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A COMPARISON OF THEOLOGICAL VIEWPOINTS
IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AS REVEALED BY
ELMER G. HOMRIGHAUSEN AND HARRISON S. ELLIOTT

by

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A THESIS

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DEDICATED
TO MY FAITHFUL HELPMET
AND TO LITTLE LOIS GRACE
AS SHE SYMBOLIZES THOSE FOR WHOM
CHRISTIAN EDUCATION EXISTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
INTRODUCTION.....	v
A. The Subject Stated and Explained.....	v
B. The Subject Justified.....	vi
C. The Subject Delimited.....	vii
D. Method of Procedure.....	viii
I. THE VIEWS OF ELMER G. HOMRIGHAUSEN.....	1
A. Introduction.....	1
B. His Theological Viewpoints.....	2
1. Views of the Bible.....	2
a. The Bible as a Revelation.....	3
b. The Bible as a Witness.....	4
c. The Bible and the Word of God.....	4
d. The Bible and the Holy Spirit.....	5
2. Views of God.....	6
a. God as Objective Reality.....	6
b. God as Sovereign.....	6
c. God as Righteous.....	8
3. Views of Man.....	8
a. In the Image of God.....	8
b. A Sinner.....	8
4. Views of Sin.....	10
a. Its Effect upon Nature.....	10
b. Its Effect upon God-and-Man Relationship.....	10
c. Its Effect upon Man.....	11
d. Its Effect upon Society.....	11
5. Views of Jesus Christ.....	12
a. His Divine Nature.....	12
b. His Revelation of God.....	13
c. His Work as Savior, Lord, and Mediator.....	13
6. Attitude toward Neo-orthodoxy.....	15
a. Homrighausen as a Barthian.....	15
b. The Weaknesses of Neo-orthodoxy...	16
c. The Author's Conclusion.....	17
C. His Methodological Viewpoints.....	17
1. Concept of Religious Education.....	17
a. The Goal of Christian Education...	17
b. The Chief Problem of Christian Education.....	18
c. The Solution of the Chief Problem.....	19

Gift of the author.

May 25, 1948

D-193

Chapter	Page
d. An Evaluation of Bushnell.....	20
e. Christian Education and the Sunday School.....	21
2. The Place of Conversion in the Life of the Individual.....	22
a. Related to Sin.....	22
b. Related to Faith and Repentance...	22
c. Elements through Which God Works..	23
3. The Nature of Worship.....	24
4. The Nature of Prayer.....	25
5. The Solution of Life Problems.....	25
a. Problems Intensified by Present Crises.....	25
b. Way to Meet Life Problems.....	26
c. The Place of the Christian Home...	27
D. Summary.....	28
II. THE VIEWS OF HARRISON S. ELLIOTT.....	31
A. Introduction.....	31
B. His Theological Viewpoints.....	32
1. Views of the Bible.....	32
a. As an Interpretation of Experience.....	32
b. As a Progressive Revelation.....	34
c. As a Source Book.....	35
2. Views of God.....	36
a. His Objectivity.....	36
b. His Immanence.....	36
c. His Nonsovereignty.....	37
d. His Character of Love.....	38
3. Views of Man.....	38
a. As Amoral in Origin.....	38
b. As Influenced by Environment.....	39
c. As a Free Agent.....	39
4. Views of Sin.....	41
a. As a Symptom.....	41
b. As Related to a Sense of Guilt....	42
c. As a Changing Standard.....	42
5. Views of Jesus Christ.....	43
a. His Person.....	43
b. His Mission.....	43
c. His Message.....	43
6. Attitude toward Neo-orthodoxy.....	44
a. Their Conflict with the Liberal View.....	44
b. Their Authoritative Doctrinal Emphasis.....	44
c. Their Exaggerated Sense of Sin....	45

Chapter	Page
C. His Methodological Viewpoints.....	45
1. Concept of Religious Education.....	46
a. The Educational Process.....	46
b. The Social Theory.....	47
c. Christian Ethics.....	48
d. The Place of the Teacher.....	48
e. The Use of the Bible.....	49
2. The Place of Conversion in the Life of the Individual.....	49
a. The Nature of Conversion.....	49
b. The Method of Conversion.....	50
c. "New Birth Experiences".....	50
3. The Nature of Worship.....	51
4. The Nature of Prayer.....	52
5. The Solution of Life Problems.....	53
D. Summary.....	54
III. A COMPARISON OF THE VIEWS OF ELMER G. HOMRIGHAUSEN AND HARRISON S. ELLIOTT.....	57
A. Introduction.....	57
B. Comparison of Theological Viewpoints.....	57
1. Views of the Bible.....	57
a. As a Record of Historical Characters.....	57
b. As Progressive in Character.....	58
c. As a Revelation.....	59
d. Use of the Bible.....	59
2. Views of God.....	60
a. As Objective.....	60
b. As Immanent.....	60
c. As Related to Life.....	60
d. As to His Chief Characteristic....	61
3. Views of Man.....	61
a. His Original Nature.....	61
b. His Freedom of Choice.....	62
c. His Response to Environment.....	63
4. Views of Sin.....	63
a. Its Nature.....	63
b. Its Relation to a Sense of Guilt..	63
c. Its Cure.....	64
5. Views of Jesus Christ.....	65
a. His Person.....	65
b. His Mission.....	65
c. His Contribution.....	66
6. Attitude toward Neo-orthodoxy.....	66

Chapter	Page
C. Comparison of Methodological Viewpoints.....	67
1. Concept of Religious Education.....	67
a. Its Goal.....	67
b. Its Method.....	68
2. The Place of Conversion in the Life of the Individual.....	69
a. The Nature of Conversion.....	69
b. The Method of Conversion.....	70
3. The Nature of Worship.....	70
4. The Nature of Prayer.....	71
5. The Solution of Life Problems.....	71
D. Summary.....	72
IV. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION.....	75
A. Restatement of the Problem.....	75
B. Summary.....	75
C. Conclusion.....	76
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	80

INTRODUCTION

A COMPARISON OF THEOLOGICAL VIEWPOINTS
IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AS REVEALED BY
ELMER G. HOMRIGHAUSEN AND HARRISON S. ELLIOTT

INTRODUCTION

A. The Subject Stated and Explained

Religious Education is set today in the framework of not only a progress-conscious age but also a crisis-conscious age! If it is going to be adequate to meet the needs of this age of crises in almost all quarters, such an education must both contain reality and meet reality. To understand the influencing factors upon Religious Education another specialized field, that of theology, must also be considered; for herein are the foundation stones for such an education. The premises of any education will determine in the main the product of that education.

If there were agreement as to what the foundations and premises should be as well as to what the desired aims and objectives should be, it would be comparatively a simple matter to study such a field. However, such basic agreement is not common in the field of Religious Education. It is for this reason, therefore, that the subject matter must needs be in the form of a

comparison in which the theological viewpoints in Religious Education as found in the writings of Elmer G. Homrighausen and Harrison S. Elliott are studied.

B. The Subject Justified

The question then arises: Is the theological approach to Religious Education necessary in order to reveal the true nature of Religious Education?" This question is answered in part by the concern of the International Council of Religious Education, as recent as 1945, in appointing a committee to restudy the theological and philosophical basis for Religious Education. Such an investigation grew out of the present crisis within this field. In the final analysis many feel that the problem is chiefly one of theology more than one of methodology. Rachael Henderlite has stated well this conviction by saying:

The tendency that is becoming widespread is the tendency for the educational concern of the school to outweigh the religious concern. Thus the textbooks of religious education have in many cases been prepared by educators and not by theologians.¹

Religious Education has undergone many changes in different directions since the days of Horace Bushnell.

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1. Rachael Henderlite: "The Need for Theology in Religious Education," The Union Seminary Review, p. 3

In the passing of time the developments of varying interpretations have come to sufficient maturity to validate a critical examination of each system. What a few years ago might have been incidental because of its lack of growth now becomes meaningful in its apparent significance. In a day when both secular and religious education seem to have failed in bringing about moral and spiritual steadfastness, an investigation of educational foundations and ideologies is not only desirable but imperative!

C. The Subject Delimited

In order to delimit the subject the problem has been first to find a common point of contact, and second to find representatives of the chief schools of thought. The point of contact may be a common sphere of agreement or of disagreement. Such a sphere is found in the Bible. Religious educators either accept or reject it in whole or in part as a guide. It is then through this attitude toward the Bible that the positions of leading men can be determined and their fundamental principles discovered. It has been concluded that representatives of opposing positions in relation to the Bible be chosen; and, since religious educators gravitate to either one of these poles on a determined issue, a

comparative study of two leading educators has been thought advisable.

The two men chosen for this study represent opposite points of view and their choice by the writer represents two contrasting emphases in Religious Education. This basic assumption is necessary for such a study. Both men are qualified to be strong representatives of the same field, chiefly because of their educational positions in leading seminaries in America. Both are also influential in the current literary field. Elmer G. Homrighausen is the Thomas Synnott Professor of Christian Education in Princeton Theological Seminary, Princeton, New Jersey. Harrison S. Elliott is Head of the Religious Education Department of Union Theological Seminary, New York, New York.

In between the views of these men lie many intermediate positions; however, these views can be understood best as they relate to the two positions under consideration.

D. Method of Procedure

A common standard has been adopted for the evaluation of these two religious educators. This standard has been chosen both for its convenience and for its objectivity. It covers the two major aspects of Relig-

ious Education: namely, its theological foundation and its methodological practice. Charles Hodge's content outline for his Systematic Theology¹ has been used in part as a guide. To this has been added two aspects of current theological thought. The methodological viewpoints aim at the practical outworking of the foundational philosophies and the cause-and-effect relationship between the two is an important objective of the writer. The chief sources of information have been the books and articles, especially those of current dates, of Dr. Homrighausen and of Dr. Elliott.

The simple arrangement of this thesis is set down as follows: Chapter I aims at presenting Dr. Homrighausen's views and Chapter II, Dr. Elliott's views; and Chapter III logically follows as a comparison of the two views; Chapter IV forms a conclusion to the thesis. The adopted standard for evaluation is the same for Chapters I, II, and III.

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1. Charles Hodge: Systematic Theology

CHAPTER I

THE VIEWS OF ELMER G. HOMRIGHAUSEN

CHAPTER I

THE VIEWS OF ELMER G. HOMRIGHAUSEN

A. Introduction

In order to determine the views of Elmer G. Homrighausen, the writer wrote to Princeton Theological Seminary Library for a list of his books. Up to the present he has written three books which have been consulted. They cover the years 1936 to 1946. Christianity in America, published in 1936, gives a detailed account in explanation of his theology. Let the Church Be the Church, published in 1940, is a series of sermons dealing with practical problems of the Church. Choose Ye This Day, published in 1943, has been especially helpful in giving a good condensation of his theology and pedagogy in the framework of the current days in the light of restudying evangelism.

