

THE POSTULATE OF PARADOX

VERNON C. GROUNDS, Ph.D.

I.

As evangelicals all of us, I suppose, bristle indignantly if we are charged with adherence to a fideistic irrationalism. A fideistic irrationalism indeed! Our Gospel, we vehemently assert, is the embodiment of reason—belief-ful reason, to be sure, sanctified reason, if one prefers so to characterize it, but reason nevertheless. Intolerant of contradiction and wary of anything akin to a Kantian antinomy, we delight to quote John McTaggart's dictum: "None ever went about to break logic, but in the end logic broke him."¹ Proclaiming a God Who cannot contradict Himself and Whose very nature therefore supplies the laws of thought, we argue—most of us, at any rate—that our faith ought to be accepted precisely because of its intellectual cogency. Wholeheartedly we endorse what one of my own professors, Edwin Lewis, wrote: Christianity

is capable of being construed into a *Weltanschauung*—a total view of things—to which there is nowhere any comparison. The Christian view, even when not accepted as "revelation," but regarded as solely the result of human reflection may still be shown to be infinitely more "reasonable" than anything given us by naturalism, vastly more satisfying, and profoundly congruous with man's own deepest nature.²

Yet as an evangelical I find myself wondering whether we self-confessed Bibliocists are unintentionally disloyal to the logic of Biblicism. I wonder whether we are so ensnared by alien principles that we refuse to take seriously the postulate of paradox, a postulate without which evangelicalism ceases to have an evangel. I wonder again and again whether we are prepared to follow out—shall I say logically?—the consequences of Paul's avowal:

The preaching of the cross is to them that perish, foolishness; but unto us which are saved, it is the power of God. For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom: But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness; But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God (I Corinthians 1:18-24).

Yes, I seriously wonder whether we had better not reconstruct our apologetic and, instead of keeping paradox hidden from sight like a deformed imbecile of whom we are ashamed, welcome it proudly into the very throne-room of theology—a kind of Cinderella at long last discovered and exalted to her rightful place. So, begging the indulgence of my system-minded brethren, let me do some thinking out loud.

All of us recognize that every theologian by virtue of belonging to the human race suffers some measure of ideological contamination; his perspective is inevitably slanted by the relativities of his *locus* in history and culture. As evangelicals we also recognize that every theologian is a sinner, noetically distorted his sin. We recognize too that every theologian is a creature and consequently has a sadly circumscribed knowledge of his Creator. We not only recognize this: we insist upon it. We contend that whenever any mere man—finite, blinded by sin, imprisoned at

one point in the space-time continuum—attempts to understand God, he encounters the impenetrable, the inscrutable, the incomprehensible. In a word, he encounters mystery. Here it is, then, that we reverently repeat a passage from Isaiah: “My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord” (Isaiah 55:8). And here it is that we may profitably employ a distinction made by Gabriel Marcel, the distinction between problem and mystery:

A problem is something which I meet, which I find complete before me, but which I can therefore lay siege to and reduce. But a mystery is something in which I myself am involved, and it can therefore only be thought of as “a sphere where the distinction between what is in me and what is before me loses its meaning and its initial validity.” A genuine problem is subject to an appropriate technique by the exercise of which it is defined; whereas a mystery, by definition, transcends every conceivable technique. It is, no doubt, always possible (logically and psychologically) to degrade a mystery so as to turn it into a problem. But this is a fundamentally vicious proceeding, whose springs might perhaps be discovered in a kind of corruption of the intelligence.³

But while adopting Marcel’s distinction, we must not reduce the mysteries of our faith to celestial detective stories. By no means! Dorothy Sayers, who is a peerless writer of murder thrillers as well as a perceptive theologian, points out in *The Mind of the Maker* that mysteries of the Perry Mason *genre* differ in four respects from Biblical mysteries. First “the detective problem is always soluble.” Second, it is “completely soluble” with no loose ends left dangling. Third, it is “solved in the same terms in which it is set.” Fourth, it is “finite;” when it has been solved, that winds up the matter.⁴

Biblical mysteries, however, unlike detective yarns, are never completely solved: as a matter of fact, they are humanly insoluble and remain insoluble to us despite the miracle of revelation. Must we, accordingly, classify Biblical mysteries in the category of unintelligible surds? Quite the reverse! Let E. L. Mascall explain their function.

Although the contemplation of a mystery may raise questions which we desire to answer, a mystery is not in itself a question demanding an answer, but an object inviting contemplation. It shares with a problem the character of being something of which we are to a greater or less degree ignorant and with which we wish to become better acquainted; but the activity to which it invites us is not that of standing back and viewing it in detachment as something subject to our condescending investigation, but that of penetrating beneath its surface in an attitude of humble and wondering contemplation. There are in fact three features which belong to a mystery, as I am now using the term. In the first place, on being confronted with a mystery we are conscious that the small central area of which we have a relatively clear vision shades off into a vast background which is obscure and as yet unpenetrated. Secondly, we find, as we attempt to penetrate this background in what I have described as an attitude of humble and wondering contemplation, that the range and clarity of our vision progressively increase but that at the same time the background which is obscure and unpenetrated is seen to be far greater than we had recognised before. It is in fact rather as if we were walking into a fog with the aid of a lamp which was steadily getting brighter; the area which we could see with some distinctness would get larger and larger but so also would the opaque and undifferentiated background in which no detail was yet visible. Thus, in the contemplation of a mystery there go together in a

remarkable way an increase both of knowledge and also of what we might call conscious ignorance. The third feature of a mystery to which I want to draw attention is the fact that a mystery, while it remains obscure in itself, has a remarkable capacity of illuminating other things.⁵

Mystery, in this sense, all of us allow and affirm—impenetrable wonder which baffles while it illuminates. But not all of us—few of my fellow-evangelicals, I suspect—are prepared both to allow and to affirm paradox at the heart of Biblical mystery. Yet I for one am driven to endorse Soren Kierkegaard’s contention:

Paradox is a category: everything turns on this point, really. People have been accustomed to talk thus—to say that one cannot understand such and such a thing does not satisfy science which insists on understanding. But it is this point of view which is wrong. One should say, rather, just the opposite: if *human* knowledge will not admit that there is something which it cannot understand, or, to speak more precisely, something about which it clearly realises that understanding is out of the question, then all is confusion. The problem for human knowledge is to see that there is something else. Human knowledge is normally in a hurry to understand more and more, but if it will at last take the trouble to understand itself, then it must frankly confirm the fact of paradox. Paradox is not a concession but a category, an ontological description expressing the relationship between a personally existent spirit and eternal truth.⁶

Whatever may be the case in philosophy, in Christianity, as I see it, paradox is not a concession: it is an indispensable category, a sheer necessity—a logical necessity!—if our faith is to be unswervingly Biblical.

