THE CONTRIBUTION OF SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE TO MODERN THEOLOGY

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A THESIS

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the
Degree of Bachelor of Sacred Theology
in the
Biblical Seminary in New York

April 1936

"We construct our earthly charts from celestial observations."

...Samuel Taylor Coleridge

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INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

A. Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this study is to search for and relate the influence which Samuel Taylor Coleridge had upon modern theology and to show the particular contributions which this man made to contemporary theological thought. The subject must of necessity be limited in scope, due to the wideness of the field which covers a most important period in both philosophical and theological developments, and also because of the nature of Coleridge's writings, which are inclusive of many ideas, however scattered and unorganized. We shall be concerned, then, with his conception of the harmony between reason and religion, his conception of the Bible, and his conception of the enlarged church, relating these views to the later developments of theology in England, Scotland, and America, as seen both in movements and in men.

B. Importance of the Problem

How many people are acquainted with Coleridge as a thinker except through a few of his poems, The Ancient Mariner in particular? As a philosopher and theologian he is not an outstanding figure in the popular mind. Many have heard the lines quoted,

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"He prayeth best, who loveth best
All things both great and small;
For the dear God who loveth us,
He made and loveth all." 1.

These words have more meaning than a surface study can reveal. Likewise, much of his later writing demands concentrated study and defies gentle perusal because of its intricate and, at times, inconsistent philosophy. The life and the literary productions of Coleridge went hand in hand, thus accounting for these difficulties. But, despite these problems, there is much to be gained from this sage, who profoundly influenced men and movements during one of the most brilliant of contemporary periods. Dr. Boreham[2.] submits his criticism of the importance of Coleridge when he says, "Few men cut a more grotesque figure in our annals than does Coleridge; few men rise to such splendid altitudes of lofty thought". It was Stopford Brooke who averred that all that Coleridge did well might be bound up in twenty pages, but added that "those twenty pages should be bound in pure gold".[3.] Hazlitt declared that "he is the only person I ever knew who answered to my idea of a man of genius. His genius had angelic wings and fed on manna. He talked on without a pause, and you wished him to talk on forever".[4.] As to his genius as a poet, Mr. Swinburne believed that "an age that should forget or neglect him might neglect or forget any poet that ever lived. For height and perfection of imaginative quality, he is the greatest of lyric poets".[5.] Thomas de Quincey was one who was associated intimately

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1. Coleridge, "The Ancient Mariner", The Poetical Works of S.T. Coleridge, p. 110
2. Boreham, "Samuel Taylor Coleridge", Australian Christian World, Oct. 25, 1935, p. 3
3. Ibid., p. 4
4. Ibid., p. 3
5. Ibid., p. 4

with Coleridge, one who knew and wrote about him perhaps as no other man. Together they suffered from a dreaded opium appetite. "Heavy indeed", says de Quincey, "are the arrears still due to philosophic curiosity on the real merits of Samuel Taylor Coleridge".[1] If Milton has not yet been understood nor appreciated, as he believed to be the case, how little can Coleridge be understood and appreciated when comparatively little has been written on him. Not only was Coleridge a poet, but, as one mixed up with the fervent politics of his age, which reflected the revolutionary agitations of Milton's age, he was an extensive and brilliant scholar.

> "This astonishing man, be it again remembered, besides being an exquisite poet, a profound political speculator, a philosophic student of literature through all its chambers and recesses, was also a circumnavigator on the most pathless waters of scholasticism and metaphysics. He had sounded, without guiding charts, the secret deeps of Proclus and Plotinus, Boehme, Kant, Schelling, Fichte, and Oken." [2]

The genius of Coleridge lies not in his supremacy in any one department of thought but in the universality of his writing and speaking. This may account for the disorganized manner of his work. When J. S. Mill said that his was one of the "seminal minds in England in their age",[3] he perhaps had in mind the impressions he set forth which had come to him through the general tenor of the times in which he lived and which permeated his thinking. We shall not raise here the oft-disputed question, whether it is the supremacy of the man or the influence of the period. No one can doubt the value of a study centering

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1. T. deQuincey, Writings, Vol. II, Narratives and Papers, p. 119
2. Ibid., p. 121
3. Bentham, London and Westminster Review, 1838

about the turn of the nineteenth century. Where have we seen such an assembly of great figures in diversified fields and countries as this period produced, or which produced this period? It is significant to note that the life span of Coleridge bridges the last decades of the eighteenth and the first of the nineteenth. Philosophers, statesmen, poets, musicians, warriors, preachers, reformers, scholars, and the cry of the common people for liberty combined to make this one of the most colorful epochs ever known. Coleridge lived in the midst of it all and was one of the dominating figures.

C. Method Employed in the Investigation

The method here followed will be one of tracing the historical developments of the periods preceding, during, and following the life of Coleridge from the viewpoint of general political structure, philosophy, and theology. A sketch of his own life, the interacting and influencing agents, will be discussed. The investigation of his own writings to discover distinctive viewpoints, special care being given to the ascertaining of his main ideas and how they were developed, will then occupy the attention. In concluding the thesis, and to formulate the main purpose of the study, we shall attempt to relate the influence which Coleridge had, through his writings, upon the men and movements which followed him, paying particular heed to the processes at work in the theology of England, Scotland, and America.

CHAPTER I

A STUDY OF THE GENERAL BACKGROUND:

THE TIMES PRECEDING AND DURING THE LIFE OF COLERIDGE

A STUDY OF THE GENERAL BACKGROUND

A. The Political and Social Situation

1. On The Continent

One may well ask the question as to the kind of world into which Coleridge came. What were the significant features, the dominating impulses, the tones of feeling, the "spirit afloat" of the times? With the beginning of the nineteenth century we more or less identify the contemporary period in all fields of thought and endeavor, for in these years we note the birth of a new industrial world, a new biological, chemical, and historical world, the making of new nations and empires.

a. Rousseau and the French Revolution

It is impossible to think of the last decades of the eighteenth century without the word "revolution". In political history, France occupies the center of the stage. The French Revolution, the terrific proclamation of human rights, the protest of plundered people against kingcraft and aristocracy, the "truth clad in hell-fire"[1], not only wrought bloody transformation in France but shook the whole of Europe. It is true, that which was objectified in France came through the guiding principles and dynamics of England and her social philosophy. Even the Germans have discovered in Rousseau the authorship, not only

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1. Markham, Book of Poetry, p. xviii

of the French Revolution, but also of the subsequent romanticism.[1] Kant, Herder, Goethe, and Schiller are not to be conceived without Rousseau, and through them was formed the new science, new philosophy, and new poetry of German idealism. This man, whose life has been called a singular paradox,[2] advocated the study of nature rather than the adherence of custom. He regarded it not necessary to follow the external sanctions of legal precedent but believed a more rational system of legislation could be framed by the free decision of the autonomous human wills.[3] The corporate social life or civilization he thought to be a disease with pernicious effects upon the natural goodness of man, and man's salvation could only come through a retreat from society into individualism.

b. "Sturm und Drang" in Germany

Closely associated with the feeling exerted by Rousseau in France was the period of "Storm and Stress" in Germany. From 1760 on, the leading intellectual and literary movement, which expressed the social struggle of the times, was the advocate of individualism, as against all tradition. With Klinger, Wagner, Schubart, and Lenz as its leaders, it rebelled against authority, was disgusted with the superficiality of education as then taught, and had an antipathy for all that was mechanical, orderly, and precise. Particularly did it have a hatred for the nobility. Such was the nature of the German nation, without a national spirit

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1. More, Shelburne Essays, p. 214
2. Painter, Great Pedagogical Essays, p.321
3. Friess, Schleiermacher's Soliloquies, p. xxvi

or unity, and the country being the land of dreamers and philosophers that it was, the results of this movement were not to be found in physical combat as in France. However, the essential values were converted into metaphysical formulae and transmitted down to the later philosophy and theology of Germany. We shall see one of the great exponents in the character of Herder.

2. The Industrial Revolution in England

With the advent of new inventions and discoveries, specialization in trades, development of urban life, a new Nonconformist group comes into the picture. The great proportion of manufacturers and inventors were in the ranks of Dissent. Brindley, Hargraves, Arkwright, and Watt were from homes of the middle-class. Jeremy Bentham, outstanding of the social reformers of his day, tried to get an English ministry interested in the good work of reforming law and building model prisons.[1] We shall note in the utilitarian philosophy of Mill, which disregarded religion, that it had its roots in the foundation which Bentham laid during the close of the eighteenth century.

B. The Trend in Philosophy

1. On the Continent

We must, in the interpretation of the life and contribution of

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1. Rogers, English and American Philosophy Since 1800, p. 1

Coleridge to modern theology, take into consideration all phases of thinking and activity. For this reason, we have noted above the social and political conditions prevalent at the time. How the "spirit afloat" was formulated into living philosophies and carried on into theological doctrines and practices attracts our attention at this point.

a. Period of the Enlightenment

Dr. Rankin has defined philosophy as

> "our interpretation of the phenomenal order presented in experience by its rational and necessary implications of reality. The phenomena are the given facts. Some of these facts appear in human history, some in an immediate experience of the religious kind. A just philosophy unites all facts in a synthesis of truth, all converging upon one center." 1.

Such is the kind of a philosophy which we seek to discover in the workings of the minds of this important period. "All facts in a synthesis of truth" implies the social conditions, innovations of science, political economy, and religious conceptions being fused into one central idea.

McGiffert[2.] lists as causes for the age of Enlightenment, or "Aufklärung", the recent discoveries of science, the conquest of the forces of nature which brought a sense of mastery over man's environment. More's Utopia and Bacon's Atlantis set forth this new attitude. With this new scientific power at their command, men were becoming dissatisfied with the humility, dependence upon supernatural powers, the idea

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1. Rankin, "Greek Philosophy and Early Trends in Theology in America", United Church Review, May, 1935, p. 131
2. McGiffert, The Rise of Modern Religious Ideas, p.12

of the insignificance of this world and the present life, the sense of sin and evil in man. All these things were the dominating beliefs of the Middle Ages but were now far out-lived. Now, indefinite progress and continuous advance in human culture could be easily obtainable. Such was the promise by which eighteenth century hearts had been warmed. A century later it became an object of derision. The "march of intellect" which characterized this movement soon became as ironic a phrase as "social progress" after the French Revolution or "international law" to the survivors of the World War. Science became merely the substituting of one sort of ignorance for another. Some of the chief characteristics of this philosophy which no doubt led to its disintegration were the "narrowness of vision, a certain crude, intellectual complacency, utter absence of imagination, extreme utilitarianism, and consequent hostility to everything which points beyond this temporal sphere of existence".[1] Especially was this a failure in Germany where it ignored the emotional nature of men who were warm-hearted and imaginative.

In its strength, however, it did succeed in promoting constitutionalism, undermining the belief in the supernatural origin of the State and divine right of kings, thus laying foundations for democracy, and in emphasizing individualism as over against institutionalism.[2]

b. Naturalism in Science

The same century that produced the founders of evangelicalism

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1. Boyeson, Essays on German Literature, p. 285
2. McGiffert, The Rise of Modern Religious Ideas, p. 13

also witnessed the discovery of the Newtonian system of nature. Until the time of Copernicus, the common view of the universe was that described in the Bible, which located man at the center of the cosmos and of God's concern. This traditional conception was destroyed by the Copernican and Newtonian physics, which shifted the center of the universe from the earth to the sun, causing man to be decentralized in the cosmos. Newton especially dealt a blow to the fundamental teachings by showing how the laws of gravity operated uniformly throughout the universe, thus destroying claims of special divine favor on the human race. The new center of gravity was discovered in the intellect.[1] As the facts or theories of natural law permeated the minds of the people, a new and different type of liberal Protestantism developed. The eighteenth century became "double-minded" in that there was a conflict between the new faith in civilization and the old faith in life beyond this world which dwarfed and obscured the significance of this natural order. The astronomical discoveries of the fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth centuries were seemingly irreconcilable with the presupposed views set forth by the sacred books of Christianity. Yet, in spite of this controversy, the great leaders in this new scientific field of research tried to hold to the new convictions about the universe without abandoning the old confidence in the statements of the Bible as the revelations dictated by an Omniscient Mind. But this was only one instance of the discord which was reaching farther and

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1. Aubrey, "What is Modernism", Journal of Religion, Oct.1935,pp. 437,438

deeper into every sphere of human life.[1] With the placing of man in the position of greatest importance through his own skill of determining cause and effect, to the withdrawal of God to the background, there comes upon the scene the rising tide of humanism and the elevation of the intellect as the highest power.

c. Idealism: a Protest Against Naturalism

(1) Highest Philosophical Development

Dr. Julius Richter[2] has stated that the philosophy of idealism was the highest philosophical development in the whole period which is being surveyed. It is the immediate predecessor of the movement which shall be most minutely covered, Romanticism. In its essence, idealism came about as a reaction against the great tide of rationalism, the stressing of the scientific and mechanical. A noteworthy comparison may be made concerning the present growth of idealistic faith in this age of extreme realism.

(a) Idealistic Philosophy: Kant to Hegel

The rationalistic spirit in Germany had been instigated by Leibniz and Wolff and held sway throughout the eighteenth century. With the decline of its power, the first wave of Kantianism swept over the walls

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1. Webb, A Study of Religious Thought in England from 1850, pp. 28,29
2. Professor of Missions, University of Berlin, Conference, Oct. 1935, Biblical Seminary in New York

of orthodox rationalism, which even then were crumbling. In accordance with the standards already set up, Leibniz had held the major aspects of the world to be determined by mathematical physics, Christian theology and civil law.[1] The importance of Kant lay in his ability to grasp universally these changes which were taking place, rather than in his attempt to work them out in piecemeal fashion as his predecessors had done. He was "the first to suggest a program of philosophic reconstruction appropriate to the situation as a whole.... Do not look for reason in some external structure of the physical world or of traditional practices and beliefs, but dare to trust the inner reason active in producing these structures, which knows it can produce better ones."[2] With such an explanation and promise, Kant really became the father of modern philosophy, whose teaching was soon to be grasped by Schleiermacher and his contemporaries. Reason, thought Kant, can never fully perceive. Mind cannot attain the limits of the Infinite and Absolute. Yet, we can never be content to cease from pursuing in quest for an explanation of the finite and temporal phenomena. Men who were most influenced by Kant - Schlegel, Schelling, and Hegel - began their careers with a study of the ancient Greek civilization, causing them to become interested in making a richer modern culture. They welcomed heartily Kant's conception of reason as this "free, inner" type, but they went further in developing the idea. Hegel, especially, defined the Infinite and Absolute as being already present in our experience,

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1. Friess, Schleiermacher's Soliloquies, p. xxvii
2. Ibid., p. xxvii

expressing Himself through the whole gamut of manifold forms. Our reason is the process whereby Reality is forever coming to the knowledge of itself. Schleiermacher, the true disciple of Kant, though in the field of theology rather than philosophy, developed and gave to the world that which Kant intended merely as a new philosophy for the advancing of the critical spirit. The Romantic temper of the times was the out-growth of Kant's philosophy of the all-inclusive, appreciative, and creative spirit.[1.]

(b) Idealism as Seen in Music

If there is any one department of thought or deed which clearly designated the contrast and conflict between the old forms and the new, it is in the realm of music as it evolved in this period. Certainly this form of expression should be given a place in our study, for where else do feeling and emotion reveal themselves so distinctly and truthfully as through the masters of this art?

This was a time of controversy and criticism in thought, with a tendency toward negation rather than construction. Manners were artificial; the average pessimism was only relieved by an aspiration for ideality on the part of certain individuals. Consequently, this was not a time, supposedly, favorable for important artistic advance, yet it was precisely here that the truly modern spirit took its rise, breaking away from the out-grown formulae, throwing off restraints, and trying to visualize goals which were far-distant.

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1. Friess, Schleiermacher's Soliloquies, p. xxxi

Pratt[1] lists as the chief movements in music during this period, the "establishment of principles of what is now called 'classical' form by a group of masters", especially Haydn and Mozart; the "reformation of manneristic Italian opera upon new and much nobler lives of development", Gluck being the leader here; and the "rising interest in the song as an art-form of importance and the reappearance of the singspiel". This early period, the latter part of the eighteenth century, is known as the "classical", and as it merges with the following years, the famous contrast between the "classical" and the "romantic" is seen. The latter stands for a revolt from mere regularity of outward form in favor of greater truth and variety of expression. Gluck, in his restoring to the opera its legitimate dramatic truth and power, brought about many changes from the artificial procedures that had become traditional and gave a re-interpretation of the entire spirit. The revival of the singspiel in Germany about 1760 revealed another reaction against artificiality, appealing particularly to the popular sentiment of northern Europe.[2] During the closing years of the eighteenth century, Protestant Church music was considerably influenced by the prevalent secular style. In awakening a desire for something less strenuous than the traditional forms, the modern temper inaugurated a new church style which avoided technical elaboration yet was not without dignity and solemnity.

In the first three decades of the nineteenth century, Beethoven, Weber, and Schubert led the way and struck the conspicuous note of the age, which has never been lost from the realm of music. "Music to him

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1. Pratt, The History of Music, p. 335, 336
2. Pratt, The History of Music, p. 378

(Beethoven) was no entertaining kaleidoscope of tones and rhythms, but the warm word of the heart."[1] Such was the idealism sought after in music. Not only do we find the struggle for a new individualism and an irrepressible desire for personal freedom in thought and feeling in the political and social relations, in the philosophical developments of these years, but even in the universal language of music is to be found that same aspiration. The formalism of the eighteenth century was disrupted by the unconventional ideas of the innovators, who transferred their themes and styles from regularity to originality, from the studied restraint or indifference to free and passionate feeling.

