THE CRITICAL STUDY OF THE THEORY OF REVELATION AS
CONTAINED IN THE DOCTRINES OF BRUNNER, MACHEN, AND WIESMAN

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INTRODUCTION

The Problem

In the writing of this thesis, it has been the desire of the writer to state clearly the theories of revelation as found in the doctrines of these representative men in their respective philosophies of religion. Each man is treated individually in an endeavor to ascertain the position taken and the arguments presented for the position, both negative and positive. In the exposition of the theories of revelation, the complete teaching of these men has been broken into divisions, giving a brief statement on each phase thought important in this study.

Following the exposition of the theories, the writer has attempted to evaluate the positions held by these men, and to do so with a comparison and contrast of their teachings as related to certain problems.

The men chosen as representative leaders in their particular fields are as follows:

   Emil Brunner   Neo-Supernaturalism
   J. Gresham Machen   Traditional Supernaturalism
   Henry Nelson Wieman   Theistic-Naturalism

It will be noted that all these men are exponents of the Christian tradition, but each one gives a different interpretation. It is the hope of the writer that the reader shall be able to note the difference and to judge without prejudice which is the most intelligible approach to use in the comprehension of the Christian Faith. By this we mean that the reader must choose the interpretation of theory of divine knowledge
that best meets the religious needs of his individual life, provided he is interested in any of the three theories of revelation that are given in this study. The intelligent reader is of course acquainted with the wide range of philosophies of religion found even in the Christian Tradition.

The Importance of This Study

There may be questions raised as to why we should be interested in the study of these particular philosophies and their theories of knowledge. The answer is found in the idea expressed by H. N. Wieman. He believes that in the future of the religious world, there will be a trend toward Theistic-Naturalism or that of Supernaturalism, with emphasis on the Neo-Supernatural interpretation of it. In his opinion the philosophy the people will take will be determined by the future of science in our world of tomorrow. Thus when a leader in religion makes a statement such as this, regardless of what our concept of God may be, we should be interested in knowing the truth of the various teachings as to how man can receive knowledge of the Supreme Being.

Note:

In the reading of this thesis, may the reader keep in mind that this is not an exhaustive survey. It is a brief study of the theories of revelation, with a short statement upon each aspect of the theories, together with the proposal of several questions and their answers.

The basis for the negative arguments of Supernaturalism has been purposely omitted because of their close similarity to Neo-Supernaturalism.
PART I

EXPOSITION OF

THEORIES OF REVELATION
EMIL BRUNNER'S

THEORY OF REVELATION
GOD, THE GIVER OF REVELATION

Let us note Brunner's concept of God as the Giver of the revelation. God is a reality, the opposite of abstract human thought. He is capable of revealing Himself to man.

The God of the Bible is the absolute and sovereign Lord. He cannot be known by reason, but only as He reveals Himself to man. "The living God is not known through thought or through profound meditation on the nature of the Spirit; He is known through revelation alone."

There are various attributes of God known by revelation. He is the Creator—not Lord because He is Creator, but Creator because He is Lord. He is not a shadowy First Cause, but the transcendent and mysterious God, the Sovereign of all. God is the Holy One; He is Wholly Other, unknowable to man except through revelation. God is also Love. "The Lord God is the One who loves; His sovereign will is His will for communion; His will to be Wholly Other is at the same time His will to give Himself wholly unto His creatures; the sense of absolute distance, reverence, merges into the sense of the completest communion, into a relation of heart-felt trust and faith."

The God of the Bible is the God who seeks man. He is the God of Justice and Mercy, Holiness and Love. It is His will to reveal Himself to man. The God of the Bible is not an abstraction of human thought. He is the Ruler of the hearts of mankind.

1. p. 44, Revelation and Reason, Emil Brunner
2. p. 46, ibid.
MAN AND REVELATION

Revelation is an encounter between God and man. It is necessary that we have a clear concept of man, who and what man is.

The Bible is concerned with man. It divides mankind into two groups: those in Christ and those outside of Christ. Man in his "natural state" is a sinner exposed to the wrath of God. He does not know that he is a sinner; that is, he may know something about it, but not as a fact of revelation. It is only when he sees Christ that he is convinced in himself that this is true. While man is a sinner he stands in a negative position before God. He at one time occupied a positive position before God, but declined to remain there and rebelled against his God. This explains his present state.

Man is responsible to God as a being who has the right of choice. There can never be any responsibility in man except to God. If we understand man correctly, we must start with this responsibility to God. Man can never be considered as something in "itself." Man is responsible to God, once and always. This is the true understanding of man, and all responsibility to his fellow-man originates with that to God.
THE RECEPTION OF REVELATION: FAITH

How does this revelation come to man? Revelation is an action that proceeds from God to man. The "Word" found in the Bible is the revelation of God. It is the disclosure of something that has happened in the past— the observation of a great light that gives significance to an event already transpired. This observation can be received only by faith. That sudden awareness of God that bursts in upon the senses as may be seen in Peter’s confession: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God." (Matt. 16:17). This faith is not the simple declaration of affirmation to a system of creeds, but it is a personal living relationship with Christ. This faith then is a transforming power that owns God as the Lord of the Life, and it is the new birth or "rebirth." It is not the knowing about something, but the knowing of Someone.

Faith is an act of unconditional self-surrender to the Giver of the revelation with the confidence that it is for the receiver’s good. As God did not compromise in surrendering Himself to man, neither can man retain one part of himself for himself. "God Himself gives Himself to me myself, and after that I can give myself to Him, in that I accept His self-giving."

In faith there are found two qualities "supernatural" and "natural." It is supernatural because it is found only in the presence of God, and realized only in God’s saving will. It is natural because it is the means that enables man to become that for which he was created. By faith God becomes real to man and man begins to live Righteously, which is the natural way.

1. p. 42, Revelation and Reason, Emil Brunner
THEORY OF REVELATION

Next follows a discussion of the event of revelation. This event has been preceded by "divers manners" of revealing of God to man leading to this supreme Revelation of God in Christ. "God, who at sundry times, and in divers manners spake of old to the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken to us by his Son." (Heb. 1:1).

Revelation has come to mankind first, through nature. This is termed general revelation and is evidenced in two ways. First, God has revealed Himself to all mankind through the acts of Creation. This revelation is not to be understood to compete with the historical, but to be a presupposition of it. It is not adequate to meet the needs of man, but serves only to make man realize his responsibility to his Creator. This revelation will not save from sin or make man a new creature.

The second concept of a general revelation is found in man himself. Paul teaches in Romans that there is within the heart of every man the potential knowledge of the law of God. "Man is responsible for his sin because God gave him the knowledge of His will 'they know the law of God'--but sin does not allow this knowledge to have its effect, since they 'have refused to have God in their knowledge'. . . The fundamental tendency of this kind of knowledge is always in the direction of moralism and a legalistic self-righteousness, and thus leads to a denial of the good."

There is no "natural theology," for Jesus Christ is the only means that opens the way to receive the knowledge that has been perverted by sin. General revelation is imperfect and impersonal, while historic revelation is personal perfect.

1. p. 72, Revelation and Reason, Emil Brunner
HISTORIC REVELATION

Revelation as Promise - Old Testament

In the Old Testament, as a part of the historical revelation, God has revealed Himself in a transient and imperfect manner. It is the promise of the perfect revelation to come. Thus, we find in it a very different revelation from that of the New Testament. In it we see God revealing Himself through visions, dreams, theophanies, oracles, angels, through the normal processes of nature, through extraordinary happenings of nature, through the mighty deeds of special persons, and through the mysterious inspired "word" of the prophets.

This revelation in the Covenant takes place through the acts or words of God, and all happens within the limits of one nation, Israel. It is an impossibility to separate the acts and words of God, for "God reveals Himself through His acts in history as much as through the words which He places in the mouth of the Prophets. . . . The Prophetic word is based upon the revelation in act, and the revelation in act issues in the 'word.'"

In the Old Testament is found the revelation of God expressed in anthropomorphic language, but it gives a distinct view of that which is revealed. It is the revealing of His name, and yet it is incomplete. "But the distinctive element in this revelation is that it is also the promise of revelation. It is a revelation which points forward to a future revelation, which will itself finally satisfy the longing for revelation and for salvation, the complete revelation, in comparison with which all the revelation which has so far been granted is imperfect and transitory. The Old Testament revelation—in the old sense of the word—

1. p. 85, Revelation and Reason, Emil Brunner
is prophetic, fortelling, looking to the future."

Revelation as Fulfillment: Jesus Christ

It was the agreement of the New Testament and the Primitive Church that Jesus Christ was the revelation of God as seen in His life, death, and resurrection. Thus, Christ becomes to Christians the final revelation of God—the God man.

Throughout the history of revelation there has been the revealing of the Revealer, but it does not reach its fulness, until seen in Jesus Christ. There is a wide difference between what is seen in Creation and in the historical Person of the Redeemer. In Christ is a disclosure of God's plan for the world, His will of redemption, His holy love, and His mercy.

The Bible presents Christ as the Prophet who is more than a prophet, in that He and His message are One. Unlike the prophets, He never speaks, "Thus saith the Lord," but rather, "I say unto you." His is the position of authority. God speaks through Christ who is God. He possesses an authority that was never felt in the Old Testament prophets. They remained anonymous many times but this One is identified as to Name and Message. "The authority of the force of the prophetic word as the authority of a person who is here and now present—that is the category of the Messiah, the Christ, the personal presence of the God who is sovereign Lord and God who creates the community."

Christ becomes the fulfilment of the promises of the Old Testament revelation. He was the Prophet (the message and the man); Priest, (who offered up to God the Perfect Sacrifice, made the Perfect Atonement, bringing God and man in communion with each other); and King (the manifestation of the sovereign rule of God in Person.

1. p. 93, Revelation and Reason, Emil Brunner
2. p. 104, ibid.
A decisively new element in the revelation of the New Testament is seen in the unity of the four elements of the Old: the word, the act, the name, and the face. These are all united in the New Testament in one person—Jesus Christ. "The Word became flesh, and we beheld His glory." (John 1:14).

"The verbal form, the means of communication through speech, proves too weak for this communication; only what we call the Incarnation, the coming of God to us in person, is sufficient for this communication; here we see that He who speaks is Himself present, and that His speaking is not merely speech but life, the life of a person."

"The holy and merciful God Himself meets sinful man, no longer in the 'sign' of the word, in a suggestion of something which can be 'handled.' He who meets Him in the vision of faith sees into the eternity of God...The eternal Light enters in...and makes us the children of light." Thus the 'face of the Lord' simply means the 'Word became flesh,' the one decisive event, the name of God, revealed as the Ultimate. Thus the promise of the Old Testament has been fulfilled in Jesus the Christ."

It follows then that by faith one can find the reality of the Divine Revelation, for faith is not a matter of "obedience at a distance" but a sacramental unity with the Redeemer. "Faith is not the acceptance of Apostolic doctrines about the Son of God, but it is personal communion with Jesus Christ Himself. The religious men of the Old Covenant did not know this faith as a present experience, but only as a future promise." "For the Holy Ghost was not yet given." (John 7:39).

1. p. 109, Revelation and Reason, Emil Brunner
2. p. 111, ibid.
WITNESS TO THE REVELATION—WITNESS OF HOLY SCRIPTURE

There is a witness to the Revelation of God in the Holy Scripture, which the Church has always looked upon as the "Word of God"—the historical self-manifestation of God. In consideration of this, one thing must be guarded against; namely, the idea that the Word of God is equal with the Holy Scripture. The Bible does not claim that it is a supernaturally revealed Book, but that it contains an account of both the general and historical revelation of God to man.

The question arises, "What is the relation between the written word of the Bible and the personal, historical Word of God?" To answer this: The written word is only "Imago Verbi." The "word" expressed in language is the means whereby persons communicate with each other. Likewise, the "Word" of God is the way in which He communicates Himself to us. Our words are poor vehicles suggesting what we mean, but God's Word is the actual meaning itself. Hence, the word of the Bible is that which is communicated; but the Word of God is the One that communicates Himself. "In theory there is no particular need to bring the Word of God and the written word into a specially close connection; quite the contrary. Primarily there is a far closer connection between the Word of God and the oral word, the viva vox. Luther rightly pointed out the secret connection between the Holy Spirit and the viva vox . . . the oral word is personal and mobile in character, controlled by the freedom of the Spirit. . . It is significant that the writings of the apostles are casual writings which, apart from some extreme instances of New Testament documents, are not particularly different from the oral
message of the Apostles." The oral word is a second party relating to a third party, what has come from the First Party, being the Word of God.

