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Witness and Word

Along with the renewed interest in biblical study, the Reformation of the
sixteenth century bore a concern for the place of the Holy Spirit in Christian
doctrine. Luther and Calvin emphasized the relationship of the Holy Spirit
to Scripture and to the redemptive work of Christ. Calvin so developed and
formulated the Reformed doctrine of the Holy Spirit that it has held an
influential place in the life of Protestantism.[1] Calvin's understanding of the
work of the Holy Spirit, however, was not without ambiguity. A recognition
of the incompleteness of Calvin's formulation provides an historical perspec-
tive for a consideration of the unresolved hermeneutical problems in current
debate.

Calvin was quite aware that an epistemology for the Christian faith
could rest neither upon the medieval use of authoritative tradition nor upon
the Anabaptist spirituality. Calvin found his authority to be the Holy Spirit's
witness in the heart of men to the truth of the Bible. The result of his dis-
covery was expressed as the *testimonium Spiritus Sancti internum*, the inner
witness of the Holy Spirit. Calvin set forth this position in his *Institutes of
the Christian Religion*, and continued to explore it in his commentaries and
sermons. As the years passed, his statements in the *Institutes* became regu-
lative in the theological structure of Protestant scholasticism and served to
hide the more dynamic view expressed in Calvin's other writings.

Two aspects of Calvin's teaching in the *Institutes* are pertinent to our
study. The first is concerned with the use and authority of Scripture, and the
second with the work of Christ and the relation of this work to man.

It was clear to Calvin that man had some knowledge of God apart from
Scripture. 'To prevent anyone from taking refuge in the pretense of ignorance,
God himself has implanted in all men a certain understanding of his divine
majesty,' Calvin wrote.[2] He went on, however, to say that this knowledge of

1. Cf. L. Dewar, *The Holy Spirit and Modern Thought* (London: Mowbray, 1959),
p. 131. J. K. S. Reid, *The Authority of Scripture: A Study of the Reformation and
Post-Reformation Understanding of the Bible* (London: Methuen, 1957), p. 29, points
out that Luther's view would not differ substantially from Calvin's, but that Luther
'would not have found it natural to make so explicit and formal a profession.' Luther's
view is presented by R. Prenter, *Spiritus Creator* (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press,
1953), and W. J. Kooiman, *Luther and the Bible* (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press,
1961). R. Seeberg, *Text-Book of the History of Doctrines* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book
House, 1958), II, p. 396, recognizes that 'Calvin is ... the author of the so-called inspi-
ration theory of the older dogmaticians.'
2. Calvin, *Institutes*, I, iii, 1, quoted from J. T. McNeill (ed.), *Calvin: Institutes of
the Christian Religion*, 2 vols. (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1960).

God has become so stifled in man's consciousness that it very rarely becomes a mature knowledge. Likewise, the knowledge of God which is available through the testimony of nature, from the evidences of creation and the continued government of the world, is so disregarded or corrupted that it is of no benefit to man.

Although man has brought this condition upon himself, he is not abandoned by God. God provides, in Calvin's words, 'another and better help' to make himself known to us.[3] This help is the light of his Word, his action and revelation in Christ. In the work of God which is recorded in the Old Testament, God revealed himself through his Word to Adam, Noah, Abraham, and others. In knowing the Word, albeit in a shadowy way, they knew God as Creator and Redeemer, and thus passed from death unto life. Even though the biblical oracles of God have ceased, and man cannot know God as did Abraham, man may now know God by turning to Scripture. While the Christological problems of the work of Christ in the Old Testament do not come within our concern here, the use of the term 'Word' to refer to God's action and revelation in Christ does. It will be part of Calvin's remaining ambiguity that he does not sufficiently separate or join his uses of the term when he uses it to refer to Christ and when he uses it to refer to Scripture.