(c) Idealism in Literature

When the literature of this period is mentioned, two names immediately come to our attention: Lessing and Herder. The former of these two men, the independent and critical writer from the University of Leipsic, led the revolt against classicism and has been called "The First Critic of Europe". He was born in 1729 in Saxony. Brandes comments on his work by saying that he "laid the foundations of intellectual life of modern Germany and freed the German culture from the bands of theology".[2] He is known by his theological as well as his literary activity, and he really unites the two worlds. In his interpretation of religion, he sought its essence in the contents of conscience and the truths of reason, thus freeing it from the shallow thinking of the Deist, the rationalist, and the apologist, who believed that religion

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1. Ibid., p. 414
2. Brandes, Main Currents in Nineteenth Century Literature, p. 19

stood or fell with certain words or events.[1]

Following Lessing, Herder became the sworn defender of individualism. Every work, he believed, must be spontaneous and the individual expression of the entire personality of the author. "Whatever you do, do it with all your soul, with all your powers" became the watch-word of the movement which was to follow and into which Herder rightfully belongs as one of its preeminent theologians. The objection of the Romanticists to the idea of aim or purpose may be traced back to him, for his theory of history excluded the idea of purpose. Herder "is the originator of a new conception of genius, of the belief, namely, that genius is intuitive, that it consists in a certain power of perceiving and apprehending without any resort to abstract ideas".[2]

A certain type of idealism may be found in the literature of France at this time, though it far from played the role of leading to the heights as did the German writing. It depicted gaiety and carefreeness. Morality took the place of religion, and there seemed to be a reaction against the fine arts and classicism.

(2) Lacking Essentials in Idealism

Why did not idealism as set forth by these great leaders succeed in its revolt against traditionalism and classicism? This outstanding philosophical development of the eighteenth century which embraced so many fields of endeavor was lacking in two main essentials: mysticism,

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1. Fairbairn, The Place of Christ in Modern Theology, p. 193
2. Op. Cit., Main Currents in Nineteenth Century Literature, p. 22

or the imaginative power needed; and historicism, or the glory of the past. Such an idealism must rest upon a surer foundation than mere revolt and revolution. Pure idealism must come from the soul or spirit, and without a connection to the past it would soon outmode the present spontaneity. There must of necessity be the period of Idealism before there could be the Romantic era, and fundamentally they are very much alike. The latter saw the weakness of the former, and soon we see that those who were at work in the idealistic field are the chief exponents of perhaps the most glorious epoch in Western civilization during the past three centuries. Its effect on theological thought in modern times is far-reaching and is worthy of our consideration.

d. Romanticism

Numerous are the reasons for the springing up of Romanticism. Some[1] would make it, along with idealism, a reaction against the period of the Enlightenment from which there developed the exaltation of the instincts and feelings over the intelligence. At least, it was through a disgust with the present that there arose a new enthusiasm for the past. It more fully stressed the antagonism for the over-dominance of the classical standards in literature and art, making a plea for life, for freedom, for the claims of feeling and the spiritual nature. Little place had there been in the age of rationalism for sentiment, emotion, or the spontaneity of creative imagination.[2] Its purpose was a single

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1. Stewart, A Century of Anglo-Catholicism, p. 53
2. Storr, The Development of English Thought in the Nineteenth Century, p.126

one: to look backward rather than forward or to the present. The devotees had been terribly disillusioned in the promises which "Aufklärung" had made with respect to science. Therefore, the new emphasis was not to be placed upon the real as science interpreted it, but upon the imagination, which was vastly more real. For the first time, the depth and largeness of human nature became recognized, due to the labors of such men as Kant, Lessing, and Herder, who were not satisfied with a half-view of life. Man, they had said, is not simply an intellectual being but a creature of passion and emotion, of deep-seated forces and instincts. In the development of the intelligence, only half of his nature had been revealed. Reason was not to be identified with the logical faculty which rationalism had assigned, but it was larger: a creative and unifying activity, the total movement of personality.[1.]

Romanticism, then, laid stress upon the importance of the imagination. Reason and imagination went hand in hand in recreating this world of thought by reviving the past. True enough, in later representatives of the movement, imagination degenerated into individual caprice and fancy. But the best efforts were directed in reconstructing the past. "To recover the life of the past, to bring it before the eyes and minds of men in all its incident and movement, was one of the prime objects of the romantic writers."[2.] In Germany a national feeling was being created after the downfall of Napoleon. There came to these writers the desire to investigate the past of the nation and to under-

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1. Ibid., p. 126
2. Storr, The Development of English Thought, p. 128

stand its place and power in the world. But mere imagination could not do this. At this point Romanticism links itself with the historical and comparative methods, forming the new spirit of historical inquiry.

As we have noted above, Herder was one of the great forerunners of this movement. From him the Romanticists derive that which is most valuable in their literary criticism: the universal receptivity which finds expression in the impulse to translate and explain.[1] Herder was the first to interpret the meaning of primitive poetry and show its significance for thought, for in this early literature one saw the spontaneous utterance of a nation's life before it had become saturated by convention. Its mythology contained the key to many of the later problems connected with the nation's religious life.

The relationship which Romanticism bore to the religious life and theological development was one of signal importance. Through various of its advocates, the Romantic school strove to reclaim a nation which was thought to be drifting into artistic paganism. It shall be noted later concerning the endeavor of Schleiermacher to humanize religion, but through other of its representatives, Tieck, Wackenroder, and Novalis, it introduced Christianity into literature.[2] We have spoken of the feeling of "double-mindedness" which became evident through the new discoveries of science and the elevating of the value of the present world-order above the traditional religious "other-wordliness". In Romanticism can be seen a movement aiming at the abolition of the necessity

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1. Brandes, Main Currents in Nineteenth Century Literature, p. 21
2. Boyeson, Essays on German Literature, pp. 356, 357

for this "double-mindedness", for it sought to discover within civilization values which the religious traditions had affirmed to exist outside of it in another world. Webb[1] has sought to show how the whole tendency was one leading toward immanentism. This problem of the immanentist or transcendent view of the world has created for us one of the most perplexing in the field of theology in the present day. Its further development in the relationship between man and nature is to be seen through the productions of the English Romanticists, among whom Coleridge is not the least.

2. The Trend of Philosophy in England

As a nation, England has always been more addicted to commercial than to metaphysical speculation. In philosophy, it has shown a greater leaning toward the practical than to the theoretical. It seems to be the nature of this people to be more concerned with the philosophy having to do with politics and natural science than with the branches of thought which interest the people on the Continent. Yet, in this one great movement of Romanticism, it felt the influence of Germany in particular. As Stewart has said: "The Romantic spirit did not belong to one country more than another."[2] It was seen in the poetry of Klopstock, in the speculations of Chateaubriand, in the history of Schlegel, in Tieck's picture of the Middle Ages, in Grimm's Fairy Tales, in Coleridge's

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1. Webb, Study of Religious Thought in England, p. 29
2. Stewart, A Century of Anglo-Catholicism, p. 54

Biographia Literaria, and in the Oxford Movement. And it has been through such men as Coleridge that the Romantic temper became transplanted in the fertile fields of England where it flowered out into Transcendentalism and the subsequent pantheism as well as that beautiful relationship between man and nature.

The utilitarianism of Bentham and Mill and the empiricism of Hume had been the dominating forces of philosophical thought in the preceding period. The literature of the eighteenth century had reflected an age of intellect, with cold-blooded feeling, and full of skepticism. Hume could not permit any innate ideas, no causality in his thinking. Adam Smith wrote on economics and wealth. It needed and waited for a Carlyle to spiritualize the philosophy which he had received from Goethe. The philosophy of immanentism, coming from Germany, was soon to make headway against the strongly entrenched tradition of empiricism and naturalism.

Especially do we note the revival of the spirit of wonder and the appreciation of the element of mystery in man and nature through the writing of Wordsworth, who recognized that human life is "bosomed in the life of an Eternal Spirit of perfection".[1.] Not only did the English Romanticists, Scott, Burns, Wordsworth, Southey, Coleridge, imitate the past as had their German precedessors done, but they went further in creating a sense of sympathy between man and nature. There was an increased appreciation of external beauty and a recognition of the spiritual ties which bind man and nature together. To Wordsworth, Nature is

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1. Storr, Development of English Thought, p. 128

clothed with a religious significance. "We may say generally of the romantic poetry, that it ceased to follow the fashion of treating nature as a mere accessory or background of external ornament to the life of man, but gave her a life of her own, and thought of that life as flowing out upon, and mixing with, human life".[1] We can even see the growth of ritualism in the Church of England as an outcome in part of the romantic love of color, movement, and pageantry. In this regard it becomes evident that the place of immanentism is being firmly fixed upon the British Isles, due to this new treatment of nature.

C. The Trend in Theology

The problem which modern theology faces is primarily to find what place and meaning religion may claim to have amid all this welter of modern interests. Such a question also did those having to do with theology face in the times with which we are now concerned. Eighteenth century rationalism seemed to find its religious counterpart successfully in a broad humanitarian program. The nineteenth century produced a bewildering variety of both the theoretic and the practical, due to the advance in knowledge and power. As the modern spirit of philosophy, politics, and social economy began with the nineteenth century, so might we designate this same era as the beginning of present religious liberalism, or modernism. Primarily, this tendency began with the Romantic Movement. Immediately there comes to us the need for distinguishing

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1. Storr, Development of English Thought, p. 130

between philosophy and theology, but under such origins and forces as we have seen at work in human minds, such a clear-cut distinction becomes impossible. Both realms involve the same feeling, speculations; the agents affecting each are interactive. Theology can be distinguished from the religion of the times, of this period. "Nothing is more common in religious circles of a liberal temper of mind than to set religion as 'life' in sharp contrast to theology. This is felt to be an emancipation of religion and is an indication of the extent to which theology has been found to work oppressively upon the religious life."[1] Temple goes on to say that theology, as set forth in some system by ecclesiastical institutions as the instruments of authoritative control, is merely reflective thinking about religion or some particular historical religion together with the organized results which have positive value for life.[2] We are to think of Coleridge as both a philosopher and a theologian, so it is well to keep in mind that fundamentally there is no real distinction except as a historical religion begins presumptively as a source of objective truth.

1. On the Continent

a. Pietism and Evangelicalism

The Pietistic and Evangelical Movements, differing in many ways,

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1. Temple, Nature, Man, and God, p. 13
2. Ibid., p. 13

yet all alike inspired by the sense of the inability of secular civilization to satisfy human life and conscious of the need of man for salvation, were the dominating religious forces in Germany during the eighteenth century. Philip Jacob Spener in the seventeenth century saw the over-emphasis of theology which caused a decline in religious feeling and morality. People lost sight of true piety and of the practical duties of the Christian life. As a result, Pietism was a protest of the individualism against institutionalism; there must be a personal experience of conversion; religion is an individual and not merely a corporate matter; one's life must be in direct communion with Christ and not dependent upon the ministrations of the priest or church.[1.] With this reassertion of the religious rights and responsibilities of the laity, as individual participants, there developed a rapid growth of the spirit of tolerance for other views and sects. It was another stress of life over doctrine, although the orthodox faith was not rejected. The Bible was studied for its devotional rather than its doctrinal value.

While this mystical religious experience was being felt among the people, there was also a conflict between the Protestant clergy of Germany, who were believed to be a kind of self-constituted tribunal with the right to censure and ostracize literary productions which were at variance with Lutheran orthodoxy, and the severe critics of the church. Lessing was the leader in this revolt against the bigotry as represented by some of the church officials.[2.] He did not write against Christianity

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1. McGiffert, Rise of Modern Religious Ideas, pp. 5-9
2. Boyeson, Essays of German Literature, p. 283

as such, but against its bigoted representatives.

b. Schleiermacher's Idealistic Theology

The preparation having been made through the work of Kant, Lessing, Herder, Spener and others for the emphasizing of the individual rather than the institution, the emotion and feeling of man rather than mere intellect, the inner reason and communion rather than external reason and legalistic doctrine, the time was now set for the advent of "The Father of Modern Theology", Friedrich Schleiermacher. Kant and Spinoza were the two philosophers who influenced him most, and, in working out his conception of religion, he sought to find a world view which does justice to human personality and to the infinite universe that stands over against man also. "He wants the advantages of both Kantian and Spinozistic metaphysics, of freedom and determinism."[1.]

His religion is chiefly an aesthetic one, holding that humanity is only an embodiment of the universe, an intermediate link between the individual and God. Man needs something other than his humanity if he is to refer himself and his existence directly to the universe, and this feeling or presentiment of something outside and above humanity is the object of all religion.[2.] Christianity, in its spirit, and independent of the dogmatic differences of sects, alone can satisfy the cultivated intellect as well as the more primitive needs of the human heart.

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1. Friess, Schleiermacher's Soliloquies, pp. xxxii, xxxiii
2. Boyeson, Essays on German Literature, p. 352

The early conceptions of his religion of feeling developed from his childhood teaching and environment. Three strains of religious forces focused themselves upon him from an early age: Quakerism, Pietism, and Wesleyanism. But with his evangelical piety and mystical exaltation there grew a critical faculty which sought new knowledge. His approach to philosophical teaching was made through Greek learning. It became his desire to make the religious life something more than a belief in the traditional tenets of Deistic theology for morality's sake.[1] In taking this step we may say that Schleiermacher did for religion what Kant did for knowledge. Religion, in its essence, he held to be a feeling of dependence.. This feeling was not a kind of religious emotion such as was present in the experience of the old-time Methodists. It was akin to independent feeling which arose in relation to knowledge or conduct.[2] It involved a certain kind of knowledge, such as was derived from insight, but it cannot be called a religion of knowledge.

2. In England

Numerous notations have been already made concerning the religious forces at work in England, but here we shall confine ourselves with mentioning two of the important developments, contrary in thought and experience.

a. Deism

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1. Friess, Schleiermacher's Soliloquies, pp. xii-xxi
2. Kensinger, Survey of Conceptions of Revelation and Inspiration, pp.14-16

One of the products of the Enlightenment was that form of religion in which one accepted God as a probability and conducted oneself accordingly. It must be linked up with the other scientific innovations of the time, especially with Newton's discoveries. The effect of his work greatly exalted the conception of God as the creator of the universe. "But the notions of miracles and of special providence seemed incompatible with the universal mechanism;... God came to seem much less accessible to man."[1.] The growth of natural religion soon began to doubt the supernatural elements found in the traditional. "Deism thus held that God was the creator of the universe and its laws and the upholder of pure morality through his divine sanctions, and that the chief worship of him was through moral living."[2.] It was entirely too rationalistic for the growing need of a mystical experience of the heart. It emphasized morality and ethical distinctions and the transcendence of God, removing Him far from the lives of men here on earth.

b. Revivalist Movements

Closely akin to the Pietism of Germany was another religious development at work in England which went under the name of Evangelicalism and was sometimes referred to as Wesleyanism. The effects of this religion on fire were far-reaching, even as far as this country where it became known as The Great Awakening. Religion came alive through these revivals, however local and sporadic they may have been. McGiffert speaks of it

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1. Lyman, Meaning and Truth of Religion, p. 249
2. Ibid., p. 249

as being the "precursor of the Romantic movement which came to expression through such men as Rousseau in France, Goethe and Schleiermacher in Germany, Coleridge, Carlyle, and Wordsworth in England".[1] Pietism, a term which aptly fits all these individual groups, found room for the feelings and emotions and dignified them. Its advocates carried the insights of Pietism out beyond the limits of the church and applied them to social and intellectual life in a secular world. We find in John Wesley as much a revolter against the lethargy and indolence of the institutional church of his day as were any of the great philosophical and literary reformers. Paying little attention to the intellectual life of the times, he stressed the supernatural grace of God to effect consequences for disobedience as well as eternal salvation for those who believe.

D. Summary

Whether we think in terms of social and political economy, philosophical thought, or theological teaching and experience, we perceive throughout the period just studied, which includes almost three-quarters of a century stretching over the last half of the eighteenth and the first quarter of the nineteenth, two or three notable features. One is the emphasis placed upon individualism over against society as an institution. This tenet takes form in diverse ways, but especially are we interested in the theological concept. A human being must seek and find his God, not through traditional ceremonies and creeds, but through the

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1. McGiffert, Jonathan Edwards, p. 40

insights of his inner reason or divine perception. Literature, depicting social life of the time, expresses this same desire for the raising of the individual worth above what the group has to say with its conventions and shibboleths. Dogmatic theology is to be relegated along with the false pretensions of science and intellect. These are only outward forms and of no intrinsic value because they do not contain the truth. The truth is to be found by the expression of the heart-feeling, the insights of the soul and not of the mind. Men are not to be so concerned with the present as with the past from whence they have come. "Back to the sources" becomes the cry in the realm of religion as well as in literature of secular nature. Man here discovers a new meaning and worth of human nature and develops a greater appreciation for this world, much to the disparagement of the transcendent view of traditional authority. God dwells in this world in multifarious forms; man and nature are to be identified as close affinities. Above all, there is a revolt against the old out-lived forms of life and a searching for new experiential meaning of life.

CHAPTER II

A STUDY OF COLERIDGE'S LIFE AND THE MEN WHO PARTICULARLY INFLUENCED HIM

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A. His Parentage and Early Life

Samuel Taylor Coleridge was born at Ottery, St. Mary, in Devonshire, England, on October 21, 1772. His father was not only a clergyman of the Church of England but also a schoolmaster, good-hearted, absent-minded, and impractical. The man with whom we are concerned was one of a large family, and his childhood was that of a precocious and imaginative boy who read fairy tales and acted out the scenes in them, living much by himself in the world which he created out of his dreams.[1] It is well that we consider his imaginative temperament even at an early age, for out of his deep sense of imagination there developed some of the most elemental and important ideas of his literary career. Coleridge himself admits that "from eight to fourteen I was a playless day-dreamer, ...;".[2] That he read profusely may be confirmed by the report that when he was three years old, he read the Bible; at six he had read Belisarius, Robinson Crusoe, and the Arabian Nights. To further describe the imaginative quality in him and his appetite for reading, DeQuincey records for us the account of Mr. Gillman, who explained an interesting

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1. Shaw, History of English Literature, p. 339
2. DeQuincey, Narrative, "Coleridge and Opium-Eating", p. 124

experience:

> "The incident indeed was singular. Going down the Strand, in one of his day-dreams, fancying himself swimming across the Hellespont, thrusting his hands before him as in the act of swimming, his hand came in contact with a gentleman's pocket. The gentleman seized his hand, turning round, and looking at him with some anger -- 'What! so young, and yet so wicked?' at the same time accused him of an attempt to pick his pocket. The frightened boy sobbed out his denial of the intention, and explained to him how he thought himself Leander swimming across the Hellespont. The gentleman was so struck and delighted with the novelty of the thing, and with the simplicity and intelligence of the boy, that he subscribed, as before stated, to the library; in consequence of which Coleridge was further enabled to indulge his love of reading." 1.

