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THE RELATION BETWEEN RELIGION AND THEOLOGY PROPER

A THESIS

BY

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CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

THESIS

THE RELATION BETWEEN RELIGION AND THEOLOGY PROPER

CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION

A. THE PRESENT SITUATION

This is an age of investigation. Men pride themselves upon their scientific attitude. There is a widespread feeling against what is called "Faith". There is a tendency to believe only those things which can be tested by experimentation from which tangible results may be obtained indicating the truth or falsity of the proposition. No field of endeavor or category of thought has been able to preserve itself from this attack. It was thus inevitable that religion with its sacred books, acts, and formulae should be placed under the microscope. At this present time we are in the midst of this scrutiny.

This investigation has brought to light those who are impatient with creed and dogma and theology; those who are zealous for the old formulae; and those who are indifferent, who say that it makes no difference what you believe so long as your heart is right.

McGiffert says, (1)

"Theology of one kind or another is thus the natural fruit of religion, but it is not the source of it or identical with it. It results rather from reflection upon it."

Others go much further than that and deny to theology any real place.

Lake says, (2)

"The experience of religion, not its intellectual expression, ought to be the basis of the church; and its theology - which is 'intellectual expression' must be put into language consistent with our present knowledge of the universe rather than reminiscent of the thought of the past. Religion may be inspired, but theology certainly is not."

Again, (3)

"The use of a creed would kill chemistry and it may easily kill the church. We need opinions, clean-cut, sharply divided, severely tested, constantly revised, but we do not need creeds."

He, in the same passage, defines a creed as "the petrification of opinion."

The following poem is suggestive of much of the current attitude toward creed, dogma, and theology.

- Note (1) McGiffert "The Rise of Modern Religious Ideas" Page 75
- Note (2) Lake, "The Religion of Yesterday and Tomorrow" Page 53
- Note (3) Idem page 106.

"The Lost Christ." (1)

"Your skill has fashioned stately creeds,
But where is He, we pray -
The friendly Christ of loving deeds?
He is not here today.

"With sentences that twist and tease,
Confusing mind and heart,
You forge your wordy homilies
And bid us heed your art.

"But where is He - or can you tell? -
Who stilled the brothers' strife,
Who urged the woman at the well
To live a better life?

"Where is the saint of Galilee,
Crude Peter's faithful guide;
The man who wept at Bethany
Because His friend had died?

"We weary of your musty lore
Behind dead walls of gray;
We want His loving words once more
By some Emmaus way.

"Give us the Christ who can bestow
Some comfort - thought of death.
Give us a Christ our hearts can know -
The Man of Nazareth."

Harold Bell Wright, writing for the lay reader,
makes one of his characters say (2)

"I, too, have been confused and have
not seen clearly the real values of life.
But I know now that it is not the
Presbyterianism of my parents that can
meet the present day religious need.
Nothing but the truths that Jesus taught
can put the world again in touch with
God. And so I am ready to throw aside

Note (1) Literary Digest 95:34 N. 5, '27. Clark

Note (2) Wright, "God and the Groceryman" Page 264

everything but those simple truths. I am ready to abandon every non-essential, and to stand for Christianity with nothing less and nothing more."

One more quotation is in point (1)

"It has proved on examination not to be infallible and slowly the problem began to define itself to the religious leaders of the day:- How far is the Christian Religion necessarily bound up with Christian Theology? Must we keep the theology to sustain the church or must we change the theology if we wish to keep the religion?"

Thus, we see that there is evident a widespread unrest in the organized church of Christ as well as without the church, with serious questionings as to the validity of the doctrines for which the church has stood, with impatience manifested towards creeds and theologies.

B. Responses to this situation.

There are three responses which may be made to this unrest. In the first place one may say that all these questionings are wrong, that one must accept the statements of the church, that those who question are tearing away the very foundations of religion. On the other hand one may welcome, without consideration, those who are advocating change as the saviours of

the church, the bringers in of a new day. The third response, and the true one, is to investigate the whole question painstakingly seeking to arrive at the truth in the matter.

C. The Problem

Hitherto the Christian Church has been built around definite and official statements of faith, statements not always made in the quiet of the study free from worry and danger, but statements made and theologies arrived at when danger lurked in every pathway and when to state one's belief was to invite death as a consequence. I am thinking now of the Augsburg Confession, the Gallican Confession of Faith, and the Scotch Covenants. The question before the churches of today is, Shall we abandon these historic statements of the content of religious belief? What requirements shall we make of ministers and those who would belong to the church? Ought we to rest content with a statement of the facts of religion without trying in the least to reduce them to a system of doctrine? The validity of the discipline which we call Theology is in question.

Another way of phrasing this problem is to ask, "Is not religion sufficient? There is a group of thinkers whose cry is "Back to the religion of Jesus and away from the religion about Jesus". It is not a question as to the validity of any particular theology such as the Lutheran, the Calvinistic or Reformed, the Roman Catholic, Anglican, Baptist, the Arminian or the Ritischlian. The question is broader than that. It strikes at the very root of the matter. It is a question of the right of men to think theologically at all. It asks, Is there any necessary and inescapable relation between religion and theology? Are not those who take the facts of religion and form them into a theology overstepping the bounds of intellectual necessity? Is not their work a work of supererogation, unnecessary and harmful? Ought we not to throw overboard all attempts to systematize these facts and rest content with the facts themselves. Man has religion and is religious. Is it necessary that he have a theology?

D. Question vital today.

Now is a very suitable time to enter upon the discussion of this problem. The minds of men are seeking an answer to these questions. Great denominations

are torn by the strife engendered in the bringing of them to light. The advancement of the Christian church as a whole waits upon their solution.

E. Limitations of this thesis.

To investigate the fullness of this subject would require a life-time of effort and a treatise rather than a thesis. It would require the investigation of every religion and every theology that the world knows or has known. But time or space do not permit such a thorough study. Neither is it necessary to go to such lengths. The discussion in this thesis may well be limited to the subject of Christian Religion and Christian Theology. But even limiting it thus would leave a tremendous field to be covered. A second limitation is to consider only a single vital doctrine. If it can be shown that there is a vital, necessary, and inevitable relation between religion and a single great and determining doctrine of theology then it may well be concluded that the place of theology as a worthwhile field of investigation is justified. Then the characteristics of this relation may be determined.

Such a point of meeting is found in the doctrine

of God, called by some theologians "Theology Proper". In accordance with what has been said the discussion in this paper will be limited to the consideration of the relation between The Christian Religion and Christian 'Theology Proper'.

F. The Problem Analyzed.

At this point the course of the argument will be traced briefly. Chapter Two will deal with the definition of the three fundamental terms, Religion, Theology and Christian, and at the close will be found four questions which must be answered. To each of these questions will be assigned a chapter. Chapter Three will deal with the question, Are there knowable facts upon which a theology can be based? Chapter Four will answer the question, Can these known facts be arranged into a theology? Chapter Five will deal with the question, Do systematized religious facts contribute to the appreciation of Religion? And, Chapter Six will cover the question, Does systematized appreciation of religion affect the lives of men? Chapter Seven will be devoted to a summary of the thesis and to drawing the conclusions which have been made evident. Chapter Eight will be the Bibliography.

CHAPTER II DEFINITION OF TERMS AND STATE-
MENT OF THE DIVISIONS OF THE
DISCUSSION

CHAPTER TWO.

DEFINITION OF TERMS AND STATEMENT OF THE DIVISIONS OF THE DISCUSSION.

A. Introductory Paragraph.

Before going further it will be necessary to define certain terms which have been used and will continue to be used throughout the course of this discussion. These terms are common enough and to a certain extent their meaning is understood and yet it is vital that we reinterpret them here. They are Religion, Theology and Christian.

B. Definition of Religion

The first of these to be considered is that elusive one, religion. This term can be so interpreted as to end all discussion or furnish the ground-work for further investigation. There is scarcely a word so commonly used which is so difficult to define. There is no universally accepted definition. In fact, there are probably as many definitions as there are original scholars studying the problem. What is being attempted here is not a new or final expression of what religion is, but rather a working definition.

1. Men are religious.

It is commonly recognized and asserted that men

are natively or inherently religious. The term instinctively has not been used since that might prejudice the investigation, but rather the more indefinite words natively or inherently. It has not been said that all men have a religious faculty for the same reason. What is said is that all men are religious to a greater or less degree whatever be determined to be the underlying religious principle or principles. It is asserted that all men are as a matter of fact religious to some extent and that they are commonly so recognized. Man is the subject of religious thoughts, feelings, and ideas. I hold this despite the fact that Herrmann says, (1)

"Religion is not something so objectively real that it must needs be observed by all; it appears only in individuals as a spiritual possession, as something peculiar. This accounts for the fact that there are many people who not only maintain that they themselves are strangers to religion, but also suspect that what others say about it rests upon self-deception. They do not regard religion as a reality."

It is no doubt true that all do not have the vital conception of religion but there is no one who does not in his inmost being believe in God. There are no real atheists.

To find the elements which are common and essential to being religious is another and far more difficult matter.

2. Current Definitions of Religion

We shall proceed in this investigation of the definition of religion by giving at this point some definitions.

Hegel, according to McGiffert, teaches that (1)

"religion is the relation of the finite spirit to the infinite".

Hegel calls religion both "knowledge of God" and "God's self-consciousness". He is frequently charged with making religion purely a matter of the intellect. He says, (2),-

"The burthen of all religion is the inward exaltation of the soul to the absolute as the all-comprehending, all-reconciling substance of existence, the knowing of himself on the part of the subject as in unity with God".

Schleiermacher (3) is charged by many with making religion a matter of "pious feeling". They report him as saying that "Religion consists in the feeling of absolute dependence".

Note (1) McGiffert "The Rise of Modern Religious Ideas" Page 95

Note (2) Paterson "The Nature of Religion" P. 466
Quoted from Swegler's Summary Statement

Note (3) See Orr "Ritschlianism" Page 43.

Herrmann (1) says, "Schleiermacher thus implies that religion means to grasp as real a transcendent entity".

McGiffert, in speaking of Schleiermacher, says (2)

"He distinguished religion from dogma on one hand and from conduct on the other, and provided it with an independent place of its own. 'Piety', he says, vindicates for itself its own sphere and its own character only by abandoning entirely the provinces of science and practice; and when it has raised itself beside them, the whole field is for the first time completely filled and human nature perfected. Religion reveals itself as the necessary and indispensable third, as the natural complement of knowledge and conduct, not inferior to them in worth and dignity'. Religion, according to Schleiermacher, has its seat in the feelings, and consists in the consciousness of oneness with the absolute or infinite. 'The reflection of the pious man is only the immediate consciousness of the general existence of all that is finite in the infinite and through the infinite, of all that is temporal in the eternal and through the eternal. To seek and find this in all that lives and moves, in all becoming and all change, in all doing and suffering, and even in immediate feeling to have and know life itself only as this existence - this is religion. When it finds this it is satisfied, when

Note (1) Herrmann "Systematic Theology" Page 32.

Note (2) McGiffert Pages 65-66, Quotation from Schleiermacher taken from p. 108-106, 123, "Reden Uber die Religion" Tommatzschll's edition (1888).

this is hidden there is limitation and anxiety, need and death. And so, religion is life in the endless nature of the whole, in one and all, in God; having and possessing all in God and God in all'. 'The universe is uninterruptedly active, and every moment reveals itself to us. In every form which it brings forth, in every being to which out of the fullness of life it gives a particular existence of its own, in every event which it scatters forth from its rich and ever fruitful bosom it acts upon us; and in all these impressions and their effects in us, to take up into our life and to let ourselves be moved by individual and limited things not as separate and opposed to each other, but as parts of the whole and expressions of the infinite - this is religion'".

Kant, according to McGiffert, (1) teaches that "Religion is the recognition of our duties as the will of God". Kant derives religion from the moral will. McGiffert (2) says "We may call Fichte's religion ethical idealism". "To be virtuous is to do one's duty without regard to consequences. To be religious is to have faith that goodness will prevail, that there is a moral order which makes for the final victory of right".

Note (1) McGiffert "The Rise of Modern Religious Ideas". Page 62

Note (2) Idem, Page 64..

Clarke says (1),-

"Religion is the life of man in his superhuman relations; that is, in his relation to the Power that produced him, the authority that is over him, and the unseen Being with whom he is capable of communion. This unseen Being, this authority, and this Power are one, in the good God and Father whom it is eternal life to know, but this is a last religious truth for man rather than a first, and until this comes religion is incomplete, one sided, and more or less misleading. But religion is always the life and experience of man as a being who is dependent upon power, answerable to authority, and adapted to commune with unseen spiritual reality".

DuBose (2) says, "Religion, which is the expression of the spiritual in man, is a relation of persons, not of natures".

R. F. Alfred Hoernle (3) says, "Religion is a certain attitude or response to the universe, and whatever it be in the universe to which we thus respond, that is for us, God".

W. P. Paterson (4) says, "It is, now a defensible view that the central movement in religious history

Note (1) Clarke "An Outline of Christian Theology"

Note (2) DuBose "The Soteriology of the New Testament"

Note (3) "The Future of Religion", Bookman 65:501
-5 J1. 27

Note (4) Paterson "The Nature of Religion" P. 467.

has been the development of the idea of God, or the self-disclosure of God."

Cave (1) says,

"Theology is the science of religion; and religion in its elementary form, however composite it may subsequently become, is that unique fact,- human perception of a spiritual world."

Slosson says (2), "Religion is the perpetual realization of God. Someone else says, "Religion is the soul's consciousness of God". Another says, "Religion is the response of man's spirit to the presence of the true God".

Kellogg (3) says,-

"All religions, from the highest to the lowest, assume the existence of a power (or powers) superior to man, on which he is dependent, and which is able decisively to influence his destiny. It is also taken for granted in all religions that the relation between man and the superior Power or powers, is a necessary relation". "More or less distinctly in all religions is the thought also expressed, that because of man's relation to this Supreme Power, certain things are obligatory on him, and other things must be avoided at the peril of suffering". "In all religions, again, is expressed the feeling that between man and the Supreme Power or powers, something is wrong; in other words,

Note (1) Cave "Introduction to Theology and its Literature".

Note (2) Slosson "Sermons of a Chemist" P.28

Note (3) Rev. S. H. Kellogg "A Handbook of Comparative Religion". Page 7.

all religions more or less distinctly express or appeal to man's sense of sin." "Religions generally assume that there is for man a state of being after death; and that the consequences of wrong-doing or right-doing in the present life will follow a man after death."

And again (1)

"Religion essentially consists in man's apprehension of his relation to an invisible Power or powers, able to influence his destiny, to which he is necessarily subject, together with the feelings, desires, and actions, which this apprehension calls forth".

