

The Decline of Theology in America

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This, at this last lecture I am delivering in this institute, I must say that the institute has been a very disappointing affair. Now, I do not mean Dr. [Leon] Morris was disappointing. He brought us wealth and riches which, by long years of patient scholarship, he mined from the Gospel of John. Nor was Dr. [Elmer] Smick disappointing. I only wish I could make philosophy as interesting as archaeology is. And then we had an amazing example of pulpit oratory, very profitable. And then it was not disappointing in the arrangements of the institute. Dr. [Gerard] Van Gronigen and others who attended to the practical details despatched them with great efficiency. But it has been a disappointing institute. I only got one game of chess in with Bob Strong. And the result was devastating. Oh my! It was a draw.

The previous lecture began with the moral principles of the Puritans and then contrasted them with our contemporary moral anarchy. It has always been clear that the Puritans derived their ethics from the ten commandments and the God who gave them. What is not always so clear is that competing systems, and even anarchy, must also presuppose or imply a particular theological position. Some systems may deliberately announce a different kind of God and then deduce their ethics from their concept of deity. More frequently, however, a system of ethics is erected on an independent foundation and a type of deity is then manufactured to suit the ethics.

This latter procedure is an inheritance from Immanuel Kant. Particularly well-exemplified by Newman Smith's very popular and widely influential *Christian Ethics*, first published in 1892, reprinted in 1922, and was the textbook in many seminaries for many years.

Joseph Fletcher and his situational ethics, though less scholarly, is still a clear case in point. In fact, still clearer, because more radical. Any attempt to justify murder, adultery, and false witness cannot merely reject the ten commandments, it must also reject the God of the ten commandments, for ethics cannot stand alone. A theology is always entailed.

For this reason, the popular objections to Puritanism, picturing them as stern, stark, and sour, cannot rise above caricature. The serious and penetrating criticisms must always be based on a prior rejection of Puritan theology. And if the opponents wish to propose a different system of ethics, they too must furnish it with a different theology. Therefore, today's lecture aims to the consider the course of theological opinion over the past 200 years.

Naturally, the American theological heritage cannot be restricted to the Puritans. There were Baptists and Presbyterians. Also before the year 1800 the Methodism of John Wesley was organized in this country.

It is in the larger context of all these groups that the history of American theology must be studied. The original colonists, whether Puritan, Baptist, Presbyterian, or even Methodist, they based their theological principles on the Bible. In some respects they differed in their interpretation of the Bible, for the Baptists rejected infant baptism, and the Methodists rejected the Calvinism of the other three groups. But they all agreed that the Bible was the sole source of theological information. They also agreed on the doctrine of the Trinity, and at least on some of the elements of the vicarious atonement, and some form of the doctrine of justification by faith. And they accepted the occurrence of miracles by supernatural power.

This briefly is the position of Protestant orthodoxy. Now Protestant orthodoxy, or what is properly called evangelicalism, as is obvious to everyone who lives here, has suffered serious reverses in the United States. The first departure from the faith occurred when some Puritan churches succumbed to Unitarianism. In America, King's Chapel Boston, the oldest Episcopal church of New England, under the leadership of James Freeman, was in 1785, or if you count a different way, in 1787, the first congregation to become Unitarian.

History books often fasten upon such dates as these as marking a transition in the course of events. But as evangelicals, and especially as Calvinists, we ought to be aware of the fact that no such Unitarian congregation could have been organized unless previous to the organization there were already many individuals who had lost their faith.

Some historians trace this declension to the halfway covenant of Jonathan Edwards' grandfather Solomon Stoddard, and in fact even to John Cotton before him. Administering baptism to the children of unbelieving parents, and considering the Lord's Supper to be a converting ordinance for unbelievers, were results of the Puritan attempt to restrict civil citizenship to Christians. This engendered hypocrisy in those with political ambitions, and it also made church privileges a civil right.

Because of this, Unitarians could use civil courts to obtain control of Puritan property. In 1818, the voters of the parish of Dedham, Massachusetts forced the appointment of a Unitarian pastor of the protest of the large majority of church members. The majority withdrew, but sued for their property. This was in the 1800's, not the 1900's. In 1821, Judge Parker of the state supreme court firmly awarded all the assets to the Unitarians. Legally, this was probably the right decision for the church property belonged to the state and not to the church members. Whether the judge was religiously biased or not, and whether or not the Unitarians acted legally, we cannot condone the further organized efforts of the Unitarians to bar the Puritans from their buildings, dismiss their ministers, and take control. There was indeed an organized effort, not by the voters at large, but by the Unitarian machine. Nor do we merely guess at the Unitarian intentions, for they put their plans on paper and boasted of their successes. Only four years after Judge Parker's decision, this would be 1825, William E. Channing was able to organize the American Unitarian Association. The deplorable morals of these people are clearly documented by Ernest Gordon in *The Leaven of the Sadducees*.

