

# Theology on the Web.org.uk

*Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible*

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

[PayPal](#)

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

---

A table of contents for *The Evangelical Quarterly* can be found here:

[https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles\\_evangelical\\_quarterly.php](https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_evangelical_quarterly.php)

## NATURAL RELIGIOUSNESS AND COGNITION OF GOD THROUGH REVELATION

WITH our subject we are stepping into the spiritual contest of the Evangelical Churches in all lands. Not only in the Continental but also in all English-speaking Churches the fundamental problem of our Christian faith and the outset of all theological thinking has again come to the front: the problem of God's revelation. Is this revelation alone and exclusively sufficient for us or must we assume still other things and authorities, in order to get a positive and reliable knowledge of God? Is Bishop Barnes right in saying: "There are but two ways in which we can know Him. We can develop to the full all that is best within us and so strengthen the intuitions, on which faith in God's goodness rests, or we can discover God's nature from the Universe He has made"? Or have we to confess with the fathers of our Reformation: there are not two ways of knowing God: the way of developing the best within us or of discovering God from the Kosmos, but there is only one way: to hear His self-revelation in the Book of Revelation, in the Holy Scripture? How will we perceive His revelation? Through God Himself? Or are given in us, in our reason and conscience, the conditions, that make us able to become aware of the Revelation? With Professor Dooyeweerd at Amsterdam, in a review of the Ethics of Emil Brunner, we ask: "Does the created world maintain a certain autonomy, independent of Christ the head of the regenerated humanity, or have we to find in Christ the true and unmatched root of the whole renewed Kosmos in all its parts?" According to the answer to this question will be our Christian thinking and acting, our work as pastor and as preacher. We shall therefore not labour in vain trying to examine thoroughly the problem of the Religio naturalis or Revelatar.

These questions ask for a plain decision, and may in no wise be befogged; of course, under the one condition, that we consider *if* in our Yes or No and *how* it is grounded. Even such

people who regret the way of discussion between Karl Barth and Emil Brunner, the two most noted spokesmen in the debate on natural theology and revelation, have to thank them for the distinctness with which they have marked their positions. For our better understanding we must ascertain firstly: what is the meaning of each notion? and secondly: if in our question a co-ordinating "And" be possible, can any bridge lead us from the one notion to the other? For a decisive answer we have, before all, to inquire of the Bible about the possibility and reality of a natural religiousness and of a cognition of God resulting from it.

## I

The notion "Natural Religion" is often used in the sense of a primitive, inferior religion. But it is not the purpose of the present essay to compare the different religions one with another. We use here that notion in the sense familiar to us since the protest our fathers have raised against the Romish doctrine of the *theologia naturalis* and the *cognitio Dei naturalis*. The discussion of our subject would be thrown into hopeless confusion if we forget but for a moment that in the spiritual wrestling of our times the notion "natural religiousness" aims at the supposed human capacity of attaining a true knowledge of God under the guidance of reason, conscience, nature or history. Because Emil Brunner in his book *Natur und Gnade* has not everywhere distinguished between the *Christian* cognition of God in nature and history and the cognition of God by the *unregenerated man*, whom the word of Christ has not yet reached, he has originated many misunderstandings. In opposition to him it must be clear, that the notion "natural cognition of God" comprehends the whole religious and theological cognition, of which our reason or our moral conscience is said to be capable. As soon as at this point the meaning of the words used by us is vague, we cannot understand each other, whilst even for our problem the proverb is true: "Life's battles must be fought to a finish," and here we are placed before a vital question. Hence by "natural religion and religiousness" is meant any religion, in which man himself principally determines his relation to the Deity. What can the *homo incurvatus*, as Luther calls him, recognize and discern of God? Let us hear the answer the Bible has given us.