Herrmann (2) says,-

"This general idea of religion, which is obvious to every religiously minded man without any profound investigation, runs as follows: To every religiously minded man religion means seeing the working of a God in the events of life".

A. M. Fairbairn (3) adopts as a provisional definition:

"Religion is, subjectively, man's consciousness of relation to supra-sensible Being; and, objectively, the beliefs, the customs, the rites, and the institutions which express and incorporate this consciousness".

- Note (1) Rev. S. H. Kellogg "The Genesis and Growth of Religion". Page 21
 Note (2) Herrmann "Systematic Theology" P. 20.
 Note (3) A. M. Fairbairn "The Philosophy of the Christian Religion". P. 200.

I should interpret this term Being as the equivalent of God. He argues (1) that all men grope after God.

J. B. Pratt (2) adopts the following:-

"Religion is the serious and social attitude of individuals or communities toward the power or powers which they conceive as having ultimate control over their interests or destinies."

Joseph A. Leighton says (3),-

"Religion then always involves the following elements: (1) Conviction or judgment as to what are the highest, most satisfying and most lasting goods of life. Man would have no religion if he made no distinction between values or goods, if he put all aspects of his life on the same level. He must have a scale of life values. He must regard some goods, and, therefore, the activities and experiences involved in procuring these goods, as superior to others. But, (2), if he could, without hindrance or aid, satisfy all his cravings for the most permanent and most desirable goods by the technical manipulation of physical forces and social human forces, he would have no need of religion. Therefore, religion springs from the recognition of the actual failures, dissatisfactions, disharmonies, of everyday existence as

Note (1) A. M. Fairbairn "The Philology of the Christian Religion". Pages 191-2.

Note (2) Pratt "The Religious Consciousness" P.2

Note (3) Joseph A. Leighton "Religion and the Mind of Today" P.4-5.

contrasted with its conceivable permanent goods. Religion only springs up in the soul of man when he discovers the discrepancy between what he would be and what he is. The most hopelessly irreligious attitude is that of completely smug satisfaction: 'Lord, I thank thee that I am not as other men are'. The most religious attitude is that of complete submission to the Transcendent Being who is the bearer of the Supreme Values: 'Not my will, but thine be done'. 'Lord, be merciful to me a sinner'.
 (3) The belief in the Higher Power who is the Source and Sustainer of the Highest Values involves acts on the part of the believer—acts of worship, sacrifice, prayer, obedience".

Wright (1) gives this definition of Religion.

"Religion is the endeavor to secure the conservatism of socially recognized values through specific actions that are believed to evoke some agency different from the ordinary ego of the individual, or from other merely human beings, and that imply a feeling of dependence upon this agency".

In his notes (2) he says,—

"Within the 'conservatism' of values I include the quantitative increase of values. The 'feeling of dependence' upon the agency excludes dependence upon forces believed to be merely physical and mechanical".

Note (1) Wright "A Students' Philosophy of Religion"

Page 47.

Note (2) Idem. Page 443.

This definition is inadequate in that it fails to allow for progress. It does not recognize the possibility of the revelation of higher values. Despite his claims to the contrary it is also subject to the charge that it does not recognize that the highest values are not in fact socially recognized unless you limit the term socially very materially.

The underlying basis of Ritschlianism which has so profoundly affected the religious situation in our own day lies in his definition of religion wherein he gives its scope and its motive. Let us first see what he says. All references are to his volume "The Christian Doctrine of Justification and Reconciliation".

He says (1),-

"Now in religion the thought of God is given. But the religious view of the world, in all its species, rests on the fact that man in some degree distinguishes himself in worth from the phenomena which surround him and from the influences of nature which press upon him. All religion is equivalent to an explanation of the course of the world - to whatever extent it may be known - in the sense that the sublime spiritual powers (or the spiritual Power) which rules in or over it, conserve and confirm to the personal spirit its claims and its independence over against the restrictions of nature and the natural effects of human society".

Again he says, (1),-

If religion in every case is an interpretation of man's relation to God and the world guided by the thought of the sublime power of God to realize the end of blessedness of man, advancing insight into the history of religions has forced on us the task of formulating a universal conception of religion, under which all the particular species of religion might find their peculiar features determined. But this task involves no slight difficulties, and contributes less to the understanding of Christianity than is often expected. The formula by which this very thing, religion in general, has just been described, makes no claim to be a definition proper of a generic conception of religion. It is too definite for that. The ideas which it employs - God, world, blessedness - has so directly Christian a stamp, that they apply to other religions only in a comparative degree, i. e., in order to indicate the general idea of religion, we should have to specify at the same time the different modifications which they undergo in different religions As, therefore, the historical religions offer, under each of these heads, a rich supply of specific and sub-specific characteristics, which have no place in the general conception of religion, language can furnish no terms sufficiently neutral and indeterminate to express the general conception of religion desired. But, besides, it would be impossible to state in their proper place the above discussed modifications of the several parts of the definition, without making obscure the very point which is professedly of importance."

Note (1) Ritschl "The Christian Doctrine of Justification and Reconciliation" Page. 194.

Ritschl points out several characteristics of the various species of religion:(1)

"The secular knowledge (1) which they involve is not disinterestedly theoretical, but guided by practical ends", here he points out that religions may be classed in different orders, that there is a sort of evolutionary process going on with Christianity at the top; (2d) "The various historical religions are always of a social character, belonging to a multitude of persons"; here he points out that all the "historical religions claim service from all the functions of spirit-knowledge ... will ... feeling ... No religion is correctly or completely conceived when one element of this succession is regarded as more important or more fundamental than the others; (3d) In every religion what is sought, with the help of the superhuman spiritual power revered by man, is a solution of the contradiction in which man finds himself, as both a part of the world of nature and a spiritual personality claiming to dominate nature. For in the former role he is a part of nature, dependent upon her, subject to and confined by other things; but as spirit he is moved by the impulse to maintain his independence against them. In this juncture, religion springs up as a faith in superhuman spiritual powers, by whose help the power which man possesses of himself is in

Note (1) Ritschl "The Christian Doctrine of Justification and Reconciliation" Pages 195, 198, 199.

some way supplemented, and elevated into a unity of its own kind which is a match for the pressure of the natural world". The readiness with which man personifies objects, "proves that it is in the spiritual personality of the gods that man finds the foothold which he seeks for in every religion". "The idea of God is the ideal bond between a definite view of the world and the idea of man as constituted for the attainment of goods or the highest good. Worship is the realization of the blessing sought by the practical acknowledgment of the power that bestows it". "No idea of a religion complete after its own order can be formed if the characteristic revelation which belongs to it is either denied or even merely set aside as indifferent". (4th)

"Christianity (1) by its completely rounded view of the world, guarantees to believers that they shall be preserved unto eternal life in the kingdom of God, which is God's revealed end in the world - and that, too, in the full sense that man is thus in the Kingdom of God set over the world as a whole in his own order".

3. Three Factors in Religion.

It is evident from these definitions that there are three factors to be considered in any complete definition of religion, God, man and the world, though we must not understand by this term God, the fullness of Christian conception when we are speaking of other than Christian types of religion. The difficulty just here is to make certain so-

Note (1) Ritschl "The Christian Doctrine of Justification and Reconciliation" P. 200.

called religions, such as Buddhism and Shintoism which are what Dr. Kellogg calls atheistic religions, come under a definition involving the idea of God.

1) God Supreme

One criticism of Ritschl's⁽¹⁾ definition of religion and those dependent on it is that while recognizing the fact that there is a God they assign the central place in religion to man and his interests. God and His interests should be given the predominant place and man a subordinant place . It is true that man is the crown of creation but he cannot excel the creator. We might almost say that in these men's minds God is a sort of deus ex machina which is brought in to solve the problems which arise in the relations between man and the world. The contradiction as Ritschl finds it is not between man in rebellion against the will of God and God but between man and the world. Man feels that he should rule but finds that in fact he is not dominant. Therefore, he seeks after some way of completing his conquest. He posits God as a power which can bring harmony instead of contradiction. This attitude toward God has its

Note (1) of W. P. Paterson "The Nature of Religion"
Pages 383, 472.

reflection in a lessening of the heinousness of sin and consequently of the need of a Saviour. This almost makes religion and ethics and morality one and the same thing. Such a theory makes character the end of religion and character the result of right action. God, or as others say the power or powers, is dominant in the universe and among men and in religion.

4. Religion is social.

Ritschl recognizes the fact that religion is social. Men receive their religious ideas mostly from others and are historically speaking practically always united with them in religious acts. However, this does not mean that men are not religious individually. Men are admitted into the religious community not in order that they may become religious but because they are religious. There is an individual relationship between man and God as well as between the community and God. Individual man may have fellowship with God. He may and does have fellowship with others in his worship of God. No side of this social quality can be neglected.

5. Whole Nature of man Involved.

There is another angle from which religion may

be viewed. In what part of the nature of man does it find its seat? Ritschl maintains as against Schleiermacher, Hegel and Kant, that feeling, will and knowledge are all involved. He says that (1),-

"no religion is correctly or completely conceived when one element of this succession is regarded as more important or more fundamental than the others".

Paterson (2) in this connection says that there are three one-sided interpretations: 1st, that which defines religion as morality; 2nd, that which interprets,-

"The Christian system from the point of view of the emotional disciple. This was done in the famous theory of Schleiermacher, who gave the primacy to devout feeling, and distinguished the religions as representing an ascending series of admirable pious states"

"The third of the one-sided interpretations is that which found the essence if not the whole, of religion in its theoretical content".

The present tendency in religion is to the over-emphasis of religion on its moral side. The current expression is "Christianity is a life rather than a set of beliefs". It is a life but it is more. No doubt this emphasis on christian morality is needed.

Note (1) P. 199 Ritschl

Note (2) W. P. Paterson "The Nature of Religion"
Pages 465-7.

Professor J. S. Huxley (1) after quoting many definitions of religion and dealing with Dr. Otto's idea of the numinous says,-

"One thing is clear from my list of definitions, that religious feeling and action and belief must be, or at least usually are, involved in religion".

Religion involves the whole personality of mankind. Bently (2) insists that the study of,-

"Psychology" must begin with the conception of experience as related to the total organism, the organism which is at once physical and mental and which produces experience only by virtue of its cooperative functions of the psychosomatic kind".

If this be true in Psychology it is no less true in the religious realm that the whole personality is involved even though we may not be able to say that all the parts receive the same emphasis or we may not be able to delimit the boundaries of feeling, will, and knowledge. It is true, however, that one may have eminently correct knowledge and belief and a life in complete contradiction to all that is held to be

- Note (1) J. S. Huxley "Religion Without Revelation"
Page 158
Note (2) Madison Bentley "The Field of Psychology"
Page 33.

religious. Such a one may be called religious only in a very limited sense. Religion cannot be segregated, partitioned off in one corner of the life. It is a certain attitude of feeling; it is a certain line of conduct which involves an activity of the will; it is a belief which is knowing. In the least developed forms of religion as well as in Christianity, the most developed, this is evident.

6. Definition of Religion Accepted in this Paper.

In the first place religion is vision, vision of life, its possibilities, its end, its destinies, in a word vision of God. In the second place it is a belief, an interpretation of the relation of man to the universe and to the maker of the universe, to God. Religion, in the third place is life; it is a right practice. Morality, ethics, is an integral part of religion but not the whole. To sum up the matter, religion is the expression of a vital and conscious relation of the spirit of man to the Eternal Spirit, i.e. GOD. This relation is mediate, through His people, and His Revelation; immediate, through a direct apprehension of God; and personal.

C. DEFINITION OF THEOLOGY.

1. Appeal to the Intellect

We must now proceed to the definition of our second term, Theology. We discovered in our definition of religion that it involved intellectual elements. Man is an intelligent being. The theologian seeks to make religion appeal to the intellect of men.

The term theology in its derivation means "The science of God". Theology then must give a systematic account so far as facts are ascertainable of God in His existence, His nature, His character, His dealings with the universe and last but not least of all with men. This last is the crown of the work.

2. Definitions

Charles Hodge (1) in arguing that theology is a science says,

"If, therefore, theology be a science it must include something more than mere knowledge of facts. It must embrace an exhibition of the internal relation of those facts, one to another, and each to all. It must be able to show that if one be admitted, others cannot be denied".

In discussing the difference between Biblical Theology and systematic Theology he says, (2),-

"The office of the latter is to take those facts (i. e. of Biblical Theology), determine their relation

Note (1) "Systematic Theology" P. 1
 Note (2) Idem. P. 2

to each other and to other cognate truths, as well as to vindicate them and show their harmony and consistency".

Herrmann calls his volume "Dogmatik" which has been translated into the English as "Systematic Theology". He says (1).-

"If we retain, then, the name 'dogmatics', it is only because, as in the older dogmatics, we desire to explicate both the foundations and the content of the Christian faith, and there is no point in unnecessarily abandoning a familiar term."

In opening his book he urges the necessity for the Christian to justify his religion by intellectual means.

Brown (2) says,-

"Christian theology, or dogmatics, as it is technically called, is that branch of theological science which aims to give systematic expression to the doctrines of the Christian faith." "Theology is the science which treats of these convictions."

Professor Clarke (3) says,-

"Religion is the reality of which theology is the study," and "theology is the intellectual presentation of the subject matter of religion"..... "Its work is the investigation and classification of facts". He maintains that it is a science and practically calls it the "Science of religion."

Note (1) Herrmann "Systematic Theology" P. 15-16

Note (2) Brown "Christian Theology in Outline" P. 3,4.

Note (3) Clarke "An Outline of Christian Theology" P. 1, 4, 5.

Cave (1) maintains that theology is a science,
in fact he says,

"Theology is the science of religion", and again, "This theology is the scientific treatment of a single and unique class of facts - the facts of religion (which are also the facts of revelation)."

A. M. Fairbairn (2) says,-

"Science cultivates no field so necessary to the complete knowledge of man as that occupied by his religions." And again (3), "Theology is an attempt to interpret the Faith - to translate it into language intelligible to the reason."

Sanday says (4),-

"That is really the meaning of all Christian Theology, The facts come first; the formulae, or groups of formulae, which express and partially explain the facts by correlating them with the whole body of belief come afterward."

Thomas B. Strong says (5),-

"Theology is the science which deals with the Being and nature of God. Christian Theology is the expression and analysis of the Incarnation of Jesus Christ." This

- Note (1) Cave "An Introduction to Theology and Its Literature". Pages
- Note (2) Fairbairn "The Philosophy of the Christian Religion" P. 194
- Note (3) Fairbairn, "The City of God". P. 9
- Note (4) Sanday "The Life of Christ in Recent Research" P. 139
- Note (5) Strong "A Manual of Theology" P. 1

latter statement is not quite comprehensive enough. He says later that theology "is concerned with all the facts of nature and human life, viewing them as a living whole, in which God is." Otherwhere he says, "Theology is the science of God and of the relation between God and the universe."

