

THE BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF SCRIPTURE

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As a basis for interaction and further probing together of a very important topic, I would like to suggest three questions along with tentative answers:

I. What does "under the authority of Scripture" mean for the behavioral sciences?

II. To what extent do the behavioral sciences among evangelicals give evidence of being under the authority of Scripture?

III. How can the functional authority of Scripture over behavioral scientific theories be established and maintained?

Before we consider these questions, it may be helpful to define certain terms as I use them.

By "under the authority" I mean that when the teaching of Scripture conflicts with any other idea, the teaching of Scripture will be accepted as truth and the other idea will not be accepted as truth.

By "functional control" I mean that the principle of Biblical priority over contrary non-Biblical opinion is not merely a doctrine to which one swears allegiance but is actually put into practice thoroughly and consistently.

By "derived from Scripture" I mean concepts that are determined to be the meaning of the original author through common-sense principles of understanding language (scientific, historico-grammatical interpretation).

By "the teaching of Scripture" I mean everything the Bible affirms as true.

Man created in the image of God is capable of gleaning a great deal of truth from natural sources altogether apart from written revelation. But because man is finite and sinful, his understanding of truth revealed in nature, and in Scripture as well, is always limited and distorted. Nevertheless, an infallible written revelation of some of God's truth makes accessible to man a clear understanding of the basic truths concerning God, man, and salvation. Such propositional truth is somewhat subject to varying interpretations, but the possibility of variation is often unduly stressed. If Scripture is viewed as a book with some error, it no longer stands as an independent authority, and the person who decides what is true and what is in error becomes the real authority. For such people the possibility of variation in understanding is enormous. But for those who place Scripture above human judgment the range of possible variation in understanding is greatly narrowed.

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Of course, it is quite possible to give assent to the idea of Biblical infallibility and authority while "interpreting" the Bible in such a way as to put some other authority above Scripture. For example, when a theological system is superimposed on Scripture in such a way as to disallow the plain meaning of the text, that system of thought is in functional control. Again, when the historian or biologist "interprets" Biblical data in such a way as to violate the normal canons for understanding the meaning of language, we say that he has allowed his historical data or scientific theory to overrule Scripture just as surely as though he let the categories stand separately and chose "science" or "history" over Scripture. The same must be said of psychological or cultural "interpretation." But in the case of the behavioral sciences the danger is even greater, because the data are never "hard" and "value-free judgment" is a myth.

Therefore when I use the term "the teaching of Scripture" I refer to everything the Bible affirms as true in the meaning understood in terms of the normal use of language.

With these definitions and presuppositions in mind let us turn to the questions proposed for our consideration.

I. WHAT DOES "UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF SCRIPTURE" MEAN FOR THE BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES?

My thesis is that the functional control of Scripture over any discipline will vary in direct proportion to the overlap of that discipline with the substance of Biblical revelation. This means that there should be a graded continuum of all subject matter from that which would require a direct and pervasive functional control to those disciplines that may have no relationship to Scriptural truth at all, other than that the practitioners ought to be people of integrity. The continuum might be structured this way:

Highest level of functional control: Subject matter completely overlaps with revelation, so that control will mean the ideas should be derived from Scripture exclusively.

Second level: Overlap with revelation is great though not complete, so that subject matter should be derived from Scripture but extended by empirical research and experimentation.

Third level: Overlap with revelation is slight, so that subject matter should be derived from natural sources but remain under the judgment of Scripture for its interpretation and application.

Fourth level: There is no direct overlap with revelation, so that subject matter may be derived wholly from natural sources but should be compatible with Scriptural truth.

Fifth level: Subject matter may be unrelated to Scripture.

To illustrate the thesis, I suggest that theology and Christian philosophy are in the highest category, derived from Scripture exclusively. The authority or functional control of Scripture is direct and

totally pervasive.

The behavioral sciences—psychology, sociology and anthropology—in their basic substance extensively overlap the basic substance of Biblical revelation, the nature of man and his relationships. The overlap is so fundamental that the functional control of Scripture means that the basic ideas about the nature of man and his interrelationships should be derived from Scripture. But inasmuch as Scripture does not profess to be a textbook on psychology, sociology or anthropology, the understanding of man and his relationships may be extended by empirical research and experimentation. In these disciplines, then, the functional control of Scripture is direct but not totally pervasive.

