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CERTAIN OUTSTANDING THEOLOGICAL AND PHILOSOPHICAL
MOVEMENTS OF THE PAST TWO CENTURIES IN RELATION
TO THEIR BEARING UPON THE DOCTRINE AND USE
OF THE SCRIPTURES

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INTRODUCTION

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INTRODUCTION

A. Plan of Procedure

The purpose of this study is to discover how certain outstanding theological and philosophical movements of the past century and a half have influenced subsequent attitudes toward the Bible. Each movement or its representative will be allowed to speak in the light of its own particular background and its distinctive thought world. No effort will be made to force the thought of any particular system into a predetermined mold. Each movement will be considered inductively on the basis of its own method of procedure.

This means that no definitions of the concepts of Revelation, Inspiration, and Authority will be given at the outset. Such definitions must naturally grow out of each individual thinker's manner of dealing with the subject. It is conceivable that a man's thought might be distorted in an effort to force that thought into categories worked out beforehand without regard to his

own particular method of elucidation. Consequently, the first task in the analysis of any one movement will be the endeavor to grasp clearly the central and distinctive feature of that system. In the light of that basic principle, each one's concept of Inspiration, Revelation, and Authority will be elucidated. These terms may be differently derived and employed by different writers. The title "Doctrine and Use of the Scriptures" is broad enough to include every conceivable definition that would be given to these theological concepts.

Friedrich Schleiermacher has been termed "the Father of Modern Theology." It is fitting therefore that he should be the first theologian to be considered in our study. Every effort will be made to grasp the central features of his system and in that light to set forth his views of the Scriptures.

His outstanding English contemporary, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, will be studied in the next chapter. This "Seminal genius" did not organize his thought into a well articulated whole, as did the great German, but he did leave some very definite and clear pronouncements regarding the Bible. These will be analyzed fully.

Although these thinkers were philosophers as well as theologians, and their viewpoints were influenced by philosophical thought, special consideration will be given to several distinctive philosophical trends in

their relation to the Scriptures. Rationalistic and Deistic thought will be given due attention. Kant's critical idealism will receive its share of discussion. The greater stress upon the Divine immanence, and finally the scientific hypothesis of evolution in their bearing upon the Bible, will be investigated.

Because this philosophical speculation left its impress upon the Ritschlian school, that important theology is next considered. Its influence has been so evident that no excuse need be offered for an investigation of the Ritschlian attitude toward the Scriptures. Ritschl himself will receive a great deal of attention, but the major portion of this study will be devoted to his distinguished follower, Herrmann of Marburg, who has dealt most fully with the subject of Revelation. Harnack, the historian, will likewise be considered.

The last movement to be investigated grew up in the Ritschlian atmosphere and matured since World War I. Its name, Barthian, has been taken from its most famous exponent, Karl Barth. Barth's works will be examined, but major attention will be directed to the lucid writings of Emil Brunner. It is a worthy objective to discover just how this most recent theological movement views the Scriptures.

Following the consideration of these movements and men with summaries and evaluations given at each step

of our study, we shall be in a position to give a concluding statement. This will not be a mere enumeration of our findings. It will be a constructive summary designed to give several principles relative to the use of the Scriptures which will do full justice to the best thought of the past two centuries.

B. The Problems Involved

In any consideration of the Doctrine and Use of the Scriptures, certain specific problems emerge. These problems center about the concepts of Revelation, Inspiration, and Authority. It has been noted that with regard to these terms universal agreement would hardly be found. Since these theological expressions mean one thing to one writer and something different to another writer, according to the view of religion held by each, no definitions will be attempted at the beginning. Each theologian will be allowed to fill his own phrases with his own meaning. A large part of this investigation will be devoted to the discovering of those meanings. What is the content ascribed to "Revelation," "Inspiration," and "Authority" by these men under consideration?

It is possible that some of the movements stress one concept and barely touch upon another. These emphases will be noted. It is also possible that no definite pronouncements regarding the Scriptures have been made.

In such cases, the attitude toward the Book and the use thereof will be gleaned from the writings on other subjects.

The problems confronting each writer are much the same. The nature of inspiration will doubtless occupy primary attention. Then the substance of revelation will likewise be of significance. Exactly what has been revealed? If truth constitutes the content of the revelation, that will make quite a difference with regard to views of inspiration and authority. If this truth is discoverable by the human intellect, then discovery and revelation are practically synonymous, the supernatural becoming but another way of viewing the natural. Inspiration in this view is the quickening of the spirit to perceive the supernatural and not the reception of truth (otherwise unattainable) from the outside. This is rationalism pure and simple, according to the common understanding of the term. If this be true, the human reason -- the intellect -- is the final authority both in matters of belief and conduct, and the truth thus received works itself out in patterns of behavior and codes of conduct. Concerning each man and movement considered, we ask: Does he hold such a rationalistic view of revelation?

However, revelation may be said to consist of truth not available to the unaided human reason. A sharp distinction is here made between natural and supernatural, between discovery and revelation. The contents of the revelation are compatible with the human

intellect and are received by it, but an activity from without bearing the truth to the mind of man is necessary. Revelation consists of truth, but this truth is not of the same nature as the multiplication table, because, unlike mathematical principles, it is not universally discoverable. It is truth apprehended only when borne in from without upon the world of human thought. Inspiration here becomes a guarantee of the supernatural origin of the truth as imparted from without. While the primary purpose of inspiration is thus to certify the supernatural origin of the revealed truth, it may also in this view partake of the quality of inward quickening mentioned above. Here also the truth works itself out in enactments pertaining to human conduct. Each thinker will be questioned as to whether this is what he means by revelation

These two views of revelation by no means exhaust the field. As a matter of fact, they have a common premise which other theologians would deny. This is the view that the substance of the revelation consists of material received by the cognitive powers of man. Thus, in a sense, both positions mentioned above are rationalistic in that both emphasize the function of the intellect in the reception of the revelation. Might the revelation come to the will of man or to his affections, rather than to his reason? If so, how would this work out with regard to the problems of inspiration and authority? Furthermore,

is it possible thus to separate the cognitive from the volitional and affective elements in man?

Where truth defined as intellectual apprehension is not made the substance of the revelation, then how does the concept of inspiration work itself out? Wherein is the authority necessary for matters of belief and conduct? These questions are put to each thinker investigated. Does inspiration pertain to a Book, or is it to be postulated only of the authors of the Book? Is there a combination of these extremes possible? Is inspiration limited to the canonical books of the Old and New Testaments and their authors, or is it broad enough to include other men and books as well?

Each author will be allowed to speak for himself with regard to these problems. His views will be set forth on the background of his times, if that is essential, and certainly in the light of his own theological system. It is even possible that his views may follow lines altogether different from these problems which are the substance of our investigation. If so, we shall endeavor to do full justice to his statements.

C. Delimitation of the Subject

It is obvious that a survey of the entire background of each thinker and movement is beyond our

ability and aim. Complete treatises have been devoted to single phases of these movements herein considered. Some principle of delimitation is clearly necessary.

No attempt will be made, therefore, to analyze the entire system of every thinker considered. His thought regarding the Deity, for example, may be important and interesting, but unless that thought has a vital bearing upon the use and doctrine of the Scriptures it will not be discussed. When, however, the doctrine of God has a direct bearing upon the objective quality and nature of revelation it will not be omitted. The central principle of each movement is therefore necessary for an understanding of views relating to the Bible unless the movement is composed of numerous unrelated doctrines, each connected to the other by no organic relation, but by some arbitrary and artificial method.

Furthermore, nothing as to the life and personal history of the men studied will be given except that which might throw light upon the vital essence of their thought system and their views of the Scripture. Every effort will be put forth to make this a clear, concise statement in which full justice is given to all who are considered.

The phrase "use of Scripture" will be limited to the author's conception as to how the Scriptures should be employed. It is obviously beyond the scope

of our undertaking to examine each theologian's exegetical methods and results. In what sense should the Bible be used? is the question to be asked of every movement examined.

D. Value and Expected Contribution of the Study

The movements selected for study have been examined many times for their various emphases and their influence upon modern theological thought. They are the outstanding representatives of the theological development of the past hundred and fifty years, and, as such, have greatly influenced and contributed to the present-day complexity of views in this field. To trace out their work in the particular field of the Scriptures remains to be done. It is this task that our present investigation essays to do.

Present-day thinking with regard to the Holy Book seems quite confused. Certainly there are a number of different views. To investigate the outstanding tributaries which have entered into the main stream of thought on this important subject is an assignment well worth while, and one which has the promise of making a valuable and important contribution to our twentieth century attitudes on the subject.

CHAPTER I

THE NATURE OF RELIGION AND REVELATION -- SCHLEIERMACHER

CHAPTER I

THE NATURE OF RELIGION AND REVELATION -- SCHLEIERMACHER

A. The Eighteenth Century Background of Dogmatic Orthodoxy

1. The Importance of Schleiermacher in This Situation

The importance of Friedrich Schleiermacher is evident from the fact that he has been styled "The Father of Modern Theology." Coming from a home of strict orthodoxy, trained in a school preeminently pietistic, and constantly thrown into contact with the German culture of the Enlightenment, he is an ideal representative of the Post-Reformation theology in contact with the new intellectual and religious movements of the 18th and 19th centuries. Because of his very uniqueness, difficulties at once arise when one sets out to determine his theological viewpoint. He has been called "two men." Schleiermacher has been charged with "taking both sides on every question."¹ The suggestion has been made that his thought arose in two different spheres, viz., the philosophical and the theological, and consequently

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1. Hugh R. MacKintosh: Types of Modern Theology, p.98.

harmony cannot always be found in his system.¹

2. Rationalistic Orthodoxy and the Illumination

In order to arrive at an understanding of this thinker's views in general and his attitude toward the Scriptures in particular, it may be well to get a sketch of the immediate background of theological thought. In Post-Reformation times the Christian religion had become crystallized into creedal statements and was often divorced from any vital experience whatsoever.² In time the sum of Christian religion had come to be practically identified with some system of doctrine, while orthodoxy was taken to be the test of the faith. A period of spiritual coldness and moral laxity arose as an inevitable result. To meet this situation, two movements protested, the one from within the Church and the other from without. On the one hand we have the growth and spread of Pietism, and on the other the rise of the Illumination or "Aufklärung." Schleiermacher's inheritance came from these two movements and the existing orthodox scholasticism. His intellectual acumen owed

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1. A. R. Osborne, class analysis.
2. Cf. Encyclopedias, Religion and Ethics, Brit. Article, "Illumination." George P. Fisher: The History of Christian Doctrine, p. 347 f. Andrew Osborne: Schleiermacher and Religious Education, p.1.

much to the Enlightenment; his spiritual insight doubtless came from his contact with the vital Pietism.

3. Loci Communes in Theology

Before Schleiermacher's time, doctrines and statements of belief were arranged in more or less unconnected chapters on particular topics, "like beads on a thread, very often loosely strung together without much effort to elicit the generative principle to which their being and unity were due." This was the method of loci communes.¹ Schleiermacher endeavored to discover a basic principle in order to show the vital and organic unity of all these theological beliefs and doctrines. Thus his work marks the end of the old system of the loci.²

B. Locating a Unifying Principle -- Schleiermacher's Method of Procedure

1. The Necessity of a Creed

A creed is necessary in the Church for two reasons. First, the instruction of converts requires

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1. Mackintosh, *Types of Modern Theology*, p. 61.
2. Ibid. Cf. Schleiermacher, *Christian Faith*, pp. 1, 3, where he endeavors to show that the concept of the Church is first necessary before any effective system of dogmatics can be constructed.

some kind of orderly and intelligent exposition of what the Christian faith is. For purposes of catechism a creed is thus quite essential. In the second place, a statement of belief and a system of doctrine show just what the Christian Church stands for in relation to other organizations and religions. Consequently, doctrinal systems have a very vital place in the Church. This point, Schleiermacher does not dispute.

His intention is to discover the vitalizing principle which gives these statements of belief a "dogmatic status". He endeavors to isolate that principle of essence which gives the creeds their validity. This essence will serve as a unifying principle for all systems of belief in the Christian Church.¹

To him, reason is not that principle. He insists that he will not first establish general proofs for God's existence by means of the intellect and then from there proceed to the Christian viewpoint. Nor will he endeavor to harmonize the Christian doctrines with the reason. He does not deny that this procedure is possible, but he does insist that it is not the one which he will pursue. That method gives substance to the creeds, his method will show the validity of the creeds.²

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1. Schleiermacher, Christian Faith, p. 3.

2. Ibid.

2. The Vital Unity Underlying Statements of Belief

The creedal statement relative to the nature of God, for example, is to be worked out only in relation to the underlying principle which gives validity to the whole system of beliefs. Ordinarily the doctrine of God is treated before any other points of doctrine. Schleiermacher insists that God cannot be fully comprehended without taking into consideration His relationship with the human personality.¹ The doctrine of God must be developed "simultaneously" with the doctrine of man. This insistence has led to the charge that the great theologian fails to give the divine element sufficient objectivity and emphasis. His pantheistic trend is seen at this particular point. A pantheistic trend seems to be essential for unity and it is unity which Schleiermacher is seeking. What unifying principle gives creedal statements their validity? This was the problem he set himself to solve.

C. The Essence of Religion

1. The Feeling of Absolute Dependence

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1. Cf. Schleiermacher, Christian Faith, p. 128

The basic element underlying the Christian religion and all religion constitutes a unifying principle. This central concept, Schleiermacher found in the spiritual experience. It was the "feeling of absolute dependence".¹ In thus defining religion as feeling, this theologian seemed to give further grounds for the charge that he left the objective elements without sufficient stress. It is to be observed, however, that this term "feeling" could mean, and doubtless did mean to Schleiermacher, "a mode of objective apprehension", a laying hold of the living God.² The word "feeling" in the eighteenth century had just this significance. It dealt with personal relationships. It meant, in Schleiermacher's own words, "being in relation with God".³

2. Relation of Religion to Knowledge and Conduct

While religion is thus a matter of "feeling" or

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1. Schleiermacher, Christian Faith, p. 5. "The piety, which forms the basis of all ecclesiastical communions is, considered in itself, neither a knowing nor a doing, but a modification of feeling, or of immediate self-consciousness."
2. Mackintosh, Types of Modern Theology, p. 48
3. Schleiermacher, Christian Faith, p. 12. Osborne, Schleiermacher and Religious Education, pp. 47-48.

of personal relationships, it has very definite contact with knowledge and conduct. Piety is neither a "knowing nor a doing", but knowing and doing are inevitable concomitants of religion. Sound thinking and sound living do come as a result of piety but they are not of its essence. Religion, considered by itself, is practically isolated from all other human activities. "Ideas and principles are all foreign to religion". Thus, according to Schleiermacher, the "pious mind as such knows nothing and does nothing", so that genuine religion is a kind of "inward music"¹. Religion is volatilized into a kind of "mystical vagueness" without definite content. The intellectual element emerges from this inward piety, but neither produces it nor forms a part of its nature.

3. The Communication of Religion

Inasmuch as religion is neither knowledge nor conduct, Schleiermacher insists that it cannot be taught. It must be caught. Being an affection it must be transmitted through this same kind of mystical transference. The "inner vision" must be perceived by each individual. No amount of teaching will awaken the soul to this feeling

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1. Mackintosh, Types of Modern Theology, p. 49.

of absolute dependence. Being an affection it is not handed on from one to another like "the communication of ideas and perceptions to be sought in books".¹ Since true religion is not knowledge or conduct, revelation must accordingly not consist of these.

D. The Nature of Revelation

1. A Matter of Personal Relationships

Revelation is in the realm of personal relationships. It is a matter between two personalities, God and man. It is the impact of Deity upon the soul and is felt by all.² As such, it partakes of a mystical quality.³ It is likewise unlimited in its scope. Mackintosh interprets this impact of Deity upon the human soul as a "vast indiscriminating pressure upon the world, diffused with virtual uniformity over the whole". Revelation, to Schleiermacher, is just this personal contact between the soul of man and the immanent God.

As such, revelation involves insight. It opens men's eyes to behold God at work in the world. To the religious mind, all of life appears to be supernatural.