However, we do possess a written word of the New Testament. There is a need for written word to be given in the New Testament, because only as the story is fixed in writing can it be retained and become the fundamental basis for the living oral message of the Church, which has been passed down through the centuries. This form of the written Scriptures is the medium by which the Word of God comes to us, since it alone contains the Apostolic word of revelation.

The doctrine of verbal inspiration must be laid aside as inadequate for making the Bible the authority of the Christian Faith. The Apostolic writings never lay claim to verbal inspiration, with the infallibility that it implies. Paul does not claim that his words were the result of Divine dictation, but that they were wrought through great human thought and struggle. However, this does not mean that these writings of the New Testament were not inspired, for they certainly were the result of guidance of the Holy Spirit. "They are human testimonies given by God, under the Spirit's guidance, of the Word of God; they have a share in the absolute authority of the Word, yet they are not the Word, but means through which the Word is given."

As to the canon of the Scripture, it should be reexamined in this light, that what does not honor Christ, or teach what He taught should be taken from the bounds of the Holy Scripture. One that believes in any canon of Scripture will return to the present canon after due examination of all Scripture (including

1. p. 126, Revelation and Reason, Emil Brunner
2. p. 129, ibid.
Old Testament) and the Apocryphal writings. The Old Testament is thoroughly Messianic and becomes clearer as it proceeds. It points forward in mysterious terms to a future revelation. It is because of this witness to the coming of the Christ that the Old Testament is included in the Holy Scripture.

"The Bible is the word of God because in it, so far as He chooses, God makes known the mystery of His will, of His saving purpose in Jesus Christ. The Bible is a special form of the divine revelation; it is not merely a document which records a historical revelation, because in it God Himself reveals to us the meaning of that which He wills to say to us, and to give us in the historical revelation, especially in the life, death, and resurrection of the Son of God. The mission of the Son is one thing; the illumination of the Apostles to perceive the meaning of the mystery of the Son is another thing. God has finally revealed Himself in the Son; but this revelation would not reach us apart from the sending and illumination of the Apostles who bear witness to Him. Without the witness of the Apostles we should not know Jesus as the Christ. For instance, had a Jewish or a pagan chronicler transmitted to us the deeds and words of Jesus, we should not be able, through their 'Historically faithful' account, as eyewitnesses, to know Jesus as the Son of God and Redeemer. In order to become Christian believers we needed not only eyewitnesses of Jesus, but also believing witnesses of the resurrection of Christ.

"The same is true of the record of events under the Old Covenant. Had they been handed down by an unbelieving chronicler, they would not have been for us 'saving history,' but a
fragment of quite ordinary Oriental national history. The testimony of the Prophets, and the faith and vision evoked by their message, was needed in order to show us that this history of God's dealings with man. Thus the Bible is not a document of historical revelation, but is itself the product of divine revelation, and this makes it also a revelation to us."  

1. p. 135, Revelation and Reason, Emil Brunner
THE WITNESS OF THE CHURCH

Only as we read the Holy Scriptures do we come to a living faith in Jesus Christ, but very few come to know the Son by this means alone. It is through the Church that God has ordained that the message is to be proclaimed and that Jesus Christ is revealed.

The Church is the body of Christ and each individual who has a living faith is a member of that body. This community of believers have not mere doctrine, but the living Word of God, who is the Life and foundation of the Church.

The Church is the instrument by which the message of the revelation of Jesus Christ is communicated to the coming generations. She must preserve the purity of the faith in her doctrines and sacraments, and in holy practice of her members. Believers are added to the Church as the Church carries forth to fulfillment her mission as mediator of the revelation of the Word.

In order for the Church to transmit this revelation, there must be found in it the mighty presence which is expressed in power. "The Dynamis and the Logos belong together, where the Word of God is concerned; for the 'Kingdom of God is not in word, but in power.' That is certainly not said by the Apostle of the Word in order to depreciate the significance of the Word, but in order to make plain the difference between the word which is powerless, and the Word which is filled with power. The power-filled Word alone reveals God; but since it is full of power it has effects in the visible sphere; it has creative results in character and action."

1. p. 163, Revelation and Reason, Emil Brunner
THE WITNESS OF THE SPIRIT

There is a third element that follows the Scripture and the Church, and it is the Holy Spirit. This is the subjective witness to the Word of God in the revelation of the Word through the witness of the Holy Spirit. This is a mystery, for it surpasses all human reasoning. It is the guarantee to the individual soul that what is contained in the Scripture (that reveals Christ) and the testimony of the Church is the truth.

"I do not believe in Jesus Christ because an Apostle tells me He is the Son of God, which would mean that my belief in Jesus Christ was based on my belief in an Apostle; but I believe in Jesus Christ because God Himself has convinced me that He is the Christ, just as He has convinced the Apostle."  

The Spirit makes known to the individual soul that what has been given as the word of an Apostle suddenly becomes the truth that convinces the individual that Jesus is the Christ, the Redeemer and Lord. "As Saint Paul says, 'No man can call Jesus Lord save by the Holy Spirit'--that is, call him his Lord in such a way that he himself knows this for certain, and recognizes Christ Himself as Lord . . . It is not the Apostle who assures me that Jesus is the Christ, but God Himself." Faith becomes a living thing, because of the inner conviction that is given of the Word of God. "Faith, in the true Biblical sense, means that man is captivated by the truth of God in Christ Jesus, through which man himself--even if very imperfectly and strugglingly--becomes true and free."

1. p. 169, Revelation and Reason, Emil Brunner
2. p. 170, ibid.
3. p. 184, ibid.
Revelation is to be considered as a history, and not as a point in a circle, the focus of our attention. It is the continuous line by which God has dealt with man in bringing to his knowledge that which is totally other than man. This brings to a concept of unity the various forms of the revelation. "The divine works in the Creation reveal to us God's sovereignty, His omnipotence and His wisdom, 'His everlasting power and glory,' but they do not reveal His mercy, which keeps faith even with the unfaithful. So also, that which will be revealed to us at the End, the infinite glory and nearness of God, when we shall see Him 'face to face,' is different from that which we know Him now, in the 'form of a servant,' in the crucified Son of God. Again, all that was revealed in the Old Covenant was only a 'shadow of things to come,' manifested to us in the Incarnation, but the Prophets only saw it from afar."

The point toward which all this revelation leads is that of the perfect revelation of God in Christ. The Old Covenant points toward it, the New Testament is about it, the Church brings it to us, and the Holy Spirit makes it a reality in personal, living, dynamic faith.

l. p. 193, Revelation and Reason, Emil Brunner
BRUNNER'S POSITIVE BASIS FOR THEORY OF REVELATION

Emil Brunner has built his philosophy of religion, known as Neo-supernaturalism, upon the assumption that there is a God, who can not be known in an empirical manner or through abstract human thought and observation but by the way of revelation—supernatural manifestation.

This theory of knowledge is built upon the fact of the God whom Brunner believes exists, totally other than nature. As heretofore stated, the God of Brunner, is Lord of all, Creator and Sustainer of all because He is the only Lord. There is no question as to the sovereignty of God. "As the Holy One, God is the Wholly Other, the Incomparable, the Sole Reality, who in this—His incomparable uniqueness wills to be known and recognized. To bring this into the experience of His creature is God's 'glory.' He says: 'My glory will I not give to another,' (Isa. 42:8) because, were He to do so, in that very act He would cease to be God. All the earth is to be filled with His glory. He can be glorified aright only when He is known as the Holy One, when He, the Mysterious One, proclaims His mystery. Thus the revelation of God is both a veiling and a disclosure, both an unveiling and an affirmation of His mystery. As the Wholly Other, He can never be fully understood by any creature. Finitum non est capax infiniti; but it is precisely His will that He should be known as the Wholly Other; that is His glory. This blending of mystery and revelation is rooted in the nature and will of God. When God in His revelation steps out of His mystery, at the same time He removes the absolute barrier between Himself and all creatures. He shows Himself as the Unfathomable, the Incomparable, that is, as One who cannot be
known; and it is thus that He makes Himself known. Both
the fact that He reveals Himself, and that even in His reve-
lation He remains the Unfathomable Mystery, the Lord, are
rooted in the nature of the Holy God."

This emphasizes the great gulf that is between God and
man. God cannot be judged according to human standards for
He is above and beyond all nature. "God is in heaven and man
is upon earth." God's ways are past finding out by man. He
is the Unknowable. His goodness is good not in the human sense
of goodness. Our human valuations of good cannot be applied to
God. We cannot give a rational account of God because He is
super-rational. The sovereignty of God remains unchallenged
and unquestioned even though there may be many problems insol-
uble to the human understanding.

It is not difficult to see how such a God could be known
by man only through the act of revelation. The natural man
is lost in his own ways, and only as God breaks in upon him
may he be able to grasp some of the truth of God. This break-
ing into man's world is to be thought of as giving to man a
gift of knowledge, that he had no reason to expect. In Brunner's
idea it would be the giving of God to one who had broken faith
with Him and had disobeyed Him. This is the only means through
which we can have access to God. There is no other way.

Now the question must be answered as to how man may know
that he is in contact with the Divine Being. We know that God
is the Giver of the revelation of Himself, but what means are
there in man that enable him to know that God is speaking to

1. p. 45, Revelation and Reason, Emil Brunner
him. This is made real to man by faith, which is not of man. "Faith is an act of knowledge; it is the 'light of the knowledge of the glory of God,' it is the awareness of the God who reveals Himself. . . To become aware of the revelation is itself revelation, and this awareness is the act of faith."

This awareness is not an intuitive knowledge that suddenly becomes alive in man, but it is a divine perception given to man, whereby he recognizes and submits to the divine revelation. This does not mean man cannot of his own free will shut his eyes to the revelation; he can accept or reject, as he desires. It is a crisis experience injected into the life of man whereby he can decide for or against God. These experiences may continue to come into the life of man until he ultimately chooses for or against God.

God reveals Himself, directly to the individual through the Word. It may come through the preaching of the ministry, through the Church in its fellowship and sacraments, or through the Bible.

The Word of God is not the collected writings of the Christian religion, but rather the manifestation of God in the world in the person of Jesus Christ. "The Eternal has entered the time series and become the Temporal; the Absolute has appeared within the world of conditional phenomena; in the person of the God-man; the contradiction between transcendence and immanence has been removed in the Incarnation of the Word of God." This is known as the miracle of all time, and all other miracles are simply pointers to this supreme miracle. Jesus Christ is true man and true God. Everything that seemed ordinary and human to

1. p. 34, Revelation and Reason, Emil Brunner
2. p. 294, Ibid.
the eye of man becomes to the eye of faith the presence of God. We do not believe that Jesus Christ is the supreme revelation of God because of the miracles which He wrought, but rather He is the Supreme Revelation of God and these miracles are merely indications of that presence of God as accepted by faith. "No one believes that Jesus Christ arose from the dead who does not first of all believe that He is the Son of God."

The Word has become flesh and has dwelt among us and we have beheld Him as the manifestation of God, the Unknowable. We know this fact by faith. The Word has gripped our entire being, and we have surrendered to Him.

God becoming man condescended to man's level so that man might be able to meet Him. He has adapted His revelation to man, in that He clothed in the human word of the prophets and apostles. Thus it could be translated into all languages of the world, that all men may use the means they have to understand the Word. To the Chinese God speaks Chinese, to the Greek He speaks Greek.

There is a wide gulf between the word of man and the Word of God. Man can understand the message of the Word of God intellectually and logically, and thus theologically, and yet he is unable to have a spiritual understanding of it. Faith bridges the gap between the word of man and the Word of God. Faith is the experience that brings unexpressable knowledge to man. It is the fact that man has seen himself a sinner before God and the impossibilities of the future and in the agony of his spirit turns to God and makes the surrender of himself to God by faith.