At the third level, subjects such as history and the arts are not derived from revealed truth, but inasmuch as the basis for selecting data, the interpretation of data and the application clearly overlap the purposes of Scripture, these must be under the judgment of Biblical revelation concerning God's sovereignty over history, revealed truth concerning human existence, and so forth.

The physical sciences might be examples of disciplines in which truth is derived wholly from natural sources but compatible with Scriptural truth at any point at which the subject matter intersects. Typing or other skills subjects could be in a fifth category, unrelated to Scriptural truth except in the person of the practitioner.

These illustrations are not intended to be precise. Not all behavioral sciences are equally overlapping with Scripture, and the bounds of each are not easily defined. Assignment to any category is not to be taken as rigid. My purpose is simply to make specific the implications of the thesis that the functional control of Scripture over any discipline should vary in direct proportion to the overlap of that discipline with the substance of Biblical revelation.

If "control" means that an idea from one source must yield its validity to a contrary idea from another source, it is clear that such control will only be necessary or, for that matter, will only be possible when the ideas are on the same subject. By definition, then, control is more pervasive the more subject matter the two sources have in common.

It is also evident that not all the subjects considered by men are of equal concern to Scriptural revelation. A gradation of applied control is, in the nature of things, inevitable. Since the behavioral sciences deal with human behavior and Scripture is given to change human behavior (2 Tim 3:15-17), the potential area of conflict is much greater than in the case of medicine or agriculture, for example, areas to which revelation is not primarily devoted. Since science derives ideas from rational observation, experimentation and theorizing and excludes the supernatural from data considered, it would not be surprising to find that conflict with revealed truth would be more in evidence since the higher one goes in the continuum, the more overlap there is. Thus the necessity of the Scriptures' functioning as the controlling or final authority in the arena of human thought varies in direct proportion to

the overlap of any discipline with the substance of Biblical revelation.

Therefore greater effort and greater care is necessary if Scripture is to control the presuppositions, methods and conclusions in the fields of psychology, anthropology or sociology. And since man is finite and sinful, Scripture teaches it is inevitable that his thinking will be wrong to some extent. Thinking that deliberately excludes the divine dimension from the outset will inevitably be at least partially wrong in its understanding of man's nature and his relationships.

It is interesting to note that behavioral scientists themselves perceive this acute conflict.

During the 1968-69 academic year, a survey of more than 60,000 college and university professors in the United States was conducted under the Carnegie Commission on Higher Education by sociologists from Harvard and Berkeley and a political science professor from the University of Connecticut.

These 60,000 teachers were raised in religious homes. Only 3.9 percent said they were raised in no religion at all. Although there is a variation from 0.9 percent raised in non-religious homes (professors of religion) to 8.7 percent (professors of anthropology), the variation is not significant inasmuch as the vast majority had a religious upbringing. Other studies indicate that this is typical of American society. In other words, college teachers come from typical American homes. But how many hold to a religious faith today? More than 90 percent of teachers in the following fields are adherents of some faith: religion, physical education, home economics, nursing and agriculture. Eighty percent or more in the following additional fields are religious adherents: medicine, education, business, engineering and library science. In these fields there is a higher degree of religious faith than is average for college teachers as a whole (75 percent). Typical of those fields which have a lower-than-average number of religious people are: English, history, biology and physics. The humanities, then, and certain sciences would be less religious, though some (chemistry, geography) are about average. But the most irreligious, apart from teachers of philosophy (40.8 percent with no religious affiliation), are all in the behavioral science group, climaxing with the anthropologists, 56 percent of whom have no religious affiliation. For whatever reason, there is a distinct graded continuum of willingness to accept religious input if not religious authority. This seems related generally to the degree of overlap with the teaching of Scripture. Of course, these statistical data do not indicate any of the reasons for the variation.¹

A more recent study by Fred Thalheimer of the California State University, San Francisco, does give evidence of direct correlation even if a causal relationship cannot be proved. He summarized the results of his very thorough study financed by several universities, the Social Science Research Council and the National Institute of Mental Health:

¹M. G. Scully, "Faculty Members, Liberal on Politics, Found Conservative on Academic Issues," *The Chronicle of Higher Education* (April 6, 1970) 1 ff.