Garvie says (1),-

"But if theology be, as seems now to be more generally accepted, an exposition of the essential and vital contents of personal faith, then this pure objectivity is neither possible nor desirable."

Note (1) Garvie "The Ritschlian Theology" P. 373.

3. THEOLOGY IS A SCIENCE

Theology is thus seen to be reasoned faith. It is a more or less complete interpretation of the facts of religion. In its more perfect types it may very properly be called a science. This science seeks to present the facts concerning God, man and the material universe in their proper relationships in order to appeal to the intelligence of men. As a science theology seeks to place the facts in an intellectual system or unit. The following quotations from Kuyper are valuable as distinguishing mere knowledge from science, (1),-

"To have knowledge of a thing is almost synonymous with having certainty of it, which of itself implies that such a presentation of the matter or fact has been obtained that it can be taken up into our consciousness. And further it is knowledge only when besides this representation in my consciousness I also have the sense that this representation corresponds to existing reality; which is entirely different from understanding, by which I investigate this representation, in order to comprehend it in its nature and necessity".

And again (2),-

"For the idea of science implies, that from manifold things I know a connected knowledge is born, which would not be possible if there were no

Note (1) Kuyper "Theological Encyclopoedia" P. 61.
 Note (2) Idem P. 65

relation among the several parts of the object. The necessity of organic inter-relations, which was found to be indispensable in the subject, repeats itself in the object. The apparently accidental discovery or invention is as a rule much more important to atomistic knowledge than to scientific investigation. But as long as something is merely discovered, it is taken up into our knowledge but not into our science. Only when the inference and the subsequent insight that the parts of the object are organically related prove themselves correct, is that distinction born between the special and the general which learns to recognize in the general the uniting factor of the special".

It is necessary to point out the fact that there is much rudimentary theology which is not and perhaps never will develop to the perfection of science.

4. DEFINITION OF THEOLOGY

Summing up this whole argument theology is discovered to be, the more or less complete, systematic presentation of the facts of religion showing their relationships in order to appeal to the intellects of men.

D. DEFINITION OF THE TERM CHRISTIAN.

Christianity is that religion which has been built around the personality of Jesus Christ as He has revealed God to men. The Christian religion is that religion which has Jesus Christ at its center.

Christian theology is that theology which has to do

with the explanation of the facts of the Christian religion.

E. DIVISIONS OF THE DISCUSSION

There are four fundamental questions which must be discussed in order that the relation between the Christian Religion and Christian Theology may be made evident.

The first is all-important. Are there known facts with which one may deal in the attempt to form a theology? This is an investigation to discover the data concerning God which the Christian Religion contains.

The second questions is, Can these known data be systematized or arranged into a theology? Is it possible to relate them or are they isolated and unrelated?

The third is, Do systematized religious facts contribute to the appreciation of religion?

The fourth is, Does orderly appreciation of religion have a definite bearing upon the life, upon the conduct?

CHAPTER III

THE DATA OF THEOLOGY

CHAPTER III. THE DATA OF THEOLOGY

A. Problem of the Chapter.

In our investigation of the relation of religion to theology we have arrived at that point where we must investigate the data or sources of theology. This chapter will seek to answer the question, Are there known facts upon which it is possible to base a theology? If there are no known facts then of course there can be no theology.

B. Dealing with the Infinite.

It is well to remember that in this thesis we are dealing with the infinite and that it is impossible for the finite human mind to delve into the depths of that subject. Thus, in any attempt to rationalize the Idea of God for the human intellect, there will inevitably be imperfection though it is to be hoped that men are gradually attaining unto a more perfect conception of the truth.

C. Theory of Knowledge.

This leads us to consider the question as to whether it is necessary or not to elaborate a theory of knowledge for the proper understanding of God.

1. Quotations from Noted Scholars

Sir Alfred Balfour (1) says,-

"A creed of some kind, religious or irreligious, is a vital necessity for all, not a speculative luxury for the few; and the practical creed of the few who speculate has a singular and even suspicious, resemblance to that of the many who do not. While those rare individuals who have thought deeply about the theory of knowledge are profoundly divided as to why we should believe, they largely agree as to what we should believe with that vast multitude who, on the theory of knowledge, have never thought at all".

This statement indicates that a formal statement of a theory of knowledge is unnecessary for the purposes of this thesis.

On pages 153 and 154 (2) of this same book he states a common sense theory of knowledge with which I agree. He says,-

"Common sense does not, however, draw the inference that our experience of material things is other than direct and immediate. It has never held the opinion - or if you will, the heresy - that what we perceive (at least by sight and touch) are states of our own mind, which somehow copy or represent eternal things. Neither has it ever held that the character or duration of eternal things in any way depends upon our observation of them." ... Common sense

Note (1) Balfour "Theism and Humanism" P. 39

Note (2) Balfour "Theism and Humanism" Page 153-154

"is content to say that, though a thing is doubtless always more than the sum of those aspects of it to which we happen to be attending, yet our knowledge that it is and what it is, however imperfect, is, for practical purposes, sufficiently clear and trustworthy, requiring the support neither of metaphysics nor psychology."

In his volume "Theism and Thought" (1) P. 62, he says that the,-

"Central theme, then, of these lectures being the value of our familiar beliefs".

On page 70 he says, (2),-

"I agree therefore with Mr. Russell in the view that we may accept the 'mass of common knowledge as affording data for our philosophical analysis'; and for myself I should be prepared to say 'ought' instead of saying 'may'. I also agree that 'we do not, as practical men, entertain for a moment the hypothesis that the whole edifice (of common knowledge) may be built on insecure foundations: provided that emphasis be laid on the word 'practical', and provided that beliefs may be treated as 'practically' secure while they are still admitted to be speculatively doubtful. Such, of course, is my conviction. We all live by faith; our inevitable beliefs far outrun any reasons which we have as yet been able to find for them."

Note (1) Balfour "Theism and Thought" Page 62
 Note (2) Idem P. 70

Garvie (1) in dealing with this subject says that Steinbeck's conclusion in his volume on "The Relation of Theology and Epistemology" is,-

"This demand (for a philosophical epistemology) cannot be fulfilled for this reason, because thereby, in the first place, theology is brought into dependence on philosophy; secondly, it cannot reach any universal reality in this respect; and, thirdly, the difficult and always uncertain solution of the problem of epistemology forbids its being placed at the beginning in a position which controls all subsequent discussions".

Garvie holds that we do not need any stated philosophical theory of knowledge. He says, (2),-

"Attention to, interest in, occupation with, the objects of knowledge will do far more in leading a man to correct methods than any epistemology can." ... "A vivid Christian consciousness and a vital Christian experience will make the better and truer Christian theologian".

2. Common Sense Theory of Knowledge Accepted.

Phenomena aided by the human-intellect's power to apprehend relationships do give us a real though partial knowledge of the facts with which man must

Note (1) Garvie "The Ritschlian Theology" P.53 Quoted from
 Note (2) Idem. P.53. Steinbeck "Das Verhältniss von Theologie und Erkenntnis-Theorie."

deal daily. This is also true when it comes to religious truth. The denial of the power of man to receive any true understanding of reality is pure agnosticism and an effectual bar to any thinking upon the subject. Were we to accept Spencer's dictum that the Unknowable was the realm of theology we would be compelled to stop just here with our task complete. It is a sufficient answer to his claim that God is Unknowable, that he knows a considerable amount about that of which on his own thesis he should know nothing.

D. The Data of Theology

Accepting such a common-sense theory of knowledge we are now ready to proceed to the investigation of the sources or data which we have upon which to attempt a theology. We have limited our discussion to the doctrine of God. Thus the facts which we will seek are facts about God. As I survey this problem there are three major questions which ought to be answered by theology if sufficient facts to warrant the attempt may be found. These are, first, Does God exist? Second, What is His nature and Character? and third, How is he related to the universe and to man? All other questions are subordiant to these three queries.

1. All facts are religious facts.

One of the English philosophers took all knowledge for his province. In this modern age we recognize the temerity of one who would seek to master the fulness of human information and wisdom, one who would seek to know, even in any superficial way, all the facts which the industry of man working through-out the centuries has acquired. And yet that is just what the comprehensive theologian must do. All is grist that comes to his mill. As Pringle-Pattison (1) maintains all facts are religious facts and have their bearing upon the problems facing the one who would comprehend or delve into the depths of God. In this scientific age it is hardly sufficient for the Christian theologian to arrive at his conception of God from the scriptures alone. He must be prepared to answer the questions of those who have drunk deep at the fountains of material science and of those who are investigating the experiences of men. He must be ready to answer those who have gone in for Biblical criticism and have traced out carefully the history of the races of men, their development and their

Note (1) Pringle-Pattison "The Idea of God" P. 57

accomplishments. We may sum up this by saying that we obtain data for theology from nature, scripture, the history of man, and human experience. We might call scripture revelation. We will center our discussion of scripture around the person of Christ. The history of man includes the history of Christianity and any light which may be thrown upon the true idea of God by other religions. Experience is involved throughout all these but we must test the validity of man's experience in a special way to discover whether or not it is a valid source of religious facts.

2. Data From Nature.

This is the age of natural science. During the early centuries of the Christian era and continuing down through the Reformation period the chief intellectual pursuit was the study of theology in relation to the current philosophies. Following that has come the age of science, or rather we should say of natural science. It has been a time of investigation with its collection of information and the classification of that information. Some of the conclusions of these investigations have seemed to challenge religious beliefs. We are to search in this field first for data bearing upon the problem of God.

One of the most obvious facts of these sciences is the existence of the universe. And what a universe is exhibited to our minds! It is constantly expanding. Constantly, astronomers are adding to its breadth and revealing more of its marvels. As the telescope is being improved it opens up vistas to the sight of man that stagger the imagination and yet that mind that is staggered can weigh and measure and predict within narrow limits the behavior of those stars millions of light years away. On the other hand the microscope is revealing the perfection and beauty and symmetry of the infinitely small. Again, the mind of man is making our own world increasingly small as the swiftness of the means of communication is being increased. What with our swift steamers, the aeroplane and airship, the telegraph and the radio and even the transmission of pictures with the speed of light men are learning more of one another and this earth upon which we live.

This universe is revealed in nature as dominated, on the whole, by law. It is an orderly universe as it must be if chaos is not to reign. Whether this is in the magnitudes of the heavenly bodies in their relationships or in the propagation of the tiniest form of life or the behavior of the smallest charge

of electricity we find obedience to law.

In nature we find life. This is one of the great facts which cannot be neglected. Keen, trained, and careful and critical observation have revealed the fact that life only emerges from life. The materialistic philosophy that all that is, is the result of chance transformations in material things scarcely needs refutation. Man has tried again and again but unsuccessfully to bring life out of steril matter. All the chemical elements which are found in the living organism may be combined in the proper chemical organization but life is not produced. At the top we find man. In him we find mind and intellect. Man is revealed as capable of conceiving great truths. He is able to understand at least some of the mysteries of existence. The mind of man is greater than the facts which it learns and with which it deals. It is also discovered that it is not always possible to posit regularity of man and the will of man.

In nature there is discovered an adaptation of organs to particular ends. To give a single illustration from a wide field: The honeybee is apparently adapted to receive its food from the sweet clover plant and at the same time to bring about the fertilization of the flowers of that plant so that

they can bring forth seed. This is sometimes spoken of as the evidence of design in the constitution of nature. This is the fact whether it is able or not to bear the weight that it is often called upon to do in proving the existence of God.

It is coming to be recognized as an incontrovertible fact that this orderly universe and this life are not self-existent and eternal. In other words it is coming to be accepted that these are results of the working of causes and prior forces. I use the term cause with what may be termed its common-sense definition.

The major facts revealed from our questioning of nature are: first, the existence of a marvelous universe; second, the dominance of law in this universe; third, the existence of life which only comes from life; fourth, man, intelligent and able to know and modify his surroundings; fifth, evidences of design or the working of intelligence in this universe; sixth, these are not self-existent and eternal.

Inference from these facts would lead us to the provisional fact that there is a god; that he is a god of power, the cause of the existence of the universe and all that is therein; that he is a god of law; that he is intelligent.

3. Data from Scripture

1. An Historical Religion

Christianity is an historical religion. As we survey its history and its dogma we find an emphasis upon certain historical occurrences the record of which we find in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. For the purposes in this thesis it is not necessary to enter into the fields of historical and literary criticism of the Bible. Sufficient is the fact that the facts are found in the Bible. There may be one exception to this, however, when we come to the study of the God whom Jesus Christ portrayed and in whom He believed. In this case the records of the New Testament will be accepted at their face value, understanding the words attributed to Jesus as being the substance of His teaching if not the exact phraseology.

2. Old Testament.

As we approach the Bible to discover the facts about God told there, we are struck with one circumstance at the beginning. We find these words there "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth". There is no argument to prove the existence of God. His existence is assumed. In the study of the great thinkers and investigators of the religions

of the world we find that what is true here is true in the other great religions and in fact of all religions. God is assumed and never proved. It is only as man begins to think about his religion and to seek to rationalize it that he tries to prove to himself the existence of God. Later in scripture we find God calling Himself "I am" or the existent one with the implication of self-existence. He is represented as eternal, as dwelling in eternity, as being without beginning and without end. I do not conceive it to be necessary to pile up the evidence for this idea in this paper. This is the unquestioned picture as it lies on the surface of the records.

This eternal God is represented as personal. He is spoken of, using the Masculine personal pronouns. To Him are ascribed personal actions. He wills the creation. He has personal relations with the man He creates. He speaks with His messengers, especially face to face with Adam and Abraham and Moses.

This God is represented as being the creator of the universe and all that is therein. This idea runs throughout the whole Bible and is not confined to any one place in the old. He is the author of material and man. The Bible does not stop to explain

this philosophically, or scientifically. It is not a book of philosophy or of science but rather a religious hand-book addressed primarily to the religious nature of man.

He is the creator of man also. There is no conflict between the religious truth here revealed and the truth as it exists in nature. Truth is truth, and must, therefore, be consistent. There may be wide divergence between man's interpretations of the truths of scripture and his interpretation of nature but there is no real discrepancy. He is the creator of all men. He is not merely a local or tribal deity. Other peoples had deities which they recognized as tribal and local. Other peoples interpreted Jehovah as the local deity of Israel. Israel herself even sometimes did the same thing. But the Old Testament scriptures taken as a whole do not permit any such a doctrine. They represent Jehovah as the creator of all men, declaring the unity of the human race. They represent Abram as being chosen for the purpose of blessing all the families of the earth.