In addition the following books have been consulted in which Dr. Homrighausen has contributed one chapter:

Varieties of American Religion, Braden, 1936
Interseminary Series, Latourette, Volume III, 1946

Homrighausen himself graciously sent the writer a list of current publications in which he has written several articles. The following available magazines containing

several articles were consulted:

Religious Education
Theology Today
Religion in Life

Homrighausen himself, therefore, is the writer's only authority. Where he has placed emphasis, the writer has attempted to place his emphasis. It is important to state that an overlapping of subjects is unavoidable since the author under consideration also mingles his various theological ideas together.

The method for arranging the material grew out of a cursory reading of Choose Ye This Day. From this book, his latest, the main points of emphasis were located and listed and a temporary outline was formed. The same book was read again and statements about his views were recorded. Those dealing with the same subject, such as his views of the Bible, were brought together and will now be considered in turn.

B. His Theological Viewpoints

The theological viewpoints of Dr. Homrighausen will be considered in the following order: his views of the Bible, of God, of man, of sin, and of Jesus Christ; and his attitude toward Neo-orthodoxy.

1. Views of the Bible.

a. The Bible as a Revelation:

The Bible, Homrighausen maintains, is above all things a revelation.

It is the story of God's coming to men when man himself could not give birth to a God who was real and true. The God of the Bible is not man's idea of God.¹

Man in the utter sinfulness of his nature could in no possible way be either the initiator or the consummation of such Biblical experience within himself apart from the grace of God. Homrighausen avoids all errors of the humanist seeking after God. "Grace is the basis of all that comes through revelation."²

Enlarging on his theory of revelation Homrighausen says that the Bible only appears to be a progressive revelation because the record is man's account from man's viewpoint. In reality God is not part of any evolutionary process but always remains the only eternal point of fixity. Liberal Christianity, he continues, makes Christ the climax of an evolutionary chain of revelation but in reality He is the fullness of God. Therefore, revelation is apparently progressive only because man is limited in receiving it, not because God is evolving.³

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1. Charles S. Braden, editor: Varieties of American Religion, pp. 98, 99
2. Elmer G. Homrighausen: Choose Ye This Day, p. 80
3. Cf. Ibid., pp. 80, 81
Cf. Elmer G. Homrighausen: Christianity in America, pp. 122-4

b. The Bible as a Witness

This then leads to what he feels to be the real nature of the Bible. "The Bible is not primarily a literature. It is a witness about God."¹ It must be kept in mind that the Bible is a human witness about God. To be a valid witness it out of necessity has to be based upon historical characters, and being historical they are real. It is for this reason that the thinking in the Bible is concrete and realistic. Because the men and women of the Bible met and encountered a real, living God, their actions were ethical with moral impact.² This does not say that their actions were always moral and that all in the Bible is approved of God, for it is a revelation through sinful men.

The Bible, Homrighausen continues, because it is a human witness coming down through human channels, is not technically an infallible book. He explains this point by saying,

Few intelligent Protestants can still hold to the idea that the Bible is an infallible book; that it contains no linguistic errors, no historical discrepancies, no antiquated scientific assumptions, not even bad ethical standards.³

c. The Bible and the Word of God

However there is another aspect, the Divine

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1. Ibid., p. 124

2. Cf. Homrighausen: Choose Ye This Day, p. 139

3. Homrighausen: Christianity in America, p. 121

element, which validates the Bible as revelation of God. Behind the actions of Biblical characters there is an obedience to God Himself, which obedience was a result of an actual revelation of God. This Word of God lies behind the Bible and "holds the words of the Bible together." This unwritten Word of God is greater than the Bible because it is the living truth concerning the living God. The introduction of the thought concerning the Word of God is necessary to Homrighausen's reasoning as he sees the pitfall of people worshipping and treating the Bible as a fetish.¹ On the other hand he senses and stands on the truth that the Bible is a revelation from God to man. Homrighausen gives a fine summary of his views concerning this in the following paragraph:

It is perfectly evident that this revelation of God actually took place in human history. The Bible is only a series of human records seeking to tell about what God did in the lives of men and women who took Him as His Word and lived in obedience to His sovereign leading. The Word of God is greater than the words of the Bible, for it is primarily an act of God, an event of God in human flesh . . . The Word of God is the living Truth of the living God, which becomes contemporary in any and every age and heart where men sense His Lordship through the medium of historical revelation.²

d. The Bible and the Holy Spirit

To round out this theological foundation,

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1. Cf. Ibid., p. 131
2. Loc. cit.

Homrighausen says that the Bible can only be interpreted by the Holy Spirit, thus making it truly the Word of God to obedient hearts, and that the Holy Spirit works through a genetic, historical, and experimental interpretation of the Bible. This Book then becomes a means for understanding and unifying history.¹

2. Views of God.

a.. God as Objective Reality

The basis of Homrighausen's view on the character of God is formulated for him through the revelation of the Bible. "The Biblical God is not a God of natural or historical or psychological process. He is the uncaused and conditional."² This view makes God not the product of man but the object of man's life and in a very real sense an objective Being. "He is always Himself, and addresses man as apart from man. God exists, even apart from man."³

b. God as Sovereign

The Objective Reality is only one part of a two-sided truth for Homrighausen, for the other side is His sovereignty in the universe. This sovereignty makes man dependent upon God, and His Objective quality would

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1. Cf. Homrighausen: Choose Ye This Day, p. 138
2. Homrighausen: Christianity in America, p. 133
3. Ibid., pp. 129, 130

tend to separate man and God. His sovereignty, however, unites them as seen in the following classic summary on this point in Homrighausen's Christianity in America:

It is God Who sets our bounds and it is God Who saves. God's will is our place, and God's rod and staff comfort us. It is God Who gives us power to affirm life in bad circumstances It is God and only God Who can give health to our social life. God only can be the only safe authority for any life, for only as we live in the authority of His truth and life and love have we any being and freedom.¹

The sovereign aspect of God is seen more clearly in the following:

. . . the cause, the sustainer, and centrum of life without whom there would be no sanction of standardizing life's actions, no dynamic for goodness, no eternal refuge, no integrating cosmic support in the realm of constantly changing time.²

It is clearly seen by this statement that the authoritative sovereignty of God is limited by the choice of man. It is here that the Creator and Redeemer natures of God should be seen. These names reveal a God of love and compassion, One Who is desirous of saving and not destroying. On one hand there is the judgment and wrath of God, but on the other hand there is His love and mercy. Homrighausen would avoid a pitfall of Neo-orthodoxy³ by emphasizing that the love of God is always beyond His judgment.⁴

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1. Ibid., pp. 226, 227

2. Braden, op. cit., p. 93

3. Cf. Homrighausen: Christianity in America, p. 209

4. Cf. Homrighausen: Choose Ye This Day, pp. 53-56

c.. God as Righteous

The Righteousness of God is affirmed by man's experience in the world which opposes God, in the man being crushed "with the burdens of the world's unrighteousness."¹ His Righteousness is the basis for His mercy. "The Bible relates God's Righteousness . . . to every historical problem."² His Righteousness is seen in judgment itself; for, whereas He judges sin, He offers forgiveness to the sinner through His initiatory act of His provided redemption.

3. Views of Man

a. In the Image of God

The two points of emphasis which Homrighausen holds about man relate to his essential nature. Man is first thought of as being created in the image of God.³ This separates him from nature as such and refutes the theory that man can be completely explained by laws. His individual worth lies in the fact that he is the image of God, though a poor reflection because of sin; still he remains the highest of God's creation.

b. A Sinner

The image of God, however, has been changed

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1. Elmer G. Homrighausen: Let the Church Be the Church, p. 61
2. Homrighausen: Choose Ye This Day, p. 141
3. Cf. Ibid., p. 84

by sin, and this sinful nature colors every thought and act of man. "The natural man left to himself is lost."¹ Through sin man has even lost his right to be called a personality in the sense that he is a real person. Only when he decides for Christ does he become a person.² His false ends through false decisions make him a false person. "Decision," says Homrighausen, "is what one does with his existence."³ It is through man meeting God by way of decision to obey Him that man actually becomes a man. "It is the act whereby the individual becomes passionately concrete. When one confronts God and his destiny, he is 'solitary' and 'alone,' his 'I self' is involved."⁴

Homrighausen continues that man is not only a sinner by nature but he also is a sinner by his directive will. He chooses to sin. This positive will to sin is from within man.⁵ Faced with this problem of sin, man comes to realize his destiny but only personal response to Christ gives him a clear view of his destiny;⁶ then it is that there is "the release of all that God has created man to be into his full stature in Christ."⁷

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1. Ibid., p. 100
2. Cf. Ibid., pp. 94, 100
3. Ibid., p. 65
4. Ibid., p. 66
5. Cf. Ibid., p. 140
6. Cf. Ibid., p. 61
7. Kenneth S. Latourette, editor: The Gospel, the Church, and the World, Interseminary Series, Vol. 3, p. 202

4. Views of Sin.

a. Its Effect upon Nature

Homrighausen often speaks of the sacramental nature of things. Creation itself could and was intended to be sacramental, but it cannot be thus viewed because sin and evil have entered in and have done something to creation that makes it unlovely and not a true representative of the eternal God.¹

b. Its Effect upon God-and-Man Relationship

At the very root of man's difficulty and the cosmos' chaos is sin. Sin is not viewed and excused as a sentimental thing. Rather, Homrighausen faces it for what it is and for what it does. He describes it by these characteristic words: 'deliberate,' 'total,' 'original,' and 'deadly.'² He speaks of sin as it relates and governs man. Really to know sin and what it is men must know the love of God. Once the love of God is accepted into the life, the true nature of sin is laid bare and men clearly see that it has been depriving God of their true devotion.³ Sin then is a separating agency originating in man's own nature and is revealed in disobedience to God.

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1. Homrighausen: Choose Ye This Day, p. 84

2. Ibid., p. 92

3. Ibid., p. 128

c. Its Effect upon Man

Sin affects the individual man in that it makes him abnormal by perverting his original nature. God never intended man to be a sinner and, as such, in His eyes, he is abnormal. That which is normal is Christian personality. Man, being abnormal, is content without God!¹ It is not until man faces up with God in Christ that he really becomes normal and has a sense of guilt for sin.