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1. Schleiermacher, *Essays on Religion*, p. 150, pp. 36-7
2. *Ibid.*, p. 88
3. Mackintosh, *Types of Modern Theology*, p. 71.

The miraculous is but the religious way of viewing life. The more religious a man is, the more miracles he sees everywhere. Consequently, revelation is said to be "every original and new communication of the Universe to men". It is such a communication that men recognize¹ their God at work.

2. The Specific Christian Revelation

The Christian Revelation takes on a more specific character. This revelation is more limited in scope, inasmuch as it is at the basis of religious² communion. The Christian Revelation is unique among such revelations which issued in historical religions³ because it is less limited and more universal. This uniqueness of the Christian Revelation is intimately connected with the Person of its Founder. He gives special significance to the Christian Religion which no other faiths can claim. The Christian Revelation derives its singularity and significance from Him.⁴

3. Christ, The Substance of Revelation

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1. Schleiermacher, Essays on Religion, p. 88
2. Schleiermacher, Christian Faith, p. 50
3. Ibid., p. 63.
4. Ibid.

Christ, Himself, is the substance of the Revelation which makes Christianity. This Personality is at the heart of the Christian religion and at the center of our holy faith. "In Christ Himself must be the original divine bestowal" of all that makes our religion a religion of revelation. From Him come the distinctive teachings and practices of the Church. Thus, Schleiermacher's theology is rightly classified as¹ Christo-centric.

4. The Place of Belief and Conduct in Revelation

While thus placing Christ at the center of the Christian Religion, and insisting that He was the substance of Revelation for the Church, Schleiermacher recognized the place of belief and conduct. These flow out of the Revelation in Him. They are the accounts of the "Christian affections set forth in speech". They are the results of this personal relationship between Redeemer and Redeemed. This contact of the human soul with its Lord issues in beliefs and standards of conduct. When Christ enters He changes one's way of looking at things and He brings a new

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1. Schleiermacher, Christian Faith, pp. 597-8. W. B. Selbie: Schleiermacher, p. 116

interpretation of life. This new interpretation in substance is the specific Christian system of doctrine.¹

E. Schleiermacher's Teaching Regarding the Scriptures

1. Revelation and Scripture not Synonymous Terms

The Scriptures, to Schleiermacher, are just such an interpretation of the Revelation made in Christ. As such, the Bible is not to be made synonymous with the term "Revelation". He is the Revelation, they are the record. He is the substance of what was revealed. They tell of His life and continued activity.²

This is quite in line with Schleiermacher's insistence that the essence of religion, and consequently, the substance of revelation, was in the realm of personal relationships rather than in the field of truth for the intellect. The Scriptures are a record of a Person. The Person is the revelation. All that the Scriptures teach derives from Christ. "Hence in Christ Himself must be the original divine bestowal of all that the Holy Scriptures

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1. Schleiermacher, Christian Faith, p. 50
2. Ibid., p. 592

contain."¹ The common tendency had been to make revelation consist of substance for the intellect - beliefs and codes of conduct. Schleiermacher makes revelation consist of a personal relationship and a Person, with these beliefs and codes of conduct flowing from that revelation. Even the teachings of the Scriptures are not revelation for they are in the realm of knowledge. The Person about whom the Scriptures tell, is the Revelation, and the teachings flow from Him. Whether it is possible, thus, to receive a Person without some knowledge as to His being and nature, this theologian does not discuss. Are personal relationships as devoid of the element of knowledge as Schleiermacher presupposes? We worship a Person, but how can we worship a Person unless we know something authoritatively as to His nature? In these questions lies the basis for much² of the criticism leveled at this thinker's view.

2. Inspiration of The Writers, not the Writings.

The term, "Inspiration", likewise, has suffered at the hands of the theologians, according to this "father of modern theology". It has become attached to the writings,³ rather than to the writers. The term "God-Inspired" in

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1. Ibid., 598

2. Mackintosh, op. cit., p.49, p. 76

3. Schleiermacher, op. cit., p. 597

II Tim. 3:16, "may very easily lead to a conception of the Holy Spirit as occupying a relation to the writer which has special reference to the act of writing but is otherwise non-existent". The phrase "being borne along by the Holy Spirit", in II Peter 1:21, has less of this suggestion, for it gives room for inspiration not only in the act of writing but in the speaking as well. In other words, the writers were inspired, whether in proclaiming the word orally or in a written manner. Schleiermacher resents any attempt to make the contents of the book a matter of special inspiration. It was the writers, thereof, who were the subjects or objects of the inspiration.

This is perfectly consistent with his whole view of religion and revelation, as we have seen. The essence of religion is personal, in distinction from its expression in doctrine and conduct. In line with this, inspiration is not a buttress or guarantee of doctrine and codes of conduct. It is a personal influence of the Holy Spirit upon the writers.

A further definition of this personal nature of inspiration and its final influence upon the scriptural writings is given in the Christian Faith.¹ Here Schleiermacher shows how inspiration is like learning and unlike reasoning,

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1. Ibid.

in the fact that such inspiration has been influenced from a source outside the person. When something new is derived by thought it proceeds solely from the thinker's own powers of reasoning, but when something is learnt or known by inspiration, it comes from influences brought to bear from without the person. Inspiration, while thus like learning, is also unlike learning in the fact that what is learnt is derived from a visible source outside the personality and is communicated externally, whereas, what is known by inspiration comes from an invisible source outside the person and is made known by internal communication. This internal "emergence" is the result of the "whole freedom of personal productivity". Inspiration thus postulates an external influence, but is different from learning in that it is less capable of definition to the intellect. A friendship does not consist of ideas merely, although, it may profoundly influence one's ideas.¹

The viewpoint becomes clearer. Schleiermacher is not identifying inspiration with reasoning and learning.

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1. Ibid., p. 599. "Thus the peculiar inspiration of the Apostles is not something that belongs exclusively to the books of the New Testament. These books only share in it; and inspiration in this narrower sense, conditioned as it is by the purity and completeness of the apostolic grasp of Christianity, covers the whole of the official apostolic activity thence derived."

Nor is he postulating it primarily of a record. It is a personal influence from the outside coming to the Scriptural writers.¹ As such, it is not limited to the canonical Scriptures, not to the act of writing. "The peculiar inspiration of the Apostles is not something that belongs exclusively to the New Testament." Inspiration is not, therefore, a guarantee of correctness of belief or codes of conduct; it is a quickening of the spirits of the Apostolic group. Strictly speaking, according to this theologian, it is not "inspiration of the Scriptures" but "inspiration of the Scriptural writers". It is an "utterly dead scholasticism" to him, which would "wish to represent the written word in its bare externality as a special product of inspiration".² The uniqueness of the sacred book, as such, is found in another direction, viz. the nearness of the Apostolic writers to the Personality of Christ. To that we now turn.

3. The Uniqueness of the New Testament

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1. Ibid. "We should recklessly break up the unity of life characteristic of these apostolic men if, in order to bring out emphatically the inspiration of the Holy Scriptures, we were to assert that they were less animated and moved by the Holy Spirit in other parts of their apostolic office than in the act of writing or in the composition of writings (also concerned with the service of the Churches) which were not destined to be included in the canon."
2. Ibid., p. 600.

Two considerations set the New Testament Scriptures off from all other presentations of the Christian Faith. The New Testament is unique in its place, because, it constitutes the first members of a series, ever since continued, of presentations of the substance of our religion.¹ This implies that later and succeeding members are "homogeneous" with the first, and this is true "alike of form and content". In other words, the New Testament is the first among many interpretations of Christianity. This would seem to place it on a level with later systems such as Calvin's Institutes or even the Christian Faith itself. Schleiermacher recognizes this possibility and refutes it in his second assertion regarding the place of the New Testament.

This writing is not only the first of a number of presentations; it is also the norm for all succeeding ones. If such were not the case, later systems would not only be on a level with the first but, because of the accumulated knowledge of the years, would actually be superior to the Book.² The New Testament, however, occupies a superior position and is normative for later presentation because it was formed under the influence of Christ Himself. The writers were freed from debasing

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1. Ibid., p. 594
2. Ibid., p. 595

extraneous material "in proportion as they had stood near to Christ, by the purifying influence of their living memory of Christ as a whole". It was this immediate contact of the Apostles with their Lord which makes the New Testament unique in all series of Christian literature. Furthermore, according to this thinker, "nothing can be regarded as a pure product of the Christian spirit except so far as it can be shown to be in harmony with the original products". Nor can any later writing possess the same authority as the original writing when it is a matter of guaranteeing Christian elements or exposing non-Christian elements.¹ Although, then, the New Testament was not to be called "inspired" - only people were "inspired" according to Schleiermacher - yet it is unique and normative for all times.

4. The New Testament Canon

He notes one further element regarding the formation of the New Testament Canon which has direct bearing upon this unique place it occupies. The spirit of Christ was operative in the early Church group in an "unequal" degree.² The varying elements of validity were

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1. Ibid., p. 596
2. Ibid., p. 593

tested by the "living memory of Christ". It was the "living intuition of Christ" and the fact that the Apostles found each one "his complement" and "corrective" in others that the apocryphal was distinguished from the canonical. Thus the New Testament, as we have it, is really an authoritative record for all ages. This is true in spite of the fact that the spirit was poured out upon all flesh and consequently, "no age can be without its own originality in Christian thinking". The Spirit is always at work "inspiring" Christians, but only the Apostolic group stood in such intimate relationship with Christ that its product - the New Testament - can be normative. Thus Schleiermacher takes away an "inspired" Book with one hand, and with the other, returns a unique normative Book.

5. The Place of the Old Testament

The Old Testament did not fare so well at the hands of this great theologian. To him, Christianity is a separate religion, distinct from Judaism. There is, it is true, a special historical connection between the two, but as far as concerns Christianity's "historical existence and aim, its relation to Judaism and heathenism are the same."¹

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1. Schleiermacher, Christian Faith, p. 60

Greek philosophy was a schoolmaster similar to the Mosaic law, to lead men to Christ. On this basis, the Old Testament occupies an inferior place to the New, which it should follow as a kind of "appendix".¹

Schleiermacher continues with the assertion that the Old Testament does not have the "normative dignity or inspiration of the New".² The law in particular, with its legalistic spirit, cannot be classified on the same level as the Christian Scriptures. The prophets in "isolated moments" rise to inspiration, particularly in Messianic prophecy and in the "premonition of a more inward and spiritual reign of God".

The Old Testament Scriptures owe their place in our Bible partly to the appeals of Christian worship with the Jewish synagogue. The particular portions appealed to by Christ and His first preachers scarcely cover more than the prophetic books and the Psalms. "Historical fidelity and completeness of view" demand that these be preserved. So, Schleiermacher concludes, the Old Testament should be preserved as a kind of appendix to the New.

F. The Use and Authority of the Scriptures

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1. Schleiermacher, Christian Faith, p. 611
2. Ibid., p. 608

1. Faith in Christ Precedes Faith in Scripture

At this point we come across one of Schleiermacher's most illuminating emphases, in which he sets himself in sharp contrast to the position almost universally held in his day. His statement partakes of a "polemical" nature when he asserts that the "authority of Holy Scripture cannot be the foundation of faith in Christ".¹ Faith in Christ precedes a peculiar authority for the Book. The doctrine of Scripture is not the source of Christian faith. It is the Christian faith which gives the doctrine of Scripture its validity.

Schleiermacher supports his assertion with two cogent arguments. In the first place, if faith in Christ is based upon the authority of the Scriptures, upon what is the authority of Scripture based? Obviously, it must then be based on "ordinary reason". This Schleiermacher will not admit, for it removes the basis of faith from the hands of the common man into the "authority of experts" who then alone are capable of having faith first-hand. All others would have faith second-hand - by proxy - an obvious absurdity to him. Furthermore, this would not be consistent with the "saving faith" which makes all Christians of the Evangelical Church on an equality. It would, in other

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1. Schleiermacher, Christian Faith, p. 591

words, make quantity of piety dependent upon ability to understand doctrine and doctrinal interpretation.

In the second place, if the authority of the Scriptures precedes faith in Christ, it is conceivable that faith could be "implanted by argument" and "exist in people who feel absolutely no need of redemption". Thus faith would come about without "repentance and change of mind"; it would be based upon "demonstrative proof", and consequently would be without that quality necessary for a "true living fellowship with Christ". Where the need of repentance is felt, the faith that makes alive may spring up entirely apart from the Book. It may depend wholly on "oral tradition". Schleiermacher thus places faith first; then the authority of the Book. The same question persists throughout. Is such faith possible without some intellectual content? Is it possible for the pious mind as such to know nothing and to do nothing?

Schleiermacher goes on to insist that the grounds of our faith must be the same as for the early Christians. From the Apostles onward, faith sprang, not from belief in the Scripture, but from the preaching of Christ by the Apostles and many others. The New Testament writings are such a preaching of Christ, and only in that sense does faith spring from them. At the same time, such faith is not conditioned upon previous acceptance of some special

doctrine as to their revelation or inspiration.¹ In other words, the Scriptures do their own work when given a chance, and need no special theory as to their nature to buttress or protect them.

2. The Unique Place of the Apostles

As for the Apostles themselves, he does assign them a special function in the composition of the New Testament. This place is due to their immediate contact with Christ. Here their faith was elicited by Christ's preaching of Himself and by the "direct impression" which He made upon their souls.² The New Testament is an expression, therefore, of this preaching and this impression. Experience of Christ, therefore, precedes any doctrine of Scripture.

A corollary to all this now follows. Since faith preceded the production of the New Testament, similar faith must precede any attempt to understand the New Testament or to define its inspiration. Any attempt to set forth a doctrine of inspiration for those who do not have this kind of faith will not meet with success. Outsiders cannot appreciate the Book for they lack this indispensable element of faith. How, according to Schleiermacher, unbelievers are

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1. Schleiermacher, Christian Faith, p. 593.

2. Ibid.

to attain unto faith is beyond the scope of our investigation. Many Christians believe that such faith comes from a reading of the Scriptures themselves.

3. The Distinction Between Sacred and Profane Writings

Schleiermacher does assign a unique place to the Scriptures. They are different from other books just because of this faith element which produced them and which is necessary for their appreciation and understanding. Inasmuch as they are the expression of an "original and authentic element in Christian piety" they occupy a position which other writings cannot enjoy.¹

4. Biblical Proof

The Bible, having this unique position among Christians, has been used as a basis of proof for dogmatic propositions. This is valid, Schleiermacher claims, if it shows that such a proposition really grows out of the personal relationship which is at the center of our faith. Otherwise Dogmatics would consist of a mere aggregate of detached propositions without any inner connection save that which is produced by the logical processes. Then

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1. Schleiermacher, Christian Faith, p. 594

only the logicians could be Christians in the fullest
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 sense.

Furthermore, a doctrine of this kind is to be understood as having been included in the Bible because it belongs to Christianity. Since such a doctrine was the expression of religion it was included in the Book. Its position in Holy Writ is due, therefore, to its Christian character. To reverse this order is not valid, he insists. We may not say that a doctrine belongs to Christianity because it is in the Bible. We must assert that the doctrine is in the Bible because it belongs to Christianity. The faith came first, then the rational² expression thereof whether in the Scriptures or elsewhere.

Faith always comes first, this thinker insists. Religion and piety have the primary place. Only then can we have doctrine, whether that doctrine concerns the nature of the Book or whether it concerns the nature of our God Himself. The definition of objective realities can be made only after an examination of the effects of religion upon the Christian consciousness.

G. Summary of Schleiermacher's Views

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1. Schleiermacher, Christian Faith, p. 594
2. Ibid.

In summarizing Schleiermacher's viewpoint, we note first of all the importance he assigns to the mystical essence of religion. This stood in startling contrast to the intellectualistic reading of Christianity by the rationalists of his day. They conceived of the Christian Faith as being composed too exclusively of dogma. The Bible was regarded as a book of truth or doctrine pitched into the world of truth. It was this doctrine which was effective, in the minds of those days, as an instrument in bringing salvation to mankind.

