man's destiny. A proper theology gives richness to life, instead of measuring life by quantitative terms.

Defamilization is gradually tearing down Christianity. Without a sense of family life, people have no sense of the past, no sense of community identity and little sense of self-identity.

The ignorance of the past and its influence upon our lives also creates a necessity for systematic theology. For no theology is complete until it has considered the development of man's search for truth about God and His world.

The social problems created by change in American government and world politics will drive the theologian back to include an understanding of society with his understanding of the Word. Finally, the growth of phenomenology in psychological circles and existentialism in philosophical circles will demand that a systematic theology answer the questions they raise.

The list of needs could be expanded to include each individual threat to Christianity. Needless to say, a systematic theology is needed in today's language with solutions to modern problems.

This prologemnon is being written for Christians wherever they have tried to incorporate the Word of God into everyday life. It recognizes the place of experience in the development of their faith.
Obviously, many Christians do not write out their theology, but they have tried to integrate Christianity into everyday life. If they were successful, they have incorporated correct theory/principles into their experience that are consistent with the Word of God. Hence, their experience is a reaffirmation of theology. What they did was transfer the experiences of the Bible into their personal experiences of life. But they skipped writing their theology on paper. They produced the end product of theology (a Biblical experience) without filtering it through the written process of theology.

On the other hand, many give verbal allegiance to a written theology, but their life is inconsistent with its teaching. They do not live what their theology teaches. On the other hand, there have been Christians who live a Biblical life but are mentally committed to a non-Biblical theology. Their lives do not reflect their written theology, and if they had, they would have died spiritually. These people have a dichotomy of theology. They have a theology of the heart, not a theology of the head.

Because of the experience of believers and of the churches, a systematic theology is needed that will speak to the problems of the day. Implied in the problem is a foundation for seeking a solution. There is a need for a systematic theology that will deal adequately with experience. The following questions can be raised: "What is a Biblical

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4 As an illustration, one who believes that he can lose his salvation by personal sin, yet he is having an affair with another person.

5 Some members in churches with liberal-oriented creeds are actually born again and are committed to the objective fundamentals of the faith.
experience?" "What is the place of experience in the process of theologizing?"

III. To Express Fundamentalism

The author is part of a movement that has deep roots in doctrine, yet no one has ever written an adequate theology to reflect this movement. One of the implied problems of fundamentalism is that it usually lasts for only one generation. Churches that are planted by fundamentalists become institutionalized in the second and third generation of leadership. Some have suggested that the cause for its usual rapid deterioration is that it is based on emotion or revivalism. This may be one of the causal factors. Most scholars support this opinion by stating that if a movement is not grounded in theological creed, its duration is short. They point out that movements with objective statements of faith tend to remain "conservative" much longer than those without a creed. Perhaps fundamentalism has been short-lived because it does not have a definitive systematic theology that interprets the unique characterizations of its nature.

Carl F. H. Henry, past editor of Christianity Today, indicates that there are two types of fundamentalists. "Historically fundamentalism was a theological position; only gradually did the movement come to signify a mood and disposition as well." By this, Henry indicates there is a theological fundamentalist and there is an experiential fundamen-


7Carl F. H. Henry, "Dare We Renew the Controversy?" Christianity Today, June 24, 1957, p. 23 f.
talist. Hence, fundamentalism is a system both of doctrine and of a life-style. Now we need to examine both areas of the definition.

1. Theological fundamentalists. The term fundamentalist means basic, original, without additions or dilutions. When something is fundamental, it is absolutely necessary. As an illustration, wheels, spark plugs and a drive shaft are necessary to operate an automobile. They are fundamental to the nature of an automobile. A glove compartment

8 Many use the phrase "cultural fundamentalist" instead of experiential fundamentalist. The word cultural limits the movement to a geographical location, usually the Southern United States. However, the movement has experiences that transcend culture, time and geographical limitations.

9 John R. Rice, I Am A Fundamentalist (Murfreesboro, Tennessee: The Sword of the Lord Publishers, 1975), p. 9. "It is generally understood that the fundamentals of the Christian faith include the inspiration, and, thus, the divine authority of the Bible; the deity, virgin birth, blood atonement, bodily resurrection, personal second coming of Christ; the fallen, lost condition of all mankind; salvation by repentance and faith, grace without works; eternal damnation in hell of the unconverted and eternal blessedness of the saved in heaven."

10 Ibid., p. 10. "As we define fundamentalism, it means a vigorous defense of the faith, active soul winning, great New Testament-type local churches going abroad to win multitudes, having fervent love for all of God's people and earnestly avoiding compromise in doctrine or yoking up with unbelievers." This definition of experiential fundamentalism grows out of the life and ministry of Dr. Rice. Not all fundamentalists would agree with him. Most fundamentalists will incorporate their activity into a definition to justify their life-style. Dr. George Dallas, former professor of Church History at Bob Jones University, Greenville, S. C., suggests a definition of fundamentalism that is slanted toward militancy: "Historic fundamentalism is the literal exposition of all the affirmations and attitudes of the Bible and the militant exposure of all non-Biblical (sic) affirmations and attitudes." A History of Fundamentalism in America (Greenville, S. C.: Bob Jones University Press, 1973), p. 1.

11 There are many theological fundamentalists who repudiate the camp of the fundamentalists, and, in turn, they are ex-communicated by fundamentalists. These are usually camps identified as evangelical or neo-evangelical. They are committed to the theological fundamentals of the faith, but reject their life-style.
or a back seat is not necessary for driving. A fundamentalist believes that certain doctrines are necessary to the establishment of Christianity. If he were to deny any of these basics, he would deny his faith. Hence, a fundamentalist is committed to foundational theology.

A group of men began the magazine The Fundamentals in 1909.\textsuperscript{12} Five doctrinal points became the basis of their fellowship. Since truth does not change, these five points still make up the theological core of fundamentalism. A fundamentalist incorporates these into his doctrinal statement. He believes certain things are absolutely necessary for the existence of objective Christianity and for the continuance of his subjective faith.

First, a fundamentalist is completely committed to the verbal-plenary inspiration of Scripture.\textsuperscript{13} He believes every word was written by the direct influence of the Holy Spirit and that Scripture is without error and accurate in all details. A fundamentalist believes the Word of God is the foundation of Christianity and, if there were any "inconsistencies," even in one verse, then the Bible would be inconsistent and faith would be vain.\textsuperscript{14}

A fundamentalist accepts the literal interpretation of Scripture and its obligations upon his life. He must obey the Bible in his life, and this obedience includes a godly walk, aggressive evangelism and

\textsuperscript{12}The Bible Institute of Los Angeles published a four-volume set entitled The Fundamentals. Twelve booklets were issued that appeared in four bound volumes. Over three million copies were distributed. The series united those who stood on the fundamentals and ultimately they received their name from the books.


\textsuperscript{14}Mt 5:18, Jn 10:35.
separation. Scripture is the solution to his problems. Because of the 
nature of Scripture it is absolutely necessary for a fundamentalist to 
defend it to the death. He will attack those who compromise its stand.

Second, a fundamentalist believes in the virgin birth of the Son 
of God.\textsuperscript{15} Sin is the great destroyer and is passed from parent to child 
so that all perish.\textsuperscript{16} But Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, was 
conceived by the Holy Ghost in the virgin Mary; hence, He was not 
contaminated by sin.\textsuperscript{17} He had a sinless birth, lived a sinless life and 
died a sinless substitute.\textsuperscript{18} One who denies the virgin birth of Christ 
cannot rightfully be a fundamentalist. Belief in the sinless Son of God 
is an indispensable foundation to Christianity.

Third, a fundamentalist believes in the vicarious-substitutionary 
atonement of Jesus Christ for the sins of the world.\textsuperscript{19} Vicarious means 
Christ identified with us and we with Him in death. He became sin for 
us and in return we were made righteous.\textsuperscript{20} As a substitute, Christ died 
for the sinner and suffered the terrible consequences of sin. Those who 
deny the blood atonement are not Christians. Without the death of Christ 
a sinner could not be forgiven, redeemed\textsuperscript{21} or justified.\textsuperscript{22}

Fourth, a fundamentalist demands belief in the physical resurrec-

\textsuperscript{16}Ps 51:5. 
\textsuperscript{17}Heb 2:17, 4:15. 
\textsuperscript{18}II Cor 5:21, Heb 4:15. 
\textsuperscript{19}Mt 20:28, I Pet 3:18, Jn 6:51, Rom 5:6-8, 8:32, I Tim 2:5, 
Heb 2:9. 
\textsuperscript{20}II Cor 5:21, Rom 3:24-25. 
\textsuperscript{21}Eph 1:7. 
\textsuperscript{22}Rom 5:1.
tion of Jesus Christ from the dead. If the body of Jesus Christ had remained in the grave, then the benefits of Calvary and the promises of Jesus Christ were unfulfilled. But Jesus arose on the third day, as He predicted and demonstrated His victory over sin and death. The physical resurrection is an absolute necessity to complete the plan of salvation. Therefore, it is a fundamental of the faith.

Fifth, a fundamentalist believes that Jesus Christ will return to earth to fulfill all that He promised. The plan that God began must be completed. Christ is coming for His own. He will judge the sinner and reward the saint. His promises to Israel will be fulfilled and those who are saved will live with Him forevermore.

A fundamentalist must accept and believe these five basic steps of faith. He feels that if he rejects any one of them, he is denying Christianity. But a fundamentalist must do more than just believe these statements with his head; he is committed to apply them to his life. Because of his deep commitment to the fundamentals, he attempts to experience them in his life and ministry. This leads us to the second type of fundamentalist.

2. Experiential fundamentalists. When we use the word experiential fundamentalist, we are describing a person who attempts to incorporate certain basic experiences in his life. First, he attempts to incorporate all the spiritual experiences into his life. These include

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24I Cor 15:17.
26II Tim 4:3-5, I Tim 4:1-3.
conversion and sanctification with all of the supporting emotions, values, and perceptions. Second, the fundamentalist attempts to harmonize his doctrine and experience into every phase of his life, including spiritual, psychological, social, and cultural areas with all of the ramifications of political, educational, family and church expectations. Hence, an experiential fundamentalist is, first, deeply committed to truth in propositional form. Second, he is just as deeply committed to truth in experiential expressions.

Fundamentalism as a branch of Christianity has similar experiential characteristics of the sect as researched by Ernst Troeltsch. Both tend to be first generation movements that are highly influenced by sincere spiritual experience. Both are deeply committed to historic Christianity and tend to be led by charismatic leaders.

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27 Ernst Troeltsch, The Social Teachings of the Christian Church, trans. by Olive Wyan (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1931), 2 Vols. Troeltsch is attributed with the origination of the sect-denomination analogy. In three of my books I have demonstrated that the characteristics of the sect as presented by Troeltsch are similar to fundamentalism. America's Fastest Growing Churches (Nashville, Tennessee: Impact Books, 1973), Chapter 11, "The Sociological Cycle of Church Growth," pp. 152-192. The conclusion is drawn that fundamentalists are sectarian, but not all sects are fundamentalists, such as Mennonite sects. Also see Is the Day of the Denomination Dead? (Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson Publishing Co., Inc., 1973) and Successful Biblical Youth Work (Nashville, Tennessee: Impact Books, 1972).

28 The basic distinction between a fundamentalist and an evangelical is that the first generally appeals to emotionalism, the latter to rationalism. A summarization of a sect is found in Moberg, loc. cit. A sect is comparatively small, avoids state and society, is connected with lower socio-economic classes, opposes established culture, is based on voluntary membership of those who have experienced the new birth, expresses its faith in sincere dedication, emphasizes conversion experience, has lay leadership, emphasizes mystical religious relationship to God, emphasizes law, believes in literal obedience to primitive church ideas, expects to transform the world solely by moral principles, and differentiates between themselves and hypocrites and heretics.

29 The term does not refer to the pentecostal manifestation of
Carl F. H. Henry, a severe critic of fundamentalism, described it by focusing on the extreme end product, rather than searching for the methodology that gave it existence.

Fundamentalism is considered a summary term for theological pugnaciousness, ecumenic disruptiveness, also unprogressiveness, scientific obliviousness, and/or anti-intellectual inexcusableness. By others, fundamentalism is equated with extreme dispensationalism, pulpit sensationalism, accepted emotionalism, social withdrawal, and bawdy church music.

We would expect a critic to use colored phrases and **ad hominem** arguments against the movement. Actually, the experience of fundamentalism is expressed in revivalism, evangelism, and pietism. All of these experiential expressions are grounded on theological foundation.

**IV. To Make Theology Experiential**

As the author read theology when he was a student, he was fascinated with the questions and pursuit of knowledge. But he heard the complaints of his fellow students. The author tended to rationalize their problems with their lack of spirituality or their undisciplined approach to education. However, the more he spent time with students, the more he realized it was a universal problem. Much of theology is written in an uninteresting manner.

The author faced another irritation. If theology was Biblical as they claimed, and if they adequately presented truth about God, why the killing effect of theology? He saw eager young preachers "dry up"

tongues, miracles or other phenomena surrounding the alleged "second blessing." The term is used by sociologists to designate personal magnetism used by leaders to accomplish a pre-determined goal in their organization or movement.

at seminary. He could not always blame courses in systematic theology as the cause for student deterioration. But it seemed some classes of theology took the zeal out of soul-winning. Other men studied theology and lost their personal faith in Christ or came away with less faith than when they began their study.

The author knew it was not always theology itself that was the problem, even though to some degree it was the teacher or the atmosphere (school surroundings) where the material was taught. He noticed some professors tried to make their classes exciting; they gave attention to preparation and tried to provide stimulating assignments for the students. But, even with all the attention given to the learning process, something was lacking.

The author gradually began to realize that most systematic theology had been developed out of a rational process, using only logical methods of arriving at theological truth. As good as the use of logic was, it was not the way that truth was conceived or communicated to men. God seldom spoke to men in propositional/dogmatic formulas. God revealed Himself to men as and where they were living. Revelation, even though conceptual in its nature of communication, was usually transmitted in experience. And the ultimate purpose of revelation was that it might effect the experience of His servants.

The author realized systematic theology must relate to the experiences of people. Doctrine came out of an experience and was communicated in an experience; therefore, it must produce an experience. The more he studied, the more he realized theology must be a spiritual experience. Just as revelation was born in Scripture, and by it man is reborn, so the end product of revelation, theology, must be born in the
Therefore, the author determined to produce a theology that would speak to the hearts of its readers, without violating their rational inquiry. He wanted a theology that produced an experience in the life of the reader. He immediately realized that the need was not solely writing theology in a better journalistic style, although that is included. The specific need was a theology that would produce spiritual life and holiness. He wanted a theology where the reader would experience the indwelling Jesus Christ and love Him with all his heart. As a result of systematic theology, the reader would walk in the spirit and win souls to Jesus Christ.

**Conclusion**

There are four reasons why this prolegomenon was written. First, the author felt the leading of God to complete the study. Second, the need to interpret Christianity to meet the problems of our contemporary society necessitated the project. Third, the fact that fundamentalists have not prepared a comprehensive systematic theology demands that it be done. Also, since the lack of creed for an experiential movement may be the cause for its short duration, a systematic theology may give continuity to the movement. Finally, the need for a system is necessitated by the fact that many have read theology and not experienced the life that is promised in Scripture.

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32 Mt 22:37-38.  
33 Gal 5:25.  
34 Acts 1:8, Mk 16:15.
FIGURE ONE

A THEOLOGICAL HISTORY OF EXPERIENCE

The Eternal Existence of God and Experience

The eternal existence of experience

1. Revelation through an experience
2. Revelation of an experience

God's Revelation and Experience

1. A record of experience
2. A record that is life-related

Inspiration and Experience

1. The message of the Bible is withheld from the unsaved.
2. The Bible can be understood by a spiritual experience.

Illumination and Experience

The Process of Theologizing and Experience

1. The process and product of theologizing is reciprocal.
2. The process and product of theology must be experience oriented.
CHAPTER TWO

A THEOLOGICAL HISTORY OF EXPERIENCE

The purpose of this chapter is to examine experience as it begins with God and reaches down to man. There are five steps by which the experience of God reaches the experience of man. Since experience and life have similar properties, this chapter examines the process by which the life of God reaches into the experience of man. First, God's eternal existence was consistent with the nature of His life, producing a sequence of experiences. If this is true, experience has an eternal quality to its existence. Second, God related to His created man through experiences, not through doctrinal statements or through theological textbooks. Third, the end result of active revelation is the written inspired Word of God. By the influence of the Holy Spirit, an infallible authority was produced. The majority of the content of Scripture is a record of the experiences that men had with God. These experiences between God and man were recorded and were so impregnated by the life of God that they can induce the same experience in the reader. The fourth step results when an individual encounters, by reading or hearing, the Word of God. The Bible produces a unique experience in the life of the one who reads or hears its message. This experience is not self-induced, nor is it self-directed, but it is motivated by the Holy Spirit as He works through the Word of God. The final level of experience is the concern of this study. It is when experience grows out of the previous steps and becomes operative in the writing of a systematic theology. Here the theologian must capture, classify and communicate the previous experiences into a systematic,
comprehensive and complete form. The end product (a systematic theology that recognizes experience) is designed to produce a spiritual experience in its readers. But, too often, systematic theology becomes an end in itself, because it becomes only a rational expression of the theologian's understanding of God. When life and experience are neglected, the process of theology is self-defeating. But when theology produces life, it is self-productive; it then accomplishes that for which it was created.

I. The Eternal Existence of God and His Experience

The first level of experience centers in the eternal existence of God.\(^1\) Throughout eternity, God has been involved in the processes that were later revealed in time.\(^2\) Since God cannot change, we expect Him to manifest His life in the same manner at all times. Also, it can be implied, the life of God after the event of creation is identical to His life before He created the world.

In eternity past, God was not in an inanimate state, waiting for something to stir Him into existence.\(^3\) Throughout the ages, God was actively using His thought patterns. We assume that there is nothing original in the thoughts of God, because He has all knowledge. Yet in every situation, He reflected on the surrounding events, then stored His observations for future reference.\(^4\) The Godhead spoke among Himself, a

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\(^1\)At no place does this study equate God with experience. It accepts the definition, "God is a Spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable in His being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth." The Westminster Shorter Catechism (Richmond: Presbyterian Committee of Publication, 1910), Q. 4.

\(^2\)Jas 1:17, Mal 3:6.

\(^3\)Ps 90:2, I Tim 1:17.

\(^4\)Rom 11:33, Ps 145:3, Rom 16:27.
process involving intellectual powers. And we can assume He reflected upon Himself, involving all the powers we recognize as phenomenology. The being of God who gives meaning to the universe also interacted with the processes about Him. All these abilities that God performed before Genesis 1:1 tell us that God was active in intellectual experience.

But the existence of God also demanded that He express His nature as related to feelings. Since God is Holy, God has always been expressing His holiness. The same can be said for the fact that God is love. God has always been expressing His love. The authenticity of a being demands that He express the properties of His nature. Therefore, God did not begin expressing His love when man came on the scene. God is love, and before creation, God loved. The objects of His love were the other persons of the Godhead and the extensions of all that God was and is. Therefore, the emotions of God were active, not passive. He was rejecting all that was not God, whether in thought or potentiality.

God also expressed His volition throughout eternity. The first word to describe human time is the verb "created." It introduces earthly actions to human readers. But before this act, God was expressing His will. Since God chooses the thoughts with which He thinks, as well as choosing the words by which He carries on a conversation, we assume the volitional nature of God has been active throughout eternity. Experience and truth are eternal in their existence because they are effects that have grown out of the activity of God. There has always been an

\[5Gen 1:26, 11:5-7.\]
\[6Isa 6:3, Rev 4:8, I Pet 1:16.\]
\[7I Pet 1:2, Eph 1:7.\]
an experience because God has always been active in His self pursuits. There has always been truth, because God has always been active in His mental process of observing, reflecting, recalling and interpreting.

Therefore, knowledge is experience, because it is part (obviously not all) of the existence and eternal activity of God. Inasmuch as God has been in the process of eternally manifesting His personality, we can only assume that experience is eternal as God exercises it by His mind, emotions and will.

Knowledge, which is the extension of His nature as manifested in truth, is revealed in experience. But since things equal to the same thing are not always equal to each other, knowledge is not experience in a qualitative sense, but only in a functional sense.

Knowledge is propositional truth, involving the laws or principles of the universe. Traditionally, laws and principles are interpreted as passive reflections of actions that are considered normative. However, the laws and principles of God carry with them the force of power or authority. With the laws of nature, the sun rises and the seasons change. With the laws of human nature, man gets sleepy or becomes sick when these laws are broken. Hence, the laws are more than static representation of right; they carry with them experiential forces that generate consequences when they are broken. They carry rewards when they are performed. Therefore, when we say that knowledge is propositional truth, we are saying that knowledge has purposeful force that can generate activity and/or experience. Hence, once again there is a reciprocity between knowledge (the cause) and propositional truth (the effect).

Therefore, we say that data is experience, not in the sense in
which the behavioral psychologists say that knowledge is experience, and only that which is perceived empirically becomes knowledge. The behaviorists would say that there is no separate existence of knowledge in the world. They deny the reality of ideas apart from the organic existence of man. To them, experience which comes out of the physical produces the phenomena of experience, and they call that knowledge.

The first level of experience apparently could have continued in uninterrupted sequences. The nature of light is that it must shine, and the nature of holiness is that it demands righteousness, just as love must have an object. The nature of life is that it must have existence in a person. Therefore, God created a man in His image.

II. God's Revelation and Experience

Between the first and second level of experience, God created the universe and man. Human time began and space as we know it came into existence. After the act of creation, man walked the universe that was prepared by God, and a new relationship developed between God and man. God communicated with man for a purpose. Man was not left undirected. God had predetermined the nature of life for the creature, and only the Creator fully understood the purpose for which man was put in this universe.