Are we sure, though, before proceeding further, that we share the same concept of paradox? A Reformed theologian, R. B. Kuiper, has proposed this definition:

A paradox is not, as Barth thinks, two truths which are actually contradictory. Truth is not irrational. Nor is a paradox two truths which are difficult to reconcile but can be reconciled before the bar of human reason. That is a seeming paradox. But when two truths, both taught unmistakably in the infallible Word of God, cannot possibly be reconciled before the bar of human reason, then you have a paradox.⁷

Or to quote Cornelius Van Til, another Reformed theologian:

It will readily be inferred what as Christians we mean by antinomies. They are involved in the fact that human knowledge can never be completely comprehensive knowledge. Every knowledge transaction has in it somewhere a reference point to God. Now since God is not fully comprehensible to us we are bound to come into what seems to be contradiction in all our knowledge. Our knowledge is analogical and therefore must be paradoxical To this we must now add that the contradiction that seems to be there can in the nature of the case be no more than a *seeming* contradiction. If we said that there is real contradiction in our knowledge that we would once more be denying the basic concept of Christian-theism, i.e., the concept of the self-complete universal in God. We should then not merely be saying that there is no complete coherence in our thinking but we should also be saying that there is no complete coherence in God’s thinking. And this would be the same as saying that there is no coherence or truth in our thinking at all. If we say that the idea of paradox or antinomy is that of real contradiction, we have destroyed all human and all divine knowledge; if we say that the idea of

paradox or antinomy is that of seeming contradiction we have saved God's knowledge and therewith also our own.⁸

So, to follow Van Til, a paradox is only a seeming contradiction. Agreed. Yet, to follow Kuiper, before the bar of logic Biblical paradox is no mere seeming: it is a contradiction which cannot be broken down by the resources of human logic, not even by the resources of Spirit-illuminated logic—at least in the world which now is. Faith anticipates a future resolution, but faith here and now has no adequate resolution to offer. Thus in his able discussion of divine foreordination and human responsibility, J. I. Packer declares:

The antinomy which we face now is only one of a number that the Bible contains. We may be sure that they all find their reconciliation in the mind and counsel of God, and we may hope that in heaven we shall understand them ourselves. But meanwhile, our wisdom is to maintain with equal emphasis both the apparently conflicting truths in each case, to hold them together in the relation in which the Bible itself sets them, and to recognize that here is a mystery which we cannot expect to solve in this world.⁹

But are there such antinomies in the Christian faith? To be Biblically loyal must we postulate propositions which contain logically incompatible statements, doctrines which from the standpoint of reason are contradictory? Undeniably there are such paradoxes; and undeniably, therefore, we must formulate such propositions.¹⁰ We must formulate them, I am convinced, if we are to be Biblically loyal. This, in my judgment, has been done by our forebears who hammered out the historic creeds: for at bottom what are those creeds except distilled paradoxes?¹¹ Hence we must postulate paradox. Let me rather sketchily indicate why I think this is so.

II.

I.

I mention, first, the ontological paradox of Christianity. For Biblical faith teaches that the ground of all being is the triune God, an ultimate Unity Who is at the same time an ultimate Plurality. What a contradiction this is! And the antinomy cannot be reduced to logical consistency unless the dogma is interpreted away symbolically. But Scripture refuses to sanction a symbolic interpretation of this doctrine. Scripture avers that somehow the realities of unity and plurality coalesce in the self-contained Trinity.

The illogicality of this dogma has been the target of attack since it was first framed. Typical is F. W. Newman's comment on the creedal assertion that Father, Son, and Spirit are together one indivisible Godhead: "This is certainly as much a contradiction as to say that Peter, James, and John, having each of them every thing that is requisite to constitute a complete man, are yet all together, not *three men*, but only *one man*."¹²

Listen now to Luther as he defies logic and holds stubbornly to this revealed truth.

I hear that Christ is of one essence with the Father and that there is, nevertheless, not more than one God. Where can I here set down my foot, find firm ground; how can I conceive or conclude it? It sounds too ridiculous in my ears and does not enter my reason. It is not to be grasped with your reason, you should rather say: When I hear the word sounding from above, then I believe it although I cannot grasp it nor understand it nor let it enter my

head, as I can grasp with my reason that two and five are seven and let me tell no one otherwise. But if He should say from above, no, two and five are eight, then I should believe it against my reason and feeling. If I am resolved to judge then I cannot believe, but I am resolved to believe him who judges and decides. To this I cling in life and death, for I trust in him whom I consider wiser and who can count better than I; although I also know it I am going to believe him; what he says I will consider as truth even if the whole world should say otherwise. Thus you must do here: although reason cannot conceive that two persons are one God—it is as if I would say: two are not two, but two are one—word and reason are here in conflict, nevertheless reason should not play the master nor be the judge and doctor, you rather take off your hat and say: two are one although I cannot see nor understand it, but I believe it. Why? For his sake who said so from above.¹³

There, starkly put, is the ontological paradox of the Gospel.

2.

Consider, next, the cosmological paradox. For Biblical faith affirms that the Triune God created the world¹⁴ and that He created it out of nothing—a baffling dogma, this, the inconceivability of which has been emphasized by Donald Ballie in his stimulating work, *God Was In Christ*.

The Christian idea of *creatio ex nihilo* . . . sounds absurd. 'God created all things out of nothing.' Even when taken as answering a more ultimate question, it seems far less satisfactory, far more difficult to state, than the other answers which it is intended to exclude. On the one hand is the dualistic answer which conceives of God as a great artificer taking an already existing raw material and moulding His world out of it. That is quite easy to state. But it is quite a pagan view, and it gives us an unworthy conception of God, a false conception of matter as godless and inherently evil, and therefore ultimately even an inadequate ethic and an inadequate doctrine of immortality. On the other hand is the pantheistic answer, which conceives of God as creating all things out of Himself, out of His own substance. This is not really creation, but emanation. Again it is easily stated, and as it lent itself to the great pantheistic systems, so it has lent itself easily to absolute idealism in the modern world. But it also is quite a pagan view, destroying the true attitude of man both to God and to the world. No, says Christian faith, God did not fashion the world out of a raw material which He found, nor did He generate the world out of His own substance. He created all things out of nothing. This is highly paradoxical. It does not seem to be the kind of position that could ever be reached by a process of inference from the phenomena, or that can even be stated without paradox.¹⁵

Biblical faith does more than affirm the dogma of *creatio ex nihilo*. It also affirms that as Creator the Triune God is both transcendent and immanent, the impassible Source and Sovereign of the cosmos Who somehow as Sustainer and particularly as Saviour enters into relationships which must disturb His eternal serenity. Leonard Hodgson has grasped and stated this antinomy with challenging insight.

The Christian doctrine of creation must be seen against the unsolved philosophical problem of the relation between time and eternity, between this spatio-temporal universe and the eternal reality which has to be postulated if anything in space and time is to be intelligible. In the Christian doctrine the eternal reality is thought of as personal, as God, and His relation to this universe as the personal activity of creation.

As the ultimate reality, the only self-existent Being, the source of whatever existence, in whatever mode of reality He gives to whatever He creates, God must be thought of as impassible. That technical term of theology is best understood from the grammatical use of the words "active" and "passive" for the two "voices" of verbs. A passive verb is used to state that the subject if being acted upon by someone or something else. But as God-in-Himself, the eternal and ultimate reality and source of all existence, God cannot be acted upon by anything than Himself, for He is all that there is. He cannot, therefore, be thought or spoken of in the passive voice. He is impassible.

But when we think of God in relation to His created universe, to which He gives a mode of reality in which it has a relative independence over against Himself, we cannot help thinking and speaking of Him in terms of passive verbs. He can be obeyed or disobeyed, worshipped or blasphemed, loved or hated.