Since sin is a fact, Homrighausen states that a man must be converted from sin itself and not merely from sins; for sin centers in the ego of man, not in the mere conduct. Therefore the only way to be rid of sins is to get rid of sin. "Sin is not overcome piecemeal; it is total and must be judged according to its totality and originality in life."² It is as man reposes in Christ as Redeemer from the effects of sin, since He alone deals with sin itself in the life of man, that sin is overcome.

d. Its Effect upon Society

Sin not only relates to the individual man, it also relates to the society of men. If then a society is made up of sinful men, what then is the effect of

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1. Cf. Ibid., p. 87
2. Ibid., p. 92

Christians in that society and to what is their responsibility? Homrighausen answers the problem by saying:

Those who are 'in Christ' are also in the humanity which He assumed and loved. They actually share in the social sin of the race and bear it redemptively, as they follow Christ.¹

Those 'in Christ' make up God's Church and, therefore, are His witness. If this witness fails to see its own need in relation to God, this then becomes its greatest sin. This action not only brings depravity upon its own nature, but it hinders God from revealing Himself to others. The message of the Church should ever be the positive and not the negative concerning sin.²

5. Views of Jesus Christ.

a. His Divine Nature

"Wherever Christianity has been potent, it has been due to a rediscovery of the decisive nature of Christ."³

Homrighausen's main emphasis, as in the other doctrines, is laid upon the nature of this doctrine as it relates to life. He does not argue about Christ but assumes Him to be the incarnation of God, 'the Son of God,' and all that the Scripture attributes to His

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1. Latourette, op. cit., pp. 201, 202
2. Homrighausen: Choose Ye This Day, p. 85
3. Ibid., p. 79

nature.. "He (Christ) is the eternal God-reality . . . through Him the reality of God has become flesh."¹

b. His Revelation of God

Christ is a Revealer of God. The love and purposes of God are seen and spoken through Him. He is the Pledge that God is still God. Homrighausen says:

The crucifixion and this resurrection stands for two pillars of the Gospel, the one marking the utter condensating love of God for men and the other marking the triumph of His purpose over every opposing power.²

Because Christ was the perfect Revealer of God, Himself being Divine, it follows that there was never a gap between what He said and what He did. There was always perfect harmony in His teaching with His essential character.

c. His Work as Savior, Lord, and Mediator

Because of Who and What He is, Christ is the focal person of all life. He is focal because He is the rule of reality and the revealer of origins. Life takes on character and meaning because of Him.³ He is central and not secondary to Christian ideas and values. The appeal is repeated by Homrighausen that Jesus Christ came to be Savior and Lord.⁴ As Savior He is more than

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1. Homrighausen: Christianity in America, p. 187

2. Homrighausen: Choose Ye This Day, p. 87

3. Cf. Ibid., p. 74

4. Cf. Ibid., chap. 5

Cf. Homrighausen: Christianity in America, p. 187

a teacher, being the active agency of redemption for fallen men. As Lord He is able to save from inner conflicts and give victorious experimental experiences to man. "The authority of Jesus was in His power to make men divine."¹ In this work of changing men, He becomes not a dispenser of truth but an imparter of it and in so doing is both a mediator and example. As mediator He interprets God and man to each other.² As example, Homrighausen says with Paul³ that Christ is our Divine example for Christian living and for methods of communicating the Christian life.

Christ is the center of all cultural as well as emotional life, Homrighausen claims. It is not the social culture nor the emotional pattern of man which has created Christ. These forces were utterly hostile and unfriendly, but it was He Who caused the change. He being God's contact with men allowed God to deal with men and change them.⁴ He then became a reality "which becomes not an annex to our lives but the decisive reality which becomes the center of something new and radical."⁵ Homrighausen thus moves away from the historic Jesus to the living and judging Christ.

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1. Ibid., p. 176

2. Cf. Homrighausen: Choose Ye This Day, p. 75

3. Cf. Philipians 2

4. Cf. Homrighausen: Choose Ye This Day, p. 116, chap. 6

5. Homrighausen: Christianity in America, p. 187

Because of Who Christ is He becomes the Great Alternative.

6. Attitude toward Neo-orthodoxy.

a. Homrighausen as a Barthian

Charles S. Braden in the introduction of his chapter on "Barthianism" in his book, Varieties of American Religion, has chosen Dr. Homrighausen as the finest American representative of Barth, but he also qualifies the man's personal position by adding, "While not a one hundred percent Barthian,"¹ he is a leading exponent of the Barthian point of view.

The main tenets of Barthianism and the new orthodoxy are Homrighausen's. He thinks, for example, of religion as man's sinful attempts at reaching God; and, therefore, God must out of His nature supersede all religions and Religion.² He accepts the Hebrew-Christian tradition as God's revelation and believes in the Sovereign God of the Neo-orthodox movement. Homrighausen then places the views of Barth as a reply for a less drastic or realistic theology on the same level as Paul and Jesus by saying, "American groups often revolt against Barth's emphasis--which are hardly less demanding than those of Jesus or Paul."³

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1. Braden, op. cit., p. 92

2. Cf. Ibid., p. 97

3. Elmer G. Homrighausen: "The Promise of a New Theology," Religion in Life, p. 203

b. The Weaknesses of Neo-orthodoxy

The truth that he is not one hundred percent Barthian or Neo-orthodox follower is seen in his own clear-cut analysis of this movement. The chief value, says Homrighausen, of Neo-orthodoxy is its rediscovery of the absolute standard of perfection which has chiefly been lost through the liberal tendency of the last generation. However, its dangers are also apparent as he analyzes the stand of Reinhold Niebuhr:¹

1. A liquidation of man through the judgment of God leads to a neglect of the Grace of God and slights the vital meaning of the Holy Spirit truth.
2. It resolves itself into a paradoxical dualism in man and is never completely resolved.
3. It is a symbolic interpretation of the historic reality of Revelation and has a tendency to have Revelation lean toward this historical rather than the divine aspect.

A clarification of Homrighausen's view regarding the first of the three dangers would seem advisable since it is at this point that a keynote to his theology is seen.

The Gospel does not liquidate man; it 'crucifies' him and calls for a confession of the sinfulness of the total man. However, the Gospel is also an offer of Grace, whereby man is able to become a Child of God in spite of his sins. A man who must constantly stand under the spotlight of God's truth without being offered a way of salvation from its blinding light would soon give up the struggle.²

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1. Cf. Homrighausen: Choose Ye This Day, pp. 53-56
2. Ibid., p. 54

c. The Author's Conclusion

His conclusion, therefore, concerning Neo-orthodoxy is that it makes it impossible to become a Christian because Neo-orthodoxy refuses to take the Grace of God seriously and because the negative elements of Judgment are a constant emphasis. The place of the movement in theological circles appears to Homrighausen to be a starting point in evangelical strategy, but as it stands it is not able to be much more.¹

C. His Methodological Viewpoints

The methodological viewpoints of Dr. Homrighausen will be considered in the following order: his concept of Religious Education, the place of conversion in the life of the individual, the nature of worship, the nature of prayer, and the solution of life problems.

1. Concept of Religious Education.

a. The Goal of Christian Education

The goal of Christian Education, according to Homrighausen, is to bring together into reality the totality of human activities with the good pleasure of God. This totality means all the activities of the

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1. Cf. Ibid., p. 56

individual to the end that a community of yielded individuals might live together.¹ Christian Education, is, therefore, the nurture of the individual and the community as pointed up in the following statement:

There are many indications that Protestantism is astir with a new interest in Christian nurture. This agitation is due to the desperate contemporary situation which is revealing the stubborn predicament of humanity as well as the true nature of Christian realism. The older liberalism, upon which much of the theory and practice of 'religious education' is based is no longer able to meet the situation or square itself with the historic nature of Christianity.²

b. The Chief Problem of Christian Education.

The problem of Religious Education which is primary to Homrighausen lies in its concept of the 'religious.' On one extreme there is the set and static education whose main ends seem to be the formulation of "right beliefs." Homrighausen cannot accept such an objective in itself. At the other extreme are those who would talk of all life as "religious attitudes." The later school of John Dewey has influenced religious educators to adapting the experience element of man at the expense of probing into the deeper nature and need of man. Homrighausen's view of man's utter failure apart from God leads him to conclude that they are too

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1. Cf. Elmer G. Homrighausen: "Communicating the Christian Faith," *Theology Today*, p. 490
2. Elmer G. Homrighausen: "Wanted: The Recovery of the Christian Paideia," *Religion in Life*, p. 126

optimistic about sinful man. "The soul of education," according to Homrighausen, "is the education of the soul."¹

c.. The Solution of the Chief Problem

The solution of the problem lies in the harmony gained between both historic Christianity for its religious foundation and creative education for its method. Homrighausen's answer is evangelization. By evangelism he means the ongoing effort of the Church, not of those outside it, to bring self-determining persons to the place of making constant responses.

Christ is the main issue in Christian Education as well as in theology:

The great danger of modern educational evangelism, however, is that while it accepts the idea that children are within the household of faith, it does not regard the Christian assumptions regarding redemption.²

Homrighausen stresses that evangelism and nurture must be kept separate. Yet at the same time they are two methods of the one goal in Christian Education.³

Because Religious Education has started with man, it therefore needs the divine thought about man. Man's apparent and woeful need, Homrighausen says,

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1. Homrighausen: op. cit., Theology Today, p. 488
2. Homrighausen: Choose Ye This Day, p. 125
3. Cf. Ibid., p. 51

demands a Revelation. Religious Education should bring children and adults face to face with their sin and with God's grace and through decision lead them into true freedom. "This freedom comes to man only when he is obedient to that for which he was created and to that for which he was meant to live."¹

He states that children are real persons and that, unless their lives are confronted with Christ on their level, they are headed toward a humanistic concept of life. Their decisions are real and growing. But decision must have the commitment aspect of continual decisions even at that age. Unless the growing life is confronted with Christ in an expanding experience, infant decisions will be outgrown and the adult life will have an infantile spiritual experience.²

d. An Evaluation of Bushnell

Since both evangelical and liberal views of Religious Education claim a common ancestor in Horace Bushnell, it is enlightening to note what Homrighausen has to say concerning him. Bushnell, he points out, rightfully revolted from the evangelism of his day by stressing Christian nurture, but this nurture depended upon the

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1. Elmer G. Homrighausen: "The Real Problem of Religious Education," Religious Education, p. 17
2. Cf. Homrighausen: Choose Ye This Day, p. 127

whole of Christian theology. However, Bushnellianism, if let go its course, leads to naturalism; for in reaction to spontaneous conversion it soon loses the reality of sin and the need for forgiveness and supplants evangelism with nurture.¹

e. Christian Education and the Sunday School

Homrighausen views the Sunday School as a means for Christian Education. At present, however, the Sunday School has either become autonomous and apart from the Church or else it has been supplanted by other organizations, such as youth groups, etc. For this reason

Sunday School Christianity lacks thoroughness and precision and it lacks churchly theological structure. In recent years religious educators have paid attention to individualism, but often at the expense of churchly theological content.²

In a time when the ecumenical movement is spreading throughout churches, Homrighausen considers its counterpart in Christian Education. He feels ecumenicity would be more difficult in Christian Education than in churches. Since nurture is one of the key elements in Christian Education, the Sunday School should be under the direction of the Mother Church. Yet he sees hope in the fact that the churches are

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1. Cf. Ibid., pp. 40, 41

2. Homrighausen: Christianity in America, p. 86

re-examining their heritage and believes that in so doing they will find a common heritage. This will in turn influence the educational program, for Christian Education is always influenced after the Church.¹

2. The Place of Conversion in the Life of the Individual

a. Related to Sin

Conversion, says Homrighausen, is "a conversion of the total life from sin to God."² A conversion from sins would indicate only reformation of a depraved being and not the new creation which is necessary.

b. Related to Faith and Repentance

Two elements are essential to both conversion and choice, namely, faith and repentance. Faith is the act of trust which weds the divine seed to the human soul and produces a Christian life.³ Repentance, enlarges Homrighausen, has not only the negative emotional sorrow for sin, but it involves seeing the self truly from God's viewpoint.⁴ Therefore repentance is a shift from self-sufficiency to a God-sufficiency. By a change of center alone is it possible for man to make

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1. Cf. Homrighausen: op. cit., Religion in Life, pp. 128-131

2. Homrighausen: Choose Ye This Day, p. 37

3. Cf. Ibid., p. 60

4. Cf. Ibid., pp. 60, 61

real choices. "Repentance saves the religious man from pride, the individualist from social isolationism, the intellectual from self-sufficient rationalism, . . ."1 In answer to the oft asked question of which is first, repentance or faith, Homrighausen makes the following answer: Before either of these two there is God's initiative. On the part of man there is found a desire to respond, quickly followed by a sense of unworthiness. "There can be no sense of repentance where there is no measure of desire."2

c. Elements through Which God Works

God touches man by what Homrighausen calls "agitation."³ It is through the many outward and inward agitations that God is speaking. In doing so Homrighausen combines the Augustinian view of man's restlessness with the "Hound of Heaven" view as God seeks. Because God seeks, man is agitated and restless to seek Him.