1. p. 305, Revelation and Reason, Emil Brunner
It is upon this foundation of faith man comes to know God. We are dominated by God and thus able to choose right, because our former ego-centric intelligence is freed from this bias.
BRUNNER'S NEGATIVE BASIS FOR THEORY OF REVELATION

Brunner is opposed to every form of rational theology because human reason when left to itself leads to many paths that are opposed to each other. Therefore, he believes the only way to find truth is by revelation. Let us note some of the ways that reason leads to the end which has no outlet.

- Atheism

Atheism must be reckoned with as one of the rational possibilities for its negative theology. It is here that reason is used to facilitate the denial of God's existence. It has been found in the various cultures of the world, in ancient India, in Greco-Roman philosophy, and in Persia as well as modern philosophical thought.

The modern atheism is connected with a naturalistic theory of religion and this naturalism explains away by its psychological arguments all its immanent transcendent ideas of truth, goodness, and perfection. Atheism is built upon the idea that for the sake of freedom, God must be denied. As one has said, "If there were gods, how could I bear it not to be a god. Thus there are no gods." Man desires to be master of himself and thus he dislikes any other master.

According to Brunner, atheism, from the Christian point of view, contains an element of truth. The God against whom atheism contends is actually false or an illusion which the atheist blindly holds to be the truth. Atheism is the necessary shadow cast by all human theology and even Christian theology in so far as it burdens the Christian revelation with "all-too-human" interpretations and obscures evangelical truths by its existence.
In the fact of all the unhappy developments that have been due to so-called Christian theology down the centuries, European atheism must be regarded as an unavoidable reaction. The history of theology confronts us with the question, "Is it possible that God may even prefer many of these who even deny His existence to those who claim to defend Him?" Indeed there is a permanent truth in atheism; namely, the right to protest against that element of untruth which clings to every human formulation of divine truth, the "all-too-human" and godless element in all theology. Atheism challenges us to recognize that in our hands the divine revelation itself is always mingled with an air of arrogance.

Pantheism

Pantheism is the result of a reflective type of paganism that has been developed by reason, for there is a failure to make a distinction between God and the world. In this system of philosophic thought, nature is deified and God is drawn down into the natural order. God and nature are considered one—the only genuine form of existence.

However, Brunner believes, there is an element of truth in pantheism. If God is the foundation of all things and if all being is derived from Him and maintained by Him so that if there were a separation from Him, everything would go back into a state of nothingness out of which it came; then God exists, and there is a complete dependence upon Him in pantheism. This is a truth that has also been given in the Christian revelation, but the Christian revelation has held to its center instead of flying off at a tangent.
Pantheism is the idea of the omnipotence of the Creator developed in a one-sided manner over against the creature, and creaturely dependence without consideration of the other fundamental Biblical idea: the relative independence of the creature due to the love of God. God does not only effect everything and preserve the universe in being as the one who loves and wills to be loved. He also creates an independent "other" who stands over against Him to whom He gives a definite measure of dependence and freedom by means of which the creature is able to love Him in return. Pantheism denies this responsibility due to the relative freedom granted to man by God. Thus pantheism is a temptation to the strict logician in whom the feeling for responsibility is weaker than the sense of dependence upon God. It is the product of a way of thinking in which the religious element has absorbed the ethical motive. Hence, it shows us clearly the danger for the Christian Faith of a one-sided development of the idea of dependence; it shows us the abyss into which we fall when we follow out an idea even where it is the most central Biblical idea in a completely one-sided way; this makes us aware of the dialectical inherent in the Christian religion of unity and multiplicity, necessity and freedom, dependence and independence, holiness and mercy, reverence and love. Pantheism is a danger to strong minds and weak consciences.

**Idealism**

This is the endeavor to identify the human self with the divine self. This idea has so possessed certain minds until it has become a system of thought whereby the human mind has desired to appropriate those ideas to which God's mind has worked
upon the human mind and interprets them as the absolute truth which is in the self. The element of truth that is found in idealism is the perception of the divine self testimony in the human spirit as such. Thus Plato was able to say that God is the good and that the soul is immortal. In idealism there is the perception that man is always moved in his spirit by God. It has perceived some of the truth that man has been in the image of God and that he has been created a person.

But idealism gives us a wrong understanding of the truth of God. It does not make the distinction between the Creator and the creature, not is there any awareness of sin. This is another illustration of how when man is dependent upon reason, reason gives him a partial account of the truth, but fails to interpret it clearly. Hence, there is the need for a divine revelation at all times. As the thinkers or the great religious reformers have given us the truth that the light of reason is a divine light, it has been given to us to know the world, but that it cannot lead us to a knowledge of God.

Mysticism

This is the idea of those who claim to have a direct faith relation to God and they ignore the mediacy of the historical revelation. A mystic is one who follows the inner light and the mystical communion with Christ is an experience of Christ and the historical Christ is not essential to him. Only the Christ who lives in the soul is essential. The religious fanatic stands outside the realm of history; he is independent of all men; he stands alone with God; his watchword is: God in the soul, the soul in God.
Brunner objects to this inner experience because he would say that it is a matter for the natural science of psychology. All of these feelings which are emotions and thrills coupled with visions and voices are the natural phenomena of the human mind. If we are to identify God with these, it would be to bring God down to the natural order and make him a trivial phenomenon of the human mind. Thus the experiences of the mystic may reveal some of the peculiarities of human nature, but it never reveals God.

Mysticism rejects reason along with neo-supernaturalism as a guide to ultimate truth. But a mystic rejects it because of the idea of having an inner experience with God, and it is with this inner experience that the mystic forms the idea that he is living in the presence of God.

In conclusion, as we have considered how Brunner meets the opposition to his position, we have seen that it is completely based upon the futility of reason to know ultimate truth. The truth of the infinite must come only by a historical revelation of the Divine.
J. GRESHAM MACHEN'S

THEORY OF REVELATION
GOD - THE GIVER OF REVELATION

The God of the Supernaturalist is a definite reality, having spiritual existence, possessed of personality that is capable of self-conscious decision. He is a being that is transcendent, yet immanent in the world. "He is not a God afar off. He is not a God who stands aloof from the universe as an artificer stands aloof from his machine." The world is dependent upon Him, but He is not dependent upon the world. The world is the work of His hands, but He is eternal. He, independent of all other existence, is in possession of life itself.

These are attributes of God: He is the First Cause; he is omnipotent; He is eternal, and holy. Upon His holiness rests the moral perfection attributed to God. It is in the holiness of God that evil is absolutely excluded, and good is found in an unlimited degree. Thus we find that in these four elements mentioned above, as they harmonize and combine, is found the personality of God. God is spirit, casual, holy and supreme. The supernaturalist finds in God a being who is absolutely ideal in character, yet far removed from man because of the sin that is in man.

God is a trinity, having three persons coequal and coeternal, the same in substance, but distinct in subsistence. "The Father is God and the Son is God and the Holy Spirit is God, and that these three aspects are not three of the same person but three persons standing in a truly personal relationship to one another."

2. p. 130, ibid.
MAN - THE RECEIVER OF THE REVELATION

Man is the object of this divine revelation, for the Biblical revelation always has to do with man and his relationship with God.

Man is the product of God's creation, formed in God's image and given the right of choice. This freedom of choice has brought man into a state of sin as opposed to the righteousness of God. As a result there is a wide gulf separating man from his Creator. He in himself cannot reach God, but must have this divine revelation.

The inference is that man is condemned by God because he is a sinner and remains in that state until the grace of God removes the condemnation and sin. Then, after the sin has been removed man is able to develop all the graces of the righteous life. This makes two classes of people to be found in the world in relation to the divine revelation: those who have chosen to serve God, and those who have decided to go the opposite way of disobedience to the divine revelation.

In all of this we understand that man, because of this freedom of the will, is responsible to God for his conduct and his attitude. The correct view of man can be grasped only as we think of the responsibility he has toward God, the Lord of all.

There is no saving virtue in man, himself, but only in the grace of God. As the analogy is used, he is lost and cannot find his way, until God finds him. Thus the divine revelation is necessitated.
THEORY OF REVELATION

Fundamental Christianity makes the claim that it has received the knowledge of God in a divine revelation. Dr. Machen, being a representative spokesman of the Fundamentalist group, believes that God has revealed a knowledge of Himself, of His purposes, and His activities. Divine revelation means a supernatural revealing of truth from God to man. By the word supernatural is meant something beyond reason or the light of nature. The truth would be altogether inaccessible to man, apart from the divine communication of it. It is because God wills it and not because I provoke it.

It is true that God hath not left Himself without record in the world. There are multiple instances of the revelation of God in nature but these are inadequate. "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth forth His handiwork." (Psa. 19:1). This is known as general revelation of God through nature. A background of this is found all through the Scripture. "Jesus plainly found God's hand in nature; the lilies of the field revealed to him the weaving of God's hand." "That revelation of God through nature . . . is wonderfully confirmed by the Bible, but it does not come only from the Bible. It is spread out before men so that all might be expected to see."

Not only has God given a general revelation of Himself in nature, but also in the constitution of man. Man knows himself to be a spiritual being and in this being is found a conscience, from which arises a sense of duty to an over Master or Lord. It

1. p. 25, Christianity and Liberalism, J. G. Machen
is the consciousness of the self, apprehending God and distinguishing itself from God. "He has planted His laws in our hearts. He speaks to all men through the voice of conscience. He speaks through the majestic words which all but the most degraded men utter, the words: 'I ought.' He speaks through the majesty of the moral law." "He found God . . . in the moral law; the law written in the hearts of men was God's law, which revealed His righteousness." Intuitively then, man receives a revelation of God through his conscience that tells him of his duty to God. "God is known by His voice within us. . . It is revealed in the voice of conscience. In the sense of guilt there is something that is removed from relativity; we stand there face to face with the absolute. True, in the humdrum of life we often forget; but the strange experience comes ever again. It may be in the reading or witnessing of a great drama; the great tragedies, in the world's literature, are those that pull aside the curtain of the commonplace and makes us feel anew the stark irrevocableness of guilt. It may also be, alas, in the contemplation of our own lives. But however conscience speaks, it is the voice of God. The law reveals a Lawgiver; and the character of this law reveals the Lawgiver's awful righteousness."

God is known not only by these general revelations of Himself, which are common to all men, but also by what is termed as Special Revelation. This revelation which is contained in the Bible is a record of God's dealings with man and of His speaking to man of His will and the means of salvation. "It presents God in loving action, in the course of history, for the salvation of

2. P. 55, Christianity and Liberalism, J. G. Machen
3. P. 76, What is Faith, J. G. Machen
sinful men. From Genesis to Revelation, from Eden to Calvary, as the covenant God of Israel and as the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, all through the varied course of Bible history, God appears in the fulfillment of one loving plan. The marvel is that it is so plainly the same God throughout. The manner of His action varies; we see various aspects of His person; He appears in anger as well as in love. But it is plainly the same person throughout: we rise from the Bible ... with a knowledge of the character of God."

Since we say that the Bible contains an account of a revelation from God to man which is found nowhere else, we must know how this account has been given. This will apply to the modes of revelation and to the doctrine of inspiration, so necessary to the Fundamentalist view of revelation.

As to the modes of revelation: God has spoken through dreams and visions; word of mouth; miraculous acts of God's power and providence; and the inspiration of the individual. All these are means by which God has spoken to man.

When the Prophet becomes God's mouthpiece, God speaks the word to this individual, who takes the position of a prophet, and delivers the message of God. "And I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak unto them all that I command him." (Deut. 18:18). A record of this mode of revelation is found throughout the Scriptures. It is the claim that all that is said is from God.

God has spoken to man through visions and dreams. This is the idea that a power not of the individual took possession of the individual's consciousness and completely determined the

1. p. 77, What is Faith, J. G. Machen
outcome of the event. It is that these visions and dreams are usually ascribed to the field of prophecy and are given to the prophet, while he is completely under the control of an outside power. "For prophecy was never brought by the will of man; but it was borne by the Holy Spirit that men spoke from God." (II Peter 1:21).