It may be noted that even in the year of 1976, the two-hundredth anniversary of our country, similar troubles beset us. But whereas Judge Parker awarded the property to the majority of those who had a good title to it, today's courts frequently award church properties to minorities whose title is at least doubtful. For example, my own congregation voted unanimously not to merge with an apostate organization. Moreover, our congregation had a quitclaim deed to its property. Yet those who gave us the quitclaim deed changed their minds after the merger, invalidated the deed in court, and took the property.

What is perhaps more painful to believers than the injustice of the civil courts is the unpleasant fact that many individuals, before any suit is filed, have already lost whatever faith they may have had. Or, more accurately, the children of a believing generation, though they became members of the church, never professed the faith, never possessed the faith they professed.

However disastrous Unitarianism was for New England, and however far its force extended beyond the Northeast, the main factor in the decline of Biblical faith was not the organized Unitarian denomination. Undoubtedly, Unitarianism had a widespread deleterious influence, but the collapse of Protestant churches in America is more directly due to the work of Friedrich Schleiermacher, a German theologian of the early 19th century.

Though the year 1800 may seem like Greek antiquity to the willing victims of the generation gap, it is essential to speak of Schleiermacher for his work resulted in a restructuring of Protestantism on a completely new foundation. One of the factors in Schleiermacher's development was the French enlightenment. It had left him without belief in revelation, miracles, or the supernatural. Nevertheless, he was convinced that the essential core of Christianity was sound and could be defended against its detractors. To rescue Christianity from doubts concerning the veracity of Biblical history and from the vagaries of highly metaphysical and speculative theology, Schleiermacher proposed as a basis for religion the undeniable empirical fact of religious experience.

This proposal of his was partly the result of German Pietism. The Pietists had always been mildly orthodox, that is they never denied the creedal theology, but their greatest emphasis was concentrated on personal experience.

The influence of Immanuel Kant is also seen here. He had sought the contents of science in experience, in strictly sensory experience. But outside the sphere of knowledge, he also made a place for morality and a religion based on morality. Here Schleiermacher saw an opening for faith and a religion of non-sensory experience. With this he sought to do battle with the irreligion of the enlightenment.

Let us rephrase this a little bit. Previous Christianity had been too intellectual. Religion, Schleiermacher held, is essentially emotional. For Schleiermacher, religion originates in a feeling of absolute dependence. This feeling guarantees the value of religion. By analyzing this feeling of absolute dependence, one arrives at the doctrines of theology. For example, since the

dependence is absolute, we may infer the existence of God. In general, Schleiermacher thought he was able to derive a great many Christian doctrines by psychological analysis. The doctrine of the Trinity, the miracle of the virgin birth, and the sacrament of the Lord's Supper were all, more or less, obtainable in this way. But only more or less.

A superficial view may find a great number of Christian doctrines in Schleiermacher, but a more penetrating view will find each one altered. The basic reason all these doctrines are altered is that Schleiermacher has substituted religious experience for supernatural revelation. This is his decisive break with all previous Christian history. How this affects the several doctrines is easy to understand. For one thing, every doctrine becomes tentative. We cannot have confidence in the truth of a doctrine because either or both of two difficulties may intervene. First, we may not have been accurate in our analysis of experience. And second, religious experience itself may change. These two difficulties do not attach to supernatural revelation. But for Schleiermacher every doctrine must be tailored to fit human experience.

To show concretely how this deviates from previous Christianity, two or three doctrines may be used as examples. The Lord's Supper perhaps can be defended as a particularly appropriate expression of our religious experience. No one could quarrel with the idea of having some sort of fraternal meal. If, of course, the idea of a fraternal meal is a satisfactory definition of the Lord's Supper. But whatever the case may be with the Lord's Supper, it is obviously difficult to derive the doctrine of the Trinity by an analysis of one's feelings. And it may be said, the virgin birth is surely impossible so to obtain. Indeed, even knowledge of God becomes impossible.