Man was not given a complete knowledge of the Godhead. Nor did man originate with the accumulated experience of eternity. Man was given the capacity to love, hate or express any of the vast feelings of humanity. Man was given the ability to choose, a staggering power with awesome

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8Gen 1:26, 5:3, 9:6, I Cor 11:7, II Cor 4:4.
consequences.\(^9\)

The Creator had knowledge of all truth, but the creature learned truth at a rate according to his nature. The Creator was the source of all feelings, but the creature only discovered his passions as he encountered situations that evoked their response. The Creator acted properly and so His power of choice was good, but the creature was not perfect in his decisions. Hence, the experience of the Creator was impeccable and the experience of the creature was limited. Man had to rely upon His Maker or suffer the awful consequences of one who violated the purpose for which he was created.

The Creator did not communicate to His creature in a doctrinal statement, nor did God give him a full set of statutes and rules for happiness and purpose in life. God did not produce a set of written principles for a successful life. But God did communicate to His creature; He did not leave him stranded.\(^10\)

God communicated to His creature through His relationship with man. In this universe, God slowly revealed to man how he should live, what was the purpose of life, and what He expected of him. The important fact is that God related to man in and throughout experience.\(^11\) Since man is made in the image of God, and in His likeness, it is conclusive that man would live, think, feel and experience in ways similar to his Maker. But the experience of man never has the same extent as his Maker, because then man would be co-equal with God, which would make him God.

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\(^9\)Gen 2:16-17.
\(^10\)Gen 2:16-17, 3:8.
\(^11\)Gen. 3:8.
The ultimate revelation of God was Jesus Christ. John teaches, "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him" (Jn 1:18). The word declared means to interpret and explain. Jesus Christ explained God to the world. Jesus Christ is the ultimate revelation and is God's message to the world. He came to show love and holiness to the world. When Thomas asked "Lord, shew us the Father" (Jn 14:8), Jesus answered, "Have I been so long time with you, and yet thou hast not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father" (Jn 14:9).

God did not give us a book in written form to describe Himself. He gave us His Son. As the writer of Hebrews observed, "God . . . hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son" (Heb 1:1-2). This does not negate the written message; Jesus gave objective truth and his disciples produced an inspired record of His life and ministry. But the primary revelation was through the person and experience of Jesus Christ. James Oliver Buswell gives a balance between objective revelation and personal revelation:

The primary presupposition of the Christian religion is, of course, Jesus Christ. This means, analytically, as included, not as subsequent articles, that we presuppose the sovereign Triune God of the Bible, and we presuppose the Bible as the infallible Word of God. The primary presupposition should not be stated as though these were three separate items. It is not (1) Jesus Christ, (2) the sovereign Triune God, (3) the Bible as God's Word; for without the assumption of the Trinity and the Bible records, "Jesus Christ" would be an ambiguous term. It is rather, Jesus Christ as the Second Person of the sovereign Triune Godhead, as presented in the Bible, His infallible Word.¹²

Experience is the key to understanding theological form and

Since imitation is one of the highest forms of adoration, God wants His creatures to live as He lived. This involves thinking as God thinks, both in process and product. This involves feeling, both in expressions of praise to God and in resulting experiences of the worshipper. But man should express a full orbit of feelings, not just the feelings of adoration. The ultimate power of experience is will. God wanted man to choose both in thought and action. God wanted man to choose the alternatives that were consistent with the decisions that were made by God and those that would be made for God.

So the second level of experience concerned itself with God relating to the life of His creatures. When man needed direction, God communicated to Adam in conversation, "Thou shalt not eat . . ." When man needed reproof, God said to Cain, "Where is Abel?" When man needed to learn faith, God told Abraham to go into a land that He would give to him and his children. Abraham believed God, and, in that experience, walked in faith. Man did not learn any of these truths from a textbook; he learned them in relationship with God.

III. Inspiration and Experience

The third step that God took in reaching man was to record His message in an authoritative and reliable form, so He produced the Bible.

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15 The Bible is inspired by God, II Tim 3:16. Strong notes, "Inspiration is therefore to be defined, not by its methods, but by its results." Augustus H. Strong, Outlines of Systematic Theology (Philadelphia: The Griffith and Rowland Press, 1908), p. 55. That product is described by Charles C. Ryrie, The Ryrie Study Bible (Chicago: Moody Press, 1976), p. 1933. "Inspiration is God's superintending of human authors so that, using their own individual personalities, they composed and recorded without error in the words of the original autographs His revelation to man."
Loraine Boettner did an adequate job in explaining the importance of inspiration.

For any serious study of Christian doctrines, we must first of all have the assurance that the Bible is true. If it is a fully authoritative and trustworthy guide, then we will accept the doctrine which it sets forth . . . The fortunes of distinctive Christianity are in a very real sense bound up with those of the Biblical doctrine of inspiration, for unless that stands we have nothing stable.16

The Scripture is primarily a record of the events of men in their struggles to relate to God. Not all of the events are victorious. God providentially included experiences that reveal the failures of men in their attempt to live for God. All men sinned: Noah got drunk, Abraham lied, Moses was arrogant, David committed adultery, and Paul took a Jewish vow after the law was finished. These defeats were recorded because they are historical fact. They are recorded experiences.

But there were also great victories of men in their attempts to live for God. These recorded experiences communicate to people today. The men who failed also triumphed over sin. Samson defeated 1,000 of his enemies with the jaw bone of an ass, David defeated Goliath, and Daniel was delivered from the lions' den.

Beyond these records of historical experiences, other supernatural events are recorded. God spoke audibly, and men heard the words of God with their ears. Some obeyed; others did not. The Bible is a Book of the yearnings and fears of the people of God. They grew in faith as they attempted to obey God's voice. Scripture is an account of average men overcoming insurmountable odds with limited resources. Men of God grew in spiritual maturity as God progressively revealed more of Himself to them.

The Bible is a Book of vast experiences: peace, happiness, love, and security. The negative feelings are also included: hate, fear, insecurity, mental derangement, and torture.

The Psalms are the expressions of the feelings of the poet, while the prophets record the experiences of men who were driven to preach the message of God. Both their preaching experiences and the content of their message are included in their writings.

The epistles come close to a written statement of doctrine from God to man. Romans in particular fits this description. But even with their strong doctrinal content, the epistles were written to meet the needs and solve the problems of churches and individuals. Even the Apostle John on Patmos writes of his experiences as God reveals the events surrounding the end of the world.

When we say the Scripture is experiences, we do not mean they are non-facts. Actually, an experience becomes a historical fact. The Bible is filled with facts or concepts and these are the building blocks of Scripture. Hodge reminds us that the process of theologizing is objective because it is dealing with facts.

The true method of theology is, therefore, the inductive, which assumes that the Bible contains all the facts or truths which form the contents of theology, just as the facts of nature are the contents of the natural sciences. It is also assumed that the revelation of these Biblical facts to each other, the principles involved in them, the laws which determine them, are in the facts themselves, and are to be deduced from them, just as the laws of nature are deduced from the facts of nature. In neither case are the principles derived from the mind and imposed upon the facts, but equally on both departments. The principles or laws are deduced from the facts and recognized by the mind. 17

Therefore, the Bible is a record of the revelation of God to man and of his experience in response to God. But the process does not stop there. The purpose of the Bible is to provoke experiences.

IV. Illumination and Experience

The fourth step of experience concerns itself with those who come in contact with the Word of God. Men are exhorted to read, study, meditate, memorize, listen to, and hear the Word of God. But the process does not stop with these activities that are essentially rational in character. Men are further exhorted to obey, hearken, walk, perform and live by the Word of God. Obviously, the Bible was intended to reach beyond the cognitive level of man's understanding into the experience of its readers.

There are different levels of experience, just as there are different degrees of comprehension. The English major will understand the message of the Bible differently from the archaeological student who studies its content. The same can be said for the lawyer, doctor, brick mason, and elementary school student. They understand according to their background and their resulting educational experience. And the degree of a person's comprehension will usually determine the degree of the experience that is produced.

The emotional nature of the reader will determine still a different experience in reading Scripture. A young man in love will respond differently when he reads the Song of Solomon than will the

\[18\] I Tim 4:13, 15, Acts 17:11, Ps 119:9, 11.

despondent person who reads the Psalms. The guilt-ridden soul will experience a different sensation from reading Scripture than will the optimist who reads a triumphant passage.

A person's cultural background does not prohibit a response when reading the Scripture. All races identify with the message of Scripture, so much so that they usually feel the Bible is written to them. So each race responds accordingly. The Bible is an amazing phenomenon, because it speaks to all people, of all times, in all places. And they respond as though it was written personally to them. This testifies to the greatness of the Bible, considering the fact that many of the greatest books cannot transcend culture at the experiential level.

The Bible also possesses a spiritual quality that produces a spiritual experience in its readers. The message of Scripture is withheld from the spiritual perception of the non-Christian, because the Bible is a closed book to him (I Cor 2:14). This leads to the spiritual blinding of the unsaved, rendering them incapable of perceiving spiritual truth (II Cor 4:3-4, Eph 4:18). These two forces keep the average reader from comprehending and applying the message of God. He may understand the grammatical construction of sentences, and he may understand the meaning of the words, and he may understand the social context in which the message was written. The reader may understand history. The same can be said for poetry. But the spiritual truth God gave to men and the experience that God demands of men, they cannot comprehend.

The Holy Spirit is the agent Who either hinders men from understanding the Bible or causes them to comprehend its message. The

\[20\text{Rom 10:17.}\quad 21\text{I Cor 2:13, Jn 16:13, 14:26.}\]
difference in the result is the nature of their spiritual experience.

The Holy Spirit convicts the unsaved person, which causes him to see the truth of Scripture. The reader is blind to God's truth, but the Holy Spirit causes the unsaved to see Christ and understand the purpose of His death (Jn 16:8-11). Understanding is a spiritual experience because it involves interpreting, relating, and storing spiritual knowledge from an experiential base.

The Bible is spiritually alive and will produce a response when read. It is the instrument of salvation that implants new life in the heart of a person who comes to God in faith. A person is born again by Scripture (I Pet 1:23, Jas 1:17, Heb 4:12), because the Bible contains more than historical details about God and His people. The Bible is life, and conversion is the response of a person's personality. The Bible is God's life communicated to man. So the Bible is called the Word of God, and Jesus is called the Word of God. The Bible is Jesus and he who believes the Scripture believes Jesus.

The entrance of Christ into a person's heart begins as an academic experience. The sinner must acknowledge the deity of Jesus Christ (Jn 20:30-31), that He is the Son of God. He must realize that Jesus Christ lived a sinless life which is the basis of His death upon the cross as a sacrifice for the sinner, dying in his place. Christ took the punishment that the sinner should have taken. The gospel is the death, burial and resurrection of Christ (I Cor 15:1-4) and an academic knowledge of that

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22 Heb 4:12.
23 Jn 6:63, 68.
event is foundational for salvation, but knowledge alone, however, will not save. It becomes experiential knowledge when the person realizes that the results of Calvary were "for me."

The entrance of Jesus into a person is a spiritual experience. It involves feelings, which are expressed when the sinner is convicted, and may include guilt, tears, and terror (Rom 3:23, II Cor 7:8-9). The emotional experience never converts the sinner, but can become a motivational force that drives him to the Savior.

The entrance of Christ into a person's heart involves a decision of the will. This is the ultimate step of a meaningful conversion experience. The person must feel a desire in his emotions and must understand the consequences of his knowledge. Then with an act of volition, he accepts Christ (Jn 1:12), also called "obeying from the heart" (Rom 6:17).

The interaction of intellect, emotion, and will is much more extensive than we realize. It is a conversion experience which involves all of God's dealing with man. It involves an act of faith, an incorporation of the correct knowledge of Scripture, the correct emotional stirring and a correct volitional response. All of this is described in the statement, "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God" (Rom 10:13).

V. The Process of Theologizing and Experience

The final or fifth step of experience is the process of theolo-
gizing. 26 Here the previous steps arrive at a peak. It is inconceivable that the previous four steps would involve experience, and the final stage ignore experience and become only a rational process. But that is the problem with most of those who have written systematic theology. Theology is taken from life and relegated to the textbooks. It is no longer alive, but is dead.

When this happens, we hear the complaint that theology "dries up soul-winning" or theology "kills the desire of a preacher." When someone makes theology academic, he assumes that spiritual conversion is only rational understanding, and that the Bible is only a doctrinal textbook.

The theological objective of producing a statement of faith is determined by its process, and this means that the final statement of systematic theology is the outgrowth of the four previous steps. Since God's relationship with His creatures has been rooted in a vital life-relationship and has always been aimed at a godly life, we should only expect an experiential theology.

But just as a ball thrown against a wall will bounce according to the velocity and direction in which it is thrown, the end result of a statement of systematic theology must be determined by a proper theologizing process. Since God left nothing to chance in His avenue of communication, He is concerned with both theological process and product.

26 Very few theologians have defined theological methodology. Hodge makes this attempt, "Theological methodology presents to the student the entire circle of the special sciences devoted to the discovery, elucidation and defence of the contents of the supernatural revelation contained in the Christian Scripture and aims to present these sciences in those organic relations which are determined by their actual genesis and inmost nature." A. A. Hodge, Outlines of Theology (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1896), p. 15.
Therefore, we conclude God wants a theology that will express itself in flesh and blood; His ultimate aim has always been that men live the gospel in their daily lives.

The written statement of theology and its living expression should be as close as the image in the mirror and the person who looks for his likeness. Systematic theology should smile, gesture, and frown, so much so that the casual observer cannot tell where the ink leaves off and the experience begins. Whether the experience is flowing into the pages or flowing out from the pages to change another life, both are theologizing.

Theologizing is so interfaced in process and product that neither can exist without the other.27 They both contain the same properties and, like a river flowing into the sea, it is difficult to know where one ends and the other takes up its new existence.

In the book The Scope of Theology, Daniel T. Jenkins relates the theologian and his theology:

What gives Christian theology its point of departure is the faith that Jesus Christ reveals the true God . . . All that can safely be said here, therefore, is that it cannot be studied very well except by those who see that it tries to deal with questions that arise out of a body of experience which demands explanation. No one is likely to make much of Christian theology unless he has some awareness of what worship, prayer, the sense of sin, moral constraint, atonement, forgiveness, gratitude, love and obedience signify, and unless he has some imaginative understanding of the peculiar nature of the compulsion exercised by the figure of Jesus Christ. This is one reason why Christian theology has nearly always been undertaken as an activity of the church . . . 28

27Ibid., p. 15-18. "Theological method . . . demands a mode of treatment peculiar to itself." He explains it grows out of logic but also appeals to Scripture.

The theologian is an experience channel. He must be a spiritual person before he can properly theologize. Without a proper relationship to the Holy Spirit, he cannot perceive spiritual truth. If he is only nominally spiritual (yielded, but not mature, which involves accumulated successful experiences in relationship to God) then his perception is partial or, in another word, he does not comprehend all truth. And a half-blind theologian is not equipped to theologize, which involves drawing from all sources the complete, comprehensive, systematic coverage of all truth concerning God and His world.

To say the theologian is spiritual implies that he is yielded to God, which means he has surrendered his pre-conceived ideas about God. But surrender involves more than just academic dedication; it involves yielding one's habits, one's pleasures and one's acquaintances. Since theologizing is a spiritual experience, then we can only conclude that the theologian must be a spiritual person. If he does not walk with God, his academic perception is impaired, not completely blocked, but any aberration in his life will show up eventually to contaminate his theology.

We have had enough of the vain men who are recognized as "great theologians" yet are drunkards. Some curse the name of God whom they claim to study. Theology is a spiritual, experiential, and academic process. When a theologian's mind is sharp, yet his soul is barren, he can never produce spiritual truth.

To say the theologian is an experience channel is more than to say he is like a river channel through which the water runs. The theologian must become the truth before he writes it. He must experience that which he attempts to communicate. The water of life must flow into
him and become a part of his life before it flows out to others.

The Bible describes the blessed man (Ps 1:1-3) when he meditates in the Word of God (the Bible goes beyond his mind into his experience). He becomes a tree planted by the waters. The theologian is a picture of this man who is similar to a tree. The water must be absorbed into the tree for it to grow. So the theologian must take the Bible into his experience. But some theologians are like rusty pipes; they suck up truth but the water does nothing to them in the process; it only becomes contaminated with the rust of their decaying souls. Other theologians are "stopped up" pipes. The water never reaches its destination because of an outside influence. But the ideal situation occurs when the tree becomes one with the water. In the process of photosynthesis, the tree takes water from the ground and becomes a channel through which the water flows. So, the theologian and the water of life must become one in experience. This is an embryonic picture of the process of theologizing, but an indispensable one.

Conclusion

Therefore we can say that God is an eternal being Who has been active in expressing His personality through experience; hence He is the source of experience.

God revealed Himself from His experience to man in His experience by an experience.

The aim of God's continuous and purposeful self-revelation is the salvation and sanctification of man. Since both of these activities are life-related, they become experiential in scope.

The activity of self-revelation and the results of the Word of
God in the daily lives of men were recorded by divine inspiration so that the message could be communicated to others to the end that succeeding generations might experience the New Testament life.

Finally, the message of the New Testament must be comprehensively and systematically translated into an experience-oriented presentation in an understandable manner so that people may experience the life God intended for them.
FIGURE TWO
THE METHOD OF THEOLOGIZING
(PART ONE)

The Eternal Existence of God and Experience

God's Revelation and Experience

Inspiration and Experience

Illumination and Experience

The Process of Theologizing and Experience

Philosophic Inquiry (Part Two)

Historical Quest

Exegesis

Statement of Faith

Art
CHAPTER THREE

THE METHOD OF THEOLOGIZING
(PART ONE)

The most instrumental forces in forming a theological statement of faith are not always the resources from which the statement is drawn. The most powerful force of theology is the process that guides the gathering, analyzing, organizing, and selecting of data. The process (which is its methodology) of theology will ultimately determine what source it will utilize. Therefore, the methodology of theology is the force that has the ultimate control over the determination of a statement of faith. Yet, few historic theologians have given adequate and complete attention to methodology, although most will briefly treat the subject.

In the recent past, attention has been given to methodology by some non-conservative theologians. Their concern with methodology usually originates from a different commitment to the source of truth or to the expression of truth. If a theologian happens to believe that truth is changeable, pragmatic, and human centered, then he rejects traditional theology and its methodology. If he happens to reject the supernatural content and the authoritative message of Scripture, then he also rejects traditional theology and its methodology. Hence, such a theologian would strive to construct a new theology.

I. Theology as a Quest for Historical Fact

The credibility of Christianity rests on historic truth, not experience, cognition, or mystical interpretation of Scripture. Christianity
is not conceived in one's feelings or experience. The origin of Christianity is never one's interpretation of God or one's perception of the nature and acts of God in the world. Christianity is a religion of fact and objective history. As such, Christianity is a system of belief and practice that is grounded in the objective fact of the existence of God and the world which He has created. God spoke to men and those events became acts of history. On other occasions, miracles were performed; these were confirmed by observation. Others participated in the miracles by drinking the water created from a miraculous source or eating food from an equally miraculous source. These events are empirical history.

Jesus Christ walked among men, a fact that is documented by historians who were eyewitnesses of the event. His death on a cross and His burial, plus the fact that He rose again on the third day, are also documented in history. His disciples saw Him and reported their observation to others. The city of Jerusalem was filled with conversations and rumors concerning His resurrection from the dead. These events were recorded as history and are the primary source for Christianity. Hence, the credibility of Christianity stands upon these available facts. The genius of Christianity is that it is a factual religion that produces a genuine experience. This cause and effect relationship is the basis for meaningful activity by Christians in the world.

The Word of God is the primary source for Christianity and the foundation for systematic theology. However, there are other sources that verify Christianity and the existence of God. Beyond these sources there are a great multitude of secondary sources that substantiate the historicity of Christianity. Outside of these sources there are the
facts of natural revelation and data from a multitude of sciences that contribute to the formation of a systematic theology. All truths become the source of data for the building of a systematic theology. In the final analysis, after the process of theologizing is completed, the end product must be in agreement with all truth.

John Montgomery advocates this approach to theologic methodology. He says plainly, "Christianity is founded on fact." Then he explains more completely:

Whether the data are "inside" or "outside" the New Testament is irrelevant; what is relevant is the primary-source quality of those data. Indeed, one of the major reasons the books comprising the New Testament today arrived there in the first place was their primary-source character.

There are several foundations that one assumes in the quest of historical Christianity. First he must accept facts at their face value, since they are data or truth. At times, the theologian may not understand all of the facts, nor may he have all of the facts, but those facts that he has gathered will move from existence to interpretation, i.e., from being to understanding. The very nature of data, like the very nature of life, is that it must manifest itself in a self-interpreting way. Therefore, the theologian must approach all of his facts with the premise that they are knowable and self-interpretative; otherwise he will have difficulty understanding what facts are indeed knowable--what


2Ibid., p. xxi. The author disagrees with a later conclusion drawn by Montgomery that faith has no place in forming theology. But he is quoted here because he is recognized as an authority on primary sources and the foundation of Christianity. His statement is taken as proof and no attempt will be made to demonstrate the primary sources in this paper.
facts are true and what facts are mystical (and hence not facts at all).

Truth is an extension of the nature of God. And just as God is self-revelatory in nature, so truth is self-interpreting in nature. Truth is available to men so that they made understand and use it.

Shedd also made this notation in approaching truth, i.e., that it is self-interpretative.