Again, when we think of God as the eternally perfect Being, we have to recognize the truth of Plato's insight in his statement that perfection entails changelessness. But having thought in this way of God-in-Himself, we have to go on to think of God-in-relation-to-creation as One who can and does call, reject, punish and forgive.

It is this apparent contradiction in the Christian doctrine of God which leads to its rejection by many philosophers. But there is no more satisfactory alternative. The theories which avoid the difficulty do so by ignoring or explaining away either the truth of the Platonic principle, or the reality of the created universe. We do not get rid of the fundamental mystery of human existence by giving up our faith in God.

The apparent contradiction has to be accepted as a genuine antinomy, i.e. we cannot rightly deny either of two truths which we cannot reconcile. We can do no more than speak of God-in-Himself as impassible and of God-in-relation-to-creation as passible.

We must honestly admit this. Having admitted it, however we may claim two things: (i) it is a doctrine of God which is relevant and adequate to this actual universe, seeing that it embraces the problem presented by the universe which all who think sufficiently deeply about it find insoluble; and (ii) the mystery is acknowledged at the point where, if anywhere, it ought to be, i.e. at the end of the enquiry, where all human thought is baffled.¹⁶

The paradox to which Hodgson calls attention is italicized by the difficulties theology encounters in discussing the attributes of God. On the one hand, His timelessness and immutability are affirmed, while, on the other, His compassion and love are magnified. Little wonder, then, that Charles M. Mead remarks:

God is allowed to remain as the Supreme Cause of the universe and as its eternal upholder. But whatever else has been alleged which implies a relation of God to men—such as his self-revelation, his work of salvation through Christ, and his function as a prayer-hearing and sympathizing Father—has been held in spite of its absolute inconsistency with those other conceptions, viz., of God's immutability and impassibility. If anything could be more astonishing than this combination of irreconcilable doctrines in our system, it would be the fact that those who have thus combined them have seemed to be serenely unconscious of the self-contradiction. God's love they have held to be his most comprehensive attribute, while yet they have declared him to

be incapable of having any feeling; though nothing is more obvious than that love is a feeling. He is declared to hate sin; but hatred is a feeling. He is declared to be supremely happy; but happiness is a feeling. He is declared to turn from indignation to forgiveness, when sinners repent; but this would be a change in one who is held to be absolutely unchangeable. He is declared to foreknow future events, and therefore to have determined them; but this makes him exist in time, whereas he has been affirmed to exist out of time.¹⁷

Little wonder, either, that William Shedd, discussing the divine omniscience, exclaims: "It is impossible for the human mind to comprehend, or even to conceive this."¹⁸

Nor is that all. These paradoxes are intensified by the Biblical doctrine of a satanic power which—really who—opposes God, a power so formidable that it could be conquered only by the death of incarnate Deity. But how can we reconcile this evil reality with monotheism and yet do justice to the Scriptural data concerning the power of this reality, a malignant will capable of defying God and necessitating the redemptive strategies of Gethsemane and Calvary? It was Karl Heim who made me face up to the cosmological mystery which the revealed doctrine of Satan introduces. Let me, therefore, lay before you the gist of Heim's argument as he presents it in his book, *Jesus: The World's Perfector*:

It is a *priori* evident that for an understanding of Christ's work of redemption there is only one or the other of two possibilities.

Either the satanic power which opposes God on the whole front is reality. Then we cannot understand the entire present situation of the world unless we take this reality into account. The sinister existence of this power is the key to the understanding of the whole situation of the world. Then the redemption of the world cannot be other than the great final war with the power that is hostile to God . . . Or what Christ, and under His guidance the first Christians, said regarding Satan is deception and mythology. There is no such opponent of God. The idea of Satan is merely a symbolic expression for certain mass-effects which have come into being through adding together many individual decisions by many autonomous individuals. Then we should not allow the devil to appear in the drama of redemption even as a mere cipher. In this case only two parties encounter one another in the reconciliation of the world, between whom a settlement is reached: on the one hand the holy God, on the other side a number of individuals who have transgressed against God's commandment . . . That in a world in which God works all things there should be a will that wants to destroy God, is, as we saw, to our minds a Gordian knot which we cannot undo. We are restlessly thrown to and fro between the two statements which our reflexion can never unite. One is: God is the sole agent, even in the devil. For without this certitude we cannot pray and trust in God. For without it God's power would be limited by an opposing power whose victims we might become at any moment. But the other is: God must have no part in the diabolical rebellion. For if God Himself receives diabolical characteristics, then He can no longer call us to account when we have taken part in the demoniacal rebellion.

Neither of these statements must be soft-pedalled in favour of the other. Our reflexion must bleed to death from the open wound of this contradiction . . . if this ultimate cosmic contrast remains inscrutable to us then we can never entirely fathom its solution. Only if we knew how the knot is tied

would we also be able to understand how it can be undone. This is an unsurmountable barrier to our understanding.¹⁹

3.

I know of very few theologians who have grappled as Heim has done with this formidable mystery, a mystery which deepens the cosmological paradox of Christianity.

Consider, in the third place, the epistemological paradox of the Gospel. For Christianity insists that truth comes to us not by human discovery but solely by divine disclosure. And in this context, obviously, I am alluding to the truth which philosophy essays to ascertain, the truth concerning human life and destiny, the truth concerning the ultimate nature and possible meaning of all existence. Such truth, Christianity insists, comes to us solely by divine disclosure. Christianity insists, moreover, that such truth comes to us exclusively along the narrow corridor of Hebrew history. It insists, further, that such truth comes to us climactically in the strange career of a young Jew gibbeted on a cross. It insists, too, that such truth comes to us along through the instrumentality of Holy Scripture as its message is proclaimed by the Church, illuminated by the Holy Spirit, and embraced in faith. This epistemological claim is of course an offense to logic. It exhibits quintessentially the scandal of particularity against which reason protests. Emil Brunner states some of the arguments raised against this claim:

Belief in an historical revelation makes faith irrational and makes the faithful intolerant. What kind of a God is he, who one day in the year 1 or 30 does or gives what mankind should have had long ago for its salvation? This arbitrariness of historical revelation, which gives at a certain point in history a divine light into the dark world, but leaves the world before that event and the world outside of it in the dark, is unbearable to our sense of divine justice. On the other hand, the assertion that Christians alone possess the full divine truth must make them arrogant and intolerant towards the others, who are not able to do anything about it: they are simply not the privileged ones, and their religion must be devaluated as superstition and mere paganism.²⁰

Reason's criticism of our epistemological claim becomes angry protest when a theologian like Rudolf Bultmann flatly affirms that there is no evidence to substantiate so arrogant a claim. Pretend that you are a non-Christian and that in Bultmann's *Existence and Faith* you read this passage:

If we ask for plain convincing reasons why God speaks actually here, in the Bible, then we have not yet understood what God's sovereignty means. For it is due to his sovereign will, that he has spoken and speaks here. The Bible does not approach us at all like other books, nor like other "religious voices of the nations," as catering for our interest. It claims from the outset to be God's word. We did not come across the Bible in the course of our cultural studies, as we came across, for example, Plato or the Bhagavad-Gita. We came to know it through the Christian church, which put it before us with its authoritative claim. The church's preaching, founded on the Scriptures, passes on the word of the Scriptures. It says: God speaks to you *here!* In his majesty he has chosen *this* place! We cannot question whether this place is the right one; we must listen to the call that summons us.²¹

How would you as a non-Christian react to that claim in support of which no "plain convincing reasons" can be given? I rather think you would react with bewildered indignation. For there, starkly put, is the epistemological scandal of the Gospel.