Scripture provides the means for the knowledge of God as both Creator and Redeemer, and it teaches us of Christ the Mediator between God and man. Calvin recognized that, while Scripture was a better help than nature and reason, it brought with it the difficulty of accepting as true the knowledge of God which it provided. To benefit by Scripture, man must accept it as authoritative, and this acceptance is the very thing that man cannot achieve by his own capacities. Neither the power of reason nor the voice of the church is able so to attest the truth of Scripture that man can receive Scripture as authoritative. The voice of the church is insufficient because the church is itself founded upon Scripture.

There is only one valid way in which we are able to recognize the importance of Scripture, and that is by knowing that God himself is its author. Calvin wrote: '... Credibility of doctrine is not established until we are persuaded beyond doubt that God is its Author.'[4] This knowledge comes, not through the ordinary mental steps which one would use to determine the author of a book, but by the special testimony of the Holy Spirit. In the inner man the Holy Spirit moves and secretly witnesses to God's authorship of the Bible. Once we are convinced of this truth we are able to rely upon Scripture and accept it as authoritative. We are thus enabled to receive the knowledge of God which it provides, and this knowledge is then effective for our salvation.[5] Thus we see that for Calvin the efficacy of the better help

3. *Ibid.*, I, vi, 1.
4. *Ibid.*, I, vii, 4.
5. Cf. *ibid.*, I, vii, 4; I, viii, 13.

depends upon our accepting its divine authorship, and that such an accep-
tance is motivated by the action of the Holy Spirit. George Hendry sum-
marizes Calvin's doctrine in these terms: 'The efficacy of the Word is
contingent on our acknowledgment of its divine origin and it is the divine
origin of Scripture that is certified by the witness of the Spirit in the first
instance.'[6]

Calvin was convinced that Scripture had been providentially inspired.
However, he was more concerned to recognize the authoritative way in which
God still spoke to men than he was to ascertain the sources and methods of
the writers. His belief in the authority of the *testimonium Spiritus Sancti
internum* did not rest on a theory of mechanical dictation, nor can it be
equated with present-day theories of verbal inerrancy.[7]

The second pertinent aspect of the *Institutes* concerns the relation of the
work of Christ to man. This relation of Christ to man is also a function of
the Holy Spirit. In Book Three Calvin said, as he had said of Scripture in
Book One, that mere information about Christ is insufficient:

First, we must understand that as long as Christ remains outside of us, and we
are separated from him, all that he has suffered and done for the salvation of the
human race remains useless and of no value for us. Therefore, to share with us
what he has received from the Father, he had to become ours and to dwell
within us.[8]

Such a close relation is not the result of our efforts to grasp the significance
of Christ by rational examination or to emulate his actions. Calvin said that
'the Holy Spirit is the bond by which Christ effectually unites us to himself.'[9]
In 1537 Calvin wrote, in his *Instruction in Faith*: 'By the power of the
Spirit, Christ ... calls and attracts us to himself in order that we may obtain
deliverance.'[10]

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6. G. S. Hendry, *The Holy Spirit in Christian Theology* (London: S.C.M. Press,
1957), pp. 75f.

7. Calvin's intention can be inferred from many passages in his biblical commen-
taries: e.g. on Num. 25:9 (*Corpus Reformatorum*, 25, 299); Ps. 8:6 (*CR*, 31, 92); Isa.
64:3 (*CR*, 37, 409); Matt. 21:10ff. (*CR*, 45, 597); John 3:12 (*CR*, 47, 61); Rom.
10:6 (*CR*, 49, 198); Ephes. 4:8f. (*CR*, 51, 193f.). Calvin's position on the inspiration
of Scripture is described by P. Brunner, *Vom Glauben bei Calvin* (Tübingen: J. C. B.
Mohr, 1925), p. 17; J. Haroutunian (ed.), *Calvin: Commentaries and Letters* (Phila-
delphia: Westminster Press, 1958), p. 33; J. T. McNeill, 'The Significance of the Word
of God for Calvin,' *Church History*, 28 (1959), 131–46; W. Niesel, *The Theology of
Calvin* (London: Lutterworth Press, 1956), pp. 30–39; R. S. Wallace, *Calvin's Doctrine
of the Word and Sacrament* (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1953), pp. 110–14. H. J.
Forstman, *Word and Spirit: Calvin's Doctrine of Biblical Authority* (Stanford, Calif.:
Stanford University Press, 1962), p. 5, traces the recovery of Calvin's authentic position to
Doumergue. Cf. E. Doumergue, *Jean Calvin: Les hommes et les choses de son temps*
(Lausanne: Georges Bridel, 1910), IV, p. 73.