The true method of investigation is natural and logical . . . because in nature one thing follows another according to a preconceived idea, and an established law . . . Everything in the analysis will be sequacious, and the whole will be a true evolution. The Trinity is the basis of theological science . . . The system sometimes follows the order of an accepted creed . . . When the individual doctrines have been deduced, constructed and defended by the exegetic-rational method they are then to be systematized.\(^3\)

The second foundation of the theologian in pursuit of historical fact is that a fact is truth. That which has its existence outside of facts cannot judge the facts. Since all truth and data are an extension of the nature of God, the theologian cannot come from outside the nature of God and judge truth or facts. We have said there are two implied criteria in judging the nature of facts. First, truth is defined by "internal consistency," which means that all of the facts fit into a predetermined system and/or systematic view of life, and, second, truth corresponds to reality. Therefore by the tests of internal consistency and correspondence to reality, we can determine the truthfulness of the data contained in our systematic theology.

The third foundation for an historical quest is found in inductive reasoning, even though this process is limited by the nature of the human mind. Inductive reasoning recognizes all facts as data that must be

incorporated into a complete, systematic, comprehensive study of God and His work. These facts must be blended into a hypothesis that can satisfy the drive of man to know truth. Once this process meets the test of internal consistency with the facts and correspondence to reality, we can say that Christianity has met the test of inductive reasoning.\(^4\)

A careful study of the primary and secondary documents regarding Christianity will not allow for any other view than orthodox Christianity. Even those who oppose an orthodox view of Christianity recognize that historic Christianity, which is the conservative position, rightly projects the teachings of the New Testament when taken at their verbal primary face value. However, since some disagree with this conclusion, it shows that they have disagreed with historical data. Most humanitarians and liberal theologians reject historical data, hence they create another quality of data on which they build their system of theology.

There is no dichotomy between faith and fact, or between historical reality and a subjective belief in God. Some try to say that science is the source of data, in that it gathers facts. When the facts are not consistent, then they conclude, "We must accept the contradiction by faith." Such a dichotomy does an injustice to Christianity. Both faith and fact are grounded in process and product.

However, as soon as we assert that there is no dichotomy, we must recognize certain problems in the nature of the two. First, science allows no place for faith. But we demand faith and give it an integral part in developing systematic theology and interpreting one's statement of faith. Second, we cannot equate the faith of Christianity with the

\(^4\)The process of inductive reasoning and rational inquiry are only introduced in this section. See Chapter Four for a complete discussion.
"blind belief" demanded by other religions, because other religions' demands of faith are based on a mystical interpretation of reality. The nature of New Testament faith is grounded on a recognition of historical data and an incorporation of that data into experience. Third, the vocabulary of Christianity and science are different. Hence, to correlate the two takes a constant effort at defining and interpreting the meanings of terminology.

Finally, we must recognize that there are no such things as Christian facts and secular fact. Facts are, by their nature, the data of reality. All truth comes from God; therefore, all truth/data have the same qualitative being.

We conclude with the observation of Montgomery regarding the historical nature of Christianity. "One sees that Christianity is not primarily a matter of feeling or even of action, but a religion of factual belief--factual belief that yields genuine religious experience."5

As a result of describing theology as a quest for historical fact, the theologian becomes the normative man. His quest is for the principles that interpret the existence of single facts and the relationship between facts. As a result of his quest, he must correlate the interpretation of all data into principles that become a coherent system. Once he accepts the task of looking for principles, and incorporating these into his life, he becomes normative in his experience.

II. Theology as Exegesis

The primary source of systematic theology is the Word of God. At

5Montgomery, op. cit., p. 29. This is a strange quotation for a theologian who argues for historical fact. He ends at experience, the thesis of this paper.
this point, we maintain that Scripture is the only absolute, authoritative, perfect truth that exists in this world. Since truth is consistent with itself (The Bible never contradicts itself and at all times and in every subject is correct and without mistake.), we say the Bible is truth. Also, since truth corresponds with reality, we expect the Bible to be a perfect representation of the laws and the reality of the world, both physical and spiritual. Since the Bible reflects the world, we say it is truth because it corresponds to reality. Truth cannot be completely mastered apart from a knowledge of the Word of God. This does not mean that the person who is ignorant of Scripture cannot arrive at truth. Scientists in many fields of study have journeyed far into truth. They may arrive at a truth or they may discover the relationship of two aspects of truth. But none have ever completely understood truth in their field without knowing the source of truth.

But we have already said truth is the Word of God, and, if man wants truth, he comes to God's Word. Quickly we must add that not every fact of truth is in the Bible, nor is every field of study even mentioned in Scripture. When we say that the Word of God is truth, we mean that it gives the ultimate answers to the necessary questions of life, and in these answers are the implied questions from every field.

But implied in truth is its own method of searching out truth and verifying it. Or to apply thus to theology, there exists in the Word of God a method of searching out truth and determining its accuracy. This is called exegetical theology. It allows God to speak for Himself. The Lord is God, and the implied meaning of God is that He is the ultimate

\[\text{Jn 17:17, 8:32, 14:6.}\]
being, the One who creates, sustains and will ultimately judge all things.

We must conclude that when God speaks, He communicates out of His being. God reveals Himself through His communication; hence, the words of God are a self-revelation.

Since Scripture is a self-revelation of God, this implies certain attitudes in extracting truth from the words of God. First, we cannot add anything to God's message and have it remain His because that would be a creature adding to his Creator. God knows everything, is everywhere present, and can do everything that is consistent with His nature and in correspondence with the truth of His word. Second, the theologian must be careful to capture as much of the meaning of God's words as is humanly possible, because God has not communicated a message that is irrelevant. Third, we cannot create extra truth, nor expand it through any process that is human. Truth comes from God and must be discovered by man. In our human exploration, we "appear" to expand truth, when all we do is expand our knowledge of truth and further our skills in using it. Fourth, we cannot re-define truth. Truth must be consistent with its eternal nature and it must correspond with reality. Many theologians have attempted to define or re-define theological concepts. This process goes on in every age and every culture. This is acceptable when the theologian is attempting to interpret truth for his understanding or for a church to which he speaks. In that sense, God must be re-interpreted in every age and every culture. God must be "inculturated" into the minds of each hearer. This does not mean that we attempt to change God's nature.

or purpose. Like the eyeglasses that magnify the words for the reader, so God is inculturated; i.e., God is made understandable to men in each culture. Note that the eyeglasses do not change the words, they only magnify the words on the page. The process is perception or cognition.

The problem of systematic theology occurs when God is interpreted by the theologian. If he changes God because of pre-conception, ignorance, or any other reason, he has committed the theological error of redefining God according to the theologian. But when he interprets the actual existence of God to the understanding of a group of people, he is performing the role of theologizing. Hence, we come to the process of exegesis, the method of taking the message out of Scripture and interpreting it to the understanding of the hearer. Just as God has revealed Himself to the world, so the Scripture should be self-interpretative to the world. In other words, we let the Scripture reflect its messages as a mirror reveals an image. And just as looking at the mirror gives its own method of interpreting what is within its frame, so the method of finding truth in the Scripture is self-guiding.

Therefore, the exegetical method of constructing theology forces the theologian to be true to the message of Scripture. The words of Scripture must be interpreted as the author intended at the time He spoke. The theologian will apply self-interpretative rules to discover the meaning of each word. Each word will have one meaning, because when a person uses words to communicate, he chooses a word and its meaning to convey what is in his mind. Thus, exegesis will concern itself with the words of Scripture, giving special attention to the meaning of words. It will mean that a theologian cannot give a dual meaning to a word and still communicate a logical thought; otherwise he has denied the nature of communication.
Also, the exegetical theologian must realize that words are spoken in the social context of a cultural background. These backgrounds must be understood to properly exegete the meaning of each word as it occurs in Scripture. At this point, it must be said that God did not communicate in an indiscernable heavenly language. He limited Himself to the social/cultural conditions of the people to whom He spoke. To the Greeks, God communicated in Greek, not Latin. Because communication is making a message understandable to people, God did not speak idly or foolishly. He spoke so man would understand and obey.

Thus exegetical theology must base truth solely on the Word of God. This means the interpretation must be consistent with the whole of Scripture. Therefore, we would expect God to match the importance of truth with the process of its revelation; main revelation would not be hidden in isolated or obscure text. All facts would be interrelated and they would correspond to reality. The emphasis that God would place on revelation would determine the importance in the reader's experience.

One of the most serious problems facing the process of theologizing is the inaccurate—not to mention careless—use of words. The theologian, in his attempt to communicate his faith, must use words that are common to both the speaker and the listener. And, in an attempt to harmonize the two, the theologian must not attempt to use language that distorts the Scripture from its original meaning.

The uniqueness of revelation is that God originally applied technical language to communicate spiritual meaning. The entire doctrine of revelation and inspiration is built on accurate terminology where each word represented one idea and conveyed one meaning. To make language do otherwise is to deny the existence of truth and to make God the author
of duplicity. Otherwise, why should God even bother with the act of revelation if His message could not be understood, or could not be reliable? Hence, to say there is no necessity that the language of revelation be accurate is to say that the revelation is not necessary and God was wasting His time.

Revelation always begins with God and is basically His self-disclosure. Revelation may be "apocalypse" which means to uncover or reveal in a supernatural manner that which was previously hidden. Revelation may also be "phanerosis," which means to display to human intelligence by both natural and supernatural means.

"Apocalypse" is completed, just as the faith is once and for all delivered to the church (Jude 3). But, "phanerosis" continues as God speaks to men through Scripture. The first refers to inspirational revelation, the second, usually to illumination.

Revelation is an experience that involves both process and product. When God spoke and man listened, both experienced a phenomenon that involved at least some of the basic ingredients of experience (i.e. hearing, understanding, feeling, responding, etc.). We can only assume that directed revelation always involved communication between the infinite and the finite, because if God revealed and no one was the recipient of His revelation, we could accuse God of purposeless activity.

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9Ibid., p. 317. Has the meaning of appearance, becoming visible, outward manifestation. Is not used in connection with Scripture or the revelation of God, which is a message.
Revelation is implanted in an experience and becomes its own authority. Men looked back to a dream, an encounter with God, or the time they heard the voice of God, and directed their actions according to the authority of the experience. When revelation was written in the language of Scripture, it became the authority because it reflected God's encounter with man. Thus we say that the Word of God is our revelation, our authority. And upon this objective standard, the Christian is to experience the qualitative life that is presented in Scripture.

III. Theology as a Statement of Faith

This has traditionally been the understanding of theology, that it was a statement of a person's or a church's belief. As an illustration, the Westminster Confession of Faith is the statement of faith of the Presbyterian Church. During the 40's, some were saying, "No creed but Christ." This was a thoroughly inadequate statement for a New Testament believer, yet even in its elementary nature, it was a statement of faith.

A statement of faith is personal and objective because it represents Jesus Christ who is objective, but in the act of conversion becomes personal.

Personal Faith

First, let us examine the personal element of faith. Faith is usually described by its synonym, i.e., trust in God. It involves a repudiation of self-effort and reliance on one's abilities and wisdom. A person expresses faith in God when he obeys the commands of Scripture. He knows that God's Word is true and that all the promises contained therein will be absolutely delivered.
The fact that the Bible said, "But was strong in faith" and "Being not weak in faith" and "Faith as a grain of mustard seed" indicated that some people had more faith than others. It is a measurable capacity; some have greater faith than others.

The credibility of one's faith is measured by the object of that faith, Jesus Christ. So, how can one have greater faith than another? When a person has greater knowledge of the Scripture and a greater ability to trust God because he has accumulated years of obedience, he has greater faith. Therefore, in personal faith, two factors emerge. First, the person who has the greater experience of a successful walk with God will have greater faith. Second, faith cannot be divorced from experience even though its object is non-subjective. Remember, faith is only effective as it is tied to the objective knowledge of Jesus Christ as found in the Word of God.

Objective Faith

When a theologian writes a statement of faith, he is preparing a propositional expression of truth. The existence of God as expressed by His nature and attributes is reduced to objective written reality. This statement about God is no longer subject to the feeling of the writer. The statement is complete, whether or not it corresponds with eternal truth. It is objective. Hence, what we know of God is limited to that written document.

God, Who is expressed in objective terms in a doctrinal statement, is also experienced by subjective faith. He becomes confined by the limited knowledge of the theologian, even though parts of God's nature

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10Rom 4:18, 20, Lk 17:6.
are unexpressed by the elementary words or limited vocabulary of the theologian. Also, the theologian's language can never express the majesty of God because words are finite, and God is infinite.

The theologian who prepares a statement of faith creates his objective statement out of his understandings or lack of them. Since he is the sum total of all his religious experiences, his objective theological statement is the final product of his accumulated experiences.

So we see that a statement of faith is both objective and subjective. The final product, known as the doctrinal statement of systematic theology, grows out of the process that contributed to its completion. Both the product and process are indelibly united in scope and source. The theologian, by active faith, produces a doctrinal statement, which is objective faith. When either or both are separated from the ingredients of Biblical faith, then the whole of theology fails.

Strong relates the objective and subjective aspects of faith into an irreconcilable union. 11

Faith is knowledge, and a higher sort of knowledge. (He is describing natural faith.) This faith though unlike sense-perception or logical demonstration, is yet a cognitive act of the reason, and may be defined as certitude with respect to matters in which verification is unattainable.

Faith is knowledge conditioned by holy affection. The faith which apprehends God's being and working is not opinion or imagination. It is certitude with respect to spiritual realities, upon the testimony of God. Its only peculiarity as a cognitive act of the reason is that it is conditioned by holy affections.

Faith, therefore, can furnish, and only faith can furnish, fit and sufficient material for a scientific theology. As an operation of man's higher rational nature, though distinct from ocular vision or from reasoning, faith is not only a kind, but

the highest kind, of knowing. It gives us understanding of realities which to sense alone are inaccessible, namely, God's existence, and some at least of the relations between God and His creation.

**Biblical faith is put into effect by the Word of God.** The real experience of faith is to recognize that it begins with a knowledge of the Word of God, but that it ends in an act of the will whereby the person puts the command of Christ into action. Obviously, man does not understand all that God has spoken. Also, man does not always understand correctly what God has spoken. But when man takes his limited knowledge and acts upon the Word of God, it becomes an experience of faith.

Let us go back and look at the historical definition of faith. Faith means two things in Scripture. First, *pistis* means the doctrine of faith (Jude 3), which also means the doctrinal statement or the content of a person's belief. This faith is called objective faith in that it deals with propositional truth. For the most part it deals with *gnosis*, which means that which is knowable by the cognitive mind of man. The object of *gnosis* faith is God Himself, or Jesus Christ. Those who speak of objective faith only communicate to the rational mind of another person. The problem is they never reach the experiential level of life. *Gnosis* faith never reaches the human factor of life where people live.

The second aspect of faith is *pistis asou christou* (believe in Jesus Christ). This faith is in the active tense; it becomes more than knowledge; it moves into the experience of man. He has knowledge of Christ which effects his emotions and he responds by an act of the will.

To get more personal faith, a person needs more of the Word of God (Romans 10:17). Now, the Word of God is alive and it gives life (Hebrews 4:12, James 1:17, I Peter 1:23), because the Word of God incarnate, Jesus Christ, and the Word of God inspired, Scripture, are both the power of
God. The two are inseparable in fact or in experience. When a person gets more Scripture in his life, he is being indwelt by Jesus Christ, and, at the same time, he is receiving more spiritual life because Jesus Christ is the life and light of men (Jn 1:4, 14:6). This means that as he is getting more of the Word of God in his heart, he is deepening his experience, because Jesus Christ comes not by intellect only, but through feelings and obedience.

Not all experience that is called faith is, in fact, Biblical faith. There are many religious experiences that are not born of the New Testament. These cannot and should not be confused with Biblical faith. Biblical faith must have its source and object in the Word of God.

To have faith, men must acquire a spiritual experience originating from the Word of God with Jesus Christ. Since Jesus Christ is in the Word of God as its content and animation, when a believer receives the Word of God in his heart, he is receiving Jesus Christ as the source of his faith. But also, Jesus Christ is the object of his faith. Therefore, Jesus Christ is both external and internal in a person's faith.

Personal faith points to a source (objective faith) and receives its credibility from that source. When active faith is directed toward any other god or any other institution, it is false faith. But when it is directed toward Jesus Christ as taught in the New Testament, then it is New Testament faith. Therefore, New Testament faith transcends and brackets the Word of God.

New Testament faith has no power in itself, its object is Jesus Christ and its source is Jesus Christ. Just as conversion has no power in itself to change the life, faith has no power in itself to produce a relationship. They are both processes that receive their power from
outside themselves. New Testament faith presupposes the inability of the individual and also presupposes the ability of God to work in man. When New Testament faith is in operation, man is open to receive the message of God flowing to him through the Word of God. By faith he recognizes God working in his experience. Man is able to hear the voice of God by seeing the message of God in the Word of God.

Often the statement about the "indwelling Christ" carries only a mystical concept to the reader. However, the "indwelling Christ" actually is present in the believer by the person of Christ who fills the heart. But, also, the indwelling Christ is in the message of the Scripture, which is memorized and meditated. The beauty of this statement is seen in the antithesis, that man has no faith in himself. Man is lost and blind. Man is a sinner and self-centered. Man is finite and cannot understand the infinite. Therefore, it is impossible for man to have faith in God, that is, for a man to work up his own faith out of his own ability. Faith is a gift of God (Eph 2:8-9) but it is given to those according to the measure of the Word of God. Those who have the largest amount of the Word of God in their experience have the largest gift of faith (I Cor 12:7).

Often we talk about one man having more faith than another. This means that faith is qualitative and quantitative. Some men have stronger faith for one area of trust; other men have a broader range of faith for many areas of trust. Jesus said that if man had faith as a grain of mustard seed (Mt 17:20) he could move mountains. By this, Jesus was speaking about the bare minimum amount of faith. A mustard seed was among the smallest items identifiable to man. Blind Bartimaeus prayed, "Lord, I believe, help thou my unbelief" (Mk 10:46-52). This is a prayer
for the growth of faith. This increase of faith is implied in Romans 1:17: "From faith to faith." Growth in faith is a wonderful phenomenon only if the reader understands that it is not grown by itself. Faith grows by Jesus Christ who indwells the heart, and the Word of God, which fills the experience of man. Therefore, as a man exercises faith, he is rooted in the Word of God and the Word of God is implanted in him. Therefore, faith presupposes union and communion with Jesus Christ.

Man cannot create faith; the Word of God creates faith in his heart. The Word must be planted (Mk 4:31-32) and grows to germination by the work of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, a man, by his own initiative cannot come to faith, faith is given to him or created in him by the Word of God.

IV. Theology as Art

Theology is a science and as such, it is dedicated to laws and universal principles. But theology is also art, here it is dedicated to feelings and expression of beauty. Theology is similar to a garden. It contains the profusion of nature, plants and flowers are scattered by the hand of God in "orderly disorder." The flowers were everywhere beautiful, but they were not placed in order. Truth is "orderly disorder," in that it is found everywhere in Scripture and in the universe. It is up to man to place it in order. In a botanical garden, everything is gathered according to species and arranged according to that which is pleasing to the eye.

The average person enjoys the beauty of nature and is not required to study botany. But the gardener must know something about the nature of the plants he works with if he wants to cultivate the plant. The scientist
never bases his study on the artificial beauty of the past, and he never approaches his study because he enjoys the art form of flowers. He approaches data as fact that must be comprehended. He may enjoy the beauty of flowers but that is not what he is paid to perform. So theology has beauty to appreciate and enjoy. But it also must be arranged in systematic order with a view of its laws and principles.

The Bible records the voice of God in many forms. At one time, God speaks with the voice of the prophet. At another place we hear Him in the voice of a saint. Still another place, His voice comes through the teachings of Paul. Then over all the Scripture we see the providence of God painted like a picture on a continuous canvas scroll. God's dealings with the souls of men are as varied as they are beautiful.

Beyond the Scripture we see the craftsmanship of God in nature and we stand in amazement at the complexity of the human mind. Once again, the universe is the signature of God. There is beauty and profound skill in the handiwork of God.

It is the theologian's privilege to attempt to classify, arrange and then make more enjoyable the unifying purpose of God.

The suggestion that systematic theology is an art produces cries of horror from the traditionalists. They view theology as an expanded doctrinal statement including explanation, defense and verification. However, theology, in both its process and product, should also be art.

Theology should speak to the culture of a people from their culture with distinctive message and in unique avenues of expression. We usually think of art as music, sculpture, poetry, painting and other cultural expressions of the uniqueness of a group of people.

Since the church is a culture of people with distinctive forms for
the expression of the uniqueness of its people, why should the church not have its own art? And why should its theology not be one of its art forms?

Art is usually portrayed as the voice of the heart rather than the message of the head. Such a dichotomy is only beneficial for an academic distinction between art and science. There are rudiments of form in all art, but art usually speaks for the feelings or nostalgia of a culture. It deals with the attitudes and appreciations of a culture that cannot be expressed in normal words and symbols.

Love is personal and private, yet people try to express it in music by combining meter, rhythm, and chords. The church communicates the feelings of love for God and love for the brethren by its music and by its experience. Those who sing a song or listen to love's melody sense the same feelings without going through the rational process of understanding the words. Art is a means of sharing oneself, the message that is communicated being more than what one has learned from another. Art is more than using one's creative abilities to receive a message from someone else and passing it on to culture or to the world. Art is the creative process by which a person gives himself to the world. Michelangelo gave himself in the Sistine ceiling and Handel gave himself in The Hallelujah Chorus, just as John Bunyan pushed back the curtain of his soul, and, in Pilgrim's Progress, we saw the experience of John Bunyan.

Again we repeat, the artist receives life from his culture and internalizes the spirit of that culture, then expresses it in his unique art form. Many artists' works have not endured. Why? Some artists did not properly internalize their culture, others did not have the creative
genius, and still others could not speak to their culture or the people
did not feel they spoke for them. Some art works have not endured because
the artist did not capture the eternal "principle" or "world soul" in his
creative work.