When he was nine years old his father died, and the next year he entered the great public school of Christ's Hospital, where he was a schoolmate of Charles Lamb. From that school he went to Cambridge and there made Wordsworth's acquaintance. Although poetry and metaphysics became the favorite studies of Coleridge there, his college life seemed to be a broken and rather unsatisfactory one.[2.] A spirit of warm democracy seemed to pervade his mind after reading some pamphlets of Burke, and this same feeling he carried with him all during his later days. During one of his lectures, a hired partisan had come to purposely bring Coleridge into trouble and is described as having hissed at him. When the cry arose to turn him out, Coleridge insisted on the man's right to hiss if he thought fit, "for what is to be expected, gentlemen, when the cool waters of reason come in contact with red-hot aristocracy, but a hiss?"[3.]

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1. DeQuincey, Narrative, "Coleridge and Opium-Eating", p. 125
2. The Poetical Works of S.T. Coleridge, Memoir, Notes, etc., p. vii
3. DeQuincey, Narrative, "Coleridge and Opium-Eating", p. 124

He was always in financial difficulties, and after experiencing a general discontentment at college, he returned to London and enlisted in the 15th Dragoons, under an assumed name. But however orderly and obedient he may have been in the army, he was entirely unfitted for this kind of life and was shortly discharged.[1.] After spending a brief time in Cambridge in 1794, he visited Oxford, Wales, and Bristol, where he met Robert Southey. At this point a new departure was taken in his life which involved new associates and a new environment, but the same imaginative quality still led him on toward radical ideals.

B. Important Developments in His Later Life

1. Intellectually

The explosion of the French Revolution seemed not only to rock the continent but also to make a deep and lasting impression upon the British Isles, despite their "splendid isolation". There is little doubt but that its influence was transplanted and made real under the leadership of the lyric Pleiad: Burns, Coleridge, Wordsworth, Shelley, Keats, Scott, and Byran, men who sought freedom from the bonds of literary tradition, renouncing the canons of authority and conformity. Robert Southey, whom Coleridge met in 1794, had become captivated by the spirit of the Revolution and sought to take practical steps in a new direction. With Coleridge

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1. Poetical Works of S.T.Coleridge, "Life and Writings", p. viii

and a few others, he conceived a scheme to which they gave the name "Pantisocracy", or the equal rule of all. They proposed to form a community on the banks of the Susquehanna River in Pennsylvania where two or three hours' labor a day on the part of each would suffice for the community, giving the remainder of the time to philosophy, poetry, and all the arts. Their plan would remind us of the Epicurics in Goethe's "Wilhelm Meister", which may have been influential in the developing of this idea. Later we note the Transcendental Movement in this country which closely resembled "Pantisocracy". Had the funds been forthcoming, this brotherly community, where selfishness was to be extinguished and the virtues were to reign supreme, might have been established. But again, due to the lack of finances, Coleridge was led to disappointment and chagrin.[1.]

In the previous chapter we noted the beginning and essential character of the Romantic Movement: its recognition of the depth and largeness of human nature, its revival of the spirit of wonder and mystery in man and nature, and its stress upon the importance of the imagination. It is to this last element upon which he concentrated his powers of genius that we find Coleridge contributing the most. Throughout his whole life his literary works were in the realms of general literature, philosophy, theology, and political economy, yet the one spirit which brooded over all was a large imagination which gave him power to see more widely and deeply than other men of his generation. He seems to have possessed this power from the very beginning, if the accounts of his early life serve

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1. The Encyclopaedia Britannica, 14th Edition, Vol. VI, p. 9

us correctly. In poetry especially is his power of imagination to be found at work. It is said that he could write his "Hymn at Chamounix" with its sublime description of the avalanche without ever seeing either Chamounix or an avalanche.[1.] In making a study of Coleridge's critical theory, Richards[2.] remarks that for him, Coleridge, imagination and fancy were two different things, two various activities of the mind. Coleridge defined the imagination as "the coalescence of subject and object", in which process the mind grows. Fancy, on the other hand, does not denote a mental growth but is merely a reassembling of products of the mind's past creation. He furthermore takes a stand against primary imagination, which is normal perception that produces the usual world of the senses, and secondary imagination which merely collects and rearranges without remaking. Such idealistic and imaginative flights made him a poor student in the more practical fields. The very character of his own wandering life, filled with problems of providing himself and his family with the bare necessities for existence, his dependence upon friends to extricate him from precarious situations, even the descriptions of his personal figure point out how he almost lived in another world. Charles Lamb loved to tell of the time when he met Coleridge who, having some abstruse subject to expound, took hold of the button on Lamb's coat and began to discourse. Lamb, remembering some important engagement and seeing no other way of escape, cut off the button from his coat and slipped away. On his return he found Coleridge still haranguing

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1. Strong, The Great Poets and Their Theology, p. 350
2. Richards, On Imagination, "New York Times Book Review", Mar.3,1935

the button.[1]

2. Morally

If his imagination was to be seen in his literary career, so also must we note other forces at work in the more practical side of his nature. Such fanciful ascents which he made vitally affected his own moral experience, and the lack of a sense of responsibility not only caused himself much trouble but led his family and friends into difficulties as well.

In October of 1795 he married Sarah Fricker, and they resided in Bristol, where a bookseller became interested in Coleridge's literary power and undertook to publish a volume of his poems, perhaps doing so to help them financially rather than for any other reason. For nearly twenty years he and his family led a shifting life; sometimes they were together, sometimes separated, depending for material resources upon writings, lectures, or gifts from those who became interested in them. An instance is to be found in the annuity of £ 150, given by Josiah and Thomas Wedgwood, the great pottery makers and patrons of arts and letters, on condition that he devote himself to literature.[2] For a while Coleridge would make a stay in Germany, then would return to be with his family, the Wordsworths, and the Southeys in the Lake Country. He had become friendly with Wordsworth in 1795, and so close was their companionship in both practical and literary experiences that one is not to

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1. Boreham, "S.T.Coleridge", Australian Christian World, Oct.25,1935, p.3
2. Markham, Book of Poetry, p. 1405, Vol. I

be thought of without the other. By 1813 the unhappy relationship in his family came to an end, the result of the union of an irresponsive, dreamy husband with a wife of limited intellectual sympathy. Then for three years Coleridge led a dreary life, lecturing, staying with friends, and struggling against the habit of opium which had fastened itself upon him. Finally, in 1816, he put himself under the care of Dr. Gillman, who resided on the outskirts of London, and there he spent the last sixteen years of his life, making occasional visits to other parts of England and the Continent, receiving many visitors and writing in his rather disconnected way on philosophical and theological subjects.

We have spoken of the immense imaginative powers of Coleridge, and attention was called to the fact that this quality was noticeable from earliest childhood. The reason is simple. While no one with ordinary commonsense would uphold the value of using stimulants and dopes to the degree to which opium laid hold upon Coleridge, yet it should be remembered, in forming a just appreciation of his life and of the contribution of thought, that what might be attributed to unnatural forces of energy, as opium, does not always depend upon this evil for inspiration. He possessed powers of thinking and genius which opium, despite its strong hold on him, never influenced. But the fact does remain, Coleridge suffered and the appreciation of his character has suffered because of this habit. He began using opium soon after meeting Wordsworth in 1795. Just why he started we do not know, unless the reason for the formation of the drug habit can be found in the consti-

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tuent elements in his weak make-up. Robertson comments upon the effect of opium on his poetry:

> "Poetry is the language of excited feeling, properly of pure excitement. But stimulants, like wine, opium, and worse, can produce, or rather stimulate, that state of rapturous and ecstatic feeling in which the seer should live; in which emotions succeed each other swiftly, and imagination works with preternatural power. Hence their seducive power....The degradation of genius...takes place when men hope to reproduce, through stimulus of the lower nature, those glorious sensations which it once experienced when vivified from above....Burns and Coleridge are the awful beacons to all who feel intensely, and are tempted to rekindle the vestal flames of genius, when they burn low, with earthly fire." 1.

The weakness of Coleridge must be recognized, whether he is a poet or philosopher or genius of any kind. He was weak physically and morally. DeQuincey, a fellow-sufferer of the disease, speaks of the procrastination of one's daily duties and the sense of remorse in a reflective mind of an opium-eater, yet maintains that he does not lose any of his moral sensibilities or aspirations. He earnestly desires and longs for those higher things which he believes possible, but the intellectual apprehension of what is possible outruns his power, not only of performing the task, but of even making the attempt.[2.] Coleridge's contemporary is of the opinion that opium killed him as a poet, "but proportionably it roused and stung by misery his metaphysical instincts into more spasmodic life. Poetry can flourish only in the atmosphere of happiness. But subtle and perplexed investigations of difficult problems are amongst the commonest resources for beguiling the sense of misery".[3.]

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1. Robertson, Lectures on Influence of Poetry, p. 24, 25
2. DeQuincey, Confessions of an Opium-Eater, pp. 108, 109
3. DeQuincey, Narrative and Papers, p. 151

In that case, what we lost from Coleridge in poetry and general literature is relatively to be gained in his philosophy.

C. Determining Influences in His Career

1. In Literature

It is very difficult to think about Coleridge without associating with him the name of Wordsworth in particular and those of Southey, Lamb, and DeQuincey. These men were very definitely thrown together and had many interests in common. In addition to them, others of the Romantic Age in England, Burns, Scott, Keats and Shelley, were possessed of the same desire to free literature from the aridity and traditional form which marked the preceding period. Of all the men who influenced Coleridge, however, Wordsworth deserves the position of prominence. It has been noted that the two men met in 1795, the same year in which Coleridge was married. Although these two men had many differences of opinion and at times their friendship threatened to be severed, Coleridge disliking Wordsworth's excessive frugality and speaking of his occasional fits of hypochandria, and Wordsworth, in turn, thinking Coleridge destined to be unhappy, yet great was the admiration and respect of each for the other. Wordsworth is characterized as "the prophet of a dramatic age"[1], one with a message and the genius to deliver it. He wrote during the years of the awful combat which ended in the overthrow of Napolean,

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1. Boreham, "William Wordsworth", Australian Christian World, Oct. 26, 1934, p. 3

1793-1815. He did not write battle-songs but rather gave "healing power" to the fainting heart and fevered brain by giving his poems about the skylark and the rainbow and the daffodil. Tulloch[1.] reminds us that Wordsworth gave voice to a higher thought in the religion to be found in nature and that he went to the heart of religion by laying its foundation in the natural instincts of man. For him, nature is clothed with religious significance, is the home of the same Spirit who has not left Himself without witness in the human heart. The same idea is true with Coleridge, but while Wordsworth remained a poet, Coleridge abandoned poetry and became a lecturer, a political and literary critic, and finally a philosopher and theologian. It is not to be doubted that the influence exerted by each of these men was reciprocal. It may well be questioned whether we should have found in Wordsworth the metaphysical element which here and there characterizes his poems had it not been for his long communings with Coleridge, who is said to have been "the Friend" to whom the outpourings of the heart were addressed in "The Prelude". Although Coleridge was two years younger than Wordsworth, yet he had much to do with opening the latter's eyes to new visions.[2.] On the other hand, however, it was Wordsworth who gave to Coleridge whatever practical wisdom he ever had and who taught him to build upon the solid ground of nature. The interpretation of nature as the continual manifestation of God may possibly be the echo of Wordsworth thought, depicted in his "Aeolian Harp":

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1. Tulloch, Movements of Religious Thought in Britain During the 19th Century, p. 5
2. MacDonald, England's Antiphon, p. 307

"And what if all of animated Nature
Be but organic harps diversely framed,
That tremble into thought as o'er them sweeps,
Plastic and vast, one intellectual breeze,
At once the soul of each and God of all."

We are, then, to think of these two men associated together during the Stowey period, jointly publishing the "Lyrical Ballads", the appearance of which marks an epoch in the history of English poetical literature. We miss in the poetry of Coleridge that directly religious element which is to be found in Wordsworth, but we find an inclined plane from the revelation in nature to the culminating revelation in the Son of Man. Besides Wordsworth, there are other Englishmen, Southey, Lamb, DeQuincey, who exerted strong influences over Coleridge of one kind or another. Together they shared their hopes and aspirations for the world of the eternal spiritual, attempted to shake off traditionalism, yielded no longer to hackneyed phraseology of the past years but rather sought the freedom which the soul and mind demanded just as the French Revolution was the demand for liberty and justice on the part of the political and social nature.

2. In History: The French Revolution

The part which the current political strife was causing in all forms of life has already been emphasized: that for which the mass struggled through force of arms and flow of blood, the same was sought for in other fields by a revision of style and thought. Literature, philosophy, and religion experienced just as much revolution as did the

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state. As it concerned Coleridge, the current events of his own times had influenced him to a large degree, as has been intimated by the foregoing description of his ideal of setting up a communistic state. He bewailed the vileness of his nation and, instead of remaining in solitude, pampering his heart with feelings about human wrongs and liberty too delicate for use, he went among men, doing what practical work he could. Even the blasphemy, terror, or blood of the French Revolution did not daunt his hopes; these evils, he thought, could be helped, since they were the necessary storms that must precede the fulfilment of a vast change for the better in human things. It was not the horrors of the Revolution that shook his faith in freedom, but the attack of France, the champion of freedom, upon the freest spot in Europe, Switzerland, cause Coleridge to fall back into hopelessness about the world. Such a hatred of the Revolution impressed upon him the sense of liberty in his own heart, causing him to take refuge in the solitudes of nature and to declare that he could only truly feel the spirit of Freedom when he sent his being out of himself through earth and sea and air.[1.] With his own peculiar sense of imagination, he could not resist his vision of Pantisocracy:

> "Strange fancies and as vain as strange. Yet to the intense interest and impassioned zeal, which called forth and strained every faculty of my intellect of this scheme, I owe much of what I, at present, possess--my clearest insight into the nature of individual man, and my most comprehensive views of his social relations, of the true uses of trade and commerce, and how far wealth and relative power of nations promote and impede their welfare and inherent strength." 2.

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1. Brooke, Theology of the English Poets, pp.72, 73
2. Gunsaulus, Higher Ministries of Recent English Poetry, pp.21, 22

But Coleridge was never a practical-minded individual and could hardly be expected to take the lead in redressing these wrongs in a material sense. His observation of the possibilities of change wrought out in the French Revolution conspired with his own imaginative feeling and spiritual insight and led him on to transcending heights in his views of the supernatural in man.

3. In German Philosophy

Coleridge, by nature a roving individual, left for Germany two years before the turn of the century, arriving in Ratzburg and then going on to Göttingen. After hearing Eichhorn lecture and applying himself studiously to mastering the German language, which he succeeded in doing if we are to judge his ability by the short time in which he translated "Wallenstein", he came home with the German influence as strong upon him as any influence ever could be upon so original and independent mind. In addition, this peculiar German philosophy, which played so important a part in his own thinking, would not act in opposition to but rather in reinforcement of his native tendencies.[1] Coleridge was to bring into English thought a force from Germany which, under the management of his own strong spirit, was to create a new epoch in Christian England. The time had come for men to obtain a deeper and surer hold upon what was called the facts of religion. By the help of the genetic men in Germany, he was able to do great service

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1. Clark, Liberal Orthodoxy, p. 133

in his own country, for they aided constructively in the formation of his ideas, originating first of all from the recognition of the orthodoxy of the past which still claimed the present. All that had preceded him in the work of Kant, Hegel, Schleiermacher, Spinoza, the German Idealists Lessing, Herder, Shelling, and Goethe, profoundly entered into his scheme of thinking. He lost his admiration for the revolutionists and had been disappointed in the French Revolution. But here was something which could be used in attaining newness of life. Had not Spinoza sounded the first note of the immanent idea of God's being here in this world? And had not Hegel carried out the representation of the Infinite and Eternal as in fact already present in our experience, being manifested in individual and social forms? There is little doubt but that Coleridge welcomed with open arms the teaching and stimulation of Goethe, who expressed in many works of imagination his deep sense of the organic unity of all reality and the importance of seeking and finding here in this experience that which had been pushed aside by the previous orthodoxy. In speaking of this whole movement of Divine Immanence in England since 1850, Webb[1] remarks that it affected England long before that time and that its chief representatives in England had been Coleridge and Carlyle. While this topic does not deal with a criticism of his views, it is fair to state one or two direct ways in which the German philosophers had influenced Coleridge. One mode of thought which took definite shape was with regard to Biblical criticism, which he discussed in "The Confessions of

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1. Webb, Religious Thought in England from 1850, p. 33

An Inquiring Spirit". From the time he first came in contact with this school of thought, the futility of the antiquated superstitious veneration of the Bible remained with him to his death.[1] He was true to Schleiermacher's principle of feeling when he declared in the phrase which has come to epitomize this man that "whatever finds me brings with it an irresistible evidence of its having proceeded from the Holy Spirit".[2] In his theory of knowledge and understanding, Coleridge modeled upon Kant's notion of the practical reason. He formed a distinction between reason and understanding, his position at times being identical with that of Jacobi, a disciple of Kant, pointing out the intuitive and the reflective faculties of the human mind. "Though Coleridge does not refer to Jacobi in connection with his distinction between the reason and the understanding, it is clear...that it is identical with the German philosopher's."[3] It is clearly evident, then, that there came into the mind of Coleridge, through German avenues, the ideas of the unity of all realities, the primacy of the spirit, and the absoluteness of God. He escaped being placed in the category of the Evangelicals on the one hand and the realism of the sceptics on the other by insisting upon the oneness of the Reason which we call God with the Reason which was within him.