Schleiermacher's own position was that although experience gives us some knowledge of God's relation to us, it gives us no knowledge at all of what God is in himself. In Kantian terms, we have a phenomenal God, but the noumenal God is totally hidden. Perhaps there is no noumenal, transcendent, real God at all, for another factor plays a puzzling role in Schleiermacher's philosophical and theological activity. In theology, Schleiermacher adjusted his phraseology so as to conform as much as possible to the traditional view of the German churches. But in philosophy he was a pantheist. He did not believe that God is an individual self-conscious being independent of the world and sovereign in himself. This disbelief in a personal God, certainly disbelief in a tri-personal God is difficult with his attempts to appear essentially Christian. In fact, it empties traditional terminology of all Christian content.

Even if we disregard Schleiermacher's philosophic pantheism and confine our discussion to his theology, his accommodating procedure no longer disguises the fact that Schleiermacher broke completely with orthodox Christianity because he provides his theology with a totally different foundation. The Trinity, the virgin birth, and the Lord's Supper, which we use simply as three examples of Christian belief, are based, and can only be based on supernatural revelation.

Once revelation is superseded by experience, and theology developed by analysis, nothing specifically Christian can remain. In fact, no theology at all can remain if we use the term theology in its etymological sense. Theology, by name, is a theory, a knowledge, or a science of

God. God is the object that theology talks about. Schleiermacher's object is a subjective emotional or feeling. Instead of theology, Schleiermacher substituted the psychology of religious experience. Fifty years after his death, his theology was introduced into America under the name of modernism. And under this name it came to dominate Protestantism during the first quarter of this century.

Whether or not Schleiermacher saw all the implications of his new religion, many ordinary ministers, charmed with a pietistic emphasis on experience and somewhat overawed by the weight of German scholarship, failed to see the implications. The sudden, decisive break with historic Christianity that has so easily been clarified in the foregoing analysis, was obscured in the weekly life of the American churches. What happened was more gradual. The trend was documented in the Literary Digest, precursor of Time and Newsweek. This journal, if anyone can find the issues from 1910 on, consistently advocated modernism in its religious section. It chronicles a decline in doctrinal interest and an increase in practical activity so popular with pragmatic Americans. Slowly, therefore, one at a time, doctrines failed to survive the empirical test of experience and one at a time they faded out.

In theory, the first reason for discarding one Christian doctrine after another, is the difficulty of deciding what is and what is not essential to Christianity. Schleiermacher, you recall, in opposition to the enlightenment, claimed to preserve the essence and true value of Christianity by discarding its historical husks. But this is the difficulty, what is essence and what is husk? One person may believe that Christ's resurrection is essential, but not the virgin birth. Someone else might assert that the fatherhood of God is essential, but not the Trinity. When once the basis of theology has been shifted from divinely revealed truth to personal experience, each theologian can identify what is essential only on the basis of his personal preference. No criterion of choice is imposed on all theologians and each takes and leaves what he wants and eventually everything is discarded.

In order to escape complete subjectivity, some contemporary theologians argue as sensory experience guarantees objectivity in science, which it doesn't, so religious experience imposed natural on all men by the fact of its occurrence, is a universal criterion for theology. But here a second consideration indicates both a practical advance and a theoretical embarrassment for modernism. It has to do with the difficulty of identifying religious experience and distinguishing it from non-religious experience. Schleiermacher had located religion in a feeling of dependence. Some very recent authors center religion in aesthetics, especially music. But at the turn of the century, religious experience was identified with a strong ethical sense of obligation to improve society and establish socialism in government. What can be more objective than political agitation? Thus the modernists of 1900 to 1915, using the Biblical phrase, "the kingdom of God," proclaim the universal brotherhood of man and work for the improvement of society.

The urge to build the kingdom of God on earth without supernatural intervention, is perhaps the most characteristic aspect of modernism. Discarding the Biblical, eschatological, apocalyptic material, the modernists, both in Europe and in America, relied on socialistic politics.

In the United States the name of Walter Rauschenbusch probably leads the list of theologians, or better, sociologists of this type. It was just about the year Rauschenbusch died, 1918, that the interchurch world movement intervened in a steel strike and this action is a measure of the Protestant church's acceptance of Rauschenbusch's sociology.