Theology is art in the deepest sense of the word. It grows out
of the culture of the church and speaks to that culture. But let us
remind the critics: theology is not art alone, but also a science. As
art, theology is the product of the feelings and non-verbal understand­
ings of a church culture. As science, it is the expression of laws and
propositional truth concerning God and His world.

Just as art speaks in its form and matter, so theology is the
expression of a Christian's heart love for God and others. It begins
with the internalization of the message, so much so that it becomes a
part of the person. It became difficult to tell where the indigenous
person ends and the incorporated Christian message begins. Jesus spoke
of, "I in you and thou in me." At another place the Word teaches, "Let
the mind of Christ be in you." The desired result is that the person
becomes more than Christ-inspired. He yields himself and finds himself
identified with Jesus Christ so that he becomes one with Christ.

As that person expresses himself in Christian song, he shares
himself. Speaking from his church culture, he also speaks to his
culture. Where he shares his inner feelings, he shares Christ.

When the Christian sculptor creates a statue, he is giving himself
and his faith to the world. It is different in content, but it is also
different in rhythm, meter, and chords. Why? Because the Christian
musician is communicating the internalized Christ to others. The
outsiders may enjoy its beauty or may completely misunderstand its meaning.
But when the Christian musician speaks to the church body in which he was converted and to which he ministers, they feel an empathy with his music.

Theology is an art form. The theologian must be a product of the church culture to which he would speak. He must be a member of the "in-group," meaning that he has been converted and has fully experienced the feelings of that culture. He has internalized the words, symbols and lifestyle of the culture.

The theologian shares himself through the creative process as he speaks to the church. He faces problems that no other generation has faced (because of the unique technological, sociological, economic and racial problems of his age); hence, he cannot speak to them with traditional dogmatic answers. (He speaks the same truth, but applies it in a contemporary form.) So he restates truth in the perception of the culture to which he ministers. Each church in each age must have answers that are more than theoretically true. The truth must be experiential to them.

Therefore, the theologian must be an artist. The theologian understands the law of God and the nature of God, but, more than having a rational knowledge, he has experienced Christ and internalized the Word. To his own culture he uniquely expresses himself in creative ways. Even the art form is the theologian sharing himself in propositional statements. These are his indigenous self, the theologian at one with Christ.

John Calvin completed an extensive statement of propositional theology. Taken as a whole, it is an art form, so that it is uniquely John Calvin giving to the Reformed Church what he had internalized as his
conception of Christianity. Calvin erred in some of his theological conclusions, not so much because of the subjective art form, but for other reasons which will be discussed later. However, Calvin falls within the camp of conservative theologians. Among the non-Biblical theologians, there are many whose works could be called an art form: Thelicke, Schlieiermacher, and Barth. Their systems are art forms, beautiful and complete. They are the works of geniuses which show creativity at its best. But just as art is judged by internal worth to the observer, so the theology of these men is thus judged by the subjective standards of the reader. They may be art, but when measured by a scientific understanding of truth and a faithful exegesis of Scripture, they are not New Testament theology. Their God is not Jehovah and the Christ of their theology is not the One to whom Thomas said in the upper room, "My Lord and my God" (Jn 20:28).

Conclusion

Christianity maintains a delicate balance between objectivity and subjectivity. Its existence is threatened when either force becomes predominant over the other. Christianity is based on historical truth and grows out of objective reality. Yet, the experience of the theologian as a scientist determines how he will construct his theology.

The second foundation of Christianity is proper exegesis of Scripture. The theologian must dedicate himself to interpreting the words of Scripture to those around him. But even in this process, experience is vital, for the theologian must not only have the skills of an exegete, but he must also have the spiritual perception to understand the message of Scripture. This presupposes that he has had a spiritual experience.
The faith of the theologian involves subjective faith, as well as the production of an objective statement of faith.

The fact that theology is an art form demands that the theologian express both form and substance in his theology. He must communicate with the head and with the heart to his listeners. At this level, theology must be experienced to be profitable.
FIGURE THREE

THE METHOD OF THEOLOGIZING
(PART TWO)

BIBLICAL AUTHORITY

I. Method of Inquiry

Scientific-Inductive Method
Philosophic Method
  values analogies speculation

II. Tools of Inquiry

Concepts  Observation  Measurement  Model

Language analysis  What is observation?  What is measurement?  What is a model?
Specification of  What will be observed?  How will we arrange data?  What is the function of
meaning.  How can we observe?  Upon what standard will
Implicit  How can we interpret  measurement be made?
Explicit  what we observe?
The function  How can we know we are  How intensive (extensive)  What kind of
of meaning.  observing the correct will we measure?
items or factors?

Hypothesis

What is experiment?
Why should we experiment?
How shall we structure an experiment?
What do we expect from experiment?

Theories or Laws

What is a theory - law?
What is the purpose of theory or law?
How will we identify conclusions?
How shall we construct an hypothesis, a theory, a law?
What shall be their field, range, scope and content?
When does a theory become a law?
How shall we express these conclusions?

BIBLICAL REVELATION  GENERAL REVELATION
CHAPTER FOUR

THE METHOD OF THEOLOGIZING
(PART TWO)

The task of theologizing includes the use of philosophic inquiry in its function. However, we must immediately remind ourselves that theology is not philosophy nor vice versa. If this distinction is not made, then some would accuse theology of philosophic contamination. Even the Bible warns, "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy or vain deceit, after the traditions of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ" (Col 2:8). Men will be theologically contaminated if they use philosophy: (1) as the only method to find truth, or (2) as the system of truth. In this section we will examine the rational process that men use in formulating their ideas. The fear of philosophy should be a real threat to the theologian, even when he uses rational process in formulating both philosophy and theology. Obviously, the theologian believes that philosophic inquiry is only one of the methods to establish theology.

Therefore, in this chapter, we will examine the role of rational-philosophic inquiry as it relates to theology. Rational method includes such procedures as forming concepts and hypotheses, making observations and measurements, performing experiments, building rational models and theories, providing explanations, and making predictions. And, by process, theology uses the same methods, although it also appeals to a higher authority, revelation. But both theology and rational process use the same vehicle, which is to describe and analyze thought, throwing light on
limitations and resources, clarifying presumptions and consequences, and relating creative potentialities to problems of thought. Rational method should propose generalizations from the results of research, suggest new applications, and examine the logical implications of new suggestions. In summary, rational methodology should help the theologian improve both the product and process of his inquiry.

One of the more serious questions which faces the theologian concerns itself with the priority of scriptural revelation in philosophical methodology. Is revelation merely a source among other sources? Does revelation come before the process of philosophic methodology and guide the process? Is revelation concerned only with content and thus has no implications for philosophic process? Or is revelation the controlling methodology and all other methods subservient to it?

The philosopher/theologian is faced with the question, does the Scripture contain only content, leaving the theologian to use the best techniques available, possibly ignoring the question of philosophic inquiry which is concomitant in the process? Or, does the Scripture communicate process along with its unique content, holding to a wholistic unification or process and content? Since this chapter takes the position that content cannot be separated from method, the content of revelation will be considered to have implication on the methodology of revelation. Therefore, the question of revelation and philosophic methodology comes into focus. Does revelation, because some view it as exclusive authority, become the source from which and to which inquiry is made, i.e., inductively drawing answers from revelation? Or, is revelation considered a source for truth, just as the natural world, historical fact, and other data are considered sources of inquiry? Is
revelation *prima inter pares* (first among equals) or *prima* (exclusive and unique) or just one among equals?

First, the term rational inquiry or philosophic method must be defined. Obviously, we are defining philosophy as method, not philosophy as system.

Philosophy is a conscious and reflective activity . . . to set bodies of proposition which express knowledge and reflections or set forth grounds for the conclusions of the sciences and the productions of the arts or adumbrate truths beyond scope of statement . . .”

The above definition deals with both process and product, and since it deals with the same properties of realities, laws, ideas and immaterial existence, the method can be related to theologized inquiry because it deals with the same area of concern.

I. Two Philosophic Methods of Inquiry

The field of rational methodology seems to have polarized between a scientific and philosophic appeal to certainty. Kaplan makes a distinction between two types of methodology and indicates there is no conflict between the two because they work in different strata.

McKeon makes a difference between the two methodologies because of their differing scope and method of inquiry. He indicates that the results of science, which includes its methodology, are used by and included in the method of philosophy, therefore, they cannot be the same.

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3McKeon, loc. cit.
Scientific Method

Science contains a supposedly objective method of approach to the empirical world, the world subject to experience by man. Science does not aim at persuasion, it aims at verification. It is a mode of analysis that permits the stating of propositions in the form of, "if . . . then . . . " Science aims at demonstration, or is that which states that a given relationship exists. Therefore, the scientific method involves finding the significance and practical utility of something. As a result of its objective approach, many who search for truth place much emphasis on the scientific method in their inquiry.

Theology utilizes scientific inquiry to formulate the results of historical quest and Biblical exegesis. All data regarding God are observed, interpreted and catalogued into a coherent system. Hence systematic theology becomes a science. Because of this, some call it the queen of sciences. This term is used because it deals with the highest type of data, or conducts a search for the highest truth.

As such, scientific method of inquiry can (1) offer a method of solving problems; (2) offer alternative methods other than problem solving alone; (3) provide a means of predicting what the consequences of a given course of action may be. The scientific method also can (1) go beyond solutions and search for values, understanding, or reasons for solutions; (2) involve controlled experimentation; (3) look for broad generalizations; (4) set experimentation against an existing body of generalizations to determine the validity of the present relationship or

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of the existing generalization.5

A scientific approach to systematic theology approaches the problems of revelation and gives objectivity to solving them. The problems might be the alleged inconsistencies between verses, the interrelationship of principles, the need to discover principles/generalizations to answer religious problems or the need to go beyond the religious principles to predict what a person or church might do in certain circumstances. All these duties of systematic theology are approached by rational processes (science) and the end result must satisfy the mental need for consistency and correspondence.

Scientific method can be found without internal value judgments. But this does not eliminate the need for value judgment. We believe it can be incorporated within mental inquiry. The determination of what is significant and what is practical are two areas that cannot be determined apart from value judgments, but fall within scientific inquiry. Such value judgments are not based on the validity of the research but on a judgment apart from the experiment. The judgments must appeal to Scripture, experience or to philosophic inquiry. It is believed that the perfect value judgment is Scripture. However, the rational/philosophic inquiry could arrive at the same conclusion if the methods were properly employed by the perfect man. But such a man does not exist, so rational/philosophic inquiry will never produce a perfect product. However, this does not destroy the fact that it has some place in theological methodology. The following equation will give guidance to the theologian: One cannot build his theology on rational/philosophic inquiry because it is

5Ibid., p. 60 ff.
incomplete and subject to the influence of sin, but one cannot build systematic theology with using rational processes so that the theological end product is consistent with the knowable methods of logic or philosophy.

Scientific methodology does not exclude its inquiry from the world of language and ideas. Rational inquiry has a definite place in methodology. Cohen warns:

Without its (science) methods the vision of philosophy would be indistinguishable from mythology, so apart from rigorous technical development, philosophic vision is thin and devoid of substance—either irresponsibly capricious or else a dark night in which all cows are black. 6

For Israel Scheffler, rational methodology is a precise and exact science. 7 He feels that if it is going to have any validity in searching for truth, it must have a greater commitment to definition in regards to language, an attempt at scientific investigation in rigor, attention to detail, objectivity of method, and the use of symbolic logic. 8 His purpose is "Improving our understanding . . . by clarification of our conceptual apparatus—the ways in which we formulate our beliefs, arguments, assumptions, and judgments . . ." 9

Theology is tied to exegesis as a foundational plank of theological methodology. At this place, every word of God must be interpreted

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to comprehend the total message of God. Without an objective (scientific) foundation, systematic theology would collapse.

Philosophic Method

The rational method of inquiry includes the scientific approach to truth but goes beyond science to include areas such as speculation into the improbable, inquiry into the areas of values, and inquiry by means of analogy. There are data that cannot be measured or proven. There are substances of the world of ideas that cannot be examined by scientific method. But these data must be explored because they are part of the creation of God. Therefore, to examine them, we must employ the rational method of inquiry, because they are rational in scope and nature.

The first area where philosophic methodology goes beyond scientific methodology involves analogies. Similarities lead the inquirer to insight, but under the scientific method, analogies cannot be demonstrated. Yet, he knows they are related by analogy. Is the inquirer, therefore, to reject the analogy? No!

The path of philosophizing is the fund of available analogies that prove fruitful to diverse minds. Those analogies which by persistent thought become fruitful hypothesis are suggested to philosophers by their own reflection or by the reflection of other intellectual workers. At this point, the theologian must proceed by more than his intellect; he must proceed by his instinct as well. He knows that certain things are correct even when he cannot prove them with his logic.

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\(^{10}\) See a discussion of the areas of inquiry beyond science for a full discussion of these suggestions.

\(^{11}\) Cohen, op. cit., p. 135.
Cohen feels the philosopher must go beyond physics to causality, he must go beyond biology to the phenomena of life, and he must go beyond the existence of nature to the existence of deity.\(^{12}\)

Here the philosopher is doing the job of the theologian. Even though he is using philosophic methods of inquiry, he is asking theological questions and formulating theological answers. Also, the philosopher speculates on what might have been.\(^{13}\) The Bible teaches this is a theological concern. "And calleth those things which be not as though they were" (Rom 4:17).

The second area in which philosophic methodology goes beyond the scientific method involves values. Values are found at all phases of disciplined inquiry into truth. Value questions concern themselves with the relation between intrinsic and instrumental values and the identification of within-the-field and outside-the-field values. In general, values are deliberated interests and justified likings.

Richard McKeon states that esthetics is a personal matter, and scientific methodology cannot enhance appreciation or lead to acceptance of any personal judgment.

They differ from the sciences since the knowledge they involve is not tested and the effects they produce are not achieved by repetition of the use of the same methods in application to the same things.\(^{14}\)

Science strives for consensus which verifies the results; therefore, values must be dealt with by a separate methodology, hence the establishment of philosophic methodology beyond the scientific approach.\(^{15}\) Theology does not look to consensus, nor will it accept consensus as a proof for

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\(^{12}\)Ibid., p. 151. \(^{13}\)Ibid.  
\(^{14}\)Ibid.  
\(^{15}\)Ibid., p. 656.
truth. But what rational inquiry attempts to do in calling the majority of results to its defense, theology accomplishes by appealing to the majority of data. Because truth will not contradict itself, it believes that the hypothesis is verified as truth reflects all facts.

Value has two meanings in connection with philosophic research; it may refer to the standards of worth or to the worthy things themselves. We have already said that some theological facts are more important than others, but they are all similar because they reflect the same quality of truth.

The most critical value judgment concerns itself with the significance of the entire research effort. Does the research have intrinsic value? To the philosopher/theologian research is satisfying because it is being done. But is it important and will it have a contribution? The results will guide the method of reaching a decision, solving a problem, improving a practice, or stimulating further inquiry. At this point, the theologian must make a value judgment. Is the project of significant worth? Does it need solving? Just because there is a theological problem does not mean it is worth solving or can even be solved. "The secret things belong unto the Lord our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us" (Deut 29:29).

The third area where philosophic method goes beyond science involves speculation. The speculative phase of philosophy is that visionary aspect of rationalistic studies which deals with projections of desirable results, experiences, and answers. Even before data is available, the philosopher forms broad hypotheses about potentially attainable goals, constructs new conceptual problems for exploration and makes creative leaps into the future. This is not the role of the scientist. This is the task for the philosopher and theologian. They
deal with the future and the substantive ideas of the future. It is their task to attempt to reach concepts whose truth is not established by means of scientific procedures.\textsuperscript{16}

Theology uses science, yet must be aware of the limitations of science. Even though the natural world was created by God, and is controlled by God, no one fully understands the world. God is the source of the world, and God is the source of man's rational inquiry. But man, at his philosophic best, is still a sinner. And beyond sin, there are other natural self-inhibiting features of scientific inquiry.

Malcom offers four weaknesses of the scientific approach to verifying truth. (1) An empirical statement is an hypothesis about an infinite series of verifications. By definition, then, the series can never be completed; hence the scientist never is sure that he arrives at truth. (2) Theologians deny certainty to empirical knowledge because they recognize that the contrary of any empirical position is logically possible, at any time; hence the scientist can never say that he has arrived at truth. (3) Theologians assert that no empirical statement is more than probable because the scientist may be in error about his statement, as he sometimes has been in the past; therefore, the scientist can never say he has arrived at truth. Finally, (4) theologians have concluded that we cannot verify the surety of any perceptual experience by any scientist. He can never trust his power of observation, memory, judging or any other scientific method. Hence, the scientist can never say he has arrived at truth.\textsuperscript{17}

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The following set of principles for rational methodology has been offered by Dr. James Merritt. They apply to the process of theologizing when rational processes are used. (1) Theological research derives much of its impetus out of concern for more adequate theory. The theologian will continue to refine and polish his theological system as long as he is in the flesh. (2) The theologian has the privilege of choosing to develop his intellectuality by means of reconstructing his various experiences, attitudes, and habits which are relevant to self-education; hence his method will be perfected and his theology will be improved. (3) The general perspective of the theologian should expand as he becomes knowledgeable about the various extant theories and systems of truth. Hence the development of his mind will perfect his system. (4) He need not trust those theologians who have developed all types of systems, but he would do well to read such theologians carefully. In the reading of variant systems, he will become convinced of the truth and the verification of his product. He arrives at a place where he affirms, "I know what I believe, because I know what I do not believe." (5) The theologian will normally be attracted by those writings which appear consistent with his own perceptions of theology, but even these writings must come under careful scrutiny. (6) Wanting to conceptualize accurately, the theologian has the privilege of reconstructing his own experience, ideas, and attitudes. He can use such materials in the hope of writing theology which will be generally accepted, but his identity as a theologian transcends his identity as his own biographer. (7) The theologian is likely to accept his own conclusions unless he feels some strong counter pressure. (8) The matter of following one's own intuition is a strong factor in making conceptual choices, but this factor does not
permit him to deny evidence from Scripture, rational inquiry or empirical sources. While these verify his choices, they can never contradict his results. The theologian offers his conceptual choices to his colleagues and public hoping for acceptance, but realizing that there will also be negative reactions. 18

II. Tools of Inquiry

The basic tools of philosophic methodology are linguistic. The philosopher uses language differently from the theologian, who uses exegesis to search out truth. The philosopher is using language as a "tool" by which he reasons. The theologian uses exegesis and language as a "source" for his reasoning. Neither are trying to develop a philosophy/theology of language, but both are trying to develop a comprehension of truth.

The linguistic philosopher . . . is not striving to develop a scientific theory of languages, but rather to clarify, improve, or systematize the languages in which we express theories . . . concerning any of a variety of subjects, as well as our common-sense beliefs, our judgments, inferences, evaluations, and convictions. It is this purpose that keeps him clearly within the philosophic tradition. 19

This point has been expressed by the Committee on the Nature and Function of the Discipline of Philosophy by the Philosophy of Education Society in the following statement in 1953, which suggests that there is a scientific approach in philosophy method. The committee suggested three characteristics of philosophy.

18James Merritt, Seminar on Research and Philosophy, Spring, 1970, Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, Illinois. The discussion originally centered on the philosopher, but here is adapted to the theologian.

19Scheffler, Philosophy and Education, p. 6.
(1) Unique theoretical tools consisting of hypotheses, concepts and categories (such as meaning, truth, value, method).
(2) The employment of these tools in the examination of the criteria, assumptions, and/or reasons which guide assessments, judgments, and choices.
(3) A scholarly acquaintance with events, practices, circumstances, and/or ideas relevant to that which the philosophy is of (that is, education, art, politics, science or religion).

The above suggestions give substance to the role of rational search for truth. When applied as one technique among many, the role of theologizing becomes more precise. The theologian begins with fixed concepts, then he must create new concepts that reflect the relationship between fixed concepts, the solution to contemporary problems and other concepts as are necessarily created by the pressures of contemporary society.

**Concepts.** Concepts are often verbal symbols of phenomena that are being examined or studied.

Since science attempts to investigate particular sections or aspects of reality, with an abstract system of thought to interpret those segments, each science develops its own terms, or concepts, for communicating its findings. We may refer to the theoretical system of the science as a conceptual system. These terms are used to stand for the phenomena, or aspects of phenomena, which are being investigated.20

The theologian uses concepts to arrive at his conclusions. These concepts are logical constructions created from sense impressions, precepts conclusions or even fairly complex experiences.21 They are the foundation of all human communication and thought. Each concept communicates to the inquirer a vast amount of conclusions, abstracted and clarified for those who understand the terms.22 Hence a concept is a vehicle or tool for carrying on the role of theologizing.

20Goode and Hatt, op. cit., p. 41.
21Ibid., p. 42. 22Ibid., p. 43.
Hypothesis. An hypothesis is a conclusion that is suggested by the theologian that he thinks will solve a problem he faces. The problem could be one of relationship, solutions, principles or analogy. The theologian must begin with an hypothesis or a suggested solution to an actual problem. First, he must make observations, gather data and collect it into a meaningful whole. Then he tests the hypothesis to arrive at conclusions that become foundational in building a system of theology. Obvious to the process is the fact that many hypotheses will be proven false. Therefore, he must experiment with concepts in order to get knowledge or conclusions about the relationship between variables. Hence, he must systematically manipulate one or more of the independent variables, thus exposing various groups of data to different variables. The experimental concepts are usually selected randomly, and they are related randomly. He is attempting to determine the relationship or differences in the phenomena being observed.23

The use of hypothesis in theology is particularly useful in determining causal relationships. It has the advantage of allowing the theologian to explore areas of truth that "beyond now" have not been examined. He is not trying to find new truth regarding the major areas of theology. These have been revealed in revelation and are immutable. The basic premise of the conservative theological creed is set. The theologian is using hypothesis to relate truth to truth in the realm of nature and human relationship. It involves the outworking of theology with experience.