In combatting this intellectualistic tendency, Schleiermacher seems to have gone to the opposite extreme of denying the intellectual element altogether in the essence of religion. Religion, to him, is a mystical relationship apart from ideas. Piety is not a knowing. It is a kind of "inward music". Out of this inward piety and feeling of dependence come doctrine and standards of conduct.

Revelation is consequently made to the inward vision and is in the realm of personal relationships. It is contact of spirit with spirit. Even the New Testament writers received their impetus to write from such a spiritual relationship. Out of that contact came the truths they recorded and the doctrines they enunciated. In this personal sense, revelation was, to Schleiermacher,

a reality. This mystic contact between the Divine and the human was the revelation. Only when the term "revelation" is made to include doctrine and standards of conduct - a usage which this theologian did not accept - could it be said that Schleiermacher didn't believe in revelation.

As for inspiration, the great German theologian applied the term only in a secondary manner to the Scriptures. To ascribe inspiration directly to the writings was to fall into the old error of making doctrine the substance of what was inspired and this he could not permit. Only by virtue of the fact that the writers were inspired could the writings have the term applied to them. Inspiration was a personal matter, the personal spirit moving upon and influencing human spirits. The writers were inspired and this inspiration extended to their speaking and preaching as well as to their writing.

Even the Scriptures are said to be inspired only to the one who himself is actuated by the spirit. The faith which produced the Book in the first place is necessary for any understanding of its contents and must precede any doctrine as to its nature. It is through the eyes of faith that the sacred Book takes its unique place in the Christian Church. It is only a believer who perceives the uniqueness of the holy Scriptures.

CHAPTER II

COLERIDGE AND THE INWARD CERTIFICATION OF THE TRUTH

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A. Coleridge's Method of Procedure

Coleridge's views, while not so systematically stated and organized as those of his German contemporary, were almost as significant. His background was similar to that of Schleiermacher; creedal and dogmatic. His views, however, were not organized into a single work of Dogmatics such as the German's voluminous "Christian Faith". There is a point of similarity between the "Address of Religion to Its Cultured Despisers" by the "Father of Modern Theology" and the series of letters entitled, "The Confessions of An Enquiring Spirit" by Coleridge. Both of these had a more personal aspect than was possible in a closely knit system of theology.

1. Dogmatic and Creedal Background

The creedal and dogmatic background of Coleridge accounts, in part, for his starting point and his unique

emphasis. The Evangelical Theology, then in the ascendant, had as a principle the belief that theological dogmas were objectively true or false "without any reference to a subjective standard of judgment". They held their place as pure data of Revelation. They were propositions of an authorized creed settled long ago. "Christian truth, it was supposed, lay at hand in the Bible, an appeal to which settled everything".¹ Thus Christian truth was conceived of as matter or material for the intellect.

2. The Reason and the Understanding

Coleridge applied the term "understanding" to the intellectual apprehension of this truth. "The understanding", he writes, "is the faculty by which we reflect and generalize."² The term "reason", to him, is more inclusive, since it denotes all the other activities of the personality, as well as the cognitive. It is a "direct aspect of Truth, an inward beholding". The whole personality is involved. Consequently, when speaking of the appeal of religion to the Reason, Coleridge refers to its action upon the total nature of man, and not

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1. John Tulloch: *Movements of Religious Thought During the Nineteenth Century*, p. 9.
2. Samuel T. Coleridge: *Aids to Reflection*, p. 149.

merely upon the intellectual aspects designated as the understanding.

3. The Alternative Views

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In the "Confessions", Coleridge doubtless has this distinction between the reason and understanding in mind when he states his method of procedure in arriving at a doctrine of Scripture. Two questions appended at the beginning of his letters to his friend indicate his viewpoint at the outset:

"Is it necessary, or expedient, to insist on the belief of the divine origin and authority of all, and every part of the Canonical Books as the Condition, or first principle, of Christian Faith?"

"Or, may not the due appreciation of the Scriptures collectively be more safely relied on as the result and consequence of the belief in Christ; the gradual increase - in respect of particular passages - of our spiritual discernment of their truth and authority supplying a test and measure of our own growth and progress as individual believers, without the servile fear that prevents or overclouds the free honor which cometh from love?"

These statements are a forecast of the line which the argument will follow. The very manner of statement shows that Coleridge practically rejects the first of the two alternatives. He is going to repudiate the insistence

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1. Coleridge, Confessions of an Enquiring Spirit, p. 289

that a belief in the Divine origin and authority of all and every part of the Scriptures be accepted as the first or foundation principle of the Christian faith. His contention is evidently following the same line as that of Schleiermacher who made, as we have seen, belief in Christ precede belief in Scripture. As we grow in faith, so we grow in appreciation of the Scriptures.

Our progress in the Christian life will result in a gradual increase of "our spiritual discernment" of the truth and authority of the Scriptures. The closer we come to Christ and His ideals for us, the more we will love and reverence the Bible. Thus, the increase in our appreciation of the Holy Book is a test of our growth in grace.

The first letter of the "Confessions" indicates Coleridge's approach. He seeks an explanation and understanding of the articles of faith. Four of these, which include practically every belief of the Reformation fathers except the one concerning the Bible, he accepts. He has no doubt concerning their validity. When, however, he comes to the fifth article, the one concerning the Bible, he finds himself at variance with the accepted Doctrine. We shall examine the Doctrine and Coleridge's rejection of it as soon as we have more fully elucidated the method of procedure which he proposes to pursue.

4. The Inductive Approach

It is his purpose to examine the sacred book inductively, to read it and let it speak for itself. "I take up this work with the purpose to read it for the first time as I should read any other work." ¹¹ Without making any affirmation as to its origin or authority, he will peruse the book and let it give its own message. He will come to the Scriptures without having formed a previous opinion as to their contents.

It might be an advantage to have an absolutely open mind regarding matters of religion in general, and the Bible in particular, but such is not possible. There are prejudices and convictions and emotional ties from the distant past which make such an impartial approach impossible. So Coleridge confesses from the outset that he cannot "throw off a strong and awful prepossession" in favor of the Bible. It has meant so much to him in the past that to examine it without emotional attachment would be out of the question. Nevertheless, in order that he be not accused of making a fetish out of the Bible, he will endeavor to read it in an unbiased fashion. Two extremes will be avoided in this procedure. First he

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1. Coleridge, Confessions, p. 294

will not accept a discrepancy between his highest reason and the written word without a most careful examination of the seeming difficulty. Secondly, he will not become, as it were, an "orthodox liar for God".

With this mind set, or rather this endeavor to have no mind set at all, Coleridge takes up the Bible. He will read it through, perusing each book as a whole and then examining each book as an integral part of the greater whole. What is the result? He finds a new appreciation of the Bible which we shall endeavor to comprehend after we have seen how he deals with the accepted doctrine of his day. That doctrine was a type of Verbal Inspiration and it was rejected by Coleridge, as we shall now see.

B. Rejection of "Plenary" Inspiration

1. Definition of the Rejected Dogma

Nowhere in these confessions is the term "Verbal Inspiration" employed. The view Coleridge rejects is, however, to be identified with Verbal Inspiration, for the infallibility of the words of Scripture is rejected¹

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1. Coleridge, Confessions, Letter 2, p. 296

by him. Once he designates this view as "plenary inspiration".

A quotation from the "Confessions"¹ gives his view of the doctrine with great clarity:

"But the doctrine in question requires me to believe, that not only what finds me, but that all that exists in the sacred volume, and which I am bound to find therein, was not alone inspired by, that is, composed by, men under the actuating influence of the Holy Spirit, but likewise dictated by an Infallible Intelligence: -- that the writers, each and all, were divinely informed as well as inspired."

This view corresponds to Schleiermacher's distinction, which we have already noted, of the difference between an inspired book and inspired authors. Coleridge, in a similar fashion, here postulates inspiration, not of the writings, but of the writers.

In rejecting the traditional doctrine, which extends the inspiration to the writings as well as the authors, Coleridge realizes the possible dangers in his procedure. Some people have from childhood indentified the very word "Bible" with this doctrine. To them, any tampering with the view by him rejected, might seem outright unbelief and infidelity. For him, however, there is a distinction between the substance and Divine

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1. Coleridge, Confessions, Letter 2, p. 296

message of the Book and this doctrine which hedges it about.¹ He can receive full spiritual value from the Bible without the support of any dogma of "inspiration".

2. Reasons for Rejecting "Plenary Inspiration"

Coleridge rejects the accepted doctrine of inspiration for the following reasons:

a. The Scriptures Do Not Claim It

The Scriptures, inductively considered, do not make such claims for themselves. They speak of the Word of God as it came to Samuel, Isaiah, and others, and of the words of God spoken to men. Nowhere, however, Coleridge finds, do the Scriptures claim that they, in their entirety, are the word of God. Only once or twice, as in the case of Moses and Jeremiah, did he find it asserted that the recording of the Divine message and words was divinely enjoined. In such instances the writing was doubtless made "under the special guidance of the Divine Spirit". After making special allowance for these cases, which to him are unquestionably "supernaturally communicated", Coleridge proceeds to the alleged claims made in the individual books.

Nowhere "explicitly or by implication" does he

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1. Coleridge, Confessions, Letter 3, p. 301

find the writers of the several Biblical books making claim of inspiration such as the doctrine in question demands. They refer to other documents, he discovers, and generally proceed with their writing as "sober-minded and veracious writers under ordinary circumstances are known to do".

The passages in one book, which refer to the origin of others to be of "plenary inspiration," are so few and so incidental that a doctrine such as the one in question cannot be clearly drawn from them. Furthermore, these very passages involve a begging of the question to Coleridge. For there is involved in the use of them the very principle they are quoted to support, namely, "the supernatural dictation, word by word, of the book in which the question is found". Consequently, an inductive examination of the Bible itself does not yield the Doctrine which Coleridge finds to be almost universally held among the Churches.

b. An Account Of The Origin Of The Doctrine Helps
Dispel A Belief in Its Validity

Coleridge finds the origin of the doctrine of "plenary inspiration" in the Jewish speculations and teachings regarding the Pentateuch. The Jewish Rabbis

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promulgated such a doctrine of rigid inspiration and "infallibility" for the books of Moses in order to express the "transcendancy" of these writings. Later Christian divines, finding that in infallibility there are no degrees, extended this doctrine to the entire Bible. The Doctrine, as defined by the Jewish Cabbalists is as follows: "The Pentateuch is but one word, even the Word of God; and the letters and articulate sounds, by which this word is communicated to our human apprehension, are likewise divinely communicated". This is, according to Coleridge, "superstitious and unscriptural". He fails to find an "infallible criterion" for the acceptance of this view.

c. The Doctrine Removes the Life From the Book and Makes it an "Automaton"

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In the third letter Coleridge asks, "Why should I not believe the Scriptures throughout dictated, in word and thought, by an Infallible Intelligence?" In reply, he insists that such a doctrine "petrifies" all the living elements in the Book, and turns this "living book" into a "colossal Memnon's head, a hollow passage for a voice, a voice that mocks the voices of many men, and speaks in

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1. Cf. Coleridge, Confessions, p. 299
2. Ibid., p. 305

their names, and yet is but one voice, and the same: - and no man uttered it, and never in a human heart was it conceived".

Furthermore this Doctrine in question, according to Coleridge, fails to account for the widely differing circumstances of the composers. It fails to consider the degrees of light and information available to the several writers. It fails to give due place to the progressive working of the Spirit of God in the course of revelation. It reduces every passage and verse of Scripture to a dead level. This the English thinker finds himself impelled to reject. He cannot accept a Doctrine which makes the name in the copy of a family register, the site of a town of the course of a river to be "dictated to the sacred amanuensis by an Infallible Intelligence"¹. He cannot accept a doctrine which would allow an English preacher to approve the morality of Jael's treacherous act, and impel a magistrate to send a crazy old woman to the gallows in "honor of the Witch of Endor". Such a Doctrine, to him, fails adequately to account for the living element in the Book and the growth of human comprehension of the Divine.

d. The Doctrine in Question Engenders Positive Harm in the Forced Interpretations and Fantastic Doctrines Derived

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1. Coleridge, Confessions, p. 310

This "indiscriminate Bibliolatry", as Coleridge terms it here, brings about forced and fantastic interpretations, arbitrary allegories, mystic expansion of proper names, and the literal rendering of passages of Scripture where a figurative meaning is called for.¹ All^{of}/this sort of thing works positive harm to our holy faith.

Worse still, however, to Coleridge, is the practice of stringing Scriptural verses together on particular subjects without taking into due regard the context. Such mosaics often combine passages composed at a millenium's distance from one another. Such a practice is employed by the Roman Church to support abuses like that of Purgatory, Popery, and the Inquisition. Bishop Hacket is mentioned as an example of similar harm wrought among Protestants by such fantastic interpretations.

- e. The Doctrine in Question Promotes Diversity
Among Christians Because There is no
Infallible Interpreter

If every sentence "found in a canonical book, rightly interpreted, contains the dictum of an infallible mind", who is there to give the proper interpretation thereof? Also, Coleridge decries, fallible and more or

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1. Cf. Coleridge, Confessions, p. 313

less prejudiced theologians must determine this.

Consequently, we have much diversity of opinion as to the real meaning of an Infallible Book.¹

Thus Coleridge rejects the doctrine of "plenary" infallibility of the sacred Scriptures. We have seen how at times he seems to identify this doctrine with "dictation" and how he must certainly have meant by it a kind of verbal inspiration. Such a view, to him, would lead into a habit of slothful, indiscriminating acquiescence. It would substitute a dead dogma about the Book for a loving loyal adherence to the Book itself. Just what his particular and specific attitude toward the Scriptures was, we now seek to determine.

C. Coleridge's Doctrine Of Holy Scripture

1. Contact With The Book Itself

If Coleridge can be said to have had a doctrine of Scriptures, following are some of the principles he advocated. The first has been already noted. It pertains to the emphasis upon first-hand contact with the Book itself. Coleridge believed in reading the Bible and letting it make its own impression. He aimed to approach

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1. Coleridge, Confessions, p. 316

the Book with no theory as to its inspiration previously framed. He wished to judge Holy Writ in the light of that "light which lighteth every man coming into the world".

2. The Bible Its Own Evidence

The second point of emphasis in Coleridge's doctrine of Scriptures is one of the most important of all for him. He claims that "the Bible and Christianity are their own sufficient evidence"¹. This he reiterates over and over again. The proof of the divine authority of the truth revealed in Christ is "its fitness to our nature and needs". Christianity and the human soul were made for each other and they match each other. Thus the Bible itself is fitted to the human soul.

Consequently, whatever "finds me bears witness for itself that it has proceeded from a Holy Spirit"². In the Bible there is more that finds him, is his own testimony, than in all other books put together. "The words of the Bible" likewise "find me at greater depths of my being". "Whatever finds me brings with it an irresistible evidence of its having proceeded from the Holy Spirit."³ This is essentially the argument from

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1. Coleridge, Confessions, Letter 2, p. 300
2. Ibid., Letter 1, p. 295
3. Ibid.

experience to which Schleiermacher adhered.

The outstanding difference here between the German and the Englishman, in statement at least, pertains to the place of the Church. Coleridge seems to minimize the collective experience of the great body of Christians through the ages. While taking account of Jerome, Augustine, and Luther, he nevertheless stands alone in his statement of belief. It is as though he and the Bible were facing each other. In it he finds words for "my inmost thoughts, songs for my joy, utterances for my hidden griefs, and pleadings for my shame and feebleness".¹ In reality, it is not the individual and the Bible facing each other, as Coleridge claimed, which is the status of Christianity; it is the whole group of Christians and the Bible facing each other. This Coleridge seemed to overlook. What has "found" the whole group of Christians through the ages is a more accurate index than what has appealed to one individual standing alone.

The contention relative to the fitness of the Book to our nature and needs must be supplemented by a further statement from this writer. "The clearness and cogency of this proof" is "proportionate to the degree of

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1. Coleridge, Confessions, Letter 1, p. 295

self-knowledge in each individual hearer".¹ In other words, the unregenerate heart would hardly spring up in spontaneous recognition of the divinity of the Book. It is through the conflicts of grace and infirmity in one's own soul that he comes to recognize the influence of the same spirit in his own soul as that which wrought in the hearts of the Scriptural writers.