Another force which causes man to be converted is an utter sense or intuition of loneliness.⁴ Conversion then both provides a fellowship with God satisfying that loneliness and stimulates a fellowship with God's people. Homrighausen in many places says that man

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1. Ibid., p. 61
2. Ibid., p. 88
3. Cf. Ibid., pp. 89, 103, 104
4. Cf. Ibid., p. 79

continually becomes or is becoming a Christian. This work of conversion is the continuing work of the Holy Spirit.

3. The Nature of Worship.

"Worship is praise, adoration, confession, and dedication to God."¹ The heart of worship is in no sense passive, but it is the active intercourse of man with the living God. In reality it is sacrifice in the form of a listening ear and a self-giving spirit. It is the very heart of the Christian life.²

Though it be essentially inward, its highest outward expression is in the Lord's Supper, which Homrighausen calls "the inmost sanctuary of our whole Christian worship."³ The Word of God should be preached within the aims and context of worship. Above both sermon and Sacrament Homrighausen places the Word of God as the center of worship; the other elements are attached to Revelation.⁴

Homrighausen rounds out his views upon worship by concluding that the Church then becomes a community of worship; and, where there is intellectual or moral debate about God, there is no true worship.

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1. Ibid., p. 113
2. Cf. Ibid., p. 146
3. Ibid., p. 132
4. Cf. Ibid., p. 140

4. The Nature of Prayer.

Prayer is related to repentance and worship. "The repentant person is the prayerful person."¹ It is through praying that the Christian is able to meet the "perennial emergency" of the Christian life. In actuality it is the means of meeting the living God through Christ in the Spirit. Prayer is as much an attitude as it is an act. Through prayerful habits in Bible Study prayer becomes a means of grace. Homrighausen has little to say on prayer. He does not argue about it, but it is evident that he believes a prayerful attitude is necessary to right thinking and action by its mediator character.²

5. The Solution of Life Problems.

a. Problems Intensified by Present Crises

The contemporary problems of man have been intensified by the growing crises in which he lives.

Modern man no longer finds himself in possession of inner order because he has so largely shifted the center of his life to the external order. This outward order is now in the process of disruption.³

Homrighausen concludes from this observation of life that though man sees his need, this does not mean that

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1. Ibid., p. 62

2. Cf. Ibid., pp. 147, 148

3. Latourette, op. cit., p. 187

he can solve his problems; to the contrary to discuss them is to lead to a deeper sense of despair. But there arises out of this very despair a point of contact between God and man.

There is an indirect point of contact through the tragic sense of life which issues from man's universal failure to gain the clue to his need and the cure to his wound unto death.¹

b. Way to Meet Life Problems

This woeful condition is to Homrighausen a hopeful condition in that utterly sinful men are brought face to face with their failure. However, this does not guarantee that man will in obedience apply the grace of God. He has two other alternatives:

1. He can meet his problem with a superman determination to conquer it by his own might.
2. He can give in to the total sense of failure by a willingness to die.²

In between these two views lies Homrighausen's own view which can be termed "Christian realism." The Bible itself grew out of life problems and, because it faced life realistically, it can help others do the same. He considers every problem to be ultimately theological, whether it be individual or social.³ This is based on his view of God as Creator. Since man is

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1. Homrighausen: Choose Ye This Day, p. 104
2. Cf. Ibid., p. 43
3. Cf. Ibid., p. 185

in the image of God and God is the Creator of all things, then every judgment that man makes is, therefore, in some respect related to God. "God's will is not to be found in isolation; it is related to every moment of the common life."¹ Liberalism would think of Christianity in terms of experience and as growing out of experience. Fundamentalism would isolate Christianity from human affairs and make religion an annex. But Homrighausen's view of what a Christian is relates and integrates the Christian faith to reality:

No one becomes a Christian until he has faced up realistically to his individual situation and asked serious questions about the problem of not only his personal but his social existence. We cannot so easily separate truth from life; in fact, in the Bible, truth and life are inextricably joined.²

c. The Place of the Christian Home

This solution to life's problems is directly related by Homrighausen to Christian nurture. He would have the Church lay greater stress in preaching, teaching, and worship, and upon the Gospels being interpreted in life. The Church can meet its problems in the following way:³

1. Instruction of young people in the Christian interpretation of marriage.

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1. Latourette, op. cit., p. 189
2. Homrighausen: Choose Ye This Day, p. 43
3. Cf. Ibid., pp. 117-136

2. Pastoral care for newlyweds.

3. Revival of the family pew.

This leads to an emphasis upon home and family religion in which the daily religion of its members goes into the weekly character of the Church. In this approach Church and home unite to help its members meet life realistically by meeting God in reality.

D. SUMMARY

This study has revealed that Elmer G. Homrighausen holds that strong churchly theology is necessary both to living the Christian life and to practicing the art of Religious Education. His concept of the Bible lies in its character of Revelation as it witnesses to the Hebrew-Christian tradition in which men met God and through their experience reveals Himself as God to those who read the Bible; but behind the Bible is the Word of God, the truth of God which guarantees the Bible's Revelation.

God is seen as sovereign of all life. Yet at the same time He does not force men. God is characterized by His grace, mercy, and love and by His wrath, indignation, and judgment. Of these qualities the mercy of God is stronger than the wrath of God, and thus God's grace does all that is necessary as the initiating

agent in the complete salvation of mankind.

According to Homrighausen's view it has been seen that man is a complete sinner and because of his nature is unable to do anything to right himself or lift himself out of his depraved condition. Yet "in Christ" man passes into a realm that was originally planned for him before the Fall. Man is never perfect, though a new creature, although he seeks perfection.

It is because of sin that man is in his present state. Sin separates man from fellowship with God and disrupts his relationship with other humans. Man's nature makes him tend toward sin. It is sin that makes mankind abnormal, the normal life being the Christian life.

It is Jesus Christ Who is the focal point of man, society, and the universe. Being the incarnation of God, men meet God "in Christ." Christ is the full revelation of God. He is the authority for men. He changes men.

Neo-orthodoxy has its usefulness in that it arouses the thinking of people by emphasizing the non-perfect element of man. But its weakness lies in its tendency to neglect the grace of God as an answer to the problem its theology creates.

Homrighausen's theological views have been seen to be the foundations for his conceptions in the

practical field. Religious Education has the double aspect of nurture, based on historic Christianity and evangelism as it is tied into the Church. These fields he claims must be kept distinct; yet ultimately they form two parts of the one truth in bringing about the Christian life. Religious Education is not to be limited to the individual but should include the community.

Conversion is necessary to man. The two elements which are part of its construction on the part of the believer are faith and repentance. It is the agitations of life that cause men to desire God. At the heart of both faith and repentance lie decision and commitment. The latter form a unit consisting of a momentary act of will and repeated acts to follow. Decision makes for conversion and in reality creates the person.

CHAPTER II

THE VIEWS OF HARRISON S. ELLIOTT

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A. Introduction

In order to determine the views of Harrison S. Elliott, the writer has selected those of his writings which have particular significance for the subject under consideration. The Union Theological Seminary Library located in New York City has been of invaluable aid in supplying a complete list of Dr. Elliott's articles and books and has been gracious in allowing the writer library privileges. The writings which were consulted cover a wide span of years, from 1913 to 1947; however, special attention has been given to his later writings. Most valuable for this study has been his book Can Religious Education Be Christian?, published in 1940, in which the author gathers up the experience and thought of a lifetime into one volume. Other books of Dr. Elliott which have been consulted are:

The How and Why of Group Discussion, 1923
The Bearing of Psychology upon Religion, 1927
The Process of Group Thinking, 1928

Two books which have been the product of co-operation with others are:

Student Standards of Action, 1915 (With Ethel Cutler)
Solving Personal Problems, 1940 (With Grace L. Elliott)

Also consulted were the following books in which Dr. Elliott has contributed a chapter:

Report of the Tenth Conference of the World's Student Christian Federation, 1913
Religion on the Campus, Miller, 1927
Foundations of Democracy, Johnson, 1947

Articles by Elliott in the following magazines have been studied:

World's Conference of YMCA Association Men
Alumni Bulletin
Religious Education
Frontiers of Democracy
Journal of Bible and Religion

In addition to the above reading matter, Dr. Elliott graciously gave the writer the privilege of a personal interview in which he answered various questions concerning his views.

B. His Theological Viewpoints

Dr. Elliott's theological viewpoints will be considered now under the following headings in the same sequence: his views of the Bible, of God, of man, of sin, and of Jesus Christ; and his attitude toward Neo-orthodoxy.

1. Views of the Bible.

a. As an Interpretation of Experience

The Bible for Dr. Elliott is chiefly literature which records the interpretation of experience. In

speaking of the Synoptic Gospels, he refers to each as being an interpretation of its author.