Revelation also comes by inspiration. By this is meant that God superintends the message and its delivery. It is not given in divine words but under the direction of the Spirit of God. The Spirit assists the individual to speak the words to gain the desired effect. It is the Spirit energizing the mind and spirit of the individual to speak that which he feels.

Not only has God spoken by these various manners but also in the final and complete revelation of Himself in Jesus Christ. This revelation stands beyond all other revelation, until all other means of revelation are but a dim shadow of this perfect revelation of God in Christ.

In the theory of Inspiration of the Scriptures we have to determine how the Scriptures came to be written, and in order that we can be sure that this record is the account of God's dealings with man, in the communication of that truth absolutely inaccessible beyond this event. It should be noted there is a difference between revelation and inspiration. Revelation is a direct communication from God to man, and inspiration is that qualifying agency by which man is able to receive divine truth and communicate it to others without error.

The Fundamentalists hold that God conditioned the writers of the Scriptures so that they are without error. "I hold that
the Biblical writers, after being prepared for their task by the providential ordering of their entire lives, received, in addition to all that, a blessed and wonderful and supernatural guidance and impulsion by the Spirit of God, so that they were preserved from errors that appear in other books and thus the resulting Book, the Bible, is in all its parts the very Word of God, completely true in what it says regarding matters of fact and completely authoritative in its commands."

This is the doctrine of plenary inspiration, which is not to be thought of as verbal inspiration. It is not the acceptance of the English Bible as inspired, nor of those copies in the original languages as inspired; but that the writers of the Biblical books were inspired by the Holy Spirit to write these original books which have long since disappeared so that it is impossible to believe in verbal inspiration for these are the only books verbally inspired. Thus the reason for plenary inspiration.

This idea of inspiration can be traced further in defining the position taken by those defendants of this argument. The writers of the Scriptures knew what they were doing as they wrote, but could not derive the fullest meaning of all they wrote; thus they were more than mere automata, for they had a comprehension of the things written. In this doctrine of plenary inspiration, writers were believed to be conditioned for the task by the Spirit of God. This would mean that they could and probably did use any documents found, eyewitness testimony, and any other source of inspiration open to them through research. Yet, beyond this was that revelation of God unfolding before them,

giving supernatural assistance. In all this experience they are kept from human error in the comprehension and communication of this revealed knowledge. The person, the content, and the words of the writer are fully inspired according to the Fundamentalist view. This does not take away any of the individuality of the writers.

"We believers in the full inspiration of the Bible do not merely admit that. We insist upon it. The doctrine of plenary inspiration does not hold that all parts of the Bible are alike; it does not hold that all are equally beautiful or even equally valuable; but it only holds that all parts of the Bible are equally true, and that each part has its place."

The Bible is to man a revelation of certain facts that he has felt were so, but in order to be positively sure of them he needed this extra support of a divine revelation. The Bible tells man that he is a sinner and under the wrath of God bound by awful chains of sin. The revealed knowledge does not end there but continues with the message of salvation through the Son of God, Jesus Christ. These are all facts that man might have hoped were true, but are true now, for man believes this is the Word of God.

Finally, the inspiration of the Scripture becomes an experience to the believer. This is the means by which each person may arrive at the knowledge of the inspiration of the Scripture, that it no longer be a matter of belief but of experience. He has become convinced that the message of the Book is true and that God has spoken to his soul as he has read it or listened to a message based upon it. This is related to the witness of the

Spirit, that inner consciousness of a relationship with the divine. "The Christian man finds in the Bible the very Word of God .... The Bible, to the Christian, is not a burdensome law, but the very Magna Charta of Christian liberty." 

1. p. 78, Christianity and Liberalism, J. G. Machen
CHRIST -- REVELATION

In the person of Jesus Christ is the full revelation of the nature of God. God entered humanity in the fulness of His nature. Christ was revealing the character of ultimate Reality. "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us." He is the supernatural Christ.

Jesus Christ came to manifest to the human race the love of God for mankind, and to show the distance there is between God and man separated by the abyss of sin. All the acts of Christ were a revelation of the character of God hitherto unknown by man in the clearness of vision as shown in Christ.

Christ came as the fulfillment of the partial revelation given by God to Old Testament writers. All that had been given prior to His coming simply points to the coming of the Perfect One.

Jesus Christ came as a personification of the love of God in that He was God incarnate, giving Himself as an atonement for the sins of man that He might redeem man from the condemnation brought upon man by sin. "Jesus is our Savior, not because He has inspired us to live the same kind of life that He lived, but because He took upon Himself the dreadful guilt of our sins and bore it instead of us on the cross."

We can draw the conclusion that the relation found between Christ and revelation is simply this, that Jesus Christ is the complete revelation of that which had been given in part. Not only is it a revelation of the character of God, but that Christ was the means of reconciling the world to God, to all that would believe upon Him as the Son of God, who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

1. p. 117, Christianity and Liberalism, J. G. Machen
POSITIVE BASIS FOR THEORY OF REVELATION

The Supernaturalist builds his theory of divine revelation on the assumption that there is a God who has revealed Himself to man through men who have been chosen and conditioned for this work of receiving the revelation and of inscribing it so that man may be able to know the message of God. This message has been transmitted to the present day in the Scriptures, but not without error which, however, is not sufficient to mar the true message of God from the beginning.

Since the God of the Supernaturalist is a being that is separated from man by the sins of man, there is a space that cannot be bridged by man to reach God of himself, but must be spanned by God who has condescended to come to man. The God of the Bible has been described by the characteristics of His holiness and love. His ways are not our ways, and His thoughts are not our thoughts, therefore, man is of himself unable to reach God by way of human attainment, known as reason. Man may be able to learn things about God's work as seen in nature and found in the conscience, but this is not sufficient, for it does not include the complete message of God as found in the Scripture. "God has given to man a faculty of reason which is capable of comprehending truth, even truth about God. That does not mean that we finite creatures can find God by our own searching; but it does mean that God has made us capable of receiving the information which He chooses to give . . . Our reason is certainly insufficient to tell us about God unless He reveals Himself; but is capable of receiving revelation when once it is given." This gives the place of reason in the matter of receiving the divine revelation.

1. p. 51, What is Faith, J. G. Machen
Reason is an aid to the comprehension of this revelation when once it is given, but never the means by which it is found through searching.

Our knowledge of God is based entirely upon the revelations He has made through nature, conscience, and the Scriptures. Thus we have come to the position where we have knowledge that God is, as we exercise faith to believe that it is true. "That knowledge of God is regarded by the Bible as involved in faith and as the necessary prerequisite of faith. We can trust God according to the Bible, because He has revealed Himself as trustworthy. The knowledge that God has graciously given us of Himself is the basis of our confidence in Him; the God of the Bible is One whom it is reasonable to trust."

If we retain and use faith we hold with all our power to the metaphysical attributes of God—His infinity and omnipotence and creatorhood. We are using faith as a means by which we may find the ultimate comfort of the human soul, even as Augustine has said: "Thou hast made us for Thyself, and our heart is restless until it finds its rest in Thee." We believe that the universe was created and upheld by this God of revelation. The Divine Being that is immanent in the world, yet transcendent is the foundation of the Christian faith.

It is thus that we are faced with the fact that we can know God only by His revelation of Himself in nature, conscience, and in the Scripture.

The question arises as to how we can be sure that what we have received is true. It can be made plain to us by the way in which it was given. God has inspired holy men of old to write

1. p. 52, What is Faith, J. G. Machen
the revelation given to them. They have been preconditioned to receive this revelation by the Spirit of God working with and in them. "All scripture is given by inspiration of God (All that has been written is God-breathed). (II Tim. 3:15)."

"For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." (II Peter 1:21). This is the doctrine of plenary inspiration, upon which the validity of the scripture is based. The men who were inspired, were inspired personally--their thinking was inspired, and their words were inspired.

Closely connected with this doctrine of inspiration is the claim to inerrancy and infallibility. This claim is held because of the Spirit of God being active in the writing of them. This includes the activity of the human authors, so that the entire body of the Scripture are what God wanted to be written to serve as a record of the revelation of His will and message to succeeding generations. Nor let it be thought that this claim places the writers as mere robots, writing what the Spirit of God dictated, but they had individuality of style and manner of expression. The Spirit of God made use of the writer's ability, information, and style in effecting his purpose. The purpose of the Scripture is to bring Christ to us, or to bring God to us. God has thus established among men a permanent written record of His self-revelation, through which He continues to reveal Himself to men.

In brief the substance of the theory of revelation is that it is a manifestation of the will of God and Himself to a certain degree. The claim is not made that God has revealed Himself
perfectly and completely, but that He has given such revelation as is necessary for mankind. The revelation as contained in the Scripture is sufficient to bring men to a knowledge of themselves and God, thereby inducing the state of repentance and faith, which leads to a vital union with God.

Faith has been summed up as the belief that God exists and that He is a rewarde r of them that diligently seek Him. God in the person of Jesus Christ, becomes the object of our faith as the Redeemer from all sin. We need to know many things of Christ. "We need to know that He is alive; we need to know, therefore, about the resurrection... And then we need to know how it is that He can touch our lives; and that involves a knowledge of the atonement and of the way in which He saves us from our sin."

After we know these things we begin to trust in the God of this revelation. The truth of this revelation begins to sink in to our inner consciousness and it becomes a reality. It provides an answer not otherwise found, to a problem in the life of man. It becomes a religious experience, known as the assurance of the Spirit in individual hearts and made real by this fuller revelation of the Spirit. It is the restoration of a broken fellowship and the reorganization of a disrupted man in the continuance of this revelation of God in a personal way. There is that calm sense of the indwelling and inworking of the Spirit of God, that reveals all things that are necessary to the individual Christian.

l. p. 91, What is Faith, J. G. Machen
HENRY NELSON WIE MAN'S

THEORY OF REVELATION
GOD - THE GIVER OF REVELATION

The God of the Theistic-naturalist is a definite reality, of whose existence there can be no doubt. He is more than can be formulated by human thought. "God is not primarily an ideal . . . he is first of all an actual, existing operative reality in our midst bringing forth all that is highest and best in existence, far beyond the scope of our specific understanding."

From this definition of God and also the criteria of God, given by Wieman may be seen some of the characteristics of this great power. God must be super-human; must be the best reality there is in existence; must exercise the greatest power for good in the universe. According to this standard, God must be impersonal and transcendental yet immanent. He is impersonal, because personality would limit his beneficence and creativity. He is non-transcendental, for to be otherwise would take him beyond this world which is identified with him. He is working in this world of time and space, yet independent of this order of things. He is absolute good, under any circumstances of place, race or time. He continues to work for good even though opposed by human effort. He is eternal and will continue to work when all else fails.

Conclusively this force is a cosmic power at work in the whole of nature, creating and sustaining all good that exists. Behind the scenes may be found this power always endeavoring to bring forth the good for all nature, especially the human order.

l. p. 348, Growth of Religion, H. N. Wieman
MAN - THE RECEIVER OF REVELATION

The object of this revelation is man. Man is a being that exists for God, and can find his highest good only in God. Apart from God comes destruction. Thus man is a dependent being.

Man is a creature who has much in his nature that fights against God, the creative good. If he hopes to gain all the good possible, and to escape all the evil he can, he must cooperate with this good by the commitment of himself to the good. Man must approach God by the way of values, which are known by human intelligence.

It is in this way that man can be distinguished from the rest of nature. "He laughs, he talks, he plays imaginatively, he uses tools and machines, he reasons, he worships, he rears a culture." He has possibilities of growth found nowhere else in nature. He can make progress as long as he places creative good above created good. Evil is found in man when he is living according to created good, or in subjection to created good. Man can, if he chooses, turn away from the actualities and potentialities of nature, and can be lost in his own imaginations, the product of his rational nature. But at all times there may be found some individual who is being used to bring forth a greatness of good. Therefore man is a responsible being, responsible to God, though not in the sense used by supernaturalism.

There are two types of men: those who cooperate, and those who do not. Man may choose to which of these two classes he will belong.

1. p. 458, Growth of Religion, H. N. Wieman
FAITH - THE RECEPTION OF REVELATION

Since God is the Giver and man the receiver of this revelation, we must know how this revelation is made accessible to man. The answer is found in faith, which is the means of appropriation of that which is given. "Faith is the self-commitment to a reality which has far greater wealth of value in it than those values of it which we have been able to bring to the light of specific knowledge."