4.

Consider, still further, the anthropological paradox of our faith. From the perspective of any philosophy, to be sure, man is an enigma. But from the Biblical standpoint, for more so than from the standpoint of its competitors, *homo sapiens* is a congeries of contradictions. For one thing, as Biblicists we assert that in some sense man has lost the divine image although in another sense he continues to exist as *imago dei*. Hence G. C. Berkouwer raises this crucial question: "Do we not, then, in dealing with an image which is both kept and lost, have to do with a strange paradox, or a dialectic, or a mysterious antinomy, which invites confusion?" Pressing this crucial question, Berkouwer inquires:

Is there, using the concepts of the wider and narrower meaning of the image, any way to escape from the danger of dualism, of antinomy, of letting the two concepts stand unreconciled? Or is the tenacity with which theologians have time and again held to this duality in the image a clear indication of a very real problem which arises in connection with man's nature, his "human-ness"?

And Berkouwer cites Edmund Schlink's insistence that anthropologically the Christian faces a "true antinomy" which involves "both this—that the image of God can be wholly lost in man's sin; and this—that the image of God can never be lost even in the greatest sin."²²

For a second thing, from the Christian perspective man is a paradox because his actions are simultaneously free and foreordained. Of all embattled issues in theology this, as we are well aware, is the one which perhaps more than any other perennially elicits terrific heat and precious little light. For attempts to resolve it—let me be rashly dogmatic—are futile. I endorse the verdict of J. I. Packer concerning this theological Gordian knot:

God's sovereignty and man's responsibility are taught us side by side in the same Bible; sometimes, indeed, in the same text. Both are thus guaranteed to us by the same divine authority; both, therefore, are true. It follows that they must be held together, and not played off against each other. Man is a responsible moral agent, though he is *also* divinely controlled; man is divinely controlled, though he is also a responsible moral agent. God's sovereignty is a reality, and man's responsibility is a reality too. This is the revealed antinomy in terms of which we have to do our thinking about evangelism.

To our finite minds, of course, the thing is inexplicable. It sounds like a contradiction, and our first reaction is to complain that it is absurd.²³

And contradictory it is in the eyes of the logician, but if we are to be un-deviatingly loyal to Scripture the contradiction must stand, a contradiction which permits, Berkouwer contends, only a faith-solution:

Do we stand, then, in the relation between Divine and human activity before an enigmatic paradox, an antinomy, which sterilizes our thinking? This would indeed be the case if the activity of God and man were viewed on the same level as comparable magnitudes. Then His activity would limit and annul ours, or our activity would limit His. But since the activity of God is preached to us in its absolutely incomparable character and as His Divine invincibility *in* our activity, there is a way for faith in God's Providence. Our "problem" is revolved in our listening to God's revelation. Listening and believing, we can confess this invincibility of God. We confess it through faith, which knows it has gotten everything from God's hand. We confess it in our

working, in which God works according to His good pleasure. At the same time we confess our guilt and our responsibility, knowing that there is no unrighteousness, but only light, in God. Rational conclusions which staticize His activity, give way to a living faith in *Him* But now we still see through a glass, in riddles, and our knowledge is made up in fragments. Now we are menaced by unbelief, doubt, and disloyalty. Temptation levels itself on the reality of our time, in which, however, the living God is at work. We cannot fathom it. We can only listen to the voice of the Word — listen, as it speaks warning and comfort.²⁴

For a third thing from our *πov στω* man is a paradox because he comes into the world guilty of a sin which he did not personally commit. Now Christianity teaches that man, created sinless by the all-good, all-powerful God, became a sinner despite God's absolute sovereignty and in defiance of that sovereignty. Augustus Hopkins Strong, for one, frankly admits that the Biblical doctrine of sin combines antithetical elements.

Sin is an existing fact. God cannot be its author, either by creating man's nature so that sin was a necessary incident of its development, or by withdrawing a supernatural grace which was necessary to keep man holy. Reason, therefore, has no other recourse than to accept the Scripture doctrine that sin originated in man's free act of revolt from God—the act of a will which, though inclined toward God, was not yet confirmed in virtue and was still capable of a contrary choice. The original possession of such power to the contrary seems to be the necessary condition of probation and moral development. Yet the exercise of this power in a sinful direction can never be explained upon grounds of reason, since sin is essentially unreason.²⁵

Faced with the mystery of sin, Berkouwer, as a true son of Calvin, does not dodge the issue. Instead he flatly avers:

We shall never fathom the Divine over-ruling, certainly not in regard to the sinful activity of man. This inscrutability need not shock us nor fill us with a panic which might haunt our entire lives. The problems resolved, though not rationally, in confession of guilt and in faith. There is a solution, but it is the solution of faith, which knows its own responsibility — as it knows the unapproachable holiness of God. He who does not listen in faith to God's voice is left with an insoluble dilemma. God's revelation does not crucify our thinking; it only judges our proud and sinful thinking. To persist in unconverted thinking is, in the end, to shove our own guilt and responsibility aside.²⁶

The permission of sin is in itself an impenetrable mystery, yet Augustine compounds that mystery, when loyal to Scripture, he announces that all of us as Adam's descendants are responsible for Adam's transgression.

Man's nature was indeed at first created faultless and without sin; but nature as man now has it, into which every one who is born from Adam, wants the Physician, being no longer in a healthy state. All good qualities which it still possesses . . . it has from the most High God, its Creator and Maker. But the flaw which darkens and weakens all these natural goods, it has not contracted from its blameless Creator . . . but from that *original sin* which it committed of *its own free will*.²⁷

Solidly rooted in Scripture and adroitly espoused by some of the greatest minds in the history of the church, the doctrine of original sin, Mead maintains, is open to serious objection. It

labors not only under the difficulty that no individual can sincerely believe and feel himself to be guilty of a sin committed by another man thousands of years ago, but also under the further difficulty that, if there is such an intimate connection between the progenitor and the race as this theory supposes, then it is unreasonable that in the treatment of the individual descendants of Adam any distinction should be made in the divine government. But the same Augustinian doctrine which asserts the absolute oneness of the race in its sin teaches that men are treated separately in the divine government, some being chosen out from the mass to be regenerated and saved, while others are left to be punished for their sins. Each man being treated as an individual responsible for his own sins, it is little relief to be told that Adam at least had a fair trial and full freedom, and might have stood the test to which he was subjected. It, having no evil propensity, and able to stand the test, he yet failed to do so, how, one may well ask, should that make me satisfied to be subjected to a test which I *cannot* stand?²⁸

But logical or not the doctrine is Biblical. You and I are guilty before God by virtue of Adam's sin—a mind-teasing concept if ever one has been formulated.