8. Calvin, *Institutes*, III, i, 1.

9. *Ibid.*

10. Calvin, *Instruction in Faith* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1959), p. 51.

Calvin frequently pointed out that the operation of the Spirit was closely linked with the person of Christ and that Christ 'came endowed with the Holy Spirit in a special way.'[11] He believed that Christ 'would have come to us in vain if he had not been furnished with this power.'[12]

Although the saving relation of man to Christ requires the operation of the Holy Spirit, this union is not the result of a mechanical or impersonal process. The 'principal work of the Holy Spirit' is the personal response of faith that knows that 'God is our merciful father because of reconciliation effected through Christ ... and that Christ has been given to us as righteousness, sanctification, and life.'[13] This faith is not one of the usual activities of the human mind. It 'does not spring from the perspicacity of the human mind or the proper movement of the heart, but is the special work of the Holy Spirit, whose it is both to enlighten the mind and impress the heart.'[14] In the *Institutes* Calvin points out that the Spirit acts throughout the life of faith as well as in its origin.[15] Along with faith and contingent upon faith, the Holy Spirit produces repentance, and it is through both that it becomes possible for man to be united with Christ in his death and resurrection, even though Christ is no longer present in bodily form.[16]

It is significant that Calvin often mentions the interdependence of the Word and Spirit in the relationship of Christ and man.[17] Whether he is speaking of the word of Scripture or the preached word, he holds that it is necessary for the Holy Spirit to be active if the words of Scripture are to become the word of Christ for us today. Ronald Wallace interprets Calvin's point by saying: 'Preaching may thus fail to be the Word of God. The act may remain on a merely human level throughout, in which the preacher with all his eloquence and skill and fervour will accomplish nothing.'[18] T. H. L. Parker, on the other hand, describes the positive side when he observes that 'the Holy Spirit works through the human words of the preacher, making them His own Word.'[19]

In this area of his thought, Calvin understands that the Holy Spirit has an important place in the relation of the work of Christ to man. The Holy Spirit

11. Calvin, *Institutes*, III, i, 2.

12. *Ibid.*

13. *Ibid.*, III, i, 4; III, ii, 2.

14. Calvin, 'The True Method of Giving Peace to Christendom and Reforming the Church,' in T. F. Torrance (ed.), *Calvin's Tracts and Treatises in Defence of the Reformed Faith* (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1958), p. 250.

15. Cf. Calvin, *Institutes*, III, ii, 33.

16. Cf. *ibid.*, IV, xvii, 10. See also P. M. van Buren, *Christ in Our Place* (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1957), pp. 97f.; R. S. Wallace, *Calvin's Doctrine of the Christian Life* (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1959), pp. 66, 79.

17. Cf. his commentary on Ezek. 2:2 (*CR*, 40, 62). See also T. F. Torrance, *Kingdom and Church* (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1956), p. 98; D. S. Cairns, *The Image of God in Man* (London: S.C.M. Press, 1953), p. 143.

18. R. S. Wallace, *Calvin's Doctrine of the Word and Sacrament* (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1953), p. 90.

19. T. H. L. Parker, *The Oracles of God* (London: Lutterworth Press, 1947), p. 140.

is closely associated with the work and person of Christ, the true and eternal Word of the Father. The Holy Spirit is the bond between Christ and ourselves, moving the hearts of men to faith and repentance. It is by the Holy Spirit's work that the words of men become the Word of God for us.