4. In Religion: The English Divines

Coleridge will always be remembered as an imparter of current

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1. Clark, Liberal Orthodoxy, p. 134
2. Coleridge, Confessions of an Inquiring Spirit, Letter II, p. 296
3. McGiffert, Rise of Modern Religious Ideas, p. 125

German thought into his home country, having spent much time on the Continent and being influenced to no small degree in the direction which these men were pursuing. Nevertheless, the Cambridge Platonists played a marked role in his theological career, and he has admitted that he claimed to do nothing more than to re-assert the principles of Hooker, Henry More, John Smith, Leighton, and others of that group. Certainly a relation exists between their methods of interpretation of Bible inspiration and his own, and in his own case, it is a conscious and deliberate one, however much further he progressed from the seventeenth century school.[1] His underlying idea, as we shall see, was in the moral and spiritual rather than in the intellectual correspondence between God and man. He sought to vitalize anew the application to Christianity of the ideas of his predecessors so as to transform them from a mere creed into living modes of thought.

It will be noted that in the Aphorisms of his "Aids to Reflection" there appear very frequently the superscriptions, "Leighton" and "Leighton and Coleridge". Concerning his purpose in writing thus, he says:

> "Still, however, the selections from Leighton, which will be found in the Prudential and Moral sections of this work, and which I could retain consistently with its present form and matter, will both from the intrinsic excellence and from the characteristic beauty of the passages, suffice to answer two prominent purposes of the original plan, that of placing in a clear light the principle which pervades all Leighton's writings--his sublime view, I mean, of Religion and Morality as the means of reforming the human Soul in the Divine Image (Idea); and that of exciting an interest in the works, and an affectionate reverence for the name and memory of this severely

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1. Clark, Liberal Orthodoxy, p. 140

tried and truly primitive Churchman." 1.

Much of the writing of Coleridge concerns Reason and Conscience, a faculty of the spirit which authenticates truth perceived by the Light from within. He selected Aphorisms from the Theological Works of Dr. Henry More, who was a contemporary of Leighton, and placed them in his "Aids to Reflection". Whether they are of his own mind or of the mind of this former divine, he states that the purpose of inserting them is the same, to declare and set forth definitions of Spiritual Religion and what are not to be deemed influences of the Spirit. This he does by quoting from More's "Mystery of Godliness",

> "These things I could not forbear to write. For the Light within me, that is, my Reason and Conscience, does assure me, that the Ancient and Apostolic Faith according to the historical meaning thereof, and in the literal sense of the Creed, is solid and true: and that Familism in its fairest form and under whatever disguise, is a smooth tale to seduce the simple from their Allegiance to Christ." 2.

In the same vein of thought, he comments on the attempt of John Smith to distinguish between the Reason and Understanding, the imperfection and limited sphere of the latter, which yet had not been recognized. How well Coleridge fits into the scheme presented by Smith:

> "While we reflect on our own idea of Reason, we know that our Souls are not it, but only partake of it...Neither can it be called a Faculty, but far rather a Light, which we enjoy, but the Source of which is not in ourselves, nor rightly by any individual to be denominated mine." 3.

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1. Coleridge, Aids to Reflection, Preface, pp. xx, xxi
2. Coleridge, Aids to Reflection, pp. 94, 95
3. Coleridge, Aphorisms on Spiritual Religion, p. 168

D. Summary

After reviewing his life, his natural and acquired gifts and characteristics, we can only agree once more with Boreham that Coleridge was one of few men who cut so grotesque a figure and at the same time rose to such splendid heights of lofty thought. He was surely a man of fits and starts, of wayward moods and fancies, hovering between inspiration and insanity.

Our attention has been called to the influences which attended both his early and mature life. The most striking feature of his mind was that of an imagination which seemed to work overtime, even from childhood. While he distinguished between imagination and the fancy or day-dreaming, which is common to all men, the practical working-out of his imaginative schemes were inefficient and impractical, for with this one quality there was also the inevitable counterpart, lack of responsibility and capacity for directing his own domestic affairs, much less those of a community. The weaknesses of his moral and physical character cannot be hidden; that he was an opium addict has placed upon him a stigma which is not easy to remove from the popular mind. But I am sure that he would offer no alibi for this escape. But if it silenced him as a poet, it is also true that it led him to greater heights as a thinker in the metaphysical and religious realm, due to his own investigations of problems which he faced and their relation to the eternal order of things.

Among the men who most influenced his life and thought, the name of Wordsworth comes first, because of his intimate association with him,

at least in the earlier part of his literary career. Their common ideas on the immanence of God and His revelation through Nature were developed jointly and reciprocally. Such dependence upon the power of Nature, as God's revelation, came to him after sensing the futility of the French Revolution. Political force and intrigue offered to him no longer the challenge it once did. His contact with German leaders and philosophy led him to become much absorbed in that culture and so completely dominated his own mode of thought that he transplanted it in his native soil. Spinoza, Hegel, Schleiermacher, Kant, Jacobi, and the Idealists became familiar figures to him, and we note the power which they had in his greatest works. Unity of all realities, primacy of the spirit, and the absoluteness of God were the cardinal points gained from this country. For his new interpretation of Reason and its place in Christian theology he is indebted partly to the German philosophers, yet the Cambridge Platonists, Leighton, More, and John Smith in particular, deserve much credit for their previous pioneering in this field. And it is an unselfish gesture which he makes when he states his intention of reasserting the truth held by these men. How he went further in developing these theories into practical modes of thought and reflection now occupies our attention.

CHAPTER III

AN INVESTIGATION OF HIS OWN WRITINGS TO DISCOVER HIS DISTINCTIVE VIEWPOINTS

Chapter III

An Investigation of His Own Writings to Discover His Distinctive Viewpoints

In conversation with Charles Lamb on one occasion, Coleridge said to his friend, "Lamb, you've never heard me preach." Whereupon Lamb replied, "My dear Coleridge, I've never heard you do anything else."[1] There is no doubt that Coleridge made a name for himself as a lecturer, however rambling he may have been in his addresses. But we cannot be concerned with him as a public speaker. It is our duty to survey his most important literary works to determine from them his peculiar and outstanding ideas in the field of theology.

Shaw finely pictures the literary qualities of Coleridge in the following summary:

> "The literary character of Coleridge resembles some vast but unfinished palace; all is gigantic, beautiful and rich, but nothing is complete, nothing compact. He was all his days, from his youth to his death, laboring, meditating, projecting; and yet all that he has left us bears marks of imperfection. His mind was dreamy, his genius was multiform, many-sided, and for this reason, perhaps, could not at once seize upon the right point of view. No man, probably, ever thought more, and more intensely, than Coleridge; few ever possessed a vaster treasury of learning and knowledge; and yet how few of his works are in any way worthy of the undoubted majesty of his genius. Materials, indeed, he has left us in enormous quantity--a store of thoughts and principles, golden masses of reason, either painfully sifted from the rubbish of obscure and forgotten authors, or dug up

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1. Boreham, "Samuel Taylor Coleridge", Australian Christian World, Oct. 25, 1935

from the rich depths of his own mind; but these are still in the state of raw materials, or only partially worked." 1.

A. His Important Literary Works: Poetry; Aids to Reflection; Confessions of An Inquiring Spirit; Biographia Literaria; Church and State; Table Talk

The writings of Coleridge may be divided into four groups: poetry, literary criticism, philosophy, and theology. We have noted that, in the popular mind, he is best known for his poetry, particularly "The Rime of The Ancient Mariner". It is a matter of speculation as to whether his poetry was but a prophecy of what he might have done had he not become a drug addict. Poetry is prophetic; real poets are pioneers in new ways. As Wilder has pointed out, "Men may be blasted...because they have become the scapegoats and pioneers of new ways of seeing, feeling, thinking." 2. The sensitiveness of poets has often led them to be the first to feel the compulsion of new liberties, new capacities.

The best known of his poems are "Religious Musings", "Lines on Sunrise in the Valley of Chamouni", "Kubla Khan", "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner", and "Christabel". Practically all of the worthwhile poetical works were written before 1800, which is an important date to remember because he had not yet come under the spell of opium to any extent, and he had not yet gone to Germany. His great religious poem is "The Ancient Mariner", composed in 1797, with the help of Wordsworth. Here

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1. Shaw, History of English Literature, p. 339
2. Wilder, "Religion and the New Poetry", The Christian Century, May 15, 1935

we see somewhat of the poet himself who has a message to deliver, for the ancient mariner is pictured as a prophet. He appears to be a bore in the mind of the merry wedding-guest, who, in spite of his impatience, is held by the fascinating eye of the old man. His message is a personal experience, not a theological discourse; it is not presented from an intellectual point of view but rather from that of feeling and emotion. To know God is for Coleridge a deeper thing than merely to have demonstrated His existence. His message is one of his own personal knowledge of God, of his discovery of the sacredness and gladness of things once despised and unnoticed. How did this change come about? How were his eyes opened? His life had been wrapped up in self, but in the midst of this loneliness where God seemed not to be, his mind passed out of its egotism and found joy in the things round about him. With the change of self into a sense of sympathy and a harmony of his soul with nature, he was able to pray and enter into the divine order of things. Then, everything becomes possessed of the nature of God, the mark of divine love abiding on all. Such a sense of the deep and surpassing love of God brings to the mariner the realization that God's love means a new creation of the whole man and a redemption of the whole life into usefulness and tenderness. But this change has not come about by argument but by experience, a discipline which awakened in man the consciousness of his deep spiritual need, and at the same time caused him to see that close at hand in every man are the love and the presence of God which alone can satisfy the soul.

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Coleridge's Aids to Reflection, published in 1825, is the best known and most valuable of his prose work, although the Confessions of An Inquiring Spirit is usually thought of in connection with this writing. The latter is comprised of a group of letters, published posthumously. With the publication of the Aids to Reflection there is an inauguration of a new movement in English thought. It is not a systematic work but rather the fragmentary musings of a thinker as he pondered over questions which had been raised by his predecessors in the fields of philosophy and theology. In this work we notice his stress upon experience and inner spiritual consciousness to authenticate the truth of religion. His purposes in writing it are, in his own words, as following:

> "1. To direct the reader's attention to the value of the Science of Words....
> 2. To establish the distinct characters of Prudence, Morality, and Religion....
> 3. To substantiate and set forth at large the momentous distinction between Reason and Understanding....
> 4. To exhibit a full and consistent Scheme of the Christian Dispensation, and more largely of all the peculiar doctrines of the Christian Faith....There are indeed Mysteries, in evidence of which no reasons can be brought. But it has been my endeavor to show, that the true solution of this problem is, that these Mysteries are Reason, Reason in its highest form of Self-affirmation." 1.

The Confessions of An Inquiring Spirit, left by Coleridge in manuscript at his death, are related to the Inspiration of the Scriptures. They are written in the form of letters to a friend,

> "concerning the bounds between the right, and the superstitions, use and estimation of the Sacred Canon; in

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1. Coleridge, Aids to Reflection, pp. xvi-xviii

which the Writer submissively discloses his own private judgment on the following Questions:-

I. 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?-

II. 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 honour which cometh from love? 1 John, iv. 18." 1.

The volume, On The Constitution of Church and State according to the Idea of Each, was published in 1830, and was the last volume which the author himself saw in print. Here again his literary style is rambling, and, as everywhere in his writings, we are brought in contact with certain large conceptions which cover too much of a field for a detailed study.

Typical of his life and thought is the narrative of some of his conversations, brought to us in Specimens of the Table Talk of the Late Samuel Taylor Coleridge. Written in diary form, his views on many subjects from 1822 until his death are made known to us. No kind of classification of subjects is possible.

Biographia Literaria was written in 1817 and resembles in style and content Aids to Reflection, although it reveals immature and inconsistent ideas when compared with his later developments.

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

B. His Philosophy and Theology

1. The Difficulty of Separating the Two

One finds in a study of this nature the difficulty of sharply dividing between what might strictly be called "philosophy" and "theology". If one agrees with Lyman,[1] theology becomes simply reflective thinking about religion, or some particular historical religion, and the organization of the results of such thinking. The only difference between a philosophy and a theology of religion is in the scope, the former being the broader field of the two, and the latter originating from some particular history of religious beliefs. Both terms imply reflective thinking and the organization of material derived from the thought processes. In the case of studying the theological and philosophical ideas of Coleridge, the problem becomes more acute because of the very nature of his essential doctrines. His main purpose was to bridge the great gulf which existed between these two realms of thought that had been held in times past to be opposite and conflicting depositories of truth. It has been pointed out that he was influenced by both English and German thinkers. There seems to be a tendency on the part of all German philosophers to think in broader fields than the English men have done. That is, the great German thinkers have reconstructed the whole scheme of philosophy, which included religion, metaphysics, theology, morality, and sources of knowledge, while British leaders have been content to work with certain

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1. Lyman, The Meaning and Truth of Religion, p. 13

phases of particular subjects. With Coleridge, however, we find the Continental element entering the Isles. In his way of thinking, the relationship between philosophy and theology cannot be broken. The mind of man, his Reason, is implicitly bound up with the things round about him, with the natural phenomena and with religious concepts. We shall discover how these two branches of thought are united by studying his distinctive viewpoints in this matter.

2. His Conception of the Harmony Between Reason and Religion

For many years there had been conflict between what we commonly call "reason" and "religion". The Protestant Reformation had left upon the minds of men the necessity of salvation through faith, as against salvation by works and institutionalism. But in other directions there had been developments contemporary with Protestantism; rationalism and physical science were taking their places in the thinking of the age. Historical criticism sought out the causes, at least to some extent, and attempted to trace the course of events. Men wanted to have a reason for their beliefs and convictions in religion as well as in the arts and sciences. Evangelicalism, Pietism, and the traditional creeds of this time were not only unconcerned with a view of harmonizing reason with their faith, but thought it positively opposed to Christian doctrine. Along with the rise of the Romantic and Idealistic period, in which truth was authenticated by feeling and emotion, there came about the broaden-

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ing and liberalizing tendencies which made religion inclusive of many ideas, heretofore considered as separate and as having no religious meaning. Such a tendency has been called "immanentism".[1] In a more crude sense it may be considered somewhat akin to pantheism. It embraced natural phenomena as revealing divine Will, all the experiences of man as having some definite purpose. The source of authority was not in a time-worn traditional creed but in the personal experience of the individual himself which assured him of the truth. It was to uphold to a certain degree this need for freedom of individuality in thought and experience, yet to safeguard such a liberal view from becoming clandestine and perverted in the hands of those who sought to take advantage, that Coleridge set forth his peculiar credos.

a. Man as Essentially a Religious Being, Having a Definite Spiritual Constitution

Coleridge found that Christianity rested upon three ultimate facts: the reality of the law of conscience, the existence of a responsible will as the subject of that law, and the existence of God. From these assumptions he derived his views of Christianity which he interpreted as a living expression of the spiritual consciousness in man. "If there be aught Spiritual in Man, the Will must be such. If there be a Will, there must be a Spirituality in Man."[2] Judging from all that he wrote upon

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1. Webb, A Study of Religious Thought in England since 1850, pp. 10-16
2. Coleridge, Aids to Reflection, p.88

the subject, an essential tenet in his theology is the universal reason and the absolute will in man. The faculties serving man's thinking and doing are arranged in this manner:

> "the prudential corresponds to the sense and the understanding; the moral to the heart and the conscience; the spiritual to the will and the reason, that is, to the infinite will reduced to harmony with, and in subordination to, the reason, as a ray from that true light which is both reason and will, universal reason, and will absolute." 1.

His conception of reason in man may truthfully be said to be an outstanding fruit of his thinking and a term which is not easily grasped by the lay-mind. "The definition and proper character of Man--that, namely, which should contra-distinguish him from the Animals--is to be taken from his reason rather than from his understanding: in regard that in other creatures there may be something of understanding, but there is nothing of reason." 2. He holds that reason and its objects do not appertain to the world of the senses nor do they partake of sense or fancy; they are supersensual; they are not things of reflection or association. "Reason is not the faculty of the finite", 3. that which reduces the confused impressions of sense to their essential forms. "Reason, as one with the absolute will..., and therefore for man the certain representative of the will of God, is above the will of man as an individual will." 4. Coleridge makes the reason, taken in this broad sense, definitely related to the will of God, which is, as he believes, the final aim of all our duties and to which all of man is to be harmonized. The will of God, or the supreme intelligence, is revealed to

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1. Ibid., p. 21
2. Coleridge, Aids to Reflection, pp. 137, 138
3. Coleridge, An Essay on Faith, p. 345
4. Ibid., p. 346

man through the conscience, which consists, fundamentally, of an "inappellable bearing-witness"[1] to the truth and reality of our reason. Faith, then, he makes to be the obedience of the individual will to the reason: "Faith subsists in the synthesis of the Reason and the Individual Will... And by virtue of...Reason, Faith must be a Light, a form of knowing, a beholding of Truth."[2] If we attach to his idea of Life the meaning of the sum of all moral and spiritual acts, so is Faith the source and sum, the principle of the fidelity of Man to God, by subordinating his human Will to his Reason, which is the sum of all spiritual Truth, representing and manifesting the Divine Will.

To fully appreciate his enlarged conception of Christianity and man's life in its relation to it, it is desirable to remember that the Evangelical School had thought of Christianity as something super-added to the highest life of humanity, as a scheme of salvation authenticated by miracles, as a part of human history interpolated into the whole order. No place was given for the largeness and unity of human experience, that keynote sounded by the Romanticists. Religion was separated not only from art and philosophy but even from morality. It was the distinctive work of Coleridge to restore the broken harmony between reason and religion. To do this, he showed that man is essentially a religious being, having a definite spiritual constitution. Religion is not something to be added to his life.