Observation. This tool of inquiry includes the most casual, uncontrolled experiences as well as the most exact film records of laboratory experimentation.\textsuperscript{24}

Most observers notice certain things and fail to see others. The pattern of selective observation is determined by preferences, alertness, the depth of knowledge, plus the goals the person seeks.

As the precision of the hypothesis increases, so must the precision of concepts and data. Simple observation is most useful in exploratory studies, but the investigator needs to supplement his notes with more carefully drawn schedules and questionnaires, with better controls over the techniques of observation. Checks on the observer's biases, selective perception, and the vagueness of his senses must be built into the research.\textsuperscript{25}

All scientific and philosophic inquiry depends ultimately on the observer, a variable which must always be taken into account when doing research. At this point, the theologian also is at the mercy of his ability to observe. He cannot conclude more than he can conceive. He must be able to perceive all phenomena, see it clearly and see it objectively.

Observation begins by some uncontrolled or casual observation of the relevant data. This furnishes valuable preliminary concepts and may even lead to an hypothesis. Casual observation helps in the development of the more scientific observations which will occupy a more advanced phase of investigation.

\textsuperscript{24}Goode and Hatt, op. cit., p. 119.

\textsuperscript{25}Ibid., p. 126.
Theories and laws. Theory refers to the relationship between facts data or concepts, and helps to order them in some meaningful way. Theory and fact are inextricably intertwined; theory is not speculation, but rather conclusion. Without some ordering principles (theory), science could yield no predictions.26

Theory is a tool in these ways: (1) It defines the major solution to a problem by defining the kinds of data which are to be abstracted; (2) it offers a conceptual scheme by which the relevant phenomena are classified and interrelated; (3) it summarizes facts into generalizations and systems of thought; (4) it predicts facts; and (5) it points to gaps in our knowledge.27

One of the differences between a hypothesis and a theory is that the hypothesis usually involves a possible explanation of relationship between concepts. Theory has broader scope in that it is a possible solution to many hypotheses and forms a general principle or universal law, those that always are applicable when the same variables are present. A law has universal properties, while a hypothesis has a "one time" existence.

If the empirical and philosophic test of a theory confirms its validity, the generalization might be called a law, provided that the finding is sufficiently important.28

Measurement and proofs. This tool of rational inquiry may be regarded as a type of descriptive research; it gives precision to

26Ibid., p. 8.
27Ibid.
28Ibid.
description and is often used to aid in research. Measurement may also be viewed as ordered classification. Measurement, also, is space-time description, or a quantitative description of data, concepts or phenomena. \(^{29}\) Simon lists six types of subclassifications or measurement research:

1. Counting, or measurement of the total. This tool is useful if one wishes to make decisions about the entire universe taken together.

2. Central value. The center point is useful if one wishes to deal with the entire universe, or with each member individually. The mean, median, and the mode are the best known examples of center points.

3. Proportion, a measure that standardizes two dissimilar groups so that they can be compared. The percentage is the usual form for expressing proportions.

4. Distribution, the complete picture of a set of data. The central values, proportions, measures of variability, and other descriptive statistics are all aspects of the distribution. The distribution lists all the categories and the numbers of items in the categories. A distribution shows the entire picture, and it is useful when one wants to deal with one of the subcategories rather than with the entire universe.

5. Measures of variability. A measure of variability summarizes one particular aspect of a distribution. Instead of describing where the data are clustered, as does a measure of central tendency, a measure of variability describes the spread of the data. The range is a handy measure of variability stating how far apart the biggest and smallest observations in the sample are. Variability is important because it is

\(^{29}\)Simon, op. cit., p. 58.
the raw material for inquiry.

(6) Dimensions. A researcher often measures several dimensions of a single phenomenon. This kind of compound-measurement work is very similar to description, for it measures many aspects of a single phenomenon. In contrast, all the previous types of measurement are applied to groups of phenomenon. 30

The role of measurement to the theologian is minimal, but necessary. The majority of the theologian's data is found in revelation. However, he must consider any and every source of truth. This involves sources in the physical world as well as the field of psychology, sociology, which in essence, includes the total world of social science. These become a source that influences a theologian's concepts and hypothesis. They can even be used in limited cases as verification.

The field of measurement also concerns the theologian as he establishes relationships between pure thought and experience. The theologian cannot ignore the interaction of spiritual experience to spiritual experience, or spiritual experience that flows out of conceptual truth.

Model. Philosophers construct "models" as symbolic explanations of their conclusions. "The term model is used loosely to refer to any scientific theory couched in the symbolic, postulational or formal styles." 31 The term schema or construct also refers to a perceivable conclusion by a theologian.

30 Ibid., pp. 58-61. The six points have been summarized and included as a useful tool for philosophic inquiry.

31 Kaplan, op. cit., p. 263.
There are several types of models: physical models used in laboratories; sematical models suggesting a specified structure; formal models, those with no variables; and interpretative models which establish correspondence between theoretical and practical.\textsuperscript{32}

A model is the final conclusion of a theologian, including all of his hypotheses, theories, and universal laws. It relates to that which is knowable and acceptable by most theologians to his conclusions. Just as systematic theology is a complete integration of any and all facts from every source, so his model will reflect the way he has integrated his conclusions.

\textbf{Conclusion}

The problem of Scripture and rational methodology is faced by the theologian as he attempts to integrate revelation into a statement of faith. Since the Scriptures are part of content, the theologian must use it as building blocks (data) in his methodology. But revelation also is communicated by rational means so the philosopher/theologian must follow the principle of philosophic inquiry as well in his construction and verification. As a result, the model for philosophic methodology suggests that revelation is placed at the top of the chart as the source of truth and also it is placed at the bottom of the chart (see boxed area on model) as the content on which rational inquiry works.

We grant scriptural revelation a unique position above philosophic inquiry. Scripture is the guiding principle of methodology as well as content. Scripture may not give a precise answer on every topic, but it

\textsuperscript{32}Ibid., pp. 273-74. Summarized for an overview.
does give the theologian truths (principles) from which to draw his operating principles. These principles, drawn from what he considers the unchanging source of truth, will supersede any other principle which man proposes to formulate. Principles drawn by reason or from experience must be tested to see whether they are valid principles and not merely opinions. These must be internally consistent and correspond to revelation and to reality. The principles correctly drawn from scriptural revelation supersede other forms of methodological inquiry because of their unique source.

Because of the supreme position of Scriptures, the theologian also turns to revelation as a source for his philosophic methodology. He goes first to Holy Writ in order to learn what God has to say about the focus and aim of inquiry, his attitude toward method, the real sources of truth, and the scope of conclusions.

The theologian, of course, often finds principles which he formulated by reasons or experience in contradiction to the scriptural principles. When this is the case, he goes back to his divine source to make certain that the principles which he has formulated are truly drawn from Scripture. He knows that the same God who is the Author of the Bible is also the Author of the world in which he lives.

The theologian still holds to revelation as a considered authority, prima inter pares, but not the only source. He must integrate his conclusions from the world of empirical sources and from revelation, so that his approach to educational activity is harmonious to his self-perception as a theologian, and is consistent with his view of the existing world, with his view of Christianity and, in the final analysis, a workable source for faith and practice.
FIGURE FOUR

THE SOURCE OF EXPERIENCE

NEW NATURE

CONSCIENCE

OLD NATURE
(Flesh)

PERSONALITY

Soul

Spirit

Will
Emotion
Intellect

BODY
(5 Senses)
CHAPTER FIVE

THE SOURCE OF EXPERIENCE

To properly understand experience, we must examine the source of experience—the person or the personality of man. The usual definition of personality identifies functions of intellect, emotion and will. A similar definition is given to experience. To explain the similarity, the personality is viewed as the cause and an experience is the effect of purposeful experience. However, upon a closer examination there are forces or urges within the person that are more complex than the three above-mentioned functions. Also, the interaction of the physical with the immaterial is completely ignored in the definition. Inasmuch as we are concerned with a Biblical understanding of experience, we must examine the Biblical terms for personality to arrive at a proper definition. Then we must examine their interaction with one another and their relationship to stimuli from outside the person.

I. Experience Originates from the Heart/Personality

The New Testament identifies the heart as the central seat of experience in man's consciousness as expressed through his moral, intellectual, emotional and volitional aspects. Therefore, the system of

1 The use of moral in defining experience/heart implies the presence of evil urges within man as well as the holy desires that arise from the new nature. Whereas most definitions of experience or personality ignore the presence of these powerful forces within man, this definition takes them into consideration.
theologizing will be applied to the term heart and other New Testament terms that relate to the immaterial man to understand the internal source of experience. Not only is an understanding of heart necessary to properly understand experience, the heart is the foundation of the Christian life.

The word heart occurs over 600 times in the Old Testament and at least 210 times in the New Testament. The extensive use of the word heart in all its varied implications places it in a position of extreme importance.

Understanding the heart of man is also crucial in light of the contemporary study of the make-up of man. The Bible is not a psychology handbook, but when it speaks on this subject, the Word of God is authoritative. What the Bible has to say on the heart is, therefore, of the utmost value and will shed light on the natural man, trying to understand the psychological make-up and function of man. When the Bible finds need to dip into the immaterial man and construct a psychology, it does not hesitate to do so. As the Bible is authoritative, what is written concerning the make-up of man must be accepted as fact.

The term heart (μαρτυρία) is never used in the New Testament to refer to the physical organ of man as it is used when reference is made to heart in the Old Testament. But the Hebrews also used the term in reference to the immaterial nature of man. This use grew from the concept that the heart is essential to physical life, being the center of the circulatory system that distributes the blood to the body. It was a natural transition to bring the term over to the spiritual world as was done by the time of the ministry of Jesus. The New Testament sees the

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heart figuratively as the center of the real person, the center of spiritual life. Hence, we will attempt to show that spiritual experience flows from it. Chambers recognizes this centrality of the heart:

According to the Bible the heart is the centre: The centre of physical life, the centre of mercy, the centre of damnation and salvation, the centre of God's working and the centre of the devil's working, the centre from which everything works which moulds the human mechanism.4

Paul's phrase, "Doing the will of God from the heart,"5 and "I have you in my heart,"6 imply that the word heart is the center of man. Christ in the Parable of the Sower likened the ground to the heart of man; a reference to the heart as the center of the immaterial man.7 Physically, the heart is the center from which life is dispersed to the body, so, figuratively the heart is the center from which spiritual vitality is spread to the personality. Chambers explains:

The heart is not merely the seat of affections, it is the center of everything. The heart is the central altar and the body is the outer court. What we offer on the altar of the heart will tell ultimately through the extremities of the body.8

Whether viewed as a unit or as a section of the personality, the heart remains a picture of the fountainhead of life. To understand experience we must look to its source. When we understand the motivations of the heart, we gain a rationale for the forces of experience. Dickson observes:

In the great majority of passages, it is absolutely necessary to give to the term the wider meaning, which obviously is implied in the cardinal counsel of Proverbs 4:23: "Keep thy heart with all diligence (literally: above all that is kept--prae omni re custodienda) for out of it are the issues of life." It is not merely

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5Eph 6:6. 6Phil 1:7.
7cf. Lk 8:12. 8Chambers, op. cit., p. 107.
the receptacle of impressions and the seat of emotions, but the
laboratory of thought and the fountainhead of purpose. Sometimes
it appears as pre-eminently the organ of intelligence, as at
Romans 1:21: "Their foolish (\(\alpha\sigma\delta\nu\varepsilon\tau\omicron\varsigma\)) heart was darkened";
II Corinthians 3:15: "a veil lieth upon their heart"; II Corin-
thians 4:6: "God . . . shined in our hearts"; Ephesians 1:18:
"having the eyes of your heart enlightened" (\(\tau\omicron\varsigma\ \kappa\alpha\rho\delta\iota\alpha\varsigma\) instead of \(\delta\iota\alpha\nu\omicron\alpha\varsigma\)); . . .

Having established the heart as the central seat of immaterial man,
a definition of the term heart in relationship to experience is in order.
In the circles of Christianity there is no consensus of thought as to a
definition. Fletcher has stated "this term is the least disputed in its
meaning . . . within the cycles of its use in Scripture."\(^{10}\) He has
defined heart as "the one organ of all thinking and of all willing as
well as all feeling."\(^{11}\) This definition is close, although it leaves out
the aspect of moral conscience. So the heart is the central seat and
organ of man's conscious life in its moral, intellectual, volitional,
and emotional aspects. The experience of a person is also described
with the powers of emotion, intellect and will. But our definition of
heart added the moral influence, so we also recognize that the human
source of spiritual experience also arises in the heart and is included
in the make-up of a normal child when born into the world.

The intellect functions in the heart. The heart is said to be the
center of intellect. The word heart conveys the meaning that is applied
to the word brain in this modern era. The brain is the source of percep-

\(^9\)William P. Dickson, St. Paul's Use of the Terms Flesh and Spirit
(Glasgow: James Maclehose & Sons, 1883), pp. 201-02.

\(^{10}\)M. Scott Fletcher, The Psychology of the New Testament (London:
Hodder and Stoughton, 1912), p. 74.

\(^{11}\)Ibid., p. 76.
tion to interpret an experience in a psychological environment. But, the word **brain** is not found in the Bible. So the word **heart** is the source to interpret experience from a Biblical perspective. As Chambers states, "In the Bible the heart, and not the brain, is revealed to be the centre of thinking."  

Delitzsch concludes similarly:

The result of our investigation is pretty much this: that Scripture without excluding head and brain (as we may see on a glance at Daniel 2:28, etc.) from psycho-spiritual activities and affections, attributes the central agency of these to the heart.  

Hebrews 4:12 ("the thoughts and intents of the heart") and Hebrews 8:10 ("I will put my laws into their mind, and on their hearts also will I write them") show the heart to be the instrument of thinking and mental processes. Reasoning and memory are aspects of the heart according to Mark 2:8, Luke 2:51 and I Corinthians 14:25. Thinking is definitely a function that takes place in the heart.  

Chambers agrees with this when he states:

Thinking takes place in the heart, not in the brain. The real spiritual powers of a man reside in the heart, which is the centre of the physical life, of the soul life, and of the spiritual life. The expression of thinking is referred to the brain and the lips because through these organs thinking becomes articulate.  

Observation and understanding are other functions within the intellectual capacities of the heart. When Christ speaks of the inability to perceive spiritual things, it is because of a darkened heart (Matthew 16:6).

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12 Chambers, op. cit., p. 97.


14 See also Mt 24:48 and Rom 10:6.

13:14). Oswald Chambers places the capacity of perception within the heart.

Perception means the power to discern what we hear and see and read; the power to discern the history of the nations to which we belong, the power to discern in our personal lives. This power is also in the heart.16

Knowledge and stimuli of the outer world are also perceived by the heart and assimilated into one's experience. Mary kept all the events of Christ's early life "stored in the heart" (Lk 2:51). In Hebrews 10:16 mind and heart are used synonymously for the storehouse of knowledge, "I will put my laws on their hearts and upon their mind will I write them."

The emotions function in the heart. According to Chafer the heart is "easily considered the center of sensibility."17 Man is among other things, an emotional creature and these feelings are resident in the heart. Fletcher places emotions in the heart when he writes:

More than any other Biblical writer Paul regards the 'heart' as the seat of feelings. We shall see later that the Apostle takes over from the Greek certain psychological terms to express the mental and moral aspects of man's inner life, and so is free to develop in harmony with O.T. precedents, the emotional meaning of the heart.18

Five aspects of emotion as suggested by Gates will be used as a basis for examining the emotional nature of the heart.19 (1) Anger is seen by Jesus as coming from the heart: "For out of the heart cometh forth evil

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16Ibid., pp. 110-11.
17Chafer, op. cit., p. 187.
18Fletcher, op. cit., p. 79.
19A. I. Gates, Psychology for Students of Education (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1929), p. 165. The listing of five types of emotions is accepted for use in this article and no attempt is made to establish the validity of only five classes of emotions.
thoughts, ... railings" (Mt 15:19). (2) Fear, which can be in the form of dread, terror, anxiety, grief or worry, can grip or control the heart. Jesus said, "Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid" (Jn 14:27), and "Because I have spoken these things unto you, sorrow hath filled your heart" (Jn 16:6). (3) Joy or love can characterize the third emotion which Gates calls excitement. Acts 2:46 records, "They took their food with gladness and singleness of heart." Jesus said, "I will see you again and your heart will rejoice" (Jn 16:22). (4) Remorse, another type of emotion, can be pictured as pity, sympathy, or sorrow. Paul expresses this as coming from the heart, "I have great sorrow and unceasing pain in my heart" (Rom 9:2). (5) Finally, the emotion of sex is seen as stemming from the heart. The depraved side of sex issues from the heart, "For out of the heart comes forth evil thoughts . . . adulteries, fornications" (Mt 15:19). The positive aspect of sexual emotion is seen in love, as husbands are exhorted to love their wives (Eph 5:25) and men are to "love the Lord thy God with all thy heart" (Mt 22:37).

Moral consciousness centers in the heart. Deep within man there is a consciousness of a divine being, an enlightenment to a divine standard, this is within the heart. In Romans 2:15 the conscience is placed in the heart, acting as a moral regulator. S. Lewis Johnson says of this verse: "It seems clear that the heart is here considered as the seat of the moral consciousness." Hebrews 10:22 also implies the conscience as being in the heart, "having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience."

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The root for conscience is συνέγνωσίς, a knowing with oneself. Since memory, thinking and volition are necessary functions of conscience, then it is natural to place conscience in the heart, because memory, thinking and volition function in the heart. The conscience or heart is also the place where God works with the individual. The heart is the immaterial organ in man which has the capacity to perceive an absolute standard and accept a knowledge of the person of God. Fletcher has summarized moral consciousness:

The "heart" being considered in Biblical Psychology the organ of all possible states of consciousness, is preeminently the seat of moral consciousness or conscience. In it lies the fountainhead of the moral life of man. Hence in the N.T. "the heart" is the metaphorical term for the whole inner character and its ethical significance cannot be overrated.

The will of man functions in the heart. Volition, or the will is the last function of the heart. This is the power of faculty within man to take deliberate action based upon personal desire. The power of the will is the ability to make a choice. Paul wrote, "But thanks be to God, that whereas ye were servants of sin, ye became obedient from the heart" (Rom 6:17). Johnson explains this verse as: "This obedience is described as ἐν καρδίᾳ. It seems evident that in this passage the heart is considered to be the seat of the will." The will is apparently not connected with the brain, but with the heart which is the center of thought. An act of choice taking place in the heart is seen in II Corinthians 9:7, "Every man according as he purposeth in his heart." Obedience

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21See footnotes 11, 14 and 16.

22See Rom 5:5, Eph 3:16, II Cor 1:22, Col 3:15.

23Fletcher, op. cit., p. 88.

24Johnson, op. cit., p. 102.
is a form of volition and Ephesians 6:5 locates volition in the heart: "Be obedient to them that are your masters, ... with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart."²⁵ Both the fixing of our will (Rom 6:17) and the planning of our will (II Cor 9:7) are found in the heart.

II. Other Inner Forces that Govern Experience

Although explanations of the four functions of the heart have been given, the heart must be seen as a whole or a totality to be correctly understood. These functions, in reality, cannot be separated because they interact and depend one upon the other. They form the conscious experience of men. Therefore, when we say that volition, moral consciousness, thinking and emotion stem from the heart, we imply that the experience of interacting and functioning are dependent on one another. The person experiences as a unit, not with sectionalized or compartmentalized aspects of his personality.

With a better understanding of the heart, we might ask, "But what is the relation of the person's experience to the immaterial parts of man?" These are soul, spirit, mind, conscience, flesh, old man-new man and old nature-new nature.

Experience and Soul-Spirit

The soul and spirit are both immaterial and have a relationship to the heart or personality. However, a guard must be taken against using the terms spirit, soul and heart synonymously. There are three different capacities in the inner man. Johnson writes concerning these differences:

²⁵Also see Heb 3:8 and Acts 7:39.
... the term *καρδιά* may include the *ψυχή* and the *πνεῦμα* since their activity takes place in the *καρδιά*. From this passage (Rom 5:5) it can be seen that the *καρδιά* is the seat and the center of the activity of the Holy Spirit, hence also of the human spirit.\(^{26}\)

The soul-spirit is the life principle of man, and lives forever. The heart contains the drives or power of the personality. In essence, the soul-spirit is amoral. The heart motivates the soul-spirit, driving it to either evil or good. It is the heart that is morally good or bad. Fletcher notes this same point: "It (the heart) is the starting point of all his activities."\(^{27}\) The lust of man's heart can motivate the person (Mt 5:18-19). The truth of I Peter 1:22 shows that "the purifying of our souls" is the result of the motivation of the heart by obedience. Obedience comes from the heart (Rom 6:17).

Since the heart, as seen earlier, is the dynamic in man, the soul-spirit must be seen as capacities in which the heart functions. The soul-spirit has no drive or urges in itself. With this proper understanding of the relation of soul-spirit with the heart, certain obscurities confusing the functions of the soul-spirit should be answered. Apparently, Mark 8:12 points to the spirit as the focus of emotions. But the heart functions through the spirit in this capacity. Another function of the soul-spirit in interaction with the heart is receiving the knowledge of God (I Cor 2:6-14). Fletcher speaks to this point:

The "heart" then, means the inmost and essential part of man whereby the human spirit functions in response to the presence to the Divine Spirit. 'The love of God hath been shed abroad in our hearts through the Holy Spirit.' The "heart" is the meeting place of the human spirit and the Holy Spirit.\(^{28}\)

\(^{26}\)Johnson, op. cit., p. 101.