Calvin thus speaks of the role of the Spirit in man's recognition of the importance of Scripture and the role of the Spirit in establishing the relation of Christ and man. He fails, however, to clarify the relationship between these two operations of the Spirit, and thus leaves the epistemological question with an incoherent answer. In Calvin's use of the term 'word' to refer both to the witness of Scripture and to the person of Christ the ambiguity is not resolved, but only hidden.

We are therefore led to wonder if Calvin has not described two operations of the Spirit which are quite different. The first operation is attesting the importance and authorship of a book. The second is the creation of a personal relation between two beings.

The separation of the witness of the Spirit to the origin of Scripture from the witness of the Spirit with Christ was expressed by Calvin in the *Institutes*, but this division was by no means the creation of Calvin. The materials for the division were already being formed in the first centuries of the Christian church.

The highly important term 'word,' which we know from the prologue to the Gospel of John, was used in a variety of ways by early Christians. Justin Martyr used the *logos* terminology to refer to the creative intelligence of God and to the expression of this creativity in God's son.[20] This was the Word which inspired prophets before Christ[21] as well as the Word which was to 'become man for the human race.'[22] Irenaeus understood that all things were formed by the Father through the Word;[23] that God himself is the Word 'who imparts knowledge of the Father;'[24] that by the Son we have knowledge of the Father through the Word;[25] and that the Word of God became flesh for the salvation of men.[26]

The way is prepared for the hermeneutical problem in Calvin's *Institutes* when the normal activity of speaking is employed by Tatian as a metaphor for the essential unity of the Word with the Father. Tatian illustrated his point thus: 'I who converse do not become destitute of speech [*logos*] by the transmission of speech.'[27] Irenaeus refrains from using this analogy,[28] but it does appear continually in the theology of the early centuries. In his *Address*

20. Cf. Justin, *First Apology*, 46 (*PG*, 6, 397).
21. Cf. *ibid.*, 36 (*PG*, 6, 385).
22. *Ibid.*, 63 (*PG*, 6, 424).
23. Cf. Irenaeus, *Against the Heresies*, II, ii, 5 (*PG*, 7, 715).
24. *Ibid.*, IV, vi, 1 (*PG*, 7, 986).
25. Cf. *ibid.*, IV, vi, 3 (*PG*, 7, 988).
26. Cf. *ibid.*, V, xiv, 1 (*PG*, 7, 1161).
27. Tatian, *Address to the Greeks*, 5 (*PG*, 6, 817).
28. Cf. J. N. D. Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines* (New York: Harper, 1959), p. 105.

on Religious Instruction, Gregory of Nyssa indicates the development of the motif at the end of the fourth century when he compares the eternal character of the spoken Word of God with the perishable character of human speech, and concludes that the Word itself must possess life.[29]

This expanding use of the term *logos* does carry with it a very powerful hermeneutical approach to the revelation of God in Christ. The ambiguity and incoherence in the concept of God's speaking his living Word are controlled by the metaphorical cast of the expression. However, when the concept is brought by Calvin into systematic connexion with the developing view that the Word of God is the truth of Scripture, the ambiguity in the concept becomes a hermeneutical problem.

In the nineteenth century Friedrich Schleiermacher attempted a theological reconstruction from the foundation of religious experience. It is often claimed that he succeeded in clearing the air of complexities which had proved troublesome in the theology of the dogmaticians who followed Calvin.[30] His criticism of the use of Scripture by the Protestant scholastics is well-known.[31]

In *The Christian Faith* Schleiermacher still associated the term 'word' with Scripture, but he was conscious of doing this in a new fashion. He begins by speaking of the 'Word' in relation to God's speaking or thinking[32] and in relation to Christ – 'for "word" is the activity of God expressed in the form of consciousness.'[33] The 'word' becomes representative of the 'whole prophetic activity of Christ.'[34] Schleiermacher suggests a hermeneutical principle when he finds the term appropriate for use in the 'human communication of the Word, in so far as that communication embodies Christ's word and continues the indwelling divine power of Christ himself.'[35]

Schleiermacher's hermeneutical conception failed to exercise a directive influence in succeeding decades. Barth has asserted that Schleiermacher actually failed to bring off his intended new statement of Protestant Christianity. Concentrating on Schleiermacher's concern to use the framework of

29. Cf. E. R. Hardy (ed.), *Christology of the Later Fathers* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1954), p. 271.