3. The Unity of the Impression Produced

The unity of the impression the Scriptures make is evidence of their essential Divinity or divine origin.² Coleridge insists that the Bible is a Divine Book because it is fitted to his nature and needs, because it and the human heart were made for each other. To the objection that there is much in the Book which does not thus find the human heart, he advances the thought of the unity of the impression made by the Holy Book. It is the "total impression" and not the impression made by isolated units.

When the soul is standing face to face with its God and finding help and consolation in the Holy Scriptures, it is a cold and captious person who would interject moot and critical questions. No other writer, such as

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1. Coleridge, Confessions, Letter 4, p. 319.
2. Ibid., Letter 3, p. 302

Shakespeare, would have his writings treated in this fashion. The enthusiasm generated by the spirit of that creator's drama would give no place to the minor problems involved in "Titus Andronicus". So Coleridge insists upon the unity of the Bible as bearing its own evidence.¹ The work as a whole manifests its divine origin.

4. The Bible A Sure And Certain Guide For Conduct

The Scriptures, considered with reference to their purpose,² are a sure and certain guide for conduct and guidance. Coleridge insists that the Bible is

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1. Coleridge, Confessions, Letter 5, p. 325: "Does not the universally admitted canon - that each part of Scripture must be interpreted by the spirit of the whole - lead to the same practical conclusion as that for which I am now contending: namely, that it is the spirit of the Bible, and not the detached words and sentences that is infallible and absolute?" (Cf. Tulloch, Movements of Religious Thought in Britain During the Nineteenth Century, p. 30)
2. Coleridge, Confessions, Letter 6, p. 323: "Is it safer for the individual, and more conducive to interests of the Church of Christ, - to conclude thus: - The Bible is the Word of God, and therefore, true, holy, and in all parts unquestionable; - or thus, - The Bible, considered in reference to its declared ends and purposes, is true and holy, and for all who seek truth with humble spirit an unquestionable guide, and therefore, it is the word of God?"

infallible in what it purports to do. It claims to give guidance. The perplexed have found this to be true. The Bible gives food for the hungry. It is a living spring for the thirsty. It is a staff for the feeble. It is music and song for the wayfarer. The sober-minded man who has been nourished from childhood on the Word finds therein guidance and comfort and strength. The Bible contains the "bread from heaven" for hungry hearts; it contains all "truths necessary for salvation", and therein is preserved the undoubted word of God. To Coleridge, then, the Book is infallible in that which it intends to do - to bring men to God and build them up in Him.

5. Revelation and Inspiration Distinguished

To Coleridge, the terms "Revelation" and¹ "Inspiration" must not be confused, as had been done in his day. The word "Inspiration" had come to have two senses, the one properly inspiration, and the other not inspiration at all, but revelation.

Where information has been miraculously communicated by voice or vision, such as in the Law and Prophets, there we have Revelation proper. No jot or

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1. Coleridge, Confessions, Letter 7, p. 33 ff.

tittle of this can go unfulfilled. It finds its fullest meaning in Christ. Coleridge calls this "inspired revelation".

In the Hagiographa, however, we find "inspiration" itself. Here the writer or speaker uses and applies his existing gifts of power and knowledge under the pre-disposing, aiding, and directing actuation of God's Holy Spirit. This inspiration does not dispense with the writer's personal abilities. It uses them and directs them to high and holy ends. Inspiration then, to Coleridge, is guidance and direction in the use of personal gifts and capacities.

D. Summary and Evaluation of Coleridge's Views

In evaluating the contribution of Coleridge, four things need to be noted to which insufficient emphasis, we feel, was given by that thinker: (1) Coleridge seemed to distort the view of "plenary inspiration" which he was attacking. It is hardly possible that any adherents of this view would hold that the words of Satan in the book of Job or the mistaken utterances of Job's friends expressed the divine sentiments.¹ The Doctrine

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1. Coleridge, Confessions, Letter 3, p. 308

of plenary inspiration doesn't insist that God commanded the tortures inflicted by David upon the inhabitants of Rabbah (II Samuel 12:31).¹ Certainly the Church Doctrine of Inspiration does not mean that God inspired the hatred which was expressed in the imprecatory Psalms. Here Coleridge seems to have misread the dogma he so bitterly attacked. (2) Coleridge failed to give sufficient emphasis to the Church and its experience. "What finds me" was his criterion of judgment. This standard is entirely too subjective. "What finds the whole body of believers" is a more valid canon of judgment. The Doctrine involved is, therefore, the expression of confidence of the experience of the whole body of believers and not that of one brilliant and gifted literary and philosophical genius. The unhappy and tragic life of this philosopher is a lurid commentary on his inability to stand alone in the midst of reality. (3) The spiritual nature of man may be perverted or distorted. Such seems to have been the case of the Pharisees of Jesus' day. Possibly the eternal sin of which the Master spoke with obvious reference to these religious leaders may have been just such a moral perversion or spiritual blindness. When the nature of man

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1. Coleridge, Confessions, p. 330

does not ring true its testimony with regard to spiritual things cannot be trusted. A corrupt life often brings with it a rejection of the Scriptures and the testimony of the saints. (4) The spiritual nature of man may be undeveloped or immature. It is possible that one with no knowledge of music at all might immediately recognize the greatness of a Beethoven composition but such is not probable. A taste for the best in any sphere must be cultivated. This is doubtless true in the realm of the highest, one's perception of the Divine. The view of Coleridge needs to be supplemented with the recognition that a period of preparation by means of some external witness and impulsion is necessary before the spiritual nature is capable of spontaneously reacting to the Divine. It was not until the "fulness of time" that the Redeemer came. The Scriptures do not carry their own witness to a distorted personality or an immature spiritual nature. External testimony in such cases is a necessity. On the whole, however, the contribution of this great English poet and philosopher has been a most wholesome antidote to an excessive emphasis upon the rigid and, at times, lifeless, Dogma of Inspiration. Subsequent theological thought has¹ certainly felt the mark of Samuel Taylor Coleridge.

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1. Cf. H.B. Swete: Cambridge Theological Essays, No. 6

CHAPTER III

THE PHILOSOPHICAL TREND OF THE EIGHTEENTH TO THE TWENTIETH CENTURIES

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The influence of philosophy upon the development of the "modern" view of the Bible has been more indirect than direct. The whole theological trend we are traversing has felt the weight of philosophical speculation. Schleiermacher and Ritschl were influenced by the Kantian philosophy, particularly in its epistemological aspects. Spinoza's contribution, although partly made in the realm of Biblical criticism, was more fully felt in the growing emphasis upon the Immanence of God. The Pragmatic philosophy, though of more recent origin, has its counterpart in the Ritschlian viewpoint. Hegel's Absolute Idealism made its mark upon the Tübingen school of New Testament criticism and postulated a kind of philosophical evolution.

Four ways in which movements of philosophy and science have directly influenced modern methods of thinking about the Bible will be dealt with in this chapter. Rationalistic and Deistic thought will be considered first. Then the greater stress laid upon the

Divine Immanence with its consequent emphasis in another field, viz., the growth of the Historical Method, will be discussed. Kant's Critical Idealism will receive a share of consideration, and, to close the chapter, the scientific hypothesis of evolution will be analyzed and related to the Bible and the Christian Faith.

A. Rationalism and Deism

Rationalism is often popularly applied to any intellectual disbelief in Christianity or argument against it. Technically, the term belongs to the eighteenth century philosophy of the period of the Enlightenment. Rationalism was then opposed to the prevailing Christian thought. It was identified with a hostile attitude toward Christianity. When it became evident that this Rationalism was not to be set over against the Christian religion, but against the orthodox reading of it, a new concept of Revelation emerged.

Orthodoxy adhered to Revelation, as it viewed it, to determine the limits and contents of religious truth. Rationalism fell back upon reason to reach the good life. The common premise of both was the intellectualistic concept of the content of religion. Both sides tended to identify the Christian religion with a set of dogmas, the one defending, the other denying

their validity. Thus, in time, the term "Rationalism" came to mean any opposition to the Faith.

Out of this contention, two definite ideas emerged. First, there came a growing recognition that the Christian religion could not be adequately defined as such a body of doctrine. A non-rational (not irrational) element in religion was definitely identified. In the second place, the concept of Reason was being broadened from a mere identification of it with the logical understanding to an approximation of the whole personality. The Reason was made to include emotional and volitional elements as well as cognitive. This inevitably modified the old theory of Verbal Inspiration so necessary to an intellectualistic idea of the content of religion.

Contemporaneous with and similar to Rationalism, commonly designated as German, was the English movement of Deism. In this philosophy, which stressed the transcendence of God to the exclusion of His immanent activity in the world, the clash between the claims of natural and revealed religion reached its climax. Deism championed the cause of natural religion as opposed to revealed. From medieval times, this distinction between the two prevailed and supernatural religion as revealed in the Bible was unquestioned.¹ The Deistic movement

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1. Alexander V. G. Allan: Continuity of Christian Thought
p. 341

brought into sharp contrast the conflicting claims and aided the eventual breaking down of the distinction between the two.

The modern world has consequently abandoned the old way of speaking in favor of a newer terminology. All religion is now seen to be revealed. No truths are inaccessible to reason. The distinction is now being made between natural and historical religion, all being¹ revelational.

This conclusion is similar to that arrived at by a consideration of the claims of rationalism, and the theological reasonings of Schleiermacher. The whole question as to the exact content of revelation is brought to the fore. Both Deism and its opponents looked upon Revelation as consisting of material for the intellect - dogma and doctrine. The modern thought world now perceives the personal nature of Revelation; it consists of unique experiences and relationships. Revelation is contact with the divine. An abiding friendship does not consist of a body of truths or beliefs, but it does modify and change beliefs. If the word "truth" is used to express the content of Revelation, it must be made to include more than logical and mathematical certainty. It must give

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1. William Temple: Gifford Lectures, Chapter I, XII, Nature, Man and God.

place for the personal element as well.

The philosophy of Rationalism and Deism, as well as the opposing orthodoxy, stressed the remoteness of Deity. The God whom they postulated was a far-off God.¹ The modern trend has been toward an increasing emphasis upon the nearness of Deity. "Closer is He than breathing, nearer than hands and feet." This stress naturally modifies the traditional views of God's activity in Bible times and in the process of the formation of the Scriptures.

B. The Divine Immanence

In its emphasis upon the Divine Immanence, modern thought goes back, not merely to Spinoza and Schleiermacher, but to the Greek fathers and the early theologians. The Medieval and Post-Reformation way of looking at things, with an ideal of other-worldliness for the good life, was an interlude initiated by St. Augustine of Hippo.¹ The modern thought world has reverted to the thinking of those early giants in the interpretation of Christian doctrine.

There is no department of Christian thought and secular attitudes that is not affected by this divergency

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1. Cf. Allen Op. Cit., Chap. 1.

of viewpoint. The Romantic movement in literature and art is an outgrowth of the newer, yet older, philosophy. In theology, the Medieval-Reformation metaphysical dualism, which set such a sharp contrast between God and His world, called for an authoritative revelation from beyond. The world of the natural needed an invasion from and a salvation toward the world of the supernatural. This incoming revelation had to be protected and buttressed by a doctrine of Inspiration. The later philosophy, which brought God nearer His universe and broke down this metaphysical dualism, modified the older view of Revelation and its protecting shield of Inspiration. If God is in His universe He can certify immediately any revelation of Himself.

With a God immanent in His creation and in constant touch with it, the old distinction between the natural and the supernatural tends to vanish.¹ The supernatural is said to be but one way of viewing the natural. From one point of view, all is natural; from another, all is supernatural. One mind sees God in the creation, the supernatural; another sees law and order, the natural.

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1. C.A. Beckwith: Schaff-Herzog Enc. Article "Rationalism", Vol IX. "The traditional dualism of the natural and supernatural is indeed in some quarters maintained; where, however, the divine immanence is seriously held, the line between the natural and the supernatural is disappearing, and the supernatural is the natural viewed from its causal or teleological import. Thus the supernatural is reinstated, not as anomalous and shrouded in mystery, but as the ultimate source and final end of the rational order."

These two are not in variance; they are but different ways of seeing the same thing. The distinction is in the mind of the beholder, not in that which is seen.

The doctrine of the Divine Immanence sees God in contact with every moment of life. He is its constant preserver. Instead of interfering occasionally, He keeps in constant touch with the world. There are no gaps in His dealings with the universe. God's acts are processes. The Old Testament is a pictorial presentation of these processes and is man's interpretation and statement of the reality. Creation, for example, is represented as having taken place by Divine fiat in a short period of time. In reality, it was a process extending over an infinitely long span. In the realm of men and human history, the giving of the law is stated to have come about within the life of one man and only a portion of his life at that. As a matter of fact, it was a process, the result of a long era of growth. Such a philosophy revolutionizes one's thought relative to the nature of Revelation and the Book.

When carried to the extreme, this tendency has a defect that needs to be avoided. It minimizes the place of personality and the human will. It tends to forget the idealizing function of the mind. Great men have appeared in history who by their ideas and force of will have exercised unusual influence upon the course of human

life. Great men do initiate great movements. The Bible is constantly stressing this fact. Men may accomplish things on the stage of history or they may fail to do their duty. The philosophy of Immanence sees the outworking of a purpose in the universe. It insists that great movements call forth great men and tends to forget the converse. It belittles human failure and sin.¹

C. The Historical Method

Hand in hand with this philosophy goes the historical method so commonly applied to the study of the Old and New Testaments. Its guiding principle is to find the explanation of any event or movement in the immediately preceding movements and events. "It becomes more and more plain that every separate incident or era in history must be viewed in a nexus larger than itself."² It is through this whole process that the immanent Creator is evolving His work into ever higher stages. The historical

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1. Cf. Arthur C. McGiffert: The Rise of Modern Religious Ideas, Chapter X. Allen, Op. Cit., Chapter I.
2. James Moffatt: Approach to the New Testament, p. 122 This is one of the best statements of the values and defects of the historical method as applied to the New Testament. Cf. Vernon F. Storr: Development of English Theology, Chaps. I, VII, p. 160. Shirley Jackson Case: Studies in Early Christianity, Chap. I

background of the Scriptures must be thoroughly explored in order to arrive at the meaning and substance of the records as they stand. The history of any one nation cannot be isolated. It has to be brought in line with all history. External influences acted and reacted upon the environment of Israel and the early Church. These had to be considered. This way of viewing the Scriptures sees no gaps in God's dealings with humanity.¹ Instead of interfering occasionally by the miraculous and magical He is always at work. He wrought His mighty deeds not only in Israel's history, but in the history of every nation.

This method fails to account adequately for the fact of personality. Paul, for example, cannot be wholly explained by his Hellenic and Jewish backgrounds with other tangible influences from his heredity and environment. Paul himself was a kind of miracle, a kind of invasion into the continuity of the stream of history. He accounts, in part, for himself by his contact with Jesus of Nazareth, the Risen Lord. Likewise, ideals are not wholly the product of environment and heredity. They belong not to the past, nor invariably

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1. Cf. James Martineau: Seat of Authority in Religion, Part I, Chapter 4.

to the present. They are a kind of projection into the future. They are a product of personality.

One salutary effect of the historical method and the philosophy of the Divine Immanence has come from the growing realization that any separateness of God from the world is in the moral sphere. This, as has been shown, is sometimes forgotten or minimized, but for Christian thinkers it will not be wholly ignored. God stands over against His creation, not in substance, but in righteousness.

When the Divine Immanence is given proper recognition, several problems remain. How can God's revelation of Himself everywhere - since He is in all things - be reconciled with His special revelation of Himself as recorded in the Holy Book? What is the justification of missionary efforts if God speaks directly to men everywhere? What place is to be given to Christian propaganda?

The modern thinker approaches the Scriptures with mind prepossessed by this Metaphysics of Divine Immanence. His philosophy colors and influences all he sees.