Sociology rather than theology is the better word because in this type of thought the idea of God recedes into the background. At any rate, it is no exaggeration to say that the modernistic notion of God differs fundamentally from that of the Apostle Paul, St. Augustine, and John Calvin. Not only is the idea of God different, but since the psychology of experience changes all doctrines, these thinkers had a different idea of man as well. Protestant orthodoxy taught that man was a sinner, depraved in all his parts and functions and therefore desperately in need of divine grace. Modernism took the opposite and apparently more optimistic view. The title of a well known book was *Moral Man in Immoral Society*. But the result was not so optimistic as the intent. Murderers were not wicked, they were sick and society was to blame. No criminal was to be punished, that would be irrational revenge. Accordingly capital punishment was to all intents abolished and violence has engulfed the nation.

Before this violence reached this height, two factors caused modernism to crumble. Faith in the goodness of human nature was somewhat shaken by World War 1 and badly damaged by World War 2. Therefore, those who wish to preserve some religious or even semi-Christian emphasis turned to neo-orthodoxy. The second factor that caused modernism to crumble was more internal. It was the inherent logic of the basic modernistic principles. The more advanced modernists saw that if religion is to be based on experience, nothing of Christianity, nothing even of general theism could remain. Consistency requires all-out humanism. The humanist therefore demanded a stricter adherence to experience.

If religion is the method for satisfying human needs, or at least human desires, the humanist, instead of seeking God, seeks integration of personality or general satisfaction. Should anyone wish to retain the term God, Professor H. N. Wieman will redefine God as "that character of events to which man must adjust himself in order to obtain the greatest goods and avoid the greatest evils." Maybe that makes H. E. W. God.

[Audience Laughter]

Many humanists however, think it is more honest to stop using the term God because most people and the English language do not think of God as a complex of selected events. The word religion on the other hand is sufficiently elastic to be unobjectionable and the prominent humanist Edward A. Burt, defines religions as "wholeheartedly absorption in whatever envisioned greatness empirically brings integrity of selfhood." I'll read that over again, it is a good one. It's much better than the shorter catechism. What is God? All right, religion. "Wholeheartedly absorption in whatever envisioned greatness empirically brings integrity of selfhood."

The two definitions, the one of God and the one of religion, which are the inevitable results of Schleiermacher's rejection of Scriptural revelation, highlight two difficulties in the empirical position. First, religious experience cannot be identified, and second, experience in general cannot furnish any moral norms.

Now first, religious experience, as distinguished from non-religious and therefore irrelevant experience, cannot be identified. If it is not a feeling of dependence nor music, neither can it be socialistic politics. If it is whatever envisioned greatness that empirically unifies personally, then Hitler and Stalin are the two greatest saints of the 20th century. On the basis of empirical humanism, religion can be no more than an individual's private preference for his own type of life and no one can logically object.

But second there is a greater difficulty. Neither music nor sports nor mysticism enables anyone to deduce theological, or even sociological conclusions. Such a religion is totally vacuous. Prodigality and miserliness, contemplation and politics, and in politics, communism and capitalism are equally well-deduced as desirable because none of them are deduce-able at all.

There were some modernists, however, who recoil from the secular and atheistic implications of the humanists. Rejecting both the blind optimism and the worship of man, they wanted something that sounded like Christianity. They discovered that Karl Barth, a new luminary, had brought to light the earlier work of an erratic Danish author, Soren Kierkegaard. His new religion, claiming to be the old religion, spoke of God and man's subservience to God. Barth also spoke of a revelation that came straight down to man from heaven. He even mentioned the Trinity and the resurrection.

The center of Barth's attack on modernism is the charge that modernism had substituted man for God. Not only was man thought to be so good that war was impossible, man was also considered naturally competent to solve all the problems of religion. Barth now saw that with such confidence, God was no longer necessary. Modernism leaves no place for revelation. Unlike the Reformation preachers who preached the word of God, the modernist preachers preached science, psychology, politics, and anthropology on their own authority. Without a message from God, the preacher had to rely on his person piety, on his own intellectual biography with the result that, the preacher, instead of proclaiming God, proclaimed only himself. Barth's heroic stand against Hitler won him widespread admiration in America. The massacre of the Jews refuted the optimistic view of human nature with its doctrine of the brotherhood of man and an imminent socialistic kingdom of God.

Barth's earlier colleague, Emil Bruner, came to Princeton for two years and popularized the new theology. The result was that many seminaries embraced what is now called neo-orthodoxy and terms like encounter, confrontation, revelation, the word of God, became and still are frequent in preaching and publication.