There can be no doubt about the fact, that the Bible in both its parts knows the existence of a divine revelation in nature and history and of a natural relation of man to God. We have but to read the psalms. However, we may not adduce the songs praising God's work in nature as a testimony to natural cognition of God, as is often done, as if such statements bear witness to a natural knowledge of God. For the man who prays, ex. gr. the viiith psalm exalting the splendour of the canopy of heaven, has not concluded the glory of God from the mere existence of the moon and the stars, but has learned it for a long while from elsewhere. The same is true of psalms xix or civ and other places, especially in the book of Job with its mighty descriptions of the beauty and majesty of the Universe. These poets do not climb up to the cognition of the living God from the marvels they meet in the creation, but they adore the God who long ago had revealed Himself to their conscience and to their heart. Knowing his hand and his ways, they see his glory in the things of nature and history. Instead of being records of a natural religiousness and of a natural cognition of God, such testimonies are uttered by men who with firm faith in the Lord our Creator reflect on his doings. Nowhere does the Bible support the opinion that those prophets and poets from the sunbeams, or from the ups and downs of life had learned, that there is a living God. The glorification of the Creator in the Old Testament is no proof of the existence of a natural knowledge of God.

On the other hand, we shall not deny the fact that the Scripture in its first part, too, is well acquainted with such a thing as natural religiousness, the existence of which it does not conceal. In the first commandment, "Thou shalt have no other gods before Me", is obviously presupposed, that there are people who know other gods, about which they have obtained information by their reason or their imagination. The Bible does not call in question the reality of such a natural relation to deities, but the question is, if the biblical writers would admit that there *the true and living God* is referred to. We bear in mind how the prophet Isaiah judges of this natural religiousness, cf. xl. 18-24.

In addition, the Scriptures never contest that natural religiousness can display a very impressive form. Paganism has also its wisdom and its beauty. In characterizing the King

Abimelech, of Gerar, Genesis, in its xxth chapter, sketches his noble religiousness, but does by no means favour the idea that the religion of the king is knowledge of the living God. Or what we read in Daniel of King Nebuchadnezzar allows us an insight into the opinion of the Bible upon the doubtlessly estimable piety of this king, "the head of Gold", as Daniel calls him. Between *his* relation to God and that of the prophet an abyss yawns across which no bridge can be thrown. Natural religiousness may have high ideals, but it is impossible for it to exceed the human sphere and to attain God. Not before the king had learned from the words of Daniel, to be afraid of the Holy One, did he begin to discern the Eternal.

As a matter of course, the existence of a natural religion is presupposed in the Old Testament. "Among the gods there is none like unto Thee" (Ps. lxxxvi); but David continues prophesying: "All nations shall come and worship before thee, O Lord," in other words: they must leave their former habits. The natural man will never draw near to God except by a *μετανοεῖν*, by a change of heart and mind without reservation. In the Old Testament we meet everywhere the contrast of nature and revelation, of the relation to the deity being possible to the natural man but being in reality only a relation to the idols, and of the relation to God which God Himself starts and regulates by his own revelation. The idea is decisively rejected, that natural religion might be a passage to the true faith, a door, perhaps a very small door, to a real cognition of God, or even that God's revelation should be thought as improvement of and supplement to natural religion. Isaiah did never hope the Egyptians would finally get knowledge of God by reasonable thinking, but he promises: "the Lord will make himself recognizable to Egypt" (xix. 21 literal translation). Of a knowledge of God as the historical psychological result of our religious capacity, the Old Testament has taught us nothing.

## II

Will we find in the New Testament a fundamentally divergent attitude to our problem? The apostles, especially St. Paul and St. John, were living in a richly flourishing religious world and had daily plenty of occasion of studying and comparing the manifold religions of their age one with another, from the

most primitive worship to the sublimest religious philosophy. What have they learnt from what their eyes had seen? Could they discover in the representatives of heathenism in the temples of Ephesus and in the class-rooms of Athens points of contact, from which by quiet and logical reflexion we may reach the cognition of the living God? Is there an immediate way from human thinking to God?

Summarizing St. Paul's sermon to the pagans at Lystra (Acts xiv. 15), St. Luke testifies that God suffered all nations to walk in their own ways and nevertheless left not himself without witness. His gifts are seen by all people and we all are living by his benefits. Just as in the Psalms and prophetic writings the reality of a divine revelation in the natural and moral sphere is not contested. But, and that is the point, St. Paul calls that religiousness significantly "vanities", τὰ μάταια, from which his hearers must turn to the living God by a radical separation. The apostles do not mean that their hearers stand in need of enlightenment and explanation, but of the call to repentance and conversion. Not: you have to continue your education! but: repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand! The messengers of Christ refer to the hitherto prevailing notions only in order to induce the hearers to change their ideas. In no way are these notions considered as starting points for the new doctrine they teach at Lystra. The actual fact of God's revelation in nature and history does not include the subjective possibility of getting knowledge of God by virtue of our reason. Natural revelation makes us rather inexcusable before God. As Calvin has remarked: "Faith does not result from observation of heaven and earth but from hearing the Word of God."