They were written to deal with problems about Jesus faced in the early Church and to set forth an interpretation of him, to defend Christianity against its opponents and to commend it to others.¹

What is true about the Synoptics, he holds, is also true about the rest of the New Testament. The Fourth Gospel, though it claimed to be a revelation of the Spirit, was basically a search for the solution of problems of the Christian faith which were both the interpretive expression of Christ by its author and the search of many other Christians for the same solution.²

Elliott continues by emphasizing the inter-pretive element in the writings of the Apostle Paul. For example he makes a distinction between that which Paul experienced on the Damascus Road and his interpretation of it:

Paul also introduced radically new features in the interpretation of Jesus Christ and his relation to the believer. The vision he had on the Damascus road he interpreted as that of the risen Christ.³

The interpretation of Paul has been both formative in Christianity as well as the center of much controversy.⁴

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1. Harrison S. Elliott: Can Religious Education Be Christian?, p. 101
2. Cf. Ibid., p. 109
3. Ibid., p. 107
4. Cf. loc. cit.
Cf. Ibid., p. 119

The Old Testament records also grew out of the experiences of its characters. Although the codes and commandments are assigned to the direct revelation of God, they "show unmistakable evidences of this empirical origin. Man has had to discover everything by the slow process of experience and experiment."¹

b. As a Progressive Record

The above concept which Harrison S. Elliott holds logically leads him to the conclusion that, since the Bible is a record of man's interpretations, these changing interpretations make up a progressive record. Describing Paul's interpretation, he says, "Whatever the origin, his interpretation was radically different from the Old Testament and the Synoptic Jesus."² The Bible concept of God grew "from the primitive ideas of God and of religion in the early Old Testament records to the fullness of meaning in the New."³ It is Elliott's belief therefore, that "this process did not close with the New Testament"⁴ but has been continuing in and through the experiences of men of each age. In opposition to an authoritarian view of the Bible and religion, he claims

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1. Ibid., p. 157

2. Ibid., p. 106

3. Ibid., p. 311

Cf. Harrison S. Elliott: "Democracy and Hebrew and Christian Hopes," *Frontiers of Democracy*, p. 204

4. Elliott: *Can Religious Education Be Christian?*, p. 311

that there does not exist any one final, singular interpretation of the Christian religion.¹

He feels that the Bible is nothing more than "a record of life situations and how they were met."² It is in this form that the Bible is considered a "Revelation," the record of man's quest for God.

c. As a Source Book

Elliott's basic principle in the use of the Bible is "the right of each individual to interpret the Scriptures for himself and to come to his own understanding and experience of the Christian faith."³ Such a study necessitates a serious consideration of the contributions of historical criticism and the contribution of the "sciences."

Assuming that the Bible contains the most significant record of religious experience, it should be studied with the following objectives in mind:

1. To be influenced by its cultural values.⁴
2. To relive and recapture the experiences of Bible personages.⁵

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1. Cf. Ibid., p. 310
2. Harrison S. Elliott: The How and Why of Group Discussion, p. 14
3. Elliott: Can Religious Education Be Christian?, p. 119
4. Cf. Harrison S. Elliott: "How to Ensure the Best Leadership of the Bible Study Work," Report of the Tenth Conference of the World's Student Christian Federation, p. 303
5. Cf. Elliott: Can Religious Education Be Christian?, p. 316

Assumpt

3. To use this past experience as a help in meeting present problems.¹

Elliott continues by saying that to this Bible record there needs to be added the larger areas of knowledge; Sociology, Psychology, Physiology, etc., so that the conscientious person might have the full field before him touching the whole man in order to help secure an enriched and meaningful Christian experience.²

2. Views of God.

a. His Objectivity

Reasoning from the psychological point of view, Elliott classifies God as being distinctive in the universe just as any earthly individual is distinct from another individual.³ He is beyond man, "the God of the universe and of human life."⁴

b. His Immanence

Though God is distinct from the universe, Elliott also says that "God does not exist apart from the universe."⁵ On one hand God is the sustainer of life; on the other hand He does not intervene in the

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1. Loc. cit.
2. Cf. Ibid., p. 134
3. Cf. Harrison S. Elliott: The Bearing of Psychology upon Religion, p. 63
4. Harrison S. Elliott: "Why Am I Religious?," Association Men, p. 378
5. Elliott: The Bearing of Psychology on Religion, loc. cit.

course of the universe except through the laws of the universe.¹

c. His Nonsovereignty

Elliott holds that to have an authoritative God would directly oppose the growth process in man which leads him into maturity. Obedience to an authoritative God is put on the same level as obedience to an authoritative parent. He says that this "tends to foster undue subservience and dependence and to hinder the growth of the personality into its own rightful maturity and independence."² In an analysis of a sovereign-God concept he continues:

A sovereign God inevitably becomes associated with sovereign men. The denial of the right of the individual to assert himself before God is usually accompanied by a denial of his rights before the authority of men. Human initiative and responsibility are fundamentally threatened because in practice the individual is made to feel that when he questions the authority of parents and teachers and ministers, he is in fact questioning the authority of God.³

God as nonsovereign cannot be approached for help since - He does not have supreme authority. He cannot forgive sin but man must solve his own sin problem.⁴ He does not deal with mankind directly, but indirectly as he

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1. Cf. Elliott: Can Religious Education Be Christian?, p. 293
2. Harrison S. Elliott and Grace L. Elliott: Solving Personal Problems, p. 294
3. Elliott: Can Religious Education Be Christian?, pp. 153, 154
4. Cf. Ibid., p. 171

meets the conditions of the law of nature. In reality God is not the authority over life, but the resources are in life itself to solve its own problems, and He thus guides life indirectly.¹

d. His Character of Love

In a world of hate Elliott says that there is still enough empirical data to prove that God is love.² He would extend his empirical data so far as to say that any manifestation of love either in men or their religions has its source in the same God who is "part of that same revelation which reaches its climax and completion in Christ."³ Wherever love is found it is God's love.

3. Views of Man.

a. As Amoral in Origin

Elliott says that it is false to think of man's nature as consisting of "well-defined egoistic or selfish and social or unselfish tendencies, which are curbed and restrained or organized by reason."⁴ His original nature is amoral in the sense that there is nothing in it which of itself causes him to be good or bad.

*not amoral
but neutral*

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1. Cf. Ibid., p. 296
2. Cf. Ibid., p. 134
3. Ibid., p. 75
4. Ibid., p. 191

Man becomes what he is through his ability to learn. "Whatever habits and attitudes they have have been learned and relearned in their experience."¹ Conduct which expresses itself in lying, stealing, anger, etc., is not the result of his original nature but is an evidence of the way that an individual has learned to act and is his way of adjusting himself to life.²

*only
Social conduct*

A realistic appraisal of human nature will place no exclusive emphasis upon either the 'demonic' or the 'divine' tendencies, but will recognize the exhaustless possibilities of both.³

b. As Influenced by Environment

Individuals become either good or bad as influenced by their environment. If the proper conditions for good conduct surround him in childhood and adulthood, it is more likely that he will respond in accordance with that setting.⁴

c. As a Free Agent

Environment itself does not determine man's actions but man's own capacity of freedom is the final judge. "The exercise of freedom is that on which growth

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1. Elliott and Elliott, op. cit., p. 287
2. Cf. Harrison S. Elliott: "Mental Hygiene and Religious Education," Religious Education, p. 4
3. Elliott: Can Religious Education Be Christian?, p. 197
4. Cf. Elliott and Elliott, loc. cit.

depends."¹ He can desire comradeship with God or exert a rebellion against God.

This freedom is allowed man because he has within himself the capacity for his own improvements. This can be accomplished by a recognition of fundamental wants and an improvement of his goal and method by a careful criticism of them.² A high estimate of man has been the result of empirical study. It has emphasized the possibilities of human beings, and has been a psychological study rather than a theological one in which other related sciences have contributed to the final conclusion.³

Dr. Elliott says that there are two classes of people, those who are responsible and those who are not. The responsible individuals have erred and "have rejected God and his will in the world, and have given their lives to the exploitation of others for their own ends."⁴ Such a rejection makes them responsible for a change in their conduct. The other class is the victim of an unchristian social order and, therefore, needs protection by that society for their own good.⁵

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1. Elliott: Can Religious Education Be Christian?, p. 156

2. Cf. Francis P. Miller, editor: Religion on the Campus, p. 154

3. Cf. Elliott: Can Religious Education Be Christian?, p. 4

4. Ibid., p. 176

5. Cf. loc. cit.

In a summary of the potentialities in human life Elliott says:¹

1. There is a limit and a range to inborn qualities.
2. Conduct grows out of environment and experience.
3. Human characteristics are modifiable.
4. The capacity for growth is seemingly unlimited.
5. The ability to improve is within man himself.

4. Views of Sin.

a. As a Symptom

Bad conduct, from the point of view of the mental hygienist, is not due to the evil nature of the individual; neither is it sin! It is a symptom of personality ill health.²

What has been called sin is in reality sins, or the individual acts. Elliott would treat not the symptom but its cause.³

He continues by saying that much of the cause of sin is poor environment:

Religious educators should make this more careful diagnosis of the problem of sin. They should recognize that however much conduct may look like sin it is often the manifestation of a sick, rather

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1. Cf. Miller, op. cit., pp. 155, 156
2. Elliott: op. cit., Religious Education, p. 3
3. Cf. Elliott and Elliott: Solving Personal Problems, p. 293
Cf. Elliott: Can Religious Education Be Christian?, p. 172
Cf. Miller: Religion on the Campus, p. 151

than a sinful personality. Often the individual's seemingly sinful conduct is the result of conditions He is the victim of circumstances which are too difficult or too easy.¹

Elliott makes it more specific when he says, "Stealing, lying, and other forms of bad conduct grow out of an unhealthy environment."²

b. As Related to a Sense of Guilt

A sense of sin or of guilt in a person is the result of being under autocratic authority. It usually has its manifestation in those years when the individual comes into his own independence and maturity. But a child who has done his own thinking and has been given a growing autonomy will not have any sense of guilt or sin which arises out of rebellion against authority.³

c. As a Changing Standard

What sin is, Elliott continues, as well as what causes sin, has varied through the decades:

The interpretation of sin has varied and that particular interpretation shows distinctly the influence of the cultural situation. Further the causes of guilt have varied, for guilt is not inevitably connected with one particular type of behavior or attitude, but it is related to that which is disapproved.⁴

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1. Elliott: Can Religious Education Be Christian?, p. 175
2. Elliott: loc. cit., Religious Education
3. Cf. Elliott: Can Religious Education Be Christian?, p. 166
4. Ibid., p. 165

5. Views of Jesus Christ.

a. His Person

Dr. Elliott holds that Jesus was a historical character. Historically he was a devout Jew, thoroughly at home in the Old Testament Scriptures and profoundly concerned about the condition of his people. It is this historical Jesus who is the basis for the Christ of experience.¹ He is the supreme manifestation of God.²

b. His Mission

Of Jesus' sense of mission Elliott says:

He believed that he had a distinctive contribution to make, but what he thought that contribution to be seems impossible to understand except in relation to the historical circumstances, and even then it is not clear.³

Concerning the death and resurrection of Christ, it is difficult to see his mission revealed in them; for it must be recognized that they were interpreted in their significance by early Christians.⁴

c. His Message

It is clear to Elliott that Jesus came to call men to repentance and to a life of perfection because

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1. Cf. Ibid., p. 99
2. Cf. Ibid., p. 155
3. Ibid., p. 99
4. Cf. Ibid., p. 119

"the kingdom of God--the new Age--was imminent."¹

Underlying this message was a confidence which Jesus had in ordinary human beings as he saw the great potentialities which could be attained and developed.²

"There is no better evidence of this insight than the extraordinary response of individuals to just that kind of confidence."³

6. Attitude toward Neo-orthodoxy.

a. Their Conflict with the Liberal View

Elliott feels that the liberal form of Religious Education which he represents is in basic conflict with the Neo-orthodox interpretation. In fact in his latest book, Can Religious Education Be Christian?, Elliott develops his views in contrast to Neo-orthodoxy.⁴

b. Their Authoritative Doctrinal Emphasis

He accuses Neo-orthodoxy of violating the basic tenet of Protestantism, the right of the individual to interpret the Bible for himself when he says, "They insist that the only study of the Scriptures which can be authoritative is that which accepts in advance their

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1. Ibid., p. 100

2. Cf. Elliott: The Bearing of Psychology upon Religion, p. 36

3. Harrison S. Elliott: "The Significance of Process in the Progress of Christianity," Alumni Bulletin, p. 12

4. Cf. Elliott: Can Religious Education Be Christian?, p. 10

particular approach."¹ Such a view of the Bible serves to illustrate both an authoritative interpretation and the fallacy of approaching the Scriptures with preconceived ideas of their meaning. This doctrinal approach means that they are attempting to solve personal problems on a theological basis, whereas Elliott holds to the educational or psychological approach.²

c. Their Exaggerated Sense of Sin

To the deep sense of sin held by Neo-orthodoxy,

Elliott answers:

There is often failure to see that an exaggerated sense of sin and guilt is as ego-centered as is excessive pride and self-assertion. The latter is ego-centeredness in times of success; the former in times of defeat and failure.³

C. His Methodological Viewpoints

The methodological viewpoints of Dr. Elliott will be considered under the following captions: his concept of Religious Education, the place of conversion in the life of the individual, the nature of worship, the nature of prayer, and the solution of life problems.