\(^{27}\)Fletcher, op. cit., pp. 76-77.

\(^{28}\)Ibid., p. 87.
The second function of the soul-spirit through the heart is employing and manifesting spiritual reality or receiving and manifesting spiritual principles. The heart believes; the soul is saved. The heart expressed volition, but "the Spirit beareth witness with our Spirit" (Rom 8:16).

Experience and the Mind

The mind is another immaterial aspect of man that is not synonymous with the heart in the New Testament. Yet, the functions of the mind are sometimes attributed to the heart. In answer to this, the mind functions through the heart as does the soul-spirit.

The mind has an ethical aspect. Titus 1:15 speaks of the mind and conscience being defiled, the conscience and mind functioning through the heart. If man has a corrupt heart, he has a corrupt mind because the latter functions through the heart. Such effects as "a darkened understanding" (Eph 4:18) or "a reprobate mind" (Rom 11:28) are the results of an unconverted heart. Regeneration includes the total man; thus the heart and the mind are renewed. Romans 12:2 speaks of regenerate man having the capacity of renewing the mind and I John 5:20 notes a new understanding and knowledge of "him that is true."

Although the mind functions through the heart, it maintains a consciousness of the outside world. The heart and mind have both the capacity of a self-consciousness and a perception of external stimuli. As Fletcher explains:

29Note Mk 12:39 and Phil 4:7.


31Col 2:18, Rom 7:25.
It (the heart) was regarded as the storehouse into which all sensations were received and the workhouse from which all acts proceeded. . . . The heart was the one organ of all thinking and of all willing as well as all feeling. It was the meeting place of all man's powers of mind.32

Experience and the Conscience

The conscience, which is another immaterial aspect of man, is the ability within man to discern right and wrong on the basis of knowledge, and is sometimes called a moral regulator. The conscience is an embryonic extension of the judicial nature of God. Just as the nature of God was expressed in the Ten Commandments, so the conscience is its expression in man.

The conscience functions through the heart since the heart is the seat of all moral consciousness. Having survived the fall and being a part of man's perceptual endowment, the conscience is a witness to man of both an absolute standard and the existence of God. Emerson points out, "Conscience is definitely not, as some would have it, the voice of God's Holy Spirit talking to us."33 Here he means an infallible guidance system to guide man in moral decisions. As will be seen later, the conscience can make mistakes. Delitzsch in his view of Biblical psychology indicates the purpose of conscience, "the conscience bears witness to man of the universal law of God as set forth in Romans 2:15."34

There is a direct relationship between knowledge and conscience which is inferred by Paul in II Corinthians 4:2, "By the manifestation of

32Fletcher, op. cit., p. 76.
truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience." This places close interaction between heart and conscience. Delitzsch asks, "Might not men's knowledge about his relationship to God from the beginning be called conscience?" Thinking, memory and perception all are involved in the operation of the conscience. Having used the processes of thinking to discern, the conscience having no power to motivate, then acts as a moral regulator. The conscience discerns; the heart motivates.

Although conscience is endowed at birth, as is the mind, both can grow and develop, thus the conscience has the potential of becoming a fair guide to the heart. Paul had developed a conscience that did not offend God or man (Acts 24:16). In I Corinthians 8:12 Paul speaks of a "weak" conscience, inferring the possibility of developing and becoming stronger. Paul also infers moral growth of conscience in his challenge to have a "good conscience" (I Tim 1:19). But the conscience can also be weakened. When the conscience discerns moral issues, but the entire man acts evil, the heart has willed to ignore the conscience. The conscience loses its effectiveness to discern moral truth when it is continually rejected and the person gives himself to sin. In Titus 1:15 such a case is spoken of, "Their minds and their conscience are defiled." Here, the conscience had degenerated; not only was it useless to discern but by being defiled what was wrong became right in its regulation. Thus, the heart and conscience have an interrelationship that is of the utmost importance in directing the moral life of man.

**Experience and Lust**

At the core of every religious experience is the evil influence of

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the heart. Thus we can never trust the experience of the heart. Yet on the other side, the positive urges of the new nature are operative through the heart. Therefore, a person must not trust his spiritual experience, but at the same time must seek spiritual experience.

The heart has been shown as the motivating power in man; also, the heart has been seen as containing the seat of lust in the individual. These facts relate the heart very definitely to the "flesh" and/or "old man" within the scope of the immaterial parts of man. This use of the word flesh is explained by Hastings, "The flesh is the present abode of sin, which requires an obedient subject to execute its belief."\(^{37}\) The International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia identifies "the old man" with "the flesh" in defining "old man":

A term thrice used by Paul (Rom 6:6, Eph 4:22, Col 3:9) to signify the unrenewed man, the natural man in the corruption of sin, i.e. sinful human nature before conversion and regeneration. It is theologically synonymous with flesh (Rom 8:3-9), which stands not for bodily organism, but for the whole nature of man.\(^{38}\)

The power that forces man to do evil is called lust in the Scripture. Paul sees lust as proceeding from the heart (Rom 1:24) and the flesh (Eph 2:3). This might seem contradictory, but when flesh is seen as functioning through the heart, there is no difficulty. Johnson places lust in the heart:

The heart is spoken of as, that which lusts or possesses lust. Of course, the word ἐν ᾠπια is neutral in itself and it may refer to a good desire as well as an evil desire ... it is used here (Rom 1:24) to indicate evil lusts as the context and the following phrase proves. Thus in the passage under consideration

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the heart is seen to be the seat of the lust.39

The flesh and the heart cannot be equated. They are different capacities of the immaterial man and must be treated as such. Their interaction is complex, the flesh and/or old man having their abode or function through the heart. Since lust is the function of sin and is the focus of sin in the individual, then man's total depravity or inability to satisfy God is centered in the heart and penetrates every part of man's existence. Laidlow has made a good summary:

In the heart lies the moral and religious condition of man. Only what enters the heart forms a possession of moral worth, and only what comes from the heart is a moral production. On the one hand, therefore, the Bible places human depravity in the heart because sin is a principle which has penetrated to the centre, and thus corrupts the whole circuit of life.40

The heart issues lust because it is the seat of the flesh and/or old man. Also, the correlation of depravity is seen in this realm because the heart is the center of the immaterial man. Because the heart is depraved, the whole inner man is corrupt. The corruption of the heart affects all capacities of the immaterial make-up of man.

Conclusion

Thus, the heart is the central seat of experience in man's consciousness as expressed through his moral, volitional, intellectual and emotional aspects. The heart and experience are vitally related to and are at the center of the immaterial man. The soul-spirit, moral consciousness mind and flesh of man are vitally related to the heart and function through the heart.

39 Johnson, op. cit., p. 93.

Experience cannot be trusted for spiritual guidance. Since experience comes out of the heart, which is influenced by sin, it cannot be trusted as a guide for the Christian life. Experience can be influenced by the urges of the old nature that can have control of the heart. When the heart is evil, even the processes of intellect, emotion and will cannot be trusted. Some Christians have relied upon their knowledge or feelings to determine the will of God for their lives, only later to find they made a mistake. Other Christians have relied on their experience and have found the will of God. The difference between the two is the influence exerted on the heart by the Word of God.

The heart and the process of theologizing. When a theologian attempts to construct a statement of faith, he does it from historical data. And if his statement is consistent with all of the facts, his statement should be truthful. But when statements of faith contradict each other, the contradiction comes from at least two sources.

First, the experience leading up to the process of theologizing has been varied. And these experiences give the theologian different presuppositions in constructing his statement of faith. Or, second, the heart can be influenced by evil desires, so that the theologian is not aware that his motives are not pure. The sin nature affects thinking and feeling regarding Scripture and its interpretation. As a result, he draws faulty conclusions.

Experience and the process of theologizing. The heart is also influenced by the new nature. Therefore, the theologian can apply the spiritual resources of prayer, Bible reading, yielding and the power of the Holy Spirit to draw near to God. When the new nature influences his
heart, then we can conclude that his experiences will have a better opportunity of leading him into a proper understanding of truth. Hence the more he opens himself to positive spiritual experiences, the better he is able to make theological statements and communicate them to others.
FIGURE FIVE

WHAT IS THEOLOGICAL EXPERIENCE?

THEOLOGIZING FOCUS

1. Theological Knowledge
2. Spiritual Experience
3. Environment
4. Communication Skills
5. Personality Adjustment
6. Self Knowledge

THEOLOGICAL FIELD

LIFE SPACE

THEOLOGIAN

LEARNER
CHAPTER SIX

WHAT IS THEOLOGICAL EXPERIENCE?

Centuries ago, John Calvin stated: "Doctrine is not an affair of the tongue, but of the life . . . (it) is received only when it possesses the whole soul, and finds its seat and habitation in the innermost recesses of the heart."¹ What Christianity has historically believed—that learning affects the total man—has never really found practical implementation into theology books. Since Christianity has great power available and has never accomplished its potential, we can only conclude that there is something blocking its effectiveness. Theology is the foundation of Christianity and the channel through which influence must flow from Scripture to the life. Therefore, the hindrance must be in the area of theology.² In this chapter, the following premise is assumed: "Theology should produce a change in the life that comes through experience, drawn from the Scriptures, reflecting a continuous life pattern."

I. Theology as a Life-Changing Agent

Doctrine produces a change in the life. A person can master the facts of theology, but if Biblical data has not changed his life, he has


²There are many blocks to the influence of Christianity such as sin, unyielded Christians, ignorance, wrong attitudes, etc. But we believe theology is foundational to all of Christianity. If theology were correct in form and substance, then these problems and others would be eventually solved.
not learned doctrine. Many pupils sit in Bible class and claim to have mastered doctrine. Yet, if their lives are not changed accordingly, they have not learned the Word of God. They claim to have learned because they have memorized Biblical facts, or acquired statements of doctrine. But learning is deeper than mental knowledge, it involves a change of life. However, learning does involve knowing Bible facts or memorizing conservative statements of belief.

Doctrine must interface experience. Experience is more than feelings and sentiment. Experience is a total life process, involving intellect, emotions and will. It is self-perception of the total physical, mental and spiritual being. Experience is a response to a stimulus that comes to the person. Every individual must gain his own experience and consciously integrate it into his thinking and patterns of behavior. Any experience that contributes to learning must involve consciousness and response. People listen to sermons or Bible lessons

3 The basis for this assumption is II Tim 3:16, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." Paul assumes that Scripture will produce doctrine, and that the end result will have implications in a person's life, "That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works" (v. 17).

4 There are many definitions for experience. It could mean "1. Test, proof, or trial. 2. An actual living through an event; personally undergoing or observing something or things. 3-5. Definition unapplicable. 6. Activity that includes training, observation or practice and personal participation. 7. Knowledge skills or practice resulting from above. Jean L. Makechnie, ed., Webster's New Twentieth Century Dictionary (Cleveland: The World Publishing Co., 1970). This volume does not define experience to mean a sensation from all response. Rather, a Biblical experience involves a conscious involvement of the intellect, emotion, will and moral powers of the personality with an outer stimulus or interaction among the forces of the personality. The concomitant experience (i.e. where the person is unaware of the process) is not defined as a Biblical experience. When used in this volume it will be identified as a sub-conscious experience.
in an unconscious way. Even though they hear the pastor and rationalize what he is saying, they have not responded to doctrine until they have acted out or internalized the lesson. Response may involve any number of activities.

**Doctrinal learning cannot be disassociated from Scripture.** There are several trends in today's Christian education known as activity learning, experience learning, and play learning. These phrases, plus a number of other titles, reflect the rule of activity in learning. Those who advocate these principles feel that pupils learn concomitantly by being in an atmosphere of Scriptural influence. Perhaps the best way to summarize their thrust is that the Bible must be learned in life because it is lived in life.

A theologian may question if this could be identified as doctrinal learning. A student learns when the lessons that come from the curriculum become a part of his life. Therefore, doctrinal learning must arise from the aims of the Scripture which involve more than just knowing the words or memorizing verses. Scripture is more than just semantic symbols. Scripture, as far as learning is concerned, is a written message that fulfills the purpose of God, so that the readers may be confronted by God and respond accordingly.

To say that doctrinal learning comes from a curriculum means more than the verbal repetition of verses or propositional statements of doctrine. This may involve the application of the skills needed to apply the Scriptures, acquiring the implied feelings inherent in the Scriptures or living through the activities that are produced by doctrine. In essence, doctrinal communication involves the acquiring of new attitudes by the learner.
Doctrinal learning has a continuous effect on life. True learning changes the life with permanent results. This does not mean that a person remembers every Bible verse he has learned, nor does he remember every statement in a catechism. Rote memory is not life-changing learning. But when Scripture became a part of his thinking, feeling and acting; he learned the Scripture because it was incorporated into his life. Some students may forget the vehicle (the Bible verse or the answer to the catechism), but when he learned the verse, he grew in spiritual maturity and had a better understanding of God's plan for his life. In that sense, his life was permanently changed because it has moved him along the destination toward the will of God. In that sense, doctrinal learning has a continuous effect on the life.

II. Theology as an Experience

There is a vast difference between a psychological experience and a Biblical experience. Many people live through events and react to them without having an experience on the humanizing level. When we use the phrase "spiritual experience" we are talking about the very human phenomenon of a person reacting to a spiritual stimulus.

Experience, as used in theological language, is not a meaningless response by a person to a stimulus, such as a person reacting when he is frightened or hurt. It is measured by the causes and the effect of the situation. A theological experience is the total response from a person's intellectual, emotional, and volitional exposure to a spiritual stimulus that produces a change in the person's behavior which was demanded by the process.

Unless the hearer's life is changed, he has not experienced the
process of theologizing. He may repeat a Bible verse by rote or answer the question from a doctrinal book, but if there is not an inner change in his experience, he has not been theologized according to Scriptural standards.

This inner change comes in several ways. First, there is a movement toward Biblical expectations. This change may be rational in nature; the person acquires new insights into Scripture or a new interpretation of his role in life. Sometimes the change may be outward, affecting his skills or physical response to Scripture. As he encounters love, he is changed by responding to it. Sometimes love has an outer expression in a tangible form.

Experience is not a static commodity that can be bottled in a container. Experience grows and can become more intense. But like other factors of life, when experience is neglected it becomes dormant. Experience is not just an emotional outlet. Too often, religious experience is interpreted as feelings, such as love, hate, joy or repentance. The term "theological experience" is defined in the following four steps.

Theological experience begins with a stimuli. Stimulus is usually defined as a force from without that demands or attracts the attention of the hearer. In Biblical reality, when God speaks to man, He speaks in a revelation. This is a stimulus that comes from without and confronts man. God, being the source of the revelation, reveals Himself to men. And since revelation from God demands a response, this is a stimulus that begins the total process of theological experience that ends up in the life style of the hearer.

Another outside stimulus is inspiration. Once again, this begins outside of the total experience of man and produces Scripture which is
authoritative. Without the process of inspiration we would never have the accurate contents of revelation. Because of the influence of inspiration, God’s Word demands a response in the experience of man.

Also, illumination is a stimulus that comes from outside of man. Illumination never acts exclusively by its own power. It works through the Word of God by the enlightening ministry of the Holy Spirit. Illumination cannot work from a vacuum, it works from the revelation of God because inspiration produced a reliable message. Illumination comes in many forms. It comes by teachers, soul-winners, or personal testimonies.

Once again, the first step of experience is a stimulus, which stirs the awareness of the hearer. In the process of theologizing, this is the first step toward internalizing the Scripture into experience.

Many people have been stimulated by theology and the experience was aborted. As a result, they never experienced salvation, even though they knew the answers to Biblical questions. They have mistakenly identified rational response to a theologizing stimulus as an experience. They misunderstood a spiritual experience; hence, they missed the joy of knowing God personally.

At the other end of the spectrum, many people have felt an emotional stimulus. Their hearts were stirred or their conscience was pricked. They might have felt some joy in the presence of Christians. As a result, because of this stimulus, they felt they had a spiritual experience, but deceived themselves. And like seeds improperly sown in the soil, they did not go on to fruition. Therefore, the theologian must be careful not to confuse theological stimulation with theological experience. When he does, he has misled people concerning Jesus Christ.

Stimulation is only the first step in a spiritual experience. It
is a necessary step and a foundational step, but only the first step. On the other side of the coin, many Christians have neglected to speak the Word of Jesus Christ. As a result, much of the world has never taken this first step toward Jesus Christ. They have never been stimulated with the gospel.

To stimulate only means to catch the attention, or direct. Those who watched Jesus Christ on Palm Sunday ride triumphantly into Jerusalem were stimulated by that sight. This obviously did not include a spiritual experience for them, for a few days later, this same crowd cried out, "Crucify him." They entered the first step of stimulation, but did not follow through to full fruition.

Theological experience is communicated through the senses. Sensation is simply the bridge from the outer world to the inner man. Theological data, both in content and experience, must be presented to the hearer. Because of the nature of man, it must come through one of the senses—sight, smell, hearing, taste or touch. These senses are the windows of the soul, the communication by which a theologian must reach through stimulation into the soul of the hearer. If the Word does not enter through one of the windows, the man has locked out the Word. He is a prisoner of his limited knowledge and experience without these senses. Obviously, we understand the sense of sight and hearing. A person must communicate the gospel to another by his senses. "How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?" (Rom 10:14). Therefore, the Scriptures teach that

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5Lk 23:21.
hearing is important. Also, seeing of the Scriptures becomes important for reading, studying and learning the message of God.\(^6\)

And then the sense of touch cannot be excluded. John tells us, "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life: (for the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;)" (I Jn 1:1-2).

When it comes to a religious experience, tasting and smelling have the least amount of impact. However, even in the Lord's table, we taste of the bread and cup and smell their elegance.

Theological experience demands perception. When the hearer is able to understand a Biblical stimulus, he is taking another step toward theological experience. When he understands the revelation of God, several things transpire. First, he is able to correctly recognize the truth of Scripture that faces him. He is not spiritually blind, nor is he academically ignorant of its form. He recognizes words and the definition that God gives to them. Second, he correctly interprets the truth that he encounters. What he sees is rationally consistent and the message corresponds to the rest of reality. Third, he relates what he encounters to past experience and other truths that he has stored away in his memory. Finally, he is able to relate what he encounters to his life. He sees its impact on his life and thus interprets the data.

This third step of perception is not a theological experience, it is simply psychological experience. Many have been stimulated with Biblical

\(^{6}\)Jn 5:39, Acts 17:11.
truth and have understood its message, yet they have not had a spiritual experience. If they had gone on to the next step, they would have experienced the result of the theologizing process.

_Theological experience is affirmed by a response._ A person has a theological experience when he understands a Biblical stimulus that is communicated through his senses and responds accordingly. The response should achieve the purpose of theology. Response is more than physical reaction to God and His Word. It may be an emotional response, or it may be an intellectual response.

Theological experience is interactive and interdependent. Sometimes it begins with an educational/academic stimulus and affects the emotions and will. This is the traditional interpretation of theological process. But humans cannot be so simplistically categorized. Sometimes the stimulus begins with a person's emotions. God communicates through the feelings of love or guilt. Then comes the effect of intellectual pursuit of God and a response of the will. Finally, God approaches some through the will. A person is convicted or he is challenged. After this stimulus/cause follows an effect upon the intellect and emotions. We cannot dictate the order of priority that God follows in encountering people. Yet we do realize the three aspects of personality are interdependent, so that none can be omitted from a theological experience. Also, they are interrelated so that when one is affected, the other two are involved in the experience.

**III. The Theologizing Focus**

Experience is dynamic. This means that experience is life-giving or life-producing. Therefore, when we say that theology is experience
oriented, we mean that the correct study of theology gives life or produces life. Studying theology is meaningless when a person simply hears facts or memorizes a doctrinal statement apart from knowing its meaning and application to his life. The total life-space of the pupil must interact with the experience that is implied in the Scriptures. He must identify with the original experience of God encountering men, or with the experience of the Bible characters in following the Lord, or with the experience of illumination as God speaks to him through Scripture. Thus, there must be a communication from total experience to total experience.

Once again, the Bible is more than mere verbalization. But at the same time, it is verbalization. Each verbal symbol represents energy and power.

When a theologian approaches the task of writing theology, specific aims of strategies should guide his experience and process. The fact is that the theologian is usually controlled only by rational aims. This limits the dynamics of the Word of God. But theology is much broader than rationalism. It is a focus that gives direction to the energy of the theologian, in addition to giving power to his message. The theologizing focus includes the entire professional attitude that the theologian brings to his tasks.

First, the theologizing focus includes the theologian's knowledge of the subject. When he has less than perfect knowledge of all data, he can never produce a complete and comprehensive theology. His knowledge must involve Biblical data, the historical development of theology, the current scope of theology in its application to the needs of men, as well as a complete knowledge of God's Word and the truth found therein.
The second stage of the theologizing focus is the theologian's past spiritual experiences. We cannot say enough about his salvation experience. If he is not born-again, his theology cannot be born of the Spirit of God. His theologizing focus also involves a daily walk with God so that he is experiencing God's Word on a day-by-day basis.

This also involves experience in the church and the use of his gifts. The Bible teaches that if a person does not use his spiritual gifts, they become inactive and are lost. Therefore, in the theologizing focus, the process of the teacher's past experiences are just as important as his rational understanding of theology. Any flaw in his character will reflect itself as a flaw in his theology. Also, any gap in his Christian dedication will be reflected in his theology. Finally, any hidden sin or rebellion to God will reflect itself in a systematic theology that has weaknesses and problems.