Consequently, Pascal is simply underscoring the fact of paradox when he exclaims:

It is beyond doubt that there is nothing which more shocks our reason than to say that the sin of the first man has rendered guilty those who, being so removed from its source, seem incapable of participating in it Certainly nothing offends us more rudely than this doctrine, and yet without this mystery, the most incomprehensible of all, we are incomprehensible to ourselves.²⁹

There, starkly put, is the anthropological scandal of the Gospel.

5.

Consider, again, the Christological paradox, the Absolute paradox, as Kierkegaard calls it, a dogma which merges the incommensurables, the ice and fire, of time and eternity, deity and humanity, suffering and sovereignty. In the name of reason the logician applauds Kierkegaard's willingness to label this dogma an absurdity.

What is absurd? The absurd is that the eternal truth has appeared in time; that God has come into existence, been born, grown, etc.; that He was there just like an individual man, not to be distinguished from another man Of the absolute Paradox one can understand only this, that one cannot understand it.³⁰

In the name of reason Spinoza also labels the incarnation an absurdity though unlike Kierkegaard he is seeking to sabotage not defend the Gospel.

As to the additional view, given by some churches, that God assumed human nature, I have expressly declared, that I know not what they say; nay, to confess the truth, they seem to me to talk no less absurdly than if any one should say that a circle has assumed the nature of a square.³¹

In the name of reason, moreover, Reinhold Niebuhr rejects the orthodox view of the hypostatic union.

All definitions of Christ which affirm both His divinity and His humanity (in the sense that they ascribe both finite and historically conditioned and eternal and unconditioned qualities to His nature) must verge on logical nonsense. It is possible for a character, even or fact of history to point symbolically be-

yond history and become a source of disclosure of an eternal meaning, purpose and power which bears on history, but it is not possible for any person to be historical and unconditioned at the same time . . . since the *essence* of the Divine consists in its unconditional character, and since the essence of the human lies in its conditioned and contingent nature, it is not logically possible to assert both qualities of the same person.³²

Nevertheless, the Gospel does assert that a certain Man combined within Himself the unconditioned and the conditioned, the necessary and the contingent, the eternal and the historical, the uncreated and the creaturely, the divine and the human. It asserts that Jesus of Nazareth was the God-Man. And there, starkly put, is the Christological scandal.

6.

Consider, sixthly, the soteriological paradox of Christianity. This is the heart of the Gospel—forgiveness, justification, a right relationship with God, all obtained by grace through faith in the vicarious death of our Lord Jesus. But is it reasonable or is it even ethical? Luther puts the case bluntly. Justification is *wider alle Vernunft*—against all reason. So with devastating logic Kant writes:

This original guilt . . . cannot, so far as we see by the light of the law of Reason within us, be abolished by any one else, for it is no *transmissible* obligation, which, like a pecuniary debt (where it is indifferent to the creditor whether the debtor pay it himself or another pay it for him), can be transferred to another, but the most personal of all personal ones,—the guilt of sin, which only the guilty can bear, not the innocent, be he ever so generous as to be willing to undertake it.³³

Who will deny that divine forgiveness is certainly a paradox? I personally will make no such denial—nor will, if I may at this juncture ally myself with him, Emil Brunner:

Forgiveness of sin is the expression of the incomprehensible renewal of God's relation to us, known or knowable only through an incomprehensible act of divine revelation.

From the point of view of philosophy such an assertion is completely irrational, and forgiveness of sin complete nonsense. The philosopher—I am speaking always of the philosopher who takes no account of divine revelation in Christ—being obliged to give reasons for what he says, can only acknowledge a reasonable God, that is, a God who acts logically. If God is the law-giver, then he must cling to his law and by some means or other remove resistance to it; or if God desires unconditionally the life and the well-being of his creatures, then he must ignore the evil. Each of these two attitudes can be called rational or logical. But to assert at one and the same time the holiness of God's will, reacting against transgression, his wrath, *and* his merciful forgiveness of guilt, is a paradox which rational philosophy can only decline as absurdity. This is what the New Testament itself says, the message of the cross is foolishness to the Greek.³⁴

Who will deny that divine forgiveness by a substitutionary atonement is ethically bewildering? Not long ago, for instance, Bishop G. Bromley Oxnam registered an emphatic protest.

We hear much of the substitutionary theory of the atonement. This theory is to me immoral. *If* Jesus paid it all, or *if* He is the substitute for me, or *if* He is the sacrifice for all the sin of the world, then why discuss forgiveness? The

books are closed. Another has paid the debt, borne the penalty. I own nothing. I am absolved. I cannot see forgiveness as predicated upon the act of someone else. It is my sin. I must atone.³⁵

Luther, however, scorning the common protest that divine acceptance must be strictly on a *quid pro quo* basis, cries out:

The human heart does not understand, nor does it believe, that so great a treasure as the Holy Spirit is given simply for the hearing of faith, but it argues like this: 'It is a weighty matter (*magna res*)—forgiveness of sins, deliverance from sin and death, the giving of the Holy Spirit, of righteousness and eternal life; therefore you must offer something of weight, if you would obtain those unutterable gifts. This opinion (*opinionem*) the Devil approves and fosters in the heart. And so when reason hears: 'You can do nothing to obtain the remission of sins, but ought only to hear the Word of God', it immediately cries out: 'No! you make the forgiveness of sins too mean and contemptible.'³⁶

Yes, redemption by a vicarious sacrifice is precisely what Albrecht Bengel calls it, "the highest evangelical paradox;" for to quote his comment on Romans 3:25-26; "In the law God is just and condemning, and in the Gospel just and the justifier of the sinner who believes in the Christ provided by God Himself a propitiation in His blood."³⁷

There, starkly put, is the soteriological paradox of the Gospel.

7.

Consider, finally, the eschatological paradox of Christianity.

I mention is passing the doctrine of a resurrected body, a spiritual organism which will be characterized by both continuity and change: the resurrected body will somehow be continuous with the body which once was buried, yet the resurrected body will undergo a remarkable change, a change equipping it to serve as the organ of personal experience in the world to come. All of this strikes the philosopher as impossible, a doctrine so weighted down by illogicalities as to be sheer nonsense. In his monumental work, *The Doctrine of a Future Life*, Alger rehearses this common objection:

The scientific absurdities connected with that doctrine have been marshalled against it by Celsus, the Platonist philosopher, by Avicenna, the Arabian physician, and by hundreds more, and have never been answered, and cannot be answered. As long as man lives, his bodily substance is incessantly changing; the processes of secretion and absorption are rapidly going forward. Every few years he is, as to material, a totally new man. Dying at the age of seventy, he has had at least ten different bodies. He is one identical soul, but has lived in ten separate houses. With which shall he be raised? with the first? or the fifth or the last? or with all? But, further, the body after death decays, enters into combination with water, air, earth, gas, vegetables, animals, other human bodies. In this way the same matter comes to have belonged to a thousand persons. In the resurrection, whose shall it be?³⁸

Now to the paradox of a resurrected body we must add that of eternal punishment. Thus in his *Christian Dogmatics* Hans Martensen struggles to achieve a reconciliation between limitless love and eternal punishment, an infinite penalty inflicted for finite transgressions. Does Martensen succeed in reconciling these two elements of Biblical revelation? Yes—by appeal to paradox!