30. There can be no doubt that Johannes Wollebius had the Bible itself in mind when he wrote in his *Compendium Theologiae Christianae* (1626): 'We therefore acknowledge no other basis for theology than the written word of God' (quoted from J. W. Beardslee (ed.), *Reformed Dogmatics* [New York: Oxford University Press, 1965], p. 30). Scripture is referred to as the Word of God in the *Scots Confession*, 17; the *Heidelberg Catechism*, qq. 21, 25; the *Second Helvetic Confession*, 1; and the *Westminster Confession*, 1. The last-named (1:2) speaks of Scripture as the 'Word of God written.' However, throughout this period *Christ* is also understood to be the Word. Cf. H. Heppe, *Reformed Dogmatics* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1950), p. 414: 'In essentials all Reformed dogmaticians are agreed that the divinity of Christ is ... the person of the Logos ...'

31. Cf. F. D. E. Schleiermacher, *The Christian Faith* (New York: Harper and Row, 1963), I, pp. 115ff.; II, p. 593.

32. Cf. *ibid.*, I, p. 221.   33. *Ibid.*, II, p. 397.
34. *Ibid.*, II, pp. 490ff.   35. *Ibid.*, II, p. 492.

human feeling, Barth criticized him for using the term 'Word' in a secondary and intellectual manner.[36] A more critical problem is raised by the fact that Schleiermacher's association of the term 'word' with both Christ's prophetic activity and Christ himself lacks an explicit theological structure to support the dual reference. Essentially he adapts and passes on the historic association of the Word with the thinking of God, as expressed in and delivered by Jesus, and with the person of Christ. With Schleiermacher the continuing proclamation must be judged by the dual test of whether it embodies Christ's word and continues his indwelling power. The problem of the relation of Scripture the Word and Christ the Word, which at first appears to be solved in the foundation of religious experience, persists in a more subtle form and a more baffling guise.

In the following decades Wilhelm Dilthey, in his approach to the problem of knowledge, emphasized understanding as a 're-living' of an author's experiences in an awakening of experience within oneself.[37] This alternative proposal for a new hermeneutical foundation was forsaken, however, with the appearance of Karl Barth's theology of the Word of God.

Karl Barth took the position that the Word of God cannot be scrutinized analytically and objectively, because it is the active speaking of God himself. God's Word is spoken by himself to himself in hiddenness. It is spoken to man in Jesus Christ as the revealed Word, and it is attested in the Bible and proclaimed by the church. As God himself wills it, the witness of Scripture and the proclamation become, by the power of the Holy Spirit, the Word of God for us. By the gracious work of the Holy Spirit man is able to know the Word of God in faith.[38]

Barth's doctrine of the Word of God uses the several historic references of the term 'word' and interrelates them to one another. In this sense his theology brings to systematic relationship and culmination the separated uses of the term in preceding centuries. We must now ask, however, if Barth's attempt to correlate the various historic uses of the term 'word' really achieves coherence. The weakness in his formulation is that the term is made to serve several distinct functions, as it has been all along. He has assumed traditional vocabulary references for the term, which have never yielded systematic coherence. The separation of the authoritative witness – which by the grace of God becomes the Word – from Christ the revealed Word is not

36. Cf. K. Barth, *From Rousseau to Ritschl* (London: S.C.M. Press, 1959), p. 335. A. Ritschl, *The Christian Doctrine of Justification and Reconciliation* (Clifton, N.J.: Reference Book Publishers, 1966), p. 587, recognized that with Schleiermacher 'religion is always represented simply as a relation to God, but not at the same time as a relation or attitude of man to the world.' This criticism from a different point of view is less bound to traditional Reformed conceptions, and may indicate a more productive hermeneutical approach.