> "Christianity is not a theory, or a speculation, but a life:--not a philosophy of life, but a life, and a living process. It has been 1800 years in existence...."[3]

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1. Ibid., p. 349
2. Ibid., p. 349
3. Coleridge, Works, vol. i., p. 233

In attempting to vindicate the rationality of religion, he faced a serious dilemma: he must assert against the Empirical school the spiritual constitution of human nature, and against the hyper-evangelical school the reasonable working of spiritual influence.[1] To uphold his claims, he asserts the spirituality in man, the self-power or Will which is at the root of all his existence. This cannot be proved by one man to another but every man can prove it for himself because such an assertive power lies in the experience of all. To the evangelical tradition, which brought religion to man from the outside and had no concern for man's spiritual constitution beyond that he was a sinner and in danger of hell, Coleridge replied that man is a fallen creature, but added that sin does not come about by an accident of bodily constitution or any other cause, rather because of his deseased will. This will we have come to recognize as the "intelligent self" of man and is a fundamental conception lying at the root of his system of thought. Conscience is the original sense of right and wrong and governs the will. It is the function of the Christian Religion and Revelation to build up the spiritual life, that is, to educate the will, to enlighten the conscience, and to remedy the evil. This power comes from God in Christ, so we note that at this point he joins with the Evangelical School, and every other living Christian Faith for that matter, in attributing to Christ salvation. Prayerful contemplation and the familiarization of the mind with Christ, the Redeemer and Mediator of mankind, by the study of the living and self-subsisting Word, the truth of all being, is the force which

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1. Tulloch, Religious Thought in Britain During the XIXth Century, p. 14

makes for the individual experience of Christ's salvation. As he states elsewhere:

> "...the light which lighteth every man, so that what we call reason, is itself a light from that light.... But it is not merely light, but therein is life; and it is the life of Christ, the co-eternal Son of God, that is the only true life-giving light of men. We are assured ... that Christ is God; and God manifested in the flesh. As God, he must be present entire in every creature; -- (for how can God, or indeed any spirit, exist in parts?)" 1.

In the whole realm of his thinking, however, he presses the need of measuring Christian theology and religion by the facts which come through the spiritual experience of the conscience. There is a moral necessity, he believes, for adhering to the doctrine of the Trinity and the Divinity of Christ, not to be gained from traditional creeds and customs but by the compulsion of the spiritual conscience.[2.] Such, in essence, is the general character of the change he made in the conception of Christianity: from being an antiquated creed with no life, it became a living expression of the spiritual consciousness. Here we see the influence of Kant's transcendentalism, the category of the moral imperative. Man's volitional nature is dependent upon a spiritual consciousness derived intuitively from God. While the Evangelical movement had sought to give it this living power, it was never able to make it applicable to the reason, as Coleridge did. He was able to make Christian doctrine alive to Reason as well as Conscience by interpreting it in the light of our moral and spiritual life. Heretofore, theological dogmas were held tenable, true or false, without any reference to a subjective standard of

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1. Coleridge, "Notes on the Book of Common Prayer", Aids to Reflection, p.351
2. Coleridge, Literary Remains, vol. i., pp. 393-4

judgment. Revelation was pure data given supernaturally. Coleridge did not disparage the Bible as Revelation, but on the other hand, he gave place for the Divine light in man. Faith, then, must not rest merely upon objective data but rather upon internal experience. "Faith subsists in the synthesis of the Reason and the individual Will.... Faith must be a Light, a form of knowing, a beholding of Truth." 1.

While holding to the preëminence of the individual feeling and Will as authoritative sources of Truth, he does not take what might be called a humanist position by saying that all this originated in man's own mind. Just as God is the Author of all thoughts and deeds, so is He also the final aim of all man's duties, the conscience revealing the will of God. So he makes the true will in man a spiritual or a supernatural gift. It is this view that makes possible sin in man's nature, and this is one of the most important elements in his thinking. All philosophical and theological controversies come back to this question -- is there a truly spiritual center, a divine root in man, which answers to a higher spiritual center in the universe? Here he brings theology back to this living center by showing that all sin was original sin in that it originated in the will itself and that sin which did not originate there could not rightfully be called such.

> "A sin is an evil which has its ground or origin in the agent, and not in the compulsion of circumstances.... no natural thing or act can be called originant, or be truly be said to have an origin in any other.... Sin is Evil having an Origin. But inasmuch as it is evil, in God it cannot originate: and yet in some Spirit (that is, in some supernatural power) it must. For in Nature there is no origin. Sin therefore is spiritual Evil: but the spiritual in man is the Will." 2.

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1. Coleridge, An Essay on Faith, Aids to Reflection, p. 349
2. Coleridge, Aids to Reflection, pp. 175-178

In this study of the spiritual constitution of man and the elements which go to make him a religious being, the particularly strong points emphasized by Coleridge have been the supernatural fused into the natural, the uniting of Reason and Faith, the existence of the human Will and Conscience. Space does not permit a detailed study of these factors, and to treat them individually would be a useless task, for they are closely correlated with one another in the whole set-up of the personality. Man is essentially spiritual, he believes, because there is in him a Will. Such a Will is guided by the Conscience, or Divine light, which comes to every man, making him to decide issues, not according to external and objective data, but according to the dictates of his Conscience and feeling. Above all, faith is the supernatural faculty which elevates the soul above sense and sensible things, even above reason. Reason is to be distinguished from understanding because of the power of the former to discern and correct errors occasioned by the sensory observation of the latter. By Understanding, Coleridge means the processes of scientific generalization, systematization of particular facts. A higher type of knowledge, however, is Reason, made up of ultimate principles of our rational nature. It makes intelligible the facts of understanding.[1] Yet with all his intuitive perception, Coleridge remained agnostic to a large degree. Christianity was a Divine revelation, not mere human tradition, and its higher doctrines were beyond the clear knowledge of man.

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1. Rogers, English and American Philosophy since 1800, p.112

b. The Place of the Bible in the Revelation of God

By stressing experience and the inner spiritual sense to authenticate the truth of religion, a result of Schleiermacher's influence upon him, it has been pointed out that he regarded man as essentially spiritual in nature, akin to the Divine, and saved by spiritual forces working within. He maintained the belief in the presence of the Infinite in all life, hinting strongly at pantheism. He insisted on the oneness of the Reason which we call God and the Reason which was within every human being, "the light which lighteth every man coming into the world".[1.]

For a proper estimate of his ideas concerning the use of the Bible as a direct source of knowledge and how it is to be approached, we must turn to his Confessions of an Inquiring Spirit, not published until six years after his death. The modern spirit of historical inquiry had already begun, and therefore it was impossible for the old notions of verbal inspiration, or infallible dictation of the Holy Scripture to continue.[2.] Rationalism, growing out of scientific research, had combined with the literary historical method to displace the tenets of external, miraculous exhibitions of the Divine Will. The origin and progress of civilization lay bare before the scrutinizing eyes of this age. To Coleridge belongs the honor of having first called attention to the fact that the Scriptures were to be read and studied as any other literature, in the light of their continuous development and adaptations. How he

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1. Coleridge, Notes on the Book of Common Prayer, p. 351
2. Tulloch, Religious Thought in Britain During the XIXth Century, p.25

again related the human with the Divine by showing the unity between Reason, which is the Divine Purpose, and the Reason which exists in each individual is clearly illustrated in his method of Bible interpretation.

> "But there is a Book... read, and yet unread,-- read and familiar to my mind in all parts, but which is yet to be perused as a whole;... I take up this work with the purpose to read it for the first time as I should read any other work.... I will not leave it in the power of unbelievers to say, that the Bible is for me only what the Koran is for the deaf Turk, and the Vedas for the feeble and acquiescent Hindoo. No; I will retire up into the mountain, and hold secret commune with my Bible above the contagious blastments of prejudice, and the fog-blight of selfish superstition." 1.

Two things are called to our attention in this passage. One is his concept of the unity of the whole; an integral part is not to be studied outside of its relationship to the entire body. So had the idea of the unity of all things permeated his thinking that it is implied also in this particular instance. Closely associated with this harmony of parts is the method which is to be followed in the study of this Word. He would not permit traditional creeds to be imposed upon the seeking Christian. They were the mechanical adjustments to fit certain needs but were not tenable for all classes and conditions. Whereas the Reason that is in the Universe and in man simultaneously gives evidence to the truth as revealed in this Word.

> "There is a Light higher than all, even the Word that is in the beginning;... the Word that is light for every man, and life for as many as give heed to it. If between this Word and the written Letter I shall any where seem to myself to find a discrepance, I will not conclude that such there actually is; nor on the other hand will I fall under the condemnation of them that would lie for God, but seek as I may, be thankful for what I have--and wait." 2.

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1. Coleridge, Confessions of an Inquiring Spirit, pp. 293, 294
2. Ibid., p. 294

To follow the leading of this higher Light, the Conscience, as the direct manifestation of God in man, to authenticate truth by feeling, based upon the synthesis of Reason and Will, is the procedure of knowing the Scripture and the basis of judgment. With this power at hand, he could well go on to say, "...whatever finds me, bears witness for itself that it has proceeded from a Holy Spirit, even from the same Spirit, which remaining in itself, yet regenerateth all other powers, and in all ages entering into holy souls making them friends of God, and prophets".[1] He has dared to be found by the teachings of the Bible and by so doing confesses the proofs of its inspiration. He contended for the self-evidencing nature of revealed religion; by the natural development of their spiritual powers and natures, the writers of the Bible were able to reveal the spirit of truth. Inspiration, then, is the outgrowth of natural processes of the relation between God and man and not a matter of mechanical dictation or verbal inspiration.[2] The Bible itself does not claim infallibility, and certainly there appear enough seeming contradictions for us. If the individual Reason is put to the test, where is the selective activity to stop? Here enters the fundamental source of knowing according to Coleridge. The higher thought and power of any literature is self-revealing, and the Bible is to be studied as any other writing. There is a subjective standard of judgment which is far more real than the canonization of propositions of the authorized creeds, for in man is the spiritual consciousness and inner Light which tests truth on the basis of reason. A reasonable faith must rest not merely upon objective

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1. Coleridge, Confessions of an Inquiring Spirit, p. 295
2. Ibid., pp. 296-7

data but upon internal experience. Coleridge illustrated this conception by pointing out Jesus' appeal to the unity of Divine light which the Jews themselves recognized in the Scriptures. If they had really understood their own Scriptures, they would have known that He was the Messiah. Whether Moses was the author of the Pentateuch was a question which did not greatly concern the Master. But there was a stream of thought and prophecy which pointed to Christ running throughout his history, and that, after all, is the great thing to consider. Back of all inspiration is an Infallible Intelligence which not only inspires writers but divinely informs them as well. This Intelligence speaks in a unity which is not broken by the diversity of instruments through which it makes itself audible. Therefore, to avoid discrepancies and chances for inconsistencies, each Book is to be studied by itself to gain the author's distinctive, authoritative message.[1.]

To thoroughly understand and appreciate the truth and worth of Christianity, there must be first of all the recognition of the communion of the Holy Spirit. If men reject this fact, Coleridge believes they cannot even understand each other, much less Divine Revelation. In souls that are desirous of good, there is a co-operation of a divine Spirit, however varied may be the natures in which it is at work. No one can say that he has the last word in the interpretation of the Scriptures. Just as men of science have been discovered to have flaws in their ideas, because they had not understood the whole of the universe, so might there be defects and obstacles in the understanding of the Bible because

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1. Coleridge, Confessions of an Inquiring Spirit, p. 296, ff.

it is not thoroughly known. But this does not preclude the fact that the Bible contains errors according to the infallible doctrine nor does it prove that one must accept it without its being tested by reason. "I demand for the Bible only the justice which you grant to other books of grave authority, and to other proved and acknowledged benefactors of mankind."[1] How this thought must have reacted upon the dignitaries of the established churches, who held that the Bible was not to be regarded or reasoned about in the way that other books may be, that the Bible was different in kind and stood by itself.

He concludes his argument and sums up the conviction in the following words:

> "Revealed Religion (and I know of no religion not revealed) is in its highest contemplation the unity, that is, the identity or co-inherence, of Subjective and Objective. It is in itself, and irrelatively, at once inward Life and Truth, and outward Fact and Luminary. But as all Power manifests itself in the harmony of correspondent Opposites, each supposing and supporting the other, - so has religion its objective, or historic and ecclesiastical pole, and its subjective, or spiritual and individual pole." 2.

Religion, as he understood it, is revealed because all truth is revealed. The conclusion of the whole would seem to be, therefore, that the divinity of the Bible rests not in the letter but rather in the spirit, in the unity of all the Divine impressions which it seeks to convey. Sincerity and a devout will to know is the prerequisite. A prejudiced mind has no place in the study of the Scriptures. Since the Bible is the repository of Divine revelation and no one yet has been able to plumb the depths of the Word, it is inconceivable to think that its great truths

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1. Coleridge, Confessions of an Inquiring Spirit, p. 317
2. Ibid., p. 335

and doctrines could be so systematically and finally arranged as the theologians of the time were wont to do. It is progressively revealed as it is thus studied. The reasonableness of this faith lies not in the mere acquiescence to supernaturally dictated data but in the leading of the Light of the Conscience and experience of the thing itself.

c. His Conception of the Enlarged Church

In keeping with the system of philosophy which Coleridge set forth, "the only attempt I know ever made to reduce all knowledges into harmony",[1] we find him being absorbed in the promulgation of the Church as an intellectual as well as a spiritual commonwealth. He had had no outstanding success in practical matters, as we have noted in the failures of his Pantisocratic vision and his own domestic life. But his extreme idealism in the unification of all ideas and practices spurred him on toward enlarging the scope of the Church in its aims and activities.

A new social mind was being formed in England following the great depression of the early nineteenth century and the passing of the English Reform Bill of 1832. Mechanized industry was producing a new middle class which found itself excluded from the rights and privileges of the state. What position was the Established Church to take in this crisis? Already it was being criticized for its inefficiency and demand for revenues.[2] Leaders prophecied that the Reform would even bring about the confiscation of Church property. The evangelical party, on the

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1. Coleridge, Table Talk, p. 136
2. Gloyn, "Coleridge's Theory of the Church", Church History, Dec. 1934, p. 285.

other hand, was sadly lacking in learning and breadth of historical knowledge. The fact has been pointed out that it sought to keep religion apart from social life and intellectual interests. Historical survey had not yet revealed the Church as the mother of philosophy and learning together with faith and piety. In such a situation Coleridge developed what may be called "a social philosophy of conservative collectivism, a philosophy for which a theory of a national church was essential".[1] Even at an early age he became cognizant of disorder, and his main social interest was balance and order. In a sense he became the prophet, warning England to take notice of what had happened in France during the Revolution. True to the Romantic Spirit, he claimed the right of the individual over mechanical and traditional forms and conventions. To the lack of balance and unity of all life he attributed the extreme disorder of this period. Most of all, he saw in the prevailing times the same cause for deficiency and retrogression as is noticeable today, viz., a philosophical and religious class had not kept pace with the newly developed trade class. Ethical and religious interests must be considered as well as the economic.[2]

To accomplish his purpose of harmonizing these two different ideas, he published a volume, On the Constitution of Church and State according to the idea of each, in 1830. In spite of its literary weakness, we are here brought face to face with certain large conceptions, covering more than the subject at hand. Coleridge is debtor to former ideas expressed

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1. Gloyn, Coleridge's Theory of the Church, p. 286
2. Ibid., pp. 287-290

on this subject, particularly to that of Hooker's theory of the church advocated in the Elizabethan age. According to this theory, "the church and the state are really identical, the church being merely the state in its educational and religious aspect and organization."[1] There is a distinction, Coleridge believes, between the Christian and the national church. The former is a spiritual and Divine aggregate, opposed to the "world", and having nothing to do with states and kingdoms. The latter is an institution, an estate of the realm, the incorporation of all the learning and knowledge, both intellectual and spiritual, in a country.[2] Thus, he clearly distinguished between the Christian Church and the national church. He would also differentiate between the clergy of the former and what he has called the "Clerisy", or the third estate, of the latter group. So inclusive became his national church that not only were the clergy called into the "Clerisy" but also "the learned of all denominations, the sages and professors of ... all the so-called liberal arts and sciences, the possession and application of which constitute the civilization of a country, as well as the theological."[3]

The constitution of a nation would be formed, therefore, by the two poles, the political pole or idea of the state, and the cultural pole or the idea of the national church. The balance of the two orders of society would not be found in Parliament, but through this third estate, the national church, which seeks to "secure and improve that civilization, without which the nation could be neither permanent nor progressive".[4] Through the Clerisy, the nation's citizens would be educated

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1. Tulloch, Movements in Religious Thought in Britain in the XIXth Century, p. 32
2. Coleridge, On the Constitution of Church and State, pp. 38, 45
3. Ibid., p. 49
4. Ibid., p. 47

in the knowledge necessary for their understanding of their rights and duties, the national life would be bound together, and a character of civilization equal or superior to that of any other nation would be secured.

This, in brief, was the plan offered by Coleridge to the Church of England at a critical time. He appealed for a definite relation with the function and purpose of the state. So far, the Church had failed in some of Its most important duties, as is seen in one of his conversations:

> "The fatal error into which the peculiar character of the English Reformation threw our Church, has borne bitter fruit ever since. - I mean that of its clinging to court and state, instead of cultivating the people. The church ought to be a mediator between the people and the government, between the poor and rich. As it is, I fear the church has let the hearts of the common people be stolen from it." 1.

To achieve this end, he continues:

> "A state, in idea, is the opposite of a church. A state regards classes, and not individuals; and it estimates classes, not by internal merit, but external accidents, as property, birth, etc. But a church does the reverse of this, and disregards all external accidents, and looks at men as individual persons, allowing no gradation of ranks, but such as greater or less wisdom, learning, and holiness ought to confer. A church, so considered, and the state, exclusively of the church constitute together the idea of a state in its largest sense." 2.

Social reform, education and enlightenment in civic functions, the balancing of national unity, the abolition of the conflict between religion and temporal affairs seem to be the main interests involved in his theory of the church, however fanciful and far-reaching it may have been. The national church idea was not a censure of the Established Church as such

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1. Coleridge, Table Talk, pp. 108, 109
2. Ibid., p. 109

but was developed in order to meet the challenge of a new industrial society. It was again a social philosophy embracing many fields of endeavor and thought, a reaction against the individualistic philosophy of the times, a plea for the unity and progression of all that is in harmony with man's spiritual nature.

C. Summary

Whatever might be said about Coleridge, his qualities as a thinker, his peculiar perception and insight, his rambling and unorganized dissertations on varied subjects, one thing remains sure: he was not content to take a narrow view of the world and all that lies therein. When he seemed to ramble and lose himself in a wilderness of digressions, he was at that time working out his conclusions through a miraculous logic. He was not satisfied with a part; he sought for the whole. Hence the minuteness and universality in his thinking.