Besides being the creator of men He is represented as being the moral governor of men. He commanded Adam and Eve not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil on penalty of death. When they disobeyed

then He brought upon them the penalty of their act. He is represented as the moral governor of a sinful race of men. Men through their own act have transgressed His law and are bearing their punishment. We may grant that the term sacred or holy as applied to God has had a growth in meaning, but it is my belief that there is no act of God in the earlier record which is, in any respect, contrary to the fulness of the ethical or moral or sacred or holy character of God as revealed in the later.

There is one very significant fact related in God's dealings with our first parents in their sin. God went out to seek them. They sought to escape from His notice but He found them. This is the same attitude as that of Jesus in the Parable of the Lost Sheep. (1) The shepherd went to find that which was lost and then bore it tenderly home. Throughout the Old Testament, though becoming more evident as it draws toward the end of that record God is represented as holding out the olive branch to rebellious men. He is doing ~~this~~ first of all to His

Note (1) Luke 15:3-7

chosen people, Israel who have departed from His law. But there is always evident the fact that His interest is in all the nations of the world. God's interest in men is evident especially in the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah in the suffering servant of Jehovah who bore the sins of men to whom the stroke was due and as this servant was made manifest in the person of the suffering prophet Jeremiah who came with his message of destruction as a judgment upon sinful Israel yet who everywhere and always qualified his message of judgment with the note of hope signifying that if they would repent and turn from their sin God would repent Him of the contemplated evil. The Old Testament prophet also emphasizes the fact that punishment will come upon Israel just because she has been known of Him and has known Him. (1). Her opportunity to which she did not respond was the very cause of the judgment.

This God is pictured as watching over His own people for good. He protects, guides, keeps, provides for their needs. He leads Israel from bondage in Egypt to freedom in the promised land. He is beneficent.

Note (1) Amos 3:2

While the Old Testament provides a system of ceremonials which are to be observed yet true religion is represented as of the heart. (1) Sacrifices are not acceptable unless the heart is right also. Men are to worship Him in sincerity and in truth. He demands a holy life of His people.

The Old Testament reveals to us that God is. He is assumed and not proved. He is eternal, personal, the creator of the universe and all that is therein, man included, the moral governor of men, being ethical and moral Himself and demanding a holy life of His people. He is seeking to call men back to allegiance to Himself going out to seek them even at the cost of suffering to Himself. He cares for every need of His people but demands a worship from the heart not being satisfied with outward observance of the forms of religion.

3. Christ.

We now come to the heart of our investigation of the data of Christian Theology. Christianity is Christ. So true is it, that Christianity is Christ, that many theologians center their whole theology in the person of Christ. It will not be the method in this paper to present every Bible passage which

Note (1) Isaiah 1:10-20.

goes to show a fact of Christianity but to accept the results of conservative Biblical Theology and refer the reader to standard treatises upon that subject (1) for the discussion of the problems involved.

It will hardly be necessary to prove that Jesus accepted the conception of God revealed in the Old Testament as valid; that there is but one God, that He is the creator and the ruler of the world, that He is moral and holy, demanding holiness in His children, that He preserves and cares for them by His gracious providence, that formal worship is not sufficient for salvation, that sinners by repentance may be restored to the favor of God.

It goes without saying that Jesus did not stop with this conception, or rather we should say that He took these ideas and so filled them with new truth that they can hardly be recognized for what they were. He filled these dead and inert statements of fact with life and made them vital, giving life to men.

The statement has often been made that Jesus' distinctive contribution to the religious thinking of the world is His idea of the Fatherhood of God. This idea is mentioned in the Old Testament but not

Note (1) Stevens "The Theology of the New Testament" and "The Johaannine Theology".

with the fulness of detail with which Jesus fills it. He calls God "My Father". He teaches men to say "Our Father". He comes to reveal His Father to men as their Father. But He never says "Our Father" with men. He claims God as His Father in a distinctive and unique way. He claims that no one knows the Father save the Son and he to whom the Son willeth to reveal Him. Otherwhere He claims that He and the Father are one. They are so much one that what he does the Father does. God is the Father of all mankind. Here we see the universality of His conception of the relation of God to men. If God is father then men must be sons. (1)

Men are sons of God but rebellious sons. He is Son in an unique way, He does the will of God completely. He says that men are sinners needing to be brought back into right relations with God. He came to preach glad tidings to these sinful men. Yea, he came to complete the works of God, to do His will, to die on the Cross, to give His life a ransom for many. As many as believe on him may have eternal life. Men owe God filial obedience.

He claims an equality with God. The people seek

Note (1) It is not necessary to state definite passages of scripture in support of these statements.

to stone Him because they understood Him to claim to be equal with God. He claimed to be God in His own right.

He sums up the law as, to love God completely and thy neighbor as thyself. John's definition of God as love is the true teaching of Jesus Christ. Whether John 3:16 be the very words of Jesus or not, John means us to understand that that was the thought of Jesus. Sinful man was so loved by the great God that He could do nothing less than make the greatest sacrifice of which He was capable to restore right relations between men and Himself. Jesus presents unto us a suffering God.

In John the fourth chapter (1) Jesus says,-

"God is a spirit and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth."

This is about as near as we come to a metaphysical definition of God in Scripture.

Much of Jesus teaching centers about the idea of "The Kingdom of God". It is an ethical kingdom into which those of a certain character have entrance.

Note (1) John 4:24. R. V.

This is a spiritual kingdom for it is within you. Entrance is through Jesus Christ for He is the door of the sheep. He is the good shepherd that layeth His life down for His sheep.

After His departure He promises to send the Comforter or the Holy Spirit who will lead them into all truth for He will take of His (that is the things of Jesus) and declare these unto them. At the last Jesus promises to come again to receive them unto Himself that "where He is there they may be also".

But we do not learn all that Jesus has to teach about God from His words. He came to do the will of God. Jesus wrote nothing. He taught and acted before His disciples trusting them to make the record of His revelation of God to men for succeeding ages. We see Jesus going up and down throughout Palestine healing the sick, causing the lame to walk, the blind to see, the lepers to be cleansed, the deaf to hear, the dead to be raised from the dead, casting out demons, and causing the poor to have the gospel preached unto them. This was a ministry of loving kindness and mercy. It was what in this modern age we would call practical Christianity. But this thing is evident. Jesus showed that faulty conditions in life were due

to spiritual rather than physical causes. His work first met the spiritual need and then the physical. He lived a life of gentleness, purity, and love. He was wise. He reveals the righteousness and holiness of God. On occasion He was righteously indignant. He says that to know God is eternal life. (1)

Jesus accepted the Old Testament conception of God but added new depths of meaning to it. He taught the Fatherhood of God, that man is a sinner but that he may be reconciled to God. He claims to be God. For Him God is love and love is the fulfillment of the law, love to God and love to men. He came to establish the kingdom of God. He promised to send the Comforter or Holy Spirit. He is coming again to receive His own unto Himself. In His practical working He showed God as a God of Love and mercy, purity, righteous, Holiness and truth. The end of Life is to know God which is eternal life. The details of this teaching are to be found in the recorded words and works of Jesus as found in the four gospels to which the reader is referred for further data of

Note (1) John 17:3.

Jesus' revelation of God.

4. Rest of the New Testament.

The rest of the New Testament is the expression of what the men who knew Jesus intimately felt Him to be, the impression which He made upon them. All the writers either knew Him in the flesh or received their message directly from the apostles. Paul received a direct revelation, however, from the risen and ascended Christ, though he later conferred with the twelve. Paul's letters are more systematic treatments of the problems involved than the others. John sees and feels and speaks, but not in systematic form. The Acts deals with the practical spreading of the gospel through the world through the work of the early missionaries, especially Paul who went out in response of the command of Jesus to teach all nations. This book is sometimes called "The Acts of the Holy Spirit" to indicate the power which made this movement possible.

The very fact that Paul and these other men went out driven by an inner urge which could not be stayed is a primary fact of great importance. These men went out preaching a gospel of salvation for sinful men through faith in Jesus Christ who was alive

but crucified and then risen from the dead and ascended up to be with God forever who was coming again. They conceived of Jesus Christ as the Messiah of the Jews who was God in His own right. The person of Christ stood at the very center of their preaching. His death was held up as the ground of forgiveness. Paul conceived of it as the scandal of the cross. (1)

We may discuss at great length just how this death was effective in saving men and just why it was required and not arrive at a final answer acceptable to all thinkers but as to the fact of the necessity of His death there can be no question. It is through His blood that men are saved. Paul has been the source of teaching which has stirred up more controversy than any other. His chief doctrine is Justification by faith. He holds that as men believe on Jesus Christ they have salvation and become legally related to God in such a way as to bring salvation. Good works will flow out of this new relationship and be the evidence of its reality. But related to this he gives us his doctrine of election or the calling of men. This has caused much discussion over the order decrees of God and whether these decrees are absolute or conditional. Related to this is the ordo salutis.

Note (1) I Cor. 1:23 *gk.*

We must relate these to the saying of Jesus "Whosoever will". God is presented in all the beauty and the holiness of His Character and as benevolence, love, and kindness, in His great mercy providing for the needs of all those who turn unto Him. There is beside this the insistence upon His judgment upon sin and the unrepentant sinner. The Old Testament conception of God and that of Jesus are implicit in all that they say and do.

The doctrine of the trinity may easily be deduced from the facts as presented in the New Testament.

5. Production of the Scriptures.

Let me say just here that the production of the scriptures and the teachings there set forth is a religious fact of prime importance. No religionist of any type can afford to neglect this book in seeking to arrive at a correct idea of God. While we may say with Storr (1), "A theology which seeks its material only in the revelation contained in the Bible will both fail to understand fully that material, and will make the part the standard for interpreting the whole", yet far more serious is the position of him who would neglect that revelation as does Huxley in

Note (1) Storr "The Living God".

his volume "Religion Without Revelation".

4. The Christian Church and Her Creeds
and Writers.

Another source of data for the theologian is the Christian Church. That it exists and has existed and is continuing to grow and bring good to the world wherever it is given a chance is of great importance. It has been a fact that has profoundly modified the thinking and attitude of men wherever it has come. It has rewritten the history of the world. It has given a new center to thought. The fact that all events are dated from the birth of its founder even though that has been miscalculated is of profound significance. That it overcame the opposition of the powers that be in its early existence and conquered them cannot be neglected. We can go to the creeds which have been produced for data in the study of theology. We find that her existence and her creeds are based upon the revelation of God found in Jesus Christ. He is the central fact in her history. It is also based on the records as we have them in the scriptures. We need not maintain that all her creeds and all her history have been valid interpretations of Christ and The Bible. We will need to interpret

and select the facts which are acceptable. The writings of her great leaders in all ages will furnish us with some data which will need to be treated in the same manner. Ritschl's insistence upon the place of the Christian community in the plan of salvation is valid even though we cannot go with him in all the inferences which he draws therefrom.

5. Other Religions.

There is one other source of objective data to which it is necessary to make reference. That is the fact of the universality of the religious notion. All people are religious in some sense of the word and have some idea of God. As we found that the writers of the Bible did not prove God but assumed Him, so original scholars in this field of comparative religion tell us that He is not proved in these other religions either. We find here ideas of God which are revolting to the one trained in the Christian religion yet we get some valid facts about Him. There is created a feeling that He exists when all men say so and that he has some kind of relationship with the universe and with men. We can scarcely generalize further than this.

6. Experience

Having completed this brief survey of the objective data upon which one may base a theology we must turn to the subjective data which are available. This is by far the more difficult and dangerous field to cover. The danger is that one will be led away to the place where he will declare that this subjective experience is the only real source of information about religion. There are those who make empiricism the guiding principle in every realm of intellectual endeavor. (1)

Professor Robertson (2) says,-

"The history of the world would seem in a striking manner to confirm the Biblical statement that man can not by searching find out God; that the world by wisdom knew not God. While the most acute philosophers and thinkers of Greece were reasoning about these things, the simple-minded Hebrews had reached a firm position from which they never receded, and from which the whole thinking world, as from a starting point, has had to advance. It is all very well for us now - when the light shines - to formulate our arguments for the existence and character of God; for we know what we want to prove. But the fact that

Note (1) See Wm. Temple "The Faith and Modern Thought" and W. E. Hocking, "The Meaning of God in Human Experience".

Note (2) Prof. Robertson "The Early Religion of Israel" Page 484.

reasoners by reason did not succeed in proving it till the Hebrew race had made it known to the world, and the other fact that they did not reach it by a process of reasoning or reflection, or adding on of one attribute to another - these facts show that such a knowledge is given with more direct force, and in a more complete form. What seems, in fact, hard and laborious to us with our logical categories and subjective processes, seems to have come instinctively to the Abrahamic race; and even Stade has admitted that if there was not precisely an instinct of monotheism in the Hebrews, they, above all others, showed a predisposition to it".

The above quotation agrees very well with what was discovered in our first glimpse at the sacred narrative. God is not proved but is assumed. This agrees with the observation made with regard to other religions. Experience is a valid witness to truth about God. Brown (1) says,

"Theology has to do with the religious convictions verifiable in experience".

He maintains the validity of an objective revelation.

Clarke "An Outline of Christian Theology" page 19

(2) says,-

"Experience cannot be set aside as mediator between theology and its chief source, the Christian revelation".

Note (1) Brown "Christian Theology in Outline" P.6

Note (2) Clarke "An Outline of Christian Theology" P. 19

This maintains that the Christian revelation as contained in the scriptures is the first source and the touchstone and test by which other facts are to be evaluated. Garvie (1) quotes Rashdall as saying,-

"This idea that the Christian knowledge of God is based not upon speculative reasoning but upon the conviction wrought in the soul by personal experience of the moral effects of Christ's life, is the fundamental idea of the theology of Ritschl".

This is also the idea of Rashdall, says Garvie, Herrmann (2) says,

"On the other hand, the man who can see and understand religion as a reality knows that this is due to the influence of those experiences in which he has personal and living consciousness of religion".
 "To every religiously minded man religion means seeing the working of a god in the events of life".
 "In our opinion nothing in religion should be called revelation save what is capable of setting us face to face with the reality of God, and can thus become the basis of religion in us."

The whole basis of the theology of Herrmann is experience. This would leave much that is vital to others, for us but the vain imaginings of the heart. We would not be bound by it. This may be true psychologically and yet there is an objective

Note (1) Garvie "The Ritschlian Theology". *Note 8.19*
 Note (2) Herrmann "Systematic Theology" P. 17, 20, 38

revelation which is valid in spite of any particular man's experience of it. Some escape from the pitfall into which such a doctrine would lead them by saying that it is the collective experience of the Christian or the religious community. It is true that no revelation of God is effective in the life unless it is apprehended. Positivism would destroy the value of all other data than its own for theology. The Article (1) "Ritschl" in the Encyclopaedia Britannica says,

"The life of trust in God is a fact, not so much to be explained as to explain everything else", and again, " 'Faith' knows God in His active relation to the 'kingdom'; but not at all as 'Self-existent'".