In this commitment of the self to the good, a way is open that gives a vision of the good. This is the power of faith revealing to one that which is inaccessible by any other means. After faith is exercised the intelligence of man must be utilized to discern the better from the worse. "The commitment of faith... releases intelligence from the constraint and bias of fixed and narrow purpose, fear, envy, self-righteousness, and many other blind spots which prevent us from receiving what God would give." Faith has become the means by which man can see the good in its true perspective, freed from all evil tendencies, then he uses the gift of reason to decide for the right, as he is committed to the creative good.

Faith is not anything supernatural, but simply an act of commitment of the self in surrender to that which is believed to be the highest good, as intelligence has judged it. This faith makes a man religious so that he follows as best he can the emerging new meanings of every situation without any prefixed ideals or desires. Through this commitment of the self man receives the revelation, which guides him into all truth as he follows reverently and sensitively in search for the good.

1. p. 444, Growth of Religion, H. N. Wieman
2. p. 481, Ibid.
THEORY OF REVELATION

In discussion of the theory of revelation, it should be understood that God must be known by the same cognitive procedure as other realities are known. By this procedure is meant the acquiring of the concept which gives meaning to the immediate values of present experience, found by means of intuition or insight. Thus the reality of God becomes suddenly real by the acquiring of this concept.

There are only two ways by which this reality may be known to the human mind; i.e., the way of the body and the way of social communication between persons. All reality must come to be known this way, thus God can be known only by this means of psycho-physical organism. It is true that God is trying to break into man's consciousness, but man must be conditioned to receive this knowledge of God. "God thus present cannot reach consciousness until men have the responsiveness, the appreciative awareness, the pattern of apprehension, and the disposition of the total personality, which will enable them to experience the riches of divine reality."

We know reality, first for a short time by abstraction, then it becomes a concrete experience, and through this psycho-physical organism we have a continuous flow of knowledge of reality.

We are not to understand that God is readily discerned by everyone. It is no more true here than it is in the observation of other realities about us. We do not see them because we do not have the right attitude toward them. Divine reality is indiscernible because we are engaged in other things so that our

1. p. 435, Growth of Religion, H. N. Wieman
attention is averted. We cannot know unless our powers of perception are focused upon it. Therefore if we are to become aware of God our attention must be redirected toward this divine reality. "Our whole personalities must be changed, before the goodness of God can pour into human consciousness."

In thinking of this knowledge of God, we can readily see that we can grasp this knowledge of God as we grasp any other fact of the realities of nature. The personality of man must be transformed to apprehend and hold it. "God must be known by using the same basic principles of knowing that the physicist must use, the friend must use, the statesman must use, the master mechanic must use. Every one of these must have his total personality ordered in the right way and adjusted to the reality in question, before he can become aware of the data that lead to knowledge. No man can have first-hand knowledge of the kinds of reality with which the above named men intimately live, unless his whole conscious and subconscious mind is so transformed and disciplined as to give him the required sort of awareness."

God may be about us manifesting the power of the creative good, but until each of us is conditioned to behold this divine reality, we do not see him anymore than the keen-eyed savage can discern the facts of modern physics. This means that as long as we do not live according to the wishes of the creative good, we can never know the reality except in a remote, second-hand way. The interests of the self has blinded the eyes of its inner being so that it cannot behold the riches of the vision of the divine reality, as found only by faith, referred to before. Thus God is manifest, yet hidden.

1. p. 437, Growth of Religion, H. N. Wieman
2. p. 439, ibid.
The question then arises: How can this divine reality be known to anyone if it can be known only as we direct all our powers of perception upon it? This means that it is hidden from our unconditioned gaze, but how can we become conditioned so that we can perceive? In answer, we can know it as we know any other fact. The knowledge comes in fragments, a bit of it here and there in the experience of life. These may be samples of the truth we are attempting to know. It is by this means that we learn that a divine reality exists, but we may be unable to determine the full content of value in these experiences, because we are not more perfectly attuned to catch the waves as they are cast forth. We can also blend together the experiences of others to bring to us a more complete picture of the whole. Then we can find also another means of knowing the hidden reality by the diversity of cultures which bring to light the meanings of value.

Besides this, we can by logic add together these various experiences and know that in this field the sum of all experience far surpasses the result of the actual addition.

The creative good that is hidden becomes known only partially now, but in the ages to come, it shall be known more perfectly as man becomes more perfectly attuned to it, and is transformed and redirected in his attitude toward this cosmic power. We must come to realize that through this process of evolution, as we are committed to the good, we can hope to know this creative better than we know it now. It is impossible to know God in any fulness now, but this may be possible in ages to come.
Up to this point an attempt has been made to show how man can and does acquire knowledge of the divine reality, according to Wieman. Knowledge is insufficient in itself—it should only lead to God, to the point that this creative good demands a surrender of the whole of self to the carrying forth of an unspecifed purpose, as far as the individual is concerned. This is the road to perfect height of religious living and not until then can one reach the norm of true religious living.

Before one reaches that level of surrender it is necessary that he live in a community of believers who likewise appreciate the good. This implies there must be a "Life-transforming tradition" in which a group must live with this knowledge and appreciation of God and thus the individual is placed in an environment that will allow him to make the decision of commitment to this creative good, the divine reality.

The term revelation in this light refers to transformation and not the giving of knowledge. "It is the giving of an attitude or disposition of the personality which enables one to acquire knowledge of God's way. It redirects the interests and desires and attentive awareness so that one can learn of God by the ordinary methods of intelligent inquiry. It removes, not the total blindness of man to God, but the impenetrable blindness of man. It enables man to learn progressively of God, in problematical situations where life-transforming problems are solved."

As the personality of the individual is changed and his interests are reorganized, he then is in a position where he may be able to truly receive knowledge. This change is wrought

1. p. 443, Growth of Religion, H. N. Wieman
by a search for truth in a community of believers.

Revelation is not the miraculous acquiring of knowledge, but it is the transformation that opens the door to knowledge (this is the whole truth of revelation). This brings to our minds the position which Jesus Christ holds in the idea of revelation. "Revelation is the lifting of the creative event to a place of domination in the devotion of a continuing fellowship to form one enduring strand of history. This lifting to a place of domination was not done by man. It was accomplished by certain events which might be listed thus: the teachings of Jesus; the Crucifixion; the Resurrection; the forming of the fellowship; the disentangling of the new faith from the Hebrew perspective and from bondage to any one perspective or set of rules. The chief consequence of this revelation is not knowledge but the release of creative power to transform the world into richness of value and to save man from self-destruction and other evils that impoverish and break him. The first consequence of revelation for man, therefore, is faith and salvation. In time he gains knowledge from this revelation that he never could have gained without it."

In this sense revelation is meant to be understood as the manifestation of creative power in creative events, which is truth slowly but eventually grasped by human reason. It may be highly possible that the ones engaged in this event, may be wholly unconscious of the value of the whole process, but those who follow after become the recipients of the good resulting from the creative event. Wieman believes that one example of this is found in Jesus, who was not conscious of his position,
but his disciples found the transforming power of this creative force working in their lives which was known in the Christian tradition as the Resurrection.

Another question that may arise is: What relation does the Bible have to the revelation. The Bible is always included in the idea of revelation, because by it the initial experience of the followers of Jesus, in observation of the creative event, is kept alive. Man could not be expected to know of this creative event that took place in ages past if it were not for a record of it in the Bible. The commitment of faith to this power could not have been perpetuated except as the record of the initial Word of God is the living Christ, and the living Christ is the creative event in dominant control over the life of man in that strand of history which forms a Christian fellowship... Creative energy controlling the fellowship is also called the 'Holy Spirit' in the Christian vernacular. It is rightly called 'revelation' only when it holds supremacy over created good in the lives of this fellowship. The Bible, then, is not a peculiar source of knowledge about God apart from observation. It does provide peculiar, direct, and saving access to the saving power perpetuated in this fellowship by symbol, ceremony, and ritual, because the Bible is the indispensable agent and condition for this fellowship and this commitment of faith."

This record is not to be interpreted literally, but is metaphysical myth, which traditional Christianity has adopted; it is symbolic of great metaphysical truths of the divine reality, the creative good. The best that is found in the Bible is to be comprehended as hidden truth, now fully understood by theistic nat-

1. p. 215, Source of Human Good, H. N. Wieman
uralism, according to Wieman.

This gives a place for the Bible in this religious philosophy as that of a record of events, and not a miraculous book of knowledge.

The final thought in consideration of this theory of revelation, is what is the relation between the Church and revelation, or this creative event.

The Church is the fellowship that was formed by disciples in consequence of their experience of the life and death of Jesus. The Church does not consist in those whole names that are on the church roll. It is a communion where members share the common devotion to the creative good, and confess their failures to overcome difficulties, and solve the problems that arise so they may be better able to cope with these evils in the commitment of faith. The Church is not formed by human endeavor, but of those who have a kindred spirit having been caught in this life-transforming revelation, which has issued from the life of Jesus.

The Church has in her possession the knowledge of how this creative power works in human lives, she should know how to dispense this knowledge to others who may enter this fellowship. "The church and its leaders must learn from the originative events of the Christian faith that this faith is not merely a vague reference to the 'vertical dimension' but lays upon us the stern demand to have a clear understanding of the way God works in the midst of human life. Only with this understanding can the man of faith in our time serve with intelligence, firmness, and conviction. The primary duty of the church is neither mystical

l. p. 291, Source of Human Good, H. N. Wieman
devotion nor trailing after other agencies in promoting social improvement. It is to demand insistently and everywhere that those human relations be provided between man and man and between man and nature which release the creative power of God."  

1. p. 291, Source of Human Good, H. N. Wieman
POSITIVE BASIS FOR THEORY OF REVELATION

Theistic Naturalism as held by Wieman is built upon the assumption that there is a God who is the object of experience, apprehended and discerned by man in the same scientific manner that any other reality found in the range of human experience. It is upon this basis that Wieman constructs his philosophy of religion, which he predicts will rise or fall with science.

It has already been noted the type of being that God is in the concept of the theistic naturalist. He is the source of all human good, "that process of existence which carries the possibilities of the highest values." God is an impersonal being, immanent, working in nature, yet transcendent to nature. In nature he is able to be discerned by man to a greater or lesser degree, but never to the complete knowledge of his being. He is a great distance from abstract thought, for God is not a being to be conceived alone, but also to be perceived. God becomes then an object of experience as soon as there is an organism that is tuned to the same pitch as he, so that this organism may be able to receive the proper stimuli and respond.

In this concept of God, it is to be realized that God is not thought of first, but experience must be prior to thought. Man can not set forth the criteria of God until he has experienced God. Thus it can be said there is no speculation in theistic naturalism, it is always operational. "God is not primarily an ideal for them. Rather he is first of all an actual, existing, operative reality in our midst bringing forth all that is highest and best in existence, far beyond the scope of our specific understanding. He is the creative synthesis at work
in the immediate concrete situation where we are."

It is true that God can not be distinguished as God by all men or even in the beginning by any man, but only as men has been conditioned to respond to this stimulus when and where it is given as God in human experience. "If we were biologically developed and disciplined to meet the requirements of such experience, if physical conditions were shaped as modern science might shape them, and if all our powers were directed by the vision of God which haunts the distinctively religious way, the scales would fall from our eyes and the sheath from our hearts, and the goodness of God would stand forth." This view of the theistic naturalist, explains that God is indiscernable to man until he has earned the right to progressively discover him. It is by the same powers that we use to know any other facts, that we can learn to know God. It is that we are living in another world, although unaware of it until the truth of this suddenly flashes upon our consciousness. We are made to realize that the experience we have had has been that of God, and we can never tell another person who or what God is until an experience comparable to ours takes place in him.

This illustrates what we mean by the statement that God is an object of human experience, as the opposite of pure, abstract thought. God must be known, first, by experience, then the criteria of God follow. He becomes to the individual as the unlimited connective growth of experiences of value.