D. Kant's (1724-1804) Critical Idealism

Herein is Kant's unique and revolutionary

contribution. Things as they really are are inaccessible, and the phenomena which we know have been colored by our minds. In the process of being appropriated by the human understanding; the "noumena" are invariably changed. Reality is unknown; its impression upon the human consciousness is all that we have. The mind in apprehending ultimate reality colors it with its own configurations. These are termed "categories", and they include even space and time, which are subjective, rather than objective realities. Man provides the molds into which reality is poured, so to speak, and the molds are always part of that which we know. The landscape viewed through colored lenses takes on the color of the glass.¹

James Russell Lowell, in his description of Ambrose, gives poetic expression to this epistemological theory of Kant: "Never, surely, was holier man than Ambrose, since the world began." With much fasting, this saint wrestled with evil; with much thought and effort, he wrought his creed. Then, when his belief was finally complete, Ambrose said, 'All those shall die the eternal death who believe not as I'. One day a lad came to discuss the matter with this good man.

"As each beholds in cloud and fire the shape

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1. Cf. Weber and Perry: History of Philosophy, p. 352 f. Ueberweg: History of Philosophy, Vol. II, p. 136 f.

that answers his own desire, so each, said the youth,
'in the Law shall find the figures and features of his
mind; and to each in his mercy hath God allowed His
several pillars of fire and cloud.'

Then "the soul of Ambrose burned with zeal
and holy wrath for the young man's weal", and the good
saint accused the youth of sin. It was a moral defect,
surely, that beclouded this immature mind.

Now there bubbled beside them where they stood
A fountain of waters, sweet and good;
The youth to the streamlet's brink drew near
Saying "Ambrose, thou maker of creeds, look here!"
Six vases of crystal he took,
And set them along the edge of the brook.

As into these vessels the water I pour
There shall one hold less, another more,
And the water unchanged, in every case,
Shall put on the figure of the vase;
O thou, who wouldst unity make through strife,
Canst thou fit this sign to the Water of Life?

If the mind has had its part in the formation
of creeds, the claim for absoluteness on their part would
have to be modified. The discussion of the Deity in
chapter two of the Westminster Confession of Faith
begins with a definite assertion; "There is but one
only living and true God, who is infinite in being and
perfection, a most pure spirit, invisible, without
body, parts or passions." Kant would have inserted
before this, "As it appears to us". The ancient
Apostle's Creed instinctively made provision for this,

as it states, "I believe in God the Father Almighty".
 Many modern creeds are consciously statements of belief.
 "We believe in one Almighty God, Creator of all thing,
 Father of all men, only Ruler and Judge of the world,
 holy and wise and loving."¹

According to this way of looking at things,
 the Scriptures represent, not Absolute Reality, but
 Reality as it appeared to the writers. Deity entered
 the molds of their minds and we have the resultant
 "treasure in earthen vessels". We have, not God, but
 God as He appeared to these holy men of old. We have their
 interpretations of His activity upon their persons and
 race.

This quite naturally demands a reconstruction
 of the mind set of the sacred writers and holy men of
 old. Their circumstances must be investigated. God's
 entrance into men's minds is so intimately connected with
 men's conceptions of Him that the two can hardly be
 separated. In tracing the growth of men's thoughts
 about God we are tracing God's revelation of Himself
 to men. On the other hand, no one is competent to
 pass judgment upon every phase of life and doctrine with

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1. Submitted to the Assembly of the United Free Church
 of Scotland, May, 1921, for "study". Quarterly
 Register, Vol. XII, No. 5. Cited by George Richards,
 Christian Ways of Salvation, p. 296.

dogmatic certainty. What may be true for one set of circumstances may not fit another. There is need for tolerance and forbearance.

This epistemological theory then has had beneficial results. It insists that when we read the Scriptures what we find there is our impression of the writers' impressions of God and ultimate reality. It is our task to disentangle as far as possible our interpretations from the real meaning of the writings. Even then we shall only have men's tracing of the footsteps of the Eternal. The question which the Critical Idealistic philosophy has brought to our attention pertains to the place of the Bible in the formulation of religious doctrine. If the Scriptures are the record of men's impressions and interpretations, what value do they have for later interpretations? A plausible solution for the scientific problems raised in connection with the early records of Genesis grows out of these considerations of interpretations, mind-sets, molds of thought, and categories of reasoning. To both perplexity and its possibly clearing up we now turn.

E. The Age Of The Earth And The Theory Of Evolution

Without attempting to give scientific theories relative to the age of man or definitions of evolution, we want to show how differing points of view deal with difficulties arising in this direction. One view simply denies the existence of the problems. The newer hypothesis, as to the age of the earth and the length of human habitation upon it, is declared to be simply "theory", having no real basis in fact. Evolution is rejected outright. Some of the conservatives have perceived the cogency of scientific findings in these directions and have attempted to harmonize their view of Scripture with these findings. The six days of creation can be taken figuratively and so expand into a long period of time. The Biblical order of creation shows some striking similarities to the proposed order of science. Consequently, there need be no anxiety, for there is no real contradiction. Of course, if any discrepancy could be definitely proved to exist between the Bible and science, the latter would be wrong.

Another "modern" view would admit discrepancies, but would account for them by its interpretation of the Biblical narratives. This was borne out in a striking way when the writer questioned a large group of College students as to their belief in evolution, as they

conceived it. The majority of the students felt that this scientific theory could be harmonized with the first two chapters of Genesis. Another sizable section rejected evolution outright on the grounds that it contradicted the Biblical account. A third group, comprising the most brilliant and diligent members, held that the narratives in Scripture were legendary and that science could frame its hypotheses on other bases than those of religious literature. This is essentially the modern view. In recent years, it has received further confirmation by the striking resemblances between Mesopotamian stories and Biblical narratives. Could the Scriptural accounts have had their origin in their ancestral fatherland.

It is now recognized that the Bible and science move in two different spheres, which need not and cannot be harmonized. The one is the province of religion, the other the field of learning and scholarship. The Bible is not a text-book of science, history, or even philosophy. Its authority can be cited only in its own particular sphere. It cannot be used as an oracle to settle all matters of the universe beforehand, in place of exact observation and reasoning. A thorough and careful investigation of its own claim

for itself makes this clear.¹

An observation of the first chapter of Genesis reveals the use of the Divine name in practically every verse. Obviously, this is a poem purporting to show the hand and power of the Almighty in creation. Could it have been the pious meditation of a godly man seated on a hill-top in the evening just at sunset?² Silent, he sits in the presence of the solemn beauty and grandeur of the scene. He sees the light fading, and then rapidly reviews all the wonders his eye beholds. Then to his mind come recollections of stories he had heard from the distant past, stories from Babylonia, the early home of his fathers. Perhaps it is the beginning of the traditional holy day of his people. Under the spell of it all, this godly man suddenly realizes, "The God whom I know, and love, and worship ~~did~~ all this". Out of this walking with God "in the cool of the day" may thus have come the story which has awed and inspired thousands through the ages. This is not science; it is religion.

The problem which faces the modern man concerns the origin of that pious bard's devotion. How did he come to know and serve this God? What was the source of

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1. Cf. Louis M. Sweet: To Christ Through Evolution, p. 15, where distinction is made between non-scientific and unscientific.
2. The writer acknowledges his indebtedness for this suggestion, in part, to Dr. Paul Barackman.

his religion? Where did the consciousness of God originate? How did awareness of Deity first arise in the human soul? After these questions are considered, the problem as to the advanced nature of the Hebrew religion must be investigated. How did the prophet come to have such an exalted concept of God, so different from the vague shadowy ideas of contemporary peoples? The origin of the Divine consciousness lies beyond the limits of our present study, but the advanced nature of the Hebrew religion will be dealt with in the next chapter.

The science and cosmogony of the Bible are thus rejected. It is the religious content of the Book which is important and supremely valuable. Only here

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1. James Orr: Problem of the Old Testament, p. 20. "He (Robertson Smith, Prophets of Israel, p. 9) goes on: 'For, as a matter of fact, it is not and cannot be denied that the prophets found for themselves and their nation a knowledge of God, and not a mere speculative knowledge, but a practical fellowship of faith in Him, which the seekers of truth among the Gentiles never attained.' The idea seems to be that these high views of God and religion in the prophets being acknowledged to be there, it is not necessary to burden the argument with too curious questions as to how they got to be there - whether by supernatural revelation, or in the way in which spiritual truth is grasped by thinkers of other nations. Enough that we have them." Cf. Foundations, B. H. Streeter, Chap. 2; The Bible, R. Brook, for valuable recent discussion of the origin of this religious experience. Obviously the most important religious question is involved. How may a man enter into this intimate fellowship with God and knowledge of Him? This problem, of course, lies beyond the scope of our present investigation.

can the Scriptures speak with authority. The nature of that religious authority constitutes one of the twentieth century's most difficult problems.

Has the religious viewpoint of Genesis I been outgrown or improved? A principle of development was obviously recognized by our Lord in the Sermon on the Mount. "Ye have heard that it hath been said of old... ..but I say unto you." How far is this development to be carried? Did it end when the canon was closed? How far may the Christian consciousness of our day sit in judgment upon the religion of the Bible? These are more puzzling questions than those concerning evolution.

CHAPTER IV

THE BIBLE A RECORD OF HISTORICAL REVELATION

THE RITSCHLIAN SCHOOL

CHAPTER IV

THE BIBLE A RECORD OF HISTORICAL REVELATION THE RITSCHLIAN SCHOOL

Two considerations make this study of the Ritschlian school more difficult and involved than the preceding ones. First, there is a paucity of material dealing directly with the subject. An entire section, as has been seen, was devoted by Schleiermacher in his "Christian Faith" to the doctrine of the Scriptures. Coleridge, likewise, treated the subject of Inspiration at length in his "Confessions". The views of these two theologians regarding the Bible were easily discerned for they told us in so many words just what their attitude was. The Ritschlian attitude, however, must be gleaned from the treatment of other subjects by members of this school and from particular exegetical studies.

The second difficulty arises from the fact that there are a number of Ritschlians and, consequently, it is not exactly correct to speak of the Ritschlean view; it is more exact to speak of Ritschlian views. Often these different thinkers follow divergent lines of

thought and strict agreement has not always been found in their writings.¹ For this reason several representatives of the school have been selected for our investigation in order that there may be obtained an adequate appreciation of the whole theological viewpoint. The three whom we have chosen are Ritschl, Herrmann, and Harnack.

A preliminary discussion of the main tenets of Ritschlianism is desirable and necessary. This must of necessity be greatly abbreviated. The masters themselves will be allowed to speak regarding their theology so that we may arrive at an understanding of what they meant. The interpretations by Garvia, Swing, Mackintosh, and Brown will be followed in order that a fuller appreciation of the school may be obtained.

A. The Ritschlian Theology and its Characteristics

Ritschl insists that our Christian religion is to be likened to an ellipse rather than a circle, because it has two foci - redemption and the kingdom of God.² He finds that the Evangelical Churches have

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1. William Adams Brown: *Essence of Christianity*. p. 267.
2. A Ritschl: *A Justification and Reconciliation* p. 114 et seq.

overstressed the former of these conceptions to the neglect of the latter with its ethical implications. From his attempt to assign each of the two elements its proper place we are enabled to discover the essential features of the Ritschlian thought. For convenience sake, these may be designed as (1) The Historical, (2) The Non-Dogmatic, and (3) The Practical and Ethical.

1. The Historical

The Historical element is closely bound up with the emphasis upon the Kingdom of God and the community of believers. Schleiermacher, by starting from the individual experience of the believer and his "feeling" of absolute dependence, had tended to fall under the pernicious influence of subjectivism. This, Ritschl and his school could not tolerate.¹ To him, the one method of escape from subjectivism was to find a firm foothold in history. This he found in the continuity of the Christian community back to the person² of its Founder, Jesus Christ. Living faith could thus draw nourishment from the soil of past events. Religious

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1. Cf. Mackintosh, *Types of Modern Theology*, p. 144.
2. Cf. Wilhelm Hermann: *Communion of the Christian with God*, p. 67

mysticism, to the Ritschlians, had neglected this¹ historical continuity, and so had fallen into subjectivism. The mystics, by emphasizing the relationship between a man standing alone and his God, had tended to dispense with the historical element altogether, Herrmann concludes. Thus, to him, both the Christian community and the historical Jesus are minimized by the mystics.

Herrmann thinks that the mystic, when he has come to God, has left Christ behind. After having been led by Christ to the threshold of blessedness, the mystic dispenses with the Master and has to do with God alone. Thus the historical person of Jesus loses His real significance. Herrmann insists further that these devout men fail to do any justice at all to the² historical in Christianity.

Ritschl likewise depreciates mysticism and its³ effort to find immediate contact between the soul and Christ. This "sentimental communion" with Christ, as he terms it, is quite different from the doctrines of

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1. Ritschl, Justification and Reconciliation, p. 114 et seq.
2. "For the fact that everything historical sinks into insignificance when God is really found may so dominate the feeling of the individual that he may become totally indifferent to the dogma that formulates the meaning of the historical in Christianity." Herrmann, Communion of the Christian with God, p. 24
3. Ritschl, Op. Cit. pp. 112, 180

Justification by Faith and Redemption which are the Reformation emphases. These are to be appropriated only in connection with the historical community.

Justification by faith is experienced by the Evangelical Christian only as he, by faith in God, incorporates himself into the community of believers and takes his stand with it in the pardoning grace of God.

This distinction between mysticism and justification by faith brings to the attention the discussion relative to the Jesus of history and the Christ of faith. Mysticism, according to the Ritschlians, emphasizes the Christ of faith to the neglect of the Jesus of History. In striving to give proper place to the revelation made in the Jesus of history and mediated through the community of believer, the Ritschlians themselves have tended to fall into the opposite error and make the influence of Christ to be merely the "posthumous result of what he did in the first century".¹ Christianity worships the living Exalted One, the Christ of Faith, whom it finds to be the Jesus of history. Our religion looks back with the Ritschlians to that One "Who spake as never man spake"; it also looks up with the devout Christian mystics to Him who promised to be with His faithful ones even unto the end of the age.

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1. Mackintosh, Types of Modern Theology, p. 164

Together with this emphasis upon the Jesus of history goes the necessity for participation in the community of believers. To Ritschl,¹ the significance of Christ's words becomes intelligible only when we see how they are reflected in the consciousness of those who believe in Him and how the members of the Christian community trace back their consciousness of pardon to the Person and the action and passion of Jesus. Thus, to the Christian, the significance of Jesus as a founder of religion depends upon the reckoning of oneself as a member of the community which He founded. We of today must become a part of the first religious community if we are fully to appropriate the pardon which Jesus so freely offers.² This applies to every part of the Christian experience. Our understanding of God, sin, conversion, eternal life, in the Christian sense, come only so far as we consciously and intentionally reckon ourselves members of the community which Jesus has founded. By the Ritschlians, our religious life is thus traced back through the Church to the historical Person of Jesus.

2. The Non-Dogmatic

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1. Ritschl, Justification and Reconciliation, p. 1
2. Ibid., p. 2.

With this historical emphasis upon the community of believers which extends back to the first century goes the minimizing of metaphysics in relation to theology.¹ The Ritschlian aversion to the combination of a metaphysical theory with theology works itself out in three ways: (a) the outright rejection of speculative theism; (b) the hostility to every theory of knowledge except that advocated by Lotze; and (c) the antagonism to ecclesiastical dogma. To these we now turn.

a. Rejection Of Speculative Theism

True to his fundamental premises, Ritschl claims that a Christian theology cannot be built upon a substructure of Natural Religion. Such a method of procedure would have the theologian take his stand outside the sphere of regeneration which is the community of believers.² The Christian thinker cannot thus abstract himself from his own past and that of his brethren in Christ and then from that external point begin his theology and base it on eternal truths and principles derived from the reason. The genuine theologian certainly begins within the bosom of the Christian

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1. A. E. Garvie: The Ritschlian Theology, p. 39.
2. Ritschl, Justification and Reconciliation, p. 8

fellowship and proceeds from there.