There are also distinct differences between academic fields, as well as within broad fields, in how directly and how closely their areas of knowledge and the questions to which they seek or claim to have answers overlap with those that have been the traditional concerns of religious systems.... In this connection, *it seems plausible to hypothesize the greatest prevalence of concern about the relationships between religious convictions and academic pursuits among academicians in fields whose scope of inquiry overlaps most directly with those questions for which religious doctrines have historically provided answers*, specifically—the humanities and the social sciences. The same should hold for the perceived conflict between religious convictions and academic pursuits and for attempts to keep these two spheres separate from each other.²

In point of fact, this is exactly what these investigations demonstrate. Thalheimer's research indicates that up to early adolescence the religious socialization, as well as the religious beliefs and practices of future academicians, probably is fairly similar to that found among other persons of comparable age and socio-economic background.

A rank ordering—necessarily rough—of the six separate major fields on the five measures of religiosity reveals the following general pattern: the fine and applied arts are highest in religiosity, followed by the medical sciences and the professional schools with sometimes only minor differences between the latter two. The natural sciences and the humanities shift back and forth between rank four and five. Here again variations are sometimes quite small. The social sciences are consistently in last place, that is, lowest in religiosity.³

The vast majority of respondents were thoroughly traditional in their early beliefs and practices and ... there were only minor differences between the early beliefs and practices of individuals who later on became active in the various major academic fields.⁴

By "religiosity" Thalheimer means affiliation, church attendance and private prayer. He couples this with beliefs about the Bible and beliefs about God. Church affiliation, for example, ranges from 72 percent among professors in medicine to 35 percent in the social sciences. However, weekly church attendance ranges from 28 percent among the medical professors to 6 percent in social scientists. Seventy percent of social scientists attend church less than once a year or never, and a similar percent never pray. This same continuum is manifest in the area of beliefs, from the professional schools where belief in the Bible as the revealed Word of God claims 32 percent, in the humanities 21 percent and in the social sciences 7 percent. Again, 54 percent of the medical teachers believe God is the Creator, while only 19 percent in the social

²F. Thalheimer, "Religiosity and Secularization in the Academic Professions," *Sociology of Education* 46 (Spring, 1973) 195. Italics mine.

³*Ibid.*, 186-188.

⁴*Ibid.*, 188.

sciences still believe this fundamental Biblical teaching.

How does religious orientation affect one's professional work? Thalheimer gives some answers:

The natural sciences and the social sciences include a higher proportion of individuals who view their religious convictions and their work as unrelated to each other, than do any of the other academic fields. It would appear, in general, that if dissonance or conflict were at one time pervasive some resolution has by now been achieved. But the resolution takes different forms, compartmentalization in the case of non-believers and redefinition in the case of believers.⁵

Curious that those working in fields in which the subject matter is most related to Scripture should be the very ones who perceive their work to be *least* related! Note that for the small minority of social scientists who still maintain any religious faith at all, the conflict is resolved by "redefinition"—that is, by reinterpreting Scripture in the light of their science. The irreligious resolve conflict, of course, by treating revelation as if it did not exist as a legitimate part of the data ("compartmentalization").

The evidence seems to be that conflict resulting from and resulting in the loss of the authority of Scripture is increasingly evident as the substance of the discipline increases in its overlap with Biblical teaching. Therefore if the revealed truth of Scripture is indeed the ultimate authority for our thinking, to be functionally in control of the behavioral sciences, ideas about man and his proper relationships must be derived from Scripture and extended by empirical research and experimentation only when methods and conclusions are compatible with Scripture. Otherwise, for non-believer and believer the pressure will be for naturalistically derived data to control one's understanding of Scripture—either to disallow it altogether or to reinterpret it.

What does "under the authority of Scripture" mean for the behavioral scientist? It means that all the basic data about the nature of man, the way he should relate to other men, to his Creator and to the creation must be derived from Scripture. Areas to which Scripture does not speak may legitimately be investigated and tentative theories postulated and put to use. However, methods and conclusions must both bow to revealed truth whenever there is conflict. But if the hermeneutics of Scripture, the basis of interpreting Scripture, is from the perspective of cultural anthropology or naturalistic psychology, for example, Scripture is no longer the final authority. Cultural relativism, environmental determinism and other anti-Biblical concepts seep in and gradually take control.