This would exclude from faith all that was derived from the testimony of others and especially of Christ and those who learned from Him. This is an arbitrary assumption excluding data without sufficient warrant.

There is not the least doubt in my mind that man is a being capable of an immediate awareness of God and that man has received direct revelation of truth in his own personal experience. The religion of Jesus Christ does work so that men may know the truth. One who does not know the truth of God in this immediate

Note (1) Encyclopaedia Britannica Article "Ritschl"

way is an unsafe leader of Christian thought. But at the same time there are objective facts which must be considered if we would be true to the religion of Jesus Christ. Any other position than this leads inevitably to a subjectivism which destroys much that is of the highest value in Christianity.

"Living faith is its own apology" says A. M. Fairbairn (1) but this living faith as it is experienced in this age is the result of the presentation of the historical data of Christianity and the presentation of the love of God as revealed therein.

MacIntosh (2) says,-

"There are events within the field of human experience, in the present as well as in the past, which have special significance, objectively as well as subjectively, as furnishing evidence of the reality, presence, and activity of God as a living, responding Factor in the lives of human beings. This is all that is essential in supernaturalism".

He holds, (3) that,-

"As a matter of fact, the only adequate proof of the existence of the God of religion is to be found in experience, and in religious experience particularly".

Note (1) Fairbairn "The City Of God"

Note (2) MacIntosh "The Reasonableness of Christianity"
P. 126

Note (3) Idem P. 128

This suggests another angle from which we may approach this problem of experience. The Bible is the record of the experience of God by men. Yet these facts furnish the objective factual basis for Christianity and determine the course of its progress and preserve it from chaotic subjectivism.

7. Tests of Religious Data

This brings us to the question of the tests to which we ought to put religious data before we accept them as valid. The first test is without doubt the person and teachings and life of Jesus Christ. He is central. Any thing that is not consistent with Him is invalid. A second test is, Does it accord with Christian experience at its highest in the past and in the present? A third, Is it in accord with the scriptures? A fourth, Is it reasonable? There is no doubt that Ritschl's idea of 'value judgments' has its place in testing the validity of Christian truth. (1)

Note (1) In closing this section of this chapter I want to point out the fact that Clarke in His Volume "The Christian Doctrine of God" has much valuable material on the experience of the early Christian church.

Conclusion

E. There are religious Data.

The statement of the data of theology from which it may be possible to arrive at a reasoned conception of God has made it evident that man in his highest moments has felt that he had a revelation of God. Though we conceive God to be infinite in all his attributes this does not in the least preclude man from receiving at least a rudimentary conception of that incomprehensible being. It is impossible for man, even the most gifted and most spiritual to attain unto a perfect knowledge of Him. But some knowledge is possible and that is real knowledge. There has been a revelation of God to men.

We find this revelation in nature which reveals his majesty and power and godhead. We see Him there as creator. But it is in scripture that we find the fullest revelation of His greatness and goodness, His judgment, His holiness and His love. This revelation is completed in Jesus Christ who showed forth the things of God by word and act, giving man the greatest assurance of forgiveness and of God's love. Through His death we are to be saved. Going forth in that spirit the church of Christ has witnessed to men and has grown both in numbers and in understanding of

the mysteries of God. Other religions have witnessed of God. Experience is a valid source of information but as corroborative rather than exclusive.

Thus we find a rather copious body of data, of which the foregoing is but a meagre account of the most important details, upon which we are now prepared to work in the endeavor to discover whether these facts can be arranged into a systematic account which will give us a reasoned account of God. The question before us in the next chapter will be, Can these known data concerning God be systematized?

CHAPTER IV SYSTEMATIZATION OF THE DATA
OF THEOLOGY

CHAPTER 4. SYSTEMATIZATION OF THE DATA OF THEOLOGY

A. The Problem of this Chapter.

16884 In the last chapter we found a great body of religious facts dealing with the doctrine of God. These are to be found in nature, in the scriptures, in the other religions of the world, in religious experience. It was found that there was not space in that chapter to make a complete summary of these data let alone discuss them completely. Now comes what is the most crucial problem in this thesis. There is religion in the world. There are religious facts. Are men justified in seeking to go further? Or, ought they to rest content here? The answer to this question will not be complete in this chapter but will require this and the two following chapters for its consideration. Here there are two questions which will necessarily be investigated. The first is, Can the mind of man rest content with facts alone? and the second, granting that the mind of man is not content with mere facts, Is it possible to dissect the religious data, analyze them and arrange them into a coherent whole? The next chapter will consider the question, Does the systematic presentation of religious facts contribute to the appreciation of

religion? The chapter following that will deal with the question, Does the appreciation of religion due to this systematic presentation of the facts have any bearing on life?

B. Can the mind of man rest content with the mere facts of religion?

1. Mind of man cannot rest in facts alone.

William Temple.

William Temple (1) says,-

"When we say that we hope in some degree to understand what it is that the historic life of Christ stands for, not only in our own experience but in the history of the world, we mean that we hope to see it in relation to all other facts. That is all one can ever mean by understanding; but such understanding is, I think, peculiarly necessary at the present moment, because there is a tendency in some places to suggest that we can do very well without understanding our religion at all, seeing that it is a great spiritual experience which comes upon men, which is its own evidence, and which is spoilt by any attempt to make it intelligible. It must be taken, we are told, as the breaking in upon the world of some Power not otherwise to be discovered in the world, a Power from which we hope for our own and for the world's Redemption; but if it is thus alien from the normal process of the world, it is impossible, on the face of it, to relate it to the other facts of the world; it must be taken apart from them altogether as something unique and it

Note (1) William Temple "The Faith and Modern Thought" Pages 114-116.

is almost a profanity to suggest that it can be intelligible at all."

"Now the motive which prompts such a contention we must all respect, for it is the motive of reverence, and of fear lest in our clumsy hands the beauty of the truth should suffer. And yet, when we come to the problem of Evil, the most real of all problems, no one is content with dreams; everyone insists that what is believed must be established. It is not enough to say, 'I have felt it; and I am sure that what I have felt is true'. The man who is really at grips with evil, whether in his own life or in the world, will require some further assurance than another individual's ecstatic feelings. We must have an intelligible scheme of salvation; we must have it, because precisely those people who most need the saving force are unable to receive it unless it is in some degree intelligible".

2. He Can and Does Relate Facts.

As has been contended in the preceding quotation the mind of man is not content to be satisfied with the experience of another or even of the facts he himself has learned in religion. This is true in all of life. The child soon begins to ask why and wherefore and keeps it up, if it grows intellectually, until its death. Progress has come because man has not been content to rest with unrelated facts. We call this the scientific age. It is of the essence of science to gather facts by critical observation and then to seek to reduce those facts to some

kind of order. The scientist seeks to arrive at the law governing the phenomena which he gathers. Part of the objection to religion today is its appeal to the supernatural and to miracle. Those who object to these say that they cannot enter a world of order which this world has been discovered to be. Had the man who invented the steam engine been content to rest in facts he had never arrived at the place where he had used steam to make power for men. Having noted certain apparent effects of steam he began to investigate and to relate the facts as he observed them. Having arrived at certain conclusions he began further experiments until at length he discovered the principle and built the first steam engine. It is true that many others had seen these phenomena, no doubt connecting them in thought and adapting their action to the consequences of the power of heat to produce steam from water which produces power which might cause an explosion, etc. But this man went one step further, saw the possibility of controlling that force for use in aiding men. Other men entered into this man's labors and at length we have our marvelous material development of which a vital part is this control of steam. It is hardly necessary to

give further evidence to support the contention that the mind of man is not content to rest satisfied with a mass of unrelated facts. He finds in himself the power to think upon the facts which he observes. He finds that he can see relationships. He does in fact relate the facts which come to his attention. It is not meant to assert here that everyone completely appreciates the relationships of those things which he learns. That is contrary to the truth. As we know men they do have the power of relating the phenomena which come to their attention each according to his ability. Furthermore, they are not content to rest satisfied with mere facts be they material facts or facts of experience. They do think on them and put them in some relationship. Dr. Louis Matthew Sweet said in class "You never see anything with the eyes alone". He was here asserting that nothing was seen without the mind which added vital factors to the sensation by which it was, in part at least, interpreted. William Temple (1) says,-

"All our experience, even our
perception of ordinary physical objects,

Note (1) William Temple "The Faith and Modern Thought" Page 33.

is conditioned by our capacity to receive".

This is asserting the known fact that all people do not see with the same power or understand in the same measure.

3. He cannot do otherwise.

Beside the fact that men do have the power to interpret facts and do relate or interpret the data which come to them, it is inevitable and necessary that they do this. It is impossible to think without interpreting facts. Fairbairn (1) holds that it is impossible not to attempt an explanation of the person of Christ. McGiffert (2) quotes Schleiermacher as saying,-

"The religious man inevitably thinks about his religious experiences and instinctively strives to give them some sort of intellectual expression".

4. Reason and Religion.

Garvie (3) says,-

"The need of an intellectual expression for faith, on which Kaftan insists, must be fully admitted, even although one may be inclined to maintain that genuine religious sympathy may exist where is very little

Note (1) Fairbairn "The Philosophy of the Christian Religion" Page. 12-19

Note (2) McGiffert "The Rise of Modern Religious Ideas". P. 75.

Note (3) Garvie "~~Ritschlianism~~" P.235.

"The Ritschlian Theology"

intellectual agreement in matters of belief".

B. H. Streeter (1) says,-

"The world is calling for religion; but it cannot accept a religion if its theology is out of harmony with science, philosophy, and scholarship. Religion, if it is to dominate life, must satisfy both the head and the heart, a thing which neither obscurantism nor rationalism can do".

Herrmann (2) says,-

"As soon as a religious community seeks to assert itself within a growing intellectual culture, it requires a science of the religion it represents. To this end religion must try to prove itself over against the other intellectual forces of culture as a power which is stronger than all of them; for this, however, it is necessary to show that in it, too, there is something of universal validity which can win recognition by intellectual means".

Fairbairn (3) says,-

"If it were illicit for reason to touch the mysteries of religion, the church would never have had a creed or believed a doctrine, nor would man have possessed a faith higher than the mythical fancies which pleased his childhood. Without the exercise of reason we should never have had a Fourth Gospel or the Pauline Epistles, or any of those treatises on the Godhead,

Note (1) B. H. Streeter "Foundations by Seven Oxford Scholars" Intro. P. VII

Note (2) Herrmann "Systematic Theology" P. 15.

Note (3) Fairbairn "The Philosophy of the Christian Religion" Page 19.

The Incarnation, of the Atonement from Athanasius or Hegel, or from Augustine to our own day, which have done more than all the decrees of all the councils, or all the creeds of all the churches, to keep faith living and religion a reality. The man who despises or distrusts the reason despises the God who gave it, and the most efficient of all the servants He has bidden work within upon man in behalf of truth".

He also says, (1),-

"No man or church has any right to ask men to believe what they cannot rationally conceive, or what contradicts ascertained and certain truths".

Pringle-Pattison says, (2),-

"The true revelation of the divine must be sought, therefore, as I have contended, in the systematic structure of finite experience as a whole".

McGiffert (3) says,-

"Theology of one kind or another is thus the natural fruit of religion, but it is not the source of it or identical with it. It results rather from reflection upon it".

MacIntosh (4) says,-

"Religion has changed less than theology, and constructive theology less than apologetics. This is because the grounds of religion in human nature lie deeper than thought

- (Note (1) Fairbairn "City of God" P. 4
 Note (2) Pringle-Pattison "The Idea of God" P. 220-221
 Note (3) McGiffert "The Rise of Modern Religious Ideas" P. 75
 Note (4) MacIntosh "The Reasonableness of Christianity" P. 1

and much deeper than argument. But man is not only religious; he is also thoughtful at times, and on occasion he can be argumentative. There must always be, therefore, a place in religion both for belief-theory, doctrine, theology, call it what you will, and, if self-respect is to be retained, for the reasoned statement and defense of that belief".

The religious man is made up of heart and intellect. Both must be satisfied in his religion. Theology is the intellectual interpretation of religion. The purpose of theology is to satisfy the intellect of the religious man. Many great thinkers insist on the right to theologize.

This does not at all conflict with the fact pointed out by Pringle-Pattison ^{who} ~~he~~ says (1),-

"In view of the sudden transformation which has overtaken the very elements of the old physical scheme, there has been reborn the confidence that experience is richer than any of the formulae in which we have sought to confine it."

This will mean that as men understand more of God they will need to restate the things that they believe retaining old truth but going beyond to the new.

Note (1) Pringle-Pattison "The Idea of God" P. 87

A. J. Balfour (1) says,-

"It is not explanations which survive but the things which are explained; not theories but the things about which we theorize."

The application of the reason to the problems of religion is justified according to these thinkers. This is a valid position to hold.

• **5. All Men Do Have A Theology.**

All men in fact do have a theology of some sort, onchoate, rudimentary, and unformed perhaps but no less a theology for all that. Jesus had a theology, every writer of the scriptures had a theology which may be discovered by study. The scriptures are not theology in themselves but are part of the material which go to enter into the thinking of men to aid in forming their theology. When one says "there is a god" he has made a theological statement. Such a statement is the result of thinking upon one's experiences.

b. Must evaluate to communicate.

Men are prone to desire to communicate their experiences to others. When one does this he must evaluate it. He determines, first of all, that it

worth telling. Then he finds the essential factors in the experience. He relates it to his own or the other's life. Perhaps he repeats the experience in order that he may have it explained to himself. At any rate in the communication there is some attempt at explanation.

6. Objection is to the theology of others.

The objection which is raised to theology is not objection to theology itself but to certain types or schools. It is not to the objector's creed or interpretations of religion but to that which he thinks wrong, whether it be new or old. This objection to the whole discipline is but a smoke screen to cover up a dogmatism often greater than that to which objection is taken.

8. All fields of research relate facts.

No field of research will permit itself to be limited to the gathering of facts without hope of ever relating these facts. The mind when it enters the realm of religion is no different than it is in the chemist's or biologist's laboratory. I do not know the source of this, whether it is mine or another's yet it presents the truth as I see it. We have other sciences and why not a science of religion?

7. All theologies not complete.

To justify the attempt to systematize the facts of religion it is not necessary to maintain that all men understand the principles of theology and have arrived at a complete systematic presentation of the facts of religion for themselves any more than it is necessary to say that all men must understand the principles of physics to justify the attempt to arrive at ultimate principles in that branch of learning.