Likewise the famous sermon at the Areopagus of Athens (Acts xvii) is only following up what St. Luke tells us in his account of the address at Lystra. St. Paul faces his hearers as a preacher of conversion, not as a teacher of philosophy, united with his disciples on a common basis of thought. Superstition, fear of demons, is their religious frame of mind, he believes. As to their cognition of God, they have made it known themselves by the altar with the inscription: "To the unknown God"; that inscription which expresses in the most affecting manner the entire despair of paganism and the confession, that men possess no light on God. In Athens as at Lystra, St. Paul has maintained his opinion that the cognition of God does not start

from human religiousness but is opposed to it. He sees no connecting link between Greek piety in spite of noble words and deep intuitions and the cognition of God. As the great tragedy of Hellenism terminates in the satyric drama and its philosophy in scepticism, so its religion in the Eleusinian mysteries. The sermon at the Areopagus is rooted in the persuasion that neither our natural knowledge of God nor our searching desire for God can lead us but to the cry for the unknown God. Natural religiousness is not a preparation to faith in the living God, father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

What the apostle has taught in his missionary witness to the Gentiles, we read also in the epistles to the Christian churches. In Romans i. 20 the reality of a universal revelation does not mean that cognition of God will be its result. Indeed God's revelation in nature and history is surely a witness of his divine power and eternal Being, but through their knowledge of God men have not been induced to recognize Him as the one and real God. In their considerations they have attained nothing else than a vain idea, and their foolish heart has persevered in the darkness. Their idea of God becomes an illusion. In place of being a locus classicus for the possibility and reality of natural cognition of God, St. Paul in Romans i. 20 maintains just the reverse: "They changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image like corruptible man." Natural religiousness cannot pass the boundaries of nature. Even in its most excellent representatives humanity is over and over again falling back below that line. The world of paganism with its idolatry was the striking proof to the apostle that men are never capable of recognizing God by the power of their reason or imagination. We are not a piece of wood nor a stone; we have eyes to see what can be seen of God's invisible being; we have, according to Romans ii, xiv, a conscience with its moral judgments, to discriminate between good and bad, a reminiscence of the law God has written in our heart; we should be able to recognize the Almighty, if as Calvin declares, "Adam integer stetisset". But because we are placed before this irreversible event of Adam's disobedience it is impossible, that any form of human religiousness becomes the root of a real knowledge of God, that is to say of the one true God and father of our Lord. As long as we do not know this God, we have not at all recognized Him. Neither the religiousness of the Jew boasting of his Bible, nor the religiousness

of the Heathen desiring to approach the Deity by his reason or his imagination, is an introduction to the cognition of God. Both are sitting in the darkness, both must turn their back to their natural religion.

We shall see this still clearer if we bear in mind the situation, in which Jesus and His apostles saw humanity outside the special revelation through God's Word and Spirit. Dead in trespasses and sins, without God and without hope in this world, children of wrath by nature, worshipping idols and not knowing God—like that St. Paul depicts our natural religiousness. Our own wisdom believes God's revelation to be folly, ever learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. From his personal unforgettable experience the apostle was convinced that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord but by the Holy Spirit. In this persuasion St. Paul agrees entirely with the testimony of his Master in the gospel of St. Matthew: "That no man knoweth the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him." In St. John we hear, that "except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God". Jews and Gentiles have but one way to the Father: faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Setting aside the faith in Christ we may perhaps recognize a *εἶδον*, a fasciosum and tremendum, but nowise the living God. St. Paul was well acquainted with the monotheism of Jewish-hellenistic philosophy and saw how excellently this god of the philosophers felt at home in the pantheon of his age without disturbing his competitors. Therefore Christ's messengers have been preachers of faith, because nothing else but faith in Him recognizes God's revelation in His creating and redeeming work. What results from human reason or from a so-called religious Apriori is an aspect of human thought, not divine revelation, as Dr. E. W. Camfield said in his book, *Revelation and the Holy Spirit*.