This paper is not the place to exhaustively examine the correct hermeneutic for dealing with cultural elements of Scripture, but in order to give some substance to an elusive concept let me suggest an approach.

⁵Ibid., 196.

Authority of revelation stands above culture—ancient or current—just as it stands above other historical sources and scientific theory. Therefore the plain teaching of Scripture cannot be altered by information concerning ancient culture or because of incompatibility with current culture. When a Scriptural passage is not clear because of inadequate background information or because of apparent incompatibility with other passages, information from extra-Biblical sources may be used to clarify the meaning. If the behavior enjoined is a cultural application of a moral or spiritual law, the Church should reapply the law to current culture. But one must clearly establish from Scripture that the commanded behavior is a cultural application and not intrinsically the revealed will of God. If the clear teaching of Scripture is not modified by Scripture itself, it may not be reinterpreted by current cultural or psychological understanding. If it is, Scripture has bowed to human authority.

II. TO WHAT EXTENT DO THE BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES AMONG EVANGELICALS GIVE EVIDENCE OF BEING UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF SCRIPTURE?

Of course, many evangelicals are working at integration with the intention of maintaining the authority of Scripture. Furthermore, a great deal of new understanding of the Bible, men and societies has come through the behavioral sciences. Evangelicals rightly put these disciplines to the service of God's kingdom.

Furthermore, the range of success in integrating truth derived empirically and truth revealed in Scripture (and, indeed, the interest in making such an integration) varies so widely in evangelical circles that no precise answer to my question is possible. Nevertheless it is very important to raise the question because the potential for good or evil is so great. A resounding affirmative should be possible: "The great majority of evangelical scholars in the behavioral sciences give consistent evidence of thorough integration with Scripture in control." If such an affirmation cannot be made with confidence, we are in great danger because of the pervasive power of humanistic thinking in our society and because of the subtlety with which Scripture's authority is eroded.

My thesis is that in the next two decades the greatest threat to Biblical authority is the behavioral scientist who would in all good conscience man the barricades to defend the front door against any theologian who would attack the inspiration and authority of Scripture while all the while himself smuggling the content of Scripture out the back door through cultural or psychological interpretation. Let me give a few examples.

In a recent meeting of the Christian Association of Psychological Studies (a group of professedly Bible-believing Christians, mostly of Dutch Reformed background), views were expressed that put the presuppositions of a naturalistic psychology in a position of authority over the clear teaching of Scripture. *Christianity Today* reports:

Dr. J. Harold Ellens, an articulate clinician and pastor of a Christian Reformed congregation in Farmington, Michigan, averred that Scripture must be taken as conditioned by its historical and cultural context. Ellens expressed his doubts about the uncritical acceptance of a literal and unseen demonic realm, suggesting that the psychological scientists must bind themselves to empirical investigation and findings rather than to the assumptions concerning demons that were current in Bible times.⁶

This not only strikes a heavy blow at the authority of Scripture but also calls in question the intelligence or integrity of Jesus himself.

In a similar vein at the same meeting, a panel ran directly in the face of strong, repeated teaching in both OT and NT concerning homosexual behavior:

In addressing themselves to the biblical-exegetical question of the sinfulness of homosexual behavior, the majority of panelists rejected the standard evangelical view that all homosexual behavior is sinful. They offered an alternative exegesis of the biblical passages relating to the subject: that God condemns promiscuity, fornication, adultery, and sexual permissiveness, whether heterosexual or homosexual, but that Scripture does not condemn homosexual behavior between committed Christians in a covenant relationship of love and loyalty.

Dr. Phyllis Peters Hart, a clinical psychologist from Chicago, declared that she had long held to the standard exegesis on the subject but that the realities of her clinical practice led her to take a second look at the exegetical question. The upshot was that a strong case was made for thinking through again the meaning of the scriptural texts without compromise and without the imposition of exegetical or emotional preconceptions.