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1. Ibid., p. 113
2. Cf. Ibid., p. 178
3. Ibid., p. 171

*How much Elliott Rel. Ed. Vision
Affects the rel. Ed.*

1. Concept of Religious Education.

a. The Educational Process

Foundational in all learning and experience is what Elliott call the educational process. "It is the fundamental method open to man for solving the problems of his world. It is the process used wherever significant responsibility is taken by man . . ."1 Elliott defines the educational process in the following statement:

The educational process is centered in the enterprises and activities of those being educated and study is made contributory to action, on the one hand, and to appreciation on the other.²

If there is any authority in his interpretation of Religious Education, it is in the educational process itself as it searches for God.³ Previously established principles do not govern the experience or process but the educational process determines the principles.⁴ It is apparent that such an educational procedure would involve some risk, to which Elliott replies:

In the interest of a vital faith, religious educators must take the risk which is involved in all vital education, and indeed in human freedom itself, that inadequate or false beliefs may become the convictions of individuals or groups.⁵

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- 1. Ibid., p. 319
- 2. Harrison S. Elliott: "Religious Education and Religious Growth," World's Conference of YMCA, p. 7
- 3. Cf. Elliott: Can Religious Education Be Christian?, p. 320
- 4. Cf. Ibid., p. 250
- 5. Ibid., p.88

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b. The Social Theory

The social theory of Religious Education has come into this field from secular education by way of the Social-Gospel emphasis. The life of the individual is rooted in community life, the whole being the expression of the life of the individual and his relationships with the others. This is the group method of solving problems.¹

Underlying the social theory are the rights of the individual, as Elliott clearly states:

Anyone who is affected by or must carry out a decision or a plan has the right to have a voice in the making of that decision . . . those who are affected by a decision or a plan have an obligation to do their part in putting it into effect.²

This puts the social theory on the plane of moral necessity rather than on the level of method. Out of such a process of group thinking and democratic participation Elliott believes there comes the best in motivation.³ One of the chief difficulties which prevent the best use of this method, he says, is the consideration of the immediate ends of the group. These practical difficulties make it easy for the group to accept ready-made solutions.⁴

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1. Cf. Ibid., p. 243

2. F. Ernest Johnson, editor: Foundations of Democracy, p. 193

3. Cf. Ibid., p. 199

4. Cf. Elliott: Can Religious Education Be Christian?, p. 264

c. Christian Ethics

Religious Education utilizes Christian ethics as a guide to individual practice and as a critique of established group practices:

The leaders of religious education would use the educational process both to determine and to embody Christian ethics. But they would trust only that educational process in which Christian ethics is central.¹

d. The Place of the Teacher

In harmony with the educational process the teacher, according to Elliott, should not consider himself apart or outside the group:

He is rather himself integrally a part of the group life since he is charged with executive or judicial responsibilities to carry out that which is recognized as necessary for the common welfare or that which has been democratically decided by the group.²

As part of the group, the teacher is a guide who seeks to make himself less depended upon as a leader so that the individual might learn how to think for himself. In such a position the teacher assumes more leadership in what to think and less in how to think.³ The problem of how a teacher should keep the group disciplined, and how much disciplinary measures should be used is given a solution by Dr. Elliott when he says:

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1. Ibid., p. 259

2. Ibid., p. 237

3. Cf. Harrison S. Elliott: The Process of Group Thinking, p. 14

A parent or a teacher, it is true, is charged with the responsibility for the maintenance of law and order so that the work of the group shall not be hindered, but he is also obligated in his discipline of refractory members of the group, who are threatening that order, to take the personality and the personal welfare of the individual into full consideration and to administer discipline in such a way that not only will order be restored but the individual will be helped.¹

e.. The Use of the Bible

Dr. Elliott advocates the use of the Bible in Religious Education as a means of helping the individual to meet his own problems. To recapture imaginatively the significant experiences of the Bible means that such a study will both widen and enrich present experience. Such inspiration and insight will lead the individual into his own unique experience of God.²

2. The Place of Conversion in the Life of the Individual.

a. The Nature of Conversion

Elliott feels that the very nature of life, being a process of growth and experience, would eliminate the single experience of conversion. "An individual does not become a Christian all at once through some single experience of conversion any more than he becomes an adult by some special experience."³ The individual starts

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1. Elliott: Can Religious Education Be Christian?, p. 238

2. Cf. Ibid., p. 277

3. Ibid., p. 313

as a little child in the Christian life, regardless of his chronological age and "in and through his experience . . . he grows more and more toward maturity in Christian experience."¹

*look like
but
not so*

As to whether a change of heart produces a change in conduct or a change of conduct influences the change of heart Elliott says, "It seemed that a change of heart accompanied and was dependent upon a change of conduct."²

b. The Method of Conversion

"If Christianity be anything, it is a living experience; and being a living experience cannot be offered or accepted or sold or bought--it can only be shared."³ Elliott, therefore, feels that because the nature of life is growing and experiencing, conversion then is a process which meets those conditions of growth. He continues in a summation of this point by saying, "Growth depends upon experience, and the range and type of experiences with Christ determine the degree to which an individual is a Christian."⁴

c. "New Birth Experiences"

Elliott makes the following criticism of the

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1. Loc. cit.
2. Ibid., p. 45
3. Elliott: loc. cit., Alumni Bulletin
4. Elliott: op. cit., World's Conference of YMCA, p. 11

traditional Protestant view of the New Birth experience:¹

1. It is difficult to put the idea of the new birth into experience for it is theological and not psychological.
2. Conversion is conditioned by the community conscience level.
3. Such an experience affects only the areas about which there is a sense of sin and guilt and does not influence the whole life.

In place of such an experience he would work to lift the level of the community conscience in order to help the transformation of the individual through the educational process.

3. The Nature of Worship.

Elliott uses the word "alternative" in connection with worship and says that worship "is an alternation from activity and leads back again to activity."² It has no value in and of itself unless it helps the individual to redirect and criticize experience as it relates to God.³ Worship is a means by which the individual gathers up his experiences and so gives them unity and meaning. Both memory and imagination are important factors. In meditation the past is evaluated in the light of how it can help in

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1. Cf. Elliott: Can Religious Education Be Christian?, pp. 123-125
2. Ibid., p. 301
3. Cf. Ibid., p. 277

the experiences of the present.¹

The nature of worship, according to Elliott, provides both individual and group alternations. Two factors make worship meaningful in experience--a small group worshipping and a group sharing common problems.²

4. The Nature of Prayer.

The chief premise from which Elliott works concerning the nature of prayer is that "results are not obtained by the intervention of some miraculous power but by meeting the conditions for the release of inherent and limitless potentialities."³ The effectiveness of praying is that it helps man to answer his own prayer through conformity to the laws of God. "It is only the prayer which is the verbal expression of the earnest effort to find and meet conditions which is answered."⁴ This conforms with his concept of God, as stated above, as one who works through natural law and knowledge. He enlarges this point by adding:

What is needed is a conception of God, a type and content of prayer, and an expression of worship that are true to one's scientific knowledge about human personality and about the physical universe and,

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1. Cf. Elliott: op. cit., World's Conference of YMCA, pp. 11, 12
2. Cf. Elliott: Can Religious Education Be Christian?, p. 303
3. Elliott: The Bearing of Psychology upon Religion, p. 54
4. Elliott: Can Religious Education Be Christian?, p. 295

therefore, true to his most fundamental beliefs about God.¹

5. The Solution of Life Problems.

The chief aims of Religious Education are for Elliott the solving of life problems. This is possible through the educational process. The human problem is never "solely an intellectual affair and thinking about it is always emotional as well as intellectual."² One basic element in the utilization of the intellect and the emotions is the social approach. In such a method goals will be set up which not only affect the individual but also the lives of others, those who are also a part of the social structure. "Progress in the solution of the problems of individuals is integrally bound up with the reconstruction of life of which they are a part."³

The life situation approach to the Bible is another guide for the individual in meeting his own problems. The counterpart of the present problem is located in the Bible and the possible solutions can be evaluated on the basis of the emphasis in the Bible or other Christian teaching.⁴ However, Elliott feels that in this method of solution there are distinct limitations

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1. Miller, op. cit., p. 160
2. Elliott: Can Religious Education Be Christian?, p. 205
3. Ibid., p. 211
4. Cf. Ibid., p. 51

since there are many problems in present life for which there are no exact courses of action illustrated in the Bible.¹

There is no set pattern for solving problems; each must be faced in its own setting by the aid of the democratic educational process, oftentimes through reinterpreting past experience in the light of new knowledge and securing the best experiences of others to enrich and direct in present circumstances.²

D. SUMMARY

This study has revealed that Harrison S. Elliott views the field of Religious Education as a liberal interpreter. The Bible is basically an interpretation of experience and history, and as a book it presents a progressive revelation. It has been seen that he believes the Bible can be used as a guide to Christian experience.

God is viewed chiefly as being both an objective personality and an immanent one. Elliott has been shown to hold that God is nonsovereign in character and that this conclusion has been arrived at psychologically. The chief character of God is love.

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1. Cf. Harrison S. Elliott: "The Implications of a Functional Approach," *Journal of Bible and Religion*, p. 29
2. Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 25

Man is amoral in origin with the capabilities of being either good or bad. His actual conduct has been shown to be the result of his environmental influence of his individual choices.

Sin has been viewed as a symptom of something wrong in man's personality. A sense of guilt is the result of rebellion against authority. The sense of sin changes since it is an interpretation of the cultural situation.

It has been seen that, according to Elliott, Jesus Christ was an historical character, although his mission was not clear to himself. His message of hope was based on his confidence in man.

Elliott is in basic conflict with the Neo-orthodox Movement. He opposes their authoritative doctrinal emphasis which he holds hinders man's growth. He criticizes them for their pessimism in an highly exaggerated sense of sin.