Consequently, there are "no sufficient grounds for combining a theory of things in general with the conception of God".¹ The Scholastic arguments for God's existence are invalid as bases for the Christian conception of God, Ritschl asserts. Such proofs are purely metaphysical; and they lead to conceptions of the world-unity which are extraneous to religion unless they are combined with the idea of Deity received as a datum from Christianity. Because of this, Ritschl would forbid² the use of metaphysics in theology. This is certainly a valid contention. The Psalmist found God in nature only because he had first found Him in His historical manifestation.

b. Lotze's Theory Of Knowledge

The theory of knowledge which Ritschl adopts fits into this non-speculative character of his theology. The theory of Plato that the "thing at rest" works upon us and may be known apart from its effects is rejected³ as so much scholastic theorizing. Kant's theory, which

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1. Ritschl, Justification and Reconciliation, p. 17
2. Ibid., p. 214
3. Ibid., p. 18

holds that the thing in itself is unknowable, but that we may understand its effects upon our world and that we may know the phenomena is likewise rejected, as this theory leads to similar scholastic fallacies. The third theory is that of Lotze and this is the one followed in the constructive work of Justification and Reconciliation. Lotze holds that in the phenomena themselves we discern the thing itself as operating upon¹ us.

In the application of this theory to theology, Ritschl claims that we are concerned not with natural objects, but with states and movements of man's spiritual life. In other words, God is to be known in His movements in the world, and the soul is to be known in its activities. "Better not inquire too closely," insists Ritschl, as to the substantial nature of these realities. Our immediate empirical perceptions of spiritual realities, such as God and the soul, are the data with which theology is to occupy itself. The theologian, Ritschl continues, is to avoid secondary rational inferences from the data, which seeks to determine what God is for Himself, and what the soul is in itself.² Garvie criticizes this view as defective,

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1. Cf. Ritschl, Justification and Reconciliation, p. 214.
2. Cf. Garvie, The Ritschlian Theology, p. 46

because thought cannot thus rest short of the attempt at a complete determination of its objects. Our minds can find no rest in a contemplation of the effects of these objects upon ourselves without seeking to discover their essential nature.

c. Antagonism to Ecclesiastical Dogma

Harnack, the historian of the school, shows most clearly its antagonism to ecclesiastical dogma. In his work, "What is Christianity?" he first discusses the essential features of the teaching of Jesus and then develops the Gospel message in relation to such problems as the social question. After this preliminary elucidation he traces the fortunes of the Gospel in his story. His chief contention is that the alliance of the Gospel with the Greek metaphysics practically changed the Christian message into a philosophy. The Logos conception withdrew men's minds from the simplicity of the Gospel and increasingly transformed it into a philosophy of religion. This gave a metaphysical significance to an historical fact. It drew into the domain of cosmology and religious philosophy a Person

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1. Garvie, Op. Cit. p. 392

who had appeared in time and space.¹

In the struggle with Gnosticism, Harnack contends, the Church was compelled to put its teaching, worship, and discipline into fixed forms of doctrine and ordinances. By compelling obedience and assent to these, it felt itself to be exhibiting "the impress of religion itself". In so doing the Church was practically obligated to take on forms analogous to those of the Gnosticism which it combatted.² Thus, he insists, the simple Gospel message was converted into a metaphysics and, consequently, into a well ordered scheme of doctrine almost foreign to its essential genius.³ The validity of his thesis has been questioned, but a discussion thereof is beyond the scope of our present investigation.

3. The Practical and Ethical

With this antagonism of the Ritschlian thought to ecclesiastical dogma went an emphasis upon the practical and ethical elements of Christianity. This expressed itself in the insistence upon value-judgments. These relate a sensation to the ego. When a sensation is judged according to its value for the personality

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1. Adolf Harnack: What is Christianity? p. 220
2. Ibid., p. 223
3. This emphasis is more fully brought out in Harnack's "History of Dogma", Vols. I-III.

or its effect upon the personality, we have a resultant value-judgment. In this type of judgment, objects are regarded, not in their relation to one another, but solely in their relation to man.¹

Theoretical judgments, on the other hand, deal with sensations in an impartial manner, with respect to their causes, nature, and interrelation. In the field of religion, a theoretical judgment about God would involve a consideration of what He is in His essential nature and a statement as to His character. In relation to our Lord, a theoretical judgment would deal with His pre-existence, His relationship with the Father, and His relationship with humanity.

Value-judgments, on the other hand, do not deal with these problems. They consider Christ's relationship to the individual and the Church. What Christ has accomplished in the redemption of the individual and what He has wrought in His community; these are matters of religious knowledge and are to be worked out as value-judgments. How God has been working in human history would involve another value-judgment. The problem, of course, which always confronts us at this point pertains to the objectivity of that concerning

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1. Ritschl, Justification and Reconciliation, p. 194.
Garvie, The Ritschlian Theology, p. 172

which value-judgments are formed. Is it possible to form a value-judgment without a previous ontological judgment? A discussion of this problem is obviously beyond the limits of our present investigation. The Ritschlian emphasis, however, quite clearly leads to the historical in this connection. Value-judgments deal with that which has been and is being accomplished on the stage of human history. Consequently, Revelation will have a strictly historical meaning.

B. The Ritschlian View Of The Scriptures

With this background giving a statement of the main tenets of the Ritschlian thought we now turn to an examination of its view of the Bible. Here we follow Herrmann quite closely for he has stated his position with the greatest clarity.

1. The Historical Character of Revelation

a. Definition of Revelation

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Revelation is defined by Herrmann as the

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1. Cf. Herrmann, Communion of the Christian with God,
p. 1

process through which God makes Himself known to man. Revelation is not human discovery. It is the result of the Divine initiative. Man by searching does not find God; God makes Himself known. The manner in which God has thus made Himself known is the particular problem which confronts the theologian. Herrmann insists that God has revealed Himself through the historical process. Revelation, to him, is an historical matter. As historical, it has some definite content and this content forms the first part of his discussion. What is the substance of the historical revelation?

b. Substance of Revelation

Herrmann insists from the outset that information is not the substance of revelation. The fact that information pertains to God does not even make that information a part of the revelation. Mere knowledge, even though that knowledge be about God, does not bring peace and quiet into human hearts. Consequently, the great doctrines of the Church are not the substance of the revelation, for they do not bring men face to face with reality and God.¹ The Revelation does not consist

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1. Herrmann, Communion of the Christian with God, pp. 57-58

of doctrine or dogma. If the acceptance of such dogmatic material is a necessary prerequisite for vital relationship with God, then a work is interposed between man and God. A work of the mind, it is true, but a work just the same. This runs contrary to the old placing of faith at the center of justification. The element of belief, as intellectual affirmation, must not come to take the place of vital contact with God, which is by faith. Assent (assensus) to a creed is different from genuine faith (fiducia) which is¹ communion with a living Person.

The substance of Revelation is in a fact history, Herrmann continues. "God makes Himself known to us, so that we may recognize Him, through a fact,² on the strength of which we are able to believe on Him." This fact which brings us in contact with the reality of God is "the appearance of Jesus in history". There are only two objective facts which certify the Christian religion and the communion of the Christian with God. The first of these is this "historical fact of the Person of Jesus". The second is that we hear within ourselves³ the demand of the moral law.

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1. Herrmann, Op. Cit. p. 217.
2. Ibid., p. 59.
3. Ibid., p. 102.

The essence of religion, which is the substance of revelation, is affirmed to be the contact of the inner spirit with God. It is the relationship of the individual personality with its Maker. This, of course, is mysticism pure and simple, unless combined with the historical as in Christianity. Through the Hebrew-Christian movement, through the Person of Jesus and through the community of believers the historical element enters into this contact of man with his Creator. There is thus a positive element in the Christian religion, and this is a part of the Revelation.¹ Herrmann concludes by making the historical Person of Jesus to be the substance of the Christian Revelation.

c. Non-Biblical Revelation

In making this emphasis, Herrmann is careful not to exclude the possibility of revelation apart from Jesus and the Christian religion. The savages of New Holland may have a knowledge of God and a gleam of true

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1. Herrmann, Communion of the Christian with God, pp. 23, 61.

religion. Likewise, the Old Testament saints seem to have had a knowledge of Him. However, in both these cases God must have used other means of revealing Himself than those available to Christian. It is not possible for us to determine what He could do with men in historical condition entirely different from our own.¹ For us Christians, the historical Christ is the substance of Revelation.

2. The Historical Revelation And The Bible

a. Contact With The Historical Jesus

The question as to how we of this day come to know the historical Jesus is quite clearly answered by Herrmann and we follow him rather closely in this phase of the problem. What place has the New Testament in getting Christians in touch with the historical revelation of God for Christianity? Of what significance and permanence are the early record of our faith? The answers to these questions will reveal the Ritschlian attitude toward the sacred Book. Herrmann answers our questions, in part at least, when he insists that it is

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1. Herrmann, Communion of the Christian with God, p. 62

the "inner life of Jesus" and the impression this makes upon the community of believers that constitutes the¹ revelation.

What place, then, has the picture of this inner life to occupy in the Church?

b. Necessity of the Fellowship

It is quite obvious to Herrmann that the picture of that inner life of the Jesus of history could be preserved within the bosom of the Church or "fellowship".² Thus the Scriptures, or the "Biblical tradition",³ as he calls them, were a product of men who had been transformed by the inner life. The Bible, consequently, is not to be called the revelation, but the testimony of the early Christians concerning Jesus, Who Himself was the Revelation.

c. Necessity of Faith

Further, as we have seen Jesus, through the "community of believers", is the Revelation to us who are far removed from that day as well as He was to those of

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1. Herrmann, Systematic Theology, p. 59.
2. Herrmann, Communion of the Christian with God, p. 73 f.
3. Ibid., p. 2.

the first Christian era. Only as that revelation has wrought its effect upon us can we understand the picture given in the New Testament. The personal transformation, what the records make of us, is the primary and essential element of the Revelation. Once that transformation has been wrought through contact with the inner life of Jesus, the way is open for and understanding of the New Testament. The one thing, Herrmann insists, which the Gospels will give us as an overpowering reality which allows no doubt¹ is that this contact with the inner life of Jesus.

d. Place of Historical Criticism

When the transforming influence of the personality of Jesus is recognized and His power in giving certainty and peace to the Christian is realized, then historical criticism and personal doubt may be allowed full sway.² Any conscientious reader of the Gospels is constantly questioning the New Testament narratives as to whether the events happened as they are recorded. This doubt can be forcibly suppressed, but the suppression does not help solve the problem.

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1. Herrmann, Communion of the Christian with God, p. 75.
2. Ibid., pp. 70, 73; Herrmann, Systematic Theology, p. 60

There are some results of historical criticism which have every evidence of the thinking man of being reliable and accurate.¹ The Christian, whose faith is lifted beyond the necessity of relying upon absolute accuracy in the sacred documents, need fear none of the results of criticism. The total impression of the inner life of Jesus and its transforming power give us certainty in our faith. Here Herrmann approves the dictum of Schleiermacher: "We do not believe in Christ because of the Bible, but we believe in the Bible because we have found Christ in it."

This emphasis is quite similar to that of Coleridge, who insisted that the Bible was true for him because it "found" him at the inmost depths of his being. Herrmann, too, found certification of the New Testament to our hearts in the "likeness of ways of thinking" and not in the complete identity of the thoughts.² This likeness of thinking and this inward response of our hearts to the Scriptures is certification of the essential truth of the unity of the New Testament. We recognize God's word as His by this impression made upon us.

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1. Herrmann, Communion of the Christian with God, p. 76; Herrmann, Systematic Theology, pp. 60-1.
2. Herrmann, Communion of the Christian with God, p. 13.

Thus the Christian faith is placed on a basis which survives all the assaults of criticism. To the Ritschlian, the truth in any particular critical theory need not vitally concern the Christian believer, since that believer's faith is built upon a firm foundation which criticism cannot touch. This foundation is the Revelation of God made to him through the historical Jesus. Herrmann insists that no amount of criticism can disturb this contact of the Christian with the inner life of his Lord. In bringing the believer into touch with the inner life of Jesus, the Scriptures are "absolutely perfect".¹ Criticism cannot affect this vital function of the Book. All it can do is to question certain sections and statements which in nowise affect the contact of the Christian with his Master. So far, Herrmann.

If the Ritschlian theology has thus given a substantial basis for Christian belief which is unaffected by the results of historical criticism it has rendered a valuable service. The question keeps recurring, however, as to how far the process may go in the New Testament narratives without reducing the picture of Jesus as presented there to a mere influence without definite intellectual content. Is it possible to say,

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1. Herrmann, Systematic Theology, p. 60

"no matter what historical critics say about the narratives in the Gospels, my faith in the inner life of Jesus is secure"?

Herrmann answers these questions in the following fashion:

The existence of the Christian church gives "certainty" that Jesus lived. Even the impartial historian must admit that "the more general features of the common story of His life" are correct.¹ On a purely historical basis the picture of the Master "with its well-known" features is a "part of the historical reality" amid which we live. The religious basis, which certifies even these facts, is as valid as the purely historical basis. Consequently, to Herrmann, even the critics admit the main features of the Gospel story. The extreme hypothetical position mentioned above as to the possible lengths to which the critics might proceed apparently had not come to his attention. Herrmann thus leaves room for historical criticism without pronouncing any judgment upon particular critical problems.

e. Rejection of Scriptural Infallibility

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1., Herrmann, Communion of the Christian with God, p 71.

He is quite definite, however, in his rejection of the doctrine of Scriptural Infallibility. "No one can still hold to the idea that all words of Scripture being of word of God are infallible expressions of the truth."¹ His contention here is that the view of infallibility would make of the Bible a law book, which runs counter to justification by faith.

The Scriptures are the expression of the faith of men who had been transformed by their contact with the inner life of Jesus. They are not a law code. In his "Systematic Theology", Herrmann finds a further reason for rejecting the orthodox idea of infallibility in the variant readings established by textual criticism. The Ritschlians have no place for the dogmatic doctrine of verbal inspiration.²

f. The Old Testament

The Old Testament fared better at the hands of the Ritschlians than with Schleiermacher, who wanted to relegate it to the end of the Bible as a kind of appendix to the New Testament. Ritschl insisted that

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1. Cf. Harnack, Luke the Physician, p. 5, on general reliability of the Lucan tradition.
2. Garvie, Ritschlian Theology, p. 229.

Schleiermacher had failed to do justice to the religion of the Old Testament, for in it were characteristics analogous to Christianity itself.¹ The conception of God as found in the Old Testament, and the idea of the Kingdom were closely linked up with the similar conceptions in the New Testament.

g. Systematic Theology And Biblical Theology

Ritschl defines the task of systematic theology in relation to Biblical exegesis in this same section² of his great work on Justification and Reconciliation. To him, exegesis has a legitimate place in setting forth the ideas of Christianity in their original sense. In that sense they were religious in form, and not theoretical. These religious ideas are not in the form of theology or theological formulae; they are expressions of the religious consciousness of Jesus and His Apostles. Although these expressions of religion are substantially in agreement, they use different forms of expression, and cognate symbolical terminology. It is the task of Dogmatics and systematic theology to systematize these ideas derived from

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1. Ritschl, Justification and Reconciliation, p. 9.
2. Ibid., p. 14

exegetical study and then to unify them in relation to an organic whole.

From this insistence, together with his own peculiar exegetical methods, Ritschl has been accused of distorting Scripture in the interests of his viewpoint.¹ His own statement is illuminating in this regard.