The symposium included a candid testimony by a minister of the Metropolitan Community Church, a gay-church movement. He said he was both homosexual and a follower of Christ.⁷

A more subtle encroachment of naturalism into Christian conduct can be seen in the whole new genre of literature on how to live a successful Christian life. A generation ago such books talked of the deeper life or the higher life, the victorious life, or the Spirit-filled life. Now the market is dominated by psychological or pseudo-psychological treatises on the subject of successful Christian living. I believe that many culturally-induced misunderstandings of Bible teaching concerning Christian living have been challenged and exposed by insights from the field of psychology. These certainly should be corrected through a fresh look at Scripture. However, a great deal of teaching is simply reprocessed naturalistic theory. For example, the problems of guilt feelings and self-rejection certainly need the word of release. All too often the new approach, however, stresses non-Biblical reasons for

⁶John E. Wagner, "National Association of Evangelicals: Amplifying His Voice," *Christianity Today* (May 9, 1975) 45.

⁷Ibid.

self-acceptance and a sense of worth and neglects to emphasize the Biblical reasons. This is not only untrue to the authority of Scripture, but it can be devastating in its results since the assuaging of guilt feelings cannot be permanently successful without dealing with the problem of real guilt. To assign responsibility to parents or society or to redefine sin or reduce the Biblical evaluation of its hideous nature will not set a man free truly and permanently. To be assured that one is important or worthwhile on any other basis than that he is important to God who created him on purpose and redeemed him at awful cost will ultimately lead to frustration and possibly despair. For one will learn from others not so benevolent as his Christian counselor that he is not all that important in their estimation.

Another example is the borrowing of psychological theory concerning catharsis. To "be honest" and to spell out one's negative feelings, "telling it like it is," may have a pragmatically good effect for a time, but it is not always Biblical and does not provide a permanent solution. God wants us to be very honest with ourselves and with him. But the next Biblical step is not to tell mother that you hate her or to spit in your neighbor's eye, but to believe God for a transformation of those feelings. Honesty in the Biblical context is not limited to self-expression of all one's feelings, but includes honesty with one's intelligent understanding, one's commitment, one's relationships—the whole man. The integrity of the whole man may—and often should—speak and act contrary to one's feelings.

But those who study human nature speak differently (from the traditional interpretation of Christ's condemnation of anger against a brother in Mt. 5:22). Anger is a basic emotion ... an automatic response to frustration. The sin is not in the anger itself but in letting anger build up and cause us to hate or despise another person.... Anger repressed is as dangerous as anger that is uncontrolled in its expression.⁸

The failure to deal with the Biblical teaching of self-control and a Biblical distinction between legitimate and illegitimate anger is not so serious as the way the interpretation of Scripture is based wholly on psychological theory.

These examples could be multiplied. It seems to me that much of current evangelical Christian counseling evidences a strong admixture, and often a controlling overdose, of a non-Biblical understanding of man.

A similar problem is much in evidence in the current evangelical approach to man in his relationships (anthropology and sociology).

For example, Charles Kraft, missions anthropologist at the School of World Mission of Fuller Theological Seminary, in 1974 spoke to a group of mission leaders gathered in Marseille for a consultation concerning reaching Muslims. Said Kraft:

⁸V. D. Brown, "A New Kind of Righteousness," *Adult Bible Study* (Southern Baptist Sunday School Series 5/1 [October-December, 1975]) 39.

What is necessary to faith, apparently, is some feeling of need or inadequacy that stimulates a person to turn in faith to God. (Likewise) meaninglessness in American culture too is a manifestation of the sin problem, the alienation problem. How do we get people who experience meaninglessness to feel guilty so they can repent and be saved? Well, what I'm saying is, we don't have to. God can save directly ...⁹