Elliott's concept of Religious Education includes the need of the educational process as the means for learning and the social experiences as the setting for that method. Christian ethics is both the test and the result of the educational process. The teacher has been seen as a guide, a member of the class, not dominating it. The Bible is valuable in that it enriches the present experience of the individual.

Conversion is not a momentary experience, but is the growing experience of the individual. The "New Birth Experience" is criticized as not changing the whole nature of man.

It has been found that Elliott considers worship to be an alternate experience which leads back into activity. An answer to prayer is essentially the finding out of God's laws and meeting them.

Finally, Dr. Elliott has been seen to hold the belief that life problems are met through the democratic educational process in which the Bible is an incomplete guide for the individual or group. The final authority for solving problems is the educational process itself.

CHAPTER III

A COMPARISON OF THE VIEWS OF
ELMER G. HOMRIGHAUSEN AND HARRISON S. ELLIOTT

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A. Introduction

The two previous chapters have presented an individual analysis of the theological and methodological views of Dr. Homrighausen and Dr. Elliott, respectively, as they relate to the field of Religious Education. The present chapter proposes to make a comparison of these views by showing where they are similar and where dissimilar. The source of the material used will be the data found in the preceding chapters.

B. Comparison of Theological Viewpoints

The theological viewpoints of both men will be compared under the following headings in the order named: views of the Bible, of God, of man, of sin, and of Jesus Christ, and their attitudes toward Neo-orthodoxy.

1. Views of the Bible.

a. As a Record of Historical Characters

Both Homrighausen and Elliott agree as to the historical aspect of the Bible. Dr. Homrighausen states

that to be real characters having a genuine witness about God the characters of the Bible must be historical.¹ Dr. Elliott is more cautious in stating his belief on this point. For example, Jesus was to him an historical character, although our record of him has various colorings because of the interpretations given him.² He speaks of the other Bible characters as having experience and thus implies their historicity.³ Elliott lays much importance on the interpretive element of Biblical experience. Homrighausen, on the other hand, does not qualify the experience in this light but simply accepts the Bible as a record of man's account of his experience with God.⁴

b. As Progressive in Character

Homrighausen and Elliott both see the progressive element in the Bible. Homrighausen views it as being progressive because man is limited by sin in receiving the revelation from God.⁵ Elliott carries the progressive element to the point that there is a contrast in views within the Bible. For example, God is first seen as a primitive tribal deity and later as the God of the universe.⁶

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1. Cf. Ante, p. 4
2. Cf. Ante, p. 33
3. Cf. Ante, pp. 33,34
4. Cf. Ante, p. 4
5. Cf. Ante, p. 3
6. Cf. Ante, p. 34

c. As a Revelation

Elliott classifies the Bible as literature which records the interpretation of experience.¹ Homrighausen attaches to it a greater significance by classifying these experiences as a witness about God.² The reason for this variant emphasis lies in a fundamental concept of the true nature of revelation. The two men under consideration hold contrasting viewpoints regarding revelation. The individuals of the Bible were, for Elliott, seeking after God through their experiences.³ But to Homrighausen it was God Who openly revealed Himself to men, the Bible being a record of God's activity in the lives of men.⁴

d. Use of the Bible

Homrighausen holds to the authoritative use of the Bible as a rule of faith in the religious experience of men. This is based upon his concept that behind the Bible record lies the Word of God.⁵ Elliott does not hold to such an authoritative concept of the Scriptures. It is chiefly valuable as a source of religious experiences which are helpful today in enriching present

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1. Cf. Ante, p. 33
2. Cf. Ante, p. 4
3. Cf. Ante, p. 35
4. Cf. Ante, p. 3
5. Cf. Ante, p. 5

Christian experience.¹

2. Views of God.

a. As Objective

Homrighausen emphasizes that God in His essential nature is both uncaused and separate from man. The character of God is best seen in His revelation.² Elliott holds that God is distinct from man, being beyond man. This conclusion has been reasoned from the psychological point of view.³

b. As Immanent

Because of a psychological approach, Elliott would on one hand say that God was in human experience, in nature, and in all the universe, but on the other hand this same God is so closely related to the universe that he does not exist apart from it.⁴ Homrighausen sees in God One who exists and would exist, even if man and the universe did not.⁵

c. As Related to Life

It is in God's sovereignty that Homrighausen sees the very centrum of man's life, its cause and

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1. Cf. Ante, pp. 35, 36
2. Cf. Ante, p. 6
3. Cf. Ante, p. 36
4. Cf. Ante, p. 36
5. Cf. Ante, p. 6

sustainer. It is through this sovereignty that God becomes immanent to man. Man, however, can choose obedience or disobedience.¹ Homrighausen would continue by saying that the only successful way for man to meet life would be to recognize God's sovereignty.² Elliott on the other hand sees in a sovereign God the greatest opposition to the growth process in man. God deals with man not as a sovereign but as a partner, meeting man through the laws of the universe.³

d. As to His Chief Characteristic

God to Homrighausen is pre-eminently righteous. This righteousness is manifested both in judgment as well as in forgiveness and is the very basis for His mercy.⁴ Elliott would characterize God as love, which he believes he can prove through empirical data.⁵ The chief characteristic which both men give to God is in complete harmony with their fundamental concept of His nature.

3. Views of Man.

a. His Original Nature

Homrighausen bases his view of man on an inter-

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1. Cf. Ante, p. 6
2. Cf. Ante, p. 7
3. Cf. Ante, pp. 37, 38
4. Cf. Ante, p. 8
5. Cf. Ante, p. 38

pretation of Scripture and holds that man was created in the image of God, having a nature which cannot be explained by laws. This image of God was changed by sin so that, still in the image of God, man is a sinner whose acts apart from God are colored with sin.¹ In contrast to this pessimistic view of man, Elliott holds to a view of man whose ability to improve is within himself. He has an amoral original nature which has potentialities for either goodness or badness.²

b. His Freedom of Choice

Both men have a place for the free choice of the individual. Homrighausen says that the natural man left to himself will, because he is a sinner, choose to sin. This positive will to sin is from within. It is only as man decides for Christ that he can overcome sinful propensities.³ Since Elliott considers the original nature of man to be amoral, he would not go so far as Homrighausen but only claims that man can either desire comradeship with God or be rebellious against God. Above all things he must be able to determine his own choices in order to grow.⁴

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1. Cf. Ante, p. 9
2. Cf. Ante, p. 38
3. Cf. Ante, p. 9
4. Cf. Ante, pp. 39, 40

c. His Response to Environment

Elliott's optimistic view of man is partially based upon the theory that the proper environment will make it more likely for him to choose the good rather than the evil.¹ In Homrighausen's thinking the depraved sinful nature of man is stronger than any good environment could be, the trouble being basically with his own nature.² At the same time he makes a plea for Christian homes as centers of nurture and instruction which both lead to Christian decisions and follow them up.³

4. Views of Sin.

a. Its Nature

Homrighausen speaks of sin as that condition in man which separates him from God and that which dominates the natural man's life. It makes man abnormal.⁴ Elliott thinks of sin as a symptom. As a symptom, he in reality conceives of sin as sins. Each symptom represents different sins. Sin is not caused by man's evil nature, but is a symptom of personality ill health.⁵

b. Its Relation to a Sense of Guilt

The natural man, Homrighausen says, being

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1. Cf. Ante, p. 39
2. Cf. Ante, p. 9
3. Cf. Ante, pp. 27, 28
4. Cf. Ante, p. 11
5. Cf. Ante, p. 41

dominated by a sinful nature, has no sense of guilt. He continues that, when man faces up with God, he becomes normal and has a sense of guilt.¹ To Elliott a sense of guilt is only the result of authoritarian rule over the individual. Remove the autocratic method and let the individual come into his own independence; there will be no sense of guilt. In other words, guilt is the artificial result of autocratic authority.²

c. Its Cure

According to Homrighausen's view, since sin in man is total, it cannot be cured piecemeal. It must be judged according to its totality and its originality in life. Christ as Redeemer is the only One able to deal with it satisfactorily in the life of the individual.³ Elliott's view, on the other hand, is that, since sin is partially caused by poor environment, it can conversely be helped in its cure by good environment.⁴ It is the social standard which determines what is to be called sin; therefore, if the social level is raised, it will aid in minimizing sin's influence upon the individual and at the same time reinterpret what sin is.⁵

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1. Cf. Ante, p. 11
2. Cf. Ante, p. 42
3. Cf. Ante, p. 11
4. Cf. Ante, pp. 41, 42
5. Cf. Ante, p. 42

5. Views of Jesus Christ.

a. His Person

Homrighausen holds to Christ as the incarnation of God, the Divine Son of God, the eternal God-reality. In so doing, he claims the highest divine nature for Christ as well as the highest human nature.¹ Although Elliott says that Jesus was the supreme manifestation of God, he holds and emphasizes his historical and human character.² His view that the Bible is one interpretation of experience enters in at this point. Those phenomena which appear to be miracles are in reality an interpretation of an incident. Miracles do not exist.³ It is implied that the miraculous and divine elements of Christ's nature were also interpretations to be differentiated from facts.

b. His Mission

According to Homrighausen the mission of Christ was his Saviorhood. This is in complete harmony with his views of man's depravity. As Savior, Christ was more than a teacher or a dispenser of truth. He was God's active agent in the redemption of mankind.⁴ The real

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1. Cf. Ante, pp. 12, 13
2. Cf. Ante, p. 43
3. Cf. Ante, p. 52
4. Cf. Ante, pp. 13, 14

mission of Jesus, Elliott concludes, has been lost in the maze of many interpretations concerning him.¹

c.. His Contribution

In the theology of Homrighausen he condenses the chief contribution of Jesus Christ by giving Him the place of centrality in life.² Life takes on character because of Him; men are saved from inner conflicts;³ and society is changed.⁴ Elliott in his basic theology asserts that Jesus' chief contribution was to stimulate confidence in the potentialities of human nature. In so doing he preached that the Kingdom of God, a new age, was at hand.⁵

6.. Attitude toward Neo-orthodoxy.

Neo-orthodoxy as a movement has a strong supporter in Dr. Homrighausen; and yet at the same time he views the movement objectively and sees the weakness in certain emphases. Chief among these weaknesses is the tendency to liquidate man and neglect the grace of God. He agrees with their doctrine of the utter sinfulness of man but sees a hopeful remedy in God's mercy.⁶ Elliott

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1. Cf. Ante, p. 43
2. Cf. Ante, pp. 13, 14
3. Cf. Ante, p. 14
4. Cf. Ante, p. 14
5. Cf. Ante, pp. 43, 44
6. Cf. Ante, p. 16

would criticize the Neo-orthodox Movement on the grounds of its authoritarian point of view doctrinally. He sees an ego-centeredness in their exaggerated sense of sin that is sinful in itself.¹

C. Comparison of Methodological Viewpoints

The methodological viewpoints of both men will be compared in the following order: concept of religious education, the place of conversion in the life of the individual, the nature of worship, the nature of prayer, and the solution of life problems.