With this thought in mind, it becomes easier for us to understand his zeal for the unity and harmonious working of all attributes, both human and Divine. Because of the very vastness of the scope which his views entailed, he could conceive of the definite relation and harmony existing between reason and religion, the immanent presence of God in the world, the order and balance which should exist in a national church. He had no quarrel with the existing order of things in the material or mundane world so long as individual personality was given its proper place in the development of civilization. For him, there was no conflict between the human and the Divine. Man was essentially a spiritual

being, inheriting such powers as to enable him to understand and interpret the Divine Will. God ever revealed Himself to man through the Inner Light of reason and conscience. The Bible is one source of this enlightenment and must be considered from the viewpoint of its practicability in the human life to be of real value. To assume its authority on the grounds of traditionalism and creedal statements, granted by institutions which have invested themselves with sole authority, is to disqualify and set at nought the infinite worth of the Word as well as to deny the one true source of knowing the Divine Will, which is the individual conscience as directed by the Spirit of God. Just as in all this world there lies a harmony of nature, uniting God and man, so throughout the Scriptures there runs a Divine unity, to be perceived, not by accepting the doctrine of verbal inspiration and infallibility, but by studying the Book as a whole, unprejudiced in mind and devout in spirit. Likewise the church, so conceived as a national realm, becomes universal in its function and purpose, administering to all the spiritual, intellectual, social, and aesthetic needs of mankind. Again this takes religion and philosophy from the hands of the ecclesiastical order and places the control under the unity of the people, to be directed by those best fitted to lead.

When once we grasp the general trend of his thinking, we must confess that there is a great deal of organization and integration of ideas, however much scattered they appear on the surface. These have been drawn together in this study of his particular viewpoints, and now we turn to see how they have been instrumental in forming the opinions of his successors.

CHAPTER IV

HIS INFLUENCE ON LATER THINKERS AND MOVEMENTS

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When we approach the problem of pointing out the distinct contribution which Coleridge made to modern theology, it is perfectly natural to expect divergence of opinion regarding this matter. It will be held by some that his thought and writing had profound influence upon certain individuals who later exerted much power in their peculiar fields of endeavor. Others would have us believe that, while he left a marked impression upon some minds and was the source of certain schools of thought, his real value is only in historic interest, the bridging of a gap during an important period, the transmission of ideas from the Continent to England and other centers of theological development. All agree that the chief benefit to be derived from his life is diffusive rather than concentrative, that, while one cannot lay one's finger definitely upon immediate results, lasting concepts have been made indelible in the whole realm of religious thought. There are, however, a number of very certain contributions which he has made, to be noted in the lives of men and movements which have succeeded him.

A. The Lack of Influence in Germany

Coleridge did not appreciably influence the theology which developed in Germany since his time. He acquired many of his fundamental and

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early ideas from that country, and these helped to mold his later philosophical mode of thought. Nothing is remarked in any of the works on recent German theology which would indicate that his contributing conceptions played a part in the development of religious ideas during the last century. Dr. Richter[1] comments that, while Lessing appreciated him, probably from the literary point of view, Coleridge never had any influence there. German thinking was deep and mystical and impractical. Coleridge tended towards the broad and practical application of truth as he saw it. He saw things in their most universal setting, in an all-encompassing point of view. He wanted to apply his principles to objective entities, however idealistic and impractical they may have been. The German thinkers were content to see singly and separately, and did not particularly care whether their ideas were applicable in a practical sense.

B. His Influence in England

1. The Oriel School

In Oxford University there was a movement which was proceeding in the same general direction which Coleridge was pursuing, so it is easy to perceive that there became organized a group of disciples who sought to carry out further the ideas presented by him. It was his desire to transfer Christian theology from the objective basis of inference to the

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1. Dr. Julius Richter, Conference, The Biblical Seminary, Oct. 1935

realm of subjective experience that appealed to these men.[1] But it will become evident that these men at Oxford were too Aristotelian and that his greatest influence was to be shed upon the Platonists in Cambbridge, who later emerged into the Broad Church. Whately seems to have been the most influential leader of the new Oriel School, sometimes referred to as the "Noetic School".[2] Here it was that the men rejoiced in the reputation of having superior mental penetration and independence. Whately is strikingly contrasted with Coleridge: he took the prevailing philosophy as he found it and focused upon it the light of ordinary reason and historical fact. He was a practical man "with strong critical tendencies",[3] a subverter of prejudice and the commonplace. "The majority of people seemed to him... to live in an atmosphere of theological delusion, mistaking their own conceits for essential principles..."[4] There was in him, as in Coleridge, a strong tendency towards Christian agnosticism. Arnold was another contemporary of Coleridge, working in the Oriel School during the same period, attempting to vitalize religious thought, not by carrying it into a higher region of thought and fitting the doctrines to the inner constitution of humanity as Coleridge had done, but by showing how Christian ideas extend into every aspect of conduct and duty, raising the whole round of life.[5] Unlike Coleridge's interest in metaphysics and philosophy, Arnold's interest lay in the objective and practical, in the ethical and disciplinary. While it is impossible to assign any definite influence of Coleridge upon either of

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1. Brastow, The Modern Pulpit, p. 69
2. Tulloch, Religious Thought in Britain During the XIXth Century, p. 43
3. Brastow, The Modern Pulpit, p. 69
4. Tulloch, Op. Cit., p. 49
5. Ibid., p. 56

these two men, the fact remains that they all sought independently and at the same time the spiritualizing of religious truths, the practical application of these in life, and the breaking down of old technicalities and traditional forms which had separated theology from life. To trace any single influence is a difficult task, since it operates to a large extent unconsciously in its subjects. But the influence which Coleridge had upon the men of this school, working simultaneously as they did, has been felt in the modern theology. "It has furnished a new philosophic basis for Christian apologetics. It justifies the preaching of our age in dealing with those truths of Christianity that are most closely connected with Christian experience...."[1] Men were made to feel in all ranks how much religion concerned them even in their everyday work, that it was not only for Sunday, service, or sacrament, but that it included every form and expression of public and personal activity.

The most definite form of modification and change which grew out of this mingled group was in the view of Scripture. We have noted the views of Coleridge in this matter, and it is clearly evident how closely associated are the conceptions held by these men. Dr. Cobb[2] speaks of the Bible as going through an iconoclastic controversy during the nineteenth century. Liberal orthodoxy based its whole strength upon this single modification, that of Scripture's mechanical or verbal inspiration. The Oriel men considered this question negatively, while Coleridge discerned "eternal ideas" moving in the Book and which appealed to the enlightened understanding.[3] The Bible for Arnold, for example, was not

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1. Brastow, The Modern Pulpit, p. 70
2. Cobb, Theology Old and New, p. 84
3. Clark, Liberal Orthodoxy, p. 140

to be regarded as a Koran or infallible code but as literature, the same position held by Coleridge. But Arnold was concerned with the use of the Scripture for practical guidance as contrasted with Coleridge's reflective and philosophical interest. However, that the Divine revelation appeals to our nature and finds us was held equally by Arnold, and the misreading of Scripture comes about by one's reading into it ideas of one's own rather than from any real obscurity in the text itself.[1.] The opinion that the Bible was truly inspired, but only in its substance and spirit, was the assertion put forth by the Oriel men about 1825. As we may see, Coleridge was one of the group who struggled for new light. That he directly influenced any one of this school at this particular time is but a speculation because he was still contemporaneous to them, working toward the same goal. There is no doubt, however, but that his thinking stimulated their minds, and through this interaction new pathways in a dead theological wilderness were being blazed.

2. The Broad Church Movement

a. Julius Hare

There were men who became more immediate disciples of Coleridge than those of the Oriel School and who themselves exerted a pronounced influence upon the religious thought and life in Britain during the middle of the nineteenth century. We speak particularly of Julius C. Hare, Whewell, Thirlwall, Frederick Maurice, Edward Irving, Charles

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1. Tulloch, Religious Thought in Britain During the Nineteenth Century, p. 64.

Kingsley, and John Sterling. All of these men were destined to wield much force in the thinking of their times, and they confess their obligations to the work of Coleridge, directly or indirectly. Julius Hare is a notable example and leader of this group. In a collection of his sermons, The Mission of the Comforter, published in 1846, he placed this dedicatory note:

> "TO THE HONOURED MEMORY OF SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE, THE CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHER, WHO THROUGH DARK AND WINDING PATHS OF SPECULATION WAS LED TO THE LIGHT, IN ORDER THAT OTHERS BY HIS GUIDANCE MIGHT REACH THAT LIGHT, WITHOUT PASSING THROUGH THE DARKNESS, THESE SERMONS ON THE WORK OF THE SPIRIT ARE DEDICATED WITH DEEP THANKFULNESS AND REVERENCE BY ONE OF THE MANY PUPILS WHOM HIS WRITINGS HAVE HELPT TO DISCERN THE SACRED CONCORD AND UNITY OF HUMAN AND DIVINE TRUTH." 1.

The Preface to this book records also the place which Hare gave to the genius of Coleridge:

> "Of recent English writers, the one with whose sanction I have chiefly desired, whenever I could, to strengthen my opinions, is the great religious philosopher (Coleridge) to whom the mind of our generation in England owes more than to any other man. My gratitude to him I have endeavoured to express by dedicating the following Sermons to his memory; and the offering is so far at least appropriate, in that the main work of his life was to spiritualize, not only our philosophy, but our theology, to raise them both above the empiricism into which they had long been dwindling, and to set them free from the technical trammels of logical systems." 2.

In spite of the fact that his work, especially on Biblical criticism, did not appeal to the intellect of the following age in which Hare lived because his ideas were not properly understood, Hare goes on to say that this does not detract "from the sterling sense, the clear and farsighted discernment, the power of tracing principles in their remotest operations,

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1. Hare, The Mission of the Comforter, Dedication, p. v
2. Ibid., p. xiii

and of referring all things to their first principles...." [1] There may be some, believes Hare, who think that Coleridge's day is gone and that modern theology has gone beyond him, but in the estimation of this disciple, he saw what our modern theologians see and also what they did not see. He saw far beyond them, because he saw things in their universal principles and laws. [2] We may perceive something of a distinct result of Coleridge's conception of the Church in one of Hare's sermons, "The Unity of the Church", in which he states as one of the main causes of the spread of error through every region of thought and action the fact that "we entirely miss the harmony and unity of truth, and become involved in endless controversies and contradictions". [3] An excerpt from this sermon points out to us the application he makes of the Will of God in the universe as the center of all unity, precisely the thing that Coleridge was driving at.

> "We have strayed away from the one divine universal centre, and have set up a multitude of arbitrary fictitious centres in its stead; so that each people has its own centre, each class has its own centre, each party and sect has its own centre, nay, each individual man has his own centre; and that is himself. Hence, inasmuch as we all look out from a different point of view, and yet are persuaded that our point of view is the centre of the universe, we all see all things differently...." 4.

This becomes the great destroyer of unity and the cause of division, the setting up of ourselves, our own will, our own fancies, our own notions, as the center of the universe instead of the will and mind of God. [5]

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1. Hare, The Mission of the Comforter, Dedication, p. xiv
2. Hare, The Mission of the Comforter, Preface, p. xv
3. Ibid., p. 269
4. Ibid., p. 270
5. Ibid., p. 271

Brastow speaks of Hare as "the most accomplished broad churchman of his day.... He was the friend and follower of Coleridge, and an interpreter of his spiritual philosophy...."[1] His associates were Grote, Thirlwall, Sterling, and Maurice.

b. Frederick Denison Maurice

Frederick Denison Maurice is another representative of the Broad Church Movement and a follower of the teachings of Coleridge. He is spoken of as being the most important of the theologians who were instrumental in bringing both the strength and weakness of Coleridge's philosophy to bear upon English religious thought.[2] The very title which was given to this movement in which we find these men as leaders, "Broad Church", exemplifies the conception set forth by English theologians as a whole and Coleridge in particular. It was a Church "neither High nor Low, but Broad".[3] The whole teaching of Maurice, as leader, was a protest against party spirit or sectarianism. His attitude is manifest in one of his essays in which he scores all ecclesiastical parties: he calls to their attention the words of Jesus, "Judge not that ye be not judged" and critically assails his contemporaries.

> "Judge not! Why, judging is the very business of our lives, the main function of our Christianity. What are we all doing, High-Churchmen, Low-Churchmen, Broad-Churchmen, but passing judgment upon one another?... Every sect, every school, is encouraged by its religious organ to discover any fault that can be found in every sect and school except its own; to think that all virtues and graces are

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1. Brastow, The Modern Pulpit, p. 216
2. Rogers, English and American Philosophy Since 1800, p.116
3. Tulloch, Religious Thought in Britain During the XIXth Century, p. 261

> to be found in itself. And this spirit which is exhibited in those organs is diffused through our whole religious society." 1.

At the bottom of his thinking we find that he maintains religion as a life rather than a matter of historical or logical evidence, having its source in a Power not ourselves making for peace and happiness. In again speaking for the practical application of the Sermon on the Mount, he says, "I am pleading for no theological theory. I am inquiring how wayfaring men may be that which they are created to be, may do that which they are created to do." 2. True to the Coleridgean harmony of nature, both human and Divine, Maurice would make two general statements:

> "Divinity will be felt to be inseparable from morality; the Sermon on the Mount will set forth to us what God is, how this righteousness has come forth in human acts, how He makes those acts possible for us.
> There will not be two moralities, - one for the holy, one for the unholy. We shall understand that all morality is derived from God; that all immorality comes from ourselves. The holy will not dare to think that he is different from others." 3.

In this way he makes for the unity of all believers in Christ. He maintained that Christ was in every man and consequently every man in Christ, that every man was already a child of God and did not need to become one, that sin lay in refusing to recognize this fact and salvation in awaking to its glory and truth. Again do we see instances of Coleridge's influence upon his thinking when, in summing up his doctrinal beliefs, we find him believing that God, through Christ, is in every man; man's nature is essentially divine; it is the call of his own nature that man must hear; if he really believes that Christ is in him and that he him-

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1. Maurice, "Morality and Divinity", Tracts for Priests and People, pp. 293-4
2. Ibid., pp. 300-1
3. Ibid., p. 308

self is in Christ, the belief will have such power that all his life will be morally transformed.[1] As to the origin of this sentiment which was sounded throughout England in the middle of the nineteenth century, Clark states that this is "the note... with some supplemental notes added to make a richer chord which Coleridge had raised when the century was young".[2] Tulloch continues to show the force which was extended by Coleridge upon the men of the Broad Church, and especially Maurice:

> "No less than his friend Sterling he was an admiring student of Coleridge, and deeply indebted to his writings. Mr. John Stuart Mill welcomed them both as Coleridgians to the debates in which he delighted in 1826. In those debates Maurice himself tells us that 'he defended Coleridge's metaphysics' against the utilitarians. He elsewhere says that Coleridge had done much to preserve him from infidelity.... To the Aids to Reflection especially he expresses 'deep and solemn obligations'. Whatever other influences, therefore, affected Maurice, he struck his mental roots deeply in Coleridge.... He remained Coleridgian in the basis of his thought. It was the Coleridgian movement, under whatever modifications, that he and Kingsley really carried forward. The life of Coleridge's thought survived the ecclesiastical turmoil of the fourth decade of the century, and the scepticism that followed, till it emerged strong again in their hands. It became a new birth of religion in many of the stronger minds of the age when Anglicanism was discredited and for a time in arrest, and Evangelical Christianity had sunk into such teaching as that of Dr. Cumming and the slanderous orthodoxy of the Record.... It came as a religious power to them, when the power of religion was at ebb-tide in other directions. Maurice and Kingsley and Frederick Robertson became the religious teachers of a generation in danger of forgetting religion altogether." 3.

In answer to the traditional creeds of High Church Anglicalism and Calvinism, which taught that man had to become a child of God, having fallen away, Maurice maintained the divine constitution of man in Christ and

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1. Clark, Liberal Orthodoxy, pp. 200-1
2. Ibid., p. 201
3. Tulloch, Religious Thought in Britain During the XIXth Century, pp. 261-3

that salvation was to be secured by man's belief in the redemptive power of Christ. As he wrote to his mother who was Calvinistically inclined:

> "The truth is that every man is in Christ; the condemnation of every man is that he will not own the truth - he will not act as if it were true that except he were joined to Christ he could not think, breathe, live a single hour." 1.

It is not difficult to trace the line of Coleridge's pantheism in this doctrinal view, which is at the very heart of his theology. Such a responsibility placed upon the human feeling and emotion is in strong contrast with the popular conception of the Established Church and Dissenting Sects, which relied upon the dogmatic, plenary revelation and creedal statements. The movement which Maurice represented "sought to justify religion by an appeal to the spiritual instincts of humanity, and gave to reason a larger meaning than Newman gave it." 2. And "spiritual instincts" are powers which concerned Coleridge so much, the meaning of which he regarded with much care. In raising this question as to whether Maurice was a Broad-Churchman, Sanders brings out the fact that this leader did not want to be so-called because that would immediately place him in a separate category and would defeat the very trouble which he fought: the forming of another sect. He wanted to be sincerely a broad churchman without attaching labels to his belief.

> "Like his teacher, Coleridge, he combined a consuming desire for unity with a willingness to defend freedom of inquiry and assertion; a veneration for the truth that was old with a sincere respect for the truth that was new or still undiscovered; a conception of a God of power and love with a conception of a God of truth; and an insistence on man's rights

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1. Tulloch, Religious Thought in Britain During the XIXth Century, p. 269, from his letters, Vol. i, pp. 155-6
2. Sanders, "Was Frederick Denison Maurice a Broad-Churchman?", Church History, September 1934, p. 226

> as an individual with a like insistence on man's duties as a social being." 1.

In his Theological Essays, Maurice states his purpose and view with regard to the accepted standards of the times and how he differs with them:

> "If men stood in no relation to God, if they did not feel, however faintly, that they were made in His image, that they may call Him Father, it would seem the idlest of all fancies, either that mankind does form a 'living whole', or that each life has a preciousness and sanctity which He will acknowledge. But I cannot find that modern opinions - the current philosophies - give us any hint that we are related to God; that His image is stamped upon us; that we have a right to call Him Father." 2.