The third theologizing focus deals with the present environment in which theology is to be communicated. We live in a complex world that seems to be more controlled by sociological processes than rational understandings. Therefore, the theologian who spends all of his time on rationalism does not speak to a world controlled by sociological interactions. The same could be said for those seeking meaning through existentialism. The process of theologizing must take all of these experiential environments into consideration.

The fourth theological focus depends upon the communication skills possessed by the theologian. It is one thing to have a grasp of theology, but if the theologian cannot communicate it to the world, he has failed. Therefore, he must have at his command communication skills that can make his message common to another person. He begins with self-expression.
This involves the skills of writing, word use, grammar and experience. At another place this manuscript claims that theology is art. Therefore, the theologian will also communicate theology by feelings and sensitivity.

Perhaps people might diminish the fact that the theologian must be able to speak. However, the theologian must possess the skills of communication for his classes in theology and for one-on-one discussion at an interpersonal level. If others cannot comprehend what he is trying to say, his theology is lost to the world.

The fifth part of the theologizing focus is the power of the theologian's personality. This is no small matter when considering theology. The adjustment of one's personality is intertwined with his thought process and product. People are blinded to their own weaknesses and to the domination of their will. A theologian with a strong dominant will may impose upon Scripture his predetermined answers. When this happens the dominant will-oriented theologian cannot have an objective theology.

At the other end of the spectrum is the weak-willed theologian who cannot see truth because he does not have the power within himself to make a logical choice. Such weak-willed theologians find that they theologize out of a vacuum; hence, they progress to the first point of strength rather than to truth. The theologian with personality defects will not always arrive at truth. If he is having interpersonal conflicts, he cannot rightly produce a theology because of his lack of personal experience. When he is in conflict with himself or with others, or is having family difficulty, it is difficult to produce a theology of experience because the Bible is profitable for doctrine and reproof. How can the theologian with personality difficulties actually see what God is intending for his life?
The sixth theologizing focus is self-knowledge. One cannot know others unless he knows himself, this becomes the foundation on which he relates to others. And in the same way, he cannot know God unless He knows himself. Because man is made in the image of God and is a reflection of the likeness of God, self-understanding is necessary in understanding God. Therefore, the theologian must have a comprehensive self-understanding of his own human experience if he is to correctly perceive and write theology. We have already said that experience is the reaffirmation of theology, therefore, the theologian must understand the work of God in his life to understand the plan of God on earth.

We do not know ourselves until we know that we are sinners, the first fundamental of human experience. Then we understand that we have come short of God's expectation and we have a rebellious nature. Only by Scriptures can we really know these facts about ourselves, for it takes the Holy Spirit by illumination to reveal our sinfulness and rebellion.

When we speak of understanding oneself we imply that a person must know his capacities, his tendencies and his human consciousness. When a person has wrong knowledge of himself, then he is deceived and cannot properly search out God. The person who has a faulty mental process cannot possibly arrive at a proper knowledge of God, his ability to know is faulty.

In the same way, the person with limited knowledge of himself will have difficulty in knowing God. A person with partial knowledge is naive, and not honest with the whole catalogue of truth. Therefore, he cannot be honest in his search for Christ. Since self-honesty leads to God-honesty, we are talking about the theologian who must be a proper vessel
before he delves into the work of theologizing.

It is only natural that a theologian who is searching for a better knowledge of the experience of the New Testament (the ultimate aim of theology) would only be rooted in a better understanding of his walk of faith and experience with God. Therefore, his experience is mandatory in both formalizing the process and product of theology.

IV. Theologizing as a Life-Producing Field

The theologian usually approaches his task with a model or schemata in mind.\(^7\) By this we mean he does the job of theologizing just as his favorite theologian did. Some theologians taught in seminaries; others confined themselves to a cloister to write their theology. Still others became aestheticians and their theology is expressed in different ways. The theologian comes to his theologizing field with a preconceived notion of how he is going to theologize.

We call "the field" the space where the theologian communicates his theology to hearers. The term "field" can be borrowed from modern physics. A field is a region or space traversed by lines of electromagnetic force. The boundaries of the field are not always sharply delineated since they change continually because of varying electrical currents. So, when we use the phrase theologizing field we denote the totality of coexisting independent, psychological events. Into this field are fed a number of forces that will determine the product of theology.\(^8\)

\(^7\)See Chapter Seven for an explanation of model formation in theologizing.

\(^8\)One of the proponents of Field Psychology is Kurt Lewin who defined, "A field is described as 'the totality of coexisting facts which are conceived of as mutually interdependent.'" Kurt Lewin, *Field Theory in Social Science, Selected Theoretical Papers* (New York:
The theologizing field could be compared to a supermarket with the theologian being its manager. A capable manager sets out all of his products, advertises them properly, makes his store appealing and plays background music to increase sales. He instructs all of his assistants to become efficient and he operates his store as effectively as possible to attract customers. People entering the market are similar to those entering the theologizing field. They usually enter the field because there are things that are needed or desired in that field/supermarket. The person brings with him past knowledge that helps him select a product. His pain-pleasure drive causes him to leave other products on the shelf. He purchases some products because his parents bought them (heredity or tradition). Other people stand in front of a merchandise counter, and their subconscious mind guides them to the selection (the effect of television commercials). No one can comprehend the different powers and their influence on the shoppers, so it is difficult to comprehend the influences on those who theologize.

Every supermarket is different because of the personality of the manager, the economic standing of the neighborhood and the demands of the customer. Just so, every theologizing field is different. The personality of the theologian, the needs of the people to whom he speaks and the social context in which he finds himself dictate the theologizing field.

Harper and Row, 1951), p. 240. He attributes seven sources of power in the learning field: (1) psychical energy, (2) tension to disequalization, (3) physical and psychological need, (4) motoric behavior, (5) valence toward positive and negative regions, (6) force for actions which is not need of tension, and (7) locomotion, the path through environment. Calvin Hall and Gardner Lindzey, Theories of Personalities (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1975), pp. 224-230. The points are summarized for this quote.
The total theological field consists of regions whose "boundaries" vary as to their degree of remoteness, rigidity and permeability.

A theological field is limited by its very design. It is limited to all of the data concerning God and His world. Obviously, all data is not equally important and must be viewed in light of certain priorities. At the same time every social environment in which theology is carried on is different; the cultural, social and even linguistic background is different. The theologian does not know everything about the subject, nor does he know the inner motivations, the past experiences nor the Bible mastery of his hearers. As a result, when he approaches the process of theologizing, he may not realize that there are people who cannot comprehend what he is saying. Therefore, the theologizing field becomes similar to an oil filter in a car or an air filter on a house furnace. The aim is to filter out the bad and allow the good to flow through. However, in the theological field, the flow of truth is slowed down and sometimes clogged. Thus, the Biblical flow may be slowed down, and, at times, clogged. The field may filter out the bad, but the good is sometimes also eliminated.

The theologian cannot do his job without a two-way flow. The theologian must guide, clarify and instruct people in the truth of God. But at the same time, the hearers must be able to question or speak back to the theologian. The hearer needs two-way communication to evaluate the truth of what is said.

There must be a face-to-face dialogue which permits both verbal and non-verbal communication in the process of theology.

Finally, there must be an attitude of love, acceptance or mutual respect in all of doctrine.
Knowing himself to be loved, he loves; knowing himself to be understood, he understands. There is an inner integrity, a courageous honesty about him, realizing his own sinfulness, he opens himself to charge, and disciplines himself to learn from others and to make himself available to them. 9

The theologian and his hearers behave as whole persons in the theologizing process. Their academic nature cannot be expected to respond to a lecture about doctrine, while socially they feel isolated from God and the rest of mankind. People react to situations as they see them, not necessarily as they are. This is why it is necessary to have feed-forward from the theologian and feedback from the hearer to arrive at a correct understanding of doctrine. People agree or disagree because of their perception. When they are given a chance to analyze, discuss and draw conclusions, their perception may be clarified so that they view the situation more clearly as it is, rather than as they previously have seen it.

V. Theologized Experience in the Hearer's Life-Space

The process of theology is not completed until it is entered into the experience of the hearer. This is where he lives, his life-space. 10 Theology can never be completed just because the theologian has written a


10A popular journalistic phrase at the time this volume is written is "space," meaning every person needs space for life's experience. The term life-space has been implied by phenomenologists such as Lewin (see footnote 9). Life-space here is defined as the psychological environment in which each person lives. He is limited by his physical parameters which make his life-space almost like a psycho-social hull, and within are the properties of personality that are intercommunicating and interdependent, yet relating heterogeneously to other persons and other stimuli.
statement of faith or explained it to his pupils. It must go beyond the theological field into the experience of the hearer. Remember, the hearer is more than a mind to memorize facts, and students are more than notebooks in which to write outlines. The hearer is a dynamic, growing person with many forces operating within his personality. He lives in a space that is surrounded by time, geography and culture. The aim of theologizing is to penetrate the person's life-space and to fill it with the influence of Scripture.

The life-space of a person is his total experience. It involves all that he is at the time he is faced with the message of God. His life-space involves his past and all the experiences that have made him the person he is. His life-space involves the present and all the forces that influence his actions. And his life-space involves the future and all the powers it has to presently influence the person and what he will become.

When the hearer has properly responded to theology, we say he has been theologized. This involves the person responding to Scripture according to the demands made by Scripture. More than academic knowledge of doctrine, he is theologized when his knowledge, feelings, will and self-perception respond in a Biblical experience.

The life-space is already formed. When the process of theology starts, the person has already learned. He does not bring a blank sheet of paper to the theologian and say, "Write upon me." He has been learning since birth and has many preconceptions about God and theology. Many of these are wrong. We cannot assume that he has quit learning because he has dropped out of Sunday School or catechism class. Because people are dynamic, they continue to learn. Therefore, when the theologian speaks
to them, he is entering a stream that is an ongoing process. The contribution that he makes is judged by all that entered the person before the process of theologizing began. But the theologian should not despair at his opposition. The power of the Holy Spirit and the authority of the Scripture can transform all that has previously entered the hearer.

People will learn about God whether they listen to the theologian or not. Learning is not controlled by a switch that is turned on when one begins to study doctrine. The task of the theologian is never to press a magical button or recite certain theological statements. He must translate theology into the experience of the learner. Just because people appear to be spiritually mature does not mean they understand doctrine. There is a vast difference between social and physical maturity and spiritual maturity.

The pupil's theological life-space is surrounded and influenced by physical needs and tensions. Those who come to the theologian are sometimes so aware of physical needs that they cannot think in terms of spiritual desires. This is not the reductionistic phrase of the missionary, "They are so hungry that they cannot hear the gospel." But people have thought of their physical needs so often that they cannot interact with the spiritual experience of theology.

A person's physical appearance carries a tremendous influence on his personality, with both positive and negative results. And since the personality influences a person's reaction to the gospel, the physical makeup of hearers cannot be ignored when evaluating a person's theologizing experience.

11 They will learn both correct and incorrect concepts. They will learn from any and every source.
The pupil's life-space hereditary factor influences his theology. What a person has received from his parents can determine his spiritual experience. Some people are more rationally oriented, others are emotionally motivated. This may or may not have been a part of the birth factor received from the parents. The influence of heredity has never been completely understood by the psychologists, yet its factors are evident. Therefore, when a theologian comes to communicate theology into the experience of a hearer, he must take heredity into consideration.

The "pain-pleasure" drive of the pupil's life-space influences his theologizing beliefs. People are motivated by pain: physical, social and psychological. People tend to avoid situations that have been or promise to be unpleasant. Pupils who have had unpleasant Sunday School, family devotions or church experiences will usually not be open to the process of theology. When they avoid any mental confrontation, for any reason, they cannot give serious consideration to the message of God's Word. On the other side, pleasure is also a strong motivating factor. People seek answers from God for various levels of satisfaction. This desire for pleasure may be to relieve guilt or to seek a similar inner peace that they see in other Christians. The power of "pain-pleasure" will either motivate or withhold motivation, hence it will ultimately influence the theologizing experience of a hearer.

The pupil's theological beliefs are influenced by his former education. If a student has been raised in a Catholic parochial school, he obviously is going to be oriented toward one form of theology with its values, attitudes and principles that control his life. The same can be said of the student raised in a secular school based on humanistic
evolution. The person's background will determine the formation of certain ideas he has of God and other areas of theology.

The pupil's theologized beliefs are influenced by his subconscious motivations. Deep within every person is a subconscious. Sigmund Freud called it the "id"--this deals with the motives of life that are not understood by the person himself.\(^\text{12}\) These become a factor in the understanding of theology. Although too much attention can be given to Freud and his influence overstated, we cannot ignore the fact that there are subconscious motivations within every person. When the theologian attempts to make theology applicable to the experience of the hearer, a subconscious motivation may block out a true Biblical experience.\(^\text{13}\) Perhaps these are negative subconscious motives. On the other hand, these could be positive influences that arise from the modeling process of phenomenology. The pupil has already identified certain people in life after whom he patterns his life. This life-patterning process could be contrary to Scripture. As a result, when the theologian attempts to influence a life with Scripture, the person subconsciously blocks out doctrine because he cannot incorporate it into his self-perception.

\(^\text{12}\)"The id consists of everything psychological that is inherited and that is present at birth, including the instincts. It is the reservoir of psychic energy and furnishes all of the power for the operation of the other two systems (ego and super ego). It is the close touch with the bodily processes from which it derives its energy. Freud called the id the 'true psychic reality' because it represents the inner world of subjective experience and has no knowledge of objective reality." Hall and Lindzey, op. cit., p. 33. The id is not a Biblical term, although its function is similar to the old nature of the old man. (See Chapter Five.)

\(^\text{13}\)Negative subconscious motives are apparently related to lust and the drives of a sinful nature. The positive subconscious motives are not expressly related to sin, but its influence cannot be overlooked, even when the "urges" are called positive.
The hearer's mental ability influences his theological beliefs. Some people have limited mental ability and do not grasp the insights of theology. Their problem may deal with insufficient verbal recognition and comprehension. Surely, the level of the hearer's recognition will determine the level to which the Biblical experience can be incorporated into him. Thus, this determines how far the theologizing process can be translated into theological experience.

Accumulated knowledge also influences the theologizing of a hearer. He has accumulated many ideas about God. Some of these are correct, others are false and misleading. These ideas come from the media, school and life in general. Accumulated knowledge concerning religious factors may block out theological experience that the person should and can have with Scripture. Therefore, in theologizing, accumulated knowledge must be taken into accord. The theologian will have to deal with the person and speak his language, first correcting those misconceptions of God, and, second, planting those seeds that will grow into a proper knowledge of God.

Conclusion

What can we conclude about the process of theologizing? It is not an easy process to understand. The complexity of human beings and their involvement in the process of understanding God's message make theologizing difficult to understand. The message must begin in the person of God and end up in the experience of people. God and man must work together perfectly to get perfect results. But man, the complex personality, is also man the sinner. So this chapter has tried to define the experiential process that is needed to translate doctrine into life.
On the other hand, the process is simple to understand because God communicates with the heart. It is as simple to understand as the blind man who explained, "He put clay upon mine eyes, and I washed, and do see" (Jn 9:15).
CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSION

CHRISTIANITY CHARACTERIZED BY MYSTICISM, REVIVALISM AND PIETISM

This study has concluded that experience is inherent in the nature of God. As a result, experience is implied in the method and content of God's revelation of Himself to the world. Since there must be a response to revelation, it is concluded that Christianity must have a life-related effect on the intellect, emotion, and will of the believer in his interaction with himself, others and stimuli from the outside world. The sum total is that an experience is an integral part (but not the whole) of a manifestation of New Testament Christianity.

True Christianity must obviously continue to manifest itself in objective statements of theological persuasion that are internally consistent with Biblical revelation and correspond with the patterns of action and attitudes that reflect life in the New Testament. In today's theological world, New Testament experience is best manifested through movements characterized as Biblical mysticism, pietism, and revivalism.

George M. Marsden in his article "From Fundamentalism to Evangelicalism: A Historical Analysis," tied two forces (pietism and revivalism) to fundamentalism.

On the other hand, its distinctive recent developments almost always have been . . . related to various elements in the older heritage of evangelicalism (Calvinist vs. Anabaptist and Pietist traditions, for instance; but the more recent dual legacy of the fundamentalist experience of half a century ago and the revivalist heritage of a century ago seem especially pertinent to establishing
where things presently stand.  

The fact that Marsden included two of these forces together does not prove their validity for the fundamentalist experience. Their credibility as determinative forces of Christianity comes out of the foundations proven in the previous chapters. However, the quotation from Marsden only recognizes their viability; it does not prove their Biblical existence.

I. Fundamentalists are Biblical Mystics

A fundamentalist does not base his religious knowledge or certainty on feelings, inner light, or instinct. Nor does he base his spiritual life on emotions. The basis of the certainty of his religious experience is the Word of God. Yet, at the same time a fundamentalist appeals to the confidence of his feelings for certainty of eternal life. He "knows" he has eternal life and will not come into condemnation, but has passed from death unto life. This is innate knowledge, or an inner experience that does not come through the senses. Hence, he is called a mystic because his authority is non-rational and non-empirical. However, there is objectivity to his mysticism because he bases his conclusions on the Word of God. Therefore, a fundamentalist is a Biblical mystic.

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1 George M. Marsden, "From Fundamentalism to Evangelicalism: A Historical Analysis," The Evangelicals, eds. David F. Wells and John D. Woodbridge (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1975), p. 149. Even though Marsden left mysticism out of this characteristic of fundamentalism, it nevertheless is a characteristic of the movement.

2 The fact of Biblical experience has been demonstrated. In this chapter, mysticism, pietism and revivalism will be defined and examined. It is the author's intent to demonstrate the experiential nature of these three forces, hence revealing their Biblical existence.

3 Phil 1:6, I Jn 5:12, Jn 5:24.
The usual manifestation of an emotional mystic is one who reflects his religious life by ecstasy, frenzy, visions, hallucination and other subjective claims of supernatural power. However, when we identify a fundamentalist as a mystic, we are identifying his communion with God. We say his spiritual life is "inward" because he has innate knowledge of God. The Biblical mystic concentrates upon the inner life. He enjoys the emotional experience of his faith, and he is aware of his feelings.

A danger of mysticism is escapism. As a result, the emotional mystic resorts to ascetic mortification and usually accepts a radical dualism of flesh and spirit. The fundamentalist believes in separation from the sins of the world. He recognizes that his inner walk with God demands that he live a pure life. As such he tends to "escape" or separate himself from the evil of the world. On the other hand, he is involved in the world if he is obeying the Great Commission.

An emotional mystic is more concerned with his relationship to God than he is with earthly institutions. Such mystics repudiate religious organizations. The chief allegiance of a fundamentalist is to Jesus Christ. Therefore, he appears to be a mystic. But he gives secondary allegiance to earthly institutions. If he is obedient to Scripture, he is involved in a local church.

Finally, the difference between the emotional mystic and the Biblical mystic is with the scientific analysis of the mystical experience. There are several principles by which the Biblical mystic can be classified, making Biblical mysticism objective and scientific. First, the fundamentalist bases his mysticism on the objective Word of God. This leads to a second conclusion, that the experience is available to other people. This makes the Biblical mystic different from an emotional mystic who
claims to have an experience that is not available to others. A third basis of a fundamentalist is that his mysticism is predictable. Inasmuch as it is based on objective revelation and spiritual principles, a scientist should be able to analyze an experience and predict certain results every time a person applied the same mystical principles in the same manner under similar conditions. The fourth element has to do with repeatability. The person who lives through a mystical experience can repeat the same experience by appealing to identical implied principles. Hence, when a fundamentalist claims to be a Biblical mysticist, it is not the same as an emotional mystic who has an emotional feeling that is: (1) personal, so that others cannot share the experience, (2) unique in character so that it cannot be repeated, and (3) unique in nature so that its results are surprising and unpredictable.

The most obvious place where a fundamentalist manifests his Biblical mysticism is with the experience surrounding salvation. He claims that Jesus Christ enters his heart.\(^4\) Obviously, this is not a physical entrance by Jesus Christ, but the spiritual presence of Christ fills his life.\(^5\) Salvation becomes a spiritual experience whereby the reality of Jesus Christ enters into the life and experience of a person when he is born again. The actual person of Jesus Christ (although not His physical person) enters into the heart, mind, and experience of a person when he becomes a Christian.

Biblical mysticism manifests itself in several other areas. Since Christ dwells in the Christian's heart, he has an inner assurance of

\(^4\) Jn 1:12, Rev 3:20.

\(^5\) Rom 8:9.
salvation based on the internal presence of Jesus Christ who communicates this assurance. Also, the Christian is led by the Holy Spirit whose counsel he seeks to give him guidance in his Christian life. Another area has to do with illumination of the Word of God. The spiritual Christian can comprehend Scriptural truth that the unsaved person cannot perceive. This involves a mystical understanding of Scripture inasmuch as spiritual enlightenment does not limit communication through the five senses, i.e. sight, sound, speech, feeling and taste, but goes beyond them to include communication directly from the Holy Spirit to the Christian. This is best illustrated by the verse, "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit" (Rom 8:16).

Finally, the mystical experience becomes the basis by which a person judges his success. Troeltsch has noted of the true mystic, "We must also note the doctrine of mystical union . . . of the indwelling of Christ as the very heart and basis of all practical religious achievement." The fundamentalist judges his success by the presence of Jesus Christ in his life and ministry; hence, he is categorized as a Biblical mystic. At another place, Troeltsch describes the mystical life, "Since in reality all Christianity is identical with the stirring of the divine seed in the soul, Christ is also omnipresent, not merely in His historical form, but also in every true believer."

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6Phil 1:6.
7Gal 5:25. 8I Cor 2:14.

10Ibid., p. 745.
The ultimate identification of a mystic is with his message or the content of his belief. Usually, he has deep feelings yet he has difficulty expressing his faith in objective terminology. His religion is a mystery, meaning unknowable by rational means and hidden to those who have not experienced his message.