There is however, at least to my way of thinking, a great flaw in Barth's theology. Yet this flaw has been as well received, and perhaps even more enthusiastically received, than his salutary emphasis on the word of God.

Modernism and humanism believe that scientific thought and human ingenuity could solve all personal and social problems. Religion became a type of engineering. Supernaturalism was ruled out as obscurantist. Complete dependence on science without revelation was part of modernism's optimism.

Now, as war shattered the brotherhood of man in actual practical life, Barth and Brunner introduced the notion of paradox to shatter the competency of reason. Man, so they said, faced insoluble problems. God himself could not solve them. Mystery is at the heart of things. And conceptual thought is incapable of grasping reality.

In later life Barth decreased his emphasis on paradox, though he never totally repudiated it. Bruner continued his irrationalism. Faith, he said, must curb logic. One must not accept the implications of one's own principles. Both sides of the contradiction must be believed, and God can speak his word to man in false propositions.

So fatal a logical flaw can confidently be expected to undermine the whole construction. Barth had accused Modernism of substituting man for God. Since the modernists had no divine message they could preach only themselves. Against this deification of man, Barth saw the need for a message from God. Only a divine norm can judge between Hitler and Churchill, between capitalism and socialism, between Jesus and Barabbas. But that of which Barth so clearly saw the need, Barth could not supply. Paradox provides no word from God. Contradictions do not constitute a divine message. Existential interpretation is a quicksand of fantasy. As this applies to theology, so it applies to the principles of morality. When the truth is also false, the evil is also good. Irrationalistic as neo-orthodoxy is, it is nevertheless the dominant active force in American protestantism today.

Though neo-orthodoxy may be the dominant force today, it does not remain pure Barthianism. A new element has modified it, and modified it considerably. Strange to say, this new element derives from logical positivism. The Vienna School, Bertrand Russell, Ludwig Wittgenstein, and Herbert Feigl can hardly be ranked among the defenders of religion. Their philosophy was one of scientism <French phrase>. Statements about God were not merely false, they were meaningless. No statement could be other than nonsense unless it were verifiable or falsifiable by sensory observation. If you look at a yellow cat and say that the cat is black, observation proves your statement is false. But if you say "God controls the universe" or that "God is just" or anything about God, your sentence has no meaning whatever. There is no sensory evidence for either its truth or falsehood. Accordingly, theology and metaphysics are nonsense.

Though logical positivism seems an unlikely source of religious advance, its attention to language and the resulting schools of language analysis have now greatly influenced religious

writing. Nor is this influence confined to Bultmann's program of demythologizing. Authors less obviously heretical make use of these principles. For example, Frank Colquhoun, who writes under the aegis of the evangelical alliance, in his booklet titled "The Fellowship of the Gospel" page 53 says "Purity of doctrine can never in fact be safeguarded by creedal systems. This is due in part to the fact that human language is, at the best, an inadequate instrument for defining and expressing the truth of God."

This statement may not be so blunt as Brunner put it, but it sounds very familiar to his assertion, that God and the medium of conceptuality are mutually exclusive.

Kenneth Hamilton, in his book, the title, "Words and The Word" tries to alleviate the alleged inadequacy of language by an appeal, a deceptive appeal to Scripture. Unlike literal scientific language, religious language, Hamilton holds, is not literal, but parabolic. Parabolic language is an advance beyond poetic language. The parable stories must not be understood as literal truth. They do not even refer to literal truth. They are something else. But what else they are, and what they mean, remains obscure.

A parable is an illustration, but no one can know what it illustrates. The same is true with Hordern's theory also. Instead of relying on parables, as Hamilton did, he chooses to invent a whole new language. Ordinary scientific language and even colloquial language has subjects, and predicates, rules of logic, rules of grammar. But in addition to scientific language there is also a personal language. No doubt Hordern's theory is a development from the it/thou distinction of Martin Buber and its application of Emil Brunner.

But neither Brunner, nor Hordern can make the distinction clear. Take Brunner first. His chief example of "thou-truth" is Peter's confession "thou art the Christ." But when Peter turns from facing Christ and addresses the crowds at Pentecost, Peter says "he is the Christ." By changing the sentence from the second person the third, Peter has descended from the spiritual heights of thou-truth, to the inadequate language of it-truth. He has fallen from divine encounter to human theology. Remarkable.