The more deeply Christian thought searches into this question, the more does it discover an ANTINOMY,—i.e. an apparent contradiction between two laws equally divine,—which, it seems, cannot find a perfectly conclusive and satisfactory solution, in the present stage, the earthly limits, of human knowledge.

This antinomy meets us if we turn to Holy Scripture; and no definite solution is given of it there. There are texts which if they be taken in their full and literal import, most distinctly refer to eternal damnation . . . — these texts, if they be taken without reservation or refinement, clearly express the idea of a condemnation in which there is no cessation, to which there is no end. But on the other hand, there are contrasted expressions of Scripture, which have an equal claim to be taken in their full sense . . . If we take these texts without limiting their full and obvious import, we shall not be far from the idea of a universal restoration; for the Apostle says expressly ALL, not some. This apparent contradiction in the language of Scripture shows that Scripture itself does not afford us a final dogmatic solution of the question . . . We readily grant that the Word of God cannot contradict itself, and that the antinomy here presented must really be solved in the depth of God's Word. We only maintain that this solution is nowhere expressly given; and we ask, whether we may not recognize divine wisdom in the fact that a final solution is not given us, while we are still in the stream of time and in the course of development?³⁹

We must ask that same question, I am persuaded, not only about eschatology but also about many of Christianity's major doctrines. Like eschatology they confront us with paradoxes for which no satisfactory solution seems to be given. Apparently it is impossible to mitigate their logical tension without denying Biblical truth. Now if I am correct in so concluding, we need to postulate paradox with a Kierkegaardian forthrightness, holding that within the framework of our revelational faith even the regenerate mind ought to anticipate bafflement. Shall I say that bafflement ought logically to be anticipated?

III.

Many of us, I know resist and reject this conclusion. Congenital Aristotleans, we find it hard to live at ease in "the pseudo-Zion of paradox," to use W. G. MacLagan's biting term.⁴⁰ Yet what other option do we have? Whether or not we like our noetic predicament, we are stuck with it; and in this state of intellectual tension we must carry on our business of study, teaching, apologetics, and evangelism. But perhaps several considerations will help to mitigate our discomfort. I proceed to suggest them very briefly.

1.

Revelation does not, as we might think and as we doubtless wish, eliminate paradox: *it requires the postulation of paradox*. Recall here Job's inability to fathom the mystery of evil. How justify a suffering which is irrationally excessive and unfair, a suffering which inexplicably overwhelms a good man in a world controlled by a God Who is all-wise, all-loving, and all-powerful? When logic breaks down and human wisdom has vainly spoken its last word, God—I presume our familiarity with this Old Testament classic—reveals Himself. But what a revelation He gives! The omnipotent Creator—I follow the exposition of H. L. Ellison—points Job

to the apparently irrational in His creation . . . Job is asked to consider a

couple of God's "jokes." . . . Why did God make the hippopotamus and the crocodile? If you have never asked yourself this question, you may find a couple of hours spent in the nearest zoo a worth-while investment. Some of us have a private list to which we have added a few more names. The Wise prided themselves that they were basing their views on the fundamental rationality of God's acts. So God faces Job with a couple of His "jokes," and Job repents in dust and ashes (42:6).⁴¹

Is a logical theodicy set forth in this revelational drama which took place long ago? Quite the reverse! God reveals to Job the utter adequacy of His power, but He fails to reveal why in a world which divine power absolutely controls a good man is permitted to suffer unfairly and excessively. From a purely logical perspective the revelation intensifies Job's problem. It demands that Job bear in faith the cross of paradox.

Gilbert K. Chesterton, I think, has caught the significance of this Biblical theodicy which defies human logic.

God comes in at the end, not to answer riddles, but to propound them . . . The mechanical optimist . . . points out that the fine thing about the world is that it can all be explained. That is the one point, if I may say so, on which God in return, is explicit to the point of violence. God says, in effect, that if there is one fine thing about the world, as far as men are concerned, it is that it cannot be explained. He insists upon the inexplicableness of everything: "Hath the rain a father? . . . Out of whose womb came the ice?" He goes farther, and insists on the positive and palpable unreason of things: "Hast thou sent the rain upon the desert where no man is, and upon the wilderness wherein there is no man?" . . . Job is not told that his misfortunes were due to his sins, or a part of any plan for his improvement. But in the prologue we see Job tormented not because he was the worst of men but because he was the best. It is the lesson of the whole work that man is most comforted by paradoxes. Here is the very darkest and strangest of the paradoxes; and it is by all human testimony the most reassuring . . . Job was comfortless before the speech of Jehovah and is comforted after it. He has been told nothing but he feels the terrible and tingling atmosphere of something which is too good to be told. The refusal of God to explain His design is itself a burning hint of His design. The riddles of God are more satisfying than the solutions of men.⁴²

So we must not be surprised if revelation fails to eliminate paradox. On the contrary, as the story of Job instructs us, revelation requires the acceptance of paradox.

2.

Some of the sting is removed from this nettle if we ponder our own paradoxical experience of grace. It is Donald Baillie⁴³ who has highlighted this indubitable fact to which, I am sure, we gladly bear witness. Gladly we testify that all the good which we do is done not by ourselves but by God. Gladly we echo Paul's confession in I Corinthians 15:10, "I labored more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me." Gladly we sing, and we sing sincerely:

And every virtue we possess,
And every victory won,
And every thought of holiness
Are His alone.

We gladly acknowledge, therefore, that God deserves the praise and glory—entirely so. We deserve no credit whatever. Yet paradoxically we gladly testify at the same time that we ourselves are to be blamed for all the evil that we do. God is totally exonerated from any complicity with our sin and failure. What does C. H. Dodd write concerning Romans 9:17-18?

The truly religious man knows that any good that is in him is there solely by grace of God, whatever he may make of this in his philosophy. But to attribute one's evil dispositions to God is a sophistication. One may feel driven to it by logic, but the conscience does not corroborate it.⁴⁴

This comment, W. G. Maclagan charges, is a frank abandonment of logic. Well, logical or not, such is the Christian's spontaneous testimony. In himself he experiences daily the paradox of grace. And this personal experience of paradox enables him to accept more readily the truth of those other paradoxes which he encounters within the framework of his faith.

3.

Christianity, while it postulates paradox, is not a misology, *an asylum ignorantiae*. It does not demand that reason be nailed to a cross of irrationalism. It logically requires defiance of logic at crucial junctures in the theology which it constructs from Biblical data, but it believes absolutely in the ultimate rationality of God. Even Kierkegaard, I remind you, votes for ontological coherence: "The eternal essential truth itself is by no means a paradox, but becomes paradoxical through its relation to existence."⁴⁵

4.

By its postulation of paradox Christianity marks out the boundaries of reason and stresses the necessity of faith in thought no less than in practice. Hence Reinhold Niebuhr asserts that doctrine of original sin

remains absurd from the standpoint of a pure rationalism, for it expresses a relation between fate and freedom which cannot be fully rationalized, unless the paradox be accepted as a rational understanding of the limits of rationality and as an expression of faith that a rationally irresolvable contradiction may point to a truth which logic cannot contain.⁴⁶

The acceptance of revelational paradox, in other words, provides us with a truth which logic cannot contain.⁴⁶

5.