The fundamentalist accepts the Bible as the content of his faith. He believes it has a knowable message. Yet at the very heart of Scripture is the doctrine of mystery. However, the Biblical mystic does not identify mystery as something that is unknowable or unexpressable.

Jesus taught that certain truth was withheld from the understanding of men, He called it mystery. "And he said unto them, Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God: but unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables: That seeing they may see, and not perceive: and hearing they may hear, and not understand" (Mk 4:11-12). In other portions of Scripture, the doctrine of mystery is also taught. (Eph 3:1-9, I Tim 3:16, Col 1:26-27, Eph 5:30-32). The New Testament doctrine of mystery does not primarily refer to something intangible or unknowable, although that meaning is sometimes implied in its definition. A mystery is hidden truth that is revealed in God's time by the Holy Spirit to His children. But how is the mystery revealed when it is made known? Is it revealed through normal processes of communication? Or is it known through "mysterious" revelations?

Jesus spoke in parables so the unbeliever would not understand His message. Paul reinforces this view by stating that the unsaved cannot

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comprehend the spiritual message of the gospel. This is similar to the emotional mystic who believes his message is hidden from outsiders. But the gospel is withheld from the unbeliever, but on the other hand, Jesus commanded that His disciples preach the message to the world. The gospel is hid to the lost which means they cannot comprehend its meaning apart from the Holy Spirit who works in blinded hearts to cause them to understand the gospel. The message is withheld from the unsaved because they do not have faith to receive and understand its content.

There were many reasons why God was not willing to reveal the mystery until Jesus Christ came into the world. Implied in that statement is the answer that Jesus Christ was the mystery. He could be revealed only in the fullness of time. Also, God was not finished dealing with the Jews because they had not carried their rebellion to its fullest. The mystery could not be revealed until the rejection of their Savior by the Jews. Finally, the judgment on the age of law was not enforced until Jesus Christ died on Calvary. When all these events came to pass, then God was ready to show His mystery to those who could understand it.

The revealing of the mystery in past time came by a historical experience, and today the revealing of the mystery to blinded hearts comes by a spiritual experience.

The Holy Spirit is given to teach us all things that Jesus taught (Jn 14:26). He is the One who reveals the message of Scripture to human hearts. He also causes people to understand the mystery. God does communicate His message/mystery directly from divine spirit to human

\[\text{12} \text{II Cor } 4:3-4. \quad \text{13} \text{II Cor } 2:13, 3:16.\]
\[\text{14} \text{Rom } 11:25. \quad \text{15} \text{Eph } 3:1-11.\]
spirit without an avenue of expression. God uses His Word and allows
the Holy Spirit to remove the scales from a person's spiritual eyes
(Eph 1:18) so he can comprehend truth.

The mystery is that God put all the treasures of salvation in Jesus
Christ (Col 2:2-3). Paul was especially chosen to write this mystery
(Eph 3:6-9). He uniquely identified himself with the mystery so that
he called the mystery "my gospel." (Rom 16:25). But his gospel was no
different from the other gospels. It is just that Paul carried the gospel
to its complete application in individual lives. Paul explained that
salvation became the experience of the in-living Christ in individuals.
"Christ in you the hope of glory" (Col 1:27) and that "we are bone of
his bone and flesh of his flesh" (Eph 5:30), which is called a mystery,
the interfacing of a believer and Christ.

All this was a mystery. The Old Testament Jew did not experience
the infilling presence of Jehovah in his life. He did not have an
internal source of spiritual power that Christians have today. He did
have fellowship with God and had a daily experience that affected his
inner life. But the source of his spirituality was without; in the
New Testament, his source was within.

Now in Jesus Christ the Jews and Gentiles are offered authority
and victory by the same in-living Christ. But this source of spiritual
experience is only part of the mystery. The greatest reflection of the
mystery is the church.

Jews and Gentiles are equal in the church. Even though the Jews had
chronological preference,\textsuperscript{16} and according to some, theological preference,

\textsuperscript{16}Rom 1:16.
now they were on level ground in the church. Neither one was above the other. This was the revolutionary content of Paul's message, i.e., that Gentiles were not raised to the level of the Jews, but the Gentiles were raised to a higher level, and the Jews were joined to them to become one in Jesus Christ. And to what were they both raised? They were placed in the body of Christ which is the church (Eph 1:21-22).

Just as the body is a complex organism that has a unified response of intellect, emotion and will, so the church is a wonderful organism, made up of believers who are characterized by thinking, feeling and doing. Therefore, the church is an experiential composite of believers who share the same statement of faith and commission.

No one can fully explain the mystery of a church, just as no one can fully explain a body. Organs can be identified and their functions can be analyzed, but the total response of the organs to itself is the process called life, which has never been duplicated in a laboratory. So in the church, members from different backgrounds with unique needs and diverse purpose in life are interfaced into a common experience. The sacrifice of the many and prayers of two or three become one voice to God. The members of a New Testament church give to one another in such a degree that the world does not understand them.

Mysticism is the first step in building a theology of experience for both the Christian and the local church. Both are founded on both objective revelation and subjective emotions. The next section deals with keeping the fervency of feelings once they are established.

II. Fundamentalists are Revivalists

Marsden indicated that fundamentalism came out of a revivalist
tradition of the last century. In making this observation, he indicates that fundamentalism and revivalism were not part of the mainstream of Christianity.

Their new emphases were essentially the opposite of the modernist principle, giving heightened expression to the revivast teachings of the supernatural transformation of individuals by the power of the Holy Spirit, separating converts decisively from the world through lives of holiness and "baptisms" with other spiritual gifts. Such separatist teachings fostered a proliferation of groups whose histories were largely isolated from other Protestant developments.17

Even though Marsden believes fundamentalists are outside of the mainstream of Christianity, they believe that their position centers on the basics of the faith. And outside observers have noted the emphasis on revivalistic preaching and experiential conversions among fundamentalists. The following definition of revivalism will also identify it as a movement that has similar characteristics to fundamentalism:

Revivalism is an experiential movement that calls individuals and churches to return to a consistent Christian life that corresponds with basic Biblical standards of obedience and with enthusiasm of service. Revivalism centers on the sinfulness of Christians, calling for repentance and renewal; as such, it has an outward emotional manifestation with a display of such feelings as tears of remorse or expressions of praise of ecstasy.18

The traditional verse used as the foundation for revivalistic theology is, "If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land" (II Chron 7:14). This verse includes most of the factors in

17Marsden, op. cit., p. 145.

revivalistic preaching: personal sincerity, repentance, emotional decisions and pursuing of a godly life. Because the fundamentalist is committed to experiential Christianity that expresses these factors, he is classified as a revivalist in temperament. And in return, most fundamentalists believe that revivalism is inherent in Christianity. Revivalism has flourished in America because this country has allowed individualistic expression in religion, politics, business, education and social expression. As such, individualism produced an atmosphere that allowed a person to follow his religious conscience according to the dictates of Scripture. But more than that, there is reciprocity. Inasmuch as the American society is a product of New Testament influence, individualism has grown out of our Biblical social context and contributed to that freedom. Hence, revivalism has apparently reached one of its highest expressions in the United States.

The theological basis for revivalism is: (1) a radical separation between the converted and the unconverted, (2) a dichotomy between worldliness and spirituality, (3) strict prohibitions against certain outward sins, and, (4) an emotional appeal to the will of man to repent from sin and follow after spirituality. Marsden notes, "the characteristics of revivalism were especially well preserved through the fundamentalist period because revivalism was the basic tradition that determined the character of fundamentalism itself."

Supporting the individual assumption of revivalism, Marsden states, "Another side of individualistic tendencies of American revivalism was that lacking strong concepts of institutional authority . . . ." \(^{19}\)

\(^{19}\)Marsden, op. cit., p. 154. \(^{20}\)Ibid., p. 156.
Because America has never had a state church, there has never been institutional control over individuals. As a matter of fact, America has revered man above its institutions; hence, man is more important in determining his religious life than is the church. Hence, the authority for religious certainty is within man. While part of the American church scene has appeal to the rational ability of man for religious authority, another part of the church has appeal to emotional certainty for authority.

Revivalism has manifested certain characteristics of fundamentalism, which emphasizes emotional preaching on sin, repentance, guilt and judgment. Fundamentalists appeal to emotions and feelings but they tend to have a Biblical revivalism because they base their feelings on objective revelation.

Revivalism emphasizes the emotional nature of praying, such as seeking, mourning, and sincerity. Revivalism tends to certify religious experience by its outward emotional evidence such as tears, sadness, gladness, happiness, and other displays of emotional integrity. Because this is also a characteristic of fundamentalists, they tend to suspect those who do not have a similar outward display of emotions. Even though the fundamentalist claims to base his religious experience on objective revelation, emotional display becomes a "practical" apologetic.

In trying to determine what is the Biblical position, we must accept revivalism in its context. The Word of God is the basis of religious authority and the only credibility of one's emotional experience. However, emotions are a re-affirmation of one's experience and only those feelings that correspond to Scripture are Biblical. Therefore, we say that the Bible is the basis for emotions, and revivalism is an expression of those feelings.
III. Fundamentalists Are Pietistic

Pietism is a movement of Christianity that emphasizes personal purity or holiness. Marsden indicates the influence of pietism on fundamentalism. He emphasizes that fundamentalists:

Retained the essentials of a revivalist tradition, moved during this early period in an innovative and separatist direction. These were the Holiness and the Pentecostal movements that developed out of the Methodist-pietist tradition . . . the Holiness and Pentecostal movements, however, closely resembled and paralleled fundamentalism, so that the heirs and emphases of these somewhat distinct movements tended to merge particularly . . . 21

Marsden is saying the pietistic tendencies of Holiness and Pentecostal groups became associated with fundamentalism. This is not the same as saying the fundamentalists became Holiness or Pentecostal in theology. He is noting that the strength of these groups influenced fundamentalism. To define pietism, the following definition is used:

Pietism is a movement emphasizing personal relationship with God by means of self-discipline and self-effort through mortifying the flesh which is sinful. It is a movement that believes God offers a special relationship to men and that this relationship is attainable; therefore, men, by sincerely applying Biblical means, can enjoy a unique walk with God, and become like God. 22

The influence of the Puritans in American society also laid the foundation for the growth of pietism in this country. The Puritan ethic is built on (1) personal cleanliness, (2) pure speech, (3) pure character development, (4) pure personal demeanor, and (5) purity of sex. The definition for the Puritan ethics is:

21 Ibid., p. 144-45.

22 Pietism is traced historically to Spencer (1635-1705), however, the movement had widespread influence in many small sects throughout Europe. The influence of the Puritans cannot be ignored inasmuch as they helped to mold the religious values and practices of America.
The Puritan ethic maintains the individual's personality reflects a holy sinless God and man's chief responsibility in life is to give of himself according to the standards of purity found in Scripture, and the purity should extend to every facet of personal life: thoughts, attitudes, actions and physical demeanor, and that cleanliness should extend to the family, community and business life. Sexual purity is the ultimate value, any deviation if a grave offense.23

It would seem that all of Christianity should be committed to personal holiness; however, this is not the case. The growth of the institutional church in Europe negated the growth of the personal holiness, inasmuch as a person's relationship to the church by baptism, membership, and doctrinal allegiance overshadowed his personal relationship to God. Also, the anti-legalism foundation of Christianity tends to counteract the emphasis on personal holiness. Anti-legalism is based on the fact that Christ did away with sins on the cross and spoiled principalities and powers, nailing the law to the cross.24 Also in point, man never pleased God by the keeping of the law,25 nor did man ever save himself by the keeping of the law.26 Therefore, any need for personal holiness, which implies keeping the law, has been omitted by Christianity. However, omission was unbiblical in the view of fundamentalists. They believe the Scriptures teach that every Christian has the obligation of living a holy life.

Richard Hofstadter characterizes the piety of fundamentalists as negative separatism from sin.

Manichaean: it looks upon the world as an arena of conflict between absolute good and absolute evil, and accordingly its scorns compromise (who can compromise with Satan?) and can tolerate no ambiguities.27


Conclusion

Therefore, the three experiential factors of fundamentalism feed one another to give comprehension to the movement. Revivalism, mysticism and pietism would individually be weakened by the elimination of any of the other two. And if the three stood alone, they would collapse. However, when they express the experiential elements of Christianity and stand on objective revelation, the total combination makes a formidable theological package.
THE ROLE OF EXPERIENCE IN THEOLOGIZING

THEOLOGIZING FOCUS
1. KNOWLEDGE
2. EXPERIENCE
3. ENVIRONMENT
4. COMMUNICATION SKILLS
5. PERSONALITY
6. ADJUSTMENT
CHAPTER EIGHT

SUMMARY

The display of experience in the life of the Christian is not based on sociological culture, the events surrounding his conversion, or the type of church in which he worships. The foundation of experience is traced back to the nature of God.

I. A Theological History of Experience

Experience and life have similar properties in that both are expressions of the person of God. God has been engaged in the eternal use of His intellect, emotion and volition in their interaction within the Godhead.

Since a being must manifest itself according to his nature, we could only expect that God would manifest Himself in an experiential expression of His person. Then man interacted with God in the act of revelation.

The experiences of God's manifestation to man were accurately recorded in Scripture by the influence of inspiration. The content of Scripture was not primarily doctrinal statements, but was an accurate presentation of the experience of people as they related to God.

The contemporary person can find the message of God in Scripture. The main purpose is not simply to communicate a rational understanding of God and His world. The Word of God should influence both the emotions and will of the person so that he encounters a spiritual experience that
directs every facet of his life.

Finally, the process of theologizing is a mature Christian's attempt to search out all truth concerning God and His work in both supernatural and natural revelation, using his rational process of inquiry and the experiential resources of faith with the purpose of organizing the result of his study into a complete, comprehensive and consistent expression that can be communicated, defended and admired. The theologian is an experience channel so that his theology communicates the experience of God into the experience of man.

II. The Method of Theologizing

Theology is a historical quest because Christianity is founded on historical fact. Therefore, theology will apply all the rules and techniques that are used in the science of historical research. However, even though Christianity is founded on fact, data is only a means to an end. The measure of one's faith is the expression of feelings and obedience that are consistent with New Testament principles and that correspond to New Testament manifestations of faith.

Theology is also built on the science of exegesis. As such, feelings, opinions and personal conclusions are not a factor in determining systematic theology. The principles of exegesis are inherent in the Word of God, just as the method of revelation is inherent in the person of God.

Theology is an act of faith in both its objective and subjective expression. Faith is effective when its object is Jesus Christ as presented in the Word of God. Yet, Christ dwells in the believer and His presence produces internal faith. The Word of God is the objective source of faith because it gives exact truth about Jesus Christ. But Scripture
is also the subjective source of faith, because as the Christian internalizes the Word of God, it becomes the dynamic of his faith. Therefore, the theologian has two levels of experience: first, as he interacts with the written Word, and second, as he interfaces with the internal Word.

Art communicates the enduring values, principles or the unique aim of a person or culture at the emotional, experiential, or non-verbal level. As such, the process of theologizing involves art in that it should reflect the experiential understandings of a church culture. Also, the product of theologizing should invoke positive feelings and attitudes in the reader or hearer.

III. Rational Inquiry and Theologizing

The process of theologizing involves the same rational processes as the process of philosophizing; however, the source of data is revelation; hence, the theologian accepts it as an authority. Also, the product of theologizing, in addition to being internally consistent, must correspond to reveal truth.

Theologizing must reflect the thought patterns of consistency, rationality and conclusions. At no time can theology violate logic or the processes of the mind in arriving at truth. As such, theology must apply the scientific method of inductive reasoning by examining all facts from any and every source, attempting to fit them into a consistent hypothesis, testing it to verify its statement of faith. As such, the process of theologizing uses the tools of concepts, observation, measurement, modeling or schemata, hypotheses and laws.

If the rational method of inquiry were perfectly followed by perfect men in perfect circumstances, they would arrive at the truth of Christian-
ity. But, lacking the perfection of men and circumstances, men will never arrive at a perfect understanding of Christianity; hence, the need of revelation and declaration. However, rational inquiry, even though not a primary source of theologizing, has a supportive role. The theologian cannot contradict the rational inquiry in theologizing, neither can he ignore its tools or processes. Rational inquiry supports historical inquiry, Biblical exegesis, faith, and art as methods of theologizing. As such, it is the rational experience of theology.

IV. The Source of Experience

An experience effects the entire personality of the person, and to be understood in its entirety, man must be viewed through a Biblical perspective. The heart is the Biblical term for the personality through which experience functions. Thus, the heart is the focus of experience in man's consciousness as expressed through his moral, volitional, intellectual and emotional aspects. Also, the soul-spirit, moral conscience, mind and flesh are vitally related to the heart and to experience.

Because the sinful nature (flesh, lust, old man, or old nature) functions through the heart, we cannot trust experience to give perfect certainty regarding spiritual questions. This is because the sinful desires have a direct influence on the mind, emotions and will. Also, the moral consciousness is susceptible to the desires that arise from the sinful nature, so that the person cannot trust his "religious instincts." Therefore, experience must be interpreted through the Word of God.

But the heart is also the center of the forces of the new nature. A person's experiences are powerful in formulating his attitudes and guiding his actions. When the new nature influences the personality, the
Christian will grow and draw closer to God. All the resources of righteousness funnel through the heart to strengthen the person.

Therefore, in the process of theologizing, the heart/experience becomes a factor in determination of correct doctrine, either for good or evil. The theologian must allow the Spirit of God to guide in his study of revelation so that the doctrinal statement reflects the Word of God.

V. A Theological Experience

The complexity of the human personality makes it difficult to accurately categorize the process of theologizing. It begins with a stimuli or an outside message that demands or commands the attention of the theologian. He filters the message through his five senses where the message must be understood and interpreted. Many assume that these steps involve an experience, but the final step in Biblical experience is response. The person reacts intellectually, emotionally, volitionally or physically in an experience that is interrelated or interdependent.

Experience is dynamic, therefore, the process of theologizing is life-giving or life-producing. The theologian communicates out of his life to the life of the learner/hearer. Therefore, the theological focus involves his knowledge, spiritual maturity, environment, communication skills, personal adjustment and self-knowledge. The theological field is where the experience of the theologian and his learner/hearer join together. The boundaries of the theological field are not always delineated, since they vary like electrical currents in an electromagnetic field. Into this social-spiritual-physical-psychological field are fed a number of forces from the theologian and the learner/hearer. The interfacing of two forces is where the work of theologizing takes place.
The process of theologizing is not complete until it enters the life-space of the learner/hearer. The life-space is all the accumulated experiences as they interact with the learner/hearer. He is never a static person as he receives theology, but is a growing, dynamic person who is continually adjusting to his environment and to the forces within his own environment. His life-space involves the pain-pleasure principle, heredity, drives of needs and desires, subconscious motivations and his education.

VI. Experiential Christianity is Manifested by Mysticism, Revivalism and Pietism

Since Christianity involves an experiential expression of one's relationship with God, we can only expect it to affect one's inner experience. The Bible uses the term mystery to refer to several aspects of New Testament Christianity. They are called mystery because the message was withheld from interpretation until a certain point in time. When we call a Christian a mystic, we do not mean he is characterized by ecstasy, frenzy, visions, hallucinations or other subjective claims of supernatural power. Nor are we claiming the message to be non-rational and subjective only to the mystic. The Christian is a mystic because he has innate knowledge that he is a child of God based on the Word of God. His certainty is non-rational and non-empirical, yet it is based on the Word of God. Therefore, we call him a Biblical mystic.

The emotional mystic is usually anti-institutions. His allegiance is to his subjective revelation. The Biblical mystic gives his primary allegiance to Jesus Christ; hence, he usually gives secondary allegiance to the institutional church.
The emotional mystic cannot repeat his experience; it is not available to others, and is unpredictable. The Biblical mystic bases his experience on the objective Word of God; therefore, his experience is transferrable, repeatable and predictable. When an experience is based on the Word of God, it has scientific parameters.

The second experiential expression of Christianity is manifested in revivalism. It calls for individuals and churches to return to a consistent Christian life that corresponds with the basic Biblical standards of obedience and with enthusiasm of service. Revivalism centers on the potential and actual sinfulness of Christians, calling for their repentance and renewal; as such, it has an outward emotional manifestation with a display of such feelings as tears of remorse or expressions of praise of ecstasy.

Revivalism emphasizes emotional manifestations of one's Christianity with sincerity of purpose and correctness of conduct. Those who are revivalists tend to appeal to the integrity of their emotions for certainty and a basis for their Christianity. However, the Word of God is the basis of religious authority and is the only basis for one's emotional expression of his faith. The emotions are a re-affirmation of one's experience, and only those feelings that correspond to Scripture are Biblical.

The third experiential expression of Christianity is pietism, where the Christian emphasizes personal holiness or purity. Pietism emphasizes personal relationship with God by means of self-discipline and self-effort through mortifying the flesh, which will erode his faith if diligent care is not taken. Pietism believes God offers a special relationship to men and that this relationship is attainable; therefore, men, by sincerely applying Biblical means, can enjoy a unique walk with God and become like God.
VII. Conclusion

Therefore, experience is indispensable to the nature and expression of Christianity. It begins with the nature of God and manifests itself in the believer. Experience cannot exist by itself, and when separated from Christianity, it has no validity. Neither can experience dictate to Christianity, nor can it have any meaning apart from the Word of God.

Experience is not the sum of Christianity. Christianity can exist without experience, but it has never happened, just as the nature of truth is to manifest itself, so the nature of Christianity is to manifest itself in experience. Experience has been linked to Christianity throughout eternity, and as long as men walk and relate to God, there will be experience.
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