The authors of the Bible do not hurry past God's revelation in nature and history with closed eyes. On the contrary, they respect that revelation, but they cannot value it as an independent source for the cognition of God nor as master whose lessons we have to learn before we are promoted in the class of faith. Not before we have heard the Word God Himself speaks, does His hand in nature and history become visible to us. Our mistake is not attributable to the attempt to read God's thoughts in the book of nature and history, but to the idea that we can



read them without His own interpretation given us in His Word. Cognition of God by nature and cognition of God by revelation are in the Bible not allies but opposed one to another, not two lines of approach to God, which must somehow be made to converge on the same point. Revelation proves all natural knowledge of God as foolishness making us enter a new world, new in its substance, in its content, in its goal.

### III

But can it not be that the revelation is only a supplement to our natural cognition of God in the sense that the one appeals to our reason, the other to our faith? Forms of orthodoxy of the sixteenth and seventeenth century took this course, finishing in rationalism and in merely philosophical speculations. Both Romish and Protestant scholasticism, the idealistic emptying and the romantic obscuration of the Gospel and, last but not least the political caricature of the Christian religion, have as their common root the presupposition that the knowledge of God by revelation makes complete what we more or less imperfectly know by reason or sentiment or intuition. Since the Roman doctrine: "*gratia non tollit naturam sed perficit,*" had secretly or frankly invaded the Evangelical theology, a petrifying virus was inoculated into its heart. Our Reformers knew perfectly well, why they fought with such firmness against the assertion that natural religion and theology hold a legitimate place in the Christian Church. According to Martin Luther, the Gospel is a judgment on all human religion, for by the first commandment, within which the Christian faith is comprised, our Creed is severed from all other creeds. Luther often expressed his amazement at many lofty utterances of natural religiousness among the heathen and in Islam, but he protests at the same time with all energy that there is no direct way from man to God, because such a directness would invalidate the Incarnation of the Word, of the Logos. It belongs to the essence of natural religion, as Luther has clearly recognized, that the sinner at the bottom of his heart desires to settle his relation to God according to his wishes and his understanding. Natural religion may follow the moral or the eudemonistic line, at all events it is religion of man, religion of myth, i.e. of the Law, or as Luther defined: *religio hominis non Dei*.

The Reformer of Geneva did not teach a doctrine different from that of the hero of Wittenberg. Peter Barth had indeed an easy task revealing the misconstruction of Emil Brunner, who called up John Calvin as compurgator for his *theologia naturalis*; more particularly as Brunner himself was forced to make many restrictions of his conjectures and even to declare verbatim: "Only the Christian partaking of the revelation in Christ has the true natural knowledge of God." Calvin's remark on the glorification of God by the creation and on the existence of a *semen religionis* in natural man is in no way connected with *theologia naturalis*, considering that he has expressly qualified this *semen religionis* as the parent of rankly growing weeds. The cognition of God in heathenism is in Calvin's eyes nothing more than "vaga et erratica de unmine opinio". The objections Peter Barth has raised against Brunner, and the arguments on the problem of natural theology in Calvin, W. Niesel has recently explained to us in his new book *Die Theologie Calvins* will, it is to be hoped, put an end to attempts to evolve a *theologia naturalis* from Calvin's writings. The Reformer avoided the fault of the revivalist theology in the nineteenth century, that forgot the creative work of God in nature and history, restricting the attention especially to God's redeeming work. But he avoided also the fault of Romanism and Humanism, that considered knowledge of God as fruit out of a natural cognition of God. Calvin did not withdraw from the question of the humanistic philosophy respecting God's revelation to the Gentiles. In his answer he referred to the fact that there never was a revelation of God among Jews and Gentiles setting aside Jesus Christ, because His person is not a historical phenomenon amid other persons, but possesses decisive importance for all times and nations. Here we observe with the utmost clearness the focus of Calvin's whole piety and thinking: Jesus Christ, the absolute and exclusive revelation of God. The God-consciousness of the natural man, Calvin fully admits, may not be confounded with real cognition of God, which is always cognition of the triune God. With the humanists of his age Calvin had the same experience as St. Paul had at Corinth with "the wise man after the flesh": "not many are called." Whether our knowledge of the Deity be cognition of God or of the idol, becomes evident to Calvin as soon as we face the question of the Holy Trinity. If we have not recognized God the Father, the Son and the Holy

Ghost: "nudum et inane dumtaxat Dei nomen sine vero Deo in cerebro nostro volitat."

