

EDITORIAL

Crucial to an analysis of the tensions in modern theology is an understanding of the subject of divine revelation. All too frequently present day theologians are not familiar with the use and significance of this term in the history of doctrine nor with the biblical data from which this concept emerged. To this issue the following studies in this volume should provide further insight and understanding.

Timely indeed is the critical yet constructive evaluation Dr. Preuss provides in his discussion of modern views prevailing on the subject of divine revelation. With keen insight he points out the ambivalent usage of this term by modern writers. Delving into the inconsistent way in which the doctrine of revelation is used currently he critically analyzes the contextual passages of current theologians and then offers a fair evaluation in terms of the biblical basis for divine revelation. The consequences of a hazy view of revelation suggested by Dr. Preuss are worthy of serious consideration by every Christian scholar who desires to provide biblically based and constructive leadership in guiding the Christian Church today.

Exegesis and interpretation of Scripture are vitally affected by a theologian's view of revelation as well as inspiration. This is apparent in the scholarly insights provided in the three studies in this issue on the subject of prophets. Book after book published since the turn of the twentieth century reflects a non-biblical view of divine revelation. Very frequently the naturalistic interpretation prevails without any consideration for the supernatural.

Prophets were deeply involved in God's communication to man. If a prophet was actually delivering a message for God the question of its origin is crucially significant. Did he produce it as a result of an ecstatic experience or through his keen intellectual insight and analysis of current events or was it divinely revealed? Did God actually speak in some manner to the prophets and accompany this message with confirmation through miracles?

All too frequently extended studies have been published on the subject of prophets that reflect merely a cultural approach without a biblical perspective of divine revelation. Added to this is the assumption that the religion of the Israelites was adapted from contemporary culture. It is at this point that the biblical scholar needs to apply a keen sense of critical analysis. A simple word study on "ecstasy" or "high places" must be carefully evaluated on the basis of the biblical context. Immediately a scholar's viewpoint is affected by his perspective on divine revelation. If the Pentateuch for instance represents the religion revealed through Moses then subsequent references should be interpreted on this basis. If the Pentateuch is post-Davidic then some of the so-called "creative prophets" proposed new ideas which were later incorporated in the Pentateuch after the prophetic era.

If we consider the Scriptures to be God's Word through which God has made Himself known to mankind then we dare not be indifferent to the confusion that prevails currently as to divine revelation. Rather recently I had an extended discussion with a fine group of inquisitive scholarly philosophy students. In protestant writings their exposure was limited to the reading of Bultmann's *Kerygma and Myth*. They were quite concerned as to the possibility that Scripture revealed anything as certain. One student seriously posed the problem of any certainty in the Bible if one could not be sure that Jesus said that He was the way, the truth, and the life. This perhaps expresses the ultimate hopelessness when we are not sure that human language can contain God's Word.

S.J.S.