In this theory reason is not displaced as it may seem, when the appeal is made to experience. Rather, we find that reason is needed to give direction and provide guidance for our religious

1. p. 348, Growth of Religion, H. N. Weiman
2. p. 316, Growth of Religion, H. N. Weiman
life. "Reason is, in no mean measure, the hand of religion reaching up after God. Man is not religious because he is rational but he becomes rational because he is first religious."

Wieman states that the function of reason in religion is to guide the subrational urge toward the super-rational lure. By this he means that in man there is a physiological urge to be connected with that which is beyond reason, found in experience that is beyond the forms of experience treated by abstract reason. He illustrates this by making an analogy of the subrational religious urge as an automobile and the super-rational lure as the road and destination which are concealed by the darkness of night. Reason is the headlight that helps the automobile find its way to its destination. Thus man can not have religion without reason in this modern age when knowledge is so prevalent if we want to keep from making havoc of our religious living.

Reason then makes it possible for us to gain knowledge from our experience that leads to greater knowledge as these experiences of the fact of God take place in our lives. All of our knowledge must meet the tests of rationality and observation. We can know something only as there are these series of actions and perceptions whereby our behavior becomes intelligently organized according to certain patterns under certain conditions. We can then say when we have reached that stage that we have gained knowledge, and this is the only way we have knowledge. This knowledge points out the way in which we may God or any other reality. We have learned as we have acted. "Knowledge is truth captured by man and domiciled in his abode; it is the specifiable structure of truth at last become specified, and

1. p. 413, Growth Of Religion, H. N. Wieman
Furthermore, it is this specified structure at last become descriptive of actual events."¹ To become more specific, religious knowledge is knowledge about what creates all human good and the conditions which man must meet to be brought under the control of this creative source of human good. Man then becomes the servant of this good and a beneficiary of it.

It is by this means that man arrives at truth by knowledge, which has been proved so that they may be said to be incorporated into beliefs. "A belief is genuine knowledge when accepted on authority, provided that authority is a record of propositions previously tested by others and their acceptance determined by evidence."

Truth that cannot be proven is not to be accepted or believed. In order to test truth there are three criteria that are set up to keep the human mind from error. These are: observation, agreement between observers, and coherence. "Observation is always a series of perceptual events in which selective attention distinguishes a structure of interrelatedness running through the series . . . Agreement means that the observers shall observe the same thing . . . Coherence means that there shall be no contradiction between the proposition alleged to be true and other propositions held to be true."³

This naturally leads to the theory of revelation, which held by many is the giving of knowledge, but as before stated, revelation is merely opening the door so that we can get a better view of truth that has become knowledge to us. It is this sudden manifestation of the creative good in the life of man

¹ p. 197, Source of Human Good, H. N. Wieman
² p. 209, ibid.
³ p. 212, ibid.
through a creative event that this source of all good has been trying to do for ages in the past. It is in the proper understanding of this manifestation of this creative good that man can say that he has found truth in a small degree as he has been able to make it knowledge to himself.

In our attempt to cover the basis for this philosophy of religion known as Theistic Naturalism, we have considered the line of argument stated upon human experience, for all human knowledge begins, continues, and ends with experience. We may know God through experience, and as we have ample proof for this experience after it is tried and tested we may say that we have arrived at truth.

The theory of revelation is built upon the idea that God is progressively discoverable by man, as man develops that sensitivity that makes it possible for him to recognize God in human experience. For God is that creative activity in our environment, shaping our lives for good as we come to an agreement with it in purpose, and with a greater desire to know more about it and to be in subservience to it, as a commitment of ourselves to the Source of all Good. Observation and reason are his means of finding cosmic reality.

The Naturalist says that man can know God only because God takes the initiative in developing and transforming the consciousness of man so that the human mind can appreciate precious reality in its character of value.
NEGATIVE BASIS FOR THEORY OF REVELATION

In consideration of Wieman's positive argument the basis for his theory of revelation, we note the opposite side of how he meets the arguments of other theories, which are namely, the Liberals, the Supernaturalists, and the Humanists.

THE LIBERALS

This group of religious thinkers have been in the tradition of Schleiermacher and Romanticism. They believe that "God, the inner purpose of the universe, speaks to us by way of religious experience." It is commonly accepted among them that to find God, one must have religious experience.

They are idealists and their God is a God of thought reached through mere logic and the religious experience, which is optimism. God cannot be found by sense perception, but by an inner experience. They claim that the soul of man can reach far down beneath the depths of this physical and sensuous world into some kind of extra-physical, extra-sensuous reality. It is then the soul is at one with God. In this mystical experience we shall find God according to the liberals.

Wieman meets their assumption with the arguments that the liberals have used the word "experience" in a way that sounded empirical, but upon closer scrutiny it merely had the flavor of being scientific, but was not really so. The word "experience" is an ambiguous word apt to be misunderstood. "Therefore when the liberal says that religious insight must meet the tests of experience he is not saying anything at all of significance unless he specifies whether he means irrational experience of rationality, or something else that is neither."

1. p. 426, Growth of Religion, H. N. Wieman
The second error that Wieman believes the liberals fall into is that of psychological introversion. This is "The attempt to validate a belief by pointing to the moral utility of it." By this is to be understood that if a person had a conscious religious experience, and it called forth in him the highest, socially accepted moral standards of the time, then it was to be concluded that the belief was true. This will not stand the test of reason, for if one believes a lie he will be influenced to act as if it were true. The subjective effects of any belief are no evidence that it is true.

It is by these two errors that liberals have been led to believe by their religious experience of optimism that good will prevail; therefore they live morally good in a conduct that is approved. They are not sure of how God may be found beyond the means of intellect plus intuition, faith, revelation, etc.

THE SUPERNATURALISTS

These are they who are of the group who believe that God is totally other than this universe. By this they mean that God is the Creator of the universe, but outside of it and greater than it. "God is not to be identified with any inner, pervasive purpose of the world. God's purpose works upon the world and through it. But it is God's purpose, not the world's purpose."

The Supernaturalist says that the only way the world-transcending God can reach the human mind is by means of faith on man's part and revelation on God's part. There is a distinction here that is carefully drawn, so there can be no confusion, because of the extreme opposites of the case, God and man.

L. p. 427, Growth of Religion, H. N. Wieman
Human reason has failed to show that there is to be found any kind of a supernatural God that has the creative and over- ruling purpose that has been taught by this faith. They claim that reason can demonstrate that the world is dependent, not able to create itself nor sustain itself, also that human reason cannot grasp the ultimate reality. Therefore the supernaturalist says the divine reality is super-rational, beyond the reach of reason.

The way to know God is by revelation and faith; intuition and myth. The person receiving this revelation may be very unable to tell you by rational procedure what God is, not how he knows that he knows, for this knowledge is a personal message given to him by divine revelation. God and he are at one with each other in a vital connection, wrought by faith.

Wiseman meets their claims in the following manner. If we follow myths, it is a question which myth shall we choose to follow. The number is great, and what shall we hold as a criteria to judge these, since no test of rationality is allowed. Myth is necessary, in religion, but must be proven by tests of observation and reason. "The mistake the supernaturalists make is to miscontinue the significance of these myths. They have thought that somehow the vivid color and emotional glow inspired by the myth constituted a new kind of super-rational truth. The error was very natural but also very obvious."

Another error found in the Supernaturalists is found in their use of paradox. They feel that paradox can give us truth that by reason could only contradict itself. Many religious truths are best expressed in paradoxes, thus they say this shows that reason

1. p. 431, Growth of Religion, H. N. Wiseman
is incompetent to grasp certain religious truths, and that they must be believed. This is an error for a true paradox is not a contradiction. Upon analysis of the paradox it will be found to be a plain statement that is not contradicting itself.

"Paradox, like myth, is often indispensable for vivid, dramatic statement. It is sometimes very laborious (and for some minds that do not delight in the fine distinction of rational analysis it may be impossible) to trace the web of rational connection which gives consistency to statements of truth that are apparently self-contradictory. Such persons are particularly gifted in setting forth to the popular mind in vivid and compulsive form the great realities of life. Such persons will rightly use myth and paradox. It would be the height of folly and pedantry to insist that they always express themselves in the form of logical consistency. But when they repudiate the tests of reason and set up as a way to the absolute goodness of God myth and paradox which do not require anything but untested 'experience' and 'untested insight' to validate them, they have set their feet on that slippery descent that plunges at last into the abyss."

THE HUMANISTS

This would be better known as theistic humanism. God is to these, the reality that is worthy of man's highest devotion. All the religious realities are found wholly within human experience, and are therefore social phenomena. "God is the power which rises up from the universe in the form of striving, climbing, idealistic imagination of man. God is the intelligent

1. P. 433, Growth of Religion, H. N. Wieman
imagination, not when it is day-dreaming, but when it is struggling after the highest and best that may ever be attained.

God is to be known, then, by scientific inquiry, namely, the science of psychology. If God is a construction of human imagination, or if God is the imagination at work in its highest capacity—in either case God is to be known by the techniques of psychological investigation."

The humanistic theism is only a branch of liberalism, for God is man. He depends upon the man-centered religious experience, which is optimism, and must be met by the same arguments as presented before.

It will be noted that continually Wieman states the two means by which he tests all knowledge: observation and reason. Whatever will not allow these two tests are cast out as impractical theories, and thus in the end his theistic naturalism, alone stands the tests.

PART II

EVALUATION OF THEORIES OF REVELATION
COMPARISON OF THEORIES
COMPARISON OF THEORIES

In consideration of the evaluation of these theories we would like to note the following points wherein they all agree:

1. All believe that God is able to reveal Himself to man. The God of these philosophies of religion is a Being that is capable of manifesting Himself to mankind. All agree not that He is omnipotent, but that in Himself is found that power that is endeavoring to break through to man's consciousness. He is revealed in the universe about us, by the way of nature. Since He is about us endeavoring to reveal Himself to man, we may consider that He is a super-human Being, the greatest power for good in the universe. Thus God becomes not an abstraction of human thought, but a concrete reality that can be known and experienced without doubt, but beyond the scope of our complete understanding.

2. All believe that man must be conditioned to receive this revelation of God.

Man is a finite being who exists for God and is the object of the revelation of God. Man can find his highest good only as it is found in God. All agree that apart from God man comes to destruction; thus man is a dependent being.

In himself man is unable to grasp in experience immediately and to receive the truth of God. He must be prepared for this manifestation of divine reality. They disagree as to how man is prepared for this, but that he is conditioned to receive it.

Man can not receive and comprehend the truth at once, because of living in subjection to that which is beneath the highest good,
God. His attention has been focused upon the inferior which is evil.

3. All believe that revelation exists.

It is agreed by these three philosophies of religion that there is an act of perceiving divine knowledge, which we designate as revelation. There is not agreement as to how and when it may happen, but that it exists. It may be known as the truth by the commitment of the self to the Good by faith. Thus man can view it without prejudice in the correct perspective.

This revelation is the comprehension of that which has been vague and indiscernible. It is the manifestation of God by some means that brings to the individual the consciousness that he has found the highest good, though only in primary manner at first, and that God shall continue to reveal Himself, until sufficient knowledge is revealed to satisfy the needs of man.

4. All believe that the Church is the guardian of the divine revelation.

The Church becomes the visible group, who should be endeavoring to live according to the revelation. They may not agree as to the definition of the term "Church," that it does exist and possesses the truth of the revelation of God, by whatever means it may be given.

Beyond these several points of similarity, the philosophies of religion differ from each other on this matter of revelation. Theistic-naturalism has nothing more in common with the other two philosophies. But as we note Supernaturalism and Neo-Supernaturalism we observe a likeness of thought on all the major points with the exception of one, known as the theory of the
Sacred Scriptures.

We find that Supernaturalism has continuously held to the idea that the Bible is the inspired Word of God. By this is meant that the Bible was written by men inspired by the Spirit of God; that there are no errors found in the original writings of the Scriptures, because under the guidance and impulsion of the Spirit of God, it was made free from errors. Thus the Bible becomes the very Word of God. This does not mean that the Bible in being translated has been kept free from error, but that in the original it was so.