Similarly, he doesn't have to be convinced of the death of Christ. He simply has to pledge allegiance and faith to the God who worked out the details to make it possible for his faith response to take the place of a righteousness requirement. He may not, in fact, be able to believe in the death of Christ, especially if he knowingly places his faith in God through Christ, for within his frame of reference, if Christ died, God was defeated by men, and this, of course, is unthinkable.... Thus, if he is required to accept a historical and doctrinal truth as a precondition to salvation, he may reject that salvation for a reason which should be very intelligible, even to us outsiders.... He doesn't have to know the details, for knowledge does not save. He simply has to pledge in faith as much of himself as he can to as much of God as he understands, even the Muslim "Allah".... The concept of the Trinity can also in most cases be avoided.... It is interesting and discouraging to look back at the development of the Trinity, and to find out that this is a development that comes out of the application of Greek ways of thinking to the Scriptures.... The deity of Christ is a more difficult concept to handle. Since this doctrine is intimately related, in the informed Muslim's mind, to the doctrine of the Trinity on the one hand and the relative position of Christ and Mohammed on the other, we again cannot answer, "Yes" if he asks us if we believe in the doctrine. But we assuredly cannot answer "No" either.... The principle here is that a fraction of the truth well communicated is preferable to the antagonism engendered when a whole truth is totally rejected.... But we can, I believe, without denying Christ as we know Him, start with his Arabic concept of the Judeo-Christian God as the proper object of saving faith.¹⁰

Kraft goes on to quote several scholars, who are considered evangelical, to the effect that people can be saved without a knowledge of Christ. Although Kraft's emphasis is on the initial approach to the Muslim and as such might be justified, he clearly indicates that a Muslim can be saved without a conviction of sin and without accepting the death of Christ as historically true. It would almost seem that for a Muslim to be saved all he would need was a consciousness of inadequacy and a sincere calling upon Allah to save him.

Although this is not the position commonly held by evangelical cultural anthropologists, it does illustrate graphically what happens when Scripture is not dynamically, functionally, pervasively in control.

Examples from anthropologists could be multiplied. "The Holy Spirit does not give gifts like magic. Methods of persuasion are the same for the Communist, Jehovah's Witness, or Christian." Separately, a case

⁹C. Kraft, "Distinctive Religious Barriers to Outside Penetration," *Report on Consultation on Islamic Communication Held at Marseille* (1974) 70.

¹⁰*Ibid.*, 71-73.

might be made for the validity of each of these sentences, but together we have another example of the undermining of the supernatural. Given in the context of serious wrestling with cultural problems and rejoicing in the insights of anthropology, the evangelical can be so mesmerized that he fails to see the total divergence of such thinking from the teaching of Acts and the epistles about the supernatural enabling of the Holy Spirit. When you leave God out you may get a residue of truth, but the residue is poison.

One of the most pervasive ideas from the sociologists was articulated earlier by Rousseau who held that man is basically good (which all evangelicals deny) and that restrictions make him bad (which increasing numbers of evangelicals affirm). Many evangelicals are simply not wrestling with the Biblical data on the subject of authority. We assume, because of saturation distribution of the theories of certain psychologists, that externally imposed authority is, indeed, not good. We have been sold the idea that maturity comes in proportion to the degree of freedom of self-determination. There is an element of Biblical truth in the idea. Man is responsible for the choices he makes. A just and benevolent society is God's will. But whatever happened to Biblical teaching on authority? Scripture is full of teaching concerning God's authority mediated through human beings in the structures established by him. God is strongly on the side of human authority, even sinful and stupid human authority. This authority of husband, parents, rulers, elders is not merely to give benign counsel or to listen sympathetically, but authority to legislate and control.

But we have been so influenced by the theories of naturalistic, relativistic, humanistic educational theorists that even educational institutions that continue to impose external authority on the lives of students do so almost apologetically. Certainly they tend to do so defensively, because the authority has shifted from what Scripture says on the subject to what the sociologist has said.

I have chosen examples for their clear visibility. In the scope of this paper it would not be possible to examine the Biblical basis for the issues raised, so I have tried to choose issues about which the Biblical data would be known to Bible scholars and not subject to easy contradiction. However, the more subtle issues may actually prove as dangerous. At any rate, my purpose is simply to validate the thesis that we are in great danger of the wide-scale subversion of Biblical authority by those who are committed to that authority on the conscious and theoretical level, but who through uncritical use of behavioral scientific methodology have unwittingly come under its control.

(In any given instance it may be argued that the misinterpretation of Scripture is due to one's theology or to some other cause rather than to psychological, sociological or anthropological theories. This may be so, but the *idea* that prevails in each case is advocated by practitioners of a behavioral science, not by theologians or automobile mechanics in general. It is the idea that is not under the authority of Scripture, not necessarily the person. And since many such ideas are

coming in from behavioral scientific sources, it is quite legitimate to attend to the apparent source with great care.)