10. Conclusion - We are justified in

attempting to systematize religious facts.

Hitherto the religious history of the world has been dominated by the creeds which men have developed and the study of theology. The question which we are considering is whether this historic position ought to be abandoned and religion rested in the facts and experiences alone without attempting to make a reasoned system to guide the thinking of men in their quest for God. We have come to the conclusion that there is a sufficient body of facts to justify the attempt to develop a theology. We have seen that man can and does systematize the facts which come to him and that such is the constitution of his mind that he cannot help but do it. We have,

on the ground that he does this in other fields, determined that reason has a place in religion and that in fact all men do have a theology of some sort whether rudimentary or developed is another question.

It is the contention of this part of this chapter that because of the power of the mind of man to relate or interpret the facts that come to him, because of the fact that he does in fact thus exercise his mind, and because of the fact that he is practically incapable of doing, otherwise, the attempt to arrive at a systematic presentation of the facts of religion is justified.

C. Can the religious facts which we have found be systematized?

1. Introduction

Having justified the attempt to bring the reason to bear upon religious facts in order to give them an intellectual interpretation we are faced with the difficulty of actually doing this. Thomas B. Strong (1) says,-

"The great facts of theology are too solid and concrete to bear dissection: their value and significance will not emerge in response to a knowledge of their structure and history, however useful this may be for deepening and strengthening their power. They must be believed in order to be fully understood".

Fully recognizing the implications of this quotation and also the fact that God is greater than the facts which we know or the intellectual interpretation to which a study of these will lead us we will, nevertheless, proceed to consider the problem of relating these truths in systematic fashion.

2. The Problem of Method.

The first problem with which we will have to do

Note (1) Thomas B. Strong "Theology" P. 10

is that of method. "Methodology seeks", says Shedd (1), "in each instance to discover the method of nature, as that specific mode of investigation which is best fitted to elucidate a subject." This will be the attempt of this part of this thesis. This method will be scientific. There is no difference in the working of the mind in matters of religion and in other spheres. The procedure in materialistic sciences is first to gather facts with scrupulous care that one may arrive at the essentials in the case. The principles of induction and deduction are applied. Argument is from premise to conclusion following out the laws of thinking. All the facts are taken into consideration going as far as the facts warrant but not beyond. When new and tried facts are brought to the attention these are taken into account even though they may modify previous conclusions. Theology will need to be thus scientific. It will also be seen to be a matter of growth, leading, if properly carried out, to truer conceptions of deity.

There is one thing which can be eliminated from

Note (1) Shedd "History of Christian Doctrine" P.4

our consideration at once. For the purposes of a complete theology it is not sufficient to set down texts of scripture and arrange them into a consistent whole. This is a necessary procedure in its place but it does not form a complete method. On the other hand any conclusion of theology must meet the test of the Bible and of Christ.

In the chapter on the Data of Theology three questions were propounded. The first was, Is there a God? The second, What is His nature and character? The third, What is His relation to men and the universe? There are several methods by which we might seek to answer these questions. We might proceed from natural to revealed religion for our answer, and then center in Christ. We might begin with the Old Testament, go to Christ, and then to the writers of the New Testament and then beyond using knowledge outside of these fields as corroborative material. Or, we might start from Christ and make our account Christo-centric. It does not seem to me a valid procedure in seeking to arrive at a conception of God to make the kingdom of God determinative, for, as we have seen, God is the dominant factor in religion rather than man. To make the kingdom the determinative idea is to exalt the interests of man over that of God.

While it is not universal yet many theologians center their systems around Christ. He is the great fact in Christianity. In a word, Christianity is Christ. Without doubt He is the greatest fact in human history.

Storr (1) says,-

"The systematization of Christian doctrine must proceed from Christ as a center. He must be shown to be the meeting point of all truth, the fulfiller of the past, and the regulative standard for the future".

A. M. Fairbairn, (2), maintains that the person of Christ is the mystery of the Christian Religion which makes it vital and compelling. He says (3) also,

"The gospels do not stand alone, but live, as it were, embodied in universal history. And in that history Christ plays a part much more remarkable and much less compatible with common manhood than the part Jesus plays in the history of His own age and people".

He says, (4),-

"In other words, Christ's person is even more intellectually real than

- Note (1) Storr "The Living God".
 Note (2) Fairbairn "The Philosophy of the Christian Religion" P. 1-5.
 Note (3) Idem P. 14
 Note (4) Idem P. 16

historically actual, i. e., it does not simply denote a figure which once appeared under the conditions of space and time, but it also stands for a whole order of thought, a way of regarding the universe, of conceiving God and man in themselves and in their mutual relations".

The world as a whole recognizes that there is something unique in the person of Christ. This is true even of those who do not accept Him as the Lord and Master of their lives. He is acknowledged to have a peculiar God-consciousness which especially fits Him for speaking of God to men. As man is the crown of creation so He is known as the supreme man. His life has changed the whole course of the history of the world, not only among His own peoples where his name is known and honored but throughout the world also.

Ritschl (1) says,-

"As theology has to do with the God revealed in Christ, this is justified scientifically as the only practicable form of the conception of God. The content of the Divine will is to be deduced from the revealed reciprocal relations between Christ and God, and from no other principle".

Note (1) Ritschl P. 237.

Brown (1) says,-

"By the Christological principle, then we mean the effort to trace in the ever-expanding revelation of God in humanity the vitalizing and transforming influence of the historic Jesus, that from our study we may gain new insight into the character and purpose of the God from whom He came, and so be able better to understand the meaning of the world in which we live and the end to which we are called. It is the method which arrives at God through Jesus, and uses the knowledge so gained as the final principle for the interpretation of life."

In accepting this method of seeing God through Christ we are not discrediting any true conclusions arrived at through other methods. It is only saying that for our present purpose this latter method gives us the surest results.

3. The Person of Christ.

The fundamental thought in Christian theology as viewed from this standpoint is the Person of Christ. The conclusion of conservative Biblical Theology is that He is the very Son of God, the only begotten Son of the Father incarnate in the flesh. According to Stevens (2) this high Christology prevades the whole

Note (1) Brown "Christian Theology in Outline" P. 77

Note (2) Stevens "The Theology of the New Testament".

of the New Testament, a conclusion to which I readily give my assent. He is also born of woman partaking of human nature. While we may differ as to some of the details and the explanation of this divine-human personality yet for the Christian He is the Theanthropos or the God-man. He is the Messiah of promise, the one who should save His people Israel.

4. Existence of God.

We find Him everywhere assuming the existence of God. He never seeks to prove that "He is", but He is ever speaking in His name. We found this same thing to be true in the Old Testament and also in every religion of the world. We may philosophically prove His existence. This is, in no way, to take the place of Christ's witness to the existence of God but may be an intellectual help to a deeper appreciation of Him. The argument from design, the argument from purpose as framed by one philosopher (1) the moral argument of Kant are all supports to the mind of man seeking after God. MacIntosh (2) says,-

"As a matter of fact, belief in God depends not primarily upon argument, but upon experience."

Note (1) Wm. Temple "The Faith and Modern Thought"

Note (2) MacIntosh "The Reasonableness of Christianity"
P. 74.

We recognize, however, that the mind of man can never by seeking find out God, that is, the God of the Christians. It is only as He has revealed Himself to us that we can see Him. Of course we get some visions of Him in nature, some in the Old Testament, but for the fulness of the idea we look to Jesus Christ. N. S. Talbot (1) says,-

"He (Jesus) found that with the mass of His fellow-countrymen belief in God was often no more than an assumption that justified traditional observance and conduct".

Jesus sought to make Him vital to the life of His age.

5. The Nature and Character of God.

The nearest we come to a metaphysical definition of God is found in Jesus' words to the Samaritan woman where He says (2),-

"God is a spirit and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth".

This agrees well with the Old Testament conception of the invisibility of God, that no man had ever seen Him. It also agrees well with what great thinkers

Note (1) N. S. Talbot in "Foundations" by Seven Oxford Scholars" P. 20.

Note (2) John 4:24

are saying, that the underlying reality in the world is not material but spiritual.

King (1) "Reconstruction in Theology" says,-

"Christ's conception of God as Father, as Fairbairn justly says, must be taken as the really ruling conception determining all else in theology".

Jesus continually spoke of God as Father. We can not say that this was an entirely new conception. God is called father in the Old Testament. But Jesus filled it with new content. He is continually calling Him "My Father". He teaches His disciples to say "Our Father". He does not say "our" Father with men. James Denney (2) says,-

"It is granted, of course, that we owe to Christ our specifically Christian thoughts of God. But for the revelation in the Son, we should not have known the Father. We call God the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ: that is the very soul of our knowledge of Him, the most intimate and adequate expression we can give to it".

Jesus said, (3), Matthew 11:27,-

"All things have been delivered unto me of my Father: and no one knoweth the Son, save the Father;

- Note (1) King "Reconstruction In Theology"
 Note (2) James Denney "Studies In Theology" P. 5.
 Note (3) Matthew 11:27.

neither doth any know the Father,
save the Son, and he to whomsoever
the Son willeth to reveal Him".

Christ put content into the idea of the fatherhood of God by His acts and His words. Again and again He claims to be showing forth the father to men. His works testify to Him that He is sent of God. These works are works of mercy, healing diseases, causing the blind to see, the lame to walk, the lepers to be cleansed, the dead to live again. He proclaimed the gospel of reconciliation to sinful men. Yet at the same time he insisted upon the right of God to judge men who were guilty of unrepented sin. He insisted that sin was a matter of the heart more than of the act. He manifested the love of God even to the extent of going to the cross for the sins of the world. "The atonement ~~is~~ His death interpreted as the basis of forgiveness", as Dr. Sweet has said. Around this idea of the Cross of Christ is built the whole plan of salvation and the future life of bliss.

Such an impression did the life and death of Jesus make upon John, the beloved disciple, that as he meditated upon that matchless life he came to

feel that God was "Love". And so in his first epistle he defined God as "love". This finds support in the Old Testament though it does not in nature or philosophy. No other religion contains such beauty. The early Christian church manifested it but forgot to put it in the creeds. It is significant that ⁱⁿ The Westminster Confession in the Shorter Catechism love was not mentioned in the definition of God unless we may include it, by inference, under goodness.

We may infer from the foregoing discussion that God is love, mercy, goodness, yet with justice in His nature. He is perfect holiness, hating evil. He is the saviour of men.

We know also that Jesus accepted the teachings of the Old Testament regarding God. There we find God as the creator of the universe, almighty, powerful, ruler of the world and all that is therein. He is the creator of mankind. He is eternal and self-existent, the only God. Monotheism was native to Jesus.

Fairbairn (1) says,-

"From the standpoint of speculative

Note (1) Fairbairn "The City of God" P. 197.

reason it might be easy to accept an impersonal God, but from the standpoint of the religious consciousness an impersonal God were none".

Jesus knew His Father as a personal God. He had had fellowship with Him in eternity before the world was and He knew Him. He always speaks of Him in personal terms and ascribes personal actions to Him. Fairbairn's contention is, that our God is an ethical or moral person, the ruler of the universe.

6. Deity of the Holy Spirit

As we have found the New Testament teaching the deity of Christ, we also find that there is the Holy Spirit which is also divine, sent forth from the Father and from the Son. Thus we find in the New Testament the idea of the trinity. Three persons and yet only one God. There is not time or space to give the exegetical details for this. The reader is referred to standard treatises (1) dealing with this subject from the standpoint of Biblical Theology.

7. The Christian Life.

If there is a cross for Christ there is no less

Note (1) Weiss "Biblical Theology of the New Testament" and Stevens "Theology of the New Testament".

a cross for His followers. They must take up their crosses and follow Him, walk in His footsteps. There is a certain type of character demanded of those who name the name of Christ, who are saved by His blood. Religion has a practical side. Men are saved in the blood of Jesus Christ by faith which is acceptance of Christ as their saviour, and yielding themselves unto obedience to Him. Paul and James are not opposed to each other but are complementary.

8. Definition of God.

Clarke (1) defines God thus:-

"God is the Personal Spirit, perfectly good, who in Holy Love creates, sustains, and orders all". He maintains that, "The essential matters are covered by this statement:- (1) The nature of God: He is personal spirit; (2) The character of God: He is perfectly good; (3) The relation of God to all other existence: He creates, sustains, and orders all; (4) The motive of God in His relation to all other existence: His motive is holy love".

There is one thing not specifically mentioned here which is worthy of notice. God saves sinners upon penitence. While this is no doubt implied in the whole of what Mr. Clarke says yet it ought to have a

Note (1) Clarke "An Outline of Christian Theology"
Page 66.

definite place therein.

9. Conclusion of this section in Systematic Form.

The following conclusions are justified by the preceding analysis. (1) God is. He revealed Himself to Moses as "I Am" the existent one. He is revealed in Christ. (2) He is personal spirit. (3) He is perfection, good, love. He is ethical and moral. (4) He is the creator and ruler of the universe. (5) He is the judge of mankind. (6) He is the saviour of men who turn in penitence to Him. Thus we find the answer to the three questions with which we opened our discussion.

D. Conclusion of the Chapter.

In the first part of the chapter we surveyed the question, Are we justified in attempting a systematic interpretation of religious facts? We discovered that men have the power to relate facts which come to their minds and that they do this habitually. We further maintained that it was impossible for them to think and not do this. We have science in other realms and the mind of man when it comes to religion is no different than it is when studying other problems. In fact, all men do have

a theology of some sort more or less complete. Reason has a legitimate place in religion. We are justified in making the attempt to give an intellectual interpretation to religious facts.

In the second part of the Chapter we were dealing with the question, Are we able to do what we found we were justified in attempting? The investigation carried on here disclosed the fact that using Christ as a center all the religious facts naturally fall into their place either as giving us truth directly or as corroborative. God is. He is personal spirit, holy, just, merciful loving. He is the ethical and moral governor of the universe, condemning sin and impenitent sinners but showing mercy to those who turn to Him. He is the saviour of mankind.

Ere this thesis is complete there are two further questions which must be answered. What is the effect of a systematic interpretation of the facts of religion upon the appreciation of religion? Does it cause men to value it more or less highly? The second is, What is the effect of an intellectual appreciation of religion upon the life of the one understanding the facts intellectually? These will be left for consideration in the next two chapters.

CHAPTER V

THE RELATION BETWEEN SYSTEMATIZED
RELIGIOUS FACTS AND THE
APPRECIATION OF RELIGION

CHAPTER V. The Relation Between Systematized
Religious Fact And The Appreciation
of Religion.