37. Cf. J. Macquarrie, *Twentieth-Century Religious Thought* (London: S.C.M. Press, 1963), pp. 122ff.

38. Cf. K. Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, I/1 (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1936), pp. 79ff., 98ff., 218ff.

overcome. Attributing the initiative to God does not in itself supply linguistic clarity.

Gerhard Ebeling and Ernst Fuchs have attempted to clarify the epistemological and hermeneutical ambiguities, to which we have fallen heir in the second half of the twentieth century, and to bring a new measure of coherence to the Christian position. Following Barth, Ebeling finds that faith assumes its position of dominance in the New Testament in conjunction with the person of Jesus Christ and as evoked by the divine initiative. The domain of personal, divine-human encounter is the 'sphere of the word.'[39] Ebeling believes that God's Word should never be conceived as an abstract statement, but rather as a personal address.[40] With the Easter event, Jesus himself becomes, not only the witness to faith, but the ground of faith. 'To believe in Jesus therefore means: to enter into relation with God in view of him, to let him give us the freedom to believe, to let him as the witness to faith be the ground of faith ...'[41]

In his book, *Word and Faith*, Ebeling expounds the idea that understanding is mediated through language. The theoretical study of hermeneutics is necessary only to remove hindrances to the function which language and word properly serve. When language serves its true function, existence in relation with others is illuminated and understood as a word-event 'which has its origin in the Word of God.'[42] Ebeling makes it clear that he retains the ordinary meaning of the term 'word' when he uses it for theology. 'When the Bible speaks of God's Word, then it means here unreservedly word as word – word that as far as its word-character is concerned is completely normal, let us not hesitate to say: natural, oral word taking place between man and man.'[43] Ebeling holds that it is quite appropriate to associate God and word: '... God and word are no more contradictory than man and word, but on the contrary it is "word" that unites God and man.'[44] The task of proclamation is that of letting the text of Scripture become God's Word once more. Ebeling writes: 'The text by means of the sermon becomes a hermeneutic aid in the understanding of present experience.'[45] Because existence is 'existence through word and in word,' Ebeling is able to use the concept of *existentialist interpretation*. An existentialist interpretation of the biblical literature would be 'interpretation of the text with regard to the word-event.'[46]

Ebeling's work is a major contribution within the Reformed tradition, and in our brief study we are in his debt on two counts. First, Ebeling has reformulated the correlation of Jesus and faith which we have seen in the writing of Calvin, and he has done this on an exegetical foundation. Secondly, Ebeling has provided a fresh exposition of the way in which the text of Scripture becomes personally and theologically significant for man. At every

39. G. Ebeling, *Word and Faith* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1963), p. 209.
40. Cf. *ibid.*, p. 211.   41. *Ibid.*, p. 302.
42. *Ibid.*, p. 327.   43. *Ibid.*, p. 325.
44. *Ibid.*, p. 326.   45. *Ibid.*, p. 331.
46. *Ibid.*

point his statement has demonstrated what he himself has recognized as the normal meaning of the term 'word.'

What Ebeling has not yet told us is the way in which these two areas of Reformed thought are to be related to one another. He has not yet systematically related Jesus, who becomes the ground of faith, to the word-event process of interpretation. Ebeling has restated both of the elements which remained essentially separate in the thought of Calvin, but he has not provided the theological structure in which these elements are coherently related.