## IV

It is exceedingly interesting to notice how Calvin's friends have accepted his judgment on the natural knowledge of God: appreciation of the divine revelation in nature and history, high esteem of reason and conscience and reference to both; and at the same time the refusal of acknowledging a true fountain of revelation beside the revelation in the Word. In the noteworthy chapter of the commentary on the Epistle to the Romans by Martin Butzer, Calvin's friend and teacher, with the inscription, "An insit in philosophia, quod cum doctrina Pauli congruat", we meet the opinion that notwithstanding their polytheism many grand men of antiquity, in particular Plato, have had ideas, not very distant from Christian ideas. He mentions as such the faith in the creation and government of the world, in man as God's image, even in the depravation of this image. But immediately Butzer himself prevents the rationalistic interpretation of these facts, making Christ the alone mediator of all truth and salvation, responsible for it.

Butzer's intimate co-worker at Strasburg, and very esteemed by Calvin was Wolfgang Capito. Otto Erich Strasser at Bern in his book *La pensée théologique de Wolfgang Capiton dans les dernières années de sa vie* has impressively depicted the theological development of this distinguished man. As a matter of course, Capito avails himself of the arguments for God's Being, from nature and reason. Yet Strasser cautions us against the temptation of regarding Capito as one of the supporters of a *theologia naturalis*, since he subordinates in the end our whole natural knowledge of God to the testimony of the Bible. God must make Himself intelligible to men by His Word.

Finally we remember Petrus Viretus, Calvin's colleague and lifelong friend at Geneva. Nobody of his circle appears to be so remote from Calvin in that very question we have to do with. In his *Instruction Chretienne* he fills many pages linking one argument for God's existence to another. But behind all his statements we meet the conviction that no rational argument can create a firm persuasion about the invisible God. Viretus gathers, ex. gr. eagerly, what human science is able to say in favour

of the immortality of the soul, and he finishes his arguments with the declaration: "Although the philosophical arguments referring to the soul's immortality are important, they can never truly convince us of our immortality, if God's own witness in his Word does not convince us of it, and before all the testimony God Himself has given in the resurrection of Jesus Christ." When all is said, the *theologia naturalis* of Viretus is insignificant in comparison with the stress laid on the revelation in the Word. Like the other Reformers he too obeyed the rule of Christian theological thinking: "*Scriptura duce ac magistra.*"

We have not space to give full particulars on the wrong ways of the Evangelical theology, since in the age of protestant orthodoxy the *locus de cognitione Dei naturali* occupied a broader and broader room, and under the influence of philosophy since Cartesius man became more and more autonomous till his divinity was boldly proclaimed. In the beginning the assertion of the claims of human religiousness was still very bashful. In the *Synopsis Leidensis* edited a short time after the *Synodus Dorolracensis* the first sentence runs as follows: "*Theologia est iuxta nominis notationem, ut quibus placet, sermo Dei, vel potius sermo de Deo, ut nos cessemus.*" The authors of the *Synopsis*, Walaeus and Thysius, had not in the least the purpose of glorifying man. Nevertheless they meant theology as *Sermo de Deo*, no longer with Calvin *Sermo Dei*. God is no longer the subject of theology but only object of our thinking. Not the *viva vox Evangelii* has the sovereign rights in the house of theology; beside it the, at the first, lowly and then more and more loudly speaking voice of man, sounding finally above the other. Protestant theology became indeed a talk of men about God or *what men thought to be God*.