A. The Problem.

This thesis has reached the place where it is necessary to discuss the value of the theology which it has been found possible for the mind of man to formulate. By religion is meant, the expression of a vital and conscious relation of the spirit of man to the Eternal Spirit, God. Theology is, the more or less complete, systematic presentation of the facts of religion showing their relationships in order to appeal to the intellects of men. Christian religion and Christian theology have Christ as the central fact. A great body of Christian religious data has been found which can be systematized into a theology. Now, of what value is this theology? Does it lead to a greater appreciation of religion? Is it a help or a hindrance? Does it bring out the beauties of religion so that they can be more fully admired or does it conceal them in a straight-jacket of logical thinking? Can man really appreciate that which he does not, at least in some measure, understand?

If MacIntosh (1) is right when he says,-

"As a matter of fact, belief in God depends not primarily upon argument, but upon experience",

what can a reasoned statement of God, His existence, nature, character and relations to man and the universe add to the appreciation of religion.

Clarke (2) says,-

"Christianity was first an experience, and an experience of God by which, since God was both Lord and Saviour, all human living was transformed, God was the sun in heaven that made the new spiritual day. In course of time the sun and its light would be investigated; but what made the brightness of the day was the shining of the sun, not the investigation or its result, and it was the brightness of the day that suggested the inquiry. The Doctrine of God that appears in the New Testament is chiefly the perception in human life of the divine being for whose fellowship man was made. The perfect Father, revealed by Christ as Saviour from sin, known in the communion of the Holy Spirit, governing all life in the counsel of wise love, this is the God in whom all live and move and have their being, and with whom His children who are reconciled in Christ live in filial unity".

Note (1) MacIntosh "The Reasonableness of Christianity"
P. 94

Note (2) Clarke "The Christian Doctrine of God"
P. 46-47.

Again (1) he makes this further statement,-

"Doctrine is helpful, but to know the doctrine of God, however correctly, is not to know God".

If these statements are true, and I do not take issue with them, how is it possible for theology to add to our appreciation of religion? On the face of it it seems as if it were a work of supererogation to spend time and effort in the production of a systematized account of the facts of religion. As we glance back through the centuries how many controversies would have been avoided had men refrained from theologizing, how much bloodshed and illfeeling would have been eliminated!

B. This Age is Practical.

In practical and utilitarian minded America it is not sufficient to say of theology that it is a worthy end and goal in itself. In fact, American education is tending to eliminate all but practical subjects so that the purely cultural side of life is being neglected. Few would be as broad as Cave when he says, (2),-

"However much we stray in the

Note (1) Clarke "The Christian Doctrine of God" P. 26
 Note (2) Cave "Introduction to Theology and Its Literature" P. 3.

tempestuous seas of this life, and are often even wrecked, whilst one is distressed by anxiety about food, another by the thirst of glory, rest is nevertheless to be found in this port (theology), and unless theology become the beginning, the middle, and the end of human beings, men cease to be men, and their life is that of the brutes that perish; there is no worthier occupation for man, there is none more liberal, there is no knowledge more excellent than the true knowledge of God and Religion".

The writer of this thesis holds that theology is of practical value in leading to a greater appreciation of the place and value of religion in the life.

C. A Scientific Age.

This is pre-eminently the age of science. All the facts of life have been put into the crucible. They have had to pass the test of close and minute scrutiny. The reason has been applied to this mass of materials and to the previous conclusions drawn from them. Mankind is not satisfied to take its thoughts ready-made, at least it will not plead guilty to this charge. It was inevitable that religion and theology should be put through the same process. Constantly questions are being asked which require a more or less careful weighing and relating of religious facts. Titles to current books are a good index to

what men are thinking. "Whither Mankind" by Beard, "Why I am a Christian?" by Frank Crane, "Why I Am A Spiritual Vagabond" By Masson, "What May I Believe?" by Soper, "Can We Then Believe?" by Gore, are sufficient to indicate the drift. Soper in the book named above has twenty-five chapters answering as many questions. Among these are "How May I know There Is A God? What kind of God do we have? Is the God who created the world a GOOD God? What must I do to be saved? Is Christianity the final religion?" Such questions indicate the demand of men for a reason for the faith that is in them. Luke was meeting the same demand when he wrote his Gospel. He says (1),-

"That thou mightest know of a certainty concerning the things wherein thou wast instructed".

It is inconceivable that there should be such perennial interest in theological thinking if it had no value. This interest would be inexplicable especially when we remember that we are in this scientific age.

D. Conflict between Science and Religion.

For many years there has been a controversy on

Note (1) Luke 1:4

between science and religion. (1) On the surface of things scientific facts and those of the Christian religion are in violent contrast. The evolutionary hypothesis has done much to unsettle the minds of many as to the value of the religion of the Bible. Many have conceived it to be the only honest course to throw over their religion when they could not reconcile it with what appealed to them as truth. These have lost their appreciation of religion through the use of their reason, through attempts to relate all the facts which have come to their attention. Their appreciation of religion would no doubt be increased by a satisfactory theology. Of course this must be qualified as there are other factors than the intellect involved in bringing a man to appreciate religion fully. It is not necessary here to resolve the difficulties between science and religion. It is sufficient to show that theology is an aid leading to a greater appreciation of religion. Cave (2) says,-

"Theology, in fact, occupies the place in spiritual things that science does in natural".

Note (1) In this connection attention is called to the section on Reason and Religion in previous chapter.

Note (2) Cave "Introduction to Theology and Its Literature" P. 11

Again (1) he says,-

"The great desideratum for robust faith is just the formulated doctrine which results from the scientific study of theology".

A. M. Fairbairn, (2) says,-

"Science cultivates no field so necessary to the complete knowledge of man as that occupied by his religions".

It is valid to hold that if men are scientifically minded in the material things of life a scientific approach to religion is necessary to cause them to appreciate religion.

E. The Problem of Evil.

Many people are turned away from religion because they do not understand how, in view of the misery there is in the world, there can be a good God in heaven. The suffering of the righteous is an especially difficult problem for them to understand. This is an age-old problem which has continuously faced the earnest religious man. While there are still many mysteries in connection with it yet earnest and careful thinking upon it has brought peace and comfort and renewed faith

Note (1) Cave "Introduction to Theology and Its Literature" Page 10.

Note (2) Fairbairn "The Philosophy of the Christian Religion" Page 194.

which have enabled men to tide over the situation until faith shall have become sight. The Scriptures (1) point out the fact that man wilfully went into sin in spite of the warning of God and that God sought and is seeking to undo what man has brought upon himself. He has done this even to the extent of giving His own Son for the sins of the world. When these facts are brought to bear the one upon another and when the provision for a future life is pointed out men have a greater appreciation of such a religion. Milton's "Paradise Lost" has for its purpose the justification of the ways of God to men. Throughout the world there have been theodicies. This fact shows that religion for complete appreciation must appeal to the intellect as well as to the emotions and to experience.

F. The Mind of Man.

The mind of man is such that he cannot rest appreciation of religion in a fact or facts out of relation to other facts. He may not consciously place these in formal relation but he does it unconsciously. The temper of this age is such that this is especially necessary. Men appreciate more and more that which

Note (1) Genesis 3
Acts 2:1-42.

they understand more and more clearly. This is beyond question.

G. Other Elements Involved.

To say this is not to say that the intellect is all that there is in religion. A rigid intellectual theology tends to externalism in religion unless modified by emotion and made a part of experience. There have been those who apparently have made religion a matter of the mind alone. This may be the cause of much of the revolt against theology, with creeds and dogma. This objection would come from at least two sources, first, those who have had what appeals to them as a valid experience of God without any great intellectual training. These do not know much about him theoretically and are sceptical about the great learning of others especially when they see learned men arguing against their understanding of religion and perhaps throwing over-board all religion. Second, from scholars with a bias against some of the intellectual theories of the theologians, from men who will not to do His will.

It is impossible to argue men into religion. This is not to be attempted. According to Acts (1)

Note (1) Acts 1:8

Christians are witnesses of the truth (1:8), allowing that to carry its own conviction. And yet we are to be ready to give a reason for the faith that is in us. (1). (I Peter 3:15).

Herrmann (2) says,-

"We have to describe religion as we can see it first in ourselves, and then (and only then) in others. A man, however, who has no personal experience of religion, cannot be convinced of it by the science of religion; as little can the heroes of history be made convincing to the man who is wallowing in sensuality. They will only be visible to him in those moments when he is mourning his own weakness and longing for liberation."

"Nevertheless, the science of religion can be of service also to the man who is as yet devoid of any personal experience of religion. If it cannot set him face to face with the reality of religion, it can at least put him on the way to it."

Browne(3) says,-

"Theology is good, important, and even necessary in its place; but we do not bring men to God by means of theology. Nor should we confuse the mind of any seeker after God by trying to cast his thought

Note (1) I Peter 3:15

Note (2) Herrmann "Systematic Theology" P. 18-19.

Note (3) Browne "Studies In Christianity" P. 236-237.

and experience in any dogmatic mould; as if one could not see God without setting forth a scheme of evangelical theology, duly recognizing the several persons of the Trinity and their respective offices specifying the provisions of the atonement, and going in order through the programme of repentance, faith, justification, regeneration, adoption, and sanctification. Whatever value such a programme may have is theological, not psychological; it represents abstractions of theory rather than facts of consciousness. The two points of view should never be confounded. The life of trust and obedience is not to be secured by an examination in the catechism; and for bringing sinners into the kingdom of God we need no more theology than is contained in the Parable of the Prodigal Son. Let the Prodigals come home, trusting in the Father's love and mercy, and take their place as penitents and obedient children in their Father's house. This is the invitation of the Gospel".

This is all true and yet even here there is a certain amount of intellectual understanding required. One must know that this invitation was intended of God for him. He must know that God will receive him if he comes. The fact that there has been a tendency to make religion a matter of intellect and to neglect the experience side is no valid ground for going to the other extreme and casting out the intellectual interpretation of religion altogether.

Gore (1) states that there are institutional, intellectual and mystical elements in religion and argues that the true religion involves a synthesis of all three. Again (2) he says,-

"But the fundamental position on which I want to insist is this: that theology is not philosophy, though it leads the way to it. The purpose of theology proper is simply to reduce to order and coherence the various ideas and doctrines which form the background and supply the motive of religion in practice, and to find the best practicable terms to express these ideas or doctrines".

H. Theology is the Servant of Religion.

As many men are arguing during these days, Theology is not the master of religion but its servant. It is a very necessary servant and vital to a complete appreciation but still it is a servant. Theology is the hand-maid of religion. Dr. L. M. Sweet said in class,-

"All theology is abstracting things which belong together. The only value of theology is thinking these through thus abstractly and then going back to a new understanding of the vitality behind the facts".

Note (1) Gore "Can We Then Believe" Lecture VI
 Note (2) Idem . P. 165

I. Conclusion of Chapter

This chapter has argued that in this practical and scientific age theology has a definite contribution to make to religious thinking, to the appreciation of religion. Since men cast all other facts into the form of reasoned systems it was inevitable that they should seek to do this with religious facts and unless this system should appeal to their reason as valid there was large danger that it should cause religion to lose its appeal. Just this has happened. The way to restore this appreciation of religion is through a careful presentation of the facts so as to appeal to the intellect. This is to theologize. Men are profoundly interested in religious questions as is evidenced by subjects treated in current books. This shows that theology rightly presented will add to appreciation of religion. This is a socially minded age also. The sufferings of men appeal to people with especial force. Many are turned from religion because they do not understand how there can be such suffering and evils in the world when there is a good God in heaven. It is necessary for the religious thinker to meet their questions and present an answer which will appeal to their reasons as valid

if he would increase their appreciation of religion.

This chapter also shows that theology is not the master of religion but its servant, that experience has its place, that the church has its place. It holds that theology is a very necessary and vital and valuable servant of religion which will drive the one thinking carefully through the problems of religion back to a greater and fuller appreciation of the vitality behind the facts.

CHAPTER VI

THE RELATION BETWEEN THEOLOGY
AND LIFE

CHAPTER VI. THE RELATION BETWEEN THEOLOGY AND LIFE.

A. The Problem in this Chapter.

In the last chapter we discovered that theology was not the master of religion but the servant, that it was not the only agent which contributed to the appreciation of religion. It was maintained, however, that it was a necessary aid in bringing this about. In the present chapter we are dealing with a different problem and yet a related one. Does theology or the systematic interpretation of religion to the intellect have any bearing upon the type of life that men live? Does the systematic appreciation of the value and place of religion by the intellect make the life different from what it otherwise would be? Does a high conception of God make for a high conception of moral conduct and cause one to live in accord with that conception? This is a discussion of the value for personal living of an appreciation of religion due to a systematic presentation of religious facts.

B. The Christian Life.

Brown (1) says,-

"The Christian life may be

variously described, according to the point of view from which it is regarded. In relation to God, it is a life of filial dependence and trust, in assurance of His Fatherly forgiveness and care, expressing itself in obedience, worship and prayer, and having its fruit in peace and hope. In relation to men, it is a life of brotherly service, and of labor for the advancement of Christ's kingdom, having its motive in love, and its fruit in joy. In relation to the forces of evil, it is a life of effort and conflict, characterized by a continual struggle against sin, and a growing victory over it; and having its fruit in character conformed to that of Jesus Christ, in purity, sincerity, humility and sympathy.

"Along all these lines it is a life of growing likeness to Christ, through progressive appropriation of His spirit."

The Christian life is a life in communion with God, in fellowship with Him.

If this be so what part does an intellectual appreciation of religion bear to that life? Does it inspire one to seek to attain this life or is it a hindrance?

C. Theory has not always led to a corresponding type of life.

In this connection it must be recognized that there has not always been a correspondence between an

intellectual understanding of Christianity and the conduct of the life. It is no doubt true that theology has received a black eye due to this fact. Many times, no doubt, men of great learning and professing an intellectually correct belief have been of severe and forbidding aspect, harsh and cruel lacking in almost every quality of the spirit of Christ. While they may have had a wide knowledge of the facts of their religion and been men of impeccable morals yet they have been unlovely. It is not always those in the church who are most correct in their theology and loudest in their clamors for orthodoxy who live the nearest to the spirit of Jesus Christ. This has been part of the cause of the objection to theology. This is probably one underlying cause for Ritschl's insistence upon the practical side of religion as the basis for theology. With this background we will now turn to a consideration of the problem.

D. A Man's Thinking Affects His Life.

Storr (1) says,

"Christianity is not a pure

Note (1) Storr "The Living God".

theory of God; it is a theory which involves a practice".