Neo-Supernaturalism makes an exception on this point of verbal inspiration. It states that the Bible is an account written by man of these events that have taken place, but not directly under the supervision of the Spirit of God as to word content. Thus the Scriptures contain errors, but not of sufficient significance because man is still able to follow the steps in the experience of the writers to have, likewise, a revelation of God. Thus because it leads us to a knowledge of God, the Bible is the inspired word of God, but not verbally inspired.
CONTRAST OF THEORIES
The point of difference found between the theories is the problem of Reason versus Revelation. What can reason give man in this comprehension of divine knowledge? Is it possible that reason is not a valid means of getting an adequate knowledge of God? Does reason become insufficient, and must it be supplemented by revelation to bring this truth to man? Answers to such questions involve a wide difference of opinion in the theories of revelation as found in the doctrines of these representative men of their respective fields.

We will state briefly the statement of each:

**Neo-Supernaturalism**

Revelation is supreme in this philosophy because reason is inadequate and unable to pierce the realm of the Divine. Hence it is necessary for God to give a revelation of Himself, since man cannot find Him by means of reason. The product of man's thinking can never be correct and perfect knowledge of God, for God is totally other than man and separated by a great abyss impassable by man.

**Supernaturalism**

Revelation is held to be the leading means and the only means of apprehending knowledge of God. However, reason is not forgotten in this matter of divine knowledge. The function of reason is to understand the revelation that has been given. Man has reason so that he may comprehend the truth given. He can understand the account given in the Bible.

**Theistic-Naturalism**

The appeal is made first to experience in this philosophy of religion for God is first known by an experience that man
has with God. Up to this point reason is forgotten, but from here reason takes the major part in the interest of gaining divine knowledge by the comprehension of facts concerning God. Reason becomes the guide that interprets, leads and directs human experience in this search for God. Reason makes it possible for man to gain further knowledge from past and present experiences. Reason must be the means by which truth can be qualified and assimilated in the being of man.

After we have made these preliminary observations in the statements showing the wide contrast of these problems of reason and revelation as found in these theories, we shall continue with an enlargement of these views.
NEO-SUPERNATURALISM

Brunner agrees that both revelation and reason are in the same class when they maintain they possess truth, but they are upon different levels of knowledge. It is the purpose of the Christian believer to find truth and this is only apprehended by faith. The truth that is claimed to be found in the rational theologies cannot be taken as valid, because of the disagreement among those who hold to their respective theories of truth. This is illustrated by the varying views of Atheism, Pantheism, Idealism, and Naturalism. All of these make an appeal to truth as found in their philosophies but they will be found to be in opposition to each other. Therefore it can be said, according to Brunner, that reason leads to a dead end in the search for divine knowledge. Since this is true, there is no other means by which God can be full comprehended but by revelation of Himself to man.

Man is isolated with his own truth in this matter of divine knowledge when reason is used to find it. It is like a sphere with man as the center, even though we try to make God the center. God in human thought can never be the Subject, He is only the Object, and thus can never be known by this method. "I introduce God into the world of my thought. Nothing happens that breaks through the circle of my self-isolation. I am alone with my truth, even with my idea of God. The God whom I think is not the one who really confronts me. Nothing has happened on His side to change my situation; neither my sin nor my distress has been altered. I can, of course, interpret my sin and my distress in the light of the idea of God; thus I can give it another
meaning, I can place it in another connection; but I can not alter it, and the God whom I think out for myself also does not alter it. Neither the human nor the divine Person is able to drag me out of myself-isolation. The human person cannot do it because he cannot say or give anything to me that I do not in principle—myself possess; the divine cannot do it because it does not give me anything at all—it simply is—namely, the idea of my thought world."

This is an illustration of the limitations of rational Theism. It is possible to go just so far in this pursuit of knowledge, but from that limited point reason fails to give the ultimate truth and the God supposedly found is only the product of human thought, and thus cannot be the Absolute God, who exists beyond human limitations.

The basis of Brunner's position is built upon a supernatural revelation. In his idea of the sphere he claims that thought is unable to go beyond the "circle of immanence" that surrounds the individual. There is no real communication with God in this way, for the God of the mind is only an abstract idea that is incapable of communicating any truth to the thinker. Neither can truth be found in the communication of another person for he only has what I have, which is reason. There must be the divine-human encounter where my world is broken into by God in a revelation of truth, which is Himself. This is the beginning of a change that takes place in me, when God suddenly makes Himself known to me, and I have an absolute, self-communication.

Reason cannot conceive of that which transcends it, and is able and does break through the world of self in which the center

1. p. 366, Revelation and Reason, Emil Brunner
is known as the rational self. Reason dares not think of the possibility of a supreme Being that is beyond it and will descend to it because this Being loves this individual or individuals that He gives Himself in self-surrender unconditionally. This is the supreme event of the revelation of the Christian Faith; namely, in the Person Jesus Christ.

Revelation becomes a necessity when viewed from this point. Reason is limited and unable to cope with the situation, because God must act first, and we must exercise faith to apprehend the truth given. It is from this point of view that Brunner qualifies the concept of truth which this makes known.

He states, first, that truth happens. By this is understood that it is the revealing of a truth that already exists; i.e., does not come into existence because it has been made known; neither is it static truth. "It is, and it remains, truth only for him who enters into that Event which is Jesus Christ, and remains there. It is always true only as something that 'happens,' as grace. Therefore 'grace and truth' belong indissolubly to one another. It is genuine communication, which remains bound to the act of communication. It is the truth-of-us, which was separated from our reality and was and is united with our reality only through that happening, the eternal determination or election. It is true only in so far as it was and is posited. It is and it remains truth which has been communicated."

God addresses us then as the "Thou" who came to minister unto us in the Person Jesus Christ. In Christ is found a revelation of God, who is the God-for-us, the Being who loves man and has addressed us as such creatures.

1. p. 370, Revelation and Reason, Emil Brunner
This is truth that is given, not found by a rational process. It is an irrational element entirely different from that which has been awakened in us or that of which we have suddenly become aware. We have this truth only as we continually receive it afresh. When we receive it thus it is truly meaningful and becomes the Truth to us.

The truth is a personal encounter. The sphere of immanence has been pierced. That which has hitherto been a monologue of thought, now becomes a dialogue with revelation being received and prayer being the answer. The God who had been only an idea appears now as the Being who calls man to Himself, and we become persons for the first time. This constitutes a change that is taking place in us through this revelation of God to man.

This truth is not appropriated by the simple perception of it, but by an act of personal surrender and commitment to it. We do not possess this truth as we do other truths, rather it possesses us. We must be in this truth and we must do it. The person who really possesses the truth must live in it and obey it. The Christian expresses it as accepting the love of God in Christ, and obeying the commands of God in Christ. "Here, at one point, the great questions of human existence are solved: the question of truth or knowledge; the ethical problem, or the question of the meaning of the world and of self. He who is in this truth is one who has been, and is, redeemed."

The question that still remains unanswered is: what relation do these two truths have to each other—the truth of reason and the truth of revelation? One pertains to the world in which we live, its facts, the truth of things, its ideas; the other is

l. p. 273, Revelation and Reason, Emil Brunner
that personal truth that is not concerned with things. The relation between the two realms of truth can be illustrated as difference found in the two planes of existence. The higher takes in the lower, but the lower can never attain the higher. "God Himself thinks, but He is not a thought. God has ideas, but He is not an idea. God has a plan and creates order, but He is not a world order. God's Logos includes all the logos of reason within Himself, but He Himself is Person, the eternal Son."

There is no conflict between the two levels of truth if the proper limits are observed. The difficulty results only when the boundaries are trespassed and the truth from one realm is made to apply in another realm. Science cannot presume to unfold the mystery of God, neither can the Church presume to declare truth of the world that is not intended to be. All things are in harmony so long as man respects with holy awe the divine mystery of God. The trouble arises when man exalts reason to be god, and makes himself the center of all things, and therefore all things are out of balance. The proper placement of reason and of faith brings revelation.

1. p. 273, Revelation and Reason, Emil Brunner
SUPERNATURALISM

In consideration of this problem of revelation versus reason, we turn to consider what place Machen gives to reason in the basis of his philosophy of religion. It is taken for granted that in the mind of the Supernaturalist, the Bible is a record of supernatural revelation. The office of reason is to interpret the Scriptures that are given. It may seem to the casual observer that to correctly interpret the Scriptures is a simple matter, but such is not the case. Only through centuries of debate on these controversial issues has the ordinary man been able to understand more clearly the correct interpretation of the Bible.

In the consideration of the important place of reason in this matter we refer to the problem of deciding which of the world's sacred books should be taken as a rule of faith and practice. Narrowing the problem still further we note the place of reason in deciding the canonicity of the books of the Bible. It is in problems comparable to this that reason has been needed to participate, in order to make a correct interpretation.

There is a danger in this that reason may be so elevated that it can induce an insurrection against God. Human reason works under the limitations of a finite mind and shares in the defects of a sinful nature. It cannot speak on themes that only revelation can unfold. It transcends its prerogative when it declares that a revelation by God is impossible. Reason must never become the usurper of the throne that God is entitled to have in the individual.

In spite of her imperfections reason is given an important
place in the constitution of man. It is through reason that we find logic in our beliefs and a defense for our faith. Reason must become the modest servant of the Christian Faith.

As Machen, the Supernaturalist, would state, the place of revelation is far about reason, because it can transcend an area that is totally foreign to man's thought. A revelation brings to man truth which is impossible to be found by reason. Without this divine revelation the universe would be a riddle. Nature proposes questions to us that only the Bible can solve. Reason will be unable to bridge the great abyss found between God and man; it can only be spanned by revelation.

If reason be unduly emphasized, or unchecked by religious experience and historical revelation, it issues in rationalism and falls short of the true knowledge of God. To those who receive the truth, however, revelation becomes an organic whole. To them it is both objectively and subjectively the Christian Faith—objectively as a body of truth that has been revealed, subjectively as having become their own in faith and assurance. It is more than a mere philosophy of life, the glory of their powers of reason; and it is more than a tradition received by inheritance, however rich that might be—it is the richer inheritance of the Holy Spirit who has quickened their belief into the assurance of personal knowledge and experience. As reason did not give them this body of truth, it cannot take it away. They received it by faith, and hence live and move in that realm which is the "substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."

The Christian Faith is addressed to the believing principle
in man, and also to reason as subordinate to faith. God is revealed to man through reason, both immediately in consciousness and mediatelty through the physical and moral systems of the universe. Supernaturalism would state that there are three elements in our knowledge of God. These are known as the historical, the experimental, and the rational. It is only when all three are used together that we can have the largest knowledge of God, possible to human beings. Each of these must test, correct, and restrain the others, and at the same time clarify, verify, and supplement them. To attain this synthesis is the great problem of religious thinking, a synthesis which can only be attained through medium of the historical revelation. All of this must center in the living Christ as the fulfillment of the perfect revelation of God to man. In Him are found all of the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. The Bible is held objectively, and through it the Spirit of God may make known the truth of the revelation in a personal, continuous revelation of Himself to man. This comes as a result of faith and humbles reason so that it may receive those mysteries which it cannot understand. Faith honors reason, when thus restored to its proper place, and gives it authority over the field in which it should preside. Reason approves the evidences upon which faith rests, and therefore the whole system of redemption, the Scriptures of revelation and the voice of sound reason blend into one perfect and harmonious whole.
THEISTIC-NATURALISM

Reason has a more important role in Wieman's philosophy of religion than is found in the other two systems of religious thought. Wieman has emphasized the fact that in his philosophy he uses the scientific method to discern divine knowledge. With such a method reason comes to the front as the means by which knowledge shall be taken and judged the truth.

Wieman has stated that man is first a religious being, and that subsequent to that he becomes a rational person. Religion is the means of bringing him to the place of becoming a thinking being. Reason comes to the aid of the religious desires of man so that it acts as an uplifted arm seeking and searching for God. It serves as a guide to take the "sub-rational urge" toward the "super-rational lure." If reason is allowed to take its rightful place in the individual's life it will preserve his religious life from wreck.

Reason makes it possible for us to accumulate knowledge that would otherwise be impossible. We must make the observation that is found in our experiences and test these by a rational method to determine how we shall act in order to gain further truth. Reason must consider the results and test what shall be called truth. Therefore if we are to know God, reason must function properly and lead us past the pitfalls of the other philosophies of religion. It must also follow that as we are positive of some truth we must continue to search making use of the past experience and knowledge to add to our storehouse of truth.