"For in part exegesis must view the particular in the light of its relationship to everything which resembles it, in part it has to fill up the chasm between our way of thinking and the Israelites' symbolical manner of speech, in part its task is to clear away false ideas forced upon certain Biblical symbols by exegetical tradition." This is certainly not true exegesis according to the scientific understanding of the term. True exegesis aims to discover exactly what the Biblical writer meant. Ritschl connects exegesis up with our way of thinking and our views. He thus lays himself open to the accusation made by Pfleiderer.²

"But I miss in it (i.e., Ritschl's Theology) one thing, which I certainly hold as an indispensable condition of every sound exegesis, the unbiased objectivity which, without squinting to right or left, looks simply on the text and allows the Biblical writers to say what

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1. Ritschl, Justification and Reconciliation, p. 15.
2. Garvie, Ritschlian Theology, p. 37.

their words, according to the plain grammatical sense are intended to express. Ritschl's exegesis stands throughout in the service of dogmatics, he twists and trifles at the passages of Scripture so long, until they yield a result which fits his purpose."

h. An Example Of Ritschlian Exegesis

By taking up one of Ritschl's discussions of Scripture, we shall further see how he handles the sacred text. In discussing the matter of human death and destiny, he feels that it is a "defect in theology, due to a mechanical use of the Scripture", that the Old Testament rather than the New has been used in fixing the standard conception relative to this subject. "True, Paul deduced the existence of the universal destiny of death from the sin of Adam. Nevertheless, the mere fact that this idea was framed by the Apostle does not straightway qualify it to become a theological principle."¹ Paul's authority in the framing of theology is thus declared to be not necessarily final. Ritschl continues in similar fashion: "There is now this further fact, that not everyone can convince himself that the theory

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1. Ritschl, Justification and Reconciliation, p. 359.

which Paul arrived at, of the dependence of death upon Adam's transgression, is correct." "For the rest, Paul has expressed his view about the doom of death imposed on Adam's descendants in such a way that it forms no obstacle to the Christian theory, of which he himself is a classical representative." There is no possibility for mistaking Ritschl's position here. Whatever conclusion is arrived at by exegesis of Scripture, the theologian feels himself competent to sit in judgment upon it. Paul's view is a "theory" to be judged as any other theoretical interpretation of the Christian facts. The Apostle is, indeed, a "classical representative" but not an absolute authority since his view is to be tested by "Christian theory", which must obviously mean Ritschl's own viewpoint. If this discussion pertained to a peripheral matter, not having doctrinal significance, it would not be so weighty in Ritschl's attitude toward the Pauline views. As it is, he obviously accords the Apostle a limited authority in vital doctrinal matters and freely claims the right to differ from him. He appears to exercise this same right with regard to all the other Apostles and apostolic writings as well as Paul.¹

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1. Cf. Garvie, *Ritschlian Theology*, p. 213.
Ritschl, *Justification and Reconciliation*, p. 15.

C. Summary And Evaluation Of The Ritschlian View Of Scripture

In this summary we have selected the two outstanding features of the Ritschlian attitude towards the Scriptures for evaluation.

1. Limited Apostolic Authority

The first pertains to this limited authority assigned to the Apostles. It is certainly true that the writers of the books of the New Testament were men of similar nature to ourselves. It is also true that in the New Testament writings we have their interpretations of the great Revelation made in Christ. Further, "the experience of the apostolic Church must be relived in order that its doctrine may again be rethought".¹

At the same time, as Garvie well points out, the Scriptures do possess an authority over Christian faith and life which this theology minimizes. The apostolic interpretations are a norm and an authority in Christian thought. In rejecting the Book as an "arbitrary and external restraint imposed on the mind", the Ritschlians have tended to reject the genuine

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1. Garvie, Ritschlian Theology, p. 390

spiritual authority and worth of the Bible for the Christian life. The individual believer is not able always to experience or appropriate all he finds in the Scriptures but he must not deny what he cannot at once appreciate, nor should he lessen the worth or weaken the force that the Scriptures possess for others.

There is a vital connection between the sacred Book and the historical revelation made in Christ. That the Scriptures "are the literary sources of our knowledge of the historical revelation is not a satisfactory statement; for if the recorders of the events and the reporters of the truths which constitute that revelation stand in a merely external relation to it, we may with good reason doubt their capacity to understand it, and their accuracy in sending it on to us".¹ There is a vital and organic unity between the revelation and its literary records which is minimized or forgotten by the Ritschlians. The historical Revelation is not completed until it is made universal and permanent by means of the holy Book. This the Ritschlians seem to have overlooked.

2. Solution Of The Critical Problem

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1. Garvie, Ritschlian Theology, p. 390.

The second feature of the Ritschlian thought which is of significance and importance pertains to its solution of the matter of historical criticism. For a number of Christians, the findings of higher criticism are incompatible with the Christian belief and an acceptance of these results is practically synonymous with a rejection of the faith. Other Christians, however, are convinced by the cogency of many of the critical conclusions. Is there a basis upon which faith can rest that the literary and historical criticism of the Scriptures cannot touch? The Ritschlians claim to have found such a foundation.

The impression which the historical Jesus makes upon the soul of the Christian, they feel, is left untouched by any critical theory as to the records. "Accept the Graf-Wellhausen hypothesis", they would say, "that does not destroy any communion with God through His Son." "That though historical research were to question or deny the Easter certainty that Jesus was alive and is alive?" So would Harnack free the vital message from the realm where historical criticism would¹ affect it.

Undoubtedly there is some truth in these

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1. Harnack, What is Christianity? p. 173

contentions. The faith of the simple Christian is untouched by the moot question of two Isaiahs. Certainly many Christians are unaware of the implications of the Documentary Hypothesis relative to the formation of the Pentateuch. Some devout believers don't even know anything about "Q" or Proto-Luke or Form-criticism. Just how far, however, may this procedure be carried, and where must a final stand be made? To what extent may our faith be divorced from a dependence upon the accuracy, authority, and reliability of the Holy Book? Can we go as far as Harnack? Is not the bodily resurrection of our Lord a vital element in our faith? Just what is the irreducible minimum to which criticism of the Scriptures can lead us before we have given up our Christian certainty? The Ritschlians have given us a start at this point, but have certainly not given us a fully satisfactory answer. A solution will be attempted in our concluding chapter.

CHAPTER V

THE OBJECTIVE QUALITY OF REVELATION
THE BARTHIAN SCHOOL

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THE BARTHIAN SCHOOL

Certainly the most widely publicized theological tendency in recent years is that which has been associated with the name of Karl Barth. This has been designated by several different terms: The Theology of Crisis, Dialectical Theology, Theology of the Word of God. Brunner, Gogarten, Thurneysen, and Bultmann are four outstanding names closely connected with the school. In our investigation we shall follow Barth himself and Emil Brunner. Both of these theologians have given clear and definite statements relating to the Bible. First, however, it is in order to set forth a clear account of the main tenets of the Barthian type of thought.

A. The Barthian Theology

1. Anti-Humanistic

When it is stated that Barthianism is anti-

modernistic, an understanding of what is meant by the term "modernistic" is necessary. Brunner gives us this understanding when he makes the distinction between modern science, and modern thinking.¹ The modernism he opposes is not modern science, but modern thinking. This type of thought, he feels, is an expression of a new interpretation of human existence, and interpretation which is irreconcilably opposed to that found in the Bible and Christian teaching. He cites Schleiermacher, Harnack, Ritschl, Otto, together with the theological schools of Chicago, Union,² and Harvard, as adherents of this kind of "modernism".

Modernism of this type is, to Barth and his school, as old as the Tower of Babel. Our twentieth-century structures whereby we would climb to heaven are those of human righteousness, human significance,³ human consequence, human learning, and human religion. Our efforts to reach God by means of these devices are futile as that ancient tower. God cannot be attained by our searching and climbing. Our theoretical knowledge, our moral knowledge, our metaphysical knowledge, our religious idealism - none of these

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1. H. Emil Brunner: The Word and the World, p. 5
2. Brunner, Theology of Crisis, p. 6
3. Karl Barth: The Word of God and the Word of Man, p. 14

brings us to the living God. He is the "Wholly Other" who cannot be found. He must break into our world and¹ make Himself known unto us.

There is a fundamental discontinuity between God and man. Sometimes this discontinuity and dissimilarity is represented by the Barthians is so marked that man cannot even recognize the Divine when it enters into human life. Whether man has any ability at all to recognize God when He comes or whether he lacks this capacity, it is certain that God must take the initiative in making Himself known. He must break into the world of man's striving in order to bring salvation to man. This revelation is the entrance into history of something "absolutely new", something which is foreign² to history and unattainable by the historical process.

That this involves a dualism is evident. The Christian faith separates God from man and will not allow any pantheistic identifying of the two. A noticeable modern tendency since Spinoza merges God and man into a monistic unity. Herein, writes Brunner, is one of^{the} reasons for the failure of the modern interpretation of existence. Against this whole pantheistic trend, Christian faith, according to the Barthians, aligns itself with its

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1. Brunner, Theology of Crisis, p. 12

2. Ibid., p. 17

insistence upon the awful distance between God and man.
 He must break into man's world from without.¹

2. Dialectical

The Barthian theology is frankly dialectical. In varying forms, this method of dialectic has been employed from the time of Plato to Kant, Hegel, and Kierkegaard. The method of Kierkegaard is the one employed by the Barthian school.

This dialectical method places the emphasis upon the fragmentariness of truths pertaining to God. The truths relative to the Divine cannot be logically systematized in such a manner as to exclude their opposite. If this were possible, we should have the old human approach to God through the logical processes. As it is, God breaks into human existence, and our interpretation must take the form of paradoxes. This type of interpretation is faith-knowledge and quite different from the non-paradoxical speculation of reason.² To Brunner, as to Kierkegaard, God cannot be known directly. His word is broken in the element of the world like a rod in water. "It is only by means of the contradiction between two ideas - God and man, grace and responsibility,

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1. Brunner, Theology of Crisis, p. 17 f.
2. Brunner, The Word and the World, p. 7.

holiness and love — that we can apprehend the contradictory truths that the eternal God enters time, or that the sinful man is declared just." The Word of God exposes the contradiction in human experience and then in grace covers it. Man is placed in the critical position of having to decide. Whereas theoretical thought seeks the unity of a system, the theology of Faith insists upon the reality of truth emerging from decision.

God's truths, then, are not to be found in systematic form for the intellect, but in paradoxical form for the faith. The essential content of Revelation is neither Dogma nor Doctrine on this basis, but an appeal to the will by the Word of God.

3. The Word Of God

The Word of God is one of the distinctive notes of the Barthian thought. Man hears this Word of God in times of crisis and then must decide whether to heed the Word or not. Man's part is in the hearing and the obeying. God's part is in the speaking. His Word is the Word of Revelation and Salvation, and is thus at the center of our religion. The Word of God to the individual comes from God Himself. In reply to a certain

student's correspondence, Barth insists that "only God can tell a man what the Word of God is". This Word is a personal message from the living God. He is the one who speaks, and major attention is to be directed to Him rather than to any conception of Him formed in religious experience. The conceptions of Him growing out of the religious consciousness are ideas, and ideas are no more than idols.¹ To the Christian, God is not merely an idea. He is a living person with something to say. He is not merely an object among other objects. He is, Himself, a subject. He is alive and active, and He has something to say. This something which He speaks is His Word.

The Barthian theology is thus preeminently "The Theology of the Word of God". "The Word of God and the Word of Man" is the title of Barth's first book translated into English. Brunner entitled one of his works "The Word of God and Theology". Another he published as "The Word and the World".

4. The Word of God in History and in Christ

If God thus speaks to the individual, what is the place of the historic revelation made through a

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1. Barth, Word of God and Word of Man, p. 22.

chosen race and through Him who gave His name to Christianity? Brunner in "The Word and the World" devotes a chapter to the discussion of this problem and another chapter in "The Theology of Crisis". In the latter book the subject is dealt with under the topic, Progress and the Kingdom. To these we turn for the Barthian conception of the place of history in the Revelation of God and the Barthian idea of the Person of Christ.

Brunner cannot ascribe the same importance and meaning to history which is given them by modern thought, for, to him, the "essence of historical existence" is mere "relativity".¹ The meaning of history lies not in the fact that it records man's upward climb to God, but in the fact that it relates the history of sinful man. As far as the entrance of the Divine into history is concerned, this record of sinful man has no significance.² The development recorded in the story of human existence is not an upward climb to God. Man by his striving cannot reach to Divine. God is not, to the Barthians, the end of the evolutionary process.

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1. Brunner, The Word and the World, p. 36.
2. Brunner, The Theology of Crisis, p. 101.

That there has been progress, Brunner does not deny, but it has been progress within the closed system of the world. Art, for example, has developed greatly since the time of the Græeks, but men are no better today than they were two thousand years ago. The power of personal decision is unaffected by the whole evolutionary process. Consequently, the reply of human personality to the Divine summons at each stage of the process of development is unaffected by what went before. God breaks through in each case and shatters the frame of history. He comes into the historical process and is not to be found as the immanent soul of that evolving process. The matter is not one of e-volutio but of ingressio, ingression, a breaking into this world of something beyond, something foreign and transcendent.¹

The supreme event whereby God has shattered the frame of history was in the person of Jesus. Christ means eternity in time, "the Absolute within relativity", a complete paradox and a stumbling block. In trying to replace this stumbling block with a human commonplace, men have fallen into the following erroneous opinions regarding Christ. He has been designated as a teacher, an example, a religious genius,

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1. Brunner, Theology of Crisis, p. 104.

and a Symbol of the Divine. None of these are accurate descriptions of Christ and His work, according to Brunner.¹

Christ is to be thought of as a Prophet. The prophet spake the Word of God and interpreted it to men. Christ was a prophet in this sense, but He was more than the Old Testament prophets for not only did He speak God's Word as did they, but He, in His own Person, was God's Word. In Him, God gave the world something absolutely new and final from outside of all that is historical, ideal and human, "something which cannot be verified, pronounced upon, or pigeon-holed, but only believed - i.e., heard as God's sovereign Word, which demands obedience". He is God's Word to a sinful world. Thus Brunner states the meaning of Christ to Christian faith.

With this crystallized statement of the Barthian theology in mind, we are now ready to investigate the more particular aspect of the Scriptures and the attitude which the Barthians entertain toward the sacred Book of the Christian Faith.

B. The Barthian Theology And The Scriptures

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1. Brunner, Word and the World, p. 42, 45

1. The Word Of God And The Bible

As we have seen, the Barthian theology is a theology of the Word of God. The problem which at once arises concerns the relationship of the Word of God to the Scriptures. Frequently we hear the two terms "Word of God" and "Bible" used synonymously. Are they identical in the thought of the Barthian school?

The answer is both yes and no. The Bible is God's Word in so far as He speaks through it to us. When God's spirit applies a portion of it to us, then it becomes His word to us. "The Bible becomes God's word in this event," when He Himself uses it as a message to our hearts and needs.¹ "For unperverted Christian faith," Brunner insists,² "Scripture is only revelation when conjoined with God's spirit in the present." It is the testimonium spiritus sancti which applies the Bible truths to our hearts and makes them in reality to be God's word for us.

The Word of God or revelation thus takes place between two parties, God and the human heart. Revelation is personal address; it is an act of God involving man. God's Word is the letter of the Bible only in so far as

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1. Mackintosh, Types of Modern Theology, p. 290.
2. Brunner, Philosophy of Religion, p. 151.

this letter is made intelligible to man by the spirit. Only as God meets me in Scripture and attests Himself to me can I call the Scripture God's word. Consequently, the identity between God's Word and Scripture is indirect; always the latter must be interpreted by the Spirit to become a word of God for me.¹ Without this interpretation and application by the Spirit, the Scriptures remain a human document, according to the Barthians.

2. The Human Character Of The Bible

When the human element of the Bible is forgotten and the necessity of Holy Spirit in the application^{of}/Scriptural truth to the heart is lost sight of, there is a tendency to make the sacred Book into a holy object, a religious fetish. As a result the dogma of verbal inspiration arises, and we have infallibility postulated of the sentences and the very words of Scripture. Even matters of history, chronology,² astronomy, physics, are declared to be inspired. The theory goes so far as to assert the inspiration of the

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1. Brunner, Philosophy of Religion, p. 32.

2. Ibid., p. 35.

Hebrew vowel points. All this emphasis upon the inerrancy of the Scripture has come about, according to Brunner, because the Church forgot the necessity of the Spirit's work in the application of Biblical truth to the human heart. Restore that Reformation principle, and the sacred Book need not be hedged about with such a mechanical protection. Restore Luther's view of the inner testimony of the Spirit, and the human element in the Book can be allowed once more to take its rightful place.