## V

The striking proof of this deplorable condition of theology is its effort, by the famous three or four arguments for the existence of God, to contribute to the substantiating and certainty of faith, whereas such arguments were to the Reformers still mere articles of luxury, or in any case things of very secondary importance. Surely has our theology since Kant less triumphantly spoken of the virtue of natural theology. But the leaven of this mode of thinking is till to-day far from being swept out. In as much as our theologians are still really connected with the

Reformation holding to the Reformation understanding of the Gospel, they are everywhere forced to take back with the right hand what with the left they have conceded to natural theology. For instance, we remember but the late Adolf Schlatter, the renowned German theologian at Tuebingen. He may be right in asserting that the Kosmos does raise in us the idea of infinity. Yet we must question, what Schlatter has obtained by his statement for the cognition of God or which starting-point for our faith he hopes to have gained by it. In continuing, he speaks of a certainty about God history is said to be able to afford. But hard by he assures us that certainty about God cannot be caused except by God alone, that therefore our conclusions from nature and history are but unreliable footholds. In spite of the *Synodus Bernensis* maintaining that all preaching of God without Christ is heathen preaching, Schlatter even thinks it possible to become aware of sin without Christ, taking this possibility for granted as founded in the human situation. But being about to explain the work of Christ, Schlatter is compelled to forget all he has said before, and to admit that our thoughts about God are dubious without Christ. Schlatter has found what all find who sustain faith in God by rational arguments: they cannot make it credible that the philosophy of the religious man leads him to a personal God, to One who is "He", and not "It". Thinking in this way we shall hardly refute the reproach, that the Gospel and the Christian faith are in truth nothing more than a species, perhaps the highest species, of human religion. From this point of view Revelation has the task only of purifying the natural cognition of God, and we are again arrived at the Romish doctrine, that the *pura naturalia*, reason and will of the fallen man are still unhurt and that only the *donum superadditum*, the supernatural righteousness was lost. Schlatter's way must end in a deadlock. I shall never forget how Martin Kaehler at Halle fifty years ago warned his students of the notion of a natural religion and natural revelation, qualifying these notions as being cross-eyed, "schieleude Begriffe". He taught us not to have the desire nor the need of being dependent in our faith on considerations beside God's revelation in Christ.

Philosophy must try, from a general notion of religion or from a religious *Apriori*, to reach a positive result, and it is of no use disputing the correctness of its way. The Christian theologian cannot even take into account the possibility of this

way, starting on the axiom that cognition of the Eternal is cognition through faith alone and only exists *where* He reveals Himself, and exists only *because* it has pleased God to reveal Himself. There is no natural theology as *praeambula fidei*, and we do not know any *motiva credibilitatis*, on the strength of which our reason deems it fit, to acknowledge the existence of God. We have no other point of departure than God's marvellous work: the faith, in which and through which God reveals Himself to us. With Agur (Prov. xxx. 3) we can but confess: "I neither learned wisdom, nor have the knowledge of the Holy. Who has ascended up into heaven or descended?" Our flying to heaven even with the aid of the best natural theology would but undergo the fate of Icarus. Either we approve the dogma of the Concilium Vaticanum: "Deum naturali humanae rationis lumine e rebus creatis certo cognosci posse," or the Gospel message: "no man cometh unto the Father, but by me; if ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also" (John xiv. 6-7). This word of Jesus does not reduce in value the book of Nature in the manner of Spiritualism, but mentions by name the one and only fountain of revelation, from which we gather a true knowledge of God. Rational thinking may also make use of God's name, yet we ask: what does it mean by it? Jean de Saussure in his lecture on "The interrelation of Theology and Secular Knowledge", at the Fourth Calvinistic Congress, made us ponder on the fact: "Le même mot 'Dieu' recouvre, pour la foi et pour la philosophie, deux contenus complètement différents."

On that account every real cognition of God is cognition through revelation, that is to say: through Christ, or there is no cognition at all. Likewise the effort of some theologians of our age, to have recourse to a so-called Theology of Creation and with the help of the first article of faith to reach a cognition of God without Christ, misses its aim and must fail. For confessing our faith in God the Father the first article objects at the outset to such an attempt. A Theology of the first article of the Apostolic Creed has no real foundation without the second and the third article. The Christian confessing God the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost is asked to do more than is fair, if you expect him to contrive a Theology of the first article. We say with Calvin, that "ex mundi conspecta patrem colligere non licet". God's footprints in creation are but undecipherable

signs, till God discovers Himself to our heart and mind in His only begotten Son, in the Word, which was with God. Because Calvin understood the language of natural religiousness and its high but vain hopes; he has time and again reminded the Church: "ad verbum inquam est veniendum!"

W. KOLFHAUS.

*Vlotho (Westphalia), Germany.*