[Audience laughter]

How a change from the second person to the third person makes the latter a different kind of truth, remains incomprehensible. Hordern's theory is no clearer than Brunner's. Although he writes at length about this personal language, he does not formulate its grammar, nor state its rules of logic. If some of his sentences are supposed to be examples of this other kind of language, how such sentences differ from ordinary language is nowhere explained.

More fundamental than the technical inadequacies in describing these new languages, are the basic assumptions which necessitated invented them in the first place. The reason religious writers have come to stress the inadequacy of ordinary language is that they have, to a greater or lesser degree, accepted the theory that language is an evolutionary development from the

cries and squeals of animals. A bit up the evolutionary scale, William Hordern, at the beginning of his book, "Speaking of God" asks, "How can we take words that have been coined to speak about creaturely things and use these earth-bound tools to speak about the transcendent God?"

Such a question can be asked only on the assumption that all language has developed out of sensory experience. If one rejects the thesis that mankind has somewhat arbitrarily coined all words for the purpose of earth-bound reference, the problem disappears. Indeed there is something more profound than this. Quite possibly all words have been somewhat arbitrarily coined, but what the language analysts miss is the concepts of which the words are symbols. This is particularly true of the large majority who are behaviorists.

Reducing all language to mere sounds in the air without any spiritual entity which they symbolize, they make thought and reference impossible. But even when thought is distinguished from words, the result is not much better. For example, Brunner expressly distinguished between words and thoughts and then insisted that our thoughts, as little as our words, can refer to God. None of this can be defended except on the basis of a completely empirical philosophy.

Hordern also makes knowledge of God impossible, but he does it in a slightly different way. Confronted with the behavioristic view of the logical positivists, he generously refuses to object to their verification principle. In their construction, metaphysics and theology are indeed nonsense. They are as much nonsense as a strike or a basket is nonsense in football. This illustration is apt because Hordern, following Wittgenstein, speaks of language games. Those who wish to play the scientific game must play it by the rules of the game. And in that game only sensory verifiable assertions are permitted.

Just as one must not kick a baseball, nor bat a football, the rules of scientific language forbid metaphysical and theological propositions. Hordern here has a telling refutation of scientism. And as an athlete may choose football instead of basketball, so a religious man may choose theology rather than science. The theological language game is not bound by the rules of the scientific language game. Every game has its own rules. Therefore, scientists have no justification for prohibiting other games. This is indeed a telling refutation of logical positivism, but the victory for religion is won only at the expense of reducing both science and religion to the status of games.

That language is not a series of games, each with its own rules, among which everyone may choose as he pleases, is irrefutably demonstrated by the laws of logic. The basic law of logic is the law of contradiction. Now, if logic were a series of games, it would be possible to select a set of rules that did not include the law of contradiction. What would the result be?

One application of the law of contradiction is that the word *dog* cannot mean *not dog*. Nor can the word *cat* mean *elephant*. In an argument, each term must retain its original meaning from the beginning to the end. Now if our language game were played by a different set of rules, one

could say, all cats have tails, therefore elephants have wings. This argument is possible because without the law of contradiction, the word *cat* can mean both cat and elephant, and as well the word *tails* means wings. But under this condition language would disappear, for no one could possibly know what anyone else meant. Language is therefore not a game whose rules we make up for the fun of it. Logic imposes itself magisterially on everyone who thinks. And even on some people who talk.

[Audience laughter]

In spite of logical positivism and language analysis, in spite of Barthianism and modernism, and despite the remoter influence of Schleiermacher and Unitarianism, there still remain in America the remnants of Puritanism and Calvinism. One thing can be said in favor of Calvinism and Calvin. They are accused of being too logical, too virtuous, too consistent. Throughout history they have been known as well for their logic as for their doctrine of predestination. This is an accusation we accept as high praise. For the Calvinist, language is neither a game nor an empirical evolution for earthly needs. Language is a gift from God, the purpose of which is, first of all, the reception and understanding of verbal revelation. And then our verbal response to God. God as the author of language, constructed it to be the adequate means of divine expression, and the adequate means of human expression of divine truths.

We do not consider inadequacy and ambiguity a virtue. We do not identify spirituality with muddled thinking. We believe that Christ is the *Logos*, the wisdom, the logic, of God whose words, whose clear unambiguous words are spirit and are life. If we guard his doctrine, we shall never see death ever. Our yea will be yea and our nay nay. And our speech will be yea and amen. For God dwelleth in light unapproachable and full of glory in whom there is no inadequacy at all and with whom there is no ambiguity nor shadow cast by turning. God is truth and to know him is eternal life.