1. Concept of Religious Education.

a. Its Goal

The goal of Religious Education, as Homrighausen sees it, is to bring the totality of human activities into harmony with the purposes of God. This goal is centered in the Divine.² Elliott approaches the subject from the human or psychological point of view. Experience is the chief end, and God is seen as He relates to it.³ It is from this viewpoint that Elliott utilizes both the educational process method and the social theory concept.⁴

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1. Cf. Ante, pp. 44, 45
2. Cf. Ante, p. 17
3. Cf. Ante, p. 46
4. Cf. Ante, p. 47

Both men are in fundamental agreement that the solution of the problems of individuals is the chief end of Religious Education.

b. Its Method

Homrighausen says that Christ is the main issue in Christian Education and that decision and commitment, for and to Him, results in true freedom. He holds that there are two ways of promoting Christian Education, by evangelism and by nurture. The two are distinct operations. Both are ongoing methods which use ongoing decisions and commitments to Christ.¹

Elliott emphasizes this same ongoing process, only he relates the process to learning through experience. Christian ethics would be utilized; however, the educational process both determines and embodies such ethics.² The use of the Bible is advocated by Elliott as a means for recapturing imaginatively and creatively the religious experiences it contains.³

Homrighausen's Religious Education necessitates a strong churchly theology.⁴ Elliott revolts at the theological approach by calling it authoritarian and would advocate instead the psychological approach in

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1. Cf. Ante, pp. 19, 20
2. Cf. Ante, p. 48
3. Cf. Ante, p. 49
4. Cf. Ante, p. 21

which theology is determined and utilized experimentally in the experience of the individual.¹

2. The Place of Conversion in the Life of the Individual.

a. The Nature of Conversion

Conversion for Homrighausen is that which affects and changes the total life, turning it from sin, not from sins, to God. It is a new creation by God rather than the remaking of the old nature.² Elliott on the other hand claims that one is not made a Christian by a single experience since such a theory violates the very nature of life which is growth.³ Elliott further speaks about the start of the Christian life in the life of a child as being dated by experience and not by age.⁴ This starting point might be similar to what Homrighausen calls conversion.⁵ Elliott looks upon it as the first step in a life of Christian growth.⁶ The divergency of views seems to be mainly one of theory, for in another place Homrighausen agrees with Elliott's growth theory by saying that man is becoming a Christian.⁷ This, however, is upon the assumption that at the starting place

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1. Cf. Ante, p. 40
2. Cf. Ante, p. 22
3. Cf. Ante, p. 49
4. Cf. Ante, p. 50
5. Cf. Ante, p. 22
6. Cf. Ante, p. 50
7. Cf. Ante, pp. 23, 24

he is changed into a new creature, the Christian life being the maturation of that creation.

b. The Method of Conversion

Homrighausen says that the method by which conversion is obtained is through faith and repentance, God Himself agitating man so that he feels a need.¹ Elliott equates conversion and growth into one process. The range and type of experiences a man has with Christ determines the degree to which the individual is a Christian.²

3. The Nature of Worship.

Worship is direct intercourse with the living God, according to Homrighausen. It is essentially an inward experience of which the outward experience of the Lord's Supper is the highest expression. Worship has its active expression in the dedication and commitment of the individual.³ The chief value of worship for Elliott is alternate character which is of value only as it leads back into activity.⁴ Whereas worship for Homrighausen is God-centered, for Elliott it is experience-centered.

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1. Cf. Ante, pp. 22, 23
2. Cf. Ante, p. 50
3. Cf. Ante, p. 24
4. Cf. Ante, p. 51

4. The Nature of Prayer.

Prayer, according to Homrighausen's conception, is essential to the Christian life in that it brings the Christian face to face with God in Christ. It is as much an attitude of dependence as it is an act of supplication.¹ To Elliott prayer is more meditation and less supplication. Since God does not intervene in life through the miraculous, but through natural laws, the chief value in prayer is the finding of those laws with the purpose of meeting them.²

5. The Solution of Life Problems.

Homrighausen makes the contention that life and truth are so closely tied up together that the two cannot be separated. Every judgment that man makes is consequently related in some respect to God. This makes theology the basis for the solution of all of man's problems.³ On the other hand, Elliott feels that the solution of problems lies in the social reconstruction of the life of which man is a part.⁴ The Bible as it records the religious experiences of others is a helpful guide to man today in solving his own problems.⁵ Whereas the experience of Biblical characters is the chief value of the Scriptures

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1. Cf. Ante, p. 25
2. Cf. Ante, p. 52
3. Cf. Ante, pp. 26, 27
4. Cf. Ante, p. 51
5. Cf. Ante, p. 53

for Elliott, the God of the Scriptures is Homrighausen's chief emphasis in the solution of life problems.

D. Summary

This chapter has compared the views of Elmer G. Homrighausen and Harrison S. Elliott. Dr. Homrighausen has been seen in most cases to uphold the evangelical interpretation of Religious Education and Dr. Elliott the Liberal interpretation.

The Bible for Homrighausen is fundamentally a Revelation from God through the experiences of its characters. Their record of those experiences present a unique witness concerning God. The Bible for Elliott is chiefly an interpretation of experience and historical fact in which the elements of change and progression are dominant.

Homrighausen has been seen to stress the quality of objective reality in God. His immanent character is manifest in life as it recognizes His supreme Sovereignty. For Elliott God is emphasized as immanent in the very nature of life itself. He is nonsovereign and works through natural law instead of through direct action.

For Homrighausen man outside of Christ is by nature a hopeless sinner whose sin makes it impossible, except for the mercy of God, for man to help himself.

Elliott holds the conviction that man is amoral in original nature, having the potentialities of either infinite goodness or infinite evil. He becomes one or the other through environment, modified by heritage and his own will to choose.

Sin to Homrighausen meant that which separated man from God. It is both the cause and the result of man's depravity. It cannot be overcome piecemeal. Elliott interprets sin as a symptom of personality ill health. In reality sin is a standard set by cultural levels and, therefore, what is sinful is not a stable standard since cultural patterns change.

Jesus Christ, for Homrighausen, is focal in finding the real meaning of life. He is the Divine Savior who came to set man free from sin. Elliott stresses the humanity of Jesus, as the supreme manifestation of God, who encouraged men to find the real potentialities within themselves.

Homrighausen, it has been seen, agrees with much of the basic beliefs of Neo-orthodoxy; yet at the same time he criticizes an overstress of man's depravity to the neglect of God's mercy. Elliott criticizes the Neo-orthodox exaggerated sense of sin and authoritarian doctrinal and pedagogical procedure.

At the heart of Homrighausen's concept of religious education lies the appeal for decision

and commitment to Christ through evangelism and nurture. Elliott centers his religious educational program in the experience of the individual by means of the educational learning process and group thinking process.

Conversion to Homrighausen was found to mean the total change of the whole man by God's Spirit. Conversion to Elliott means growth and maturity in Christian experience.

The nature of prayer and worship has been seen to mean direct contact with the living in the interpretation of Homrighausen. To Elliott they are chiefly alternates characterized by meditation and remembrance in which a solution for life problems is sought and, when found, is acted upon.

Finally, both Homrighausen and Elliott agree that the chief end of Religious Education is to find the solution of life problems. Homrighausen finds his solution in the theological approach and Elliott through the psychological.

CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

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A. Restatement of the Problem

The problem of this study has been to find the theological viewpoints in Religious Education as revealed by Elmer G. Homrighausen and Harrison S. Elliott.

B. Summary

In order to find a solution to the above problem, the writer adopted a general outline which was used as the main guide for each of the preceding chapters. This general outline provided for theological viewpoints which included: views of the Bible, of God, of man, of sin, and of Jesus Christ; and attitude toward Neo-orthodoxy. Following the theological viewpoints were the methodological viewpoints which included: concept of Religious Education, the place of conversion in the life of the individual, the nature of worship, the nature of prayer, and the solution of life problems.

In Chapter I the above outline was applied to the views of Elmer G. Homrighausen. In Chapter II the same outline was used in determining the views of Harrison S. Elliott. In Chapter III the views of both of these men were compared on the basis of the data given

in the previous chapters in the same order of the above outline. In such a procedure it was possible to cover adequately the area marked out by the problem in an objective manner, allowing enough elasticity for each author to give his own emphasis and scope.

C. Conclusion *Education*

Elmer G. Homrighausen is well acquainted with the field of Christian Education and he has an intimate knowledge of its problems. His interpretations are to be highly respected for he is a man of scholarship and deep understanding. Although he ably represents the traditional Protestant viewpoints in most instances, his unique contribution lies in the fact that his presentation is enriched by a thorough knowledge of the liberal point of view. He does not seek to ignore the liberal contributions but meets them face to face on their own grounds; and where there is a liberal contribution which he feels of itself will contribute to Christian Education, he accepts and integrates it.

Undergirding Homrighausen's viewpoints is the conviction that the Bible is God's revelation of Himself to man. He argues for a strong churchly theology founded upon this revelation. His approach is repeatedly from God to man through Christ. His interpretation of man's

condition is based partially upon a psychological analysis; however, this analysis is interpreted and its solution is found in the spiritual and theological point of view. Man and his life are a hopeless chaos without the unifying agency of life as found in Christ.

What is true of this approach to man's problems is also true of Homrighausen's approach to Christian Education. It cannot be mostly "education" but the "religious" element needs to be strongly present. In fact the religious element needs to be re-examined. He, therefore, advocates a strong theology as a foundation for the educational method. In this he is well aware of the influence of secular educational methods, the practice of which often directly contradicts the historical revelation through the Old and New Testaments.

In the light of a present changing theology Homrighausen seeks to reinterpret historic Christianity according to Scripture, reason, and present conditions. To ^{my} ~~the~~ writer's mind he has done this exceedingly well and has made a valuable contribution to Christian Education.

Harrison S. Elliott has been in educational work most of his professional career. In his earlier years he dealt with the practical use of the Bible in dealing with problems of young people and college stu-

dents. His interests in succeeding years have shifted to the educational aspect of Religious Education.

His clear logic and command of psychology, sociology, education, and contemporary life are to be commended. He aims at solving man's problems from the human level. It is in this tendency that the writer sees how Elliott's interpreters could arrive at a purely humanistic approach to Religious Education. Although his theory of Religious Education is for the most part humanistic, he attempts to hedge it about wherever possible with a diluted theology.

His chief contribution lies in the field of method in Religious Education. To this end he has applied his scholarship. He emphasizes experience as the means for true learning and, therefore, shifts emphasis from content to the individual. The educational process of the individual, a process of informal education, has its chief value in a social democratic setting.

In a recent interview with Dr. Elliott, he stated to the writer that he thought the present trend in Religious Education and in the years to come would be toward the Neo-orthodox view with which he has been in basic conflict.

What then is the future hope in this field? Is it not in an intelligent integration of the chief

contributions of each of these men? Do we not need a strongly evangelical theology set in the framework of the sciences interpreted by sound educational practices? In the trend back toward a Religious Education which embodies a Biblical theology yet conserves educational values, we can look with hope to the future of a vital Christian Educational program which will adequately prepare children and young people to meet life as they find it.

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