For there is a human element in the Book. It is the privilege, yes, the responsibility of faith to investigate this human element. Barth writes;

"The Bible is a literary monument of an ancient racial religion and of a Hellenistic culture religion of the Near East. A human document like any other, it can lay no a priore dogmatic claim to special attention and consideration. For it is too clear that intelligent and fruitful discussion of the Bible begins when the judgment as to its human, its historical and psychological character has been made and put behind us." 1

Brunner, likewise, calls for the historical analysis of the Biblical books. He is thoroughly sympathetic with critical methods. His divergence from modern thought lies, not in modern higher criticism, but in the different emphasis placed upon the historical element

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1. Barth, The Word of God and the Word of Man, p. 60

in religion.¹

Brunner recognizes the cogency of the newer scientific and biological hypotheses.² Although hypotheses, they seem to have the weight of scientific proff in their favor. It is folly to set up against them the scientific views gleaned from the Scriptures and the world views found there. It is quite evident, to Brunner, that we cannot return to the view of the world which was common to the Bible and antiquity. The Christian thinker dare not make the mistake of identifying that ancient world view and its Hebrew chronology with the Word of God.³

Investigation and criticism are as necessary for an appreciation of the documents coming down from early times in the Bible as for documents transmitted outside the sacred Book. The Bible is a thoroughly human document and as such is subject to the same searching analysis as any other bit of literature. Only as the Spirit of God takes that Hebrew-Christian literature and applies it to our hearts does it become the Word of God for us. So far, Brunner.

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1. Brunner, Philosophy of Religion, p. 156.
2. Brunner, Theology of Crisis, p. 5.
3. Ibid., p. 20.

3. The Bible And Inerrancy

With the human character of the Bible clearly recognized and the demand for historical and literary criticism frankly admitted, the Barthians naturally deny the theory of Verbal Inspiration. It is only through a serious misunderstanding that genuine faith could find any satisfaction in that outworn theory. The doctrine of an infallible Book, they feel, is not compatible with true faith. "He who identifies the letters and words of the Scriptures with the Word of God has never truly understood the Word of God."¹

With this rejection of Verbal Inspiration, Brunner finds many inaccuracies and mistakes in the Bible. To him, the Bible is full of frailty and fallibility. There are many inferior sections in the Book no better than what we find in other literature. There are many contradictions in the report of Jesus' life. There are many misleading views in the pages of Holy Writ. Brunner² also finds many legends in both Old and New Testament.

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1. Brunner, Theology of Crisis, p. 19
2. Brunner, Philosophy of Religion, p. 154; The Word and the World, p. 96. "That is why in the Bible we find so many errors and inaccuracies, so much that is no better than what man has said and done in other places and in other times: the Bible is full of frailty and fallibility which is characteristic of all that is human."

The failure to recognize this fallible nature of the Book would lead to harmful results according to Brunner. Only by a previous sacrifice of the intellect and its integrity could the demand be made that one's eyes remain closed to the real facts. Such blind obedience, while apparently doing honor to the Book, would be in direct contradiction to its own demand for an acceptance that is not blind but seeing.¹

What is more serious, Brunner continues, such a demand for an infallible Book would raise the Bible to a Divine status and make of it something to be worshipped. The Scriptures are not an idol, the Barthians insist, and bibliolatry is not Christian faith. The Bible is of supreme importance, not because of itself, but because of the One it reveals. When Christ has the preeminence and the Word of God is given free course in human life, it is possible to dispense with the mechanical view of inspiration and recognize fully the human and fallible character of the Book.²

C. Critical Estimate Of The Barthian Attitude Toward The Scriptures

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1. Brunner, The Word and the World, p. 94.

2. Ibid., p. 92;
Brunner, Philosophy of Religion, p. 155.

While the Barthians thus emphasize the human element in the Bible and insist upon the fact of mistakes and errors, they also recognize the necessity of the Book for the continuance of the Church. Without the Scriptures Christianity would long ago have "degenerated into an unrecognizable caricature".¹ An experience with the teachings of the pages of Holy Writ is the best guarantee, they feel, of peace and spiritual power. So far, they place a high estimate upon the Book. It becomes a Word of God to present day believers as the Holy Spirit applies it to their hearts.

At the same time, they apparently fail to do full justice to the fact that the experience thus necessary for the appropriation of the Word is cognate to that out of which the Word originally came. The Word of God came to Moses and Elijah and Isaiah. That Word was recorded in the Bible and the words of the Bible do have a special significance. There is something valid and permanent in these words. The Book in a particular sense is set apart from other books. It contains God's Word in a way that other writings do not. The Barthians fail to do justice to the Word in this respect

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1. Brunner, The Word and the World, p. 83.

and by their insistence upon the human and fallible character of Scripture, seem to depreciate the written word beyond the point to which Christian thinking can follow.

The Christian thinker ought never by a word lessen the worth or weaken the force of the Scriptures for others. The Bible has a special authority for the Christian group that must not be depreciated. The Barthians, like the Ritschlians, seem to come short of what is called for by the full Christian faith at this point.

CONCLUSION

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It will be the purpose of this concluding section to summarize our findings in relation to several pertinent questions concerning the Scriptures which confront the modern world. These problems have emerged during the past three centuries and solutions for them have been put forth by the men and movements considered in this investigation. These particular men were in most cases devout Christians who were interested in maintaining their Christian Faith while at the same time doing justice to the demands of newer intellectual viewpoints. Present day Christians, who find themselves bewildered by the multitude of strange and often disturbing views relative to the Scriptures, can profitably turn to these pious thinkers and investigate the solutions offered by them for such vexing problems. The three particular aspects of the doctrine and use of the Scriptures which we have selected for consideration in this connection are,

1. The Christian Faith By Resting On Inward
Conviction Is Able To Subject Its Scriptures
To Critical Investigation

Many Christians of the twentieth century are puzzled by the problems involved in the higher criticism. Some find that an acceptance of the results of critical research would seriously weaken their faith. To many, the term "higher criticism" is practically synonymous with unbelief. Yet higher criticism is here. It has a prominent place in our commentaries, dictionaries, and encyclopedias. Every scholar must reckon with it. In one way or another it is involved in almost all modern study of the Bible. Can the Christian Church find a basis for the acceptance of these critical results, or a consideration of critical scholarship, without losing its Evangelical message? We look to the men and movements investigated for at least one solution to this question.

While all the men considered either openly advocated higher criticism or tacitly subscribe to critical principles, the Ritschlians, in particular, have offered a tentative solution whereby the difficulties for Christian faith involved in the acceptance of higher criticism may be surmounted. By

locating a basis of faith independent of the absolute inerrancy of the record, these theologians are able to make place for any type of criticism of that record. This basis of faith, the Ritschlians find in the present experience of the believer and in his present contact with the Lord. To them, the influence of Jesus upon His immediate group has been mediated through the Christian community to present day Christians. Through the fellowship of believers, the historical Jesus has become a vital element in our present experience. This transforming power of Jesus for the Christian today is thus seen to be independent of an infallible record, they continue.

We may know the Lord as our Savior even though we do not subscribe either to traditional or liberal views concerning the authorship of the Pentateuch, they would insist. Herrmann shows that the believer's present communion with God through the historical Jesus need not be disturbed by any question relating to an event in the remote past or any doubt concerning the authorship of a record from antiquity. To Harnack, an understanding of the significance of the bodily resurrection of our Lord is not a prerequisite for full religious faith. An acceptance of the unity of Isaiah is not necessary for a loving filial relationship between the believer and

his God, they would continue. Thus living, vital faith need not be made dependent upon traditional views of inspiration.

Herrmann carefully distinguishes between faith as belief and faith as committal. True faith is the mutual self-giving of Christ and the believer.. It means that the Christian has dedicated all he has and is and ever hopes to be to Christ. It also means that Christ has imparted His life to the Christian. This living union of the believer with Christ is not dependent upon the acceptance of an inerrant set of beliefs, including that belief relating to an inerrant record, Herrmann concludes.¹

Faith is now recognized to be a personal relationship. It is, in the words of Henry W. Clarke,² "the submission of human personality to a life-giving Personality constantly present upon the world's stage since the advent of Jesus Christ". In Christ, the Christian finds a "creative life-force". In Him is the "life-dynamic" which motivates the entire Christian personality. On this basis, vital religion is the union of one Personality, Christ, with the personality of every Christian believer. When this union is harmonious and

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1. Herrmann, Communion of the Christian with God, p. 4.
2. Henry W. Clarke, Liberal Orthodoxy, Chap. 1.

complete, the mind can have its rightful, unhampered place in the scheme of Christian thought. Thus, the greatest latitude of scholarship, Clarke insists, can be allowed to the one whose life is in constant touch with the Lord.

To the Christian scholar whose life is bound in this fashion to the Lord, historical criticism is an instrument of research. Just as the sanctified human reason has been trying to fathom the mysteries of the Trinity, the Atonement, the Person of our Lord, and many other Christian doctrines, so the devout intellect may now examine the doctrine of the Scriptures. The particular aspect of that doctrine connected with historical criticism is thus to be worked out within the Christian fold.

"The higher criticism does not mean negative criticism. It means the fair and honest looking at the Bible as a historical record, and the effort everywhere to reach the real meaning and historical setting, not of individual passages of the Scripture, but of the Scripture records as a whole - This process can be dangerous to faith only when it is begun without faith - when we forget that the Bible history is no profane history, but the story of God's saving manifestation." ¹

In the early Church, the reason set to work on the doctrine of the Lord's nature. The doctrine was not

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1. Robertson Smith's inaugural address at Aberdeen in 1870. Quoted from "The Life of Robertson Smith," p. 128 G. F. Barbour: In the Life of Alexander Whyte, p. 203.

fixed from the beginning. A period of more than three centuries witness the efforts of the fathers to explain how our Lord could be both human and divine. Many conflicting and heretical opinions were expressed. Years of controversy and disagreement preceded the final formulations of Nicea and Chalcedon. All the while, the best thought of one theologian tended to correct, supplement, and amplify that of another.

The last word has yet to be said with regard to the written word. Much disagreement prevails regarding the manner and mode of revelation. There is no one universally accepted critical viewpoint. There are numerous theories, many of which have been taken up and then abandoned by critics themselves. Within the bosom of the Christian community, one scholar tends to correct, supplement and amplify the findings of another on these moot problems. As Christian believers, we can hope and pray for the time when, through this process of mutual investigation and correction, the Church universal will find an ecumenical belief with regard to the critical questions concerning the written Word as it once did with regard to the incarnate Word.

2. The Sacred Scriptures Grew Out Of Spiritual Experience And Are To Be Called "Inspired" Because The Writers Were Inspired

The term "inspiration" has usually been applied

to the Book. Something is predicated of the record. The basis for this predication is found in II Timothy 3:16, where "every Scripture" is said to be "of God". It has been pointed out that the meaning of the verse is not materially altered whether it is translated with or without the copula.¹ "Every Scripture inspired of God" or "Every Scripture is inspired of God" are the two translations and both come to the same end of predicating something of the Scripture.

The context clearly reveals these Scriptures to be the Old Testament writings. The ecclesiastical usage has extended the term "inspiration" to cover the New Testament as well. Consequently, "The inspiration of the Scriptures" means the inspiration of both Old and New Testaments.

The meaning of the passage in II Timothy is clear. The Scriptures are asserted to be able to perform their function. They are available for instruction, correction, and reproof. They are able to equip a Christian man completely for his work. Just how much more than this furnishing of the Christian Paul meant to include in his characterization of the Scriptures is difficult, if not impossible, to determine. In the

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1. R. F. Horton: New Century Bible, Pastoral Epistles, ad loc.

usage of the Church, however, the term Paul used, "inspiration", came to be a guarantee of the sacred character of the Bible. The doctrines and teaching, the thoughts and the very words of the Book came to have a special significance because of this inspiration. Every passage, every verse - often in disregard of its setting - was asserted to be of God.

This situation in Schleiermacher's time led to his protest against the ecclesiastical terminology. He insisted that the term "inspiration" should be applied, not to a Book, but to persons. He turned to IIPeter 1:21 where it is asserted that "men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit". To the German theologian, Peter's expression gave room for the truth that the Scriptural writers were "always" under the influence of the Spirit, whether in speaking or in writing.¹ Thus he made inspiration to be a personal matter, the contact of spirit with spirit. Only in the light of the inspiration of the persons who wrote could the writing be declared "inspired". Thus Schleiermacher clearly distinguished between the "inspiration" of a Book and the "inspiration" of men.

The problem involved in this distinction was

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1. Schleiermacher, Christian Faith, p. 597.

evident to the German theologian. Would not the uniqueness of the Christian Scriptures be imperiled by such a procedure? If the same Spirit motivated Augustine, Calvin, and Luther as moved upon Moses, Isaiah, and Paul, why not include the Institutes of Calvin, for example, within the pages of Holy Writ? Schleiermacher avoided this difficulty by emphasizing the proximity of the New Testament writers to the Person of our Lord. Because the New Testament Scriptures grew out of that first Christian community which knew Him face to face as He walked on the earth, they have a significance for Christians which no other writings can ever possess. In this manner, Schleiermacher maintained the uniqueness of the Christian Scriptures without assigning to them any "scholastic" and mechanical" type of inspiration.

3. The Sacred Scriptures Having Come Out Of Spiritual Experience Are Able When Given A Chance To Produce And Nourish Similar Experience

The theologians whom we have considered in our investigation have set forth a very valid contention regarding the origin of the Scriptures. These writings,

they claim, have come out of the experiences of the writers. The holy men of old through their contact with the historical revelation in Christ and through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit were led to give expression to that which had been impressed upon their hearts and souls. The sacred Book is the result of these impressions and experiences of its writers.

The limits of the Bible, too, were the product of the inspiration of the Spirit. The experiences of the early Church, as it lived under the guidance of God's Spirit, led to the formation of the New Testament Canon and later to the acceptance of the Old Testament Canon. Thus the books of the Bible, as we have it, were determined by the collective experience of the whole body of Christians over a long period of years. Universal agreement came to prevail with regard to the sixty-six books we now have.

Thus our Bible has had worth and value for devout Christians through all the centuries. The Ritschlians seem never to have risen from these value-judgments of the worth of the Scriptures for the individual to a theoretical judgment as to the nature of the Book in itself apart from any application to individuals. Consequently these theologians often have been charged with subjectivism in dealing with its sacred pages. It

is our contention that inasmuch as the Scriptures did come out of spiritual experience cognate with the experience which certifies them to the twentieth-century Christian, these sacred writings do have a place in the Christian Church which other writings can never have. The Bible in itself is an objective reality, a gift from God, and a revelation of Himself. As such, it has the ability to nourish and sustain the soul.

Thus it is clear that religious experience and Bible assimilation are mutually reacting. The deeper one's spiritual life, the more readily he gains an insight into and an appreciation of Holy Writ. Similarly, the more he comes into the spirit of the Book the richer becomes his inner life. The Bible, by virtue of its unique character, has this power of transforming life and feeding the soul.

Consequently, it needs neither buttress nor support. It is its own introduction and its own defense. When given a chance it makes its own impression and takes care of its own Divine nature. Its message is its own authority. The same spirit which moved its writers now illumines the eyes of its readers. No dogma need support its message to the human heart. When its contents are made known, its transforming power is felt.

In the light of all this, the task of the

Christian Church is clear. There is no need for elaborate schemes of defense for God's Word. No protection is necessary for its sacred character. Calmly, the Church can let the Book withstand all assaults directed against it. What is needed is a plan whereby the contents of the Bible may be made known to mankind. There is an urgent necessity for some type of program which will teach the Bible as it is, so that men and women may come to know what it says and may thereby be led to experience its life-giving power.

The Word is the seed. Let it be sown abundantly without any kind of protection and it will accomplish marvelous results. In missions, how many chapters could be written of subdued passions, changed lives, and transformed personalities by means of the Bible alone! In literature, how many classics have felt the influence of this one great classic and have manifested its spirit and attitudes! In art, what masterpieces have been produced from the pages which tell of the Lord and Master of us all! In every field of human life this one Book has shown itself able without defense or comment to maintain itself as the "supreme book of mankind."

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