While he goes on to say that he finds warrants and pledges of our likeness to God and our fellowship with him in the old Theology of the Bible and the Creeds, there is also a darker side of the picture which speaks of his sin and despair,

> "the voice which comes from what is likest the devil in me.... And, oh, how much deeper is the abyss which the conscience opens to a man, which it shows to be yawning for himself, than all the pictures of torments with which the most eloquent preachers have terrified for a few moments a few of their hearers." 3.

In both cases, however, it is noticed that the voice is that from within man's own soul and not from external and mechanical exercise. He also has a writing which he has entitled The Conscience, 4. in which he discusses the word itself, the rules, liberty, supremacy, and education of the conscience. Summarily, we may say with Tulloch that:

> "It was Mr. Maurice's aim, in view of the half Christian or wholly materialized forms of thought around him, to reconstruct the Christian ideal that it might take its

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1. Sanders, "Was Frederick Denison Maurice A Broad-Churchman?", Church History, September 1934, p. 231
2. Maurice, Theological Essays, Preface, p. xii
3. Ibid., pp. xii, xiv
4. Maurice, The Conscience

> place once more in the human heart as the only power by which men can live and die." 1.

To those who would accept neither Anglicanism nor Evangelicalism he gave a Divine Philosophy by which they could work.

c. Charles Kingsley

We find the name of Maurice connected with that of Charles Kingsley and the two identified as leaders in Christian social reform during the nineteenth century.[2.] The personal experience in religion of the Evangelical Revival had been supplanted by the Oxford Movement, which stressed the social nature of Christianity. If Maurice is, as one author believes, the founder of Christian Socialism,[3.] certainly his disciple and co-worker in this field is Kingsley, the "Giant Great Heart". He represents the utilization of religious sentiment and appeals to the better side of human nature for the active work of God's glory. Kingsley's chief teaching to those who were outside of all recognized Christian influences was the divineness of all the nature of man. The body is the witness to the Divine skill and wisdom and may become the temple of the Holy Spirit. Man's purpose in life is to enjoy and serve God and find present happiness in him. Men who are busy in practical matters require a present-day Gospel which recognizes even this world as God's kingdom.[4.] Thrown into a world of scepticism after the first wave of the Oxford movement had

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1. Tulloch, Religious Thought in Britain During the XIXth Century, p. 279
2. Temple, "The Christian Social Movement in the Nineteenth Century", Christian Social Reformers of the Nineteenth Century, Martin, ed. p. 7
3. Rogers, English and American Philosophy Since 1800, p. 119
4. Ellis, Charles Kingsley, p. 47

died down, growing up in a neglected parish, he became cognizant of definite needs to be met which were outside the theological controversies. In his intellectual development he found Coleridge's Aids to Reflection and Maurice's Kingdom of Christ to be of infinite value.[1] In the main he owes his ideas to Maurice more than to any other, although even here we hear the universal note of "this-worldliness" being sounded as it was uttered by Coleridge some years before. It is another instance of the modifying and readjusting of main conceptions to meet particular needs in local situations, and in this case it is practical application of a deep philosophical idea born out of genius. And many times in the very change which must occur there is created a different interpretation and meaning from that of the original.

d. Frederick W. Robertson

As we view the progress made during the middle of the nineteenth century in the field of theology and especially as it was developed by the Broad Church Movement, another figure attracts our attention, so prominent was he in the life and thought of his period, Frederick W. Robertson. Tulloch says of him, "There is no life that mirrors more completely the spiritual conflicts of the fifth decade of our century than that of Frederick W. Robertson."[2] Although brought up in the Anglican Church, he had nothing to do with the conservatism, conventionalism, and devotion to institutional religion which characterized the

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1. Tulloch, Religious Thought in Britain During the XIXth Century, p. 287
2. Ibid., p. 295

average Anglican preacher. His spirit was too independent and revolutionary; ecclesiastical ordinances could not bind his humanness. "He was the product of a broader world than that in which his church moves."[1] As to his exact theological position, one supreme doctrine is established. He owned no master but Christ. He was neither Tractarian nor Evangelical, and it is in this sense that he may be termed "broad", the same as Maurice. Christianity and the Church must be interpreted in the widest sense both historically and spiritually. The similar position runs through all the Broad Churchmen's system of thought:

> "All men who own their spiritual heritage in baptism were to him the children of a common God and Father. They were neither 'made the children of God' by baptism, nor was there any doubt as to their position.... Baptism, he said, is the special revelation of the great truth that all who are born into the world are children of God by right." [2]

But he goes further than his associates by saying that there must first be the truth or fact before we believe, else how could we be asked to believe it? This was on the one hand a reaction against the Tractarian tenet which implied the magical creation of a nature at the moment of baptism, and, on the other hand, it repudiated the Calvinistic and Evangelical position of the select few. Both views, he believed, destroyed the essential nature of Christianity.[3] His main interest was in the truth that is of the nature of poetry which was to be felt and not proved. All of the creeds and formulas set forth by spiritual minds in the past are valuable but not absolute summaries of Divine Truth. The real validity of these statements, according to Robertson, is to be realized, not as propositions addressed to the intellect, but as the witness

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1. Brastow, Representative Modern Preachers, p. 49
2. Tulloch, Op. Cit., p. 315
3. Ibid., pp. 315, 316

of God's Spirit to man's spirit.[1] It is well to note how closely this belief resembles that propounded by Coleridge earlier in the century.

In another point he clearly reveals the influence which Coleridge had upon him, and that is in his conception of the necessity of gaining a clear and accurate knowledge of the Bible.[2] Not only did he possess a great power for memorizing portions of the Scripture, but he also was able to arrange what he had read so that when a doctrine was mentioned all the passages bearing on this point would come before his mind immediately. Clark remarks that "he developed and applied that general principle of freer Bible treatment for which the Oriel men had fought."[3] He wanted to look beyond the mere words of the Book to the realities behind them. It was the hunger in his heart for a living communion with God and the recognition of a similar hunger in the hearts of others that caused him to break with the Bibliolatry of the older evangelicalism and turn to more positive preaching.

> "And once he read the Bible, not in slavish pupilage to its mere words, but in order to drink in its large spiritual ideas, that inward passion and hunger showed him how to read and how to understand and how to apply, and every religious truth leaped into immediate contact with his inner nature and its needs." 4.

His preaching typified this truth, for it was one of the principles of Robertson that the sermon should unfold itself from within outward, rather than move from without inward. This is in line with his Biblical interpretation which necessitates an unfolding process. The preacher must get into close connection with the Biblical writer whose thoughts

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1. Tulloch, Religious Thought in Britain During the XIXth Century, p. 317
2. Edwards, Nineteenth Century Preachers, p. 115
3. Clark, Liberal Orthodoxy, p. 203
4. Ibid., p. 205

he is going to unfold, must make real in his own mind this experience which the author has felt.[1]

That Coleridge directly contributed to Robertson's mode of thought and practice becomes quite evident from the similarity of underlying ideas and by statements which show how Robertson had come in contact with the works of the poet-theologian. After becoming familiar with Plato and Aristotle at Oxford, Robertson studied the philosophy of Kant and Schleiermacher. He turned, then, to Coleridge's Aids to Reflections. To this work, Brastow attributes his indebtedness for the theory of religious knowledge, that religious truth is felt and not reasoned out.[2] Here is the reverberation of the idealistic philosophy which so strongly attracted Coleridge several decades preceeding. Robertson was another in the Coleridgian line who earnestly sought to defeat the wave of cold, empirical rationalism on the one hand, and the unfounded emotionalism of the Evangelical theology on the other. An excellent summary which reveals the aspirations and failures of the Oriel School and the Broad-Churchmen is given by Clark:

> "And to sum up, we have seen all these teachers putting to larger application that principle of freer treatment of the Bible upon which at the beginning of its career Liberal Orthodoxy had thrown itself with such ready abandon, finding out some of the consequences which that principle entailed. To Robertson, in the emancipation of the soul which descended upon him together with the first emancipation of the mind, in that passionate spiritual aspiration of his which had as it were flung itself helplessly against a steadfast wall so long as mechanical readings of the Bible and its doctrines had been his programme, and which, now that the

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1. Brastow, The Modern Pulpit, p. 122
2. Brastow, Representative Modern Preachers, p. 64

> wall was beaten down, went roaming through all the fields of religious thought to find its response.... To Erskine, Campbell, and Maurice the truth that divine revelation must find a response in the moral constitution of man, and must prove itself by so doing, became a finger pointing to the further truth -- really the same truth looked at from another quarter and along another line -- that man possessed a divine quality in that human nature which had hitherto been condemned as wholly un-divine. For all of them, it was the drawing out of what had been, unknown to them, involved in the acceptance of an initial idea. Over and above that, one can see, perhaps, how close to the idea of a veritable life-dynamic in Christ all these thinkers came -- how those of the Coleridgean order overshot it, how Robertson just stopped short. Declaring that man's great need was not to receive the divine life, but to awaken to the consciousness of it, the Coleridgean school passed to the other extreme from the idea that in man there was nothing divine at all, incurred the danger which more recent resurrections of the same extreme position have revealed, the danger of making Christ's redeeming work one of the moral influence alone, and missed the middle line of teaching -- the position surely nearer to the truth than either of the other two -- that man needs a new baptism of God's life to save him, that this baptism is offered him moment by moment in a living Christ, and that man can receive it precisely because the measure of divineness he already possesses constitutes in itself a capacity for more." 1.

In this movement and through the preaching of these men do we see both the weakness and strength of a spiritualized theology which rests upon reasonable grounds.

3. The Oxford Movement

The fact is rather commonly agreed upon that the Oxford or Anglo-Catholic Movement, sometimes referred to as the Tractarian Movement, had its impetus in the underlying principles of the Oriel School. Tulloch states, "What is known as the Oxford Movement had its first beginnings

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1. Clark, Liberal Orthodoxy, pp. 206-8

in the same centre of intellectual life as the early Oriel School. It sprang as a secondary crop from the same soil." [1] It is impossible to think of this development without considering the effect which the whole Romantic Revival had upon it.

> "The effective link between the Romantic Revival and the Oxford Movement was Samuel Taylor Coleridge. It is known that one of the Tractarian leaders, Charles Marriott, had been a serious student of Coleridge.... 'Coleridge', says Fr. Widdrington, 'itensified the repugnance felt by Wordsworth and those who refused to be intimidated by the high priests of an arrogant political economy, toward the new industrialism. He uttered a ringing protest against the vulgarisation of life and thought induced by industrialism, and denounced the despotism of finance in government and legislation.'" [2]

Undoubtedly, the connection between Coleridge and the Oxford Movement was in the theory of the Church, having

> "taken the simple but all-important step of viewing the Church in its spiritual character as first and foremost and above all things essentially a religious society of divine institution, not dependent on the creation or will of man or on the privileges or honours which man might think fit to assign it." [3]

It is in Coleridge and his influence on the Oxford Movement that we see Romanticism rising to its highest conception. But the very thing which Coleridge desired to maintain, freedom from ecclesiastical bounds, was lost when once the Tractarians seized upon this spiritual element and set up their sanctions of dogmatic theology.

> "The Broad Church is the extreme opposite of the Ritualists. It repudiates the fundamental basis of the High Church theory, ... narrows the distinction between the ecclesiastical and the secular, exalts the authority of reason at the expense of traditionary standards...." [4]

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1. Tulloch, Religious Thought in Britain During the XIXth Century, p. 86
2. Peck, The Social Implications of the Oxford Movement, pp. 58, 59 quoted from Widdrington, The Social Teaching of the Oxford Movement, p.5
3. Ibid., p. 59, quoted from Church, The Oxford Movement, p. 71
4. Sheldon, History of Christian Doctrine, Vol. II, p. 275

Back of the whole change which was to take place at the hands of Keble and Newman lay the Romantic Movement, the new literary spirit of the time which took one back to Medieval times, deepening men's thoughts and awaking desires for nobler ideas in religion as in other things. But there was an even stronger force at work than this, as the opinion expressed by Newman of Coleridge bears out:

> "While history in prose and verse was thus made the instrument of church feelings and opinions, a philosophical basis for the same was laid in England by a very original thinker, who, while he indulged a liberty of speculation which no Christian can tolerate, yet after all instilled a higher philosophy into inquiring minds than they had hitherto been accustomed to accept. In this way he made trial of his age, and succeeded in interesting its genius in the cause of Catholic truth." 1.

Stewart goes on to show the pronounced influence which Coleridge had upon the leaders of this movement:

> "Every thinking man in the thirties or forties at that time, said Mill, was in philosophy either a Benthamite, belonging to the school of progress, or a Coleridgean 'who upheld and emphasized the wisdom contained in the sacred traditions of the race'. It was just such a philosophy of Tradition that the coming Anglo-Catholic Movement needed most of all. The most eminent of English speculative thinkers, a layman and a fierce anti-papist, had been building this up for twenty years. Thus the significance of Coleridge as preparatory to Newman and Keble was enormous." 2.

In commenting further on the way which Coleridge paved for the later Church Revival, Stewart points out that his attack was made upon the scripturalists, who held the inerrency of the whole Bible because it had all been dictated by the Supreme Being to human amanuenses, and upon the rationalists at the opposite pole, the two groups most feared

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1. Tulloch, Religious Thought in Britain During the XIXth Century, p.88, quoted from Apologia, p. 185, quoted from an article by himself in the British Critic, 1839
2. Stewart, A Century of Anglo-Catholicism, p. 67

by the Tractarians. He met each case by seeking a more elastic doctrine in moral reason and by showing that the Bible proved itself unique, not by external witness of miracle, but in setting forth the truth which is applicable to human nature and needs.[1.]

In spite of the abstract speculation in the spiritual philosophy of Coleridge which few could penetrate or understand, there was one doctrine to which the leaders of the Oxford Movement were attracted: the great doctrine of the Church's spiritual independence.[2.] The result of Coleridge's study of the centuries, where it became evident to him that there was a guidance of human life in its divine issues which was not mediated by principalities and powers, but by the Holy Spirit working in Christian society, was seized upon by the Anglo-Catholics as authenticating the purpose of the new Church. But if they could only realize it, by building an organization around the battle-cry he offered in Church and State they defeated the very object of his quest. He was intent on constructing a Universal and spiritual commonwealth which ministered to the social and temporal needs as well. While the Anglo-Catholic Church today counts Coleridge as one of its chief exponents, it has perverted the essence of his teaching by its organization of another sect, however close may be the communion between the Church and State.

Whatever may be the dispute as to the possibility of any such Church being the embodiment of authority and power, the Oxford Movement has done more in our time to revive the grandeur and true place of beauty and art in worship than any other movement.[3.] The Oxford Movement is not to be

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1. Stewart, A Century of Anglo-Catholicism, pp. 67-9
2. Ibid., p. 71
3. Tulloch, Religious Thought in Britain During the XIXth Century, p. 123, also see, Brastow, Representative Modern Preachers, p. 257

understood apart from the Romantic spirit of the nineteenth century with its tendency to look backward and to find something deeper and more satisfying than the rationalism of the preceding years. And, as we have seen, Coleridge played an important part in bringing the force of feeling and imagination of literary productions to bear upon the theology of his times.

C. His Influence in America

1. The Transcendental Movement

By far one of the most interesting developments in American theology during the nineteenth century was the Transcendental Movement. Its importance to American thought and practice cannot be judged by the brevity of its duration. For its origin we must trace our steps back to Kant and the German intuitivists and from them turn our attention to Coleridge, whose ideas were transplanted into this soil just as he had imported German ideas for his home country.

In defining this philosophy we go to Cook who says that "transcendental truths are simply those necessary, self-evident, axiomatic truths which transcend experience."[1] Kant, one of the originators, states that

> "'Transcendent' was employed to designate qualities that lie outside of all 'experience', that cannot be brought within the recognized formularies of thought, cannot be reached either by observation or reflection, or explained

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1. Cook, Transcendentalism, p. 48 f.

as the consequences of any discoverable antecedents'". 1. We may conceive the meaning of this term to be, then, that which is above or beyond experience, or knowledge gained by intuition. It again asserted the worth of man, the immanence of divinity in instinct, the transference of supernatural attributes to the natural constitution of mankind. 2.

Such a philosophy attracted the New England mind during this period for several reasons. There were no immovable prejudices to overcome in this new land of liberty; religion in New England was of the intellectual Protestant type which favored individuality of thought and action; the theology of New England was essentially spiritual, a reaction against philosophy which was limited to experience alone. 3. We have observed how this movement in general, not going under this title, made its beginning in Germany where spiritual fire was low and the church had little influence. Similar conditions were found here, as Ingraham writes:

> "Religion and literature were saturated with this mundane and unaspiring philosophy, while theology was, as represented in the different sects, dead systems of cut, dried, and labeled specimens of ecclesiastical opinions, stern, cold and devoid of any attractive charm or sentiment. That real religion was neglected and that public worship had largely become a mechanical exercize without faith and love as essential elements is testified to by the authoritative writers of that day. It can readily be understood that in the midst of such conditions the liberal and inspiring ideas of 'Aids to Reflection', and 'Sartor Resartus' were welcomed and appropriated by the cultured and spiritually minded young men of New England, who embraced these hopeful and attractive views as a new evangel, and with consecrated and enthusiastic devotion set themselves to define, develop and apply to life and religion the Transcendental philosophy." 4.

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1. Frothingham, Transcendentalism in New England, p. 12
2. Ibid., p. 136
3. Snell, Paper "A Study of New England Transcendentalism" Course in American Christianity, Biblical Seminary in New York, 1935, p. 6
4. Ingraham, Washington Irving and Other Essays, p. 188

Attention has already been called to the fanciful idea of Pantisocracy conceived by Coleridge in his earlier years. One can even go back to see the beginnings of this absolute idealism in the "Republic" of Plato, the "New Atlantis" of Bacon (1624), the "Oceana" of Harrington (1656), the "Utopia" of Sir Thomas More (1516). Attempts were made to carry out these forms of living such as we see in the life-work of William Penn.[1] All of them were more than attempts to reform social conditions, for they sought the freedom and development of the spiritual nature of man rather than a mere readjustment to the material world.