Existentialist interpretation, in the more commonly understood style associated with Rudolph Bultmann, has been developed in recent years by Bultmann's student, Ernst Fuchs. In his essay, 'The Essence of the "Language-event" and Christology,' Fuchs argues that faith is a response to the proclamation of the word of God, in that 'he who is questioned and grasped by the proclamation confesses for his part – Jesus is God's word.'[47] The proclamation is to be understood, not as a recitation of doctrine, but as the asking of a question which the hearer has to answer. The proclamation and the response of the hearer to the proclamation are viewed as a dynamic circle. The crucifixion of Jesus is received in the proclamation as the judgment that our personal being (*Dasein*) is 'in fact under the power of death.'[48] Within this paradox of surrender and self-assertion we are asked how we understand ourselves. 'In this hermeneutic, authentic existence is to be understood as my existence which I have to decide in the moment of existing.'[49] Fuchs attributes to Bultmann the recognition that this decisive responsibility for personal being is the eschatological gift of God. In deciding for the present and thus being free for a future, 'man is relieved of the burden of the past.'[50]

The key to Fuchs' position lies in the concept of the 'situation.' Fuchs finds in the Synoptic witness that the situation is now conditioned by Jesus. 'Jesus' proclamation shows us that he understood himself as the one who "brought into language" the call of God in the final hour.'[51] The change in the situation which the call brings is manifest in the changing of conceptions and is thus understood as a 'language-event.' In this situation of language-event, decision for God is accompanied by a new 'being to God' and a new self-understanding.[52]

Jesus wished to be understood, not apart from his proclamation, but in it. His proclamation was a witness of the new being of man, 'in which God speaks with the individual; and as a result, the individual also is able to speak freely of God.'[53] Jesus understood himself as the witness of the new situation of the rule of God, valid now in his own presence. Jesus now becomes the centre of the proclamation and is proclaimed as the Word of

47. E. Fuchs, *Studies of the Historical Jesus* (London: S.C.M. Press, 1964), p. 214.
48. *Ibid.*, p. 216.   49. *Ibid.*, p. 217.
50. *Ibid.*, p. 218.   51. *Ibid.*, p. 219.
52. *Ibid.*, p. 223.   53. *Ibid.*, p. 224.

God. 'From the witness of faith in God there had arisen the *basis* of this faith.'[54]

The written word now preserves the situation in which we speak of God out of the new self-understanding. The language of the New Testament, which has been determined by the being of man before God, is now the 'cause of Jesus' relationship to God becoming an event for us also.'[55]

In this essay by Fuchs the role of Jesus in relation to man is correlated with the role of Scripture. The language-event of Fuchs reflects, in a way that Ebeling's word-event did not, both the situation of Jesus and the function of the authoritative witness. Fuchs has, in part at least, brought into union two traditionally separated themes of the Reformed tradition.

Fuchs does not achieve the union in a complete form, however, and the continuing separation can be seen in the reliance which he places upon belief in the decision which man makes. Belief is the significant basis of the decision: '... The word of God does not reveal itself as such, it does not appear as the word of God, unless it is believed as the word of God.'[56] Everything depends, in the final analysis, on whether or not man acknowledges the proclamation to be the word of God. The concept of God speaking his word in the proclamation is not yet integrally related to the situation of language-event which appears with Jesus. Belief in the proclamation *as the word of God*, moreover, is dependent upon certain traditional *a priori* language concepts, and would not likely be the confessional form used by the secular man upon the appearance of faith.[57]

In this survey we have recognized that, in the *Institutes* of John Calvin, there is a separation between the role of the Holy Spirit in relation to the authoritative witness of Scripture and the role of the Spirit in relation to Christ. This separation, reflected in the uses of the term 'word,' originated with the use of metaphors by patristic writers and has been maintained into the twentieth century. Today the influence of this separation is evident in the tension of language and event, which remains unresolved in hermeneutical discussion. John Calvin's incomplete correlation, then, is a significant factor in the contemporary problem of Reformed epistemology.

54. *Ibid.*, p. 226.   55. *Ibid.*
56. *Ibid.*
57. For a similar emphasis on belief, cf. F. Baumgärtel, 'The Hermeneutical Problem of the Old Testament,' in C. Westermann and J. L. Mays (eds.), *Essays on Old Testament Hermeneutics* (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1963), p. 136.