When the Biblical paradoxes are embraced in faith, they form a strangely dovetailed *gestalt*, a mosaic of meaning which amazingly illuminates and interprets the mystery of existence. Here, then, I agree with Ramsdell:

The Incarnation and the Cross constitute the unifying ground of the Christian perspective. In them all other Christian doctrines find their integration. Through them the doctrines of creation, original sin, grace, the Kingdom of God, and immortality become an organic whole.⁴⁷

Accept paradox, in short, and, paradoxically, a pattern of rationality emerges from the otherwise patternless welter of brute events.

6.

Accept paradox, furthermore, no, postulate it, and you save reason. Deny it, however, and you destroy reason. Van Til succinctly and, to my mind, convincingly shows why this is so.

Our position is naturally charged with being self-contradictory. It might seem at first glance as though we were willing, with the dialectical theologians, to accept the really contradictory. Yet such is not the case. In fact we hold that our position is the only position that saves one from the necessity of ultimately accepting the really contradictory. We argue that unless we may hold to the presupposition of the self-contained ontological trinity, human rationality itself is a mirage. But to hold to this position requires us to say that while we shun as poison the idea of the really contradictory we embrace with passion the idea of the *apparently* contradictory. It is through the latter alone that we reject the former. If it is the self-contained ontological trinity that we need for the rationality of our interpretation of life, it is this same ontological trinity that requires us to hold to the apparently contradictory.⁴⁸

7.

The acceptance of paradox is no excuse for intellectual sloth. Indeed, no specific paradox ought to be accepted until sustained travail of mind forces us to its acceptance. Ronald W. Hepburn, who is scandalized by the paradoxical nature of Christianity, imagines a conversation between a theologian and a philosopher. The theologian speaks first:

'You hold', he says, 'as a metaphysical dogma that *there are no mysteries*. You believe that given persistence, cleverness, and good luck, we shall be able to describe all that there is to describe without paradox: or (putting it the other way round) that there are no entities such that we human beings are compelled to talk about paradoxically or not at all.' But the philosopher might reply, 'No, I'm not advancing any dogma. If I find, as I *do* find, that certain long-standing puzzles have in fact yielded or begun to yield when approached with the suspicion that they *might* turn out to be confusions of language, then I think I am justified in going on to attack further paradoxes at least in the hope that they will yield in the same way.' 'In that case,' says the theologian, 'you are admitting, aren't you, that some paradoxes may never yield, but remain quite opaque to our understanding—just as I claim the paradoxes in all our talk about God will remain, for the most part, opaque?'

'I don't see any way of ruling that possibility out in advance,' comes the reply, 'but it is only after trying one's hardest to dissolve them and by discovering why they *resist* dissolution that one could prove them to be opaque rather than just confused.'

Whereupon Hepburn draws this conclusion:

So the core of the problem would now seem to lie in knowing in what circumstances we should regard some stubbornly paradoxical concept as a muddle, to be dissolved sometime in the future, and when to regard it as a mystery, to be lived with and perhaps held in reverence.⁴⁹

I concur enthusiastically. For we may fancy that some doctrine is an insoluble paradox when it is nothing of the kind. Our task, consequently, the task of all Christian scholars working cooperatively, is to expose ruthlessly any mental muddles which are illogically mistaken for mysteries.

In conclusion, I urge that we unabashedly imitate the famous evangelical, Charles Simeon, whose Cambridge pulpit exerted so commanding an influence over 18th century England. In the preface to the 21 volumes of his *Horae Homileticae* he explains the principle which he follows in exposition:

As in the Scriptures themselves, so also in this Work, there will be found

sentiments, not really opposite, but apparently of an opposite tendency, according to the subject that is under discussion. In writing, for instance, on John 5:40, "Ye will not come to me, that ye might have life," he does not hesitate to lay the whole blame of men's condemnation on the obstinacy of their own depraved will: nor does he think it at all necessary to weaken the subject by nice distinctions, in order to support a system. On the contrary, when he preaches on John 6:44, "No man can come unto me, except the Father who hath sent me draw him" he does not scruple to state in the fullest manner he is able, "That we have no power to do good works pleasant and acceptable to God, without the grace of God by Christ preventing us that we may have a good will, and working with us when we have that good will:" nor does he judge it expedient on any account to soften and palliate, and fritter away this important truth. While too many set these passages at variance, and espouse the one in opposition to the other, he dwells with equal pleasure on them both; and thinks it, on the whole, better to state these apparently opposite truths in the plain and unsophisticated manner of the Scriptures, than to enter into scholastic subtleties, that have been invented for the upholding of human systems. He is aware, that they who are warm advocates for this or that system of religion, will be ready to condemn him as inconsistent: but, if he speak in exact conformity with the Scriptures, he shall rest the vindication of his conduct simply on the authority and example of the Inspired Writers. He has no desire to be wise above what is written, nor any conceit that he can teach the Apostles to speak with more propriety and correctness than they have spoken.

It may be asked perhaps, How do you reconcile these doctrines, which you believe to be of equal authority and equal importance? But what right has any man to impose this task on the preachers of God's word? God has not required it of them; nor is the truth or falsehood of any doctrine to be determined absolutely by this criterion. It is presumed, that every one will acknowledge the holiness of God, and the existence of sin: but will any one undertake to reconcile them? or does any one consider the inability of man to reconcile them, as a sufficient ground for denying either the one or the other of these truths? If then neither of these points are doubted, notwithstanding they cannot be reconciled by us, why should other points, equally obvious in some respects, yet equally difficult to be reconciled in others, be incompatible, merely because we, with our limited capacity, cannot perfectly discern their harmony and agreement?"⁵⁰

Let us do as Simeon does. Let us emphatically assert "apparently opposite truths," remembering as a sort of criterion that very likely we are being loyal to the Bible as long as we feel upon our minds the tug of logical tension. Let us as evangelicals unhesitatingly postulate paradox.

Conservative Baptist Seminary
Denver, Colorado

REFERENCES

1. Quoted by W. G. Madlagan, *The Theological Frontier of Ethics*, (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1961), p. 117.
2. Edwin Lewis, *A Philosophy of the Christian Revelation* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1940), p. 164.
3. Gabriel Marcel, *The Mystery of Being* (London: The Harvill Press Ltd., 1950), Vol. 1, pp. 211-212. Marcel quotes the English translation of his own work, *Being and Having*. Cf. Roger Hazelton's article, "Marcel on Mystery," *The Journal of Religion*, Vol. xxviii, No. 3, July, 1958, pp. 155-167.
4. Cf. Hugh T. Kerr, *Mystery and Meaning in the Christian Faith* (Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1958), p. 10.
5. E. L. Mascall, *Words and Images* (New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1957), pp. 78-79.
6. Quoted by Hermann Diem, *Kierkegaard's Dialectic of Existence* (London: Oliver and Boyd, 1959), p. 50.
7. Quoted by George W. Marston, *The Voice of Authority* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1960), p. 16. Very different is the concept of paradox in popular works such as Ralph W. Sockman, *The Paradoxes of Jesus* (New York: The Abingdon Press, 1936), Gerald Kennedy, *The Lion and the Lamb:*

Paradoxes of the Christian Faith (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1950), and R. Earl Allen, *Bible Paradoxes* (Westwood, New Jersey: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1963). In these paradox is essentially a rhetorical device employed for homiletical purposes. For a discussion of paradox on deeper levels cf. Daniel Lamont, *Christ and the World of Thought* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1935) and Donald Mackenzie, *Christianity, the Paradox of God* (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1933).