> "New England Transcendentalism is both a doctrine, and a life. It 'denounces materialism in philosophy, formalism in religion, utilitarianism in personal and social ethics. It is a vindication of soul against sense, spirit against letter, faith against rite, heroism and nobleness against petty expediencies of the market'. The central article of its creed is the autonomous and creative activity of the individual soul, which stands at the center of things as the source of all values and the touchstone of all truth. Self-culture, therefore, in the largest sense, became the main business of the Transcendentalist." 2.

In Emerson, as principle leader of this movement, there is clearly evident the influence of Coleridge, his stress upon feeling, his perception of knowledge by flashes of concrete insight rather than in connected reasoning of the ordinary sense, his lack of systematization. Caldecott says at this point regarding the relationship between the two,

> "With the school of Intuitivism or Mysticism we may include the two men who next to Coleridge have been the vehicles of impressing it upon the minds of English-speaking people in the nineteenth century, Carlyle and Emerson.... Through

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1. Merz, History of European Thought in the Nineteenth Century, Vol.IV,p.428
2. Rogers, English and American Philosophy Since 1800, p. 213

> Coleridge they passed to Goethe and Richter and Novalis, Fichte and Schelling." 1.

To cite another viewpoint as to the parts which these men played in the work which each did in promoting this philosophy of life:

> "It has been said of English Transcendentalism that Coleridge was its philosopher, Carlyle its preacher and man of letters, and Wordsworth its poet; in America it might be held that Emerson was its philosopher, Bushnell its theologian, Parker its preacher and Whitman its poet." 2.

Thus we are able to picture Coleridge as again furnishing the impetus, through his writings rather than by any specific activity, of a religion that swept the country and which to some extent is still sought after. Yet this genius would not take for himself the glory of such an important place without paying tribute to those men who so definitely molded his way of thinking in his early years. Again we are to characterize Coleridge as the great transplanter and importer of German mysticism who deftly and sincerely desired to see its ideals made practical and useful for humanity.

2. On Horace Bushnell

It has just been pointed out that Bushnell is called the theologian of the Transcendental Movement in America. If there is any one man who stands out preëminently in the religious field as a direct disciple of Coleridge, one who himself influenced theology of this country during the past century as few others ever could, it is Bushnell. What

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1. Caldecott, The Philosophy of Religion in England and America, p. 301
2. Ingraham, Washington Irving and Other Essays, p. 199

was permanently accomplished by the Transcendentalists as a separate group is negligible, although their high ideals of freedom of individuality, education and social reform, cooperation and unselfishness contributed to the general attitudes of the times. But with Bushnell a complete revision of New England theology, centering particularly in the method of religious education, was brought about. McGiffert, for example, refers to his book, Christian Nurture, which, he claims, did more than any other single agency to break down the extreme individualism of the old Puritan theology of America.[1] This work stands out above all others as maintaining the place of the Christian home in the development of Christian character. Throughout the main arguments of Bushnell we perceive the strong tendency which was earlier set forth by Coleridge, namely, the education of the inherent qualities which reside in human personalities. His emphasis also upon the conscience formed an important step in American theology. It was from a leading idea, namely, that doctrine must commend itself to conscience, that he worked over some of the orthodox doctrines, especially of original sin and the atonement. In asserting the principle that revelation must be in consonance with the moral constitution of mankind, he shows the effect of the Coleridgian school upon him.[2] Let us turn to take note of the direct influence which Coleridge had upon Bushnell.

He was an independent thinker but was not without dependence upon greater thinkers. "Men of light and leading like Coleridge pointed the way, and he was quick to follow, for it seemed to him the homeward path;

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1. McGiffert, The Rise of Modern Religious Ideas, p. 277
2. Clark, Liberal Orthodoxy, p. 216

but he followed in a strikingly independent way." [1] In conversation with his friend, Dr. William W. Patton, he stated his own relationship with the writings of Coleridge:

> "But I conceive of the soul in its living nature; as free, and intelligent, and sensitive; as under vital and not mechanical laws. Language, too, for that reason, is not so much descriptive as suggestive, being figurative throughout, even where it deals with spiritual truth. Therefore, an experience is needed to interpret words. Thus, when I was in college I once undertook to read Coleridge's 'Aids to Reflection'. But the author seemed foggy and unintelligible, and I closed the book, and put it upon my book-shelves, where it remained a long time. Meanwhile, my mind went on thinking and maturing; and one day, my eye falling on the book, I took it down and began to read, and, behold, all was lucid and instructive." 2.

In a letter to John T. Sewall, Professor of Homiletics in Bangor Theological Seminary, he confirms this influence, when, after reviewing the place given to Paley in his mind, he turns to say:

> "By-and-by it fell to me to begin the reading of Coleridge. For a whole half year I was buried under his 'Aids to Reflection', and trying vainly to look up through. I was quite sure that I saw a star glimmer, but I could not quite see the stars. My habit was only landscape before; but now I saw enough to convince me of a whole other world somewhere overhead, a range of realities in higher tier, that I must climb after, and, if possible, apprehend. Shortly after, a very strong lift in my religious experience came as a waft upon my inspirations, to apprise me more distinctly of their existence, and of the two-world range that belonged to me. My powers seemed to me more than doubled; and where was the language to serve me in such higher thoughts as I might have?" 3.

It was during an informal conversation with friends when the subject turned to authors. Someone asked him what authors he did like, after he had dismissed a great many of the literary champions.

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1. Brastow, Representative Modern Preachers, p. 187
2. Cheney, Life and Letters of Horace Bushnell, p. 208, Cf. Munger, Horace Bushnell, p.29
3. Cheney, Op. Cit., p. 209, Cf. Munger, Horace Bushnell, p. 46

> "Hesitating a little, and probably perceiving the snare, he mentioned two or three, but finally demolished them all, save Coleridge. I have often heard him say that he was more indebted to Coleridge than to any extra-Scriptural author." 1.

Thus do we perceive that the theology of his day failed to satisfy him, and he was compelled to look for truth from certain sources and by certain methods that were not recognized by his teachers in seminary. Coleridge's Aids to Reflection stood by him to the end, and to that work he confessed a greater indebtedness than to any other except the Bible. Despite the fact that this book was an epoch-making work, it was not until Bushnell turned its light upon the theology of New England that it was recognized here. In the following quotation he shows its use and value:

> "Too soon did the Doctors of the Church forget that the heart, the moral nature, was the beginning and the end; and that truth, knowledge, and insight were comprehended in its expansion. This was the true and first apostasy, - when in council and synod the Divine Humanities of the Gospel gave way to speculative Systems, and Religion became a Science of Shadows under the name of Theology, or at best a bare Skeleton of Truth, without life or interest, alike inaccessible and unintelligible to the majority of Christians. For these, therefore, there remained only rites and ceremonies and spectacles, shows and semblances. Thus among the learned the Substance of things hoped for passed off into Notions; and for the unlearned the Surfaces of things became Substance. The Christian world was for centuries divided into the Many that did not think at all, and the Few who did nothing but think, - both alike unreflecting, the one from defect of the act, the other from the absence of an object." 2.

It may almost be said, then, that it is to this book we are indebted for Bushnell and his contribution to this country's theology. From the dry bones of theology to Coleridge's Aids to Reflection Bushnell turned in his early years, even as a student, to find in those pages glimpses of

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1. Cheney, Life and Letters of Horace Bushnell, p. 499
2. Munger, Horace Bushnell, pp. 47, 48

"a whole other world".[1] He sought something more than that which the mind would warrant and found it in the assurance granted by the heart.

In our attempt to relate the intimate contact that Bushnell had with Coleridge through his writings, a summary of Bushnell's theological views may be appropriately and briefly stated so that the similarity may be more clearly shown. As regards his opinions on inspiration and revelation, Kensinger has noted these:

> "1. Christianity and the Christian revelation are supernatural because they contain the provisions necessary to free the will of man and frustrate the effects of sin.
> 2. The contents of the Christian revelation are not to be placed in the realm of knowledge, i. e., scientific knowledge, for they were neither discovered by the cognitive faculty in man nor are they apprehended by that faculty.
> 3. The Christian revelation consists of a Gospel received by faith only, with certain intellectual beliefs growing out of that revelation.
> 4. Bushnell did not believe in Verbal Inspiration. Inspiration is to be postulated primarily of the writers, and of the writings only in a secondary sense.
> 5. There are two kinds of inspiration; a., The influence of the Spirit of God in reëstablishing the normal state of the soul of man, and b., that influence of the Spirit whereby certain men are called for certain tasks. This is the inspiration of Instrumentality." [2]

Bushnell appealed for the recognition of the innate potentialities for good which were to be found in man. His book, Christian Nurture, was written to establish the proposition that "the child is to grow up a Christian, and never know himself as being otherwise."[3] How closely does this follow Coleridge's conception of immanentism and the method of acquiring goodness, except that Bushnell was able to project these

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1. Powell, Heavenly Heretics, p. 94
2. Kensinger, A Survey of the Conceptions of Revelation and Inspiration of Representative Modern Theologians, Thesis, Biblical Seminary, p. 56
3. Powell, Heavenly Heretics, p. 96

views in a more practical way than Coleridge could ever have done.
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We submit some quotations taken from "Aphorisms" of Bushnell which further illustrate his dependence upon Coleridge:

> "The faith of immortality depends on a sense of it begotten, not on an argument for it concluded."
> "Real conviction goes before talk and is grounded in the soul's own thinking of subjects and questions themselves."
> "We anticipate a day for man when commerce itself shall become religious and religion commercial, when the holy and the useful shall be blended in a common life of brotherhood and duty, comprising all the human kindred of the globe."
> "What is conscience, but that summit of our nature where it touches God?"
> "God is not a mere thought of our own brain, but a being in the world of substance, fact and event, and all such knowledge has to be gotten slowly, through the rub of experience."

From Bushnell's sermon "The Immediate Knowledge of God" we may glean some interesting passages which further demonstrate the affinity.

> "Doubtless, it is much to know about God, about his operations, his works, his plans, his laws, his truth, his perfect attributes, his saving mercies. This kind of knowledge is presupposed in all faith, and constitutes the rational ground of faith, and so far is necessary even to salvation. But true faith itself discovers another and more absolute kind of knowledge, a knowledge of God himself; immediate, personal knowledge, coming out of not report, or statement, or any thing called truth, as being taught in language. It is knowing God within, even as we know ourselves. The other is only a knowing about God, as from a distance." 2.

Concerning his view of religious nature and character, he writes:

> "It may not consciously pine after God, as an orphan for his lost parents; and yet God is the necessary complement of all its feelings, hopes, satisfactions, and endeavors. Without God, all it is becomes abortion. It wants God as its completest, almost only want; feeling instinctively after him even in its voluntary neglect of him, and consciously or unconsciously, willingly or unwillingly, longing and hungering for the bread of his fatherly relationship." 3.

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1. Bushnell, The Spirit in Man, pp. 411-433
2. Bushnell, Sermons on Living Subjects, p. 115, "Immediate Knowledge of God"
3. Ibid., p. 132 "Religious Nature and Religious Character"

Such excerpts as these definitely manifest the close bond of unity which existed between these two theologians of the nineteenth century. Their fundamental doctrines and ideas seemed to pursue the same course, a new liberalizing tendency in the realm of traditional orthodoxy. What Coleridge had accomplished in his own country as a theologian of the Romantic Movement, Bushnell was able to project in this land, for "it can be said of Bushnell as Professor George B. Stevens has said of St. Paul, 'He challenged men to a new habit of thought.'"[1.] Like Coleridge he did not so much object to the opinions of theology as to the way of arriving at those opinions. Like Coleridge he was often misunderstood or not understood at all, even by his closest associates, criticized as being eccentric. So it seems to continue, this rejection of new spiritual endeavor and search for eternal truths which must be sought after by new paths.

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1. Munger, Horace Bushnell, p. 381

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

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CONCLUSION

A. Re-Statement of The Problem

An effort has been made in this thesis to search for and relate the influence which Samuel Taylor Coleridge had upon modern theology. We have attempted to show wherein his peculiar theological ideas contributed to those found in individuals and movements of a later date. As these views have been set before us, together with substantiating evidence as to their place in modern theology, our belief is confirmed that Coleridge was an unusually original thinker. Particular emphasis has been given to the study of three cardinal ideas and their relationship with doctrines expounded by his successors, namely, his conception of the harmony between reason and religion, his conception of the Bible, and his conception of the enlarged church.

B. The Influence of Coleridge on The Continent

With the exception that his literary style was appreciated by a few of the German writers, his influence upon the thinking of the Continental minds during the nineteenth century was negligible. That he himself was greatly indebted especially to the German philosophy and spirit of the times, the Romantic Movement, cannot be doubted. We are to think of him as the importer of certain idealistic tendencies into

his own country and as the interpreter of these to the English-speaking people.

C. The Influence of Coleridge in The British Isles

1. The Oriel School

Apart from and yet working simultaneously with his contemporaries, Coleridge was a direct source in originating certain dominant trends in liberal theology which have characterized the religious thought of England during the past century. One cannot say that he created this school, for there were other thinkers who had begun somewhat the same line of development as Coleridge produced. In all their work, they sought to justify a more harmonious unity between religion and reason. Coleridge, as a chief contributor in this field, was attempting to bridge the gap which existed between the formal ecclesiastical polity of the established church on the one hand and the cold and false rationalism which was seeking to make inroads into the religious faith of God-fearing men on the other hand. Was it possible to secure a deeply religious feeling, welling up out of the heart, demanding the moral obedience which the Evangelicals desired, and still be based upon intelligent, reasonable grounds? To answer this question, Coleridge devoted his life, and while there is no semblance of this school of thought left for us today, as an institution, we are convinced that such a highway of truth has a place in modern theology.

2. The Broad-Church

As an organization, the Oriel School did not survive. But certain

men who came out of this movement have left permanent impressions in the realm of contemporary theological thought. All of them have distinctly signified their indebtedness to Coleridge. Whether they engaged primarily in preaching the Word, as Hare and Maurice, or were interested in rebuilding a broken and degraded social system by religious reforms as Kingsley, or were zealous for an appreciation of the literary skill as Robertson, all of them showed marked similarity to the ideas set forth by Coleridge in the earlier years of the nineteenth century. He, in truth, was the forerunner of the true "Broad-Church". His interpretation of the Bible and life would not permit him to see another sect or organization formed, and he had no such purpose in mind when he declared the inclusiveness of the spiritual church as embracing the universe. So close should be the harmony between the human mind and that of the Divine that contention and strife would be done away. It would seem, therefore, that he granted the freedom which Luther demanded, but becoming aware of the inevitable denominations which arose, his mind was intent upon the spiritualizing of all life. To do this, it is necessary to conceive of the Divine universal center and the manifestation of that power in the unity of all believers in this world. When man really recognizes the Supreme Will as having a definite purpose for each individual, then will this world-mind become a spiritual one in the true sense. To Coleridge Hare pays tribute for the idea of the Will of God as the center of unity in this world. Maurice is indebted to Coleridge for his stand against sectarianism, for his conception of religion as a vital Christian experience, applicable to all men, and for the doctrine of the inherent worth of man validated by his spiritual instincts. Kingsley was zealous that practical application be made of these beliefs and was instrumental in

exercizing to a great extent the utilization of Coleridge's judgments on the values of "this-worldliness". Robertson's broad conception of the church was due primarily to the theory which Coleridge had propounded several years before, the basis for such being the Divine Revelation given by God's Spirit to man's spirit. His emphasis placed upon the need for Bible study as the unfolding process also had its origin in the writings of his teacher. So intent were all these men upon the reconstruction of a dynamic Christian experience, taken from the dead and legalistic theology of an earlier day, that they overshot the real interpretation which Coleridge purposed. These liberalizing tendencies made possible Pelagian and humanitarian concepts of salvation, beliefs not at all encouraged by him who saw the Divine working definitely and initially in the human mind. Such perversions we may expect to encounter in all change of theology.

3. The Oxford Movement

The Tractarian leaders, namely, Keble, Marriott, and Newman in this nineteenth century development, again appropriated for the cause which they represented certain doctrinal views expressed by Coleridge and institutionalized his theory of the enlarged church to suit their own purposes, and in so doing they defeated the very principle for which he stood. To the extent that they desired a genuine spiritual enterprise, ministered to by the church, embracing all believers, they followed his general views. But when they created dogmatic and ecclesiastical assertions and were hide-bound by the very ties from which they had sought to escape, it is clearly seen that this is the direct opposite from the spiritual world Coleridge visioned. However, his literary genius which

depicted the Romantic Age was appreciated by this group in its return to pageantry and ritualism.

D. The Influence of Coleridge in America

By combining the Transcendental Movement with the life and teachings of one of its exponents as well as one of the best known among contemporary American preachers, Horace Bushnell, we note the direct bearing which Coleridge had upon the theology of this country about the middle of the last century. Concerning this development, we must think of Coleridge as again transplanting a certain German philosophy into this soil, through the medium of his own works and by influencing later thinkers along this line. His own imaginative and transcendent mind yielded much fruit in this study, but it was largely through his interpretation of Kant that we are indebted to him at this point. As a devotee to his principles, Emerson projected materially and philosophically this aim of intuitive authority.

Bushnell remains one of the greatest disciples of Coleridgian thought, outstanding as he is in modern theology. Upon Coleridge depends his chief understanding in the realm of religious knowledge and consciousness, and from this conception are worked out his contentions fro Christian nurture and the education of personalities from childhood in the righteous way of the Lord. Man is constituted to believe the Divine Truth if properly taught, and by so believing he is saved. From this argument he constructed the moral atonement theory, which, interestingly enough, closely resembles the doctrine worked out by the English theologians of the Broad-Church just mentioned. Again following Coleridge, he demands

the authority based upon the heart and feeling, not merely upon the intellect, for by means of the heart as seat of the emotions has God chosen to reveal Himself. Horton, in referring to the fact that Bushnell came in contact with German religious thought through Coleridge's Aids to Reflection, says in passing that to this work "British and American religious liberalism owes more than to any other single writing".[1.]

This study has been for us an attempt to know and appreciate some of these "Heavenly Heretics" and one in particular, to seek his direct or indirect influence upon others, to discern the interaction of their thought and purpose, to select those values which will aid us and refrain from the irrelevant, and to interpret the life of our times in the light of abiding influences which they have exercized.

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1. Horton, Realistic Theology, p.26

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