The expression current among a certain type of men today is that "Christianity is a life not a theory". We may admit that religion is a way of life rather than a theory about life and still not destroy the value of theology for living. It is sufficient for our purpose to show that on the whole theology is an aid to Christian living. In fact, any other position than this is essentially unsound. It is the writer's thought that theology is one of several aids to correct practice. It is not the sole agency. There is an over-emphasis on the intellectual side which makes the belief the essential and fails to ask whether that belief is carried out in practice.

The wise man of Israel (1) said, "As a man thinketh in his heart so is he". Jesus Christ emphasized the same truth when He says, (2),-

"Ye offspring of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. The good man out of his good treasure bringeth forth good things: and the evil man out of his evil treasure bringeth forth evil things".

Note (1) Proverbs 23:7
 Note (2) Matthew 12:34-35.

James Franklin Bethune-Baker, (1), in summing up his chapter on "Christian Doctrines and their Ethical Significance" says,-

"The evolutionist ethics of to-day, as represented by the teaching of Nietzsche, which is professedly anti-Christian in conception and frankly antagonistic to the received code of morality, both in theory and practice, proclaiming the need for a revision of the scale of moral values, are an actual instance of what may result in ethics from the abandonment of Christian doctrine".

"But adequate evidence on which to form a judgment as to the possibility of Christian ethics maintaining their authority apart from Christian Doctrine will be wanting till many a generation has passed away after all belief in the Incarnation has vanished from the world. It can, however, be said that, as there is no proof that the ethical principles have existed effectively in the past except in connection with Christian doctrine, so there is little probability that they can ever exist in the future, for the mass of men at least, except in dependence on belief in a living Christ".

In a note to this he says, "Nietzsche himself ridicules those who imagine they have no more need of Christianity as a guarantee of morality, and give up Christian belief, while they cling more firmly than ever to Christian morality. See e. g. 'The Twilight of the Idols', Eng. Trans. Vol. XI Page 167".

Ordinarily we are governed by our conception of the worth of a course of conduct. Men at least believe

Note (1) James Franklin Bethune-Baker in "Cambridge Theological Essays" Swete P. 570-571

themselves to be governed by their reasons in their acts though this may be questioned at times. On the whole if we have a high intellectual appreciation of the place and value of religion we will be more likely to conform our lives to its teachings.

Theology has affected the lives of men. The great reformers of the days of the Reformation were driven on to their work by their doctrine of God and His plan for the world. Men have gone out to death itself driven by their conception of God.

King (1) says,-

"Out thinking cannot be without its finally profound reaction on our living".

"False conceptions of the religious life, then, must injure the life itself; true conceptions, on the other hand, must prove of positive help against mistakes and discouragement. Theology, too, is only a thoughtful and unified expression of what religion means to us".

No one attains a higher type of conduct than that of the God whom he admires and worships. Hegel (2) is reported to have said,-

"There is one notion of freedom

- Note (1) King "Reconstruction In Theology".
 Note (2) Hegel "Philosophy of Religion" Vol. I
 Page 241.

in religion and in the state. This one notion is the highest man has, and it is realized by men. The people that has a bad notion of God has also a bad state, bad government, bad laws".

A. J. Balfour (1) says,-

"My present contention is, that though history may show plenty of examples in heathendom of ethical theory being far in advance of the recognized religion, it is yet impossible to suppose that morality would not ultimately be destroyed by the clearly realized belief in a God who was either indifferent to good or inclined to evil".

Cave (2) says,-

"Clearer intellectual apprehension has always produced a more blissful experience, and a more consistent and enriched practice".

The religious life of any individual is of the type indicated by his conception of the nature and character of God in His relation to the world and to men. This does not necessarily mean his professed conception but his actual understanding. There are many people who have two theologies, one to talk about, and the other to live by. A true conception of God and His requirements is the only adequate sanction for truly moral living. Bowne (3) says,-

Note (1) A. J. Balfour "Foundations of Belief" P. 326

Note (2) Cave "Introduction to Theology and Its Literature".

Note (3) Bowne "Studies in Christianity" P. 225-6.

"What, then, does God require of us? Various answers are given, all of which come to the same thing. An old prophet found the requirement in doing justly, loving mercy, and walking humbly with God. Loving submission and active obedience to the will of God is another formula. Seek to live so as to please God in all things is still another. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ - that is, become his disciple and follower - is another. But they all mean the same thing. We are not required to have affecting views of our sins, or a sense of our deep unworthiness, or an insight into theology of any sort, but we are required to surrender ourselves to God to do his will, and then at once set about our Father's business".

Biblical writers both in the Old Testament and in the New insist that the belief of men in God shall affect their conduct. Paul grounds Christian conduct in his most profound teachings concerning God and Jesus Christ.

A. J. Gordon (1) has said,-

"Doctrine is the framework of life; it is the skeleton of truth, to be clothed and rounded out by the living graces of a holy life. It is only the lean creature whose bones become offensive".

E. Only Interpreted Facts Affect the Life.

It may be further confidently affirmed that facts

Note (1) A. J. Gordon.

have no bearing upon life until they are interpreted. The aim of the theologian is so to interpret or relate religious facts that they will build right character. Theology has the same relation to the religious life that Botany has to the appreciation of nature. Any true theology will be not merely the creation of the intellect and demand intellectual assent; it will also have a reflex effect upon the life.

It is no valid objection to theology that it has been perverted, abused, misapplied. What good thing has not been thus treated? If this were a legitimate argument against theology what would become of the telephone, radio, automobile, aeroplane, steamship, etc.? We do not for one moment think of scrapping these because people with perverted minds use them for evil purposes. Neither should we scrap theology for this reason.

F. Theology one aid among others.

To take the position that a man's theology should and does affect the life is not to argue that there are not other valid aids to Christian living. Sperry (1) says,-

"Now the Christian life, even

Note (1) Sperry "The Disciplines of Liberty" P. 94-5.

in the moral struggle, is not a business of saying, 'Oh, my goodness! It is an experience of the Grace of God. What that grace actually means in the moral life Saint Paul has told us, 'But we all with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the Lord the Spirit', in other words, victory in the moral struggle is not primarily a matter of consciously elevating ourselves. It is living life in the constant presence of the ethical idea and suffering that ideal to work its own changes in us and for us".

There is an immediate awareness of God which comes upon us and aids us. We have communion and fellowship with Him, an idea upon which the apostle John insists.

Intellectualism is not enough to bring correctness of living. The feelings must be stirred and the will moved to action. Convincing the mind furnishes a powerful lever to move the will to action in obeying but alone it will not succeed.

Bowne (1) says,-

"Against all these errors the Methodist fathers protested. For them, religion must be more than a machinery of rites and sacraments, and more than correctness of belief.

Note (1) Bowne "Studies In Christianity"
Pages 248-250.

It was no hearsay matter, but a conscious life, which found its great witness in itself. They also denied with all vehemence the Calvinistic conception of God and His government, and thus made love and joy possible once more. And to express this conviction of life at first hand, and this joy in the Lord, they very naturally fell back on the witness of the Spirit. In the circumstances of the time it was practically a new doctrine, or a rediscovery of an old one. But the essential thing in it was the denial of the Calvinistic nightmare, the emphasis on personal religion, and the spiritual assurance which arises in the life of faith and obedience. This was historically the essential meaning and strength of the doctrine, and this it was that kept it sane and sweet. It was mainly a practical doctrine, and it was only under polemical stress that it ran off into doubtful exegesis and into theological and metaphysical interpretations. Thus the doctrine became prominent, and while thus practically held, it was true and fundamental. The attempt to give it a theoretical standing was rather confusing than otherwise. The multitudinous experiences of joy, and even of emotional excitement, were gathered up into the doctrine; and all these were accepted as the witness of the Spirit, because that was the way in which we regarded the matter. Nowadays more discrimination is needed; but the essential contention of the fathers must never be lost sight of, that religion is the ideal religious training and development, and that this personal life must

justify itself as true and divine within the consciousness of the disciple himself".

F. Conclusion of Chapter.

The Christian life is not a barren intellectual assent to theological propositions. There is danger that certain types of intellectuals shall make it so. The Pharisaism of this age is just as wicked as that of Jesus' day. N. S. Talbot (1) says,-

"He (Jesus) found that with the mass of His fellow countrymen belief in God was often no more than an assumption that justified traditional observance and conduct".

The profession of a creed does not make one a true worshiper of God. It is necessary for one to know what he believes and why, but there must be a willingness to obey the God in whom he professes to believe. We test belief by the life which flows out of it.

Theology is the balance wheel of Christianity. It provides on the one hand against a too great emphasis upon the externals, the institutions, the trappings, and on the other, against a too great emotionalism. Religion is a quest after God. The

Note (1) N. S. Talbot in "Foundations" by Seven Oxford Scholars P. 20. Ed. B. H. Streeter.

Christian life is the expression of the extent to which one has attained this object. An intellectual element is involved. The Prophet (1) of old makes God say "Come, now, and let us reason together", Isaiah 1:18.

This chapter has been dealing with the question of the relation of an intellectual appreciation of religion and the Christian life of the believer. It is recognized that Christianity is a life and not merely a theory. It has a theory which must work itself out in conduct. However, it is true that the theories we hold about God and the universe have affected and do affect the character of the life of believers. It is recognized that the Christian life is more than the profession of a creed. It is admitted that theology has been abused and has not always been as fruitful as it should be. It is the contention, however, that theology is an aid in leading to a better character, that it is vital, necessary and indispensable. Theology is the handmaid of religion and the religious life.

Note (1) Isaiah 1:18.

CHAPTER VII THE SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

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This age prides itself upon its scientific spirit and is impatient with anything that does not appeal to the intellect. Every form of knowledge has been subjected to the minute scrutiny of patient investigation. It was inevitable that religion should also be thrown into the crucible. There has developed a growing impatience with creeds and dogma, with the dissecting work of the theologian. In certain circles the right of men to think theologically has been questioned. This thesis is an investigation of this problem. What is the relation between religion and theology proper.

It was discovered at the beginning that the field of investigation was too broad and that its scope needed to be narrowed. This was done by limiting it to a single great doctrine holding that if the right to theologize in this field was justified it was justified in all. This center is in the doctrine of God. Even here it was found necessary to make another limitation and confine the investigation to the Christian doctrine of God.

Religion was found to be the expression of a

vital and conscious relation of the spirit of man to the Eternal Spirit, God. This relation is mediate through His people and His revelation and immediate through a direct apprehension of God. It is also a personal relation. Theology is the more or less complete systematic presentation of the facts of religion showing their relationships in order to appeal to the intellect. Christianity is that religion which has been built around Jesus Christ. Therefore, Christian religion and Christian Theology are that religion and that theology which have at their center the person of Christ.

The first problem which faces us in the investigation of this relationship between religion and theology is that of the data. Is there a sufficient body of data upon which a theology can be based? Of course, if there are not sufficient facts, to theologize is impossible. It is not necessary to discuss a technical theory of knowledge but it is sufficient to accept a common-sense theory. In this chapter it was discovered that there was a sufficient body of facts. All facts are religious facts. They are found in nature, in the scriptures, in Jesus Christ, in the

early church, in the creeds and confessions of the church. Other religions also furnish facts which must be considered. Experience is a valid ground of religious data about God.

The next problem which required investigation was as to whether these facts could be systematized into a theology. It was discovered that the mind of man does not and cannot rest content with unrelated facts. There is science in other fields of learning and why not in religion for the mind that comes to religion is no different than it is in the study of other subjects. Reason has a valid place in religion. The religious man is made up of heart and intellect and both must be satisfied in his religion. Because of the power of the mind to relate or interpret the facts that come to him, because of the fact that he does in fact thus exercise his mind, and because of the fact that he is practically incapable of doing otherwise the attempt to arrive at a systematic presentation of the facts of religion is justified. It was discovered that using Christ as a center all the data of religion naturally fall into their place either as giving us truth directly or as corroborative.

God is. He is personal spirit, holy, just, merciful and loving. He is the ethical and moral governor of the universe, condemning sin and impenitent sinners but showing mercy to those who turn to Him. He is the saviour of mankind.

Now comes a very practical question, Does this systematic presentation of the facts of religion add to its appreciation? Since this is a scientific age and men are casting their thinking in systems, religion must do likewise or it will be left out of consideration. Men are profoundly interested in religious questions as is evidenced by much of the current secular literature. They are asking why and wherefore. This is also a socially minded age. People are interested in asking why all the suffering in the world if there is a good God in heaven. The church cannot ignore such a challenge. She must give a reasoned answer. But theology is not the master of religion. It is the servant. There are other vital factors which bring appreciation of religion. The personal experience of the Christian and the church have their place. Nevertheless, theology is a very necessary and vital servant of religion which will drive the one thinking the problems of religion

through carefully, back to a greater and fuller appreciation of the vitality back of the facts.

The last question to be investigated is the relation between a systematic appreciation of religion and the Christian life. The Christian life is not a barren intellectual assent to theological propositions. Many have made it so. There has not always been that correspondence between correct belief and the habits of life that there ought to be. Nevertheless the thinking of the mind does affect the life. "As a man thinketh in his heart so is he" is still true. It is no valid objection to theology that it has sometimes been unfruitful, often abused and misapplied. There are other aids to correct Christian life, among the chief of which is immediate awareness of God. Theology is the balance wheel of Christianity preventing a too great emphasis upon the externals of the religious life upon the one hand, and upon the emotional element on the other. Christianity is a life and not a mere theory. But it has theory in it. Theories have affected the lives of men. Theology is an aid among others leading to a life more in conformity with the will of God. Theology is an

aid leading to better character. It is vital, necessary and indispensable. Theology is the handmaid of religion and the religious life and exists only for the purpose of making these vital. In other words, theology does not exist as an end in itself and must not arrogate to itself the chief place. A man might learn mathematics or geometry or a language just for the sake of the knowledge itself. This would in no respect change the knowledge which he attained. Very few persons would do this however. They would have some practical end in view. But to be real the study and understanding of theology can not thus be divorced from life. It cannot be merely an intellectual exercise. Theology is to religion as Plato to Socrates or botany to the study of plants. As long as it remains subordinate it is to be studied and given due honor. However, it has not always done this. It has often exceeded its authority. When it does this it is to be condemned and relegated to its proper sphere.

Conclusion.

1. There is a sufficient body of data to justify the attempt to form a Theology.

2. The mind of man cannot rest satisfied with religious facts alone but must relate them the one to the other.
3. Using Christ as a center the religious facts discovered in Christianity can be systematized.
4. Such a systematized presentation of the facts of religion does add to the appreciation of religion.
5. Such a systematic appreciation of religion does affect the life of men.
6. Theology is an aid to religion and not its master. It is the hand-maid of religion.
7. Therefore, men are justified in thinking theologically. They are justified in asking that every religious fact be made to find its proper place in relation to other facts and that men have a reason for the faith that is in them.

CHAPTER VIII

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