8. Cornelius Van Til, *The Defense of the Faith* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1955), pp. 61-62.
9. J. I. Packer, *Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God* (Chicago: Inter-Varsity Press, 1961), p. 24. Cf. similar statements in Charles M. Mead, *Irenic Theology* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1905), pp. 78, 93-94, 124-126, and in Kenneth J. Foreman, *God's Will and Ours* (Richmond, Va.: Outlook Publishers, 1954), pp. 59-63.
10. It may be of interest to note that Luther labels a number of doctrines as lying beyond the jurisdiction of logic. B. A. Gerrish in his *Grace and Reason: A Study in the Theology of Luther* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1962), has a convenient summary. "Turning to specific doctrines, we find that reason stumbles at the Trinity (W.A. 101, l. 191.2, 239-15); Creation (W.A. 42, 92, 27; TR. 2, no. 2659); sin (TR. 6, no. 6660); the Incarnation (TR. 6, no. 6645; reason cannot know Christ for Saviour of the world when it sees him born a little child and lying in his mother's bosom); the doctrine of Christ's Two Natures (reason cannot harmonize the two statements, that Christ was Son of David and Son of God: W.A. 45, 155, 35ff.); the Crucifixion (the greatest wonder that ever was upon the face of the earth is that God gave up His beloved Son to be crucified, saying: Go, let them nail you to the gallows; does God treat Caiaphas, Herod, Pilate, more kindly than His own Son? TR. 6, no. 6618); the Resurrection (Christ's Resurrection had to be revealed by an Angel, and to foolish women! TR. 6, no. 6601); the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper (W.A. 42, 117, 16); Baptism (reason is scandalized at Baptism's simplicity, desiring some greater ceremony: W.A. 21, 541, 23 ff.); the resurrection of the saints (W.A. 43-373, 35 ff.). The list could be extended, no doubt." (p. 20).
11. E. L. Mascall in his *Via Media* (Greenwich, Connecticut: The Seabury Press, 1957) admits that "on the cardinal points of Christian doctrine orthodoxy consists in holding together two notions which might well seem to be incompatible". He denies, however, that they are "incompatible in fact" (p. xiii). But he also admits that any non-Christian logician who reads his book "will write most of it off as nonsense" (p. xv).
12. Quoted by Henry L. Mansel, *The Limits of Religious Thought* (Boston: Gould and Lincoln, 1860), p. 319.
13. Quoted by M. Reu, *Luther and the Scriptures* (Columbus, Ohio: The Wortburg Press, 1944), p. 151.
14. Origen, for one, was very cognizant of the difficulties involved in the idea of creation. Cf. Neander's observations regarding those difficulties: "Here, therefore, there occurred to him reasons against a beginning of creation generally, which must ever suggest themselves to the reflecting mind, which cannot rest satisfied with simple faith in that which to itself is incomprehensible. Supposing that to create is agreeable to the divine essence, how is it conceivable that what is thus conformable to God's nature should at any time have been wanting? Why should not those attributes which belong to the very essence of the Deity, His almighty power and goodness, be always active? A transition from the state of not-creating to the act of creation is inconceivable without a change, which is incompatible with the being of God." Quoted by Mansel, *op. cit.*, p. 257.
15. Donald Ballie, *God Was in Christ* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1955) pp. 110-111.
16. Leonard Hodgson, *The Doctrine of the Atonement* (London: James Nisbet & Company, Ltd., 1951), pp. 84-85.
17. Mead, *op. cit.*, pp. 40-41.
18. Quoted by Mead, *ibid.*, p. 42.
19. Karl Heim, *Jesus the World's Perfecter* (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1959), pp. 70-71.
20. Emil Brunner, *The Scandal of Christianity* (London: SCM Press, 1951), p. 24.
21. Rudolph Bultmann, *Existence and Faith* (New York: Meridian Books, Inc., 1960) p. 168.
22. G. C. Berkouwer, *Man—the Image of God* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1962), p. 53.
23. Packer, *op. cit.*, pp. 22-23.
24. G. C. Berkouwer, *The Providence of God* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1952), pp. 170, 172.
25. Augustus Hopkins Strong, *Systematic Theology* (Philadelphia: The Judson Press, 1944), pp. 586-587.
26. Berkouwer, *The Providence of God*, p. 145; cf. pp. 147-149.
27. Quoted by Reinhold Niebuhr, *The Nature and Destiny of Man* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1941), vol. I, pp. 241-242.
28. Mead, *op. cit.*, pp. 134-135.
29. Blaise Pascal, *Pensees* (London: J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd., 1940), pp. 121-122.
30. Quoted by Denzil C. M. Patrick, *Pascal and Kierkegaard* (London: Lutterworth Press, 1947), vol. II, p. 236.
31. Quoted by Mansel, *op. cit.*, p. 322.
32. Niebuhr, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 61.
33. Quoted by Mansel, *op. cit.*, p. 238; cf. Mead, *op. cit.*, p. 288; cf. too the opinion of N. P. Williams concerning the "absurdity" of original sin as quoted by Niebuhr, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 261.
34. Brunner, *op. cit.*, pp. 43-44.
35. G. Bromley Oxnam, *A Testament of Faith* (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1958), p. 144.
36. Quoted by Gerrish, *op. cit.*, p. 90.
37. Quoted by Donald Mackenzie, *op. cit.*, pp. 164, 178.
38. William R. Alger, *A Critical History of the Doctrine of a Future Life* (New York: W. J. Widdleton, Publisher, 1866), pp. 503-504.
39. Hans Martensen, *Christian Dogmatics* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1890), p. 475-476.
40. MacLagan, *op. cit.*, p. 123.
41. H. L. Ellison, *From Tragedy to Triumph* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1958), p. 124.
42. These quotations are from G. K. Chesterton's introduction to *The Book of Job* to which extended reference is made by Hugh Kenner in his excellent study, *Paradox in Chesterton* (London: Sheed and Ward, 1948), pp. 82, 96; cf. also pp. 64-65. Berkouwer holds that it is impossible to build any satisfactory theodicy except on the basis of faith. And the theodicy of Biblical faith fails to satisfy the logical tests proposed by non-Biblical critics. Cf. his incisive treatment in *The Providence of God*, pp. 251-294. The "enigmas" and "antinomies" of divine government are soluble, he affirms, pistically not rationally (pp. 170-172).
43. Ballie, *op. cit.*, pp. 110-111.
44. Quoted by MacLagan, *op. cit.*, p. 117.
45. Quoted by Diem, *op. cit.*, p. 49.
46. Niebuhr, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 262.
47. Edward T. Ramsdell, *The Christian Perspective* (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1950), p. 57.
48. Cornelius Van Til, *Common Grace* (Philadelphia: The Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1947), pp. 9-10.
49. Ronald W. Hepburn, *Christianity and Paradox* (London: Watts, 1958), p. 8.
50. Charles Simeon, *Exposition Outlines on the Whole Bible* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing Co., 1955), pp. 14-15.