What hope is there for solving this problem?

III. HOW CAN THE FUNCTIONAL AUTHORITY OF SCRIPTURE OVER BEHAVIORAL SCIENTIFIC THEORIES BE ESTABLISHED AND MAINTAINED?

My thesis is that the functional control of Scripture over any discipline must be achieved through the integration of Biblical and extra-Biblical ideas in one person's mind.

A committee of scientists and theologians can never do this integration. To house the anthropology department next door to the Bible department will not do it either. Functional authority of one idea over another can take place only in one mind. To put a school of psychology next to a school of theology does not mean the Bible will actually control the work of the psychologists. The theologians may theorize with amateurish ideas about psychology and the psychologists select theological input on the basis of their own expertise in psychology. Even though working closely with Bible scholars—indeed perhaps *because* working together—the behavioral scientists may tend to use Scripture texts to tack a Bible-colored veneer over stuff built wholly from the categories of naturalistic empiricism. Continuing interaction between theologians and behavioral scientists is very desirable and will result in good things for God's people. But my contention is that true integration, as distinct from helpful interaction, must be accomplished by individuals with dual competence.

How can this integration take place in a person's mind with revelation coming out on top rather than being subordinated?

First of all, there must be commitment to the proposition that Scripture must be in *functional control*. This attitude is not just mental assent to the thesis, which would make for theoretical or constitutional control, but acute awareness of the danger involved and a jealous commitment to the Bible first and last as the originating and controlling source of ideas about man and his relationships. However, this mind-set or approach by itself will not assure the functional control of Scripture.

There must also be effort commensurate with the weight of controlling authority. In a discipline in which there is great overlap in the basic substance under study it will not do for the behavioral scientist to be a giant in his empirical research and theorization and a pigmy in his knowledge of Scripture. Because he is dealing with basic theological ideas when he delves into the nature of man and tinkers with the implications of these ideas, he certainly must give as much time and energy to knowing thoroughly what God says on the subject as he does to what man says on the subject. It would be mechanical and naive to hold that the Ph. D. in sociology must have a Th. D. in Biblical studies in order to qualify for this work of integration. On the other hand, it would be equally naive to suppose that one with graduate credentials in a

behavioral science coupled with an undergraduate minor in Bible could make any sort of integration in which Scriptural truth sits at the controls.

Again, the application of time, energy and thought does not apply merely to one's formal training. After initial training in both Bible/theology and the behavioral sciences, it is highly unlikely that the behavioral scientist will find the Bible actually controlling his thinking if he spends his entire professional life studying the latest research based on naturalistic presuppositions, supplemented by a personal early morning encounter with Scripture for twenty minutes. There is no way that Scripture can be in functional control under these circumstances. It may not be practical in many educational institutions, but for those who are thoroughly committed to the authority of Scripture it might be a saving innovation to require each behavioral scientist on the faculty of a seminary, Bible college, or Christian liberal arts college to teach at least one Bible book study or course in Christian doctrine each year. If he does not have the knowledge and credentials to do so, I am calling into question his credentials to make the integration of Scriptural truth and empirically derived truth with the Bible in functional control.

Who can become expert in two disciplines simultaneously? Will such a scientist not so dissipate his energies as to become sub-professional in his scientific field? Certainly the demands of such a dual disciplinary expertise are formidable. Few will have the mental capacity for this sort of integrating work. But full competence in two disciplines is not uncommon in the scientific world and, in fact, it is the brilliant master of two disciplines who often makes the creative breakthrough. I firmly believe we will be further along in our search for ultimate truth in these areas if we produce a few who are adequately gifted for this demanding task and refuse to be led astray by multitudes of earnest Christian psychologists, sociologists and anthropologists with varying degrees of competence in naturalistically-based ideas but superficial in the understanding of God's revealed truth.

May God give us a giant or two in each of the behavioral sciences who is simultaneously a giant in Scripture. In the meantime, may the Lord give us theologians who take the time to read and understand what the behavioral scientists are saying and to respond with Biblical insight. And may he also give us behavioral scientists humble enough to take seriously the criticism of those who seek to speak from a Biblical perspective.