We are not to take any knowledge as truth until it meets the tests of reason. Then we can say that it is truth and is valid as
such to us. Truth that cannot be proven must not be accepted by the thinking individual.

As before stated the tests of any truth are built upon the tests of observation, agreement among observers, and coherence. If it will submit to these tests it is able to be accepted as the truth. "His method is strict adherence to observation and reason. He does not decry mystical awareness nor ignore its importance for religion. On the contrary he stresses its great importance as complementary to scientific method. But mystical awareness is not knowledge, nor does it yield knowledge of God or reality, unless its synthetic grasp be subjected to such tested methods as observation and critical reflection."

We can see readily that his system is not built upon abstract thought. Divine knowledge is not the product of our reasoning, but there must precede it the experience that we identify as God, from then on we may be able to set up the criteria of God. Other philosophies of religion besides these considered in this study place reason as the sole means of arriving at the knowledge of God. Wieman is certain there is a God, and that He must be experienced as the Supreme Value of human life, working in the world for good of all life. This is the starting-point and from there progress is made toward a better knowledge of the Supreme Value, entirely by the scientific method of greater observation and complication of facts that can be reduced to certain truths by this critical reflection. "In moving toward a more adequate knowledge of God, even though we approach from

1. p. 293, American Philosophies of Religion, H. N. Wieman
afar off, three things are required: (1) a clarification of
type of experience which we call distinctly religious;
(2) an analysis or elucidation of that datum in this experience
which signifies the object being experienced (God); and (3) in-
ference concerning the nature of this object."

As we have noted the place of reason, we turn to learn what
may be considered as revelation, meaning a bursting forth of di-
vine knowledge upon the consciousness of man. Wieman would say
that it is impossible to have a historic revelation such as is
found in the Supernatural philosophies. There is no revelation,
except as the Creative Good is able to manifest to man in a cre-
ative event that which one can experience and thus test by the
scientific method. This is the only revelation that is possible.
As man continues to make progress he will be able to discern God
better than before. There is no divine revelation of supernatu-
ral knowledge; this is built alone upon man's ability to test
his experience and obtain truth.

1. p. 33, Religious Experience and Scientific Method, H. N. Wieman
TIME AND METHOD OF REVELATION
The most important problem in the mind of the writer is by what criteria shall we decide that we have become the recipients of a divine revelation? In this study it has been taken as a basic assumption that the idea of revelation exists, although there is a difference of opinion as to how and when this knowledge of divine truth may be imparted to the consciousness of the individual.

NEC-SUPERNATURALISM

If we are to take the position of the Neo-supernaturalist, we must note his view as he builds his system of religious truth. He has taken the position that divine knowledge is imparted to us through a divine revelation. As to the mode of this revelation there may be a variance, but the truth is that it suddenly bursts in upon the consciousness of the individual, and he is to accept it without further question as the answer to all his needs. He has termed this individual revelation as the Witness of the Spirit to the revelation of God in Christ. This is the personal message of the Truth as opposed to impersonal truth found in other forms of thought. Brunner would say that knowledge of this type cannot be classified as truth simply because of tradition or hearsay, but I must know for myself. What then can it be that forever seals the mind to any other form of so-called revelation, and how do we know when it is taking place?

Again we turn to the subject of the Witness of the Spirit. He says that it is the sudden breaking in of God upon the individual's world. "It is as if a door, which had been closed, is opened, and in the doorway there appears the expected One. God Himself appears in Jesus Christ; He steps out of the self-revealing
scriptures, and suddenly I become aware of two things: that Christ is truly what the Apostle claimed Him to be, and that the Apostle is a true witness."

It is not something that can be conveyed to me by another human being, but it can come only from the one who possesses this divine mystery. "Here God Himself reveals His presence; it is the experience of the presence of God in His Word." When the Holy Spirit testifies within me that the Word Christ is the Truth, I know, myself, that it is true... And since it is the Word of God which I know thus as the Truth, I know and recognize that I possess the truth, not by my own efforts, or in virtue of my own reason, but because I receive it from God." To say the least, it is a peculiar kind of knowledge that is apart from that found in or by reason. It is because of this that Brunner can denounce reason as a means of arriving at divine truth. Nor does he claim that his statements are true for anyone else, until they, likewise, have received this revelation of divine truth through the Person Jesus Christ. Brunner quotes Luther to substantiate his position, "So long as thou dost not feel it, so long hast thou certainly not yet tasted the Word of God, and thou art still hanging with thine ears on the mouth or the pen of men, and not with the bottom of thy heart to the WORD." God can only be known as He reveals Himself to us personally, apart from our self-endeavors, through reason or meditation or experience. It is super-natural.

As to the tests of this revelation, it will be found in the results. Brunner claims that the power of sin is broken in the life of the individual, who in turn, abandons the ego-centric

1. P. 169, Revelation and Reason, Emil Brunner
2. P. 171; ibid.
3. P. 178; ibid.
view of himself and becomes theo-centric. In theological terms, repentance and faith are one, as he turns from himself to God, and by faith accepts the love and mercy which are freely given by God. It is the realization that we are sinners and that Christ gave Himself for us, that causes us to give ourselves to Him in the surrender of faith. "To be able to see oneself and Jesus Christ in this light, to see through the mists of sinful error and perceive the original divine truth freshly granted to us—this is the gift of the Holy Spirit, the testimonium spiritus sancti."

Brunner does not despair of reason; rather he states we should reason to the fullest extent, but we should never try to know God by the same means that we try to know the world. We can know Him only through this revelation of Himself in the Word. It is by faith that we know. This faith is that which gives us knowledge of things which before were unknown, but are now known as certainly as we know any other fact of the world. To sum his view we make a final quotation: "True faith...is no human achievement on the basis of a human command; it is not belief on authority, a sacrificium intellectus; it is not an act of servile obedience to a law; but it is the divinely effectual miracle that man, through the illumination of the Holy Spirit, becomes able to see the truth of God in Christ Jesus. Hence this faith means the effectual working of the Holy Spirit in the spirit of man, life-renewing energy, the principle of the new birth and of sanctification. From faith of this kind spring spontaneously the good movements of the will...This faith is not merely related to the 'being' of the person; it is rather

1. p. 174, Revelation and Reason, Emil Brunner
the coming to birth of a new person; it is the rebirth, the restoration of the defaced image of God; for it is the break with man's sinful autonomy, and his return to the original 'theonomy' of the man who has been created in the image of God."

The question of the theory of knowledge is the most baffling in the whole system of Brunner. As was stated before reason may not be used as a guide in helping us to discern truth from error. It is given entirely by faith in the revelation of this knowledge of God. No attempt is made to classify this knowledge. It is simply given by faith and answered by "we know because we know." It is the idea that God will make it plain to us, so that there needs be no doubt in our minds regarding it.

The results of the revelation of the Word will vindicate the position, so that the individual shall be assured that it is valid truth, so necessary for life. There is no answer to this, except as it is discarded completely. There can be no tests of reason applied, so that we either accept or reject it completely. No appeal is made to tradition or present authority. It is the claim that it is a knowledge, totally apart from all other knowledge.
SUPERNATURALISM

Dr. Machen has taken the position with the traditional supernaturalists, that all divine knowledge that we have has come to us in the words of the Sacred Scripture. They are our only rule of faith and practice. We must accept them by faith and in the acceptance is found that convincing proof that this is truth.

In answer to the question of how we may receive a revelation of divine knowledge that becomes personal, we refer to the same argument that is used by Brunner. It is at this point that there is not much variance in the teachings of both groups. They both agree upon the ministry of the Holy Spirit, and therefore by means of the Spirit, we are able to know truth that is before inaccessible. There is some difference in the use of terms between the two groups, but in the mind of the writer, they are used to identify the same experience.

Faith becomes the means by which knowledge is given and grasped by the individual exercising faith. "True faith . . . is always based upon knowledge. But true faith is not only based upon knowledge, but also it leads to more knowledge." From this we may understand that a person must be convinced of the truth of a certain statement or number of statements, and then as he has this knowledge, he is enabled to exercise his faith, and receive a greater knowledge that substantiates the first knowledge learned. It is the confidence that as we believe, assurance of what we believe will be given, proving that we have the truth which makes men free.

1. p. 231, What is Faith, J. G. Machen
It is at this point that both the Supernaturalists and the Neo-Supernaturalists agree. If it be an error for one, it is the same for the other. It is a personal kind of knowledge received in a way opposed to reason. However, reason is employed considerably in the Supernaturalist position; reason becomes a way of producing logical proof for the system of belief.

Another way of expressing the means of acquiring knowledge in this philosophy of religion is that of belief in certain doctrines as being true, and then seeking those sources of grace and salvation which these teachings declare to be necessary if man is to have access to the world of the supernatural, which is God.

The whole system of knowledge is built upon the accepting of the Sacred Scriptures as the truth of God. They become not only a record, but a source of truth that can be used in all ages as the revelation of God to man inspired of God, and given in His mercy to man.

The danger in this philosophy of religion, is that of destruction of the Book. It is therefore very important that a decisive stand be taken by the Supernaturalist to protect his Bible, for if higher criticism is able to destroy it effectively, he has lost the foundation of his truth, even though the final proof of the truth may come by the Witness of the Spirit.

Therefore we may sum the answer to the question that we must believe what is given as the truth, and look for increased knowledge, which they teach will come to the believing mind.
THEISTIC- NATURALISM

From the point of view of the Theistic-Naturalist, we must ascertain the type of experience that is going to become the initial experience which we call a manifestation of God to our consciousness. The claims are that God is in the world trying to impress upon us the truth, which we may determine for ourselves. Wieman has expressed that God as the Supreme Value is that force found in the world, that shapes our lives toward the progressive attainment of mutual support and meaning. He has set forth four reasons for determining that God is this growth that makes for the Supreme Value:

1. In it the greatest value than can ever be experienced at any time is always to be found.

2. It carries the highest possibilities of value, possibilities reaching far beyond the specific meanings we know now.

3. All increase of value is found in it.

4. The best conceivable world can be approximated in existence to some degree through this growth, and in no other way.

Then to justify his claim that this Supreme Value is God, he states the following reasons:

1. Growth of meaning commands our supreme devotion and highest loyalty by right of its worthfulness.

2. It creates and sustains human personality.

3. It carries human personality to whatsoever highest fulfillments are possible to it.

4. It has more worth than personality, hence human personality finds its highest destiny in giving itself to this growth

1. p. 51, Normative Psychology of Religion, H. N. Wieman
to be mastered, used and transformed by it into the fabric of emerging values.

5. The greatest values can be poured into human life only as we yield ourselves to the domination and control of this growth. When we try to dominate and use it, we lose these values.

With these reasons for God as Supreme Value in the universe, we must then, according to Wieman, decide which experience gives a fragment of truth. It may be true that if we follow his thought we shall finally arrive at the same destination, in the finding of some knowledge we call God. With this standard to measure our experiences we shall finally come to know ultimate truth by means of the scientific method.
CONCLUSION

After a study of the theories of revelation as taught by these men, the writer holds to a modified form between Brunner's and Machen's theory, with more emphasis than Brunner places on the inspiration of the Scriptures, yet not the limit that Machen takes. In the mind of the reader, it may seem that there is no difference, but the writer feels there is a point that divides the two, which can make for a conservative position.

The Supernatural theories give satisfaction to the writer as they give assurance and knowledge found in no other theory or philosophy of religion. It is true, that it is a knowledge, beyond the scope of reason and not subject to the tests of the scientific method, because of the personal nature of this knowledge; but, when accepted by faith it leaves the possessor assured that he has the ultimate truth and can forever close his mind to other truths, because they are of a lower level.

Dr. Wieman's theory is rejected on the ground that the naturalistic theory may be only human knowledge. The activity that he designates as the activity of Creative Good may be only that activity found in the human personality and spirit. God would become then a force moving in man, and as such would be sub-human instead of super-human. In theory such as this there could be no revelation of truth, but only seeking for greater human knowledge. Beyond this there remains no God to worship--only an impersonal force, an activity in the world.
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